

KAW_10 – Waimangaroa-Granity (3764.2747 ha)

| Protected Area(s) | Area (ha) | NaPALIS # | # of Primary Parcels |
|---|-----------|-----------|----------------------|
| Conservation Area – Waimangaroa – Granity | 3764.2747 | 2807805 | 15 |

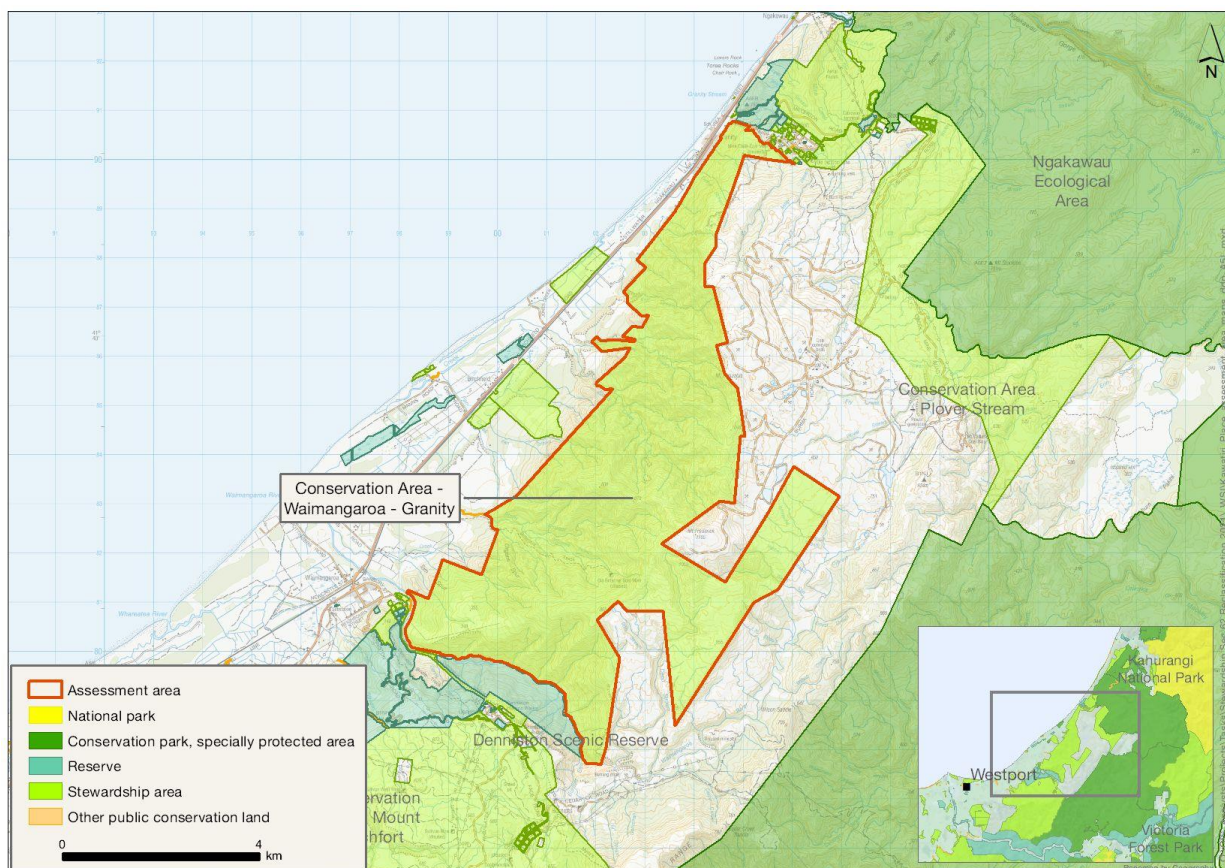
Location

This assessment area is between Waimangaroa in the south and Granity in the north and includes the western faces of the Stockton Plateau north of Westport, in the Buller District.

