



| water

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Policy on Regional Parks

November 2003

Working with our communities for a better environment



Structure

The policy is generally structured as follows:

- Part I: Outlines guiding principles, the scope of regional parks; and the Environment Bay of Plenty's role;
- Part II: Outlines assessment criteria.
- Part III: Outlines broad methods to achieve regional parks.
- Part IV: Outlines how Environment Bay of Plenty will work with others.
- Part V: Outlines management principles.





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Part I - Guiding Principles

1 Purpose of Policy

To provide a framework that sets out strategic goals for regional parks in the Bay of Plenty, and to provide a structure for dealing with specific regional parks acquisition and management decisions.

2 Scope of Policy

For the purposes of this policy, regional park means:

Open space¹ secured for the long-term enjoyment and benefit of the Bay of Plenty Region's people and visitors to the region and for the protection and enhancement of their environment.

3 Purposes of Regional Parks

3.1 Environment Bay of Plenty will consider the use of regional parks as a tool to achieve any of the following purposes, where these values or issues are of regional significance, or where there is a regional community of interest²:

- Preserving the special character of and the quality of life in the Bay of Plenty Region; or
- Enhancing public access to and enjoyment of the environment; or
- Environmental education and interpretation; or
- Engaging people in the protection and enhancement of natural and cultural heritage values³.

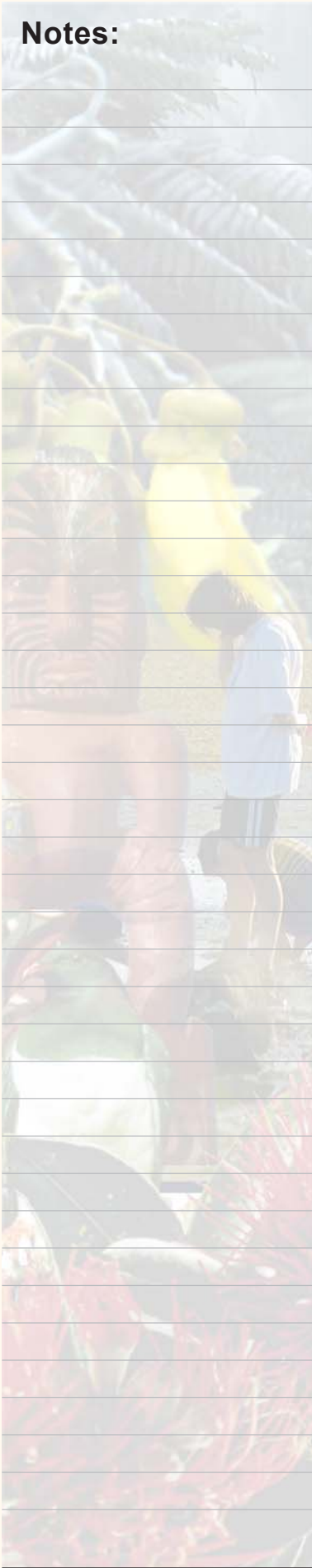
4 Vision for Regional Parks

An integrated system of public open space that provides for continued access to, and enjoyment of, the unique characteristics of the Bay of Plenty Region, by present and future generations.

¹ A predominantly unbuilt character.

² Not all land purchased by Environment Bay of Plenty is for the purpose of developing regional parks. For example, land may be leased or purchased primarily for the purpose specified in a regional plan. Land purchased primarily for such other purposes may be developed as a regional park, where the environmental and recreation values justify this.

³ For the purpose of resource management in the Bay of Plenty Region, "heritage place" is defined as any place of special interest of character, intrinsic or amenity value or visual appeal, or of special significance for spiritual, cultural or historical (including archaeological) reasons. Refer also to section 189(2) of the Resource Management Act 1991.

Notes:**5 Regional Council Niche**

Environment Bay of Plenty will provide, or contribute to, regional parks that meet the needs of significant numbers of the region's people for quality open-space experiences that characterise the region. The nature of regional parks will be such that they complement the public open space provided by other agencies, for example by filling the niche between the reserves owned by the Department of Conservation and district and city councils.

6 Partnerships

Partnerships with other agencies for the provision of regional parks and for the integrated management of open space in the Bay of Plenty Region, will be considered by Environment Bay of Plenty.

