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OUTDOOR RECREATION RESOURCES
IN THE MANAWATU
With
A PRELIMINARY CASE STUDY
OF FOXTON BEACH AS A
WATER-BASED RECREATION RESOURCE

A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfilment
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ABSTRACT

The subject of supply of outdoor recreation resources is discussed in this thesis. The nature of the resources suitable for outdoor recreation and the present use made of them are determined. The extent and use of one type of recreation resource in the Manawatu - the Water-based recreation resource - is extensively reviewed. A preliminary case study is made of Foxton Beach as a water - based recreation environment. The results of the study of the ecological implications of recreation on the beach and the visitor surveys conducted there are presented. Major areas of 'ecological intolerance' are described and the recreation behaviours exhibited by the visitors at the beach are reported. Foxton Beach is reported to be able to attract visitors from within and outside the Manawatu region.

PREFACE

"Leisure of course will be greatly extended. A much shorter work-week will no doubt prevail in 1980, and another ten or fifteen years will have been added to the average life-span Not labour but leisure will be the great problem in the decade ahead. That prospect should be accepted as a God-given opportunity to add dimensions of enjoyment and grace to life."

David Sarnoff, FORTUNE

January 1955.

In this age of the population and leisure explosions New Zealand's landscape has become one of her most valuable - and most vulnerable - assets. Yet there exists no recognised need to evaluate this asset for outdoor recreation. There is, moreover, surprisingly little concern about the implications that growing outdoor recreation has on this asset. One might offer, therefore, an evaluation of the Manawatu landscape for outdoor recreation resources, an account of its present supply and the ecological implications that outdoor recreation has for some of these resources.

This thesis is an exercise in Recreation Resource Planning and does not aspire to be anything more. The study is aimed mainly at making an inventory of recreation resources, with a case study on a water - based recreation resource. It is hoped that part of the results may be valuable in the field of Planning, and also stimulate further research in this much neglected relationship between leisure and natural resources.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
Abstract	II
Preface	III
Acknowledgements	IV
Table of Contents	V
List of Tables	VI
List of Figures	VIII
List of Plates	X
Glossary	XII
Introduction	1
Chapter One	Resource Survey 5
Chapter Two	Available Population and Resources 27
Chapter Three	Inventory and Management 39
Chapter Four	Part One : The Manawatu Water Recreation Environments. 64 Part Two : Foxton Beach - A Preliminary Case Study of A Water-Based Recreation Environment. 99
Chapter Five	Summary and Conclusions 142
Photo Coverage	
Appendices	149
Bibliography	170

LIST OF TABLES

<u>TABLE</u>		<u>PAGE</u>
I	Assessment of Land-based recreation resources	10
II	Assessment of Water-based recreation resources	15
III	Assessment of conservation interest	17
IV	Assessment of landform landscapes	21
V	Assessment of landuse landscapes	22
VI	Relationships of landform and landuse landscapes	23
VII	Composite scores of landuse and landform landscapes, and assessment of scenic resource	24
VIII	Theoretical and practical grade score system	25
IX	Relative quality of recreation environments of the Manawatu	25
X	The supply of scenic reserves	41
XI	An Inventory of recreation opportunity on publicly designated recreation areas	45
XII	Recreation acreage as percentage of total county land area	48
XIII	Comparison of recreation densities	49
XIV	Availability of Crown and Maori lands in the Manawatu	52
XV	Habits of outdoor recreationalists in Britian	72
XVI	Average Accessibility Index	77
XVII	Accessibility Index	78
XVIII	Chemical Test to Show Water Quality	84
XIX	Mean daily maximum and minimum temperature for Ohakea (1940 - 1970 °)	104
XX	Method of Travel	120

<u>TABLE</u>		<u>PAGE</u>
XXI	"How far have you travelled to get here today?"	121
XXII	Origins of Visitors	122
XXIII	"Is your visit a trip out from home or part of a holiday stay here?"	123
XXIV	Patterns of visiting Foxtton Beach	124
XXV	"When was your last visit?"	125
XXVI	"What were your reasons for coming here?"	126
XXVII	Satisfaction with Beach	127
XXVIII	Changes desired at Foxtton Beach	128
XXIX	"Which of the following facilities would you like to see developed?"	130
XXX	"Would you visit Foxtton Beach again in the near future?"	131
XXXI	"When do you think you will visit this place again?"	131
XXXII	Size of Groups	132
XXXIII	Composition of Group	133
XXXIV	Personal data of visitors	133

