GOLDEN BAY/MOHUA LANDSCAPE PROJECT

ADDITIONAL LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENTS

OCTOBER 2017

TASMAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cover Photo

Kaipuke Cliffs, south of the Anatori River, on the west coast of Tasman District. Along the coast is a band of long-established farmlands while inland to the summits of the Wakamarama Range, on the skyline, are a series of highly-natural, undeveloped river catchments, mostly in virgin bush, within the North-West Nelson Forest Park. The Forest park contains the Te Tai Tapu area, subject to recent Treaty Settlement agreements.

INTRODUCTION

1. These Additional Assessments have been prepared for the Council by Graham Densem, landscape architect.

2. They are prepared in response to the recommendations of the Small Working Group of the Golden Bay/Mohua Landscape Project, which coordinated community consultations on the ONFL areas in Golden Bay. In its *Final Report* of October 2016, the Small Working Group was unanimous in accepting many ONFL proposed in the 2011 assessments by Andrew Craig[1]. However, they reached no consensus, or received public submissions, on six further sites.

3. The **six sites** are:
    - N.W. Nelson Forest Park, Te Tai Tapu Estate
    - Mount Burnett
    - Ballroom Caves, and potentially, other caves.
    - N.W. Nelson Forest Park, Sam's Creek
    - The Grove
    - Wainui Bay Headland

    Their locations are shown in **Map 1** attached.

4. **The Brief** for these Additional Assessments is to further consider the six sites and recommend their adoption or not as ONLF in the current District Plan Review.

5. In terms of the Resource Management Act, ('RMA'), smaller sites are *Features* within a wider landscape while larger sites may be *Landscapes* in their own right, or parts thereof. Te Tai Tapu, Mt Burnett and Sam's Creek all are parts of wider 'Landscapes' in this sense, while the Ballroom Caves, the Grove and the Wainui Headland all are 'Features'.

6. The documents on which this process is based are:
    - The Brief, as in 3 above;
    - The Small Working Group*, Final Report* of October 2016;
    - The Draft Plan Change, ONFL Location Map;
    - The Andrew Craig report *Golden Bay Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes Evaluation,* of 12 December 2011;
    - The Boffa Miskell Ltd report: *Tasman District Coast Landscape Character Assessment* of August 2005;
    - *Environment Court Evidence* by Elizabeth Kidson in 'Friends of Nelson Haven and Tasman Bay Incorporated v. Tasman District Council', July 2007.

[1] Craig, A. *Golden Bay Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes: Evaluation*, 12 December 2011

7. The **Assessment Process** was as follows:
   i. Desktop study of previous assessments and available geographical and scientific background;
   ii. Site visits, observations and preliminary assessments;
   iii. Report preparation, with documentation of site assessments, with necessary interpretation and recommendations

8. The **Assessment Criteria** adopted for these Additional Assessments are those used in the Craig Report, namely:

Biophysical

Natural Science: *The explicit or inherent presence of geological, topographical, soil, hydraulic, botanical, faunal and ecological attributes;*

Transient: *Ephemeral conditions that change over time, relating to the presence of wildlife, climate, weather, seasons and atmospheric patterns;*

Naturalness: *The degree of modification, on a scale from pristine to highly modified;*

Aesthetic

Vividness: *Contrast between elements; how striking is the impression created in the viewer; to what extent it conveys a sense of the sublime;*

Legibility: *The clarity with which the elements, patterns or processes convey a sense of the formative processes;*

Coherence: *The intactness, interrelatedness and harmony of composition of the elements, patterns and processes;*

Memorability: *The strength of impression to which a feature or landscape may be recalled over time.*

Cultural

Historic: *The explicit or inherent presence of historic significance in a feature or landscape, including archaeology, past events, and present patterns or objects;*

Tangata Whenua: *Qualities in the landscape valued by Maori;*

Shared and Recognised: *The degree of agreement between experts and the lay public as to the values of a feature or landscape.*

9. In RMA proceedings, the above are termed the 'Pigeon Bay Criteria', and are widely used in various slightly differing but compatible forms. They are not a gospel so much as a check list to ensure all attributes of a feature or landscape are evaluated, and to ensure compatibility between different assessments.

10. **Scale of Values:** The 7-stage scale of the Craig 2011 Report (page 2) is continued in these Additional Assessments, for the ranking of landscape values:

VERY HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM HIGH	MEDIUM	MEDIUM LOW	LOW	VERY LOW

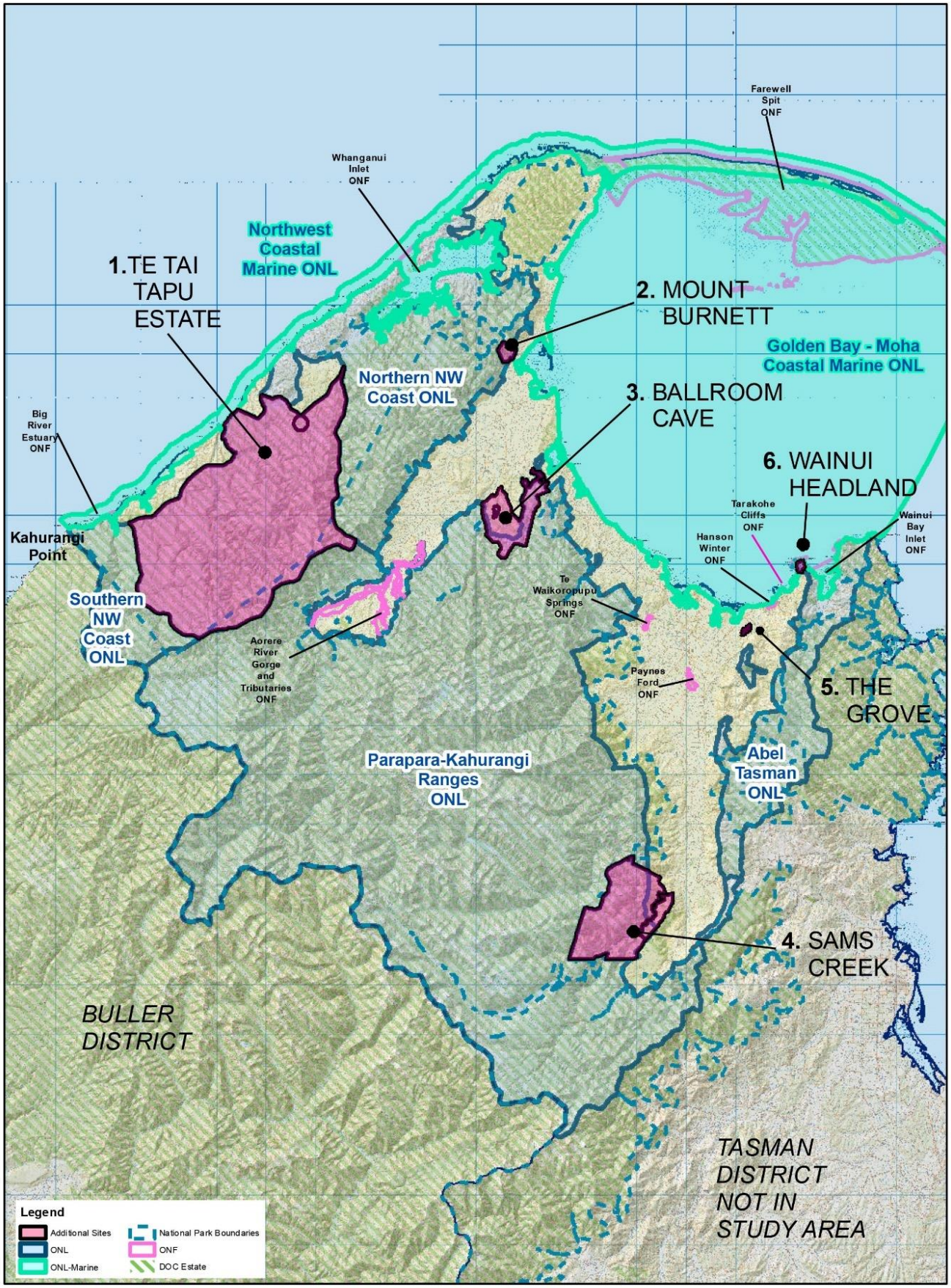
11. When referring to ratings of value, this report will use the convention 'High', 'Medium-High' etc., using quotation marks and capitals, to make it clear that this

scale is the origin. However, the Craig method of weighting of values, by doubling their scores in certain cases,[2] will not be used. Instead, the essential requirement for outstandingness is taken in these Additional Evaluations as having at least one value that stands out or is exceptional by being in the 'Very High' category. This qualifies it for management under section 6(b) of the RMA.