Brief Description

This large complex area covers most of the western slopes of the Stockton Plateau and includes all or part of two Recommended Areas for Protection in the Ngakawau Ecological District, as well as part of Buller Coal Plateau Biodiversity Priority Site. It is also part of the high value Deep Stream/Waimangaroa Ecosystem Management Unit and adjacent to the Species Management Unit for *Powelliphanta augusta*. It has a long history of both coal and gold mining during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and is used by visitors to historic mining sites as well as by hunters and trampers. DOC manages the Britannia Track and a Recreational Gold Fossicking Area in Britannia Stream. Parapenting occasionally occurs from the plateau. There are three active permissions for open cast coal mining.

Map



Ngāi Tahu Values and Interests

Mo tātou, a, mo ka uri, a muri ake nei – for us and our children after us

There is a deep connection between Ngāi Tahu and all of the whenua in the Ngāi Tahu takiwā. A section 4 Conservation Act and Te Tiriti principles perspective is required, 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

Most of this conservation area falls within Ngakawau Ecological District, though a small portion of the lower western slopes is within Foulwind Ecological District (both North Westland Ecological Region). The western part of this assessment area supports the most complete sequence of steep forested coastal bedrock faces of the ecological district, stretching from the Birchfield Flats to the highest points on the summit ridge.

The coastal hillslopes support northern rātā (*Metrosideros robusta*) and beech (tawhai, *Fuscopora* and *Lophozonia*) forest with some rimu (*Dacrydium cupressinum*) on lower slopes. On the eastern side an intact portion of gently east-sloping plateau of coal measures contains tussock and associated low vegetation and bryophytes while the steep sides of deeply incised streams are covered by low forest. The forest in the gullies of the plateau, between extensive areas of rock pavement, support mountain beech (*Fuscospora cliffortioides*), southern rātā (*Metrosideros umbellata*), pink and yellow silver pine forest with abundant bryophytes in all tiers. It includes the largest and best examples of sandstone erosion pavements in the ecological district. The headwaters of Deep Stream contain some of the best examples of tall beech forest remains in the sheltered gullies. Some wetland areas (approx. 50 ha) are identified in the south of the assessment area. All species of bird, lizard and large land snail present in the Ngakawau Ecological District are in this assessment area.

The assessment area includes all the Mt Frederick–Mt Augustus Recommended Area for Protection (Overmars et al. 1998), half of the Upper Waimangaroa–Mt William Recommended Area for Protection and part of Buller Coal Plateau Biodiversity Priority Site (as per the Conservation Management Strategy). It is also part of the high value Deep Stream/Waimangaroa Ecosystem Management Unit and adjacent to the Species Management Unit for *Powelliphanta augusta*. Its western and southeastern sides border Stockton Mine. Land immediately adjacent to Stockton Mine has been damaged by rockfall and weed incursions – notably heath rush (*Juncus squarrosus*) – but the conservation area is still overwhelmingly natural and largely intact. Consecutive cyclones since 2010 have felled swathes of forest on the lower western slopes but these are regenerating in indigenous vegetation.

Diversity and pattern

The bedrock of the steep coastal faces is pre-Tertiary basement granite, gneiss and Greenland greywacke. The plateau consists of high uplifted Brunner sandstone/siltstone/coal measures, with some block outcrops of pre-Tertiary granites. These very different substrates and topographies provide an unequalled area of ecological diversity in the least modified condition of the Ngakawau Ecological

District. Faults define both the eastern boundary (the Kiwi Scarp) and the Mt Augustus ridgeline with sharp transitions in vegetation and faunal species.

