

assessment of
**CONSERVATION
VALUES**
in dunedin city



**DUNEDIN CITY
COUNCIL**
Kaunihera-a-Rohi o Ōtago
CITY PLANNING

Why is the DCC undertaking this project?

Consultation undertaken by the Council on the Community Plan indicates that the Dunedin community strongly supports protecting our natural assets and recognises the contribution this makes towards our quality of life in Dunedin. Dunedin is promoted as a nature and heritage centre. The Council is committed to ensuring that this continues and biodiversity is maintained for future generations. To achieve this the Council intends to promote both regulatory and non-regulatory methods.

The main regulatory method used by the Council is the Dunedin City District Plan, which identifies and protects the most important areas as Areas of Significant Conservation Value (ASCV) and seeks to encourage retention of indigenous biodiversity.

The District Plan currently identifies and protects 118 sites as ASCV's. This list is limited to land under public ownership and areas that were legally protected by covenants as at 1995. Through submissions and appeals to the District Plan, it was highlighted that the list of existing ASCV's does not represent the variety of habitats that exist within the City. Many of these biodiversity values are located on private land. The Dunedin City Council would like to continue to add areas with significant conservation value to the schedule.

Why have I been contacted?

The City has been surveyed to determine areas that warrant further investigation as they might have some special conservation values, such as vegetation or habitats for indigenous species. The survey has included areas that have had conservation values recognised by some form of published research or report, and areas that are known to support native vegetation but that have not been formally described. Aerial photography was also used.

What assistance can the Dunedin City Council provide?

a) Ecological assessment of your land

An ecologist can be provided to you free of charge to undertake an ecological assessment of the conservation values of your land. Normally the average cost of an ecological assessment ranges between \$500 and \$1500.

b) Rates Remission

The Council has a policy to consider rates remission on land that is voluntarily protected for conservation purposes. This policy currently provides for 100% remission on the area that is formally protected. The level of the remission will depend upon the rateable value of your land and the area that is formally protected.

c) Guidance in preparing applications for funding

There are a number of funds available for biodiversity protection. Council can provide

guidance on preparing applications for funding and provide access to aerial photography.

d) Assistance with the development of management plans

Management plans can identify the significant conservation values on your land, the potential threats to these values, limitations on land use necessary to avoid such threats, activities that make positive contributions and opportunities for enhancement. Council is intending to develop guidelines to assist landowners in establishing management plans for the conservation values.

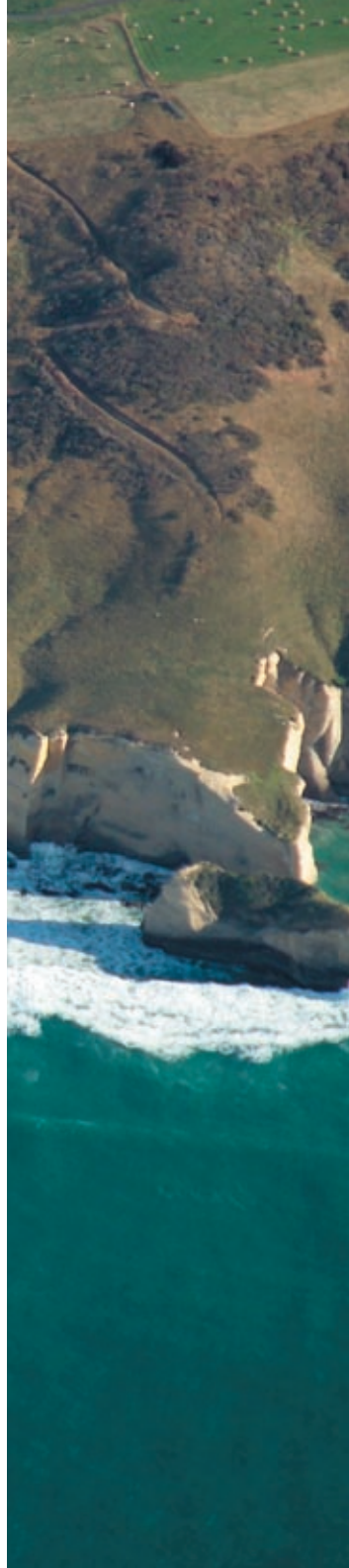
e) Support networks and access to information

Workshops and field days can provide practical opportunities to illustrate management techniques and benefits of conservation to landowners. As part of the actions resulting from the Biodiversity Strategy for Dunedin, a biodiversity forum will be established to provide consistency and a focus for those working in conservation in Dunedin. A website for Dunedin's biodiversity is also to be developed which will provide useful links to volunteers, contacts and information and resources that will be a useful hub for accessing management assistance and advice.

