

Off Road Motorised Recreation in the Auckland Region

Issues and Potential Responses Paper



November 2008

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Off Road Motorised Recreation Key Summary Points

Off Road Motorised Recreation Overview

- A significant number of off road motorised recreation users exist within the Auckland region with an estimated 8,500 off road vehicles making 250,000 off road trips per year.
- There has been an increase in the number of off road motorised recreation users and their profile is changing. Off road vehicle sales have increased over recent years with most trips undertaken by off road motorised recreation users being casual (i.e. with friends, family, or on their own).
- Most local sites and facilities for off road motorised recreation are based in rural parts of Rodney District, Waitakere City, Manukau City, Papakura District, Franklin and northern parts of the Waikato. Users often leave the Auckland region to travel to other parts of the country (and even overseas) to participate in events and to access other sites. The majority of these alternative sites are to the south of the Auckland region.
- All users are prepared to travel to access sites, with the average distances users are willing to travel to participate in off road activities being 196 km; however this differs between motorbikes, 4x4 vehicles and quad bikes.
- There are different track requirements for different events and activities, e.g. Enduro races require greater track distances as opposed to winch challenges that require difficult terrain. This makes it challenging to provide for all forms of off road motorised recreation at one commercial park. Users indicate they are willing to pay between \$20 and \$50 to use an off road motorised site.

Regulation

- Off road motorised recreation is regulated differently throughout the region. The more rural TLA's identified that the number of complaints have increased in recent years and the majority relate to noise and dust from off road motorbike usage.
- Increasing regulation, often as a result of an increasing number of complaints as areas around sites become more urbanised, is resulting in reduced access to sites and significantly increased costs.

Impacts

- Off road recreation can have a significant impact especially on environmental or culturally sensitive sites.
- The impacts of off road recreation on other recreational users or neighbouring properties are an important issue for the general community.
- A small number of irresponsible off road users are seen by many off road users as responsible for creating a negative perception of all users.
- Limited access to suitable sites can result in overcrowding at existing sites, increased travel to access sites out of the region and the greater casual and / or 'illegal' use of sites.

Implications for future

- Off road motorised recreation is forecast to grow. The diversity in user profile, growing popularity of the sport, and the increased affordability and availability of off road vehicles are seen to be key drivers in growth.
- The increasing cost associated with the sport, e.g. fuel, is expected to impact on the sport. The likely impact is that users are less likely to travel distances to participate in the sport and hence there will be increased pressure on sites in the region.
- Population growth in the region, in particular the fringes of the city, is likely to see further urbanisation or 'suburbanisation' of rural sites. Increased urbanisation puts pressure on existing sites and can reduce opportunities for off road recreation.
- Existing sites are not fully meeting current demand. If the proposed options to meet this demand are not considered, future growth is likely to result in a combination of increasing membership of off road motorised recreation clubs so as to gain access to sites that only allow organised groups, together with an increased casual / 'illegal' use of sites.

Section 1 Introduction

1.1 Project Rationale

In February 2008 the Auckland Regional Council (ARC) Parks and Heritage Committee considered a range of issues associated with vehicles on beaches. The committee recognised that due to the wide range of associated issues there would be a need for a comprehensive research approach to inform future decision making. For this reason, the ARC commissioned Visitor Solutions to undertake an Off Road Motorised Recreational Study (the Study).

As the Study's research process progressed, it became apparent that the inclusion of a regional sports stakeholder would further inform the study. It was therefore agreed the Study should be developed in partnership with Auckland Regional Physical Activity and Sport Strategy (ARPASS)¹.

Underpinning ARPASS has the vision that:

"Auckland is a region where physical activity through exercise, sport, active transport (such as walking and cycling) or active recreation, is a way of life."

The Strategy outlines the necessary actions to achieve this vision under a series of four goals and associated strategies and actions. The ORMR Demand Study aligns with Goal 4 and in particular Strategy 4.1 and its associated actions.

Goal 4: Regional Facilities - "Current and future regional facilities are planned, developed and managed to serve the current and future needs of all Aucklanders".

Strategy 4.1 *"The development and management of regional facilities is planned collaboratively by partner organisations and key stakeholders"*

Action *"Develop a set of "Regional Facilities Principles" that record the framework and guiding principles that local authorities, regional sports trust, codes and other key facility providers will use to work together to plan, develop and manage regional facilities"*

In parallel to this Study the ARC is also going to undertake two additional pieces of research in early 2009. These are an:

- Evaluation of the impacts of ORMR
- Public perception survey of ORMR.

Once completed, the ARC will consider this additional information alongside the findings from this Study, to holistically inform future strategic planning and policy.

1.2 Project Objectives and Scope

The objectives of the overall ARC ORMR project is to:

¹ ARPASS was developed in an effort to better co-ordinate and strengthen the sport and physical activity sector within the greater Auckland region. Strategy partners include the seven local authorities and the regional council, the four regional sports trusts, the Ministry of Health and SPARC.

- Outline the current and proposed provision of off road motorised recreation (ORMR) in the Auckland region, and determine how secure that provision will be in the future.
- Identify the environmental, social and economic impacts and constraints.
- Determine the current and future demand for ORMR opportunities in the Auckland region for both formal sport and recreation.
- Identify future options for motorised recreation in the region.
- Consider the potential roles ARPASS partners might take in managing future demand for motorised recreation.

The scope of the overall project is to:

- Determine current and future demand and supply of ORMR opportunities in the Auckland region for both formal sport and recreation.
- Evaluate the significance of off road recreation to Auckland's residents, the environment and the economy.
- Evaluate how demand can be managed and identify what role, if any, the ARC and local authorities might play in the provision of off road motorised recreation and
- Identify and evaluate the constraints and influences on future demand e.g. fuel prices, supply, and resource consent issues.

In essence the project is designed to primarily provide a 'snap shot' of the profile of and demand for ORMR in the Auckland region in order to assist future decision making by the ARC and other ARPASS partners, recreational off road motorised recreational facility providers (such as clubs), private facility owners and forest managers.

It is not intended that the end point of this project will be any form of strategy for off road recreation. It is also important to recognise that identifying and recognising the demand for off road motorised recreation does not imply that meeting a demand will be a priority, or that it will necessarily be appropriate for the various agencies involved in the study to meet that demand.

1.3 Study Definitions

A range of off road motorised recreation activities are undertaken in the Auckland region. This project concentrates on both club based and casual off road recreation, including both competitive and non-competitive activities.

For the purposes of this study off road motorised recreation is considered to include all off road motorised activity for which the primary purpose of the activity is recreational driving off the public highway. The study therefore considered 4x4, motorcycles and quad bikes and their primary off road activities (as outlined in Section 2). The study does not include off road vehicle use where the vehicle is a secondary activity or a requirement for work activities, for example fishing, farming, regulatory and utility access to remote areas.

The study is focusing on the wider Auckland region, including areas outside the ARC boundary, primarily due to the high use levels these sites receive from Auckland residents and because they are often perceived by users to be within the region. The study also identifies the main sites used by Auckland residents in neighbouring regions for both competition and casual activity.

1.4 Consultation and Research

In developing this paper the input of a range of organisations has been sought including Auckland Regional Council officers and Political Reference Group, ARPASS, territorial local authorities, the Department of Conservation, environmental groups, national sports

organisations, the Motorcycle Distributors Association, off road motorsport clubs and individual users, off road facility providers and the Police (see Appendix for the full list of agencies that have been consulted in the initial background research).

As part of the background research two comprehensive surveys were undertaken with the off road motorised recreation community. These included a survey to the off road motorised recreation clubs in the Auckland region, with 19 of the 26 responding, and a second online survey targeting off road recreational users. The off road recreational user survey (the survey) was promoted to both club members and casual users through online forums and blogs; a total of 810 responses were received between the 30th July and the 24th August 2008. All further references to the survey in this document refer to the off road user survey.

1.5 Purpose of this discussion paper

The purpose of this paper is to present the findings from the consultation and research gathered to date and to seek feedback from the off-road motorised recreation sector to ensure this is an accurate record of the issues and potential responses relevant to off road motorised recreation.

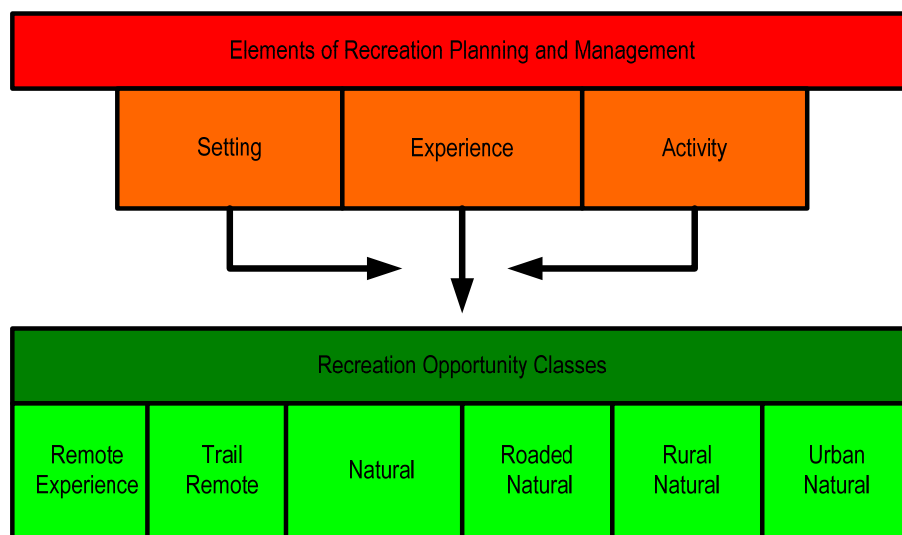
Once feedback has been received, consideration will be given to the suggestions and if and how these can be taken into account. Based on this feedback a final ARPASS ORMR report will be developed so that the various partner organisations can consider the identified demand for ORMR, together with the ARC impacts paper and the public perception survey results, in guiding future decision making.

Section 2 Off road motorised recreation within the Auckland region

2.1 Providing a spectrum of recreational opportunities

The recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) framework was developed in the United States in the early 1970's². The key assumption underlying the ROS is that *recreational quality is best assured through the provision of a diverse range of recreational opportunities*³. (Figure 2.1). This general concept has formed the foundation for the vast majority of the world's park management plan frameworks.

Figure 2.1: Components of the Traditional ROS Framework.



Source: Luoni, 1986

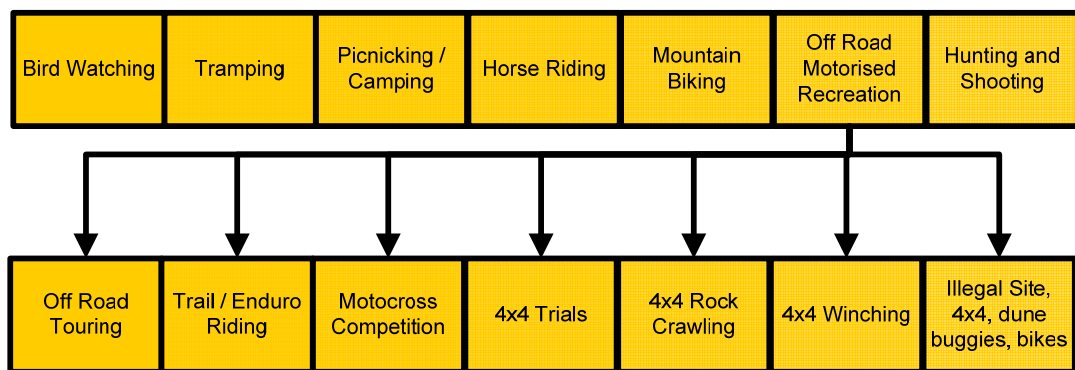
The ROS framework has also been used as an environmental protection tool. It was recognised very early on in park management that it was preferable to have recreationists undertaking particular activities in the environments that were ecologically best suited to them rather than letting an activity have free reign over an entire park or region.

When considering the range of potential activities within the natural environment there is spectrum of different activities, one of which is off road motorised recreation. Within off road motorised recreation there is also a spectrum of different activities to be considered. The spectrum of some of the different activities is set out in Figure 2.2 below.

² Clark and Stanley 1979.

³ Stankey and Wood, 1982.

Figure 2.2 Spectrum of Activities in the Natural Environment



It is very difficult to estimate the number of visits made to the natural environment to undertake recreational activities in the Auckland region. However, a conservative estimate is 7 to 8 million visits per annum. This has been based on an estimate of 5 - 6 million visit to the Auckland Regional Parks network and 1.9 million to the main Department of Conservation sites within the Auckland region. While this does not include off road motorised recreation, it provides context for the overall scale of recreational activity in the Auckland region's natural environments.

2.2 What is off road motorised recreation?

For the purposes of this study off motorised road recreation is considered to include all off road motorised activity for which the primary purpose of the activity is recreational driving off the public highway. The study does not include off road vehicle use where driving the vehicle is a secondary activity or a requirement for work activities, for example fishing, farming, regulatory and utility access to remote areas.

This study considers both club based and casual off road motorised recreation with a focus on 4x4 vehicle, motorcycles and quad bikes. It has been identified that the following are the major categories for off road motorised recreation:

- Enduro/ Cross Country Riding
- Trail Riding
- Motocross
- 4x4 winching
- 4x4 touring
- 4x4 trails
- Quadbikes
- Off Road Racing.

Enduro is a competitive off road motorcycle endurance race. In an Enduro event, the rider is required to pass certain points at certain times over a variety of tracks; if they drop below a certain time, then the race is over. Enduro events generally cover 100 kms of tracks, and take between 5 to 7 hours depending on the track, conditions and rider skill level.

Trail Riding is facilitated at either bike parks or through organised events which are staged at varying locations. Motorcycle clubs have indicated that Trail Riding has seen large growth in numbers in recent years. Throughout the year there are usually a number of trail riding events at different regional locations.

Motocross is a competitive off road motorcycle sport held at a dedicated motocross track. It is a popular off road motorcycle sport that often attracts over 200 riders to events.

Events cater to various categories of rider from the younger inexperienced riders through to experienced riders. The sport is currently enjoying a high level of success with New Zealand recently having a number of World Champion motocross riders.

4x4 winching is a competitive 4x4 sport. A competition is made up of several off road stages set on rough terrain. 4x4 are equipped with 'winches' so where the vehicle cannot get through an obstacle, the winch is attached to a fixed object and used to get the vehicle through or up and over the obstacle as quickly as possible.

