

TIMARU DISTRICT
SIGNIFICANT NATURAL AREAS
SURVEY

SUMNER PROPERTY

Report prepared for the Timaru District Council by Mike Harding
July 2007

TIMARU DISTRICT SIGNIFICANT NATURAL AREAS SURVEY

PROPERTY REPORT

PROPERTY DETAILS:

Owner:Grant Sumner
Valuation Reference:24660/258.02
Address:538 Pleasant Valley Road, Geraldine
Location:.....On a steep scarp on the southwest side of the Geraldine Downs,
adjacent to Pleasant Valley Road.
Ecological District:Geraldine Ecological District
TDC Land Type:.....Soft Rock Hills and Downs
Land Environment:N3 (downlands of South Canterbury and coastal Otago)

ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT:

The property lies on the eastern edge of the Geraldine Ecological District, on the western scarp of the low rolling hills of the Geraldine Downs. The original vegetation of this area would have been predominantly podocarp-hardwood forest, dominated by totara, matai and kahikatea emergent over a hardwood canopy. Important canopy hardwood species would probably have been narrow-leaved lacebark, pokaka, kowhai, lemonwood, five-finger, broadleaf and mahoe. The indigenous fauna would have been significantly more numerous and diverse, with a greater range of birds, lizards and invertebrates than is presently found in the area.

One patch of hardwood forest and a number of scattered indigenous trees are present on the property. The forest remnant contains remnant and regenerating indigenous vegetation, including moderate-sized kanuka, broadleaf and kowhai trees. This area of forest is part of a more extensive area of scattered patches of forest and treeland on the Geraldine Downs. The most important of these is Talbot Forest Scenic Reserve, which lies approximately 4.5 km to the southeast.

These areas of forest and treeland may provide roost sites (though maybe only occasionally used) for long-tailed bat (a 'nationally endangered' species). Long-tailed bat have been recorded nearby in the Te Moana valley and in Talbot Forest. The indigenous forest on the property is also likely to provide habitat for kereru/NZ pigeon (threat status: gradual decline).

SIGNIFICANT AREAS ON THE PROPERTY:

The property was surveyed as part of the District-wide survey of Significant Natural Areas during May 2007. All parts of the property were visited. One forest remnant on the property is regarded as significant when assessed against the District Plan criteria.

Area No.	Area Name	Central grid reference	Aprox. size(ha)	Vegetation/habitat type
32a	Pleasant Valley Road scarp forest, south	J37: 647-801	1.6	Hardwood forest

This area of indigenous vegetation and habitat that is identified as a Significant Natural Area (SNA) is illustrated on the attached aerial photograph and described in greater detail on the Area Inspection Form in this report. Note that the boundary of the forest is indicative, rather than precise. This area meets the ecological criteria in the Timaru District Plan (criteria i-vi, pages B18-B19) and is considered to be sustainable in the long term (criterion vii, page B19). The area is subject to confirmation by Council after regarding the matters listed under Final Considerations (pages B19-B20).

The implication of an area being listed as an SNA is that consent is required from Council for clearance of indigenous vegetation by any means (including burning and spraying with herbicides) or over-planting. This does not normally prevent clearance to prevent shading of buildings, the maintenance of tracks and fences, or grazing. To assist with the protection and management of any SNA, landowners can apply to Council for financial assistance. SNAs will eventually be listed in the District Plan. Any questions regarding the protection, management and use of SNAs should be directed to the District Planner.

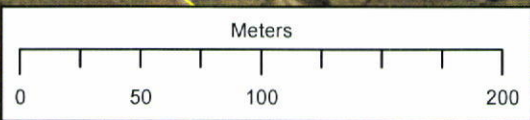
OTHER AREAS INSPECTED ON THE PROPERTY:

Other areas of indigenous vegetation and habitat on the property were inspected but are not regarded as significant when assessed against the criteria on pages B18-B20 of the Timaru District Plan. Failure of an area to meet the significance criteria does not necessarily mean that it is not important for nature conservation or the protection of indigenous biodiversity; it simply means that the area (as assessed at this time) does not meet the criteria in the Timaru District Plan. Some of these areas have considerable potential value and, if left alone, may eventually become significant. One such area is the patch of scattered indigenous trees (kanuka, matipo, mahoe and fuchsia) on the upper slopes at the northeast corner of the property. This area may become significant if natural regeneration was encouraged.