What determines whether an area is an ASCV?

An area must be assessed against a number of standard criteria listed in the District Plan to determine its ecological significance. The criteria include: Rarity/distinctiveness, representativeness, viability, context in the ecological landscape, diversity/pattern, naturalness/intactness, size and shape.

Areas set aside by statute or covenant for protection and preservation will also be considered as an ASCV, along with areas identified as having significant conservation value in the Otago Regional Council Regional Plans (including Water and Coast).



What restrictions does being an ASCV impose on my land?

ASCV's are identified and included in Schedule 25.4 of the District Plan. Rules apply to these sites to ensure activities are managed so they do not adversely affect the values that are being protected. If an area is also protected under a covenant, the covenant will usually outline what activities can be undertaken on site, although activities are still subject to the relevant zone provisions in the District Plan. For areas that are not protected by a covenant and do not have a management plan, resource consent will be required if an activity involves pastoral intensification, vegetation clearance or ground disturbance. This will allow the effects of the activity upon the conservation values to be assessed. If you do wish to change your management you will be required to apply for resource consent. These will be processed at no cost.

Another alternative that provides more certainty is to develop a Management Plan for the area with conservation values where you provide for certain activities to take place within the area. Resource consent would still be required but Council can not decline the consent although may impose conditions. The process would be a formal way of ensuring that the activity complies with the management plan.

Why does it have to be in the District Plan?

Including significant conservation areas in the District Plan ensures a level of protection and recognition of conservation values, increases awareness of the existence of an area and provides a flexible approach to assess the effects of activities upon an ASCV. It also provides an opportunity to access funding and other incentives in recognition of the protection of conservation values.

How do I go about finding out more about the conservation values on my land?

As the landowner you have been contacted because your land has been identified as having conservation values that are a part of Dunedin's biodiversity and has the potential to be considered as an ASCV. Likewise you may have contacted us if you consider there is an important area that requires further investigation.

If you are interested in learning about the biodiversity values on your land an ecologist can be provided to spend some time on your property at no cost. The ecologist will arrange a suitable time to meet with you and assess the biodiversity values of the area identified on your land to see if it meets the criteria to be included as an ASCV.

What happens after the ecologist has visited my land and carried out an assessment?

A written report will be provided to you identifying the vegetation/habitat types found on your land, assessing their significance against the District Plan criteria and recommending whether an area meets the criteria. The report will also contain information on what financial and other forms of assistance are available to help maintain the area, and the various options for protection.

A Council officer will contact you to discuss the implications for the land management. There will be an opportunity to discuss the report and to work with you to guide you in the preparation of a management plan for the area tailored to the management of your land and its conservation values.

What does it mean if an area meets the ASCV criteria?

Where an area meets the criteria it is appropriate that further discussions between yourself and the Council over the boundary of the area to be identified as an ASCV or the management of it, including programmes to monitor the conservation values. Sites meeting the ASCV criteria will be placed on a list of items to be added to the District Plan.


How will additional Areas of Significant Conservation Value be added to the District Plan?

Upon completion of the assessment process across the City, a list of additional ASCV's will be collated and the Council will then undertake a Plan Change to include these areas into the District Plan. The Plan Change is a formal process where individuals and groups can make submissions, attend hearings, and if not satisfied with the Council's decisions, have the right to appeal to the Environment Court.

Can I still protect an area that does not meet the ASCV criteria?

Yes. Although the District Plan seeks to protect the most significant conservation values in the city, the values identified on your property are an important piece of the overall biodiversity of Dunedin. Managing these areas by fencing or retiring livestock may allow enhancement or restoration of values. Such management could eventually work towards establishing status as an ASCV.

The QEII National Trust assist landowners protect significant natural and cultural features on their land. The Trust use open space covenants as a legally binding protection agreement registered on the title of the land. Open space covenants are generally in perpetuity. While each covenant varies they generally contain a purpose, development of management statements and stipulate



what activities can be undertaken within the covenanted area. It usually involves fencing and management plans to ensure the conservation values are protected.

