

## MAW\_11 – Ahaura Riverbed (1923.9693 ha)

Protected Area(s)	Area (ha)	NaPALIS #	# of Primary Parcels
Conservation Area - Ahaura Riverbed	452.2296	2806799	8
Conservation Area - Orwell Creek	0.4044	2806800	1
Conservation Area - Ahaura Riverbed	771.8947	2807514	1
Conservation Area - Ahaura River	699.4406	2807515	4

### Location

Ahaura Riverbed upstream (to the south-east) of Ahaura.

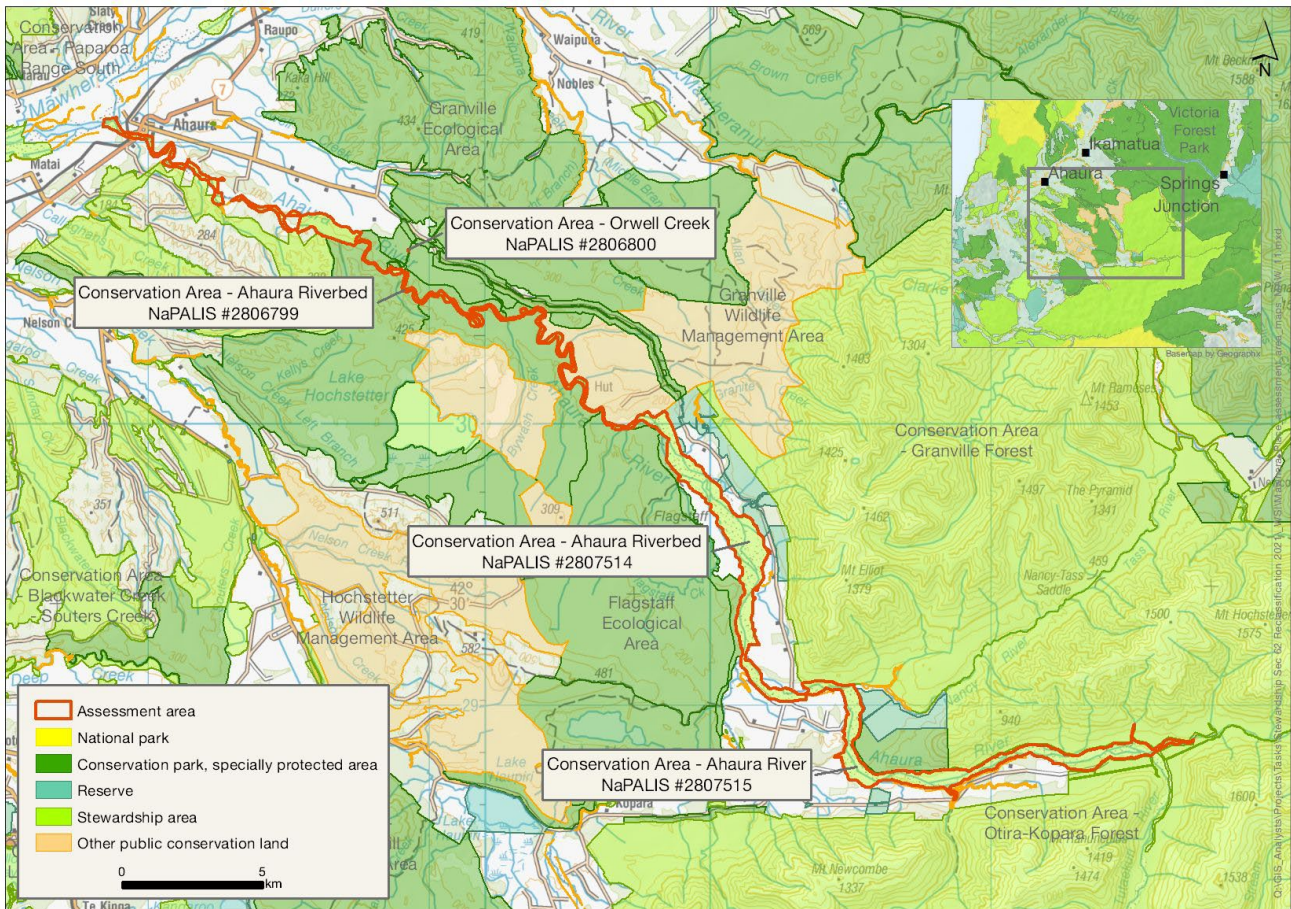
### Brief Description

A substantial section of the active channel and riparian habitat of Ahaura River, one of the main tributaries of Grey River/Māwheranui. The assessment area specifically focuses on riverine habitats and is predominantly nestled amongst other public conservation land in its headwaters and mid-sections, including multiple ecological areas. There is a Water Conservation Order at the head of river, predominantly for scenic values.

The recorded archaeological sites represent Māori and Pākēha use of Ahaura River. The community manages and maintains the 4-bunk Jim's Flat Hut, and DOC maintains road access to it. Other recreation uses include jetboating, rafting, hunting and fishing. Minerals prospecting permits intersect part of this area at two locations. There is some gold mining interest in flats in the lower part. Concessions include easements for a powerline, an access arrangement, gravel extraction and grazing.

There has been past interest in a land exchange with an adjacent landowner – there are reports on file and owner is still interested.

