

# Motutere Recreation Reserve Context Summary

## Contents

Introduction.....	2
1. Purpose of the Reserve Management Plan .....	2
2. Ngāti Te Rangiita ki Waitetoko Values .....	3
3. Description of Motutere Reserve .....	7
4. Significant Areas .....	10
5. Recreation Values .....	17
6. Reserve Built Areas.....	20
7. Safety Risks .....	22
8. Reserves Act Classifications .....	24
9. Reserve Challenges and Opportunities: .....	25
10. Summary of Relevant Documents .....	27
11. Taupō District Council Commitments .....	34
Glossary .....	36
Appendix .....	39

# Introduction

This document sets out a summary of information used for the development of the Motutere Reserve Management Plan (the Plan). It outlines the relevant legislation and legal description of the reserve, values, significant areas and features, site safety risks, and a summary of reserve challenges and opportunities.

## 1. Purpose of the Reserve Management Plan

The Plan assists with decision making and guiding appropriate land use and development within Motutere Reserve. Reserve management plans are required under section 41 of the Reserves Act 1977 and are considered in District Plans under section 74 of the Resource Management Act 1991.

Motutere Recreation Reserve has many matters of consideration. This reserve management plan, drafted alongside Ngāti Te Rangiita ki Waitetoko hapū, has been developed in particular to consider the following:

- future generations;
- the reserve's cultural, landscape and natural values;
- improved public access to and connection with Lake Taupō, and reserve user safety;
- the reserve's current (2005) lease of part of the reserve as a commercial campground (Motutere Bay Holiday Park);
- recreation values; and
- the local purpose use for council infrastructure being water and wastewater use.

The development of this plan alongside Ngāti Te Rangiita ki Waitetoko hapū has been key to ensure the reserve is managed appropriately and in partnership.

### **Section 41(3) of the Reserves Act 1977 states:**

*The Management Plan shall provide for and ensure the use, enjoyment, maintenance, protection and preservation, as the case may require, and, to the extent that the administering body's resources permit, the development, as appropriate, of the reserve for the purposes for which it is classified, and shall incorporate and ensure compliance with the principles set out in section 17<sup>1</sup>, as the case may be, of this Act for a reserve of that classification.*

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<sup>1</sup> Recreation Reserves

## 2. Ngāti Te Rangiita ki Waitetoko Values

### 2.1 Hapū Values

A cultural values report for the wider Motutere area including the recreation reserve has been undertaken by cultural advisor H. Winitana on behalf of Ngāti Te Rangiita ki Waitetoko hapū. The cultural values report contains sensitive information including locations of wāhi tapu, therefore the full contents of that report cannot be shared. This information has been shared with Council's resource consent team to hold on file and consider in any relevant resource consent applications.

The Ngāti Te Rangiita ki Waitetoko cultural principles and values are summarised below, along with how the Council has integrated them into the development of this plan.

In addition to specific Ngāti Te Rangiita ki Waitetoko values, the Te Aranga Māori design principles identified in Council's engagement strategy have been applied in the development of this plan. Te Aranga outcomes-based principles were established by a collective of Māori designers and planners (Ngā Aho) at Te Aranga Marae Hastings, in 2008. These are a starting point for considering cultural values and can be adapted in partnership with iwi and hapū to suit specific projects, strategies, events planning, or other council kaupapa in the rohe. More information on the Te Aranga Principles is included in section 10.5 of this document.

H. Winitana's report outlines the key philosophy for Ngāti Te Rangiita ki Waitetoko hapū; is that their intrinsic connection to their environment is respected and upheld. The Māori worldview is grounded in whakapapa. Māori perceive no division between themselves and the natural world; they are one and the same. The saying of the late Ngāti Te Rangiita kaumātua Te Kanawa Pitiroi is "*Ki te tiaki te tangata i te Taiao, ka tiaki te Taiao i te tangata*" – "If mankind takes care of the environment, the environment will take care of mankind".

Within H. Winitana's report; there are three key concepts central to Ngāti Te Rangiita ki Waitetoko principles and values. These are **Mauri** – life force, **Tapu** – sacredness, and **Mana** – authority or influence. The report then outlines 12 key principles and values, in addition to the above three, they are; **Kawa**, **Tikanga**, **Whakapapa**, **Wairuatanga**, **Kaitiakitanga**, **Kotahitanga**, **Whanaungatanga**, **Manaakitanga**, **Utu**. The following sections elaborate on these values and principles, outlining examples of how they are to be implemented in the management of Motutere Recreation Reserve.

### **Mauri**

Mauri is the life force or essence present in all living beings and natural elements.

1. Dictionary Definition: Mauri is described as life force, vitality, essence, spirit, energy, well-being, and life principle.

2. Cultural Explanation: Mauri embodies the interconnectedness of all living beings and the dynamic balance required for their well-being.
3. Extended Meanings: Mauri can denote the vitality of a person or entity, encompassing physical, mental, and spiritual health. It can also refer to the life force of natural elements and the spiritual significance of objects, places, or rituals within Māori culture.

This concept is also aligned with the Te Aranga values outlined in the Council's Māori engagement strategy of **Taiao** and **Mauri Tū**. These values aim to protect, restore, and enhance the natural environment, ensuring the health and well-being of the environment is safeguarded and improved.

### **How this concept is applied to the reserve management plan:**

Mauri is integral to the management of Motutere reserve and the vision statement. It is the mauri of the reserve that is to be protected and restored, and in turn the mauri of the people. The management plan also acknowledges other aspects of mauri, including objectives, outcomes, and actions aimed at environmental restoration and connection. These include addressing erosion from reserve use on the lakeshore reserves, maintaining, and enhancing regenerating bush areas, replacing indigenous vegetation when it is removed, and enhancing the connection of mana whenua and other reserves users with the land and water.

## **Tapu**

Tapu is a fundamental concept in Māori culture. It represents sacredness, restrictions, and spiritual essence. It signifies the sanctity of objects, places, people, or events, necessitating adherence to protocols to maintain integrity.

1. Dictionary Definition: Tapu is described as sacredness, restriction, prohibition, or protection by spirits. It can also denote a state of curse or ritual restriction.
2. Cultural Explanation: Tapu refers to the spiritual essence of something considered sacred or consecrated, requiring respect and protocol adherence.
3. 3. Extended Meanings: Tapu can denote something as off-limits due to cultural reasons, involving restrictions to uphold its sanctity

This concept also links to the Te Aranga principle of **Tohu**: Sites of significance to iwi and hapu where cultural landmarks are acknowledged and protected.

### **How this concept is applied to the reserve management plan:**

Aspects of Tapu and Tohu that the management plan contributes towards includes protection of known sites of cultural significance. This is outlined in the report by H. Winitana. The plan's actions outline the need to take guidance and direction from mana whenua on these sites and manage them appropriately according to their different levels of tapu. Levels of tapu will be confirmed with the hapū cultural advisor.

For Tohu - where knowledge is willing to be shared by mana whenua; the action involves sharing the information about sites with historical and cultural significance through learning boards to enhance understanding and appreciation of the area.

## Mana

Mana signifies power, authority, and influence encompassing personal and spiritual power. It's earned, inherited, or bestowed through ancestry, achievements, and leadership acts.

1. Dictionary Definition: Mana denotes power, authority, control, influence, prestige, reputation, charisma, and divine authority.
2. Cultural Explanation: Mana refers to the inherent power or authority held by individuals or groups, earned through various factors such as achievements and leadership.
3. Extended Meanings: Mana can describe the reputation or prestige of a person or group, indicating their influence and standing within the community. It's also connected to Tapu, referring Mana is connected to Tapu, representing the spiritual power or divine authority held by specific individuals, objects, and environments.

This concept also links to the Te Aranga principle of **Mana**; the status of iwi and hapū as mana whenua is recognised and respected.

### How this concept is applied to the reserve management plan:

The reserve management plan has been co-drafted between Council and Ngāti Te Rangiita ki Waitetoko hapū. The plan is guided by the hapū recognising their kōrero and whakapapa to the whenua.

At the governance level, the Motutere Recreation Reserve Committee appointed for the review of this management plan includes equal representation of Ngāti Te Rangiita ki Waitetoko and Council elected members. The Committee is set up to provide direction on the management plan drafting, hear submissions and make recommendations for adoption of the plan. The final decision to adopt the management plan is with the Council's elected members.

The Council highly values and upholds its relationships with all iwi and hapū in our rohe, both in governance and operations, and this commitment has persisted with Ngāti Te Rangiita ki Waitetoko throughout the development of this management plan.

### Relationship of the three concepts

H. Winitana's report notes that the relationship between Mauri, Tapu, and Mana is an important holistic and interconnected system. This worldview is not just a set of ideas, it is a lived reality, accentuating interdependence of all living beings and the importance of maintaining balance with nature. Mauri, Tapu, and Mana within Māori culture are a holistic triad, together, they create a holistic system where life is animated by Mauri, sanctified by Tapu, and empowered by Mana. These three concepts help to understand Ngāti Te Rangiita ki Waitetoko's principles and values of Motutere and the surrounding whenua. These interwoven principles and values, rooted in their culture, define their uniqueness, and carry their holistic worldview, forming the essence of Ngāti Te Rangiita ki Waitetoko identity.

## Principles and Values

The following summarises the remaining principles and values of Ngā Te Rangiita ki Waitetoko and how they are applied to the management plan.

**Kawa: Sanctified procedures only applicable to change under specific measures, and Tikanga: Customs, protocols, and behaviour guidance.**

The management plan outlines that specific protocol and procedures will be sought from Ngāti Te Rangiita ki Waitetoko. This includes (but is not limited to) instances of rāhui, ceremonial blessings, and traditional practices.

