

Kāpiti-Mana Forest and Bird

Newsletter July 2022

Chair's opinion. Recommendations for West Coast Stewardship Land

The reallocation of stewardship land is the single largest change to NZ conservation in decades. It will determine what stewardship land is protected and what is disposed of. It covers 30% of the DOC estate and 9% of NZ, so its huge.

Stewardship land is natural land that the government was not sure how to treat when DOC was set up in 1987. Some of it was good enough to be national parks or reserves. Some of it may have minerals that the government might want to exploit later etc. It was difficult to decide how to allocate each parcel of land so the government of the day decided not to allocate them and instead called them "stewardship land" and generally treated them as protected until there was an application to mine coal or some other use.

You can read more about them [here](#) or if this link does not work, follow the URL https://www.forestandbird.org.nz/sites/default/files/2022-04/StewardShipLand_Report_0.pdf

The government has now initiated a very fast track decision making process to decide whether to add parcels of stewardship land to National parks, to an ecological area, a wildlife management area, a conservation park, amenity area, or to dispose, or partly dispose of the land from the DOC estate. The first chunks of land to go through this process are the group on the West Coast of the South Island.

The process has been running for some months and recommendation to government have been made. The map on the next page shows the recommendations. To help you interpret the map;

- absence of colour represents land not in the DOC estate.
- The yellow and green colours represent national park and other protected land respectively.
- The crosshatched land is stewardship land and the background colour and the hatch colour show what is recommended.

After looking at the map for a while, you will be able to work out that most of the land is to be protected. Very little is recommended for disposal or partial disposal.

The yellow hatch on clear background and red hatch on yellow background will become the most protected. They are recommended to be added to existing national parks. They are small.

The red hatch on yellow, blue or no background and the orange hatch on blue or no background will be well protected being wildlife management or ecological areas but they are tiny and hard to find.

The largest areas are green hatch and will become additional conservation parks. The second largest areas are blue hatch and will become reserves.

Black hatch on any colour is for disposal or partial disposal. They are very small.

My interpretation of this is that very little of the stewardship land will be well protected. Large areas will receive greater protection. (I think reserves are better protected than conservation parks) and very little will be disposed of.

It is good to see that little Stewardship land is recommended for disposal and to see small additions to national parks, wildlife management areas and ecological areas. I acknowledge that more protection will be given to much of the land but I would like to see much better protection given to most of it.

Submissions are invited and there are three ways you can submit;

- If you want to sign the F&B submission click [here](#) or if this link does not work, follow this URL. <https://www.forestandbird.org.nz/petitions/protect-stewardship-land> Fill in your details and submit. Done.
- You could fill in a DOC submission online. You will find it here or if this link does not work, follow the URL <https://consult.publicvoice.co.nz/S2/s> Submit your feedback online.
- Or you can write an individual submission. Submissions close by 5pm on 26 July so sorry There is not much time left. Email submissions to stewardshiplandreclassification@doc.govt.nz

Subject line: West Coast stewardship land reclassification

I have decided to write a submission. The key points are;

This submission is generally supportive of the reclassifications of Stewardship land on the west coast of the South Island.

It is very pleasing to see so much land being protected and so little being disposed of. My reasons for saying this are;

- E O Wilson wrote "if we allocate nature half of the earth, many of our environmental problems will go away". Protecting this land will deliver ecosystem services of greater value than human use of the land could deliver.
- With the acceptance of these recommendations, there will be a wide unbroken corridor of natural land from the bottom of the South Island to the top. The recommendations will not only connect the West Coast National Parks but other more isolated reserves and protected areas that could otherwise become isolated.
- When people use (farm, forest, or mine) land, they reduce the number of species of plants and animals. A less diverse environment supports far less organic life, and the environment starts to unravel. Carbon is lost to the atmosphere from the lost flora and fauna and the loss of soil carbon. Protecting all stewardship land would be best for the climate and biodiversity emergencies.
- Where some land may have been partly logged or previously farmed, if protected and left to recover, that will bring the best climate and biodiversity gains because nature is essentially self-correcting. Left alone, it will increase biodiversity and lock away carbon as it has done for millions of years.
- Protected rather than used, the land will be more resilient and stable, will produce less pollution, erosion, flooding and drought. It will also increase in fertility.
- These lands are stewardship land because they are some of the most difficult types of land for people to use and have difficult climates. That makes them vulnerable to disturbance, the results of which often negatively affect nearby human populations. Preservation in their natural state will be best for NZ and the local people.