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Part II - Assessing Proposals for Regional Parks

7 Primary Assessment Criteria

The following criteria must be met before Environment Bay of Plenty will consider securing an interest in land for regional parks, or contributing to the purchase or maintenance of land for regional parks by other agencies:

- The purpose of the regional park is consistent with the visions expressed in Environment Bay of Plenty's policy and planning documents⁴; and
- A public interest in land is considered an appropriate way of protecting the values on the site, or adjoining land, and access to these values; and
- The regional community will potentially benefit from access to and, protection of the values on the site; and
- The land is or has potential to be generally suitable for establishment as a regional park, including the development or the enhancement of public access and facilities.

7.1 Level of Regional Investment

7.1.1 Environment Bay of Plenty will determine the level of regional investment in any regional park having regard to the following:

- The degree to which the purpose of the regional park is consistent with the priorities identified in section 7.2;
- The degree to which the purpose of the regional park is consistent with the visions expressed in Environment Bay of Plenty's policy and planning documents;
- The method of public security (e.g. acquisition or lease), and the degree to which this is in perpetuity;
- Existing and potential levels of use and demand for access;
- The type of partnerships entered into, and the level of funding and support provided by other agencies; and
- Requirements for the practical management of the park (e.g. minimum levels of service).

⁴Includes policy and planning documents such as the long term council community plan prepared under the Local Government Act 2002, the regional policy statement or regional plans prepared under the Resource Management Act 1991, or this policy, or non statutory strategies whose preparation included public consultation.

Notes:**7.2 Regional Priorities**

Environment Bay of Plenty will give priority to securing land where:

- The features on that land are unique and help to define the special character of the Bay of Plenty Region, and where that land is under threat or where the opportunity to secure the land arises and is unlikely to recur in the future.

Environment Bay of Plenty will also have regard to the following criteria:

- Multiple goals of public use and enjoyment and environmental sustainability can be achieved;
- The values on that land are under-represented at a regional level in the existing public open space network;
- There is opportunity to improve access to existing public open space assets (e.g. land owned by Environment Bay of Plenty);
- Securing land would significantly enhance the values of, or public access to reserves, including marine reserves;
- The land is part of a wider natural and cultural landscape;
- Securing land will lead to the creation of significant ecological networks and linkages (e.g. mountains to sea), and the enhancement of significant environmental values;
- The land is, or has the potential to be easily accessible to the public, and demand for that access is, or has potential to be high; and
- The interest in the land can be secured in perpetuity.

7.3 Work Outside Region

To consider the purchase of regional parkland outside the Bay of Plenty Region where this land achieves one or more of the following purposes:

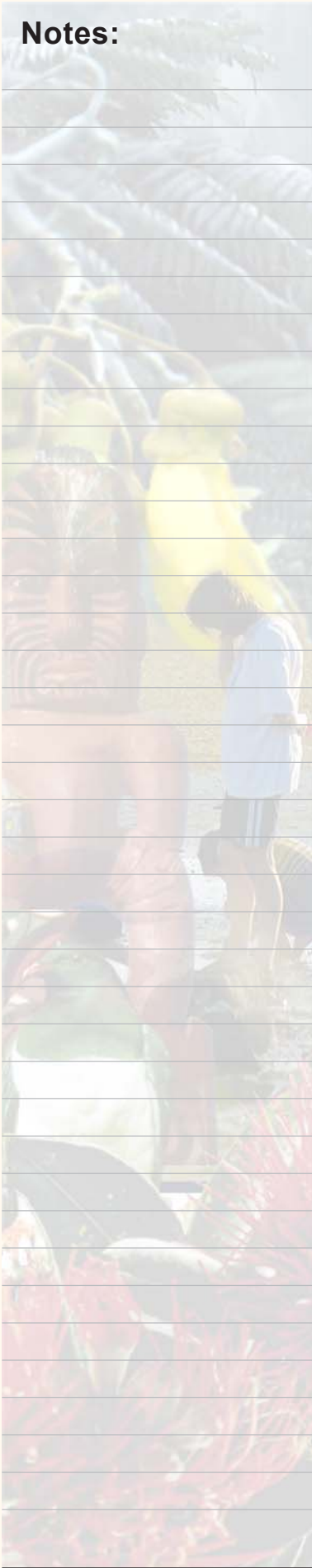
- Adjoins existing regional parks and can significantly add to the value of the regional park, for example adding to the recreation potential of the park and/or protecting environmental/cultural values;
- Where there is a demonstrable benefit to the people of the Bay of Plenty Region; and
- Where the values of the land are consistent with the relevant objectives, policies and criteria in the Draft Policy on Regional Parks.