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>FIGURE</u>		<u>BETWEEN</u> <u>PAGES</u>
1.	Location	3 & 4
2.	Physical Characteristics	4 & 5
3.	Systems Approach to Recreation Resourch Evaluation	6 & 7
4.	Suitability for Land-Based Recreation	8 & 9
5.	Suitabiltiy for Water-Based Recreation	11 & 12
6.	Relative Ecological Evaluation	14 & 15
7.	Land-form Landscapes	20 & 21
8.	Land-use landscapes	22 & 23
9.	Scenery	23 & 24
10.	Recreation Environments	24 & 25
11.	Available Population within 10 miles	29 & 30
12.	Available Population within 30 miles	31 & 32
13.	Available Population within 50 miles	34 & 35
14.	Outdoor Recreation Resources - Scenic Reserves and Public Recreation Areas	40 & 41
15.	Available Supply - Crown and Maori Lands	52 & 53
16.	Organisation of a Regional Agency	56 & 57
17.	Regional Agency - Relationship to other Organisations	58 & 59
18.	Comparative Physical Accessibility	78 & 79
19.	River Pollution - Manawatu and Oroua Rivers	80 & 81
20.	Site of Proposed Weir	87 & 88
21.	Proposed Weir - Artist Impression	88 & 89
22.	Proposed Plan for Raumai Recreation Area	89 & 90
23.	Riverbank at Esplanade	91 & 92

FIGUREBETWEEN
PAGES

24.	A Proposed Plan for Coastal Recreation	97 & 98
25.	Foxton Beach: Relative location, Population Structure and Wind Patterns	102 & 103
26.	Foxton Beach: Two Profiles	105 & 106
27.	Application of McHarg's Analysis of Ecological Tolerance	107 & 108
28.	Recreation Activities	112 & 113
29.	Relative Ecological Sensitivity	113 & 114
30.	Zoning for Recreation	115 & 116
31.	Origins of Journeys 22 October 1972	123 & 124
32.	Origins of Journeys 12 November 1972	123 & 124
33.	Origins of Journeys 14 January 1973	123 & 124
34.	Origins of Journeys - Percentage of Combined total of the 3 surveys	123 & 124
35.	A Conceptual Plan for Recreation Development	135 & 136

LIST OF PLATES

X.

- Plate 1 Relief Typical of 'Lower Range' Landform
- Plate 2 Relief Typical of 'Rolling Hill' Landform
- Plate 3 Power-Boating Environment of Whirokino Bridge,
Manawatu River
- Plate 4 Totara Reserve
- Plate 5 Existing Raumai Picnic Area
- Plate 6 The Proposed 'Raumai Recreation Area.'
- Plate 7 Vinegar Hill Picnic Area
- Plate 8 Scenic View of Oroua River
- Plate 9 Aerial View of Himatangi Township
- Plate 10 View of Tangimoana Beach Front
- Plate 11 View of Lake Kaikokopu
- Plate 12 View of Lake Kopatara
- Plate 13 Aerial View of Foxton Beach
- Plate 14 Aerial View of Foxton Beach looking Northwards
- Plate 15 Foredune Environment of Foxton Beach
- Plate 16 Low-Tide at the Manawatu River Mouth Beach
- Plate 17 Aerial View of Public Recreation Facilities
at Foxton Beach Township
- Plate 18 Public Picnic Area at Foxton Beach
- Plate 19 View of Car Park, Foxton Beach
- Plate 20 Low-Tide at Manawatu River Mouth Beach Boat Ramp
- Plate 21 Beach-Bugging inside Ecologically 'Intolerant
Zone.'
- Plate 22 View of Ocean Beach Looking Northwards
- Plate 23 View of Ocean Beach Looking Southwards
- Plate 24 View of Rubbish Tip, Foxton Beach
- Plate 25 A Legacy of Bad Siting of Rubbish Tip

- Plate 26 Aerial View of Ocean Beach
- Plate 27 View of Public Car Park from the Beach
- Plate 28 Housing Encroachment on Beach Front, Foxton
Beach.