- We benefit from the ecosystem services that these lands, left in their natural state, will continue to deliver. These services include regulation of climate and water, the production biomass, atmospheric oxygen and habitat, the formation and retention of soil, the recycling of nutrients and water, and the sequestration of carbon dioxide. In this way, they are a significant yet underappreciated contributor to NZ's economy.
- New Zealanders and tourists benefit, physically and psychologically, from recreation and reflection, aesthetic experience, spiritual enrichment, and the appreciation of aesthetic values when they enter, view or experience these environments.

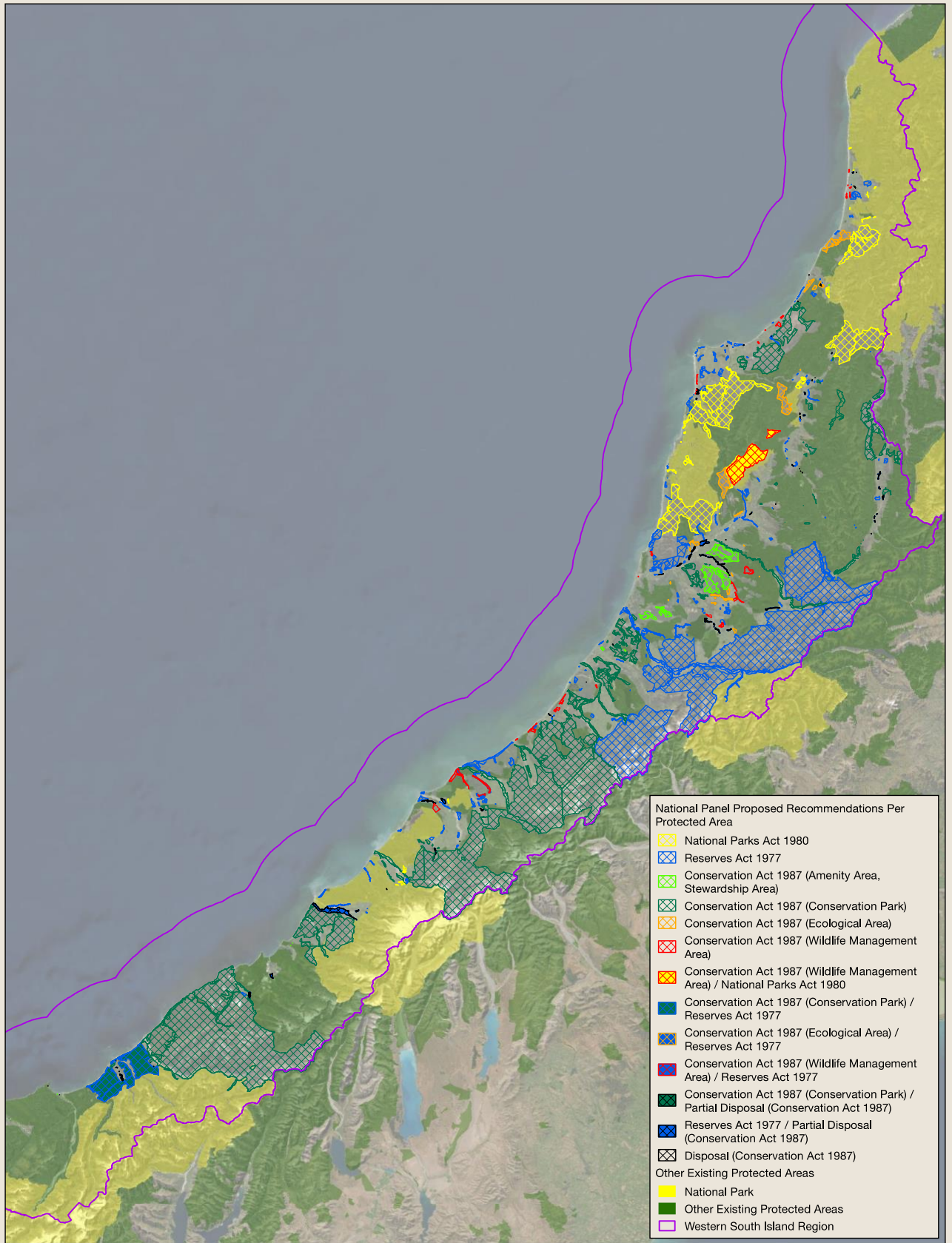
Small areas of stewardship land are recommended for good protection. However much of the land, while getting better protection than if left as stewardship land, is not well protected. I would request that greater areas be given more protection.

