

Tawharanui

Marine Reserve Proposal (Re-notified)

April 2007

Background

This is the second notification of this application. Due to a technical error with the first notification in August 2006, the Auckland Regional Council has decided, in consultation with the Department of Conservation, to re-notify the application.

The Tawharanui Marine Park adjoins the northern side of Tawharanui Regional Park. It was established in 1981 and covers the areas from Mean High Water Mark to half a nautical mile seaward, for a length of three kilometres (See map attached). As a marine park the area is a "no take" zone of approximately 395 hectares, administered by the Ministry of Fisheries.

Since 1995 the Auckland Regional Council has explored the possibility of establishing a marine reserve at Tawharanui.

Marine reserves are established under the Marine Reserves Act 1971. This Act establishes the following purpose for marine reserves:

"....preserving, as marine reserves for the scientific study of marine life, areas of New Zealand that contain underwater scenery, natural features, or marine life, of such distinctive quality, or so typical, or beautiful, or unique, that their continued preservation is in the national interest".

From 2001 to 2003 the ARC drafted a discussion document and consulted key stakeholders and the public on it. The document proposed a significantly expanded protected area, which would have increased the no take zone to approximately 585 hectares. The majority of submissions on this proposal opposed it. Most objections cited the expansion of the protected area, in particular the inclusion of a popular fishing spot known as Cigar Reef, in the no take zone, as the reason for opposition.

In 2005 the ARC, in order to progress the establishment of a marine reserve at Tawharanui, produced a revised proposal taking into account previous submissions from key stakeholders and the public. The ARC's Parks and Heritage Committee resolved to lodge an application with the Director General of Conservation based on this proposal.

Current Proposal

The significant enlargement of the protected area proposed in the 2003 discussion document has been revised. The current proposal retains the principle of straightening the seaward boundary of the protected area at Tawharanui but the

overall protected area will be approximately 400 hectares. Importantly, the popular recreational fishing spot, Cigar Reef, will be outside the proposed marine reserve boundary.

The ARC's application also proposes the establishment of a marine reserve committee to assist DoC with the management of the marine reserve. This committee would be a means for Tangata Whenua, ARC and other key stakeholders, to have a say in the ongoing management of the marine reserve.

Effects / Benefits

This change at Tawharanui will mean that:

- The existing restrictions on taking or disturbing of marine life within the Marine Park will continue to apply within the boundaries of the marine reserve.
- The marine reserve boundary will be straightened to enable better clarity for users and managers of the reserve and adjacent areas.
- Rules affecting use of the Marine Reserve will be clearer and more widely understood than with the existing Marine Park; given that rules are consistent from one marine reserve to another but can differ between marine parks.
- The Marine Reserve will be managed by the same body (DoC) as the nearby Cape Rodney Okakari Point Marine Reserve, rather than under two separate authorities as is currently the case.
- A marine reserve committee will provide ongoing assistance and input from key stakeholders into the management of the marine reserve.

The cumulative effect of these would be to enhance the protection of the area and the opportunities for the scientific study of marine life due to the improved status, recognition, management capacity, visibility and enforcement of the protected area.

