

Inangahua Place Stewardship Land



Waiuta 1912. Jos Divis (1885-1967). Published photograph.

Landscape Values

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Landscape context for decision-making about stewardship land in Inangahua Place

Landscape is formally defined as “all aspects of the environment including its physical form, and all natural and cultural processes and systems, and the interactions of these systems.”

Landscapes are the outcome of many interconnected processes.

All landscapes are evolving. Even pre-human landscapes in Inangahua Place were constantly changing in response to natural forces, such as cell by cell growth or massive catastrophic landslips, but their character used to be 100% natural. When people arrived processes of modification began, as successive generations shaped the landscape to meet their needs and desires. Original vegetation was harvested or removed, landforms and drainage patterns altered, natural soils cultivated, and many things have been built.

In Inangahua Place the processes of modification have affected the river valleys most. The original natural character landscapes of the valley floors have morphed into a new cultural landscape where most local people make their homes, and where food and other goods are produced. But there are still fragments of original character surviving, adding visual interest and a sense of the past, contributing to overall ecosystem health, maintaining biodiversity benefits and helping to manage hydrology. Some of the remaining fragments are stewardship land.

The processes of landscape change have not stopped. Change is ongoing. If current trends continue it seems likely that over the next few generations much of the remaining indigenous vegetation which expresses underlying natural character in modified valley floor landscapes will be further modified or replaced.

The landscape of Inangahua Place is defined by its mountains with their big forested catchments and the three rivers; Maruia, Inangahua and Mawheraiti. Water quality, ecological health, wairua and the mauri of all three awa are directly related to how the land is managed.

Functionally and in landscape terms Mawheraiti has more in common with Mawheranui and the Grey Valley landscape in Mawhera Place.

But the parallel north-flowing Inangahua and Maruia Rivers and all their many tributaries are part of the massive Buller River catchment. The huge areas of forested hill country drained by these two rivers play a vital role in the water quality and hydrology of the Buller River.

Forests act as sponges receiving and holding precipitation and releasing it more slowly than farmland which is often modified to drain as quickly as possible. It is possible ongoing land clearance in the Buller River catchment, particularly evident in the Maruia valley, is contributing to higher peak flows at the river mouth and recent flooding in Westport.

One notable feature of the Maruia and Inangahua Rivers is the number of riparian and riverbed stewardship land parcels along them. The level of modification, particularly in Maruia, is surprising given the high natural heritage value of braided river systems and their value as recreational fishing resources. There is scope for re-wilding these parcels at some point in the future so they can contribute more positively to the ecosystem health and indigenous biodiversity of the braided river systems they sit within. The potential hydrological cost to permanently incorporating them into surrounding productive landscapes should be taken into account as well.

In these reports the focus is on natural character (and to a much lesser extent historic character). This is because the stewardship land reclassification process is occurring under the Conservation Act 1987 and the purpose of this act is “to promote the conservation of New Zealand’s natural and historic resources”. “Conservation means the preservation and protection of natural and historic resources for the purpose of

- maintaining their intrinsic values,
- providing for their appreciation and recreational enjoyment by the public and
- safeguarding the options for future generations.”

The Department of Conservation’s West Coast *Te Tai o Poutini* Conservation Management Strategy 2010-2020 (CMS) sets out the desired outcomes for the whole West Coast region (p177-183), and for Inangahua Place (pp 219-227). Landscape outcomes sought for the region include:

“Within public conservation lands, natural, historical and cultural heritage is protected, maintained and enhanced.” (p117) and

“Where practicable, natural heritage is improved to a more natural state. The ecological integrity and natural character of managed sites is maintained or restored....The connectivity and natural functioning of mountain-sea ecosystems, lowland wetlands and riparian areas is improving.” (p181).

For Inangahua Place the landscape outcome sought is:

“4.2.4.3 Geodiversity, landforms and landscapes in 2020

The overall character of geodiversity, landforms and landscapes in Inangahua Place is maintained in its 2010 condition.” (p219)

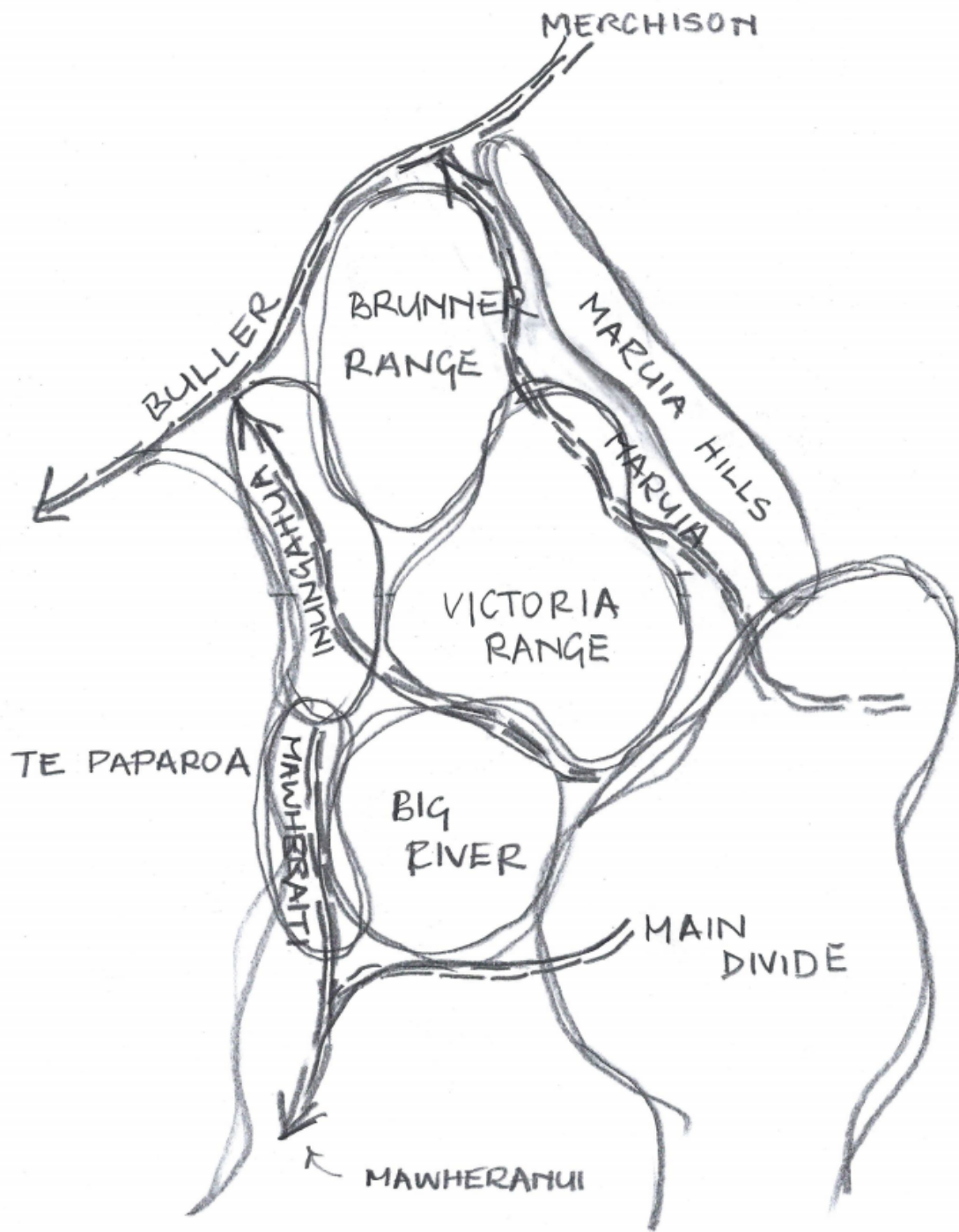
Inangahua Place is in the Grey District. The existing Grey District Plan relies on public conservation lands and waters (including stewardship land) to protect 90% of the outstanding natural landscapes. Only eight other places are identified as outstanding landscapes (Table 4.1, pp22-23) and these are very limited in area. Most of them are coastal. None are in Inangahua Place.

Regional Council also has statutory responsibility for Inangahua's landscapes. In 2013 they commissioned two studies to inform their regional planning. Brown Ltd mapped areas of high and outstanding natural character first, which was followed by a report identifying Outstanding Natural Landscapes (ONLs) in the coastal zone. This was followed up with the addition of inland ONLs.

A new combined district plan *Te Tai o Poutini* has been drafted using these ONLs, but it is not yet operative. Quite a few stewardship land parcels fall into Brown's high and outstanding natural character areas, and some are also located in ONLs identified in the draft *Te Tai o Poutini*.

One limitation of assessing landscapes on the basis of natural character only is that tangatawhenua landscape values and historic landscape values which may contribute to an areas outstanding quality are not taken into account in the rankings. However some of this information is provided in the conservation value reports for each stewardship cluster. It is assumed Outstanding Natural Landscapes identified in the draft *Te Tai o Poutini* took values other than natural character, including cultural and historic values into account in the assessment process used to identify ONLs.

There are about 75 parcels of stewardship land in Inangahua Place. To better understand how each stewardship parcel fits within its wider landscape setting Inangahua Place is broken into nine chunks of similar character. Stewardship parcels in each are identified and landscape factors discussed. Where all or part of a stewardship parcel falls into an ONL or natural character unit this is stated because this is a consideration which may need to be given some weight. That said, there are many areas of high natural character outside the boundaries of the units identified at a regional scale and stewardship lands by their nature are often in locations with high natural character.



A WAY TO UNDERSTAND INANGAHUA PLACE

Contents

Name of stewardship land parcel (area)	Report Ref. No	Natural Character	TTOP ONL?
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Te Paparoa massif (Inangahua Place)

1	Rough River Conservation Area (138ha)	MAW04	outstanding	
2	Mawheraiti Farm Conservation Area (189ha)	INA26		
3	Mai Mai-Te Wharau Conservation Area (847ha)	INA23	outstanding	39/41
4	Berlins Bluff Conservation Area (2512ha)	INA08		41
5	Lower Buller Gorge Road Conservation Area (42ha)	INA04	outstanding	41
6	White Cliffs Conservation Area (442ha)	INA04	outstanding	39
7	Inagahua Junction Conservation Area (104ha)	INA04		39

Mawheraiti valleys

8	Little Grey River Conservation Area (6ha)	INA32	high	
9	Blackwater River Conservation Area (26ha)	INA27	high	
10	Blackwater Creek Conservation Area (0.2+0.5ha)	29/30		
11	Caribu [sic] Creek Conservation Area (1ha)	INA28	high	
12	Stony Creek Conservation Area (15ha)	INA24		

Ka Tiritiri o te Moana (Main Divide) Inangahua Place

13	Conservation Area Robinson River (106ha)	MAW09		34
14	Robinson River Conservation Area (81ha)	MAW09		34
15	Grey River/Mawheranui Conservation Area x 2 (1126ha)	MAW09	outstanding	33
16	Palmer Road Conservation Area (0.4+0.4+0.4ha)	INA40		34
17	Palmer Road Conservation Area (737+185+8ha)	INA41		34
18	Upper Grey River Conservation Area (80ha)	INA41		

