

Northland Regional Landscape Assessment Worksheet

Unit / Landscape Ref No.	Unit name – WAIMA MATARAU BUSHCLAD HILLS
DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISATION	
Component	Comment
Land Types (refer to list overleaf) Ranges; high relief	Extremely dissected in the Waima Forest area, transitions to semi-tableland at the tops in the southern part of that Forest and into the Mataraua area. Highest peak in Waima is 762m and a number of subtle peaks reaching over 700. Matarau area typically around 100m lower.
Geology (including geopreservation sites)	Tangihua Complex igneous rock volcanic origins through Waima, with balance formed on deeply weathered Lower Miocene Waipoua Subgroup basalt flows through plateaus and Otaua Group sandstone and conglomerate at the northern end of the Waiuku Coach Road.
Soil Types	Matrix of Awapuku clay loams, Te Kie steepland soils, stony clay loams, light brown stony clay loams and reddish clay loam. Small pockets of Tutamoe friable clay and Waimatenui clay.
Ecology (including protected vegetation / features, PNAP Level 1 and 2 sites)	<p>Forms approximately half of PNA survey area O06/001 (Waiopoua / Matarau / Waima forest tract), an area of almost 33,000ha. This wider extent contains representative areas of 18 ecological units recorded and many more known to be present. It is difficult to distinguish those which occur only in this ONL from those found in the Waipoua.</p> <p>It contains the highest number of native plant species of any Northland forest. The continuum represents the best altitudinal sequence in Northland—from its highest point to sea level. Nationally, it represents the largest tract of old growth kauri forest in New Zealand—a type now reduced to less than 2% of its original cover (Department of Conservation, 1999). In addition the Waipoua River is the most pristine full catchment river system in Northland.</p> <p>Waima Forest supports several narrow-ranged cold climate endemics (<i>Coprosma waima</i>, <i>Olearia crebra</i>, <i>turoa onamata</i>) which are thought to be possible relics of a previous colder climate.</p> <p>Mataraua Forest contains one of the best examples of upland plateau forest in Northland.</p> <p>The forest continuum supports the largest NI brown kiwi population in Northland and possibly the North Island and is a refuge for the last functional kokako population in Northland. It also provides habitat for red-crowned parakeet, kiwi, pied tit, fernbird, bats and kauri snail.</p> <p>Fauna and flora values are extremely high, including 36 nationally threatened and 64 regionally significant plants, 46 threatened and 4 regionally significant animals including a diversity of invertebrates, both terrestrial and freshwater.</p> <p>Waima Forest is a soil site of regional significance for containing a large area of diverse brown granular clays under indigenous vegetation.</p> <p>Mataraua Forest (P06 728 260) is a soil site of regional significance because it contains a large area of a moderate range of brown granular clays under indigenous vegetation and contains good examples of Waipoua soils which are uncommon.</p>

Archaeological sites	Limited recorded sites, but an area of particular focus identified as an outlier to the margin of the unit.
Heritage Landscapes	Associated with the Waimamaku Valley – an historic area of early farming and settlement. Traversed by bridle trails and the Waikou coach Road, which predate the modern roading network. Area includes a large extent of attempted farm settlement that was abandoned due to excessive rainfall.
Landscape characterisation (including the identification of any specific characteristics) <p>Part of an extensive area of indigenous forest – the largest in Northland - that stretches from adjacent to the Hokianga down through the Waipoua to almost 30km south at its widest. It is ecologically rich and diverse, with that complexity evident from views from nearby road corridors. The overarching, but variably composed, indigenous cover unifies the ONL across two distinctive landforms; the volcanically derived, convoluted topography of the Waima Range that echoes the line of the mid Hokianga, and the softer, weathered materials that contribute to the plateau-like form of much of the Matarau Forest area.</p> <p>Collectively with the kauri-rich Waipoua ONL, this unit creates a broad division and headwaters for the catchment that drains south to the Wairoa and Kaipara Harbour, and the catchment that falls north to discharge into the Hokianga or coast nearby. Many of the farmed areas associated with this ONL, but outside of it, have been managed to conserve groves and specimens of indigenous trees that extend the character found within the ONL and avoid the “hard line” that often marks the boundary between conservation estate or areas with substantial indigenous cover, from grazed pasture.</p> <p>It is also highly influential in prescribing the character of the southern shores of the outer Hokianga, and that of the harbour itself, along with the distinct basin / valley associated with Waimamaku and its river.</p>	

EVALUATION		
Criteria	Rank	Comment
Natural Science Factors		
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.	5	Highly representative, as demonstrated by ecological records documenting the significance and local associations found across the area. When combined with underlying geology and soils, that local ecology distinctiveness is in turn reflected by a specific landscape character.
Rarity Natural features are unique or rare in the region or nationally, and few comparable examples exist.	4	An ecology that contains many rare and threatened species. Landforms, particularly the transition to an elevated plateau, is uncommon.
Aesthetic Values		
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.	5	Very cohesive and contiguous, despite underlying transitions in landform and vegetation associations.
Diversity & Complexity The elements contributing to overall landscape character are diverse and complex (particularly in ecological terms) without creating disharmony.	5	Highly complex as a result of topographic diversity and the range of ecological types that overlay that varied landform.
Vividness Natural features and landscape are widely recognized 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.	5	The outer Hokianga, Waimamaku and Waima areas each have their own distinct identity that is considerably influenced by this ONL. The area is a popular destination for travelers as part of the Twin Coast Highway and the drawcard of Omapere/Opononi itself.

Naturalness How affected by human activity is the landscape? Does human activity intrude on the landscape? Eg. <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. 	5	<p>Generally very natural, with limited built development or prominent signs of recent human modification. Building which exist are largely focused around Mountain Road and occur in a small pocket as seen in photographs attached. There are pockets of pasture on the upper slopes and tops in this part of the range also.</p> <p>Indigenous vegetation cover is extensive and largely intact, although almost all is second growth following earlier timber extraction.</p> <p>Natural processes appear largely intact, with catchments delivering clean water in highly natural watercourses in the upper parts of the catchment. That character changes as the waterways descend to lower, farmed land.</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.	5	<p>Very intact and contiguous. Forest ecosystems and canopy compositions largely remain in a dynamic state following historic forest clearance and timber milling.</p>
Experiential Values		
Expressiveness The 'legibility' of the landscape. Natural features clearly demonstrate the natural processes that formed them.	5	<p>Extremely legible and clearly expressed, largely due to distinctive and evocative landforms. The overlay of vegetation provides unity and subtle transitions across landform and soil types.</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).	4	<p>A rich and natural context for several areas of habitation and well-used travelling corridors. The visual qualities of this ONL contribute to the landscape experience of those living in or passing through those areas.</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.	3	<p>Subtle seasonal and lighting changes. Subcanopy conditions inherently more stable and buffering of changes in light, weather and season.</p>
Remoteness / Wildness Does the landscape display a wilderness character, remote from and untouched by human presence? Eg. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of remoteness • Accessibility • Distance from built development 	4	<p>Much of the unit is elevated, remote and difficult to access. Whilst the edges of the unit are in close proximity to farmed and settled areas, a limitation on road access and the typically steep terrain separates the ONL in a way that gives it a heightened sense of remoteness despite proximity.</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.	5	<p>A significant and pivotal component of the local identity of the outer Hokianga / Waimamaku / Wekaweka area. Contributes more broadly to the Hokianga's character of remoteness and separation from the main body of Northland.</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. Associative meanings are spiritual, cultural or social		<p>Consultation was initiated during the mapping process, but has not led to any feedback within the required period.</p>

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.		
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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









