



WANGANUI DISTRICT

OUTSTANDING NATURAL LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

10th July 2015



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For

Wanganui District Council

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1 Executive Summary

The landscape assessment of the Whanganui District has been undertaken as an expert based approach, with 8 areas identified as having the significance to qualify them as Outstanding Natural Features or Landscapes.

The landscapes have been assessed according to the Pigeon Bay Criteria, which is a list of landscape assessment criteria established by the Environment Court in its decision on an appeal for a series of mussel farms in Pigeon Bay, Banks Peninsula¹. These criteria, which were refined in the subsequent *Wakatipu Environmental Society Inc (WESI) v Queenstown Lakes District Council* appeal, are known from that case as the WESI criteria². However, the Pigeon Bay case has taken on a greater prominence in rhetoric, and is the commonly used name for the method of assessing the significance of landscapes. It is also the process referred to in the Wanganui Manawatu Regional Council's One Plan.

The assessment process identifies three categories for assessment: Natural Science, Perceptual & Associational. These are each subdivided into a further 11 factors, being:

Natural Science	Geological/Geomorphological
	Biological/Ecological
	Hydrological
Perceptual	Memorability
	Legibility/Expressiveness
	Transient
	Aesthetic
Associational	Naturalness
	Historical
	Tangata Whenua
	Shared/Recognised

While efforts have been made to obtain information relating to all 11 categories, inevitably greater information will be held in relation to each area and each category than is known to the author. However, the results of the assessment process have shown a consistency in terms of higher values occurring for specific areas over a range of factors for landscapes of significance i.e. high values may occur for geomorphology, ecology, hydrology, memorability, expressiveness, aesthetic and naturalness in the same area. This reinforces the assessment that this particular area has landscape significance. It is then a value judgment as to whether that area qualifies as an outstanding natural landscape.

Outstanding natural landscapes (and/or features) are generally of high value in terms of natural science and perceptual criteria, with less human modification and greater aesthetic appeal. There are a number of areas that rank highly in terms of the assessment criteria, however may not qualify as

Outstanding. This is typically due to the level of modification which provides clear evidence of human intervention, or reduced values in terms of natural science or perceptual values. This assessment relates specifically to s6(b), being Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes, and has not identified amenity landscapes as provided for as a s7(c) matter.

2 Background

An assessment of the District's landscapes was motivated by a desire to clearly identify landscapes of significance within the District. This was commenced by the work of Horizons Regional Council, where their provisions relating to significant landscapes evolved as the One Plan moved from its Proposed version to the Decisions version and now onto the Operative Version. The One Plan Provisions (Policy 7-7A) note that some significant landscapes have not been included in the POP, and provide a policy framework for Territorial Authorities to add to the One Plan list of outstanding natural features and landscapes. This has been done in the Whanganui assessment, while the general areas that were identified within Whanganui in the One Plan have been refined through this assessment process. Additional areas not identified in the One Plan have also being added in the Whanganui assessment.

For these reasons, and due to the fact that the Whanganui District Council is embarking on a review of its District Plan, it is timely to initiate a comprehensive landscape assessment to allow the results to be incorporated into the proposed Whanganui District Plan.

The request to prepare the landscape assessment was made in early 2015, and the fieldwork and draft report were completed in June 2015.

3 Issue to be Managed

The issue to be addressed in the landscape assessment is the identification of outstanding landscapes so that these are known and can thus be protected or had regard to in terms of the requirements of the Resource Management Act.

Part and parcel of the need to carry out a landscape assessment of the District was the fact that Horizons Regional Council has identified significant landscapes at a regional scale by way of written description. The landscape report for Whanganui District Council was required to identify the outstanding areas spatially and at a cadastral level. To achieve this, the assessment has gone about mapping their extent, describing them in terms of the Pigeon Bay criteria, and determining the landscape characteristics and values that relate to each area. This is intended to form a basis for objectives, policies and rules that relate to the identified areas and for assessment criteria that may apply to activities within these areas.

¹ *Pigeon Bay Aquaculture Ltd and others v Canterbury Regional Council [1999] C32/99*

² *Wakatipu Environmental Society v Queenstown Lakes District Council [2001] C075/2001*. These have been further refined in subsequent appeals, but the underlying principles remain the same.

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4 Legislative Setting

The key provisions of the RMA that need to be considered when addressing the issue of landscape significance are:

Sn 6(a) The preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment (including the coastal marine area), wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins, and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development.

Sn 6(b) The protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development.

Sn 6(e) The relationship of Maori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu, and other taonga.

Sn 7(c) The maintenance and enhancement of amenity values

5 Policy and Regulatory Setting

The Regional Policy Statement identified significant landscapes throughout the Horizons Region. This has been replaced by the One Plan which repeated part of this list, and initially mapped their extent. In the now operative One Plan, the maps have been removed and the ONFL are listed by description in Schedule F. Additionally, the One Plan lists a set of assessment criteria at Table 7.7 (which are generally akin to the Pigeon Bay criteria and have been adhered to in the Whanganui Assessment) that are to be taken into account when identifying outstanding landscapes, and when Territorial Authorities are identifying or considering adding to the One Plan Schedule F. The One Plan acknowledges that the submission process has highlighted the potential for additional areas to those identified as outstanding, but this could not be done under the scope of the Plan's development as those areas had not been identified or consulted on in the notified version of the Proposed One Plan. None of the additional areas acknowledged as absent from the POP by the Provisional Determination fall within the Whanganui District.

6 Existing Information

Existing information that was drawn on for the preparation of the landscape assessment included the following:

- District Plan Boundary and cadastral information from Quickmap
- Topographic and NZTopo50 mapping from Quickmap and LINZ
- Aerial photography from Quickmap, WDC, Google & Bing Maps
- Conservation significance information from DoC websites
- DoC Actively Managed Historic Places
- One Plan Chapter 7 and Schedule F
- Operative Whanganui District Plan
- Pigeon Bay Aquaculture Ltd and others v Canterbury Regional Council [1999] C32/99
- Oblique aerial photographs taken on two flights over the District on 28 May 2015 and 17 June 2015
- GIS layers supplied by WDC
- Associational factors

7 Additional Information Required

To complete this assessment, additional information is needed from consultation to inform decision-makers on the views of land owners, the public, and cultural representatives. This information will be obtained during consultation with key stakeholders through notification or submissions after notification. Without this information the assessment remains purely an expert based assessment and lacks the breadth and depth, particularly regarding Associational Factors, that comes from community input.

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8 Consultation to Date

Consultation will take place as appropriate during the sectional review of the Proposed District Plan

9 Existing Approach to Managing the Issue

The Whanganui District Plan (Operative 2004) has three areas listed as Landscapes which are Outstanding and Regionally Significant as defined in the RPS. In the Whanganui District these are:

- Whanganui River and River Valley upstream of Aramoana
- Whanganui National Park
- The District's coastline

Under the Issues section, it also listed a range of criteria that qualify areas suitable for inclusion as having particular significance, such as DOC estate, Council Reserves, QEII land etc. These landscapes are not mapped and rely on the One Plan descriptions and the qualifying criteria listed above. These landscapes are managed by the Whanganui District Council through their responsibility to give effect to Regional Plans, where significant landscapes are identified. Schedule F of the One Plan has the three areas listed above within Whanganui District listed as Outstanding Landscapes.

9.1 Effectiveness and Efficiency of Existing Approach

The Whanganui District Plan (Operative 2004) does not identify the spatial extent of those landscapes identified as outstanding and regionally significant. Having completed the landscape assessment for the Whanganui District, it is apparent that there is some minor variance between the extent of areas described in the Operative One Plan and the areas identified in this landscape assessment for the District Plan. The variance relates to the collection of smaller areas to the east and west of the district that are identified in this assessment but not in the One Plan, plus the mid reaches of the Whanganui River and River Valley as seen from Aramoana Lookout which is identified in the One Plan but not in this assessment. The One Plan provides for refinement and addition of areas at the territorial level, so such discrepancies are to be expected when a detailed review is undertaken at a district level. By identifying the extent of areas of landscape significance throughout the district and the values relating to them, policies can be put in place to ensure the relevant provisions of the RMA, One Plan and NZCPS are met.

The results of the landscape assessment will lead to greater efficiency if adopted into the Proposed Whanganui District Plan. A reason for this is because the areas of landscape significance have been spatially defined so whenever a consent application arises in close proximity to a significant landscape, the boundaries are already defined. This removes the need for assessment work to potentially be repeated and gives certainty to users of the Plan, which adds to its effectiveness and efficiency for future users of the Proposed Whanganui District Plan.

10 Alternative Approaches to Managing the Issue

The primary alternative approach to the Operative Plan is to not only describe the areas of landscape significance but to map these areas also. This has the advantages of introducing a higher level of certainty when applications are considered and may reduce subsequent costs in identifying whether applications relate to areas of landscape significance or not. Alternatively, the Operative Plan approach of not spatially defining any areas could be adopted and the current level of landscape protection could continue. This has issues relating to uncertainty and the subsequent costs this leads to.

10.1 Effectiveness and Efficiency of Alternative Approaches

The expected effectiveness of the alternative approach outlined above (being the current approach) is low, while the expected efficiency is also low due to the potential need for redefinition of areas of landscape significance each time a consent application is assessed.

11 Most Appropriate Approach

The assessment has listed the values relating to each area, and these can be incorporated into the policies that the plan writer needs to incorporate when drafting the provisions of the proposed WDP. A cost evaluation has not been carried out.

12 Risk of Acting or Not Acting

The risks of acting or not acting relates to the need to meet the statutory requirements of the RMA, in which sections 6 deals with significant landscapes. If these are not identified in the District Plan, there is considerable difficulty in giving effect to the Act and the One Plan.

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13 Method

As outlined above in the Executive Summary, the landscapes have been assessed according to the Pigeon Bay Criteria, which is a list of landscape assessment factors established by the Environment Court in its decision on an appeal for a series of mussel farms in Pigeon Bay, Banks Peninsula³. These factors, which were refined in the subsequent Wakatipu Environmental Society Inc (WESI) v Queenstown Lakes District Council appeal, are known from that case as the WESI criteria⁴. However, the Pigeon Bay case has taken on a greater prominence in rhetoric, and is the commonly named method for assessing the significance of landscapes.

The assessment process identifies three categories for assessment: Natural Science, Perceptual and Associational. The factors under these three headings have also considered the factors listed in One Plan **Table 7.2 Natural Feature and Landscape Assessment Factors**. The three categories used in the Whanganui assessment are subdivided into a further 11 categories, being:

Natural Science	Geological/Geomorphological
	Biological/Ecological
	Hydrological
Perceptual	Memorability
	Legibility/Expressiveness
	Transient
	Aesthetic
	Naturalness
Associational	Historical
	Tangata Whenua
	Shared/Recognised

The assessment process gathered information from available sources, but in some cases there were information gaps and these have been marked as 'unknown' in the assessment sheets. Any gaps may be filled when submissions are received on the proposed plan. Until that time, this is an expert assessment that does not have the input from the wider community, particularly in relation to Associational factors where local knowledge is essential.

When undertaking the assessment to arrive at the Summary of Key Values, subjective assessments needed to be made in relation to aesthetic values. To provide some guidance when reviewing this assessment, the following explanations have been developed in relation to some of the subjective words used in these categories:

13.1 Expansiveness.

Used to describe the appreciation of wide open spaces and views. Typically views of more than 180° and sometimes up to 360°. Long distance views are normally available, with objects diminishing in prominence and visibility due to distance and increasing dominance of the landscape in comparison to the object itself. The perception of expansiveness can be significantly reduced when large structures or features are seen in the foreground or mid ground, as they provide a focus that is well short of the natural horizon. Even if these structures do not block the view, their presence can provide a visual distraction and focus that disrupts the perception of expanse.

13.2 Expressiveness

Landscapes evolve over geological time. The ability to perceive evidence of this evolution reflects how expressive the landscape is of its formative processes. For example, the Whanganui River escarpments are within an incised river bed and have evolved through erosion over time, therefore they are expressive of these geological processes. Highly expressive landscapes are often also dramatic, which in turn can make them highly memorable.

13.3 Memorability

A landscape becomes memorable when the image perceived by the viewer remains with them after they leave the site. It is not possible to fully define what makes landscapes memorable, as the combination of factors is numerous and of different importance to different people. However, the factors contributing to memorability include how dramatic the view is, the expansiveness, openness, simplicity, naturalness, coherence, vividness, expressiveness and rarity of the view, and the extent of panorama obtained. In terms this landscape assessment, the more memorable views are typically those with higher natural character and/or of greater dramatic quality due to their expressiveness of natural and formative processes.

13.4 Openness.

Typically an open landscape has few structures or features, as such elements would collectively start to create a sense of enclosure. Shelter belts, buildings, trees, and large structures such as wind turbines can all contribute to a loss of openness, but they would need to be of sufficient prominence or density to actually limit visibility of parts of the view. This is different to loss of expansiveness, which can occur without loss of views.

³ Pigeon Bay Aquaculture Ltd and others v Canterbury Regional Council [1999] C32/99

⁴ Wakatipu Environmental Society v Queenstown Lakes District Council [2001] C075/2001. These have been further refined in subsequent appeals, but the underlying principles remain the same.

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13.5 Simplicity.

Typically a simple landscape has a uniform land cover and even land form. Simplicity is lost when elements introduce diversity. These can be varied vegetation, new structures, earthworks, drainage etc. Structures such as wind turbines and access roads would reduce simplicity. However, in a somewhat ironic way, simple landscapes can also be well suited to visually accommodating wind turbines due to the simplicity of these large structures - the two can complement each other. When a simple landscape is of sufficiently large scale, it can potentially accept simple elements such as wind turbines, but it is important that ancillary features like roads and transmission lines have minimal impact. Other aspects of landscape character may be adversely affected, such as natural character, if this is a feature of that particular part of the landscape. Where there is a simple landscape that does not have high natural character, there is potential for a wind farm to be appropriate.

13.6 Complexity

A complex landscape occurs when there are features, elements or patterns that individually or collectively contribute to diversity. The complexity may be in the vegetation cover or the landform. Typically, more complex areas are able to visually integrate additional features such as large structures due to the existing diversity that already exists.

13.7 Coherence

A coherent landscape occurs when there are features, elements or patterns that individually or collectively contribute to a cohesive appearance. The coherence may be in the vegetation cover or the landform, such as a full cover of native vegetation or a repetitive landform. Typically, more coherent areas are able to be visually identified as having a common character which can define the extent of an ONFL.

13.8 Vividness

A vivid landscape occurs when there are features, elements or patterns that individually or collectively contribute to the landscape having 'stand out' or spectacular aspects within it. It is often accompanied by memorability e.g. 'I vividly remember ...'. It can also be linked to expressiveness due to the legibility of a scene such as an extensive coastal dune strip with no buildings. Vividness may not be limited to visual, but may include transient values such as bird song or sea spray.

