

Northland Regional Landscape Assessment Worksheet

	Unit name – NORTH EAST BUSH CLAD HILLS
DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISATION	
Component	Comment
Land Types Northern and eastern dissected hills; moderate to high relief land type	<p>The forested hill country represented by this unit is strongly representative of the character of the Northland landscape, as is the balance between this vegetated steeper country and gullies, and the pastured lower lying country and rivers flats.</p> <p>Since public access to the hills that comprise this land type is limited, views experienced by the wider community of this land type are restricted to glimpses of a vegetated ridge slope on its margins when travelling along a road, or more frequently as the forested hill slopes that form a backdrop to much of the east coast of Northland.</p>
Geology (including geopreservation sites)	<p>Steeply dissected hillcountry of Waipapa Terrane greywacke with Kerikeri Volcanics basalt flow remnants and associated boulder colluvium on some hills and ridge tops.</p> <p>Steeply dissected hillcountry in Waipapa Terrane greywacke.</p>
Soil Types	<p>The more elevated portions of the unit are characterised by Te Ranga steepland soils, clay loam and stony clay loam, with isolated pockets of Waioto friable clay. Midslopes are dominated by Te Ranga steepland soils, light brown clay loam and stony clay loam. The valley floors are overlain by Whakapara mottled clay loam.</p>
Ecology (including protected vegetation / features, PNAP Level 1 and 2 sites)	<p>Q06/026 (Hansens Hill Forest) The site comprises 2492 ha of forest, 217 ha of shrubland, and 10 ha of wetland.</p> <p>Hansens Hill Forest is significant for the presence of kawaka (Sparse), pateke, which are Nationally Endangered) utilise streams in the habitat, and breed in the area. North Island brown kiwi (Serious Decline) is also reported to be present.</p> <p>Other significant fauna include kukupa (Gradual Decline), NI tomtit (Regionally Significant), and <i>Peripatus</i> sp.</p> <p>Q06/113 (Whananaki Bush) This site comprises 442 ha of forest, and 861 ha of shrubland.</p> <p>The site is significant as a large, contiguous area, which provides habitat for several threatened species including NI brown kiwi (Serious Decline), kukupa (Gradual Decline), Auckland green gecko (Gradual Decline) recorded in 1998. Fish recorded at this site include inanga and redfin bully.</p> <p>Whananaki Bush is a representative site for kanuka/manuka shrubland, kanuka/manuka–totara shrubland, kauri–rimu–towai forest (only record in Ecological District), kanuka/ manuka–rimu forest, kauri–tanekaha forest, towai secondary forest, kanuka/manuka–tanekaha–totara shrubland, tanekaha–totara forest (only record in Ecological District), and taraire–kahikatea forest (only record in Ecological District).</p>

