

INA_36 – Big River (0.4215 ha)

Protected Area(s)	Area (ha)	NaPALIS #	# of Primary Parcels
Conservation Area – Big River	0.4215	2807498	1

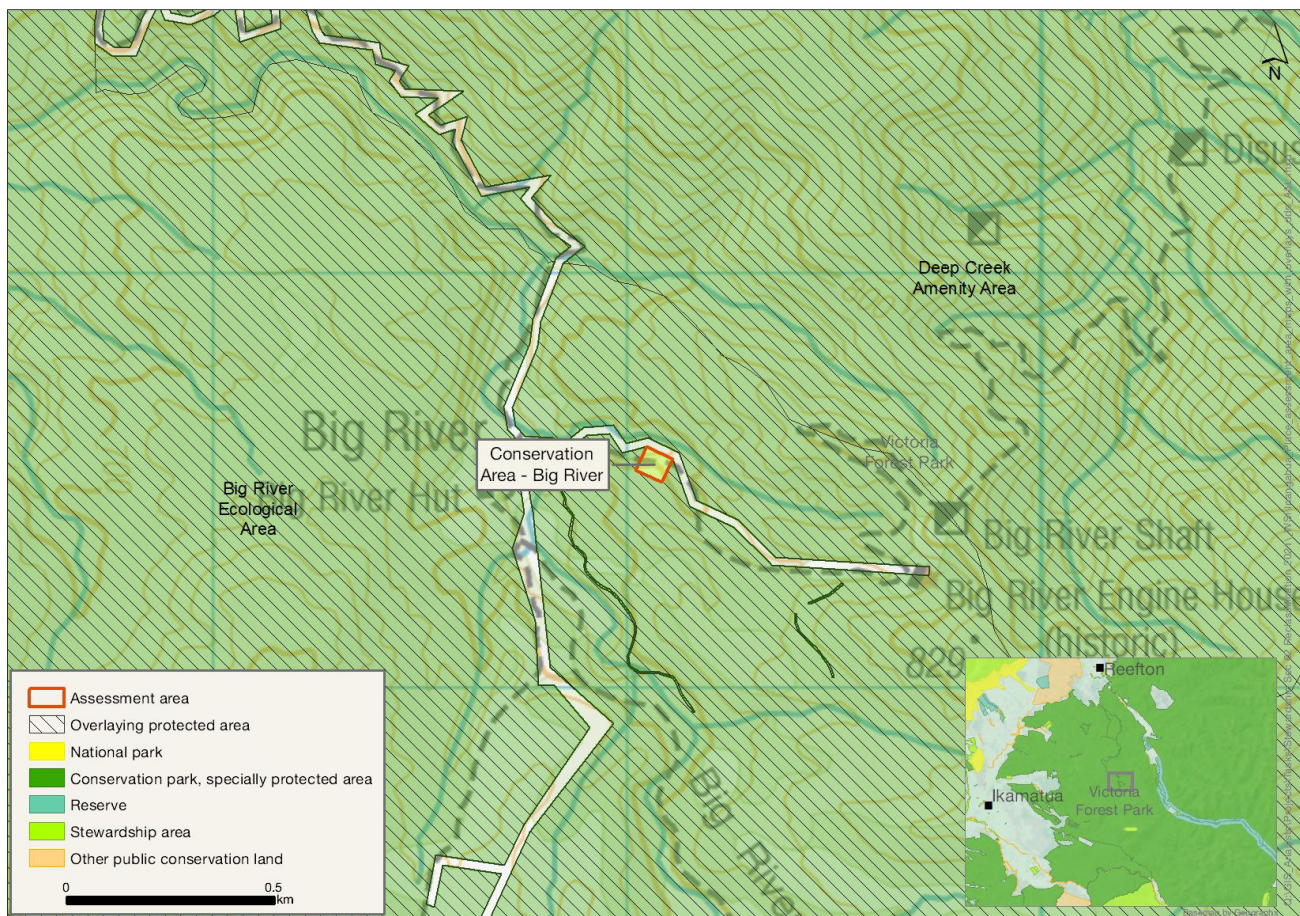
Location

At Big River in the middle of Victoria Forest Park and Ecological Area, approximately 14 km south of Reefton in a direct line.

