

SOUTHLAND COASTAL HERITAGE INVENTORY PROJECT

**Rebecca Robertson¹, Rachael Egerton², Dean Whaanga³, Marcus Roy⁴, Matthew Schmidt⁵
& Judith Christie⁶**

¹ Environment Southland, ² Department of Conservation, ³ Te Ao Marama Incorporated, ⁴ Southland District Council, ⁵ New Zealand Historic Places Trust & ⁶ Invercargill City Council

INTRODUCTION

The Southland Coastal Heritage Inventory Project (SCHIP) was initiated in 2004. The project began in response to Environment Southland's state of the environment reporting on the coastal environment¹. The reporting highlighted a lack of information about Southland's coastal historic heritage sites and the threats they face.

The SCHIP is a partnership project between: Environment Southland, Department of Conservation, Te Ao Marama Incorporated, the New Zealand Historic Places Trust, the Southland District Council, the Invercargill City Council and the New Zealand Archaeological Association. The partners also works closely with the Southland Museum and Art Gallery and the University of Otago. The SCHIP has three goals:

1. Southland's coastal heritage is safeguarded for future generations;
2. knowledge about heritage and skills for its protection are enhanced and shared within the community;
3. there is a wide appreciation for the cultural, historical and archaeological values of Southland.

The project has resulted in all agencies responsible for heritage management within Southland's coastal environment collaborating to managing and monitor coastal heritage, pool funding and share knowledge. The following sections present the background of the project, details of monitoring, knowledge improvement and extension of the project. The paper concludes with a discussion on the factors contributing to the success of the project.

BACKGROUND

The SCHIP began with teams of archaeologists walking the Southland coast from Waiparau Head to the Rowallan Burn (Figure 1). The archaeologists revisited recorded archaeological sites, updated existing records and recorded new archaeological sites. It was estimated that as many as half of the 317 sites originally recorded had been lost². The reasons most commonly given for the loss of sites were "destruction by erosion or development processes...[or] vegetation cover...obscuring the sites." However, the survey also recorded 109 new sites and made recommendations for the management of every site that was found³.

¹ Environment Southland (2005). The State of Southland's Coastal Marine Environment.

² Brooks, E., Jacomb, C., and Walter, R., (2008). Southland Coastal Heritage Inventory Project: Waiparau Head to Rowallan Burn. Unpublished report prepared for SCHIP partners.

³ Brooks, E., Jacomb, C., and Walter, R., (2008). Southland Coastal Heritage Inventory Project: Waiparau Head to Rowallan Burn. Unpublished report prepared for SCHIP partners.

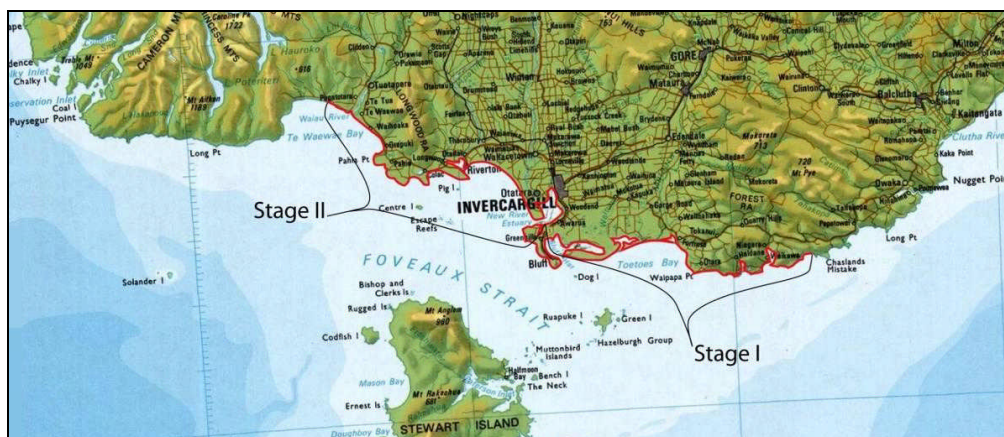


Figure 1: The extent of the project.

MONITORING

The monitoring that occurs as part of the SCHIP is focused on understanding the changes to sites and their management needs. The SCHIP monitoring project has three key components: five yearly monitoring, annual monitoring and kaitiaki monitoring (kaitiaki monitoring is discussed below under Extension).