14 Potential Threats

There are a number of potential threats to the areas identified within this assessment and these have been outlined below. These primarily relate to weed and pest nuisance and effects, loss of indigenous vegetation, earthworks, loss of water flow and in coastal areas the effect of wind farms.

14.1 Wind Farms

The results of the landscape assessment conclude that wind farms would have an adverse effect in any Outstanding Natural Landscape or Feature. There is potential for them to be located adjacent to Outstanding Landscapes, but in doing so they should not adversely affect the values associated with any Outstanding Natural Landscape or Feature which may be adjacent or some distance away.

14.2 Damming for Hydroelectricity/Irrigation/Recreation

The results of the landscape assessment conclude that the construction of dams in most of the Outstanding Natural Landscapes or Features would have an adverse effect. This is primarily due to the effect on the geomorphology and ecology, both of which make a significant contribution to most of the features.

14.3 Pastoral Farming

There are no examples within the areas identified as Outstanding Natural Landscapes where farming activities are already occurring (except a very small area at Atene Meander). The results of the landscape assessment conclude that farming should not be accommodated in the identified ONFL areas. Farming is more common within areas associated with Amenity Landscapes, which are not considered as part of this assessment.

14.4 Pine Plantations

The results of the landscape assessment conclude that pine plantations cannot be accommodated in any Outstanding Natural Landscape or Feature. This is because the regimented planting of exotic species reduces the ecological values of the landscape and also downgrades the perceived naturalness values. There may be potential for them to be located in some Amenity Landscapes, but these have not been considered as part of this assessment.

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14.5 Earthworks

The geology/geomorphology of the areas identified within this report play an important role in heightening the landscape classification. This is because the geology/geomorphology within the Whanganui District typically contributes to a number of key value aspects. For example, the Whanganui River geomorphology allows confined views along the gorges of the river corridor, is expressive in the way the dramatic escarpments expose the layered sedimentary mudstone rock while also representing a complex and memorable landscape comprised of numerous patterns, processes and elements. These values are all connected to the underlying geology/geomorphology and as such protecting the landform from modification, such as earthworks, must be considered. Mining and damming are unlikely but possible threats.

15 Removals

As part of this assessment the ONFL areas detailed in both the Horizons One Plan and the operative District Plan have been specifically considered. All of the Horizons One Plan ONFL's have been accepted (with refinement), however the landscape items listed in the District Plan 2013 have not been specifically mapped so it cannot be known if they are accepted or removed.

15.1 Whanganui River and River Valley as seen from Aramoana Lookout

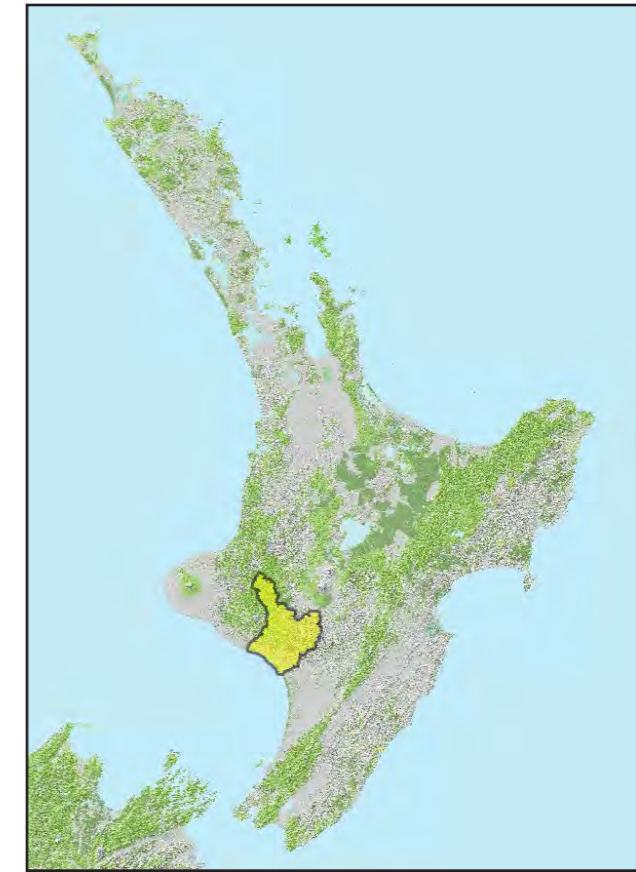
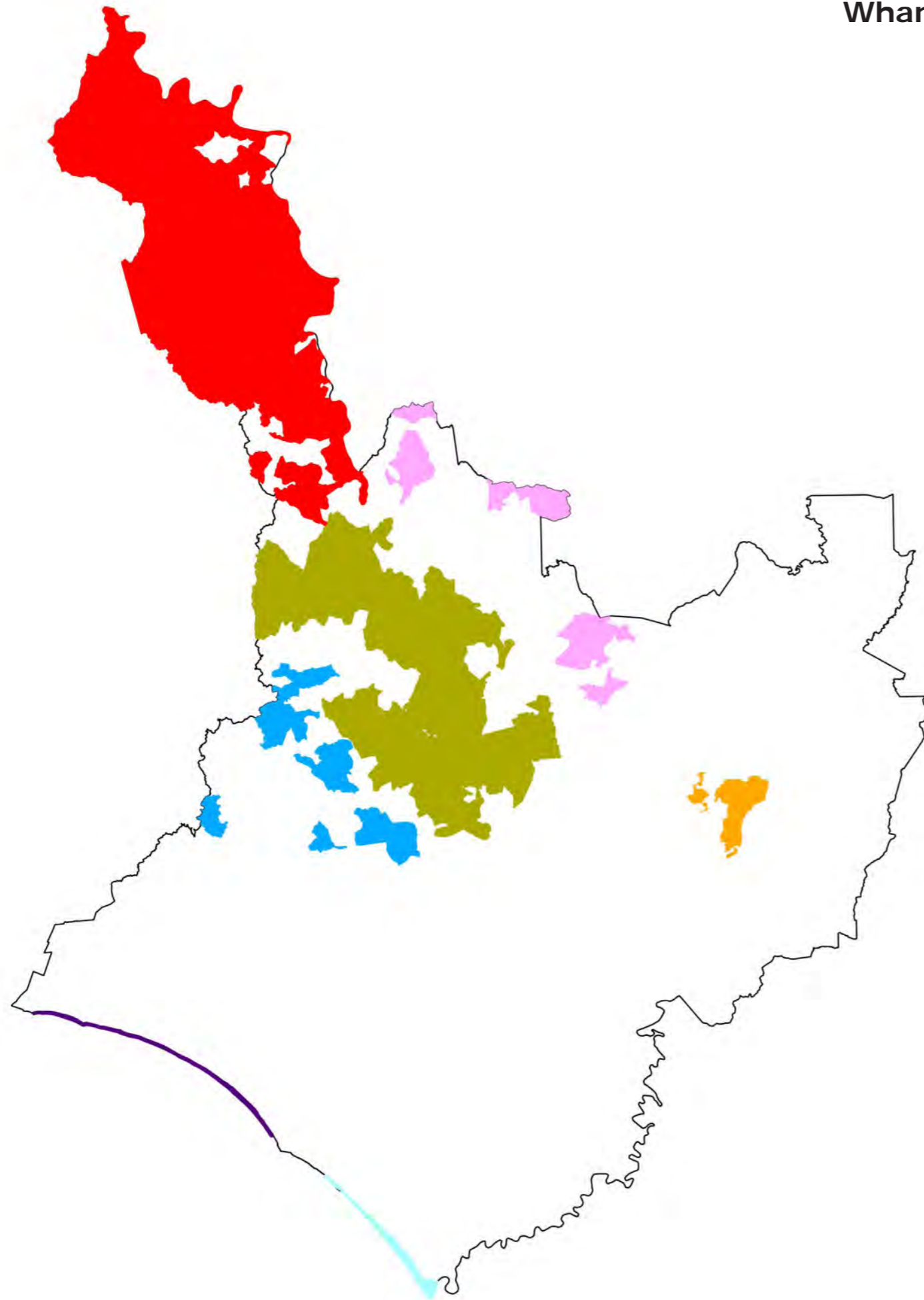
While it is acknowledged that the views obtained from this vantage point is highly memorable, much of the landscape content in view from these locations is not considered to qualify as an Outstanding Natural Landscape or Feature in their own right. The District Plan should deal with the protection of vistas as a separate issue from the identification and protection of Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes. This may be achieved through District Plan provisions which control the size and position of trees/development which may block views from identified locations. The Whanganui River has very high associational values, particularly for iwi. It is considered that these values do not cause the entire river to be an Outstanding Natural Feature under s6(b), but would more properly be recognized under s6(e) 'The relationship of Maori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu, and other taonga.' The sections of the Whanganui River that do qualify for recognition under s6(b) are upstream of the Aramoana Lookout and occur where the terrestrial and aquatic values come together to form an Outstanding Natural Landscape or Feature.









16 Conclusion

While efforts have been made to obtain information relating to all 11 factors, inevitably greater information will be held in relation to each area and each factor than is known to the author. However, the results of the assessment process have shown a consistency in terms of higher values occurring for specific areas over a range of factors for landscapes of significance i.e. high values may occur for geomorphology, ecology, hydrology, memorability, expressiveness, aesthetic and naturalness in the same area. This reinforces the assessment that this particular area has landscape significance. It is then a value judgment as to whether that area is an outstanding natural landscape, however ONFL's (apart from the Whanganui River Atene Meander) exclude productive farmland. It is recommended that this be noted in the provisions to allow for continuation of existing rural practices in this specific location.

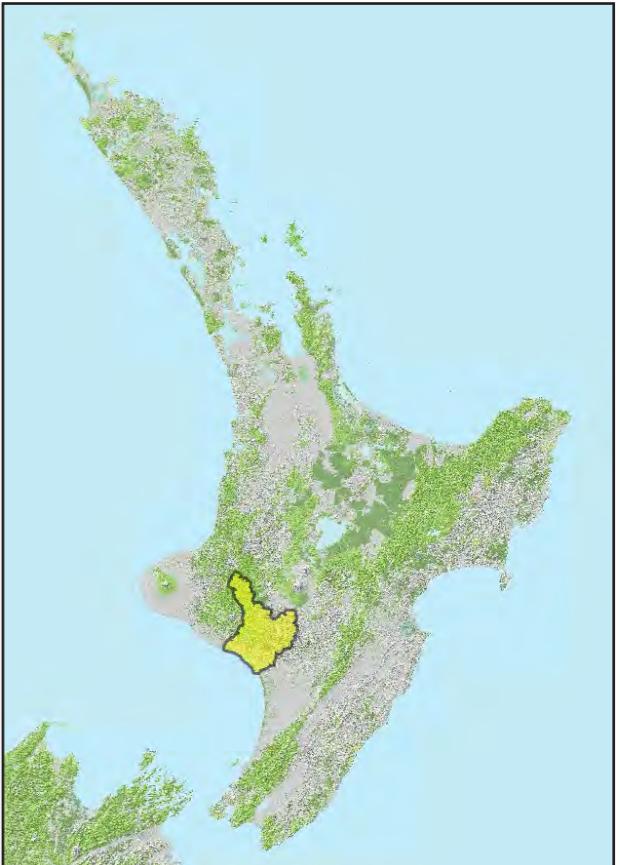
As this assessment relates to s6(b), being Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes, significant amenity landscapes do not qualify but would qualify for recognition under s7(c). Amenity values relating to cultural importance can be mapped under s7(c), but determination of such values will require contributions from the public and special interest groups. Areas valued as part of the national cycleway may qualify for such values, as might areas appreciated by tourists for their scenic values. Before considering them for recognition in the District Plan, Council should also be aware that there may be a very limited range of additional policy provisions that would apply to significant amenity landscapes as distinct to adjacent rural landscapes. Amenity Landscapes have not been considered as part of this assessment. It is a separate matter whether threats to their values warrant separate recognition in district plan provisions. This is a matter that needs to be decided by Council.

