

TIMARU DISTRICT
SIGNIFICANT NATURAL AREAS
SURVEY

STRINGER PROPERTY



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

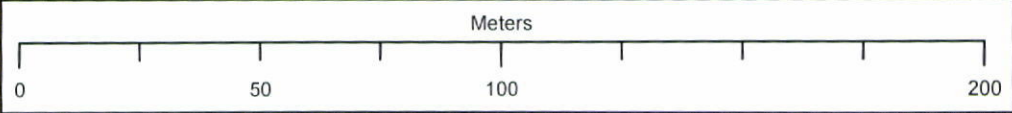
Stringer Property
24660/251.01



211a

SHERRATT ROAD

DOWN'S ROAD



1:1,500

TIMARU DISTRICT SIGNIFICANT NATURAL AREAS SURVEY

PROPERTY REPORT

PROPERTY DETAILS:

Owner:Colin Stringer
Valuation Reference:24660/252.01
Address:11 Sherratt Road, Geraldine
Location:.....On the northern side of the Geraldine Downs
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 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 small area of depleted podocarp-hardwood forest is present on the property. This forest remnant 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 1½ km to the southeast. Another substantial indigenous forest remnant is only ½ km north of this remnant.

These areas of forest and treeland may provide roost sites (though maybe only occasionally used) for long-tailed bat (a 'nationally endangered' species). Long-tailed bat are present nearby in Talbot Forest. The indigenous trees on the property are also likely to provide habitat for kereru/NZ pigeon (threat status: gradual decline). Notable plant species present on the property are the locally-uncommon dwarf mistletoe (*Korthalsella lindsayi*) and the remnant kahikatea trees.

SIGNIFICANT AREAS ON THE PROPERTY:

The property was surveyed as part of the District-wide survey of Significant Natural Areas in May 2007. The forest remnant on the property is regarded as a Significant Natural Area (SNA) when assessed against the District Plan criteria.

Area No.	Area Name	Central grid reference	Aprox. size(ha)	Vegetation/habitat type
211a		J38: 675-798	0.3	Podocarp-hardwood forest

This SNA is illustrated on the attached aerial photograph and described in greater detail on the Area Inspection Form in this report. Note that the boundary of the SNA is indicative, rather than precise. This SNA meets the ecological criteria in the Timaru District Plan (criteria i-vi, pages B18-B19), though active management will be required to ensure its long term sustainability (criterion vii, page B19). 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, or grazing. 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.

Scientific names of species cited by common name	
Common Name	Scientific name
(* = naturalised species)	
broadleaf	<i>Griselinia littoralis</i>
dwarf mistletoe.....	<i>Korthalsella lindsayi</i>
five-finger	<i>Pseudopanax arboreus</i>
hen and chickens fern.....	<i>Asplenium bulbiferum</i>
horopito.....	<i>Pseudowintera colorata</i>
kahikatea/white pine	<i>Dacrycarpus dacrydioides</i>
kowhai.....	<i>Sophora microphylla</i>
kowhai* (North Island).....	<i>Sophora tetraptera</i>
lancewood	<i>Pseudopanax crassifolius</i>
lawyer.....	<i>Rubus schmidelioides</i>
lemonwood.....	<i>Pittosporum eugenioides</i>
mahoe/whiteywood	<i>Melicytus ramiflorus</i>
matai/black pine	<i>Prumnopitys taxifolia</i>
matipo/kohuhu	<i>Pittosporum tenuifolium</i>
mistletoe.....	<i>Heostylis micranthus</i>
narrow-leaved lacebark.....	<i>Hoheria angustifolia</i>
pohuehue.....	<i>Muehlenbeckia australis</i>
pokaka.....	<i>Elaeocarpus hookerianus</i>
shrubby mahoe.....	<i>Melicytus micranthus</i>
silver beech*	<i>Nothofagus menziesii</i>
totara	<i>Podocarpus totara</i>

TIMARU DISTRICT SNA SURVEY

AREA 211a

Area Name:	Property: Stringer
Location (central map reference): J38: 675-798	Nearest Locality: Geraldine
Ecological District: Geraldine	Area Size (ha): 0.3 Altitude (m): 220
Surveyors: Mike Harding	Survey Time: ½ hour Survey Date: 29-05-07

General Description:

The Area is on a gentle south-facing slope on the Geraldine Downs on the north side of Sherratt Road just east of its junction with Downs Road.

