

2023 PROPOSAL FOR THE GOMEZ ROAD OPPORTUNITY SITE



Prepared and Submitted by

FRIENDS OF GOMEZ
- FOG -

Mō tātou, ā, mō kā uri ā muri ake nei
For us and our children after us

2023 PROPOSAL FOR THE GOMEZ ROAD OPPORTUNITY SITE

A WALKING PATH

**FOG – Friends of Gomez
Residents of Gomez Road and Supporters**

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Introduction:

The Hikurangi Placemaking Plan 2021 identifies an ‘Opportunity Site’ in Gomez Road, and asked the Community to submit proposals for the use of this land. Whangarei District Council have defined the spatial scope for the Hikurangi Placemaking Plan which largely comprises the Hikurangi village and they acknowledge the need to connect to the wider rural areas associated with Hikurangi.

The WDC declared a climate emergency in 2019 and in response to that, a Draft Climate Action Plan was developed, of which outcomes had focused on both climate change mitigation and adaptation. Also adopted by councils and tangata whenua representatives in April 2022 was the Te Tai Tokerau Climate Adaptation Strategy. Since that time the council has been working to develop an adaptation plan that will **protect our people, places and cultural identity**.

This proposal is to initiate awareness to the special qualities of the Gomez Road opportunity site which has been described by some as a “scrubby bit of land full of gorse and dope growers”. To us who are familiar with this unique section of land, we see beauty and wonder and an historic gem which we as a community along with WDC support, can work together to restore and protect; an opportunity to bring the local Hikurangi hapouri together with a vision that will benefit not just us and our tamariki, but in the future, the wider Whangarei hapouri.



Gomez Road Site History

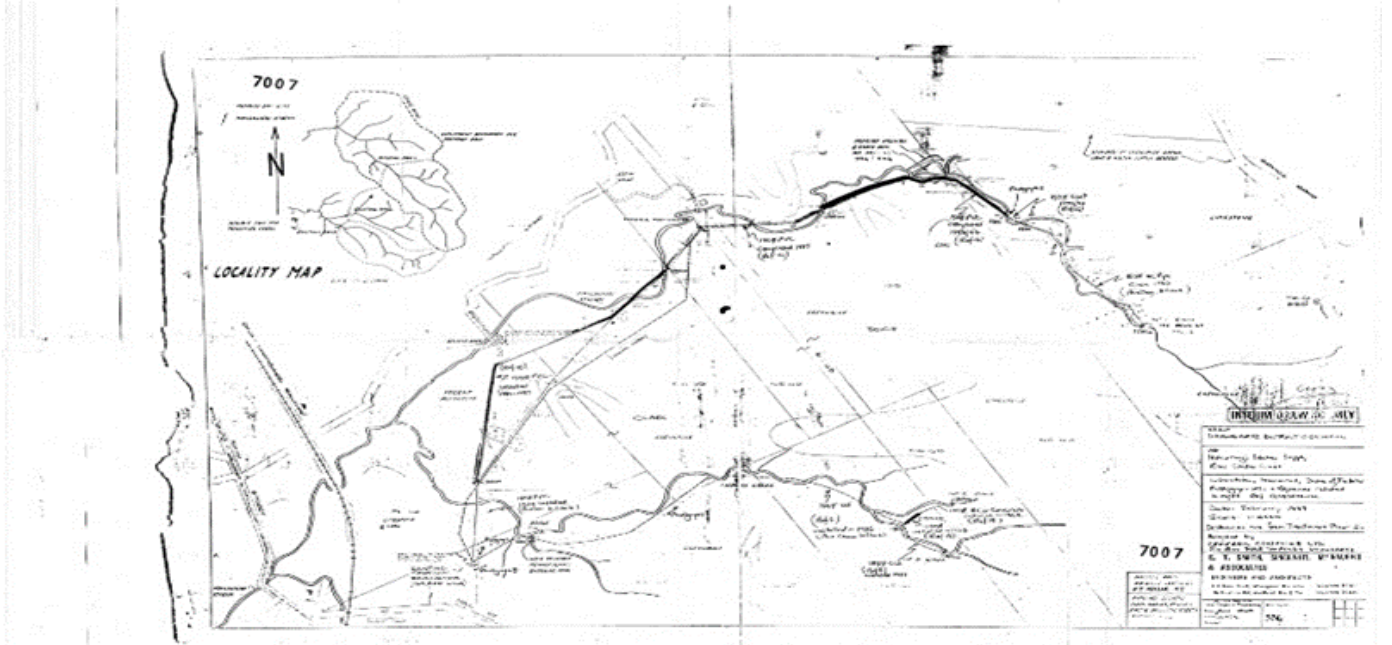
An area of 12,000 acres of land at Hikurangi was purchased from Ngatikahu and Ngatihau by the District Commissioner of Lands in 1862. The land was considered desirable because it contained mature timber and high quality flax and transport routes were established. The area became a timber milling centre with the establishment of a road to Whangarei in 1875, and the first of several sawmills soon after. Kauri gum diggers were also active in the area.

The town grew around local coal mines, which opened in 1890. The North Auckland railway line from Whangarei reached Hikurangi in 1894.

Hikurangi was administered by the Hikurangi District Roads Board until the formation of the Hikurangi Town Board in 1908. The Board became the Hikurangi Town Council in 1955. In 1989, they amalgamated with the Whangarei City Council and Whangarei County Council to form the Whangarei District Council.

In 1912 the need for a permanent water supply for Hikurangi was established. “...the difficulty of locating water of good quality and of bringing sufficient quantity by gravitation to the Town was overcome by adopting Messrs H. Metcalfe and Sons scheme of grouping three streams of water from the dividing range between Hikurangi and Marua. ...The main source of water is drawn from

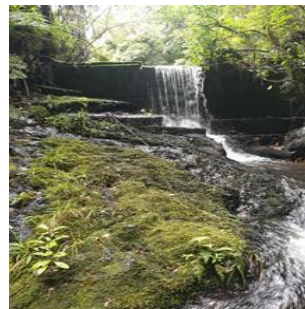
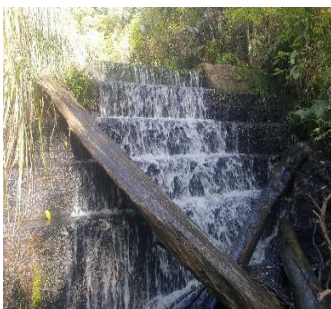
branches of the Mangawhero creek, which is composed of spring water from the clap and slate rock formation. The Town Board had adopted the engineer's suggestion and arranged for securing about 380 acres of land around and in the vicinity of the intakes as a catchment area, so as to free the water from pollution.



This area contains about 150 acres of beautiful mixed native bush and several small waterfalls, which make it a **valuable property for a park and scenic reserve**". It was the Town Boards intention to plant the un-forested portions of the reserve with suitable trees so as to provide shelter and conserve the "water springs".

https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NA19140710.2.16?items_per_page=10&page=20&query=Hikurangi+board+water&snippet=true

In 1913 three dams and an interconnecting tunnel from dam 2 to dam 3 of approximately 40m were constructed. These dams and tunnels remain mostly intact today and provide a picturesque scene.



This site has been recently recorded by Heritage New Zealand as a 'post-1900s archaeological site' and is registered on the NZAA database.

Currently a full historical report is being written by a local historian. We will be able to attach this to our proposal as soon as it is available.

