



**TIMARU DISTRICT**

90720

**SIGNIFICANT NATURAL AREAS  
SURVEY**

**GASKIN PROPERTY**

Report prepared for the Timaru District Council by Mike Harding  
July 2008



*Mike Harding*

**ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANT**

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**COPY FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

28 July 2008

Sarah Gaskin  
2 Gordon Street  
Hillcrest  
Hamilton

Dear Sarah,

Thank you for allowing your property to be surveyed as part of the District-wide survey of significant indigenous vegetation and habitats. I have now edited the draft report on the Significant Natural Area on your property and marked the area more carefully on an aerial photograph. The enclosed edited copy is much the same as the draft report.

The area of forest on your property is interesting and is an important part of a corridor of forest habitat on the Geraldine Downs. Your protection and restoration efforts are commendable.

This report will now become part of the Council's records and it is expected that the SNA will eventually be listed in the District Plan.

Thank you for your assistance and comments. Please do not hesitate to contact me or the District Planner (687-7299) if you have any questions or concerns regarding this report.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Harding

cc: District Planner, Timaru District Council

# TIMARU DISTRICT SIGNIFICANT NATURAL AREAS SURVEY

## PROPERTY REPORT

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### PROPERTY DETAILS:

**Owner:** ..... Sarah Gaskin  
**Valuation Reference:** ..... 24660/229.08  
**Address:** ..... Ribbonwood Road, RD 21, Geraldine  
**Location:** ..... On the crest of the Geraldine Downs, between Pyc and  
Ribbonwood roads, west of Talbot Forest Scenic Reserve  
**Ecological District:** ..... Geraldine Ecological District  
**TDC Land Type:** ..... Soft Rock Hills and Downs  
**Land Environment:** ..... N3 (downlands of South Canterbury and coastal Otago)

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### ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT:

The property lies at the eastern edge of the Geraldine Ecological District, on 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 area of indigenous forest is present on the property. This area is a modified and regenerating remnant of the original forest. It 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 600m east of the property.

Collectively the areas of forest and treeland on the Geraldine Downs provide habitat for birds including kereru (threat status: gradual decline) and are likely to provide important (though maybe only occasionally used) roost sites for long-tailed bats (nationally endangered). Bats have been recorded recently at Talbot Forest.

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### SIGNIFICANT AREAS ON THE PROPERTY:

The property was surveyed as part of the District-wide survey of Significant Natural Areas during June 2008. One area of indigenous vegetation is regarded as a Significant Natural Area (SNA) when assessed against the District Plan criteria.

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 area meets the ecological criteria in the Timaru District Plan (criteria i-vi, pages B18-B19), but will require some management to maintain its ecological values in the long-term. 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 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. It is expected that 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.

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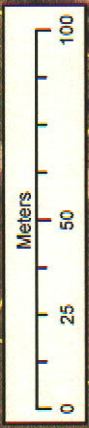
**OTHER INDIGENOUS VEGETATION ON THE PROPERTY:**

A small patch of trees is present at the southwest corner of the property, beside a small pond. It includes narrow-leaved lacebark, totara, lancewood and *Coprosma crassifolia*. This area of indigenous vegetation is too small and too modified to be significant when assessed against the District Plan criteria. This does not mean that it is unimportant; it only means that it does not presently meet the significance criteria in the District Plan. If restoration or regeneration occurred, the area may eventually become significant.



Gaskin  
24660/229.08

1:2,000





# TIMARU DISTRICT SNA SURVEY

AREA 721f

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<b>Area Name:</b> Gaskin Forest Remnant	<b>Property:</b> Sarah Gaskin	
<b>Location (central map reference):</b> J38: 682-791	<b>Nearest Locality:</b> Geraldine	
<b>Ecological District:</b> Geraldine	<b>Area Size (ha):</b> 0.6	<b>Altitude (m):</b> 190-200
<b>Surveyors:</b> Mike Harding	<b>Survey Time:</b> 1 hour	<b>Survey Date:</b> 09-06-08

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## General Description:

This SNA comprises indigenous forest on a moderately-steep south-facing slope near the head of a small gully on the rolling hill country of the Geraldine Downs.