12. The Craig Report[3] has a useful background discussion on the process of valuing a feature or landscape and the issues will not be traversed again here.

13. **Expert Assessments:** The evaluations and recommendations herein are expert assessments of landscape value. They are a yardstick to assist Council decision making. The Council, as the body charged under the RMA with managing landscapes in their territory, may accept or modify expert recommendations. It is free to reject them but must specify the reasons, and be prepared to defend them in Court if challenged.

[2] A. Craig *Evaluation*, p.2
[3] A. Craig *Evaluation*, p.1



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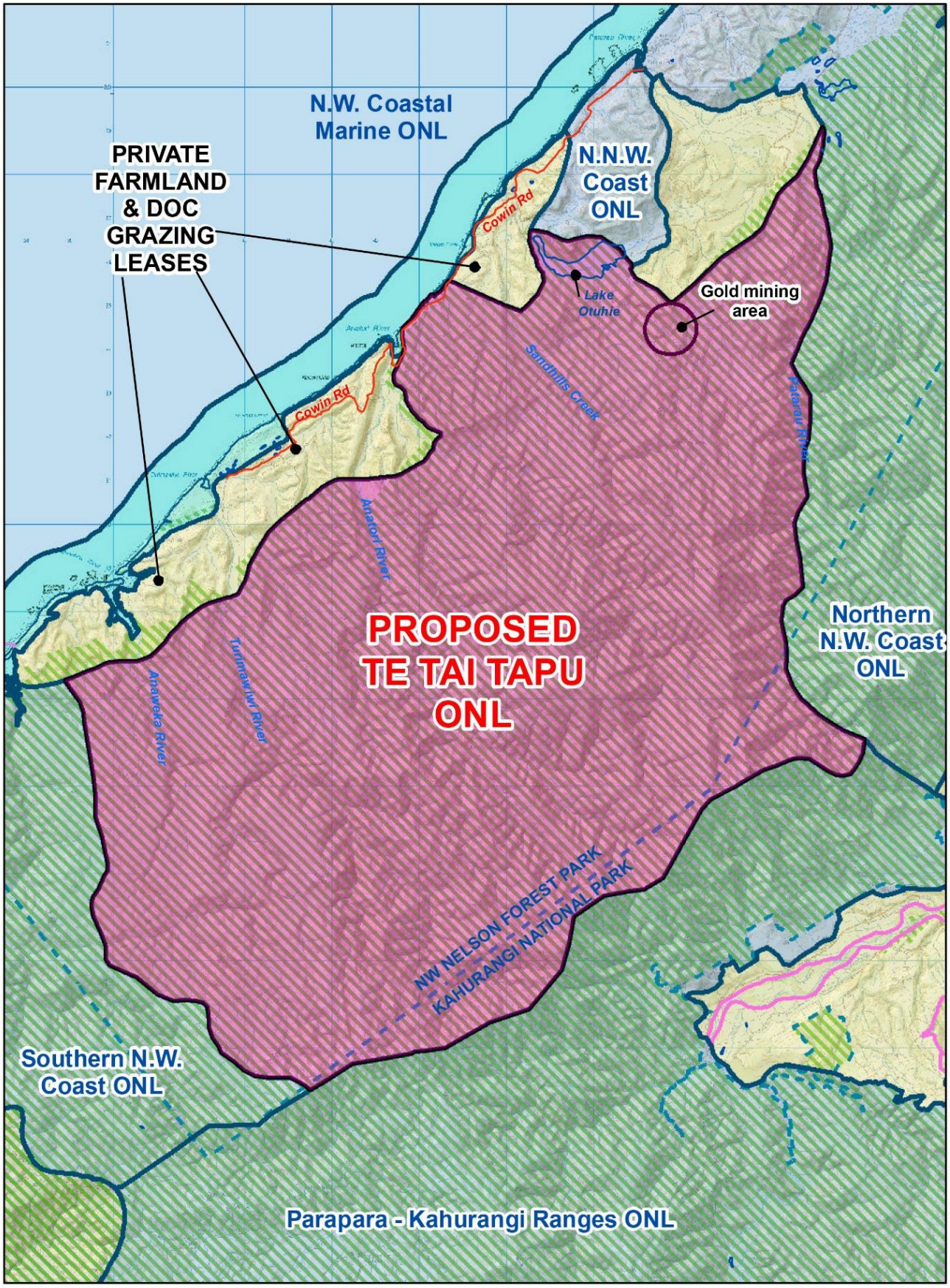
ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENT SITES Map 1



Legend

- Additional Sites
- ONL
- ONL-Marine
- National Park Boundaries
- ONF
- DOC Estate

GOLDEN BAY / MOHUA LANDSCAPE PROJECT

TE TAI TAPU

Map 2

TE TAI TAPU

This large area, 28,500ha approximately, is on the west side of the Wakamarama Range, overlooking the west coast of Tasman District (Map 2). It is within the North-West Nelson Forest Park and adjacent to Kahurangi National Park. The name derives from the Native Reserve that formerly covered this whole area, which was sold by its Maori trustees in 1884 and subdivided into 12 farms by the purchasers.[4] The area later saw gold mining and milling of the coastal podocarp forest, but the most continuous use has been its isolated farms along the thin coastal strip. The NZ Forest Service purchased remaining bush areas in 1985, forming the basis of today's North-West Nelson Forest Park. Today, the process of returning it to tribal ownership is well-advanced, following the Treaty Claims Settlement for Te Tai Tapu in 2010. This is now awaiting internal agreement within iwi.

DESCRIPTION

The area outlined in the Brief is shown in in the 'ONFL Location Map' in the Final Report of the Small Working Group[5], and Map 2 of this assessment. It includes all that land within the North-West Nelson Forest Park between the divide of the Wakamarama Range in the east and the coastal boundary of the Park in the west; and from Big River in the south to the Paturau River in the north. Its north-south boundaries follow the Forest Park boundaries while its east – west boundaries follow the catchment boundaries of the rivers named. Although there are differing definitions, for the purposes of this Assessment, the name 'Te Tai Tapu Estate' will refer to the land within the 'ONFL Location Map' of the Small Working Group.

The Estate is surrounded by 5 areas of confirmed ONFL or National Park:

- North of the Paturau River, the '**Northern North-West Coast ONL'**, confirmed by the Small Working Group;
- South of Big River, the '**Southern North-West Coast ONL'**, confirmed by the Small Working Group;[6]
- Along the coastal inshore waters, tidal zone and coastal features such as dunes, the **'North-West Coastal Marine ONL'**, confirmed by the Small Working Group;
- Adjoining the south end of the Estate, the 'Big River Estuary ONF';[7]
- Adjoining the entire eastern boundary of the Estate, The Kahurangi National Park.

Along coastal lowlands between the Te Tai Tapu Estate and North-West Coastal Marine ONL is a band of private land containing Anatori and Turimawiwi Farms, the southern-most of those beyond the Wakamarama Ranges, within Tasman District. These comprise improved pasturelands between the DOC lands uphill and the coastal dunes. Access is by a no-exit road involving river crossings from the unbridged Anatori River southwards, limited to 4WD vehicles and trucks, and weather-dependent. Access today is relatively normal, compared to the primitive beach routes of previous times. The private land is not part of the Brief for this Assessment but its landscape values will be discussed later.

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4 Hindmarsh *Kahurangi Calling* pp. 225 – 237.
5 *Final Report of the Small Working Group*, pp. 30 - 31
6 *Final Report of the Small Working Group*, pp. 18 - 21
7 *Final Report of the Small Working Group*, pp 16 – 17, and 36 – 37.

Immediately south of Big River is Kahurangi Point, the southern limit of Tasman District and a regional turning point between Westland and Nelson. The coastline south of Kahurangi Point is termed 'the Wilderness Coast' by Hindmarsh, an inaccessible length of sea-bound cliffs, with multiple headlands, a jumble of rocks, harsh and windswept, lacking in shelter and lacking in beach at high tide. This extends south for 30km, from Kahurangi Point to the Heaphy River.[8]

Bordering the entire eastern boundary of the Estate is the Wakamarama – Aorere area of Kahurangi National Park. The Estate was recommended for National Park status in the 1990's [9] but excluded, it is believed, to allow for the iwi claims now nearing fruition. The Heaphy Track passes close to the south-west corner of the Te Tai Tapu Estate, within the National Park. The Gouland Downs Hut is 4 kms from Mt White on the Wakamarama summit, and the track 2 kms from the Forest Park boundary. The Gouland Downs, between Perry Saddle and Saxon Hut, form the headwaters of Big River, and Kidson includes this area within her definition of the north-west coast section of her 'Mountain Catchment ONFLs'[10]

The land has a history of Maori occupation and use and there are a number of archaeological and Wāhi tapu sites. The ancient Poutini Trail, by which Maori transported pounamu, passed through the area. Heaphy used the name 'Tai Tapu' for the area in 1846.[11]

During fieldwork for these assessments, the land was overflown by light aircraft but not visited on the ground. Primarily, it comprises rugged, unroaded bush with only limited views of the interior from Corwin Road. Good views of the Estate interior were obtained from the air, and the patterns and condition of the land were well able to be assessed.