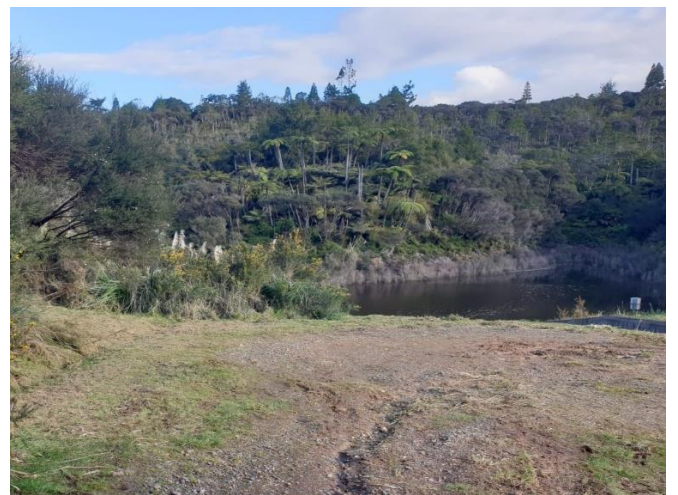
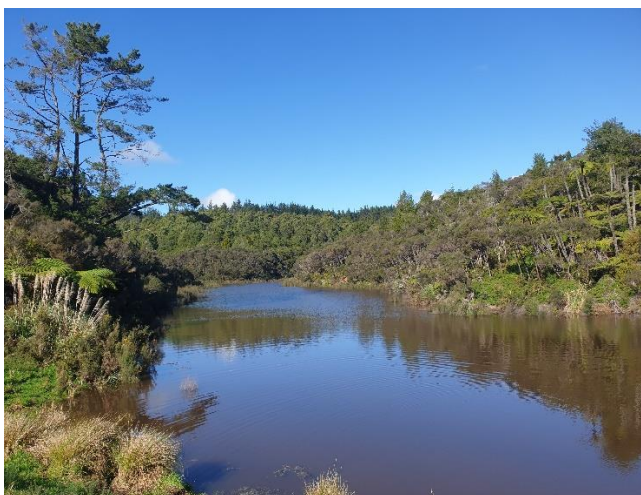
Gomez Road Site Today

Recognising Hikurangi Heritage and the Councils commitment to ongoing engagement with hapouri Maori and hapouri Hikurangi to enable their cultural values to be central to any place-making programme or projects for Hikurangi, it is evident that the Gomez Rd Site which we will refer to from this point as the **'Gomez Scenic Reserve'** (to borrow the perfect description from the gentlemen of the Hikurangi Town Board (1908)) is indeed a site worthy of investigation. Guidelines have been put in place by the WDC in the District Plan to protect the character of sites such as this. There are waterbodies in Hikurangi that have been given greater recognition such as the Waro Scenic Reserve.



We have such water bodies 10 minutes away from the Hikurangi Township and Waro Scenic Reserve right here in Gomez Road, waterfalls streams and dams of such beauty and historical value that must be seen to be appreciated and worthy of recognition, investment, restoration and early engagement particularly when proposed future projects may impact the wai.

There are four man made dams on the **'Gomez Scenic Reserve'** land; the three historic dams referred to previously in the history section and a fourth newer reservoir (marked in green as proposed wetlands area on our map pg14). There is very little information available about this newer dam. However, through newspaper articles and other sources we estimate it to have been constructed around the 1950's -1970's. Unlike the other three concrete stepped dams, this fourth reservoir is an earth-fill dam approximately 11 meters high. The dam was been dewatered in July 19th 2019 following a routine site inspection that uncovered a sink hole. Therefore, we propose the area is turned into a wetlands area. This could be done in partnership with the Hikurangi Primary School, an opportunity for our local tamariki to be involved in the development of the **'Gomez Scenic Reserve' Wetlands**. This would make a great place for whanau to come and picnic and possibly a bird watching shelter. We envisage a tree growing programme, which is already in place through Enviro-schools and subsequent community and school planting days.



There is a large habitat feature known as the Gomez Road Bush identified in the PNA report ([Habitat No Q06/078](#)). Based on a 1997 survey this is a Level 1 site identified as a 294ha unit comprising of 264 ha of forest and 30ha of shrubland.



Many people think that shrub/scrub land has no real value; The New Zealand Plant Conservation Network says “In New Zealand, scrub and shrub lands are often considered a nuisance by farmers that see them as colonising economically productive lands. From a biological perspective, however, this plant community is significant for many reasons.

Scrub is habitat for many native plants and animals, including various lizard species, mistletoes (such as the leafless *Korthalsella salicornioides*) and orchids (such as *Linguella puberula*). They often form 'corridors' between areas of vegetation and some act as a nursery for regenerating forest. They can also play an important role as buffer to native vegetation".

[\(https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/ecosystems/plant-communities/scrub-shrublands/\)](https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/ecosystems/plant-communities/scrub-shrublands/)



To quote DOC "...Early settlers battled hard to clear their land and regarded manuka/kahikatoa and kanuka as invasive shrubs that undid all of their hard work. Today however, these plants can act as an important tool for re-vegetating bare, eroded slopes. By creating shade and shelter from the wind, they provide an excellent nursery for other, slower growing native plants. Then, as these other plants get taller and overtop them, the Manuka/kahikatoa and kanuka die away as a result of being shaded".

[\(https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/native-plants/manuka-kahikatoa-and-kanuka\)](https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/native-plants/manuka-kahikatoa-and-kanuka)

"Restoration is the care and maintenance of the natural environment to allow it to regenerate and flourish, and to support native plants and animals that would naturally live in the area." [\(Treasure the Natural Environment - Auckland Design Manual: 6.2\)](#)



We wish to ensure that, over time, the biodiversity and ecological function of the site are enhanced. But first we need to identify and understand the ecological composition of this site so as to restore and protect threatened species or ecosystems within.

This photo illustrates an old forestry track, one of which is flanked by a beautiful stand of mature



kanuka. The track itself has a place in this space in that it speaks to the logging history of the site.

Maori used kanuka for a wide range of uses, particularly those requiring a hard, strong timber. It was the most favoured wood for the making of agricultural implements –mainly different types of digging sticks.

Another important use was for weapons – taiaha, tewhatewha, and koikoi (a double pointed spear). The bark was often used as an insulating material between the inner and outer walls of whare. It acts as a nurse plant for many species - especially kauri and Podocarps - and, being light demanding, is eventually replaced by these species.

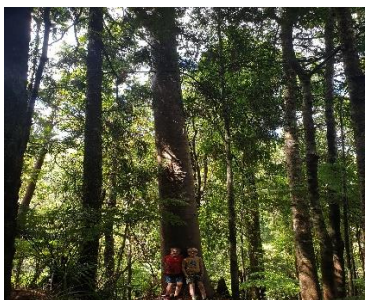
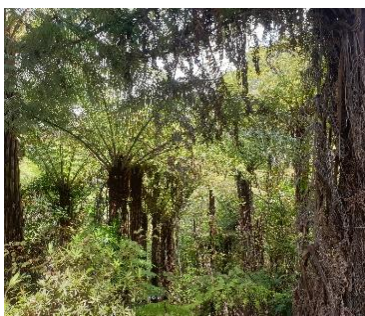
Some have spoken of this as “undesirable scrub” and would destroy the functionality of this beautiful stand of Kanuka and others like it within the site, to make way for dirt bikes and ATV’s.

Also identified here are native trees such as Kauri, Rewarewa, Rimu Tanekaha, Ti Kouka and Mamaku to name a few.