The aim of the **4x4 trials** is to get as far through the course without stopping or touching a course marker peg. Each hazard is designed to challenge the driver, the navigator and the 4x4 vehicle itself.

4x4 Touring is a non competitive 4x4 category. This is where 4x4 users explore off road terrain and inaccessible scenic areas in their 4x4s. It is reported that this category of activity has increased in popularity amongst families in recent years. There is also a market for 4x4 touring amongst tourists to New Zealand, hence many 4x4 commercial providers focus on touring.

Quad bikes or All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) were originally designed for use on farms and increasingly, are now used for recreation. As a form of recreation, quad bikes are used for touring as well as racing. There are a variety of sub disciplines such as quad bike motocross races, trails, cross country races and forest gravel sprints. Also, increasingly, commercial tour providers have quad bike tours as well as off road 4x4 touring options available. Quad bikes do not require vehicle registrations, hence it is difficult to ascertain quad bike popularity as an off road motorised sport.

Off road racing is a competitive sport for four wheel vehicles that compete over dedicated tracks which can be provided either on a temporary or permanent basis. A wide variety of vehicles are used from specially built single seat vehicles through to V8 monster trucks. There are two main categories of competition, short course racing over undulating land between 0.8km and 1.5 km in length and enduro racing over a longer track (5km) with a total race between 150km to 250km.

Off road motorised recreation is not confined only to the above categories. While these are the main categories it is recognised that there are a number of variations of off road motorised recreation using motorbikes and 4x4 vehicles.

Commercial Tour Operators

There are a number of commercial organisations that provide off road tours within the Auckland region. Activities include introductory sessions to off road driving through to organised off road tours. Organisations include:

- 4 Track Adventures
- Bike Adventures NZ
- Pukerau 4WD
- Enduro Touring NZ
- Extreme 4WD Adventures
- Rest New Zealand.

The majority of commercial off road motorised recreation providers in New Zealand are found in the South Island, offering tours of 'inaccessible scenic areas'.

Organised Events

There are a number of both competitive and casual events organised throughout the year within the Auckland region. The majority of competitive events are organised by clubs and associations with Motorcycling New Zealand identifying that there are 830 licensed events in New Zealand each year.

There are a growing number of non-competitive events aimed at the casual user. The majority are organised by clubs, however there are a number of commercial providers also operating including:

- Mr Motorcycles Ltd
- Power Adventures Ltd

In addition to the commercial tours and events there are a number of commercial off road sites within the region.

2.3 How many people participate in off road motorised recreation in the Auckland region?

It is difficult to accurately quantify the number of off road users within the Auckland region as this information is not available from any one source. We have utilised off road motorised club information, vehicle sales and survey information to estimate the number of off road motorised recreation users.

2.3.1 Off road motorised recreation users

There are two types of off road motorised users - those who belong to a club and those who are casual users (i.e. those who do not belong to a club). Casual users are harder to quantify compared to club members. Casual users do not belong to formal clubs and typically go 'off-road' with friends and family or on their own. Club members tend to participate in organised events with their clubs; however they will also go off road casually with friends, family or even on their own.

The survey⁴ undertaken as part of this project identified 67% of all users belonged to a club; of these users, 62% of the trips undertaken were club based while 38% were casual trips. It is therefore estimated that 42% of all off road activity is organised club activities (62% of the trips of club members) and 58% is casual.

26 off road motorised recreation clubs have been identified within the Auckland region. These clubs have reported their user numbers to be between 70-180 participants. The majority of clubs have experienced a rise in club membership over the last 5 years. Some have reported changes in member profile with an increase in family memberships and younger professionals. This suggests an increase in the profile and popularity of the sport.

2.3.2 Off road vehicle sales

Off road vehicle (ORV) sales can be another indicator of potential numbers of users. The availability of off road vehicles, both in terms of the number and affordability, has increased in recent years.

The Motorcycles Distributors Association (MDA) identifies that sales of off road models have increased from 7,847 in 2004 to 11,342 in 2007. See table 2.3.1 below.

Table 2.3.1 Off Road Motorcycle Sales

| | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 (Jan - Jun) |
|-----------------|-------|-------|--------|--------|---------------------|
| Off Road Models | 7,847 | 9,454 | 10,137 | 11,342 | 5,365 |

⁴ An online survey of off road users was promoted through off road clubs and web forums. A total of 810 surveys were completed.

It is identified that many of the new sales have trade-ins attached; while these figures are not recorded it is estimated by the MDA that 50% of all sales are trades. Based on this it is estimated that there are approximately 22,000 off road bikes in use from the previous 4 and a half years of sales. In addition it is estimated that 50% of the previous ten years of sales are in use, bringing the total off road bike numbers in New Zealand to approximately 40,000.

Not all motorcycle importers are members of the MDA and these figure exclude some of the smaller brands including importers of Chinese mini bikes and quad bikes. The total sales of these motorbikes is not known, however, a 50cc Dirt bike can cost as little as \$230 with a 250cc going for \$2,499 and a 50cc Quad bike starting at \$650, with a 250cc costing \$1,800⁵.

The sales of 4x4 vehicles are much harder to ascertain. Land Transport New Zealand indicates that the number of new vehicle registrations has increased significantly in recent years, but it does not identify which of these are 4x4 vehicles. Anecdotal evidence, such as, increased media coverage on the improved safety of 4x4 vehicles and the advertising focus and promotion of 4x4 vehicles, would however suggest a potential increase in market demand for them. A review of the second hand 4x4 market in New Zealand has identified that on a single day in August one website listed 46 4x4 vehicles for sale for under \$1,000 in the Auckland region. This number increased to 795 for vehicles under \$10,000⁶.

2.3.3 Number of ORVs in the Auckland region

The number of ORVs in the Auckland region is difficult to quantify however the following information is available:

- 40,000 off road motorbikes in NZ (MDA). (If pro rata on population approximately 12,000 or 30% are in the Auckland region)
- 8,000 off road bikes in Auckland (Rodney Motorcycle Club)
- 6,864 registered riders in the Auckland region (Power Adventures Ltd)
- 26 off road motorised recreation clubs with between 70 and 180 members (Survey)
- Motorbikes make up 70% of ORVs, 4x4 21% and quad bikes 9% (Survey)

Based on the above it is estimated that there are 8,500 ORVs in the Auckland region that are regularly used off road. (Using 6,864 registered riders as the number of bikes and quads in the region. The survey identifies that this represents 79% of off road vehicles)

2.3.4 Number of ORV trips in the Auckland region

The number of ORV trips in the Auckland region is difficult to quantify, however, the following information is available:

- There is estimated to be 8,500 ORVs in the Auckland region
- 32% of all users participate weekly (Survey) - 2,720 ORVs
- 35% of all users participate fortnightly (Survey) - 2,975 ORVs
- 25% of all users participate monthly (Survey) - 2,125 ORVs.

Based on the above it is estimated that there are approximately 250,000 off road motorised recreation trips per year carried out by users from the Auckland region.

⁵ Sourced from TradeMe, 6th August 2008, 'Buy Now' price.

⁶ Sourced from TradeMe website, 6th August 2008

Key Summary Points

- A significant number of off road motorised recreation users exist within the Auckland region; with an estimated 8,500 ORVs making 250,000 off road trips per year.
- Most trips undertaken by off road motorised recreation users are casual (i.e. with friends, family, or on their own)
- There has been an increase in off road motorised recreation users and their profile is changing.
- Off road vehicle sales have increased over recent years.

2.4 Who participates in off road motorised recreation in the Auckland region?

The surveys undertaken as part of this project indicate the following characteristics of off road motorised users in the Auckland region:

- 70% are motorbike users, 21% are 4x4 users and 9% are quad bikes users;
- 68% are club members and 32% casual / non club members;
- 84% of casual / non club members use motorbikes to go off road;
- Users are predominantly male (between 87% and 94% of survey respondents depending on activity) and aged between 35-44 years;
- Users will frequently go off road casually (with friends and family);
- The majority have been involved in off road motorised recreation for more than 5 years and
- 67% will go off road at least once a fortnight.

Clubs have indicated that their member profiles have changed slightly in recent years. They have reported more families, females, young professionals and younger members within their clubs.

2.4.1 Profiles of off road motorised recreation users

The profile of the off road motorised user varies slightly according to the both type of vehicle used (i.e. motorcycle, quad bike or 4x4) and the type of user (i.e. casual or club users) and is summarised in Table 2.4.1

Table 2.4.1 Profile of off road motorised recreation users

| Off road Motorcycle User | Off Road 4x4 User | Off Road Quad bikers |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predominantly male (89% of survey respondents) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predominantly male (94% of survey respondents) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predominantly male (87% of survey respondents) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Younger, usually aged 25-34 and 35-44 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older, usually aged 35-44 & 45-54 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older, usually aged 35-44 & 45-54 years |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequently go off road casually with friends. Fewer are club members (61%) than 4x4 users | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4x4 users are more likely than other categories of user to be members of off road recreation clubs (89%) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority are members of off road motorised recreation clubs (72%) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most likely to go off road weekly (40%) or fortnightly (35%) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most likely to go off road fortnightly (33%) or monthly (46%) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most likely to go off road fortnightly (38%) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have more users, than other categories of ORMR, that have been driving off road for less than 3 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority have been driving off road for more than 5 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority have been driving off road for more than 5 years |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most users are prepared to travel 180 km (or thereabouts) to participate in off road motorised recreation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most users are prepared to travel 209 km (or thereabouts) to participate in off road motorised recreation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Users are prepared to travel 223 km (or thereabouts) to participate in off road motorised recreation |

The survey indicates that there is a difference between the casual user and the club members.

Table 2.4.2 Profile of the casual user and the club member

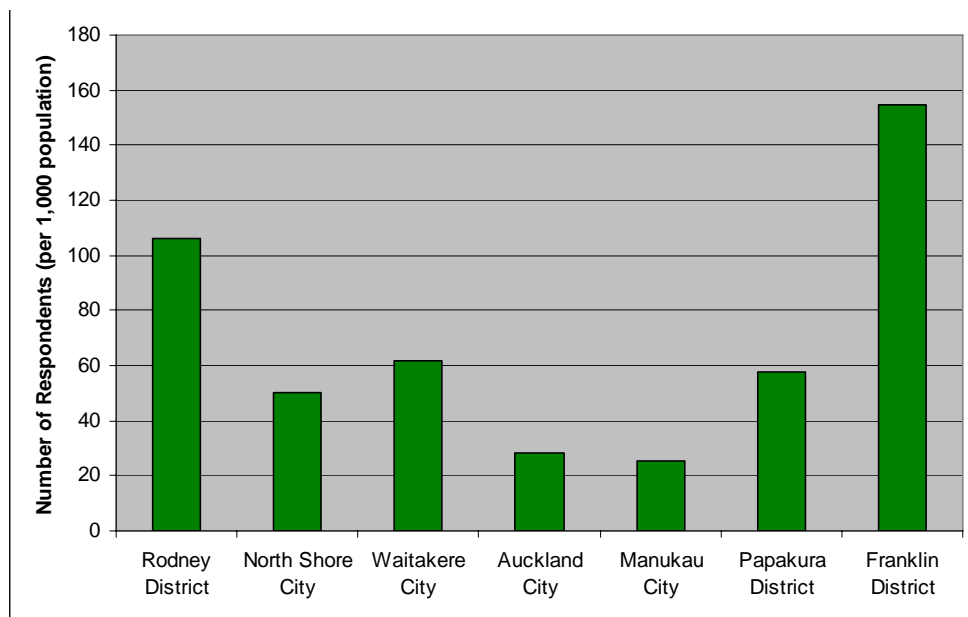
| Casual user | Club Member |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominantly male | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominantly male |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Younger age groups, more 15-24; 25-34; 35-44 year olds | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Older age groups, mainly 35-44; 45-54 and 55 years and above |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newer participants- users have been involved in off road recreation for less than 5 years (39%) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More experienced members, with more members have involved in off road recreation for more than 5 years (74%) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Majority of time spent off road is with friends (58%) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will go off road with friends and family (51%) but frequently goes off road with club (46%) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Majority of casual users are off road motorcyclists (84%) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Majority of club members use a 4x4 or quad bike |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will go off road weekly, fortnightly or monthly (84%), some 3-6 monthly. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are likely to go off road rather often-weekly, fortnightly and monthly (98%) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A casual user will spend 2-4 hours (30%) or all day off road (66%). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Club members are more likely to spend all day off road compared to casual users (78%) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average distance travelled is approximately 131km | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average distance travelled is approximately 218 km |

It was found that the casual user is younger, newer to off road recreation, spends less time off road with the majority being off road motorcyclists.

2.4.3 Where do off road users live.

The survey identified that the off road users who responded to the survey are located throughout the region, the greatest number of respondents were from Auckland City (19%) and Waitakere City (19%). Interestingly 15% of users to the survey respondents live in Rodney District and 14% in Franklin District indicating a relatively higher participation rate in the more rural areas with Figure 2.4.1 highlighting the response rate to the survey per 1,000 population.

Figure 2.4.1 Participation in ORMR by Location of Survey Respondents



2.5 Where do people go for off road motorised recreation in the Auckland region?

2.5.1 Distances traveled & frequency

The majority of off road motorised recreation users regularly travel to access off road sites both within and outside the Auckland Region.

Generally, it was found the average distance users are willing to travel to participate in off road motorised is 190km, with casual users traveling an average of 131km compared to 218km for club members. Distances traveled by different types of type of vehicle (i.e. 4x4, motorcycle or quad bike) varied. Table 2.5.1 below summarises the average distance users are willing to travel.

Table 2.5.1 Average distances users are willing to travel

| User/ Vehicle | Average Distance | Average distance willing to travel for: | |
|---------------|------------------|---|-------------|
| | | Casual User | Club Member |
| Casual User | 190 km | 131km | - |
| Club Member | | - | 218km |
| 4x4 User | 209 km | 77km | 222km |
| Motorcyclist | 180 km | 130 km | 213 km |
| Quad biker | 223 km | 185 km | 237 km |

On average 4x4 users and Quad bikers were prepared to travel further to participate in off road motorised recreation activity than motorcyclists. This may be as a result of the availability of suitable sites.

In terms of frequency of use, 40% of motorcyclists went off road every week compared to 10% of all 4x4 users.

