

TWP_13 – Poerua Riverbed, Ferguson Creek and Dry Creek (128.9172 ha)

Protected Area(s)	Area (ha)	NaPALIS #	# of Primary Parcels
Conservation Area - Poerua Riverbed	37.4104	2805649	2
Conservation Area - Ferguson Creek	25.1318	2805655	2
Conservation Area - Dry Creek	66.375	2805656	3

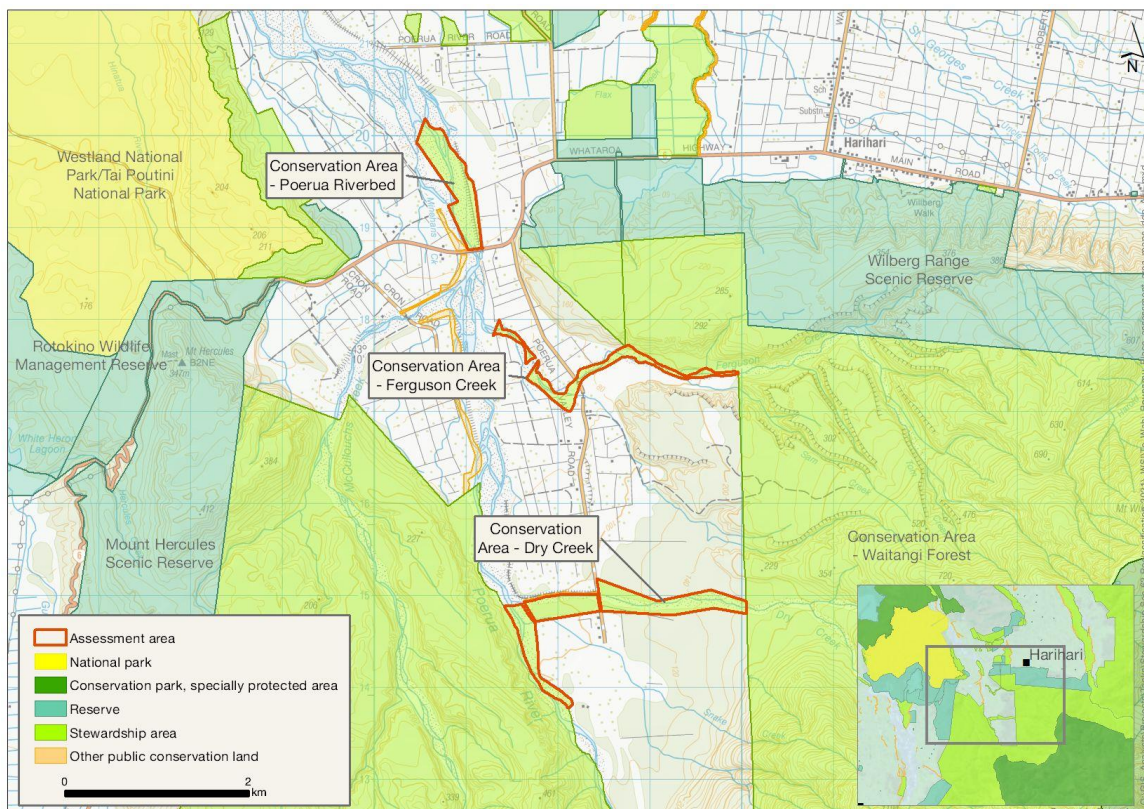
Location

A grouping of riverbeds west of Harihari, immediately downstream of Poerua River bridge and west of Harihari.

Brief Description

Three conservation areas of land along Poerua River and tributaries (Ferguson and Dry creeks), which each contain naturally rare, braided river ecosystem. There is limited evidence of freshwater rarity and distinctiveness although the assessment area may be able to support rare species. There is no recreational use or DOC-managed tracks or facilities. Some parts have been developed into farmland and grazing and gravel extraction concessions are in place.

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 areas include active riverbed and adjacent alluvial flats within Harihari Ecological District. The vegetation is typical of the modified landscapes on river terraces in the ecological district. Some parts of the assessment area are used by the neighbouring farm.

