

## Sand Study - Response

It is great to see at last some effort being made to establish an overall plan for our dunes! We have tried to be proactive in pushing this previously by passing on Coastal Restoration Trust information folders to both WDC and Horizon's staff, plus talking to any staff interested enough to listen!

But it was disappointing to find that groups and individuals that have previously been involved in working on and studying these major dunes were barely consulted or spoken too. Thus the opportunity for them to share their knowledge, photographic records and thoughts were lost! Castlecliff Coast Care definitely would have appreciated such an opportunity, a couple of emails hardly provided this opportunity and we think DOC's dune experts would also have had lots to contribute.

Whenever Coast Care have reviewed their progress and made new plans, we have invited knowledgeable local people from WDC, Horizons, Forest & Bird, past and present DOC staff and local coastal experts, to talk with us and provide advice. And have always found this worth the effort. However we appreciate the current report gives valuable information on climate change effects and tidal data

We know this is an extensive dune system by New Zealand standards so we believe that walking through it during different seasons and during different wind and tidal conditions is imperative to fully understand how it works in different natural circumstances. Plus the effects humans impose with their feet, horses and motor vehicles varies with the seasons and weather conditions. A brief one off visit, does not provide this overview and understanding. This area is worthy of longer visits in fact these are necessary to gain useful understanding of how it works.

In addition to suggesting that hearing from DOC dune specialists about what they believe we should be doing here, we would have liked members of the Coastal Restoration Trust who have worked with similar wild west coast beaches to have been part of the consultation process. In fact, in the past, several have taken the time to visit and offer practical suggestions to Castlecliff Coast Care. And we

wonder if these groups could be asked to review this report ? These people have already shown willing by spending time here to advise Castlecliff Coast Care on survey techniques, helping with the set-up of our monitoring sites and asked questions that we have then set out to find the answers to.

Based on our experiences working as the local Coast Care group and discussions with folks we consider coastal systems experts, we suggest the current report has the following deficiencies when considering the restoration of the major dune system -

1. An understanding of the dunes, their values, geomorphology, accretion rates etc.(i.e. basic information) has not been demonstrated. This section is very brief.
2. There's no consideration of the botanical and faunal values of any part of this site, including the wetlands and stream. Or what should be planted here. (For example the plant list includes species that have never been here and what is considered by botanic experts to be locally native weeds (e.g. karo).
3. There also seems no recognition that our spinifex dunes are self-established. (And we one that has formed since Google set up "maps" of the swimming beach.)
4. Weed management is not explained; with the proposed plans seem more suited to a gentle east coast beach, such as Tauranga, than to our west coast dynamic beach system. Will this plan work here we ask?
5. The proposed plan to remove and reshape dunes is radical, and seems uncalled for. The system isn't broken – sure it has problems, but the guts of a dune system are there. We also understand that removing all the vegetation below Kāpiti Terrace caused sand problems for locals and was the reason Ted Frost had trouble getting acceptance that wattle did need cutting out. But eventually vegetation naturally re-established itself.

6. The predicted rate of accretion are not stated. We wonder if there is enough room in front of the lowest carpark to reconnect this fore-dune. (These are well established on either side.) If it isn't sufficient yet, when would it be expected to be? (We suspect it is very close). This may indicate there is no need to move infrastructure. (But if infrastructure needs to retreat it would have been nice to have the science behind it.)

We have noticed there is a whole new spinifex dune on the south side of the swimming beach which wasn't there when Google mapped the area! (We have added pingao to this area with Aranui School students this year.)

We appreciate the sensible thought of having paths and board-walks to the beach that are not straight but irregular Y-shaped, etc. This makes lot of sense.

It'll take some political decisions to correct some of the problems (e.g. no vehicles, stop grooming and to allow creation of the dune in front of the beach carpark), but the guts of a protective fore-dune are there.

We believe a lot more can be achieved for a fraction of a \$8m budget but don't underestimate that it will take thoughtful planning, time and money.

Getting vehicles off the dunes and the swimming beach seem to be a worthwhile priority to us. As part of this; talking to the riders of these vehicles seems to be an important goal.

Of course we are unsure what the WDC asked for in this Report which makes it hard to comment on.

Recommendation (that we think should happen):

1. That DOC's sand dune experts and Coastal Restoration Trust be asked to review this report.
2. and that the writers of this report be prepared to help answer queries the above reviewers may have.

3. That WDC & Horizons work with local motor bike riders and the police to get these vehicles off the sand dunes and the swimming beach area.
4. That no more sand and driftwood is moved around the swimming beach until an effective plan for establishing a stable fore-dune is agreed on.
5. Establish an agreed plan for stable fore-dunes using spinifex & pingao (the sand binders of this area). There may need to be sites set up to demonstrate the viability of such a plant based approach.
6. That spinifex and pingao plants are ordered from local nurseries and investigations of local viable seeds is undertaken.