

Call for better management of our coastline

Laurel Stowell

New Zealanders need a better relationship with the sea, and that could mean moving back and giving nature more room, coastal scientist Jim Dalim says.

He is a founding member of the Coastal Restoration Trust, which is holding its annual conference in Whangarei this week.

Coasts needed to be managed better, he said, with less time spent fighting the sea.

"If we want to improve the management of the coast, we need to make a better effort to inform and involve the community."

"At the moment too much is being done by professionals and councils.

"The consequence of that is that changes we are trying to get are occurring too slowly.

"Council staff are often quite reticent to make changes that the community don't understand, so really we need to explain what's going on to communities much more, and move away from technocratic to a more democratic approach to planning."

Developers gave the coast more room, less effort would be needed to fight the sea, he said.

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Coastal privilege

Whangarei is "privileged" its coastline is building up, scientist Jim Dalim says.

Photo: Lennie Gardner



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Sea level rise was at crisis point for Hawke's Bay towns such as Hanuona, Whangamata. People were lucky their coastline was building up rather than being cut into.

"You're in a very privileged situation, one of the few parts of New Zealand where the coast is still aggrading," Dahm said.

The sand that flows south down this coast would mitigate the effect of sea level rise, he said.

But it would not stop cliffs eroding under more frequent wave attacks.

"Certainly we are expecting quite significant increase in erosion of soft cliffs, and cliffs in general."

Vehicles had been a point of contention on Whangamata beaches, and Dahm said they did not belong in dunes.

"It's a sure way to create blowouts and wind erosion problems, and that gets very serious very quickly."

Coastal privilege

Whangamata is "privileged" its coastline is building up, scientist Jim Dahm says.



Coastal scientist Jim Dahm is a founding member of the Coastal Restoration Trust.

Photo / Brian Conroy

Vehicles going to beaches needed a well-defined accessway that they kept to, he said.

Vehicles driving on hard sand were another matter. Driving beaches was a long-established habit that was

highly valued, Dahm said, but it could affect shellfish and nesting birds.

He expected beach driving to get less common, as people learned more about coastal ecosystems.

"Most people are fairly well-

intentioned.

"If they're well informed and you work collaboratively with them then you generally get a very, very high level of co-operation.

There are 110 people at the Coastal Restoration Trust con-



Whangamata's Colin Ogilvie (left) receives the Pihango & Toheroa Award from Coastal Restoration Trust trustee Graham La Cock.

Photo / Laurel Stewart

ference titled Living on a Dynamic Coast Ko Te Kawa o Tangaroa, which finishes today.

It is based at the Grand Hotel with field trips to Turakina Beach, Waverley and Waipipi.

On Wednesday, Whangamata ecologist Colin Ogilvie spoke on coastal vegetation.

He was then presented with the trust's Pihango & Toheroa Award for an individual who has made an exceptional contribution to coastal restoration.

Photo / Laurel Stewart