

Silverstream Spur

PC49 Variation 1 to the Operative District Plan – Ecology Issues

Simon Edmonds – Presentation Notes

Hutt Valley Eastern Hills Pre 1860's Tracks Jeremy Foster 2021

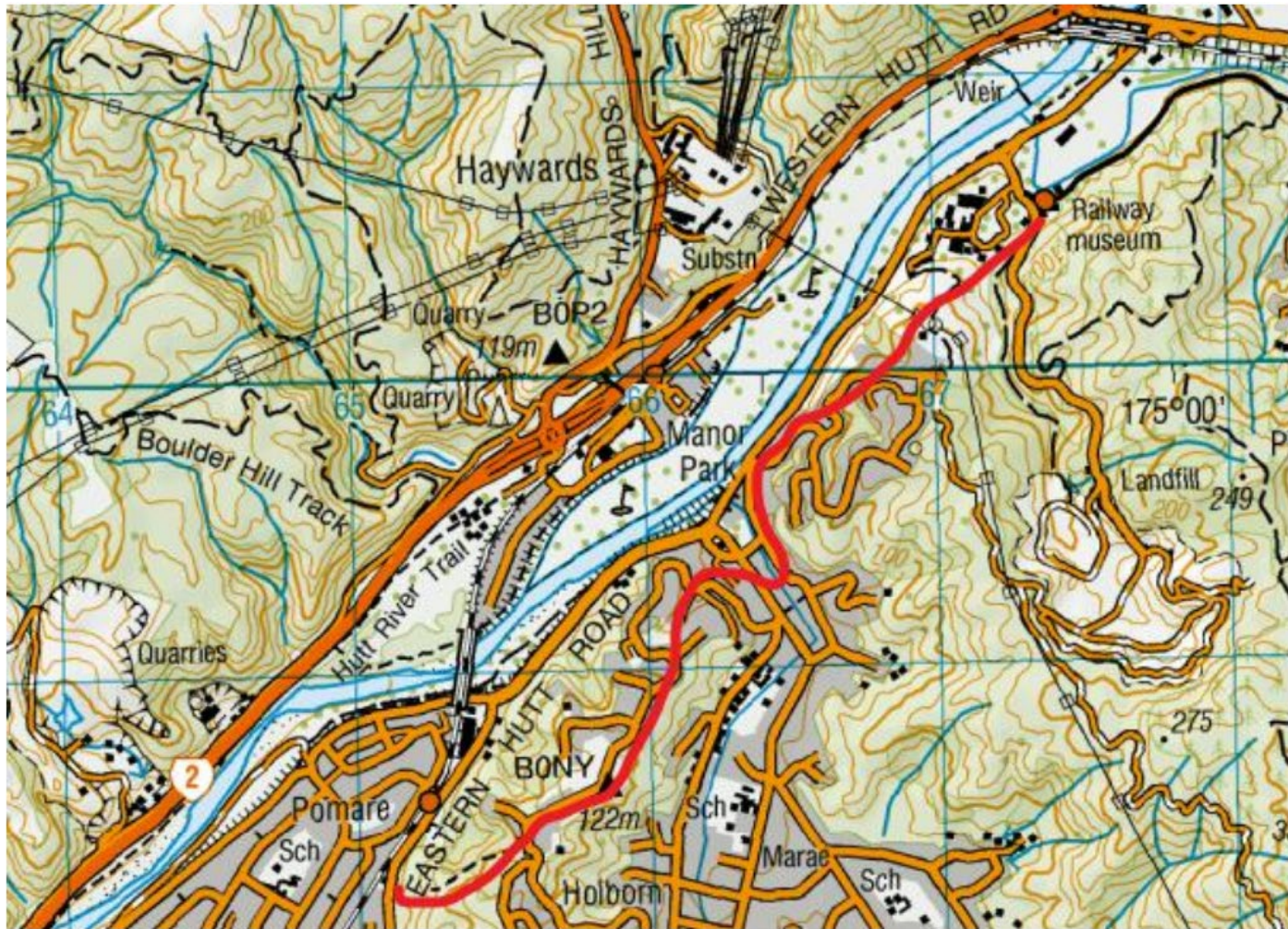
Taitā Track

The track started from about 198 Eastern Hutt Road, Taitā, Hutt Valley. It then went up the ridge, then down into Stokes Valley along the ridge in what is now Holborn Drive. Once on the flat it was a semi-circular curve crossing the Stokes Valley Creek to what is now Thomas Street. Then it climbed the hill along what is now Manor Drive and then came out at the Silverstream Railway at Reynolds Bach Drive, Upper Hutt. The track fell into disuse when the road was constructed through the Taitā Gorge in 1847.

It means an accumulation of logs or driftwood. This occurred just south of the Taitā Gorge area where logs that came down in floods accumulated in a certain corner.

Source – *Stokes Valley Through the Years* by Milton and Poppy Watts.

Pre
European
Taita Track
Past Spur



2007 GTC Plan for Housing

The Spur area was classified as mostly plantation pine except the proposed SNA area of Kamahi forest with emergent pine.

VEGETATION

Description

The vegetation of the site consists of a mosaic of forest, regenerating scrub and pine plantation typical of the highly modified eastern Hutt hills. Some fragments contain original forest and others contain beech that has regenerated following fire. Several small unprotected remnants of beech forest occur and extend over the western ridgeline into the Silverstream landfill site and the Stokes Valley reserves.

The native forest is typically unmodified, except for their margins. Where beech has been removed from these sites and pine has not been planted, kamahi, kanuka, and manuka are typically appearing, often through a succession involving gorse.

Pine is the dominant forest type occurring at all stages of the harvest cycle, with wilding pine a feature of this regenerating vegetation. The forest variety reflects repeated fires, planting and harvesting of exotic conifers, and the influence of browsing by goats and possums.

