

Part D.



Reserve Management



**D.1 PRINCIPLE STATEMENT FOR
SPA THERMAL PARK AND
RIVERBANK RECREATIONAL AND SCENIC RESERVE**

**TO APPRECIATE THE NATURAL HERITAGE OF THE RESERVES AND
TO PROVIDE FOR THE PHYSICAL WELFARE AND ENJOYMENT OF
PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.**

D.2 GOAL AND OBJECTIVES FOR SPA THERMAL PARK AND RIVERBANK RECREATIONAL AND SCENIC RESERVE

The management goal for Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve is:

To develop an area for the purpose of providing sites for recreation activities, public enjoyment and physical welfare, and for the protection and appreciation of the natural heritage with emphasis on the retention of open spaces, informal outdoor recreational activities and an Adventure Tourism Area for approved commercial recreational activities.

This management goal will be met through the following objectives:

1. To provide as natural and unmodified environment as possible adjacent to the Taupo urban area.
2. To provide access to the Waikato River and its banks.
3. To provide an area for recreation and adventure activities.
4. To appreciate the natural heritage of the reserves
5. To provide an Adventure Tourism Area for approved commercial recreational activities and ancillary services.



D.3 POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

General Management

POLICY A: ADMINISTRATION AND CONTROL

POLICY: *To administer Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve as reserve land under the Reserves Act 1977 and in accordance with this management plan, the Taupo District Plan and the Parks and Reserves Bylaws.*

EXPLANATION: Spa Thermal Park has been gazetted as recreation reserve under Section 17 of the Reserves Act 1977. Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve has been gazetted as recreation, scenic, local purpose, scenic or road reserve. Control of the reserves is vested in the Taupo District Council.

Within the Taupo District Council management of the reserve is the responsibility of the Community Services Manager and staff of the Division. Policy decisions are taken by the Council following advice from relevant staff.

- IMPLEMENTATION:**
- a) *Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve will be administered by the Taupo District Council and its staff, in accordance with the requirements of the Reserves Act 1977, the objectives and policies outlined in this management plan, local bylaws and the Taupo District Plan. Where the policies in this plan conflict with the bylaws then the management plan policies will prevail.*
 - b) *Management of the reserves will be the responsibility of the Community Services Manager and staff of the Division.*
 - c) *Any activity or development not allowed for under the policies contained in this management plan will not be permitted. However an activity or development may be possible following a policy decision from Council, which in turn must be in accordance with relevant legislation and follow formal public consultation.*
 - d) *Any major change of objectives and policies should facilitate a plan review.*

POLICY B: PUBLIC ACCESS AND RESERVE CLOSURE

POLICY: *To make Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve accessible to the public, taking into account safety, natural values, capacity for use, the provisions of Section 53 of the Reserves Act 1977, other Acts and Bylaws and any other restrictions necessary for the reserves' protection and management.*

EXPLANATION: The public is generally allowed access to the reserves at all times. It may however be necessary periodically to close part or all of the reserve(s) to the public for maintenance, security, safety reasons, protection of natural values or to enable particular events to be staged.

IMPLEMENTATION:

- a) Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve will be accessible to the public.*
- b) When necessary the reserves or part of them will be closed to the public subject to the provisions of the Reserves Act 1977.*
- c) Public access and enjoyment of the reserves and Waikato River must not be compromised.*

SEE ALSO: Fees
Organised Formal Activities/Special events
Commercial Activities



POLICY C: SIGNS AND INFORMATION

POLICY: *To erect the minimum number of signs to ensure that all visitors to the reserves are aware of the location of facilities, the rules governing the area and some information, including geology and history about the reserves.*

EXPLANATION: Good design of a reserve will ensure that a minimum number of signs to direct and inform visitors are required. It is preferable that all such signage be limited to reduce the number of structures in the reserve.

There will also be a requirement for directional signs to various important locations within the reserve.