FEATURES

Topography: The terrain of the Wakamarama Range slopes westwards from summits of 1000 – 1200 metres down to 100 – 200m behind the coastal farmlands (Photo 3). A series of ridges and rivers such as the Big, Anaweka, Turimawiwi, Anatori and Paturau having incised a deep and steep valley and ridge topography into the ranges, perpendicular to the coast. Except at the coast, and in the north around Lake Otuhie, the rivers are in V-shaped valleys with little floodplain.

Geology: Within the Estate, the Wakamarama Range comprises mostly quartz sandstones, with granites in the south, around Big River and Kahurangi Point (Photo 2). There is a band of gold-bearing sandstones inland (east) from Lake Otuhie, which were the scene of hard-rock mining between the 1880's and 1913 (Photo 4). Parallel to the coast, from Kahurangi Point to the base of Farewell Spit, is a band of limestone, which give rise to distinctive outcrops and formations on the upper farmlands and lower Forest Park (Cover Photo).

Vegetation: This comprises uninterrupted lowland podocarp or podocarp/beech forest. It is the largest area of lowland forest remaining in the Nelson region[12], (Photos 5 & 6).

- Pure podocarp-hardwood forests are found north of the Anatori River and in the Big River area, with a podocarp component of rimu, miro, Hall's totara, kahikatea and matai, and a hardwood component of Hinau, pukatea, tanekaha and kawaka;

[8] Hindmarsh, *Kahurangi Calling*, pp 176 - 195
[9] DOC, *North-West South Island National Park Investigation*, Fig 12, p.118.
[10] Kidson, Environment Court evidence, *Friends of Nelson Haven & etc*, Appendix 4, p.32.
[11] Hindmarsh, *Kahurangi Calling*, p. 177
[12] Dept. of Conservation *North-West South Island National Park Investigation*, p. 19

- Beech-podocarp forest occurs on ridges and areas of poor soil, often with rimu emergent above hard beech;
- red or silver beech forests occur on faces and gullies.

In less-accessible areas the forests are virgin but much of the lower ridges and more-accessible north is regrowth forest or scrub, having been logged over the last 100 years.

Lake Otuhie: Adjacent to the north end of the Estate is the scenic, tannin-brown-coloured Lake Otuhie (Photo 4). The western shoreline and flanks are within the Forest Park, but not the lake itself. On each side, Lake Otuhie is flanked by dramatic limestone outcrop, creating a highly scenic feature. South-east of the lake, on and around the Slatey/Slaty River, are the denuded ridges of the gold-bearing bedrock, the scene of 19th Century mining. These areas still are covered by exploration licenses, raising the possibility of further mining in the future. South-west of Lake Otuhie, farmlands extend up and into distinctive limestone bluffs adjacent to the Forest Park.

Features: The features of the Te Tai Tapu Estate are summarised as follows:

- An extensive area of land in single ownership;
- Land is in DOC stewardship pending resolution of iwi matters before transfer to iwi, following Treaty Claims Settlement;
- Isolation;
- Marine outlook, weather and environment;
- An extensive area of mountain lands and hills continuously in a natural state under coastal podocarp forest;
- A distinctive west-facing, coastal aspect, climate and environment;
- A belt of limestone formations parallel to the coast;
- Remnants of former forest clearance in places, but in well-advanced regrowth;
- Naturalness of river systems, from source to sea;
- The tannin-coloured but pure rivers;
- Lake Otuhie, outside the Forest Park, but its eastern flanks inside it;
- Past history of iwi occupation;
- European history of gold mining and logging of the coastal podocarp forests;
- The possibility of future gold mining;
- Unique and distinctive coastal farming adjacent to, and generally in harmony with, the Estate;
- Mountains, farms and coastland part of a single 'landscape';

LANDSCAPE VALUES

This section will place values on the landscape features and characteristics identified above.

Natural Science

Ecology

- This is the largest area of lowland podocarp forest remaining in Tasman District. Parts of the forests remain in virgin bush. Vegetation sequences range from almost sea level to the tops and fauna within the forests have good connections over a wide area. Water quality is very good. Ecological values are **'Very High'**.

Topography

- The Estate contains an unusually-extensive expanse of unmodified hill and gully topography. The rivers are natural from source to sea. The limestone

features are distinctive. The setting of Lake Otuhie, and the lake itself, are dramatic. Topographic values are **'Very High'**.

Geology

- The gold bearing geologies are of **'Medium-High'** value for the mining they gave rise to, and for their relative value within similar strata throughout Tasman District.

Atmospheric

- The westerly aspect, facing marine weather, climate and atmospheric patterns, are unique in Tasman District, and of **'Very High'** values.

Transient Values

- The Estate varies somewhat with the weather and seasonal patterns of rain, fish and forest life, but they are not a primary value of the area. **'Medium-High'** transient values.

Naturalness

- The Te Tai Tapu estate is unique in its unusually large expanse of relatively unmodified, and in some cases virgin, forest lands and topography. It is not pristine but is **'Very High'** in Naturalness.

Legibility

- Legibility values (i.e. sense of formative processes) are **'Very-High'**, particularly arising from the text book examples and unmodified state of uplift and erosional landforms in the summits, headwaters, rivers, gullies, lakes, coastal outwash, estuary and sand dunes (although these latter are mostly beyond the Estate area).

Vividness

- The mountain tops, hills and gullies of the Estate create a vivid, distinctive wilderness scene, mild-temperate but purged by the westerly weather. The upper areas and interior of the land are hard to see from ground level but the lower areas are a succession of attractive vistas of ridges, river valleys and estuaries (some outside the Forest Park). **'High'** vividness values.

Coherence

- The Estate has '**Very High**' values of visual coherence, from the uninterrupted forest covering and the clear patterns of topography, waterways, and soils this reflects. They are some of the most coherent in the District.

Memorability

- The parts of the estate seen from the ground are distinctive and dramatic, from their isolation, coastal influences and uniqueness. The farmlands and river crossings also are highly memorable. The largely unseen interior is highly memorable from the air, for its continuous naturalness and graphic patterns of vegetation, valley and rivers. Memorabiliaty is assessed as **'High'.**

Shared and Recognised Values

- The north-west coast is unknown to most people but for those who know it, very highly regarded for its naturalness and 'wildness'. Hunting, tramping and

recreational driving are popular although in small numbers. **'High'** shared and recognised values.

Tangata Whenua Values

- To be advised by iwi. Believed to be high, leading to the 2010 Treaty Settlement.

Historic Values

- European values arise from mining and logging but particularly from the colourful history of farming in this remote area. Legends abound of the larger-than-life activities of 'pioneer' farmers, loggers and miners. '**High'** historic values.
- Maori heritage is included in the tangata whenua category.

ASSESSMENT

The ONFL values of the Te Tai Tapu Estate are self-evident. The landscape of the Estate is indistinguishable from those of the confirmed ONFLs north and south of it, and from the National Park to the east. The Estate has several district-wide superlatives, notably its single ownership, its intact and continuous very high state of naturalness, its extensive and continuous forest cover, some of it virgin forest, its unique westerly aspect, climate and environment, and the equally unique character of its isolated iwi, farming and extractive population. It has a diversity of values within the outstanding range and clearly qualifies as an ONFL.

This is in agreement with:

1. the 2005 Boffa Miskell assessment, which assessed the 'North-West Coast Character Area', including the entire Te Tai Tapu Estate as now defined, to be an outstanding natural landscape, in terms of RMA Section 6(b).[13]
2. The 2007 assessment of Ms Kidson.[14]
3. Mr Craig's assessment for the North West Coast, in his 2011 assessments for this current study.[15]

While outstandingness should not be assessed solely by weight of numbers, it is significant that all four professional assessments, comprising the three cited above and this present one, are in agreement. It also is significant that the Te Tai Tapu Estate was of sufficient value to have been recommended by DOC for inclusion in Kahurangi National Park. It's later exclusion was for cultural reasons, not for lack of landscape values.

Recommendation 1: Te Tai Tapu Estate

That the area of Te Tai Tapu Estate between the Southern and Northern North-West Coast ONFLs, and from the Wakamarama Range to the seaward boundary of the North-West Nelson Forest Park, be considered for incorporation into the District Plan Review as an Outstanding Natural Landscape.