Vegetation communities on the site include:

1. Primary beech forest with mixed use podocarp/rata/kamahi
2. Primary and secondary beech forest with kamahi and occasional pine
3. Kamahi forest with emergent pine and occasional remnant beech
4. Manuka/Kanuka with kamahi and emergent pine
5. Pine forest
6. Residential/urban fringe

Design Response: Constraints and Opportunities

1. Retain and protect primary forest remnants for their ecological values and gradually remove pine trees.
2. Focus development on flatter areas of pine and regenerating forest.
3. Design residential areas around forest remnants to attract homeowners who would pay a premium.
4. Ensure adequate buffers to protect remnants from weeds/children.
5. Utilise forest for public access walkways to connect different remnants within the area as well as the suburb of Pinehaven and other adjacent reserves.
6. Utilise public walkways through the forest remnants to decrease the need for footpaths as part of the roading requirements in the area.
7. Some less sensitive areas of regenerating forest / pine could be used for locating infrastructure such as stormwater and sewage treatment and disposal facilities.
8. Utilise resident networks or body corporate structures for the long-term management and protection of forest remnants.

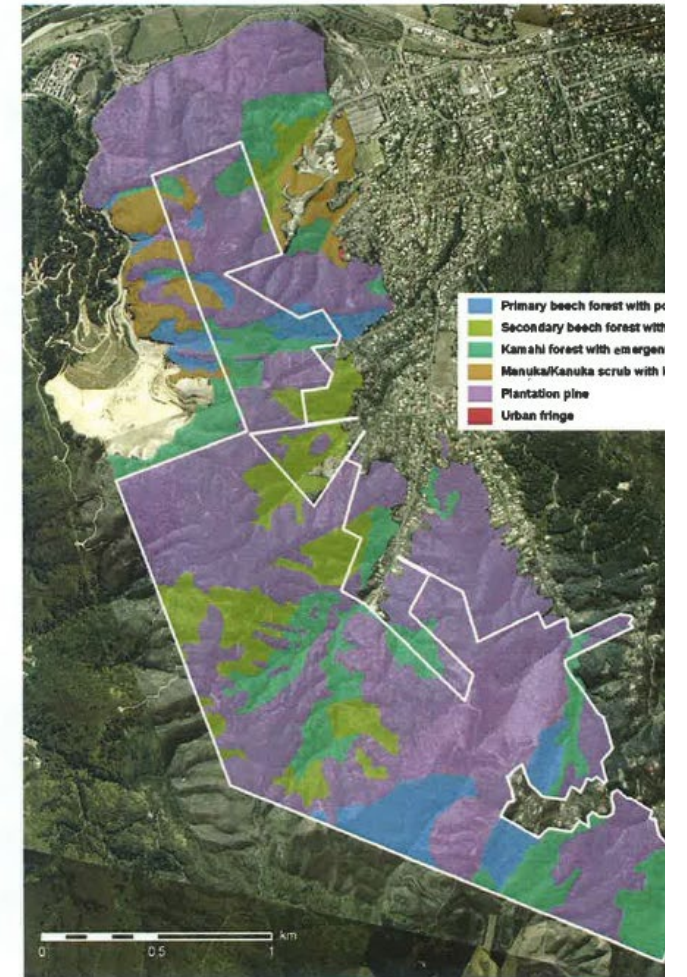


Figure 2: Silverstream Spur vegetation communities.






2015 Boffa Miskell Ecology Report

“Tree Fern” classification of what were to become proposed SNA areas. The tree fern area has expanded into some gully areas

This figure has been prepared by Boffa Miskell Limited on behalf of the Upper Hutt City Council. It is to be used for the purpose of the assessment of the proposed SNA areas. It is not to be used for any other purpose without the written consent of Boffa Miskell Limited. The information contained herein is based on the data provided to Boffa Miskell Limited by the Upper Hutt City Council. It is not to be used for any other purpose without the written consent of Boffa Miskell Limited.



Key

-  Council Ownership
-  Site Boundary
-  Broadleaved Indigenous Hardwoods
-  Fernland
-  Indigenous Forest
-  Manuka and/or Kanuka



Getting exciting now for the Spur classified with area of Indigenous Forest and some Broadleaved Indigenous Hardwood area as well near the location now being proposed as SNA by Dr Keesing

GTC 2021 Masterplan

3.5 Significant Natural Area + Special Amenity Landscape

As part of PC48 UHCC identified Draft Significant Natural Areas and Special Amenity Landscape Zones for Tiaki Taio based on aerial studies.







Since then Boffa Miskell has performed an on ground analysis against these boundaries and has recommended amended boundaries.