These decisions are being made against a background of a climate and biodiversity emergency to which there are three general solutions; Reduce carbon release, find and implement technical fixes, and implement natural solutions. Protecting this land is a large-scale natural solution.

NZ is in a very lucky position. It could fully protect all the areas that have been recommended for protection without sacrificing part of our economy or people's livelihoods. If we develop or exploit this land we will increase flooding, droughts, fires, storms for NZ and worse overseas. So for me, the best thing DOC can do is "Give greater protection for all the areas that have been recommended as remaining as natural lands."

"I ask that you all write a submission or sign the Forest and Bird submission. Gandhi said *What each of us do seems insignificant, but it is most important that we do it*. While the recommendations seem to be going our way and we might think it does not need our support, we need to consider what could happen if the majority of submissions opposed the recommendations.

Russell



Stewardship Land Proposed Reclassifications Western South Island

0 10 20 40 60 80 km

Not for navigation
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30/05/2022
DOC, Geospatial Services
Service Layer Credits: Source: Esri, Maxar,
GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus
DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS
User Community



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai
New Zealand Government

Fivefinger in flower

Pseudopanax arboreus or Whauwhaupaku or Fivefinger is one of the few New Zealand plants to flower and fruit in winter. I only recently noticed the flowers which have cream stamens on dark purple petioles that remind me of looking at a constellation (interestingly they first appear around matariki). Fivefinger is a common tree often found on forest and stream edges or planted as part of regeneration projects. It's commonly called fivefinger because it most commonly has five leaflets shaped like fingers on each leaf, though it can have up to seven leaflets. (Patē – schleffera digitata - is another similar native with seven finger-like leaflets but the they are much thinner to touch). Māori used whauwhaupaku to treat eye infections, to make traditional kites, or flutes, and in boat making. The bark can also be used to make a khaki dye. Next time you're in nature see if you can see some flowers for yourselves, and you might also spot a bellbird, as they seem to love them.



Photo: © Wayne Mitchell

CAN YOU HELP US? **We are looking for new committee members** - and would love someone from the Porirua District in particular (but anyone who lives in our branch area). Talk to Russell or Pene for more information.

We're not scary, it's not onerous, and together we can make a bigger difference for nature.

Waikanae Estuary Care Group AGM for your diary

Photographers Roger Smith and Pam Stapleton will be presenting on wildlife in the Estuary at **The Otaihanga Boating Club, Makora Rd Otaihanga on Thursday 15 September at 7pm.** Find out more about membership, activities and joining here: <https://bit.ly/3Ho2ima>.

You might also like to check out this cool flyover video of the Waikanae river and estuary produced by Greater Wellington: <https://youtu.be/Z8OS-55tZf0>

Meetings resume in August with our AGM

Hooray, we finally have the all clear from Head Office so we can start having in person meetings again. We were notified too late for our regular July meeting, but will meet on **24 August 2022 from 7:10pm (for a cuppa) and 7:30 to start, at the Waikanae Presbyterian Church on Ngaio Road, Waikanae.**

Our very patient speaker, Andrew Stewart - Fish Scientist, Te Papa Museum, is available and will be telling us about Marine Pests and the trouble they cause. We hope you will be able to make it.



Photo: © Te Papa Tongarewa

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Your feedback on this newsletter would be most welcome as would contributions to future newsletters.