- IMPLEMENTATION:**
- a) All signs should be designed to be in harmony with the environment while still achieving its main purpose of conveying information to visitors (colour, size and shape etc).*
 - b) Information will include a plan of the area, permitted activities, reserve history and other features of the area.*
 - c) All signs must conform to the Taupo District Plan.*
 - d) No sign shall be erected on the reserves except for those directly relevant to reserve management or to assist public use of the reserve.*
 - e) All signs must be approved by Council as landowner.*
 - f) To identify and where appropriate interpret the natural features of the reserves.*
 - g) To publish an information brochure.*

SEE ALSO: Facilities and Amenities
Commercial Activities
Concept Plan

POLICY D: VANDALISM

POLICY: *To prosecute anyone found to be undertaking a material offence on the reserves as defined in Section 94 of the Reserves Act 1977 or in the Parks and Reserves Bylaws.*

EXPLANATION: The Council may bring a prosecution against anyone found undertaking a material offence on a reserve. Reserves are for the enjoyment and use of everyone in perpetuity. Vandalism and offences against the reserve can threaten the long-term viability of the area and can create increased maintenance costs to the Council.

IMPLEMENTATION:

- a) The Council will inform the NZ Police in acts of vandalism.*
- b) The Council will lay a complaint with the NZ Police against any person found undertaking a material offence against the reserves.*
- c) Every person allegedly committing any offence on a reserve shall, upon request of the Council or any authorised officer, immediately leave the reserve and may be prohibited from appearing on the reserve for each period as the authorised officer deems fit, but shall nevertheless be liable also to be prosecuted for the offence.*

SEE ALSO: Walking Tracks



POLICY E: FEES

POLICY: *To permit free public access to Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve subject to the provisions of Section 53 of the Reserves Act 1977, except for special events or commercial activities.*

EXPLANATION: The public will generally be allowed free access to the reserves. The Council may require a fee from groups (commercial or non-commercial) using a reserve for activities involving the exclusive use of a site for a particular event. These groups will in turn be able to charge their members or clients. The fees imposed by the Council will be set at the time of their application for the activity.

All applications will be subject to the provisions of this management plan, the District Plan and the Reserves Act 1977.

IMPLEMENTATION:

- a) *There will be no fee charged to members of the public using Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve on an informal basis.*
- b) *Fees may be charged for commercial use of a reserve and to a lesser extent non-commercial use, at the discretion of Taupo District Council. The amount of the fee charged will be determined by Council.*

SEE ALSO: Public Access & Reserve Closure
Organised Formal Activities/Special Events

POLICY F: ROADS AND VEHICLE PARKING

POLICY: *To provide and maintain roads and carparking to a level appropriate for the level of use that the reserves can sustain without diminishing the reserves' outdoor recreation values.*

EXPLANATION: *There is a sealed road on Spa Thermal Park terminating with a car park adjacent to the children's playground.*

IMPLEMENTATION: *a) Existing roads will be rationalised to a minimum to allow access to recreation areas.*

b) These roads, in (a) above and indicated on the concept plan will be developed and maintained to a standard suitable to minimise degradation of the area.

c) Vehicle parking areas will be designed for each recreation area and maintained with defined edges.

d) To undertake an environmental impact assessment on the effect of widening Spa Road (in relation to proposed road network changes) on the reserve site for the Adventure Tourism Area.

e) To make provision for a car park extension subject to an increase in activity on site and the recommendations of the "Spa Road" environmental impact assessment report."

f) That any proposed car park extension within the Adventure Tourism Area is subject to the lodgement of a development plan acceptable to Council as landowner, other provisions of this Management Plan and Resource Management Act 1991.

SEE ALSO: *Facilities and Amenities
Concept Plan*



POLICY G: VEHICLES

POLICY: *To prohibit the use of all motorised vehicles in Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve, except on the formed roads, parking areas and maintenance vehicles on the reserves.*

EXPLANATION: All motorised vehicles (including motorbikes and trail bikes) can have adverse effects on the natural values of a reserve and on the experience and safety of visitors to the area.

The location of roads and parking areas will be specifically designed so that any activities compatible with the reserve and this plan, requiring vehicle use will be catered for.