[13] Boffa Miskell *Tasman District Coast Landscape Character Assessment,* p12, Figs 0 & 3

[14] Kidson, Elizabeth, *Evidence,* Appendix 4, p.32

[15] Craig, A., Map, *Proposed Outstanding Natural Landscapes and Features*, 13 Dec 2011

DISCUSSION

Do the existing modifications preclude ONFL status? Areas of Te Tai Tapu Estate have been modified by mining, logging and their associated roads, tracks, earthworks and forest clearance. From the air, areas of virgin and regrowth forest are distinguishable, and bare areas above the bush line or in remnant gold workings. However within the context of the Estate as a whole, these are minor in extent (bare areas, tracks) and effect (regrowth forests), and only marginally devalue the ONFL assessment of the Estate overall.

What 'Landscape' is the ONFL within? The Boffa, Kidson and Craig assessments all included the land between the Wakamarama summits and the coastline as ONFL, including the private freehold areas and developed farmlands. They also included the Tai Tapu Estate as ONFL undistinguished from those ONFL accepted by the Small Working Group to the north and south.

Technically, the 'Landscape' of the North-West Tasman Coast, within which the Te Tai Tapu Estate exists, comprises the land from the Wakamarama Summits to the coast in its entirety. The landscape does not stop at the Forest Park boundary but includes the private farmland. It also includes the area from the Big River catchment to the Whanganui Inlet in its entirety. Therefore, the ONFL in Recommendation 1 above should technically extend to the rear of the Marine ONFL, and include the private farmlands. This was the view of the Boffa, Kidson and Craig reports/evidence, and remains valid.

It therefore needs to be considered whether the ONFL should include the farmlands, with provisions made for farming as an appropriate use, or whether they should be maintained as a separate zone.

Lake Otuhie: The status of Lake Otuhie in the Brief is unclear. It is outside the North-West Nelson Forest Park, but appears to be possibly within the Estate area on the ONFL Location Map (p. 30 – 31 of the Small Working Group *Final Report*). This assessment has stated that the setting of Lake Otuhie, and the lake itself, are of 'Very High' scenic value. Therefore it qualifies as ONFL and should be included within the Estate ONFL, for Council consideration.

Amalgamation of North-West Coast ONFL: Should the proposed 'Te Tai Tapu ONFL' be adopted by Council, it would sit between and be continuous with the Northern and Southern North-West Coast ONL confirmed by the Small Working Group. The ONFL Location Map on pages 30 – 31 of their *Final Report* refers. This assessment stated earlier that there are no discernible differences between the land of the Tai Tapu Estate ONFL and those to the north and south. It therefore is recommended that, should the Tai tapu Estate ONFL be adopted by Council, the three areas be united into one ONFL.

In such an event, it would be desirable to distinguish the land-based ONFL from the North-West Coastal Marine ONFL. Currently their names are similar and likely to cause confusion. A distinctly different name should be chosen for the combined land-based ONFL, if confirmed by the Council. The following are five suggestions:

Wakamarama Coast ONFL
Te Tai Tapu Coast ONFL
North-West Tasman Coast ONFL
North-West Nelson Coast ONFL
North-West Coast ONFL

PHOTO 1: *The Aorere Valley does not have views of the proposed Te Tai Tapu ONL although it begins immediately west of the Wakamarama summits on the right in this view, looking up the valley above the Kaituna River.*

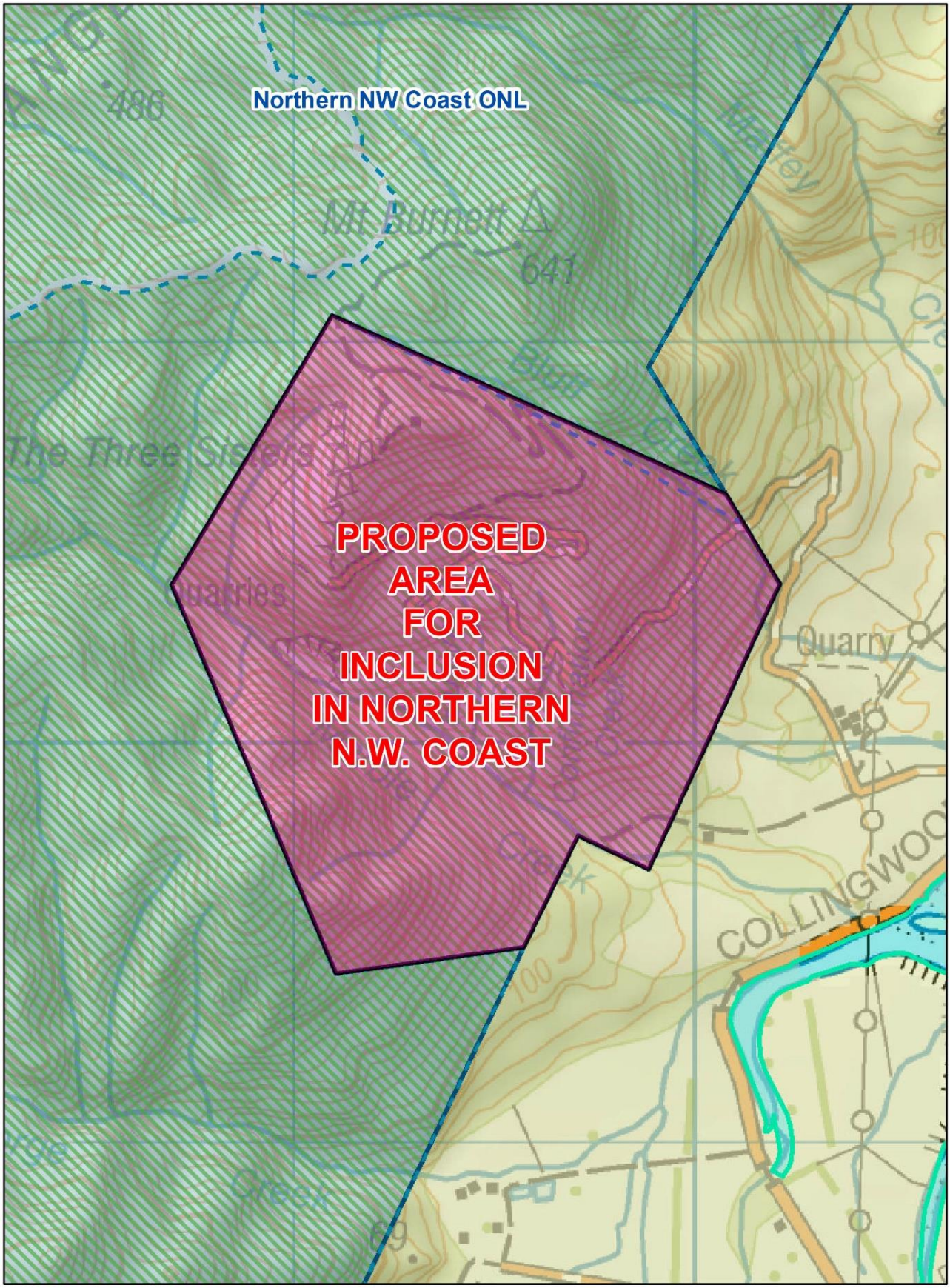
PHOTO 2: *Quartz-sandstone geology results in infertile unforested areas in the upper Anaweka/Turimawiwi catchments. This view looks west, with the Big River and Turimawiwi estuaries in distance.*

PHOTO 3: *Ridges of the proposed Te Tai Tapu ONL rise steadily to the Wakamarama summits on the skyline. View east over Big River Estuary. Proposed ONL begins beyond pasturelands at left.*

PHOTO 4: *Northern limit of proposed Te Tai Tapu ONL. View east over Lake Otuhie to Slaty Creek Hills, the scene of gold mining in the late 19th Century.*

PHOTO 5: *Highly natural catchment of the Turimawiwi Valley with band of coastal farmlands at the coast. Typical of the Tasman west coast.*

PHOTO 6: *Anatori Headwaters comprise an entirely-natural, undeveloped basin, typical of the proposed Te Tai Tapu ONL. View south towards Wakamarama summits on the left skyline.*



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MOUNT BURNETT

Map 3

MOUNT BURNETT

This assessment concerns a small area excluded from the Northern North-West Coastal ONFL, covering a consent to allow dolomite mining around Mount Burnett (Map 3). Dolomite has been mined here for many decades and is stated by DOC to be of national importance to the rural market.[16] The area was excluded from the proposed national park to allow for the dolomite mining, with the intention for review on (i) expiry and application for renewal or (ii) surrender of the licenses. Any review would include consultation with any further applicant (existing or new) and site investigations

> *'… with a view to ensuring that high natural value areas are included in any national park and high value mineral areas are excluded….*
>
> *… 'The general Mt Burnett area has natural values eminently worth inclusion within a national park, including species endemic to the area and unusual dolomite outcrops.'*[17]

The issues for the mining operation would be different between ONFL management in the District Plan, and inclusion within the national park.

