

Leslie Road Conservation Area field trip

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On 9 September 2018 fourteen botanists from the Waikato and Rotorua Botanical Societies turned out for a field trip to explore the Leslie Road Conservation Area. This field trip was arranged at short notice as a substitute for the Arnolds Bush field trip which had to be postponed due to the habitat being too wet to access.

Leslie Road Conservation Area is a 226 ha DOC-administered reserve to the east of Putaruru. It straddles several ridge and gully systems which run off the Mamaku Plateau. The area, while bordering a public road on both sides, is seldom visited and has never been botanised by either botanical society to my knowledge. The reserve is bordered by exotic pine forest (part of Kinleith Forest) on its southern and western boundaries and by farmland and a large chicken farm on its northern and eastern boundaries.

The trip started by dropping cars at the bottom (western) end of the reserve and shuttling people up Leslie Road to near the top of the reserve. Here we managed to scramble into the forest and down a steep bank into a gully. Immediately we were in large mature tawa forest. The subcanopy was dominated with pigeonwood (*Hedycarya arborea*), mahoe (*Melicactus ramiflorus*) and titoki (*Alectryon excelsus*) with abundant supplejack (*Ripogonum scandens*) throughout. The understorey appeared to be in good condition with hangehange (*Geniostoma ligustrifolium*), kanono (*Coprosma grandifolia*) and hen and chicken fern (*Asplenium bulbiferum*) abundant. We crossed the head of a damp gully where we noted abundant pole pukatea (*Laurelia novae-zelandiae*) present.

From here we scrambled up a relatively steep face mainly dominated with mamaku (*Cyathea medullaris*), eventually emerging on a flat ridge and onto a power line corridor track. The vegetation on the ridge was completely different to the gully being secondary in nature, obviously having been cleared or burnt in the past. Vegetation was predominantly (maritime pine)/kanuka-rewarewa-(*Pittosporum colensoi*) forest with local areas of tanekaha (*Phyllocladus trichomanoides*), mamaku and mangleo (*Litsea calicaris*). In the subcanopy shining karamu (*Coprosma lucida*), mapou (*Myrsine australis*), rewarewa (*Knightia excelsa*) and soft mingimingi (*Leucopogon fasciculatus*) were common. In the understorey mapou, blueberry (*Dianella nigra*), rewarewa and *Schoenus tendo* were common.



Figure 1: View from ridge through tawa forest in the reserve with exotic pine forest on distant ridge.

The powerline corridor track made a convenient access track to follow along the flat ridge as well as some open habitat which made for interesting botanising. Along the way we noted arching clubmoss (*Lycopodiella cernua*) in a sunny open spot. In other open places populations of sundew (*Drosera auriculata* and *D. binata*) were locally common along with *Lycopodium deuterodensum* and *Pomaderris amoena* – all characteristic of dry open ridges. In terms of exotic weeds Spanish heath (*Erica lusitanica*) was common along parts of the power line corridor along with occasional emergent maritime pine (*Pinus pinaster*) which is common on many of the regenerating ridges in this area. Along with areas of tanekaha some Hall's totara (*Podocarpus laetus*) was noted regenerating along the ridge on the edge of the power line corridor. Further along the ridge there were areas of taller tanekaha forest. From the ridge we could get glimpses into the gully below into areas of mature tawa-rewarewa-pukatea forest.

Eventually after following the power line corridor along the ridge in a westerly direction for some time we decided to stop in the sun and have lunch. Having decided we had done enough botanising of the secondary vegetation on the ridge it was time to make our way down off the ridge and start heading in the direction of Leslie Road

and our vehicles. We managed to find a reasonable route down off the ridge avoiding the worst of the supplejack. We were soon back in the tawa dominated forest towards the gully. It wasn't long before we came across a nikau (*Rhopalostylis sapida*) frond, eventually finding an adult and seedling. Given this site was a long way inland this was a pleasant surprise, although nikau is common in Fitzgerald Glade (Tukorehe Scenic Reserve) about 4.5 km north of here at a similar altitude – approx. 200 m.

Finally we came out in large dry gully dominated by pate (*Schefflera digitata*) in mature tawa forest. It was very open with only *Deparia petersenii* and some *Diplazium australe* common in the understorey. We followed this gully down as it was mostly easy walking except for a large tawa windfall we had to sidle up and around. Eventually we hit the edge of the blackberry vineland which is common in the gully along much of the northern edge of Leslie Road. On the forest edge we were now in a relatively open area dominated by kotukutuku (*Fuchsia excorticata*) and dense wheki-ponga (*Dicksonia fibrosa*). Unfortunately we found evidence some of the wheki-ponga had been cut and a few removed along with a fuchsia. An old fenceline was present along with *Hymenophyllum flabellatum* on wheki-ponga. In the same area were two large specimens of matai (*Prumnopitys taxifolia*) and rimu (*Dacrydium cupressinum*). We were somewhat surprised to see these so close and accessible to the road as we had generally not seen any big podocarps in the reserve to date, as presumably they had been logged out previously. A short scramble brought us out onto Leslie Road again.



