

MAW_53 – Hohonu Forest (10578.67 ha)

Protected Area(s)	Area (ha)	NaPALIS #	# of Primary Parcels
Conservation Area - Hohonu Forest	10,578.67	2806524	19

Location

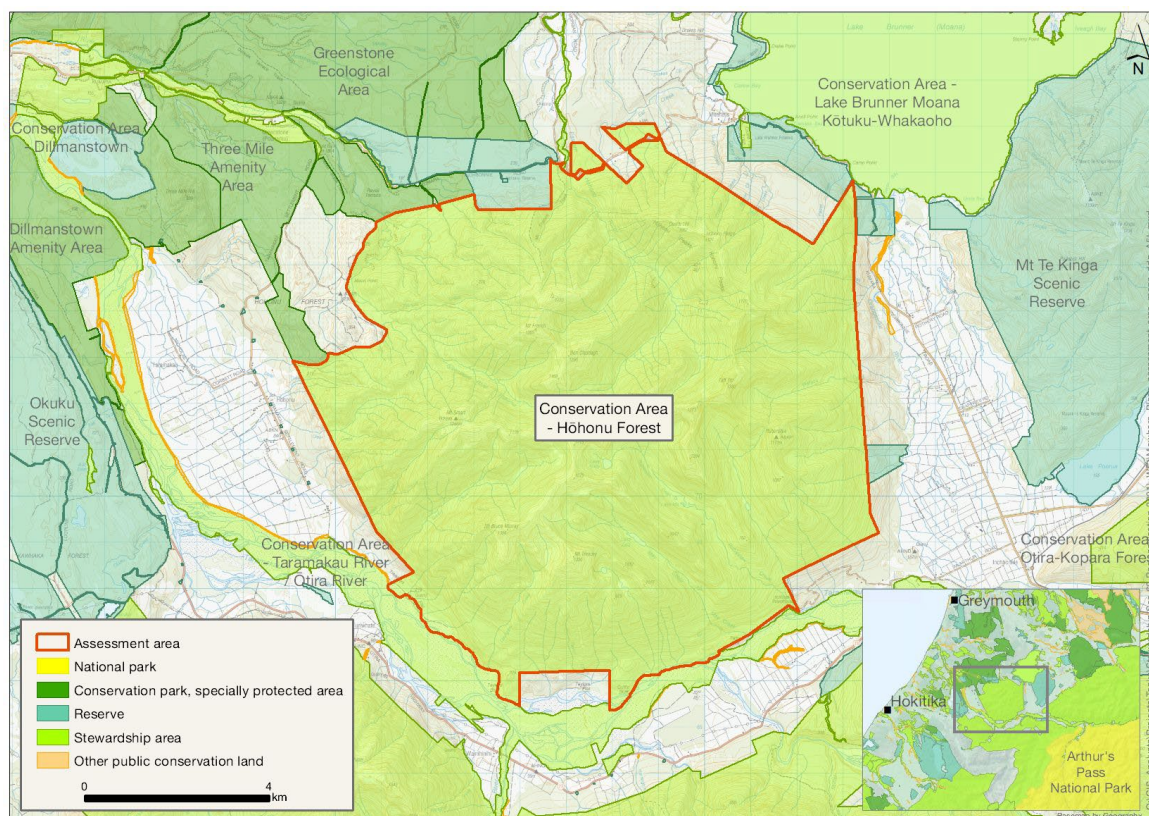
Hohonu Range, north of Taramakau River and south-west of Lake Brunner/Moana Kōtuku-Whakaoho.

Brief Description

A large block of forest based around the Hohonu Range between Taramakau River and Lake Brunner/Moana Kōtuku-Whakaoho, accessible in the north from Kumara Inchbonnie Road. The area is large, extending from lowland conifer-broadleaved into montane conifer-broadleaved forest and subalpine shrubland, into alpine snow tussockland. The area is largely intact with limited human modification. Also present are lakes (including lakes Ruby and Julia), wetlands and numerous streams.

This area is significant to Ngāi Tahu – it features in a Poutini Ngāi Tahu pounamu legend, and is an ara tawhito (traditional travel route). The Mt French tramping track provides access to the open tops and the area is known by hunters as being a good site for hunting chamois. There are other more local tracks. There are archaeological sites associated with the gold rushes of the 1860s and beyond. Concessions include an easement for a hydropower scheme, a grazing licence for grazing and silage, an accommodation licence for a bach, and a telecommunications licence.