Inangahua valley floor

19	Inangahua River Rahu Saddle Cons Area (6+2ha) INA37+	INA39	outstanding	33
20	Crushington Conservation Area (1ha)	INA34	outstanding	
21	Crushington-Blacks Point Conservation Area (1ha)	INA34	outstanding	
22	Blacks Point-Trennery Steet Conservation Area (0.1ha)	INA33		
23	Inangahua River Conservation Area (Reefton Racecourse) (4ha)	INA19	high	
24	Inangahua River-Reefton(North Bank) Conservation Area (1ha)	INA20	high	
25	Inangahua River-Reefton C A (Inangahua Bridge Sth Bank)(2ha)	INA21	high	
26	Inangahua River-Reefton Cons Area (Rosstown Road) (0.5ha)	INA22	high	
27	Inangahua River Conservation Area (near Burkes Creek) (4ha)	INA14	high	

28	Inangahua River Conservation Area (near Giles Creek) (31ha)	INA14	high	
29	Inangahua River Andersons Road Conservation Area (4ha)	INA14	high	38
30	Waitahu River Island Conservation Area (7ha)	INA14	high	
32	Swamp Creek Road Rotokohu Conservation Area (21ha)	INA13		
33	Inangahua River Conservation Area (near Oweka) (17ha)	INA10	high	
34	Inangahua River Conservation Area (near Rotokohu) (20ha)	INA12	high	
35	Inangahua River Cons Area (near Perseverance Road) (9ha)	INA12	high	
36	Inangahua Riverbed Conservation Area (6ha)	INA12	high	
37	Brown Creek Conservation Area (37ha)	INA09		
38	Inangahua Junction (North) Conservation Area (2ha)	INA05		
39	Upper Buller Gorge Road Conservation Area (0.5ha)	INA07		
40	Inangahua Lancaster Street Conservation Area (3ha)	INA07		

Big River backcountry

41	Waiuta-Jos Divis Cottage Conservation Area (0.1ha)	INA31		
42	Murphy Creek Conservation Area (61ha)	INA25		
43	Bald Hill Conservation Area (88ha)	INA38		33
44	Progress Water Race Conservation Area (6ha)	INA35	outstanding	33
45	Big River Conservation Area (0.4ha)	INA36	outstanding	

Victoria Range

46	Boatman Creek-Capleston Conservation Area (382ha)	INA16		33
47	Boatman Creek Conservation Area (57ha)	INA15		
48	Waitahu River Conservation Area (46ha)	INA17		
49	Reefton Conservation Area (34ha)	INA18		
50	Shenandoah River Conservation Area (1319ha)	INA45		
51	Warwick River Conservation Area (230ha)	INA46		
52	Woolley River Conservation Area (133ha)	INA52	outstanding	37

Brunner Range

53	Winding Creek Conservation Area (286ha)	INA11		
54	Brunner Range Tops Conservation Area (1629ha)	INA44		48/33
55	Dee Creek Conservation Area (73ha)	INA06		
56	Ram Creek Conservation Area (13+3ha)	INA06	high	
57	Buller River-Lyell Conservation Area (33ha)	INA01	outstanding	48
58	Glengarry Stream Conservation Area (15ha)	INA42		?
59	Shenandoah Conservation Area (456ha)	INA43		?
60	Maruia River-West Bank Conservation Area (4416ha)	INA43		?

Maruia valley floor

61	SH7 Springs Junction Conservation Area (0.3ha)	INA54	high	
62	Maruia River Cons Area (downstream of SH Bridge)x 6 (50ha)	INA53	high	
63	Maruia River Conservation Area (Woolley Creek) (20ha)	INA53	high	
64	Maruia River Conservation Area x 4 (Boundary Road) (32ha)	INA51	high	
65	Maruia River Conservation Area (Creighton Road)	INA48	high	
66	Maruia River-Paenga Conservation Area	?	high	?

Maruia East Hills

67	Station Creek conservation Area (240ha)	INA52		?
68	West Rappahannock River Conservation Area (146ha)	INA49		?
69	Rappahannock River Conservation Area (334ha)INA47	INA47		?
70	Diamond Creek Conservation Area (553ha)	INA47		?
71	Caves Road Conservation Area (308ha)	INA47		?

Notes:

- INA02 **Rahui-Buller River Island Conservation Area** (13ha) and INA03 **Buller River Island Conservation Area** x2 (8ha) will be considered with the whole of Buller River in Kawhitiri Place
- The remote INA23 **Otututu Valley Conservation Area** (752ha) was considered in the Mawhera Place Landscape Values report.

Te Paparoa Massif (Inangahua Place)

The eastern-most flanks of the Paparoa Range massif are in the Inangahua Place. (Most of the massif is in Paparoa Place with some of south Paparoa in Mawhera Place) All the hill country east of Mawheraiti and Inangahua Rivers is included here, from Otututu (Rough) Valley to the Lower Buller Gorge. Berlins Bluff-White Cliffs escarpment is a significant landscape feature in the north toward the Buller river

No outstanding landscapes on the Inangahua side of Te Paparoa are identified in the operative Grey District Plan 2005.

In Schedule 5 of the draft *Te Taio o Poutini* plan two **Outstanding Natural Landscapes** are listed:
ONL39 Te Paparoa/Paparoa Range foothills
ONL41 Te Paparoa/Paparoa Range east & Mt William Range.

A number of outstanding natural character units are identified in the Paparoa massif in the West Coast Region Natural Character Study (Brown 2013) but most of these are to the west in Paparoa Place. Three units are relevant for Inangahua Place, all **outstanding**. They are:

T124 Otututu River (Rough River)
T122 Little Grey & Inangahua River Escarpments
T139 Buller River

There are seven parcels of stewardship land

- Rough River Conservation Area (138ha)
- Mawheraiti Farm Conservation Area (189ha)
- Mai Mai-Te Wharau Conservation Area (9224ha)
- Berlins Bluff Conservation Area (2512ha)
- Lower Buller Gorge Road Conservation Area(42ha)
- White Cliffs Conservation Area (442ha)
- Inangahua Junction Conservation Area (103ha)

Landscape factors for decision-makers to consider

- **Rough River Conservation Area** is also referred to in Mawhera Place. Otututu River (aka Rough River) is the boundary between Mawhera and Inangahua places. It is downstream of the very high natural character Otututu Valley Conservation Area.

Rough River Conservation Area is a long riparian strip. It's character changes along its length. The upstream part is sandwiched between Otututu Ecological Area and Otututu Scenic Reserve (which are contiguous on the south bank), and Mirfin Scenic Reserve, Otututu Ecological Area and an outlier of Paparoa National Park (on the north bank). Although there is a grazed area on the south bank the character of this section is predominantly natural. The twin parcels of Rough River Marginal Strip which are aligned with an alternative river channel sit within the grazed area.

This upstream part of **Rough River Conservation Area** lies within **outstanding** natural character unit *T124 Otututu River (Rough River)* together with the more remote Otututu Valley. Key attributes/characteristics described include:

Confined river channel set in a steep and deeply incised valley system, comprising multiple channels, exposed gravel beds, terracing, and is flanked by the Paparoa Range. The lower reaches of the river comprise a broad outwash plain that flows into the Grey River and is flanked by a vegetated river terrace.

- Rugged and raw landforms and their dramatic profile give the river a sense of wildness. Characteristic high rainfall events accentuate the drama and the sense of wildness.
- Dramatically eroded landforms clearly express the rivers power and varying flow. Broken vegetation and a series of outwash fans from its tributaries reinforce these qualities.
- Evidence of erosion revealing underlying geology, rockfall, stream downcutting and flooding. The River contains a range of aggregate sizes and weathered boulders that are constantly sifted and graded by the varying flows.
- Highly expressive outwash plain and river escarpment.
- Pristine beech forest on ranges flanks the river.
- Dynamic natural processes associated with the meandering braids and gravel beds, grading of aggregate sizes, downcutting, river terracing, flood events and inundation.
- Enclosing landforms heighten the sense of wildness.
- Entirely devoid of development/modification.

The downstream half of Rough River Conservation Area crosses the Mawheranui/Mawheraiti plains to reach Mawheranui (Grey) River and is set within the modified valley floor landscape. It is not part of Te Paparoa massif.

- **Mawheraiti Farm Conservation Area** is contiguous with the outlier of Paparoa National Park referred to above. Its shape and boundaries reflect the drainage patterns from this National Park parcel. Separating this and another part of Paparoa National Park to the north is an area of land modified with humps and hollows and roads possibly for plantation forestry. Mawheraiti Farm Conservation Area is likely to play an important role protecting freshwater values upstream of the outlying national park parcel, and the freshwater values of Burton Stream, thereby contributing to water quality and ecosystem health of the whole Mawheranui braided river system.
- **Mai Mai-Te Wharau Conservation Area** is in two parts. The first is in hill country rising to Mt Epping 1440m and Mt Raoulia 1362m. Sandwiched between remote Otututu Valley Conservation Area and the Paparoa Wilderness Area, and an outlying section of the Paparoa NP which runs along the toe of the slope west of Mawheraiti Valley. Mawheraiti Scenic Reserve on the Mai Mai Plain is also connected. Te Wharau Wildlife Management Area is contiguous on north boundary. There are licenced telecommunication facilities at Mt Raoulia and easement concessions have been granted for several other telecommunications sites.

A second separate block of Mai Mai Te Wharau Conservation Area is further north in the catchment of Te Wharau Stream (aka Stony Stream), surrounded by other PCL.

Mai Mai Te Wharau Conservation Area plays an important connecting role at the centre of a number of other parcels of PCL. It is fully integrated with the surrounding natural landscapes ecologically, hydrologically and visually.

Both parcels of **Mai Mai-Te Wharau Conservation Area** are **Outstanding Natural Landscape**. Most is in *ONL39 Te Paparoa/Paparoa Range foothills*, but some of the larger parcel may also fall into adjacent *ONL41 Te Paparoa/Paparoa Range east & Mt William Range*. Site Type and values for ONL39 are described as:

Assemblage of steep to very steep ridges and peaks, with deeply incised valleys that flank the Inangahua Valley.

Interplay of mature indigenous forest and vegetative sequence from lowland beech forest through to alpine scrub communities reinforcing topography and pronounced relief.

Exposed peaks and ridge tops revealing underlying geology are highly expressive of the landscapes formative and ongoing natural processes.

Pristine beech forest, unmodified and dramatic landforms, exposed ridge tops with the natural vegetation sequences reinforce the natural qualities of this alpine landscape.

Abuts areas of regenerating native scrub, farmland and exotic forestry in the Inangahua Valley.

At least part of the northern parcel of **Mai Mai Te Wharau Conservation Area** seems to be within **outstanding** natural character unit *T122 Little Grey & Inangahua River Escarpments*. Key attributes/characteristics of this unit are:

Series of steep river escarpments and slopes covered in mature forest.

- Homogenous mature forest cover that – in parts – directly flanks the rivers edge.
- Rugged and raw landforms and their dramatic profile give the river a sense of wildness. Characteristic high rainfall events accentuate the drama and the sense of wildness.
- Dramatic and distinctive steep river terrace plunging to the river heightening the sense of wildness. Characteristic high rainfall events also accentuate the drama and the sense of wildness.
- Eroded river escarpments / slopes clearly express the rivers power and varying flow.
- Apart from the pastoral valley below this landscape is largely devoid of development.

- **Berlins Bluff Conservation Area** is entirely surrounded by PCL including Blackwater Ecological Area, Fletcher Creek Wildlife Management Area, another Paparoa National Park outlier, Berlins Bluff Ecological Area and Lower Buller Gorge Scenic Reserve. Gently graded hill country rising 694m, fully forested apart from bluffs and several slips in varying stages of regeneration. Many small waterways flow through Berlins Bluff Conservation Area to reach the Inangahua and Buller Rivers.

