

Ecological evidence from Silverstream Spur site visit 10 March 2024

On 10 March 2024 I visited Silverstream Spur together with 4 members of the Silverstream Stream Railway. We accessed the site from Reynolds Bach Drive via what is designated as a "Vehicle Track" on the LINZ 1:50,000 topographic map (accessed by NZ Topo50 North Island iPhone App) which led up onto the council owned land. I also recorded the route that we took using my Suunto Spartan Ultra sports watch which I also used to record the co-ordinates of various points of interest. The route followed from there is shown in white dots superimposed on Figure 1 in Attachment B to Mr Goldwater's site notes from his visit on 22/12/2023 (see attached). It was obvious that the routes taken by Mr Goldsmith and Keely Paler from Wildlands mostly followed the marked vehicle track.

In addition to following the vehicle track we explored off-track in areas not currently part of the proposed Significant Natural Area SNA070. Three of these areas are highlighted with green oval rings on Fig 1 and number 1 to 3 and some observations from each of these areas are listed below.

1. We followed a gully down to the top of the steep bank above Silverstream Steam Railway. There was water in the gully from 41.1503 S, 174.9998 E. There were small trees, tree fern and supplejack in the gully and some large rimu and beech trees on the sides. Some seedlings that would grow into canopy trees such as tawa were also seen. In a pool near the bottom a medium size kōura was found and photographed. I believe that this gully should form part of the SNA.
2. The marked vehicle track which was followed by Keely Paler and ourselves was quite narrow in this area due to regrowth and followed a ridge. Seedlings of putaputawētā and porokaiwhiri were noted along the sides of the track. This area could regenerate into native bush if left undisturbed and the pine trees gradually killed to allow the natives to take over.
3. We followed this gully down to just before it drops off near Silverstream Steam Railway. There was water from 41.1532 S, 174.9985 E which is within the current SNA. There was little change in the vegetation further down the creek from the SNA boundary and I didn't see any of the weed species that were mentioned in June 2022 Wildlands report. There were some large beech trees and also a lot of seedlings up to 2 m high from species such as tawa and porokaiwhiri. I believe that this gully should be retained in the SNA as was originally proposed.
4. At this location a miromiro was sighted by two of us but unfortunately flew off before a photo could be taken. This location is within the current proposed SNA but not the reduced SNA recommended by Dr Keesing. In the centre and along the sides of the marked vehicle track around this area were many seedling native trees including porokaiwhiri and putaputawētā. This area is obviously frequented by birds that have been spreading seeds and I agree with Mr Goldwater that this section should be included in the SNA to link the more mature areas and I believe that it could regenerate quickly with management of predators and gradual killing of pine trees.

I took a large number of photographs on my iPhone 12 during the site visit and these have their co-ordinates recorded by the phone's GPS receiver. I intend to illustrate a presentation with a selection of these photos.

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Figure 1 Approximate route taken 10/3/24 (white dots)