Dinah Wakelin
Department of Conservation
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Dunedin 9058

16 November 2015

**SUBMISSION IN SUPPORT OF OTAWA SANCTUARY AREA PROPOSAL**

We, the undersigned, fully support the proposal to give sanctuary area status to the conservation area described below and proposed to be renamed the “Otawa Sanctuary Area”.

The land is described as Parts Section 12 and Section 13 Block VIII Otanewainuku Survey District and Sections 4 and 5 SO 469336 and is 400ha in area.

**We support this change for the following reasons:**

This change in land designation from Stewardship Land to Sanctuary Area will provide vital legal protection for the unique conservation values found there.

 We support the proposed new designation as any land declared to be a Sanctuary Area under section 18AA or 18(1)of the Conservation Act 1987 is afforded protection under section 5 (b) Schedule 4 of the Crown Minerals Act 1991. Any quarrying or mining operation would pose a significant threat to the areas unique conservation values.

The land provides a critical link in the native forest that stretches from Otanewainuku to Otawa and the protection afforded by a sanctuary area designation will ensure that this forest remains intact in perpetuity.

We support the proposed new name of the site “Otawa Sanctuary Area” as proposed by the local iwi Waitaha who have a strong historical connection with the site.

The Hochstetters frog found within the proposed sanctuary is one of the world’s rarest and is ranked as Nationally Critical A(1) and is fully deserving of every protection measure it can be afforded.

This area until very recently supported kiwi and kokako and it is envisioned that these birds will once again return to the area as their populations at Otanewainuku grow and expand their distribution.

This is a rare opportunity to restore puriri forest in the developed coastal environment of the Western Bay of Plenty.

**Thank you for taking the time to consider our submission.**

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