

TIMARU DISTRICT SIGNIFICANT NATURAL AREAS SURVEY

PROPERTY REPORT

PROPERTY DETAILS:

Owner: George Hunter
Valuation Reference: 24660/224.00
Address: 50 Kalaugher Road, Geraldine
Location: On the crest of the Geraldine Downs, east of Kalaugher 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 crest of the low rolling hills of the Geraldine Downs. The original vegetation of this area would probably 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.

An area of scattered remnant indigenous narrow-leaved lacebark trees (treeland) is present on the property. This treeland is a highly modified remnant of the original forest and is part of a more extensive collection of scattered patches of forest and treeland on the Geraldine Downs. The most important of these is Talbot Forest Scenic Reserve, which lies approximately 600 m southeast 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 bats (nationally endangered). Long-tailed bat have been recorded nearby in Talbot Forest Scenic Reserve.

SIGNIFICANT AREAS ON THE PROPERTY:

The property was surveyed as part of the District-wide survey of Significant Natural Areas during August 2007. The area of scattered trees (treeland) is regarded as significant when assessed against the District Plan criteria. This area is listed in the table below.

Area No.	Area Name	Central grid reference	Aprox. size(ha)	Vegetation/habitat type
725a	Hunter Treeland	J38: 686-795	0.3	Hardwood treeland

This Significant Natural Area (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), but will require active 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. 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.

Scientific names of species cited by common name

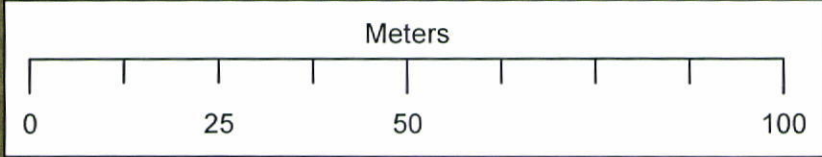
Common Name Scientific name
 (* = naturalised species)

broadleaf	<i>Griselinia littoralis</i>
five-finger.....	<i>Pseudopanax arboreus</i>
hawthorn*.....	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>
kahikatea/white pine.....	<i>Dacrycarpus dacrydioides</i>
kowhai.....	<i>Sophora microphylla</i>
lemonwood.....	<i>Pittosporum eugenioides</i>
mahoe	<i>Melicytus ramiflorus</i>
matai/black pine	<i>Prumnopitys taxifolia</i>
mistletoe	<i>Ileostylis micranthus</i>
narrow-leaved lacebark	<i>Hoheria angustifolia</i>
pokaka.....	<i>Elaeocarpus hookerianus</i>
totara	<i>Podocarpus totara</i>

Hunter



725a



1:1,000

TIMARU DISTRICT SNA SURVEY

AREA 725a

Area Name: Hunter Treeland
Location (central map reference): J38: 686-795
Ecological District: Geraldine
Surveyors: Mike Harding

Property: Hunter
Nearest Locality: Geraldine
Area Size (ha): 0.3 **Altitude (m):** 180
Survey Time: ½ hour **Survey Date:** 21-08-07

General Description:

The Area lies on a gentle spur on the crest of the low rolling hills of the Geraldine Downs.

Plant Communities:

This Area comprises scattered trees of narrow-leaved lacebark. These are mostly old trees, with trunk diameters (at breast height) ranging from 27 to 70 cm. Many of the trees have large cavities or splits in their trunks, providing good roost sites for birds and possibly long-tailed bats. All the trees are in a grazed paddock, except for one tree that lies within an area of planted natives close to the house. Other species present are one hawthorn tree and clumps of mistletoe. Other narrow-leaved lacebark trees and one *Lophomyrtus obcordata* are present east and southeast of the area. Well-established plantings of native species are present around the house and adjacent to the remnant indigenous trees.

Birds/Fauna Observed:

Native species observed during this brief inspection were bellbird and fantail.

Notable Flora, Fauna and Habitats:

The presence of old trees with trunk cavities and its location between other areas of indigenous forest and treeland are the notable features of the Area.

Notable Plant and Animal Pests:

The only introduced woody plant observed in the Area was the single hawthorn tree.

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

The Area lies within a grazed paddock, though is adjacent to a substantial area of well-established native plantings. The individual trees (with one exception) are not protected from grazing, though grazing appears to be limited to sheep and grazing pressure does not appear to be intensive. The Area lies approximately 600 m from the important Talbot Forest Scenic Reserve and is close to other areas of indigenous forest and treeland on the Geraldine Downs.

Condition and Management Issues:

The main management issue is the replacement of the existing trees before they eventually senesce and die.

Property Owner Comment:

The landowner values and has protected the remnant indigenous trees. He has also put considerable effort into planting and managing a relatively large area of native plantings around the house and on other parts of the property. These planted natives complement the remnant trees by providing useful habitat for birds and will eventually become more significant.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST DISTRICT PLAN CRITERIA:

Primary Criteria	Rank	Notes
Representativeness	M	This treeland is a depleted example of the indigenous vegetation originally present in the ecological district.
Rarity	M	These trees provide useful habitat (feeding, perching and roost sites) for kereru (threat status: gradual decline) and may provide roost sites for long-tailed bat (nationally endangered).
Diversity and pattern	L	A substantially depleted indigenous plant community with much-reduced species diversity.
Distinctiveness/special features	M	These trees are part of a network of fauna habitat on the Geraldine Downs.
Other Criteria		
Size/shape	M	A relatively small area, though in effect part of a larger collection of areas of treeland on adjoining properties.
Connectivity	M/H	Close to other areas of indigenous forest and treeland and an ecologically-viable 'stepping-stone' of habitat for birds and possibly long-tailed bat.
Long-term Sustainability	L/M	Active management (replacement of canopy trees) 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):

Trees in this area have been retained and informally protected by the landowner. The trees add considerable amenity value to the property. The presence of the trees enhances the existing land use (grazing) by providing shelter and shade, though may limit the potential for farm development.

Discussion:

This area of treeland meets the District Plan criteria for a Significant Natural Area, primarily because it provides useful habitat for native birds, potential roost sites (trunk cavities) for long-tailed bat and provides a 'stepping stone' of habitat between other larger areas of indigenous vegetation. Long-tailed bat have been recorded nearby in Talbot Forest Scenic Reserve and adjoining areas of habitat on the Geraldine Downs. Long-tailed bat is a nationally endangered species and the South Canterbury population is nationally significant.