Berlins Bluff Conservation Area is **Outstanding Natural Landscape** in *ONL41 Te Paparoa/Paparoa Range east & Mt William Range*. ONL site type and values listed are: Steep mountain range moderately dissected by descending foothills and lowland terraces with exposed rocky peaks and outcrops along the ridge tops.

Interplay of mature indigenous forest and vegetative sequence from lowland forest through to alpine communities reinforcing topography and pronounced relief.

Exposed peaks and ridge tops revealing underlying geology are highly expressive of the landscapes formative processes.

Assemblage of ridge lines, peaks and mountaintops of similar orientation, elevation and vegetation cover and appearance.

Continuous beech forest giving way to alpine tundra at higher elevations.

Mt Rochfort, Buckland peaks, and the lower Buller Gorge are landmarks within this landscape.

- **Lower Buller Gorge Conservation Area, White Cliffs Conservation Area and Inangahua Junction Conservation Area** are grouped together at the end of the distinctive White Cliffs landform. They are part of an extensive continuous forested area across the Paparoa Ranges, and are adjacent to the Paparoa National Park, the Rosemount Scenic Reserve, and the Berlins Bluff Ecological Area, creating good connectivity. Bare talus and seral vegetation on landslips from the Murchison and Inangahua earthquakes is still visible.
- Different parts of the White Cliffs Conservation Area are above and below the Berlins Bluff-White Cliffs escarpment. Paparoa National Park land is contiguous along many boundaries as is Lower Buller Gorge Road Conservation Area.
- **Lower Buller Gorge Road Conservation Area** is contiguous with White Cliffs Conservation Area on the landform west of Inangahua Junction. State Highway 6 Lower Buller Gorge Road forms its north boundary.

Lower Buller Gorge Conservation Area is **Outstanding Natural Landscape** falling within *ONL41 Te Paparoa/Paparoa Range east & Mt William Range*. ONL41 site type and values are listed for Berlins Bluff Conservation Area above.

Lower Buller Gorge Conservation Area and part of **White Cliffs Conservation Area** are included in **outstanding** natural character unit *T139 Buller River*, a very long unit which extends from the West Coast Region boundary near Newton Flat down to Te Kuha where Buller River emerges from the hills. Key attributes/characteristics described for this unit are:

Very long river which passes through a variety of landscapes. It includes a series of confined and dramatic gorges (Upper and Lower Buller Gorges) and is enclosed by steep to very steep sided valleys, deep canyons, limestone cliffs and bluffs, river terraces and plains where the river channel becomes broader and less confined.

- The combination of enclosing landforms, vegetation cover, large volumes of water give the river a dramatic and wild character which is pronounced at the upper and lower gorges.
- Dramatically eroded landforms clearly express the rivers power and varying flow. Broken vegetation and expansive depositional landforms reinforce these qualities.
- Evidence of erosion revealing underlying geology, rockfall, stream downcutting and flooding. The River contains a range of aggregate sizes and weathered boulders that are constantly sifted and graded by the varying flows.
- Flanked by mature beech forest.
- Wide range of channel typologies (braids, pools, rapids, eddies).
- Flanked by a mountain landscape along much of its length, with the exception of the Inangahua and Buller River confluence. A number of rural dwellings, SH6, and the Stillwater Ngakawau Line are situated within this unit but remain largely subservient due to the extensive coverage of native vegetation. The river abuts the rural communities of Inangahua, Lyell and New Creek located on the river plains and terraces – these are excluded from this unit.

- Forested **Inangahua Junction Conservation Area**, together with contiguous Rosemount Scenic Reserve also occur on the landform close to Inangahua Junction. An outlying part of Paparoa National Park is contiguous along its western boundary. Private land to east. Vegetation near the toe of slope appears to have been cleared or burnt but is regenerating. Inangahua Junction Conservation Area is functionally and visually indistinguishable from adjacent PCL.

Mawheraiti valleys

Includes all the valley floor land either side of Mawheraiti (Little Grey) River up to its headwaters near the Reefton Saddle. Extends some way up Waiuta and Blackwater Rivers, and Antonio Creek valley floors as well.

Extends up the north bank of Mawheranui (Grey) River Valley on the Ikamatua Plain. There is a notable absence of PCL on the Ikamatua Plain/North Bank of Mawheranui. Some stewardship parcels on south side are considered in Mawhera place, but both sides of the valley are really one landscape character area.

Mawheraiti includes settlements at Ikamatua, Hukarere, Waimaunga, Mawheraiti, Hinau, Maimai, and Tawhai, strung out along State Highway 7 which follows the river down to the coast at Greymouth

No outstanding landscapes from the operative Grey District Plan are located in Mawheriti valley.

No **Outstanding Natural Landscapes** are listed in Schedule 5 of the draft *Te Taio o Poutini* plan for the Mawheraiti valley part of Inangahua Place.

Mawheraiti River is a significant tributary of Mawheranui (Grey) River. In the West Coast Region Natural Character Study (Brown 2013) the bed of Mawheraiti River and some land either side is identified as part of the lengthy **high** natural character unit *T93 Grey River Mawheranui flats* which extends right up to the top of the Mawheraiti valley. Key attributes/characteristics described for the whole unit are:

Very extensive braided river channel and gravel beds surrounded by pasture, farming activities and steep escarpments covered in indigenous vegetation.

- Mix of aggregate sizes, their volume and the pronounced river beds give the impression of the rivers force during flood events and a distinct impression of the rivers wildness.
- Evidence of erosion revealing underlying geology, rockfall, stream downcutting and flooding. The River contains a range of aggregate sizes and weathered boulders that are constantly sifted and graded by the varying flows.
- Dynamic natural processes associated with the meandering braids and gravel beds, grading of aggregate sizes, downcutting, river terracing, flood events and inundation.
- A wide range of channel typologies (braids, pools, rapids, eddies).
- Eroded river escarpments / bluffs clearly express the rivers power and varying flow. River terracing and depositional landforms reinforce these qualities.
- The highly modified landscape adjoining the river – including farming activities, pasture, railway and roads – does impact upon the sense of seclusion and remoteness, but on balance, does not detract from the integrity of the evident and very expressive natural processes of the river bed.
- Includes the lower reaches of the Arnold, Big, Ahaura, Snowy, Blackwater, Otututu and Little Grey Rivers.

Note that quite a lot of modified Mawheraiti valley floor landscape, away from the influence of the river, is not included in the high natural character unit which is a reflection of the high natural character of the river itself.

There are five parcels of stewardship land

- Little Grey River Conservation Area (6ha)
- Blackwater River Conservation Area (26ha)
- Blackwater Creek Conservation Area (0.2 + 0.3ha)
- Caribu [sic] Creek Conservation Area (1ha)
- Stony Creek Conservation Area (15ha)

Landscape factors for decision-makers to consider

- A few small fragmented riparian parcels occur on the valley floor, often in riverbeds. These include:

Little Grey River Conservation Area is in the riverbed just upstream of the Ikamatua Bridge. Two slivers of riparian type land including river bed and river bank. Some flat land modified for farming. Little Grey River Conservation Area is included in **high** natural character unit *T93 Grey River Mawheranui flats*, described above.

Caribu [sic] Creek Conservation Area appears to include Caribou [sic] Road and part of a tributary of Cariboo [sic] Creek. It is located close to an extension of Victoria Forest Park. A modified river terrace, it includes some big trees on the riser. This tiny parcel falls within the high natural character unit *T93 Grey River Mawheranui flats* as well.

Blackwater Creek Conservation Area is three tiny slivers of river bed land intermingled with Blackwater Creek Marginal Strip (0.2ha) and a separate stand alone rectangle (0.3ha) with a building (a garage next to a dwelling?) in Blackwater settlement. It seems to be someone's garden.

These scattered fragments of riparian and riverbed stewardship land are complimented by several marginal strips including Burton Creek, Rough and Tumble Creek, Mawheraiti River, Blackwater Creek and Antonios Creek Marginal Strips.

- **Blackwater River Conservation Area** is a rectangular parcel surrounded on two sides by Victoria Forest Park. It includes a section Blackwater River. Indigenous forest on hillside is indistinguishable from surroundings. The valley floor modified by 19th century dredging and includes ponds. The valley floor part of this conservation area falls within the high natural character unit *T93 Grey River Mawheranui flats*, described above, and also contributes historic landscape value.
- **Stony Creek Conservation Area** contains a long remnant of podocarp/beech forest on a terrace at the edge of Stony Creek on the Maimai Plains, between Suttons Mill Road and Stony Creek. Mawheraiti Scenic Reserve is on the opposite bank and farmland to the north and east so it is important as a buffer between farmland and the scenic reserve, as well as providing riparian protection and additional habitat for flora and fauna found in the scenic reserve.

Collectively the forested PCL along Stony Creek extends the high natural character landscape of Paparoa out across the Mawheraiti valley floor in a way which is similar in effect to the extensions of Paparoa National Park up valley at Mai Mai Creek and (partially) at Casolis Creek. These evenly spaced extensions create a predictable pattern in the landscape which also serves a valuable ecological purpose, linking ki uta ki tai.

Notes:

Blackwater Creek Conservation Area is not to be confused with Blackwater River Conservation Area. Stony Creek is not to be confused with nearby Stony River (aka Te Wharau River)

Ka Tiritiri o te Moana (Main Divide) Inangahaua

A huge mountainous area along the main divide Ka Tiritiri o te Moana at eastern edge of Inangahua Place, rising to Mt Barron at 1806m, Mt Puttick 1623m and Mt Fryberg 1817m. Gloriana Peak 2218m of the Spencer Mountain group sits just outside the northeastern corner. Two river systems play a key role in defining the character of the main divide part of Inangahua Place: Mawheranui (Grey) and Maruia Rivers and their headwaters. Does not include any modified valley floors except small enclaves along the Palmer and Upper Grey valleys.

Almost all the high natural character landscapes of the whole Ma Tiritiri o te Moana area are currently protected by management as PCL including Otira-Kopara Conservation Area, Arthurs Pass National Park, Lewis Pass Scenic Reserve, and Victoria Forest Park.

Most of Inangahua Place is in the Buller District but the north eastern part (lower Maruia Valley) is in the Tasman District.

No outstanding landscapes in this area are listed in the operative Grey District Plan.

Nearly all of this Ka Tiritiri o te Moana (Main Divide) part of Inangahua Place is **Outstanding Natural Landscape** scheduled in the draft *Te Tai o Poutini*. Relevant units are:

ONL33 Victoria Range west

ONL35 Lewis Pass-Fryberg Range

ONL36 Maruia River Valley East

ONL34 Upper Māwhera/Grey Valley

ONL24 Kea Pass-Arthurs Pass-Amuri Pass which runs up along the main divide boundary

In the West Coast Region Natural Character Study (Brown 2013) most of the valleys close to the main divide are assessed as having **outstanding** natural character. For Inangahua Place these include units:

T110 Upper Grey, Brown Grey, Blue Grey, Robinson and Tass Rivers

T111 Clarke and Alexander Rivers

T113 May Creek lake and tarn

T114 Lake Christabel

T115 Maruia River

T116 Alfred River and Lake Daniel

There are six parcels of stewardship land in this area:

- Conservation Area Robinson River (106ha)
- Robinson River Conservation Area (81ha)
- Grey River/Mawheranui Conservation Area (two parts)
- Palmer Road Conservation Area (0.4 + 0.4 + 0.4ha)
- Palmer Road Conservation Area (737 + 185 + 8ha)
- Upper Grey River Conservation Area (80ha)

Landscape factors for decision-makers to consider:

- **Grey River/Mawheranui Conservation Area** is in two parts. One is a riparian section immediately downstream of the other part which is a pair of blocks, one each side of an incised section of Upper Grey River, and including forested terraces.

