

KAW_02 – Mōkihinui River Seddonville (6.7118 ha)

Protected Area(s)	Area (ha)	NaPALIS #	# of Primary Parcels
Conservation Area – Mōkihinui River	5.8481	2807738	2
Conservation Area – Burkes Creek	0.8637	2807751	1

Location

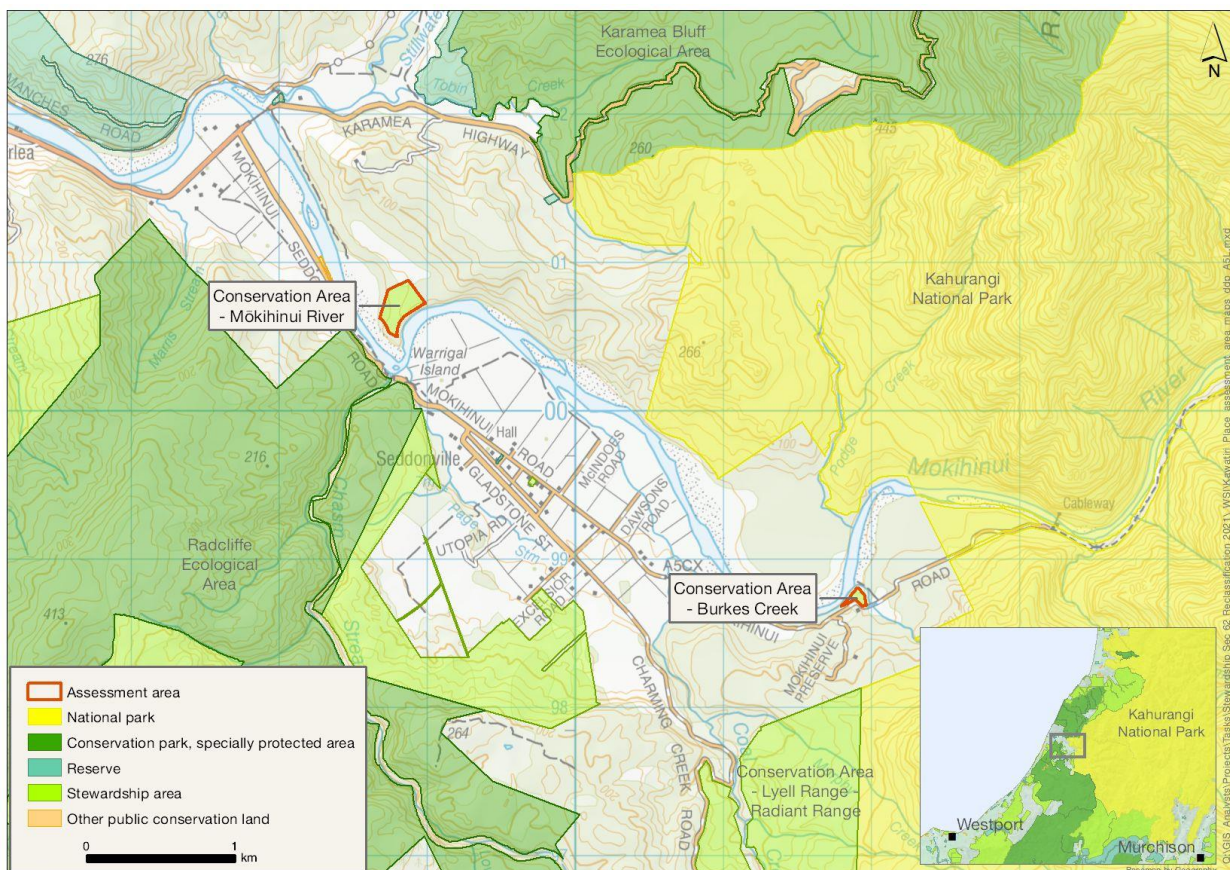
Two primary parcels on the banks of Mōkihinui River at either end of Seddonville township in the northern Buller District.

Brief Description

This assessment area comprises two separate low altitude (0–40 m above sea level) conservation areas adjacent to Mōkihinui River, at the junction of three ecological districts; Karamea, Kawatiri and Wangapeka. Both parcels comprise a mix of tall forest and seral riparian forest and are adjacent to other natural areas and to pasture. The lower parcel is covered by a Species Management Unit for protection of the threatened large land snail *Powelliphanta lignaria lignaria*.

The Mokihiinui area was the site of two main gold rushes. Mōkihinui River immediately beside these areas is enjoyed for kayaking, swimming and its high landscape value as background to the iconic Warrigal Island. There is an access easement through the Burkes Creek parcel.

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

Two small discrete parcels of land, which both support indigenous podocarp (*Podocarpaceae* and *Phyllocladaceae*)/beech (tawhai, *Fuscopora* and *Lophozonia*) forest on terraces of Mōkihinui River, one just downstream and one just upstream of Seddonville.