The *Southland Coastal Heritage Inventory Project Action Plan and Strategic Overview* sets out the five yearly monitoring programme, which splits the Southland coast into five sections. The document recommends each section of coast is monitored once every five years⁴. The objectives of the monitoring are to assess the overall condition of sites, to update the information regarding threats to sites and to document the rate and nature of any deterioration. Over time the monitoring will provide a clearer picture of the overall rate of change and loss of heritage sites along the Southland coast. This information will help trigger appropriate management responses, particularly where significant sites are being lost.

In addition to the five yearly monitoring, several sites have been identified for annual monitoring⁵. These sites were assessed⁶ as being both 'highly significant' and subject to severe coastal erosion (Figure 2). The annual monitoring serves four purposes:

1. to understand the nature, causes and rates of coastal erosion and site damage;
2. to understand whether maintenance or stabilisation work has been effective;
3. to determine whether additional management responses are required; and
4. to record information about the sites as they erode and respond to exposure of sensitive materials.

The SCHIP monitoring programme provides the agencies responsible for the management of historic heritage in Southland with an accurate record of historic coastal sites in the region. This, enables the sites to be effectively managed for future generations, for example, under section 6(f) of the Resource Management Act, 1991.

⁴ Brooks, E., and Jacomb, C. (2012). Southland Coastal Heritage Inventory Project Action Plan and Strategic Overview. Unpublished report prepared for the SCHIP partners.

⁵ Brooks, E., and Jacomb, C. (2012). Southland Coastal Heritage Inventory Project Action Plan and Strategic Overview..

⁶ Brooks, E., and Jacomb, C. (2012). Southland Coastal Heritage Inventory Project Action Plan and Strategic Overview. Unpublished report prepared for the SCHIP partners.



Figure 2: Coastal erosion at one of the annual monitoring sites.

KNOWLEDGE IMPROVMENT

In addition to monitoring, the SCHIP undertakes research to increase knowledge about historic heritage sites. The partners contract archaeologists, to implement the recommended actions in the SCHIP action plan and work plan⁷. These actions may include: augering, test pitting, radio carbon dating and excavations. This work helps SCHIP understand the significance and extent of sites, which is valuable information for the management agencies when planning for the management of coastal heritage into the future.

An example, is a recent marine archaeological survey of the Norwegian Whalers Base on Stewart Island/Rakiura. The survey enabled the site (both marine and terrestrial environments) to be mapped and declared as an archaeological site by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust. This status affords the site protection, previously the site was not protected and at risk from fossickers.

For sites affected by severe coastal erosion archaeological investigations ensure as much information as possible is retrieved from the sites before they are eroded. For example, an archaeological investigation (including excavation, test pitting and augering) was undertaken at Tokanui, which discovered new information about early life on the shores of Foveaux Strait. After the investigation the area was subject to significant coastal erosion and the site has now been almost completely lost. Similar investigations have been completed at three other priority sites so far.



Figure 3: SCHIP field work being undertaken.

⁷ Brooks, E., and Jacomb, C. (2012). Southland Coastal Heritage Inventory Project Action Plan and Strategic Overview.

EXTENSION

As discussed above, the goals of the SCHIP include increasing appreciation for historic heritage and increasing knowledge and skills with respect to heritage and its protection. The partners work with landowners, kaitiaki rūnaka and other interested Southlanders via the kaitiaki monitors' programme to achieve these goals.

Kaitiaki is the term used for the Maori concept of guardianship, sokaitiaki monitors are guardians of coastal heritage. They play an important role in monitoring archaeological sites within the coastal environment of Southland. The kaitiaki monitors are volunteers and can be Te Rūnaka o Murihiku or other interested members of the community. The SCHIP provides the monitors with archaeological site monitoring training and resources (including a field kits) so they can recognise, photograph and record sites and feed this information to the kaitiaki monitoring co-ordinator. The monitors will benefit from the programme by learning about the evidence of their heritage that is still preserved along the coast. The programme will also help the monitors to understand the threats to these historic sites.