The Poerua Riverbed Conservation Area constitutes a small section of Poerua River, which is a small braided/semi-braided river. Aerial imagery indicates the presence of a small section of active channel and a large gravel beach that could be important braided river bird habitat. Species found in the assessment area include lamprey (kanakana, *Geotria australis*) and torrentfish (piripiripōhatu, *Cheimarrichthys fosteri*), and there are likely to be more. Nearby species that could be in this package include kōaro (*Galaxias brevipinnis*), banded kōkopu (*Galaxias fasciatus*), giant kōkopu (*Galaxias argenteus*), common bully (*Gobiomorphus cotidianus*) and redfin bully (*Gobiomorphus huttoni*).

Low levels of naturalness are expected in the downstream areas, where satellite imagery shows the stretch to be dominated by farmland. Higher levels of naturalness are expected upstream where the watercourse traverses dense indigenous vegetation. A high Macroinvertebrate Community Index score suggests high predicted water quality.

The Ferguson and Dry Creek conservation areas could be described as a marginal strip of a tributary to Poerua River. The upstream catchments flow through dense indigenous vegetation, so a high level of naturalness is evident. However, the lower catchments traverse farmland, resulting in a highly modified catchment. High Macroinvertebrate Community Index score suggests high predicted water quality.

Diversity and pattern

The assessment area includes part of Poerua River bed and that of two tributaries. The assessment area is likely to support a diversity of species although it constitutes only a small section of a much bigger river. There is not a huge diversity of freshwater ecosystem types (braided/semi-braided river and a stream). Species found at site include threatened lamprey and at-risk torrentfish. There are nearby records of giant kokopu, banded kokopu, kōaro and longfin eel (all At Risk: Declining) which may also be present. This indicates a high level of predicted diversity. There are moderate diversity and pattern values.

Rarity and distinctiveness

The conservation areas each contain the naturally rare, braided river ecosystem. The area includes the level 4 land environment M2.1a (Leathwick et al. 2002), which is described as well drained, with a moderate climate and good fertility; this land environment type has been greatly modified in the Harihari Ecological District and only 6.3% of this type is in public conservation land and supports native vegetation in the ecological district.

Several bird species are likely to use the braided river area, including the banded dotterel (tūturiwhatu, *Charadrius bicinctus*) (Nationally Vulnerable), pied, little black and black shags (*Phalacrocorax varius*), (kawaupaka, *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*) and (kōau, *Phalacrocorax carbo*) (all At Risk), pied and variable oystercatchers (*Haematopus finschi*) (tōrea, *Haematopus unicolor*) (both At Risk: Declining) white-fronted tern (tara, *Sterna striata*) (At Risk: Declining), pied stilt (poaka, *Himantopus Himantopus*) (Not Threatened) and gull species.

As above, there is limited evidence of rarity and distinctiveness from a freshwater perspective although the assessment area may be able to support rare species.

Ecological context

The assessment area is a combination of disjunct linear shapes of 37.4 ha and less than 10 m wide at its narrowest. It connects avifauna across the river valley between other public conservation lands. It constitutes a small section of Poerua River, which as a whole has high ecological value. There is farmland on either side of the river/floodplain in this location.

Poerua riverbed and gravel material were affected by a landslide from Mt Adams when it blocked the Poerua River in 1999, creating a landslide dam about 11 km upstream from the SH6 bridge. Despite fears of flooding and other damage, there were relatively minimal impacts when the dam was breached six days later, though significant quantities of coarse gravel were deposited downstream and the river's course was changed in places. The Poerua conservation area includes areas of stopbank and associated planting on true right below bridge.

Recreation Values

Setting

These areas are in a Backcountry-remote zone in the bed of Poerua River. There are no DOC-managed tracks or facilities. Some of the areas have been developed into pasture and are surrounded by farmland.

Visitor type and activities typically undertaken

This area is likely to receive little recreation use.

Access

Access via Poerua Valley Road.

Heritage Values

Sites recorded

None recorded.

Heritage values

No value statement possible.

Modifying factors

None recorded.

Permissions summary

- One concession permit held for gravel extraction
- One grazing concession held over part of the bed of Ferguson Creek, approximately 5.2ha

Map (aerial photo)

