

PARIMAHANA SCENIC RESERVE FIELD TRIP

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On Sunday 2 July 2000 seven Society members and friends met in the Pinelands hotel carpark in Kawerau for the long awaited field trip to Parimahana Scenic Reserve. The 39 ha reserve lies due north of Kawerau township and west of the Carter Holt Harvey and Tasman mills, on the edge of the Kawerau geothermal field. Geothermal activity is restricted to the southern portion of the reserve with most activity occurring on the steeply rising cliffs and river flats.

We walked through the kanuka (*Kunzea ericoides* var. *ericoides*) plantings on the recreation reserve along the edge of the Ruruanga Stream before reaching the Scenic Reserve.

To access the main part of the reserve we had to cross the Ruruanga Stream. A fallen kanuka provided a makeshift bridge; crossing was a feat some of us found more difficult than others! Once safely across the river without mishap we walked through the kanuka shrubland into the prostrate kanuka (*Kunzea ericoides* var. *microflora*) shrubland on the alluvial flats below the main geothermal face. We stopped briefly to admire the abundant lichens under the kanuka – *Cladia* sp and *Cladonia* spp. It wasn't long before a small population of *Schizaea fistulosa* was found. Also noted in abundance was an unknown hard, brown-coloured fungus, similar in shape to a puffball growing in amongst the lichen. This was later identified as *Pisolithus tinctorius* (I. Hood pers. comm.). As we moved through the prostrate kanuka shrubland we quickly realised from the softness of the substrate that some areas were still geothermally active. Moving more carefully now we set out to relocate a previously recorded population of *Nephrolepis* cf. *cordifoila*. This was found under large kanuka trees near the stream margin. Debate followed, without resolution, about the taxonomic characteristics distinguishing the exotic and native *Nephrolepis* spp. Also noted growing here was a species never before seen naturalised by any of us – a silky oak (*Grevillea robusta*).

We continued through the open geothermal areas dominated by prostrate kanuka and Spanish heath (*Erica lusitanica*) and here the discovery of the day was made - a population of dwarf mistletoe (*Korthalsella salicornioides*) growing on kanuka. The rest of the group joined the search and once everyone became familiar with the plant it quickly became apparent that this species was widely scattered on the kanuka and prostrate kanuka around the flats. Also noted was *Psilotum nudum* and a small patch of *Cheilanthes humilis* growing on the geothermally heated soils. On the slope above the flats we found *Schizaea dichotoma* and passed through one of the many large colonies of *Dicranopteris linearis*, a threatened fern that is locally abundant in this reserve.

From here we climbed up through the kanuka scrub to the geothermal basins above the cliff faces. Many dead prickly hakea (*Hakea sericea*) and a number of willow-leaved hakea (*Hakea salicifolia*) plants were noted that had been cut by DOC contractors the previous summer. Spanish heath and cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster glaucopyllus*) were also seen in abundance around geothermal areas and the forest margins. With a good view of the Tasman mill from the cliff top we had lunch before botanising further through the upper geothermal areas. Dwarf mistletoe plants were still being found scattered throughout the geothermal vegetation, mainly on prostrate kanuka. The orchid *Genoplesium pumilum* was also noted in this area.

After hand pulling a few prickly hakea plants we moved over the ridge and crossed into another geothermal gully of prostrate kanuka, moss and loamfields before entering the rewarewa/kanuka forest that covers much of the reserve. Here both pig and possum sign was noted. The understory was relatively open with abundant kanono (*Coprosma lucida*), prickly mingimingi (*Cyathodes juniperina*) and mingimingi (*Leucopogon fasciculatus*) present. From here we scrambled down the steep hill emerging on to the farmland. Chinese privet (*Ligustrum sinense*) is very common on the margins of the reserve. After re-crossing the Ruruanga stream we returned to the vehicles well satisfied with ourselves. The general feeling was that this had been an excellent trip to a little known reserve

which has some very interesting geothermal vegetation hidden amongst the rewarewa/kanuka forest that covers most of the reserve.

REFERENCES

Beadel S.M.; Bishop C.; Gosling D.S. 1998: Geothermal vegetation of Parimahana Scenic Reserve. *Wildland Consultants Ltd Contract Report No. 187.*

Ecroyd C.E. 1979: Parimahana Scenic Reserve. *Unpublished Report.* Forest Research Institute, Rotorua. 4pp.

Owen J. 1979: Scientific values of the proposed Parimahana Scenic Reserve. *Unpublished report.* Department of Lands and Survey. 4pp.

ADDITIONS TO THE CHECKLIST OF PLANTS FOR PARIMAHANA SCENIC
RESERVE (Beadel *et al.* 1998)

Indigenous Species

Earina mucronata

Geniostoma rupestre var. *ligustrifolium*

Hymenophyllum multifidum

Korthalsella salicornioides

Myrsine australis

Nertera dichondrifolia

Adventive Species

Grevillea robusta