Table 2.5.2 Frequency of use

| User/ Vehicle | Weekly | Fortnightly | Monthly |
|---------------|--------|-------------|---------|
| Casual User | 20% | 34% | 30% |
| Club Member | 37% | 35% | 24% |
| 4x4 User | 10% | 33% | 46% |
| Motorcyclist | 40% | 35% | 19% |
| Quad biker | 18% | 39% | 31% |

2.5.3 Sites within the Auckland region

A number of sites commonly used for off road recreation have been identified across the Auckland region. Table 2.5.3 below highlights the main sites used both within the Auckland region and those sites users perceived to be within the Auckland region. For the purposes of this study, all these sites have been considered as within the Auckland region due to the high level of use by Auckland residents.

Table 2.5.3 Off Road Motorised Recreation Sites within the Auckland region

| Venue | District | Description | Current Use | Casual Illegal | Casual open access | Casual Organised | Regional Events | National Event |
|---------------------------------------|----------|---|--|----------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Kawasaki Sandpit, Woodhill Forest | Rodney | Part of Woodhill Forest, a Crown Forest managed by Hancock Forest Management Ltd. Site lease and recently been upgraded and reopened as Kawasaki Sandpit. The site could extend to 300km once all tracks and trails have been incorporated. It caters for casual as well as club use. As the name suggests, it caters to motorcycles- trail riding, enduro, motocross. Charge \$25 per day | Formal off road park, open Wednesday thru to Sunday 9am to 5pm (gates closing at 5pm) with late night on Thursdays until the end of daylight saving (9am to 7pm) | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Colin Dale Park | Manukau | Park in Manukau City. (Current planning includes provision of a formal motorsport site) | Two events a year for Off Road racing Illegal use - casual | ✓ | | | | ✓ |
| Puhinui Park | Manukau | Park in Manukau City. | One event a year for Off Road racing | | | | ✓ | |
| Private Farm Land | All | Off road motorised recreation events and practice sessions take place on private farm land due to land access issues. Areas that these farms are located are mainly in the western and southern sectors of the region. Areas identified include Drury, Clevedon, Redhills, Whitford, Franklin, Waimauku, Kumeu, and Warkworth. Used by motorcycles, quad bikes and 4x4 vehicles. | Vary according location Rodney 8 events per 12 months | ✓ | | ✓ | | |
| Kaukapakapa | Rodney | Private farm land used for off road racing event | 1 event per year | | | | ✓ | |
| Muriwai Beach and Te Oneone Rangatira | Rodney | Muriwai Beach and Te Oneone Rangatira is a renowned for off road motorised recreation vehicles due to its proximity to other off road motorised recreation sites and the long held perception that the beach is a road. Licenced drivers/riders are allowed to drive along the foreshore between Coast Road and the bombing range but all road rules apply e.g. vehicles must be registered and warranted. The current use of the sand dunes for ORMR is illegal. | Recreational use and illegal use. | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| The Bombing Range | Rodney | Jointly owned by DOC and the Ministry of Defence. No formal access arrangements. Currently used casually. | Illegal use | ✓ | | | | |

| Venue | District | Description | Current Use | Casual Illegal | Casual open access | Casual Organised | Regional Events | National Event |
|-------------------------|----------|---|--|----------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Beaches | All | Beaches around the Auckland region, in particular Western beaches have been cited as a site for off road motorised recreation. Beaches mentioned were Bethells (Western beaches), Karioitahi Beach; Rangitira Beach; Orere Point Beach (non- Western beaches). Beaches are normally used by casual motorcyclists, quad bikers and to a lesser extent 4x4 drivers. Some access is restricted through regulations such as TA bylaws. Road rules apply to all beaches. | Recreational use and illegal use. | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Ardmore Motocross Track | Papakura | The Ardmore Motocross Track is an important site for off road motorcyclists. It is often used by club, used for events and casual practise. | Formal off road park open Wed and Sunday for practice and events 4 th Sunday of the month | | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Jeep Woodhill 4wd Park | Rodney | Part of Woodhill Forest, a Crown Forest managed by Hancock Forest Management Ltd. Site lease and as formal off road motorised recreation site. Used by four wheel drives, it caters to all skill levels. Used by club members. Charge \$80 per day. | Formal off road park, Open 9am - 5pm Saturday & Sunday (and private events mid week) | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Extreme 4wd Club | Rodney | The Extreme 4wd Club site is located in Kaupakapaka, near Riverhead forest. It's used for 4x4 driving. Mainly club use and those trying out 4x4 driving. The club offers training and safety courses on site. Charge \$80 per day. | Formal off road park, open for bookings 7 days a week. | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Riverhead Forest | Rodney | 5,000 hectares of clay based pine forest owned by Matariki Forests/Rayonier NZ Ltd. The Riverhead Forest is accessible for organised club activities. Mainly motorcycles and quad bikes | Permit for organised groups only. | ✓ | | ✓ | | |
| Woodhill Forest | Rodney | The Woodhill Forest, a crown forest managed by Hancock Forest Management Ltd, is accessible for organised club activities. All vehicle types. Also used by other off road recreation activities such as horse riding etc. | Permit for organised groups only. | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Fell's Farm | Rodney | The site is owned and operated by Ken Fell at Kaupakapaka. A privately run site, for casual riders as well as events. Mainly motorcycles and quad bike use. Charge \$30 | 8 events per annum | | | ✓ | ✓ | |

| Venue | District | Description | Current Use | Casual Illegal | Casual open access | Casual Organised | Regional Events | National Event |
|--|----------|--|--|----------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Paper Roads | All | A number of paper roads are used by clubs and casual users, mainly used by 4x4s with the majority of paper roads identified in the Rodney district. Not all paper roads are suitable for off road use. | Casual, recreational use. | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Pukerau Farm | Papakura | Located at Clevedon, the Pukerau farm is owned and operated privately by Pukerau 4wd Ltd. Commercial trip and training operator. Mainly 4x4 use for touring and safaris. | Formal off road park. | | ✓ | | | |
| Hunua Ranges | Papakura | Some casual use. Also used for a range of other off road recreation such as mountain biking. | Occasional permitted 4x4 use for community based groups | | | ✓ | | |
| Grant Leighton's Farm | Rodney | Privately owned and operated site for off road motorcycles and quad bikes. It is located at South Head, Kaipara. Events only. | 8 events per season | | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Dome Valley | Rodney | No formal access arrangements. Reported casual use. Also used for other off road recreation such as mountain biking. | Paper Roads and illegal use | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Whitford Forest | Manukau | Pine forest owned by Matariki Forests/Rayonier NZ Ltd. No formal access arrangements. Reported casual use. Also used for other off road recreation such as mountain biking. | Illegal Use | ✓ | | | | |
| Harrisville Motocross Track (Pukekohe) | Franklin | Popular off road motocross venue for more experienced riders. Perceived by many off road motorcyclist as within the Auckland region | 12 events per year (1 st Sunday of the month). Casual/ training 1 - 3pm every Saturday | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Mercer Sand Track | Franklin | Popular off road motocross venue. Perceived by many off road motorcyclist as within the Auckland region. Casual and club use | 5 events per year (3 rd Sunday of the month). Casual/ training 12 - 4pm 3 rd Sunday of the month | | | | ✓ | |
| Maramarua Forest | Waikato | Mainly Motorcyclists and Quadbikers. Often used by club and casual riders and annual Off Road Racing regional event. | Permit for organised groups only | | | ✓ | ✓ | |

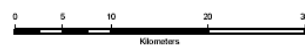
| Venue | District | Description | Current Use | Casual Illegal | Casual open access | Casual Organised | Regional Events | National Event |
|-----------------------------|----------|--|---|----------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Port Waikato | Franklin | Site often used by casual / recreational users | Illegal use | ✓ | | | | |
| Waiuku Forest | Franklin | 1000 hectares of sand dune based forest owned by the Crown Forests Ltd and managed by Northern Forests Ltd. Franklin District Council and user group representatives help develop and co-ordinate 4x4 access and events. No formal arrangements for motorbikes however site often used by casual users | Permit for organised groups only. Motorbikes excluded | ✓ | | ✓ | | |
| Thunder Park Valley | Franklin | Popular off road motocross venue with 750ha of trails. Perceived by many off road motorcyclist as within the Auckland region. Mainly casual users and competition. | Open 9am to 6pm, Wed to Sun. | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Te Kauwhata ATV Club Track | Waikato | Popular club track for quad bikes. Perceived by many off road motorcyclist as within the Auckland region. Mainly casual users and competition. | 6 events per year | | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Te Kauwhata Off Road Racing | Waikato | Private farm land used for off road racing event | 1 event per year | | | | ✓ | |
| Meremere | Waikato | Private farm land used for off road racing event | 1 event per year | | | | ✓ | |



DRAFT

Auckland Region Off Road Motorised Recreation Sites

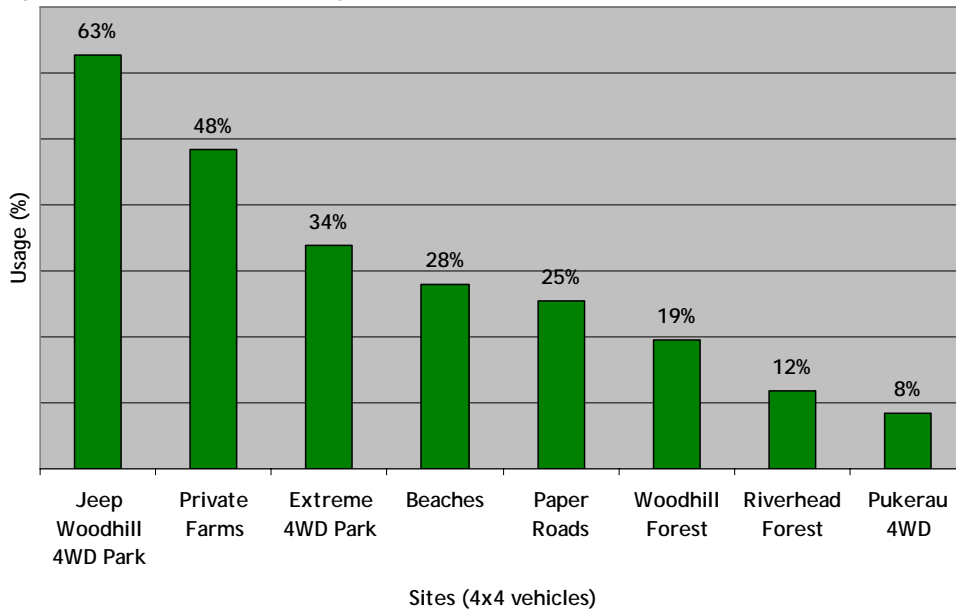
(refer to Table 2.5.3)



2.5.3.1 Sites used by off road 4x4 vehicles (within the Auckland region)

The survey highlighted that the top three sites frequented by 4x4 users are Jeep Woodhill Forest (63%), private farms (48%) and the Extreme 4WD Park (34%). It also showed that beaches and paper roads had a significant role to play in the provision of driving environments. The results of the survey are shown in Figure 2.5.1 below.

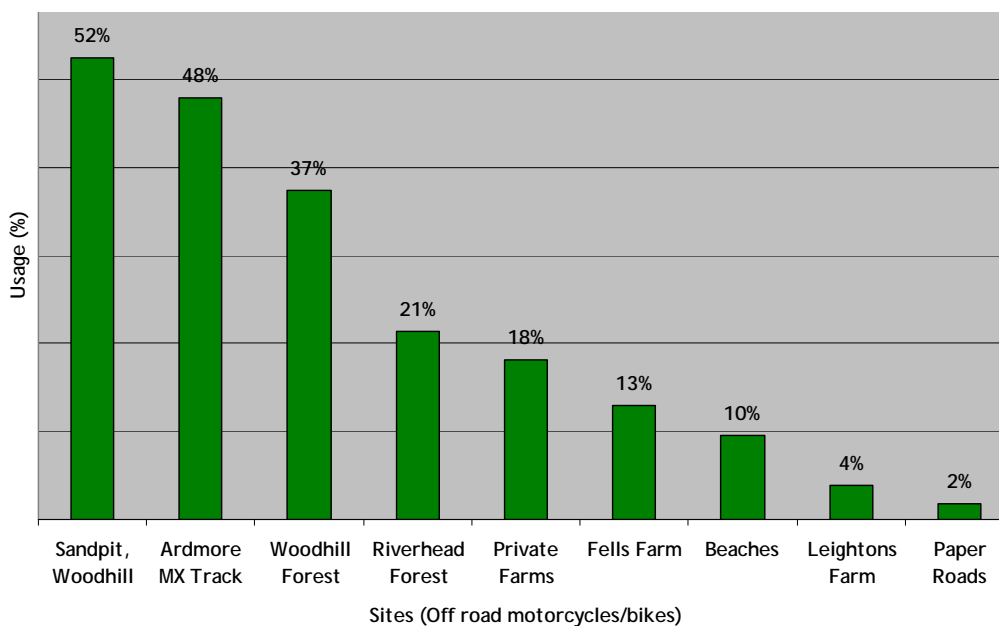
Figure 2.5.1 Sites used by off road 4x4 vehicles within Auckland



2.5.3.2 Sites used by off road motorcycles/motorbikes (within the Auckland region)

The survey highlighted that the top three sites frequented by motorcycles/motorbikes are Woodhill Kawasaki Sandpit (52%), the Ardmore Motocross track (48%) and the Woodhill Forest (37%). It also showed that Riverhead Forest and private farms had a significant role to play with two farms identified specifically. Both Woodhill and Riverhead permit access for organised activities, while the majority of access is permitted activity, there is some illegal use. The results of the survey are shown in Figure 2.5.2 below.