Both parcels of **Grey River/Mawheranui Conservation Area** are considered **Outstanding Natural Landscape**. They are within the extensive *ONL33 Victoria Range west* area. Site Type and values for this ONL are listed as:

Steep to very steep mountain range with high relief and dissected by deeply incised valleys.

Interplay of mature indigenous forest and vegetative sequence from lowland beech forest through to alpine scrub communities reinforcing topography and pronounced relief.

Exposed peaks and ridge tops revealing underlying geology are highly expressive of the landscapes formative and ongoing natural processes. Erosion, scree slopes and depositional landforms clearly express the erosive nature of the mountain landscape and uplifted landforms.

A mountain range sequence of deeply etched ridge lines or similar heights, displaying rock formations in upper elevations and alpine vegetation patterns.

Mt Puttick, Haast, Hunter, and Beckham are key/representative landmarks within this landscape – as seen from SH7 approaching Springs Junction.

Grey River/Mawheranui Conservation Area is also included in **outstanding** natural character unit *T110 Upper Grey, Brown Grey, Blue Grey, Robinson and Tass Rivers* with key attributes/characteristics cited as:

Very extensive and broad valley system that is flanked on each side by high altitude mountain ranges covered in unmodified mature beech forest and comprises braided river channels, steep escarpments, gorges, and open river terraces / plains.

- Rugged and raw landforms and their dramatic profile give the river a sense of wildness. Characteristic high rainfall events accentuate the drama and the sense of wildness.

- Dramatically eroded landforms clearly express the rivers power and varying flow. Broken vegetation and expansive depositional landforms reinforce these qualities.

- Evidence of erosion revealing underlying geology, rockfall, stream downcutting and flooding. The River contains a range of aggregate sizes and weathered boulders that are constantly sifted and graded by the varying flows. Naturally unconstrained alignment.

- Continuous mature beech forest.

- Dynamic natural processes associated with the meandering braids and gravel beds, grading of aggregate sizes, downcutting, river terracing, flood events and inundation.

- Various patches of pasture, farming activities, and several houses have been excluded from this unit.

- **Robinson River Conservation Area** and **Conservation Area Robinson River** are at the end of Palmer Road at a farmed alluvial flat called Newcombes.

Parts of both **Robinson River Conservation Area** and **Conservation Area Robinson River** are included in **Outstanding Natural Landscape** *ONL34 Upper Māwhera/Grey Valley*. Site type and values described for this landscape are:

Series of steep ranges and peaks that enclose Te Māwherataka-o-kā-kuha-o-Tū-te-rakiwhanoa/Upper Grey River.

Interplay of mature indigenous forest and vegetative sequence from lowland beech forest through to alpine scrub communities reinforcing topography and pronounced relief.

Exposed upper slopes revealing underlying geology are highly expressive of the landscapes formative and ongoing natural processes. Erosion, scree slopes and depositional landforms clearly express the erosive nature of the mountain landscape and uplifted landforms.

Pristine beech forest, unmodified and dramatic landforms combine with the natural vegetation sequence to impart a strong sense of naturalness.

Pockets of farmland, buildings / dwellings, and modification have been excluded from this unit.

T110 Upper Grey, Brown Grey, Blue Grey, Robinson and Tass Rivers outstanding natural character unit completely surrounds the Newcombes valley but does not include the valley floor so these two stewardship parcels are not considered to have outstanding natural character at the regional level.

- Palmer Road links remote Newcombes valley with Springs Junction. Some parts of **Palmer Road Conservation Area** lie on each side of this road. The larger area is closest to Newcombes, and the smaller parcel of the three is in a corner of Palmer Flat. All are forested, contiguous with Victoria Forest Park, and are indistinguishable from the high natural character landscape surrounding them.

A further three small rectangular parcels of **Palmer Road Conservation Area** are evenly spaced along Palmer Road. All are surrounded by Victoria Forest Park and are natural in character.

Because the more modified Palmer Flat is excluded from *ONL34 Upper Māwhera/Grey Valley* most but not all parcels of **Palmer Road Conservation Area** are included in the **Outstanding Natural Landscape**. Site types and values for *ONL34* are listed above.

Most of the Palmer Road Conservation Area is in the outstanding natural character unit *T110 Upper Grey, Brown Grey, Blue Grey, Robinson and Tass Rivers*, with characteristics as listed above. The grazed Palmer Flat part of the Palmer River valley is omitted from *T110* so one (or possibly two) smaller parcels may not be within its boundary.

- **Upper Grey River Conservation Area** is in two parcels, one either side of May Creek, in a valley west of Palmer Flat. It is surrounded by Victoria Forest Park and almost linked with some riparian sections of Palmer Road Conservation Area which are intertwined with Blue-Grey River marginal strips. It is forested, with high natural character.

Upper Grey River Conservation Area sits just outside the boundary of *ONL33 Victoria Range west*. It is not included in the *T113 May Creek lake and tarn* outstanding natural character unit as it is located further down the May Creek valley.

Inangahua valley floor

All the modified valley floors from headwaters right to confluence with Buller River at Inangahua Junction. Includes valley floor land up the Capleston valley, Awarau, and Landing Creek.

Includes a series of settlements (upstream-downstream) Crushington, Blacks Point, Reefton, Waitahu, Cronadun, Larry's Creek, Rotokohu, Inangahua Landing, Oweka, Inangahua Junction all connected by State Highway 69, and the town of Inangahua itself.

Inangahua Valley is distinguished from other modified valley floor landscapes by the high number of small riparian parcels, especially river bed parcels, stung out along the length of the river and up tributaries.

No outstanding landscapes in this area are identified in the operative Grey District Plan

In Schedule 5 of the draft *Te Taio o Poutini* plan two **Outstanding Natural Landscapes** are listed:

ONL38 Reefton Saddle,

ONL33 Victoria Range west

In the Inangahua valley three high and outstanding natural character units have been identified in the West Coast Region Natural Character Study (Brown 2013):

T120 Inangahua [sic] River (outstanding)

T121 Inangahua River Flats (high)

T122 Little Grey and Inangahua River Escarpments (outstanding)

There are about fourteen parcels of stewardship land in the Inangahua Valleys

- Inangahua River Rahu Saddle Conservation Area (1 + 1ha)
- Inangahua River Rahu Saddle Conservation Area (6ha)
- Crushington Conservation Area (0.9ha)
- Crushington-Blacks Point Conservation Area (0.8ha)
- Blacks Point-Trennery Steet Conservation Area (0.1ha)
- Inangahua River Conservation Area (Reefton Racecourse) (4ha)
- Inangahua River Conservation Area (Reefton, North Bank) (1ha)
- Inangahua River -Reefton Conservation Area (Inangahua Bridge South Bank) (2ha)
- Inangahua River -Reefton Conservation Area (Rosstown Road) (0.5ha)
- Inangahua River Conservation Area (near Burkes Creek)(4ha)
- Inangahua River Conservation Area (near Giles Creek) (31ha)
- Inangahua River Andersons Road Conservation Area (4ha)
- Waiatu River Island Conservation Area (7ha)
- Swamp Creek Road Rotokohu Conservation Area (21ha)
- Inangahua River Conservation Area (near Oweka)(17ha)
- Inangahua River Conservation Area (near Rotokohu)(20ha)
- Inangahua River Conservation Area (near Perseverance Road)(9ha)
- Inangahua Riverbed Conservation Area (6ha)
- Brown Creek Conservation Area (37ha)
- Inangahua Junction (North) Conservation Area (1ha)
- Inangahua Lancaster Street Conservation Area (3ha)
- Upper Buller Gorge Road Conservation Area (0.5ha)

Landscape factors for decision-makers to consider

- The first two parts of **Inangahua River Rahu Saddle Conservation Area** are isolated stewardship parcels along the State Highway 7 over Rahu Saddle. One is at the saddle itself, and the other is at the confluence of a tributary entering Inangahua River a little way downstream of the beginning of the Klondyke Spur track. Both are embedded in the Rahu Scenic Reserve within a wider Victoria Forest Park and are indistinguishable from their natural character surroundings.

The second **Inangahua River Rahu Saddle Conservation Area** is further downstream in a bend of the upper Inangahua River between the State Highway 6 and the river. It is surrounded by Rahu Scenic Reserve.

- These parcels of **Inangahua River Rahu Saddle Conservation Area** together with **Crushington Conservation Area** and **Crushington-Blacks Point Conservation Area** lie within outstanding natural character unit *T120 Inangahua River*.

Key attributes/characteristics for this unit are cited as:

Steep to very steep valley system, partly entrenched with river terracing and escarpments, and an exposed riverbed flanked by high altitude ranges.

- Rugged and raw landforms and their dramatic profile give the river a sense of wildness. Characteristic high rainfall events accentuate the drama and the sense of wildness.
 - Dramatically eroded landforms clearly express the rivers power and varying flow. Broken vegetation and a series of outwash fans from its tributaries reinforce these qualities.
 - Evidence of erosion revealing underlying geology, rockfall, stream downcutting and flooding. The River contains a range of aggregate sizes and weathered boulders that are constantly sifted and graded by the varying flows. Naturally unconstrained alignment.
 - Pristine beech forest on ranges flanked the river.
 - Dynamic natural processes associated with the meandering braids and gravel beds, grading of aggregate sizes, downcutting, river terracing, flood events and inundation.
 - An area of development/modification near Garvey Creek Mine Road is particularly apparent and is excluded from this unit. SH7 traverses the valley floor.
 - Enclosing landforms heighten the sense of wildness.
- All **Inangahua River Rahu Saddle Conservation Area** parcels also fall within *ONL33 Victoria Range west*. Site type and values details are:
Steep to very steep mountain range with high relief and dissected by deeply incised valleys. Interplay of mature indigenous forest and vegetative sequence from lowland beech forest through to alpine scrub communities reinforcing topography and pronounced relief. Exposed peaks and ridge tops revealing underlying geology are highly expressive of the landscape's formative and ongoing natural processes. Erosion, scree slopes and depositional landforms clearly express the erosive nature of the mountain landscape and uplifted landforms. A mountain range sequence of deeply etched ridge lines of similar heights, displaying rock formations in upper elevations and alpine vegetation patterns. Mt Puttick, Haast, Hunter, & Beckham are key/representative landmarks within this landscape – as seen from SH7 approaching Springs Junction.

- A number of small fragmented riparian parcels closely associated with the Inangahua River braided river system occur along the Inangahua River and its tributaries. These include:

Crushington Conservation Area and **Crushington-Blacks Point Conservation Area** are two similar lenses of land between Inangahua River and State Highway 7 Road upstream of settlement of Blacks Point. They appear to be modified terrace, maybe for river access.

Inangahua River-Reefton Conservation Area (north bank) is an area of terrace land between down town Reefton and the Inangahua River, which includes a tiny section of the river itself. It was possibly part of the Inangahua riverbed in the past, and may be again in the future, but is now an amenity area, with a car park, toilets, mowed grass, and scattered large exotic trees.

