

TIMARU DISTRICT
SIGNIFICANT NATURAL AREAS
SURVEY

DENTON PROPERTY



Report prepared for the Timaru District Council by Mike Harding
January 2009

TIMARU DISTRICT SIGNIFICANT NATURAL AREAS SURVEY

PROPERTY REPORT

PROPERTY DETAILS:

Owner: MJ and JN Denton
Valuation Reference: 24670/155.01
Address: Brophy Road, Pleasant Valley, Geraldine
Location: On a south-facing slope in a small gully on the southwest side of Pleasant Valley.
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 in the Geraldine Ecological District, on the rolling hill country east of Waitohi Hill (and just east of the Orari Ecological District). 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 large and one smaller area of kanuka forest are present on the property. These areas of forest are part of a network of scattered patches of indigenous forest on the east side of Waitohi Hill. Collectively these areas provide important habitat for birds and possibly for long-tailed bat (a 'nationally endangered' species). Bats have been recorded in the Te Moana valley.

SIGNIFICANT AREAS ON THE PROPERTY:

The property was surveyed as part of the District-wide survey of Significant Natural Areas during December 2008. The larger area of kanuka forest is regarded as a Significant Natural Areas (SNA) when assessed against the District Plan criteria.

Area No.	Area Name	Central grid reference	Aprox. size (ha)	Vegetation/habitat type
216	Denton kanuka forest	J38: 638-770	2.66	kanuka forest

This SNA is illustrated on the attached aerial photograph and described in greater detail in this document. Note that the boundaries of the SNA are indicative, rather than precise. This SNA meets the ecological criteria in the Timaru District Plan (criteria i-vi, pages B18-B19). The long term sustainability (criterion vii, page B19) of the SNA uncertain. SNAs are 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, weed control or removal of non-indigenous species such as elderberry. To assist with the protection and management of any SNA, landowners can apply to Council for financial assistance. Any questions regarding the protection, management and use of SNAs should be directed to the District Planner. It is expected that SNAs will eventually be listed in the District Plan by way of a notified plan change.

OTHER AREAS INSPECTED ON THE PROPERTY:

Another smaller area of kanuka forest on the property was inspected. This area has some value as indigenous vegetation and as habitat for birds, but is too small to meet the significance criteria in the Timaru District Plan. Failure of this area to meet the significance criteria does not 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.

Scientific names of species cited by common name in this report

(Note: this is not a complete species list; it is a list only of species cited by common name in this report)

Common Name	Scientific name
(* = naturalised species)	
bidibid	<i>Acaena</i> sp.
blackberry*	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>
broadleaf	<i>Griselinia littoralis</i>
broom*	<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>
cabbage tree/ti rakau	<i>Cordyline australis</i>
elderberry*	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>
five-finger	<i>Pseudopanax arboreus</i>
foxglove*	<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>
gorse*	<i>Ulex europaeus</i>
hairy pennywort	<i>Hydrocotyle moschata</i>
kahikatea/white pine	<i>Dacrycarpus dacrydioides</i>
kanuka	<i>Kunzea ericoides</i>
kowhai	<i>Sophora microphylla</i>
lemonwood	<i>Pittosporum eugenioides</i>
mahoe/whiteywood	<i>Melicytus ramiflorus</i>
male fern*	<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>
manuka	<i>Leptospermum scoparium</i>
matagouri	<i>Discaria toumatou</i>
matai/black pine	<i>Prumnopitys taxifolia</i>
matipo/kohuhu	<i>Pittosporum tenuifolium</i>
narrow-leaved lacebark	<i>Hoheria angustifolia</i>
necklace fern	<i>Asplenium flabellifolium</i>
pennywort	<i>Hydrocotyle</i> sp.
pohuehue	<i>Muehlenbeckia australis</i>
pokaka	<i>Elaeocarpus hookerianus</i>
soft rush*	<i>Juncus effusus</i>
totara	<i>Podocarpus totara</i>
wall lettuce*	<i>Mycelis muralis</i>

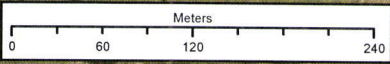


MJ and JN Denton
24670/155.01



216

Stony Road



1:5,000

TIMARU DISTRICT SNA SURVEY

AREA 216

Area Name: Denton Kanuka Forest

Location (central map reference): J38: 638-770

Ecological District: Geraldine

Surveyors: Mike Harding

Property: Mike and Joy Denton

Nearest Locality: Pleasant Valley

Area Size (ha): 2.66 **Altitude (m):** 160-200

Survey Time: 1½ hours **Survey Date:** 22-12-08

General Description:

This SNA lies on a moderately-steep south-facing slope in a small gully on the southwest side of Pleasant Valley. It is located near a number of other mostly smaller patches of kanuka forest on other properties.

