



Significant Natural Area Assessment			
Project No: 11001/002		Property Name: <i>Branch Creek</i>	Ecologist: <i>Glenn Davis</i>
		Site Name: <i>Branch Creek SNA D</i>	Date: <i>3 November 2010</i>
Survey Undertaken By: <i>Glenn Davis and Ralph Henderson</i>		Waypoint No (mid-point of survey area): <i>See plan attached.</i>	
LENZ Unit: <i>Q2.2a</i>		Photo No.(s): <i>See below.</i>	
Ecological District: <i>Wanaka Ecological District</i>			
Topography: <i>Valley floor and lower hillslopes</i>	Slope: <i>Various</i>	Altitude: <i>520 - 700 masl</i>	Aspect: <i>Various</i>
Threatened Environment Status: <i>Chronically threatened and critically underprotected.</i>		Area Size (ha): <i>11.17</i>	
Representativeness: <i>Grey shrubland – dominant indigenous vegetation cover in the drier areas of the Wanaka Ecological District, Lakes Ecological Region, and N4.1d environments.</i>			
Are there threatened species expected/identified in the survey area? If so, list species and threat status.			
Threatened Species		Threat Status	
<i>Falco novaezealandiae</i> "eastern"		At Risk - Recovering	
Provide onsite description of vegetation:			
Vegetation type: Shrubland consisting of matagouri (<i>Discaria toumatou</i>), <i>Olearia odorata</i> , <i>Olearia bullata</i> , <i>Aristotelia fruiticosa</i> , <i>Coprosma propinqua</i> , <i>Coprosma tayloriae</i> , <i>Carmichaelia petriei</i> , sweet briar (<i>Rosa rubiginosa</i>), elderberry (<i>Sambucus nigra</i>), <i>Melicytus alpinus</i> , <i>Rubus schmidelioides</i> and <i>Meuhlenbeckia australis</i>			
Degree of Modification: The area has experienced historical disturbance (fire), but has not been disturbed for a long period.			
Overall Health: The shrubland is largely intact and is dominated by mature indigenous species with a minor component of introduced woody weeds, briar and elderberry.			
Provide onsite description of fauna habitat:			
The shrubland provides habitat for a variety of passerines that are prey for the eastern falcon that is present in the Branch Burn. The population of mature <i>Olearia</i> will support a unique, diverse and abundant invertebrate fauna. The presence of <i>Coprosma</i> and <i>Melicytus alpinus</i> will provide a food supply and habitat for skinks and geckos.			

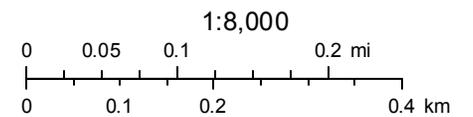
<p>Threats to vegetation and flora/fauna species? (Weeds, predators, current management practices): The presence of weed species, i.e. elderberry and briar.</p>
<p>Rarity: The threatened environment classification identifies the Q2.2a environment to have 39.92% indigenous vegetation cover remaining with 5.07% protected.</p>
<p>Area Size and Shape (degree to which the area may be or is becoming self-sustaining): The area is elongated and therefore has a high edge to area ratio. Notwithstanding this point the width of the stands is up to 100 meters either side of the creek and is self-sustaining providing no inadvertent disturbance occurs. It is noted that the riparian shrubland has been excluded from any clearing activities under the vegetation clearing consent.</p>
<p>Diversity and Pattern (is there a notable range of species and habitats, aspects, sequences?): The shrubland contains a diverse range of the grey shrubland species and is notable for the presence of a large number of healthy, mature tree daisies.</p>
<p>Distinctiveness/special ecological characteristics (unusual veg. & landform features, distribution limits?): The shrubland is distinctive within the ecological district for the population of Olearia within the shrubland.</p>
<p>Connectivity (how is the site connected to surrounding communities/areas?): The shrubland is connected to shrubland patches that extend through the Branch Burn catchment and down onto the Branch Burn flood plain.</p>
<p>Sustainability (does the site possess the resilience to maintain its ecological integrity and processes?): The shrubland is currently in good condition with a diverse range of mature shrubs and creepers and a predominantly closed canopy. The shrubland will continue to develop providing it remains free from inadvertent fire events.</p>
<p>Recommendation (Accept/Decline): The shrubland is a good example of vegetation that is representative of this environment. Indigenous vegetation cover in these environments is severely reduced from its original extent and less than 6% has any formal protection. It is also important as habitat for a diverse and abundant invertebrate fauna, and passerines that are critical for the maintenance of the eastern falcon present in the Branch Burn catchment. Given the high level of representativeness, rarity of quality grey shrubland in these LENZ environments, and the habitat it provides for falcon, we recommend the area should be considered for designation as a SNA.</p>

Figure 1: The area of potential significance - Branch Creek SNA D - F2D.



September 29, 2014

- Proposed Significant Natural Area
- Parcels
- Proposed Significant Natural Area



Please note the area shown is indicative and only for discussion purposes.



Figure 2: Branch Creek SNA D – Branch Burn riparian shrubland, looking north east.



Figure 3: Branch Creek SNA D - Riparian shrubland in the upper Branch Burn.