GLOSSARY

- Fabridam: An inflatable and deflatable rubberized fabric table which can be pressurized by either air or water. When fully inflated it acts as a fixed dam comparable to a rigid structure; when completely deflated it offers a minimum flow resistance and permits the passage of flood flows.
- M.R.D.C.: Manawatu Regional Development Council.
- Outdoor Recreation: "Leisure time activity undertaken in a relatively non-urban environment characterized by a natural setting for the primary purpose of enjoyment and physical or mental well-being."
- O.R.R.R.C.: Outdoor Recreation Resource Review Commission.
- P.N.C.C.: Palmerston North City Corporation.
- P.N.C.D.A.: Palmerston North Civic Design Association.

INTRODUCTION

The recreational use of leisure is as old as the hills and the history of outdoor recreation is as long as that of trade. It was not, however, until after the Industrial Revolution that together with a transformation in systems of transport and communications, and, the growth in affluence and leisure, did outdoor recreation in the developed countries make a significant impact on the national natural resources. Within the last twenty-five years or so its growth has been so significant and demanding that it has been now exploded with a new industry - the recreation industry. Internally in New Zealand, the index for the propensity to participate in outdoor recreation has also increased significantly.

Recreation is an accepted and important part of life and the inclusion of recreation planning within the planning world is now a vital and inevitable one. Fairly rapid changes in recreational requirements are expected to result from population growth, technological changes and economic factors in New Zealand. The increase in mobility over the last few years through the access to a motor car has provided an easy means of escape from the humdrum life of an urban environment: everyone wants to be a gypsy, keen to tow the caravan to get away from it all. This factor of mobility has triggered off an outdoor recreation movement that is often orientated towards countryside resources. Consequently, the growth and demand for outdoor recreation will bring major pressure for shifts in resource use. It is therefore important to plan for outdoor recreational use of resources. Hence, one of the principal

planning goals towards which this study was directed was the assessment of resources for outdoor recreation. The other goal was to account for how existing resources were used.

The concern with outdoor recreation is a natural one, and while demand on resources is inevitable following a rising and continuing trend for outdoor life, little is available in New Zealand on research and planning studies of outdoor recreation resources. Studies of any major significance to research understanding are limited to those on the Waimakariri River (Dalmer 1971; Hayward and Boffer 1972); Foreshore of Waimairi (Lincoln); and, Kawakawa Beach (Auckland Regional Authority 1972). This study hopes to make a contribution to the use of outdoor recreation resources in the Manawatu area.

The thesis proposes to focus on the supply aspect of resources for outdoor recreation. More specifically, it proposes to determine the nature of the resources suitable for outdoor recreation, and, where recreation resources have been developed, the present use made of them. The purpose of planning recreational resources is, first, to evaluate the physical environment for its suitability for outdoor recreation purposes (such an evaluation allows natural resources to be classified for outdoor recreation uses); and second, to allow the quality, quantity and spatial distribution of these to be identified and mapped. Chapter One of the thesis is provided with these objectives in view; the techniques used for evaluation are modelled closely along those used in the Lanarkshire Study (Coppock 1970).

The thesis is divided into three further chapters. Chapter two is concerned with the spatial dimensions and

patterns of user pressures where the spatial relationships between the 'available' recreation resources and peoples (which have recreation planning and development implications) can be discerned.

The third chapter presents an inventory of public outdoor recreation areas in the study area and also advances a cause for a 'regional agency' to manage, acquire and supervise development of recreation resources for the region.

Chapter four of this thesis looks at the use of a specific category of recreation resource - the water-based recreation resource. This chapter is divided into two parts: Part I describes broadly the present use made of the different types of water-bodies in the study area for outdoor recreation and the proposals made for future use of these resources. Part II defines Foxton Beach as a preliminary case study of a water recreation resource where the present use and future developments of the beach are considered from the ecological and social perspectives. The summary and conclusions are in the last chapter.

The area under study

The area under study comprises of the five counties of Kairanga, Oroua, Kiwitea, Manawatu and Pohangina. These counties are statistical areas and the grouping of these together help form a core unit for study. For the purpose of identification this core area shall be referred herein as the Manawatu region. An indication of the region's boundary and location with respect to the whole of the North Island is given in figure 1. The physical characteristics of the region is shown in figure 2. The dichotomy between lowland and upland is evident in this figure.

