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**VALUING COASTAL DUNES: A CASE STUDY OF THE
MANAWATU PARABOLIC DUNEFIELD**

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Abstract

Conservation areas are a public good which society derives a wide range of benefits from. Because conservation lands are public goods, they are normally provided for by the Government. The Department of Conservation is charged with the preservation and protection of all representative examples of the environment, to ensure the preservation of New Zealand's 'natural character'.

The Department of Conservation, contemplating providing conservation land, must consider whether or not the conservation potential of the land is greater than the productivity of the land. When dealing with the environment, values associated with any landscapes cannot be observed in commercial markets.

This research attempts to provide decision-makers with a way to value the potential for an area of conservation. To achieve this a Contingent Valuation Method Survey was used in the form of personal surveys to an affected farming population. These surveys were conducted to gain the willingness to pay, and the willingness to accept compensation for an area of conservation. The research also attempts to determine whether or not the current conservation estate administered by the Department of Conservation is representative of all dune types present in New Zealand.

The information and results obtained from the questionnaire showed that they could provide valuable information and in particular qualitative data concerning individual landforms. However the quantitative data that was attempting to be generated yielded less favourable responses, mainly due to respondents providing biased responses. The examination of the current conservation estate showed that the current conservation estate is unrepresentative when protecting dunelands throughout New Zealand.

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