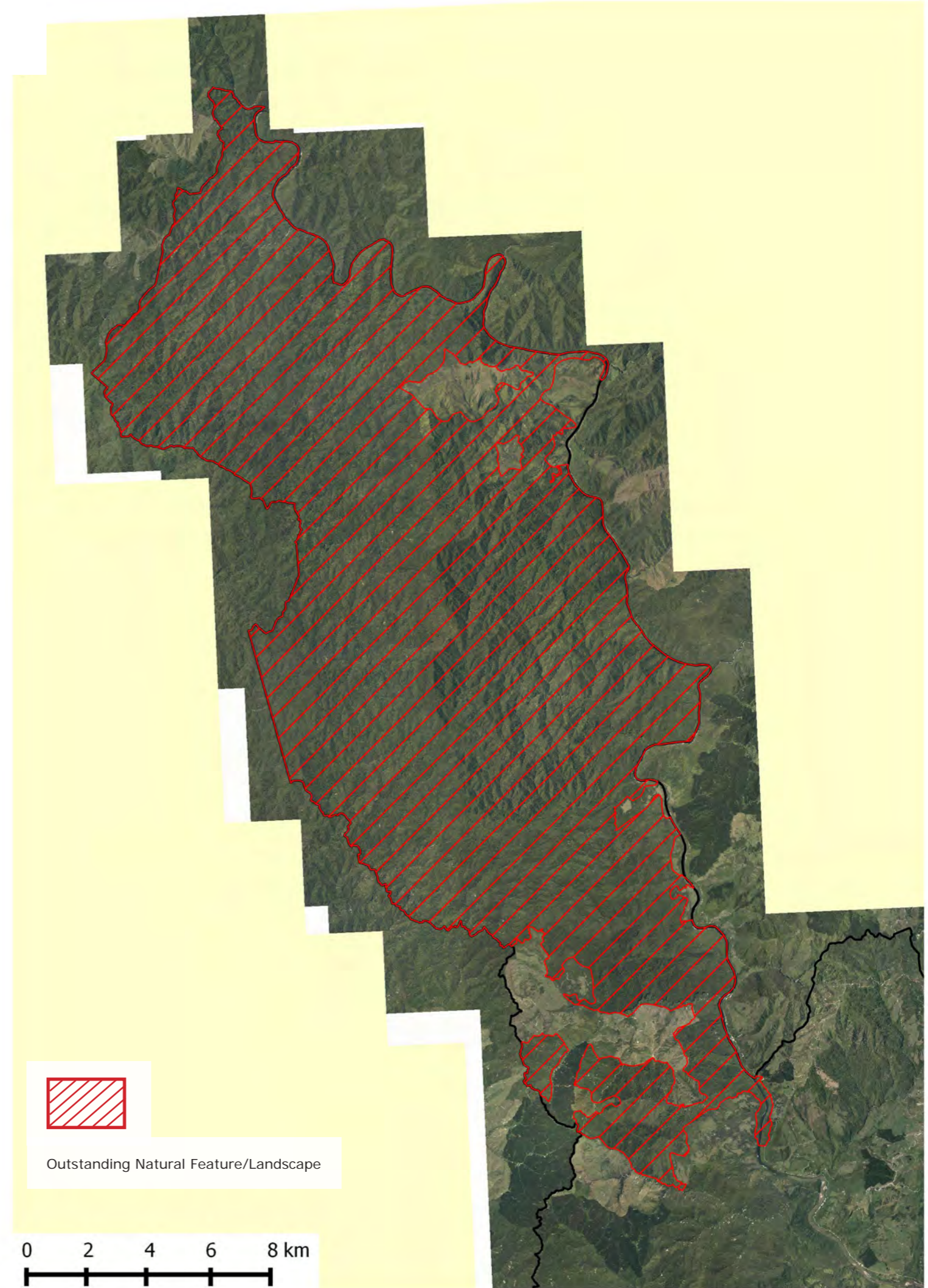
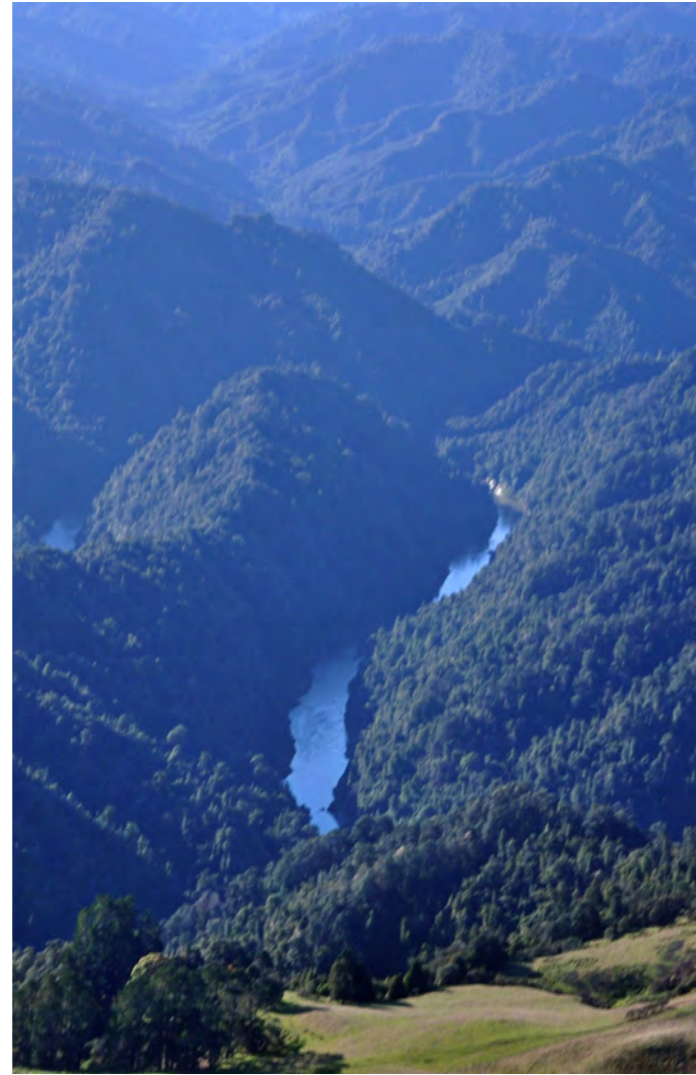
Overview Whanganui Outstanding Natural Features/Landscapes



-  Area 1 - Whanganui River Gorge and Upper National Park
-  Area 2 - Whanganui River and Lower National Park
-  Area 3 - North East Inland Hills and Valleys
-  Area 4 - North West Inland Hills and Valleys
-  Area 5 - Otoko
-  Area 6 - Whanganui Western Coastline
-  Area 7 - Whanganui Eastern Coastline
-  District Boundary

Whanganui River Gorge and Upper National Park





Name: Whanganui River Gorge and Upper National Park

Location: NZ Topo 50 - BK32 & BJ32

Description: The section of the Whanganui River from its confluence with Tangarakau River to Jerusalem and land westward from the river to the District Boundary. Deeply incised meandering river valley and gorges with exposed mudstone escarpments. Extensive steeply eroded hills covered in unmodified indigenous forest covering virtually the entire district northwest of Jerusalem.

ONL/ONF: Outstanding Natural Landscape

Natural Science	Geological/ Geomorphological	Deeply incised gorges created by erosion of the river through the sedimentary soils that formed the seabed and were uplifted and exposed following the last ice age. The soils comprise uplifted sedimentary mudstone and hard and soft sandstone with layers of volcanic ash and pumice that have been deposited following volcanic eruptions from the Taupō eruption 1850 years ago, and later from Taranaki and Tongariro. The erosive action of the river has resulted in entrenched meanders or steeply incised gorges with near vertical edges, exposed rock outcrops or mudstone bluffs. The sedimentary origins are evident through the soft sedimentary layers, while fossils can be exposed in the erosion process.
	Biological/ Ecological	Unmodified indigenous podocarp forest which enhances the ecological value and river quality while also creating a habitat for indigenous and exotic birdlife. Extensive tracts of primary lowland forest clothe the land surrounding river, extending the full width (approximately 12km) of the District from the Whanganui River in the east to the district boundary in the west.
	Hydrological	Water in the river and from stream tributaries has significant quality and quantity values, with recognition of the benefits that the indigenous land cover has on the rivers water quality. A water conservation order exists on a number of tributaries as a means of protecting water flow. Water of the Whanganui River has great spiritual value to iwi, flowing from the mountain (Ruapheu) to the sea and being recognised by iwi as their river Ko Whanganui te Awa (Our River is Whanganui).

Associational	Historical	Important travelling route since early settlement. Used by Maori for travel from the Taranaki coast through to the central plateau and Lake Taupo, a significant trading route. Used by European as a water highway for trade and tourism. In the late 1800's a fleet of 12 steam boats run by A Hatrick & Co plied the river between Whanganui and Taumaranui, providing transport of timber, produce and tourists.
	Tangata Whenua	The entire river has huge cultural significance to Maori, having provided a means of transport and living environment for hundreds of years. The status of the river is now recognised as Te Awa Tupua (an integrated, living whole) with an inextricable relationship between iwi with the river. Whanganui River is now given legal status and recognised as having a legal identity, just like a person when it comes to the law (in the same way a company is), which will give it rights and interests. The people say, 'Ko au te awa. Ko te awa ko au' (I am the river. The river is me). The Great River flows, From the Mountains to the Sea, I am the River, and the River is me.
	Shared/ Recognised	With an overall length of approximately 300 km, the Whanganui is the country's third-longest river and has the second highest discharge rate (behind the Waikato River) in the North Island. The Whanganui River is widely recognised by iwi for its cultural significance, and Europeans for its historic and recreational significance. Virtually the entire area within the upper reaches of the District are included within the Whanganui National Park which gives national recognition to its outstanding landscape values.
	Recreation	High level of recreational use, including hunting, tramping, jet boating, river cruises, fishing and over 6,000 people kayak the gorge parts of the river each year.

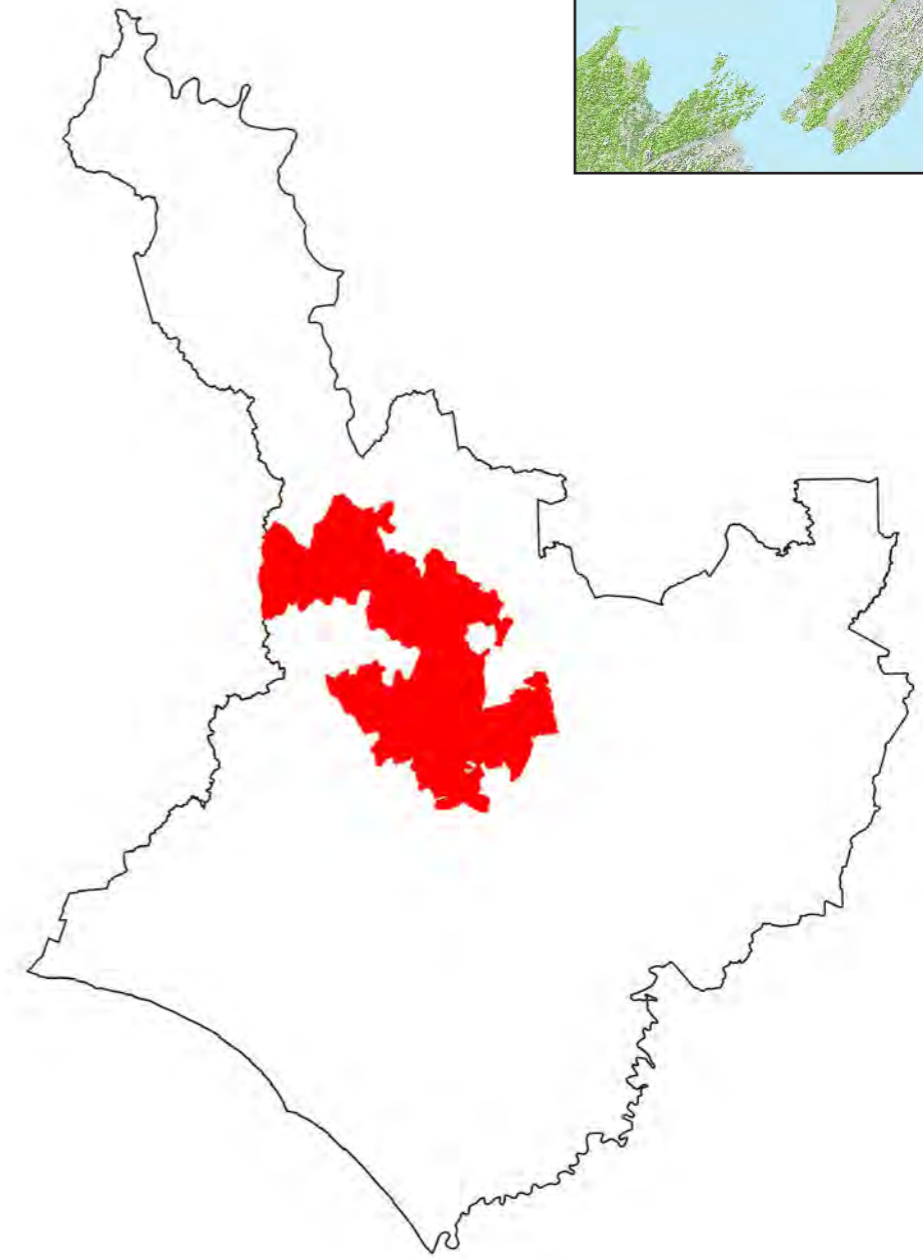
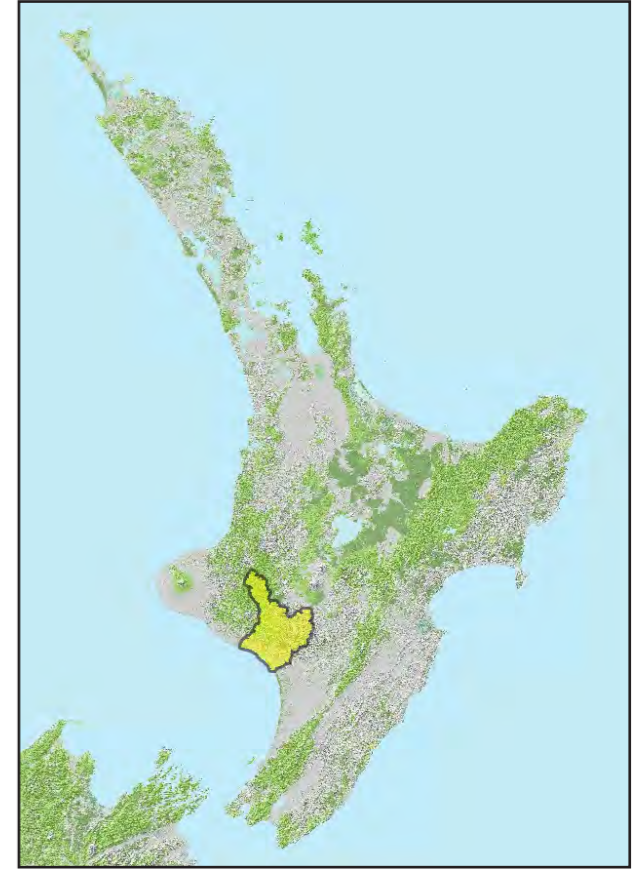
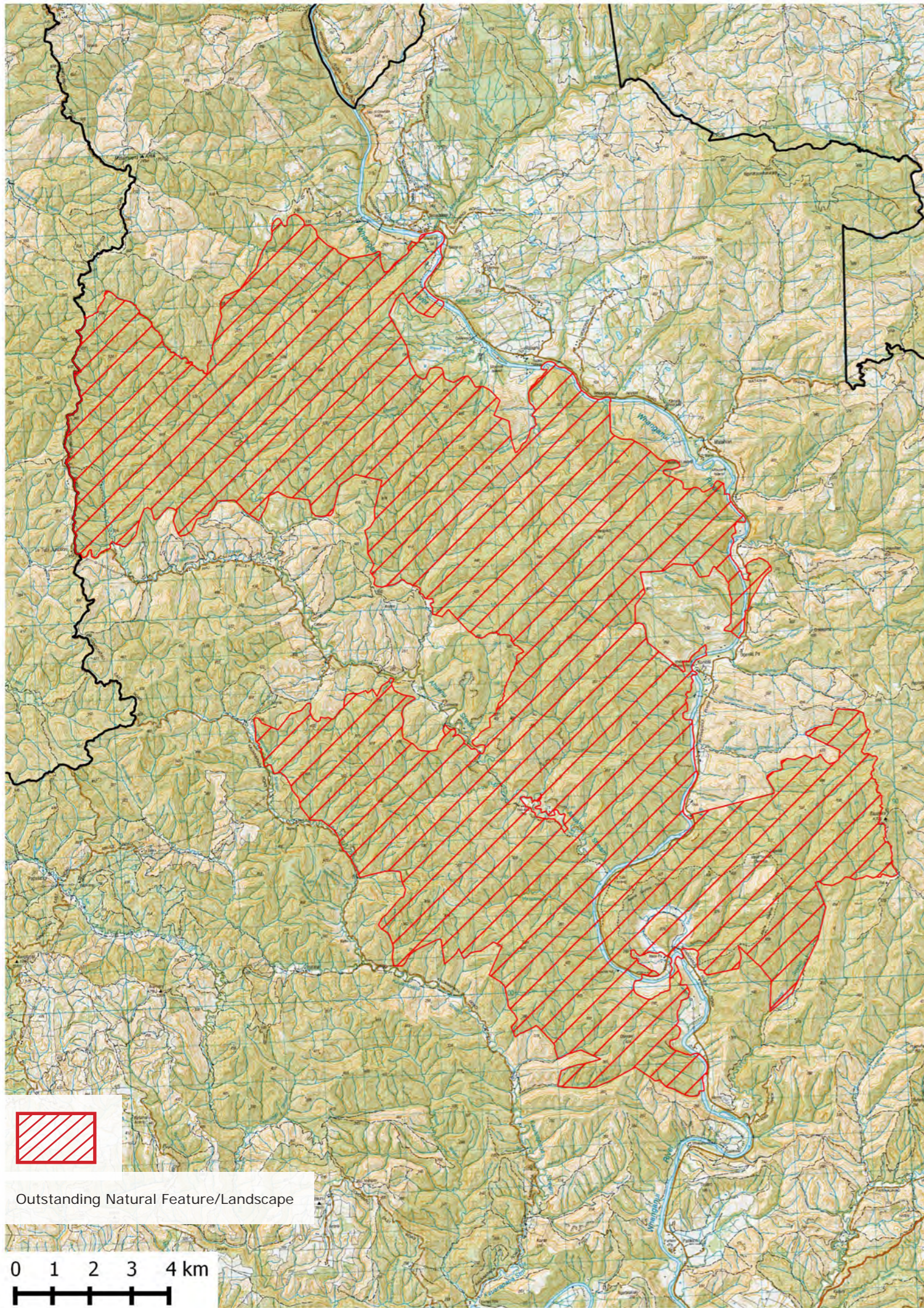
Perceptual	Memorability	Highly memorable landscape due to the scale and steepness of landform incision rising from the watercourse - more dramatic than surrounding folded landforms due to the presence of a significant escarpments along the waterway which contrasts with the surrounding sloping geology. The escarpments have a high degree of memorability and contribute to the identity and sense of place of the area. The Whanganui River flows in an almost unbroken narrow winding gorge in this section of the Park, giving outstanding examples of entrenched meanders. This landscape provides a sense of enclosure and intimacy, as well as isolation, for those travelling this section of the river and a sense of wilderness and isolation for those within the landscape to its west. The magnificent unmodified forest is awe inspiring in its scale and grandeur, with tall trees and diverse undergrowth covering the hills and valleys through the landscape west of the river.
	Legibility/ Expressiveness	A highly expressive incised meandering pattern resulting from the rivers erosive action through the soft sedimentary geology. Legibility is emphasised by the dramatic enclosure from the vertical escarpment faces lining the extensive gorges. The extensive topography of the bush covered land west of the river is characterised by its steep, V-sided valleys with sharp ridges of a fairly uniform height and a deeply entrenched dendritic (tree-like) drainage pattern.
	Transient	The river valley has its own microclimate, with the sheltered gorges characterised by heat in the summer, cold in the winter and heavy rains at any time of year. Mists frequently gather over the river and wider hills, giving meaning to the tangata whenua reference to 'people of the mist'. Extensive native birdlife and song, the sound of dripping water from hanging ferns and waterfalls, the roaring of rapids and streams in deep caverns through which tributaries pour and the silence of slow moving sections between rapids are all characteristics of this section of the river.
	Aesthetic	High aesthetic value within the river gorge due to its steep escarpments, cliffs and entrenched meanders within the river channel, provide a sense of enclosure, intimacy and isolation in the river section of this area. These are a dramatic and awe inspiring landscape features characterised by a repetition of vertical cliffs and meandering water that combine to provide a high level of coherence for this stretch of the Whanganui River before it transitions into the more open lands south of Jerusalem. The extensive hills west of the river have a maturity, continuity and intactness of the landscape, with the natural landscape expressing the underlying geology across large tracts of primary lowland forest. The natural landscape is predominant and the sense of remoteness and isolation is profound.
	Naturalness	Highly natural landscape with extensive areas of unmodified indigenous podocarp forest. Naturalness within the river corridor significantly contributed to by the dramatic escarpment features, scale of their erosion and the expressiveness of the rivers meandering course over time as shown by the deep gorges and vegetated cliffs. Naturalness of the extensive hills west of the river manifested by the pristine vegetation.