“The majority of the site is described as composed of secondary Towai forest with Kauri, Rewarewa,

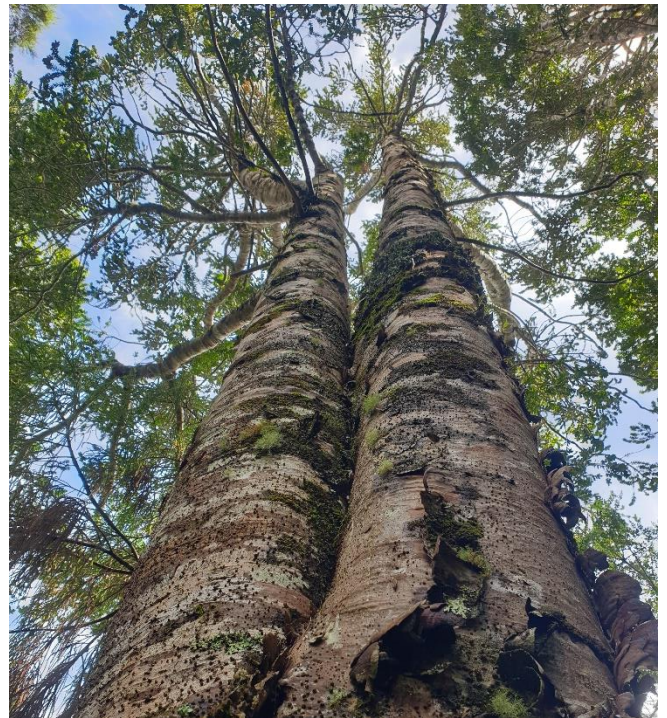
Tanekaha, and Mamaku with Rimu and Ti Kouka (cabbage tree) occasionally...” “...Closer to Gomez Road and part of the feature are two small pieces of Kanuka/Manuka shrubland of up to 4m height (i.e. in 1997)...Regionally significant flora is identified as Toatoa (Phyllocladus Toatoa)”. [\(Poynters Ecology Report from 2011: Gomez Road Bush Habitat Feature 2.1 Pg 2 \)](#)

We have found large Miro, Totara, Tawa, Taraire and Kahikatea with seedlings and saplings also coming through.



”North Island Brown Kiwi are also cited as present. The presence of a threatened bird species and a regionally threatened plant species supports the ecological significance status of the feature”. ([Poynters Ecology Report from 2011 Gomez Road Bush Habitat Feature Pg2, 2.1](#)) “Taking account of the fact both that the older bush type on the site is similar to that described for the Gomez Road Habitat Unit (and that is deemed to be a Level 1 PNA site), and also as there has been extensive shrubland regeneration since that time, it may well be that the native vegetation on the site would now achieve a higher level of recognition in terms of its ecological status”. ([Poynters Ecology Report 2011 Botanical Significance Status Pg8, 6.0](#)) ... *This report was produced in 2011, so it has now been at least 25 years since the last survey was done.

Over a long period of time having been left relatively undisturbed, this site has enjoyed a period of regeneration and its own ecosystem has allowed existing forest/bush, flora and fauna to flourish.



Kiwi;

Māori always regarded the kiwi as a special bird. They knew it as '**te manu huna a Tāne**', the hidden bird of Tāne, god of the forest.

One of the most exciting finds at the Gomez Rd site is a kiwi nest with 2 eggs! Unfortunately the incubating male kiwi abandoned the nest. The eggs, one of which was viable, were removed in consultation with the NRC Biodiversity staff and taken to the Whangarei Native Bird Recovery Centre.



We have seen Kiwi scat, footprints and feathers, heard the calls of kiwi on the Gomez Rd Site but also found a nest! We sent Sue Hodges (WDC) a report of our find as follows: (see appendix 2)



Breaking News!

Kiwi Nest discovered on WDC land at Gomez Road!

On Saturday 13th August 2022, a kiwi burrow was accidentally discovered in a pampas bush on WDC land at the junction of the main forestry road off Gomez Road and a side track above a gully of native bush above the Gomez Road dam (see attached maps for exact location recorded on GPS).

The nest contained one fertile egg and one rotten egg. As the nest was disturbed and the incubating bird abandoned the nest, in consultation with the NRC biosecurity staff, the fertile egg was uplifted to be incubated at the Whangarei Native Bird Recovery Centre where it is continuing to develop towards hatch in late September. At this stage, we have the other egg which has now been blown and will remain in our care.

Although unfortunate the nest was disturbed, Gomez Road residents are very excited to have actual proof that Kiwi are breeding here, having already found footprints, poo and hearing calls in the general area from time to time. The Whangarei Department of Conservation Kiwi coordinator has been consulted about what happened and actions taken.

After soft release on Limestone Island Kiwi Crèche (Whangarei Harbour) the chick will grow to reach a weight where he/she will be safe from stoat predation on the mainland. Gomez Road residents hope that if the Kiwi chick successfully hatches, he/she can eventually come back to the site.

Residents are keen to work alongside the WDC to take action towards pest control on the Gomez Road property with the aim of creating a safer environment for the Brown Kiwi and other marginalised species already identified within the area, so that they can thrive. Just this morning (21/08/22) a NZ Fernbird (Kotata or Matata) was identified as being present on the WDC Gomez Road block. Fernbirds are a "potential indicator of wetland health because they depend on the presence of high quality and ecologically diverse habitats and rich food supplies. ...Fernbirds have declined significantly since humans began draining wetlands. They are now classed globally as at risk, declining. They have disappeared from large areas of New Zealand..." (Department of Conservation)

Eventually we envision walking/cycling tracks which would be cleared carefully so as not to disturb the existing flora and fauna in the area. This will enable all who wish to enjoy the serenity of our beautiful native landscape, the ability to do so.

Please see supporting documents attached...

In addition to Kiwi, we have been able to identify Grey Teal, Auckland Green Gecko, Paua Slug, NZ Dabchick and NZ Fern Bird as being present, all of which are a 'protected' or 'important' species. We look forward to further discoveries.



Grey Teal; Tētē-moroiti

The first specimens of Grey Teal in New Zealand were obtained by Sir Walter Buller in 1866 and remains fully protected to this day. The preferred habitat is shallow freshwater lakes, lagoons and swamps with extensive marginal cover.



Auckland Green Gecko; Moko kākārīki

Barking geckos are one of nine green gecko, moko-kākārīki; species that only live in Aotearoa New Zealand. They are considered 'At Risk – Declining' under New Zealand's Threat Classification System due to ongoing predicted declines from habitat destruction and predation by introduced mammals. Lizards are critical for ecosystem processes: they pollinate native plants and disperse seeds through eating fruit.



Pāua Slug; is the Māori name given to three New Zealand species of large edible sea snails, marine gastropod molluscs which belong to the family Haliotidae. The carnivorous land-dwelling slugs are found only in the North Island of NZ and have a distinctive paua shaped shell on their back. They are officially a 'semi-slug', and like a paua are a gastropod but the resemblance of the shell is a coincidence. Like other slugs and snails they prefer a damp, protected environment, foraging nocturnally when the humidity is high. They are under pressure due to habitat destruction and

introduced predators such as pigs, rats, and blackbirds which forage in its preferred habitat. DOC identifies this as a threatened species.



NZ Fernbirds; Mātātā have declined significantly, many local populations have been lost due to drainage of wetlands and conversion to pasture, combined with predation by cats, rats, dogs and mustelids. DOC is focusing on developing methods for surveying Fernbirds systematically. These methods will enable people to establish baseline data and distribution maps; identify important wetland habitat types for conservation and measure the response to management such as pest control; and habitat maintenance and restoration.



Dabchick; Weweia is a specialised water bird endemic to NZ. They are currently extinct in the South island but can be found around the central North Island. Usually nests are anchored to emergent aquatic vegetation like raupo or sedges or tree branches that trail into the water. Eggs are vulnerable to predators like water rats. DOC currently complete bi-annual surveys of dabchick populations with the aim of identifying varying populations.

At present, the environment, ecosystems, waterways, native forest/bush, flora and fauna are at risk because of predator pests and people who see no value in the protection and preservation of this outstanding natural landscape, this Taonga Tuku Iho.

FOG – Who We Are:

FOG (Friends of Gomez) is a Gomez Road resident’s action/planning group that formed in 2021 to identify opportunities for passive recreation and care of the Gomez Road whenua that is in keeping with their small rural community that values the environment and amenities that attract them to living in a quiet rural location.