Inangahua River-Reefton Conservation Area (Inangahua Bridge South Bank), is close to the township of Reefton, just downstream from bridge on Ikamatua Highway (SH 7), a modified river terrace located between Grey Road and the river. About a quarter is in the braided riverbed with channel and river gravels. The remaining three quarters of the area is pasture, grazed under licence, possibly cultivated, with scattered trees, and shrubland on the riverbank.

Inangahua River-Reefton Conservation Area (Rosstown Road) on the south bank opposite Reefton township is a thin sliver of riparian land, mostly terrace riser, between Rosstown Road and the river. Shrubby vegetation on steep riverbank immediately above an active channel and some river gravels are included.

Inangahua River Conservation Area (Racecourse) Native vegetation has been cleared and the conservation area is grazed with some gorse and broom shrubland cover. The conservation area includes a tiny section of the river itself. It would have been part of the Inangahua River bed at some point in the past and may be again in the future.

Inangahua River Andersons Road Conservation Area is a wooded island in the braided riverbed with channels either side. Mostly pasture with some native regeneration.

Inangahua River Andersons Road Conservation Area is located within **Outstanding Natural Landscape** *ONL38 Reefton Saddle*. This is probably because it is at the base of some river bluffs. Site type and values of this landscape are cited as:

Distinctive sequence of steep dissected hill country that sits between the Paparoa and Victoria Ranges.

Homogenous mature lowland forest cover.

Cohesive assemblage of ridges, peaks, and mountaintops of similar orientation, attitudes, vegetative cover and appearance. Contiguous unmodified landforms, pristine forest cover, moderate relief, incised river channels, and vegetation patterns reinforce the natural qualities of the landscape.

Views of dramatic cliff / bluffs and steep slopes along the Inangahua River from SH69.

Inangahua River Conservation Area (near Burkes Creek) immediately upstream of Waitahu River confluence includes part of a river channel, riverbed gravels, shrubland and pasture, possibly cultivated.

Inangahua River Conservation Area (near Giles Creek) is made up of four close parcels of riverbed land down stream from Waitahu confluence. Riverbed, gravels, shrubland pasture on alluvial terraces.

Waitahu River Island Conservation Area in the river bed near Waitahu settlement consists of river gravels, pasture, possibly woody weeds, and some native regeneration.

Inangahua River Conservation Area (near Perseverance Road)(9ha) 886 Twin slivers with pylons running through the length just downstream of Perseverance Road Bridge. A grazed island in Inangahua River bed with regenerating riparian forest, and riverbed gravels likely to have water over them during high flows.

Inangahua River Conservation Area (near Rotokohu) is an area of modified alluvial flats next to the Inangahua River, mainly cultivated and grazed pasture and exotic shrubland but with some regenerating native forest.

Inangahua Riverbed Conservation Area includes river bed between the main channel and an old flood channel of the braided river. Cover includes river gravels, grazed pasture and some regenerating shrubland and riparian forest. It is likely to be inundated during floods.

Inangahua River Conservation Area (Oweka) Alluvial terrace grazed as pasture but the area also includes active riverbed, gravels and regenerating riparian beech forest along the river and terrace risers.

Upper Buller Gorge Road Conservation Area is a town section between the railway line and State Highway 6 as it passes through the settlement of Inangahua. A stream passes through it, a tributary of the Buller River. It is forested, possibly with old growth indigenous forest.

Inangahua Junction (North) Conservation Area is a small river bed parcel in the Inangahua River near its junction with Buller River. Rosemount Scenic Reserve is nearby across the river. The conservation area is mostly highly modified farmland but does include a narrow strip of riparian vegetation.

In addition to these stewardship areas marginal strips including Inangahua Marginal Strip, Burkes Creek, Waitahu River, Larrys Creek, and Hard Creek Marginal Strips help protect braided river landscape values.

From Crushington down to Inangahua Landing the Inangahua River and its environs are included in a **high** natural character unit *T121 Inangahua River Flats*. The unit extends some way up Giles Creek, Waitahu River, and Awarau (Larry River). All the riparian and riverbed stewardship parcels listed above. Which are in this section of the river, are included in the high natural character unit. Key attributes/characteristics of *T121 Inangahua River Flats* are described as:

Extensive braided river channel and gravel beds orientated on a north-south axis, surrounded by pasture, farming activities and flanked by the Victoria Range to the west and low elevation foothills to the east.

- Mix of aggregate sizes, their volume and the pronounced river beds give the impression of the rivers force during flood events and a distinct impression of the rivers wildness

- Evidence of erosion revealing underlying geology, rockfall, stream downcutting and flooding. The River contains a range of aggregate sizes and weathered boulders that are constantly sifted and graded by the varying flows.
- Dynamic natural processes associated with the meandering braids and gravel beds, grading of aggregate sizes, downcutting, river terracing, flood events and inundation.
- A wide range of channel typologies (braids, pools, rapids, eddies).
- The modified landscape adjoining the river – including farming activities, pasture, railway and roads – does impact upon the sense of seclusion and remoteness, but on balance, does not detract from the integrity of the evident and very expressive natural processes of the river bed.
- Enclosing landforms around the lake margins heighten the sense of remoteness.
- Includes the lower reaches of Waitahu and Awarau Rivers.

Although they may be widely scattered and small, together with multiple marginal strips and other PCL they support the healthy functioning of freshwater ecosystems not only in the immediate waterway but also in bigger rivers downstream and their hapua.

Braided river systems such as the Inangahua River are dynamic. Just because a river bed stewardship parcel is some distance from the channel at present does not mean it will not be reclaimed by the river in the future. There is value in allowing room for the natural functioning of the system and this may be the reason many of these parcels were set aside for conservation in the first instance. Allowing room for a braided river to function fully strengthens and enhances the river's natural character.

The value of braided river systems have been misunderstood and under-rated by past and present generations and this is reflected in current management of riparian and riverbed stewardship parcels. Parts of some stewardship parcels have been fenced, grazed, and/or cultivated. Where valley floor or river bed conservation land is significantly modified, it's contribution to Inangahua Place landscape outcomes can be enhanced, if not now, then in the future. It is possible their contribution to water quality, ecosystem health and natural landscape character will be better appreciated by future generations.

Many of the parcels of stewardship land in the Inangahua valleys retain at least some of their natural character attributes. Often they are small and ecologically vulnerable, set as they are within a highly modified landscape which is rapidly evolving. However, collectively their value lies in how they reveal and express the underlying natural systems from which the modified landscapes evolved. As ongoing processes of modification continue on the valley floor the value of natural character stewardship parcels will increase. Careful consideration needs to be given to how best to “safeguard the options for future generations”.

Valley floor conservation lands, however fragmented, provide ecological and visual linkages to high natural character landscapes in the surrounding hills. Many are essential to achieving ki uta ki tai ecological linkages between the hills and Inangahua River, and in a few cases the Buller River. Such linkages enhance resilience of both terrestrial and freshwater communities and improve probability of species survival. They can also provide a natural character framework to which other land managers can add, including private landowners, supporting the evolution of a more sustainable rural landscape.

- **Brown Creek Conservation Area** is a long (about 7km) sinuous riparian conservation area along Brown Creek as it crosses the Oweka plains to meet Inangahua River. It links

Victoria Forest Park with Rough and Brown Creek Scenic Reserve. A small outlier of the scenic reserve is tucked into a bend in Brown Creek. The conservation area is not strictly aligned with the current course of the creek in places. Brown Creek has an active creek bed and riparian margins of both exotic and indigenous forest. Surrounded largely by developed farmland it has an important freshwater ecosystem protection purpose, provides connection and adds value and visual interest to the surrounding rural landscape.

- Three surveyed sections in the Inangahua Valley settlement of Blacks Point make up **Blacks Point-Trennery Street Conservation Area** together with nearby Trennery Street-Blacks Point Historic Reserve. State Highway 7 passes them. Low natural character at present but natural or historic value may increase with time.
- **Swamp Creek Road Rotokohu Conservation Area** is lowland forest remnant in the middle of modified plain. The conservation area is an awkward rectangle but it is currently part of a larger area which has more sympathetic boundaries. Some shrubland and pasture grazed under concession are included in the stewardship area as well as the forest.

Surviving lowland forest remnants on valley floors are particularly highly valued symbolic markers of the original natural landscape as they express not only the natural past but also the endeavours and aspirations of nineteenth and early twentieth century landowners. As ongoing processes of landscape modification continue the natural and cultural heritage value of such remaining natural character fragments for future generations will increase.

- **Inangahua Lancaster Street Conservation Area** contains old growth indigenous forest. Brown Creek Road forms its western boundary with part of Dee Creek Scenic Reserve across the road. Forest in the conservation area is part of a larger remnant of indigenous native forest some of which is on private land. It contributes to the ecological functioning of all the remaining patches of indigenous forest on the alluvial plains around the junction of Inangahua and Buller Rivers.

Remnant beech forest is an important component of the special character of the Inangahua townscape to which this parcel and **Upper Buller Gorge Road Conservation Area** (see list of riparian conservation areas above) contribute significantly.

Big River back country

Hill country between SH 7 (Mawheraiti Valley) and SH 7 (Upper Inangahua River Valley)

Nominal boundary about Alexander Mine and Mt Gore 1488m

Includes a multitude of gold and coal mining sites including historic settlement sites at Waiuta, Blackwater, Merryjigs and Big River, historic mines and includes Alexander and Progress water races. Also includes current mine operations in centre near former Big River settlement.

Most of the massif is protected as Victoria Conservation Park.

No outstanding landscapes from this area are listed in the operative Grey District Plan,

The draft plan *Te Taio o Poutini* identifies one **Outstanding Natural Landscape** in schedule 5: *ONL33 Victoria Range west*

In the West Coast Region Natural Character Study (Brown 2013) four units in the Big River massif are assessed as having **outstanding** natural character.

T111 Clarke and Alexander Rivers (part?)

T119 Upper Snowy and Big Rivers

T122 Little Grey and Inangahua Escarpments

T120 Inanahua [sic]River (should be Inangahua)

There are five parcels of stewardship land

- Waiuta-Jos Divis Cottage conservation Area (0.1ha)
- Murphy Creek Conservation Area (61ha)
- Bald Hill Conservation Area (88ha)
- Progress Water Race Conservation Area (6ha)
- Big River Conservation Area (0.4ha)

Landscape factors for decision-makers to consider

- **Waiuta-Jos Divis Cottage Conservation Area** in historic Waiuta mining settlement includes resident miner/photographer Jos Divis cottage and section. The building is being restored. Set within the historic Waiuta township and surrounded by Waiuta Amenity Area. Low natural character due to widespread modification by mining, but high historic value.
- **Murphy Creek Conservation Area** (aka Antonio Creek Conservation Area) is a rectangular parcel surrounded on three sides by Victoria Forest Park and appears functionally and visually indistinguishable from its surrounding landscape. It includes the forested valley of a section of Murphy Creek which meets Antonios Creek at Antonios Flat.
- **Bald Hill Conservation Area** is an oval shaped area of stewardship land partly covering the open tussock grassland tops of Bald Hill 1191m. It is entirely surrounded by Victoria Forest Park.

Bald Hill Conservation Area is part of the extensive **Outstanding Natural Landscape** *ONL33 Victoria Range west*. Site type and values for this ONL are described as:

Steep to very steep mountain range with high relief and dissected by deeply incised valleys. Interplay of mature indigenous forest and vegetative sequence from lowland beech forest through to alpine scrub communities reinforcing topography and pronounced relief.