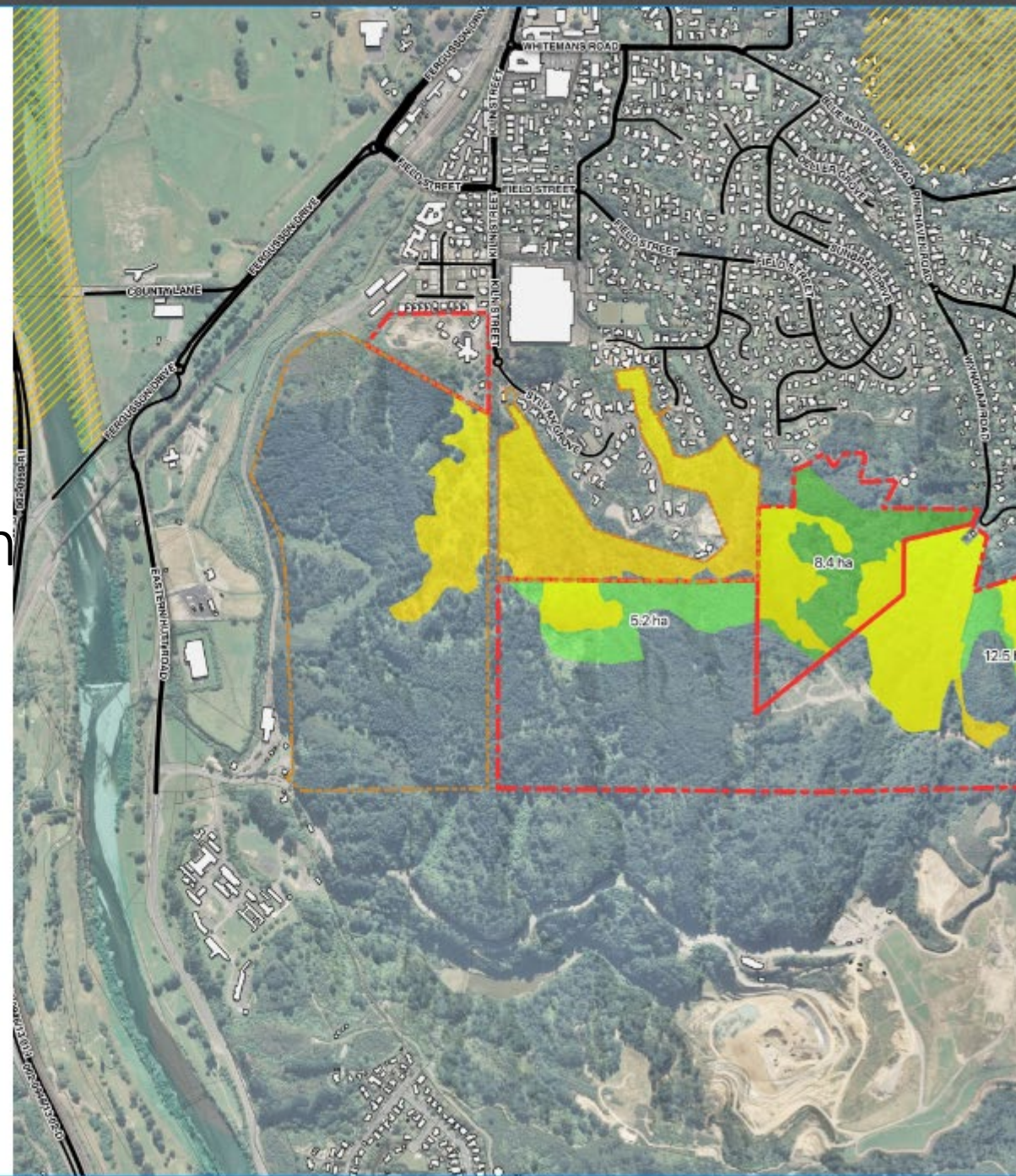
The green backdrop that the site provides for the Pinehaven and wider Upper Hutt Character is important to retain and any housing situated in these areas will have to be sensitively sited and controlled through design measures to ensure quality development.

GTC 2021 Masterplan

Part of the Spur area upgraded to be an SNA

But no area of Broadleaved Indigenous Hardwood shown

- Key**
-  Council Ownership
 -  GTC Ownership
 -  Draft Special Amenity Landscape
 -  Proposed SNA's (Boffa Miskell)
 -  Additional Reserve
 -  Proposed Reserve



5.1

Focus Area 1 – The Spur

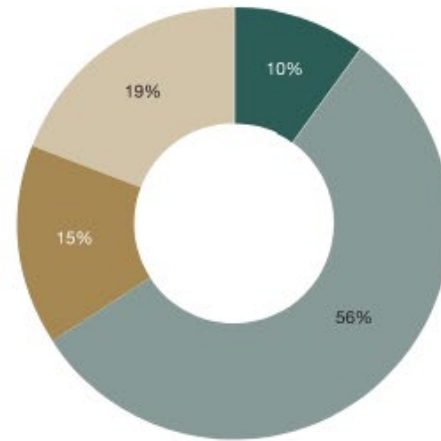
Currently exotic forest and broom/gorse covers 71% of the Spur. There is significant opportunity to add both ecological and amenity value to the Spur through sensitive development that respects the Spur's contribution to the surrounding character of the Hutt Valley.

Locating the spine road is key to how development on the Spur would be guided. A 1.1km long winding road with a separated cycle facility can be achieved with minimal landform modification and predominantly within areas that are of low ecological amenity, such as exotic pine forest.

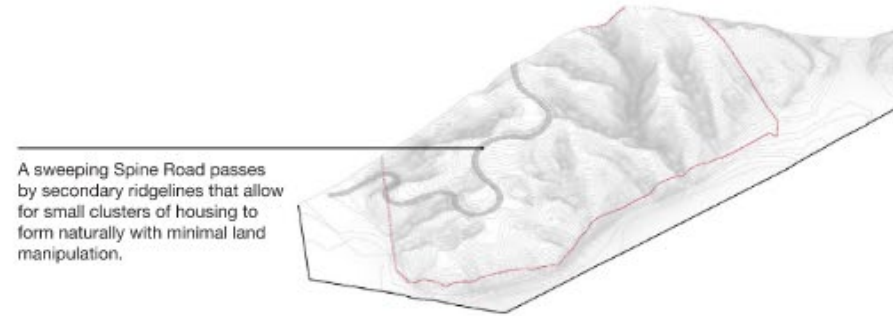
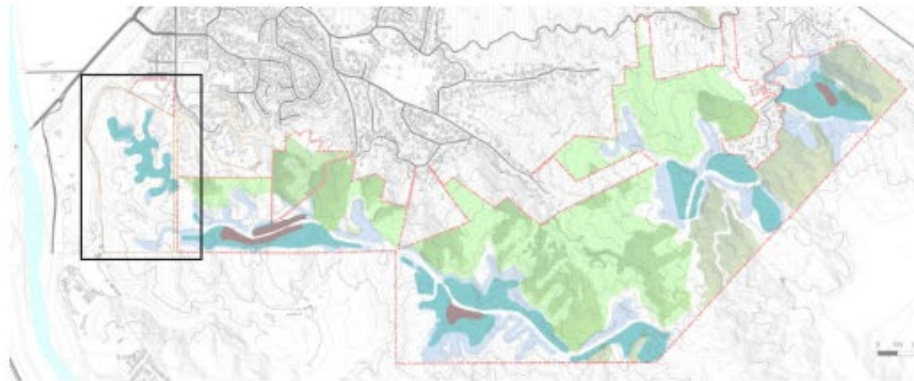
The potential route of the spine road passes several secondary ridges that can accommodate small housing clusters sitting discretely within the landscape. Residential housing development that sits within valuable ecological areas would be low density, sensitively sited and accessed in order to minimise its impact and maximise the benefits of living amongst the forest.