(Gomez Road resident supporters)



We believe the health/cleanliness of the environment is intrinsically linked to the wellbeing of that which resides within i.e. the water, forest/bush, fauna and flora. We acknowledge that the responsibility to preserve this uniquely treasured site, sits squarely on our shoulders (being Gomez hapouri) as well as that of our Hikurangi community, local Maori, Whangarei District Council and all tangata concerned about preserving our existing taonga tuku iho.

We are a community group who are passionate about the whenua around us and willing to do the mahi but we cannot do it alone. We will continue to build relationships with like-minded tangata

within our hapouri to preserve the wellbeing of our tangata and the whenua of which we are all caretakers.



In 2021, residents of Gomez Road became aware of the need to step up and take action towards the preservation of this particular site because of its unique properties and its status as stated by WDC as a “Key Feature” along with the likes of Lake Waro in the Hikurangi Area.

An action/planning group of willing residents was established. Many hours of research was carried out and eventually a Gomez Residents Meeting was held on 14th August 2021 at the Hikurangi Golf Club. This was to discuss the current concerns for Gomez Road residents as well as opportunities outlined in the Placemaking Plan. The meeting was attended by over 50 people. Residents had the opportunity to discuss and present their ideas for the site.

FOG presented residents with a preliminary plan for the ‘**Gomez Scenic Reserve**’ site. The overwhelming response from the residents was for a passive walking pathway. The majority of residents were opposed to the HBA accessing land in Gomez Road for motorsport use due to the negative affects this would have on the habitat, environment, the geography, forest/bush, flora and fauna and the local community.

We knew that much time and resources would be needed to create a proposal to submit to WDC. We wanted an alternative solution for the use of this land and the Gomez Rd residents were up for finding one. All present were invited to be part of the team doing this work and some made themselves available to help in whatever capacity they could.

On 29th July 2022 our first proposal was submitted to Sue Hodges and Simon Weston and it was to be presented to council on 8th September 2022 but the presentation was delayed because of other interested groups who also desired to submit proposals.

Though disappointed at the delay, the FOG action/planning group decided to use the time wisely by seeing how we could make our proposal more comprehensive and thorough. Hundreds of hours of research, meetings, interviews, emails, phone calls, site visits and expeditions has gone into the writing and background of this proposal.

The original Proposal which was submitted on July 29th 2022, is replaced with this document, 2023 Proposal for the Gomez Road Opportunity Site. The vision remains the same.

The 2023 FOG Proposal:

*That ‘**Gomez Scenic Reserve**’ becomes a **Key Feature and Amenity** within the Hikurangi area, just as Lake Waro has been identified as such an area on Page 53 of the Hikurangi Placemaking Plan. An identified ACTION was for a joint management plan and masterplan for Lake Waro.

*We would like to work with Whangarei District Council and other agencies towards the development of a **Joint Management Plan for the ‘Gomez Scenic Reserve’**.

1. To Create a Space where the Hikurangi Hapouri, and the wider Whangarei Hapouri can enjoy passive recreation by way of pathways.

WDC has identified that “adults living in the most socio-economically deprived areas are 1.6 times as likely to be obese as adults living in the least deprived areas. Children living in the most Socio-economically deprived areas are 2.7 times as likely to be obese as children living in the least deprived areas.” ([Active Recreation and Sport Strategy for Whangārei District, 27February 2020](#)) Pathways would be designed so that they can be enjoyed by all tangata.

***To create walking paths for passive recreation.** We have already identified key destinations within the ‘**Gomez Scenic Reserve**’ being mindful of the need to form paths suitable for all fitness levels, school groups, family groups and the elderly or impaired.

This map was prepared by a member of FOG and is an indication of what we envision for the ‘**Gomez Scenic Reserve**’.



In the future we see additional tracks being opened up, other destinations for the enjoyment of all.

Tracks and Destinations:

The initial track would be the short track from the carpark to the first historic dam which would follow an existing access track. This would benefit from some replanting along the edges of the track. As you get closer to Dam 1, it moves into more established native forest. Large Kauri and other mature trees can be seen from here. We envision a swing bridge crossing the waterway just below the dam wall so visitors can see and appreciate the true beauty of this historic feature.

The paths could be zoned according to the level of fitness with estimated time from point A to point B. This will give users, individuals, family groups, school groups and senior walking groups to name just a few, informed options on individual tracks according to their needs, interests and time availability.

***To build a safe but simple parking area and signage:** To allow easy access to the 'Gomez Scenic Reserve' site with signage in the parking zone as well as along the tracks at points of interest.

These signs would be informative and educational interactive elements that reveal stories about the significance of features within the 'Gomez Scenic Reserve'. This could be a particular plant species or a kai source for Maori. Another would tell the story of the Dams beginnings' back in the early 1900's through to decommission when the Hikurangi water supply was provided by the Whau Valley Water Treatment Plant. There may be a story to tell of the rich logging history in this area and the gum-diggers who followed.

The map shows proposed tracks and destinations of historical value and beauty that we have identified as being of interest. The tracks will take you on a journey through pristine native and regenerating forest; along high ridges with occasional views of the historic Hikurangi village; down low valleys alongside awe-inspiring streams and waterfalls; be surrounded by the beautiful song of some of our amazing native birds; experience the immersion of your senses in nature.

Whangarei District Council has a unique opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to climate, conservation, ecology, environment, heritage and sustainability. Just as important is the preservation of this particular historic site for the Hikurangi community, and the wider Whangarei community for generations to come.

FOG would work with the WDC, local Maori, Hikurangi Lions, Hikurangi community, DOC, Kiwi Coast and similar groups in the area, to create over time, areas where tangata and tamariki can go for a walk and enjoy the environment, the tranquillity and beauty of the native bush and the sounds of wildlife, waterfalls and streams.

2. To Reconnect Tamariki to their Whenua by way of Outdoor Education for Schools.

***That the 'Gomez Scenic Reserve' be a place to foster education, awareness and kaitiaki in our tamariki** towards our Kiwi and other important and protected species.

A disconnection of tangata whenua and from one another has manifested itself in Hikurangi in the form of homelessness, truancy and for many, no sense of place.

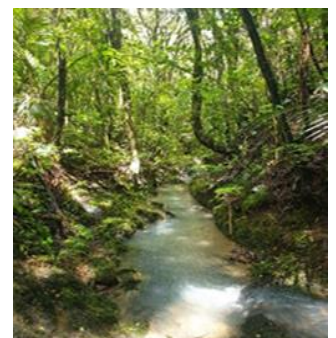


‘Gomez Scenic Reserve’ has the potential to provide a platform for learning and appreciation for the environment; the value of and the need to protect our native taonga tuku iho, national treasure and an opportunity to restore and strengthen ties to each other which is vital to restoring mana tāngata, developing self-esteem through contributing for our tamariki; to inculcate in our tamariki, the future kaitiaki of our taonga tuku iho, the need to respect and value what belongs to them.

Mātauranga, the sharing of traditional knowledge and connection of hapouri Māori to their whenua, wai and environment has been lost for many. The effects of this on social, cultural, economic and physical wellbeing is well documented. There are opportunities within the **‘Gomez Scenic Reserve’** to deliver that traditional knowledge in these settings.

It will take time to establish **‘Gomez Scenic Reserve’** but every step of the way, is an opportunity to involve the Hikurangi community and tamariki. Multiple opportunities would be available for them to understand, connect and value both the tangible and intangible heritage values associated with the place; and to find a ‘sense of place’ which is missing in the lives of many.

It will be an asset to Hikurangi that people, tamariki and many groups can enjoy whether through education or taking a beautiful walk in the bush or enjoying other quiet recreational activities which are in keeping with a quiet rural community; sustainable practices, biodiversity and the climate.