Plant Communities:

Kanuka forest is the main plant community present. This community is described below. Naturalized (exotic) species are indicated with an asterisk*.

The forest canopy is dominated by kanuka. Trunk diameters (at breast height) of the larger kanuka trees are mostly between 25 and 45cm. Other canopy species are pohuehue (*Muehlenbeckia australis*) and occasional manuka and cabbage trees.

The forest understorey is relatively open. Important species present in the understorey or forest openings are *Coprosma propinqua*, *Coprosma tayloriae*, elderberry*, gorse*, *Hypolepis ambigua*, blackberry* and thistles*.

Ground-cover in the more open-canopied parts of the forest is dominated by pasture and foxglove*. Closed-canopy areas are dominated by bare ground. Common ground-cover species are foxglove*, male fern*, pennywort and necklace fern.

Understorey and ground-cover species occasionally present are broom*, *Asplenium hookerianum*, *Asplenium richardii*, *Polystichum richardii*, *Blechnum penna-marina*, *Blechnum fluviatile*, bidibid, hairy pennywort, *Cardamine* sp., wall lettuce* and, in places, seedlings of kanuka.

The forest margin is dominated by pasture and scattered shrubs of matagouri and *Coprosma propinqua*. Other species present at the forest margin are cabbage tree, pohuehue, soft rush*, gorse*, blackberry*, foxglove* and thistles*.

Birds/Fauna Observed:

Native birds observed during this brief survey were grey warbler, bellbird, brown creeper, fantail and harrier. Kereru/NZ pigeon are present in the area.

Notable Flora, Fauna and Habitats:

Important features of this area are the habitat it provides for native birds, its location near to other areas of indigenous forest and its size. The presence of manuka and the abundance of matagouri on the forest margin are unusual features for this part of the District.

Notable Plant and Animal Pests:

The native climber, pohuehue, and the introduced elderberry are the most important plant pests present. Gorse and broom are present but do not pose a major threat to the forest. Animal pests were not surveyed.

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

The forest is fenced along its lower boundary and lies within a larger fenced paddock. It is protected to some extent by its location on a damper south-facing slope. There are other similar, although mostly smaller, patches of indigenous forest nearby.

Condition and Management Issues:

The forest canopy is in relatively good condition. The understorey is open and in places depleted. Plant pest control is probably the most important management issue. The effect of grazing is important, though removal of grazing would need to be accompanied by targeted weed control.

Property Owner Comment:

The property owners have informally protected this area of forest. It is grazed periodically.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST DISTRICT PLAN CRITERIA:

Primary Criteria	Rank	Notes
Representativeness	M	A depleted example of indigenous vegetation typical of the ecological district.
Rarity	L/M	May provide habitat for kereru/NZ pigeon (a threatened species).
Diversity and pattern	L/M	Species diversity is reduced from that typically and originally present.
Distinctiveness/special features	M	The presence of manuka and relative abundance of matagouri are interesting features.
Other Criteria		
Size/shape	M/H	A moderate-sized area that is well buffered.
Connectivity	M	Lies close to other areas of indigenous forest and is part of a network of fauna habitat in the area.
Long-term Sustainability	L/M	Ecological values of the area are likely to decline in the long term in the absence of protection and/or conservation management.

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

This SNA has been informally protected by the landowners, though is lightly grazed. Protection of the area would limit opportunities for further development, though these steeper slopes have limited potential for farming.

Discussion:

This area meets the District Plan criteria for a Significant Natural Area. Important features of the area are the habitat it provides for native birds, its location near to other areas of indigenous forest, the presence of manuka and relative abundance of matagouri, and its size.