A gross developable area of approximately 8.5ha of the Spur is proposed in this concept masterplan, or 24% of the Spur's total land area. The remaining 76% of the Spur being set aside as vegetation – potentially vested back to the UHCC – and replanted in native species.

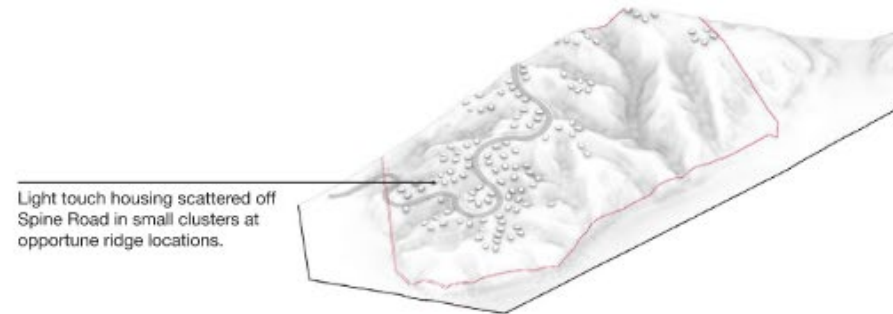
Existing Spur Vegetation



- Broadleaved Indigenous Hardwoods
- Exotic Forest
- Gorse/Broom
- Indigenous Forest



A sweeping Spine Road passes by secondary ridgelines that allow for small clusters of housing to form naturally with minimal land manipulation.

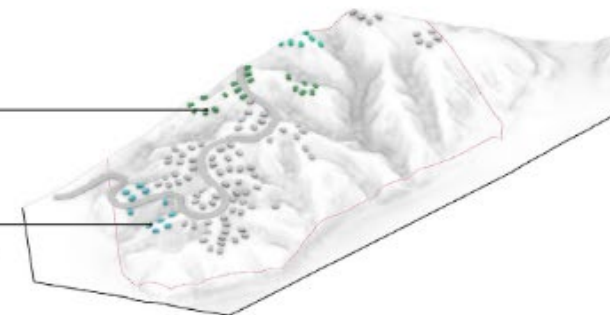


Light touch housing scattered off Spine Road in small clusters at opportune ridge locations.

Housing located within existing native vegetation.

Housing located within existing draft significant natural areas (PC48).

Housing located within Silverstream railway noise buffer zone.



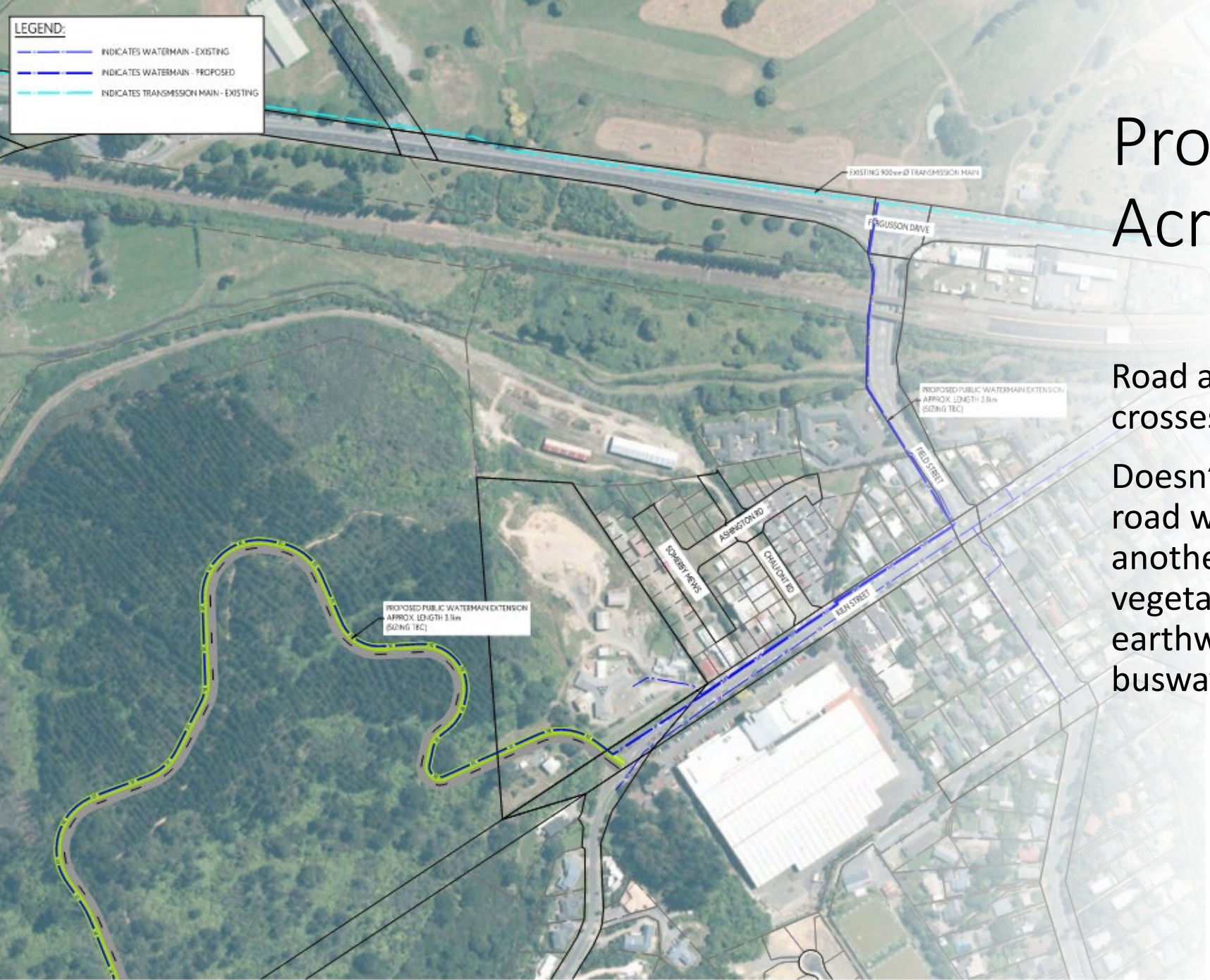
LEGEND:

- INDICATES WATERMAIN - EXISTING
- INDICATES WATERMAIN - PROPOSED
- INDICATES TRANSMISSION MAIN - EXISTING

Proposed Road Across Spur

Road alignment crosses and re-crosses the proposed SNA areas.

