

3.1 BOYCE PARK

3.1.1 DESCRIPTION

Boyce Park is a long flat area running beside the Tarawera River at the northern entrance to Kawerau. Tamarangi Drive and the River Road provide boundaries to the north and west, and to the south is Kawerau College and River Road Reserve. The flat area drops to a series of banks and river flats to the east along the Tarawera River.

A sports field at the wider, northern end of the Park is fenced and gated. South of the sports field is a toilet block and a building owned by Kawerau Judo and Martial Arts Club. The southern portion of the Park is a flat grassed area used by the Fire Brigade for training.

Vehicle access is from two points on River Road. The first is a sealed road to the Kawerau Judo and Martial Arts Club building. Past the building the road becomes an unformed track which follows the sports field fence around and along the river embankment. The access way at the southern end of the Park is an unformed track to a locked gate providing access to River Road Reserve.

Pedestrians can access Boyce Park from any point along Tamarangi Drive or River Road. An important feature of the Park is the access it provides to the Tarawera River. A walking track follows the Tarawera River along a series of banks and river flats from Boyce Park to Tarawera Park. The walkway provides a tranquil, restive environment for passive recreation.

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. Potentially high in fertility, the scoria has yet to break down to form real soil. 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 quality turf cover.

The majority of Boyce Park is a broad expanse of grass suitable for passive recreation. The sports field is not currently maintained to sports field standard but could be returned to that level (by under sowing, irrigation and mowing) should the need arise.

The Park contains many fine mature evergreen and deciduous trees. Beneath a grouping of specimen trees at the northern end of the Park is a naturalised bulb planting which provides spring flower displays. Annual flower beds also provide colourful displays at the River Road/Tamarangi Drive intersection.

The Tarawera River bank is a semi-wilderness area and some pest plants (e.g. Privet, Blackberry and Wandering Jew) are a problem. Some native replanting has been carried out in the past and a stand of Kanuka (*Kunzia ericoides*) remains on the embankment behind the toilet facilities.

3.1.2 HISTORY

In 1953, construction of a pulp and paper mill began on a site known as the 'Murupara Settlement.' Plans for a town to serve the mill were drawn up by the Ministry of Works in 1954. The town was named Kawerau and the plans made provision for numerous reserves, parks and playgrounds.

River Road Park was one of the first areas in Kawerau to be set aside as a reserve. Bordering the Tarawera River and River Road, the Park ran from Tamarangi Drive to Waterhouse Street. In 1954 the Kawerau Town Association Football and Sports Club Incorporated (later to become the Kawerau Town Soccer Club) was formed. The northern end of River Road Park was developed as the Club's playing field.

The Soccer Club building was one of six temporary wooden shops moved onto the site from the corner of Plunket and Onslow Streets in 1957. Construction of the permanent shopping centre meant the wooden buildings were no longer required and they were moved to various sporting grounds to be used as pavilions. One by one these original buildings were replaced over the years with more modern facilities. The building at Boyce Park is the only surviving wooden temporary shop building.

On 16 June 1960 River Road Park, together with Firmin Field and Prideaux Park, became the first reserves to be vested in the then Kawerau Borough Council for recreation purposes under the Reserves and Domains Act 1953.

During the early 1960's an area near the soccer grounds was used as an informal camping ground. Many newcomers to Kawerau camped there until permanent accommodation became available, using the toilet facilities at the Soccer Club. Thereafter Kawerau's Fire Brigade used the area for training purposes.

By 1967, River Road Park had become known as three separate reserves. The northern part containing the Soccer Club 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.

In the early 1980's the Kawerau Fire Brigade developed Boyce Park. Three hydrants were installed on the reserve, which is used for training purposes, as well as hosting various competitions. The Fire Brigade also uses the sports field for competitions. In 1985 the Kawerau Town Soccer Club moved to larger and more modern facilities at Stoneham Park. The Club sold their building to the Kawerau Judo and Martial Arts Club. The building now houses the Kawerau Judo and Aikido Dojo.

In the mid 1990's the sports field was used during the winter season by Tarawera Rugby League Football Club. By 2005, declining use led to a Council decision to reduce the maintenance level of the sports field to that similar to a passive reserve.

3.1.3 STATUS

Boyce Park is vested in, and administered by Council. The Park is a Recreation Reserve as defined by the Reserves Act 1977. The legal description is: Part of Lot 2 DPS 5883 Recreation Reserve. Boyce Park is situated at the northern end of Lot 2 DPS 5883, the rest being River Road Reserve and Waterhouse Street Reserve. Boyce Park is approximately 4.0912 hectares in size. Boyce Park is zoned Reserve under Council's District Plan.

3.1.4 POLICIES

Landscape Character

1. The relaxed and informal nature of the Park shall be retained.
2. Specimen trees and annual flower beds at the northern end of the Park shall be maintained and developed.
3. Grounds maintenance shall be to a standard appropriate for the various uses of the Park.
4. The semi-wilderness character of the river embankment shall be maintained.

Vegetation

1. Planting on the river embankment shall be with tree and shrub species complementary to the nature of the Park.
2. The integrity of the Kanuka stand shall be preserved.
3. Prior to removal of any vegetation, its historic, ecological and aesthetic merit shall be assessed against the goal of removal.
4. Pest plants shall be controlled and where possible eliminated from the Park.
5. Sound horticultural techniques shall be applied in the management of the Park's vegetation.

Access/Parking

1. Boyce Park, other than marked playing areas, is a designated dog exercise area.
2. Car parking shall be allowed around the perimeter of the sports field, except under the specimen trees at the northern end.
3. The sealed access way into the Park shall be maintained.
4. 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.