(1) The downstream parcel: the substrate is diverse, ranging from fertile limestone and young Holocene alluvial gravels at the river edge, to Kaiata mudstones and less fertile sandstones at its eastern edge. These differing substrates with their characteristic flora and fauna are present separately in larger quantities within the ecological district, but are all present in close proximity here. The parcel is not only overwhelmingly natural but has high scenic value as the backdrop to a small limestone island in the middle of Mōkihinui River.

(2) The upstream parcel: indigenous beech/podocarp forest on a high river terrace grading to younger seral native vegetation immediately beside Burkes Stream, both typical of the vegetation on such topography in the lower Mōkihinui gorge.

Diversity and pattern

(1) The downstream parcel: the gradation from river edge vegetation on frequently replenished fertile new soils to a leached upper terrace with regenerating podocarp forest provides a strong pattern. The diversity of substrate and increasing distance from the river's edge, and height above the river, is expressed in the vegetation, with seral species like kowhai (*Sophora microphylla*) on the fertile forest edge where light levels are high, grading to dense tall podocarp/beech forest on the terrace behind it. Likewise, shags, swallow, shelducks and kererū use the river edge forest with native passerines supplanting them further inland.

(2) The upstream parcel: This small land parcel grades from stream and river edge vegetation on frequently replenished fertile new soils to a leached upper terrace with regenerating podocarp forest.

Rarity and distinctiveness

The two parcels of land in this assessment area are both classified as an H1.1 land environment (Leathwick et al.) of which very little is in public conservation land, with native vegetation, in either the Ngakawau Ecological District (2%) or Karamea Ecological District (19%). H1.1 environments are recent, well-drained soils of low fertility from granite and alluvium from granite at low to moderate elevations.

Both parcels support populations of threatened *Powelliphanta* snails. In the downstream parcel, a rare hybrid colony of *Powelliphanta lignaria lignaria* x *Powelliphanta lignaria ruforadiata* (Nationally Vulnerable) is present, brought together by the flooding of Mōkihinui River. In the upstream parcel, a low density population of *Powelliphanta lignaria unicolorata* (Nationally Vulnerable) is present.

In both, in addition to common forest birds, South Island robin (toutouwai, *Petroica australis australis*) are present and kererū (New Zealand pigeon, *Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*) and tūī (*Prothemadera novaeseelandiae*) are common. This is because of the presence of seral forest along the river edge, which provides vital winter and spring food resource for kererū and tūī. On the opposite bank of the downstream parcel is a small breeding colony of pied shag (*Phalacrocorax varius*), one of only two known pied shag colonies on the West Coast. The shags also use the downstream parcel's riverside trees for roosting.

Ecological context

Both land parcels are small irregularly-shaped polygons; 5.5 ha and 0.9 ha respectively. Both connect riverine forest to native forest on the higher terraces above the river; a linkage lost in many other parts of the valley where the forest beside the river has been cleared for farming, yet particularly important here as it allows the natural process of speciation in the species of large threatened land snail *Powelliphanta lignaria* to continue. The seral forest provides the flowers, berries and fresh leaves that are important winter and spring food resource for kererū and tūī.

The upstream parcel buffers both the Mōkihinui River edge and Burkes Creek from the vegetation clearing, stock trampling and weed incursions that have degraded the immediate banks of Mōkihinui River opposite Burkes Creek. The downstream parcel is opposite Warrigal Island in the middle of Mōkihinui River and, like it, is highly scenic as the forest occurs on outcropping limestone.

Recreation Values

Setting

Both land areas are in a Backcountry-remote zone on the north bank (true north) and the south bank (true north) of Mōkihinui River. There are no tracks or facilities within this area. Mōkihinui River immediately beside this area is used for kayaking and swimming. It has high landscape value as the background to the iconic Warrigal Island and is readily viewed from the Chasm Creek walkway.

Visitor type and activities typically undertaken

The land parcels themselves are likely to receive little or no recreation use. However, Mōkihinui River immediately beside these areas is used for kayaking and swimming.

Access

The area on the north bank does not look like it is easy to access due to developed pasture on adjacent land (although unformed legal road is beside the river). The south bank parcel can be accessed from the Mokihiinui Road.

Heritage Values

Historical overview

The Mokihiinui area was the site of two main gold rushes. Gold was first prospected along the beach around the mouth of the Mōkihinui River in 1866, and a small township with several thousand miners sprung up, approximately a mile up-river from the mouth. By June 1868 the Mokihiinui rush appears to have been over and the West Coast Times reported that the township of thousands was deserted, although some prospecting up the river appears to have continued. Within 12 months there was another small rush, when coarse gold was struck about 3 miles up the river.

Four years later the Mokihiinui again became a focus for gold miners when a quartz reef containing good gold resources was found approximately 20 miles up the river, and it was this area that was to become the main focus of gold mining for the next 60 years. Access was via a pack track along the river.

Sites recorded

L28/7 is a recorded pack track (Mokihinui-Seddonville) and part of this track may run through this parcel.

Heritage values

No value statement possible.

Modifying factors

None recorded.

Permissions summary

An access easement through the Burkes Creek parcel.

Map (aerial photo)

