

HOK_47 – Mikonui River (168.6266 ha)

Protected Area(s)	Area (ha)	NaPALIS #	# of Primary Parcels
Conservation Area - Mikonui River	168.6266	2805512	2

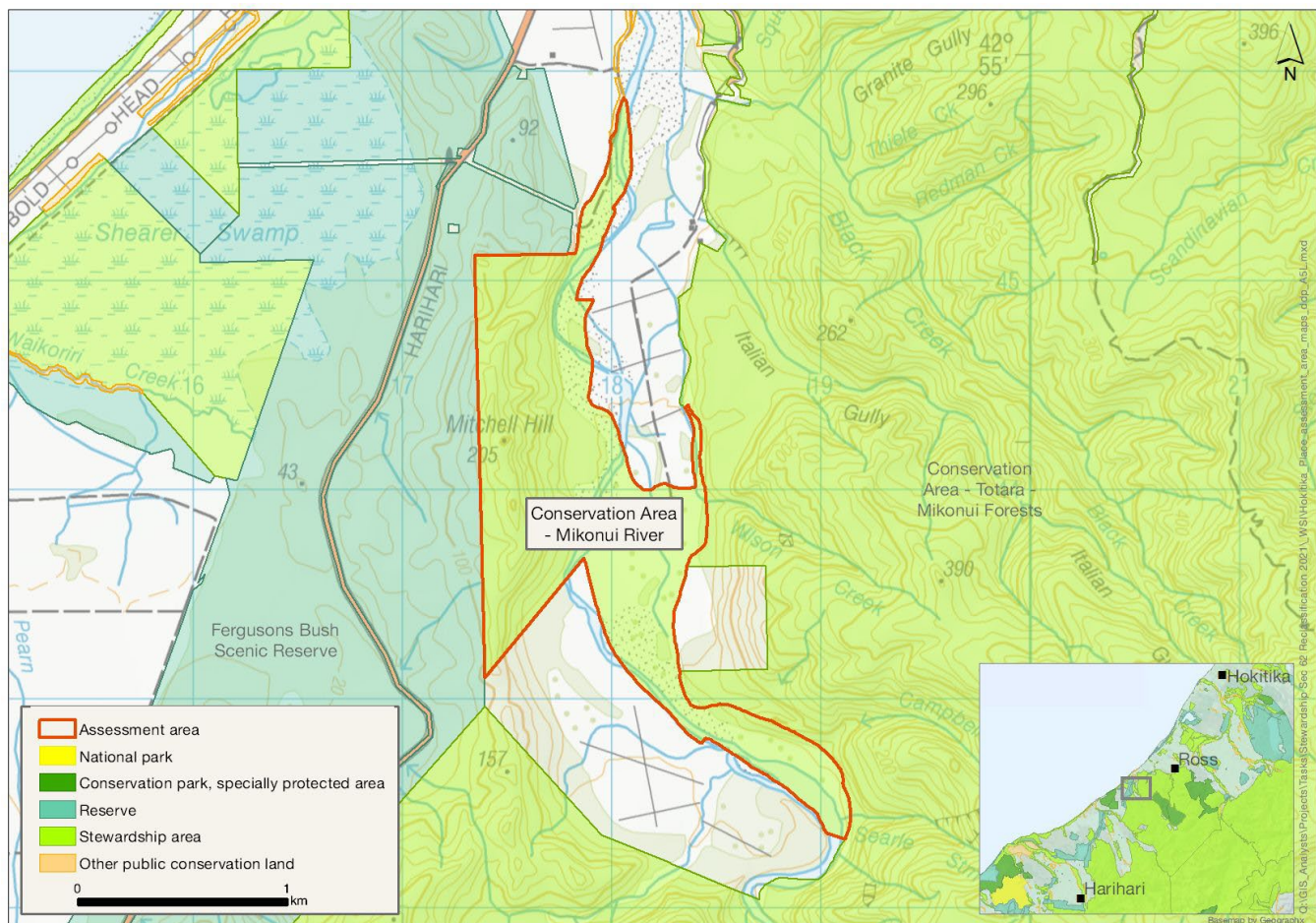
Location

Mitchell Hill, lower Mikonui River Valley, 1 km above SH6.

