

Summary of site assessments for informing proposed Freedom Camping Bylaw

Summary of site assessments against the criteria within the Freedom Camping Act 2011 to inform a proposed Westland District Council Freedom Camping Bylaw

Introduction

As part of the development of a Freedom Camping Bylaw, Westland District Council (WDC) has collated information on areas relevant to the proposed bylaw to inform where it may be appropriate to prohibit, restrict, or permit freedom camping. This document provides a summary of the full site assessment document developed for this purpose.

Freedom camping is currently permitted by the national legislation, the Freedom Camping Act 2011, using an assessment matrix considered best practice by the Local Government sector. The assessment matrix is used to inform where it may be necessary and appropriate to prohibit or restrict freedom camping according to the following criteria:

1. Protect the area - Consider cultural and historical significance and the natural environment;
2. Protect the health and safety of people who may visit the area - Consider levels of vehicular traffic (car parks/lookout points), use for other activities (like sports grounds), and issues of persistent vandalism; and
3. Protect access to the area - Consider damage caused by vehicular access to flora and fauna and the impact that people accessing the site will have on other users of the area.

The sites included in this assessment are Local Authority Areas identified as where there is specific interest in managing freedom camping.

In completing the reviews, Council also considered sites where it may be suitable for freedom camping vehicles which are not self-contained or in tents. All sites included within the assessment fall within local authority areas, which is defined in section 6 (1) of the Act, and is land controlled or managed by or on behalf of Council.

Certain areas have been excluded from this assessment, such as:

- Private land;
- Crown land including conservation land, land managed by Waka Kotahi, and LINZ Land; and
- Inaccessible land.

Assessment of Sites

In total, 17 sites across the District were assessed. Table 1 outlines the freedom camping assessment matrix and Table 2 outlines the assessment of freedom camping sites.

Table 1. Freedom Camping Area Assessment Matrix

Protect the area Consider cultural and historical significance and the natural environment		Protect the health and safety of people who may visit the area Consider levels of vehicular traffic (car parks/lookout points), use for other activities (like sports grounds), and issues of persistent vandalism		Protect access to the area Consider damage caused by vehicular access to flora and fauna and the impact that people accessing the site will have on other users of the area	
Has historical, cultural, or environmental significance and requires full protection	5	Risk to health and safety is too great to allow access to the site, including no vehicle access to, or car parking on, the site	5	No access to the site and any vehicle access would cause significant damage	5
Contains some significant historical, cultural or environmental areas	4	Significant health and safety concerns	4	Restricted access to the site and any vehicle access would cause damage	4
Contains some areas that should be protected	3	Minimal health and safety concerns (risk for the elderly or children)	3	Moderate access to the site and any vehicle access would cause minimal damage	3
Low concerns about areas that need protecting	2	Low concerns regarding health and safety	2	Good access to the site, which would not cause damage	2
No significant area concerns	1	No health and safety concerns	1	Fully formed access to the site	1

Applying the assessment matrix

- Each area is given a score of 1-5 for each of the three criteria.
- If the total score of all three criteria is **9 or more**, restricting or prohibiting freedom camping in the area may be necessary. If the score **for any one of the three criteria is 5**, this also indicates a need to protect the area by prohibiting or restricting freedom camping.
- If the total score of all three criteria is **8 or less** the area is a reserve, and there is an indication that freedom camping may be permitted on the reserve. For the area that have a score of **8 or less**, the tool indicates that it is appropriate for freedom camping to remain permitted.

Table 2. Assessment of Sites

Area Assessed	Current Status	Score		Summary of assessment	Recommendation
Kumara Domain, Kumara	Public Carpark. No freedom camping restriction in place.	Total: Protect area: Protect H&S: Protect access:	3 1 1 1	The Kumara Domain is a suitable site for freedom camping with facilities such as waste bins, public toilets, and seating available.	It is recommended that the Kumara Domain be a registered freedom camping site in the Kumara township. It should be noted that the Domain is currently used by the local community as a campsite where donations are required.
Arahura Historic Bridge Reserve, Arahura	Public carpark, No freedom camping restrictions in place	Total: Protect area: Protect H&S: Protect access:	8 5 2 1	The Arahura Historic Bridge Reserve is not a suitable site for freedom camping. The carpark is located off State Highway 6.	It is recommended that the Arahura Historic Bridge Reserve area is not allocated as a freedom camping site due to the cultural significance of the area.
Gibson Quay, Hokitika	Public Carpark. No freedom camping restriction in place.	Total: Protect area: Protect H&S: Protect access:	9 4 2 3	The Gibson Quay Western Carpark is not a suitable site for freedom camping.	It is recommended that the Gibson Quay area is not allocated as a freedom camping site due to the cultural significance of the area.
Cass Square, Hokitika	Public Carpark. No freedom camping restriction in place.	Total: Protect area: Protect H&S: Protect access:	9 4 4 1	The Cass Square South facing carpark is not a suitable site for freedom camping facilities although it has waste bins, public toilets and seating available.	It is recommended that Cass Square is not allocated as a freedom camping site due to the residential nature of the area.
Sunset Point, Hokitika	Public Carpark. No freedom camping restriction in place.	Total: Protect area: Protect H&S: Protect access:	7 2 3 2	The Sunset Point Northern carpark is a suitable site for freedom camping with facilities such as waste bins, public toilets and seating available.	It is recommended that the parking area north of the Sunset Point public toilets be a freedom camping site, approx. 12 parks. We recommend that freedom camping be restricted to the hours of 8pm – 7am.
Hokitika Beachfront, Hokitika	Public Carpark. No freedom camping restriction in place.	Total: Protect area: Protect H&S: Protect access:	3 1 1 1	The Hokitika Beachfront Southern car park is a suitable site for freedom camping with facilities such as waste bins, public toilets and seating nearby.	It is recommended that the Hokitika Beachfront Southern car park be an allocated site for freedom camping, approx. 12 parks. We recommend that freedom camping be restricted to the hours of 8pm – 7am.