IMPLEMENTATION: a) *To restrict the use of all motorised vehicles in Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve except on the formed roads and parking areas.*

b) *To prohibit the use of all motorised vehicles in the Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve except for reserve maintenance*

c) *Any person(s) found riding or driving a vehicle on a reserve shall, upon request of the Council or any authorised officer, immediately leave the reserve but shall nevertheless be liable also to be prosecuted for the offence.*

d) *To allow vehicles for approved activities*

SEE ALSO: Fees
Roads and Parking

POLICY H: FACILITIES AND AMENITIES

POLICY: *To restrict facilities on the reserves to those necessary to protect the natural environment whilst facilitating the use of the reserve for its primary purpose.*

EXPLANATION: Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve are adjacent to the Waikato River. Water quality is high and the reserves themselves have high natural and open space values. Too many built structures would be inappropriate and largely unnecessary in these areas.

However there is usually an expectation by visitors for some basic facilities such as toilets, drinking water, shelter, rubbish bins, tables, seats, shade, play equipment, and walking tracks.

Some of these facilities protect the area as well as assist visitors while others purely enhance the visitor experience.

Provision of rubbish bins tends to diminish visitor responsibility for disposal of rubbish and does not encourage self-sufficiency in waste management. Therefore the location of the rubbish bins will be centralised to the carpark area.

There has been some demand in the past for electricity to be provided to parts of the large open spaces in Spa Thermal Park and this should be given consideration.

Abseiling takes place on the cliffs between Cherry Island and Taupo Bungy.

A skateboard bowl has been provided in Spa Thermal Park however this is no longer meeting the total needs of present and potential users. A new skateboard facility has been built closer to town.

There is potential for more play equipment to be installed, especially by service clubs, as long as they meet the appropriate standards.



The Spa Thermal Park - Huka Falls Walkway starts from Spa Thermal Park. There are some informal tracks through the bush on the banks of the river upstream from the start of the Walkway. The construction of a quality track along the edge of the river should be investigated. The cliffs become too steep further upstream but the track could then be resumed near Cherry Island. The preservation of the scenic values of both banks of the river should be given a high priority.

A memorial walk on the banks adjacent to the cemetery provides opportunities for people to donate plants and plaques in memory of their loved ones. Overhead powerlines cross this area and consideration should be given to burying them.

On the true left bank it is possible to follow the road (50% of maintenance costs come from private residents who use it for access) and grassed areas if people want to follow the river. However the land then becomes Maori land before further reserve land and the Reids Farm reserve and camping area is reached. The option of completing a track on the true left bank, to Reids Farm should be considered in the future.

It is not always easy to get to the rivers edge and there is potential to increase the number of pedestrian access points along the river banks on both sides.

- IMPLEMENTATION:**
- a) *Facilities will be permitted where there is a need to provide protection to the environment and ensure the safety and enjoyment of permitted recreation activities.*
 - b) *Any structure will conform to the requirements of the Taupo District Plan, Building Act 1991 and Bylaws.*
 - c) *The location, design, colours and materials of any structure will be in harmony with the natural environment.*
 - d) *No open fires will be permitted.*
 - e) *To improve and maintain to a high standard the children's playgrounds.*
 - f) *To investigate the improvement of access for people with disabilities to the toilets on Spa Thermal Park.*

SEE ALSO:

- Signs & Information
- Roads & Vehicle Parking
- Organised Formal Events/Special Events
- Commercial Activities
- Concept Plan



POLICY I: ANIMALS

POLICY: *To allow dogs in Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve provided they are under control at all times.*

Horses will not be allowed in the Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve.

EXPLANATION: Dogs are companions for people as part of the family or they provide security for those who require it. However when they are not suitably controlled they cause a nuisance to other users or to other dogs. Provided they are suitably controlled these problems can be minimised. For this reason Spa Thermal Park has been designated as a dog exercise area under the Taupo District Council Control Of Dogs Bylaw 1997.

- IMPLEMENTATION:**
- a) *To permit dogs in Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve so long as they are under full control at all times.*
 - b) *To prohibit dogs in the play equipment area of Spa Thermal Park.*
 - c) *Dog owners will clean up after their dogs. Anybody responsible for the dog(s) and failing to do this may be prosecuted.*
 - d) *The person responsible for the dog(s) should carry a pooper scooper bag or similar to ensure that dog droppings are removed immediately.*
 - e) *Where dogs are found out of control, owners may be prosecuted.*
 - f) *Horses are not permitted on Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve. Any horses found on Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve without consent may be removed and the owners may be prosecuted.*

POLICY J : MAINTENANCE AND SERVICING

POLICY: *To maintain and service the reserves to an acceptable standard by the community and to ensure it's continued public enjoyment and efficient management.*

EXPLANATION: The services including the play ground equipment are required to be maintained to appropriate health and safety standards. It is necessary to maintain all services to appropriate levels thus ensuring effective management. The Sport, Recreation and Leisure Strategy (1995) identifies the need for lockable bike stands at the car park.