Figure 2: The remaining expedition members on Leslie Road at the end of mission.

With the option of a short walk down Leslie Road to the cars parked on the edge of the reserve or a walk through the small area of reserve on southern side of Leslie Road most of the party opted for the forest walk while the remainder headed off back to their cars. Although only a small area of native forest forms part of the reserve to the south of Leslie Road this proved to be a very pleasant flat walk through some lovely tawa-(pukatea) forest. Of particular note were five large emergent rimu and a matai present. The subcanopy was dominated by mahoe with more abundant kotukutuku, kanono and wheki-ponga. The understory here had abundant hen and chicken fern, kanono and kiwakiwa (*Blechnum fluviatile*) present. After a pleasant botanise through this nice piece of forest we emerged at the bottom end of the reserve up against the cut-over pine boundary. We noted here a few mangaeo (*Litsea calicaris*) trees present on the forest edge which we had not seen elsewhere in reserve.

Back at the cars we regrouped and headed off. The general consensus was that this was an interesting area to visit with some good examples of indigenous forest typical of what you would expect on this edge of the Mamaku plateau. It was certainly an area that no one present had botanised before so it was good to finally get a species list together for the reserve.

Leslie Road Conservation Area species list

(Forest south of power-line ridge track)

J.F.F. Hobbs & C. Beard 9 September 2018

* = naturalised species

Ferns and fern allies

<i>Asplenium bulbiferum</i>	hen and chickens fern, mouku
<i>Asplenium flaccidum</i> subsp. <i>flaccidum</i>	hanging spleenwort, makawe
<i>Asplenium oblongifolium</i>	shining spleenwort, huruhuruwhenua
<i>Asplenium polyodon</i>	sickle spleenwort, petako
<i>Blechnum chambersii</i>	lance fern, nini
<i>Blechnum filiforme</i>	climbing hard fern, pānako
<i>Blechnum fluviatile</i>	kiwakiwa
<i>Blechnum membranaceum</i>	
<i>Blechnum novae-zelandiae</i>	kiokio
<i>Cyathea dealbata</i>	silver fern, ponga
<i>Cyathea medullaris</i>	black tree fern, mamaku
<i>Cyathea smithii</i>	soft tree fern, kātote
<i>Deparia petersenii</i> subsp. <i>congrua</i>	
<i>Dicksonia fibrosa</i>	whekī-ponga
<i>Dicksonia squarrosa</i>	harsh tree fern, whekī
<i>Diplazium australe</i>	southern ladyfern
<i>Hymenophyllum demissum</i>	drooping filmy fern, irirangi
<i>Hymenophyllum flabellatum</i>	fan-shaped filmy fern
<i>Lastreopsis hispida</i>	rough shield fern
<i>Leptopteris hymenophylloides</i>	single crepe fern, heruheru
<i>Loxogramme dictyopteris</i>	lance fern
<i>Lycopodiella cernua</i>	arching clubmoss
<i>Lycopodium deuterodensum</i>	puakarimu
<i>Lycopodium volubile</i>	scrambling clubmoss, waewaekoukou
<i>Microsorium pustulatum</i> subsp. <i>pustulatum</i>	hound's tongue fern, kōwaowao
<i>Microsorium scandens</i>	fragrant fern, mokimoki
<i>Paesia scaberula</i>	lace fern, mātātā
<i>Pellaea rotundifolia</i>	button fern, tarawera
<i>Pneumatopteris pennigera</i>	gully fern, pākau
<i>Polystichum vestitum</i>	prickly shield fern, pūniu
<i>Polystichum wawranum</i>	common shield fern, pikopiko
<i>Pteridium esculentum</i>	bracken, rārahu
<i>Pteris macilenta</i>	sweet fern, tarawera
<i>Pyrrosia eleagnifolia</i>	leather-leaf fern
<i>Tmesipteris elongata</i>	fork fern
<i>Tmesipteris lanceolata</i>	fork fern
<i>Tmesipteris tannensis</i>	fork fern
<i>Trichomanes venosum</i>	veined filmy fern

Gymnosperms

<i>Dacrydium cupressinum</i>	red pine, rimu
<i>Phyllocladus trichomanoides</i>	celery pine, tānekaha
* <i>Pinus pinaster</i>	maritime pine
<i>Podocarpus laetus</i>	thin-bark totara
<i>Podocarpus totara</i> var. <i>totara</i>	tōtara
<i>Prumnopitys ferruginea</i>	miro
<i>Prumnopitys taxifolia</i>	mataī