Plant Communities:

The Area comprises scattered indigenous trees and patches of indigenous trees and shrubs over pasture in a paddock adjacent to the house. This plant community is described below. Species that appear to have been introduced (planted) are indicated with a hatch[#].

Indigenous trees in this open forest remnant are predominantly narrow-leaved lacebark and kahikatea (white pine). The trees are moderate-sized: trunk diameters (at breast height) of the narrow-leaved lacebark trees range between 20 and 50 cm (mostly c.45 cm); trunk diameters of the kahikatea trees are between 25 and 50 cm. Other canopy species present are totara, matipo, pokaka, broadleaf and pohuehue. Kowhai[#] (the North Island species, *Sophora tetraptera*), silver beech[#] and other planted trees are adjacent to this forest remnant along the drive and near the house.

Understorey species present in the remnant are mahoe, *Coprosma crassifolia*, *C. propinqua*, horopito and lawyer. A small area within the forest remnant that is fenced from stock has the following understorey species: *Coprosma rotundifolia*, totara, lancewood, shrubby mahoe and hen and chickens fern. Mistletoe is present on *Coprosma crassifolia* and on planted trees in the area. The locally uncommon dwarf mistletoe is present on *Coprosma crassifolia*.

Notable Flora, Fauna and Habitats:

Notable features of this small remnant are the presence of kahikatea, the presence of the locally-uncommon dwarf mistletoe, the habitat the area provides for birds and possibly bats (long-tailed bats are present nearby in Talbot Forest) and its proximity to other indigenous forest remnants in the area which collectively provide important forest bird habitat.

Notable Plant and Animal Pests:

No significant plant or animal pests were observed during this brief inspection. Possums are likely to be present.

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

This forest remnant is unfenced (except for a very small patch) and is grazed as part of the surrounding paddock. It has a relatively compact shape and is buffered on its northern boundary by trees adjacent to the house. The remnant extends (as scattered trees) onto the adjoining property. The forest remnant is approximately 1½ km from a relatively large area of remnant indigenous forest in Talbot Forest Scenic Reserve and less than one kilometre from other significant areas of indigenous forest on the Geraldine Downs.

Condition and Management Issues:

The forest remnant is in relatively poor condition. The forest is open with few understorey species. Fencing and removal of stock may allow some regeneration of understorey and canopy species, though removal of grazing would need to be followed by weed control, and regeneration of indigenous species would be hampered by the sward of pasture grasses. Control and management of the invasive native climber pohuehue may be beneficial, though effective control may be difficult to achieve.

Property Owner Comment:

ASSESSMENT AGAINST DISTRICT PLAN CRITERIA:

Primary Criteria	Rank	Notes
Representativeness	M	A depleted example of the indigenous forest that was originally present in the ecological district.
Rarity	M	The forest probably provides habitat for kereru (gradual decline).
Diversity and pattern	L/M	Species diversity is substantially reduced from that originally present at the site.
Distinctiveness/special features	M	Some larger trees have cavities that provide suitable roost sites for long-tailed bat (present nearby in Talbot Forest). The forest is part of a network of fauna habitat on the Geraldine Downs.
Other Criteria		
Size/shape	M	The area of forest is small, though has a good shape and could easily be buffered or protected.
Connectivity	M	This area is isolated from other indigenous forest remnants but is an important part of a network of fauna habitat on the Geraldine Downs.
Long-term Sustainability	L/M	Active management (notably encouragement of understorey and canopy species regeneration) will be required for the maintenance of ecological values in the long term.

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

This area of forest has been retained and informally protected by the landowners. The presence of the trees enhances the existing land use (grazing) by providing shelter and shade, though may limit the potential for farm development. It is visible from nearby houses and visible from Sherratt Road. Some management will be required to maintain the ecological values of this area in the long-term.

Discussion:

This forest remnant meets the District Plan criteria for a Significant Natural Area. Important attributes are the presence of remnant podocarp trees (kahikatea), the presence of dwarf mistletoe, the habitat the forest provides for fauna (kereru and possibly long-tailed bat) and that it is part of a network of fauna habitat on the Geraldine Downs.