- IMPLEMENTATION:**
- a) *Where provision of utility services is deemed necessary they shall be designed and located so that their impact on the reserves' visual and recreational values is minimised.*
 - b) *Due to the geothermal activity and hot ground in Spa Thermal Park special design features for services placement may be necessary.*
 - c) *Seating and rubbish bins are provided and maintained in appropriate locations.*
 - d) *The Service Statements outlined in Appendix 3 of this document will be adhered to.*

SEE ALSO: Appendix 3 Service Statements for the Reserves
Concept Plan



Recreation

POLICY K: RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

POLICY: *To manage Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve as a recreation area.*

EXPLANATION: The primary purpose of Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve is to provide an opportunity for outdoor recreation. Outdoor recreation activities take many forms and are defined in many ways. It is appropriate in this case to maintain and enhance the positive attributes of the area by allowing activities that do not detract from them.

The Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve provide an opportunity for a 'natural' experience adjacent to the Taupo urban area. In particular it offers;

- relatively natural environment,
- a variety of 'levels' with mature trees and grass,
- large areas of open space,
- easy access to the Waikato River,
- contrast with nearby busy and highly modified areas.

These are the assets of Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve which this management plan intends to maintain. As such the types of recreation activities that are considered most appropriate are those that do not have detrimental effects on these features.

IMPLEMENTATION: a) *To allow outdoor recreation activities which do not adversely effect the present values of the reserve. These values are discussed under the explanation above.*

SEE ALSO: Commercial Activities
Organised Formal Activities / Special Events

POLICY L: ORGANISED FORMAL ACTIVITIES / SPECIAL EVENTS

POLICY: *To conditionally approve organised formal activities (of six days or less) by commercial and non-commercial groups that are compatible with the provisions of this management plan, the Taupo District Plan, the Reserves Act 1977 and any Bylaws.*

EXPLANATION: Applications are periodically received by Council from both commercial and non-commercial groups to hold short term or one-off events on reserves. The number of applications requesting the use of reserves continues to rise.

The cliffs between Cherry Island and Taupo Bungy are used by clubs, commercial ventures and schools for abseiling. It is the only opportunity for this activity close to Taupo. Limits on the amount of use need to be established to offset any adverse effects on the cliff face, adjacent area, vegetation and nesting birds. An Environmental Impact Report will be commissioned as soon as possible to determine limits on the use of the site.

Applications will be viewed favourably so long as there are no adverse effects to the reserve and environs.



- IMPLEMENTATION:**
- a) *Any application received by Council for short term (six days or less) one-off events (no more than once a year) will be assessed on its merits to determine its suitability and appropriateness to the reserve.*
 - b) *A scale of fees will be enforced for such applications. The amount of the fee and / or bond will depend on the possible effects of the event, and the end use for any proceeds.*
 - c) *All applicants must demonstrate that the activity will not have any adverse effects on the reserve and its primary purpose.*
 - d) *All applications will be subject to the provisions of Section 53 of the Reserves Act 1977.*
 - e) *Abseiling will be limited as determined by an independent Impact Report on the effects of the activity. Bookings will be controlled and must be made with the Community Services Division of Taupo District Council. Commercially based abseiling will be charged according the TDC scale of fees.*

SEE ALSO:

- Recreation Opportunities
- Public Access & Reserve Closure
- Fees
- Facilities and Amenities
- Commercial Activities
- Soil Conservation

POLICY M : WALKING TRACKS

POLICY: *To maintain the existing walking track network and provide any further tracks found to be necessary to enable use and enjoyment of the reserves.*

EXPLANATION: A walking track network is presently in existence on the reserves. This network needs periodic maintenance work. Further tracks may be provided if the demand arises and finances permit.

The Spa Thermal Park - Huka Falls Walkway begins within the park adjacent to the main car park. This track is managed by the Department of Conservation.