Bartlett McQuade
24660/258.02

82a

PLEASANT VALLEY ROAD



1:3,000

TIMARU DISTRICT SNA SURVEY

AREA 32a

Area Name: Pleasant Valley Road scarp forest
Location (central map reference): J37: 647-801
Ecological District: Geraldine
Surveyors: Mike Harding

Property: Sumner
Nearest Locality: Geraldine
Area Size (ha): 1.6 **Altitude (m):** 180-200
Survey Time: 1½ hours **Survey Date:** 10-05-07

General Description:

The Area is located on a steep south-facing slope on the southwest edge of the Geraldine Downs, adjacent to Pleasant Valley Road just northwest of the junction of School Road.

Plant Communities:

The Area supports regenerating hardwood forest. This plant community is described below. Naturalized (exotic) species are indicated with an asterisk*.

The forest canopy is dominated by kanuka, mahoe, matipo, broadleaf and the native climber, pohuehue. Other canopy species present are lancewood, wineberry, cabbage tree, fuchsia, mapou, kowhai and bush lawyer.

The forest understorey is relatively dense and diverse. Species present are *Coprosma rhamnoides*, *C. crassifolia*, *C. rotundifolia*, yellowwood, mahoe, mapou, broadleaf, five-finger, marbleleaf, fuchsia, bush lawyer, native jasmine, bush lily, Himalayan honeysuckle*, Khasia berry*, tutsan*, bittersweet* and single old man's beard* vine (removed).

Important ground-cover species present are *Asplenium appendiculatum*, *A. hookerianum*, *A. richardii*, hen and chickens fern, prickly shield fern, *Pellaea rotundifolia*, hound's tongue fern, *Blechnum chambersii*, *B. fluviatile*, pennywort, hookgrass (*Uncinia* sp.), sedge (*Carex* sp.) and mahoe seedlings.

Other species present on the forest margin are poroporo, elderberry*, gorse*, broom*, foxglove*, Scotch thistle*, blackberry, *Calystegia tuguriorum* and lawyer.

The southeast part of the Area, on the house side of the new fence, supports similar vegetation to the main area of forest, except that it is more modified. Its margins have more weedy species, including old man's beard*, Chilean flame creeper*, elderberry*, Himalayan honeysuckle*, blackberry* and, at its southeast corner, sycamore*, stinking iris* and bamboo*.

Birds/Fauna Observed:

Indigenous birds observed during this brief visit were bellbird, grey warbler, rifleman and fantail.

Notable Flora, Fauna and Habitats:

Important features of this area are the presence of tall kanuka and kowhai, the habitat the area provides for kereru (gradual decline), rifleman (gradual decline) and possibly long-tailed bat (nationally endangered) (larger indigenous trees with cavities provide favourable roost sites for bats) and that it is part of a larger area of indigenous forest extending west along the steep scarp of the Geraldine Downs. The forest is clearly visible from Pleasant Valley Road.

Notable Plant and Animal Pests:

Old man's beard and Chilean flame creeper are the most important plant pests present. The presence of sycamore, stinking iris, elderberry and Khasia berry in or adjacent to the area also pose a threat to the forest. Old man's beard and Chilean flamer creeper can smother intact indigenous forest. Sycamore can invade and eventually over-top intact forest. Unfortunately these weed species are present and common on the nearby floodplain of the Te Moana River. Animal pests were not surveyed, though possums are likely to be present.

Boundaries (buffering, fencing, adjoining plant communities and habitats):

This indigenous forest remnant, except for the southeast part, is fenced from the grazing paddocks on the property, though appears to have been recently grazed. It is protected to some extent by its location on a steep south-facing slope. The forest remnant extends along the steep scarp onto an adjoining property. This

forest remnant is approximately 4½ km from a relatively large area of remnant indigenous forest in Talbot Forest Scenic Reserve and approximately two kilometres from an area of indigenous forest protected by a QEII Covenant. Other patches of indigenous forest and treeland are present nearby.