The site was viewed from the Collingwood – Puponga Road and also from the air.

FEATURES

In landscape terms, Mt Burnett is one of a series of peaks along the east side of the Burnett Range, and one of several components of a wider landscape, more than a feature in its own right (Photo 7). From close up, however, its conical shape comes to dominates the view, and it is a feature in its own right. In assessment terms, it is a component of a wider landscape rather than a feature.

The operations of Golden Bay Dolomite Ltd comprise a short access road from the Collingwood – Puponga road to a loading and works area at the foot of the steep front slope of Mt Burnett. From there a haul road ascends 400m approximately, traversing the steep visible face of the mountain. The active quarry is on the back face of the mountain, out of sight of the Collingwood lowlands, and from the point of view of visual impacts, it is well-sited (Photo 8). Even in good light, the haul road is of minor impact due to bush edging, while the quarry is not visible from the Aorere Valley, the Estuary, or Collingwood.

A transmitter is sited on the summit of Mt Burnett, about 700m north of the quarry face. This is accessed by a separate road that branches off the quarry road at about the 400m contour and ascends the east and north faces of the mountain. The transmitter and road are not visually prominent and are unlikely to affect ONFL values unless any upgrading should create visible earthworks.

VALUES

The Mt Burnett exclave has two principle groups of values, and a third possible group:

- The natural values referred to by DOC;

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[16] DOC, *North West South Island national park Investigation*, 1993, p.137.

[17] *ibid*

- Visual values, from its prominence within the lower Aorere Valley-Collingwood-Ruataniwha Inlet;
- Possible heritage value, from Mt Burnett being one of the 'Three Sisters' of local folklore.

The **natural values** are in general taken for granted, having been sufficient for DOC to include the surrounding ranges with Kahurangi National Park, and for the Small Working Group to have accepted them as part of the Northern NW Coastal ONFL. However, the sole purpose of the Mt Burnett exclave is to allow for mining. The vegetation and topographic values have been devalued by this but in limited and selected areas, not sufficiently extensive or obtrusive to significantly devalue the natural values.

The natural values are taken to be 'Very High'. The vegetation has a continuity which causes the Burnett Range generally, and including Mt Burnett, to be an attractive bush backdrop and natural contrast to the farmlands of the lower Aorere Valley. Its natural character remains intact in views from the outside, with moderate devaluation in the limited area where extraction occurs. The Natural values are taken to be **'Very High'**.

In **visual values**, Mt Burnett is prominent and interesting from closer distances (2 – 3 kms) such as the Collingwood – Puponga main road. It also has high values of visual coherence from its continuous forest cover. The Visual Values are taken to be **'Very High'.**

Cultural Values: There are local stories of a 'Three Sisters' feature existing on the skyline around Mt Burnett. It is easy to imagine in the evening light, the skyline profile having a marked resemblance to a recumbent woman. Possibly it is a pub story or of Maori origin, although preliminary enquiry with iwi showed no such traditions. The 1:50,000 topographic map shows the 'The Three Sisters' as a much smaller group of three outcrops immediately above the dolomite quarry face. Any wider importance of the Three Sisters therefore is unable to be gauged, with little concrete documentation.

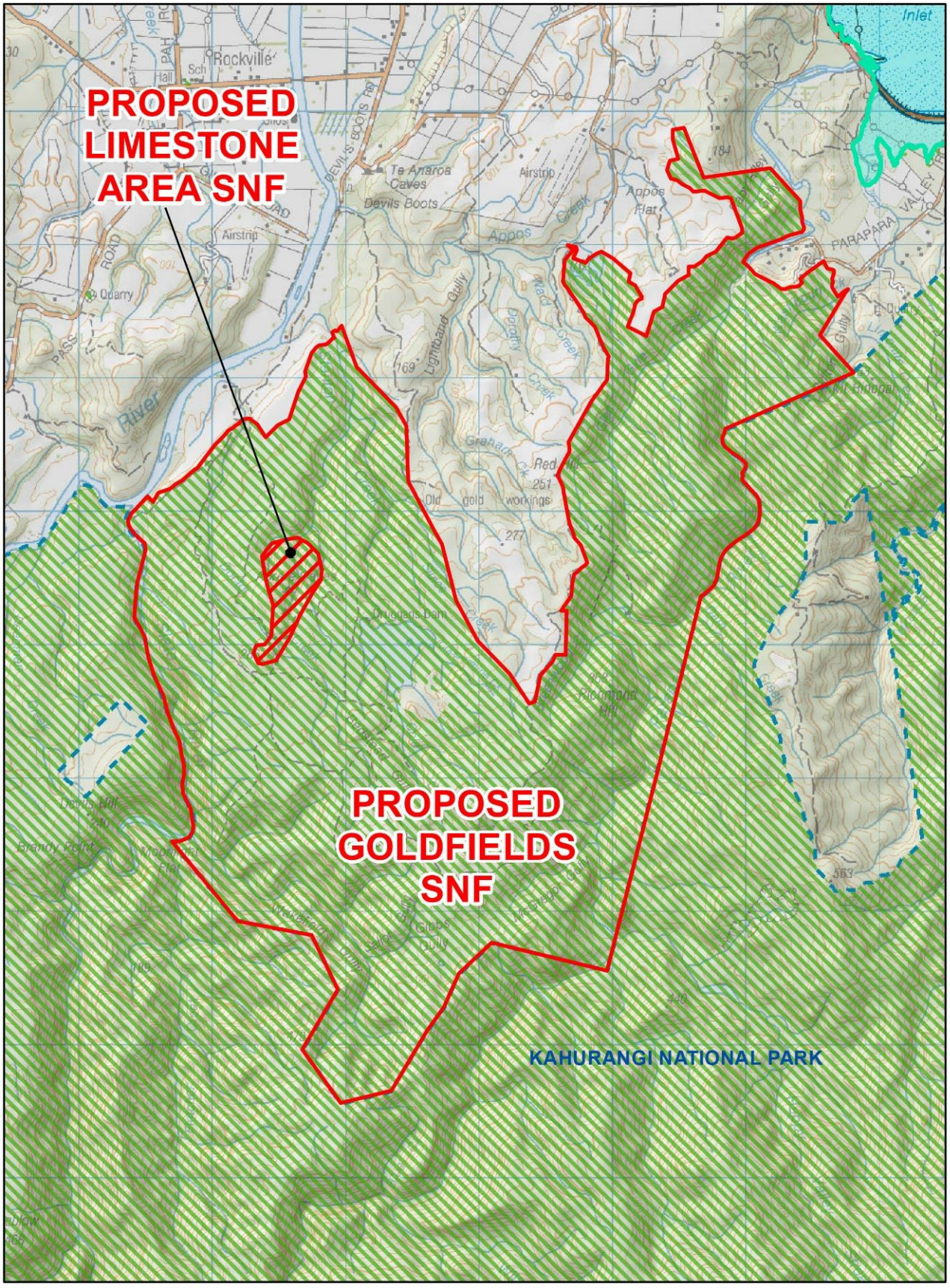
ASSESSMENT
The Mt Burnett exclave is assessed as having Outstanding Natural Landscape values, for its 'Very High' natural and visual values, and as an integral part of the wider Northern North-West Coast ONFL adopted by the Small Working Group.

DISCUSSION
It is recommended that the Mt Burnett exclave be included in the Northern North-West Coastal ONFL.

Recommendation 2:
That the area of the Mt Burnet mining licenses be included in the Northern North-West Coast ONFL.

PHOTO 7: *The Burnett Range, seen across the Ruataniwha Estuary from near Collingwood. The mining license area is marked. Apart from the license area, the Ranges are within the Northern North-West Coast ONL.*

PHOTO 8: *The bentonite quarry on the rear of Mt. Burnett. The location ensures the operations are screened from view in the Ruataniwha Estuary, Collingwood (e.g. Photo 7), and the Aorere Valley.*



Legend

- Additional Sites
- ONL
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- ONF
- DOC Estate

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BALLROOM CAVE

Map 4

BALLROOM CAVE

The Ballroom and Stafford Caves are within the Aorere Goldfields Reserve (Map 4). They exist within a small remnant of limestone capping strata over the underlying gold-bearing schists that gave rise to the goldfield[18]. The caves are subsidiary features within a reserve set aside for its goldfields relics and recreation. In the 1990's, the Reserve was considered for inclusion within the now-established Kahurangi National Park, but was excluded to allow for continued use by gold fossickers and trail bikers.[19] The Ballroom Cave is reputed to be named for dances held there by the miners in the 19th Century.