At present there are no bush walking tracks in Hikurangi. The town grew around the timber mill which opened in 1875 and the local coal mines which opened in 1890. By walking along the streets of Hikurangi Township, you can enjoy the historic buildings such as the Hikurangi Hotel that remain to this day.



Other historic buildings such as the Hikurangi Historic Museum, the Hikurangi District War Memorial Hall and many other buildings listed by Heritage Northland as important, have been preserved and are worth a visit.

The Waro Scenic Reserve provides a wonderful historic space to walk, swim and interact with whanau and friends.



The **'Gomez Scenic Reserve'** will provide a unique opportunity for whanau, friends and groups to enjoy a much different experience.



We believe that the **'Gomez Scenic Reserve'** would be a valuable addition which could easily align with the proposed Hikurangi Heritage Trail as identified in the WDC 2021 Placemaking Plan.

Whilst walking any of these tracks you will experience the immersion of your senses in nature; past and present.

3. To allow for the Regeneration of Flora (Ngai Kirehe) and Fauna (Ngai Tipu ()) to continue.

*We would **identify key natural features** of the **'Gomez Scenic Reserve'** which are particularly degraded or modified, and work to restore these with the support of local community and the Whangarei District Council.

*That the **'Gomez Scenic Reserve'** is a place for the **protection and enhancement** of the environment, flora and fauna by looking after the existing natural features with plant and animal pest control.

It is vital to enhance the mauri, environmental health of the **'Gomez Scenic Reserve'**. Maintaining and enhancing the quality of the wai, the whenua, the soil and air of the reserve is very important to ensure that the spaces support native flora and fauna. Mauritu, enhancing the park's environmental health and life essence, is very important to Maori. All waterways are considered to be wahi tapu for Maori, therefore it is essential these are protected.

We must understand the flora and fauna that currently exist on site. To protect habitats and species, and plan for their successful management in the future and to ensure that, over time, the biodiversity and ecological function of the site are enhanced. Restoration is the care and maintenance of the natural nohonga, habitat to allow it to regenerate and flourish, and to support native plants and animals that would naturally live in the area. Restoring Hikurangi native habitat is increasingly important. As our population grows; we place more pressure on the biodiversity of our natural environment.

Key Natural Features – Tunnels



This historic tunnel has become home to 100's of **Weta** which you can see if you look very carefully. They inhabit the entire tunnel and others like it.

The 60 species of **cave wētā** or tokoriro have extra-long antennae and may have long, slender legs and a passive demeanour. Although they have no hearing organs on their front legs like other species, some (such as *Talitropsis*) are very sensitive to ground vibrations sensed through pads on their feet. Specialised hairs on the cerci and organs on the antennae are also sensitive to low-frequency vibrations in the air.

Although some do live in caves, most species (e.g. *Talitropsis sedilloti*) live in the forest among leaf litter, logs, under bark, inside tree holes and amongst rocks. Cave-dwelling species may be active within the confines of their caves during the daytime, and those

individuals close to cave entrances venture outside at night.

This would be indeed a challenging experience for the fainthearted but also a great educational tool for our tamariki. The awe and wonder of the cave itself and how it came to be, as well as the star attractions, the Weta themselves. In time when it can be safely observed, this will be one of the many '**Gomez Scenic Reserve**' highlights.



Key Natural Features - Glow worms

Below is a photo of Titiwai, glow-worms found in '**Gomez Scenic Reserve**'. *Arachnocampa Luminosa*, commonly known as New Zealand glow-worm is a species of fungus gnat endemic to New Zealand. The larval stage and the imago produce a blue-green bioluminescence. The species is known to dwell in caves and on sheltered banks in native bush where humidity is high. Glow worm have been spotted on many or the banks alongside the creeks in the '**Gomez Scenic Reserve**'.



The **Gomez Road Landcare Group** is beginning a programme of animal pest control and will add in weed control in the future as the group gets further established. Controlling plant and animal pests will enable the already regenerating land to flourish and help protect and enhance the wildlife.

FOG has a vision that includes invasive **predator and pest (plant and animal) education for schools**; there is potential for **wetland development around the dams**; **trapping education and planting opportunities**. Residents backed this idea; we are the ones who live here; it is our sense of place and to us environmental health and well-being is vitally important.

To this end, FOG's animal pest control programme will continue into the '**Gomez Scenic Reserve**' (permission has been sought and granted) as soon as traps become available. Many Gomez Road residents are happy to give up their time to trap and record. There are some 26 possum traps, 3 cat traps, 28 rat/mouse traps, 15 bait stations and 4 stoat traps in use on private property in the area today. We are being overseen by NRC's Bevan Morgan from the biodiversity team who is our contact/liaison person. He has been supportive of our animal & pest control program.



Our vision is to have the '**Gomez Scenic Reserve**' speak for itself to enable tangata to understand the mata whenua and its processes; to be a place of peace, safety and serenity for the inhabitants within and for all tangata to enjoy; to encourage Hikurangi community and local Maori awareness, appreciation and care of this, to matou wahi, our place.

Actions Taken:

* FOG members met with the **Whangarei District Council** on 16th September 2021 to discuss residents' preferences for the site and concerns regarding the Hikurangi Business Association wanting to bring noisy motorsport activities, model aviation, archery, clubrooms, large carparks and toilets into a quiet rural community. In attendance, Tony Collins, Sue Hodge, Anna Murphy, Gregg Martin, Alicia Lawrie (WDC), Mark & Julia Willemen (GRASS), Grant Soich of Soich Deer Farm, Ben Pearce, Miriam Ritchie, Glenys Murdoch (FOG).

* FOG met with **Northland Regional Council/KiwiCoast** and the **Marua Landcare Group** on 27th October 2021 to discuss starting our own Landcare group to trap private properties and the WDC land to protect and enhance biodiversity values on Gomez Road. There are low numbers of kiwi on private land, the Gomez side of Glenbervie Forest and on the WDC land, so by trapping predators we will increase chances of kiwi chick survival and protect other wildlife present (Auckland green gecko, grey teal, paua slug, NZ dabchick). This, in conjunction with the Marua Landcare Group, will

also help link areas of higher kiwi numbers on the other side of Glenbervie Forest and Sandy Bay, by way of creating a kiwi habitat corridor. There is already predator trapping happening in Glenbervie Forest near Gomez Road.

* FOG have spoken to Ngaire Sullivan from **KiwiCoast** and Rob Fuchs, **Northland Regional Council**. Their response has been positive and they will help with resources and information. Our efforts will eventually help to extend the corridor for kiwi and other at-risk wildlife species. NRC and KiwiCoast have given us the go ahead to start our Landcare group and are funding traps and training for the group.

* FOG has spoken to Will Steward from **Glenbervie Forest**, they would love to see the kiwi corridor extended and work with our group as they have done a lot of work with kiwi in Glenbervie Forest.

* FOG met again with the **Whangarei District Council** on the 15th November 2021, where FOG gave an outline of what they are proposing; concerns and bottom lines - increasing bio diversity, walking tracks, focus on pest control and native regeneration, look into wilding pine removal funding, the opportunity to extend the pest control corridor and ngutu roa protection; Opportunities around forest regeneration, emission trading.

(At the 15 November 2021 meeting there was a discussion regarding the Hikurangi Business Association's (HBA) Draft plan to use the site for Dirt Bike/Motocross events to raise money for community groups. At the 14th August 2021 residents meeting, the majority of residents were opposed to the HBA accessing land in Gomez Road for motorsport uses due to the negative affects their proposal would have on the Gomez hapouri, the whenua, ngahere, ngai kirehe and ngai tipu. In attendance, Tony Collins, Sue Hodge, Crs G. Martin & A. Murphy, Sophie Bone WDC. Shayn Rouse, Sharlene Morris-Ross HBA, Alex Smits Friendship House (Teams) Ben Pearce FOG, Julia Willemen GRASS).