Doesn't show the 24m minimum road width or the allowance for another 12m of width for vegetation clearance and cut/fill earthworks on either side of the busway and separate cycleway.





GTC Forestry Road Vegetation Clearance

This width of vegetation clearance is approximately half what would be required for a public road across the Spur.

Removal of either indigenous or exotic vegetation results in this level of destruction over Natural Open Spaces and loss of the values of the land to tangata whenua and people who connect to this place.

More than 10% of the Spur area would be lost under any road proposal and affect the areas it would bisect.

1943 Retrolens Imagery of Spur

Prominent areas of indigenous vegetation within the gullies on the Spur and in the area alongside Sylvan Way – 80 years ago.

Therefore the large native beech trees in this image are likely to have been 50-70 years or older at this date.

Observe the canopy trees within the gully inside the proposed SNA area that some ecologists are claiming have treefern only with emergent pine.

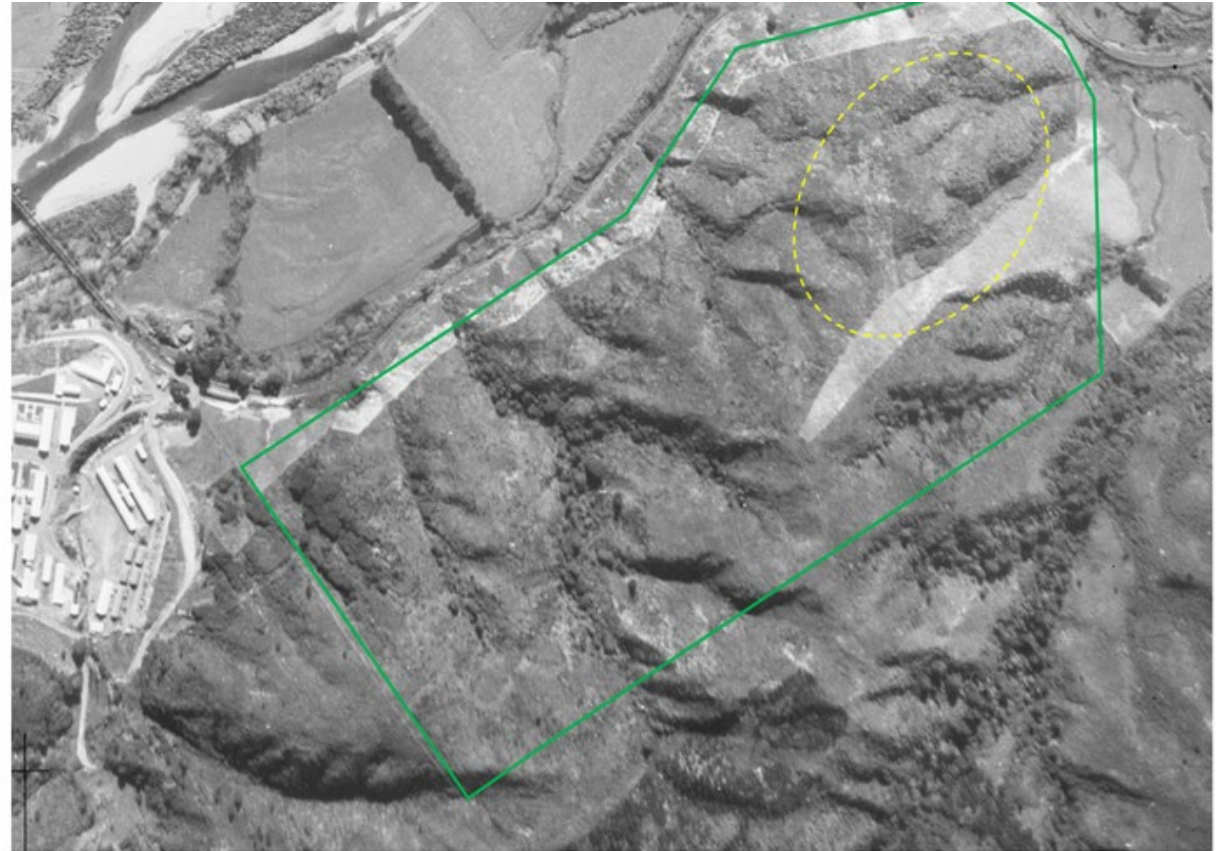


Figure 5 Silverstream Spur area, Detail of aerial image, 1943 (SN163-183-18 sourced from Retrolens NZ).

