

TIMARU DISTRICT
SIGNIFICANT NATURAL AREAS
SURVEY

PAUL PROPERTY



Report prepared for Timaru District Council
by
Mike Harding and Mark Davis
April 2012

TIMARU DISTRICT SIGNIFICANT NATURAL AREAS SURVEY

PROPERTY REPORT

PROPERTY DETAILS:

Owner: Lindsay and Rhoda Paul
Valuation References: 24860/178.00
Address: Normanby Road, RD1, Timaru 7971.
Location: Lower reaches of Pig Hunting Creek, South Canterbury coast.
Ecological District: Makikihi Ecological District.
TDC Land Type: 'Plains'
Land Environment: N3.1b (eastern South Island plains).

ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT:

The property covers gently sloping, low-lying land on the north side of and including part of Pig Hunting Creek, on the South Canterbury coast north of Pareora. The property lies in Makikihi Ecological District.

It is likely that the original vegetation of this area was predominantly wetland vegetation adjacent to the stream, grading to coastal and/or lowland forest on higher ground. Widespread loss of indigenous vegetation in this part of Timaru District makes it difficult to determine the precise nature of the original vegetation.

Pig Hunting Creek is an important area of open water and wetland habitat on the South Canterbury coast. It has been previously identified as a Site of Special Wildlife Interest (SSWI) and a Wetland of Ecological and Representativeness Importance (WERI). A detailed survey of indigenous fauna was not undertaken, though the stream and riparian (streamside) vegetation are likely to provide regionally important habitat for migratory, wading and coastal birds.

SIGNIFICANT AREAS ON THE PROPERTY:

The property was surveyed as part of the District-wide survey of Significant Natural Areas by ecologist Mark Davis during February 2012. One area (SNA 95e) is regarded as a Significant Natural Area (SNA) when assessed against the District Plan criteria. It is significant for the contribution it makes to the open-water habitat of indigenous fauna of the Pig Hunting Creek SSWI and WERI.

This SNA is illustrated on the attached aerial photograph. 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) and is considered to be sustainable in the long term, or sustainable with appropriate management (criterion vii, page B19). SNAs are subject to confirmation by Council after regarding the matters listed in the District Plan (pages B19-B20). It is expected that SNAs will eventually be listed in the District Plan by way of a notified plan change.

At present, consent is required from Council for clearance of areas of indigenous vegetation or habitat which meet the Interim Definitions in the District Plan. Clearance includes draining, burning, spraying with herbicides and over-planting. SNAs encompass most, but not necessarily all, areas of vegetation and habitat which meet the Interim Definitions.

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.



Pig Hunting Creek at the lower (eastern) part of the property.

Paul Property
24860/178.00



1:2,500

TIMARU DISTRICT SNA SURVEY

SNA 95e

Area Name: Pig Hunting Creek

Location (central map reference): J39: 691-368

Ecological District: Makikihi

Surveyors: Mark Davis

Property: Paul

Nearest Locality: Normanby

Area Size (ha): 0.42

Altitude (m): 1-2

Survey Time: 1 hour

Survey Date: 16-02-12

General Description:

This SNA covers a section of Pig Hunting Creek downstream from the Timaru-Pareora Highway (State Highway 1).

Plant Communities:

Plant communities on the stream banks at the edges of this SNA are dominated by naturalized (exotic) species with a narrow strip of rushes (three square: *Schoenoplectus pungens*) and small patches of bachelor's button (*Cotula coronopifolia*) and retoreto (*Azolla filiculoides*).

Birds/Fauna Observed:

Birds observed during this brief survey were royal spoonbill, pied stilt, welcome swallow and spotted shag.

Notable Flora, Fauna and Habitats:

This SNA lies in an area where indigenous vegetation and habitat has been substantially reduced. The surrounding area is an acutely threatened land environment. Wetland vegetation is regarded as a nationally uncommon ecosystem. The open water habitats of Pig Hunting Creek are listed as a Site of Special Wildlife Interest (SSWI) and a Wetland of Ecological and Representative Importance (WERI).

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

This SNA encompasses the main open-water habitat of Pig Hunting Creek and the edges of the creek.

Condition and Management Issues:

Riparian (streamside) vegetation at the boundaries of this SNA is modified, though has potential for recovery or restoration. The condition of the open water habitat appears degraded though was not assessed as part of this survey. Water quality in Pig Hunting Creek is influenced by activities elsewhere in the creek catchment.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST DISTRICT PLAN CRITERIA:

Primary Criteria	Rank	Notes
Representativeness	M	The open-water habitat is representative, though stream margins and probably water quality are degraded.
Rarity	M/H	Lies in acutely threatened land environment.
Diversity and pattern	M	Habitat and vegetation is not diverse, though provides open water for a number of bird species.
Distinctiveness/special features	M	The SNA is part of an SSWI and WERI.
Other Criteria		
Size/shape	L/M	A long narrow area that is not well buffered.
Connectivity	M	Part of a larger area of open water habitat.
Long-term Sustainability	M/H	Habitat values are likely to persist, provided water flow and quality is not reduced.

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

This area has very limited potential for development. It is an integral part of the wider Pig Hunting Creek habitat and its values are dependent to a large extent on activities elsewhere in the catchment.