

# INA\_04 – Inangahua Junction, Lower Buller Gorge Road, White Cliffs (586.3698 ha)

Protected Area(s)	Area (ha)	NaPALIS #	# of Primary Parcels
Conservation Area - Inangahua Junction	103.0077	2807825	5
Conservation Area - Lower Buller Gorge Road	41.5478	2807826	2
Conservation Area - White Cliffs	441.8143	2807842	6

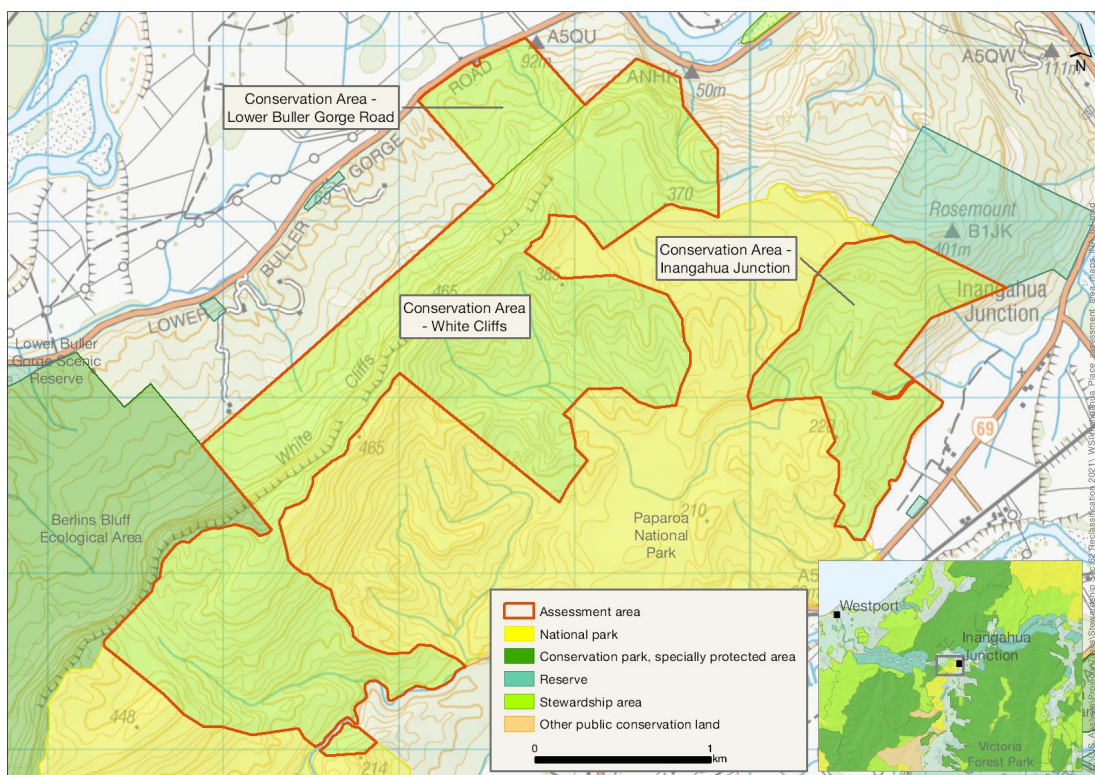
## Location

South of Buller River between the Inangahua and Berlins settlements, midway between Westport and Murchison, in North Westland.

## Brief Description

Podocarp/hardwood/beech forest on tilted limestone block of Tertiary age, with bare talus and seral vegetation on landslips from the Murchison and Inangahua earthquakes still visible under the highest points of the western facing escarpment. Heavily forested eastern slopes. The assessment area bounds the northern eastern end of the Paparoa National Park and is adjacent to a Species Management Unit (SMU) for *Powelliphanta* 'Buller River'. There are no tracks, facilities, permissions or points of historical interest.

