

TIMARU DISTRICT
SIGNIFICANT NATURAL AREAS
SURVEY

MORRISON PROPERTY
RIBBONWOOD HOLDINGS



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

TIMARU DISTRICT SIGNIFICANT NATURAL AREAS SURVEY

PROPERTY REPORT

PROPERTY DETAILS:

Owner: Ribbonwood Holdings
Valuation Reference: 24660/229.00
Address: c/- Raymond Sullivan McGlashan, Timaru
Location: On the crest of the Geraldine Downs, at the corner of Tripp and Davies streets, 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)

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 large area of scattered indigenous trees (treeland) and several isolated indigenous trees are present on the property. This area of treeland is a highly modified remnant of the original forest and mostly comprises scattered trees of kowhai and narrow-leaved lacebark. 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 adjacent to the property across Davies Street.

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.

SIGNIFICANT AREAS ON THE PROPERTY:

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

Area No.	Area Name	Central grid reference	Aprox. size(ha)	Vegetation/habitat type
721b	Ribbonwood treeland	J38: 686-789	1.2	Hardwood treeland

This SNA is illustrated on the attached aerial photograph and described in greater detail in this document. Note that the boundaries of the SNAs 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.

OTHER TREES ON THE PROPERTY:

Other isolated indigenous trees on the property are also important due to their size, the habitat they are likely to provide for birds and possibly bats, and their location close to Talbot Forest Scenic Reserve. They are too isolated to include in the SNA and probably too small to provide significant habitat by themselves. However, these trees are important and their protection is desirable.

Ribbonwood Holdings
24660/229.00

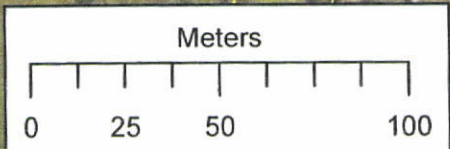
721b1

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TIMARU DISTRICT SNA SURVEY

AREA 721b

Area Name: Ribbonwood Holdings

Property: Morrison

Location (central map reference): J38: 686-789

Nearest Locality: Geraldine

Ecological District: Geraldine

Area Size (ha): 1.2

Altitude (m): 170-200

Surveyors: Mike Harding

Survey Time: 1½ hours

Survey Date: 16-10-07

General Description:

The SNA lies on a gentle north-facing slope on the crest of the Geraldine Downs, just west of Talbot Forest Scenic Reserve.

Plant Communities:

Indigenous vegetation in this SNA comprises scattered and clumped trees over pasture. This plant community is described below. Naturalized (exotic) species are indicated with an asterisk*.

This treeland is dominated by mature kowhai and narrow-leaved lacebark trees. Trunk diameters (at breast height) of the kowhai trees range between 22 and 60cm; trunk diameters of the narrow-leaved lacebark trees are between 30 and 44cm.

Other trees present are a single large *Lophomyrtus obcordata* and a single large *Streblus heterophyllus*. Unfortunately the latter tree has been recently broken by the fallen trunk of a nearby kowhai tree. Other species present are shrubs of *Coprosma crassifolia*, seedlings of mahoe, broadleaf and *Coprosma* perching on tree trunks, lawyer and clumps of the native smothering climber pohuehue. Native mistletoe is also present on narrow-leaved lacebark and *Coprosma crassifolia*.

Birds/Fauna Observed:

Indigenous birds observed during this brief inspection were harrier and kereru/NZ pigeon. A kereru was observed on a nest in the forks of a large kowhai tree, with a young chick.

Notable Flora, Fauna and Habitats:

The abundance and size of the older trees (especially the kowhai trees), the presence of nesting kereru and the proximity of the treeland to a much larger area of indigenous vegetation in Talbot Forest are notable features. The treeland is also clearly visible from Davies Street and from houses along Pye Road.

Notable Plant and Animal Pests:

Pohuehue is the most important plant pest present. Although it is a native species, it can climb and smother relatively large trees. Gorse* is present, though it poses little threat to the indigenous vegetation.

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

The boundaries of this area have been drawn to include the main patches of trees. The treeland is in pasture-dominated paddocks which are grazed (presently by cattle). The indigenous trees on the property, though scattered, complement the indigenous forest and treeland of Talbot Forest and on other adjoining properties. The value of the trees is enhanced by their proximity to these other areas of indigenous vegetation, especially the regionally-important Talbot Forest Scenic Reserve.

Condition and Management Issues:

Most of the indigenous trees on the property are old. Some are senescent and several appear to have recently succumbed to old age and/or the effects of the smothering climber, pohuehue. Some tree trunks have been affected by cattle and the few smaller trees could be browsed or trampled if subjected to intensive grazing. This area of treeland will not survive in the long term unless new trees can be established to replace the older trees when they become senescent and die. This could be achieved by fencing the denser areas of treeland planting new locally-sourced indigenous species planted to replace those trees that die.

Property Owner Comment:

The owner expressed concern that there may be a requirement to fence the area. The boundaries have been re-drawn to more closely follow the clumps of trees and the comments about fencing in this report have been changed, in response to these concerns.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST DISTRICT PLAN CRITERIA:

Primary Criteria	Rank	Notes
Representativeness	M	A depleted and modified example of the forest originally present.
Rarity	M	The trees contain cavities that provide suitable roosting (and nesting) sites for kereru (threat status: gradual decline) and roost sites for long-tailed bats (nationally endangered).
Diversity and pattern	L/M	A substantially depleted plant community with much-reduced species diversity.
Distinctiveness/special features	M	The trees in these areas provide stepping-stone habitats for kereru and possibly long-tailed bat. Their proximity to Talbot Forest is a special feature.
Other Criteria		
Size/shape	M	A moderate-sized area with a good shape but poorly buffered.
Connectivity	M/H	Part of a regionally-important habitat for long-tailed bat and part of a network of fauna habitat on the Geraldine Downs.
Long-term Sustainability	L	Ongoing and intensive management will be required to maintain the ecological values of the areas in the long term.

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

These indigenous trees have been retained and informally protected. The trees enhance the existing land use by providing shelter and shade, though may limit the potential for further development of the property. Active management will be required to maintain the ecological value of these areas in the long term.

Discussion:

This area of treeland meets the District Plan criteria for a Significant Natural Area, primarily because of the presence of older trees with favourable roost sites for birds and possibly bats and its proximity to the regionally-important Talbot Forest Scenic Reserve.

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>
gorse*	<i>Ulex europaeus</i>
kahikatea/white pine.....	<i>Dacrycarpus dacrydioides</i>
kowhai.....	<i>Sophora microphylla</i>
lawyer.....	<i>Rubus schmidelioides</i>
lemonwood.....	<i>Pittosporum eugenioides</i>
mahoe/whiteywood	<i>Melicytus ramiflorus</i>
matai/black pine	<i>Prumnopitys taxifolia</i>
mistletoe	<i>Ileostylis micranthus</i>
narrow-leaved lacebark	<i>Hoheria angustifolia</i>
pohuehue	<i>Muehlenbeckia australis</i>
pokaka	<i>Elaeocarpus hookerianus</i>
totara	<i>Podocarpus totara</i>