Map



Ngāi Tahu Values and Interests

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

There is a deep connection between Ngāi Tahu and all of the whenua in the Ngāi Tahu takiwā. A section 4 Conservation Act and Te Tiriti principles perspective is required, 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.

This area is significant to Ngāi Tahu as the maunga Ōhonu (Hohonu) features in a Poutini Ngāi Tahu pounamu legend, which holds that the Tairea Waka was carried up here on a tidal wave and deposited upon Ōhonu. This explains the pounamu found in the adjacent creeks.

Tarahanga e Toru – Three Passes

The narrative that follows applies to Conservation Areas MAW_09, MAW_44, MAW_53, HOK_01 (in part), HOK_03, HOK_05 (in part) and HOK_19 (in part) as they are all linked by pounamu traditions ki uta ki tai (from the mountains to the sea).

From the snowy peaks to the sea waters of the taniwha Poutini, the central West Coast is of immense significance to Poutini Ngāi Tahu. From the earliest times, pounamu was the reason for settlement on Te Tai o Poutini and this central region is the heart of Poutini Ngāi Tahu legends, customs and traditions.

Every foot of this region was explored, named and utilised. The mountains are criss-crossed by pounamu trails connecting the pā of Arahura, Taramakau and Māwhera with the great Ngāi Tahu trading centre of Kaiapoi Pā. Three passes in particular were lifelines for Poutini Ngāi Tahu as trading routes for pounamu and kai in times of war and peace.

Rakimaurikura, the alpine crossing at the head of the Taramakau (Harpers Pass) was the easiest and favourite route. It started at the great pounamu pā at the mouth of the Taramakau, crossing over to Kōtukuwhakaoko (Lake Brunner) via the Ōhonu (Greenstone Creek) to avoid the swift rapids, re-emerging in the Taramakau valley at the foot of Kaimatau (Mt Alexander) – a tohu whenua or notable landmark visible from all over the Taramakau and inland Grey Valley as a beacon for travellers. Whakamoemoe was the resting place just before ascending or descending the pass.

Another important trail follows the Kokatahi (Styx River) into the Arahura headwaters and then across Te Tarahanga o Kaniere (Brownings Pass, also known as Nōti Raureka). This trail has carried 500 years of pounamu trading and numerous water parties since the first footsteps of Raureka, who innocently disclosed the path up the Kokatahi.

The next great alpine route is up the Ahaura River and over Amuri Pass for a more direct route to Kaiapoi Pā, and was favoured by war parties, including Tuhuru. This route was marked by another tohu whenua, Mt Whakarewa.

These three pathways are also markers in the 1860 Arahura Deed of Purchase with the Crown.

The varied and plentiful mahinga kai resources in this area supported pā and kainga nohoanga (temporary settlements) throughout the region, and were critical to the success of the pounamu pathways. Ngāi Tahu tīpuna had vast knowledge of these resources, their availability and sustainable practices for their use.

Pounamu legends associated with this area abound, from the hills of Ōhonu (Hohonu Range) to Turiwhate, the entire Arahura and environs, including Kawhaka, Tuhua, Timuaki, Raparapahoe, Mt Tara o Tama (the great mountain of the pounamu explorer Tama Ahua) and as far as Mt Kaniere (Mt Harman), named for sawing the pounamu. These places are all remembered in whakapapa, waiata and oral histories.

Ōhonu was frequently prospected for pounamu by Poutini Ngāi Tahu, and it was this that led to the accidental discovery of gold by Poutini Ngāi Tahu within the bed of Ohonu Creek (Greenstone Creek) that led directly to the great West Coast gold rush.

War parties trod these lands, and battles for ascendancy of this taonga see-sawed at Kokatahi, Kaniere, Māhinapua, Arahura and Kōtukuwhakaoko. Brunner and Heaphy, the first Pakeha explorers, found a thriving pounamu pā at the mouth of the Taramakau at the head of the lagoon Ohinerata, and from here, jewellery, hei tiki and mere were expertly crafted and then traded up the coastline to Whakatu (Nelson) and across the Taramakau to Kaiapoi. Historical and contemporary associations with pounamu are integral to Poutini Ngāi Tahu identity.

Poutini Ngāi Tahu ancestors and their stories are literally embedded in this landscape and the immense historical, spiritual and cultural significance of this area cannot be understated. The Kokatahi, Arahura, Taramakau and Ahaura catchments, along with Kōtukuwhakaoko, are inextricably linked and integral to Poutini Ngāi Tahu history and identity. Parts of this cultural landscape have been recognised through provisions in the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998, including Statutory Acknowledgements for the Taramakau River and Kōtukuwhakaoko.