Notes:**7.4 Regional Park Land Types and Priorities**

Priorities for securing regional parks, by Environment Bay of Plenty acting in partnership with other agencies, or independently, will be considered having regard to the following:

Priority	Broad Land Type	Example of features likely to be included.
1	Coastal - open coast headlands and spits	Dunelands, land adjoining sandy beaches, islands, rocky headlands and shores, spits, islands.
1	Harbourside and estuarine	Harbour headlands, peninsulas and saltmarsh.
1	Freshwater - lakes, rivers and wetlands	Land adjacent to rivers, wetlands and lakes. Environment Bay of Plenty owned land in existing river control schemes.
2	Unique cultural landscapes or features	Maori fortifications, historical sites.
2	Outstanding natural features and landscapes	Mountains, prominent ridges, waterfalls, geothermal features, high points.
2	Indigenous vegetation	Biodiversity values, forest, wetlands, dunes.
3	Rural/farm	Rural land integrating natural features such as streams, bush, views etc. with active farm management, farm parks.
3	Specific amenity	Formal gardens, arboretum.

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Part III - Broad Principles of Involvement

8 Options for Securing Regional Parks

8.1 Objective

Methods for securing land which best provide for protection of values, secure a long-term public interest in land, and meet the aspirations of the regional community.

8.2 Policies

8.2.1 To consider the following options for securing a public interest in land:

- Land purchase; or
- Long term lease; or
- Long term management or access agreements (e.g. covenants); or
- Statutory tools (e.g. heritage protection orders, or zoning)

8.2.2 To give priority to purchase or leasing of land by Environment Bay of Plenty, or Environment Bay of Plenty working with other agencies, where a negotiated agreement with landowners is possible.

8.2.3 To establish ownership and management structures, having regard to the following:

- The degree to which the option will facilitate the objectives of the park and achieve desirable outcomes; and
- The degree to which the option will secure land in perpetuity; and
- The acceptability of the option to all partners involved in the ownership and management of the park; and
- Consistency with legislative requirements and any relevant plan or policy documents; and
- Ease of implementation; and
- Long term costs.

Notes:**9 Regional Park Funding Options****9.1 Objective**

A regional parks network funded equitably, and in a manner that recognises that the beneficiaries of the regional parks network will include present and future generations.

9.2 Policy

9.2.1 To give priority to funding the capital costs of regional parks through general funds (including reserves) or loans (internal or external) serviced from general funds;

9.2.2 To give priority to funding Environment Bay of Plenty regional parks operating costs through an activity in its annual plan funded by general income, including rates;

9.2.3 To consider opportunities to offset the costs of ongoing management of parks (e.g. self funding 'farm park' arrangements), where this will not restrict public enjoyment of the asset, or adversely affect the values of the land;

9.2.4 To consider where appropriate, other funding or cost sharing options for regional parks, including:

- Targeted rates (e.g. coastal occupation charges for coastal or marine parks);
- Contributions from partners;
- Community trusts;
- Central government grants;
- Sponsorship or grants;
- Bequests and donations;
- Land management income earning practices (e.g. farm parks, forestry); and
- Commercial partnerships (e.g. camp grounds and concessions).

10 Future Acquisition**10.1 Objective**

A regional parks network, which is developed in a cooperative and timely way, which reflects aspirations of the community, and for which the long term benefits outweigh the costs.

