

Queen Elizabeth II National Trust — guardian of open space

THE QUEEN ELIZABETH II NATIONAL TRUST was established to protect, enhance, and provide open space. Like the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, it is concerned with the complex task of balancing development and conservation. The Trust is seen by some as merely protecting bush, but its activities are far wider. Its constituting Act, 1977, defines open space as "any area of land or body of water . . . of aesthetic, cultural, recreational, scenic, scientific, or social . . . value".

THE TRUST works in various ways. It protects land through open space covenants, it can buy and sell land, it investigates and advises on the use of open space, and it produces landscape studies. The Trust is establishing demonstration farms, and it manages the properties it has received through gifts and bequests.

Open space covenants

Open space covenants to protect privately owned land are of major importance.

Each covenant inquiry is thoroughly assessed. The land is closely looked at by Trust staff, who frequently request advice from specialists such as a botanist, archaeologist, or town planner. For example, Dr Geoff Park, manager of the Biological Resources Centre, Dr Alan Edmonds, a forest ecologist from the University of Waikato, and Bruce Clarkson, regional botanist with the DSIR in Rotorua, have inspected covenant proposals for the Trust.

The proposed covenant's regional significance, its long-term viability, and its management issues such as noxious plants and animal control all need to be assessed.

There are guidelines for covenants. There is a guideline

By Jane Clendon

minimum of 10 ha, but a smaller remnant may be worth protecting as the last example of a specific forest type in the district. For instance, the Trust has covenanted 2.1 ha of predominantly kahikatea forest, with some kauri, at Te Kopuru on the north Wairoa River flats, one of the few

lowland remnants in the district.

Other such covenanted areas include 2.6 ha of beech forest on the Manganuiateao River, near Raetihi, and 1.6 ha of remnant native forest dominated by titoki, rimu, and kahikatea on the Wai-iti River, near Nelson. There are 32 blocks of forest like this, or larger, which are being protected throughout New Zealand.



Bush-filled gullies running from the slopes of Mount Karioi to the coast were part of the area investigated in the Mount Karioi Landscape Study.