What are the benefits of being involved in the process?

a) Good land management practices

The protection of natural features makes good land management sense. Bush and wetlands help filter rain and runoff improving water quality. Fencing areas enables regeneration of bush, protects stream banks, water quality and keeps stock out of hard to manage areas. Healthy bush and natural landscapes beautify and add economic value to properties. Formal protection recognises your good land management practices.

b) Access to funding

There are several contestable funds that have been established to assist the management and protection of areas of indigenous biodiversity on private land. To access most of these funds an area of indigenous biodiversity is required to have formal protection.

Funding opportunities include:

The Otago Regional Council has a biodiversity fund to assist private landowners in Otago with the voluntary protection of areas of biodiversity, using QEII covenants. The projects include fencing, re-vegetation, weed and pest control and interpretation..

The Department of Conservation (DOC) services the following national funds:

- **Nature Heritage Fund.** The purpose of the fund is to protect indigenous ecosystems that represent the full range of natural diversity originally present in the New Zealand landscape by providing incentives for voluntary conservation. The fund can assist with management costs.

- **Nga Whenui Rahui Fund** was established in 1991. The purpose of the fund is to facilitate voluntary protection of indigenous ecosystems on Maori owned land while honouring the rights guaranteed to Maori landowners under the Treaty of Waitangi.
- **Matauranga Kura Taiao Fund.** The purpose of the fund is to support hapu/iwi initiatives in the revival, use and retention of traditional Maori knowledge and practices in biodiversity management.
- **The Biodiversity Advice Fund** focuses on information and advice to land managers. It funds projects which inspire landholders or groups to better protect indigenous species on their land, such as workshops, field-days, and publications.
- **The Biodiversity Condition Fund** aims to improve and maintain the condition of areas of indigenous vegetation, species and habitats. The fund seeks to broaden community effort in the management of indigenous biodiversity. Suitable projects may include fencing or pest control on private land.

Further information can be found at www.doc.govt.nz

There are also a number of other local, regional and national funding opportunities available for a range of conservation projects such as restoration enhancement and management. The Funding Information Service website www.fis.org.nz provides a useful resource on funding information in New Zealand.

c) Economic Benefits

Unique areas may have eco-tourism potential.

d) Contribution to maintaining biodiversity within Dunedin

Maintaining areas with conservation values has a number of public good benefits. Maintaining biodiversity contributes towards the overall amenity and quality of life for the community within Dunedin. Your land will contribute towards the understanding of biodiversity values of Dunedin and continued state of biodiversity.



Further Information

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the project please contact:

Debbie Hogan

City Planning

Dunedin City Council

Ph 474 3331

Email: dhogan@dcc.govt.nz

This brochure has been prepared by the Dunedin City Council with the support of the following organisations:

Otago Regional Council

70 Stafford Street
Private Bag
Dunedin
Phone: (03) 474 0827

Federated Farmers of New Zealand (Inc) Dunedin

Jade House
Birch Street
Phone: (03) 477 7353
Fax: (03) 479 0470
www.fedfarm.org.nz

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

Cnr Portsmouth Drive & Strathallan Street
PO Box 5648
Dunedin
Phone: (03) 477 8454
www.maf.govt.nz

Department of Conservation

Coastal Otago Conservancy

Conservation House, 77 Lower Stuart Street
PO Box 5244, Moray Place, Dunedin 9058
Phone: (03) 477 0677

Save the Otago Peninsula

PO Box 23, Portobello, Otago Peninsula

Yellow Eyed Penguin Trust

PO Box 5409, Dunedin
Phone: (03) 479 0011
www.yellow-eyedpenguin.org.nz

QEII National Trust

PO Box 3341, Wellington
Freephone: 0508 (QE2TRUST) 732 878
www.openspace.org.nz

Coastal Otago Representative

Rebecca Reid
Phone: (03) 482 2304

Website Resources

The following websites provide information and guidance on conservation:

www.biodiversity.govt.nz

provides information on New Zealand's native biodiversity, various national programmes and the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy

www.nzpcn.org.nz

NZ Plant Conservation Network website provides information on native plants and their conservation

www.doc.govt.nz

Department of Conservation

www.whatbird.co.nz

helps to identify exotic and native birds

www.landcareresearch.co.nz

environmental research organisation

www.weedbusters.org.nz

information about weeds and actions to control weeds

www.forestandbird.org.nz

website of Forest and Bird organisation

www.bush.org.nz

NZ ecological restoration network is a non-profit, community-driven organisation dedicated to sharing knowledge and experiences about native habitat protection, management and ecological restoration in New Zealand.