



Swamp system with small patch of regenerating kahikatea



Riparian forest



Regenerating broadleaf forest / podocarp



Forest understory



Conservation Covenants in Whangarei District



Further Information

Contact Council Duty Planner or the State of the Environment Co-ordinator, if you have any queries.

Covenants may also be created under the following statutes:

- The Queen Elizabeth the Second National Trust Act 1977, QEII National Trust
www.openspace.org.nz
- Te Ture Whenua Maori Act 1993 (Part 17), Department of Conservation
www.doc.govt.nz

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Conservation Covenants in Whangarei District

A conservation covenant is a voluntary agreement made between a landowner and an authorised body, for the purposes of protecting and enhancing the natural, cultural, historical and/or significant values of a site. The landowner continues to own the site, while meeting their responsibilities to ensure the values of the site are conserved.

What can be protected?

Sites with ecological, cultural, and historical values and significance can be protected by a conservation covenant. Within the Whangarei District native bush and wetlands sites make up the majority of conservation covenants.

Benefits

Covenants are a good example of members of the community working with Council to protect and enhance biodiversity values and habitat for threatened species within the district.

Covenants can improve the stability of a site e.g. reduce erosion, contribute to forming ecological corridors, as well as provision of ecosystem services, e.g. nutrient recycling, filtering rain and runoff, improving water quality and store carbon (climate regulation).

Establishing a conservation covenant with the Council is an opportunity to formalise the protection of a site, in perpetuity. Such protection can increase surrounding property values along with natural, cultural and historic values.

In entering into a conservation covenant, landowners receive rates relief from the Council for the area of the site that is covenanted, and assistance with ecological and technical advice.

Establishing a Covenant with the Whangarei District Council

The Whangarei District Council is authorised under Section 77 of the Reserves Act 1977, to establish conservation covenants in respect of private land for the purpose of managing such sites so as to preserve the natural environment, landscape amenity, wildlife, fresh water life, marine life habitat, or historical value of the sites.

Under rule 73.3.2, Environmental Benefit, of the District Plan, a covenant may be established as part of a subdivision development within Countryside and Coastal Countryside

Environments, to secure permanent protection and/or enhancement of:

- Stands of indigenous vegetation or indigenous fauna habitat, including indigenous wetlands;
- Areas of appropriately designed indigenous re-vegetation or enhancement.

Where such protection/enhancement is offered, the number of environmental benefit lots that can be obtained is related to the value and areal extent of the items that are to be protected. A covenant may also be, and often is, established as part of any other subdivision proposal.

There are costs involved in establishing a covenant which include, but are not limited to, application fees, surveying and legal costs, and registering the covenant on the property title. These costs are the responsibility of the landowner/s.

There are approximately 875 conservation covenants in the Whangarei District, covering 1,307ha area. These make an important contribution to protecting natural, cultural and historic values of the district. There are also 298 QEII covenants in the district covering 2,426.63ha area and five Nga Whenua Rahui covenants covering an area of 76ha.

Covenantor's Responsibilities

The landowner of the site covenanted, is responsible for its management. Some funding maybe obtained for assistance with fencing and pest control, although this is not guaranteed.

Landowner responsibilities may include:

- Undertaking pest and weed management.
- Maintenance of access tracks and perimeter fences.
- Encouraging the regeneration of native vegetation.

The land owner is responsible for ensuring that the site is preserved. Any activities undertaken on or within the conservation area that contravene the preservation of the site will require the Council's prior written approval.

Monitoring

Ecological monitoring of the covenant is carried out by the Council, preferably 10 years from the date of agreement and then subsequently at 10 yearly intervals. Monitoring is carried out to assess the state of the covenant and offer advice to the land owners concerning management for protecting the ecological and/or other values.