## Plant Communities:

The main plant communities present are remnant and regenerating podocarp-hardwood forest with some recent indigenous planting. These plant communities are described below. Naturalized (exotic) species are indicated with an asterisk\*. Planted species are indicated with a hatch<sup>#</sup>.

Prominent canopy or emergent species present are totara, narrow-leaved lacebark, pokaka, kahikatea, lancewood, rohutu, mahoe, marbleleaf and hawthorn\*. Some of the trees are large. Trunk diameters (centimetres at breast height) of the larger trees are: totara, 70 and 71; pokaka, 48 and 58; kahikatea, 52; and rohutu, 26.

Other canopy species are pohuehue, native jasmine, bush lawyer, lawyer, *Clematis foetida* and mistletoe. Mistletoe is present on a wide range of species, including totara, hawthorn\*, *Coprosma crassifolia* and *Coprosma propinqua*.

Dominant shrub and small tree species present are *Coprosma crassifolia*, *Coprosma propinqua*, *Coprosma rotundifolia*, *Coprosma areolata*, Darwin's barberry\*, shrubby mahoe and mahoe. Other species present are horopito, *Coprosma tayloriae*, rohutu, fuchsia, matipo, dwarf mistletoe (on *Coprosma crassifolia*) and sweet brier\*.

Understorey or ground-cover species present within the clumps of trees are black nightshade\*, male fern\*, blackberry\*, poroporo, *Pellaea rotundifolia*, prickly shield fern, hen and chickens fern, *Asplenium hookerianum*, swamp kiokio, and seedlings of mahoe, lemonwood, cabbage tree and *Coprosma* species.

Open grassed areas between the main clumps of trees support *Coprosma propinqua*, broom\*, gorse\*, pohuehue, *Coprosma robusta*<sup>#</sup>, lemonwood<sup>#</sup>, matipo<sup>#</sup>, *Olearia lineata*<sup>#</sup>, manuka<sup>#</sup>, tree lupin\* (near the stream), *Hypolepis ambigua* and bracken.

## Birds/Fauna Observed:

Native birds observed during this brief inspection were bellbird, fantail, silvereye and harrier. The area is likely to be utilised by kereru (NZ pigeon).

## Notable Flora, Fauna and Habitats:

Notable features of this area are the presence of podocarps (totara and kahikatea), the presence and size of the pokaka and rohutu trees, the presence of locally-uncommon species (dwarf mistletoe and swamp kiokio), the diversity of indigenous species present and the contribution the remnant makes towards the network of fauna habitat on the Geraldine Downs (including habitat suitable for kereru and long-tailed bat).

## Notable Plant and Animal Pests:

The most important plant pests present are Darwin's barberry and hawthorn. These species have attractive fruits which are readily dispersed by birds, thereby threatening other areas of indigenous forest in the area. Darwin's barberry is also shade tolerant and can successfully invade intact indigenous forest. The native climbing pohuehue (*Muehlenbeckia australis*) also poses a threat, smothering large trees especially those on the forest margin. Other introduced species present do not pose a significant threat to the existing vegetation. Animal pests were not surveyed.

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

This area occupies a damper south-facing slope and is therefore buffered from drought (and fire). It is fenced along the road boundary and separated from an adjoining property by a sealed driveway. It adjoins other scattered remnants of indigenous forest along slopes to the east and west. Together these remnants form a corridor of indigenous vegetation, linking this remnant with others in the area, including the regionally-important Talbot Forest Scenic Reserve.

**Condition and Management Issues:**

The existing indigenous vegetation is in relatively good condition. The area would benefit from the removal of Darwin's barberry and hawthorn and perhaps the judicious control of pohuehue. Open grassed spaces between the trees have been planted with indigenous species, though some (such as *Olearia lineata*) are probably not typical of the original vegetation of the area.