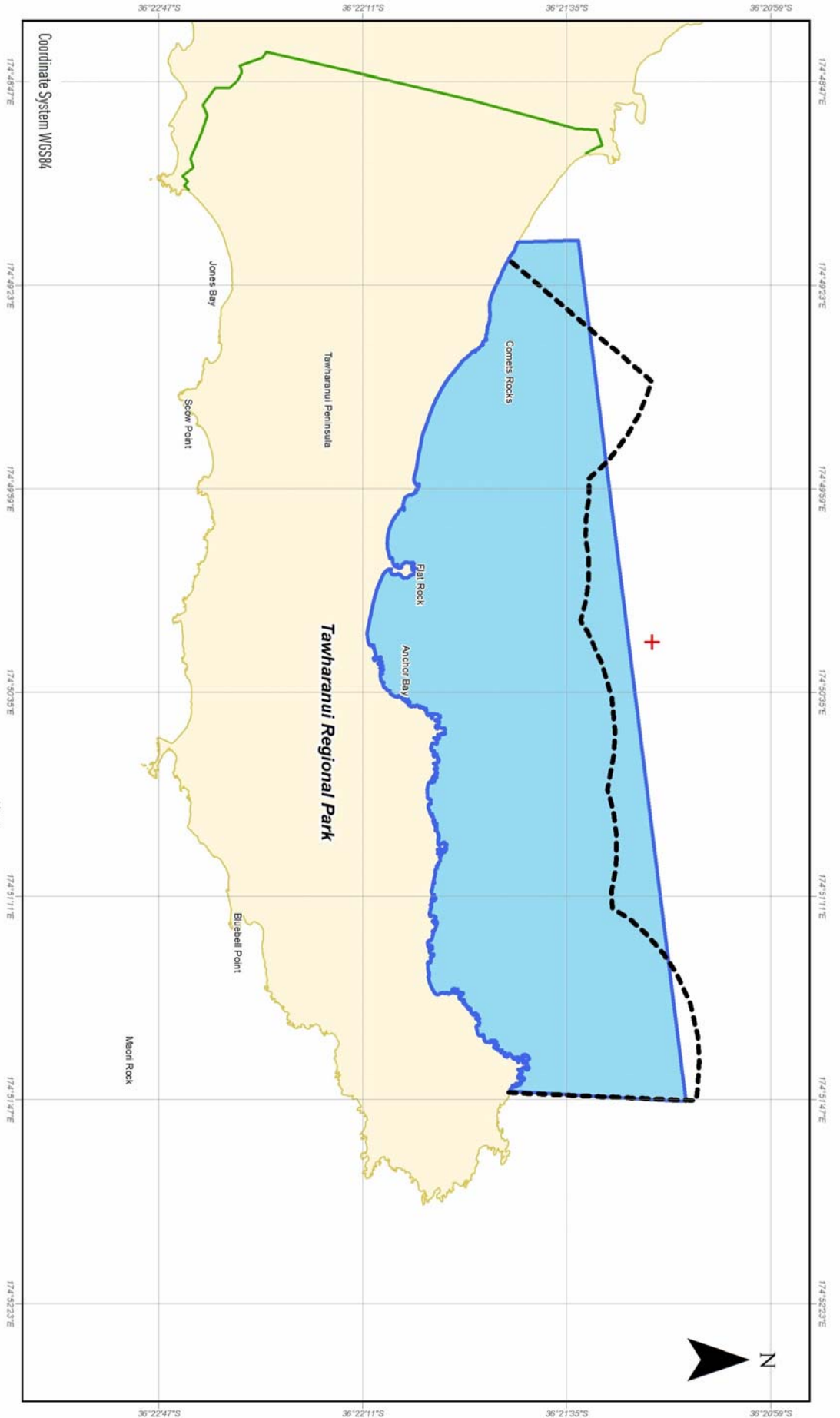
Where to from here

The ARC intends to lodge its application with the Director General of Conservation in April 2007.

Once lodged, the application will be subject to the process clearly outlined in the Marine Reserves Act 1971. The ARC's application will be publicly notified (scheduled for 15 May 2007) and the public will have a two-month period to make submissions on it to the Department of Conservation, Private Bag 68908, Newton, Auckland 1145. As the applicant, the ARC will have the opportunity to respond to the submissions. The Department of Conservation will prepare a report on the application, including any submissions and responses from the applicant, to pass on to the Minister of Conservation. The Minister will make the final decision on whether or not to grant marine reserve status.

Further Information

For further information on the Tawharanui Marine Reserve proposal please contact Andrew White (09) 366 2000 ext 8437 or andrew.white@arc.govt.nz or Jo Davidson (Communications Advisor) (09) 366 2000 ext 8071 or jo.davidson@arc.govt.nz.



Legend

- Existing Tawharanui Marine Park (395Ha)
- Proposed Marine Reserve Boundary (400Ha)
- Tawharanui Regional Park Boundary
- Cigar Reef

Tawharanui
Proposed Marine Reserve and Existing Marine Park Boundaries