The Ballroom Cave was suggested several public submissions as a possible ONLF in. This assessment will consider only the Ballroom Cave, being the only one mentioned in the brief for this study. However, its values are likely to be shared by the Stafford Cave.

The Goldfields Reserve was visited during fieldwork, the surface state of the site assessed for vegetation and topography, and the areas containing the caves sighted. It also was overflown. The Cave itself was not visited due to fading light but has been researched on line. If necessary, it and the Stafford Cave will be revisited to confirm or reassess, depending on the outcome of this interim assessment.

FEATURES

The Aorere Goldfields Reserve comprises an area of approximately 20km^2 on low hills between the Parapara Ridge and Aorere River Valley in Golden Bay. It was the site of New Zealand's first goldrush, beginning in 1857 (alluvial gold), and continuing in production until well into the Twentieth Century (hard rock mining). The land was cleared and extensively fossicked at the time, today being regrowth scrub of manuka and bracken fern on low-fertility *pakihi* soils. The reserve is laced with tracks and mining remnants (Photos 10 - 12). Established regrowth forests exist on the high points of the reserve, comprising the more fertile soils of the limestone capping. These were not so extensively cleared and are regenerating quicker than those on the *pakihi* areas.

The Ballroom Cave is within one of these forested caps. It is visually unobtrusive at the surface, the entrance being hidden within bush surrounds. Underground however, the main chamber of the cave is an impressive natural feature, well-known locally and the scene, historically and recently, of community gatherings and celebrations, as well as being visited on a daily basis by recreational hikers and bikers.

The features of the Aorere Goldfields Reserve are:

- The geological structure of gold-bearing schists and small areas of limestone capping;
- Its potential for further hard rock mining;
- The low-fertility *pakihi* soils and regrowth scrub;
- The historic values of the gold workings;
- The recreation asset of the Reserve, with its web of walking and biking tracks;
- The Ballroom Cave and its surrounding limestone forest.

These constitute the list on which values will be assessed.

[18] Rattenbury et al, *Geology of the Nelson Area*, pp 50 - 51
[19] Hindmarsh, *Kahurangi Calling*, p.225

CAN 'LANDSCAPE' INCLUDE UNDERGROUND FORMATIONS?

Before considering the values of the Ballroom Cave, it should be clarified whether it may, as an underground formation, be justified as part of 'landscape'.

The definitions of 'landscape' used in Resource Management Act proceedings focus on the earth's surface terrain. The Act itself does not define 'landscape' but does have a definition of 'land':

> ***'Land** includes land covered by water and the air space above land.'* [20]

The New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects defines 'landscape' as:

> *'The cumulative expression of natural and cultural features, patterns and processes in a geographical area, including human perceptions and associations.'*[21]

The concept of *inclusion* is embodied in both definitions. That is, a lake or river is part of its containing landscape, and also the atmosphere above it. A cave being a natural feature, the conclusion is that underground features with connections to the surface terrain also should be considered part of a landscape. Likewise, if underground soil characteristics and fertility giving rise to surface plant growth and patterns, and if groundwater processes that store and move water underground, and their resurgences, may be considered part of a landscape's attributes, then so should underground places and spaces such as caves, particularly those connected to the surface.

The Ballroom Cave, therefore, should be considered part of the Golden Bay landscape for RMA purposes, but its small size compared to the landscape as a whole, qualifies it as a 'feature' rather than a 'landscape'

LANDSCAPE VALUES

In placing values on the attributes listed, this section will distinguish between those of the Cave itself, and those of the goldfields reserve generally. Being for District Plan purposes, values are judged against the range existing in Tasman District as a whole, not against those of Golden Bay or the Aorere Valley. The words 'cave' and 'caves' are used interdependently, intended to be inclusive of the Ballroom and Stafford Caves.

Natural Science

The Reserve

- Its **geological values** derive from the relative rarity of the gold-bearing schists within Tasman District. These are of **'Medium-High'** landscape value.
- Its **topographical values** derive from the low, hummocky, altered terrain of the reserve. This is of no particular significance and of **'Medium'** landscape value.
- **Ecological values:** The vegetation of the reserve is emergent regrowth, which has landscape value as a successional stage, although its values as they exist now are ordinary. Including the floral and faunal habitats, the reserve is of **'Medium'** landscape value.

The Cave

- The Ballroom Cave's **geological values** derive from their distinctive limestone formations. These are impressive but compared to numbers of larger and

[20] Resource Management Act, s.2, 'Interpretation and Application'.

[21] nzila.co.nz, document library.

more widely-known caves within Tasman District, for instance Nettlebed, Bulmer, the Ellis System, the Greenlink System and Harwood's Hole, they are of second-tier importance within the District. The geological features of the Ballroom Cave are therefore of **'High'** landscape value in the District. Within Golden Bay the Ballroom Cave is of first-tier significance, and would be of 'Very High' values were the yardstick not the District as a whole.

- As far as the Ballroom Cave, as an underground feature, may be considered **'topography'**, it is of **'High' value,** both from the limestone surface terrain surrounding it and the physical features of the cave itself.
- The Ballroom Cave has a regular population of insects such as the spiders and cave wetas. These are specialised within cave systems and are of **'High'** landscape value due to being uncommon in the wider Tasman District context (although in common with most other caves). The podocarp-broadleaf regrowth forest on the limestone area around the caves is more-developed than surrounding pakihi areas and is of **'Medium-High'** landscape value.

Natural Character

- Owing to its altered terrain and vegetation, the reserve is in a no more than **'Medium'** state of **naturalness.** The caves, however, are of **'High' naturalness**, given their relatively unaltered state.

Aesthetic

The Reserve

- The land forming the reserve shows little **Vividness** or visual excitement. A little interest comes from the occasional remnants of gold workings, but overall the reserve is **'Medium-Low'** in vividness values.
- The reserve maintains some **legibility** of its formative process, through the pattern of erosion of its overlying limestones, discernible despite the human disruption. It is of **'Medium-High'** landscape values.
- The reserve displays **'Medium' Visual Coherence** values, being relatively uniform in topography and vegetation but with little notable harmony of vegetation and terrain.
- Nor is the reserve particularly **Memorable**. A visitor takes away a general impression rather than a lasting memory. **'Medium'** memorability values.
- The reserve has an average sense of **Natural Character** being much altered by earthworks, vegetation clearance and today's tracks. Scrub regrowth is in an early stage. It is of **'Medium'** natural character value.

The Cave

- The Ballroom and Stafford Caves have '**High**' landscape values of **Vividness, Legibility, Memorability and Natural Character**, and '**Medium High'** values of **Visual Harmony**. Much arises from a sense of the formative processes of limestone dissolved by rainwater over the years.

Transience

- There are no significant values of **Transience** in either the reserve or the cave. There are some changes with weather, daily and seasonal sun-angles and tourist patterns, but both have only **'Medium'** values of transience.

Shared & Recognised

- Within Golden Bay both the reserve and the Ballroom Cave have very high levels of agreement as to their values. Within the wider Tasman District, public and tourist knowledge of the Cave is less widespread, although knowledge of the Aorere Goldfields Reserve remains high, for its historic and recreational values. The reserve therefore has **'High' Shared and Recognised** values but the Ballroom Cave, which this assessment is principally about, has **'Medium-High'** shared and Recognised values, at a district-wide level.

Tangata Whenua

- Values should be confirmed by iwi. They are likely to be significant, given tangata whenua values on the meaning of limestone and the uses of caves.

Historic

- The reserve maintains remnants of the former mining, although scattered, overgrown and relatively low-key. It also maintains, relatively unchanged, a sense of the topography the mining occurred within, but masked by regrowth. The values are sufficient for DOC to have identified and maintain it as a reserve. For RMA purposes, the reserve has '**High'** historic values.
- The Ballroom Cave also has historic values, but less momentous or vivid that the mining around it, and generally secondary to the mining heritage. It has **'Moderate-High'** historic values.
- Maori history is included in the Tangata Whenua category.

ASSESSMENT

Caves

From the above, the Ballroom and Stafford Caves **cannot be said to have ONFL values**. None of their values are 'Very High' and they do not have a first-tier importance among the large number of notable caves within Tasman District.

The Caves do however have a significant number of 'High' values, that under RMA practise **classifies them as SNFL** (Significant Natural Feature or Landscape). This requires management of their use, development and protection of their natural and physical resources, under s.7 of the Act. The Brief does not ask for SNFL to be identified and it is understood no second-tier level of protection is intended for the Plan Review. This SNFL assessment should therefore be 'left on the table', for possible future reference.

