

have been pushed to afford it.

"We didn't have enough money for the property but the owners said we could forget the loans and they would provide the mortgage. They initially preserved the bush but didn't set it aside. They simply didn't fell the trees."

The most important immediate task was to fence off the kahikatea stand from browsing stock, and so allow the undergrowth to regenerate. The area fenced off initially was somewhat smaller than it is today.

For the first three years the Garretts were besieged by "every miller from Taupo to Hamilton", but they were never tempted to put the trees to the chainsaw.

A suitable name had to be chosen for the farm, something that related to their love of trees. With the help of a Maori friend they dubbed it "Pirirakau", meaning "the keeping of the trees".

It wasn't until 1981 that the Garretts heard of the QEII National Trust, and the thought of the permanent protection a QEII National Trust Open Space covenant would provide was attractive.

Unfortunately open space covenants are not always as welcomed by the farming community. Michael says there is an element of suspicion over the effect of a covenant among some farmers.

"A lot of people are frightened it will give open slather to the public. That's not the case. We still have control of it. The QEII National Trust simply has the

right to investigate whether we (or more likely the future owners) are keeping up the agreement," he explains.

No two agreements are the same, allowing the owner to make an individual agreement with the Trust. The covenant is registered on the land title, but the landowner retains ownership; it does not become the property of the Trust or the State.

Another farming concern is that the value of the land will be reduced if an area is set aside, making it difficult to resell. Michael has a ready answer to this fear.

"To us the bush was one of the farm's assets. Some farmers feel the value of the land has been reduced, but in today's enlightened community the reverse could be true. I think that today there must be people prepared to buy a farm with a piece of bush," he says.

Some moves could be made to attract more farmers to covenant their land, he suggests. One important way would be to remove the burden of rates on the reserved land; Michael could have been spared a substantial sum over the 16 years he has fenced his bush off, more especially since the farm is on some of the highest rated farm land in the country. Rates will climb even higher as horticulture makes inroads into the Waikato, as it is certain to do.

For the future it is hoped that school children will make use of the bush for study. Since 1974 the Garretts have



Michael and Pam Garrett: protecting for future generations.

Photo: G. Hutching

opened up their land to children, but they plan to go further with a series of activity points where particular studies can be made. One of the clearings will be turned into a fernery to help people to identify specimens. The Garrett's property is one in the Trust's School Covenant Programme, linking schools with nearby areas protected by open space covenants.

Clearly the bush is a source of pleasure to its present owners, simply for its value as a home for wildlife and the different plants growing there. But thanks to the QEII National Trust open space covenant it should remain an enduring store of delight for generations to come — and that, more than anything, is what satisfies the Garretts.

None so deaf as those who won't hear

by Mark Bellingham, Forest and Bird
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In the far north of Aotearoa, where turbulent northern waters meet the land, lies Unuwahao, between the wide sand beaches of Kapowairua (Spirits Bay) on the one side and Takapaukura (Tom Bowling Bay) on the other.

These bush clad hills are the turangawaewae of the Ngati-Kuri of Te Hapua. Their cultural and natural importance has resulted in successive attempts to have governments recognise Unuwahao as a special type of reserve, but

to date these requests have fallen on deaf ears.

Even on summer mornings cloud can envelop Maunga Unuwahao, one of the highest hills in the Te Paki region, providing a refuge for moisture-loving and cooler climate plants.

Horopito are conspicuous among the pohutukawa and taraire on the summit. The puriri-taraire-kohekohe forests gradually became confined, over the year, to Maunga Unuwahao and many

steep gullies across Unuwahao, but recently the forest mantle began to advance. Under the kanuka, a new forest is emerging, linking the remnants of the original bush.

Unuwahao has its own unique fauna. Best known are the large land snails: two sub-species of pupuharakeke (*Placostylus ambagiosus*) survive only there, along with pupurangi (*Paryphanta bushyi watti*). While there is little information about small land snails, more intensive searching will no doubt reveal new species — as has been the case in the nearby Spirits Bay catchment. Three endemic beetles are also confined to Unuwahao.

The rapid regeneration of forest and shrublands in the whole Te Paki region has paved the way for a more favourable environment for lizards and birds. Tui and pigeon had virtually disappeared 20 years ago but are now on the increase. Unuwahao would be a suitable site to reintroduce bush birds now absent from Northland, thanks to habitat improvement and absence of possums, deer and goats.

In the past the land from Kapowairua to Takapaukura was the most intensively occupied in the whole Te Paki region, for here are found the most fertile soils and year round water supplies that drain from Unuwahao.

Great fortified pa at Maungapiko, Maunga Unuwahao and Tomokanga remain as silent sentinels, reminders of the