

## CEF backdunes project demonstration site - an example of great work in the Tasman District

Motupipi Spit is near Takaka in Golden Bay and is one of a number of sites where dune restoration is being undertaken as part of the Tasman District Council's Coastcare Programme. Dunes Trust scientists familiar with Tasman District Council Coastcare describe the work as some of the best in NZ, despite challenging circumstances and limited resources.

Restoration work on the exotic-dominated Motupipi Spit dunes commenced six to seven years ago, though a large fire about three years ago destroyed much of the earlier restoration planting. Planting is guided by sound ecological principles and ongoing learning based on results at the site. This is one of the local sites that will be part of the two day optional post-conference field trip in March 2013.

The site has a number of advantages as a demonstration area:

- Older plantings and naturally occurring natives provide useful information on the performance of different species over time in different backdune environments;
- The spit contains large backdune areas with a wide range of different backdune environments (including open coast and estuarine margins as well as a very dynamic estuary entrance area), varying degrees of wind and salt exposure, and varying distances from the coast;
- The estuarine and freshwater wetlands enable ecosystem transitions and sequences to be restored over time;
- The proposed development of a walking and bike trail means there is opportunity to incorporate public information and learning opportunities with restoration in the area;
- There is a wide range of exotic vegetation including marram, gorse and tree lucerne. Japanese Honeysuckle is also becoming problematic in some areas. This vegetation provides a range of challenges and learning opportunities for transitioning from exotic to native vegetation communities.
- The site is located immediately to the west of a popular golf course which has encroached close to open coast and estuarine margins resulting in a range of environmental and (open coast) erosion hazard issues – so the demonstration area offers a useful contrast of what can be achieved by allowing space for natural processes and environments along the coastal margins.
- The site is also significant to local tangata whenua and has wahi tapu status.

Other progress with the Dunes Trust backdune project, jointly funded by the Ministry for the Environment's Community Environment Fund and local agencies over the last six months, has included reviews of restoration and community-based monitoring initiatives at over a dozen coastal sites from Northland to



*Motupipi Spit, Tasman Bay, is the fifth demonstration area for the project. Photo showing frontal and backdune areas. Photo: J. Dahm*



*Backdune restoration on estuarine margin bordering golf course adjacent to the Motupipi Spit demonstration area. Photo: J. Dahm*



*Wetland area adjacent to walkway track within which backdune riparian margins are being restored. Photo: J. Dahm*

Southland with a focus on several South Island regions including Nelson, Canterbury, Otago and Southland. In addition to the demonstration site set up at Motupipi Spit, a further demonstration site was established at several beaches in the western Waikato region. Read more in our latest [partners backdune newsletter](#), plus previous partners newsletters on the Dunes Trust website [www.dunes.trust.org.nz](http://www.dunes.trust.org.nz)