

INA_41 – Palmer Road – Upper Grey River (1010.5348 ha)

Protected Area(s)	Area (ha)	NaPALIS #	# of Primary Parcels
Conservation Area – Palmer Road	185.0264	2807473	7
Conservation Area – Palmer Road	736.6244	2807475	21
Conservation Area – Palmer Road	8.4594	2807509	1
Conservation Area – Upper Grey River	80.4246	2807474	2

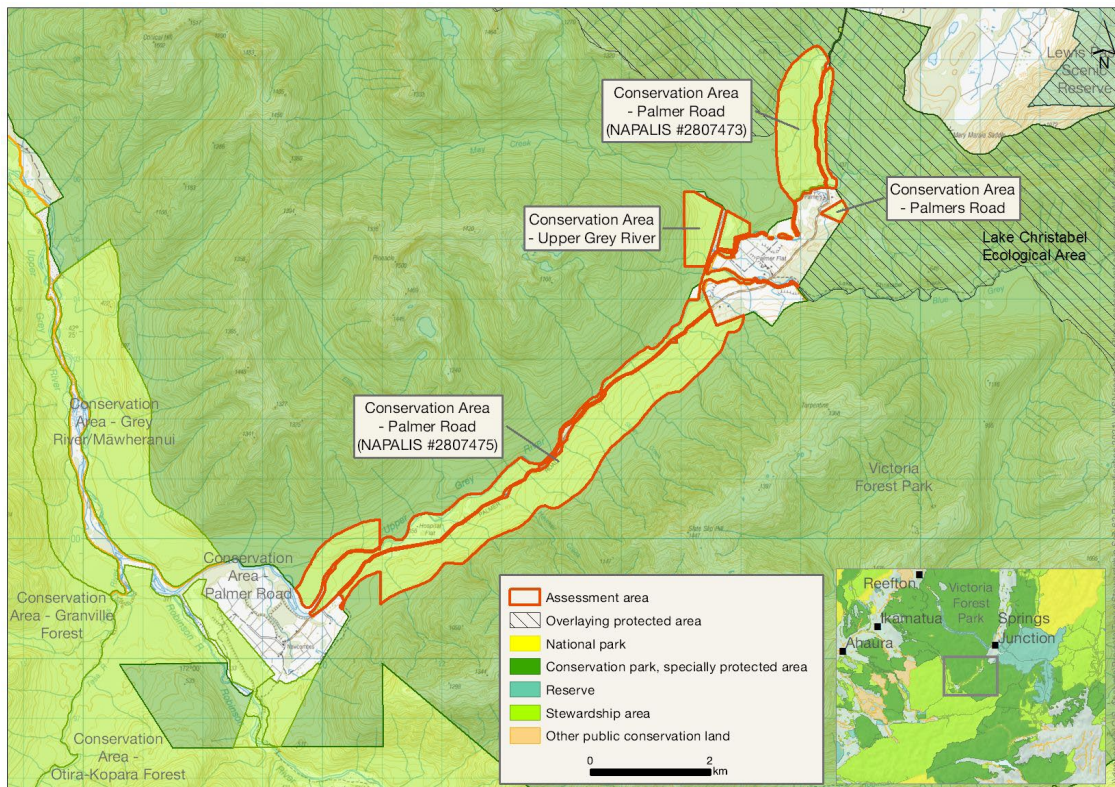
Location

Palmer Road, south-west of Springs Junction.

Brief Description

Three relatively large pieces of beech forest in the Upper Grey River above its confluence with Robinson River, along either side of Palmer Road. There is a high level of diversity of pattern, from wetlands and riparian forests on the edge of the upper Grey River, through to intact forests connecting with the Victoria Forest Park. There are several records of native freshwater fishery values within this area. Visitor activities typically include tramping, hunting and fishing. DOC-managed Robinson Valley track starts in the south-western end of Palmer Road. There is a grazing licence for dairy cows.