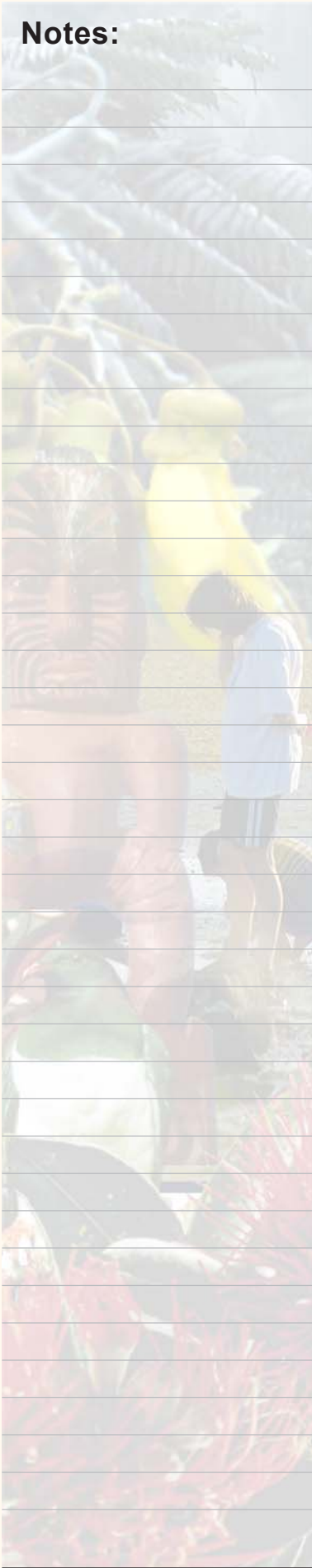
Notes:**10.2 Policies**

10.2.1 To develop, based on community aspirations, a regional parks implementation strategy, in partnership with district and city councils, Department of Conservation and other agencies that identifies:

- Existing and potential gaps in the existing public open space network; and
- Priority areas for regional parks; and
- Timeframes for securing land; and
- Capital and management costs.

10.2.2 To ensure that district and city councils have an opportunity to contribute to decisions over land acquisitions.

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Part IV - Working with Others

11 Other Agencies

11.1 Objective

Enhanced ability to achieve the vision for regional parks through partnerships with other agencies and organisations.

11.2 Policies

11.2.1 To consider a range of partnership options for securing an interest in land where this is effective and efficient, including:

- Ownership or leasing and management by Environment Bay of Plenty;
- Ownership or leasing by Environment Bay of Plenty, where other agencies⁵ have a secured interest in management;
- Joint ownership or leasing and management of land by Environment Bay of Plenty and other agencies;
- Ownership or leasing by other agencies, where Environment Bay of Plenty has a secured interest in management; and

11.2.2 To contribute to the enhancement of services and facilities in existing and under used parts of the open space network, including on land owned by other agencies (e.g. Department of Conservation and district and city councils), where this meets the purpose of regional parks and the criteria outlined in 6 above.

11.2.3 To advocate to district and city councils, and other organisations, to make adequate provision for future reserve requirements.

11.2.4 Cooperation with private landowners to safeguard significant areas by means of joint ownership, leasing and management strategies.

11.2.5 To utilise the local knowledge, expertise and resources of the district and city councils, other agencies and the community in achieving the purposes of regional parks.

12 Tangata Whenua

12.1 Objective

Tangata whenua participation in regional parks through the expression and practice of kaitiakitanga, and the management of heritage values.

⁵ Other agencies could include Government and non -Government agencies, including but not limited to district and city councils, Department of Conservation, and iwi or hapu.

Notes:**12.2 Policies**

- 12.2.1 To work with tangata whenua in the management of ancestral land, sites, and taonga of significance to them within regional parks.
- 12.2.2. To ensure tangata whenua input into the development of education material, and approval of interpretation material relating to their ancestral land, sites, and taonga within regional parks.
- 12.2.3 To have regard to the customary use of natural resources within regional parks by tangata whenua;
- 12.2.4 To remain aware of Treaty of Waitangi claims and to take these into account when considering the acquisition development and management of regional parks;
- 12.2.5 To provide for tangata whenua to contribute to decisions over land acquisitions, changes in land ownership and in any major developments within regional parks, where these activities may affect heritage values or the relationship of tangata whenua with that land.

13 Community Participation**13.1 Objective**

A community that values its regional parks and that is actively involved in experiencing, protecting, enhancing and promoting them.

13.2 Policies

- 13.2.1 To promote a range of opportunities for people, communities and organisations to be involved in and make use of regional parks;
- 13.2.2 To encourage community initiated proposals for the management of regional parks where this is consistent with the purpose of the regional park;
- 13.2.3 To develop a regional park education strategy;
- 13.2.4 To provide role models and examples of environmental best practice in the management of regional parks.
- 13.2.5 To provide for community participation including using processes under the Local Government Act 2002.

Notes:

Part V - Managing and Using Regional Parks

14 Asset Management

14.1 Objective

Transparent management of regional parks.

14.2 Policies

14.2.1 To develop management plans for all regional parks, in a manner consistent with the requirements under the Local Government Act 2002;

14.2.2 To consider protecting regional parks from sale and disposal in perpetuity, by an Order in Council under Section 139 of the Local Government Act 2002;

14.2.3 To consider where appropriate the designation of regional parks under the Resource Management Act 1991, and/or classification under the Reserves Act 1977, where this would significantly enhance the protection and management of values within the park;

14.2.4 To consider where appropriate the sale and disposal of land within regional parks, including minor boundary adjustments, only where:

- The land was not suitable for regional parks purposes; or
- Its retention would not materially enhance the conservation or recreation values of that park; or
- Its disposal would enhance the efficient administration of the regional park.

