

WAIPIPI A TREASURED PLACE



Prepared with Whenuakura, Wai-o-Turi and Te Wairoa-Iti Marae and the Waipipi Land Trust and the support of Aotea Utanganui Museum and the South Taranaki District Council.

Waipipi - fishing ground, place for launch and landing waka, learning house of the sea.

Waipipi Tauranga Ika, Tauranga Waka, Wharekura-A-Tai

Oral history speaks of the Kaahui Maunga and Kaahui Rere - the original occupants of the lands between the Pātea and Waitōtara rivers. The Pātea river was then known as Te Awanui-o-Taikehu (the great river of Taikehu, the Rangatira of the area at the time, a descendant of Rauru Kītahi). Whenuakura river was known as Waikākahi (named for the green lipped freshwater mussels once plentiful in the river), while Waitōtara was the river in which totara trees grew.

Later arrivals (Turi, Rongorongo and their people of Aotea waka) merged with the Kaahui Maunga and Kaahui Rere and their descendants settled upon the land from the coastline inland to the Matemateāonga Ranges. Over the many generations various settlements were established inland including Hukatere, Ōtautu, Pūkorokoro, Opaku, Taranaki-Iti, Kānihi, Pūtahi, Oika, Okahukura, Whenuakura and Wairoa-Iti, plus along the coastline including Rangitaawhi, Haere Hau, Tihoi, Waitore, Paraunui, Te Oho and Waipipi.

By the early 1800s new settlers were arriving from Great Britain and Europe. By the 1860s war broke out between the Government and Tangata Whenua.

As part of the Taranaki land wars, local tangata whenua who opposed the survey and sale of their lands were wrongly imprisoned in Ōtākou (Otago). This includes Ngawaka Taurua (pictured right), one of the significant Rangatira (chiefs) of the area. Upon their return from Ōtākou they found their families had been forcibly removed from their homes, their settlements destroyed, and their lands confiscated and allotted to militia and new settlers. Various small reserves were eventually returned to them including the Waipipi and Te Oho blocks.

Waipipi

For local tangata whenua, fish played an important role in their staple diet, with Waipipi being a significant Tauranga Ika and Tauranga Waka, and Wharekura-a-Tai, where the young gained knowledge and skills necessary to become competent fishermen and providers for their people.

During the warmer seasons, the people would migrate to their coastal settlements to gather kaimoana (seafood) including mussels from the reefs along Waipipi beach. Drying was a favoured method of preserving their catch. "Sea puha" also known as "Aotea Puha" which grows on the coastal cliffs, was also gathered, and is said to be sweeter than land puha. In early summer seagull eggs were gathered and young seagull chicks were hunted. The feathers of the Kōtuku (White Heron), which were highly regarded, were also gathered, and used as special adornments.

Portrait of Ngawaka Taurua (photographer unknown).
Mair, Gilbert Henry, 1875-1966 :
Photographs Ref: PA2-2183.
Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington,
New Zealand /records/23113899.



Fishing stories from the early 1900s

There are two main freshwater streams that feed the land - the Wairoa Stream and the Waipipi Stream. Tuna (eels) and Piharau (lamprey eel) could be caught in both. Tai Ngāpaki of Whenuakura Marae was captain of the fishing boat named Raroa. Another waka named Heiawe (captained by Singapore Broughton) was also launched from Waipipi.

Karakia were recited preceding every sea voyage. Only men were permitted to go out in the waka and certain tikanga (protocols) had to be obeyed.

Returning with 100 snapper was not a problem for the fishermen. Navigation was done by landmarks such as the Rangitaawhi cliffs. Fishing at night was navigated by the moon and stars, and the whānau (families) on shore would build a huge fire and kept this burning, giving guidance to the fishermen's safe return.

On returning to land, the women would karanga (call) them back in. The first fish caught was always taken to the Rangitaawhi cliffs to be buried or it was believed the seas were liable to turn rough.

The land and its people today

Today Waipipi (a Māori freehold land block of 20 hectares) is in a land trust which is administered by its descendants. The windfarm surrounds the block on three sides, while its west side faces the sea and boasts a prime beach front location. Whānau (families) still journey to Waipipi, to fish and camp on the land, and recount stories of times past. Te Oho (also a Māori freehold land block of 215 hectares) is managed by PKW (Parininihi ki Waitootara).