Exposed peaks and ridge tops revealing underlying geology are highly expressive of the landscape's formative and ongoing natural processes. Erosion, scree slopes and depositional landforms clearly express the erosive nature of the mountain landscape and uplifted landforms.

A mountain range sequence of deeply etched ridge lines of similar heights, displaying rock formations in upper elevations and alpine vegetation patterns.

Mt Puttick, Haast, Hunter, & Beckham are key/representative landmarks within this landscape – as seen from SH7 approaching Springs Junction.

The natural character of Bald Hill Conservation Area is high but the hill top lies between outstanding natural character units *T119 Snowy River* and *T111 Alexander River* and is not included within the boundaries of either.

- **Progress Water Race Conservation Area** is very long and thin and just covers the length of historic progress water race as it winds around hillside above upper Inangahua River valley, set within Victoria Forest Park. The conservation area forms boundary between PCL and adjacent farmland for about half its length. Progress Water Race is about 16km in total, but it is not clear if its whole length is in PCL.

Although more historic than natural the **Progress Water Race Conservation Area** is located in and **Outstanding Natural Landscape** *ONL33 Victoria Range west*, details of which appear above.

Progress Water Race Conservation Area is located in **outstanding** natural character unit *T120 Inangahua River*. Key attributes/characteristics for this unit are cited as:

Steep to very steep valley system, partly entrenched with river terracing and escarpments, and an exposed riverbed flanked by high altitude ranges.

- Rugged and raw landforms and their dramatic profile give the river a sense of wildness. Characteristic high rainfall events accentuate the drama and the sense of wildness.
 - Dramatically eroded landforms clearly express the rivers power and varying flow. Broken vegetation and a series of outwash fans from its tributaries reinforce these qualities.
 - Evidence of erosion revealing underlying geology, rockfall, stream downcutting and flooding. The River contains a range of aggregate sizes and weathered boulders that are constantly sifted and graded by the varying flows. Naturally unconstrained alignment.
 - Pristine beech forest on ranges flanked the river.
 - Dynamic natural processes associated with the meandering braids and gravel beds, grading of aggregate sizes, downcutting, river terracing, flood events and inundation.
 - An area of development/modification near Garvey Creek Mine Road is particularly apparent and is excluded from this unit. SH7 traverses the valley floor.
 - Enclosing landforms heighten the sense of wildness.
- **Big River Conservation Area** is located a long way up Soldiers-Big River Road in the remote Big River mining area. It is a small rectangular section on a side road to the historic Big River Engine House. Surrounding landscape is modified by mining but supports a mosaic of shrubland, grassland and forest with some indigenous component.

Big River Conservation Area is located within **outstanding** natural character unit *T119 Upper Snowy and Big Rivers*. Key attributes/characteristics of this unit are listed as:

Deeply incised and confined river channel flanked by steep slopes covered in pristine beech forest. The head of the valley is much broader and comprises a narrow meandering river channel surrounded by flat swampland.

- Rugged and raw landforms and their dramatic profile give the river a sense of wildness. Characteristic high rainfall events accentuate the drama and the sense of wildness.
- Dramatically eroded landforms clearly express the rivers power and varying flow. Broken vegetation and a series of outwash fans reinforce these qualities.
- Evidence of erosion revealing underlying geology, rockfall, stream downcutting and flooding. The River contains a range of aggregate sizes and weathered boulders that are constantly sifted and graded by the varying flows. Naturally unconstrained alignment.
- Dynamic natural processes associated with the river channel and gravel beds, grading of aggregate sizes, downcutting, flood events and inundation.
- Largely devoid of development. Some modification near Big River Hut and forestry closer to Caribou Road. Modification near Waiuta has been excluded from this unit.

One remarkable characteristic of the Big River back country area is the high number of relict mining settlements, roads, mines, water races, and other historic features across the whole massif which taken together result in an intact historic landscape as well as having reasonably high natural character. Many of the stewardship parcels have features which help to strengthen this historic landscape character.

Victoria Range

Victoria Range runs north-south, rising to Ives Peak 1749m.

Upper Inangahua River is the southern boundary and Larrys River-Scotty Creek defines the nominal boundary between Victoria Range and Brunner Range to the north.

Also includes outlying Mt Rutland and Maruia Gorge. The Shenandoah Highway follows the Warwick River to the east of Mt Rutland.

Victoria Range drains south and west toward Inangahua River via various streams including Tobin and Shaw Streams, Waitahu and Montgomerie Rivers

Eastern side of Victoria Range drains to Maruia Valley in a rhythmic series of quite evenly spaced streams of similar size.

Includes Waitahu Remote Zone

Many alpine lakes are a feature

Lots of mines in hills closer to Inangahua side.

The local government boundary follows the top of the Victoria Range, so the north eastern part of the Victoria Range area is in the Tasman District. Most is in the Grey District and is in the West Coast Region.

No outstanding landscapes identified in the operative Grey District Plan occur in this part of Inangahua Place.

In Schedule 5 of the draft *Te Taio o Poutini* plan two **Outstanding Natural Landscapes** are listed:

ONL33 Victoria Range west

ONL37 Victoria Range east

In the West Coast Region Natural Character Study (Brown 2013) four units are assessed as having **outstanding** natural character. These include units:

T118 Woolley River

T123 Waitahu and Montgomerie Rivers

T128 Awarau/Larry River

T120 Inanahua [sic] River (should be Inangahua)

There are seven parcels of stewardship land on hill country around the edges of the Victoria Range massif:

- Boatman Creek-Caplestone Conservation Area (382 + 52ha)
- Boatman Creek Conservation Area (4ha)
- Waitahu River Conservation Area (46ha)
- Reefton Conservation Area (34ha)
- Shenandoah River Conservation Area (1319ha)
- Warwick River Conservation Area (150 + 80ha)
- Woolley River Conservation Area (133ha)

Landscape factors for decision-makers to consider:

- **Boatman Creek-Caplestone Conservation Area** in two separate parts at the top end of the modified Caplestone Valley, near the road end at Caplestone. Larger part includes

catchment of Boatmans Creek. Regenerating shrubland/forest with a small section of short vegetation which could be pākihi wetland. It is enclosed on two-three sides by Victoria Forest Park with plantation forestry to west. The area includes several disused mines, tracks, huts and relics associated with its mining history. Mining and exploration for gold is ongoing.

- The top edge of **Boatman Creek-Caplestone Conservation Area** is part of **Outstanding Natural Landscape** *ONL33 Victoria Range west*. Site type and values details include:
Steep to very steep mountain range with high relief and dissected by deeply incised valleys.
Interplay of mature indigenous forest and vegetative sequence from lowland beech forest through to alpine scrub communities reinforcing topography and pronounced relief.
Exposed peaks and ridge tops revealing underlying geology are highly expressive of the landscapes formative and ongoing natural processes. Erosion, scree slopes and depositional landforms clearly express the erosive nature of the mountain landscape and uplifted landforms.
A mountain range sequence of deeply etched ridge lines or similar heights, displaying rock formations in upper elevations and alpine vegetation patterns.
Mt Puttick, Haast, Hunter, and Beckham are key/representative landmarks within this landscape – as seen from SH7 approaching Springs Junction.
- **Boatman Creek Conservation Area**, together with an outlying area of Victoria Forest Park and the smaller part of Boatman Creek-Caplestone Conservation Area occupies a long flat-topped rise to 336m between Coal Creek and Boatmans Creek. Regenerating shrubland and forest covers the landform.
- **Waitahu River Conservation Area** is hillside land rising up to 424m surrounded by Victoria Forest Park. The hill side vegetation cover is mostly forest and shrubland at various stages of regeneration and there is a pond which is unlikely to be natural. An active coal mine on cleared land at the foot of the slope is included in the conservation area.

Waitahu Conservation Area is located right at the downstream edge of outstanding natural character unit *T123 Waitahu and Montgomerie Rivers* but is not included.
- **Reefton Conservation Area** includes 12 town sections in Reefton and hill slopes behind them which form a backdrop to Reefton settlement. Indigenous vegetation has been cleared except for some small areas of secondary beech forest. Not closely connected with other PCL.
- **Shenandoah River Conservation Area** includes northern slopes of Mt Rutland 1315m. The rest of this distinctive stand-alone landform is protected by Victoria Forest Park and Warwick River Conservation Area. State Highway 65 skirts the eastern boundary. Steep forested hill country with some forested terraces in broad valley of Maruia River to west. Also includes three slivers of stewardship land between the highway and Warwick River near Neilson Flat.
- **Warwick River Conservation Area** (in two parts) is on south eastern side of Mt Rutland at base of slope below Victoria Forest Park. Lower slopes, gentle grades, terraces. Forested. Runs right down to a bend in the Warwick River in one place. There is modified farmland against its long eastern boundary

- **Woolley River Conservation Area** is contiguous with the much smaller Woolley River Scenic Reserve. Both are fully forested. This PCL is located on some gentle hill country rising to 506m extending out into the middle of Maruia valley. It is visually and ecologically disconnected from other PCL by surrounding farmland. Neighbouring land on the same landform is modified by partial vegetation clearance but still seems to retain some natural character.

The stewardship land includes alluvial flats along the Woolley River, a gully, and gentle to moderately steep hill slopes, all together with a high level of naturalness.

Woolley River Conservation Area is part of **Outstanding Natural Landscape ONL37 Victoria Range east**. Site type and values for this ONL include:

Very steep, etched ridge lines with high relief and exposed rock formations and deeply incised valleys. Depositional landforms, outwash fans and river terracing.

Interplay of mature indigenous forest and vegetative sequence from lowland beech forest through to alpine scrub communities reinforcing topography and pronounced relief.

Exposed peaks and ridge tops revealing underlying geology are highly expressive of the landscapes formative and ongoing natural processes.

Contiguous mountain range and foothills.

Extensive beech forest, devoid of development and unmodified / pristine landforms impart a strong sense of naturalness.

Continuous beech forest giving way to alpine tundra at higher elevations.

River terraces of the **Woolley River Conservation Area** are located within **outstanding natural character unit T118 Woolley River**. Key Attributes/characteristics cited are:

Incised tributary to the Maruia River whose catchment comprises a portion of the Victoria Range.

- Rugged and raw landforms and their dramatic profile give the river a sense of wildness. Characteristic high rainfall events accentuate the drama and the sense of wildness.
- Dramatically eroded landforms clearly express the rivers power and varying flow. Broken vegetation and a series of outwash fans reinforce these qualities.
- Evidence of erosion revealing underlying geology, rockfall, stream downcutting and flooding. The river contains a range of aggregate sizes and weathered boulders that are constantly sifted and graded by the varying flows. Naturally unconstrained alignment.
- Dynamic natural processes associated with the river channel and gravel beds, grading of aggregate sizes, downcutting, flood events and inundation.
- Devoid of development.

Brunner Range

Between Inangahua and Maruia valleys with upper Buller Gorge to north.

Mountainous, rising to Mt Pelion 1502m and Mt Wynn 1413m

Awarau (aka Larry River) and Scotty Creek are the nominal boundary between Brunner Range and Victoria Range to the south. Outlying Mt Rutland is included with Victoria Range.

Also includes the big Deepdale River catchment and hills draining north toward Buller River.

Brunner Range drains west toward Inangahua River via a regular series of named waterways including De Flippi, Spring, Ram, Dee, Rough, Camp, Brown, Coal, Winnipeg, Johnny Walker, Dunphy and Landing and St Helena Creeks, and tributaries of the Awarau (aka Larry River).