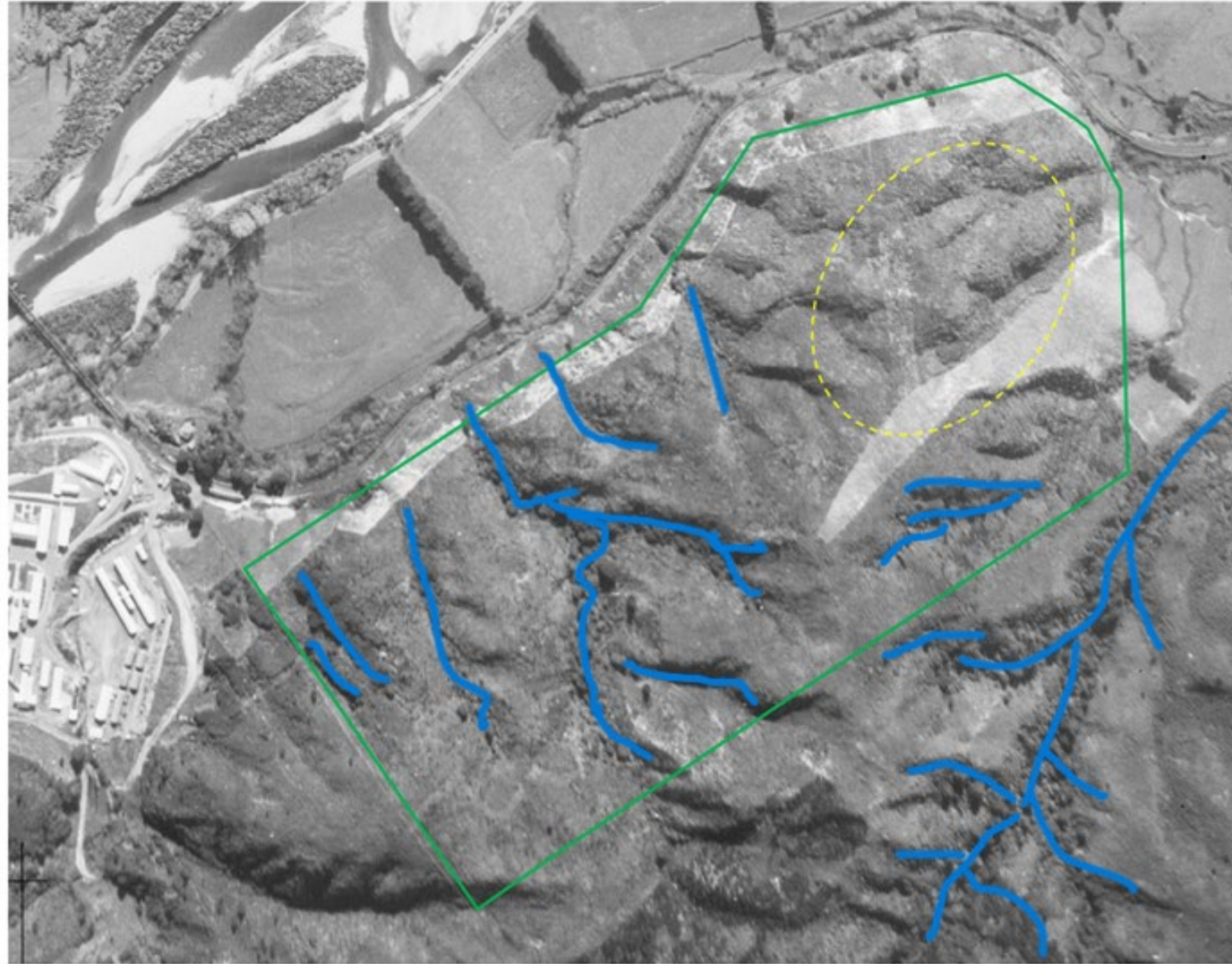


Figure 5 Silverstream Spur area, Detail of aerial image, 1943 (SN163-183-18 sourced from Retrolens NZ).



Retrolens January 1984 Spur Aerial Photograph



1984 – Water Vat Gully Indigenous Vegetation Extent – Partly Within Proposed SNA Area

These gully areas were not disturbed by forestry tracks as at 1984.

The SNA area proposed by Dr Keesing is within this gully system.

The individual mature canopy trees visible in this image were able to be located in 2024 by volunteers on various fieldtrips.

The fieldtrips by volunteers have confirmed that this area as defined has now further developed over 40 years and has been documented within several submissions.