The reclassification of these lands must recognise and provide for the ability for Ngāi Tahu whānui to reconnect to their ancestral lands, provide for the mana and rangatiratanga of Ngāi Tahu and to exercise kaitiakitanga and mahinga kai, as well as the protection of natural and historic resources.

Ecological Values

Representativeness

The area is large, extending from lowland conifer-broadleaved into montane conifer-broadleaved forest and subalpine shrubland, into alpine snow tussockland. The area is largely intact with limited human modification. The area is largely within the Brunner Ecological District but extends into the Hokitika Ecological District.

There are numerous small waterways, high level of representation predicted naturalness.

Diversity and pattern

The area extends from lowland conifer-broadleaved into montane conifer-broadleaved forest and subalpine shrubland, into alpine snow tussockland giving a high level of diversity and pattern. Also present are lakes (including lakes Ruby and Julia), wetlands and numerous streams. The area contains four level 6 land environments.

Rarity and distinctiveness

The area contains intact vegetation sequences from c. 80–1356 m. The herb *Gratiola concinna* (Nationally Endangered) and the Westland greenhood orchid (*Pterostylis cernua*) (Naturally Uncommon) have been recorded in nearby areas and so may be present. The area is totally within Hohonu Ecological Management Unit, which is a sequence of lowland to montane conifer-broadleaved forest and scrub occupying a dissected granite outlier west of the alpine fault. It includes a number of hanging valleys with small lakes and wetlands, particularly on the southern flanks.

There is likely excellent freshwater habitat with numerous small streams, swamp wetland and one fen identified. No fish surveys have been undertaken in the assessment area but directly adjacent are records of brown trout (*Salmo Trutta*) (sports fish), longfin eel (*Anguilla dieffenbachii*), kōaro (*Galaxias brevipinnis*), giant kōkopu (*Galaxias argenteus*) (all At Risk: Declining), dwarf galaxias (*Galaxias divergens*), kōura (freshwater crayfish, *Paranephrops planifrons*), common bully (*Gobiomorphus cotidianus*) and upland bully (West Coast)

(*Gobiomorphus breviceps*) (all Not Threatened). Given the connectedness of waterways and short distance there is a strong likelihood they are also using the waterways in this parcel.

Ecological context

The area contains intact vegetation sequences from c. 80–1356 m. The area adjoins the Taramakau River/Ōtira River Conservation Area to the south and the Hohonu, Lake Brunner and Orangipuku River scenic reserves to the north and east. The assessment area covers the majority of Hohonu Range, and Taramakau River runs around the southern side with many of the tributaries of this assessment area feeding the Taramakau.

The repeater on Mt French includes DOC's channel 3 network. There are intake pipes from two tributaries of Ruberslaw Stream that feed the Inchbonnie hydropower station.

Powelliphanta fletcheri has recently been identified on Mt Smart from genetic material from a live snail. The population is present around the leatherwood scrub (tūpare, *Olearia colensoi*) forest throughout the range. Kea (*Nestor notabilis*) and kākā (*Nestor meridionalis*) are known from Hohonu Forest, fernbird (mātātā, *Bowdleria punctata*) are prolific in the subalpine scrub, and kākārīki (yellow-crowned parakeet, *Cyanoramphus auriceps*) and long-tailed cuckoo (koekoeā, *Eudynamys taitensis*) are often present in the forest. Kiwi have previously been found on the tops but there are no recent records. Whio (Blue Duck, *Hymenolaimus malacorhynchos*) have been recorded in the lower Eastern Hohonu River and are possibly present in the Hokonui and Smart Creek.

The tops used to be grazed by sheep farmers, with old rock stacks to divert sheep when they used to travel the tops. There is an old, marked track that goes off the tops of Mt Treacey and an old rock bivy is found in the head of Smart Creek catchment and is irregularly used by travellers – an old hut book style “intentions” book is present there. The rock can be identified as the largest rock in the aerial imagery.

Recreation Values

Setting

This area is located south of Kumara Inchbonnie Road and includes a large area of Hohonu Range. It is managed as both a Backcountry-remote zone and a remote zone. The DOC-managed Mt French Track provides tramping access to the open tops near Mt French and the area below is steep and remote without facilities. There is also a track beside Eastern Hohonu River, another old Forest Service track to Mt Smart and two routes that are recognised locally, but not mapped or regularly maintained.

