

## What's In The Sand Anyway?

Archaeologists are able to glean all sorts of interesting information from middens, dwelling places and other archaeological sites.

For example, a midden discovered at Raumati provided a rare glimpse into the activities of the occupants of the site about 300 years ago. These people were catching a variety of fish including large quantities of red cod as well as kahawai, flounder and hoki. Tuatua were collected in vast numbers and their shells fashioned into scrapers to scale fish for preservation in the sun. Information from this site, such as the lack of snapper (a pattern observed in coastal sites of a similar age throughout the Cook Strait region) also revealed that sea water temperatures and therefore climate were cooler than today.

## Reduce The Risks To You And Your Company

Considering Māori use of the Kāpiti Coast area for the past 900 years, it is probable all areas within the District have some connection with tāngata whenua. To ensure you avoid damage to an archaeological site and minimise legal liability:

1. Never assume anything. Avoiding a point or a star on the New Zealand Archaeological Association Site Recording Scheme map/archsite does not guarantee there isn't a heritage site.
2. Ask Council.
3. Ensure you have a copy of the resource consent to undertake earthworks and are aware of the conditions and requirements.
4. Be aware of your contract conditions, obligations and liabilities.

The presence of recorded sites indicates the potential for further sites in the area or below the ground. Sites are often more extensive than what is indicated on the map.

If you need to undertake work in an area where a site is suspected, you will need to obtain permission (an "archaeological authority") from Heritage New Zealand before work is started.



This brochure is not a substitute for referring to the requirements in the District Plan and the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014. Please contact Heritage New Zealand for more information about this Act and the Council about the District Plan. Please note: you may also need to seek your own independent legal advice.

### For further information contact:

#### Kāpiti Coast District Council

175 Rimu Road  
Private Bag 60601  
Paraparaumu 5254  
Ph (04) 296 4700 or toll free 0800-486-486  
Email: [kapiti.council@kapiticoast.govt.nz](mailto:kapiti.council@kapiticoast.govt.nz)

#### Iwi Representatives

Contact Kāpiti Coast District Council for contact details of the iwi representatives in your area.

#### Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga

Central Region Archaeologist (Kaihuakanga a Rohe)  
P O Box 2629, Wellington 6140  
Ph (04) 494 8320  
Email: [infocentral@heritage.org.nz](mailto:infocentral@heritage.org.nz)  
Visit [www.heritage.org.nz](http://www.heritage.org.nz)

#### Other Contacts:

NZ Archaeological Association: [www.nzarchaeology.org](http://www.nzarchaeology.org)

# Earthworks & Archaeological Sites

Are you a:

- Contractor
- Earthmover
- Landscaper
- Developer
- Surveyor
- Engineer
- Land owner

**Then this pamphlet is for you!**



## Earthworks and Archaeological Sites

Most people see middens (ancient rubbish dumps) as just a heap of old shells, but the sand dunes and terraces of the Kāpiti Coast District have a story to tell. They contain valued details of past ways of life and clues about environmental change.

Historic heritage is significant to the tāngata whenua of the Kāpiti Coast. Pā and kāinga sites, burial grounds, middens and other occupation sites hold secrets that have been largely lost through time.

These sites can also hold a spiritual significance for tāngata whenua especially, where kōiwi/bones are discovered. The tāngata whenua of the Kāpiti District ask that you work with the Kāpiti Coast District Council and with iwi to manage these sites responsibly.

The Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 makes it illegal for any person to modify or destroy, or cause to be modified or destroyed, any part of an archaeological site without permission from Heritage New Zealand. If you wish to do any work that may affect an archaeological or waahi tapu site, you may also need resource consent from the Kāpiti Coast District Council.

## Know Your Rights And Responsibilities

An archaeological site is defined in the Act as any place in New Zealand (including buildings, structures or shipwrecks) that was associated with pre-1900 human activity, where there is evidence relating to the history of New Zealand that can be investigated using archaeological methods.

Waahi tapu means a site or an area which is sacred or spiritually meaningful to tāngata whenua. Waahi tapu may be associated with creation stories of tāngata whenua; a particular event (such as a battle or ceremony); it may be where the whenua (placenta) was returned to the earth; or where a certain type of valued resource was found. Waahi tapu sites or areas are included in the definition of an archaeological site.

The District Plan (through the resource consent process) also protects, and seeks to avoid damage to, archaeological sites (including waahi tapu).

The Act provides for substantial penalties for unauthorised destruction or modification of an archaeological site. All parties involved in a project are liable for prosecution, including the earthmoving contractor, surveyor and engineer if a site is damaged and work is not stopped immediately.

## Before You Dig

Before you begin work on a site you can take two precautionary steps:

### 1. Site Assessment

Prominent hills or dunes, swamps, rivers, lakes and coastal zones are likely to contain an archaeological site. If you are going to work in any of these areas you should refer to the District Plan maps and contact Council (who hold relevant contact details of the local iwi representative, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga and local archaeologists). They will be able to assess the likelihood of any sites being in the area and advise you accordingly.

### 2. Check for Recorded Sites

The District Plan and the NZ Archaeological Association hold inventories of recorded sites. A check of your work area against these lists will assist you to avoid disturbing a known archaeological site. If there is any potential for encountering archaeological material an archaeological authority should be in place prior to the works.

Note: only a quarter of surviving sites are recorded on these lists. Sometimes the exact locations are not accurately recorded so you need to be aware of what to look for.



## What Do I Look For?

Many sites such as signal hills, tracks, seasonal food gathering places and bathing pools are not visually obvious. Even if you cannot see any surface features, archaeological evidence may still be present. The following are indicators of an archaeological site:

**Middens:** rubbish dumps that may contain shells, bones, artefacts, charcoal and sometimes oven stones.

**Groups of cabbage trees. Old Karaka and Kauri trees:** (old Karaka and Kauri trees are not naturally occurring within the Kāpiti District).

**Obsidian:** volcanic glass shards (used as cutting tools).

**Pā sites:** surface features such as shallow ditches, terraces, pits, channels, drains and trenches.

**Urupā (burial sites):** bone or bone fragments. Stone mounds, walls and fences.

**Cultivation areas and gardens:** these can be seen in soils and from lines or walls of loose stones or stone mounds.

## What Do I Do If I Discover A Site?

If you think you have discovered a site you must stop work immediately and contact Council and Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga. Usually an archaeological assessment is required to determine if work can continue and if so, in what form.