**Whakapapa: Ancestral connections defining identity and place, Wairuatanga: Spirituality and understanding of spiritual dimensions.** In this management plan, our goal is to enhance understanding among the reserve users, community, and those with an interest in the reserve about Ngāti Te Rangiita ki Waitetoko and their enduring ancestral ties to the whenua. To honour this connection, the plan includes initiatives to collaborate with mana whenua in applying for cultural narrative and learning boards, respecting the willingness of hapū to share this knowledge. This will involve Council considering whether to fund this through the Long-term Plan. This may also include (depending on whether mana whenua agree to share this information) **mahi toi** traditional artwork and motifs and references back to cultural traditions such as Matariki viewing. We will also ensure that the correct and original place names are used.

**Kaitiakitanga: Guardianship of land and resources.**

Ongoing management, maintenance, and monitoring are proposed to be in partnership with mana whenua, emphasising a joint approach to kaitiakitanga of the reserve. This will require relationships with all of the organisations that have an interest in the ongoing care of the reserve and for the Council and the campground Lessee to collaborate together. All people and organisations with an interest in Motutere Recreation Reserve have a role to play in protecting and enhancing the natural environment. These roles are integral to the health and well-being of the reserve, bolstered through partnership, and are provided for in the management plan. The plan also seeks to minimise impact as much as possible on the environment, and providing for consolidated reserve use where services can be better provided – water and wastewater reticulation, services for high intensity use areas, and minimising services in low intensity use areas.

**Kotahitanga: Unity and solidarity, and Whanaungatanga: Relationships and belonging, Manaakitanga: Hospitality, kindness, and care for others.**

This management plan seeks to provide for more inclusive lakeshore reserves to the local community, mana whenua, campers, and public. Actions include exploring the potential for a closer working relationship between the hapū and the campground, as well as supporting and facilitating traditional practices. An example of this could be supporting celebration of Matariki at Motutere Bay.

**Utu: Maintaining balance through reciprocity.**

A key management plan consideration is maintaining Council's relationships across the plan and partnerships described above. The aim is that we continue to work together partnership so that the relationship extends beyond just the review of the reserve management plan, and into on-going management throughout the life of the plan.

## 3. Description of Motutere Reserve

### 3.1 Location and Character

Motutere reserve is located on the eastern shores of Taupō Moana Lake Taupō, approximately 18km north of Tūrangi and 25km south of Taupō township. The topography along this edge of the lake has a range of headlands and valleys that drain from the Kaimanawa Ranges to Taupō Moana.

The total land area of Motutere reserve is 31.8 hectares. It is divided into three main areas;

1. Motutere main reserve,
2. Motutere Bay lakeshore reserve,
3. Ōtaiātoa Bay lakeshore reserve.

These three areas are separated by State Highway 1, and Motutere Point at Waitapu Road.





### **Main Motutere Reserve**

The larger Motutere reserve is approximately 24 hectares in size and located immediately south of State Highway 1. The land extends 34 vertical meters uphill, with a small tributary gully and ephemeral stream extending south north through the centre. This portion of land sits between two headlands, with the west headland being the land behind Motutere Point, and the east headland being the land behind Te Poporo Bulli Point.

To the south lies Motutere Scenic Reserve, listed as a Significant Natural Area (SNA155) in the Taupō District Plan. Beyond that, to the southwest of the reserve, is the Hautu block, a 30,000-hectare area largely comprised of pine plantation forestry. The surrounding headlands and tributaries are in native regenerating vegetation. A section of plantation forestry adjoins this portion of land on the southwest corner.

This part of the reserve contains the main campground lease area. It sits to the northwest of the main portion of land and directly to the south of State Highway 1. The campground lease on this area is approximately 10 hectares in area and contains the key campground facilities and boat trailer parking.

The remaining parts of the main Motutere reserve comprises a blend of regenerating native vegetation, scrubland, and hillside extending to the east. This area forms the Outstanding Landscape Areas (OLA04) Eastern Bays in the Taupō District Plan. It includes water tanks that supply potable water to the campground, as well as the council wastewater treatment plant, disposal field, and access road. This section of the site also includes a contaminated area, formerly an old landfill site.

### **Motutere Bay Lakeshore Reserve**

The remaining areas of the reserve are lakeshore reserves. Motutere Bay lakeshore reserve lies directly north of State Highway 1, adjoining Taupō Moana Lake Taupō. This part of the lakeshore reserve extends approximately 900m in length along the foreshore and contains the second part of the campground lease area which extends 780m along the foreshore and covers approximately 3.2 hectares. It adjoins private properties on Motutere Point at Waitapu Road to the west, and State Highway 1 to the east.

The 2005 campground lease extends across the access to the public boat ramp and jetty (the actual ramp and jetty are not located on the reserve – these are within the lakebed administered by Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board and facilities administered by the Department of Internal Affairs). The 2005 campground lease area also contains an access road, parking areas, two sets of showers and toilets, BBQ kitchen/laundry, a mixture of permanent and temporary campsites. Motutere Bay lakeshore reserve is also used for boat and trailer parking by public accessing Te Poporo Bulli Point.

### **Ōtaiātoa Bay Lakeshore Reserve**

The second lakeshore reserve is located on the eastern shores of Ōtaiātoa Bay. It stretches 2.2km along the foreshore from the west side of Motutere Point to State Highway 1. This narrow strip of recreation reserve is predominantly covered in mixed scrub and grass areas, featuring a public rest area with larger trees. Camping is not permitted in this section of the reserve.

## 4. Significant Areas

### 4.1 Cultural Sites

The wider area from Hallets Bay to Motuoapa is the territorial boundary of Ngāti Te Rangiita ki Waitetoko hapū. This includes Motutere Recreation Reserve and its surroundings. The historical ties of Ngāti Te Rangiita ki Waitetoko to this area date back through generations of ancestors who lived in and cared for this area. Within this area there are significant sites with names and histories. Within Motutere Recreation Reserve there are many sites of cultural significance.

H. Winiata's cultural values report outlines historical background and areas of cultural sites. The cultural sites are sensitive and cannot be shared with the wider public. Council will hold this information on its files so that Council officers can identify where land disturbance activities are proposed within proximity to these sites. A cultural assessment may be required to be commissioned by a hapū approved cultural advisor. Council will work in partnership with Ngāti Te Rangiita ki Waitetoko hapū to develop methods to share cultural history and narrative – where hapū wish to share that information with the wider public.

### 4.2 Archaeology

An archaeological field survey of Motutere Recreation Reserve was undertaken by Lynda Walter and Josie Hagan dated 9th September 2019. The Walter and Hagan report found that the reserve contained two archaeological sites that had been recorded in the New Zealand Archaeological Site Recording Scheme. The report noted that a thorough ground search was made to attempt to find recorded archaeological sites identified in previous archaeological reports. These sites were not able to be located. The following sections summarise the archaeological sites found in previous studies.

#### **T18/15 Pits**

The T18/15 (pits) site was recorded by Glennis and David Nevin in November 1978. It was described as being “opposite the eastern end of the ‘Motutere Motor Camp Domain, 50 metres off State Highway 1”. The site was described as five pits dug into a pumice cliff face, being located on a 3-metre-high bank above a 10-metre-high precipitous bank. The average size of the pits was recorded as 2.0 x 1.7 metres, and they were cut into the bank with a slight overhang above. The Walter Hagan report notes that the description of the pits “is consistent with field evidence of ‘rua’ type storage pits seen elsewhere in the inland lakes’ areas of the central North Island”.

#### **T18/120 Oven/Terrace**

The T18/120 (oven/terrace) site was recorded by Perry Fletcher in 1984. The location was identified as being within the area now occupied by the wastewater treatment plant. The description on the site record form states “House sites on top of terrace. A fence boarding the local rubbish dump...was demolished and oven and artefactual material and bank fronting the terrace was destroyed in 1983”. The Walter Hagan report notes; “It is unclear from this description if the extent of the site was entirely modified or destroyed at the time of recording, but this does seem highly likely based on research documented in this report.”

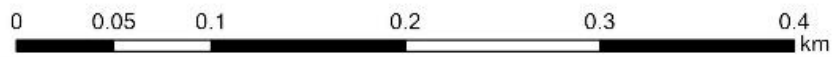
In addition to the two sites described above, the Walter Hagan Report noted that the reserve contains a post-1900 historic heritage place. A small housing settlement was located near the northern boundary of the Reserve, in an area now partially modified by State Highway 1. The settlement is visible on early aerial photography but appears to have been abandoned and the houses removed by approximately 1950.

*Insert Location Plan showing recorded archaeological sites T18/15 and T18/120 within the Motutere Recreation Reserve (Source: ArchSite [www.archsite.org.nz](http://www.archsite.org.nz))*

No field evidence of additional archaeological sites was found during the Walter Hagan archaeological survey in the reserve. Their summary was that previous ground disturbance within the reserve has been concentrated in the areas that were most likely to contain evidence of former Māori occupation.



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## 4.3 Ecological

The wider reserve contains regenerating indigenous native vegetation. This mostly consists of regenerating whauwhaupaku/five finger *Pseudopanax arboreus*, and kōhūhū/black matipo *Pittosporum tenuifolium*, mahoe/whiteywood *Melicactus ramiflorus* and kānuka *Kunzea ericoides* forest. A desktop ecological study of the recreation reserve and adjacent scenic reserve was undertaken by Wildland Consultants in 2019. This identified a draft area of significant indigenous vegetation, subject to further ground truthing.