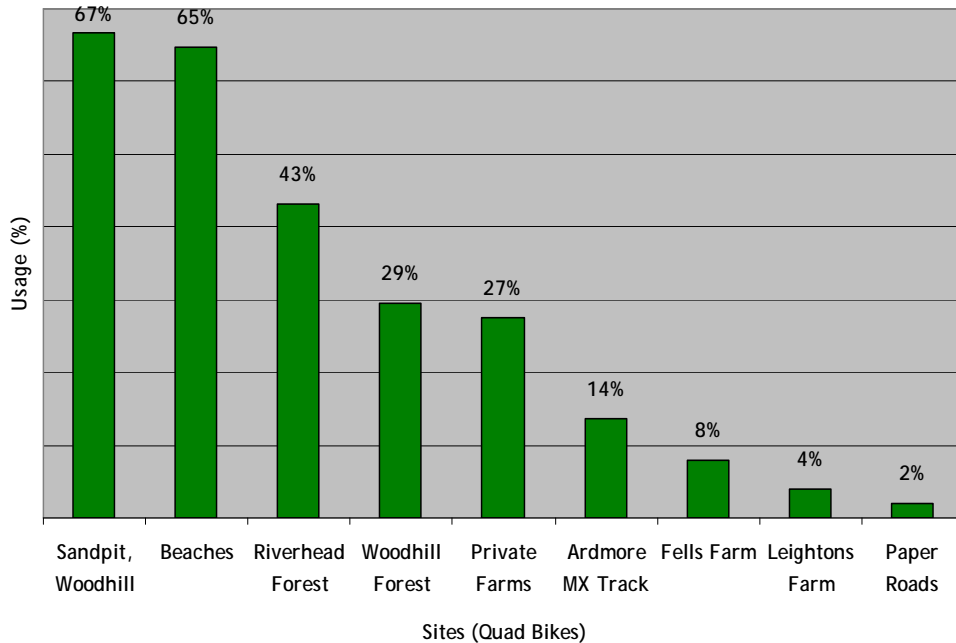
Figure 2.5.2 Sites used by off road motorcycles/motorbikes within Auckland



2.5.3.3 Sites used by Quad Bikes (within the Auckland region)

The survey highlighted that the top three sites frequented by quad bikes are Kawasaki Sandpit (67%), beaches (65%) and the Riverhead Forest (43%). It also showed that Woodhill Forest and private farms had a significant role to play with two farms identified specifically. The results of the survey are shown in Figure 2.5.3 below.

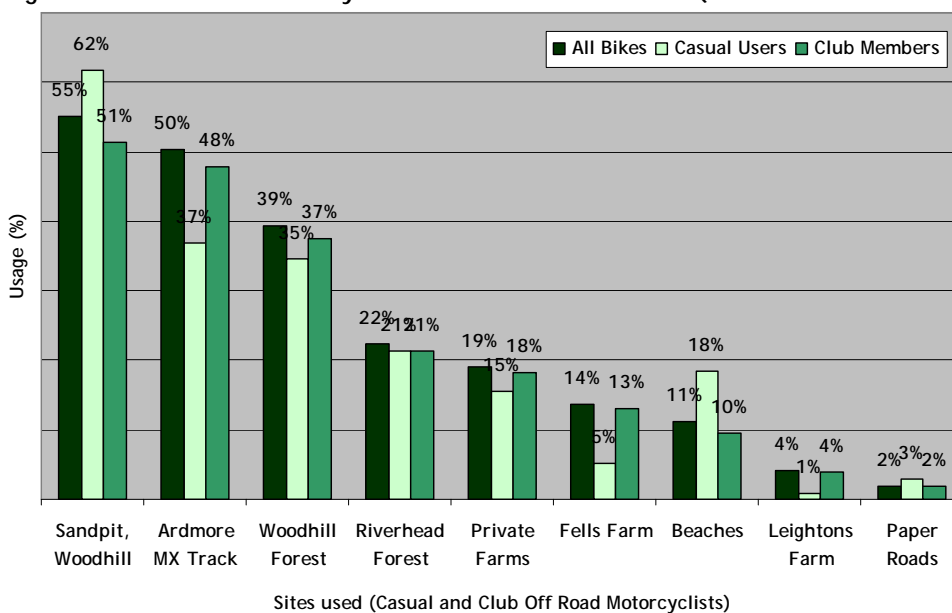
Figure 2.5.3 Sites used by Quad Bikes within Auckland



2.5.3.4 Sites used by off road motorbikes (Club members and casual users) within Auckland region.

The survey highlights that there are some differences in sites used by casual users and club members. While all sites identified are used by both groups, club members were more likely to use Ardmore MX Track, Woodhill Forest, private farms (including Fells Farm and Leightons Farm) than casual users. The survey indicated that casual users were more likely to use Woodhill Sandpit and beaches than club users.

Figure 2.5.4 Sites used by casual and club members⁷ (off road motorbikes)



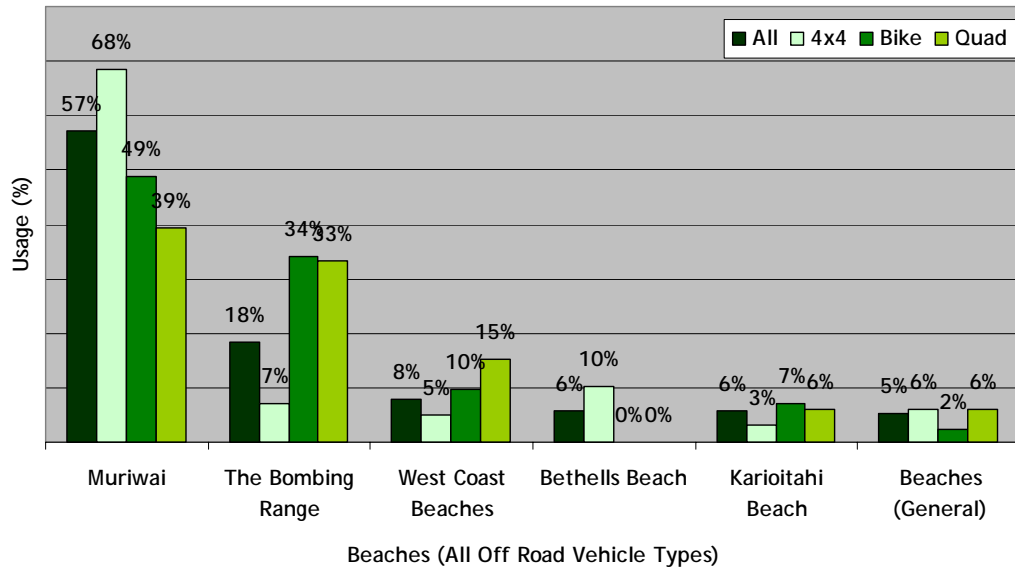
⁷ These represent sites used by respondents that identified themselves as belonging to an organised club. Use of the sites includes casual access and does not imply organised club activities.

Similar analysis of casual user and club member for 4x4 vehicles and quad bikes was unable to be carried out due to the smaller sample sizes.

2.5.3.5 Beaches used by all vehicle types (within the Auckland region)

The survey highlights that 57% of users that go off road on beaches go to Muriwai beach, this increases to 68% of all 4x4 users. While the Bombing Range has previously allowed access, use of the site is currently illegal. The site however was used by approximately one third of motorbike and quad bike users that regularly used beaches.

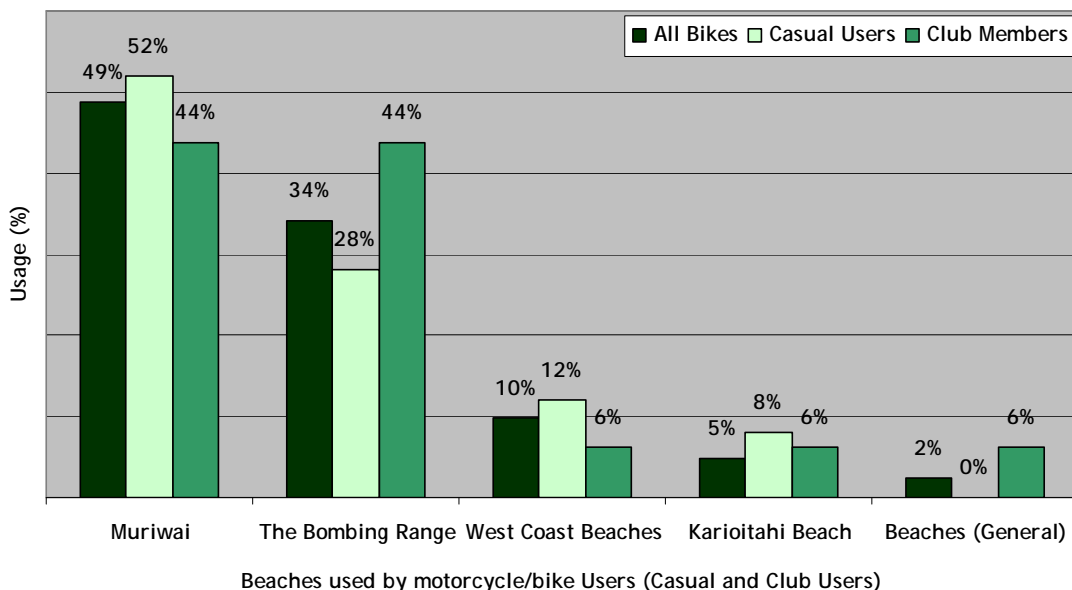
Figure 2.5.5 Beaches used by all vehicles types (within Auckland region)



2.5.3.6 Beaches used by off road motorbikes by casual user and club member (within the Auckland region)

The survey highlights that there are differences between the sites used by club members and casual users. Muriwai beach was more popular with casual users and more club members used the bombing range. It is important to note that the 'club members' referred to here are not necessarily on organised club activities.

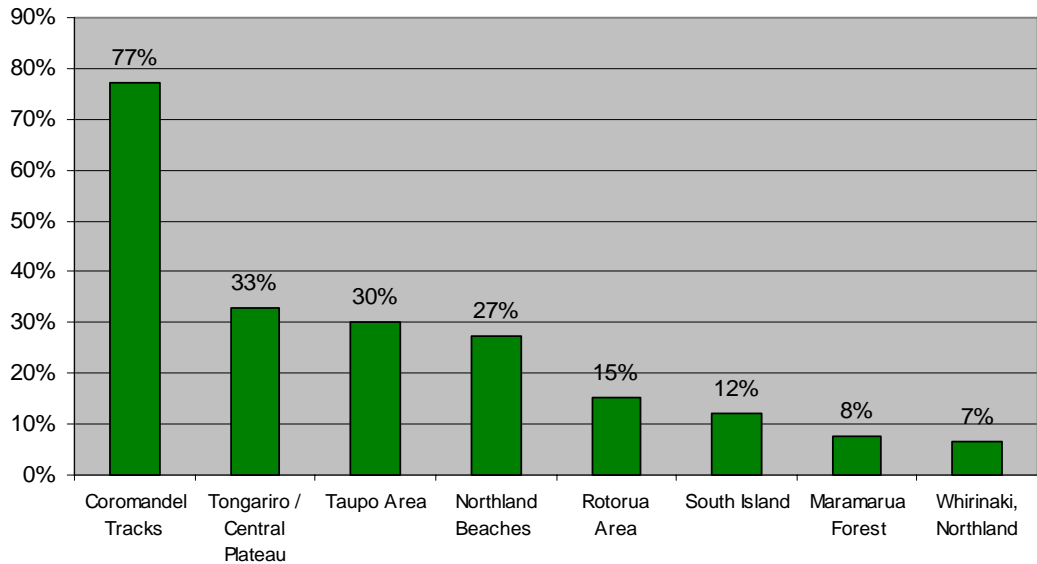
Figure 2.5.6 Beaches used by off road motorbikes by casual and club member



2.5.3.7 Sites used by off road 4x4 vehicles outside the Auckland region

The survey highlighted that the main sites frequented by 4x4 users outside of Auckland were in the Coromandel. These sites were used by 77% of all users. The results of the survey are shown in Figure 2.5.7 below.

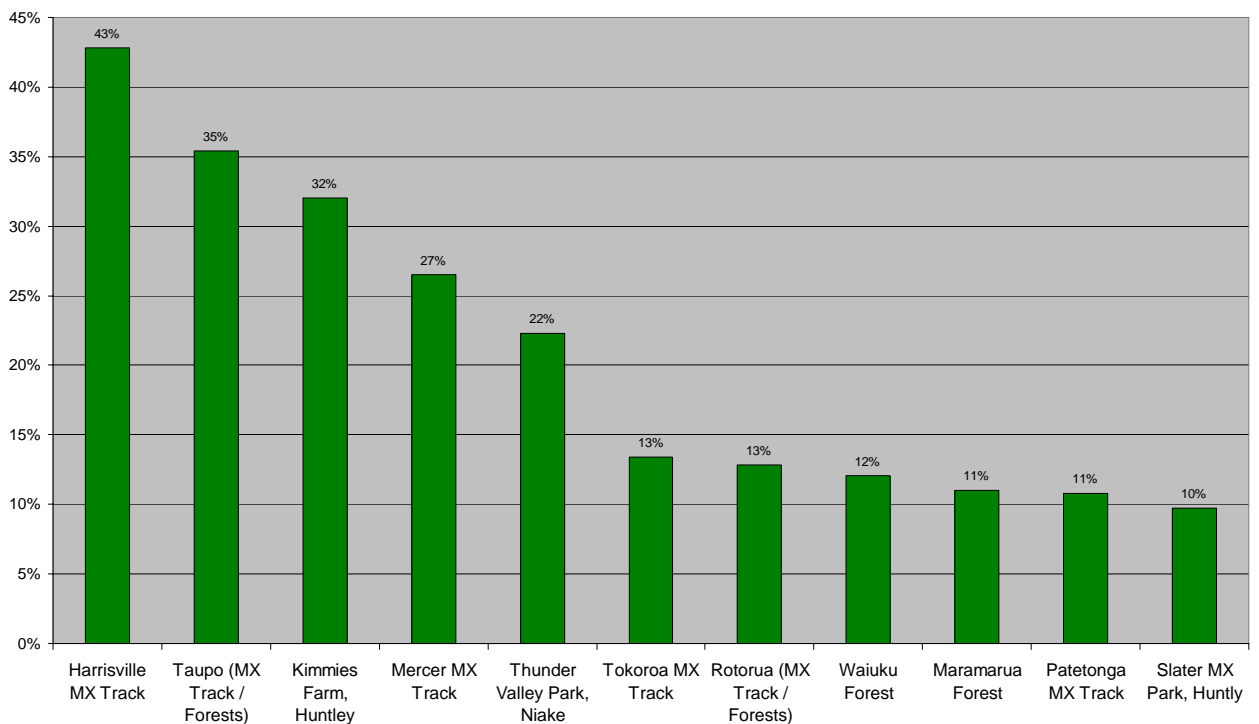
Figure 2.5.7 Sites used by Auckland based off road 4x4 vehicles outside of Auckland



2.5.3.8 Sites used by off road motorbikes

The survey highlighted a significant number of sites outside the Auckland region and that the main site frequented by motorbikes is the Harrisville MX Track, Franklin (43%). The results of the survey are shown in Figure 2.5.8 below.