The block is located along the south bank of the Whenuakura river, and its southern area is leased to the windfarm.

Today the descendants of Kaahui Maunga, Kaahui Rere, Aotea waka, Waipipi and Te Oho unite under the tribal names Ngaa Rauru, Ngāti Ruanui and Te Pakakohi. Our Marae include Whenuakura, Wai-o- Turi, and Te Wairoa-Iti. We are the local tangata whenua, and this is our history and connection to this land.



2019 Waipipi Wind Farm sod turning ceremony with Ngaa Rauru.

History of Waipipi Reserve

The land known as Waipipi is situated on the west coast of the North Island between the two rivers, Waitōtara and Whenuakura. Before the Aotea Waka came to these shores, Te Kaahui Rere (The Flying People) who came from the east coast of the north island, travelled by sea, and landed at Pātea and Waitōtara. When Turi arrived in South Taranaki, his descendants married members of Te Kaahui Rere.

Two tribes, Pakakohi and Ngāa Rauru, occupied the land before the arrival of Pākehā. Many Pā sites were located along the coastline, all the way to the Pātea River. Waipipi is renowned to have an abundant supply of resources – food, freshwater and minerals which appealed to Māori and Pākehā alike.

The land wars of South Taranaki began in 1863 and Waipipi was confiscated from Pakakohi and Ngāa Rauru by the Government under powers enacted through the New Zealand Settlements Acts after war ended in September 1865, along with the rest of the west coast (from Whanganui to the white cliffs north of New Plymouth).

In 1876, the Government sold land to European settlers, then dispersed free grants to military settlers who fought in the Colonial forces during the Land Wars. On 7 March 1882, the Native Land Court issued four crown grants. This included the Waipipi Reserve which was allocated to Ngawaka Taurua (pictured on previous page) and eleven others who were wrongly imprisoned in Ōtakou (Dunedin) during the Taranaki Land Wars. In 1963, all West Coast Settlement Reserves were amalgamated

into the Parinihi ki Waitotara Reserve comprising 71,969 acres and put under the management of The Māori Trustee. In 1976, the Parinihi ki Waitotara Incorporation was established to receive and manage the leases and rents of 55,137 acres. The rest remains privately owned.

The black sand along the west coast of New Zealand was described as “wealth spread out like a carpet” by Cornishman John Perry in 1841, who had owned an iron foundry in England. The sands were found to be rich in titanomagnetite – an oxide of iron and titanium, that had originated from eruptions of Maunga Taranaki during the Pleistocene era.

Studies were conducted in 1939 to determine a way to smelt the sands into workable materials, as it was found to be too small and problematic using normal

methods. The solution was sintering (removing the moisture) from the sand to create chunks, then the problems with smelting the sands in a blast furnace could be eliminated.

Waipipi Iron Sands Limited began mining on this site on 9 December 1971. Waipipi Iron Sands mining operation employed many locals from the district and when the mine began to face difficulties, their livelihoods were directly affected. Lay-offs were inevitable with the first group in 1982, then another in 1983. The mine changed ownership several times before closing on 31 March 1988. A once thriving industry that had supported the small area of Waverley for almost seventeen years had finally come to an end. During its lifetime an estimated 15.7 million tonnes of sand was shipped to Japan.



Waipipi Iron Sands mine in full operation, c1970s [Aotea Utanganui Pictorial Collection]

Waipipi today

31 wind turbines are placed on a land area of approximately 980ha. Regular farming activities continue in parallel to the wind farm's operation with less than 2% of the site land impacted.

The wind farm site is flat to gently undulating land approximately 20 to 40 metres above sea level. The ground cover is mainly grassland. The Waipipi stream, which runs through the centre of the site, has been permanently fenced off and planted with native vegetation as part of the project.

An Environmental Buffer Zone is located around the coastal perimeter of the site to protect the visual amenity and natural character of the area, coastal hazards, noise, ecology, birds and heritage matters.

The average site wind speed is 8.6m/s (31kph) at hub height making the site an ideal location for a wind farm.

Waipipi Wind Farm viewed from the west at Mana Bay.



