

Ongoing management

Tasman District Council believes that protection and enhancement of natural areas on private land is best done by the landowner, with full knowledge of what they have and how best to look after it. However, there may be significant costs involved to cover fencing, weed and pest control, and infill planting of gaps or open edges.

Council recognises that protection and enhancement of natural areas often has benefits for the wider community by:

- protecting species or habitats that are now rare or threatened
- providing habitat for wildlife which spreads around the district
- providing an attractive landscape for passers-by to enjoy
- enhancing water quality in streams and water bodies

Council would like to work in partnership with landowners to achieve beneficial management of identified habitats. A Landowner Assistance Package is being developed to provide advice on sources of funding to contribute towards the costs of management, enhancement planting, pest management, legal protection and ongoing monitoring. Landowners who wish to achieve long-term protection of their area will be encouraged to investigate the use of covenants.

There may be benefits from Government initiatives to encourage carbon sequestration and native reforestation on private land. Information is available from the Ministry of Primary Industries www.mpi.govt.nz/forestry/native-indigenous-forests/supporting-native-indigenous-forestry/

For further information and resources on biodiversity, conservation, and research across New Zealand see www.doc.govt.nz/nature/biodiversity/biodiversity-new-zealand-resources/

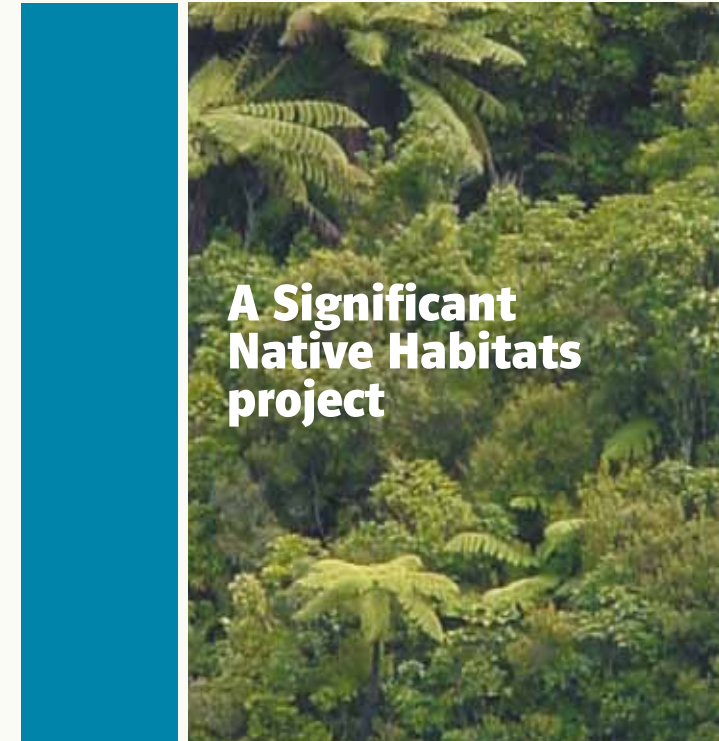


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What is the Significant Native Habitats project?

The Significant Native Habitats project has been initiated by Tasman District Council to survey natural areas on private land and on public land outside the conservation estate. The project aims to survey the extent, type and values of natural vegetation, wetlands and wildlife habitat that remain. When this is known, Council and landowners can look at ways to work together to ensure these areas are looked after appropriately. Landowner participation in this project is voluntary and does not in any way affect ownership rights or give others access to this land.

What areas are being surveyed?

Landowners whose properties are identified as having natural areas of interest will be contacted to seek permission to survey their property. No survey will be undertaken without permission. The programme will initially concentrate on the plains and lowlands of east Tasman (Waimea - Moutere - Motueka) where there are few natural areas remaining, then move to north-west Tasman (Golden Bay) and finally to south Tasman (Murchison - St Arnaud). It is a long term project that is expected to take from five to ten years. Resource limitations may mean that not all identified sites will be surveyed.



What is involved in a survey?

Property surveys to evaluate natural areas will be carried out by an ecologist contracted to the Council. A survey will involve a visit from the ecologist and a discussion about the sites to be assessed. The landowner will be invited to accompany the ecologist during the survey and will receive an informal briefing at its completion. The landowner will receive a draft report outlining the natural values found. Special features will be highlighted, and may include rare or threatened species, special habitats or unusual communities. The report will consider the risks and threats to valuable features, and provide suggestions on how these features could be enhanced. There will be an opportunity to comment on the report before it is finalised.



What happens to the information?

One of the most important outcomes of this project is the property report provided to the landowner. The information from the individual reports will be summarised into a series of publicly available ecological reports covering the whole district. Individual properties will not be identified in these publications. The reports will encourage greater community awareness and appreciation of the biodiversity and natural values of private land and hopefully increase support for positive management and protection. The information will also be available for use by Council when making long term planning decisions or undertaking biodiversity monitoring. Landowners should be aware that the property reports become council property and may be requested by other parties. Access to these reports will be through the project manager and landowners will be advised of any applications.

Who is involved in this project?

Following an Environment Court mediated agreement, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the following parties: Tasman District Council, Federated Farmers, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, Department of Conservation, and Friends of Nelson Haven and Tasman Bay. This Memorandum describes how Council will work with these parties to investigate, assess and develop priorities and methods to protect the ecological values of remnant natural areas on private and Council land. These parties, along with Fish and Game NZ, have worked with Council on this project as an Oversight Group. Council would like to acknowledge their contribution and ongoing participation.

Why are we doing these surveys?

The Oversight Group is committed to achieving the identification, enhancement and protection of significant native habitats through a voluntary partnership with local landowners.

Council has responsibilities for natural habitats and native biodiversity in its district. This responsibility comes from the Resource Management Act, as well as from the community.

Section 6(c) of the Resource Management Act requires Council to recognise and provide for the protection of areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna. To achieve this, Council needs to know what natural areas remain and their condition.