15 Protection and Enhancement

15.1 Objective

Values in parks are identified, protected, enhanced, interpreted and promoted.

15.2 Policies

15.2.1 To retain existing heritage resources within parks, and protect and restore these values where appropriate;

15.2.3 To maintain accurate records on values within parks and to protect sensitive information and knowledge related to these values and sites.

Notes:

- 15.2.4 To provide for flexible management structures that reflect the unique values within each park, and the park's purpose of providing for people's appreciation of those values;
- 15.2.5 To minimise any adverse effects on surrounding land, or from surrounding land, through appropriate management practices and consultation with landowners.

16 Use and Access**16.1 Objective**

Access to a full range of values and facilities within parks, while providing for the protection of heritage values, and public health and safety.

16.2 Policies

- 16.2.1 To allow access to and within all parks where practical⁶ and to restrict access only when this is necessary to provide for public health and safety, reasonable management practices, or to protect sensitive heritage and ecological sites and information (e.g. waahi tapu or urupa);
- 16.2.2 To allow free public access to parks, and to consider charging for levels of service or use beyond that provided to the general public;
- 16.2.3 To allow for uses which are consistent with the purpose and character of the park and which do not detract from the values of the park.
- 16.2.4 To give priority to those uses which are consistent with the purpose of the park, and which best promote and protect the parks values, where uses are conflicting or competing;
- 16.2.5 To provide a range of recreational opportunities within parks, while balancing this with the protection of park values, while recognising that not all recreational facilities will be offered in all parks.
- 16.2.6 To provide levels of facilities consistent with the purpose of regional parks and which focus on public health and safety, interpretation, and facilitating peoples enjoyment of the outdoors;

⁶ In some cases access may be limited due to physical and cultural constraints within a park.

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16.2.7 To consider allowing the establishment of commercial facilities and operations within parks, including camping grounds, where this use:

- Is consistent with the purpose of the park; and
- Does not adversely impact upon the values of the site; and
- Does not interfere with public access to the site.

16.3 Criteria

16.3.1 To assess the effects of proposed new activities and facilities within parks having regard to the following criteria:

- The extent to which the proposal is consistent with the purpose of the park; and
- The extent to which the proposal will detract from public use and enjoyment of the park and its facilities; and
- The extent and degree to which the proposal will modify or damage any values on the site, and any opportunities for mitigation of these effects; and
- The extent to which the proposal is necessary to provide for reasonable public access and use of the park, and for the operation of essential park facilities.
- The extent to which the proposal is consistent with the management plan for the park.

17 Programme Links**17.1 Objective**

Integration between activities and outcomes in regional parks and other Environment Bay of Plenty programmes.

17.2 Policy

17.2.1 To have regard to all Environment Bay of Plenty's statutory and policy documents, including the long term council community plan, strategic and annual plan, the regional policy statement, regional plans, strategies and operational policy, when selecting, securing and managing land for regional parks⁷;

17.2.2 To have regard to the planning and policy documents of other agencies, including recreation and open space strategies, and iwi and hapu management plans when selecting, securing and managing land for regional parks;

⁷Environment Bay of Plenty has a number of programmes to achieve sustainable management of resources, including programmes working with landowners and the community. Some examples are the Environmental Enhancement Fund, coast care, environment education, biodiversity protection on private land, pest control, land improvement agreements.

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- 17.2.3 To promote Environment Bay of Plenty's objectives, policies and environmental programmes through parks education and interpretation material.

18 Monitoring and Research

18.1 Objective

Decisions on regional parks acquisition, and parks management, that are based on sound information and research.

18.2 Policies

- 18.2.1 To develop a monitoring programme for all regional parks that documents:
- Statistics on public use and enjoyment (e.g. levels, benefits and costs, and demographics);
 - Natural and cultural values contained within the park
 - Management programmes, and their effects (e.g. pest control);
 - The effects of any activities or facilities on the park environment.
- 18.2.2 To review the effectiveness of this policy on regional parks at intervals of not more than three years in consultation with the public.



Appendix II - Reference List

Assessment of the Bay of Plenty Public Open Space Network, APR Consultants, April 2001.

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