Area Assessed	Current Status	Score		Summary of assessment	Recommendation
Rimu Lookout, Rimu	Public carpark for lookout, No freedom camping restrictions in place	Total: Protect area: Protect H&S: Protect access:	9 2 4 3	The Rimu Lookout was highlighted as not being a suitable freedom camping site due to the small parking area and the dangerous vision entering and existing the lookout.	It is recommended that the Rimu Lookout be included in the restricted zone due to its small parking area and access to Woodstock Rimu Road.
Woodstock Domain, Woodstock	Carpark for Woodstock Domain. Maintained and operated camping site by local community.	Total: Protect area: Protect H&S: Protect access:	3 1 1 1	The Woodstock Domain is a suitable site for freedom camping. It is currently a campground managed by the local community.	It is recommended that the Woodstock Domain be a registered freedom camping site. It should be noted that the Domain is currently used by the local community as campsite where visitors are charged.
Kaniere Domain, Kaniere	Public carpark located along Kaniere road on edge on Domain.	Total: Protect area: Protect H&S: Protect access:	9 2 5 2	The Kaniere Domain carpark was highlighted as not being a suitable freedom camping site due to the level of traffic along Kaniere Road. No facilities such as toilets or waste bins are available.	It is recommended that the Kaniere Domain be included in the prohibited zone due to its location in proximity to Kaniere Road.
Miltown Shelter, Miltown	Public carpark located on West Coast Wilderness Trail	Total: Protect area: Protect H&S: Protect access:	8 5 3 1	The Miltown shelter carpark is not a suitable site for freedom camping although it has public toilets and covered seating. It is located off Miltown Road.	It is recommended that the Miltown shelter carpark not be allocated as a freedom camping area due to the cultural significance of the site.
Ross Hall, Ross	Public carpark, No freedom camping restrictions currently in place.	Total: Protect area: Protect H&S: Protect access:	9 2 3 4	The Ross Hall carpark is not a suitable site for freedom camping. It is located off State Highway 6 and is close to facilities such as waste bins and public toilets.	It is recommended that the Ross Hall carpark not be allocated as a freedom camping site due to the small carparking area and the hall is used for various activities.
Harihari Hall, Harihari	Public carpark next to domain. No freedom camping restrictions currently in place.	Total: Protect area: Protect H&S: Protect access:	9 2 3 4	The Harihari hall carpark between the garden and State Highway 6 provides a small carparking area. This location is within close proximity to the public toilets	It is recommended that the Harihari Hall carpark not be allocated as a freedom camping area due to the small carparking area and the hall is used for various activities.

Area Assessed	Current Status	Score		Summary of assessment	Recommendation
				and waste bins. This is not a suitable freedom camping site.	
Kakapotahi Beach, Kakapotahi	Public carpark, Currently a popular freedom camping site. No restrictions in place.	Total: Protect area: Protect H&S: Protect access:	7 2 3 2	The Kakapotahi Beach carpark is a suitable site for freedom camping. It is located off the highway and provides a safe location for campers to park.	It is recommended that the Kakapotahi Beach carpark be a registered freedom camping site. We recommend that freedom camping be restricted to the hours of 8pm – 7am.
Franz Josef Heli Carpark, Franz Josef	Public paid carpark. No freedom camping restriction in place.	Total: Protect area: Protect H&S: Protect access:	3 1 1 1	The Franz Josef Heli carpark located off State Highway 6 provides a safe area for freedom campers to park. This location is within close proximity to the public toilets and waste bins.	It is recommended that the Franz Josef Heli carpark be a registered freedom camping site. We recommend that freedom camping be restricted to the hours of 8pm – 7am.
Paringa Salmon Farm, Paringa	Public carpark. Currently popular freedom camping site. No restrictions in place.	Total: Protect area: Protect H&S: Protect access:	3 1 1 1	The Paringa Salmon Farm carpark located off State Highway 6 provides a safe area for freedom campers to park. This location includes public toilets.	It is recommended that the Paringa Salmon Farm carpark be a registered freedom camping site. We recommend that freedom camping be restricted to the hours of 8pm – 7am.
Bruce Bay Beach, Bruce Bay	Road reserve, no freedom camping restriction in place.	Total: Protect area: Protect H&S: Protect access:	8 5 3 1	The Bruce Bay carpark at the northern end of Bruce Bay is not suitable for freedom camping. The carpark is located off State Highway 6.	It is recommended that the Bruce Bay car park area towards the northern end is not allocated as a freedom camping site due to the cultural significance of the area.
Haast Playground, Haast	Public carpark, No freedom camping restriction in place.	Total: Protect area: Protect H&S: Protect access:	5 1 3 1	The Haast playground carpark is a suitable site for freedom camping with facilities such as waste bins, public toilets and seating available.	It is recommended that the Haast playground carpark have ten allocated carparks to be a registered freedom camping site. We recommend that freedom camping be restricted to the hours of 8pm – 7am.