

Backdune Restoration

Partners Newsletter Year Two No. 2, 2012



Community Environment Fund



Weeds are the number one issue at many back dune sites. The cost and effort of control and removal seems endless. So, true to kiwi nature - locals are coming up with innovative and site specific ways to deal with weeds that reduces cost and effort.

At Proctors Beach in Northland (left), on site mobile compost bins are used to contain hand-pulled iceplant which is then covered in dark plastic tarpaulins. It may not work everywhere, or for every weed – but it suits this site.
Photo: M. Bergin

Dunes Trust Conference, 2013

The ever popular Dunes Trust conference is scheduled for **5th-7th March 2013** at the Tahuna Beach Holiday Park in **Nelson**.

There will be a range of speakers and field trips, as well as an optional two day Golden Bay trip from 8th-9th March.

Go to www.dunestrust.org.nz for conference updates and registration forms. Registration opens 7th December.

If your organisation can help by sponsoring a morning tea, lunch or other contribution, please contact info@dunestrust.org.nz.

You will have sponsorship naming rights and be supporting the only community based coastal conference in New Zealand.

Are your Coastcare groups part of our new-look website?

Until the end of 2012, Coastcare groups can join the Trust for free and receive a webpage profile, a Handbook and subscribe to our email newsletter.

Encourage your groups to fill out the form at www.dunestrust.org.nz or contact info@dunestrust.org to talk about bulk uploading regional Coastcare profiles.

Exposed west Auckland sites developing coastal forest

West Auckland beaches are some of the more complex environments to manage in the country. They are highly exposed to wind and waves, have a long history of blow-outs, sand encroachment, rabbit and weed issues, and are also some of the most visited beaches in the country for a wide range of activities.

Auckland Council, DOC and local community groups have made great progress in stabilising dunes and revegetating backdune areas over the past 15-20 years.



Significant foredune and backdune planting has been undertaken at Piha and Muriwai. It is likely that the natural succession now occurring at these sites will see hardy shrubs and trees dominate dune vegetation up to near the landward edge of the frontal dune. These shrubs and trees will act as a nurse crop for coastal forest to develop over time.



At Te Henga (Bethels Beach) a low lying hollow running through the centre of the dunes has been successfully restored (above photo). Many native species are now regenerating naturally and in the longer term the area will develop into mature coastal dune forest.

In other areas, restoration work by this community has repaired human-induced wind erosion and established pioneer native dune communities. There is potential to introduce a wide range of native species into these areas to enhance biodiversity and natural ecological succession. In particular, planting native species in 'clumps' to increase survival rates and ensure that exotic plant communities don't establish and dominate. The active community groups in the area will be able to undertake monitoring over the first three to five years to measure its success.

Demonstration Area: Motupipi Spit, Tasman District

Motupipi Spit is near Takaka in Golden Bay and is one of a number of sites where dune restoration is being undertaken as part of the Tasman District Council Coastcare Programme. Dunes Trust scientists familiar with Tasman District Council Coastcare describe the work as some of the best in NZ, despite challenging circumstances and limited resources.

Restoration work on the exotic-dominated Motupipi Spit dunes commenced six to seven years ago, though a large fire about three years ago destroyed much of the earlier restoration planting. Planting is guided by sound ecological principles and ongoing learning based on results at the site. The site has a number of advantages as a demonstration area:

- Older plantings and naturally occurring natives provide useful information on the performance of different species over time in different backdune environments;
- The spit contains large backdune areas with a wide range of different backdune environments (including open coast and estuarine margins as well as a very dynamic estuary entrance area), varying degrees of wind and salt exposure, and varying distances from the coast;
- The estuarine and freshwater wetlands enable ecosystem transitions and sequences to be restored over time;
- The proposed development of a walking and bike trail means there is opportunity to incorporate public information and learning opportunities with restoration in the area;
- There is a wide range of exotic vegetation including marram, gorse and tree lucerne. Japanese Honeysuckle is also becoming problematic in some areas. This vegetation provides a range of challenges and learning opportunities for transitioning from exotic to native vegetation communities.
- The site is located immediately to the west of a popular golf course which has encroached close to open coast and estuarine margins resulting in a range of environmental and (open coast) erosion hazard issues – so the demonstration area offers a useful contrast of what can be achieved by allowing space for natural processes and environments along the coastal margins.
- The site is also significant to local tangata whenua and has wahi tapu status.



Motupipi Spit, Tasman Bay, is the fifth demonstration area for the project. Photo showing frontal and backdune areas. Photo: J. Dahm



Backdune restoration on estuarine margin bordering golf course adjacent to the Motupipi Spit demonstration area. Photo: J. Dahm



Wetland area adjacent to walkway track within which backdune riparian margins are being restored. Photo: J. Dahm

Dunes Trust Backdune Project Contacts

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The Dunes Trust thanks the following partner organisations for their funding and ongoing involvement in the Backdune Project. We also appreciate the fantastic efforts of the community groups working on their local projects. We welcome other partners so please contact us.