The species above are predominant in the area to the west and south boundaries of the site. This vegetation is within the 2004 proposed campground expansion area. There are wilding pine trees (*Pinus pinaster*), along with patches of blackberry, and bracken. The understorey includes hangehange *Geniostoma ligustrifolium*, karamū *Coprosma robusta*, *lucida*, and understorey fern. An ecological assessment was undertaken by Nicholas Singers Ecological Solutions Ltd in July 2024 (**Appendix**). This report described the area as being contiguous with the surrounding Significant Natural Area (SNA155/1069) meeting the criteria for areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna.

Kōwhai *Sophora tetraptera* groves are located on lakeshore cliffs in the vicinity of Te Poporo Bulli Point at the northern extremity of the Bay. Kōwhai trees are found within the campground, and the lakeshore reserve, where they are the dominant tree species. Kōwhai provide natural amenity within the lakeshore reserve area and are visually significant during flowering.

Protected native bird species observed in the area include the native honeyeater Tui, korimako/bellbird, riroriro/grey warbler, kererū, pīwakawaka/fantail, tauhou/silvereye, kōtare/kingfisher, and matuku moana/white-faced heron.

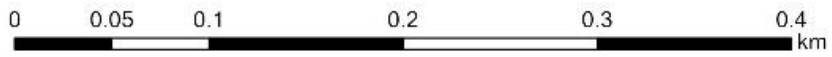
The Wildland Consultants 2019 report lists pest species and threats to SNA 155/1069 being human development, adjacent forestry operations, pest animals; possums, pigs, red deer, wasps, cats, mustelids. Plant species; pampas, broom, blackberry, wilding pines.



Draft Area of  
Significant  
Indigenous  
Vegetation

SNA  
155/1069

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## 4.4 Landscape

The headlands and ridges surrounding Motutere Bay define a series of bays along the lake edge. The reserve is located within the flat to gently sloping land at the head of Motutere Bay, which is contained by Te Poporo Bulli Point to the north and Motutere Point to the south, as well as the lakeshore to the south of the campground.

The reserve itself can be broadly divided into three-character areas largely defined by the headlands and surrounding hilly landform and land cover. These include:

- The gently sloping hills of the existing camping ground and regenerating native bush beyond.
- The flatter, more open area along the lakeshore, which is separated by State Highway 1 from the hill slopes beyond and visually contained by the headlands. Views across the lake and along the lake edge are frequently gained from the state highway, although obscured in places by the structures along the lake edge.
- The lake edge south of the Motutere Camping Ground has a more secluded, intimate nature. Views of the highway from the lake edge are less frequent in this area, which is buffered by a mix of introduced plant species and clumps of native vegetation and the lay of the land, which drops away to the lake.

The Main Motutere reserve area contains Outstanding Landscape Area OLA04 in the Taupō District Plan, which lists the attributes of OLA04 as “forms the eastern edge to Lake Taupō with high public use, and one of the most scenic parts of SH1 in the District for its lakeside vistas and close association with the lake edge. The cliff sides have high visual prominence with a very high level of naturalness, some rising steeply. Provides an important backdrop to the settlements of the eastern lake edge. Important for its views to and from the lake.”

## 4.5 Natural Character – Foreshore Protection Area

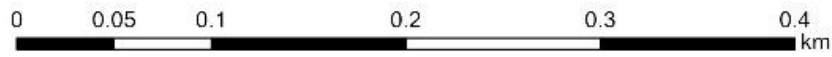
The Taupō District Plan identifies a 20m margin along the foreshore of all lakes and rivers of the Taupō District. The Foreshore Protection Area is defined in the Taupō District Plan as “20m measured horizontally from the landward boundary of the ‘bed’ (as defined in the Act) of any identified lake or river, or for Lake Taupō, measured from the Nui-a-Tia boundary, whichever is the further inland.” While there is a line drawn in the district planning maps – the definition needs to be applied, as the line drawn in the maps may not match to the actual bed of the lake.

In summary, the purpose of the Foreshore Protection Area is to assess the potential or actual impacts of proposed buildings or structures within the lake margin. This assessment focuses on preserving the visual amenity, openness, and natural character values of the lakeshore environment, as well as addressing potential erosion concerns from the district's waterways and lakes.

Under the District Plan, any structure, temporary or permanent, movable, or immovable (with some exclusions) within the Foreshore Protection Area requires a discretionary resource consent.



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## 5. Recreation Values

Motutere Recreation Reserve provides an opportunity for nature-based outdoor recreation activities. The main recreation uses of the reserve include swimming, camping, walking, picnicking, and water activities such as boating, fishing, paddle-boarding, jet skiing, and kayaking. The proximity of the reserve to Lake Taupō makes it highly valued by locals and visitors.

The Taupō District Council Recreation and Sport Strategy has a set of guiding principles for providing and improving reserves and parks. Principles include providing a reserve network where waterfront reserves support open recreation, access to our lakes and waterways, play, leisure, walking, cycling, and picnicking.

### 5.1 Motutere Bay

Motutere Bay has a swimmable sheltered beach with access to a public boat ramp and jetty. There is a close association with the Motutere point community and local recreational users. The bay offers water-based play, camping, an outdoor nature experience, educational and tourism experiences.

### 5.2 Campground

Motutere Campground has been a highly valued destination for generations. Prior to 1950, informal camping took place along the lake foreshore. In 1953 the first toilet was installed at Motutere as an act of service for the Queen, who was passing through on her trip through New Zealand. Although the Queen never used the toilet, the facility remained and marked the beginning of a formal campsite.

In the late 1970s, the campground grew to include both sides of the reserve at Motutere Bay, separated by State Highway 1, and a boat ramp was established in the bay. The campground continued to grow on the southern side of State Highway 1 and facilities such as the shop and the manager's office were moved from the lakeshore to this side of the highway.

In 1982 Motutere reserve was classified as a recreation reserve under the Reserves Act 1977. The first Motutere Holiday Camp lease was granted by Taupō County Council in 1986. Over the last five decades the campground has grown to include additional facilities such as cabins and self-contained units.

The campground lease area at the time of developing this plan is the lease that commenced in 2005. This lease expires in 2038 unless surrendered earlier. A map showing the 2005 lease is below.

# Motutere Recreation Reserve - 2005 Campground Lease Area



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## 5.3 Ōtaiātoa Bay

Ōtaiātoa Bay is less developed than Motutere Bay and provides a more exposed rocky experience. The bay currently provides a public rest area for travellers and a place for locals and visitors to picnic and walk along the foreshore. Due to the shallow and rocky nature of the bay, it is not suitable for swimming. There is an opportunity to improve this part of the reserve to include a defined walking and cycling track, along with vegetation enhancement.

## 6. Reserve Built Areas

### 6.1 Facilities

The main facilities within the reserve are for the campground and its associated infrastructure. The campground currently occupies approximately 10 hectares of the Motutere Recreation Reserve. The campground provides over 200 caravan and tent sites plus cabins, a shop and office, managers accommodation, toilet and ablution blocks, and laundry facilities. At the commencement of the current lease, Council sold its campground buildings to the lessee. The lessee is therefore responsible for maintenance of its buildings (interior and exterior). The current lease commenced on 1 March 2005 and was granted for a term of 33 years. It is referred to in the reserve management plan as the 2005 lease. The expiry date of the 2005 lease is 28 February 2038.

The public boat ramp together with sealed access and jetty is also located on the Motutere Bay lake margin at the approximate midpoint of the bay. The boat ramp is operated by the Department of Internal Affairs.

Vehicle public access is provided to Ōtaiātoa Bay lakeshore reserve from the adjoining State Highway.

### 6.2 Council Infrastructure Assets

The campground is fully reticulated for wastewater and water. A wastewater treatment plant servicing the campground is located on the main Motutere reserve to the east of the campground. Primary treated sewage is irrigated to land. Waikato Regional Council has issued resource consent for the wastewater treatment plant that is subject to conditions requiring ongoing compliance by Taupō District Council.

This treatment plant is necessary to allow the campground to function. The Motutere Point residential properties at Waitapu Road will connect to the plant in 2024. Access to the site is gained via a walking/vehicle track extending eastward from the current campground.

The drinking water supply for the campground comes from the lake and services the campground only. Currently there is basic treatment before being pumped to two holding tanks at the upper slopes of the reserve. A planned upgrade of the water plant to meet legislated drinking water standards is in the Council's Long-term Plan.

If the campground Lessee expands the capacity of the campground on a permanent basis, or requires any additional water or wastewater infrastructure, the Lessee shall be responsible for all additional infrastructural costs the Council may incur.

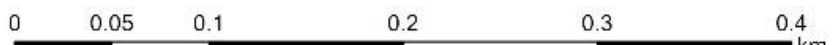
An aerial map of the campground operations as of 2024 is shown below.



# Motutere Recreation Reserve Council Water and Waste Water Services (as of 2024)



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## 7. Safety Risks

### 7.1 Reserve Use Safety Risks

- State Highway 1 creates a safety risk for pedestrian access from the campground to the lakeshore reserve. This portion of highway is wide with a median strip turning bay, two lanes and two lane shoulders. A defined crossing point is established at the campground and lakeshore reserve, however currently there is no safe pedestrian refuge at the centre of the road.
- Once within the lakeshore reserve; the only pedestrian access point to the lake is on the boat ramp vehicle access road. This creates a safety risk for pedestrians when the ramp is being used by vehicles and trailers.
- Reserve users want to swim and jump into the water. They are currently using the boat jetty to do this, which is illegal and causing safety conflict. There is no designated swim zone or motorised boat free zone to provide for a pontoon as an alternative to jumping off the jetty.
- A closed landfill is located to the east of the campground area / lease site. This is listed in the District Plan as contaminated site “Old Motutere landfill site” C41. This closed landfill occupies the base of a small gully immediately to the east of the present caravan sites. The Waikato Regional Council also identified the area below the contaminated site on its Hazards Activities and Industries List (HAIL) report.
- Bush walking within the reserve on informal tracks is leading to unlawful entry into adjacent forestry operations.
- There is no median strip or vehicle turning bay into Ōtaiātoa Bay lakeshore reserve, and no space to provide for one. Currently there is only a small shoulder extension on south bound traffic, with drivers still pausing in the south bound lane to turn, and no shoulder extension for north bound traffic to pull over.