* FOG met with the **Gomez Road community** on 11th December 2021 to discuss predator trapping options for private landowners and find out who wanted to be involved. People were highly in favour of setting up a Landcare Group to do predator trapping on Gomez Road properties and the adjoining Whangarei District Council land.

The people who live in the Gomez area have particular knowledge and experience of the area's history, geography, its flora and fauna and have a connection and attachment to this whenua and wish it to remain a sustainable environment, to protect its natural landscape, character and ecosystems.

The soil type and land contour of the '**Gomez Scenic Reserve**' site requires a **low key approach**; this country is under-laid by a hard silica pan which once exposed is prone to water erosion; we would not want to see large areas of land cleared for any activities that required excavation such as for dirt bike tracks, buildings and archery courses.

Our climate change and sustainability work includes how we adapt to a changing climate as well as what we can do to reduce our environmental footprint.

Local government support is vital to stop this negative and destructive action from taking place.

Support:

GRASS (Gomez Road Association): GRASS supports FOG's proposal it being in keeping with its own bottom line of No Motors and keeping infrastructure low-key and minimal. GRASS believe that by implementing the FOG proposal for the '**Gomez Scenic Reserve**' the Hikurangi community as a whole will have access to and a use for the site that Gomez community can happily live with and be proud of.

Hikurangi Conservation Society

Hikurangi Conservation Society has been proud to support FOG as they prepared this extensively researched and passionately written proposal. Included, you'll find a true sense of place, community, historical value and of course native taonga species of flora and fauna. This is the exact type of project that will ensure environmental and ecological principals of our district are revered and upheld. With the mahi already done and the commitment of many to follow this journey, we have great potential to add a crowning jewel to our districts scenic reserves. Whangarei District Council has an opportunity here to show true commitment to climate, community, conservation, ecology, environment, heritage and sustainability. This is a key moment in our districts story.

Tanga Te Whenua Iwi

Ngararatunua Kamo Maori Committee & Puhipuhi Waitou Maori Committee

SUPPORT FOR FOG PROPOSAL

This is a support letter from the NZMC 2021-2024 Ngararatunua Kamo Maori Committee. We have been working with this community on protecting and conservation of this natural community and Maori site of significance.

Ngati Hau Whanau Hapu, Whakapara, Hokianga, Ngapuhi - Local Tangata Whenua
Kristi Henare ([See Appendix 4](#))

Heritage NZ

My name **Elizabeth Clark**. I am a **regional historian** covering many aspects of Northlands rich and diverse heritage.

In the research done to date, the dam and water infrastructure would merit scheduling on the basis of its rarity, intactness and historical importance in the growth of Hikurangi as a township and community. In short, there are no other examples of this type of infrastructure dating from the early 20th century as intact or in existence. The site has the potential to have regional importance. It is also a significant example of engineering heritage in the use of cement and other materials for its construction.

At the same time, the site also contains taonga species such as North Island Brown Kiwi, North Island Fern Bird and other endemic fauna including cave Weta species. The remnant forest containing kauri and other at-risk flora is one of the few examples remaining in the immediate area of vegetation cover. Much was lost during the 19th and early 20th centuries to clear-felling operations. ([See Appendix 5 for full comment by Elizabeth Clark](#))

Forest & Bird Society – Dean Baigent-Mercer

Forest & Bird fully supports the protection of the Gomez Road regenerating native forest, dam and wetlands areas for public use and opposes proposals for motorsports and land clearance for other uses. Regenerating native forests are important carbon sinks. The more pest control underway ensuring rats, goats and possums are as low as possible, the more growth will be put on as the forest rapidly grows. This also locks in increasing amount of carbon each year, which will form an income source from carbon credits and biodiversity credits.

Ongoing high quality pest control targeting all the worst introduced pest animals (including feral cats, stoats, weasels) and plants is essential and will lead to a remarkable and rapid recovery of native plants, birds and bugs. It was also importantly build resilience for times of extreme weather events like floods and droughts and slow the rush of water onto land downstream.

Forest & Bird also suggests the area qualify for an e-DNA test in the waterway to see what kind of species are present that might be hard to find or that haven't been recorded yet. (see: <https://www.wilderlab.co.nz>).

Hikurangi Primary School

We have been in touch with Hikurangi School's sustainability teacher. Her reply was "As sustainability and conservation is part of our school's kaupapa and strategic plan we would fully support a proposal to retain the area as a reserve". We have provided her with a copy of our proposal and will add further comments from her once we receive them.

Whangarei Bird Recovery Center – Robert Webb

Robert took in and incubated the kiwi egg which was removed from an abandoned nest on Gomez Road reserve land on 14th August 2022. Robert is currently writing a report on the outcome of the incubation. We will provide attach this to our proposal as soon as it's available. Robert has been very supportive of FOG's vision to protect this incredible kiwi habitat. It's reassuring to know that we can depend on the Bird Recovery Centre for their expertise and support.

Kiwi Coast – Ngaire Sullivan

Ngaire Sullivan is the Whangarei Co-ordinator and all-round amazing action Woman, enabling and assisting communities to come together to protect what's important to them. Kiwi coast will continue to support FOG through workshops, information sharing, assisting with awareness campaigns, providing signs and sounding gear for kiwi and to assess the presence of Pekapeka, native bats in the area and much more.

Whangarei District Council

Trapping the 'Gomez Scenic Reserve' site. Miriam Ritchie (FOG) contacted Ren Lamb (WDC) in November 2022 regarding installing traps for pest control. We are grateful to Ren who allowed us to extend our pest control program. (WT223713 - Pest Control Gomez Dam Hikurangi).

Northland Regional Council

NRC (Bevan Morgan from the biodiversity team has been supportive of the establishment of our Landcare Group and animal pest control program. FOG appreciate and will continue to look to NRC for expertise and support.

Waipu River Walk – Nigel Taylor

Thanks to Nigel Taylor for his support and help in the navigation of our own path. The Waipu River Walk, a Community-Led proposal for Whangārei District Council and the path to its success is truly inspiring to us.

Submissions

We are happy to report that as of 30 January 2023 we have received well over 100 submissions from people who support the 2023 '**Gomez Scenic Reserve**' proposal. Additional submissions are coming in daily. (See Appendix 7)

Summary:

The 2021 Hikurangi Placemaking Plan identifies Gomez Road as an Opportunity Site and as stated in the Placemaking 2021 plan, page 62, the Whangarei District Council will support the hapouri in the development of a path/trail and support the hapouri with grant funding for resource consents and consider further support within future Long Term Plan'.

This is a Community-lead Initiative, in keeping with the Gomez Road community 'Sense of Place' and as such it has the support of the Gomez Road community.

This Proposal fits with a number of the pivotal outcomes of the Whangarei District Council's Draft Climate Action Plan.

FOG believes this 2023 Proposal is the best way to protect this whenua:

*by predator pest control (trapping) to protect the existing flora and fauna;

*by enhancing the environment in a minimal low-key way;

*by giving the flora and fauna an opportunity to thrive;

*by protecting it from land use activities such as motor sports, extensive earthworks, excavation and building.

FOG intends that the '**Gomez Scenic Reserve**' will provide the Hikurangi community a safe place that is continually accessible, especially to tamariki. It will be a place to bring tangata together without cost, a place that Hikurangi community can be proud of.

FOG foresees that in time, the outstanding natural landscape, features and history of this land can be an amenity that can be enjoyed by many, including education for our tamariki for generations to come.

Conclusion:

This 2023 proposal has been put together by the Gomez Road community group (FOG) in order to save the uniquely beautiful Taonga we have right here in Hikurangi which has been unappreciated for its heritage, historic and natural value for too long.

Because it is now at risk from those who seek to destroy the natural ecosystems and landscapes for their own purposes, we have been left with no choice but to resolutely raise awareness to you as members of the Whangarei District Council, particularly those who are unacquainted with this gem, the '**Gomez Scenic Reserve**'.