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

Moderate level of representativeness and naturalness, with intact sequences of indigenous forest from the valley floor to mid-slope. Some of the areas have been modified into exotic grassland and are being farmed. These areas are land predominantly covered by indigenous forest. The river and tributaries that flow through are tributaries of the Grey River/Māwheranui. They represent a high level of naturalness that is not very common in downstream stretches of this catchment, where the majority has been cleared for farming and urbanisation. There is high predicted water quality. Pākihi, swamp and seepage wetland types are present.

Diversity and pattern

There is a high level of diversity of pattern, from wetlands and riparian forests on the edge of the upper Grey River, through to intact forests connecting with Victoria Forest Park. The area provides intact continuous forested habitat in some areas from valley floor (350 m above sea level) to the lower slopes of the surrounded hills (600 m above sea level).

There are several records of native freshwater fishery values here, largely for longfin eel (*Anguilla dieffenbachii*), kōaro (*Galaxias brevipinnis*) and upland bully (West Coast) (*Gobiomorphus breviceps*). Within close proximity downstream, there are also records of torrentfish (piripiripōhatu, *Cheimarrichthys fosteri*), kōura (freshwater crayfish, *Paranephrops planifrons*), bluegill bully (*Gobiomorphus hubbsi*) and dwarf galaxias (*Galaxias divergens*), that could potentially use these stretches of catchment as habitat.

Rarity and distinctiveness

West Coast green gecko (*Naultinus tuberculatus*) (Nationally Vulnerable) and scarlet mistletoe (pirita, *Peraxilla colensoi*) (At Risk: Declining) have been recorded on the boundary of these areas and could be present within them. Threatened ecosystem (wetlands) is present in the valley floor. Level 4 land environments M2.1a decrease in indigenous vegetation cover (1997-2002), classified as At Risk and P5.2a decrease in indigenous vegetation cover (1997-2002), no threat category provided.

Longfin eel and kōaro are both At Risk: Declining. Many other native freshwater fish records in close proximity show that there are several other highly mobile species that could also potentially use these areas as habitat.

It is likely habitat for threatened long-tailed bat (*Chalinolobus tuberculatus*) (Nationally Critical) and kākā (*Nestor meridionalis*) (At Risk: Recovering). This is an important site to support Tia Kina Ngā Manu pest control operations.

Ecological context

This assessment area (1011 ha) comprises 11 parcels on the valley floor around the 'settlements' of Palmer Flat and Hospital Flat, surrounded by Victoria Forest Park. There is approximately 90% indigenous vegetation cover and 10% farmland, with a grazing concession over part. The Upper Grey River flows through some of the areas. There are altitudinal sequences of indigenous vegetation from 300–600 m above sea level. The area is on the boarder of Ella, Reefton, Totara and Rotoroa ecological districts.

These areas are sandwiched between several other areas of public conservation land, namely Victoria Forest Park and Marginal Strip - Blue Grey River, which protect large portions of indigenous forest, something that is not representative of large sections of the downstream catchment, which is largely cleared for farmland and urbanisation.

Recreation Values

Setting

These areas are in a Backcountry-remote zone. The areas are forested and generally free of tracks and facilities, however, DOC-managed Robinson Valley track starts in the south-western end of Palmer Road and provides access to the Mid Robinson (six-bunk), Top Robinson (eight-bunk), and Lake Christabel (eight-bunk) huts.

Visitor type and activities typically undertaken

Tramping, hunting, very popular for trout fishing.

Access

Access from Palmer Road.

Heritage Values

Historical overview

Sites recorded

None, but L31/2 (artificial cave recorded from Haast's 1861 topographical survey report) recorded in vicinity of northern end, but exact location unknown. There are several artefact find spots (obsidian and adzes) recorded just outside the area.

Heritage values

None recorded.

Modifying factors

None recorded.

Permissions Summary

Grazing licence for grazing 250 dairy cows on Palmers Road.

Map (aerial photo)