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## 8. Reserves Act Classifications

### 8.1 Legal Description

The three parcels of land are described in the cadastral records as Sections 1, 2, 4, and 5 Block II, and Section 1 of Block V Tokaanu Survey District (LINZ). The Reserve comprises of 31.8493 hectares recorded in title number 799999. The Reserve is subject to a 20m wide public right of way. This right of way margins all of Lake Taupō and was legislated in 1926 under the Māori Land Amendment and Māori Land Claims Act. This right of way still exists today.

### 8.2 Recreation Reserve Classification

The reserve is classified as a recreation reserve. Section 17 of the Reserves Act 1977 states that this classification is for the purpose of

Section 54(a) of the Act allows for the leasing of the reserve for a campground to give effect to the principles and purpose set out in Section 17. Schedule 1 of the Act sets out the basic provisions that are applicable to the lease.

### 8.3 Local Purpose Reserve Classification

While the primary use of Motutere reserve is for recreation purposes, there is water and wastewater infrastructure located on the reserve. These types of assets are usually located on and classified as local purpose reserves. Unlike other forms of reserve established under the Act, local purpose reserves do not need to have a specific conservation purpose. At some stage reclassification may be required and this management plan allows for that to occur.



## 9. Reserve Challenges and Opportunities:

### Summary of Challenges:

- **State Highway 1.** Motutere Recreation Reserve is primarily centred at Motutere Bay but also includes a long strip of land along the lake margin of Ōtaiātoa Bay. The reserve is disconnected by State Highway 1, which has an 80 km/h speed limit at Ōtaiātoa Bay and a 60 km/h limit at Motutere Bay creating movement challenges for reserve users.

Additionally, improving safety for those crossing State Highway 1 at Motutere Bay is essential. While lowering the speed limit has been a positive step, this reduced speed needs to be maintained and a safe pedestrian refuge is urgently needed.

- **Vehicle safety at Ōtaiātoa Bay.** There is no median strip or wide shoulder bays at Ōtaiātoa Bay. This creates challenges with safe vehicle access in and out of this part of the reserve.
- **Anti-social behaviour at Ōtaiātoa Bay.** This reserve has internal vehicle access. It is visually and physically separated from the local community, passive surveillance, existing services, and reticulation. This is creating issues around regular instances of illegal camping, fly tipping, bush toileting, and reports of fire lighting on this reserve. Its current use is State Highway 1 rest area, which services transient use, but is not servicing its local community well.
- **Motutere Bay not currently meeting recreation needs of all.** Motutere Bay is one of the few north facing swimmable sheltered bays on the shores of Taupō Moana. It is culturally significant and has a long historical connection to Ngāti Te Rangiita ki Waitetoko; mana whenua of the area. Motutere Bay is also highly valued by campers who enjoy the campground. There are challenges in how to change the use of the bay so that it best services the recreation needs of all.
- **Campground lease area over the boat ramp.** The campground lease area at Motutere Bay extends across the entire bay and public boat ramp. This has created issues around providing public parking, parking for the boat ramp, and safe public pedestrian access. This has also unintentionally created exclusive use of the lakeshore reserve, disconnecting the reserve from the local community and the public. This arrangement is not currently meeting the public recreation needs of a recreation reserve, and requirement to maintain public access to lakes.
- **Loss of natural character.** Camping on the entire lakeshore reserve at Motutere Bay has also led to an increase in built structures within the Foreshore Protection Area, erosion from lack of formed public access points, and loss of natural character of the foreshore. Initiation by the campground lessee to remove permanent camp sites from the lakeshore reserve and move buildings out of the Foreshore Protection Area is an important step to restoring the natural character of the lake front.

### Opportunities:

- **Improved recreation user experience and community inclusion.** A public reserve space at Motutere Bay could be mutually beneficial to the local community, visitors, and campground users if it is developed with each other in mind. Motutere Bay features a median strip, wide shoulder bays, a

public boat ramp, existing wastewater reticulation, and a hub of recreational activities. There is the ability to create a safe swim zone and publicly accessible water play equipment. There will be provision of public services such as toilet, BBQs and picnic tables.

- **Provide expansions for the campground lease area.** There is an opportunity for the campground to expand in two areas. One on the upper slopes of the reserve to provide more tourist accommodation, and the other on the former landfill site, proposed as a recreation area. Both expansions are subject to conditions outlined in the reserve management plan.
- **Education opportunities.** There is potential to offer educational programs for school groups focused on ecological restoration in the regenerating bush areas of the reserve, subject to site health and safety. This could also help the campground during the off-season, through increased school group visits.
- **Minimise anti-social behaviour.** There is opportunity to restrict vehicle access to Ōtaiātoa Bay and provide a small carpark that has clear line of sight from the State Highway as a form of passive surveillance. This will help minimise illegal camping, fly tipping and anti-social behaviour at this bay. Preventing vehicles from driving along the bay will also help reduce environmental damage being caused by vehicles. The natural character of Ōtaiātoa Bay can then be restored through native planting.
- **Encourage camping at Motutere Bay:** By restricting access to Ōtaiātoa Bay and providing signage about where people can legally camp, those groups that may have previously illegally camped at Ōtaiātoa Bay will be encouraged to stay at Motutere campground.
- **Cycle and walkway linkages.** There is opportunity to provide a cycle / walkway connection from Motutere Bay to Waitetoko, creating improved community connections and use. There may be an opportunity to link to the Department of Conservation Scenic Reserve walk.

# 10. Summary of Relevant Documents

## 10.1 National Statutory Context Relevant legislation

DOCUMENTS	RELEVANCE
<b>Reserves Act 1977</b>	<p>The Reserves Act is the key piece of legislation for administering public reserves. The Reserves Act sets out how reserves are to be managed by administering bodies in accordance with the general purpose of the Reserves Act, as set out in section 3 of the Act, summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Providing for the preservation and management of areas for the benefit and enjoyment of the public</li><li>• Ensuring, as far as possible, the survival of all indigenous species of flora and fauna</li><li>• Ensuring, as far as possible, the preservation of access for the public</li><li>• Providing for the preservation of representative samples of all classes of natural ecosystems and landscape</li><li>• Promoting the protection of the natural character of the coastal environment and the margins of lakes and rivers</li></ul> <p>Reserve management plans are required under section 41 of the Act.</p>
<b>Resource Management Act 1991</b>	<p>The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) is the key piece of legislation for managing environmental resources in Aotearoa New Zealand. The purpose of the RMA is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources. Council, as an administering body and owner of reserve land, is required to comply with provisions in the RMA and documents prepared under the RMA such as Regional and District Plans.</p>

<b>Local Government Act 2002</b>	The Local Government Act 2002 (LGA) enables and directs general administrative processes for local authorities in managing reserves.
<b>Conservation Act 1987</b>	The Conservation Act was developed to promote the conservation of natural and historic resources in New Zealand. The Act has several functions including the management of land for conservation purposes and fostering recreation activities on conservation land, providing the use is consistent with the conservation of the resource. This is relevant to the management of reserves as the administering body of this piece of legislation - the Department of Conservation - is involved in the management and maintenance of reserves classified under the Reserves Act.
<b>Te Tiriti o Waitangi</b>	<p>The Reserves Act is required to be interpreted and administered to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. Reserve Management Plans take into account the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active Participation</li> <li>• Partnership (mutually beneficial relationship)</li> <li>• Active protection</li> </ul> <p>Reserve Management Plans seek to recognise and provide for the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, wāhi tapu and other taonga.</p>
<b>Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act (2014)</b>	Prohibits the modification or destruction of an archaeological site unless an authority is obtained.
<b>Wildlife Act 1953</b>	States which wildlife on the reserve is and isn't protected.
<b>Land Transport Management Act 2003</b>	This Act defines the management regime for State Highways and is relevant to this plan in so much as the reserve either abuts to or is split by State Highway 1. The Act allows the New Zealand Transport Agency

(Waka Kotahi) to control and manage the highway system to achieve the objective of a safe and efficient highway system.

**The Māori Land  
Amendment and Māori  
Land Claims Adjustment  
Act 1926**

This Act established the right of public access to and along the lakeshore and consequently, overrides the provisions of the Reserves Act.

## 10.2 Iwi Management Plans

Ngāti Tūwharetoa is the primary iwi who hold mana whenua and kaitiakitanga over the Taupō district and are the legal owners of the bed of Lake Taupō moana and its tributaries. As kaitiaki, ngā hapū o Ngāti Tūwharetoa have an intrinsic duty to ensure that the mauri and therefore the physical and spiritual health of the environment is maintained, protected and enhanced.

