

Northland Regional Landscape Assessment Worksheet

	Unit name – MARERETU RANGE
DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISATION	
Component	Comment
Land Types Northern and eastern dissected ranges; high relief land type	Visible as an elevated vegetated landform, the unit forms a recognizable feature within the landscape and one of a number of similar elevated landform features, which contributes to the character of the lower part of the region.
Geology (including geopreservation sites) Manaia / Bream Head stratovolcano	Dissected hill country predominantly underlain by Mesozoic greywacke (Waipapa Terrane), with Eocene glauconitic sandstone (Ruatangata Sandstone, Te Kuiti Group) and Miocene sandy mudstone (Waitemata Group) present locally. Small areas of Holocene alluvium are present in this site at the base of a prominent fault scarp running along the northern side of Finlayson's Brook and Kaikowhiti Stream.
Soil Types	The southern facing upper slopes of the ranges are overlain with Te Ranga steepland soils, light brown clay loam and stony clay loam. A narrow strip of Marua clay loam overlays the foot of the southern slopes. The soils of the northern slopes comprise Marua light brown clay loam and Rangiora clay on the upper slopes, with Marua clay loam, and silty clay loam on the lower, more gentle slopes.
Ecology (including protected vegetation / features, PNAP Level 1 and 2 sites)	Identified in the Waipu Ecological District PNAP report as Q08/220 (Maretu Range), this Level 1 site comprises 2,779.1 ha of forest, 41.2 of shrubland, and 0.1 ha of wetland) The Mareretu Forest contains the largest area of indigenous forest and the third largest area of indigenous shrubland in Waipu ED. The site has a diverse, healthy canopy, and includes areas of mature forest with emergent podocarps. Grazing by stock appears to be restricted to the edges of the remnant adjacent to pasture. The site is representative for all of its ecological units except (p) kahikatea forest on alluvium. The eastern side of the forest where it adjoins Ahuroa Road Forest, and the northern side of the forest, between the 350 and 338 m highpoints and Millbrook Road, is primarily vegetated with kanuka forest with frequent mamaku and occasional kauri, puriri, rimu, mapou, tanekaha, totara, kahikatea, pate, and kohuhu. This vegetation type probably regenerated following attempts to farm the area. The highest altitude ridges, particularly along the tops of the southern face, include remnants of the original forest cover, typically rimu forest with frequent kauri, totara, and kahikatea. Taraire, mamaku, rewarewa, pate, and occasional large emergent northern rata. Rimu also form large emergent trees. The steeper portions of the southern face, are mostly covered in diverse podocarp–broadleaf forest. The southern face also has small areas of mamaku forest and taraire forest. Towai forest with frequent kahikatea or mamaku–mahoe shrubland

	<p>(e) is present on the lower slopes adjacent to Finlayson's Brook Road.</p> <p>On the alluvial flats adjacent to Finlayson's Brook, and sometimes contiguous with the larger forest remnant, are small areas of raupo reedland and kahikatea forest.</p> <p>The site is habitat for seven threatened fauna species (kukupu, kauri snail, longfin eel, Hochstetter's frog, grey duck, Schizoglossa worthyae, Amborhytida dunniæ), two regionally significant fauna species (tomtit, banded kokopu), three threatened plant species (mida, kawaka, Nematoceras rivulare), and five regionally significant plant species (northern rata, gully tree fern, Coprosma rigida, Hebe macrocarpa var. macrocarpa, and hard beech). Mareretu Forest provides linkages between many smaller remnants around its periphery, and provides catchment protection for several rivers and streams.</p>
Archaeological sites	None known.
Heritage Landscapes	None known.

Landscape characterisation

(including the identification of any specific characteristics)

This landscape straddles the district boundaries of Whangarei and Kaipara and is located some 2 km to the west of Waipu, and 9 km to the north of Maungaturoto. The hills form part of the 'horse-shoe' of elevated land, that curves inland from Bream Tail on the eastern coast up to the Takahiwai Range on the southern side of Whangarei Harbour. This reflects the underlying Waipapa Terrane geology.

Like the Brynderwyn Range, and the elevated land occupied by the North River Forest to the north, the landform occupied by the Mareretu State forest has a distinctive form. It comprises a ridge aligned approximately north east – south west, with the southern ridge face dropping steeply and quickly to the valley of the Finlayson Brook. The steepness of the landform is reflected in the hydrological pattern where short and direct streams feed into the Finlayson Brook.

To the north of the ridge, the topography displays a dissected form with a complex drainage pattern, gradually dropping northwards to the valley of the Taipuha Stream. The Taipuha Stream drains into the Mill Brook, and thence into the Ahuroa River.

The steep southern face of the range ensures that the hills are a prominent and dominant feature when viewed from within the south quadrants with the vertical scale being readily apparent. Viewed from Finlayson Brook Road, the ridge provides a feeling of enclosure and immediacy, rising above the road on the valley side to the north. From the northern quadrants, on Helmsdale and Millbrook Roads the extent of the forested area is more evident with the vertical scale less noticeable. The range is visible from the State Highway to the west and north west from where the hills form a containing element that contrasts with the low lying character of the Ahuroa floodplain and Ruakaka flats.

The range, vegetated with a largely contiguous cover of native forest is recognizable as a repeated theme also represented by the Brynderwyn range, the North River Forest, the Ruakaka Forest and the Takahiwai Range.

