

Progress

In July 2004 a questionnaire was sent to areas within the district identified as having dry stone walls, 1600 responses were received. The questionnaire has helped to identify the number of stone walls in the district, their condition and whether people know any history or general information about walls.

Of those survey participants that responded to the questionnaire, very few knew historical or general information about dry stone walls.

This project has identified a need to educate people on:

- Maintenance and repair of dry stone walls.
- Whangarei District Plan rules relating to dry stone walls.

Council staff have recorded the position of dry stone boundary walls in the Three Mile Bush, Glenbervie, Central, Maunu and Maungatapere areas. Some internal dry stone walls have been recorded due to being close to the main roads. The rest of the internal walls will be recorded in the future.

If you have a dry stone wall on your property and would like it surveyed, or know of any historical details relating to dry stone walls in the Whangarei District, please contact the council on 09-430 4200.



District Plan Rules

Currently the maximum length of wall that can be removed without consent is 6 metres. This is for the purpose of an access way only.



Maintenance Tips

- Trees should be planted a minimum of 2 metres from the wall.
- Ensure coping-stones are intact and firmly placed along the top of the wall.
- Keep walls free of vegetation within 1 metre of the wall, spray vegetation - do not pull out!
- Where possible remove tree roots.
- Ensure drainage does not saturate the foundations, as this will cause the wall to collapse.
- Undertake regular checks on the condition of your wall.
- Employ a skilled craftsman to perform any maintenance required.
- Where possible keep stock away from the walls.



WHANGAREI
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Vision

To be a vibrant, attractive and thriving district, developing sustainable lifestyles based around our unique environment; the envy of New Zealand and recognised worldwide.

Mission

Creating the ultimate living environment.

Values

- Communication
- Customer First
- Innovation and Excellence
- Valuing Employees and Partnerships

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WHANGAREI
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Dry Stone Wall Project

Creating the ultimate living environment



Dry Stone Wall Project

Council wishes to address concerns raised during consultation regarding the effects of development on 'dry stone walls' in the district.

This will be achieved by reviewing and enhancing current rules in the Whangarei District Plan. Another outcome of the project will be to update council records by mapping the location of stone walls, which therefore allows monitoring of the rules, to ensure the walls are being protected.

Additionally the district will gain a historical resource containing stories relating to the stone walls. The history of stone walling has been handed down through the generations orally and if not recorded could be lost.

By educating and raising the profile of the walls, the project also aims to encourage people to repair and maintain existing walls, whilst also encouraging new walls to be built. This will enhance the character and amenity of the district.



The History

Whangarei District has some fine examples of dry stone walls. They owe their existence to the volcanic cones that lie dotted across the landscape. The walls were constructed specifically to clear the land of volcanic stone to make way for agriculture, and horticultural crops. Stone walls proved to be the only method of keeping feral pigs out of farmers' land, while containing livestock.

There are remnants of stone walls in the central city, but primarily there are five main areas in the Whangarei District with dry stone walls:

- Maungatapere
- Maunu
- Glenbervie
- Three Mile Bush
- Maungakaramea

The walls were built from the 1850's-1920's and were mainly built using casual labour. Due to the lack of surface stone available and the costs of construction, dry stone walls seem to be something of the past, though there are some excellent new dry stone walls being constructed.

Construction of Dry Stone Walls

Dry stone walls are constructed without mortar, and rely on pressure within the stones. Large foundation stones are laid providing a stable base for the outer stones (face-stones). The centre of the wall is filled with rubble called 'hearing' giving the wall strength. The stones are laid so that each stone crosses the join of the one below, creating a bridged join. Wedges or pinning stones are pushed into the gaps between the face-stones which help to reduce movement. A free-standing wall has two faces commonly referred to as a double skinned wall. The top layer or coping-stones are tightly interlocked and protect the wall from weather erosion, livestock and human damage.