On the plateau, characteristic "stonescapes" are dissected by deep gorging gullies, visually expressing the strong tectonic influences in the area. There are multiple ecotones wherever the flat exposed pavement blocks are cracked, improving drainage, increasing slope and shelter from strong winds, resulting in characteristic vegetation and faunal communities. A diverse array of at-risk and threatened avian and herpetofauna inhabit this area. There is a highly diverse array of freshwater species present in the streams that flow out of the parcel, including kōura (freshwater crayfish, *Paranephrops planifrons*), shortfin eel (*Anguilla australis*), longfin eel (*Anguilla dieffenbachii*), lamprey (kanakana, *Geotria australis*) kākahi (freshwater mussel, *Hyridella menziesi*), bluegill bully (*Gobiomorphus hubbsi*), common bully (*Gobiomorphus cotidianus*), freshwater shrimp (*Paratya*), redfin bully (*Gobiomorphus huttoni*) and four whitebait species – kōaro (*Galaxias brevipinnis*), banded kōkopu (*Galaxias fasciatus*), inanga (*Galaxias maculatus*) and giant kōkopu (*Galaxias argenteus*) – making those potentially important streams with regard to migratory fish diversity.

Rarity and distinctiveness

The northeastern end of the assessment area is immediately adjacent to the type locality (no longer intact) of the threatened large land snail *Powelliphanta augusta* (Nationally Critical) and contains the last fragment of natural habitat of this highly endangered species. The western slopes and the plateau support the threatened land snail *Powelliphanta patrickensis* (Nationally Endangered).

The threatened Parkinson's rātā (*Metrosideros parkinsonii*) (Nationally Vulnerable) is highly likely to be within the area as is the threatened liverwort (*Acromastigum verticale*) (Nationally Critical). Red mistletoe (pikirangi, *Peraxilla tetrapetala*) (At Risk: Declining) and threatened small herb *Mitrasacme helmsii* (Nationally Endangered) have been found just outside the area and are highly likely to occur in it too. The shrub *Dracophyllum densum* and North Westland Snow Tussock (*Chionochloa juncea*) (both At Risk: Declining) are present throughout. Bearded orchid (*Calochilus paludosus*) and the small shrub *Pseudowintera traversii* (both At Risk: Naturally Uncommon) are present, as is the regionally uncommon grass *Zotovia thomsonii*. Due to the recurrent presence of mist and clouds, especially towards the tops, rock outcrops are often covered with mats of algae and lichens that have been poorly studied or understood.

Forest gecko (*Mokopirirakau granulatus*) (At Risk: Declining) and West Coast green gecko (*Naultinus tuberculatus*) (Nationally Vulnerable) are present, as are the great spotted kiwi (roroa, *Apteryx maxima*) (Nationally Vulnerable), kea (*Nestor notabilis*) (Nationally Endangered), rifleman (tītiti pounamu, *Acanthisitta chloris*), fernbird (mātātā, *Bowdleria punctata*) and pipit (*Anthus novaeseelandiae*) (At Risk: Declining). Surveys for threatened long-tailed bat (*Chalinolobus tuberculatus*) (Nationally Critical) haven't been done in the area, but the bats have been recorded within 20 km, which indicates that they are possibly using the habitat.

The area includes multiple examples of Naturally Uncommon Ecosystem types: pakihi wetlands and tarns, sandstone erosion pavements, boulder fields of acidic rock, and quartzose cliffs. The freshwater fish species present include bluegill bully (*Gobiomorphus hubbsi*), torrentfish (piripiripōhatu, *Cheimarrichthys fosteri*), longfin eel (*Anguilla dieffenbachii*), giant kōkopu (*Galaxias argenteus*), kōaro (*Galaxias brevipinnis*) and kākahi (freshwater mussel, *Hyridella menziesi*) (all At Risk: Declining), and shortjaw kōkopu (*Galaxias postvectis*) (Nationally Vulnerable).

Ecological context

At 3764.7 ha, this conservation area is the largest remaining, relatively intact block of characteristic Stockton Plateau stone pavement contiguous with the forested western escarpment. The full altitudinal sequence of coastal podocarp broadleaf to subalpine beech forest is an important feature. The conservation area is bordered by Denniston Scenic Reserve to the south, the high value Deep Stream/Waimangaroa Ecosystem Management Unit to the south and east, and Mt Augustus (*Powelliphanta*) Species Management Unit to the northeast. It borders the Stockton Ribbon wetland (Regional Council Schedule 2) and an approximately 315 ha block of LINZ land adjacent to the east. The presence of many ecotones between wet and dry areas is likely to sustain the threatened snail populations.

