

Otanewainuku Ecological District

July 2007

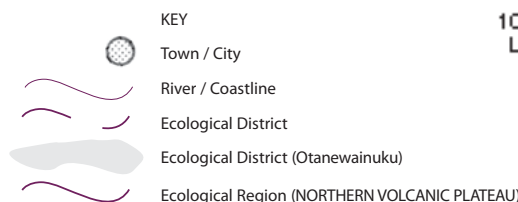
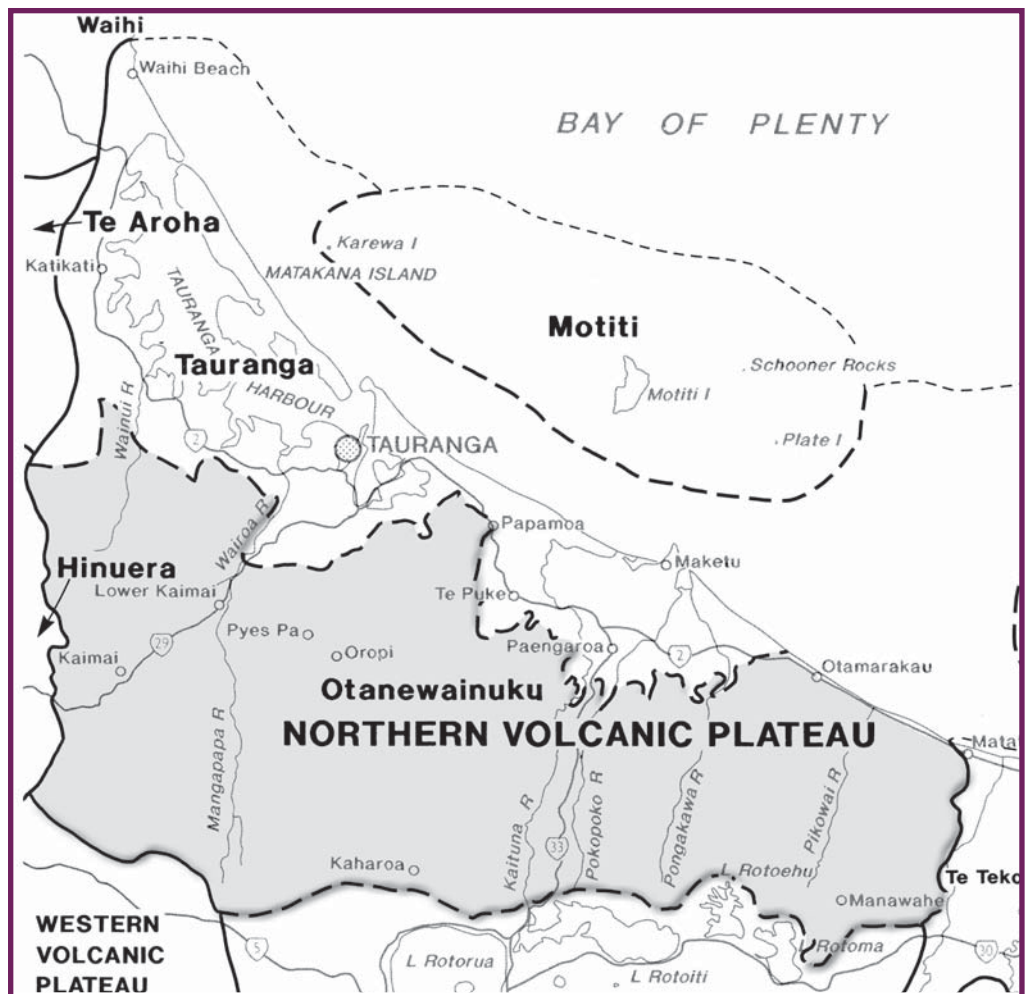
PROTECTED NATURAL AREAS PROGRAMME

What is the Protected Natural Areas Programme?

The Protected Natural Areas (PNA) programme was established nationally in 1983 to try to extend protection of New Zealand's natural ecosystems and landscapes beyond areas already formally protected. The programme was a response to the Reserves Act 1977, which identifies the need for "preservation of important samples of all-classes of natural ecosystems and landscapes which, in their aggregate, gave New Zealand its own recognisable character". Since 1983 the Department of Conservation (DOC) has been working in conjunction with landowners to identify these areas and raise owner awareness of their value.

Otanewainuku Ecological District PNA Programme

Work on the Otanewainuku Ecological District PNA Programme started with a major survey in 1994. You may recall being consulted about this at the time by Wildland Consultants Ltd, who carried out the survey on behalf of the Department of Conservation.



Recommended Areas for Protection

The Otanewainuku Ecological District Protected Natural Area (PNA) report comprises a list and description of Recommended Areas for Protection (RAPs), the most representative examples of ecosystems unprotected in the Otanewainuku Ecological District. RAPs are categorised according to their biological significance.

What was found?

A total of 62 RAPs covering almost 19,922ha have been identified as priority areas for protection within the Otanewainuku Ecological District. These include a wide range of ecosystems – dunes, freshwater wetlands, native shrubland and forests. Landowners in the district were consulted on the draft RAPs in 2003. While some of these places have since been protected, others would benefit enormously from more assistance and some protection measures. The Otanewainuku Ecological District Protected Natural Areas report has been published by the Department of Conservation. Copies are available from the Department's Tauranga and Rotorua offices.

What does it mean for landowners?

As a landowner the survey results provide you with detailed information about the natural values on your property. It does not compel you to do anything else. Land protection on private property is voluntary. If a landowner chooses to formally protect a piece of land identified by DOC as worthy of protection then DOC along with other agencies such as Environment BOP, Nga Whenua Rahui, district councils and the QEII National Trust can help.

There are many measures a landowner can take, independently of DOC, to protect ecologically valuable sites and species. DOC staff are pleased to provide advice and support to landowners who wish to follow this course.

As this is a voluntary process, the ultimate decision on whether to protect a natural area rests with the landowner.

Landowner benefits

DOC and landowners often share the concern of protecting and retaining important local ecosystems. Many landowners appreciate knowing more about particular ecosystems on their property. Legal protection may be an option for some landowners and doesn't need to involve a change of ownership, i.e. a covenant with conditions agreed by the owner. Protecting natural areas provides habitats and corridors for native plants and animals, including threatened species, improved water quality and soil protection and maintenance of scenic and landscape values. For many people there is satisfaction in contributing towards the preservation of New Zealand's natural heritage.

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