

## 3.12 WATERHOUSE AND RIVER ROAD RESERVES

### 3.12.1 DESCRIPTION

**River Road Reserve** This is a long thin strip of land approximately 2.2450 hectares. It lies centrally between Boyce Park to the north and the Waterhouse Reserve to the south. It is bordered by the Tarawera River on the east and Kawerau College to the west. The area undulates from steep banks to river flats and is of passive recreational use only.

**Waterhouse Reserve** This is the largest area in the gazetted block of Lot 2 DPS 5883 being approximately 6.1835 hectares. Its northern boundary is that of Kawerau College and the River Road Reserve. To the east is the Tarawera River and the western boundary is River Road itself. Waterhouse Street is the southern boundary for the reserve.

A kayak course was built between 2008 and 2010 with landscaping for access, seating and viewing along the river bank.

**General Features** No public facilities are available on either Reserve. Both the Waterhouse and River Road Reserves provide excellent passive recreational areas for public enjoyment.

The track along the river bank forms part of a walkway which follows the river from Boyce Park to Tarawera Park. The area along the river is mainly used by anglers, swimmers and kayakers, and people and exercise dogs on the grassed flats.

Three stormwater drains run into the Tarawera River. One is directly behind the College coming off River Road with the other running beneath Waterhouse Reserve from the Hobson Street/River Road intersection and the Fenton Street/River Road intersection.

The Waterhouse Reserve topography is largely flat. The eastern boundary along the Tarawera River however, does in places fall steeply from between 4 and 5 metres to the river's edge. These areas have been left in an undeveloped natural state with the brush providing an adequate natural barrier. The River Road Reserve on the other hand has only a narrow access as most of his reserve is steep river embankment. Small

river flat peninsula areas in both reserves have been cleared and developed by the Department of Conservation's Conservation Corps. The entire river embankment area of both reserves forms part of the Tarawera River track.

Soil in the area is of recent origin, associated mainly with eruptions from the Okataina caldera. The rhyolitic pumice subsoil is free draining and of moderate to low fertility. The Tarawera eruption of 1886 covered the area in alkaline basaltic scoria. The dark colour of scoria combined with high sunlight levels in the region gives rise to natural dryness, causing difficulties in establishing tree species and maintaining a turf cover.

Kanuka lines the entire river length of the two reserves. The upper flat areas have been cleared of brush and subsequently sown with grass. A number of mature Plane, Gum and Poplar trees provide a pleasant backdrop for Waterhouse Reserve.



### 3.12.2 HISTORY

River Road Park was one of the first areas in Kawerau to be set aside as a reserve. The park ran from Tamarangi Drive south to Waterhouse Street and was bordered by the Tarawera River and River Road.

In 1954 the Kawerau Town Association Football and Sports Club was formed and the northern end of the reserve was developed as their playing field. The middle of the reserve was occupied by the Churhouse and Shirley single men's camp and was the location of the first refuse disposal area in Kawerau until October 1957. The local Finnish community built a sauna close to the Tarawera River and Waterhouse Street in 1955. Saunas are a very important part of the Finnish way of life. As part of the original four year contract with the Finnish Community, Tasman Pulp and Paper Company agreed to provide the materials for the sauna to be built. The building was demolished in 2000 as it was no longer used and had fallen into disrepair.

On 16 June 1960 River Road Reserve became one of the first reserves to be vested in the former Kawerau Borough Council for recreation purposes under the Reserves and Domains Act 1953. Construction of a college began in the early 1960s and Kawerau College was officially opened on 2 March 1963.

By 1967 River Road Park had been renamed as three separate Reserves. The northern part of the reserve containing the soccer grounds and the area opposite the Fire Brigade was named Boyce Park, after the first Mayor of Kawerau Mr Clive B Boyce. The area behind Kawerau College became known as River Road Reserve, and the area north of Waterhouse Street was named Waterhouse Reserve, after the former New Zealand Premier G.M Waterhouse.

A dirt running track was developed around the perimeter in the mid 1980's with 'confidence course' type structures erected every 50 metres or so.

In 2008 the Tarawera River adjacent to the Waterhouse Reserve was developed into a kayak course. Walkways, control gates and judging platforms were installed and vegetation cleared from the river banks, where to provide for a combines walkway and spectator viewing and seating area to be constructed.

### 3.12.3 STATUS

Waterhouse and River Road Reserves are vested in, and administered by the Kawerau District Council. The area is a Recreation Reserve as defined by the Reserves Act 1977. The legal description is Part of Lot 2 DPS 5883 Recreation Reserve.

These two Reserves are the south and centre sections of Lot 2 DPS 5883 with the northern area made up by Boyce Park. The Waterhouse and River Road Reserves are approximately 7.0585 hectares in size.

The reserves are zoned Reserve under the Kawerau District Council's District Plan.

### 3.12.4 POLICIES

#### Landscape Character

1. The relaxed and informal nature of the Reserves shall be retained.
2. Maintenance and development shall be to a standard appropriate to various recreational uses.
3. The semi-wilderness character of the river embankment shall be maintained.

#### Vegetation

1. Any further planting on the river embankment shall be with tree and shrub species complementary to the character of the Reserves.
2. The integrity of the Kanuka stands shall be maintained and protected.
3. Prior to removal of any vegetation its historic, ecological and aesthetic merit must be assessed against the goal of removal.
4. Pest plants should be controlled and where possible eliminated from the Reserves.
5. Sound horticultural techniques appropriate to the use shall be applied in the management of vegetation and turf.

#### Access/Parking

1. The track along the Tarawera River from the Kawerau Golf Course to the Waterwheel Heritage Park shall be maintained in a semi-wilderness state for walking access.
2. The unsealed vehicle access way through the reserve shall be maintained.