Virtually on Track came about with the increasing evidence of the importance of social participation and changing life/work patterns. The project aims to enhance connections of people with each other and increase engagement in recreation locally. The Bay of Plenty region is rich with beautiful parks, spaces and reserves; however local people don’t necessarily know where they are or how they can be used.

Virtually on Track is aimed at:

- Beginner level adult participants
- Participants involved in one adventure sport who potentially might adopt another
- Current users of the local gem recreation sites, involving users in technology
- Communities based around and with access to the local gems

Virtually on Track is focussed on developing significant recreation hubs at eight local gem sites under DOC classification across the Bay of Plenty. The community partnering and collaboration between sport and recreation clubs, providers and groups to improve the delivery and utilisation of the local gem sites is the heart of the project and also the key to sustainability.

The local gem recreation sites are located:

1. Lower Kaimai and McLaren Falls
2. Waihī Beach/Orokawa Bay/Bowentown
3. Ōtānewainuku/Kaharoa
4. Pāpāmoa Hills/Summerhill/Kaiake Falls
5. Mōtū Area
6. Tōi’s Track and Ōhiwa Harbour
7. Whakarewarewa Forest and Rotorua Lakes
8. Kawerau/Tarawera

Virtually on Track is designed to connect these natural resources with regular recreation activities and adventure sport such as orienteering, geocaching, climbing, mountain biking, kayaking, waka ama and much more. It also helps to provide opportunities for a broad range of the community across the Bay of Plenty – recognising differences in culture and socioeconomic status amongst different communities.

Users can engage in virtual adventure challenges such as dedicated Virtually on Track Strava bike/run/walk courses, Geoteering courses (a combination of geocaching and orienteering) using free GPS apps and compete online against other adventurers. Corporate challenges are another great way to get outside and earn “virtual km” for your team by running, walking, cycling or swimming.

For further information please contact:

**Kate Clark**
Virtually on Track Project Leader, Sport Bay of Plenty
07 578 0016 ext 842
katec@sportbop.co.nz
www.virtuallyontrack.co.nz