

Northland Regional Landscape Assessment Worksheet

	Unit name – MOTUTAU FOREST AND REMNANTS
DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISATION	
Component	Comment
Land Types <small>(refer to list overleaf)</small> Steep hills: moderate high relief.	Visible as an elevated vegetated landform, the unit forms a recognisable 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 <small>(including geopreservation sites)</small>	Steep hill country underlain by Cretaceous-Paleocene ophiolitic volcanics (Tangihua Complex).
Soil Types	The unit comprises a mix of soil types with the dominant type being Te Kie steepland soils, stoney clay loam, but also including pockets of Taumata clay loam, Takitu gravelly clay loam, Purua clay loam, and Omu clay loam.
Ecology <small>(including protected vegetation / features, PNAP Level 1 and 2 sites)</small>	<p>The unit is identified in the Tangihua Ecological District PNAP report as P06/084 (Motutau Forest). This Level 1 site comprises three remnants and encompasses an area of 521.3 ha.</p> <p>It comprises a large area of cut-over tall podocarp-broadleaved forest near the eastern boundary of Tangihua ED. Taraire forest is widespread, with frequent tawa, rewarewa, and puka evident in the canopy. Occasional species include karaka, totara, rimu, pukatea and puriri. Towai forest is of similar abundance, occurring with frequent rewarewa and occasional miro, totara and kauri. The remaining forest type includes co-dominant kanuka, totara and towai, with frequent kahikatea and rewarewa, and occasional rimu, tanekaha and mamaku.</p> <p>The PNAP report notes that the site is significant due to the presence of Northern rata (regionally significant), NI brown kiwi (Nationally Vulnerable), kauri snail (Gradual Decline), <i>Liarea bicarinata</i> (Range Restricted), NI tomtit (regionally significant), and kukupa (regionally significant),</p> <p>It states that the land snail <i>Amborhytida forsythia</i> (Gradual Decline) is also present.</p>
Archaeological sites	None known.
Heritage Landscapes	None known.
Landscape characterisation <small>(including the identification of any specific characteristics)</small> The forest occupies an area of elevated land which rises to a maximum height of 560 metres and is a prominent feature from a wide visual catchment, particularly from the southern quadrant from where it is also seen in the context of the Mangakahia Forest. Much of the northern flanks and the southern flanks at the western end of the range (including the high point) are vegetated with pine plantations and this detracts to some degree from the coherence of the unit.	

The central portion of the range retains a cover of contiguous vegetation and this, in association with the prominence and scale of the feature, and its relationship to Mangakahia Forest contributes to its significance.

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>	4	The landscape is strongly representative of the sequence of ranges vegetated with native forest that occurs between the Tangihua and Tutamoe Ranges, but which also includes Mangakahia Forest. 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>	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

<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>	3	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 northern and western part of the ranges is more fragmented with the slopes clad with pine plantation.
<p>Diversity & Complexity The elements contributing to overall landscape character are diverse and complex (particularly in ecological terms) without creating disharmony.</p>	3	The ranges display a moderate 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 Kaikou and Moengawahine valley floors.
<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 moderate - 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 northern and western slopes due to exotic vegetation tends to diminish the apparent 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>

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.	3	The main body of the unit displays a moderate level of intactness, with modification associated with the pine plantations detracting from the aesthetic values of the northern and western slopes.
Experiential Values		
Expressiveness The 'legibility' of the landscape. Natural features clearly demonstrate the natural processes that formed them.	4	The unit displays a moderate 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.
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).	2	The unit displays subtle qualities associated with native bush, and is reliant to some extent on interaction with weather to elevate sensory qualities.
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.	4	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.

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 	2	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.
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.	3	The ranges tend to be less widely recognised than Tutamoe but form part of a wider sequence of landscape features
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.	5	Consultation was initiated during the mapping process, but has not led to any feedback within the required period

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



Motutau Forest from Marlow Road



Motutau Forest from Riponui Road