# 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

This parcel of land covers a substantial length (>55 km) of the active channel and riparian habitat of Ahaura River, a major tributary of Grey River/Māwheranui. It covers large areas of braided riverbed and forested terraces and islands. The parcel specifically focuses on riverine habitats and is predominantly nestled amongst other public conservation land in its headwaters and mid-sections, including multiple ecological areas. It also flows adjacent to an extensive area of wetlands downstream of Flagstaff Hill. There is a high level of naturalness

predicted, and the considerable area of public conservation land that borders this parcel indicates a high level of catchment naturalness.

## Diversity and pattern

High diversity and pattern, braided river ecosystems (channels, gravel islands), forested islands and terraces.

There are numerous records of freshwater fish and kōura (freshwater crayfish, *Paranephrops planifrons*) within this stretch of Ahaura River: longfin eel (*Anguilla dieffenbachii*), dwarf galaxias (*Galaxias divergens*) and kōaro (*Galaxias brevipinnis*) (all At Risk: Declining), upland bully (West Coast) (*Gobiomorphus breviceps*), redfin bully (*Gobiomorphus huttoni*) and common bully (*Gobiomorphus cotidianus*) (Not threatened) and brown trout (*salmo trutta*) (introduced).

## Rarity and distinctiveness

The braided river ecosystem is classified as Endangered. It is habitat for freshwater fish, birds, lizards, and invertebrates. The area includes Acutely Threatened, Chronically Threatened and At Risk land environments. Black-billed gulls (tarāpuka, *Larus bulleri*) (Nationally Critical) have been observed at the confluence with Grey River/Māwheranui. Great spotted kiwi (roroa, *Apteryx maxima*) (Nationally Vulnerable) is recorded at one location, from the 2010s. There are multiple freshwater species of conservation concern (see under diversity and pattern), and the river will provide high quality habitat throughout much of its length within this assessment area.

## Ecological context

This area (1954 ha) consists of several parcels of land covering the Ahaura River bed and terraces. Part of the area is adjacent to the 1.1 EMU Hochstetter (Prescription #300562). Minerals prospecting permits intersect part of this area at two locations, and there is active grazing permit within the riverbed at Flagstaff Flat. It covers three ecological districts (Totara Flat, Hope and Hochstetter).

This assessment area is contiguous with multiple blocks of public conservation land, beginning with the MAW\_10 area, then Flagstaff, Lake Hochstetter, Granville and Nancy's Clearing ecological areas, and Granville Wildlife Management Area. There is a small amount of private farmland that fringes the parcel near Haupiri, and downstream near the township of Ahaura. It covers diverse riverine habitats that are ecologically important. Approximately half of the parcel covers an Acutely Threatened land environment.

There is a Water Conservation Order at the head of river predominantly for scenic values, from Starvation Point (Hamers Flat, Neds Hut) down to the bottom of the gorge just above Ahaura township.

There is considerable gorse in the lower reaches.

There has been past interest in a land exchange with an adjacent landowner – there are reports on file and owner is still interested. There is some gold mining interest in flats in the lower part.

## Recreation Values

### Setting

These areas extend from the Ahaura Road bridge up Ahaura River to Jim's Flat and then continue up Ahaura River to Waikiti Downs and the confluence of Tūtaekurī River. The area is in a Backcountry-remote zone. The

community manages and maintains the 4-bunk Jim's Flat Hut. The Department maintains road access to this hut from Ahaura-Kopara Road.

The small Orwell Creek area is located away from the river and surrounded by the Ahaura Terraces Ecological Area. Ahaura River is adjacent to a mix and number of different land statuses including the Ahaura River Amenity Area, Ahaura Terraces, Lake Hochstetter and Nancy's Clearing ecological areas, Granville Wildlife Management Area, Kopara and Haupiri scenic reserves and Otira-Kopara Stewardship Area. The areas above Jim's Flat are also beside farmland.

## **Visitor type and activities typically undertaken**

Jetboaters, hunters and fishers use Ahaura River. People can drive to Jim's Flat Hut and stay and raft down the river. The river areas above Jim's Flat are less likely to be used for recreation as they are adjacent to developed farmland.

## **Access**

Access using jetboat or a long drive up Ahaura-Kopara Road. The upper reaches of the Ahaura River are access via Haupiri Road.

## **Heritage Values**

### **Historical overview**

### **Sites recorded**

- K31/4 findspot of two partly polished pieces of stone found during cultivation
- K31/165 embankment associated with the original 19th century Ahaura Bridge
- K31/90 several discrete areas of gold sluicing, stacked tailings, tail races, piping, sluice faces, hut site, and water race. Reported as Passene's Claims

### **Heritage values**

The recorded archaeological sites represent both Māori and Pākēha use of Ahaura River. The bridge embankment constitutes the remains of an important piece of transportation infrastructure which would have made the river crossing much less hazardous.

### **Modifying factors**

The bridge embankment has been modified by the construction of the modern bridge. The goldmining features are all in bush and likely to be in reasonable condition.

## **Permissions summary**

- Easement concession for a powerline - Reefton to Dobson line (Ahaura Riverbed)
- Non-notified easement for access across the conservation area - Ahaura Riverbed to reach Access Arrangement
- Non-notified permit for gravel extraction and river diversion of Ahaura River adjacent to freehold land
- Non-notified grazing for Flagstaff Flat, adjacent to Ahaura River
- Grazing licence, non-notified, for Waikiti Downs, Ahaura

## Map (aerial photo)

