

jacent lands were initiated in the mid-1970s for soil and water conservation purposes. The Kaikoura coast is noted for its rapid climatic changes and high intensity rain storms, resulting in severe erosion of gullies and hillsides causing disruption to the main road and rail links.

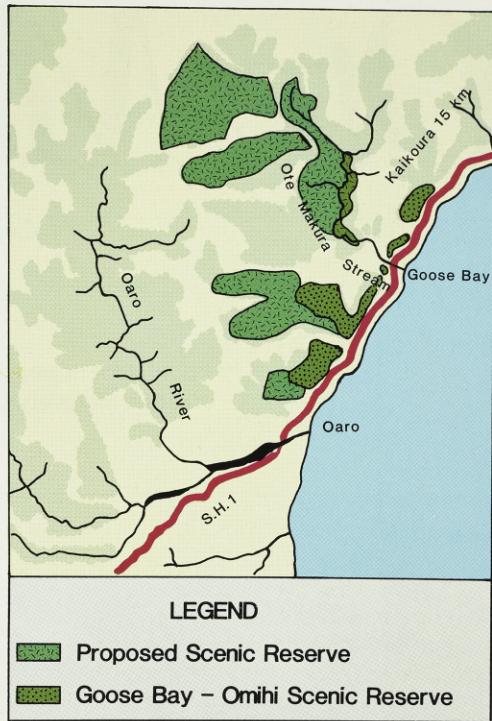
A Marlborough Catchment Board East Coast survey published in 1978 highlighted browsing animals and bush clearance as the two main contributing factors to erosion along the coast. Feral and domestic animals had severely depleted the vegetation under the canopy so that little regeneration was occurring. Running screes under the canopy were evident in the forest, with the long term possibility that the forest would die. Although the upper full slopes were stable, slow insidious clearing into the riparian zone was affecting the stability of stream beds. This was causing problems to rail and road links.

The East Coast Survey also noted that although recreation use was coast-orientated, it was likely to extend inland in the future. This dwindling of the flora and fauna resource was highlighted, and preservation of these was shown to be in the nation's interest.

The report recommended the Ote Makura and Omihi catchments should be reserved with appropriate retirement fencing.

Shortly afterwards in response to a Department of Lands and Survey request Dr Peter Williams, of the Botany Division, DSIR, surveyed all of the reserves in the Kaikoura region. His findings were published in the booklet *Scenic Reserves of Southern Marlborough* 1982. The Goose Bay — Omihi Reserves received a scientific rating of 9 (0-10 scale) because of "the size of this reserve and adjacent bush distinguishes this reserve from many of the others on this coast. It has a variety of habitats, from sunny faces to deep shady gullies and this is reflected in the diversity of species."

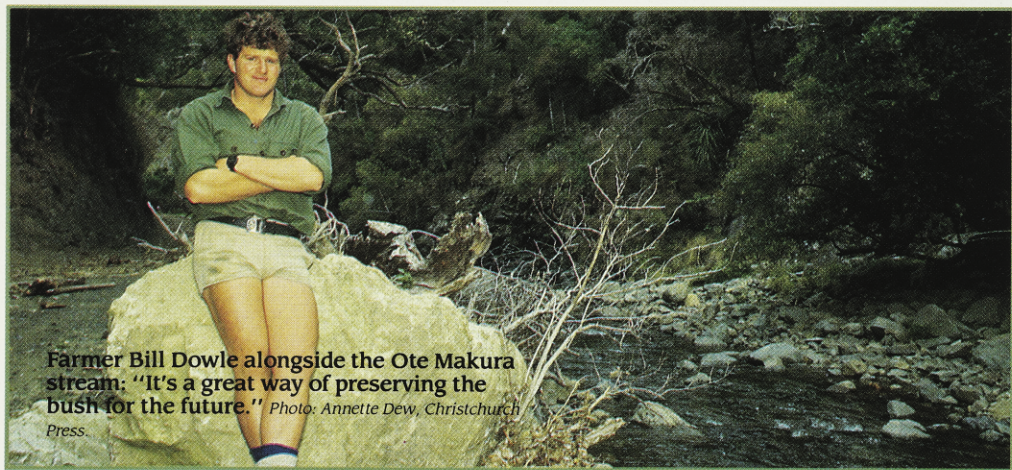
The main reserve area comprises mainly mahoe-titoki-ngaio forest with a mixture of broadleaf, pigeonwood and five finger being the other major canopy trees, while the sub-canopy is mainly mahoe. Dr Williams noted in his conclusions that the current reserve boundaries "do not make biological sense, excluding upper parts of an altitudinal sequence from the coast through to beech forest," and that "the reserve should be extended to the heads of the Ote Makura and Omihi Streams."



Stock in forest

Early in 1985 Bill Dowle, conscious of the importance of the bush on his property, was also becoming concerned that he could not manage his productive land as successfully as he would like. He therefore approached the Catchment Board and asked them to prepare a run plan. The steep Ote Makura bush dissected his property. He has no flat land; most of it is very steep with most of his grazing done on narrow ridge crests. Tighter sub-divisions in recent years had resulted in heavier grazing pressures and stock had been forced deeper into the forest. Bush boundaries were no longer effective and stock control had been lost.

Senior Soil Conservator, Don MacKay, assessed the problem. His solution was to fence the forest — 24 km would be required! It was agreed that fencing the



Purchase or pressure — options for private forest protection

Is purchase the best way to protect native forest on private land? To judge from the increasing number of requests coming to our Head Office, it seems many people consider it is. Certainly it is a popular approach with many members who want to own bush areas and devote their energies to enhancing and protecting such places. Their work is acknowledged and important.

However the Society's executive do not generally share this enthusiasm for bush purchase and believe a range of incentives is needed to encourage nature protection on private land. These will be more equitable, far more cost-effective and not burden our members with huge fund-raising tasks and on-going management costs.

Without infringing private property rights much more could be done to discourage private land forest destruction:



The rural downturn is causing farmers to look to income from woodchipping. Recent clearfelling in the Pelorus valley, Marlborough.

Photo: Craig Potton