EVALUATION

Criteria	Rank	Comment
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Natural Science Factors

<p>Representativeness Natural landscapes are clearly characteristic of the area, district or region. The key components of the landscape will be present in a way that defines the character of the place and distills its character and essence. Endemic associations.</p>	5	The landscape is strongly representative of the sequence of ranges vegetated with native forest that occurs between the Brynderwyns and Takahiwai Range. These features characterise the landscape within this part of the region, and are representative of Northland as a whole.
<p>Rarity Natural features are unique or rare in the region or nationally, and few comparable examples exist.</p>	5	Whilst a number of examples of this land type exist, the strength lies partly in the repeated occurrence within the region. They are characteristic of Northland and rare in a national sense.
Aesthetic Values		
<p>Coherence The patterns of land cover and land use are largely in harmony with the underlying natural pattern of the landform of the area and there are no significant discordant elements of land cover or land use.</p>	4	The main body of the range displays a high level of coherence, with the forest clearly reflecting and emphasizing the underlying landform. The vegetation within north east part of the ranges is more fragmented, however the natural patterns still display a level of coherence where vegetation has been retained on steeper valley sides and within gullies.
<p>Diversity & Complexity The elements contributing to overall landscape character are diverse and complex (particularly in ecological terms) without creating disharmony.</p>	5	The ranges display a high level of ecological diversity and complexity, with a variety of vegetation types reflecting the topography, drainage patterns and slope aspect.
<p>Vividness Natural features and landscape are widely recognised across the community and beyond the local area and remain clearly in the memory; striking landscapes are symbolic of an area due to their recognisable and memorable qualities.</p>	4	Views of the unit from the southern quadrants are particularly striking with the scale of the ranges clearly evident. This characteristic is heightened both by the contiguous vegetation cover and by the contrast between the steep southern ridge face and the flatness of the valley floor.
<p>Naturalness How affected by human activity is the landscape? Does human activity intrude on the landscape? Eg.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of buildings and associated built development. • Presence of infrastructure services. • Extent of indigenous forest cover. • Homogeneity of exotic vegetation. • Presence / extent of modified agricultural land use. • Strength of natural processes / ecological patterns. • Unmodified and legible physical relief and landform. • Presence of water. 	4	<p>The majority of the unit displays a high level of naturalness with minimal evident human activity. Past clearance for agriculture is evidenced by the diversity of the kanuka forest, but the contiguous character of the forest lends the ranges a high level of natural character when viewed from the southern quadrants.</p> <p>Fragmentation of the vegetation to the north and north east tends to diminish the apparent naturalness, but this modification is confined to the foreground when viewed from Helmsdale and Millbrook Roads.</p> <p>Vegetation types and patterns are clearly representative of topography, drainage patterns and slope aspect, and this suggests a high level of strength of natural processes.</p>
<p>Intactness Natural systems are intact and aesthetically coherent and do not display significant visual signs of human modification, intervention or manipulation, visually intact and highly aesthetic natural landscapes.</p>	4	The main body of the unit displays a high level of intactness.
Experiential Values		
<p>Expressiveness The 'legibility' of the landscape. Natural features clearly demonstrate the natural processes that formed them.</p>	5	The unit displays a high level of legibility in terms of the hydrological processes that have shaped the valleys and ridges. The complexity and spatial arrangement of vegetation reflects the underlying topographical form of the ranges.

<p>Sensory qualities (These are landscape phenomena as directly perceived and experienced by humans, such as the view of a scenic landscape, or the distinctive smell and sound of the foreshore).</p>	3	<p>The presence and strength of the unit is most immediate and apparent when experienced from Finlayson Brook Road and Brooks Road to the south. From here the vertical scale of the feature is apparent, and the landform, and vegetation cover provides a strong sense of enclosure when on Finlayson Brook Road.</p>
<p>Transient Values The consistent and repeated occurrence of transient features that contributes to the character, qualities and values of the landscape; landscapes are widely recognised for their transient features and the contribution that these make to the landscape.</p>	3	<p>The unit is strongly influenced by light and weather conditions, although light conditions on the southern side tend to be more muted in scope. Ridges create extremely distinctive silhouettes during dawn and dusk. Seasonal influences of flowering trees and other plants are also important with respect to transient values.</p>
<p>Remoteness / Wildness Does the landscape display a wilderness character, remote from and untouched by human presence? Eg.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of remoteness • Accessibility • Distance from built development 	3	<p>The roading network in the area provides reasonably easy access around the range, and the prevailing sense from the margins is of a rural landscape. A greater sense of remoteness can be gained from within the forest where its scale and elevation provide a sense of separation from the surrounding rural landscape.</p>
<p>Shared and recognised values Natural features and landscape are widely known and valued by the immediate and wider community for their contribution to a sense of place leading to a strong community association with, or high public esteem for the place.</p>	3	<p>The ranges tend to be less widely recognized than the nearby Brynderwyn ranges but form part of a wider sequence of landscape features.</p>
<p>Spiritual, cultural and historical associations Natural features and landscapes can be clearly and widely known and influenced by their connection to the spiritual, cultural and historical valued in the place and includes associative meanings and associative activities valued by the community. These can include both activities and meanings associative meanings are spiritual, cultural or social associations with particular landscape elements, features, or areas, whilst associative activities are patterns of social activity that occur in particular parts of a landscape, for example, popular walking routes or fishing spots.</p>		<p>Consultation was initiated during the mapping process, but has not led to any feedback within the required period.</p>

Rank scale between 1 (low) and 5 (high)

Land Types
Coastal cliffs / escarpment
Low escarpment
Bays and headlands
Beach
Dune complex
Reefs and islands
Estuarine / inlet
Open harbour
Coastal plain
Rolling hills
Steep hills; moderate to high relief
Ranges; high relief
Strongly rolling land
Low rolling land
Valley floors and flats
Plains
Volcanic cones
River mouth
Wetland
Watercourses
Lakes and water bodies

Photographs of unit



Southern flank of Mareretu Range



Northern side of Mareretu Range