



46 High Street
Private Bag 1102
Marton
Telephone (06) 327-8174
Facsimile (06) 327-6970

26 January 2000

CO2-3-2

The Secretary
Koitiata Residents Committee
50 Wainui Street
Turakina Beach
RD11
Wanganui

Attn: Mrs J Nation

Dear Mrs Nation

Causeway: Turakina River

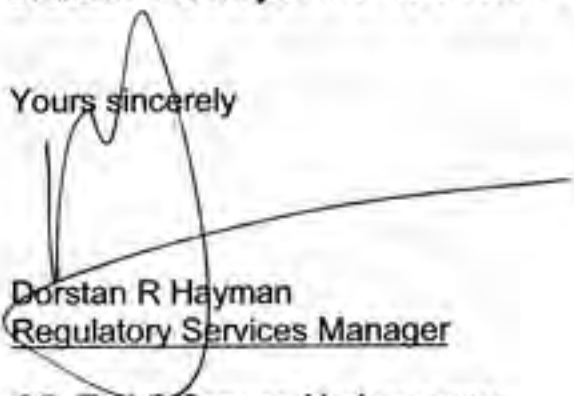
Further to my letter dated the 30th November 1999 I confirm that I have had a response from both the Department of Conservation and the Regional Council.

The Department of Conservation have indicated that since the reserve area is vested in Council they have no need to get involved with your proposal.

The Regional Council have indicated that because of the hazards associated with constructing a causeway in an erosion prone environment they would not suggest the project be pursued.

Messrs O'Connor and Alan Cook of the Regional Council together with myself are available should you wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely


Dorstan R Hayman
Regulatory Services Manager

CC Ted O'Connor, Horizons.mw

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Rangitikei
The Undiscovered Secret

17 August 2000

EM 08 03
ECO-FAC

Regulatory Services Manager
Rangitikei District Council
Private Bag 1102
MARTON

Dear Dorstan

CAUSEWAY: TURAKINA RIVER

Alan Cook and I have made a complete inspection of the old Turakina River channel and the site of the proposed causeway, which will be through the childrens playground.

The existing track to the coast to the south is difficult to use, even by a 4WD vehicle. It also crosses into the area containing the forest and it is probable the forest company owning the trees would have concerns with their forest being utilised in this way.

To the north there is a steep drop into the old channel and the only access would be by private land.

The proposed causeway alignment is in the narrowest area of the old channel and the present track to it crosses some wet, swampy land before reaching the water. The wet, swampy area of the alignment is almost beyond the capabilities of a number of 4WD vehicles and would require considerable upgrading. To maintain an all-weather track to the beach will require a considerable amount of fill.

On the day of the inspection we met a couple of the Kaitiata Community who informed us the track would not be that high as the lagoon was to be lowered by a cut to the sea. It was very unclear where this was to be sited, but if this is what is planned, then such a cut would involve considerable excavation and ongoing maintenance. There was a suggestion the cut may be close to the causeway alignment and if that is the case an area of the coastal dune will need to be removed.

It is quite feasible to construct a causeway but it will have a cost. Its chances of remaining in place long term are not high.

I have considerable concern with the draining of the water from the old channel and the tidal implications a cut to the sea would put in place.

The causeway itself, and its associated culvert would not be of great concern to horizons.mw. The possible cut to the sea through the dunes and the diversion and drainage of water will have environmental effects.

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The Community will require consents from horizons.mw for the proposal. They will need to apply for all the things they wish to do, i.e. the causeway embankment and the culvert through it, the excavated channel to the coast and the diversion of water through it as well as the drainage of the present lagoon by it and finally any excavation or quarrying of the coastal dune.

A check will be required again with Department of Conservation. They may not have had any concern with the causeway, but they may have concern with the removal of the lagoon. I suspect the Fish and Game Council will also have some concerns with the lagoon drainage.

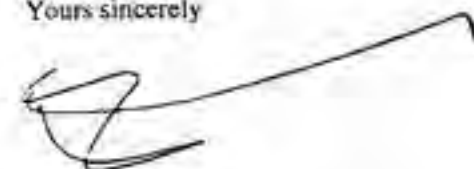
A check should also be made with the farm to the north. A large area accreted to that property and then was avulsed from it. As the property is in Maori ownership, they now have a claim on a considerable portion of the avulsed land. They may have little interest in the issue but they are an affected party.

It is difficult to say at this stage if the consent applications need to be notified. I suspect if Department of Conservation, Fish and Game, the Maori owners to the north, the forestry owners to the south and the Kaitiaki Community, have no concerns with the proposal and give their written consent to the proposal, then it could go non-notified.

I suspect the Community will want your Council to be the Applicant and pay for the work. It will not be cheap and some clear estimates of what it will cost will need to be made as well as how the funding will be obtained. Your discussions with the Kaitiaki residents tomorrow will possibly address some of these issues.

I hope this information is of assistance and let me know how you get on tomorrow.

Yours sincerely



E C O'Connor
PROJECT MANAGER

07 September 2000

0/0/GEN
GTL:FAC

Koitiata Residents' Committee
21 Rapakai Street
Koitiata
R D 11
WANGANUI

Attention Jan Gaskin

Dear Jan

RESOURCE CONSENT REQUIREMENTS FOR PROPOSED CAUSEWAY - TURAKINA ESTUARY

It has come to my attention that the Koitiata Residents' Committee is considering constructing a causeway across the former Turakina River Estuary to provide access for the residents to the beach, and possibly draining the 'lagoon'. The proposed culverted causeway would require consent for a discretionary activity under RCP Rule 37 of the Regional Coastal Plan for the Manawatu-Wanganui Region, while the proposed draining of the lagoon is a prohibited activity under the RCP Rule 49 of the Plan. No consent application for such an activity will be considered.