DOCUMENTS	RELEVANCE
<b>Ngāti Tūwharetoa Environmental Iwi Management Plan 2003</b>	The Ngāti Tūwharetoa Environmental Iwi Management Plan is based on Ngāti Tūwharetoa tikanga and kawa, setting out a series of goals and policies/baselines concerning kaitiakitanga, partnership and ngā taonga. A holistic view of the environment is at the very core of Tūwharetoa resource management.
<b>Te Kaupapa Kaitiaki – Taupō Catchment Plan</b>	<p>Te Kaupapa Kaitiaki is a high-level plan focusing on sustainable development and cultural values to guide environmental, social, and economic decisions in the Taupō catchment. The plan is based on Ngāti Tūwharetoa perspectives and reflects Ngāti Tūwharetoa aspirations and vision for the area's future.</p> <p>Te matawhānui; the vision of the plan is:</p> <p><i>A healthy Taupō catchment that is capable of sustaining the whole community and that is managed in a manner that reflects Ngā Tūwharetoa tikanga.</i></p>

The plan will be integrated into local government plans, strategies and activities.

**Taupō-nui-a-Tia  
Management Plan**

The waters of Lake Taupō, including the bed and all the tributaries, are a taonga of paramount importance to the people of Ngāti Tūwharetoa. The people of New Zealand derive significant value from Lake Taupō; ranging from undertaking active recreation activities to the simple knowledge that Lake Taupō exists in its own right.

The tikanga and kawa of Ngāti Tūwharetoa dictates that the management of Taupō Waters and its catchment needs to be holistic. This means management must take an all-encompassing and intergenerational approach that is consistent with the role of Ngāti Tūwharetoa as kaitiaki. For Ngāti Tūwharetoa, the health and wellbeing of Taupō Waters also reflects the health and wellbeing of the people.

The Taupō-nui-a-Tia Board Management Plan for Taupō Waters includes a specific management outcome that the integrity of the landward margins surrounding Taupō Water is retained.

### 10.3 Taupō District Council Documents

The table below lists documents that from time to time will impact the Reserve. Copies can be found on the Taupō District Council website <https://www.taupodc.govt.nz/>

DOCUMENTS	RELEVANCE
<b>District Plan</b>	The District Plan is prepared under the Resource Management Act 1991 and sets out the policies and rules Council uses to manage the use of land in the district.
<b>Long-Term Plan</b>	A Long-term Plan is prepared under the Local Government Act 2002 every three years and is the district's guiding document for the next ten years. It outlines the Council's plans and priorities for the district over this period. It covers the services, projects and activities Council has

planned across the district, alongside the budgets required to deliver them.

**Annual Plan**

The Annual Plan is based on Council's main strategic planning document, the Long-term Plan. It details the activities the Council intends to carry out over the coming financial year, how much these activities will cost and how they will be funded. The plans are prepared in the years between the Long-term Plans.

**Recreation and Sport Strategy**

The Taupō District Council Recreation and Sport Strategy has a set of guiding principles for providing and improving reserves and parks. Principles include:

- providing a reserve network where bush areas, waterfront reserves and gullies support open recreation, access to our lakes and waterways, play, leisure, walking, cycling and picnicking.
- Community reserves will be managed so they enhance the local environment.
- Community reserves will be inclusive and accessible so everyone in our community can get out and enjoy them.
- Council will closely work with Iwi and Hapū to enable them to share their stories as they deem appropriate through our reserves and facilities networks.

**Bylaws, rules, regulations, and policies**

These cover matters such as dog control, freedom camping, littering and drone use.

**Reserves Bylaw and Public Places Bylaw**

The purpose of these Bylaws is to set the requirements for reserves and public places within Taupō District to ensure the health and safety of any persons, and to protect the public from nuisance.

**Asset Management Plans**

Asset management plans set out a ten-year programme for the management of assets such as the Council owned Motutere water scheme and the toilet block.

**Erosion and Flood Strategy** Waikato Regional Council and Taupō District Council have developed a joint strategy that will guide management of erosion and flood risk around the Lake Taupō foreshore. The strategy sets out roles and responsibilities, recommend actions along with timeframes and costs. Other relevant strategies at the time of this plan include a Water Supply Strategy.

## 10.4 Waikato Regional Council

Waikato Regional Council administers the provisions of the RMA as it relates to their statutory functions. The table below lists documents that from time to time will impact the Reserve.

DOCUMENTS	RELEVANCE
<b>Waikato Regional Plan</b>	The Waikato Regional Plan implements the Regional Policy Statement. The plan contains policy and methods to manage the natural and physical resources of the Waikato Region.
<b>Regional Pest Management Strategy</b>	The key components of the strategy include the identification of animal and plant pests subject to management under the strategy, the identification of management and enforcement regimes for these pests, and the obligations of landowners to control pests of regional significance located on property under their control.

## 10.5 Te Aranga Principles

In addition to specific hapū values and our engagement strategy, the Te Aranga Principles have also been applied in the development of this plan. Te Aranga outcomes-based principles were established by a collective of Māori designers and planners (Ngā Aho) at Te Aranga Marae Hastings, in 2008. These are a starting point for considering cultural values and can be adapted in partnership with iwi and hapū to suit specific projects, strategies, events planning, or other council kaupapa in our rohe.

- **Mana:** The status of iwi and hapū as mana whenua is recognised and respected.
- **Whakapapa:** Māori names are celebrated and correct.
- **Taiao:** The natural environment is protected, restored and / or enhanced.



- **Mauri Tu:** Environmental health is protected, maintained, and / or enhanced.
- **Mahi Toi:** Iwi, hapu narratives are captured and expressed creatively and appropriately.
- **Tohu:** Sites of significance to iwi and hapu and cultural landmarks are acknowledged and protected.
- **Ahi Kā:** Iwi, hapū have a living and enduring presence in their rohe – particularly in public spaces.

# 11. Taupō District Council Commitments

## 11.1 Taupō District Council Iwi and Hapū Engagement Strategy

Taupō District Council's iwi and hapū engagement strategy states:

*We are committed to achieving key goals and outcomes to be the best partners to iwi, hapū and Māori in our rohe, and to support our kaimahi at Taupō District Council to be the best partners.*

## 11.2 Local Governance Statement

The purpose of the Taupō District Council is to enable democratic local decision-making and to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities in the present and for the future.

## 11.3 Partnerships

Our focus is on building strong partnerships and continuing to work together to deliver outstanding places, spaces, and services to our wider community and visitors.

The success of managing Motutere reserve is dependent on key partnerships and understanding one another's duties.

Entities and their roles in caring for the area are set out below

### **Ngati Te Rangiita ki Waitetoko hapū**

- Mana whenua, kaitiaki.

### **Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board**

- Kaitiaki of the Taupō Moana and lakebed.

### **Taupō-nui-a-Tia Management Board**

- Represents iwi and community interests to manage the Taupō waters as if they are a reserve for recreation purposes.

### **Taupō District Council**

- Administration and management of Motutere Reserve pursuant to the Reserves Act 1977, Resource Management Act 1991, and plans and strategies pursuant to that Act.

**Department of Conservation**

- Administration and management of adjoining conservation land, and umbrella organisation to Project Tongariro for partnering on ecological restoration projects on council administered land.

**Lake Taupō Harbourmaster - Department of Internal Affairs**

- The Harbourmaster's Office is responsible for the Crown-owned Motutere Reserve boat ramp and administers the sale of ramp permits and monitors compliance.

**Waikato Regional Council**

- Is responsible for preventing adverse environmental effects on the lake and land from discharges and land erosion.

**Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency**

- Manages and maintains State Highway 1 which runs through the Reserve.

**Lessees**

- Obligation to manage in accordance with their lease or licence agreement.

# Glossary

This section covers words and terms used both within this document. Definitions are partly from existing council documents for context in our organisation, and from Te Aka Māori dictionary.

<b>Amenity</b>	The Resource Management Act defines amenity as “...those natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people’s appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes.”
<b>Concept Plan</b>	Shows any physical and administrative changes planned for the reserve.
<b>Foreshore Protection Area</b>	As defined in the Taupō District Plan
<b>Hapū</b>	Sub section of large kinship group (iwi) descended from a common ancestor.
<b>Iwi</b>	Large kinship group of people descended from a common ancestor and connected through whakapapa to a distinct area.
<b>Kaimahi</b>	Staff, worker
<b>Kaitiaki</b>	A guardian or trustee
<b>Kaitiakitanga</b>	Guardianship of land and resources.
<b>Kaupapa Kaitiaki Plan</b>	Plan to protect and improve the health and wellbeing of the Taupō catchment
<b>Kawa</b>	Sanctified procedures only applicable to change under specific measures
<b>Kōrero</b>	Conversation
<b>Kotahitanga</b>	Unity and solidarity

<b>Lease</b>	A grant of an interest in land that gives exclusive possession of the land and makes provision for any activity on the land that the lessee is permitted to carry out.
<b>(2005 Lease)</b>	The campground lease that was in place at the time of reviewing the reserve management plan.
<b>License</b>	A grant of non-exclusive interest in land that makes provision for any activity on the land that the licensee is permitted to carry out.
<b>Mahi</b>	Work, vocation
<b>Mahi toi</b>	Art, craft
<b>Mana</b>	Authority or influence
<b>Mana whenua</b>	Indigenous people, born of the whenua, people of the land that hold authority over a particular area through whakapapa (their ancestral connection to the whenua). In the context of this document mana whenua is Ngāti Te Rangiita ki Waitetoko hapū.
<b>Manaakitanga</b>	Hospitality, kindness, and care for others.
<b>Māori</b>	A member of the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand
<b>Matariki</b>	A large cluster of stars
<b>Mauri</b>	Life force
<b>Mauri tū</b>	Environmental health is protected, maintained, and / or enhanced.
<b>Mātauranga</b>	Knowledge
<b>Ngā Aho</b>	Māori designer and planners
<b>Outstanding Landscape Area</b>	As defined in the Taupō District Plan
<b>Pā</b>	Fortified village
<b>Rahui</b>	To put in place a temporary ritual prohibition,