Reserve

The reserve is **likewise assessed as an SNFL**, having two values, 'Shared and Recognised' and 'Historic' in the 'High' range. It is SNFL for its cultural rather than natural landscape values.

The Environment Court has established precedents accepting modified landscapes as ONFL, or by implication, as SNFL. So long as the feature or landscape remains in the 'natural' half of the spectrum, it may be ONFL or SNFL for perhaps aesthetic or cultural reasons. The natural science values of the reserve were assessed generally as 'Medium', with two 'Medium High'. The reserve therefore falls towards the lower end of what could be considered 'natural'. However, its character generally is that of a natural area rather than an overtly altered one, and, barring further disturbance, it will continue to

regenerate over time into forest. It can therefore be concluded the reserve is sufficiently natural to allow for ONFL or SNFL status. It therefore can be confirmed as SNFL.

Recommendation 3, Ballroom Caves:
That the Ballroom and Stafford Caves and their surrounding limestone area be accepted as a Significant Natural Feature, to be considered for inclusion in the District Plan Review.

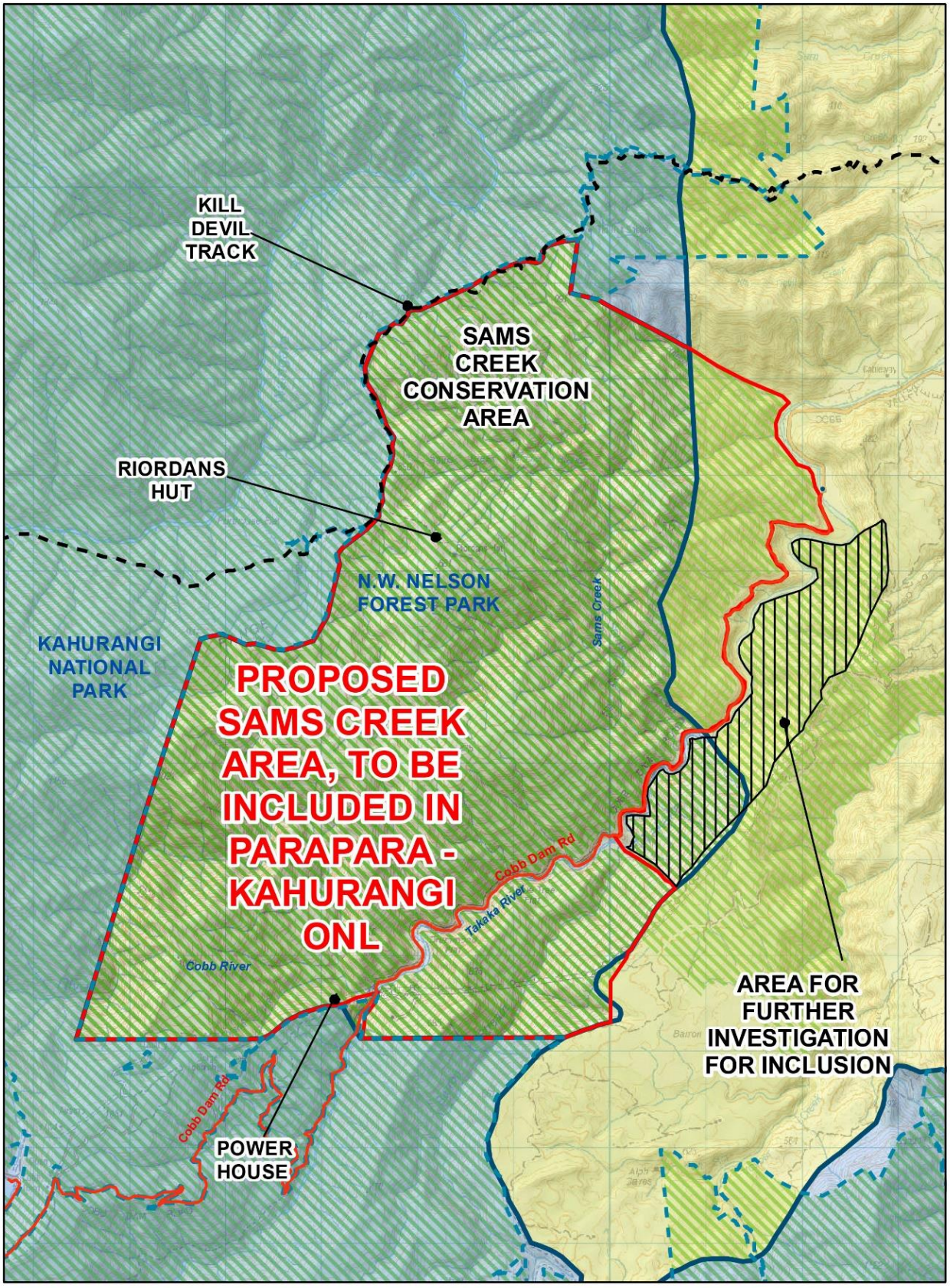
Recommendation 4, Aorere Goldfields Reserve
That the Reserve be accepted as a Significant Natural Feature, to be considered for inclusion in the District Plan review.

PHOTO 9: *Ballroom Cave entrance, showing forested exterior surrounds. This and the nearby Stafford Cave have formed in remnant limestone capping above the gold-bearing basement starta.*

PHOTO 10: *Aorere Goldfields Conservation Area, Druggans Dam in distance. The hummocky mined areas generally are in early regrowth scrub, with public trails visible. Limestone areas stand above these. Cave entrances not visible to the right.*

PHOTO 11: *Goldfields Conservation Area from the east, Druggans Dam in foreground, Aorere Valley and Wakamarama Ranges beyond. Limestone areas stand above the goldfields terrain. Ballroom Cave entrance is in darkest shadow area beyond right tip of the lake.*

PHOTO 12: *Early regrowth scrub on former goldfields workings, with more-developed forests on limestone area above. Ballroom Cave is on reverse side of limestone area.*



GOLDEN BAY / MOHUA LANDSCAPE PROJECT

SAMS CREEK

Map 5

SAMS CREEK

DESCRIPTION
This site is an exclave from the Kahurangi National Park, and also from the Parapara – Kahurangi Ranges ONFL accepted by the Small Working Group.

Site: The boundaries of 'the site' are taken from the Small Working Group *Final Report*.[22] In general, it comprises the exploration licenses 31.2178 and 31.2661, shown on Map 6, but also, southern areas of 31.2177.[23] These were the areas excluded from Kahurangi National Park by DOC because of their potential for gold production. They currently comprise the Sams Creek Conservation Area and part of North-West Nelson Forest Park (Maps 5 & 6).

The ONFL Maps on pages 24 and 30 – 31 of the Small Working Group *Final Report* show a different eastern boundary from that in Map 6, following the North-West Nelson Forest Park boundary, not the mining license boundaries. Neither the North-West Nelson Forest Park nor the mining licenses include the bed and margins of the Takaka River.

The boundaries make little sense in landscape terms, having been defined for prospecting purposes.

Topography: The site comprises approximately 4,000ha of slopes, ridges and high land west of the Takaka River, and some slopes east of the river, extending 8 kms downstream from the Cobb Powerhouse (Map 5). It also includes lower parts of the Cobb River Valley. The high land, generally unseen from beyond the site, comprises the extensive raised watershed of Sam's Creek, at elevations between 500 and 1,000m (Photo 17). The high land is part of the Sam's Creek Conservation Area and the Takaka River slopes are part of the North-West Nelson Forest Park, except the east side below Barron Stream, which does not have reserve status. These areas are surrounded on all but the east side by Kahurangi National Park. Elevations on the Takaka River range from 110 – 250m.

Upstream of Sams Creek, the Cobb Dam Road is within a steep V-shaped valley, lacking in floodplain, and with mature regrowth native forest above (Photos 14, 15). This area is very scenic, strongly enclosed by the valley walls, and with rock bluffs and outcrops in places. Downstream of Sams Creek, surrounding valley slopes are less steep and their vegetation a mixture of regrowth scrub and exotic wildings. While a pleasant valley, this section lacks the scenic impacts seen upstream, largely through the disturbed vegetation but partly also from the less-steep slopes.

Geology: The significant formation within the site is the band of gold-bearing schists covered by the Macraes licenses.[24] Exploration in the 1980s identified potentially significant gold resources. Tracks remaining from this exploration activity are seen throughout the upper Sam's Creek catchment, but not unduly obtrusive in outside views.