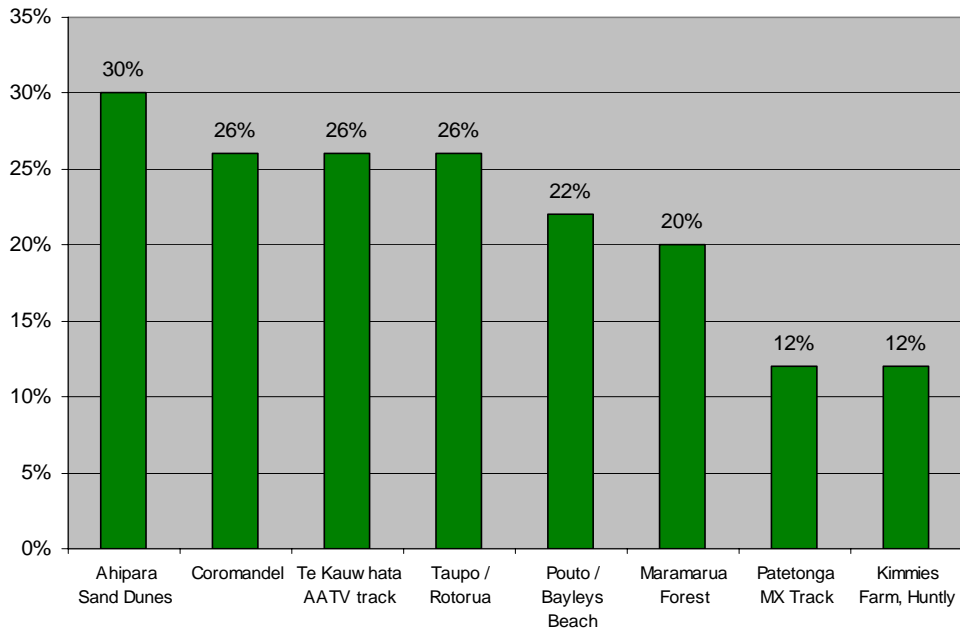
Figure 2.5.8 Sites used by off road motorbikes



2.5.3.9 Sites used by quad bikes

The survey highlighted that there are a number of sites frequented by quad bikes outside the Auckland region with the most popular being Ahipara Sand Dunes (30%). The results of the survey are shown in Figure 2.5.3 below.

Figure 2.5.9 Sites used by quad bikes



2.5.4 Site requirements

4x4 users, motorcyclists and quad bikes have different site requirements depending not only on the type of activity, the age and experience, but whether it is being used for an event, training or casual activity. The site requirements for the main off road categories are set out in Table 2.5.3 below.

Table 2.5.4 Requirements for off road motorised recreation

| Vehicle | Activity | Length & Width | Terrain |
|-----------------|-----------------------|--|--|
| Motorcycle | Trail Riding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minimum 20km length • 8-10 metres wide | Forest Tracks; Undulating dirt track; |
| | Enduro/ Cross Country | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 150km up to 250kms • 8-10metres wide | Undulating dirt track; challenging, varying terrain |
| | Motocross | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 2km's in length, • 8-10 metres wide • Plenty of parking • Access all year round. • Toilets • Spectator viewing | Dirt track, with variation and challenges |
| | Trials | Challenging obstacles | Dirt track with challenges |
| 4x4 vehicles | Mud Drag | About half a football field | Muddy terrain |
| | Rock Crawling | Half to whole football field | Rocky terrain |
| | Trails | Not applicable. Obstacles are requirement | Rough terrain- challenging forest terrain, with obstacles |
| | Winching | Not Applicable. Obstacles and difficult terrain are required | Rough terrain, usually forest terrain with obstacles |
| | Tours | Not applicable. | Undulating or flat. Well maintained tracks. Scenic quality important. |
| Quad bikes | Trails & races | Minimum 1ha | Flat or open rolling terrain. Varied in terrain- can be muddy, water based, gravel, sandy etc. |
| Off Road Racing | Short Course | Track between 0.8 and 1.5 km long. | Undulating land over a dirt track. |
| | Enduro | Track of approximately 5km racing over distances between 150km to 250km. | Undulating land over a dirt track. |

Overall, requirements vary according to the type of activity. An obstacle-based event will require difficult terrain and tracks over the length of the course. As for sports such as Enduro, endurance and the ability to continue racing and complete the distance is the challenge. Requirements will vary slightly according to users' skill levels. Also, junior and senior events have different requirements. It is important that trails and terrain are marked to the appropriate skill level. The majority of activities can be provided through both permanent and temporary sites on a rotational basis. The exceptions to this are motocross and some forms of quad bike racing that require a permanent site with a dedicated track.

Ancillary facilities such as parking, rest rooms, and spectator facilities are also important factors to be considered.

2.5.5 Willingness to pay

The survey identified that the majority (56%) would be willing to pay \$21-\$50 to use an off road motorised recreation facility. 34% stated that would be willing to pay between \$1 and \$20 and only 5% stated the would not be willing to pay for access to a site. On average club members indicated that they were willing to pay slightly more than casual users and both 4x4 and motorbike users were willing to pay slightly more than quad bike users.

Key Summary Points

- Most local sites / facilities for off road motorised recreation are based in rural parts of Rodney District, Waitakere City, Manukau City, Papakura District, Franklin and northern parts of Hamilton.
- Users often leave the Auckland region to travel to other parts of the country (and even overseas) to participate in events and to access other sites. The majority of these alternative sites are to the south of the Auckland region.
- All users are prepared to travel to access sites, with the average distances users are willing to travel to participate in off road activities being 196 km; this differs between motorbikes, 4x4 vehicles and quad bikes.
- There are different track requirements for different events/ activities, e.g. Enduro races require greater track distances as opposed to winch challenges that require difficult terrain. This makes it challenging to provide for all forms of off road motorised recreation at one commercial park.
- Variety in the sites used is important for the sport - hence, most off road sites are used 3 monthly, or 6 monthly.
- Users are willing to pay between \$20 and \$50 to use an off road motorised site.

2.6 Regulations and bylaws around off road motorised recreation

2.6.1 Regulations and bylaw pertaining to off road motorised recreation

The ARC's role in the regulation of off road motorised recreation sites is limited to consideration of regional parks, within coastal areas and sites with significant environmental, cultural or natural heritage importance. Sites where there are no significant environmental, cultural or natural heritage impacts the ARC has a remit to consider any earthworks and impact on waterways of any potential site. Provided these issues are adequately addressed then there are limited reasons why the ARC cannot grant resource consent.

The majority of other issues related to use of a site by off road recreation are determined by the territorial local authority. Provided these issues are adequately addressed there are limited reasons why the ARC cannot grant resource consent.

The ARC does however determine appropriate use and regulate activity within sites in their ownership including the regional parks network through Regional Parks Management Plans and in coastal areas through the Regional Plan, Coastal.

At the District / City level the provision of sites for off road motorised recreation sites varies. For example, within Rodney there is no formal provision for motorsport within the District Plan and a plan change is required to create a special zone for a permanent off road recreation site. However in Franklin, within the rural zone, Active Recreation (including motorised sport) is a discretionary activity.

In considering any proposal for off road motorised recreation the following will be considered by the District / City Council:

- Hours of operation;
- Nuisance elements, noise, dust, litter, odour;
- Intensity of activity;
- Parking requirements and management;
- Traffic movement;
- Signage;
- Effects on cultural and natural heritage resources.

In terms of events, provision within district plans varies from district to district. Rodney District Council makes provision for motorsport activity on private farms under the temporary activities rule. Rule 16.12.1.2 (e) states:

The following are Permitted Activities in all zones unless otherwise stated elsewhere in this Plan:

- (e) Temporary motor sport activities and associated car parking provided that they:
 - (i) do not involve the assembly of more than 1,000 persons;
 - (ii) do not operate outside the hours of 7:00am - 10:00pm; and
 - (iii) do not exceed a duration of 8 days in any twelve month period.

Franklin District Council identify that temporary activities, including buildings, for such purposes as recreational and sporting events shall be permitted in all zones provided that they:

- do not involve the assembly of more than 500 persons;
- do not operate outside the hours of 6.30 am to 10 p.m. and
- do not exceed a duration of six days in any calendar year
- do not use public roads for parking unless the consent of the Chief Executive Officer (or delegate) has been obtained.
- comply with the relevant noise standards for the zone.

In terms of enforcement the regulatory framework around off road recreation forms a jigsaw of permit requirements, council bylaws, site prohibitions. At present council officers have reported that there are few specific regulations for off road motorised recreation and most issues are controlled via a variety of bylaws including noise restrictions, public safety, nuisance in a public place, motor vehicles on beaches to name a few.

2.6.2 Council issues and concerns around off road motorised recreation

Research with relevant council officers revealed that on a day to day level, with the exception of a few specific sites, there are few major issues with off road motorised users. Generally, most users seem to use vicinities and areas off road that are fit for that purpose.

It was reported amongst urbanised areas that there are some issues with users riding their vehicles on parks. This was reported to be mainly amongst younger age groups who do not have the means to travel to off road areas and use public places.

The main concern here is around conflicts of uses in public places. Off road vehicles are perceived to be a threat to other users from a safety and intimidation and a nuisance point of view. The additional environmental concerns are the noise and dust generated by these vehicles, the petrol and oil found in natural areas, as well additional maintenance of green areas used by off road vehicles.

Council territories with more rural land face a slightly different issue. Off road motoring usually occurs on a private 'lifestyle block', rural land or organised off road sites. Here it was identified that the numbers of complaints regarding off road vehicle usage has increased in recent years. The majority of complaints were limited to specific sites with the main concerns raised being noise and dust. It was also highlighted that the majority of complaints related to off road use of motorbikes.

In some areas concerns were raised about vehicles parking to access sites, for example vehicles parking on Wilsons Road to access Muriwai beach.

Most territorial authorities in the Auckland region did not see off road motorised recreation as a problem that impacted on their territorial areas and saw it as an issue in 'other areas'. It was perceived by some that TAs see themselves as unable and to an extent unwilling to provide more formalised areas for the sport.

2.6.3 Off road users view on regulations of off road motorised sport.

Off road motorised users feel that whilst there aren't many formalised regulations against off road motorised recreation; the regulatory framework around site access to off road recreation has had an effect of reducing site access for off road motorised recreation.

Regulatory frameworks that have led to decline in sites are OSH compliance and resource consent issues. Some clubs have reported that private land is hard to secure, due to Resource Management Act compliance and OSH compliance. Some existing sites, e.g. Ardmore MX Track, are threatened and are facing more restrictive conditions in terms of availability and hours of use.

Clubs and users are concerned not only for the limited access to sites but about the increasing regulations and restrictions being placed on use of existing sites resulting in a reduction of the hours of use available.

Compliance with the regulation has resulted in a significant additional financial burden being placed on off road motorised recreation sites to apply for resource consent, comply with the condition and, in the case of Ardmore MX Track, appeal against a reduction in use.

Key Summary Points

- Off road motorised recreation is regulated differently throughout the region. The more rural TLA's identified that the number of complaints have increased in recent years and the majority relate to noise and dust from off road motorbike usage.
- Increasing regulation, often as a result of an increasing number of complaints as areas around sites become more urbanised, is resulting in reduced access to sites and significantly increased costs.

Section 3 Key issues & impacts of off road motorised recreation

The consultation and research undertaken to date has highlighted that there are a number of constraints and challenges that impact on off road motorised recreation throughout the region. In this section the issues have been grouped and summarized so that they can be evaluated and addressed.

3.1 Environmental issues and impacts

The impacts of off road vehicles (ORV) on forests, streams, beaches and other natural areas have been studied internationally since the 1970s with a growing concern amongst environmental groups, biologists and governments around the impacts of ORV on natural areas. Research highlights that off road vehicles have direct and indirect effects on natural features and areas, but the severity of these impacts will depend on the type and frequency of off road usage and the nature of the area in question.

3.1.1 Conflicts with fauna and flora

The most direct effects of ORV usage in natural areas include the increased mortality of flora and fauna by collisions with vehicles. Vehicles will inadvertently run over bird nests, birds, and other fauna. This can be especially problematic with rare and endangered species, such as the NZ Fairy Tern, New Zealand's rarest endangered bird, whose home is the beach. Also vehicle tracks on features such as beaches, dunes and bush reduce visual amenity and naturalness.

Another direct effect of ORV usage is animal disturbance. It was found⁸ that wildlife tends to avoid areas with high disturbance levels. Although this can reduce the likelihood of these animals being threatened by ORV usage; it can signify an ecologically poorer landscape, especially if that landscape is used for other activities such as bird watching, tramping etc.

3.1.2 Compaction and erosion

The most commonly cited indirect effect of ORV usage is the formation of tracks and the compaction of soil due to the weight of the vehicle. Tracks formed by vehicles can act as channels for water that in turn can cause accelerated erosion. A study on effects of motorised sport stated that "Off road vehicle induced rilling and gullying proceeds much more rapidly than other land use practices such as grazing"⁸.

Compacted soil and the gullies formed will weaken soil stability, decrease water infiltration and this can lead to formation of inorganic surface crusts. The surface crusts will inhibit germination and lead to a harsher environment for flora and fauna to survive.

3.1.3 Effect on biodiversity

The change on living conditions of the micro landscape as a result of ORV usage could mean significant damage to the biodiversity of the area through the disappearance of environmentally sensitive species of flora and fauna. This risk is particularly high during summer months where dry and brittle plants are especially susceptible to the damage posed by ORVs.

On water bodies such as riverbeds and lakes, ORV usage has a similar effect of compacting clay and soil and affecting the flora and fauna. There is a possibility that motor oil from

⁸ Havlich, 2002, *No Place Distance: Roads and Motorized Recreation on America's Public Lands*, Washington

ORVs could pollute streams and rivers. A study by Garret, 2001⁹ on the Nueces River, found a profound effect ORV usage had on biodiversity of river communities.

“(The Author) compared an impacted site to an un-impacted site and documented that 79% of the fish at the impacted site was comprised of environmentally tolerant species and that environmentally sensitive species were absent”¹⁰

Riparian areas occupy a small area the regional landscape however their ecological importance is far greater than their physical footprint. Many species of wildlife depend on riparian habitats for water, food and cover. ORV usage can have significant impact on riparian areas and lead to irreversibly damage to such environments.

Another indirect effect of ORV usage on environment can be the spread of invasive plants and pathogens that may be carried on the undercarriage of ORVs and the resultant spread of noxious weeds and plants can destroy native plants.

3.1.4 Coastal environments

The effect of ORV usage can be damaging in coastal environments. This is primarily due to the fragile ecosystems on beaches and the nature of ORV use in this environment.

The dune systems are fragile and important in alleviating coastal erosion. It is an important separator between the foreshore and inland areas. ORV damage to sand dunes is often indirect through its damage to plants. Plants anchor the sand dunes and when plants that bind sand are damaged, sand is not trapped and dunes do not build. Resultantly, sand is blown landward and dune formation is compromised.

