

Bay of Plenty Coast Care

Every time we go to the beach we think of sun, sand, surf and fun. Now let's have a closer look at the beach environment – the sea, beach, sand dunes, dune vegetation and reserve areas. All these areas play an important part in the visual appearance, function, natural character and enjoyment of our beaches.

What is Coast Care?

Coast Care is a community volunteer programme, coordinated by Bay of Plenty Regional Council in partnership with Tauranga City Council; Whakatāne, Western Bay of Plenty, and Ōpōtiki District Councils; and the Department of Conservation.

The purpose of the Coast Care programme is to protect, enhance and restore the natural coastal environment with a focus on dune systems.

The four goals of the programme are:

- 1 To enhance the resilience of dune systems to withstand the impact of population growth, coastal hazards and relevant climate change effects.
- 2 To educate those who manage, benefit from, or use Bay of Plenty beaches about natural dune ecosystems.
- 3 To promote tangata whenua and community involvement in the management of their beaches.
- 4 To protect and enhance the natural character and biodiversity of Bay of Plenty beaches.

Coast Care draws its volunteers from a cross section of the community including schools and kura, corporate groups, coastal landowners, conservationists, and coast care groups organised around a specific piece of beach. All are united in their care for this fragile environment, working tirelessly to ensure it is protected and maintained for the benefit of all.

The programme is managed by four restoration coordinators who are tasked with delivering the planting and maintenance programme, supporting volunteers with advice and resources, and delivering an educational programme to volunteers and schools.

Sand dunes

Beaches and sand dunes are the narrow but precious bands of sand between the land and sea. Sand dunes in their natural state provide amazingly effective protection to the land, its people and their housing from storms, cyclones, and tsunamis. Dunes covered with native dune plants give us our distinctive New Zealand coastline, screening coastal development from view, allowing a sense of returning to nature at many beaches. Sand dunes are also home to a range of unique insects, lizards, and birds that only live in these areas.

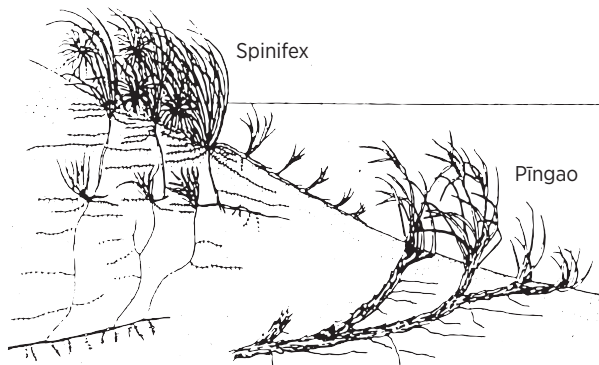




Sand dune plants

Native dune plants can survive severe storms, salt spray and being buried by sand. However they evolved in a land without mammals, and are therefore sensitive to trampling and grazing. Spinifex and pīngao are our two most effective native sand-trapping plants. They grow on the front of the dunes where their root systems, long runners and tall leaves enable wind-blown sand to be trapped in the dunes.

Section of sand dune



What can you do to help?

Use formal accessways such as board walks, steps and marked tracks wherever provided. Do not drive vehicles in the dunes – if you must take a vehicle on the beach please observe the local rules and if possible travel along the beach below the high tide mark.

Encourage your friends and children to respect the dunes and play elsewhere (there is lots of space on the beach itself). In particular do not play on the critically important seaward face of the dunes.

Do not light fires in the dunes. Many of our dune species are slow growing and susceptible to fire.

Do not dump personal household and garden rubbish in these areas – not only does it look unsightly, but it can also be dangerous and aids the spread of weeds. Use the rubbish bins provided or take your rubbish home and recycle it.

Keep dogs under control. These plants have fragile runners which do not like being trampled by people, animals, horses, cars, quadbikes or motorbikes. Help to protect these plants by not walking and playing in these areas.



Find out more

For more information on Coast Care groups and programmes contact:

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Bay of Plenty Regional Council in partnership with Tauranga City Council; Whakatāne, Western Bay of Plenty, and Ōpōtiki District Councils; and the Department of Conservation.