## 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

Supports good populations of almost all the fauna and flora characteristic of the eastern half of the Buller Ecological District. While the western half of the district is dominated by deep, cold, beech-clad valleys – such as the Ohikanui – amidst high mountains on ancient hard gneiss and granite geologies, the eastern sector is dominated by younger sandstones, mudstones, limestones with some coal seams, and is warmer, drier and more fertile. The Inangahua Junction assessment area is highly representative of the latter, with gradients extending from the tall forest of the valley floor, to the bare summit of White Cliffs on both its western (warmer and drier) and eastern (cooler and wetter) sides. While logging has removed the podocarp element in the forests closest to the road on the valley floor, the assessment area vegetation remains entirely indigenous. Red beech (*Fuscospora fusca*) and hard beech (*Fuscospora truncata*) with kamāhi (*Pterophylla racemose*) dominate, but on the high fertility limestones along the White Cliffs escarpment plant diversity is high, with hardwood species and many small-leaved *Coprosma*, kōwhai (*Sophora microphylla*) and other seral species on the edge of slips and cliffs, providing food for a wide range of forest birds and lizards.

The assessment area includes a number of small tributary streams in forested catchments that feed into Buller and Inangahua rivers, which likely represent good freshwater habitat with a predicted high degree of naturalness. There have not been any freshwater surveys undertaken in the assessment area itself, but nearby are redfin bully (*Gobiomorphus huttoni*), bluegill bully (*Gobiomorphus hubbsi*) and longfin eel (*Anguilla dieffenbachii*).

### Diversity and pattern

White Cliffs ridgeline trends strongly north-south, while the limestone layer that gives White Cliffs its distinctive appearance is thrust steeply up from the east towards the west over an altitude range from 60–485 m above sea level. The area rises from gentle lower slope in the east, to steep slopes and vertical westward-facing cliffs which shed rubble down moderately steep slopes and end abruptly where they meet a broad alluvial plain formed by Buller River. This diversity of aspect and slope provides a moderate to high diversity of natural vegetation and habitats of indigenous species, and the strongly expressed geology and topography are mirrored by multiple gradients between communities. The area contains four level 4 land environment units.

### Rarity and distinctiveness

The forest on the lower western side of White Cliffs Bluff is part of the type locality and one of the few surviving habitats of the large land snail, *Powelliphanta* 'Buller River' (Nationally Critical). Great spotted kiwi (roroa,

*Apteryx maxima*) and South Island kākā (*Nestor meridionalis*) (both Nationally Vulnerable), and South Island robin (toutouwai, *Petroica australis australis*) and kārearea (New Zealand falcon, *Falco novaeseelandiae*) (both At Risk: Declining) are present, along with other now-rare forest birds, kākārīki (yellow-crowned parakeet, *Cyanoramphus auriceps*) and rifleman (tītiti pounamu, *Acanthisitta chloris*). Large flocks of up to 150 kererū (New Zealand pigeon, *Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*) have been seen feeding in the kōwhai and willow growing below the limestone cliffs at the north end of the assessment area.

There are records of the tiny herb *Gratiola concinna* (Nationally Endangered) and scarlet mistletoe (pirita, *Peraxilla colensoi*) (Nationally Vulnerable) recorded from adjacent sites and likely to be present. Macintyre's Five Finger (*Pseudopanax macintyrei*) (Naturally Uncommon) is present.

The White Cliffs are a distinctive geological feature. Cliffs of calcareous rocks are uncommon ecosystems classified as Threatened-Vulnerable (Holdaway, 2012).

There is a high degree of naturalness. No have been no freshwater surveys in the area itself, but nearby are redfin bully, bluegill bully and longfin eel (all At Risk: Declining).

## Ecological context

This assessment area is composed of two disjunct conservation areas of irregular shape, both over 200 m at their narrowest. It is part of the extensive continuous forested area of the Paparoa Ranges, and is adjacent to the Paparoa National Park, the Rosemount Scenic Reserve, and the Berlins Bluff Ecological Area. It is a forested area with small tributaries, and likely represents good connectivity and buffering to downstream waterbodies.

## Recreation Values

### Setting

These areas are in a Backcountry-remote zone. There are no tracks or facilities.

### Visitor type and activities typically undertaken

These areas are relatively difficult to access due to steep and broken terrain. Likely to receive little recreation use.

### Access

Access from SH6, Buller Gorge Road.

## Heritage Values

### Historical overview and Sites recorded

No historic sites or heritage values recorded.

## Permissions Summary

N/A

## Map (aerial photo)

