

ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF 8 KOROMIKO STREET, MURUPARA



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1. INTRODUCTION

Under Section 6(c) of the Resource Management Act (1991), territorial local authorities, such as Whakatāne District Council, are required to provide for the protection of areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna. Information used to determine Significant Indigenous Biodiversity Sites (SIBS) in the Whakatāne District was obtained from a number of published reports, including Protected Natural Area Programme survey reports for each of the relevant ecological districts where such surveys have been undertaken, and other ecological assessments undertaken within the District (Wildland Consultants 2010). Assessment of potential sites of significance utilised the criteria set in the Bay of Plenty Regional Policy Statement (BOPRC 2010) for definitions of Representativeness, Rarity and Distinctive Features, Diversity and Pattern, Naturalness, Ecological Context, and Viability and Sustainability.

Conservation Area - Murupara, located in Murupara, is currently identified as SIBS BS6 B in the Operative Whakatāne District Plan 2017, but inclusion of SIBS BS6 B in the District Plan has been queried based on the site's urban setting and apparent lack of ecological value. Whakatāne District Council commissioned an ecological assessment of SIBS BS6 B to determine whether the site meets the criteria for inclusion as a SIBS in the Operative District Plan. If SIBS BS6 B does not meet the criteria for the SIBS then the Council will undertake a Plan Change to rectify this.

This report provides an ecological assessment of SIBS BS6 B, describes and evaluates ecological values and their relative significance, and assesses ecological significance using the criteria outlined in Appendix F Set 3 – Indigenous Vegetation and Habitats of Indigenous Fauna of the Bay of Plenty Regional Policy Statement (BOPRC 2010).

2. METHODS

The site was assessed during a walk-through survey on 2 August 2022. Vegetation types and habitats were described, and all avifauna observed were also recorded.

Relative value of habitats at the site for indigenous fauna were assessed, including species not recorded during the field survey.

A selection of photographs were taken of the site (Appendix 3).

3. ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Kāingaroa Ecological District

Much of this section has been summarised from Nicholls (1990) and Wildland Consultants (1997).

The site is within the lowland bioclimatic zone in Kāingaroa Ecological District (c.258,000 hectares), which is c.120 kilometres long, and runs from 750 metres above

sea level (a.s.l.) at the Ahimanawa Range, southeast of Lake Taupō, to c.20 metres a.s.l. near the northern end of the Matahina ignimbrite sheet.

Vegetation in the Ecological District has previously undergone enormous change. Post-glacial, pre-human climax vegetation would have been dominated by podocarp forest that developed in a cycle of periodic wide-scale disturbance and succession driven by eruptions from the Taupō and Ōkātina Volcanic Centres. Human-induced fires subsequently removed most forest cover, which was replaced by shrubland. Former indigenous vegetation and habitat types have since been largely replaced by exotic plantation forest and pasture.

Today, c.90% of the Kāingaroa Ecological District is exotic plantation forest or high producing exotic grassland. Mānuka-kānuka scrub (c.2%), indigenous broadleaved hardwood scrub (c.1%), and indigenous forest (c.2%) are the indigenous vegetation types with the greatest total cover in the Ecological District (NZ Landcover Database).

Local Site Context and Description

SIBS BS6 B is located on the southern edge of Murupara, at an altitude of c.180 metres a.s.l. The site is flat and covers 0.3 hectares (see Appendix 1).

The site is very highly modified, and is entirely surrounded by modified urban environments.

Korimiko Street and Main Road/State Highway 38 (including the road margin) run parallel to the site, to the northeast and southwest, respectively. A public toilet facility and a commercial business are located to the northwest and southeast, respectively. Several commercial businesses are also present on the northern side of Koromiko Street, opposite the site. Koromiko Street and Main Road/State Highway 28 are sealed roads, with associated stormwater infrastructure, including drains and gutters.

Wooden bollards (c.40 centimetres tall), fixed at approximately 1.5 metre spacings surround the boundaries of the site, to prevent vehicles from accessing the area.

The site is currently used as urban parkland, and has been modified for a long time. For example, historic photographs on the Retrolens website from 1963 show that the vegetation cover of the site was exotic grassland at that time¹.

4. VEGETATION AND FLORA

The site is predominantly mown grassed urban parkland dominated by exotic grasses, with a wide diversity of scattered herbs typical of grassland habitats (Plates 1-5).