LOCATION

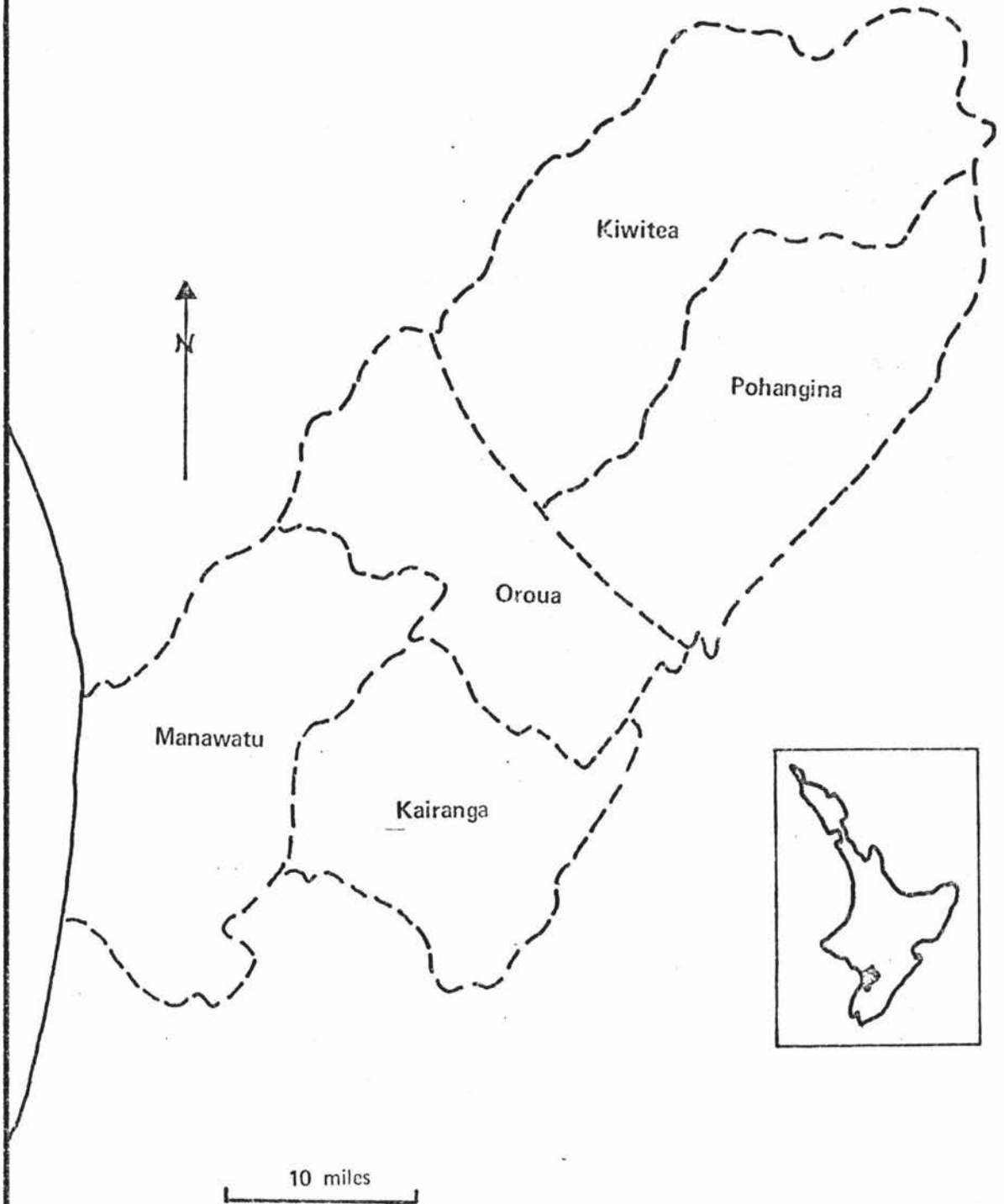


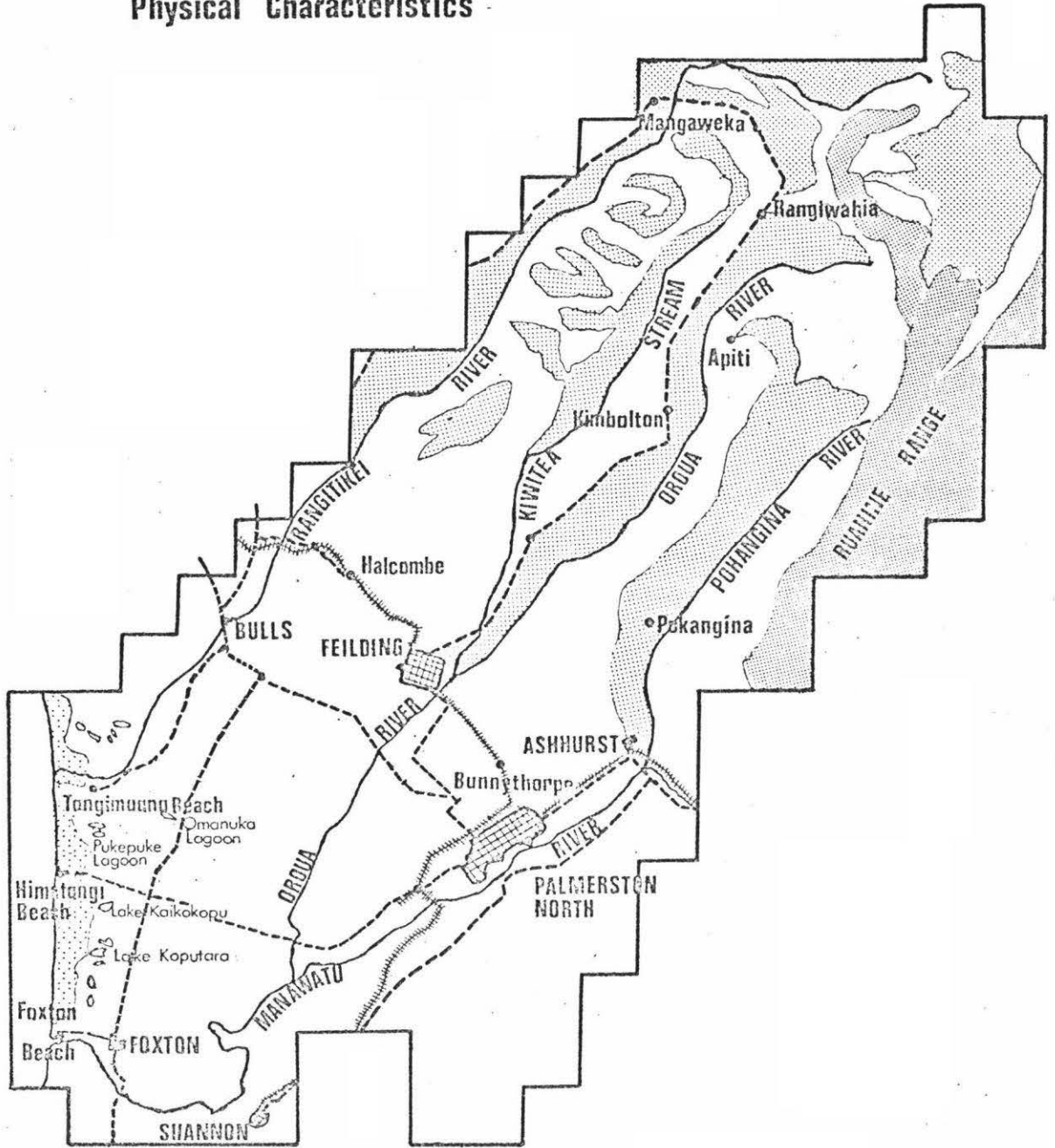
Figure 1

On the west is a belt of sand in the form of dunes and plains and these extend up to twenty miles inland from the coast. This sand country represents the most recent stage in geological development of the region's coastal lowland. Inland from the sand belt lies the extensive sheet of alluvial flood plain. This is the fertile agricultural area. Relief at the sand country seldom exceeds fifty feet and those on the low lying agricultural plains seldom reach an altitude greater than twenty feet above sea level. This extensive lowland formed by the sand country and the agricultural plain gives way to a rolling and hill topography where the southern end e.g. the Mount Stewart - Halcombe - Feilding anticlines combine with the dissected river terraces to elevate the surface to heights between 120 to 600 feet. The eastern margin of the study area is bounded by higher reliefs e.g. the foothills and range environments of the northern Tarawas and the Ruahines.

The north-eastern margin is formed by the Rangitikei River and this is joined by the Kawhatau in the extreme north. The Oroua and the Kiwitea rivers run through longitudinally to 'divide' the region into halves, with the Manawatu river looping its way at the lower end to form the south-west end boundary.

STUDY AREA

Physical Characteristics




RAILWAY 

MAIN RIVERS 

SAND DUNES 

MAJOR URBAN AREAS 

MAIN TOWNS 

STATE HIGHWAYS 

RANGES 

HIGH COUNTRY 

FIGURE 2