In effect when sand dunes that act as a buffer against coastal erosion are comprised, coastal erosion by storm waves is exacerbated. Moreover, when sand dunes are eroded, building them up again is a slow process. Hence, restoring, or more importantly, protecting those ‘binding plants’ is very important to the dune building process.

The compaction of sand from ORVs liquefies the sand and can affect the growing conditions of wildlife such as shellfish and crabs. This means that they may float to the surface and litter beaches, and are vulnerable to predators such as gulls and oyster catchers.

3.1.5 Environmental contribution of off road clubs

Environmental awareness is emphasised within the off road motorised recreation community. There is a code of conduct, developed by DOC and the New Zealand Four Wheel Drive Association that is advertised and emphasised by clubs when in the outdoors. A significant proportion of this code is aimed at raising awareness and encouraging ‘minimum impact’ on the environment. Additionally, the off road clubs are members of ‘Tread Lightly¹¹’, which aims to educate and advertise outdoor, environmental ethics with the aim of protecting recreational access and opportunities in the outdoors.

Another environmental contribution is ‘clean up’ days offered by the clubs. Clubs will maintain and clean tracks as and when required as an appreciation to the ability to use the site, as well as to ensure minimal damage. For instance, the 42nd Traverse at National Park, are made available for off road use during summer; however clubs are involved in maintenance and cleaning throughout winter. Similarly ‘clean up days’ have been organised by clubs for areas such as Muriwai and other beaches. For instance, the Muriwai Beach

⁹ Garret, 2001, *Nueces River Collection Report*, Unpublished report

¹⁰ Sourced from Taylor, R, *The Effects of Off Road Vehicles on Ecosystems*, (date unknown), page 6

¹¹ **Tread Lightly!** is a non-profit organization offering a variety of tools to help arm recreationists and the industries that serve them with essential outdoor ethics. Their mission is to proactively protect recreation access and opportunities in the outdoors through education and stewardship initiatives. (www.treadlightly.org)

Clean Up Day sees off road clubs involved and assisting with the logistics of removing litter. Additionally, clubs often do not use tracks constantly, but access a track every 3-6 months. This helps minimise environmental effects.

Off road motorised recreation users are aware of potential damage to the environment. However, the attitude that prevails is one of sustainability in order to ensure future access to the site.

3.2 Social issues and impacts

3.2.1 Conflicting recreational use

SPARC's Outdoor Recreation Review (2008) estimates that there are 1620 outdoor recreation clubs which encompass recreation such as fishing, walking, tramping, climbing, horse riding, mountain biking, running, walking, motorised recreation and many others.

Within the Auckland region, these activities are competing for a decreasing number of usable outdoor spaces and often off road motorised recreation takes place near areas used for other forms of outdoor recreation. Issues relating to off road motorised recreation taking place alongside walking areas, such as on beaches, are often focused on the safety of other users, i.e. pedestrians, beach goers. Aesthetic and noise impacts are also noted by many other users who find that these impacts often detract from their experience, both in the immediate areas and in neighbouring areas.

Different recreational users have different expectations of the outdoor environment; including 'peace and quiet' and 'getting away from it all' through to 'thrills and excitement'. Different types of activities have the potential to interfere with or restrict other individual's activities, greatly impacting on their expectations and altering the perceived quality of their desired recreational experience.

Certain types of activity have the potential to impact disproportionately on an individual's experience. For example low levels of motorised recreation can impact significantly on the non motorised recreationists' expectations and experiences. In the extreme these recreationists can even be displaced from sites by certain activities that they perceive as being incompatible with their desired outdoor experience (e.g. bird watching).

Conversely other recreationists involved with or interested in motorised recreation may actually perceive that even a high number of encounters with vehicles have little or no impact on the quality of their outdoor experience. In some cases such contacts may actually enhance the quality of their outdoor experience. This underscores the need from the recreationists' perspective to have a spectrum of opportunities across a region.

3.2.2 Irresponsible off road drivers and negative public perception

The media coverage on the dangerous nature of off road motorised recreation and irresponsible off road drivers around public areas has helped shape public opinion of the off road motorised community as a noisy, environmentally damaging and dangerous activity. This negative perception of off road recreation, which, often based on the impact of a small number of irresponsible users, is a significant issue for the majority of the off road motorised community as well. The public perception that they can be a 'nuisance' and 'anti-social' has reduced the 'tolerance' toward the off road motorised group and impacts on the opportunities available for ORVs. 15% of survey respondents specifically identified irresponsible off road users, 'hooners', as an issue which is not an accurate reflection of the sport.

3.2.3 Impact on neighbouring properties

When off road motorised recreation takes place on private farms and lifestyle blocks there are public nuisance effects on neighbouring properties. Noise and dust are the two most common complaints amongst neighbours.

Other concerns around indirect impacts of off road motorised recreation include motor oil, run off of top soil and sedimentation in streams and rivers that could indirectly pollute neighbouring properties.

Another impact on neighbouring properties is as a result of vehicles accessing sites and parking vehicles. This is particularly an issue with informal use of casual sites (e.g. beaches) and when permitted events are held on private farms, both are often in rural locations, without parking facilities and accessed by roads not necessarily suitable to the traffic generated.

3.2.4. Limited sites and lack of access to sites

Lack of access to sites is a very significant issue facing the off road motorised community and was identified by 51% of all survey respondents as the main issue they face. Many have complained that there is not enough land available for both casual recreation and club based activity / events. As seen in Section 2.4, many resort to using private farms and areas outside of the Auckland region for events and general recreation. It is not unusual for an event organiser to have to use a number of farms and to travel outside the region to secure land for events. The main reasons contributing towards a lack of access to sites include site closures and increased restrictions on use of sites as a result of the pressure of urbanisation.

As a result, there is an issue of too many riders/users on too few spaces which leads to health and safety issues and difficulties in managing training requirements and casual access. For example, it was stated that Harrisville MX Track casual usage is restricted to between 1pm till 3pm on Saturdays with up to 150 users wanting to use the track over this period. As a result there is a mixture of different abilities and experience from casual users through to international standard riders wanting access over a limited time. The need to segregate these different users, for health and safety reasons, results in further time restrictions placed on each of the different users, groups as numbers of users and different ability riders need to be managed and access the track at different times.

Another concern amongst users is the limited diversity of sites within the region. This can have a number of impacts in terms of:

- Experience / skill level of the users from introduction to the sport through the experienced off road users. For example Ardmore MX Track provides a good opportunity to learn and develop motocross skills where as Harrisville MX Track is more suited to experienced motocross riders only.
- Diversity of sites - off road users were looking for a number of different opportunities and challenges to provide variety and choice.

Additionally, there is an element of boredom, as the users require variety in tracks. As a result of the limited access to sites, some casual off road motorised users are likely to resort to unsanctioned use on public land or sensitive sites.

3.2.5. Closure of sites

The loss/closure of land used for off road motorised recreation has further exacerbated the problem of limited sites. Users have reported losing sites previously used for off road motorised recreation due to increased urbanisation and change of ownership or site management.

Many of the privately owned sites are managed by individuals or clubs. Consultation has highlighted that these sites often rely on the users to assist with maintenance and operations. It was indicated that some off road facilities struggle financially, this has the potential to impact on the long term provision of sites should they no longer be considered viable.

Currently the Crown Forests, namely Woodhill and Waiuku, provide a range of casual off road access however there is uncertainty associated with long-term access.

3.2.6. Increased urbanisation

Many ORV sites were originally developed in rural areas where the impacts on neighbouring properties were limited. As a result of increasing urbanisation and the development of lifestyle blocks, sites that were once in rural areas now have neighbours and a resultant increase in the number of complaints from noise, dust and associated impacts of traffic accessing the site. The increased urbanisation has had an impact on both the availability of sites and the level of use allowed existing sites. The impact of increased urbanisation is one that is likely to continue. In rural areas of Franklin, for example, 4,500 titles currently exist that could be built on in the future.

3.2.7. Regulations

A number of site owners and off road users identified the regulations and 'red tape' around site access as a significant barrier to securing suitable sites. Occupational Health and Safety (OSH), resource consent issues and regulations that are placed around sites found to be complicated and time consuming. It was identified by users, that the restrictions placed on use, for example restricted hours of use or events, did not meet the demand.

The current proposal to re-designate paper roads to walking access only as part of the Te Araroa, The Long Pathway, while providing security for walking has the result of reducing ORV access and further reducing the opportunities available.

3.2.8. Lack of information

The lack of coherent information about the legal framework for securing and retaining site access is a concern amongst the off road community. These users also believe there is a lack of accurate information on accessible facilities and legal sites. As a result information is passed on informally through word of mouth, online forums and blogs within the off road community. Casual riders have a lack of information around where they are allowed to ride and what they are allowed to do. The differing regulations and bylaws within territorial authorities can lead to further confusion as some actions are permitted in one territorial authority, but not in another.

3.3 Cultural issues and impacts

3.3.1 History of off road motorised recreation in New Zealand

Motorcycling New Zealand (formerly the New Zealand Auto-Cycle Union) commenced operations as the governing body for motorcycle sport in New Zealand in 1916. The New Zealand Auto Cycle Union (NZACU) was formed after the North and South Island Unions decided to join forces to help stimulate motorcycling sport and to draw up rules for the safe conduct of the sport.

Motorcycling New Zealand is recognised by SPARC (Sport and Recreation New Zealand) as a National Sports Organisation and currently has 70 affiliated clubs representing approximately 20,000 members nationally.

Many of the original four wheel drive vehicles were supplied during the first and second world wars for military use. Post World War Two, a surplus of off road vehicles became available on the market with the vast majority used as farm and utility vehicles. Besides farming, many were also widely used for recreation.

In the early years of the 1920s and 1930s 'grass track' racing was common form of off road racing. 1930s also saw events on unsealed roads such as the 'New Zealand Tourist Trophy' race that was held on Waiheke Island. It was only after the 1940s that road and circuit racing became increasingly popular.

The New Zealand Four Wheel Drive Association (NZFWDA) is the national four wheel drive body in New Zealand, established in 1974 and representing the voices of over 2400 members and their clubs. The NZFWDA is currently not on the SPARC list of recognised National Sporting or Recreation Organisations.

3.3.2 Tangata whenua values

While many Maori are involved in ORMR, there are many concerns associated with the illegal, damaging and dangerous use that is currently occurring in several locations throughout the region. These concerns relate to the adverse effects this use has on the relationship of Maori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral land, water, sites, waahi tapu and other taonga¹². The number and variety of ORMR activities affecting the mauri¹³ of ancestral taonga has increased significantly in recent times. Ngati Whatua Nga Rima o Kaipara and Otakanini Topu, for example, have both recently voiced concerns about impact of ORMR on Muriwai Beach and Te Oneone Rangatira's cultural heritage sites, dune systems, shell fish beds, bird nesting sites and non ORMR visitors. They have both advocated greater restrictions on vehicle use in this coastal environment and the identification and protection of legitimate and necessary uses, such as emergency response, boat launching and retrieval and kaimoana collection.

Most iwi in the Auckland region have kaitiaki objectives similar to those stated in Ngaati Te Ata's Iwi Management Plan that encompass long term planning to protect sensitive features of the environment and ensure sustainable use of taonga.

The Auckland Sustainability Framework recognises the need to sustain the mauri of natural and historic resources within the region in ways which enable provision for the social, economic and cultural well being of Tangata Whenua. When considering the potential responses, there is a need for direct and effective involvement of Tangata Whenua in the sustainable management of their ancestral taonga.

3.3.2 Sensitive sites

Historical heritage through land based sites, buildings and such are a tangible component of our cultural heritage. These are places that are significant because of their associations with our ancestors, cultures and our past. It is important to protect and preserve our cultural and natural heritage for future generations to enjoy. Historic heritage includes- built heritage, archaeological sites, places significant to Maori and of traditional importance, trees or other vegetation with historical or cultural associations, places where past events have taken place, shipwrecks and maritime heritage, landscapes and areas of heritage places.

ARC cares and maintains the historic heritage in Auckland's regional parks in conjunction with the Department of Conservation. Statutory mechanisms include the Resource

¹² Taonga generally refers to something highly prized and treasured, tangible or intangible, that contributes to Maori intellectual, physical or spiritual wellbeing (Auckland Regional Policy Statement).

¹³ Mauri is normally described as the life-essence, life force or power which, through the creation of the natural world, exists in all things.

Management Act, Historic Places Act and other legislative mechanisms protects historic heritage.

The Auckland region has a number of recorded and unrecorded sites of archaeological and cultural significance. Many of these sites are considered wahi tapu, both to local iwi and the wider community. A significant number also have an importance scientifically due to their archaeological significance. Both passive and active recreational activities are therefore unsuitable in many of these areas. Activities such as off road recreation in particular are disruptive in these fragile environments.

3.4 Economic issues and impacts

3.4.1 Cost

Cost is a concern amongst off road motorised recreation community and was identified by 7% of survey respondents as an issue impacting on participation. Rising petrol costs, vehicle maintenance costs and participation costs are starting to impact on off road users. While increasing cost is an issue for many, the likely impact will be an increasing demand for sites within the Auckland region as off road users look for sites closer to home. This is likely to further increase the pressure on both formal and informal sites.

3.4.2 Economic impact

Assessing the economic impact of off road recreation is difficult to do accurately without detailed research and evaluation. A high level assessment based on vehicle sales of dedicated off road vehicle, individual spending and event costs provide a conservative estimate of \$31.25m a year. The basis of this calculation is set out in Table 3.4.1 below.

Table 3.4.1 Economic Impact

| | Assumption | Estimated Value |
|---------------------|--|-----------------|
| Vehicle Sales | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11,342 Motorbike sales (MDA Members only). Assume 3000 in Auckland with an average sale price of \$5,000 = \$15m | \$18.15m |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 630 Off road 4x4 sales. (Based on 21% of off ORV are 4x4) with an average sale price of \$5,000 = \$3.15m | |
| Individual Spending | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average of \$1,500 per off road user per annum 8,500 off road users Site / event entry fees, licence, fuel, annual maintenance | \$12.75m |
| Event Costs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75 events per year \$5,000 per event to include site hire, insurance, marketing, staffing, toilets. | \$375,000 |
| | Total | \$31.25m |

This estimate excludes non MDA member sales, 4x4 sales for road use (occasional off road), spending on associated items e.g. trailers, transport costs to / from events and an economic multiples or secondary spend.