<b>Rohe</b>	Territory or boundaries of tribes
<b>Rua</b>	Storage hole, pit, burrow
<b>Taonga</b>	A highly treasured object
<b>Tapu</b>	Sacred, spiritual restrictions
<b>Te Ao Māori</b>	Māori world view
<b>Te Aranga Principles</b>	A cultural landscape strategy/approach to design thinking and making which incorporates a series of Māori cultural values and principles
<b>Te matawhānui</b>	Vision
<b>Te Taiao</b>	Natural environment
<b>Te Tiriti o Waitangi</b>	The Te Reo Māori version of the Treaty of Waitangi
<b>Tikanga</b>	Customs, protocols, and behaviour guidance.
<b>Tino rangatiratanga</b>	Self determination
<b>Tohu</b>	Sites of significance to iwi and hapu where cultural landmarks are acknowledged and protected
<b>Urupa</b>	Burial ground
<b>Utu</b>	Maintaining balance through reciprocity
<b>Wāhi tapu</b>	Sacred place, sacred site
<b>Wairuatanga</b>	Spirituality and understanding of spiritual dimensions
<b>Waka Kotahi</b>	New Zealand Transport Agency
<b>Whakapapa</b>	Ancestral connections defining identity and place
<b>Whanaungatanga</b>	Relationships and belonging
<b>Whenua</b>	Land

# Appendix

An ecological assessment undertaken by Nicholas Singers Ecological Solutions Ltd in July 2024.

**Author(s):** Nicholas Singers for Singers Ecological

**Date:** July 2024

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## CONTENTS

CONTENTS.....	41
1. Introduction.....	42
1.1 Purpose .....	43
2. Ecological Values of the Project Area .....	45
2.1 Threatened species .....	47
2.1.1 Threatened flora.....	47
2.1.2 Threatened fauna .....	48
3. Significant Natural Area designation .....	48
3.1 Waikato Regional Policy Statement significance criteria.....	48
3.2 National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity 2023 .....	48
3.3 Wildlands significance assessment of SNA 1069.....	49
3.4 Current significance assessment of the Project Area .....	50
4. Policy Assessment .....	52
4.1 Reserves Act 1977.....	52
4.2 National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity 2023 .....	52
4.3 Taupō District Plan.....	53
5. Discussion and Conclusion .....	53
References .....	55

## 1. Introduction

Motutere Recreational Reserve is 32.27 hectares and located on the eastern side of Lake Taupō (Figure 1.1). The part where the campground is located is 23.897 hectares.

**Figure 1.1: Motutere Recreational Reserve**



Part of the reserve is used as a campground, whilst much of the remainder is either indigenous or exotic woody vegetation. The south part of the area of woody vegetation has been identified for low density expansion of the campground within the reserves management plan (Taupo District Council 2004). This area is also included within as Significant Natural Area 1036 (Figure 1.2) within Wildlands (2019a) desktop SNA report. Areas require field survey to confirm SNA

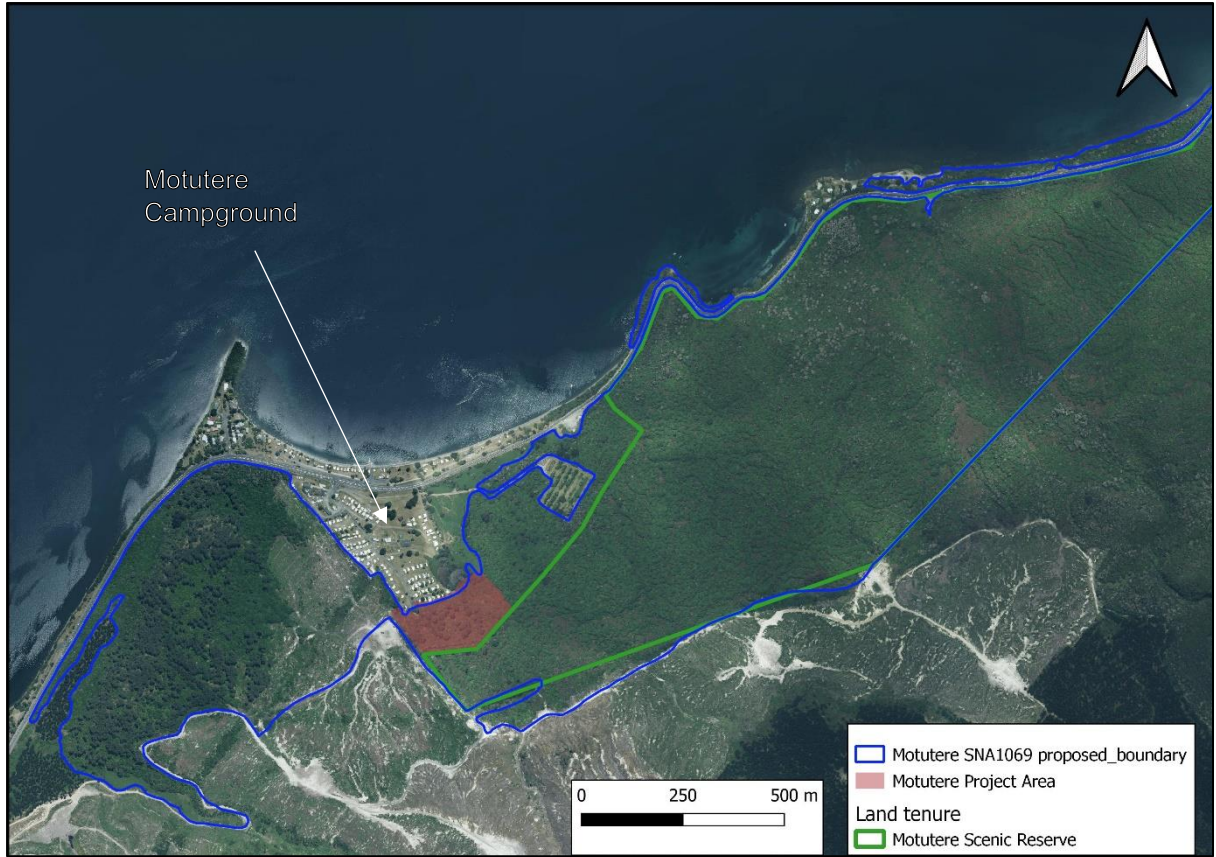
status which has not been done for this area. However as the area is a reserve under the Reserves Act 1977, this 'draft' designation probably does not legally apply and thus should be considered to be a Significant Natural Area (SNA) for the purposes of management.

## 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this report includes the following components:

- Undertake an ecological assessment of the draft SNA within the campground expansion area (hereafter called the Project Area) and ground truth the Waikato Regional Council significance criteria for indigenous habitat and species and relevant district plan criteria.
- Provide a high resolution orthomosaic drone image of the draft SNA within the campground expansion area.
- Produce an aerial map showing extent of SNA (if criteria are met).
- Undertake a statutory assessment of the requirements of the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity, relevant District Plan rules and Reserves Act 1977 (if criteria are met).

**Figure 1.2: Motutere SNA1069 boundary and the location of the Project Area**



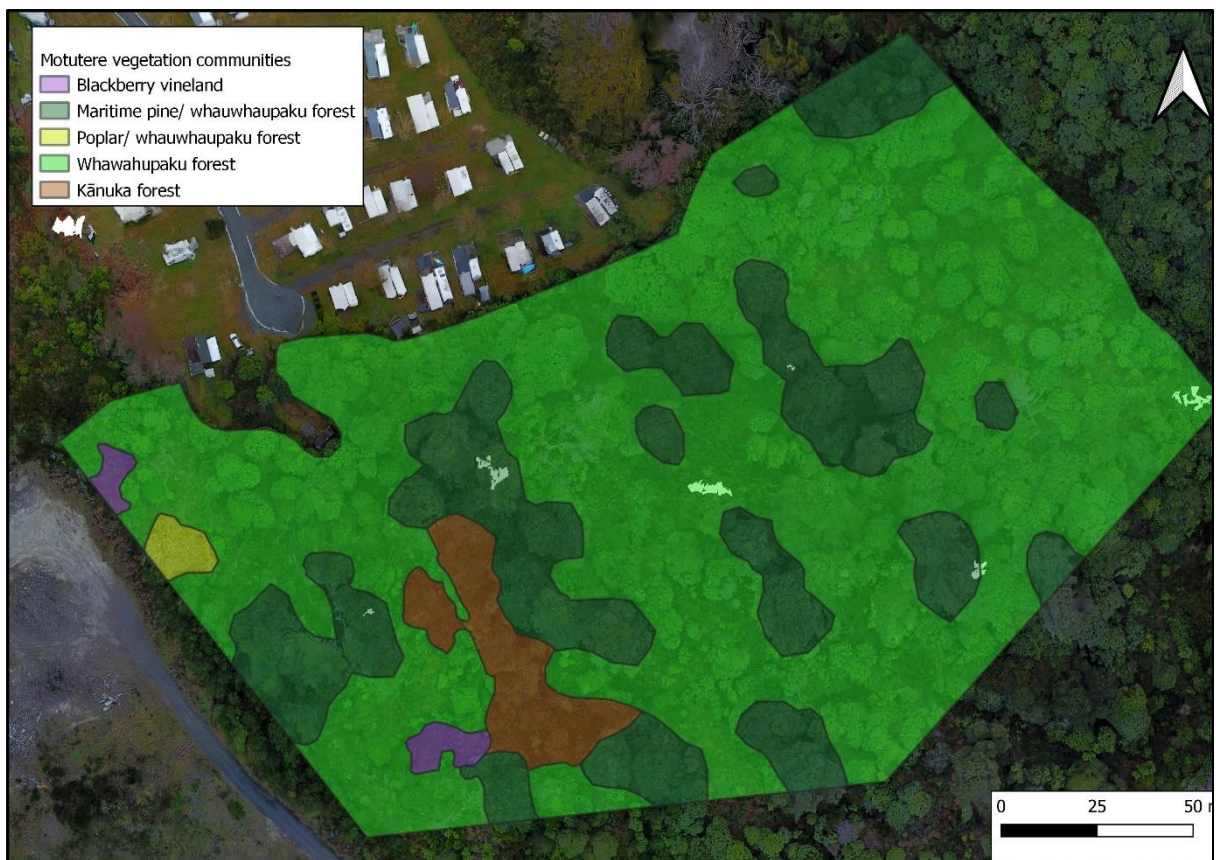
## 2. Ecological Values of the Project Area

The Project Area is approximately 3.454 hectares in size.