- IMPLEMENTATION:**
- a) *Walking tracks will be maintained to a standard sufficient to allow the public uninhibited foot access while preserving the "natural" appearance.*
 - b) *To develop new walking tracks such as the "Thermal River Walk" to acknowledge the areas natural history.*
 - c) *All additional walking tracks will require the consent of the Community Services Division of Council.*

SEE ALSO: Concept Plan



POLICY N: CAMPING

POLICY: *Camping will not be permitted on the reserves except for a special event.*

EXPLANATION: The reserves are not generally seen to be an area suitable for camping. There are a number of camping grounds in and around Taupo including the Lake Taupo Holiday Park which lies adjacent to the reserves, for this activity. However a special event may be approved.

IMPLEMENTATION:

- a) *Unauthorised camping will not be permitted on the reserves and anyone found doing so will be removed by Council staff or appropriate authorities and may be subject to prosecution.*
- b) *Camping in association with a special event may be approved upon application.*

POLICY O: SWIMMING

POLICY: *To discourage the use of the Waikato River bordering the Spa Thermal Park for swimming due to the threat of illness from Amoebic Meningitis.*

EXPLANATION: The thermal waters of the Otumuheke Stream have the capacity to carry the disease Amoebic Meningitis. It has in the past caused serious illness and the occasional death. Signs have been erected down by the river warning potential swimmers of the danger.

- IMPLEMENTATION:**
- a) *Swimming will be discouraged in the Waikato River adjoining the Spa Thermal Park due to the threat of illness from Amoebic Meningitis.*
 - b) *The signs by the river warning people against swimming in the river will be maintained.*



Commercial Environment

POLICY P: COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

POLICY: *To permit existing commercial activities in the Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve.*

To permit new commercial activities within the Adventure Tourism Area of Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve providing they meet the requirements of this management plan and other relevant legislation.

EXPLANATION: Presently there are two approved "commercial operations" using the reserves. One is located on the cliff in the Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve leasing an area of land for a "bungy" and scenic river cruises operation. The second "commercial" use of the Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve is from short-term use of the abseiling cliffs for motivation and leadership training.

Within the Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve, there is an area, which has been identified for the development of adventure tourism activities that utilise and/or take advantage of the topographical features associated with the adjacent Waikato River. Adventure tourism and related activities are permitted within the Adventure Tourism Area.

Any bridge spanning the Waikato River in this context is not a permitted activity.

IMPLEMENTATION:

- a) *Existing recreational based commercial activities may be permitted on Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve.*
- b) *Existing recreational based commercial activities within the Adventure Tourism Area being the bungy jumping activity and platform and the scenic river cruises will be permitted.*
- c) *New recreational based commercial activities may only be permitted within the Adventure Tourism Area of Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve providing the activity is in keeping with other provisions of this plan (including the Concept Plan for the Adventure Tourism Area) the District Plan and relevant legislation. Such applications may be subject to the lodgement of a development plan acceptable to Council and /or notified resource consent.*
- d) *The applicant will be required to produce evidence that any new recreational commercial activity within the Adventure Tourism Area will not adversely effect the reserves' environment and primary purpose. Such evidence will be presented to Council in the form of a complete Assessment of Environmental Affects undertaken by an independent environmental consultant with Council approval.*
- e) *An Amusement Device Licence will be required for all motorised activities pursuant to Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992, Machinery Act 1950, Amusement Device Regulations 1978.*
- f) *That the lease (pursuant to Sections 54 and 56 of the Reserves Act 1977) within the Adventure Tourism Area be varied to permit additional activities and require payment of rental for the additional activities as and when additional activities receives/ obtains all required approvals.*
- g) *Any other future additional recreational activities of a commercial nature which are intended to be located and operated within the Adventure Tourism Area on Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve will require the consent of Council as landowner, and will be subject to all Reserves Act 1977 processes and will be subject to a resource consent.*
- h) *Use of the Adventure Tourism Area for a bridge spanning the Waikato River will not be permitted.*

SEE ALSO:

Recreation Opportunities
Public Access & Reserve Closure



Natural Environment

POLICY Q: VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

POLICY: *To promote the establishment of native vegetation.*

EXPLANATION: There are large grassed areas in both reserves as well as extensive areas of bush and trees, adding to the appeal of the area so close to an urban centre.