Furthermore, because the monitors are volunteers the SCHIP is able to afford to monitor a much greater extent of Southland's coastline more frequently than would be possible if archaeologists were to be employed. Kaitiaki monitors are also be able to visit the heritage sites after storms or other events that may damage archaeological sites and notify the kaitiaki monitoring co-ordinator of an exposures. Information collected by the monitors is collated by the kaitiaki monitoring co-ordinator and reported back to the SCHIP partners. This enables the site monitoring information to be used to inform decisions about site management. Importantly the programme also serves to enhance the connections between Southland people and their cultural heritage and this is key to heritage management, sustaining cultural identity, and in the long term contributes to societal wellbeing.



Figure 4: Kaitiaki monitors training day, July 2012.

Landowner permission is required to again access to many of the sites managed by the SCHIP. The process to obtain permission allows the SCHIP to establish and maintain relationships with landowners. This process also enables the partners to tell landowners about the value of sites located on or adjacent to their property and to provide them with information about action they can take to help protect sites from damage.

CONTRIBUTORS TO SUCCESS

The project's successes are an outcome of a number of factors including: collaboration amongst heritage management agencies, joint funding, working with Kaitiaki Rūnaka o Murihiku, the wider community and landowners, and the development of the SCHIP action plan and strategic overview⁸.

The SCHIP operates under an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU states the goals of the project and any expectations, in terms of inputs and outputs. The provision of funding is not a mandatory requirement for involvement in the project. However, to secure funds the SCHIP approaches the organisations represented by the partners. This may occur, for example, via local authorities' annual planning processes. The SCHIP's own annual reports provide further evidence of the project's achievements and therefore can support submissions for funding. Any funds received are pooled. An annual work programme, guided by the recommendations made in the preceding years annual plan and agreed to by the partners, is prepared to allocate specific funds.

The majority of sites being monitored and investigated are of significant value to kaitiaki rūnaka. Te Ao Marama Incorporated liaises with kaitiaki rūnaka on behalf of the partners to update them on progress, seek required approvals and invite them to participate in field work. Included in all contracts to carry out archaeological investigations is a requirement to present the results of the work to the kaitiaki rūnaka. Presentations are also an opportunity to introduce the work planned for the following year.

Building and maintaining relationships is fundamental to the success of the SCHIP. The SCHIP works alongside interested parties who bring valuable knowledge and experience into the SCHIP, including: landowners, the Southland Museum and Art Gallery, kaitiaki rūnaka and the University of Otago to achieve the goals of the SCHIP..

The collaboration between the partners is a major contributor to the success of the project. The partners hold regular meetings. This enables them to discuss SCHIP actions and progress, but also to discuss other issues relating too heritage management in Southland. These discussions halp raise issues before they escalate and also facilitate their resolution.

In 2012, the partners developed the 'Southland Coastal Heritage Inventory Project Action Plan and Strategic Overview'. This document prioritises and schedules recommended tasks from the 2008 survey from Rowallan Burn to Waiparau Head. It also develops a five year work plan (2012-2017), which the partners are currently implementing. Resourcing of the SCHIP varies depending on the various agencies' priorities. This can impact on the timeliness of the project. There is a constant drive from the partners to create efficiencies where possible and this will be a continuing theme into the future.

CONCLUSION

The SCHIP has improved the understanding of the nature, extent and threats to Southland's coastal heritage. It promotes informed protection and management of Southland's heritage. However, there is still work required to implement the recommended actions and to keep knowledge about the condition of sites up to date. In addition, the project draws attention to the effects of how coastal erosion and other development processes on sites, and furthers the development of strategies to respond to that threat. Over time the project will provide a better picture of how the coastline is changing and what it means for the management of coastal heritage.

The SCHIP has also greatly enhanced the knowledge and understanding of the human history of Murihiku including, how the area was used by its first and subsequent inhabitants. It has also improved landowner awareness of heritage values in general.

Furthermore, the benefits of a collaborative approach to the work have been clearly demonstrated; none of the partners could have achieved the same success working alone.

⁸ Brooks, E., and Jacomb, C. (2012). Southland Coastal Heritage Inventory Project Action Plan and Strategic Overview. Unpublished report prepared for the SCHIP partners.

The project is gaining recognition nationally as good practice but needs continued support from all the partners to maintain its success and for the results to have relevance to future heritage management.

All around New Zealand there are similar pressures affecting archaeological sites and there are comparable issues with lack of information about location, nature, condition and threats. Department of Conservation and New Zealand Historic Places Trust, as central government agencies, are interested to work with partners in other parts of New Zealand to advance similar work.



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