The canopy vegetation is dominated by whauwhaupaku (*Pseudopanax arboreus*), of 5 to 8 m tall which occupies 50–60% of the canopy. Amongst this are emergent maritime pine trees (*Pinus pinaster*), which cover approximately 0.8 hectares of the area. Whauwhaupaku commonly occurs beneath this emergent tree. Other common trees include kōhūhū (*Pittosporum tenuifolium*), māhoe (*Melicytus ramiflorus*) and kānuka (*Kunzea robusta*). On the south side several poplar trees and two small patches of blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus*) occur. Bracken occurs in open clearings, though the areas are too small to map and are rapidly regenerating into whauwhaupaku forest.

In the understorey, hangehange (*Geniostoma ligustrifolium* var. *ligustrifolium*) is abundant while karamū (*Coprosma robusta*) and shining karamū (*C. lucida*) are common. Shining spleenwort (*Asplenium oblongifolium*) is the most common understorey fern. Other fern species present include pikopiko (*A. bulbiferum* and *A. gracillimum*).

**Figure 2.1: Vegetation communities in the Project Area**



Examination of aerial images show that there has been considerable vegetation succession of this area over the last 20+ years. This recovery has likely been encouraged by control of possums by Ospri TB FreeNZ.

Whilst maritime pine are common, other invasive weeds are uncommon. The following species were seen all of which are uncommon: Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), English ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), flowering cherry (*Prunus* sp.), three species of cotoneaster, male fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*), jasmine (*Jasmine polyantha*) and agapanthus (*Agapanthus praecox*). The latter two have spread from adjoining campsites.

**Table 2.1: Vegetation communities mapped and orthomosaic imagery from drone imagery (6<sup>th</sup> July 2024)**

Vegetation type	Area (Ha)
-----------------	-----------

Blackberry vineland	0.031
Kānuka forest	0.141
Maritime pine/ whauwhaupaku forest	0.801
Poplar/ whauwhaupaku forest	0.022
Whauwhaupaku forest	2.470
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3.464</b>

Native birds seen or heard include tūī (*Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae*), which was particularly abundant feeding on flowering whauwhaupaku. Other species seen or heard include korimako or bellbird (*Anthornis melanura*), pīwakawaka or fantail (*Rhipidura fuliginosa*), riroriro or grey warbler (*Gerygone igata*), pōpokotea or whitehead (*Mohoua albicilla*), miromiro or tomtit (*Petroica macrocephala toitoi*), kererū (*Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*) and tauhou or waxeye (*Zosterops lateralis lateralis*). Wildlands (2000) also recorded the mātātā or North Island fernbird (*Poodytes punctatus vealeae*) within the SNA which is an At risk — declining species.

Other species likely present within SNA 1069 include, kārearea or falcon (*Falco novaeseelandiae*), the elegant or green gecko (*Naultinus elegans*) and the Raukawa or forest gecko (*Woodworthia maculata*) and long tailed bats (*Chalinolobus tuberculatus*).

A number of waterfowl species have been recorded along the lake margin which also frequent parts of the reserve.

## 2.1 Threatened species

### 2.1.1 Threatened flora

Overdyck (2020) provides a comprehensive list of nationally threatened and regionally uncommon species (de Lange et al. 2017) historically or currently present in the Waikato Region and the Taupō District.

- Kānuka (*Kunzea robusta*) — Threatened Nationally Vulnerable. This species is locally common within the Project. Kānuka is a threatened species due to the risk from myrtle rust however I have not seen myrtle rust present on kānuka locally or elsewhere. Myrtle rust is locally present on more susceptible species. Whilst myrtle rust has been recorded on kānuka (Campbell et al. 2020), disease severity on these species appears to be minor (Sutherland 2020) — approximately 15% and 13% respectively of these have been shown to be resistant in ex-situ inoculation studies (Smith et al. 2020). Consequently, I do not consider to be threatened in the Waikato Region.
- Dwarf mistletoe (*Korthalsella salicornioides*) — Threatened – Nationally Critical. This is a hemi-parasite found on mature kānuka within the Motutere Scenic Reserve, so occurs within the wider SNA. It was not seen and is unlikely to occur in the Project Area, given that its host, kānuka, were all small young trees.

Citizen scientist species observations from iNaturalist were explored and no threatened plants were found.

### 2.1.2 Threatened fauna

No species of threatened fauna were detected within the Project Area. The Project Area appears to be unsuitable for mātātā and this species is unlikely to now be present here. Mātātā likely utilise large areas of bracken fernland within the SNA and these are more common within the adjacent Scenic Reserve. Whilst no threatened fauna was detected, this is not proof of absence. There is a good chance that the elegant gecko, which is an At risk – declining species is present. This would need to be surveyed for during warmer months to confirm. Long tailed bats potentially feed in the area and may on occasion roost within the large maritime pine trees. These would also require a specific surveyed for during warmer months (October to April).

## 3. Significant Natural Area designation

Within the Waikato Region significance under section 6c of the RMA 1991 is determined by applying criteria within the Waikato Regional Policy Statement and the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (2023). There is some overlap with these criteria so both need to be considered.

### 3.1 Waikato Regional Policy Statement significance criteria

Up until the NPSIB 2023, determining significance within the Waikato Region was evaluated by applying the significance criteria (Table 28 of the RPS) for a particular site. Guidance for applying these criteria can be found in Wildlands (2019b).

These (abbreviated) criteria are:

- Criterion 1 — Legally protected habitat.
- Criterion 2 — Coastal Marine Area
- Criterion 3 — Threatened or At Risk species.
- Criterion 4 — Under-represented (20% or less) habitat or ecosystem in an Ecological District, or Ecological Region or nationally.
- Criterion 5 — Naturally uncommon ecosystems
- Criterion 6 — Wetland habitat
- Criteria 7 — Large (relative to other examples).
- Criteria 8 — Critical habitat
- Criteria 9 — Healthy and representative habitat
- Criteria 10 — Ecological sequence
- Criterion 11 — Ecological buffer, linkage, or corridor

### 3.2 National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity 2023

The NPSIB2023 (appendix 1) provides guidance for determining significance, primarily based on four criteria and associated clauses (2 & 3).

*(1) An area qualifies as an SNA if it meets any one of the attributes of the following four criteria:*

*(a) representativeness: (This is equivalent to WRPS criteria 9)*



*(b) diversity and pattern: (This covers WRPS criteria 7, 10 & 11)*

*(c) rarity and distinctiveness: (This covers WRPS criteria 3 & 4)*

*(d) ecological context: (This covers WRPS criteria 7, 8, 10 & 11)*

*(2) If an area would qualify as an SNA solely on the grounds that it provides habitat for a single indigenous fauna species that is At Risk (declining), and that species is widespread in at least three other regions, the area does not qualify as an SNA unless:*

*(a) the species is rare within the region or ecological district where the area is located; or*

*(b) the protection of the species at that location is important for the persistence of the species as a whole.*

*(3) If an area would qualify as an SNA solely on the grounds that it contains one or more indigenous flora species that are Threatened or At Risk (declining), and those species are widespread in at least three other regions, the area does not qualify as an SNA unless:*

*(a) the species is rare within the region or ecological district where the area is located; or*

*(b) the protection of the species at that location is important for the persistence of the species as a whole.*

### 3.3 Wildlands significance assessment of SNA 1069

Wildlands (2020) have provided Taupō District Council with a stocktake of SNAs within the district. SNA 1069 recognises all indigenous dominant vegetation present, including the campground expansion area within the recreational reserve. SNA 1069 is larger than the part within the recreational reserve and includes the adjacent Motutere Scenic Reserve and adjoining Māori land to the south, 'Rangitoto' which is an urupa (Figure 1.2).

Wildlands assessment considered that SNA 1069 met the following criteria:

- 1 (Protected area),
- 3 (Habitat for Threatened or At risk species),
- 9 (Healthy and representative), and
- 11 (Ecological buffer to Lake Taupō).

SNA 1069 is 278 hectares and is contiguous with natural vegetation within the Waiehi Stream complex which is 1208 hectares (SNA036). Combined these two significant natural areas are approximately 1,486 hectares. The altitude of this remnant ranges from 380 m to 660 m and transitions from mild forest dominated by broadleaved trees to cool forest dominated by beech forest.

### 3.4 Current significance assessment of the Project Area

Significance assessment should be applied at the scale of the natural area (Davis et al. 2016). Assessing subparts of a natural area separately is an incorrect application of the method which typically downgrades values. However, my assessment below, I have considered the Project Area as well as the wider SNA1069.