FOG asserts that it is your responsibility to see that no harm is done to '**Gomez Scenic Reserve**' and that it becomes a '**protected**' area to be enjoyed by Hikurangi community and the wider Whangarei community now and for future generations to come.

This is in keeping with your Climate Action Plan "working with community" as well as the Placemaking Hikurangi Plan 2021 which sites "Identification of heritage buildings & character" and "Hikurangi heritage Trails" (of which 'Gomez Scenic Reserve' would be an asset for the Hikurangi Community) as an "Action Priority".

Our vision is to have the '**Gomez Scenic Reserve**' speak for itself; to enable people to understand its history, its uniqueness and processes; to be a place of peace, safety and serenity for the wildlife within and for all tangata to enjoy; to encourage Hikurangi community and local Maori awareness, appreciation and care of this, to matou wahi, our place.

FOG are very proud to present this proposal and we envision the '**Gomez Scenic Reserve**' to become a place that the Whangarei community can come to and enjoy for generations to come.

We look forward to meeting with council staff to discuss our proposal.

Contacts: Spokesperson Pamela Hodgson

Pamela Hodgson pamelangairehodgson@gmail.com Local Gomez resident

Claire Saunders clairesaunders4@gmail.com Local Gomez resident

Miriam Ritchie canineconservation@gmail.com Local Gomez resident

FOG email contact Friendsofgomez1@gmail.com

Appendix 1: Poynters Ecology Report

POYNTER & ASSOCIATES ENVIRONMENTAL LTD – ECOLOGY REPORT
HIKURANGI MOTORSPORT AND OUTDOOR RECREATION PARK JUNE 2011

Excerpts from report:

The full report is available.

The PNA was established in 1982 under the Reserves Act 1977. Broadly speaking it is a register of natural features which aims to ensure the survival of indigenous biota and the preservation of representative examples of all natural ecosystems and landscapes. PNA's are split into Level 1 and Level 2 sites (Level 1 being the higher) according to their significance values which are assessed against a range of ecological criteria.

Gomez Road Bush Habitat Feature

To the north of Gomez Road and only a short distance from the site, there is a large habitat feature known as the Gomez Road Bush identified in the PNA report (Habitat No Q06/078). Based on a 1997 survey this is Level 1 site identified as a 294ha unit comprised of 264 ha of forest and 30ha of shrubland. The majority of the site is described as composed of secondary Towai forest with Kauri, Rewarewa, Tanekaha, and Mamaku with Rimu and Tti Kouka (cabbage tree) occasionally. Closer to Gomez Road and part of the feature are two small pieces of Kanuka/Manuka shrubland of up to 4m height (i.e. in 1997). Regionally significant flora is identified as Toatoa (*Phyllocladus toatoa*) and North Island Brown Kiwi are also cited as present. The presence of a threatened bird species and a regionally threatened plant species supports the ecological significance status of the feature.

Streams and Immediate Riparian Zones

The stream section immediately below the dam is likely to be somewhat atypical due to the presence of the structure itself. Further downstream the stream takes on a form that is likely to be typical of that in both the northern and western subcatchments and is described as follows:

The streambed substrate is a mixture of cohesive clay and stone. The stream and a generous riparian zone are afforded heavy shading by the native bush. The stream banks are undercut but appeared stable and were not obviously eroding. The stream is typically 1.5 to 2m between the banks and up to 0.75m to 1.0m in the pools. There are small rock sills and larger pools. On the day of the site inspection water clarity was good to the extent that the bed of the stream was clearly visible. Two of the 2nd order side tributaries were inspected in their lower sections. Flow was minimal but there were small pools and the habitat in general was low in silt.

Both short fin and long fin eel are present above the Wairua falls but the habitat within the WDC site is more suited to long fin eel. The potential presence of long fin eel (*Anguilla Dieffenbachii*) is significant ecologically. The stream habitat appears of good quality and suitable for this species. Long fin eel are an endemic species of specific conservation interest as they are registered as being in 'Gradual Decline' (Hitchmough et al 2005). At one point during the site survey some disturbance was seen in the stream. The source was not observed but it is likely to have been an eel. A quick inspection of the under-surface of some of the stones revealed a variety of invertebrate life including caddis larvae.

Valley Floors and Steep Side Slopes

The site inspection indicated the valley floors of the main streams and the lower sections of the 2nd order side tributaries to include large (12+m) kanuka (*Kunzea ericoides*), a range of *Coprosma*

Appendix 1: Con'd...

species, pate (*Schefflera digitata*), Rewarewa (*Knightia excelsa*), mapou (*Myrsine australis*), ponga (*Cyathea dealbata*), mahoe (*Melicactus ramiflorus*), Alseuosmia (*Alseuosmia macrophylla*), hangehange (*Geniostoma rupestre*), turutu (*Dianella nigra*), tanekaha (*Phyllocladus trichomanoides*), kiekie (*Freycinetia banksii*), towai (*Weinmannia silvicola*), supplejack (*Ripogonum scandens*), miro (*Prumnopitys ferruginea*), climbing rata (*Metrosideros perforata*) and kahikatea (*Dacrydium dacrydioides*). In several places patches of Ricker Kauri (*Agathis australis*), Kahikatea and Rimu (*Dacrydium cupressinum*) were apparent.

Botanical Significance Status

The site requires a more formal and detailed botanical survey in relation to the specific ecological criteria used to assess PNA status and its ranking under section Schedule 17A of the District Plan. In relation to the PNA, the last survey of the area appears to have been at least 14 years ago.

*Taking account of the fact both that the older bush type on the site is similar to that described for the Gomez Road Habitat Unit (and that is deemed to be a Level 1 PNA site), and also as there has been extensive shrubland regeneration since that time, it may well be that the native vegetation on the site would now achieve a higher level of recognition in terms of its ecological status.

*this report was produced in 2011, so it has now been at least 25 years since the last survey was done.

Appendix 2: Cont'd...

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/northern-advocate/1914/07/10/5>

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THE DANGEROUS WATERWORKS.

The Town Board has received 100 applications from the owners of houses for the purpose of installing waterworks. The Board has decided to permit the householders to have the free use of water for the next six months to enable property owners time to connect up with the water system from the house-connection existing connections at the street boundary.

The Town Board is to be congratulated on the excellent assistance rendered by the Town Clerk (Mr. J. Macdonald) who has had previous experience in waterworks, the whole undertaking has been carried out satisfactorily without a single hitch.

The Town Board anticipates that after supplying the present population of Whangarei with 10 gallons of water per head daily (which is a very liberal allowance) having a daily surplus of between sixty and seventy thousand gallons available for manufacturing and other purposes. It will be about two months before the whole of the houses will be connected with the system, an improvement will have the full benefit of the waterworks for the coming summer.

The present Town Board Commissioners are Messrs T. B. Gager (Chairman), H. Horne, W. R. Dunn, G. B. Kerr, and F. Little. Mr. J. C. Macdonald, who was the chief supporter of the waterworks scheme, had to retire from the Board early in the beginning of the present year owing to having a large family to support.

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In future always have a bottle of Bonnington's Irish Moss in the house—he never fails!

Appendix 3: Kiwi Nest Found



Breaking News!

Kiwi Nest discovered on WDC land at Gomez Road!

On Saturday 13th August 2022, a kiwi burrow was accidentally discovered in a pampas bush on WDC land at the junction of the main forestry road off Gomez Road and a side track above a gully of native bush above the Gomez Road dam (see attached maps for exact location recorded on GPS).

The nest contained one fertile egg and one rotten egg. As the nest was disturbed and the incubating bird abandoned the nest, in consultation with the NRC biosecurity staff, the fertile egg was uplifted to be incubated at the Whangarei Native Bird Recovery Centre where it is continuing to develop towards hatch in late September. At this stage, we have the other egg which has now been blown and will remain in our care.