Visitor type and activities typically undertaken

People undertaking a day tramp and hunters. The Hohonu Range is a great recreation hunting area for chamois.

Access

Access from Kumara Inchbonnie Road.

Heritage Values

Sites recorded

Three recorded archaeological sites:

- K32/22 The Hohonu Diamond Terrace Company race, the Eastern Hohonu water race and the Little Hohonu water race
- K32/21 Māori Point gold workings
- K32/23 Erin-go-Bragh Water race

Historical overview

At the edge of this area is the Greenstone goldfield where gold was first discovered at the mouth of the Greenstone/Hohonu River by Ihaia Tainui and his colleagues Neri and Whitau, who received an award of £1000 for the discovery of the first goldfield on the West Coast. It was not rushed, however, until 1864 when coarse gold was found near Revell Terrace. This began a 75-year period of continuous mining along the river.

By late 1864 the claims extended almost continuously from Māori Point on Revell Terrace down to the Taramakau. These were being worked by about 300 miners including Māori families and Chinese parties. Like all the West Coast rushes, miners very quickly moved on after the initial enthusiasm, although by 1868 interest had revived again focused on Argus Terrace on the south bank of the river opposite Dukes Terrace. Within a few weeks discoveries on the Duke of Edinburgh Terrace precipitated a new rush and by the early 1870s this was the heart of the field.

The township of Greenstone was first established on the north side of the river at Shed Flat at the foot of the gold workings and by early 1869 the population was estimated at 1500–2000 people. Mining on the flat threatened the town and indeed the section of the township on the northern side of the river was completely obliterated by tailings from Dukes Terrace and erosion by 1877.

Like many of the goldfields, an adequate and reliable water supply was an issue, and much effort went into the construction of water races, particularly over the period 1869–1870. One of the biggest of these races was the Erin-go-Bragh (Ireland Forever) from the main branch of Hohonu River below Revell Terrace to Argus Terrace in 1869, extended to Quinns and Hayes Terraces in 1878 and finally to Paynes Gully in 1884.

Mining continued in sporadic bursts through into the 1930s. Rushes occurred at Quinns and Paynes terraces in 1877–78 and Cape Terrace in 1879. In 1910 the government stepped into support mining operations, which saw the extension of the Kumara water race across the Taramakau through the laying of an inverted siphon across the riverbed to provide additional water to Hayes and Quinns terraces. This significant feat was opened in 1912. This can be regarded as one of the greatest achievements in New Zealand gold mining history although somewhat paradoxical in that it was transporting water from a tributary of Arahura River while the Taramakau was untapped. This system was not without its problems however, and the siphon was replaced by a pipe bridge in 1915. By 1925, maintenance costs were such that following a major break it was not repaired.

Interest in dredging the river began in 1898 and four dredges worked the river 1901–1913. The last major dredge was the Kaniere Gold Dredging Company which started work along the south bank of the Hohonu in 1956. It then worked along the Hohonu and into the Taramakau until 1982.

Sawmilling in the valley began about 1868. By 1920 large areas on both sides of Hohonu River had been surveyed off as timber reserves and sawmill areas.

Heritage values

The Greenstone goldfield at the edge of this assessment area has high historical significance as the first West Coast field to have been discovered, and although returns in some of the subsequent fields were higher, it lasted longer than many of them. During its life it saw almost every method of alluvial mining from early cradling and sluice boxes, to paddocking, tunnelling and ground sluicing claims at its peak, and later hydraulic sluicing and steam dredging.

The site at Māori Point has high archaeological and technical values as a good example of early small claim mining techniques including hand stacked tailings, deep tail races and tunnels.

Modifying factors

The Māori Point workings have high representative value of early small claim mining techniques as most others have been destroyed by flooding, large scale hydraulic operations and dredging. Only a small section of the water races is likely to be within the northwestern margins of this area, although the intake for the Erin-go-Bragh race was in the vicinity of Māori Point. There are almost certainly further unrecorded archaeological sites within this assessment area.

Permissions summary

- An easement for a Hydropower scheme in the Hohonu Range near Inchbonnie
- A grazing licence for grazing and planting crops for silage within part of the Taramakau River bed
- An accommodation licence for a bach on the lower side of the Mitchells/Greenstone Road, 3 km southwest from Mitchells
- A telecommunications licence for a telecommunication site on Mt French

Map (aerial photo)

