

KAR_15 – Little Wanganui River Wangapeka Road (51.8257 ha)

Protected Areas	Area (ha)	NAPALIS #	# of Primary Parcels
Conservation Area - Little Wanganui River	51.8257	2807699	1

Location

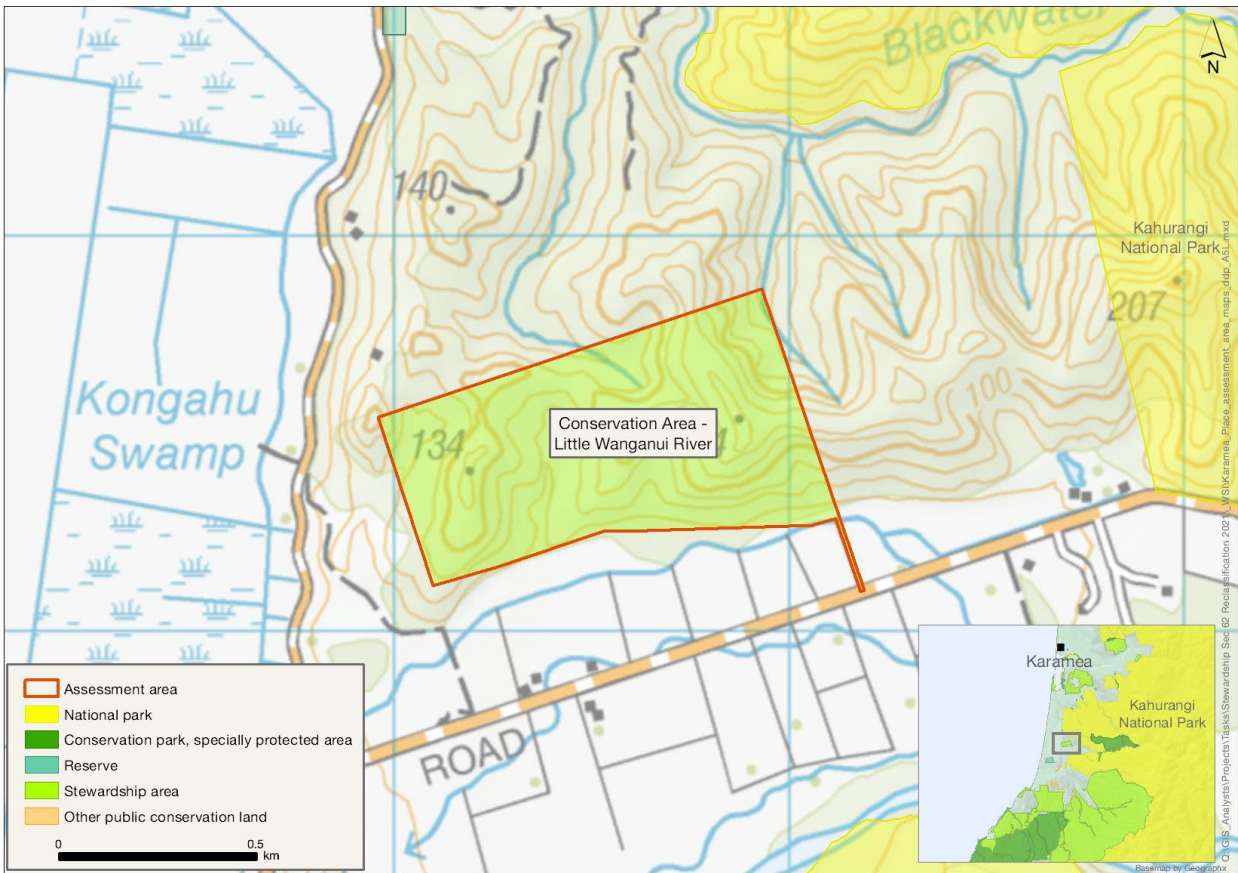
North of Wangapeka Road approximately 1 km east of the intersection with Kongahu Swamp Road, south of Karamea.

Brief Description

Indigenous forest block with a narrow strip at the south-eastern end providing access to Wangapeka Road. Otherwise isolated from public conservation land. This assessment area covers two small peaks in the hill country bordering the Karamea Plains. It likely supports a full suite of common forest bird species and threatened and at-risk birds, and possibly geckos typical of the ecological district.