Brief Description

The assessment area includes the river, riverbed and alluvial flats of the Mikonui Valley and steep forest hillslopes on the eastern side of Mitchell Hill. The braided riverbed along Mikonui River is a naturally rare ecosystem and will be a threatened habitat. The entire area is under active minerals permit (gold). There are no DOC-managed tracks or facilities, and the river is used by an occasional rafter and kayaker. There is a grazing concession in place, and no known heritage values.

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 area includes the braided channel of Mikonui River, adjacent alluvial flats, and the steep forested slopes to the west, i.e., the east side of Mitchell Hill, which rise to about 205 m. The alluvial flats are largely pasture with remnants of riparian forest and shrubland. The area traverses the boundary of the Hokitika and Harihari ecological districts and is only modestly representative of both. The alluvial river flats pasture is farmed.

The area covers active channels and riparian margins of part of Mikonui River. The entire area is under active minerals permit (gold). There is high predicted water quality, very natural catchment. This area covers equal parts forested slopes and riverine habitat. Grazing concession covers about one quarter of it. It is riparian margin with vegetation (scrubland on true right, indigenous vegetation on true left).

Diversity and pattern

This area includes lowland forest, braided riverbed and river flats, and spans from c. 10–205 m above sea level. The forested slopes of Mitchell Hill have several gullies, which adds some diversity. The area contains five level 4 land environment units, which is considered to show a moderate level of environmental diversity.

There are no survey records from this immediate reach, but nearby records suggest a very high diversity of freshwater fish and invertebrates: shortjaw kōkopu (*Galaxias postvectis*), bluegill bully (*Gobiomorphus hubbsi*), longfin eel (*Anguilla dieffenbachii*), torrentfish (piripiripōhatu, *Cheimarrichthys fosteri*), kōaro (*Galaxias brevipinnis*), kōura (freshwater crayfish, *Paranephrops planifrons*), redfin bully (*Gobiomorphus huttoni*), common bully (*Gobiomorphus cotidianus*), banded kōkopu (*Galaxias fasciatus*) and freshwater shrimp (*Paratya*). All whitebait species use this reach of Mikonui River to access habitat upstream. This section of the Mikonui is also predicted to be within the distribution of the dwarf galaxias (*Galaxias divergens*).

Rarity and distinctiveness

The braided riverbed along Mikonui River is a naturally rare ecosystem and will be a threatened habitat. The area contains some of the M2.1a land environment, which has an At Risk status, i.e., 20–30% remaining in indigenous vegetation cover. No terrestrial threatened species have been recorded from the site.

Nearby records suggest a very high diversity of freshwater fish and invertebrates: shortjaw kōkopu (Nationally Vulnerable) and longfin eel, kōaro, bluegill bully, torrentfish and redfin bully (all At Risk: Declining), banded kōkopu, common bully, kōura and freshwater shrimp. All species listed in survey records come from a stream that feeds into the true right that has been seriously impacted by gold mining.

Ecological context

The site lies between and links the extensive Tōtara-Mikonui Forest Conservation Area (HOK_43) to the west, and the Ferguson Scenic Reserve (674 ha) to the east. It therefore forms an integral part of an extensive area extending from the coast to mountain tops. The area protects about 4 km of riverbed.

This area covers riverine habitat with a moderate-high level of naturalness, and with a (likely) high diversity of freshwater fish and invertebrate species. It is contiguous with public conservation land to the west (Fergusons Bush Scenic Reserve).

Recreation Values

Setting

This area is in a Backcountry-remote zone. There are no tracks or facilities managed by the Department.

Visitor type and activities typically undertaken

The river is used by the occasional rafter and kayaker.

Access

Can be accessed from Mcleods Terrace Rd.

Heritage Values

Historical overview

SO 1887 shows the area is immediately north of an area with identified sluicing (I33/4), but no indication of features in this block.

Sites recorded

None recorded.

Heritage values

No value statement possible.

Permissions Summary

Grazing licence for grazing over part bed of Mikonui River.

Map (aerial photo)