Archaeological sites	Pa sites are evident hill tops, particularly near the coast.
Heritage Landscapes	None known
<p>Landscape characterisation (including the identification of any specific characteristics)</p> <p>As part of a continuing theme of elevated forested hills that extend down the east coast from the Bay of Islands to Whangarei harbour, this unit comprises a sprawling area of forest that links Mimiwhangata with the hills inland from Sandy bay.</p> <p>As with the Russell Forest, and the Eastern hills, this unit forms a vegetated backdrop to the coast which characterises Northlands east coast. Similarly, these hills, when seen from inland roads are often experienced as glimpses of forest where it overtops a ridge, or flows down a gully. In other places the forest may be seen as a more continuous feature extending for some distance.</p> <p>Viewed from elevated locations within the unit, the extent and contiguity of the vegetation are more apparent. Whilst the more frequently seen margins of the units tend to comprise regenerating shrubland, the vegetation contained within its interior is generally more established and diverse, and often encompasses entire catchments.</p> <p>Frequently, pockets of pasture are isolated within the wider areas of bush. Most frequently these are limited to ridge tops, or spurs, thus providing easier access for stock to the interior of the bush areas. Sometimes pockets of lower lying pasture are evident in lower lying locations.</p> <p>The pastured ridgetops also allow access to, and suitable buildings sites for dwellings, and development of this type has occurred, particularly at the southern end of the unit around Whananaki and Sandy Bay, but also along the bush margins of the valleys occupied by Whananaki North and South Roads, and Kaiikanui Road. Generally built development has been sympathetic to the landform patterns and form recessive elements in the landscape, although some less sympathetic examples are more prominent and draw the eye.</p> <p>With the exception of the indeterminate edges resulting from the grazed ridgetops, the margins of the unit are reasonably well defined by the bush edges, and generally accommodates the steeper land.</p> <p>The landscape type as characterised by this unit forms a dominant element in the mix that typifies the Northland rural landscape, with other elements of the mix including pastured hills and ridges, and bush remnants. Plantation forestry is also a feature of this unit, although usually occurring in contained pockets close to the margins of the unit.</p> <p>The unit includes several extensive areas, these are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hills to the north west and north of Opuawhanga; • Hills to the south and south west of Helena Bay; • Hansens Hill and Onekainga, to the north and north west of Whananaki; • The range of hills between Whananaki North and South Roads, and; • The range of hills between Whananaki South Road and Matapouri Road, inland from Sandy Bay. <p>Typically this vegetation lends a sense of coherence and legibility to the landscape, creating a strong landscape structure.</p> <p>The age and diversity of much of this forest is limited, and historical aerial photography has indicated that many areas have regenerated over the past 30 – 50 years, although more diverse vegetation within gullies and on steeper slopes evidences a framework of older and more established forest.</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.	4	The unit is strongly representative of the sequence of ranges vegetated with native forest that occurs between the Russell Forest, Mt Tiger and Eastern hills. These features characterise the landscape within this part of the region, and are representative of Northland as a whole.
Rarity Natural features are unique or rare in the region or nationally, and few comparable examples exist.	4	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		
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.	4	The unit displays a moderate level of coherence, with the larger areas of forest clearly reflecting and emphasizing the underlying landform and patterns of the landscape. There is a degree of fragmentation however with the intervening areas being used for other landuses. Generally however the natural patterns still display a level of coherence where vegetation has been retained on steeper valley sides and within gullies.
Diversity & Complexity The elements contributing to overall landscape character are diverse and complex (particularly in ecological terms) without creating disharmony.	4	The unit displays a moderate to high level of ecological diversity and complexity, with a variety of vegetation types reflecting the topography, drainage patterns and slope aspect.
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.	4	<p>Viewed from the coast to the east, the unit forms an important backdrop to the landscape, which is a repeated theme along the east coast. This land type is not, however particularly spectacular, although memorable in the wider overriding 'landscape character' sense.</p> <p>The unit is also experienced when travelling to or from the coast along the various west – east aligned roads. Viewed from these roads there is no perception of the overall extent of the vegetation, although in some locations particularly when bisecting the larger areas of forest and descending to the coast – Sandy Bay Hill and on Whananaki South Road for example – when the scale of vegetation is more memorable and forms a waymarker, or gateway on the journey to the coast.</p> <p>A key element of this is the lack of visible built development thus heightening the sense of wildness and remoteness – key elements of the Northland coastal experience.</p>
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. 	4	<p>The majority of the unit displays a high level of naturalness with minimal evident human activity.</p> <p>Fragmentation of the vegetation tends to diminish the apparent naturalness, as does the presence of pine plantation to the west, but the linking fragments relate well to the underlying topographical and hydrological patterns.</p> <p>Pasture along ridgetops and spurs reflect the ongoing use of these areas for grazing of stock. Pastured ridgetops are more common on the margins of the unit, although in places</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence / extent of modified agricultural land use. • Strength of natural processes / ecological patterns. • Unmodified and legible physical relief and landform. • Presence of water. 		<p>they do extend some distance into the unit. Although these areas do detract to some extent from the naturalness of the unit, and suggest the ongoing use of the forest as a grazing resource, the scale of the unit as a whole tends to mitigate against the diminishing of naturalness.</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	<p>The unit displays a moderate level of intactness, although the corridors although the unit provided by Matapouri, Whananaki South, Whananaki North, and Kaiikanui Roads have resulted in the fragmentation of the wider area of forest. In the extensive areas between these road corridors the unit displays a high level of intactness.</p>
Experiential Values		
<p>Expressiveness The 'legibility' of the landscape. Natural features clearly demonstrate the natural processes that formed them.</p>	5	<p>The landscape 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 unit.</p>
<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>	2	<p>Viewed from the east, the unit forms an elevated and vegetated backdrop that contributes to the character and sense of place of the landscape.</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>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.</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 to the unit, and the prevailing sense from the margins is of a rural landscape. The proximity of built development also affects the sense of remoteness, although in some locations a limited sense of remoteness whilst journeying can be experienced.</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 recognised than the nearby Russell Forest but forms 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



View north east over North east Hills to Whananaki



View north east over Otamure Bay showing the relationship between the coast and unit