There is a history of use and settlement, including by Ngāi Tahu, European sealers, gold miners and saw millers. There is little current recreational use.

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 assessment area covers two small peaks in the hill country bordering the Karamea Plains. The underlying geology is of the Upper Blue Bottom Group mudstone with well drained Matiri Hill soils under indigenous forest likely to include northern rātā (*Metrosideros robusta*), beech (tawhai, *Fuscopora* and *Lophozonia*), rimu (*Dacrydium cupressinum*) and broadleaved species. The area is on the border of developed farmland and indigenous forest and has likely suffered modifications from common exotic mammalian pest species. There appears to be a mix of intact native canopy and regenerating vegetation cover. It is a good representative site within the ecological district with moderate naturalness values. It likely supports a full suite of common forest bird species and threatened and at-risk birds, and possibly geckos typical of the ecological district.

Diversity and pattern

The area has a heterogenous topography with gullies and low peaks, three ridges and northwest and southeast facing slopes. A small north running tributary of Blackwater Creek has its headwaters within this area. It likely has a moderate diversity of indigenous plants and is known for its high avifauna values.

Rarity and distinctiveness

There are no known threatened or at-risk plant species records from the area. As a large area of forest in this ecological district, it will support threatened and at-risk avifauna such as kea (*Nestor notabilis*), kākā (*Nestor meridionalis*) and kārearea (New Zealand falcon, *Falco novaeseelandiae*). The land environment classification (Leathwick et al. 2002) indicates that over 80% of this land environment is in indigenous vegetation within public conservation land in the ecological district.

The intact tall forest in this area likely supports the local populations of common and uncommon forest bird species which occur in high numbers in this ecological district (Morse 1982), for example weka (*Gallirallus australis*), fantail (pīwakawaka, *Rhipidura fuliginosa*), tūī (*Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae*), bellbird (*korimako*, *Anthornis melanura*), kārearea, kea, tomtit (ngirungiru, *Petroica macrocephala*), South Island robin (toutouwai, *Petroica australis australis*) and kererū (New Zealand pigeon, *Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*). It is in the distributional range of threatened kea (Nationally Endangered), kākā (Nationally Vulnerable) and great spotted kiwi (roroa, *Apteryx*

maxima) (Nationally Vulnerable). The threatened long-tailed bat (*Chalinolobus tuberculatus*) (Nationally Critical) has been recorded within the nearby area and may use this habitat.

Ecological context

The regular polygon of 51 ha is adjacent to large areas of indigenous forest. It is surrounded by freehold land and contributes to the scenic value of the approach to the Wangapeka Track. This area appears to have suffered little disturbance from the 2014 Cyclone Ita event.

Recreation Values

Setting

This area is a Backcountry-remote zone. There are no tracks or facilities within this area.

Visitor type and activities typically undertaken

The area is likely to receive little recreation use.

Access

Legal access is available from the Wangapeka Road, but there is no easy physical access to the area.

Heritage Values

Historical overview

The Little Wanganui area was occupied intermittently by Ngāi Tahu, and later by European sealers in 1836 and gold miners in 1864. Organised settlement started in the 1870s, helped by a government settlement scheme. In the early 1900s there were monthly arrivals of supply ships from Westport, which would continue on to Karamea to load up on butter, timber, and flax. By the 1920s there were several sawmills in the area, serviced by a busy port.

Before World War One, families had begun to settle in the remote upriver areas of Wangapeka Valley and Blue Duck Creek. Wangapeka children walked to school in Little Wanganui, several miles away, until a schoolhouse was built in 1921. In the 1930s, the Marris and Wollett sawmill began operating in the valley, but the population of Wangapeka gradually fell until the school closed in 1935. At Blue Duck Creek, children attended a Household School from 1917 until a schoolhouse was built. On 17 June 1929 the magnitude 7.3 Murchison earthquake struck the area, causing extensive slips and damage to buildings. A huge natural dam formed in the Little Wanganui gorge and burst three months later. The flood of mud and boulders destroyed 4 miles of road and numerous structures, but caused no loss of life.

Sites recorded

None recorded.

Heritage values

No value statement possible.

Modifying factors

None recorded.

Permissions summary

None recorded.

Map (aerial photo)