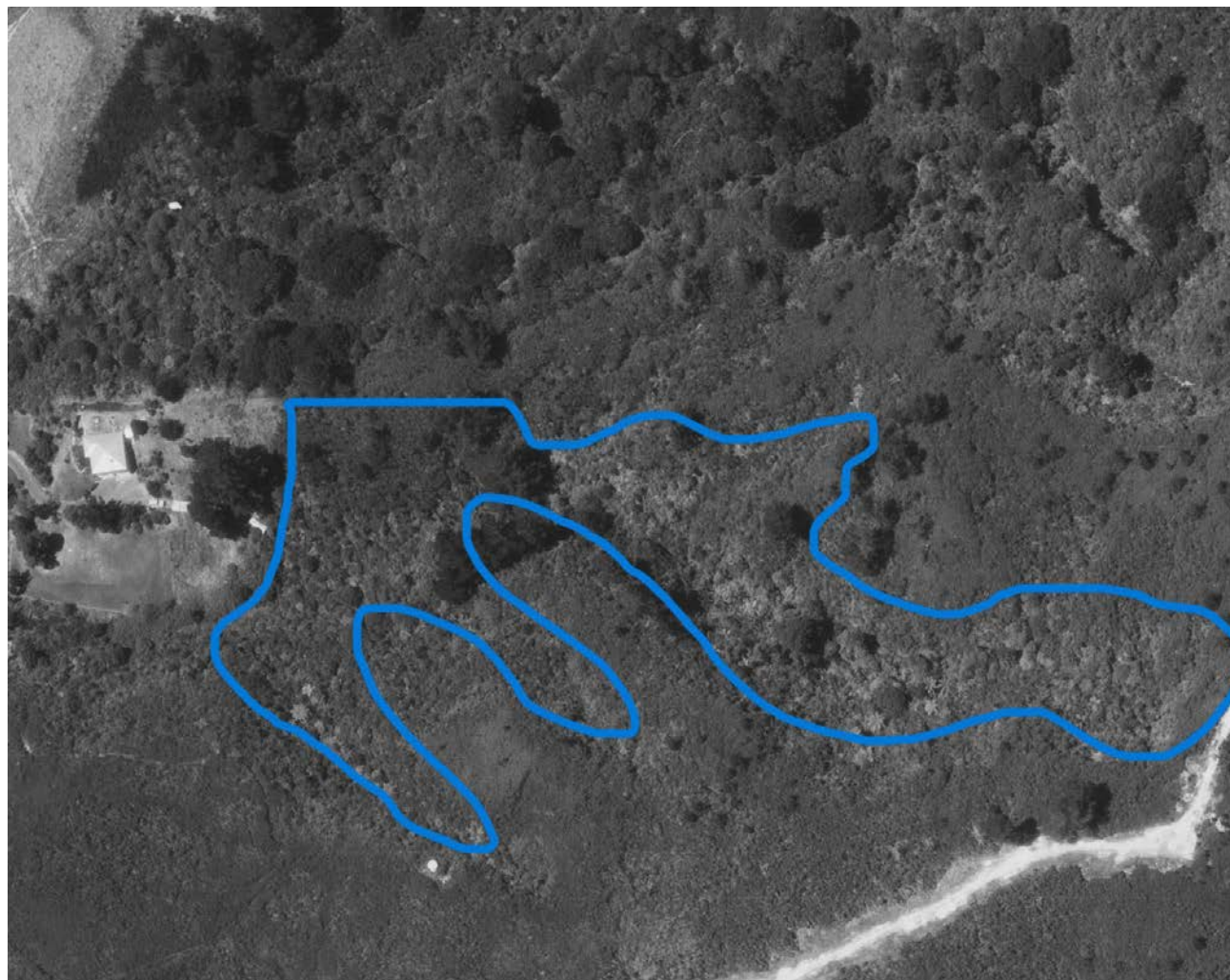


1984 Spur Gully Parallel with Sylvan Way – Currently Within Proposed SNA

This gully system is within the SNA area proposed by Mr Golding as a linkage and buffering area and classified as Mamaku and treeferns.

This gully actually contains mature broadleaf indigenous hardwoods as documented by volunteer inspections in 2024.

This gully system is wholly within the Mamaku and treefern area with occasional emergent pine (wilding pines).



1984 Hulls Creek Gully – Not Within Proposed SNA

This gully system is not within the proposed SNA area.

This gully actually contains mature broadleaf indigenous hardwoods as documented by volunteer inspections in 2024.

The gully system is immediately adjacent the Water Vat Gully system, and now has linkages across the ridge that divides the two systems of manuka and tree fern that has grown within the last 40 years between 1984 and 2024.

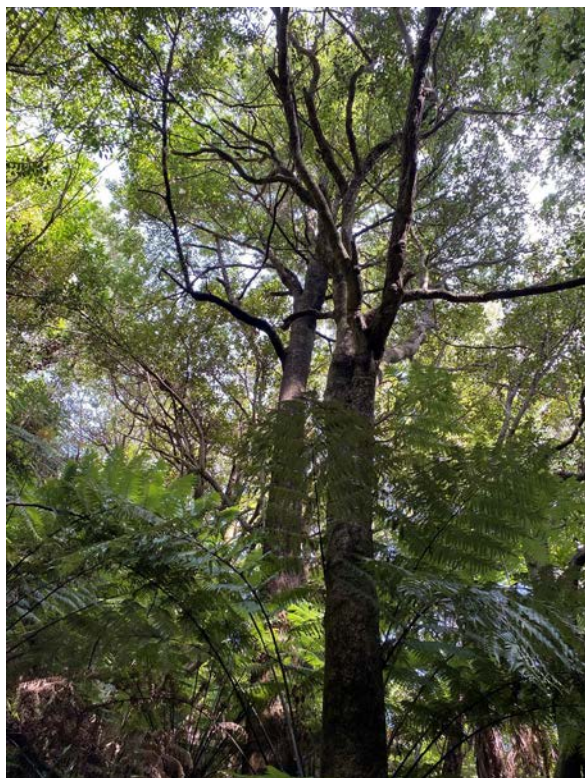




Figure 5. The transitional nature of production forestry highlights the Spur in 1985. Source: Retrolens