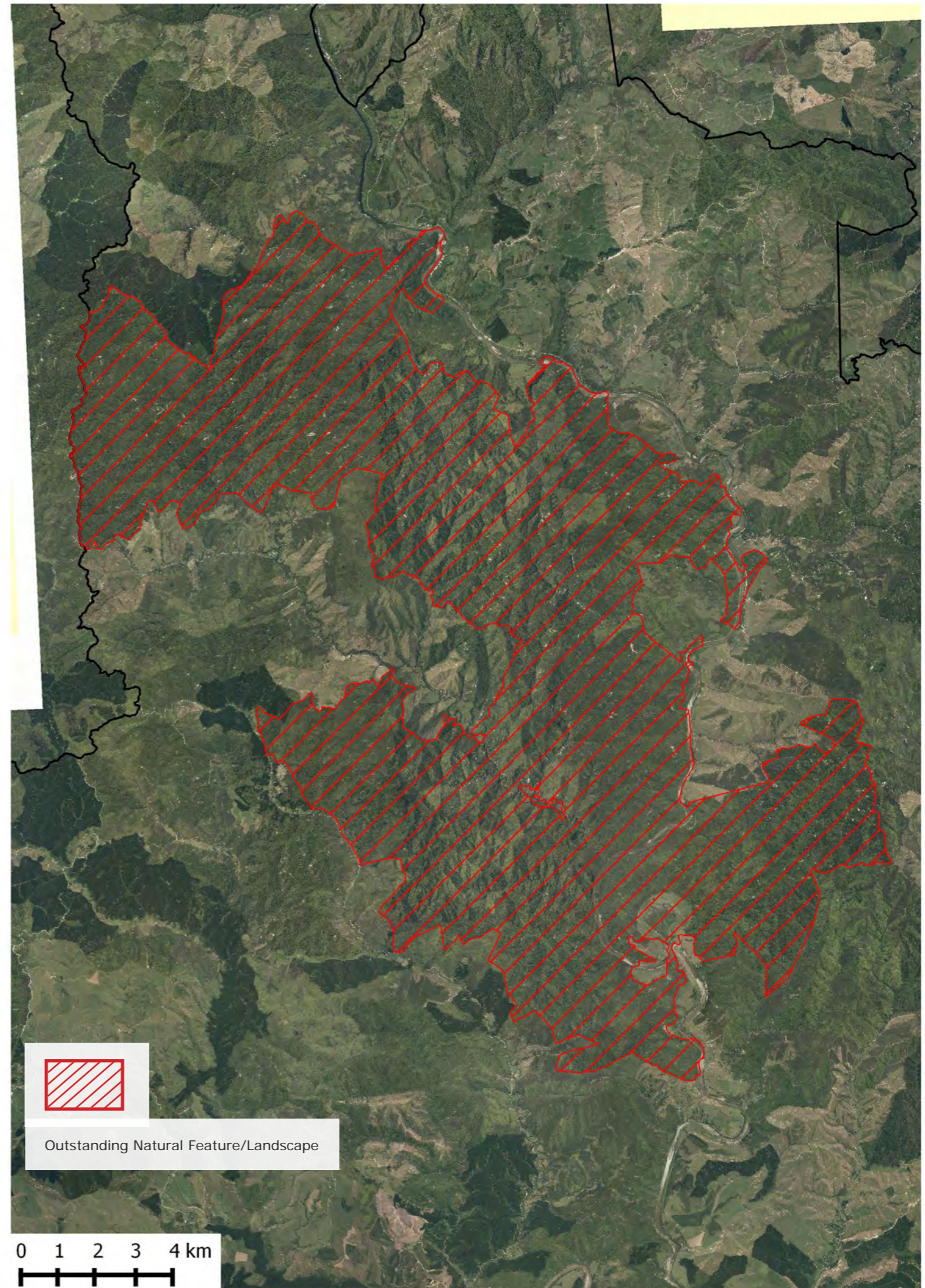
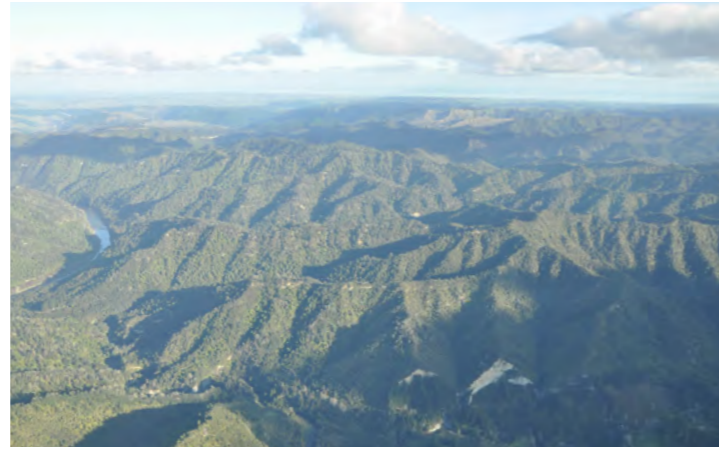
Summary of Key Values Very high landscape and visual values and natural character derived from the pristine vegetation and expressiveness of the formative processes of the Whanganui River course which cuts through the soft sedimentary sandstone and mudstone rock. The dynamic qualities demonstrated by the legibility of the gorges, the dramatic appearance of the enclosing vertical escarpments, the prominence and beauty of the mudstone cliffs, and the natural simplicity of the cliff edges and escarpments result in a highly memorable landscape feature. West of the river are the distinctive V-sided valleys that rhythmically flow across the landscape. Across the entire area, the vast coverage of unmodified indigenous podocarp forest stretching from the Whanganui River west to the District boundary. The National Park status of the vast majority of this area confirms its recognised values as an outstanding landscape.

Potential Threats Clearance or degradation of native vegetation throughout any part of the area. Loss of water through upstream take. Currently water is taken for hydro generation as part of the Tongariro Power Development. Further take for this purpose or perhaps irrigation could reduce water flow and have adverse cultural and perhaps ecological effects. Damming for hydroelectricity. Establishment of exotic weeds such as Gorse or Willow along the river edge. Adverse effects of military activities. Loss of indigenous flora and fauna by pest animals.

Potential Policies Maintain unmodified and regenerating indigenous vegetation along riparian edges and throughout the extensive area west of the Whanganui River. Control and remove exotic plants along the river margins. Control and remove pest animals. Maintain natural water flow and quality. Avoid clearance or loss of indigenous vegetation or introduction of exotic vegetation.

Area 2
Whanganui River and Lower National Park





Name:	Whanganui River and Lower National Park
Location:	NZ Topo 50 – BK33 & BK32
Description:	Whanganui River from Jerusalem to Atene Pa and the landscape westward. Land to the west has areas clothed in unmodified Indigenous podocarp forest and regenerating indigenous vegetation. South of Pipiriki, steep gorges alternate with more open areas and wider terraces within this defined ONL area, before land cover becomes more modified beyond the southern end of the National Park.
ONL/ONF:	Outstanding Natural Landscape.

Natural Science	Geological/ Geomorphological	Uplifted sedimentary sandstone and mudstone form the underlying geology, with terraces of volcanic deposits dropped or washed downstream from eruptions over the last 2,000 years. Ingrown meanders define the river valley, with sloping sides having greater lateral erosion than the gorges upstream. Land to the west of the river is characterised by its steep, V-sided valleys with sharp ridges of a fairly uniform height and a deeply entrenched drainage pattern. Some exposed escarpments remain prominent due to their contrasting light colour and exposed rock due to the ongoing erosion of their soft base material. The southern part of this area includes the Atene “meander” or oxbow, where the Whanganui River once flowed in a near circle round the hill Puketapu and now has cut through to create a shortcut to the sea. This feature is recognised as one of the best examples in New Zealand, and is included in the Geological Society of New Zealand’s Geopreservation Inventory, an outstanding geological feature in the NZ Geological Society’s Index.
	Biological/ Ecological	Indigenous forest clothes the sloping riverside escarpments and the entire defined area west of the river. Much of this is unmodified podocarp forest and some is well developed native regeneration, both of which enhance the ecological values and water quality while also creating a habitat for indigenous and exotic birdlife. A small area of pastoral land is located in the old meander of the Atene oxbow. Maintenance as pasture and productive use of the pastoral land should be able to continue within this landscape character area as it does not detract from the landscape values associated with the Atene meander.
	Hydrological	Water in the river and from stream tributaries has significant quality and quantity values, with recognition of the benefits that the indigenous land cover has on the rivers water quality.

Associational	Historical	Important travelling route since early settlement. Used by Maori for travel from the Taranaki coast through to the central plateau and Lake Taupo, a significant trading route. Used by European as a water highway for trade and tourism. In the late 1800’s a fleet of 12 steamers run by A Hatrick & Co plied the river between Whanganui and Taumaranui, providing transport of timber, produce and tourists. Numerous settlements, both Maori and European, were established along the banks of this section of the river. A number of settlements were named after European cities such as Atene (Athens), Koriniti (Corinth), Ranana (London), Jerusalem (Hiruhārama). Unlike many others, Jerusalem is more commonly known by its English name and is where Sister Suzanne Aubert founded her Order, the Sisters of Compassion, and was the home of notable poet James K Baxter.
	Tangata Whenua	The entire river has huge cultural significance to Maori, having provided a means of transport and living environment for hundreds of years. The status of the river is now recognised as Te Awa Tupua (an integrated, living whole) with an inextricable relationship between iwi with the river. Whanganui River is now given legal status and recognised as having a legal identity, just like a person when it comes to the law (in the same way a company is), which will give it rights and interests. Throughout the river corridor are located numerous archaeological sites rising from Maori habitation.
	Shared/ Recognised	With an overall length of approximately 300 km, the Whanganui is the country’s third-longest river and (behind the Waikato River) has the second highest discharge rate in the North Island. The Whanganui River is widely recognised by iwi for its cultural significance, and Europeans for its historic and recreational significance. The Whanganui National Park covers an extensive part of this landscape character area, giving recognition to its outstanding landscape values.
	Recreation	High level of recreational use, including hunting, tramping, jet boating, river cruises, fishing and kayaking.