In addition to the financial benefits there are a number of other economic impacts to consider which include:

- Costs associated with regulation and enforcement. Increased levels of off road motorised recreation, in particular illegal and inappropriate use has lead to an increase in the number of complaints received by TA's and the Police. Resultant enforcement and regulatory actions places an increased pressure on the resources of these organisations.
- Off road motorised recreation can result in accidents for both participants / competitors and for other outdoor recreationists. Some forms of off road motorised recreation result in a disproportionate number of accidents and associated costs.
- Environmental mitigation and remediation. Off road motorised recreation can result in increased damage to the environment. As a result there can be an increase in costs associated with environmental mitigation and remediation.
- Fossil fuel usages. As with all motorised recreation, off road activity increases the usage of fossil fuels and environmental pollution.

3.4.3 Social contribution of clubs

Many clubs have been involved in events to raise money for local and rural schools. For instance, Land Rover Owners Club Auckland, have been actively involved in fundraising events for Kaukapakapa School which has brought in over \$20,000 each time it has been run. Off road motorised events are commonly held as fundraising initiatives.

Key Summary Points

- Off road recreation has the potential to have a significant impact especially on environmental or culturally sensitive sites
- The impacts of off road recreation on other recreational users or neighbouring properties are an important issue for the general community.
- The majority of users identify that a small number of irresponsible off road users are seen as responsible for creating a negative perception of all users.
- The core concern for off road motorised recreation community is the limited sites and restricted access to sites in the Auckland region. This can result in overcrowding of existing sites, increased travel to access sites out of the region and greater casual / 'illegal' use of sites.
- Increased urbanisation puts pressure on existing sites and can reduce opportunities for off road recreation.

Section 4 Factors affecting future demand for off road motorised sport within the Auckland region

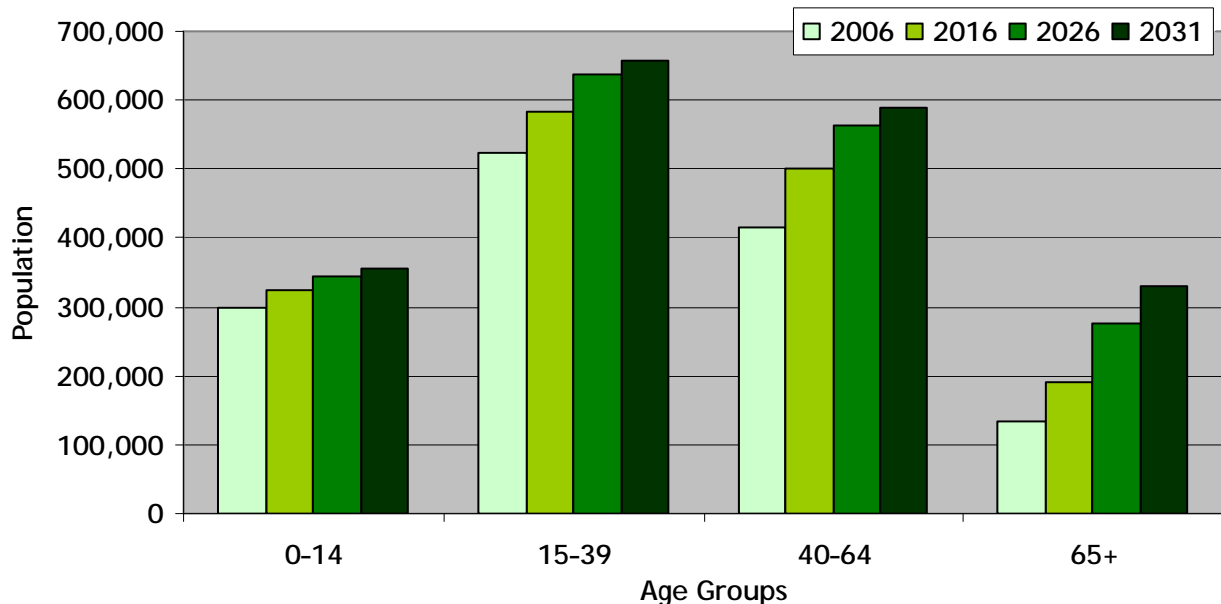
4.1 Population change in the Auckland region

According to the 2006 census the Auckland region is likely to grow to 1,932,300 residents by 2031. Statistics New Zealand projections indicate that by 2016, Auckland's resident population is likely to be more ethnically diverse, with higher growth projected in Pacific Peoples' and Asian ethnicities.

The median age will increase to 38 years in 2031 from 33 years in 2006. As illustrated in Figure 4.1.1, Auckland is likely to experience the beginnings of an ageing population.

Within the region, Auckland and Manukau City are likely to house the largest proportion of residents by 2031. It is projected that these will be areas of intense growth (27% and 31% respectively) within the Auckland region. However, it should be noted that substantial increases in population are expected in Rodney District (47%), Franklin District (42%) and Waitakere City (39%). The key implication of growth in these areas is the increased pressure for urbanisation or the suburbanisation of rural land. There will be pressures to provide living space and in particular open space within the region.

Figure 4.1.1 Auckland region's age projections



4.2 Trends in participation in off road motorised recreation

4.2.1 Current trends in participation

Consultation with clubs and individuals involved in off road motorised recreation within the Auckland region have reported an increase in participation. A survey of Auckland's 26 off road motorised recreation clubs revealed that 60% reported an increased participation in the sport. The same number of clubs reported change in the profile of participants; with an increase in females, and younger people (aged 8 years and up) and families. Another trend noted is the return of veterans to the sport and more juniors participating. Motorcycling NZ identified that junior participation was one of the biggest areas of growth however suitable facilities were difficult to find.

The increase in participation and change in profile of participants suggest a growing popularity of the sport. Furthermore, the increased reliability, affordability and availability of off road vehicles have lowered the barriers to entry to the sport as evidenced by the increase in off road vehicle sales over recent years. While sales of large 4x4 vehicles, for road use, is beginning to decline in response to increased fuel costs, this currently has little or no effect on the demand for off road activity as the large majority of large 4x4 vehicles purchased never venture off road.

4.2.2 Future trends in participation

There is a strong suggestion of growth in participation in off road motorised recreation. Approximately 90% of off road motorised recreation clubs in the region expect participation to increase in future. They suggest the key factors influencing increased participation is the growing popularity of the sport in general, a larger and growing population base, as well as the growing profile of participants (i.e. diversity of members, hence more numbers).

It is likely that growth will be higher in off road motorbikes and quad bikes than in 4x4 and that this will result in a future demand for sites to meet both competitive events and casual access.

4.3 Factors affecting off road motorised recreation

The projected increase in participation can be attributed to several factors;

1. **Media coverage and profile of the sport**

The increased TV coverage of championships/events and the general increase in visibility of the sport has added to its popularity and prompted participation. Most see this trend continuing into the future. A number of categories off road use currently have a number of International Competitors and World Champions in their discipline.

2. **Supply of off road recreation motor vehicles**

The increased affordability and availability of off road recreation vehicles, supported by advertising campaigns by manufacturers, is likely to continue and further contribute to growth in participation. A growing second hand market and cheaper Chinese imports will continue to reduce the cost barrier to participation hence more people will be able to afford a vehicle.

Better quality equipment, greater reliability and diversity of vehicle models have lead to younger people participating in the sport. Manufacturers are targeting the younger market with 50cc machines and such have meant the age of entry into motorbike and quad riding has come down. If this trend continues, people involved

in the sport at a younger age are likely to continue participating; and continued growth in junior members suggests growth in numbers.

3. Challenging and fun sport

The challenging and social nature of the sport could be said to have contributed to its growth. Participants mention that the camaraderie and confidence from overcoming barriers and obstacles and testing individuals' ability are key factors behind continued participation.

4. Cost of fuel and general rise in cost

The general rise in costs, especially projected increases in the cost of fuel is likely to have an impact on membership growth and /or participants' behaviour. Rising costs of fuel may have a significant impact on off road motorised recreation however likely outcome will be that off road users will look travel shorter distances to participate in off road motorised recreation. As a result there is likely to be increased pressure on sites within the region.

5. Site access

Due to the rural nature of the sport, further urban spread would threaten the availability and the diversity of sites. The pressure to provide for this growth is likely to further impinge on existing sites (private farms, public sites) used for off road recreation.

This pressure on existing sites is likely to result in a combination of increasing membership of road motorised recreation clubs to gain access to sites that only allow organised groups and an increased casual / 'illegal' use of sites.

Implications for future growth of off road motorised recreation

- Forecast growth in off road motorised recreation. The diversity in user profile, growing popularity of the sport, and the increased affordability and availability of off road vehicles are seen to be key drivers in growth.
- The increasing cost associated with the sport, e.g. fuel, is expected to impact on the sport. The likely impact is that users are less likely to travel distances to participate in the sport and hence there will be increased pressure on sites in the region.
- Population growth in the region, in particular the fringes of the city, is likely to see further urbanisation or 'suburbanisation' of rural sites. Sites for off road motorised recreation could be threatened.
- Existing sites are not fully meeting current demand. Future growth is likely to result in a combination of increasing membership of road motorised recreation clubs to gain access to sites that only allow organised groups and an increased casual / 'illegal' use of sites unless viable alternatives are available.

Section 5 Potential responses to manage demand

To understand the demand for off road motorised recreation it is necessary to first understand the way in which the majority of this activity is undertaken. Off road motorised recreation does not operate in the same way as many other traditional sports.

Competition is usually events based and focused around a specific site where participants compete as individuals as opposed to clubs. Many clubs are based around groups of like minded individuals that come together, often for social reasons, as opposed to forming a formal team for inter club competition. The majority of competition is based around an event or series of events organised at various sites within the region. The number of events is often limited by access and restrictions that are placed on suitable sites.

Off road motorised recreation users do come together for club activities, such as organised club rides through Woodhill Forest. These types of events are usually non competitive with the club co-ordinating access to the site for a specific event. Other types of off road motorised recreation activity is based more on casual activity where individuals or small groups go off road as a recreational activity. A proportion of this type of activity is held at commercial sites where users pay between \$20 and \$50 a day to use the site, for example Sandpit in Woodhill Forest or the Extreme 4WD Park.

There is however, another category of off road recreational use, casual use. This can be based around the unstructured but legal use of sites such as Woodhill Forest, beaches and paper roads; as well as the illegal use of sites.

In considering the needs for off road motorised recreation there is a need to consider a hierarchy of provision based on meeting the different types of activity including:

- Formal events / competition.
- Organised casual access.
- Casual open access.

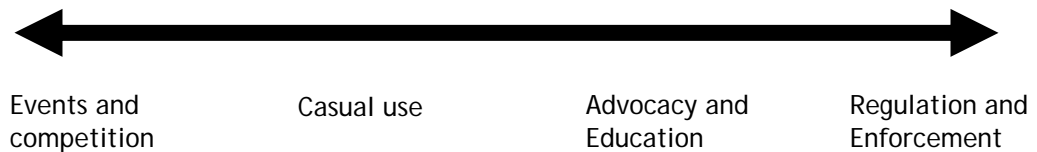
Given the complexity of off road motorised recreation it is clear that a combination of responses will need to be explored to manage the future demand. Responses will need to be explored that provide for all types of activity, including unstructured casual access. Failure to do so will likely lead to the on-going illegal use of sites.

There are various roles that the potential partners could take in the future to meet the identified demand for off road recreation. These roles include:

- ***Direct Provider***
To identify and provide regional site(s) for off road motorised recreation.
- ***Partnership***
To work in partnership with other organisations to provide access to sites for off road motorised recreation.
- ***Enabling***
To work in partnership with other organisations to secure access to sites for off road motorised recreation.
- ***Education and Advocacy***
To provide education and advice to partner organisations, local communities and off road users.
- ***Regulatory***
To make use of the regulatory framework to manage off road motorised recreation under the Resource Management Act and by-laws.

These are not mutually exclusive and it is likely that the various organisations will be required to undertake a number of these potential roles to successfully manage the demand for off road motorised recreation.

In the course of describing the issues and impacts around off road recreation, a number of potential responses to manage future demand have been identified. The potential responses can be seen along a continuum from direct provision of sites through to advocacy and information. It is likely that a combination of different responses will be required that involve many different stakeholders. Viable solutions do not rest with one agency or group and individual agencies may have different roles to play with different responses.



There is a need to get your feedback on which potential responses should be investigated further. Certain responses would by their very nature require the allocation of limited regional resources. It is also important to understand that further investigation may reveal that certain responses are not viable. The potential responses identified include:

Events and competition

- Securing access to appropriate existing sites.
- Existing sites for competitive motocross and off road racing.
- New sites for competitive motocross.

Casual use

- Provide greater support to recognised off road sites.
- Increasing casual access to existing motocross sites.
- Developing sites for the young and inexperienced.
- Development of dedicated off road site(s).
- Access to appropriate sections of the paper road network.
- Access to dedicated beach and dune sites.

Advocacy and education

- Regional guidance.
- Information and education.
- Advocacy.
- Code of conduct.

Other Potential Options

- Access to beach and dune sites.
- Access to the existing regional park network.