Typical exotic lawn grasses are present with scattered broad-leaved plantain (*Plantago major*), narrow-leaved plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), lawn daisy (*Bellis perennis*),

¹ Historic aerial photograph sourced from <http://retrolens.co.nz>, and licensed by LINZ CC-BY 3.0. Copyright: Crown. Survey number - SN1519, Elevation -12,500 feet, Run - I, Photograph Number - 27. Scale 1:18,100. Date: 4 April 1963.

catsear (*Hypochaeris radicata*), black nightshade (*Solanum nigrum*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), purple cudweed (*Gamochaeta spicata*), and sheep's sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*).

Planted indigenous and exotic trees (c.4-10 metres tall) are also present within the site boundaries and the margins of adjacent properties. Indigenous tree species present on-site comprise two planted tōtara (*Podocarpus totara*; c.4 metres tall) and one planted red beech (*Fuscospora fusca*; c.9 metres tall). Planted exotic tree species include silk tree (*Albizia julibrissin*).

Several planted red oak (*Quercus rubra*), *Eucalyptus* sp., silver birch (*Betula pendula*), bottlebrush (*Caslistemon* sp.), and ornamental cherry (*Prunus* sp.) are present on the margin of Main Road/State Highway 38, adjacent to the southwest boundary.

A small rock (about one metre tall) with an engraved plaque is positioned roughly in the centre of the site.

No plant species recorded during the site visit have a national threat status (as per de Lange *et al.* 2018), and no regionally uncommon species were present.

5. FAUNA

Two indigenous bird species - pīwakawaka (North Island fantail, *Rhipidura fuliginosa placabilis*) and spur-winged plover (*Vanellus miles novaehollandiae*) - were recorded during the site visit.

Five exotic bird species were recorded: chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*), eurasian blackbird (*Turdus merula merula*), house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), myna (*Acridotheres tristis*), and song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*).

None of the bird species recorded during the site visit have a national threat status (as per Robertson *et al.* 2021).

No other fauna were recorded on site.

6. ECOLOGICAL VALUES

SIBS BS6 B is a highly modified site with no significant indigenous vegetation and habitat types. Only three planted indigenous trees are present: two tōtara and one red beech (see Plates 1 and 5, respectively). These trees are of very low ecological significance, although tōtara and red beech are a feature of indigenous vegetation elsewhere in Kāingaroa Ecological District.

The site is also of very low conservation value for indigenous fauna, including avifauna.

The site does not satisfy any criteria outlined in Appendix F Set 3 – Indigenous Vegetation and Habitats of Indigenous Fauna of the Bay of Plenty Regional Policy Statement (BOPRC 2010) (see Appendix 2). It also doesn't trigger any criteria in the

2022 exposure draft of the National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity (NPSIB).

7. CONCLUSION

Removal of Conservation Area – Murupara (SIBS BS6 B) from the schedule of SIBS in the Whakatāne District Plan is appropriate based on the lack of ecological significance when assessed using the criteria set out in Appendix F Set 3 of the Bay of Plenty Regional Policy Statement (BOPRC 2010) and the exposure draft of the NPSIB.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



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SIGNIFICANT INDIGENOUS BIODIVERSITY SITE:
CONSERVATION AREA - MURUPARA (BS6 B)



	Significant Indigenous Biodiversity Site -- BS6 B			<small>Aerial Photography from between 2011 and 2013, depending on the area. Parcel boundaries are to be taken as approximate only, not to be substituted for site specific survey. May contain LINE data. Crown Copyright Reserved. Note: Place names may not conform to LHD guidelines 2008. DISCLAIMER: While Wildland Consultants (WDC) has exercised all reasonable skill and care in controlling the content of this information, WDC accepts no liability in contract, tort or otherwise whatsoever, for any loss, damage, injury or expense (whether direct, indirect or consequential) arising out of the provision of this information or its use. Position of all assets & historical sites are approximate, actual positions are to be verified on site.</small>
	<small>File: \\12833\005\GIS\01\04\Planning\BS6_Construction\Pages_DefinitiveQuery.mxd</small>	<small>Scale: 1:800</small>		
<small>Date of Issue: 01/12/2013</small>				

BAY OF PLENTY RPS CRITERIA FOR ECOLOGICAL SIGNIFANCE

Set 3 Indigenous vegetation and habitats of indigenous fauna

Policies CE 9B, EI 5B, GR 1A, GR 4A, IW 2B, IW 5B, MN 1B, MN 2B, MN 3B, MN 7B and MN 8B

Methods 1, 2, 3, 11, 12 and 70

Representativeness

- 3.1 Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna contains associations of indigenous species representative, typical or characteristic of the natural diversity of the region or any relevant ecological districts.