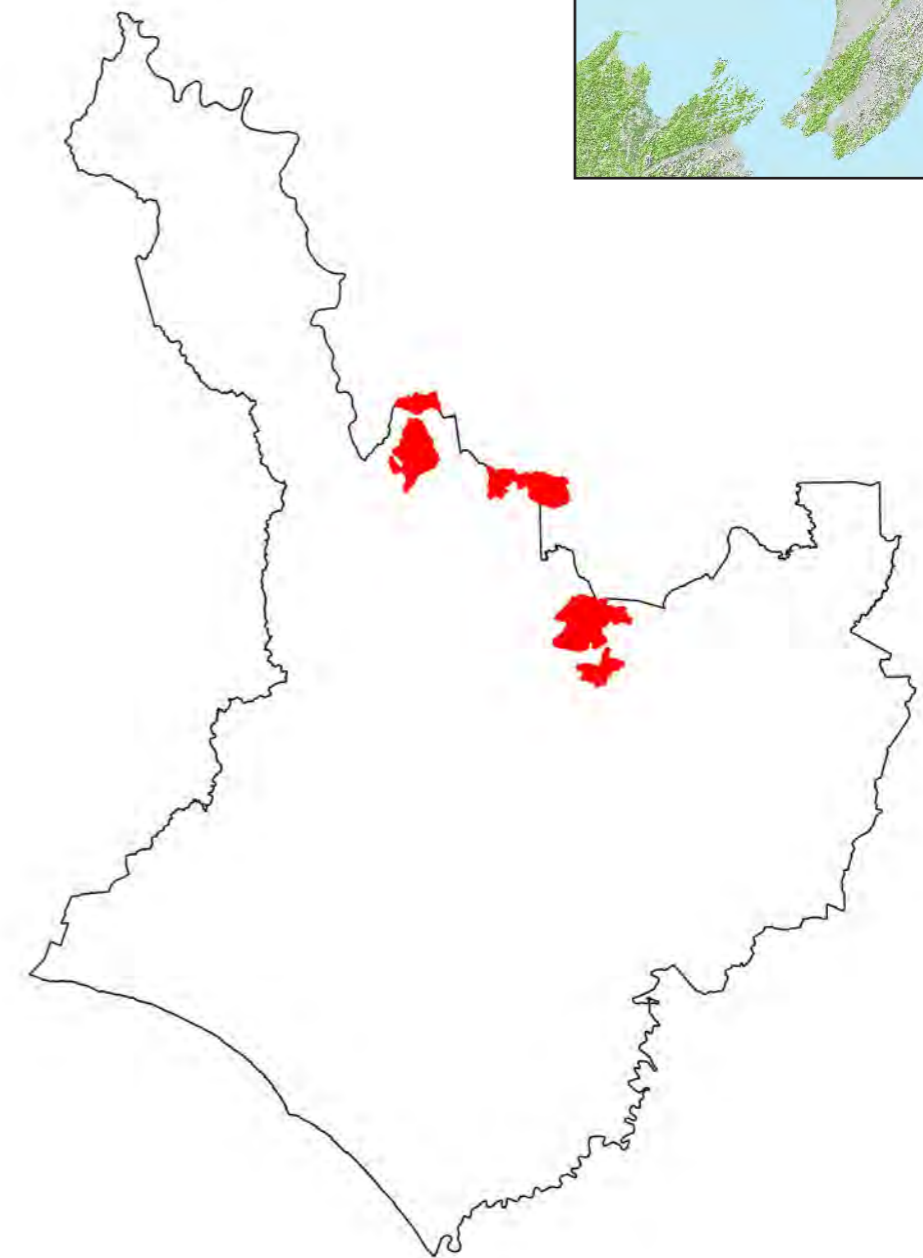
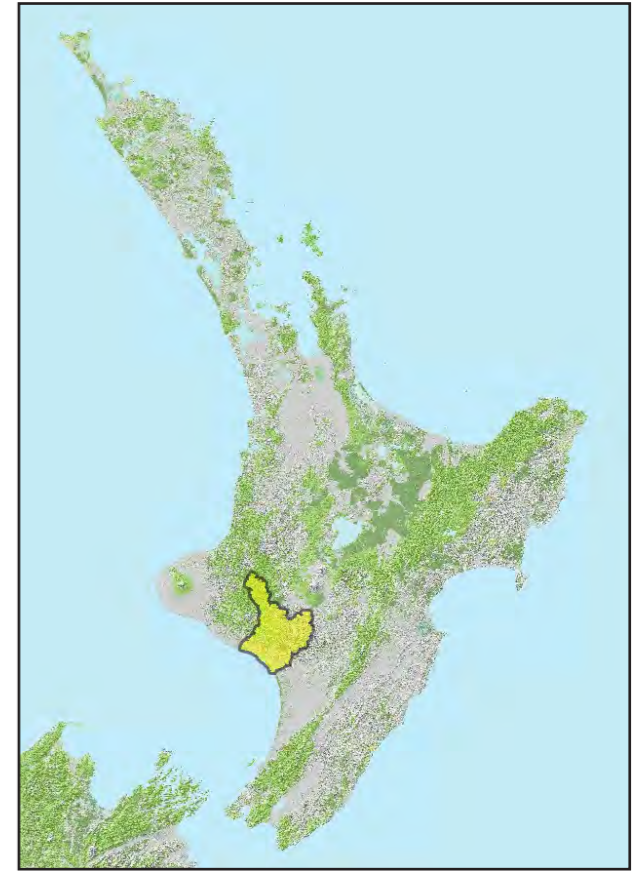
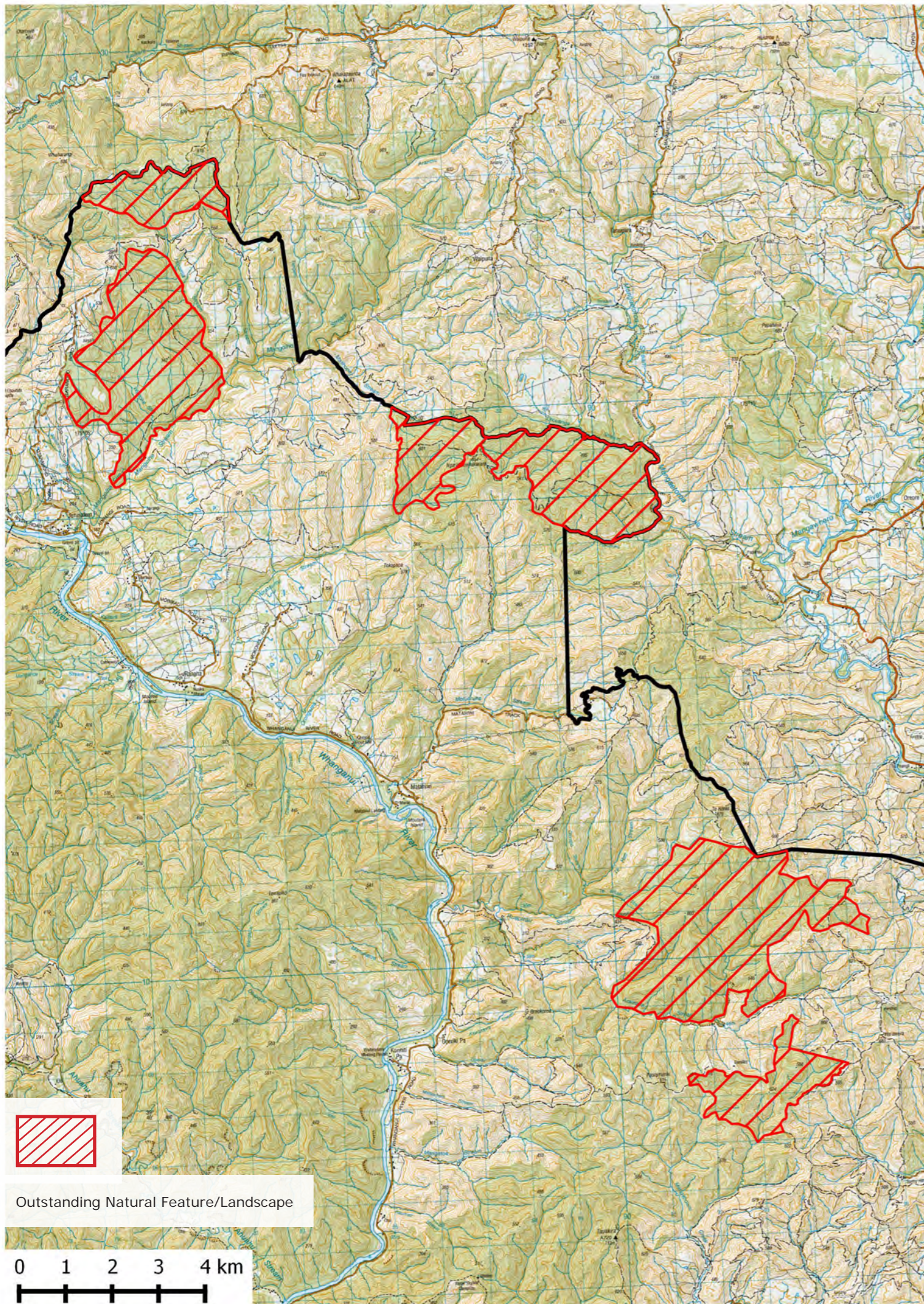
Perceptual	Memorability	Memorable landscape due to the scale and length of the incised and ingrown meandering that the river undertakes, plus the density and extent of indigenous vegetation that clothes the entire area. The sense of enclosure and intimacy plus a sense of grandeur combine to make this river section highly memorable. The vast tracts of indigenous vegetation covering the rhythmic geomorphology of the v shaped valleys to the west also contribute to the memorability of the area due to its extent, isolation and naturalness.
	Legibility/ Expressiveness	An expressive meandering pattern resulting from the rivers erosive action through the soft sedimentary geology. Legibility is emphasised by the broad enclosure from the sloping escarpment faces lining the extensive meanders. The extensive topography of the bush covered land west of the river is characterised by its steep, V-sided valleys with sharp ridges of a fairly uniform height and a deeply entrenched dendritic drainage pattern.
	Transient	The river valley has its own microclimate, with the sheltered valleys characterised by heat in the summer, cold in the winter, mists and rain periods throughout the year. Extensive native birdlife and song, the dampness of dripping understorey and the sound are all characteristics of this section of the river and land to the west.
	Aesthetic	Extensive indigenous vegetation throughout the valley system has a high degree of coherence and reinforces its vividness both as a feature and in harmony with the natural meanders of the river. The extensive hills west of the river have a maturity, continuity and intactness of the landscape, with the natural landscape expressing the underlying geology across large tracts of primary and regenerating lowland forest. The natural landscape is predominant and the sense of naturalness is unavoidable.
Naturalness	Natural landscape with extensive areas of unmodified indigenous podocarp forest. Naturalness within the river corridor significantly contributed to by the scale of the escarpment features and the expressiveness of the rivers meandering course over time. Naturalness of the extensive hills west of the river significantly contributed to by the pristine and regenerating indigenous vegetation.	

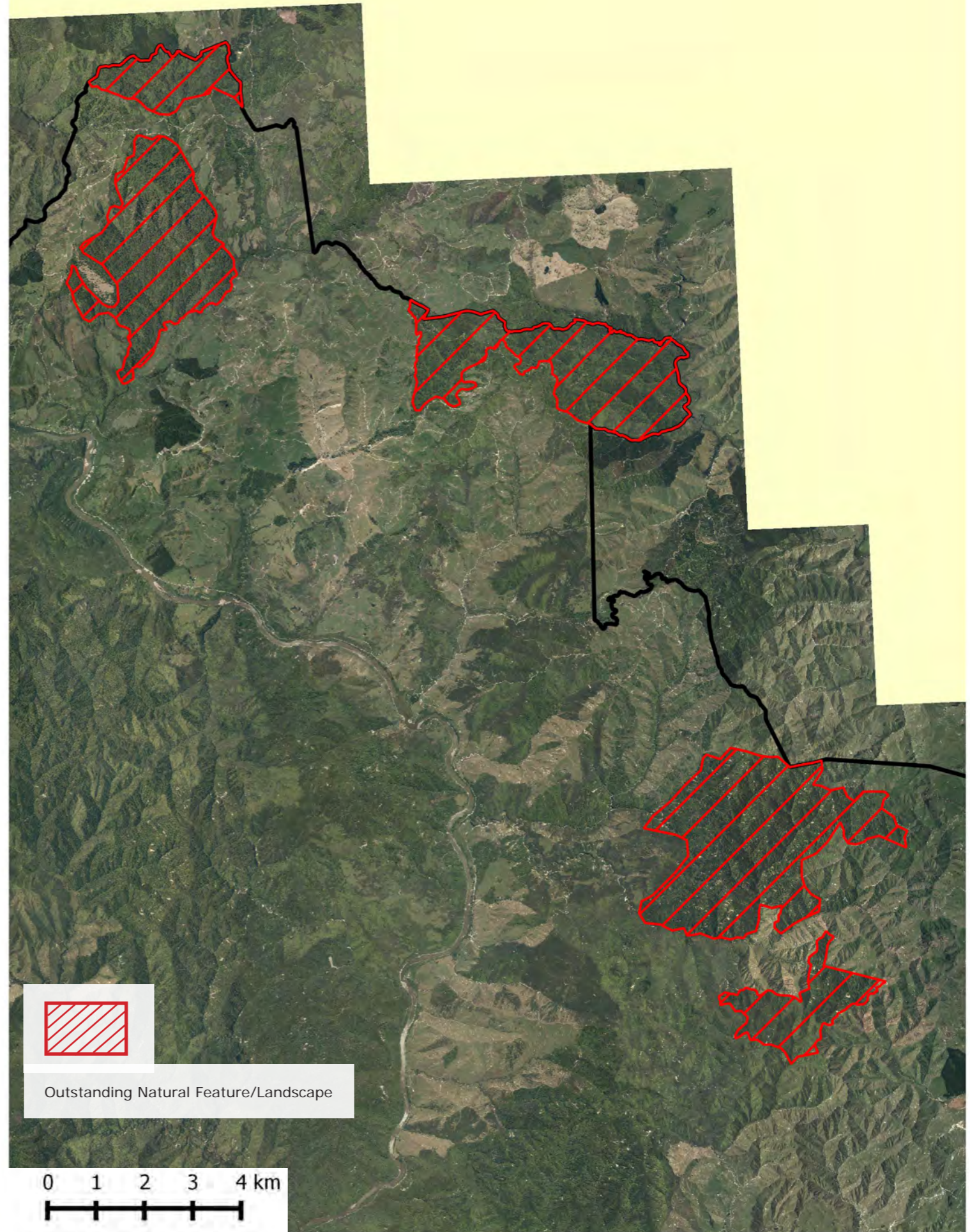
Summary of Key Values	Very high landscape and visual values and natural character derived from the pristine and regenerating vegetation and expressiveness of the formative processes of the Whanganui River course which meanders through the soft sedimentary sandstone and mudstone rock. The dynamic qualities demonstrated by the legibility of the meanders, the memorable appearance of the enclosing escarpments, and the naturalness of the extensive indigenous vegetation cover that can be easily seen from the riverside road. West of the river, the distinctive V-sided valleys that rhythmically flow across the landscape. Across the entire area, the vast coverage of unmodified and regenerating indigenous podocarp forest stretching west from the Whanganui River. The National Park status of the majority of this area confirms its recognised values as an outstanding landscape.
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Potential Threats	Clearance or degradation of native vegetation throughout any part of the area. Flora and fauna damage through pests such as possums, rats and goats. Loss of water through hydro take off or irrigation. Damming for hydroelectricity. Establishment of exotic weeds such as Gorse or Willow along the river edge.
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Potential Policies	Maintain unmodified indigenous vegetation along riparian edges and throughout the extensive area west of the Whanganui River. Control and remove exotic plants along the river margins. Control and remove pest animals. Maintain natural water flow and quality. Avoid clearance or loss of indigenous vegetation or introduction of exotic vegetation. Maintenance as pasture and productive use of the pastoral land should be able to continue within the Atene Meander landscape character area as it does not detract from the landscape values associated with the landform.
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Area 3
North-East Inland Hills and Valleys





Name: North-East Inland Hills and Valleys

Location: NZ Topo 50 – BK33 & BK32

Description: There separate areas of hills and valleys in the eastern part of the District, between the Whanganui River and the eastern boundary. Distinctive well-advanced regenerating indigenous podocarp forest over eroded landform of ridges, side-spurs and steep-sided, narrow-floored valleys.