Most of this area is in the West Coast region and the Buller District but the northern (downstream) part of the Maruia catchment is part of Tasman District. The Brunner Range ridge line marks the boundary between Buller and Tasman Districts.

No outstanding landscapes are identified in this part of Inangahua Place in the operative Grey District Plan.

In Schedule 5 of the draft *Te Taio o Poutini* two **Outstanding Natural Landscapes** are listed:
ONL48 Brunner and Lyell Ranges and the extensive
ONL33 Victoria Range west

In the West Coast Region Natural Character Study (Brown 2013) units to the north and south of the Brunner Range massif are assessed as having outstanding or high natural character.

T128 Awarau/Larry River (outstanding)

T139 Buller River (outstanding)

T141 Walkers Flat, Buller River (high)

There are eight parcel of stewardship land associated with the Brunner Range area

- Winding Creek Conservation Area (286ha)
- Brunner Range Tops Conservation Area (1629ha)
- Dee Creek Conservation Area (73ha)
- Ram Creek Conservation Area (13 +3ha)
- Buller River-Lyell Conservation Area (32ha)
- Glengarry Stream Conservation Area (15ha)
- Shenandoah Conservation Area (456ha)
- Maruia River-West Bank Conservation Area (4416ha)

Landscape factors for decision-makers to consider:

- **Winding Creek Conservation Area** is in two separate parts on hills south of Coal Creek, near settlement of Inangahua Landing. It is surrounded by Victoria Forest Park, except for the northern boundary which is private land. The larger part of the conservation area includes the catchment of Winding Creek. It occupies hill slopes and is almost completely forested. Winding Creek Conservation Area plays a buffering role, helping to maintain the natural values of adjacent Forest Park and nearby Coal Creek Ecological Area.

Continuing to manage these two land parcels as conservation land would help avoid the unfortunate un-natural boundaries of the forest park emerging if land use changes.

- **Brunner Range Tops Conservation Area** runs from Bourkes Rock 1306m in south to Mt Wynn 1413m to Mt Curtis 1412m at north end. Stewardship land boundaries very approximately aligned with intact vegetation sequences from beech forest to open tussock land and alpine areas.

Brunner Range Tops Conservation Area is assessed as **Outstanding Natural Landscape** straddling the boundary between *ONL48 Brunner and Lyell Ranges* (see below for characteristics) and the extensive *ONL33 Victoria Range west*. Site type and values for ONL33 are:

Steep to very steep mountain range with high relief and dissected by deeply incised valleys.

Interplay of mature indigenous forest and vegetative sequence from lowland beech forest through to alpine scrub communities reinforcing topography and pronounced relief.

Exposed peaks and ridge tops revealing underlying geology are highly expressive of the landscapes formative and ongoing natural processes. Erosion, scree slopes and depositional landforms clearly express the erosive nature of the mountain landscape and uplifted landforms.

A mountain range sequence of deeply etched ridge lines or similar heights, displaying rock formations in upper elevations and alpine vegetation patterns.

Mt Puttick, Haast, Hunter, and Beckham are key/representative landmarks within this landscape – as seen from SH7 approaching Springs Junction.

- **Dee Creek Conservation Area** lies at the end of a ridge close to Inangahua settlement, between two parcels of Dee Creek Scenic Reserve, with SH 6 Upper Buller Gorge Road as northern boundary. Vegetation is a combination of forest and regenerating forest with a limited area of shrubland and pasture. Donnybrook Stream and catchment are included. Dee Creek Local Purpose Reserve-Gravel is notched into the northern boundary, and transmission lines and pylons through the gorge detract from natural character. The stewardship land plays an important role ecologically connecting surrounding PCL, strengthening natural character.
- **Ram Creek Conservation Area** is in two neighbouring parts; one above SH6 and one below the road which slopes down to Three Channel Flat. Vegetation is modified; a combination of forest and regenerating forest with shrubland and pasture. Dee Creek Scenic Reserve is on boundary of lower parcel with a pylon in the middle of it. Transmission lines are a noticeable detractor from natural character and scenic quality.

Ram Creek Conservation Area appears to be within an outlying part of **High** Natural Character unit *T141 Walkers Flat, Buller River*. Key attributes/characteristics of this unit are described as:

Steep vegetated river escarpment that flanks the Buller River at Walkers Flat.

- Mix of aggregate sizes, their volume and the pronounced river beds give the impression of the river's force during flood events and a distinct impression of the rivers wildness.
- Evidence of erosion revealing underlying geology, rockfall, stream downcutting and flooding. The River contains a range of aggregate sizes and weathered boulders that are constantly sifted and graded by the varying flows.
- Dynamic natural processes associated with the meandering braids and gravel beds, grading of aggregate sizes, downcutting, river terracing, flood events and inundation.
- A wide range of channel typologies (braids, pools, rapids, eddies).

- The pasture and farming activities that abut this unit impact upon the sense of seclusion and remoteness, but on balance, does not detract from the integrity of the evident and very expressive natural processes of the riverbed and its escarpment.

- **Buller River-Lyell Conservation Area** occupies the end of a ridge running down from Boundary Peak 1218m to force a horseshoe bend in the Buller River at New Creek. State Highway 7, near the Iron Bridge, curves around the toe to form the north and west boundaries and Buller River forms the eastern boundary. Visually prominent. Steep slopes on both sides rising to 265m. Pylons, transmission lines and a formed access road detract from otherwise natural character. Connected to Victoria Forest Park at south tip. Variably aged indigenous forest and shrubland vegetation, similar to surrounding landscape. This stewardship parcel plays an important ecological and visual connecting role with surrounding PCL.

- The eastern half of **Buller River-Lyell Conservation Area** is within **Outstanding Natural Landscape ONL48 Brunner and Lyell Ranges**. Site type and values for this landscape are listed as:

Assemblage of steep to very steep ranges and peaks with deeply incised valleys that flank the Inangahua and Kawatiri/Buller River Valleys.

Interplay of mature indigenous forest and vegetative sequence from lowland beech forest through to alpine scrub communities reinforcing topography and pronounced relief.

Exposed peaks and ridge tops revealing underlying geology are highly expressive of the landscapes formative and ongoing natural processes.

Sequence of ridge lines of similar orientation, elevation and vegetation cover, punctuated by exposed ridge tops and tussock lands.

The Upper Buller Gorge is a landmark with this landscape unit.

Forms the backdrop to the Inangahua River Valley.

- Most (if not all) of **Buller River-Lyell Conservation Area** sits within **outstanding** natural character unit *T139 Buller River*, a very long unit which extends from the West Coast Region boundary near Newton Flat down to Te Kuha where Buller River emerges from the hills. Key attributes/characteristics of this unit are cited as:

Very long river which passes through a variety of landscapes. It includes a series of confined and dramatic gorges (Upper and Lower Buller Gorges) and is enclosed by steep to very steep sided valleys, deep canyons, limestone cliffs and bluffs, river terraces and plains where the river channel becomes broader and less confined.

- The combination of enclosing landforms, vegetation cover, large volumes of water give the river a dramatic and wild character which is pronounced at the upper and lower gorges.
- Dramatically eroded landforms clearly express the rivers power and varying flow. Broken vegetation and expansive depositional landforms reinforce these qualities.
- Evidence of erosion revealing underlying geology, rockfall, stream downcutting and flooding. The River contains a range of aggregate sizes and weathered boulders that are constantly sifted and graded by the varying flows.
- Flanked by mature beech forest.
- Wide range of channel typologies (braids, pools, rapids, eddies).
- Flanked by a mountain landscape along much of its length, with the exception of the Inangahua and Buller River confluence. A number of rural dwellings, SH6, and the Stillwater Ngakawau Line are situated within this unit but remain largely subservient due to the extensive coverage of native vegetation. The river abuts the rural communities of Inangahua, Lyell and New Creek located on the river plains and terraces – these are excluded from this unit.

- **Glengarry Stream Conservation Area** is on the Maruia valley side of Brunner Range. It occupies part of the toe of a long ridge which runs down from peak A5JC 760m. Gentler gradients than hills behind, almost a terrace. A tributary of Glengarry Stream flows within the boundary. A mosaic of wetland, shrubland and forest, connected to Victoria Forest Park along north boundary. Gravelled Glengarry Road curves around to form south boundary. Retaining the high natural character of this landform would be consistent with the surrounding pattern of forested hills with modified valley floors.
- **Shenandoah Conservation Area** runs across the mid slopes of the Mt Allman ridge from Shenandoah Scenic Reserve (contiguous along a shared boundary) to Minehaha. It is linked with Victoria Forest Park along its entire upslope boundary. At least four streams pass through it on their way down to join Maruia River.
- **Maruia River-West Bank Conservation Area** is similar to Shenandoah Conservation Area above, occupying mid slopes and aligned along the hill sides with Victoria Forest Park along its long upslope boundary. The conservation area extends down ridges in some locations into the modified valley floor. Some plantation forestry abuts. Numerous streams cross it taking water toward Maruia River. It also includes forested valley floor of the Maruia Gorge valley between Victoria Range and Mt Rutland, contiguous with some marginal strip land along the river in this valley too.
- Both **Shenandoah** and **Maruia River-West Bank Conservation Areas** are forested and visually and ecologically indistinguishable from the high natural character Victoria Forest Park land uphill. They enlarge the total protected area making it more resilient and they provide an ecological buffer between PCL and the modified landscapes of the valley floor. They both perform an important visual function extending forest further downslope and enhancing contrast between the high natural character hill sides and the more modified valley floor, strengthening the character of both.

Maruia valley

Modified valley floor of the Maruia River valley from Mary Maruia Saddle upstream of Springs Junction down to its junction with Buller River near O'Sullivan's Bridge.

Includes Glengarry River valley.

Mt Rutland and the broad forested valley of the Maruia Gorge as it passes between the Victoria Range and Mt Rutland are not included. They are considered as part of Victoria Range.

State Highway 65 (aka the Shenandoah Highway) runs north-south through it.

Settlements/district nodes include Springs Junction, Maruia, Warwick Junction, Burnbrae, Paenga, Minihaha, Shenandoa, Glengarry, and Ariki

No outstanding landscapes in this area are identified in the operative Grey District Plan. It is not yet clear whether Tasman District Council has identified outstanding landscapes in its region. (TBA)

In the draft *Te Taio o Poutini* plan **Outstanding Natural Landscapes** are mapped on hills on both sides of the Maruia valley. The ONLs include lobes which extend down across the valley floor to include forested areas or rivers. These lobes include some modified valley floor landscape. In a few other places modification occurring upslope is included within the "broad brush" ONL boundary. The two ONLs which include some Maruia Valley floor landscape are

ONL36 Maruia Valley east

ONL37 Victoria Range east

Maruia River is a significant tributary of the Buller River. In the West Coast Region Natural Character Study (Brown 2013) the bed of Maruia River and some land either side is identified as part of the **high** natural character unit *T117 Maruia River flats* Key attributes/characteristics described for the unit are:

Extensive braided river channel and gravel beds orientated on a north-south axis, surrounded by pasture, farming activities and flanked by the Victoria Range to the west and low elevation foothills to the east.