However the expanse of grass on the true right bank of Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve should be decreased and the areas of grouped native planting increased. Access for maintenance vehicles and space for picnic areas should be left as mown grass.

The reserves would be enhanced by removal of the pine trees along the riverbank. They should be replaced with native species such as kowhais, flax, pittosporums and five fingers to name a few. Some pines in Spa Thermal Park enhance the area and the better ones should be left in place.

There are also many areas where weeds such as blackberry, gorse, broom and Himalayan Honeysuckle have taken hold. In some cases they provide protection for young native seedlings or create a sense of 'wilderness' but in most cases it is appropriate to remove them.

IMPLEMENTATION:

- a) *Management of trees, bush and other vegetation on the reserves shall be in accordance with the requirements of the Reserves Act 1977 and Biosecurity Act 1993.*
- b) *Pine trees will gradually be phased out through active removal. Pruning and extraction of trees or bush shall have minimal effect on the reserve and where appropriate provision shall be made for replacement planting or restoration.*
- c) *Weed control will be undertaken where necessary.*
- d) *To undertake a Significant Natural Values Study of the Spa Thermal Park - Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve*
- e) *To undertake a natural heritage study (wildlife and plants) of the Spa Thermal Park - Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve to assess the need to protect natural habitats.*

SEE ALSO:

Concept Plan



POLICY R: WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

POLICY: *To protect, where appropriate, and manage the wildlife and wildlife habitat of Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve to an extent compatible with the reserves' primary purpose.*

EXPLANATION: It is important that the desirable wildlife of Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve is afforded some protection and that wildlife habitats are managed in a way to encourage indigenous wildlife to the area. Birds provide an attraction in this type of environment.

Management of habitat in the reserves will be particularly important in respect of increasing species numbers and diversity. Management and control of pests will also have to be undertaken periodically. This section shall not authorise the undertaking of any action that will contravene the Wildlife Act 1953 or any regulations, proclamation or notification under that Act.

- IMPLEMENTATION:**
- a) *Native and exotic fauna normally found in the reserve will generally be protected and encouraged subject to the requirements of any bylaws and regulations relating to noxious animals and vermin and to fishing rights.*
 - b) *Planting of berry and nectar producing plants shall be included in planting plans where practical to encourage indigenous species of birds to the area.*
 - c) *Pest control will be undertaken by the appropriate organisation.*
 - d) *To undertake a Significant Natural Values Study of the Spa Thermal Park - Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve*
 - e) *To undertake a natural heritage study (wildlife and plants) of the Spa Thermal Park - Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve to assess the need to protect natural habitats.*

SEE ALSO: Animals

POLICY S: SOIL CONSERVATION

POLICY: *To manage Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve in such a way as to minimise soil and river bank erosion.*

EXPLANATION: In general there is very little erosion occurring.

- IMPLEMENTATION:**
- a) *Clearing of vegetation along stream and riverbanks must be approved by Council. Further planting will be undertaken to ensure greater protection of the banks.*
 - b) *Re-vegetation and other necessary work will be undertaken at existing sites of erosion.*
 - c) *Vegetation will be retained in areas prone to erosion.*

SEE ALSO: Vegetation Management
Concept Plan



POLICY T: GEOTHERMAL ENVIRONMENT

POLICY: *To interpret to the public areas of interesting geothermal activity while promoting public safety in the more active areas.*

EXPLANATION: Parts of Spa Thermal Park are very active and could pose a threat to public safety. Other areas are much safer and are more suited to public access. A thermal river walk already exists along the Waikato River.

IMPLEMENTATION:

- a) *Where safety permits, geothermal areas will be open for public access and interpretation.*
- b) *The public will be discouraged from entering the more active areas.*
- c) *A lessee for the Adventure Tourism Area will provide annual reports prepared by a qualified consulting engineer to Council on:*
 - 1) *the stability of the cliffs*
 - 2) *the platform(s) foundation*
 - 3) *the integrity of their structures, their support and their continued ability to function as designed.*

SEE ALSO: Signs and Information
Education
Appendix 4: Geological Data
Concept Plan

POLICY U: LANDSCAPE VALUES

POLICY: *To protect and enhance the landscape character and scenic quality of the Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve.*

EXPLANATION: The landscape character and scenic beauty of the reserves are inherently important natural features of the area, worth protecting and enhancing. It is therefore important that the reserves are well landscaped and aesthetically pleasing.