Although unfortunate the nest was disturbed, Gomez Road residents are very excited to have actual proof that Kiwi are breeding here, having already found footprints, poo and hearing calls in the general area from time to time.

The Whangarei Department of Conservation Kiwi coordinator has been consulted about what happened and actions taken.

After soft release on Limestone Island Kiwi Crèche (Whangarei Harbour) the chick will grow to reach a weight where he/she will be safe from stoat predation on the mainland. Gomez Road residents hope that if the Kiwi chick successfully hatches, he/she can eventually come back to the site.

Residents are keen to work alongside the WDC to take action towards pest control on the Gomez Road property with the aim of creating a safer environment for the Brown Kiwi and other marginalised species already identified within the area, so that they can thrive. Just this morning (21/08/22) a NZ Fernbird (Kotata or Matata) was identified as being present on the WDC Gomez Road block. Fernbirds are a “potential indicator of wetland health because they depend on the presence of high quality and ecologically diverse habitats and rich food supplies....Fernbirds have declined significantly since humans began draining wetlands.

They are now classed globally as at risk, declining. They have disappeared from large areas of New Zealand...” (*Department of Conservation*)

Eventually we envision walking/cycling tracks which would be cleared carefully so as not to disturb the existing flora and fauna in the area. This will enable all who wish to enjoy the serenity of our beautiful native landscape, the ability to do so.

Appendix 4: Tangata Te Whenua

Kristi Henare - Ngapuhi, Ngati Hau, Whakapara

From: **Kristi Henare** <kristihenare@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, 31 Jan 2023 at 17:46
Subject: Re: 2023 Proposal, Final Draft
To: Pamela Hodgson <pamelangairehodgson@gmail.com>

31st January 2023, 5.30pm

Kia ora Pamela

Supporting your FOG Proposal

Please take this email as correspondence and ongoing support for your FOG Proposal from myself as whanau and hapu of Ngapuhi, Ngati Hau, Whakapara.

This block whenua is a site of significance to our whanau who are from this tribal area. That is why we opposed it in 2011-2012. We thought we had successfully fought to stop this development.

We also have asked Forest and Bird Northern Branch and National Office to support this FOG Proposal as well. The Whangarei District Council and its District as very familiar with the abandoned mercury mine at Puhipuhi and the exploration mining permit for gold in Whakapara, Puhiphui to protect our freshwater.

I would be willing to speak to this for 5 minutes with you.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need more support. I am looking forward to the site visit with local Hapu to discuss this further.

Ngā mihi maioha,

Mrs Kristi Henare
Puhipuhi, Whakapara, Hikurangi, Whangarei
Mobile: (021) 02668126

Appendix 5: Elizabeth Clark – Historian

My name Elizabeth Clark. I am a regional historian covering many aspects of Northlands rich and diverse heritage. The Gomez Road Dam site was brought to my attention as an at-risk heritage site. I am also an experienced heritage researcher specialising in difficult to research industrial sites and structures that would otherwise be lost. I have also done site assessments for Northland Regional Council in the past involving similar structures. I work for a media company based in Kaipara District at present. However, I have continued to remain involved in heritage and am currently working on a collaborative project related to the former Kaihu Valley Railways background heritage including related industries and sites, people and community.

At present I am writing an interim background heritage report on the Gomez Dam site. I have not visited the site but I have been supplied photographs of the structures and site. I have obtained titles and Survey Office maps of the site which was gazetted in 1916 as a water supply reserve vested to the Hikurangi Town Board and to its successor entity Whangarei District Council.

In the research done to date, the dam and water infrastructure would merit scheduling on the basis of its rarity, intactness and historical importance in the growth of Hikurangi as a township and community. In short, there are no other examples of this type of infrastructure dating from the early 20th century as intact or in existence. The site has the potential to have regional importance. It is also a significant example of engineering heritage in the use of cement and other materials for its construction.

At the same time, the site also contains taonga species such as North Island Brown Kiwi, North Island Fern Bird and other endemic fauna including cave Weta species. The remnant forest containing kauri and other at-risk flora is one of the few examples remaining in the immediate area of vegetation cover. Much was lost during the 19th and early 20th centuries to clear-felling operations.

I have been in contact with Bill Edwards, Area Manager of Heritage New Zealand Northland Area Office. He has advised me he has visited the site. It is my intention to submit a fully referenced heritage report to NZHPT with a request that the site is considered for registration as a historic area. The site should also be scheduled on the District Plan. The benefits of retaining the structures and excluding wheeled vehicles and other activities outweigh the negatives.

Whangarei District Council has the mandate to establish a heritage trail in its vision with the community of Hikurangi as a whole. This site could form an important part of that heritage for built and natural heritage. It benefits the community as a whole.

Wheeled vehicles including mountain bikes could cause potential damage to important heritage structures and cause irreparable harm to kauri which is presently under threat from Kauri Dieback disease. Kiwi is also at high risk and is considered a flagship taonga species. It needs to be taken into account before making any finalisation on the site's future usage.

Elizabeth Clark
Historian 31/01/2023

Appendix 6: Our Tamariki Support

save the

Kiwi
N



0x15
4

Appendix 6: Cont'd...

To WDC

I would like to support FOGs
proposal to protect the Gomez
this is important to me because
Kimi live there



Jack 8 years old

Appendix 6: Cont'd...

To W.D.C
I would like you to support
FOGS proposal to protect the
Gomez Reserve.

This is important to me because
I have seen a fern bird and
I didn't even know we had
fern birds

from Ruby. 10



Appendix 6: Cont'd...



Otis 4.

Appendix 6: Cont'd...

To WDC

I would like you to support
~~the Gomez~~ FOGs proposal to
protect the Gomez Reserve.

this is important to me because
I like bush walks and nature.
I have learnt about protecting our
native species from predators.



Lilly 9

Appendix 6: Cont'd...



Appendix 6: Cont'd...



Appendix 7: Submissions

FOG members have been out in the community garnering support for our Proposal. Below is the Submission form we prepared and so far we have over 100 signed copies. More are coming in daily. The support has been overwhelming.

Submission in support of Gomez Road Scenic Reserve:

I/We am writing a submission in support of the above Friends of Gomez (FOG) proposal to use the WDC land at Gomez Road HIKURANGI as a natural environmental reserve and to provide safe walking tracks for the people of Hikurangi and the wider Whangarei district. I understand that the walks will be varied in nature from gentle to physically challenging contour, widening the availability of use to all tangata no matter their age or level of fitness.

The only publicly available walking area in Hikurangi is Lake Waro, which is a gently contoured path with very little vegetation and no established native forest and little wildlife. The streets of Hikurangi are generally considered unsafe for walking because of the number of stray dogs on the loose.

The general area used to be used for bush walking by the local school (1970s). There is also historic structures left from when the dams were used as water supply for Hikurangi. These should be protected under Heritage legislation and preserved for future generations. Making these sites accessible by walking would connect people back to the history of Hikurangi and could be included in the proposed Hikurangi Heritage trail.

Recently, nesting Kiwi have been found on an old forestry track, Fernbirds/ Mātātā with a declining conservation status have been sighted. We as a society need to protect these Taonga, we have a responsibility under the Treaty and DOC to preserve these pockets of precious bush, waterways and the precious inhabitants therein.

I/We believe that any kind of motor sport or any other sport which would involve major earthworks in Gomez Road reserve area puts this habitat at risk (particularly the wildlife), and as such should be excluded from this area and would not support any such proposal.

I/We do not support the HBA proposal.

WDC have declared themselves a sustainable Council and as such, the protection of remaining habitat should be foremost in your considerations. The use of fossil fuels for essentially entertainment, and the use of natural areas for the same should not be supported by our council.

Name:

Occupation:

Contact details:

I/We do/not wish to speak in support of my submission.

Date: