

Northland Regional Landscape Assessment Worksheet

	Unit name – TAKAHIWAI HILLS
DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISATION	
Component	Comment
Land Types Northern and eastern dissected hills; moderate to high relief land type	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 (including geopreservation sites)	Dissected hill country on Mesozoic greywacke (Waipapa Terrane).
Soil Types	The predominant soil type within the unit is Rangiora clay, clay loam and silty clay loam whilst pockets of Maungarei clay are present to the south of the unit and on the northern lower slopes. Pockets of Rangiora silty clay loam are evident at the northern and southern extremes of the unit.
Ecology (including protected vegetation / features, PNAP Level 1 and 2 sites)	<p>Identified in the Waipu Ecological District PNAP report as Q07/124 (Takahiwai Forest), and comprises 635.3 ha of forest, 4.2 ha of wetland, and 1.7 ha of shrubland.</p> <p>Takahiwai Forest has one of the largest areas of coastal kanuka forest, with kauri-kanuka forest dominant on many of the ridges. These types are also common further inland, but here they are likely to have a different suite of species regenerating through them due to the coastal influence. Small patches of more diverse totara-puriri forest and karaka-nikau-kanuka forest remain in the gullies and gully heads. These broadleaf forest types would have been more extensive in the area before widespread human disturbance. Pakauhokio Knoll Forest (Q07/122) at the northern end of Q07/124 is mainly degraded kanuka forest</p> <p>The area is of significance due to the presence of seven representative ecological units: (a) kanuka forest on moderate hillslope, (b) kauri-kanuka forest on ridge-top, (c) totara forest on moderate hillslope, (e) totara-puriri forest in gully head, (f) manuka shrubland on moderate hillslope, (g) karaka-nikau-kanuka forest in gully, and (h) kanuka-puriri treeland in gully.</p> <p>It is a relatively large area and of compact shape, however grazing occurs on the forest edges, and in places is resulting in canopy breakdown and the formation of treeland (h). The site supports three threatened fauna species (kukupu, <i>Amborhytida dunni</i>, and longfin eel), two regionally significant fauna species (tomtit and banded kokopu), and five regionally significant plant species (northern rata, hard beech, maire tawake, <i>Pratia angulata</i>, and <i>Coprosma rigida</i>).</p> <p>Takahiwai Forest provides important riparian protection for tributaries of the Ruakaka River, and Takahiwai Stream. Approximately 65.0 ha of this site is within a scenic reserve (DOC-administered) (Mata Farm Settlement Scenic Reserve).</p>
Archaeological sites	The Takahiwai area has had a long history of settlement, and Pakauhokio, at the western end of the Ranges was a significant pa site. There is evidence of pa sites further to the west along the ridge and nearer the harbour coast.

Heritage Landscapes	None known.
<p>Landscape characterisation (including the identification of any specific characteristics)</p> <p>The Takahiwai Hills form the northern end of the 'horseshoe' of largely vegetated elevated land, that curves inland from Bream Tail on the eastern coast northwards to the Whangarei Harbour. The Takahiwai Range is part of a representative sequence of ranges that typifies the Northland landscape and is a repeated theme evident when travelling north along State Highway 1. It is clearly visible as a containing feature to the west of the road, with steep west facing slopes which vary between vegetated with native forest, and grassed. Similarly, the range forms a distant backdrop from across the harbour to the north, with little visible development extending higher than the harbour edge, leaving the hills as natural and largely unmodified.</p> <p>The contrast between the surrounding alluvial Ruakaka River floodplain (on its south western and southern sides) and the steeply rising hills is dramatic. With the exception of cleared ridgetops at the southern end, the range forms an mostly contiguous area of vegetation extending for a length of some 5.0 km, running north west – south east.</p> <p>The edges of the range are marked by a number of quarries. Off Fulton Road on the north west side of the range, a quarry is slightly separated from the elevated land, but is seen in its context when viewed from the west. On the south east side, a large quarry is accessed from One Tree Point Road, and further north, a smaller quarry, accessed off Takahiwai Road is hidden by an enfolding ridge.</p> <p>The NZMS260 Topomap indicates a large concentration of pa sites on ridges around the margins of the range, and it is understood that an important pa site and settlement was located at the northern end of the range at Pakauhokio.</p>	

EVALUATION		
Criteria	Rank	Comment
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 Whangarei Harbour, but also extends north to include the Te Wai-iti forest and Pukenui. 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	<p>The main body of the range displays a high level of coherence, with the forest clearly reflecting and emphasizing the underlying landform. The vegetation at the north western end of the range, and at the south eastern end is more fragmented and is separated by areas of pasture. Landscape patterns are maintained in these areas to some extent due to the retention of bush remnants within gullies or on steep slopes.</p> <p>The presence of quarrying activities and telecommunications facilities on high points detracts from the coherence of landscapes. The latter tend to compromise the scale of the ranges by acting as a 'yardstick' against which the scale of the ranges can be measured.</p>

<p>Diversity & Complexity The elements contributing to overall landscape character are diverse and complex (particularly in ecological terms) without creating disharmony.</p>	5	<p>Detailed and vegetated skyline visible from a wide catchment.</p> <p>Convoluted site slopes with multitude of minor catchments. and a diverse ecology.</p>
<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>	5	<p>The unit has a scale that draws the eye and forms a dominant backdrop to views from the coast. This characteristic is heightened due to the presence of a contiguous covering of native forest, the dark hue of which contrasts with the surrounding undulating pastoral landscape.</p>
<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 landscape 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 on the margins of the unit,, and particularly on the margins of the southern portion tends to diminish the apparent naturalness, but this modification is not readily apparent from the majority of the main public viewpoints.</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 main body of the landscape area 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 ranges.</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>		<p>The ranges form a dominant skyline backdrop to the wider landscape to the south and east, when viewed from the State Highway. Viewed from the north, the ranges also form a backdrop and are also seen with the Harbour as a foreground context. This can strengthen and enhances the memorability of the view. For individuals living in close proximity to the ranges they form an island of fauna that influences activity in the surrounding area.</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 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>	5	<p>The ranges tend to be less widely recognized than the Brynderwyn ranges to the south but form part of a wider sequence of elevated and vegetated 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



Takahiwai Hills from the State Highway



Takahiwai Hills from the north side