SNA Area Broadleaved Indigenous Hardwoods

Eastern End Dr Keesing Proposed Area

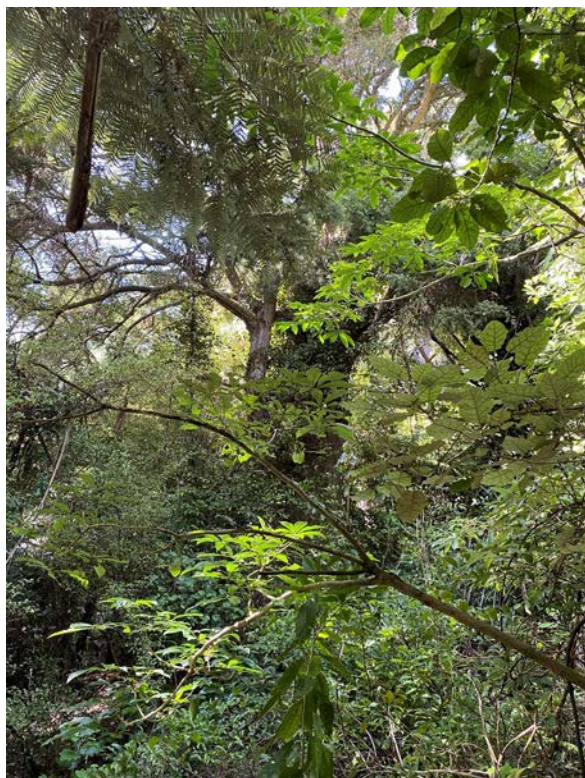


Eastern End Dr Keesing Proposed Area

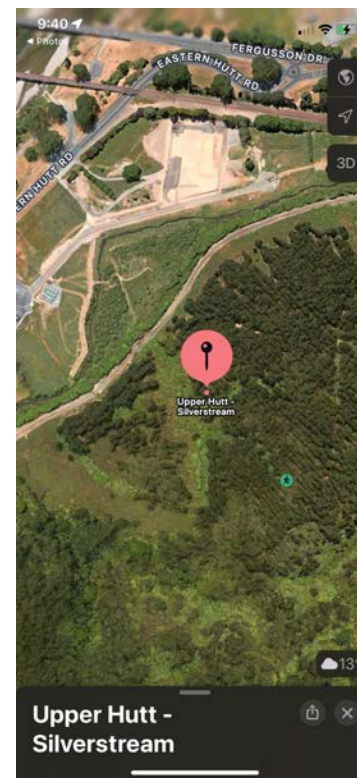


Hulls Creek Gully – Not Currently Included in SNA

Broadleaved Indigenous Hardwoods



Location of Image



Hulls Creek Gully – Not Currently Included in SNA

20m plus Broadleaved Indigenous Hardwoods

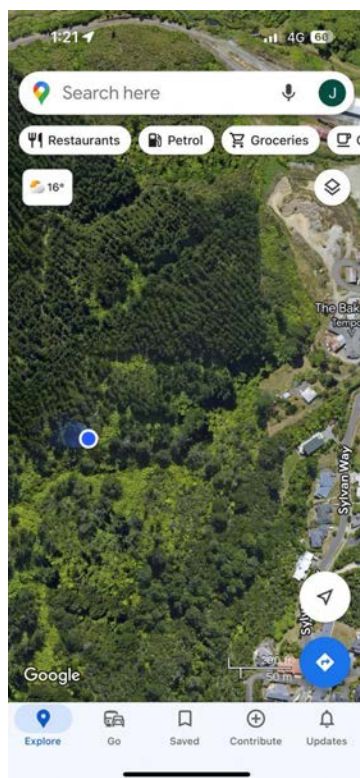


Location of Image



Spur Gully Adjacent Sylvan Way – Currently Included in SNA proposed by Mr Goldwater

Location of Image



Broadleaved Indigenous Hardwoods

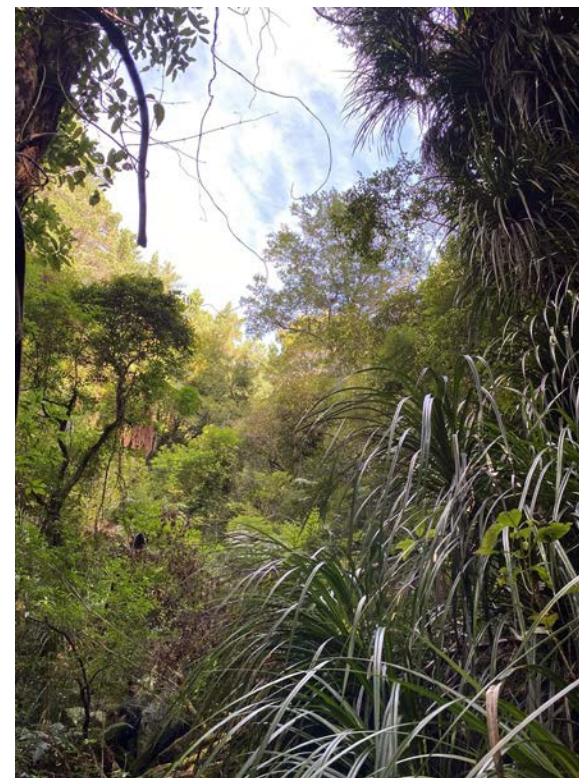


SNA Area Broadleaved Indigenous Hardwoods

Western End Dr Keesing Proposed Area



Western End Dr Keesing Proposed Area

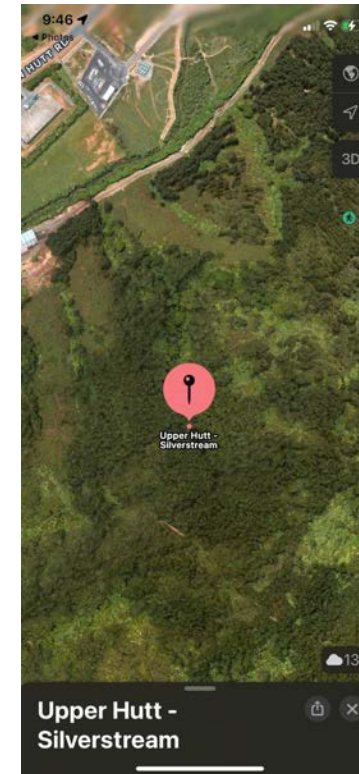


Water Vat Gully Upstream of Dr Keesing Proposed SNA Area

**Tree ferns and young broadleaf
indigenous hardwoods**



Location of Image

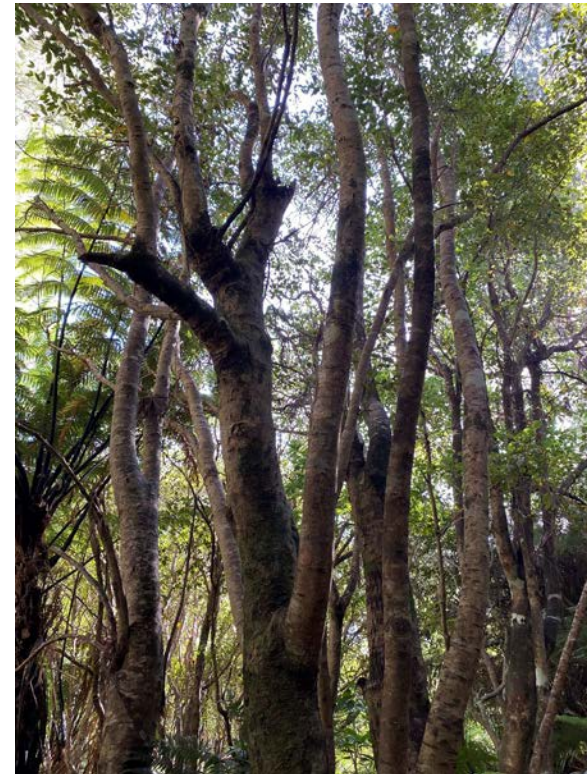


Water Vat Gully Downstream of Dr Keesing Proposed SNA Area

Broadleaved Indigenous Hardwoods



More Broadleaved Indigenous Hardwoods



My recommended additions to the proposed SNA area including the Hulls Creek Gully (Red), The Water Vat Gully and the Ridge Area between the Hulls Creek and Water Vat Gullies