Dicotyledons

<i>Alectryon excelsus</i> subsp. <i>excelsus</i>	titoki
<i>Alseuosmia macrophylla</i>	shrubby honeysuckle, toropapa
<i>Aristolelia serrata</i>	wineberry, makomako
<i>Beilschmiedia tawa</i>	tawa
<i>Brachyglottis repanda</i> var. <i>repanda</i>	bushman's friend, rangiora
* <i>Buddleja davidii</i>	buddleia
<i>Centella uniflora</i>	centella
<i>Coprosma grandifolia</i>	large-leaved coprosma, kanono
<i>Coprosma lucida</i>	shining karamu, karamū
<i>Coprosma robusta</i>	karamū
<i>Coriaria arborea</i> var. <i>arborea</i>	tutu
<i>Drosera auriculata</i>	sundew, wahu
<i>Drosera binata</i>	forked sundew, wahu
* <i>Erica lusitanica</i>	Spanish heath
* <i>Erigeron sumatrensis</i>	broad-leaved fleabane, kāka
<i>Fuchsia excorticata</i>	tree fuchsia, kōtukutuku
<i>Gaultheria antipoda</i>	snowberry, tāwiniwini
<i>Geniostoma ligustrifolium</i> var. <i>ligustrifolium</i>	hangehange
* <i>Genista monspessulana</i>	Montpellier broom
<i>Gonocarpus incanus</i>	gonocarpus, piri-piri
<i>Griselinia lucida</i>	puka
<i>Haloragis erecta</i> subsp. <i>erecta</i>	shrubby haloragis, toatoa
<i>Hedycarya arborea</i>	pigeonwood, porokaiwhiri
* <i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	St John's wort
<i>Knightia excelsa</i>	New Zealand honeysuckle, rewarewa
<i>Kunzea robusta</i>	white tea tree, kānuka
<i>Laurelia novae-zelandiae</i>	pukatea
<i>Leptospermum scoparium</i>	teatree, mānuka
* <i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	oxeye daisy
<i>Leucopogon fasciculatus</i>	soft mingimingi, mingimingi
* <i>Leycesteria formosa</i>	Himalayan honeysuckle
<i>Litsea calicaris</i>	mangeao
* <i>Lotus pedunculatus</i>	lotus
<i>Melicytus ramiflorus</i> subsp. <i>ramiflorus</i>	whitey wood, māhoe
<i>Metrosideros diffusa</i>	white rata vine, rātā
<i>Metrosideros fulgens</i>	scarlet rata, akatawhiwhi
<i>Metrosideros perforata</i>	white rata, akatea

<i>Muehlenbeckia australis</i>	puka
* <i>Mycelis muralis</i>	wall lettuce
<i>Myrsine australis</i>	red matipo, māpou
<i>Nertera depressa</i>	stinky nertera
<i>Piper excelsum</i> subsp. <i>excelsum</i>	pepper tree, kawakawa
<i>Pittosporum colensoi</i>	Colenso's kohuhu, rautāwhiri
<i>Pomaderris amoena</i>	tauhinu
<i>Pseudopanax crassifolius</i>	lancewood, horoeka
<i>Ranunculus reflexus</i>	hairy buttercup, mārūrū
* <i>Ranunculus repens</i>	creeping buttercup
<i>Rubus cissoides</i>	bush lawyer, tātarāmoa
* <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	blackberry
<i>Schefflera digitata</i>	patē
<i>Solanum americanum</i>	small-flowered nightshade, raupeti
<i>Toronia toru</i>	toru
<i>Veronica stricta</i> var. <i>stricta</i>	hebe, koromiko
<i>Weinmannia racemosa</i>	kāmahi

Monocotyledons

<i>Astelia hastata</i>	tank lily, kahakaha
<i>Astelia trinervia</i>	kauri grass
<i>Austroderia fulvida</i>	toetoe
<i>Carex uncinata</i>	common bastard grass, kamu
<i>Cordyline australis</i>	cabbage tree, tī kōuka
<i>Cordyline banksii</i>	forest cabbage tree, tī ngahere
<i>Corybas trilobus</i>	spider orchid
* <i>Crocasmia ×crocsmiiflora</i>	montbretia
<i>Dianella nigra</i>	blueberry, turutū
<i>Drymoanthus adversus</i>	green fleshy orchid
<i>Earina mucronata</i>	spring orchid, peka-a-waka
<i>Freycinetia banksii</i>	kiekie
<i>Gahnia pauciflora</i>	cutting sedge
* <i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire fog
<i>Morelotia affinis</i>	morelotia
* <i>Paspalum dilatatum</i>	paspalum
<i>Rhopalostylis sapida</i>	nīkau
<i>Ripogonum scandens</i>	supplejack, kareao
<i>Schoenus tendo</i>	kauri sedge, wīwī

For names that you don't recognise go to

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