

Waka route for coastline

By **MARIANNE KELLY**

AN OPPORTUNITY to follow traditional sea pathways along Auckland's south-east coastline will be a feature of a kayak and waka trail planned by the regional council.

Five regional parks with water access and existing campsites have been chosen as bases to link the trail, which would start at Omana Regional Park north of Maraetai Beach and finish at Waharau Regional Park between Orere Point and Kaiaua.

ARC's parks and heritage committee has recommended the development plan be approved and implementation of the trail be considered in the regional parks management plan review.

Funding has been included in year one of the draft long-term council community plan.

Multi-day water-based activities are presently absent from recreational activities on the regional parks network.

A paddling experience – for up to five days and four nights – will promote a sense of place and awareness, ARC says.

It will tell the story of traditional sea pathways used by tangata whenua (people of the land), including the use of traditional place names, navigation routes, and landing places where waka were drawn up out of the water.

Paddlers will land in many of

the smaller communities between the parks with the opportunity to use facilities provided by private operators such as bed and breakfast, lodge, motel and back-packer accommodation at Maraetai Beach, Kawakawa Bay, Orere Point and Waharau.

Potential opportunities for marae accommodation also exist at Umupuia marae (Umupuia beach), Wharekawa marae (near Whakatawai) and by using the existing visitor centre building at Waharau Regional Park.

Existing camping facilities on the parks will need to be extended in some cases.

Formalising the traditional route could provide opportunities for other recreational and tourist services and also raise the awareness of regional parks in the south-eastern area.

PROPOSED ROUTE

■ **Day one** (2.5-3 hours): Omana Beach to the Duder Regional Park Peninsula.

■ **Day two** (2-3 hours): Mouth of the Wairoa River to Waitawa Bay Beach newly-acquired but not yet open Waitawa Regional Park, north of Kawakawa Bay.

■ **Day three** (3 hours): Kawakawa Bay to the Tawhitokino Regional Park estuary at the end of Kawakawa Bay Coast Road.

■ **Day four** (1-1.5 hours): Tawhitokino Beach to Tapapakanga Regional Park south of Orere Point.

■ **Day five** (2-3 hours): Tapapakanga Estuary to Waharau Regional Park, the gateway to the eastern Hunua Ranges. A 90-minute road trip takes paddlers back to the Auckland CBD.