5.1 Events and competition

5.1.1 Securing access to appropriate existing sites

Where existing off road sites exist in appropriate locations consideration should be given to site hardening and to securing their long term use. Where such sites are identified restrictions could be minimised to enable current and future event and casual demand to be met. Greater consideration should be given to the net benefit of increasing use at one site if it can be demonstrated that this would take pressure off other more sensitive areas.

| Securing access to appropriate existing sites. | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|---|---|
| Secure access at appropriate existing sites. Consider options to develop a buffer zone around existing sites to minimise the impact of increasing urbanisation of rural areas. Where existing sites are located within more suburban environments consider increased investment to mitigate the impact. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing use in appropriate areas is secured providing greater security of access in the future. Additional demand can be met through site hardening and the greater use of existing sites. Impacts of off road recreation can be controlled and monitored in known locations. Mitigation mechanisms can be developed to reduce environmental impacts on and off site. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential additional impacts on neighbouring properties. Potential additional cost of increased mitigation. Potential additional site hardening costs. Potential additional costs associated with securing long term access (if private land is being examined). |
| Applicable to: All categories of off road user. However, may not be as viable for off road touring activities. | | |

5.1.2 Competitive motocross and off road racing sites (existing sites)

There are a number of competitive motocross tracks throughout the region providing for a range of local competitions through to the New Zealand Supercross Championships (with a round held at the Harrisville Motocross Track in Pukekohe). It is considered that the majority of future demand could be met by increasing the number of events allowed on existing tracks within the region as opposed to increasing the number of tracks themselves. Consultation has, however highlighted the potential demand for an additional track in the north of the region.

| Existing site for competitive motocross and off road racing. | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|--|---|--|
| Explore opportunities to increase the number events allowed on all existing tracks throughout the region. Consideration should be given to allowing a higher number of events at tracks where the impacts on neighbouring properties can be minimised. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of existing facilities is increased, reducing the need in the future for additional sites to be developed. Environmental and social impacts are limited to existing areas. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased impact on neighbouring properties through noise, dust and associated traffic. Can not be achieved without a review of TLA district plan provisions. Potential additional cost of increased site usage. |
| Applicable to: Competitive motocross, national, regional competition and casual use. | | |

5.1.3 New sites for competitive motocross.

While it is considered that the majority of future demand could be met by increasing the number of events allowed on the existing tracks, consultation has highlighted the potential demand for an additional track in the north of the region.

| New sites for competitive motocross. | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|--|---|--|
| Explore opportunities to support the development of a motocross site in the north of the district. Consideration should also be given to increasing the investment to mitigate the impact of the facility. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site in north of the district has the potential to meet the identified demand. • Potential site has been identified and necessary consents approved. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased impact on neighbouring properties through noise, dust and associated traffic. • Increased environmental impact on potential site. • Cost of developing new site and complying with RMA and District Plan requirements. |
| Applicable to: Competitive motocross, regional competition and casual use. | | |

5.2 Casual use

5.2.1 Provide greater support to recognised off road sites

There are a number of commercially managed sites that provide for structured casual access throughout the region. The cost of establishing and maintaining these sites can be high and when these costs are combined with the price sensitivity of many users it could impact on their commercial viability. With many off road users looking for affordable access to the natural environment, a contribution to the capital and operating expenses of facilities may be one way reduce the cost disincentive and therefore attract more people to legal and appropriate sites.

| Provide greater support to recognised off road sites. | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|---|---|
| Organisations such as councils, DoC, gaming trusts could consider providing capital development grants or operational subsidies to current off road recreational sites to ensure affordable entry fees. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces barriers to using organised sites, providing a network of accessible sites. • Regulations can be set e.g. noise limits, seasonal closures as condition of funding. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not meet the need of many users looking for variety and different sites to go off road. • Additional funding requirements for organisations. |
| Applicable to: All off road user groups. | | |

5.2.2 Increasing casual access to existing motocross sites

There are a number of motocross tracks throughout the region providing for a range of casual as well as competitive opportunities. It is noted that access to these tracks for the casual and training user can be restricted and it is considered that a significant amount of future demand could be met by increasing the access to established tracks for casual and

training opportunities as opposed to increasing the number of tracks themselves. Additional casual access to existing tracks has the potential to provide an alternative to the illegal use of inappropriate sites.

| Increased casual access to existing sites. | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|--|---|
| Consider increasing casual / training opportunities at appropriate motocross sites. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of existing facilities is increased, reducing the future need for additional sites to be developed. • Environmental and social impacts limited to existing areas. • Increased casual access provides alternative to inappropriate sites. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased impact on neighbouring properties through noise, dust and associated traffic. • Can not be achieved without a review of TA district plan provisions. • Potential additional cost of increased site usage. |
| Applicable to: Motocross, quad bikes - casual users. | | |

5.2.3 Developing sites for the young and inexperienced

There are a number of off road motorised recreational sites around the region, few however cater for the needs of young and inexperienced users. As a result young and inexperienced users often go to casual sites, such as beaches, to learn. There are often few appropriate alternative sites for them to progress within their discipline; this can result in the inappropriate use of illegal sites. Where appropriate consideration should be given to developing sites specifically for the young and inexperienced users; this may be through developing additional sites or expanding the range of opportunities provided at existing sites.

| Developing sites for the young and inexperienced. | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|--|---|--|
| Where appropriate, develop opportunities for young and inexperienced off road users. Consideration should be given to developing these as part of or adjacent to existing sites. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables experienced and inexperienced users to be separated, reducing health and safety concerns. • Provides an alternative to use of illegal sites. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased impact on neighbouring properties through noise, dust and associated traffic. • Increased environmental impact on potential site. • Cost of developing new site and complying with RMA and District Plan requirements. |
| Applicable to: All categories of off road user. However, may not be as viable for off road touring activities. | | |

5.2.4 Development of dedicated off road site(s)

Where appropriate, consideration should be given to developing a large dedicated off road site, or network of smaller off road sites, to provide for a wide range of off road motorised recreation. These sites could be developed on public or private land to provide a focus for off road motorised recreation in the region based on the Tech Park Concept under

development in the Bay of Plenty. Where such sites are identified restrictions should be minimised to enable current and future event and casual demand to be met. Greater consideration should be given to the net benefit of increasing use at one site if it can be demonstrated to take pressure off the more sensitive areas.

| Regional public access off road sites | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|--|--|
| Where appropriate, consider developing a large dedicated site, or network of smaller off road sites | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an alternative to use of illegal sites • May enable existing sites / users to be relocated resulting in a net benefit to the region. • Dedicated recreation site(s) may provide for other outdoor impact sports, e.g. mountain biking, canyoning. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased impact on neighbouring properties through noise, dust and associated traffic. • Increased environmental impact on potential site. • Cost of developing new site (s) and complying with RMA and District Plan requirements. |
| Applicable to: All categories of off road user. However, may not be as viable for off road touring activities. | | |

5.2.5 Access to appropriate sections of the paper road network

Some parts of the paper road network are currently used for off road touring activities. Consideration could be given to securing and mapping a network of paper roads suitable for use and determining the protocols for managing the network.

| Access to appropriate sections of paper road network. | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|---|---|
| Where appropriate, work with landowners, to secure access and map a network of paper roads for off road motorised recreational use. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing use in appropriate areas is secured providing greater security of access in the future. • Provides access to additional public land. • Access can be managed and controlled. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of securing and maintaining access. • Impact on neighbouring properties and other users. • Impact on sensitive sites not identified through the background research. |
| Applicable to: Mainly 4x4 and touring user groups. | | |

5.3 Advocacy and Education

5.3.1 Regional guidance

The current regulations on off road motorised recreation differ across the region. While there are differences in the regulations they are applied equally to all categories of off road motorised recreation, which does not take into account the wider environmental and social impacts. For example 4x4 touring has different environmental and social impacts to motocross. It is considered that guidance could be developed to assist TLAs in their decision making process that consider the identification of the type and number of events, provision of casual access and hours required, industry standards / best practice conditions (e.g. Motorcycle NZ Noise emission controls) for the different categories of off road user.

| Regional guidance. | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|--|---|---|
| Develop guidelines to aid the TLA decision making process as to the appropriate restrictions for off road sites based on the requirements of the different categories of user and meeting the identified demand at a site. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restrictions on events, casual access are appropriate to the categories of user and potential impacts TLAs have robust information and best practice advice to aid future decision making. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different regulations for different categories of off road users may lead to confusion Guidelines can not be implemented without a review of TLA district plan provisions. |
| Applicable to: All off road user groups. | | |

5.3.2 Information and education

There is a need to ensure off road motorised recreation users know where they can ride, what they need to do to prepare and what is expected when they get there by:

- Developing information on all off road motorised recreation sites, access arrangement and any temporary restrictions.
- Develop signage at all casual sites outlining the access arrangements and code of conduct for the site.
- Work with off road organisations to promote responsible off road recreational use to schools and consider using role models as part of a social marketing campaign.
- Increasing understanding of the environmental impact of ORMR.

| Information and education. | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|--|---|---|
| Improve information available to off road users and education on responsible off road usage. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarifies current regulations and restrictions Promotes responsible off road motorised recreation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of regulations on own will not stop illegal use of sites Diverse categories of off road users making an educational programme and social marketing campaign expensive and difficult to target. |
| Option is Applicable to: All categories of casual off road user. | | |

5.3.3 Advocacy

Work in partnership with regional and national organisations to promote responsible off road vehicle ownership through to engaging with importers and distributors of off road vehicles and after market accessory suppliers. The focus should be towards reducing noise emissions, promoting responsible vehicle usage and use of appropriate sites.

| Advocacy. | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|--|---|--|
| Work in partnership with regional and national organisations to advocate for responsible off road vehicle ownership. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A co-ordinated approach to issues such as noise control in line with national and international best practice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially difficult to monitor and enforce • All importers and distributors may not sign up thereby reducing the effectiveness. |
| Applicable to: Off road motor vehicle suppliers and distributors. | | |

5.3.4 Code of conduct

Develop a code of conduct in partnership with consistent regulations and penalties that apply across all off road sites in the region, e.g. use of an illegal site could potentially result in refused admission to a competition elsewhere in the region.

| Code of conduct. | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|---|--|
| Develop a code of conduct in partnership with consistent regulations and penalties that apply across all off road sites in the region | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent and coordinated approach to off road vehicle usage across the region | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially difficult to monitor and enforce • All sites, clubs and association may not sign up reducing the effectiveness. |
| Applicable to: All partners and ORV users. | | |

5.4 Other Potential Options.

In addition to the potential responses outlined above further opportunities were identified which are contrary to current policy and / or cause significant environmental and social impact and are therefore not considered appropriate.

5.4.1 Access to dedicated beach and dune site

There is an identified demand for casual, unstructured access to public land. The beach and sand dune environment is identified by the off road motorised recreation sector to be in high demand with many legal and illegal sites utilised throughout the region.

This use is contrary to the Regional Coastal Management Plan and was considered by the ARC Parks and Heritage Committee on the 8th October 2008. At this meeting the Parks and Heritage Committee resolved that the ARC intends to work toward a position where there is greater control of vehicles on beaches regionally to ensure legitimate and necessary access is identified and protected but unnecessary, damaging and dangerous use is stopped.

5.4.2 Access to existing regional park network

The ARC aims to provide world-class accessible parks, providing a unique range of quality experiences while preserving the natural essence of the region. In achieving this, the ARC has to balance the demands for a variety of recreational activities alongside the protection of the park environment, the health, safety and wellbeing of other park users, park resources, the facilitation of park operations and the enjoyment of other park users. The Regional Parks Management Plan (RPMP) guides ARC in its decision making on a day to day and long term management of the parks.

Off road motorised recreation is currently a prohibited activity in all regional parks under Objective 40.1.1 of the RPMP. This objective states "To prevent activities from occurring that would have a permanent adverse impact on the natural environment and amenity values of a park or would significantly detract from the enjoyment of other park users." Prohibited activities are considered activities that would irreversibly damage the environment of the park or cause a danger to people using the park or would detract from the amenity of the parks.

The only exception to this is the Hunua Ranges regional park where occasional 4x4 trekking has been permitted as a discretionary activity.

Due to the nature and use of the existing regional park network it is not considered appropriate to allow ORMR in the current Regional Parks.

Section 6 The next steps

This issues and options paper summarises initial findings from this project. Off road motorised recreation presents a number of issues and impacts both environmentally and socially. It is however a growing recreational activity with an estimated 250,000 off road motorised recreational trips made each year.

There is a difficult balance to make between meeting the demands of the off road motorised recreational users and the environmental and social impacts this creates. Resource constraints mean that all the suggestions won't be able to be actioned and for this reason there is a need to prioritise the options to manage future demand and clarify the role the various agencies should take.

Accordingly, it would be appreciated if you could indicate your support for the identified options, describe those areas which require particular attention and identify if there are other things that should be looked at.

From this feedback, a detailed ORMR demand report will be developed outlining the key issues, options to meet future demand, to assist with future decision making.

How do I have my say?

The best way to have your say is to send the feedback on the form provided. While there are a number of questions posed, you should not feel limited to only commenting on these questions. Your comments on other issues concerning off road motorised recreation in the Auckland region are welcome.

When you have completed your feedback form, you can:

- Send it to us at the following address:

Off Road Motorised Recreation Study
Visitor Solutions
P.O. Box 14-245
Panmure
Auckland 1741

- Email it to us at richard@visitorsolutions.net
- Fax it to us on (09) 574 6918

When do submissions close?

Submissions close at 5.00pm on Friday 23rd January 2009.

**Off Road Motorised Recreation in the Auckland Region:
Discussion Document Feedback Form**

Please fill in the form and:

- Send it to us at the following address:
Off Road Motorised Recreation Study
Visitor Solutions
P.O. Box 14-245
Panmure
Auckland 1741
- Email it to us at richard@visitorsolutions.net
- Fax it to us on (09) 574 6918

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Question One | A number of constraints and issues have been identified concerning off road motorised recreation in the Auckland region. Do these identified issues cover your main concerns or are there other important issues that should be considered? |
| | |
| Question Two | There are a number of agencies, clubs and private providers involved in managing the current and future demand for off road motorised recreation in the Auckland region. Please identify which agencies you think should be involved and what role they should play? |
| | |

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Question Three | Which of the potential solutions do you support and why? |
| | |
| Question Four | Which of the potential solutions don't you support and why? |
| | |
| Question Five | With reference to Table 2.5.3 and the map provided. Are you aware of any other off road motorised recreation sites in the Auckland region? |
| | |

To help identify the level of support for each of the potential responses please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each by circling the appropriate number in the table below.

| | Strongly Disagree | | Neutral | | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|---|---------|---|----------------|
| Secure access to appropriate existing sites. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Existing sites for competitive motocross sites and off road racing. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| New competitive motocross sites. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Subsidise access to recognised sites. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Increased casual access to existing motocross sites. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Developing sites for young and inexperienced users. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Development of regional off road site(s). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Access to appropriate sections of the paper road network | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Regional guidance. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Advocacy. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Code of conduct. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Information and education. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Do you currently participate in off road motorised recreation? Yes No

Do you know any friends of family that regularly participate in off road motorised recreation? Yes No

Where do you live?

Rodney District North Shore City Waitakere City Auckland City
 Manukau City Papakura District Franklin District Outside Auckland

Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback.
 We look forward to reading your thoughts.

In developing this issues and options document for consultation the following organisations have been contacted:

ARPASS Regional Collaboration Team (including representatives of ARC, 7 TAs and 4 Regional Sports Trust)
Auckland Regional Council
Auckland City Council
Franklin District Council
Manukau City Council
North Shore City Council
Papakura District Council
Rodney District Council
Waitakere City Council
Department of Conservation
Forest and Bird Kaipara Branch
Auckland Forest and Bird
Auckland Conservation Board
Environmental Defence Society
NZ Police - Muriwai
NZ Motorcycle Retailers Assoc
Motorcycling NZ
NZ Four Wheel Drive Association
Motorcycle Distributors Association
Auckland region off road clubs.