Condition and Management Issues:

The forest remnant is in relatively good condition. The forest understorey is dense and has a diverse range of plant species. Ideally, existing weeds (notably old man's beard) should be removed. The Area should be monitored for the establishment of shade-tolerant naturalised trees (notably sycamore). Control and management of the invasive native climber pohuehue on the forest margin may be beneficial, though effective control may be difficult to achieve.

Property Owner Comment:

ASSESSMENT AGAINST DISTRICT PLAN CRITERIA:

Primary Criteria	Rank	Notes
Representativeness	M	A modified example of the indigenous forest that was originally present in the ecological district.
Rarity	M	The forest provides habitat for kereru and rifleman (gradual decline).
Diversity and pattern	M	Species diversity is reduced from that originally present at the site.
Distinctiveness/special features	M	The forest is part of a network of fauna habitat on the Geraldine Downs and may provide habitat for long-tailed bat.
Other Criteria		
Size/shape	M	The area of forest is small, though it has a good shape and is very well buffered.
Connectivity	M/H	This area adjoins indigenous forest to the west, is relatively close to other areas of indigenous vegetation and provides an ecologically-viable stepping stone of habitat for long-tailed bat and kereru.
Long-term Sustainability	M	Control of plant and animal pests will probably be required for the maintenance of ecological values in the long term.

Final Consideration (of other matters: Section D, page B-19 of Timaru District Plan):

This area of forest has been retained and informally protected by the landowner. The presence of the forest does not limit the potential for farm development, as the forest is located on a steep erosion-prone slope. It is an attractive patch of forest that is clearly visible from Pleasant Valley Road. Some management will be required to maintain the ecological values of this area in the long-term.

Discussion:

This forest remnant meets the District Plan criteria for a Significant Natural Area. Important attributes are the presence of tall regenerating hardwood trees (kanuka, broadleaf and kowhai) and the habitat the forest provides for fauna (kereru, rifleman and possibly long-tailed bat).

Scientific names of species cited by common name

Common Name Scientific name

(* = naturalised species)

bittersweet*	<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>
blackberry*	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>
broadleaf	<i>Griselinia littoralis</i>
broom*	<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>
bush lawyer	<i>Rubus cissoides</i>
bush lily	<i>Astelia</i> sp.
cabbage tree/ti rakau	<i>Cordyline australis</i>
Chilean flame creeper*	<i>Tropaeolum speciosum</i>
elderberry*	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>
five-finger	<i>Pseudopanax arboreus</i>
foxglove*	<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>
fuchsia	<i>Fuchsia excorticata</i>
gorse*	<i>Ulex europaeus</i>
hen and chickens fern	<i>Asplenium bulbiferum</i>
Himalayan honeysuckle*	<i>Leycesteria formosa</i>
hookgrass	<i>Uncinia</i> sp.
hound's tongue fern	<i>Microsorium pustulatum</i>
kahikatea/white pine	<i>Dacrycarpus dacrydioides</i>
kanuka	<i>Kunzea ericoides</i>
Khasia berry*	<i>Cotoneaster simonsii</i>
kowhai	<i>Sophora microphylla</i>
lancewood	<i>Pseudopanax crassifolius</i>
lawyer	<i>Rubus schmidelioides</i>
lemonwood	<i>Pittosporum eugenioides</i>
mahoe/whiteywood	<i>Melicytus ramiflorus</i>
mapou	<i>Myrsine australis</i>
marbleleaf/putaputaweta	<i>Carpodetus serratus</i>
matai/black pine	<i>Prumnopitys taxifolia</i>
matipo/kohuhu	<i>Pittosporum tenuifolium</i>
narrow-leaved lacebark	<i>Hoheria angustifolia</i>
native jasmine	<i>Parsonsia</i> sp.
old man's beard*	<i>Clematis vitalba</i>
pennywort	<i>Hydrocotyle</i> sp.
pohuehue	<i>Muehlenbeckia australis</i>
pokaka	<i>Elaeocarpus hookerianus</i>
poroporo	<i>Solanum laciniatum</i>
prickly shield fern	<i>Polystichum vestitum</i>
Scotch thistle*	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>
stinking iris*	<i>Iris foetidissima</i>
sycamore*	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>
totara	<i>Podocarpus totara</i>
tutsan*	<i>Hypericum androsaemum</i>
wineberry	<i>Aristotelia serrata</i>
yellowwood	<i>Coprosma linariifolia</i>