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**ASSESSMENT AGAINST DISTRICT PLAN CRITERIA:**

<b>Primary Criteria</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Representativeness	M/H	An example of indigenous forest typical of the ecological district and containing a good number of species that are representative of the original forest.
Rarity	M	The larger trees provide habitat for threatened bird species (kereru) and possibly long-tailed bat. Two locally uncommon plant species are present (dwarf mistletoe and swamp kiokio).
Diversity and pattern	M	A relatively diverse remnant for its size, though species diversity is reduced from that originally present.
Distinctiveness/special features	M	The presence of large podocarps (totara and kahikatea) and large pokaka and rohutu trees are special features.
<b>Other Criteria</b>		
Size/shape	M	A small area, but with a good shape and well buffered.
Connectivity	M/H	Part of a corridor of indigenous vegetation and a network of fauna habitat on the Geraldine Downs.
Long-term Sustainability	M	Some management (mostly weed control) will be required to maintain the ecological values of the area in the long term.

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

This area of indigenous vegetation has been informally protected by this and previous owners and some restoration plantings have been undertaken. The area has limited potential for development, due to its position on a moderately steep south-facing slope. There is sufficient (and more suitable) space elsewhere on this rural-residential property to site a dwelling.

**Discussion:**

This area meets the District Plan criteria for a Significant Natural Area. Important features of the area are the presence of podocarps (totara and kahikatea), the presence and size of the pokaka and rohutu trees, the presence of locally-uncommon species (dwarf mistletoe and swamp kiokio), the diversity of indigenous species present and the contribution the remnant makes towards the network of fauna habitat on the Geraldine Downs.

### 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)	
blackberry*	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>
black nightshade*	<i>Solanum nigrum</i>
bracken	<i>Pteridium esculentum</i>
broadleaf	<i>Griselinia littoralis</i>
broom*	<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>
bush lawyer	<i>Rubus cissoides</i>
cabbage tree/ti rakau	<i>Cordyline australis</i>
Darwin's barberry*	<i>Berberis darwinii</i>
dwarf mistletoe	<i>Korthalsella lindsayi</i>
five-finger	<i>Pseudopanax arboreus</i>
fuchsia	<i>Fuchsia excorticata</i>
gorse*	<i>Ulex europaeus</i>
hawthorn*	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>
hen and chickens fern	<i>Asplenium bulbiferum</i>
horopito/pepperwood	<i>Pseudowintera colorata</i>
kahikatea/white pine	<i>Dacrycarpus dacrydioides</i>
kowhai	<i>Sophora microphylla</i>
lancewood	<i>Pseudopanax crassifolius</i>
lawyer	<i>Rubus schmidtioides</i>
lemonwood	<i>Pittosporum eugenioides</i>
mahoe/whiteywood	<i>Meliccytus ramiflorus</i>
male fern*	<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>
manuka	<i>Leptospermum scoparium</i>
marbleleaf/putaputaweta	<i>Carpodetus serratus</i>
matai/black pine	<i>Prumnopitys taxifolia</i>
matipo/kohuhu	<i>Pittosporum tenuifolium</i>
mistletoe	<i>Ileostylis micranthus</i>
narrow-leaved lacebark	<i>Hoheria angustifolia</i>
native jasmine	<i>Parsonsia</i> sp.
pohuehue	<i>Muehlenbeckia australis</i>
pokaka	<i>Elaeocarpus hookerianus</i>
poroporo	<i>Solanum laciniatum</i>
prickly shield fern	<i>Polystichum vestitum</i>
rohutu	<i>Lophomyrtus obcordata</i>
shrubby mahoe	<i>Meliccytus micranthus</i>
swamp kiokio	<i>Blechnum minus</i>
sweet brier*	<i>Rosa rubiginosa</i>
totara	<i>Podocarpus totara</i>
tree lupin*	<i>Lupinus arboreus</i>