Rarity or distinctive features

- 3.2 Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna supports an indigenous species or associations of indigenous species threatened or rare nationally, regionally or within the relevant ecological district.
- 3.3 Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna can contribute to the maintenance or recovery of a species threatened or rare nationally, regionally or within the relevant ecological district.
- 3.4 Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna is distinctive, of restricted occurrence, or at the limits of its natural distribution range, or has developed as a result of factors such as natural geothermal activity, historical cultural practices, altitude, water table, or soil type.
- 3.5 Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna is one of the largest remaining examples of its type within the region or any relevant ecological district.
- 3.6 Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna is significantly reduced in area and is degraded but retains key natural ecosystem functions (for example hydrology) and has a high potential for restoration.

Diversity and pattern

- 3.7 Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna contains a high diversity of indigenous ecosystem or habitat types, or changes in species composition, reflecting the existence of diverse natural features (for example landforms, soil types or hydrology), or communities along an ecological gradient.

Naturalness

- 3.8 Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna is in a natural state or healthy condition, or is in an original condition.

Ecological context

- 3.9 Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna contributes to the ecological viability of adjoining natural areas and biological communities, by providing or contributing to an important ecological linkage or network, or providing a buffer from adjacent land uses.
- 3.10 Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna provides habitat for indigenous species at key stages of their life cycle.

Viability and sustainability

- 3.11 Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna is of sufficient size and compact shape and has the capacity to maintain its ecological viability over time.
- 3.12 Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna supports intact habitats and healthy functioning ecosystems.

- 3.13 Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna is of sufficient size and compact shape to resist changes initiated by external agents.

Māori

- 3.14 Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna contributes to the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu and other taonga.

(Refer also to set 4 - Māori Culture and Traditions criteria).

Historical

- 3.15 Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna is known and valued for its connection to the history of the place.

Community association

- 3.16 Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna is known and valued by the immediate and wider community for its contribution to a sense of place leading to community association with or public esteem for the place, or due to its value for recreation or education.

- 3.17 Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna is valued for the contribution it is making to research into the Bay of Plenty's or New Zealand's ecosystems.

Set 4 Māori culture and traditions⁸

Policies EI 5B, IW 2B, IW 5B, MN 1B, MN 3B, MN 7B and MN 8B

Methods 1, 2, 3, 11, 12 and 70

Mauri

- 4.1 Ko te mauri me te mana o te waahi, te taonga rānei, e ngākaunuitia ana e te Māori.

The mauri (for example life force and life supporting capacity) and mana (for example integrity) of the place or resource holds special significance to Māori.

Waahi Tapu

- 4.2 Ko tērā waahi, taonga rānei he waahi tapu, arā, he tino whakahirahira ki ngā tikanga Māori, ki ngā puri mahara, me ngā wairua ā te Māori.

The place or resource is a waahi tapu of special, cultural, historic and or spiritual importance to Māori.

Kōrero Tūturu/Historical

- 4.3 Ko tērā waahi e ngākaunuitia ana e te Māori ki roto i ōna kōrero tūturu.

The place has special historical and cultural significance to Māori.

Rawa Tūturu/Customary resources

- 4.4 He waahi tērā e kawea ai ngā rawa tūturu ā te Māori.

The place provides important customary resources for Māori.

⁸ In the event of any conflict in meaning between the Māori and the English versions of the Māori culture and traditions criteria, the Māori version shall prevail.



SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Plate 1: Two planted tōtara trees (left), approximately four metres tall, on the northeastern side of the site. These trees provide some amenity value but are of no ecological significance. 2 August 2022.



Plate 2: View eastwards from the western corner of the site. Mown exotic grassland is the main cover with scattered planted trees within and surrounding the site. 2 August 2022.



Plate 3: Southwestern boundary, view southeast from the western corner of the site. Planted trees are adjacent to the Main Road/State Highway 38 road, outside the boundary. Main Road/State Highway 38 is visible to the right. 2 August 2022.



Plate 4: Westward view from the eastern corner of the site. The small rock with an engraved plaque is visible on the left. 2 August 2022



Plate 5: Planted red beech tree, approximately nine metres tall, located on the northwestern boundary. This tree provides some amenity value but is of very low ecological significance. Public toilet facilities located outside of the boundaries are visible on the right. 2 August 2022.



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