Brief Description

A small rectangle of land next to a legal road and surrounded by Victoria Forest Park. Its historical values lie in its association with the successful quartz, coalmining and sawmilling operations that occurred at Big River, and the historic school site. There are no at-risk or threatened species recorded, and the area could be a habitat for lizards, invertebrates and native birds. This is a 0.4 ha area on the walking track between Big River Hut and Big River Engine House, visited by people exploring the history of Big River. There is no watercourse. No permissions in place.

Map



Ngāi Tahu Values and Interests

Mo tātou, a, mo ka uri, a muri ake nei – for us and our children after us

From the preliminary desk top assessments, there do not appear to be any site specific Ngāi Tahu values identified. However, there is a deep connection between Ngāi Tahu and all of the whenua in the Ngāi Tahu takiwā, and the absence of site-specific values in the preliminary analysis does not detract from that connection, nor does it confirm that site specific values are not present. Further, a section 4 Conservation Act and Te Tiriti principles perspective is required as well, and it may be that areas of land are significant to Ngāi Tahu from that broader perspective. To avoid doubt, nothing in the proposed classification affects, limits or derogates from the rangatiratanga of Ngāi Tahu over its takiwā, including in relation to freshwater; and/or any other rights or interests Ngāi Tahu may have.

Ecological Values

Representativeness

According to the topographic map, this tiny area sits over a track, but the aerial image shows that the road is to the north. There is a moderate level of naturalness, with broken forest cover and old mining infrastructure. As the area has been modified for mining it is not representative of the indigenous values in the wider ecological district. This area is very small, and is close to the riparian zone of small tributaries of Big River, which is in turn a tributary to Grey River/Māwheranui. The catchment appears to retain the majority of its indigenous forestry values. Despite several walking tracks, roads, a few huts and mines, this area does appear to contain a high level of naturalness. No watercourses go through the area but the wider catchment has high predicted water quality.

Diversity and pattern

Moderate diversity and pattern, and part of a more intact large forest system. No freshwater values.

Rarity and distinctiveness

No at-risk or threatened species recorded. It could be a habitat for lizards, invertebrates and native birds from time to time. The land environment is Less Reduced and Better Protected.

Ecological context

This is a 0.4 ha area on the walking track between Big River Hut and Big River Engine House (Historic). It is part of the Totara Ecological District and the Victoria Forest Park and Big River ecological areas. There are no species or ecological management units close by. There are no freshwater values present.

Recreation Values

Setting

This area is at Big River Historic Settlement and mine, and is adjacent to Victoria Forest Park. The area is beside the 4WD road that provides access to the Big River Winding Shed and poppet head. The area is in a Backcountry-remote zone, with no tracks or facilities, but it is associated with the historic school site.

Visitor type and activities typically undertaken

People exploring the history of Big River.

Access

Access via the 4WD road to Big River Winding shed.

Heritage Values

Historical overview

The area is on the edge of the settlement associated with Big River Mine, which operated 1882–1942 and was one of the district's longest lasting and most successful enterprises. Although small by comparison with other mines in the Inangahua gold field, it often outperformed them in financial returns to shareholders. Operations were at their peak 1907–1924, and over 100 people lived in the isolated settlement. Big River never developed a town proper. Workers and their families lived in houses and huts scattered around the mine working areas. There were also at least three boarding houses.

Sites recorded

Old School Site (Equipment No. 100053706)

Category I Listed historic place (7762)

Heritage values

This area contains the remains of one of the companies' boarding houses that was later used as a school house. Its historical values lie in its association with the quartz and coalmining and sawmilling operations occurring at Big River. These operations were particularly important during the depressed period of the early 1890s, when it was a mainstay of the field and a noted producer in 1907–17, when most of the old established mines had closed or were in decline. The area falls within the Heritage New Zealand Category I listed historic place.

Modifying factors

The condition of the structure itself is poor and it is now largely an archaeological site. However, it is part of a heritage landscape that has high integrity as reflected in its Category I heritage listing.

Permissions Summary

None recorded.

Map (aerial photo)