- Criteria 1

This criterion is met because the Project Area is part of a Recreation Reserve protected under the Reserves Act 1977. Further this adjoins the Motutere Scenic Reserve.

- Criteria 3 (Potentially applicable see section 2.1). This criterion is partially equivalent to the NPSIB rarity criterion which considers both species rarity.

Insufficient information to confidently state what threatened species occupy or utilise the Project Area. It is very likely that some threatened species occur within SNA 1069.

Kānuka is present which is threatened Nationally Vulnerable (de Lange et al. 2017). However, this species would not trigger the rarity criterion because when applying the NPSIB Appendix 1 Clause 1(2) criterion, because kānuka is widespread within the Waikato Region and adjoining regions (Bay of Plenty and Hawkes Bay).

Dwarf mistletoe (*Korthalsella salicornioides*) which is threatened Nationally critical (de Lange et al. 2017) occurred in SNA1069 near Lake Taupō. Whilst these plants along with the host trees have died, it is likely to be present somewhere else within the SNA.

Criterion 3 would be triggered if elegant gecko or long tailed bats used the Project Area.

- Criteria 4 (Under-represented habitat or ecosystem, (20% or less) in an Ecological District, or Ecological Region or nationally. This criterion is partially equivalent to the NPSIB rarity criterion which considers ecosystem rarity.

This criterion can consider both the current and potential state of the habitats and ecosystems present within an SNA.

Wildlands (2019a) did not identify that SNA 1069 met this criterion. Wildlands (2019b) recommends as a starting point comparing the site vegetation to current extent of potential ecosystems (Singers & Rogers 2014) with Appendix 1. Appendix 1 was developed by WRC and involved spatially comparing current vegetation (from Landcare Research Landcover database 5) with the potential ecosystems for the Waikato Region (Singers 2015). The potential ecosystem type (Singers & Rogers 2014) for the Project Area is predicted to be MF10, Tōtara, mataī, kahikatea forest, which the remaining extent has been calculated at 1.3% within the Taupō District. My assessment of the Project Area is that this is valid, tōtara and mataī would have dominated most of the Project Area while kahikatea would have likely occurred within the gully to the north. This is a nationally threatened ecosystem type and due to fire and logging, most remaining examples are early successional or modified vegetation.

Under representativeness is also supported by assessing whether the Project Area and SNA is located within a threatened land environment (Landcare Research). Using the online maps I have identified that the Project Area is located in a chronically threatened land environment, which is one where there is

10–20% of indigenous cover left. Indigenous biodiversity in these environments has been severely reduced and remaining habitats are sparsely distributed in the landscape. (Landcare Research).

The current state of the Project Area and wider SNA 1069 is not MF10. Consequently, it is also valid to consider the extent of whauwhaupaku forest as a habitat type. Whauwhaupaku forest is successional and regionally uncommon because it occurs only where animal pests are at very low abundance. Whilst there is no qualitative evidence regionally, for the distribution and abundance of whauwhaupaku forest, my knowledge is that the Taupō District contains most of it within the lakeshore reserves. This is entirely a consequence of that these reserves were set aside between the 1960's and 1980's and this legal protection coincided with decades of low possum and ungulate populations, allowing forest succession of highly palatable species, such as whauwhaupaku.

For these three reasons I consider that criteria 4 is met for both the Project Area and wider SNA.

- Criteria 9 (Healthy and representative). This criterion is equivalent to the NPSIB 'representativeness'.

Despite the presence of wilding maritime pine, the Project Area is dominated by palatable plants, such as whauwhaupaku, māhoe and hangehange which are highly palatable to introduced animal pests. Regeneration is abundant and prolific. The Project Area is moderately representative of whauwhaupaku successional forest, though highly native dominant habitat occurs within the wider SNA.

For these reasons I consider that criteria 9 is met for both the Project Area and wider SNA.

- Criteria 11 (Ecological, buffer, linkage, or corridor)

Agree with Wildlands (2019a). Current, land use is a low nitrogen leaching landcover thus provides a buffer for protecting water quality of Lake Taupō. Further, this area contiguous with the Waipehi Stream corridor.

## 4. Policy Assessment

### 4.1 Reserves Act 1977

Section 17 of the Reserves Act 1977 covers recreational reserves. Part 1 describes the purpose of recreation reserves:

*'providing areas for the recreation and sporting activities and the physical welfare and enjoyment of the public, and for the protection of the natural environment and beauty of the countryside, with emphasis on the retention of open spaces and on outdoor recreational activities, including recreational tracks in the countryside'.*

Section 2 (b) — (d) of the Act provide guidance to maintain the natural and landscape values of the reserve:

*'where scenic, historic, archaeological, biological, geological, or other scientific features or indigenous flora or fauna or wildlife are present on the reserve, those features or that flora or fauna or wildlife shall be managed and protected to the extent compatible with the principal or primary purpose of the reserve'*

*'those qualities of the reserve which contribute to the pleasantness, harmony, and cohesion of the natural environment and to the better use and enjoyment of the reserve shall be conserved'*

*'to the extent compatible with the principal or primary purpose of the reserve, its value as a soil, water, and forest conservation area shall be maintained'*

In summary, section 17 aims to balance provision of recreation whilst protecting the environment and landscape values.

### 4.2 National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity 2023

The relevant policies and clauses for management of SNA within the are presented below:

- Policy 3: A precautionary approach is adopted when considering adverse effects on indigenous biodiversity.
- Policy 6: Significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna are identified as SNAs using a consistent approach.
- Policy 7: SNAs are protected by avoiding or managing adverse effects from new subdivision, use and development.
- Policy 8: The importance of maintaining indigenous biodiversity outside SNAs is recognised and provided for.
- Policy 9: Certain established activities are provided for within and outside SNAs.

Sections 3.10 & 3.11 provide clauses for managing adverse effects on SNA of new subdivision, use and development and exceptions to these. These clauses need to be evaluated together when considering this proposal and would be fundamental for the development of an assessment of effects. This will require additional information gathering.

My assessment has confirmed that the Project Area meets WRC significant criteria and NPSIB 2023 and should be considered an SNA (not a draft SNA) because the land is legally protected as a recreation reserve and meets other significance criteria.

If this project were to proceed then the first stage would be to:

- Confirm there is a functional need or operational need for the new subdivision, use or development to be in that particular location (as per clause 3.11 (b)); and there are no practicable alternative locations for the new subdivision, use or development ((as per clause 3.11 (b)). This will require evidence that options analysis has occurred, and all other options have been exhausted and why this is the best location for campground expansion. Specifically addressing:
  - *Are there other suitable locations within the Recreational Reserve which could be developed that have no or less effects on SNA 1069? For example, land east of SH1 is currently dominated by blackberry and other weeds. This could be cleared, a corridor of native trees planted as a buffer to the road and the remaining area appropriately landscaped.*
- Address clause 3.10 (2) particularly sub-clauses (b) & (c) which cover fragmentation and connections to other important habitats. As shown on Figure 1.2 the Project Area adjoins the scenic reserve. Provision of a suitable sized buffer, between the Project Area and the scenic reserve would be appropriate and consistent with this clause.

If the development were to proceed then:

- An assessment of effects report would need to be developed (as required by clause 3.10 (3) and (4) (a) & (b) that applies the effects management hierarchy to avoid, minimise, remedy, offset or compensate effects. This would firstly require additional information to be gathered specifically on fauna, especially lizards and long tailed bats. This development would likely trigger the need to undertake a biodiversity offset. This would need to comply with principles 1 to 6 in Appendix 3 and 4 and have regard to the remaining principles in Appendix 3 and 4, as appropriate. The larger the clearance of SNA 1069, the larger the offset would be required. Given the age of parts of the forest, the offset required would be greater than 1: 1. However, if this offset was undertaken in advance, a 1:1 ratio may be sufficient. The offset could be undertaken elsewhere within the Taupō Ecological District.

#### 4.3 Taupō District Plan

Relevant District Plan objectives and policies are including in the following sections:

3i.2.2 Facilitate the long term protection of areas of natural value in the Taupō District

3i.2.3 The enhancement of areas of natural value in the Taupō District.

### 5. Discussion and Conclusion

The Project Area has ecological values which met significant criteria within the WRPS and NPSIB2023, thus should be included as part of SNA 1069. However, the Project Area contains a number of areas dominated by maritime pines, young Douglas fir and other introduced weeds, covering approximately 0.8 – 1 hectare. Removal of these weeds and creation of small clearings would provide for low density accommodation as stated within the Motutere Recreational Reserve Management Plan (TDC 2004). One very feasible option would be to create 'Bush campsites' which would retain most natural vegetation and the

associated natural character and amenity values. A low density approach is likely consistent with policy within the Reserves Act, NPSIB2023, District Plan and Management Plan.

Removal of areas of indigenous vegetation should be offset through restoration planting of appropriate species. The amount of offset should be determined through an appropriate method such as the Biodiversity Accounting Method (Maseyk, 2014). If this offset was undertaken at the same time as loss, it is likely that a ratio of approximately 1: 4 or 5 would be required, given the age and size of the trees. However, if an offset was to occur several years in advance this would be less. The goal of the offset would be to achieve at least 80% cover of indigenous trees within 5 years, which would require an annual maintenance plan. This would be an appropriate consent condition if a consent is required.

Wholesale clearance of all this area would be inconsistent with policy. More intensive campsite development would be better to be located to other degraded areas of the reserve, such as areas of blackberry scrub adjacent to State Highway 1 or after remediation, the former landfill site.

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