The area plays an important role in providing for connectivity between coastal and lowland forest in the west with the inland mountainous forests of the Ngakawau Ecological Area. This connectivity is essential for maintaining highly mobile species such as kea, and ecological processes such as pollination, seed dispersal and genetic variability in both fauna and flora.

Recreation Values

Setting

The area is in a Backcountry-remote zone. The Britannia Track is managed as a Frontcountry site and passes through the southern part of the area to the disused historic Britannia Gold Mine, although this track is currently closed. A Recreational Gold Fossicking Area is in Britannia Stream. No other tracks or facilities are managed by the Department in this area.

There are multiple historical mining sites. The Ngakawau Ecological Area is located immediately to the north and Stockton Mine to the south. The conservation area is adjacent to Waimangaroa township in the south and Granity and Millerton townships in the north.

Visitor type and activities typically undertaken

The area may be used by hunters, trampers or visitors to historic mining sites. The Britannia Track (when open) is used by walkers, mountain bikers and gold fossickers. Parapenting occasionally occurs from the plateau.

Access

The area can be accessed directly from State Highway 67 and the Britannia Track (closed) in the west, Waimangaroa township in the south and Granity and Millerton townships in the North. Access to the east is from Burma Road.

Heritage Values

Historical overview

This assessment area was the site of both coal and gold mining during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The Waimangaroa River was one of the first two gold diggings opened up on the West Coast in winter 1861 and the region's first quartz mining claim and battery operated up this river in 1867. Further quartz

discoveries in 1882 led to a rush into Stony Creek. The Britannia goldmine was initially worked by the Great Republic Quartz Mining Company and then taken over by the Britannia Gold Mining Company in 1899. The area was worked spasmodically until 1910. The mine reopened in 1925 for three years and between 1932 and 1937 there were further unsuccessful attempts to open it.

At the same time coal was also being mined at various locations across the plateau. The Koranui Incline and coal mine at the southern end of the conservation area was constructed and opened in 1883 and had stopped producing by late 1886. The Rockies Mine operated between 1924 and 1934.

Sites recorded

Britannia Mine and track is an actively conserved heritage place (several components including stamper batteries, aerial ropeway components, berdans, cyanide tanks, water pipeline). Functional location: DS-34-105-2013.

There are five recorded archaeological sites:

- L28/14 Rockies Mine and horse tramway, L28/15 Rockies Incline
- L29/15 Britannia goldmine and track
- L29/14 Koranui Incline and coal mine
- K29/76 alluvial goldmining

Heritage values

The plateau area is best known for coal mining, which became a mainstay of the Buller economy. The Waimangaroa River, however, has historical significance as one of the first two gold diggings opened on the West Coast.

The Great Republic Battery was a large-scale operation by local standards, attracting capital from the North Island and Australia. The later Britannia Mine was one of the few on the West Coast outside of the Reef-ton/Lyell field to pay dividends.

Modifying factors

The coal and gold workings form part of a much wider industrial heritage landscape across the Buller plateau.

The remains associated with the Britannia workings represent several goldmining attempts over about 50 years. Some of these elements are reasonably intact, providing an opportunity to interpret on a historical small gold mining operation.

There are several inclines across the plateau associated with coal transportation, the most famous being the Denniston Incline (in a different conservation area). Evidence for alluvial gold mining is much less common in this area than south of the Buller (Kawatiri) River.

Permissions summary

There are three active permissions for open cast coal mining over approximately 14 ha on the western edge of the Stockton Plateau immediately above Granity, 2 km southwest of Mill.

Map (aerial photo)