IMPLEMENTATION:

- a) *All landscape plans for the reserves will be designed to protect and enhance their natural features.*
- b) *The colour of all buildings will be such that they blend into the surrounding area.*
- c) *To undertake a Significant Natural Values Study of the Spa Thermal Park - Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve*

SEE ALSO: Concept Plan



POLICY V: WEED AND PEST CONTROL

POLICY: *To undertake noxious weed and pest control necessary for the protection and general wellbeing of the reserves.*

EXPLANATION: Some weed and pest control will be necessary to ensure protection of indigenous flora and fauna and for soil conservation purposes.

IMPLEMENTATION: a) *Weed and pest control will be undertaken by Council staff as required*

SEE ALSO: Soil Conservation
Vegetation Management
Concept Plan

Social Environment

POLICY W: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

POLICY: *To enhance the social wellbeing of the public through the development of Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve as a place for recreation*

EXPLANATION: Leaving the reserves as an area where people can go to relax and enjoy the openspace provides a great deal of social benefit. Spa Thermal park provides an area where children can play off the streets and where people can exercise their dogs. The park will therefore be retained as an area where these activities can be undertaken. Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve provides an area where people can walk and admire the natural beauty of the Waikato River and its surrounding landscapes.

IMPLEMENTATION: a) *Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve will be retained as an openspace area where children can play, people can relax and dogs can be exercised.*

SEE ALSO: Concept Plan



POLICY X: HISTORIC SITES

POLICY: *To identify and protect any historic sites or other historic features and where possible to interpret these to the public appropriately.*

EXPLANATION: There are some historical sites and features that have been identified on Spa Thermal Park. These are largely associated with the early European occupation of the area. There are likely to be other sites on Spa Thermal Park that as yet have not been identified.

- IMPLEMENTATION:**
- a) *The history of the reserves will be interpreted to the public as part of the overall interpretation plan for the area.*
 - b) *Where historic sites and features are identified (including the "Thermal River Walk" and the Old Coach Road) they will be appropriately interpreted to the public.*
 - c) *Historic sites are protected under the provisions of the Historic Places Act 1980 and as required by the Historic Places Trust.*

SEE ALSO: Signs and Information
Concept Plan

POLICY Y: ARCHITECTURAL CONTROLS

POLICY: *To ensure that all buildings and structures are in harmony with the natural environment.*

EXPLANATION: As Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve are openspace reserves the visual harmony of buildings with the natural environment is very important. It is therefore necessary to control the design, colour and materials of which buildings are made to ensure their compatibility with the environment.

- IMPLEMENTATION:**
- a) *All existing buildings and structures are permitted.*
 - b) *All buildings and structures within the Adventure Tourism Area must be designed to be compatible with their environment.*
 - c) *The colour of all buildings will be such that they blend into the surrounding area.*
 - d) *That subject to the lodgement of a development plan acceptable to Council as land owner and approvals under the Resource Management Act 1991, the District Plan and /or other relevant legislation provision is made for a building in the Adventure Tourism Area to house a café / sale and booking office / administration / toilet block and that the final design (materials, colour etc) must be approved by the Council.*
 - e) *All future buildings and structures within the Adventure Tourism Area must be essential in enhancing the recreational enjoyment of the area and enable the public to obtain benefit and enjoyment of the Waikato River Valley.*

SEE ALSO: Concept Plan



POLICY Z: EDUCATION

POLICY: *To encourage the use of Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve for educational purposes compatible with the goal of the reserves.*

EXPLANATION: The reserves have been used in the past by educational and youth groups for interpretation of the natural environment. These activities are compatible with the purpose of the reserves and will therefore be encouraged.

IMPLEMENTATION: *a) The Council will encourage the use of the Spa Thermal Park and Riverbank Recreational and Scenic Reserve for educational purposes and make available information to assist such groups obtain an understanding of the reserves.*

SEE ALSO: Concept Plan