ONL/ONF: Outstanding Natural Features

Natural Science	Geological/ Geomorphological	A pattern of rolling ridgetops and side spurs descending steeply to narrow-floored valleys. Land form differs from the more steeply incised gorges of the Whanganui River gorges, being more similar to the rhythmic patterns of the north-western landform of the district. Soils comprise uplifted sedimentary mudstone and hard and soft sandstone with layers of volcanic ash and pumice that have been deposited following volcanic eruptions from the Taupō eruption 1850 years ago, and later from Taranaki and Tongariro.
	Biological/ Ecological	Regenerating Indigenous podocarp forest completely covers the folds of the land, enhancing the ecological value of these areas, and creating improved habitat for indigenous and exotic birdlife. Regeneration is approximately 30-50 years old and more, with emergent podocarp species beginning to dominate, particularly on moister south-facing slopes, and having reached the tops of most ridges and spurs. Ecological values will continue to improve as the process continues over time.
	Hydrological	Water in stream tributaries has quality and quantity values as tributary to the Whanganui River, with recognition of the benefits that the indigenous land cover has on the rivers water quality.

Associational	Historical	Areas of regenerating forest originally felled for milling, as was much of the land now used for rural purposes throughout the district. Regeneration of the native forest has occurred to varying degrees, with the defined areas demonstrating more advanced regeneration and generally moving into or through secondary growth and in places emergence of tertiary species.
	Tangata Whenua	The entire river valley has great significance to iwi, particularly the river itself. Current and former marae and archaeological sites are liberally dispersed through the areas associated with the river.
	Shared/ Recognised	Similar vegetation and landscape characteristics as many areas within the District recognised as reserves or as part of the DOC estate.
	Recreation	Possible hunting potential or activity, while the eastern area has extensive tracking but the purpose of these is not confirmed

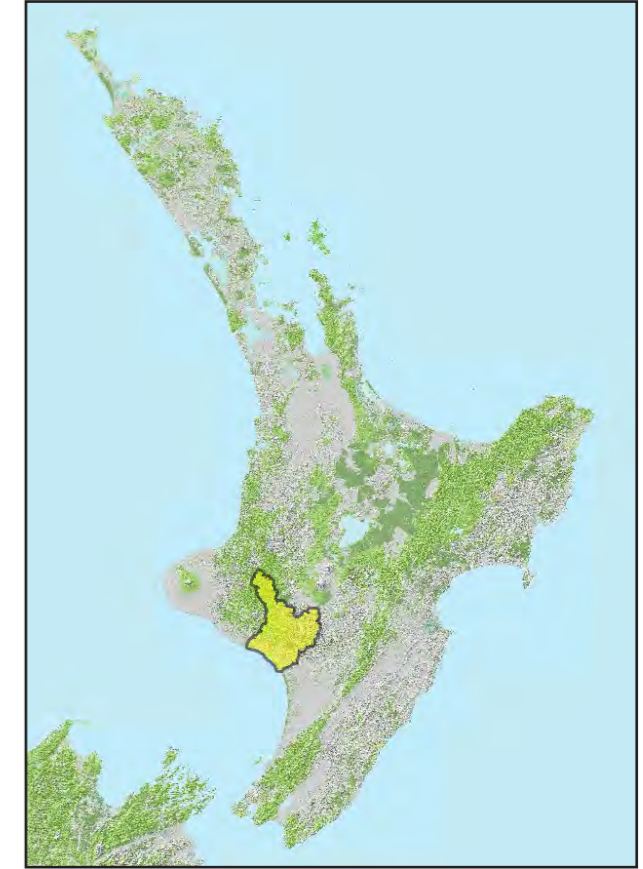
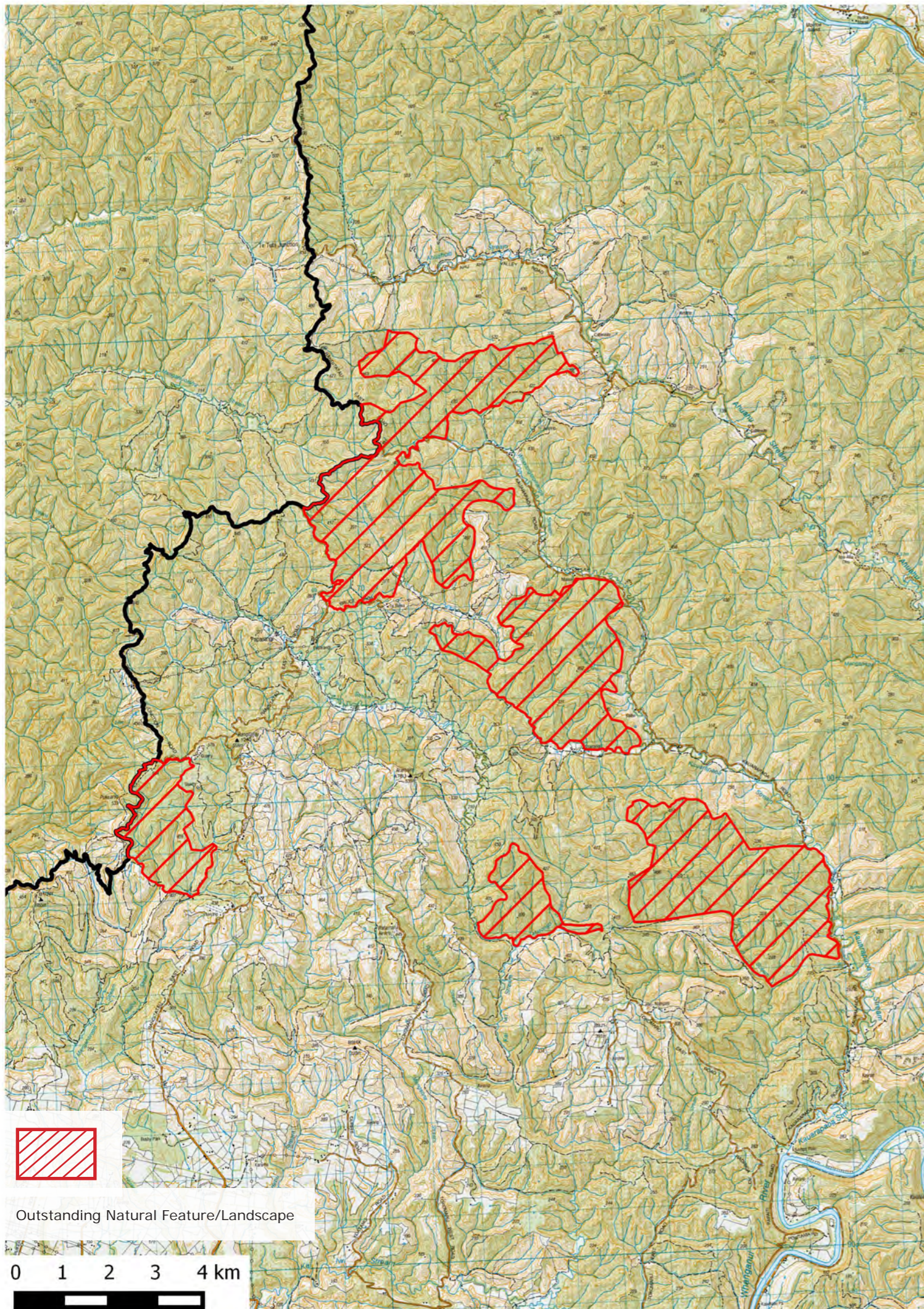
Perceptual	Memorability	Memorable landscape due to the land-cover (dense regenerating indigenous forest) and land-form (a series of ridges, side-spurs and steep narrow-floored valleys), providing a visual contrast with surrounding pasture and more gentle landform. The areas stand out visually as undeveloped and with a high degree of naturalness. They have a sense of isolation, wildness and being separate from their immediate more modified surroundings, adding considerably to memorability.
	Legibility/ Expressiveness	Landform is highly expressive of the natural geomorphic forces which shaped it, showing a rhythmic pattern of ridges and steep-sided, narrow-floored valleys. Landform reflects natural drainage patterns, and is also expressed through the patterns of regenerating vegetative cover. Steep v-shaped valleys and dense vegetative cover present here as untamed land, with the underlying eroded landform clearly expressive through the regenerating podocarp forest which in turn is clearly legible as remnant land cover distinct from their adjacent rural land-use. Vegetation patterns are expressive of slope aspect, with the moister southern slopes showing greater diversity and maturity in the regeneration process.
	Transient	The bush environment is secluded, enclosed and quiet, with extensive native bird-life and song, and the sound of waterways and streams and/or dripping rain.
	Aesthetic	High aesthetic value due to the quality of the regenerating indigenous vegetation, the pattern of the hills and valleys, and the quality of the experience from within these areas – isolated, quiet and natural. A strong contrast to the surrounding productive rural land-use, further emphasising the perception of naturalness of the defined areas.
Naturalness	Natural landscape with unmodified landform and dense indigenous vegetative cover with extensive areas of well-advanced regenerating podocarp forest. Natural value is significantly contributed to by the quality and stage of the forest regeneration.	

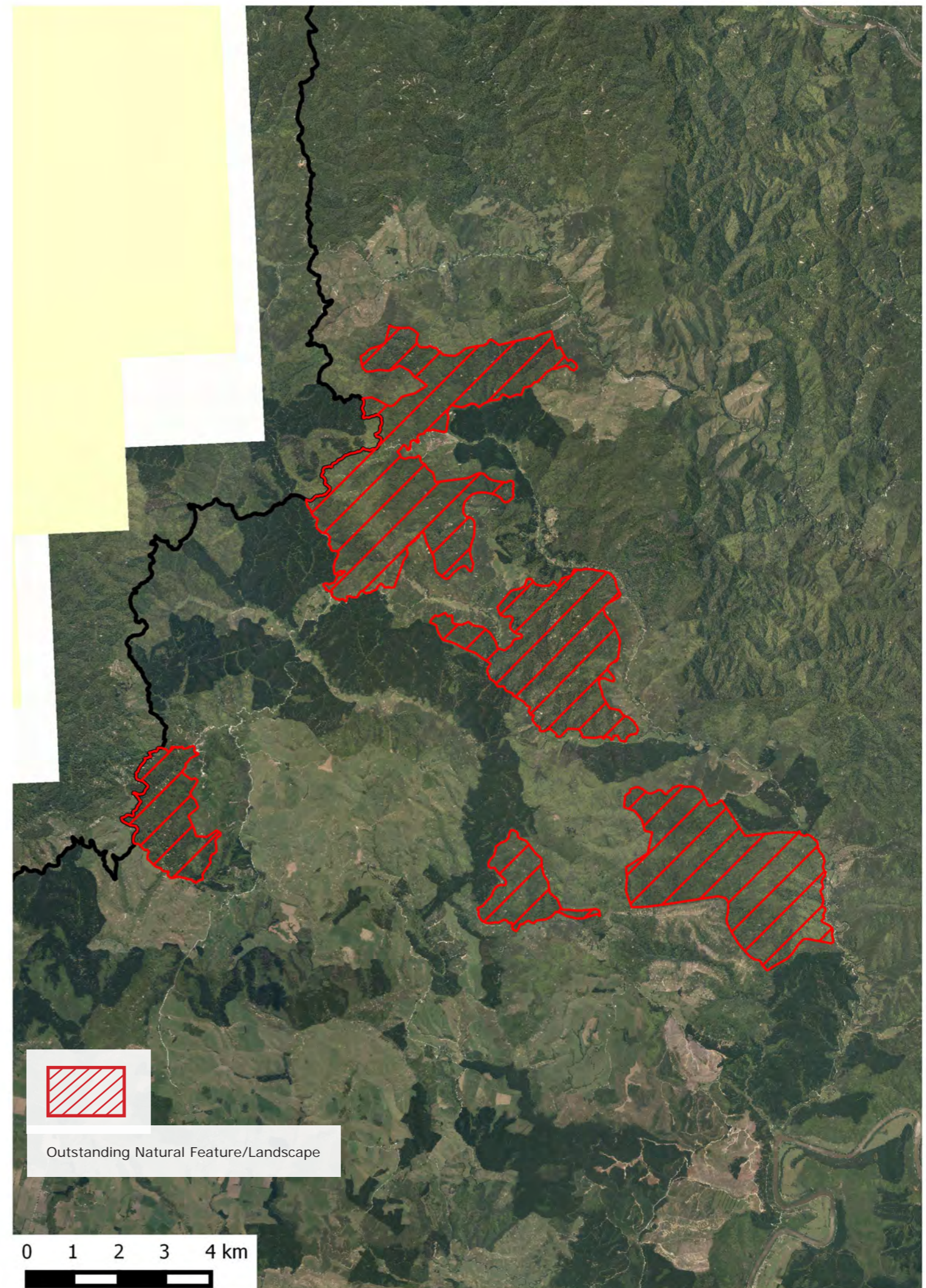
Summary of Key Values
High landscape and visual values derived from the high-quality regenerating indigenous vegetation cover over the eroded uplifted landform pattern. Contrast with the surrounding areas of pasture increases the value of such remnant areas of regeneration.

Potential Threats
Clearance or degradation of native vegetation throughout any part of the area. Damage to flora and fauna by animal pests. Establishment of exotic weeds such as wilding pines, pampas, gorse, willow within the areas and along stream margins.

Potential Policies
Maintain indigenous vegetation throughout these areas east of the Whanganui River. Control and remove exotic plants within the areas and along stream margins. Control animal pests. Maintain natural water flow and quality. Avoid earthworks and clearance or loss of indigenous vegetation or introduction of exotic vegetation.

Area 4
North-West Inland Hills and Valleys





Name: North-West Inland Hills and Valleys

Location: NZ Topo 50 – BK32

Description: Five separate areas in hills and valleys south and west of the southern part of the Whanganui National Park to. Distinctive well-advanced regenerating indigenous podocarp forest over eroded landform of ridges, side-spurs and steep-sided, narrow-floored valleys.

