

KAR_17 – Little Wanganui River Flats (37.2321 ha)

Protected Areas	Area (ha)	NAPALIS #	# of Primary Parcels
Conservation Area - Little Wanganui River	13.967	2807700	5
Conservation Area - Little Wanganui River	23.2651	2807723	4

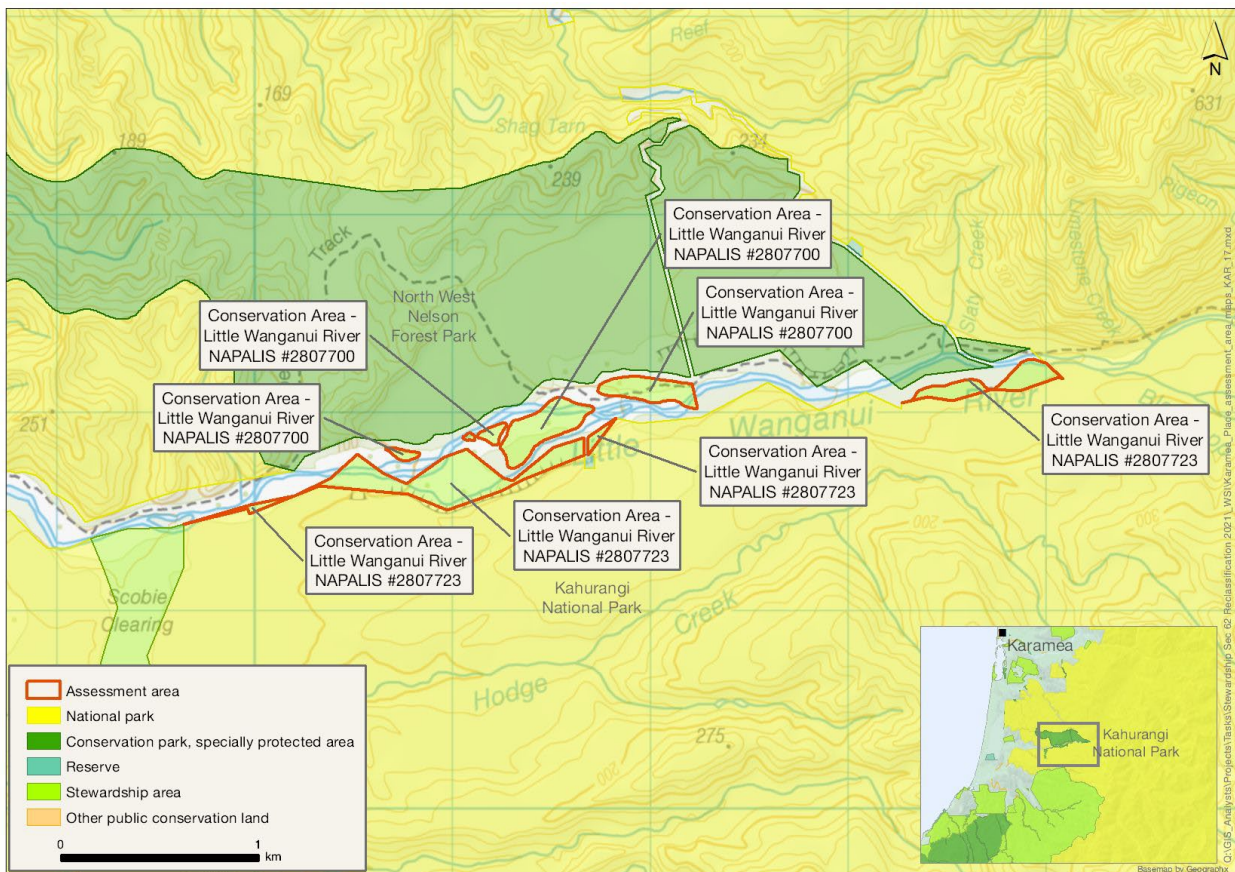
Location

The Little Wanganui River flats are 2-3 km upstream of the end of Wangapeka Road in the Karamea Ecological District.

Brief Description

Several discrete parcels of land along the Little Wanganui River flats, traversed in one part by the Wangapeka Track, which is managed as a Backcountry Destination for Remote Seekers. Little Wanganui River is in its natural state and is supported by surrounding native forest. There is a history of use and settlement, including by Ngāi Tahu, European sealers, gold miners and saw millers.

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

The assessment area is made up of several discrete primary land parcels bordering and including stretches of Little Wanganui River in the Karamea Ecological District. It is underlain by recent soils that are well drained but only moderately fertile. The assessment area's vegetation is modified mixed podocarp (*Podocarpaceae* and *Phyllocladaceae*)/broadleaved/beechn (*Fuscopora* and *Lophozonia*) forest. It appears to be dominated by tree ferns (ponga, *Cyathea* and *Dicksonia*), shrubs and small trees with occasional mature trees which appear to include northern rātā (*Metrosideros robusta*). The area is likely dominated by native plant species but also includes a number of common pest plant species such as gorse and broom and common adventive pasture grasses and forbes.

The assessment area contains an intact native riparian vegetation and naturally braiding river channel. Little Wanganui River is in its natural state and is supported by surrounding native forest. The assessment area is likely to support some lizards and a typical suite of common birds and invertebrate fauna.

Diversity and pattern

There is little variation in the physical components of this assessment area; there is only one soil type and one land environment (Leathwick et al. 2002). Sections of Little Wanganui River are within the assessment area and predicted to be in good condition, supporting a diverse array of freshwater fish, including populations of bluegill bully (*Gobiomorphus hubbsi*), redfin bully (*Gobiomorphus huttoni*), torrentfish (piripiripōhatu, *Cheimarrichthys fosteri*), longfin eel (*Anguilla dieffenbachii*), kōaro (*Galaxias brevipinnis*) and kōura (freshwater crayfish, *Paranephrops planifrons*).

Rarity and distinctiveness

The assessment area is classified as an H1.1b land environment of which 35% is in native vegetation in public conservation land in the ecological district and is considered less at risk and better protected (Holdaway et al. 2012). Trees that are rare in the ecological district including true tōtara (*Podocarpus totara var totara*) and kōwhai (*Sophora microphylla*). Akeake (*Dodoneae viscosa*) is potentially found within this area. The threatened long-tailed bat (*Chalinolobus tuberculatus*) (Nationally Critical) has been recorded within the nearby area and may use the assessment area

while foraging along the river. The freshwater fish species present include bluegill bully, torrentfish, longfin eel and kōaro (all At Risk: Declining).

Ecological context

The assessment area is composed of fragmented primary parcels connected through a continuous native plant canopy, Little Wanganui River and legal road parcels. It is spread over both sides of approximately 4 km of river and is approximately 14 ha. Immediately south of the area is Kahurangi National Park and immediately north is northwest Nelson Forest Park.

Recreation Values

Setting

These areas are in a Backcountry-remote zone up the Wangapeka River. The Wangapeka Track passes through some of the land parcels. The Wangapeka Track is managed as a Backcountry Destination for Remote Seekers.

Visitor type and activities typically undertaken

Approximately 350 people tramp the Wangapeka Track each year and hunters may access the area.

Access

The area is close to Karamea with access via Wangapeka Road.

Heritage Values

Historical overview

The 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)