- Mix of aggregate sizes, their volume and the pronounced river beds give the impression of the rivers force during flood events and a distinct impression of the rivers wildness.
- Evidence of erosion revealing underlying geology, rockfall, stream downcutting and flooding. The river contains a range of aggregate sizes and weathered boulders that are constantly sifted and graded by the varying flows.
- Dynamic natural processes associated with the meandering braids and gravel beds, grading of aggregate sizes, downcutting, river terracing, flood events and inundation.
- A wide range of channel typologies (braids, pools, rapids, eddies).
- The modified landscape adjoining the river – including farming activities, pasture, and roads – does impact upon the sense of seclusion and remoteness, but on balance, does not detract from the integrity of the evident and very expressive natural processes of the river bed.

This high natural character unit extends from Marble Hill in the upper Maruia valley to Warwick Junction and extends some way up Rahu Creek and Woolley River. Downstream of Warwick Junction Maruia River is in the Tasman District.

There are six parcels or bundles of stewardship land in this area

- SH7 Springs Junction Conservation Area (0.3ha)
- Maruia River Conservation Area x 6 (downstream of SH Bridge)(50ha)
- Maruia River Conservation Area (Woolley Creek confluence) (20ha)
- Maruia River Conservation Area x 4 (end of Boundary Road) (32ha)

- Maruia River Conservation Area (Creighton Road) (5ha)
- Maruia River-Paenga Conservation Area

Landscape factors for decision-makers to consider:

- Thirteen river-related parcels strung out along the length of Maruia River from Springs Junction to the Buller River.
- **SH7 Springs Junction Conservation Area** is in Maruia Springs settlement. It is a riparian parcel immediately downstream of the SH7 bridge across Springlands Creek, a tributary of Rahu River. Large trees in the wider area to the north may be old growth beech forest, and there is some riverbank vegetation but much of the conservation area is modified with lawn. The gravelled yard of an adjacent land use encroaches onto the conservation area.

Maruia River Conservation Area (downstream of SH Bridge)

Six parcels between SH65 Bridge and Woolley Road Bridge:

(1) The upstream parcel occupies part of the braided river bed of Maruia River and may have previously included a backwater stream. River terrace land cultivated and grazed, Possibly the riverbank has been straightened and flood protection installed. Willows?

(2) Parcel 2 is aligned along an outlying length of Rahu River Marginal Strip. Braided river bed and forested riser. A backwater along toe of riser is included. Cultivated farmland on top of the riser is outside the conservation area.

(3) Downstream, parcel 3 was probably formerly riverbed. River terrace with scattered trees and shrubland. Over half of conservation area has been cleared for grazing, and possibly cultivated.

(4) On the west bank this parcel includes river bed with channel and bare gravels. Terraced stewardship land above is almost completely modified for farming. Willows along terrace riser.

(5) This parcel is just a sliver of river bank land including some gravels on the west bank with a backwater nearby.

(6) The largest area of this series abuts SH 65 at its downstream tip with Station Creek Conservation Area across the road. It includes a small area of riverbed with channel and gravels but most is alluvial terrace land, completely modified for farming. The stewardship land could provide public access to Maruia River from the tourist highway SH65 at some future time

- **Maruia River Conservation Area (Woolley Creek confluence)** Across the river from Maruia Hall, between the confluences of Woolley and Waterfall Creeks, this conservation area includes some less modified braided riverbed but the western half on the terrace has been cultivated and is now grazed under concession.

This parcel of Maruia River Conservation Area and no.6 above lie between two landforms, one each side of the valley, which are included in ONL. Both have stewardship land on them. They are Station Creek Conservation Area (in Maruia Hills east) and Woolley Creek Conservation Area (described in Victoria Range). Together the four parcels have potential as a natural character landscape bridge and biodiversity corridor across Maruia Valley.

- Maruia River Conservation Area (end of Boundary Road)**
 (four more parcels of riparian land near the end of Station Road on the west bank)

 - (1) Just upstream of the confluence of Manuka or Ranger Creek this parcel is on a bend in Maruia River and includes some river channel, backwater and open braided river habitat, some with willows. The rest, up on the west bank terrace has been modified for farming.
 - (2) Nearly all the land in this parcel, just downstream of the Manuka or Ranger Creek confluence, is cultivated paddock, possibly irrigated. A farm track or road passes along its length on the edge of the terrace. Willows. There is a tiny bit of natural character braided river at the downstream tip.
 - (3) This parcel is a narrow dead straight strip, possibly surveyed as a road originally, but also loosely following an unnamed tributary. It runs past the back of a homestead at the end of Boundary Road.
 - (4) The downstream parcel, the largest in this group, was presumably intended to protect an island between main river and a backwater but it is now modified with fences, tracks, and cultivated pasture, grazed under concession. Vegetation of the risers may include a native component.
- Maruia River Conservation Area (Creighton Road)** is in switchback bend in Creighton Road on steeply sloping terrace riser. It contains an isolated remnant of beech forest and links with Maruia River at its south tip. It is surrounded by plantation forestry and farmland.
- Maruia River-Paenga Conservation Area** is downstream of the Maruia Gorge between the Victoria Range and Mt Rutland. The conservation area contains a variety of comparatively unmodified braided river habitats: active channel, backwater, open gravels and also forest on a lower terrace.
 (note: there does not seem to be an ecological report for this parcel)
- All** of the stewardship land parcels above are within **high** natural character unit *T117 Maruia River flats* with characteristics as listed above.
- A small number of marginal strips supplement the riparian and river bed stewardship lands, intended to provide access and contribute to maintaining water quality and freshwater ecosystem health. These include Rahu River, Springlands Creek, Maruia River-Springs Junction, Flat Creek and Maruia River Marginal Strips.
- The paucity of riparian protection lands in the modified landscapes of Maruia valley is surprising given the value of Maruia River for fishing and its worldwide reputation.
- The fact that so many of the conservation areas along Maruia River are significantly modified for farming limits their contribution to the healthy ecological functioning and natural character of the braided river system and to the survival of associated indigenous species. However these values could be restored at some future time.

This is the intention of the current CMS in its stated vision for Inangahua Place:
 “Representative samples of forests and wetlands of...upper Maruia valley floors are protected as conservation lands or via other mechanisms such as covenants and/or District Plans. The natural character of these remnants is improving.” (p221)

Maruia East Hills

Somewhat modified hills east of the Maruia River Valley, including hill slopes visible from SH65 and the hill country catchments behind them.

Much of this land is in PCL including Lewis Pass National Reserve and Victoria Forest Park, but intensification of farming in the Maruia Valley means that remnant forest and shrubland is being cleared from lower slopes making the remaining forested natural character landscapes even more valuable in ecological, landscape, and water storage terms.

The eastern hills drain to Maruia River which in turn feeds Buller River. These high rainfall catchments make an important contribution to the hydrology of the whole Buller River system. Stewardship land on the eastern hill country from Shenandoah Saddle north is not included in Inangahua Place, although it does fit comfortably with the Maruia east hills landscape.

In Schedule 5 of the draft *Te Taio o Poutini* plan one **Outstanding Natural Landscape** is listed in this part of Inangahua Place:

ONL36 Maruia River Valley East which runs along the valley wall east of Maruia valley as far north as Warwick Junction.

In the West Coast Region Natural Character Study (Brown 2013) no outstanding natural character units were identified east of the Maruia River valley.

There are five parcels of stewardship land in this part of Inangahua Place:

- Station Creek Conservation Area (240ha)
- West Rappahannock River Conservation Area (146ha)
- Rappahannock River Conservation Area (334ha)
- Caves Road Conservation Area (308ha)
- Diamond Creek Conservation Area (553ha)

Landscape factors for decision-makers to consider:

- **Station Creek Conservation Area** (240ha) occupies half of a mounded landform rising to 490m together with a large flat area adjacent to Station Creek. It extends south east to meet SH56 and the Maruia River near the Woolley Bridge and its northern boundary is Station Creek itself. Victoria Forest Park is contiguous to the east. Much of the forest appears to have been cleared in the past but is regenerating, except in a couple of places which appear to be grazed as part of neighbouring farms. A cleared strip parallel with the state highway is being maintained as grazed open space apparently to connect farmland on either side. A formed road passes through the conservation area to provide access to Digger Creek and to an enclave of grazed land much further up Station Creek.

A second long riparian parcel follows Station Creek upstream and includes some steep hill slopes above the river. There are a few random fragments of Station Creek Scenic Reserve scattered about the vicinity.

The Station Creek Conservation Area landform relates to a similar to the landform on the other side of the Maruia River valley with the Woolley Creek Conservation Area on it (see

Victoria Range section). In between are two riverbed parcels of Maruia River Conservation Area. There is potential to strengthen a natural character bridge and ecological corridor across the modified valley by building on these four conservation areas and other PCL nearby.

Most of **Station Creek Conservation Area** is **Outstanding Natural Landscape**, within *ONL36 Maruia River Valley East*. Site Type and values associated with this ONL are: Steep to very steep hill country and escarpments flanking the eastern side of the Maruia Valley and denotes the confluence of the Maruia and Alfred Rivers.

Erosion, scree slopes and depositional landforms clearly express the erosive nature of the mountain landscape and uplifted landforms.

Mature beech forest, steep landforms and lack of development create a strong sense of naturalness.

Consistent orientation, elevation and appearance of landforms flanking the eastern margins of the Maruia Valley.

Baldy is a key landmark within this landscape.

- **West Rappahannock River Conservation Area** (146ha) is located in low hills east of SH65 north of Warwick Junction. It is a rectangular parcel separated from other PCL in the vicinity. It includes a stretch of the Rappahannock River which has its origins in a wetland at the head of the valley, part of which is included in the conservation area. The rest is forested, with the forest patch currently extending well beyond the conservation area boundaries, except along the western boundary where there is cleared farmland.
- **Rappahannock River Conservation Area** (334ha) is located on steep dissected hill slopes east of SH65 which drain into the Rappahannock River which runs around the toe of the slopes. It is contiguous with Victoria Forest Park which in turn is contiguous with Diamond Creek and Cave Road Conservation Areas forming a larger whole.
- **Diamond Creek Conservation Area** (553ha) is dissected hill country including the lower half of Diamond Creek catchment and the catchment of another stream right below the Dreadnought Ridge. These and a number of smaller streams drain to Rappahannock River which meanders through a narrow valley at the toe of the slope. Much of the conservation area is forest except the lower catchment where there is shorter vegetation which appears to be associated with some kind of disturbance, possibly a slip or fire. Contiguous with other PCL as described above.
- **Caves Road Conservation Area** (308ha) is similar to Diamond Creek Conservation Area above but on the south side of Rappahannock River. It has the same sort of vegetation disturbance on lower slopes.
- Along the hills east of Maruia River, from Shenandoah Saddle north, there are a number of other PCL areas including stewardship parcels such as Maruia Saddle Road Conservation Area (located on the Maruia side of Maruia Saddle 580m), Glenroy Road-Murchison Conservation Area, Burnbrae Conservation Area, Shennandoah Saddle Conservation Area, Ruffe Creek-Shennandoah Conservation Area, an upslope Maruia River Conservation Area, Doughboy Road Conservation Area, Higgins Bluff Maruia Conservation Area, Murchison Conservation Area etc. These are outside Inangahua Place.

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Note: The maps currently used in the draft Plan were produced in 2013 and recently digitised for the draft Plan. People have drawn attention to mapping errors in relation to the High Natural Character areas in particular. The Outstanding Natural Landscape and High/Outstanding Coastal Natural Character boundaries are currently being reviewed through an updated field assessment from the landscape architect.