ONL/ONF: Outstanding Natural Features

Natural Science	Geological/ Geomorphological	A pattern of defined ridgetops and side spurs descending steeply to narrow-floored valleys. Land form similar to the nearby steeply sloped hills of the Wanganui National Park that lies to the north and east of these areas. Soils comprise uplifted sedimentary mudstone and hard and soft sandstone with layers of volcanic ash and pumice that have been deposited following volcanic eruptions from the Taupō eruption 1850 years ago, and later from Taranaki and Tongariro.
	Biological/ Ecological	Regenerating Indigenous podocarp forest completely covers the folds of the land, enhancing the ecological value of these areas, and creating improved habitat for indigenous and exotic birdlife. Regeneration is approximately 20-50 years old and more, with emergent podocarp species beginning to dominate, particularly on moister south-facing slopes. Ecological values will continue to improve as the process continues over time.
	Hydrological	Water in stream tributaries has quality and quantity values as tributary to the Whanganui River, with recognition of the benefits that the indigenous land cover has on the rivers water quality.

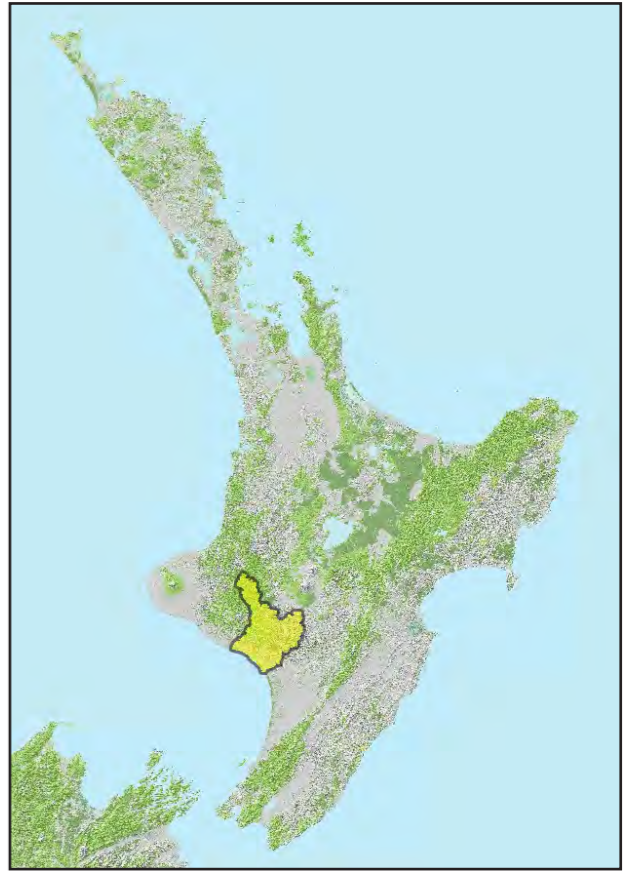
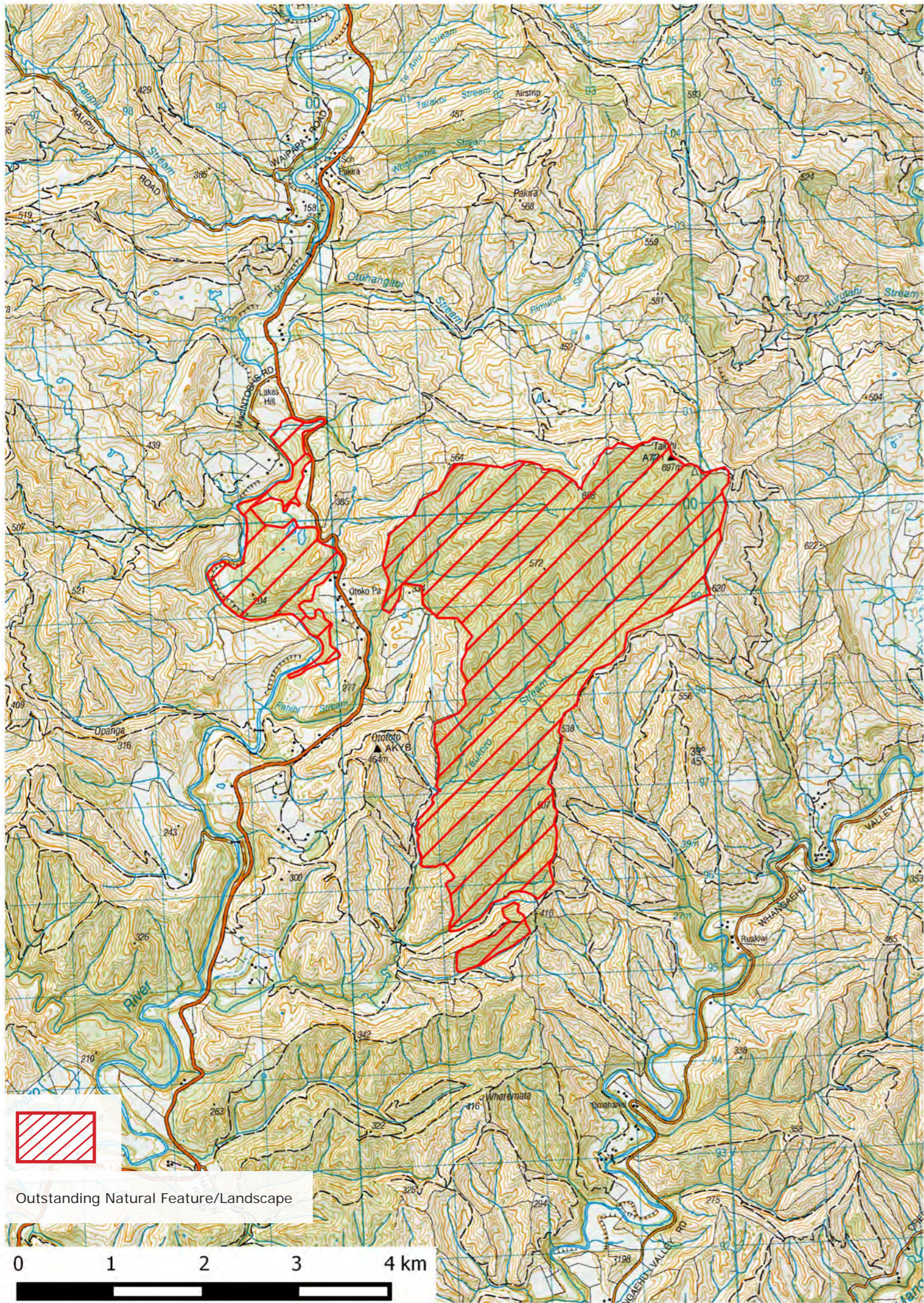
Associational	Historical	Areas of regenerating forest originally felled for milling, as was much of the land now used for rural purposes throughout the district. Regeneration of the native forest has occurred to varying degrees, with the defined areas demonstrating more advanced regeneration and generally moving into or through secondary growth and in places emergence of tertiary species.
	Tangata Whenua	The entire river valley has great significance to iwi, particularly the river itself. Current and former marae and archaeological sites are liberally dispersed through the areas associated with the river.
	Shared/ Recognised	Similar vegetation and landscape characteristics as the adjacent National Park and many areas within the District recognised as reserves or as part of the DOC estate. Includes land within the Waitahinga Reserve, which contains the dam and water supply for the city.
	Recreation	Possible tramping activities and hunting potential or existing activities.

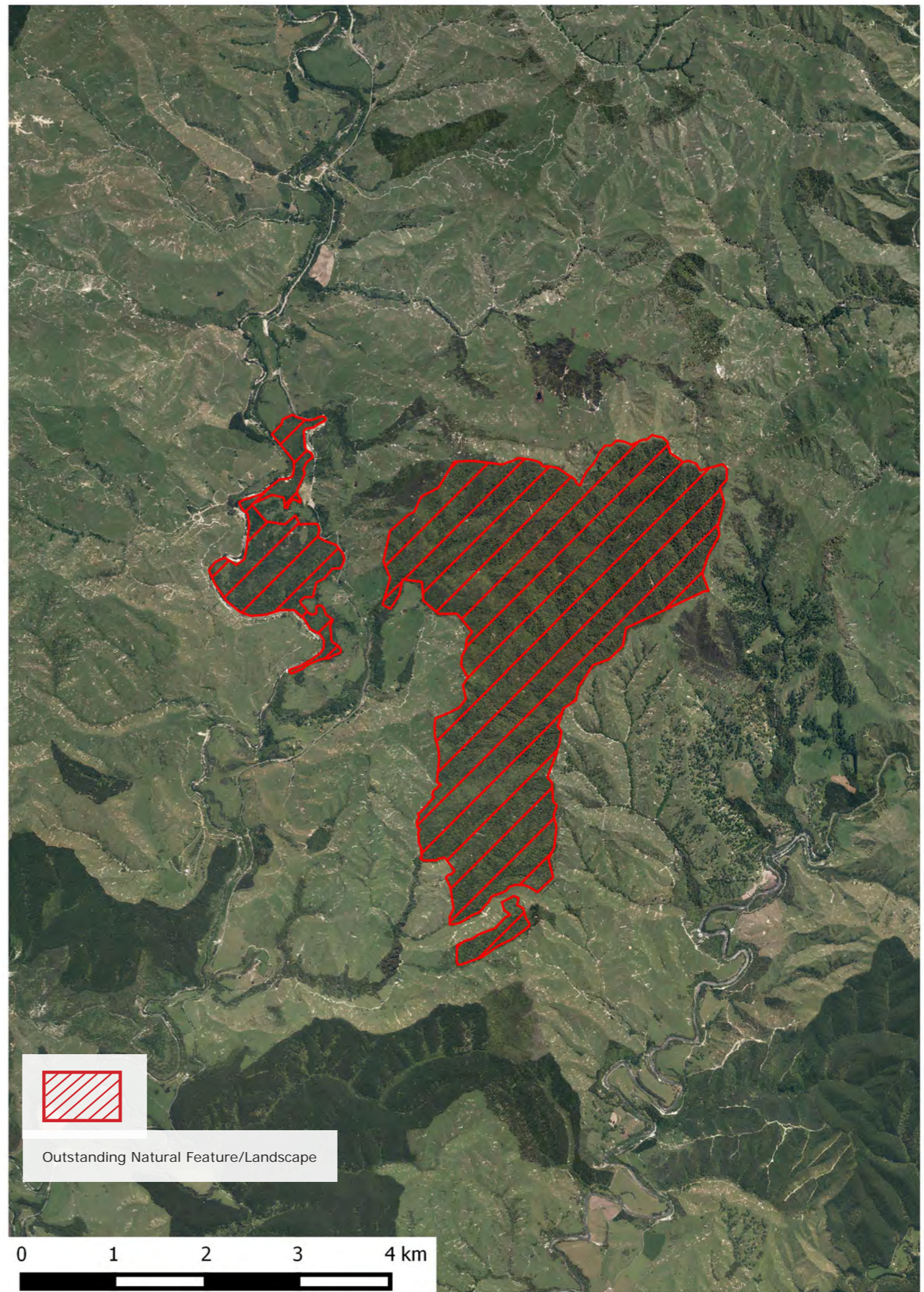
Perceptual	Memorability	Memorable landscape due to the land-cover (dense regenerating indigenous forest) and land-form (a series of ridges, side-spurs and steep narrow-floored valleys), providing a visual contrast with surrounding pasture and more gentle landform. The areas stand out visually as undeveloped and with a high degree of naturalness, contrasting with adjacent plantation forestry in places. The areas have a sense of naturalness, wildness and being distinct from their immediate more modified surroundings, adding considerably to memorability.
	Legibility/ Expressiveness	Landform is expressive of the natural geomorphic forces which shaped it, showing a rhythmic pattern of ridges and steep-sided, narrow-floored valleys. Landform reflects natural drainage patterns, and is also expressed through the patterns of regenerating vegetative cover. Steep v-shaped valleys and dense vegetative cover present here as untamed land, with the underlying eroded landform clearly expressive through the regenerating podocarp forest which in turn is clearly legible as remnant land cover distinct from their adjacent productive land-use. Vegetation patterns are expressive of slope aspect, with the moister southern slopes showing greater diversity and maturity in the regeneration process.
	Transient	The bush environment is secluded, enclosed and quiet, with extensive native bird-life and song, and the sound of waterways and streams and/or dripping rain.
	Aesthetic	High aesthetic value due to the quality of the regenerating indigenous vegetation, the pattern of the hills and valleys, and the quality of the experience from within these areas – isolated, quiet and natural. A contrast to the surrounding productive rural land-use, further emphasising the perception of naturalness of the defined areas.
Naturalness	Natural landscape with unmodified landform and dense indigenous vegetative cover with extensive areas of well-advanced regenerating podocarp forest. Natural value is significantly contributed to by the quality and stage of the forest regeneration.	

Summary of Key Values High landscape values derived from the high-quality regenerating indigenous vegetation cover over the eroded uplifted landform pattern. Contrast with the surrounding areas of plantation forest or pastoral land increases the value of such remnant areas of regeneration.

Potential Threats Clearance or degradation of native vegetation throughout any part of the area. Damage to flora and fauna by animal pests. Establishment of exotic weeds within the areas and along stream margins.

Potential Policies Maintain indigenous vegetation throughout these areas west of the Whanganui River. Control and remove exotic plants within the areas and along stream margins. Control animal pests. Maintain natural water flow and quality. Avoid earthworks and clearance or loss of indigenous vegetation or introduction of exotic vegetation.





Name:	Otoko
Location:	NZ Topo 50 – BK33
Description:	Located beside State Highway 4 on the Mangawhero River, 40 km from Whanganui. Over 1,000ha of regenerating podocarp forest, much of it held as part of the DOC estate. Otoko Marae is located beside the river amongst the western area of vegetation. Several small lakes located between the road and river, enclosed by native vegetation.

ONL/ONF:	Outstanding Natural Feature
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Natural Science	Geological/ Geomorphological	A pattern of sharp or rolling ridgetops and side spurs descending to valley floors. Land form softer than the more steeply incised gorges and valleys further north, but still maintains steep side slopes and distinct ridges derived through erosion of its uplifted origins. The side slopes of the adjacent Mangawhero River reflect the lateral erosion that has occurred through the uplifted sedimentary sandstone and mudstone that underlies much of the district, being more intact in form (without the erosive action of the river) and overall less dramatic in gradient compared to the gorges of the Whanganui River through the national park.
	Biological/ Ecological	Regenerating Indigenous podocarp forest covers the folds of the land, enhancing the ecological value of these areas, and creating improved habitat for indigenous and exotic birdlife. Regeneration is approximately 30-50 years old and more, with emergent podocarp species beginning to dominate. Evidence exists of remnant pasture amongst the vegetation near the river, but this appears to be diminishing as regeneration progresses. Ecological values will continue to improve as the regeneration process continues over time.
	Hydrological	Water in lakes and stream tributaries have quality and quantity values as tributary to the Mangawhero River, plus associational values for iwi.