The Turakina Estuary is defined in the Regional Coastal Plan as a 'protection area' due to its national importance as a strategic site for migratory and threatened bird species. Any significant modification of this environment would have potentially very serious adverse environmental effects. Subsequently the reclamation of any part of this area is a prohibited activity.

One might argue that the current lagoon is no longer part of the estuary and is subsequently not as environmentally significant. However the fact remains the Regional Coastal Plan defines the area as a protection area. Only a Plan Change could alter this designation.

Further, the estuarine environment is highly dynamic and it is likely the same natural processes that caused the Turakina River to avulse to its present course will likely cause the channel to return to its former course given time.

I must inform you that any attempts to carry out the proposed draining of the lagoon would be treated very seriously by horizons.mw.

Please don't hesitate to contact me should you have any further questions regarding the proposed activities or if you would like a consent application pack for the proposed causeway. I can be contacted directly on **06-952 2859** or through Freephone **0508 4 horizons**.

Yours sincerely



Grant Leggett
CONSENTS PLANNER

Village fights for access to its beach



PHOTO: COLIN ROWATT H0005

Koiitiata resident Bruce Attwell... community frustration and anger over bureaucratic obstinacy.

By Colin Rowatt

Frustration and anger among residents of the Turakina beachside community of Koiitiata is steadily mounting as they battle with two "do nothing" bureaucracies — the Department of Conservation and Horizons.mw.

For the Koiitiata community committee the issue is simple and straightforward — they want to spend their money, time, energy and resources to build a sandbag "causeway" to restore access to their beach.

For longer than most residents can remember the Turakina River flowed past the village to run into the sea about 3km down the coast. Along the front of the village the river was barely knee deep so even small children could wade across to the ocean beach. The shallow water meant the river was also offered safe swimming right at the edge of the village. To enhance that asset the locals voluntarily created playground and picnic areas adjacent to the beach access track.

But three years ago the river carved a new path to the sea about 1.5km up the coast. Drifting sand soon blocked each end of the old river course, creating a 4km-long lake with no outlets.

Boosted by water running off adjacent farm land, the lake level has now risen to almost waist-deep. It has also backed up to create a swamp in what used to be low sand dunes on the village side of the river.

That means access to and across the lake, to reach the beach, is now virtually restricted to high-wheel tractors which cause untold damage to what DoC is now calling a natural "wetland".

Koiitiata community committee spokesman Bruce Attwell said in past summers the river and beach were a popular aquatic playground which attracted large numbers of visitors.

But nowadays the track to the water's edge is a quagmire and the lake is rapidly becoming an unattractive, weed-infested, body of brackish water.

"Koiitiata has now become the only beach settlement on the west coast of the North Island with no viable access to its beach," Mr Attwell said.

"We have been saddled by an event which has virtually destroyed the whole reason for the existence of the village."

He said all the community wants to do is build a causeway, out of natural materials, to restore adequate access to the beach. The local iwi has given its approval and the Rangitikei District Council has raised no objections.

"We have a settlement of more than 100 houses owned by people who pay thousands of dollars in rates. But we just have to watch helplessly as house values slump and much voluntary work goes for nought.

"The bureaucrats from DoC and Horizons.mw are determined not to allow any moves to rectify the position. It seems a few wading birds are regarded as more important than people.

"DoC seems only interested in rigidly sticking to the letter of the (Resource Management) Act and shows no real judgement, initiative or social conscience," Mr Attwell said.

Agencies ready to consider causeway idea

By Colin Rowatt

Koitiata residents could get a more sympathetic response from the Department of Conservation and horizons.mw to proposals for a short sandbag causeway to improve access to Turakina Beach.

Officers of both agencies yesterday rejected Koitiata resident Bruce Attwell's allegation of "bureaucratic obstinacy" in dealing with the Koitiata community committee's original causeway plan.

Horizons.mw consents planners Grant Leggett said he had "gone to considerable effort" to assist the committee. That had included meeting with members on the site and reviewing the issues from environmental and engineering perspectives.

He said the committee initially wanted to drain the lagoon but that proposal was given a firm thumbs down.

An unauthorised and unsuccessful attempt was made to cut a channel through to the sea at the southern end and earned the committee a reprimand from horizons.mw.

"As a prohibited activity in a protected area that was a serious thing to be doing because of the significant environmental impacts," Mr Leggett said.

The committee's proposal for causeway right across the lagoon was also a non-starter for environmental and practical reasons.

However, Mr Leggett said if the committee was now talking about a short causeway horizons.mw would be prepared to look at that option.

DoC Spokesperson Carol Greensmith said that agency had not given a definite answer to any of the Koitiata committee's proposals.

The area was controlled by horizons.mw's coastal plan under which DoC was just one interested party.

Ms Greensmith said the Koitiata committee's proposals were matters involving resource consents and ultimately horizons.mw would determine whether consents were issued.

"We have not said yes, no or otherwise. All we have said is that we need to know better what they want to do so we can make an informed decision. We can only do that when we know what the impacts are and that's what we are waiting for," she said.

At this stage the Koitiata committee has made no application for a resource consent for any of its proposals. The committee is reluctant to make formal application because of the possible cost if the issue goes to a submissions hearing.

Ms Greensmith said until horizons.mw receives a formal consent application and decides whether it will be publicly notified for submissions DoC has no direct role to play.

She said she was not aware of the committee's more modest causeway proposal but said the Department's response to that would be the same.

"When they decide what they want to do and give that information to horizons.mw then we might be able to make an informed decision," she said.