

5. Siberia Valley – then and now

An excursion train passes through the Siberia wind protection barriers. Photo: Jordan collection, NZ Railway & Locomotive Society archives.



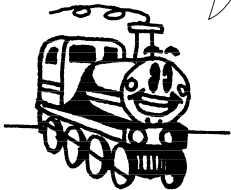
Siberia postcard, date unknown. NZ Railway & Locomotive Society archives.

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The native bush in the valley is flourishing now that goat and possum control programmes are in place. Scientists can check the health of the forest by monitoring the range of plants (from new seedlings to mature trees) and the number of birds.

- Stop and listen carefully. Count the number of birds you hear while you count slowly to 30. Repeat this activity in another area of the forest.
- Look for signs of interdependence in the forest. How do birds depend on other living things and how do birds support the forest?
 - If there were a lot of browsing animals (possums, goats) in the forest eating leaves, berries and young seedlings, how would this affect the birds in the valley?

A large rock and earth embankment once filled the gully so that trains could cross.



An artist's impression of the fatal rail accident at Siberia on 11 September 1880. Sketches of the accident were published in newspapers at the time, but the artists had not seen the accident site so they used their imagination to illustrate the accident. Photo: NZ Railway & Locomotive Society archives.

A fatal accident occurred here on 11 September 1880. A passenger/goods train was partly across the embankment when a gust of wind blew some of the wagons off the embankment—three children were killed and 13 other passengers were seriously injured.

- What safety factors do you need to consider in this area? List at least five risk management strategies that your group is following.
- Can you find any evidence of safety precautions that have been taken to protect people from the winds in this exposed area?