Perceptual	Memorability	Memorable landscape due to the land-cover (dense regenerating indigenous forest), the natural lakes within the regenerating vegetation, and the land-form (a series of ridges, side-spurs and steep narrow-floored valleys), providing a visual contrast with surrounding pastoral land cover. The areas stand out visually as highly undeveloped and with a high degree is naturalness. There is a sense of isolation, wilderness and being separate from their immediate more modified surroundings, adding considerably to memorability.
	Legibility/ Expressiveness	Landform is expressive of the natural geomorphic forces which shaped it, showing a rhythmic pattern of ridges and steep-sided, narrow-floored valleys. Landform reflects natural drainage patterns, and is also expressed through the patterns of regenerating vegetative cover. The valleys and dense vegetative cover present here as a natural landscape, with the underlying eroded landform clearly expressive through the regenerating podocarp forest which in turn is clearly legible as remnant land cover distinct from their adjacent rural land-use. Vegetation patterns are expressive of slope aspect, with the moister southern slopes showing greater diversity and maturity in the regeneration process.
	Transient	The bush environment is secluded, enclosed and quiet, with extensive native bird-life and song, and the sound of waterways and streams and/or dripping rain.
	Aesthetic	High aesthetic value due to drama of the hills and valleys, the quality of the regenerating indigenous vegetation, and the quality of the experience from within these areas – isolated, quiet and natural. Beautiful lakes, offset by the setting, topography and surrounding vegetation. A strong contrast to the surrounding productive rural land-use, further emphasising the perception of naturalness of the defined areas.
	Naturalness	Natural landscape with unmodified landform and dense areas of well-advanced regenerating podocarp forest. Natural value is significantly contributed to by the quality and stage of the forest regeneration, the presence of the Mangawhero River and the adjacent lakes.

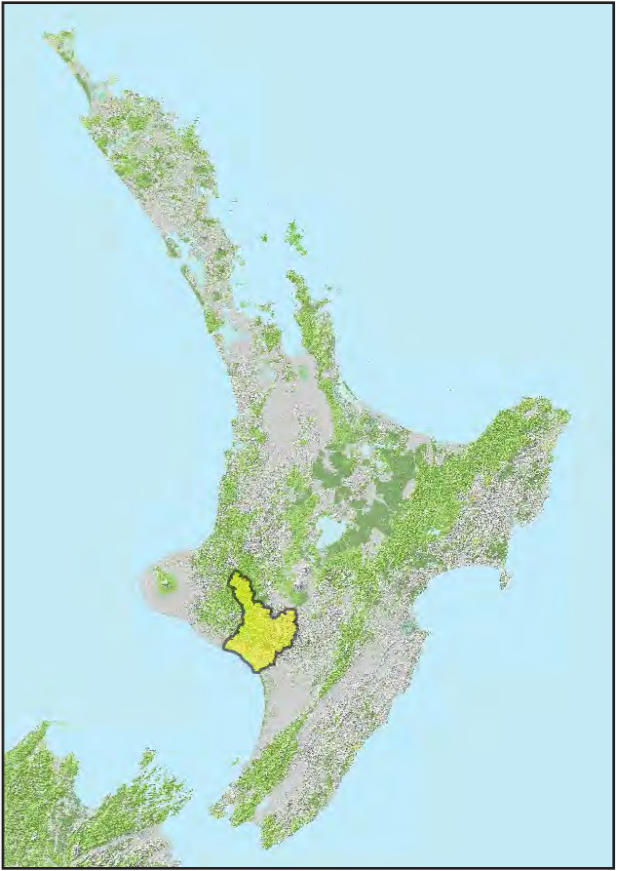
Associational	Historical	Areas of regenerating forest originally felled for milling, as was much of the land now used for rural purposes throughout the district. Regeneration of the native forest has occurred to varying degrees, with the defined areas demonstrating more advanced regeneration and generally moving into or through secondary growth and in places emergence of tertiary species.
	Tangata Whenua	Otoko Marae is the only remaining kāinga (Māori village) of many that were once on the Parapara Road. Ōtoko's marae is a southern stronghold of the Ringatū faith. The meeting house was first built in 1870. Large DOC reserve east of the highway and smaller area of regenerating indigenous vegetation between the highway and river. Seven small lakes are located within the bush west of the highway, giving added aesthetic and spiritual values to the area.
	Shared/ Recognised	Similar vegetation and landscape characteristics as many areas within the District recognised as reserves or as part of the DOC estate. Particular iwi values associated with the seven lakes on the land.
	Recreation	Possible hunting potential or activity, and possible walking throughout the area within the DOC reserve.

Summary of Key Values	High landscape and visual values derived from the high-quality regenerating indigenous vegetation cover over the eroded uplifted landform pattern. Contrast with the surrounding areas of pasture increases the value of such remnant areas of regeneration. The seven lakes have particular values for iwi and high aesthetic values.
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Potential Threats	Clearance or degradation of native vegetation throughout any part of the area. Establishment of exotic weeds within the areas and along stream margins. Loss of vegetation context and water quality in the lakes
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Potential Policies	Maintain indigenous vegetation throughout these areas east of the Mangawhero River. Control and remove exotic plants within the areas and along stream margins. Maintain vegetation context and natural water flow and quality of the lakes. Avoid earthworks and clearance or loss of indigenous vegetation or introduction of exotic vegetation.
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Area 6
Whanganui Western Coastline





Name:	Whanganui Western Coastline
Location:	NZ Topo 50 – BL32, BL31 & BK31
Description:	Coastal sea cliffs from Whanganui river mouth to District boundary at the eastern end of Waiinu Beach.
ONL/ONF:	Outstanding Natural Feature

Natural Science	Geological/ Geomorphological	The seaward lands of the rural terraces that form the Whanganui coastal cliffs originate from sedimentary deposits was laid down under the sea then uplifted over the last 500,000 years. The deposits were then cut into by rivers and the sea, exposing many layers of the original sediment. The cliffs contain layers of mudstone, sandstone, volcanic ash and limestone, with each layer also containing fossils from their respective periods. The hardness of the layers varies depending on the material, with the sea exposing and eroding these at varying rates depending on the material and coastal erosion pattern at the time. Coastal land towards the western end of the district are typically eroding, with farmland gradually receding and steep cliffs being exposed through the process. On the other hand, coastal land towards the Whanganui River is gradually expanding, with the accumulating material providing protection along their base by forming dunes and wetlands. The seaward groynes guarding the mouth of the Whanganui River may have influenced the littoral drift and contributed to the accretion in this area.
	Biological/ Ecological	Minimal vegetation towards the western end where constant erosion by the sea continually exposes bare sedimentary layers. Mixed native and exotic vegetation on the sea cliffs towards the eastern end and on the forming dunes at their base. Developing wetlands in several places between the dunes and cliffs, with associated wetland species inhabiting these.
	Hydrological	Coastal processes dominate this landscape character area. Occasion water flows through seams between the sedimentary layers, but can be tainted by the composition of the layers material. Dominant iron sand influence along the coast can also cause water to be brackish. A number of small streams emerge at points along the coast, but water quality appears to be degraded through rural influences on its overland flow.

Perceptual	Memorability	Memorable as an expansive coastal cliff system, generally unbuilt west of Castlecliff. Cliffs reach up to 40m in height, presenting a dominant vertical or steeply inclined and quite spectacular face to the broad sandy beach.
	Legibility/ Expressiveness	Clearly expressive of coastal uplift and erosion processes. The sedimentary nature of the uplifted material is clearly legible through the layering of varying materials. The erosion at the western end and accumulation of material at the eastern end is clearly legible and expressive of the coastal processes and littoral drift taking place along the bite.
	Transient	Climatic changes of onshore/offshore winds, sea spray and coastal birds.
	Aesthetic	Extensive linear cliff landform combined with the coastal grassland and some native vegetation cover towards the eastern end contributes to the coherence of this feature and is vivid particularly when observed from the beach. High aesthetic value due to dramatic appearance, naturalness and linear extent of the cliffs.
	Naturalness	High degree of naturalness, with a clearly powerful coastal processes dominating the coastal edge. Naturalness adversely influenced to some extent by proximity of houses towards the eastern end and non-native vegetation parallel to the beach.

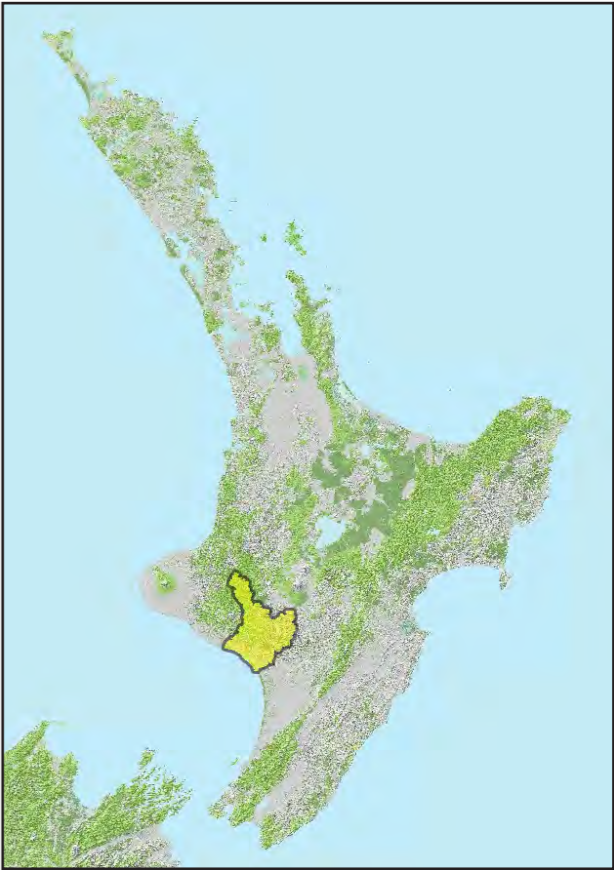
Associational	Historical	The beach was the highway for travellers in previous times, while Whanganui Port of Castlecliff, located in the lower reaches of the river south of the town, was a significant maritime facility for the Taranaki coast. The port provided the opportunity for trade, exports of timber and farm produce from the hinterland, and a point of entry to the central north island via the river access to Taumaranui.
	Tangata Whenua	The coastal cliffs form the distinctive meeting point between the land and the sea along this section of the coast. The coastal edge have always been highly significant to Maori, providing a link to the food from the sea and the transport link provided by the beach. The cliffs are just the edge of an area highly significance to Maori, with the entire Whanganui River and its surrounds having high associational values.
	Shared/ Recognised	Cliffs recognised for the importance they play in coastal processes and coastal natural character. The object of study by students and practitioners in the fields of geologist, coastal process and anthropology, the sedimentary layers, the fossils and the accretion patterns inform current understanding on New Zealand's evolution over time. The cliffs are recognised in the One Plan as outstanding, reinforcing the shared associational values of this area. The ONFL covers a small part of Council's Castlecliff Domain, reinforcing the recognised values of the area.
	Recreation	The cliffs provide a highly aesthetic backdrop to the beach and the recreational activities that can take place from there.

Summary of Key Values	High aesthetic value as a backdrop as seen from the beach for its landscape and visual characteristics. Dramatic visibility of the uplifted sedimentary deposits and coastal erosion process generally visible west of the Omapu Stream outlet. Dominance of the uplifted vertical cliff face and increasingly aggrading dunes east of Omapu Stream.
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Potential Threats	Earthworks on the cliff faces, loss of indigenous vegetation on the cliffs. Structures in such proximity to the ONF that they adversely affect the cliff's dominance and perceived naturalness. Erosion of the dunes and loss of naturalness through quad bikes, tracking, vegetation clearance at the eastern end of the character area.
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Potential Policies	Avoid ground disturbance. Maintain free of development within the Feature. Limit adjacent development so that the Key Values of the cliffs are maintained.
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Area 7
Whanganui Eastern Coastline



Outstanding Natural Feature/Landscape

0 1 2 km





Name:	Whanganui Eastern Coastline
Location:	NZ Topo 50 – BL23
Description:	Coastal foredunes from Whanganui River to District boundary at Whangaehu River
ONL/ONF:	Outstanding Natural Feature

Natural Science	Geological/ Geomorphological	Coastal dune system along the seaward of the rural east of the Whanganui River. Includes active dune areas located along the entire coastal strip. Inland area derived from uplifted sedimentary deposits and overlain with dunes formed along the coastal edge.
	Biological/ Ecological	Modified vegetation with prevalence of coastal grasses covering dunes between the high water mark and scattered pine plantations and farming inland of the coast. The rural and plantation areas lie outside the ONF.
	Hydrological	The ONF runs along the seaward edge of the Whanganui River south spit and the northern edge of the Whangaehu River mouth.

Associational	Historical	The beach was the highway in early European times. The port operated at the Whanganui River mouth servicing steamships from the mid 1800's, with construction of moles either side of the river mouth in the late 1800's and early 1900's.
	Tangata Whenua	Foredunes are part of the wider coastal dune system, which was highly significant to Maori. Linked with the historic wetlands inland of the coastal dunes, fish (e.g. eels), flora (e.g. flax, pingao) and fauna was an important food source for Maori.
	Shared/ Recognised	Dunes recognised for the importance they play in coastal processes and coastal natural character. The DOC estate, located on the coast immediately west of the Whangaehu River, contains an examples of a dynamic dune system, which once stretched eastward right along the coast. The Reserve is partially planted in exotic pine plantation, the areas of which are excluded from the ONL.
	Recreation	Foredunes accessed from coastal roads, although off-road vehicles threaten their stability, particularly in proximity to these road ends.

Perceptual	Memorability	Memorable as an extensive linear unbuilt coastal foredune system.
	Legibility/ Expressiveness	Clearly expressive of coastal dune processes.
	Transient	Climatic changes of onshore/offshore winds, sea spray and coastal birds.
	Aesthetic	Extensive linear repetitive dune landform combined with the coastal grassland and native vegetation cover contributes to the coherence of this feature and is vivid particularly when observed from the beach. High aesthetic value due to naturalness and linear extent of unbuilt coastal frontage. Significant presence of logs and driftwood deposited liberally along the coast above the high tide mark gives a wilderness character to the beach and foredune area.
Naturalness	Generally high naturalness, but with some areas of modification due to vehicle tracks and non-native vegetation. Naturalness also influenced by proximity of settlements and pine plantations parallel to the beach. Proximity of airport and sewage treatment plant diminishes the natural and reduces the width of the ONF accordingly, as do the groynes and river control structures along south spit.	

Summary of Key Values	Vital contribution to healthy functioning of coastal processes and erosion control. Aesthetic values of expressiveness and naturalness resulting from extensive unbuilt coastal strip.
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Potential Threats	Erosion, loss of vegetation cover, earthworks, wind farms, buildings/subdivision, off-road vehicles.
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Potential Policies	Avoid ground disturbance and maintain free of wilding pines, weeds and development. Make provision for cycleway to enhance aesthetic appreciation of the area.
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