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[22] Small Working Group *Final Report*, ONFL Location Map, pp. 30-31
[23] DOC, *North-West South Island National Park Investigation*, pp 142 – 3 and Appendix 13
[24] Rattenbury et al, *Geology of the Nelson Area*, p.51

Vegetation: A matrix of varying vegetation types exists throughout 'the site':

- Valley sides flanking the Cobb Dam Road (both sides), upstream of the Sam's Creek confluence, are clothed in continuous native forest, whether virgin or regrowth is unknown, and are highly natural (Photo 14);
- The valley sides below the Sam's Creek confluence are in mixed regrowth scrub, from earlier clearance, with small areas of native remnants and numerous wilding pine.
- East of the river, in the lowest section near the Cobb Dam Road bridge, is plantation forestry;
- Raised areas west of the Takaka River valley, comprising the upper Sam's Creek catchment, are in variable scrub, with many bare ridgelines and emerging regrowth forest in wetter gullies. Probably this pattern results from the pastoral burning but the infertile soils may also play a part (Photos 16, 17).

Visibility: The enclosed valley of the Cobb Dam Road is not visible from outside and the road itself offers no views beyond the immediate surrounds. The raised interior of the Sam's Creek catchment, equating to the Sam's Creek Conservation Area, also is not generally visible, being screened by the peaks above the Cobb Dam Road (Map 5).

The mid and upper slopes are prominent in the extensive views from SH60 on the Takaka Hill Road (Photo 13). This applies particularly to the slopes downriver from Sam's Creek. Those upriver from Sam's Creek are visible but not prominent. These visible areas are within the North-West Nelson Forest Park.

History: The upper Takaka, Cobb and Waingaro Valleys have seen various mineral operations in the 19th and 20th centuries. Gold was mined on a small scale in the 19th Century, and in a Depression works scheme, from the late 1920's until World War 2. This refers particularly to the Waingaro Valley, which was accessed via the punishing (steep) Kill Devil Track, which skirts the rear boundary of the Sam's Creek site. From the 1940's to 60's, asbestos was mined in the Upper Takaka Valley, 5km past the Power Station. The valley was opened to outside access by construction of the Cobb Dam Road, in the 1930s.

The Cobb Dam was begun in the 1930s and, with the intervention of World War 2, the power scheme opened in 1955. It collects water from the dammed reservoir and conveys it by tunnel and pipeline approximately 4kms to the Power Station at the confluence of the Cobb and Takaka Rivers. The Power Station and lower Cobb Valley are within the 'site'. The ridge ridgeline east of the Takaka River is crossed by high tension power lines originating from the Power House, and its far side is laced with an extensive pattern of construction or maintenance roads. These have little impact on the site but are significantly visible from SH60 on the Takaka Hill.

From the 19th Century until the early 1950s, summer grazing occurred in the Takaka headwaters, the Cobb Valley (then unflooded), and their surrounding tops. The Kill Devil Track gave access to the areas, used annually to bring in the flocks in spring and out in autumn. Until 1945, burning of the hills to create pasture was an annual event, accounting for the wide areas of gorse, broom and scrub regrowth seen today. Hindmarsh states that at

its peak approximately 30% of the slopes and tops were regarded as grazable cover, although much of it rough and scrub-clad.[25]

From the 1930s the Riordan Brothers foraged up to 2,000 sheep in the Sam's Creek catchment. Appearing from today's regrowth pattern, this probably extended down to the Takaka Valley, on the less-precipitous slopes north of Sam's Creek. The brothers' base was Riordan's Hut, renovated in 2003 and still in use for trampers today. These activities had ceased by the early 1950s but today's scrub, weed and regrowth patterns bear witness to their burning during those years.

FEATURES

From the above, the landscape features of the Sam's Creek site are:

- The highly natural, incised, V-shaped, scenic river and gorge of the Takaka River;
- The high area of steep hill and gully land in the upper catchment of Sam's Creek;
- The variable pattern of coherent native forests and regrowth scrub, with wildings in some areas;
- The geology, with gold-bearing rocks and existing exploration licenses;
- The Cobb Dam Road, Powerhouse and transmission lines, which opened the area to outside access;
- The pastoral and mining (gold, asbestos) history;
- The high state of naturalness in most areas

VALUES

Biophysical

The **Natural Science** values of the Sam's Creek Site arise from:

Landforms & Topography: **'Very High'** values of the v-shaped gorge landform and of the natural state of all landforms throughout the site;

Vegetation: - **'Very High'** values of the remnant forests of the east and south (Takaka and Cobb Valleys), for their continuous covering and native character;
- **'High'** values of the upper Sam's Creek catchment for their disturbed but regenerating state and continuity;
- **'Medium'** values of the early-stage mixed regenerating scrub/wilding vegetation of the site between the Sam's Creek valley and Cobb Dam Road bridge.

From their relative proportions and significance, these equate to **'High'** vegetation values generally across the site

Rivers: **'Very High'** values of the Takaka River, for its naturalness and believed water quality.

The **Transient** values of the site arise from weather and seasonal changes. These are not particularly marked but have different summer and winter patterns and character. Snow affects the tops periodically in winter and the river is subject to fresh and flood after rain and snow melt. Seasonal wildlife patterns vary subtly among forest, bird and water wildlife. Transient values are **'Medium-High'.**

[25] Hindmarsh, p.62

Naturalness: Although disturbed in part, The site overall has **'High'** values of naturalness, for its intact gorge and upper area landforms and significant proportions of native forest. These together form the general character of the site and their naturalness outweighs the modified vegetation of the lower valley and upper area.

Aesthetic

The **Vividness** values of this site are **'Very High'**, arising from the dramatic gorge scenery, river and Powerhouse, and the interesting exposed upper area, this latter with views over the Waingaro Valley from the Kill Devil Track. The sense of contrast between valley and tops is very high. Also, parts are within the dramatic views from SH60 on the Takaka Hill.

Legibility values are **'High'**. The uplift and erosional processes are obvious, raw and active in the valleys, tops and steep slopes. The geological formations are reflected in the exploration licenses. The hydrological cycles are reflected in the Cobb Power Station.

Coherence values are **'Very High'**. Coherence of the range and valley landform patterns and processes is very strong but the sense of harmony lessened somewhat by the areas of vegetation disturbance. In total however, it is the strong influence of the site landforms play in the striking valley views, and those from SH60 on the Takaka Hill, that creates the very strong sense of coherence.

Memorability values are '**High'**. Visitors take away strong impressions of the gorge, river and power station in particular. Trampers retain strong impressions of the upper areas along the Kill Devil Track and Riordan's Hut.

Cultural

Historic: The area of the upper Takaka, Cobb and Waingaro Rivers and their headwaters has had an eventful European history of pastoralism, mining and power generation, particularly in the 20th Century. These were difficult of access in the 19th Century but has assumed a district-wide profile since the 1930's, with its road access, lake and power station.

The Kahurangi National Park has a profile well beyond the district for its landscape and ecological variety, and its recreation and conservation. While the Sam's Creek site is excluded from the Park it is surrounded by it on three sides, and equally as worthy of inclusion, being on a par with those areas to the north, within the Park, in the Craigieburn and Stony Creek catchments. The site contains the Riordan Hut and along its north-west, the Kill Devil Track, which are part of the network of historic tracks in the headwaters.

These two elements of historic development within the site (power and the tracks) give it a district-wide profile which indicate **'High'** historic values.

Tangata Whenua: Not considered. These values to be provided by the iwi.

Shared and Recognised: As part of the recreation and conservation regimes of the Kahurangi National Park/Sam's Creek Conservation Area, and public knowledge of the road to the Cobb Pawer Station, the site is of high profile in the public consciousness and there is a **'Very High'** degree of accord between the lay public and experts as to the values of the site.

ASSESSMENT

From the above, the Sam's Creek site is assessed as having outstanding natural, aesthetic and cultural values and as being indistinguishable from the wider outstanding natural landscape adjacent to it on three sides. This assessment arises from its **'Very High'** natural science, vividness, coherence and shared and recognised values, and **'High'** naturalness, legibility, memorability and historic values.

Recommendation 5:

That the Sam's Creek site be included within the Parapara-Kahurangi Ranges ONFL and that the District Plan contain provisions to manage ONFL values in the event that future mine applications might be received.

Re commendation 6:

That the eastern boundary of the Sam's Creek site include all North West Nelson Forest Park land, and that the area downstream to the east be further refined in values and extent.

PHOTO 13 *(above):*
View of proposed Sams Creek ONL (marked), from SH60, Takaka Hill. Upper Takaka River flows from valley at right.

PHOTO 14 *(right):*
Upper Takaka Valley looking upstream in deep winter shadow, showing the dramatic terrain and highly natural state of vegetation. Cobb Dam Road is in shadow at right and the power house a short distance upstream.

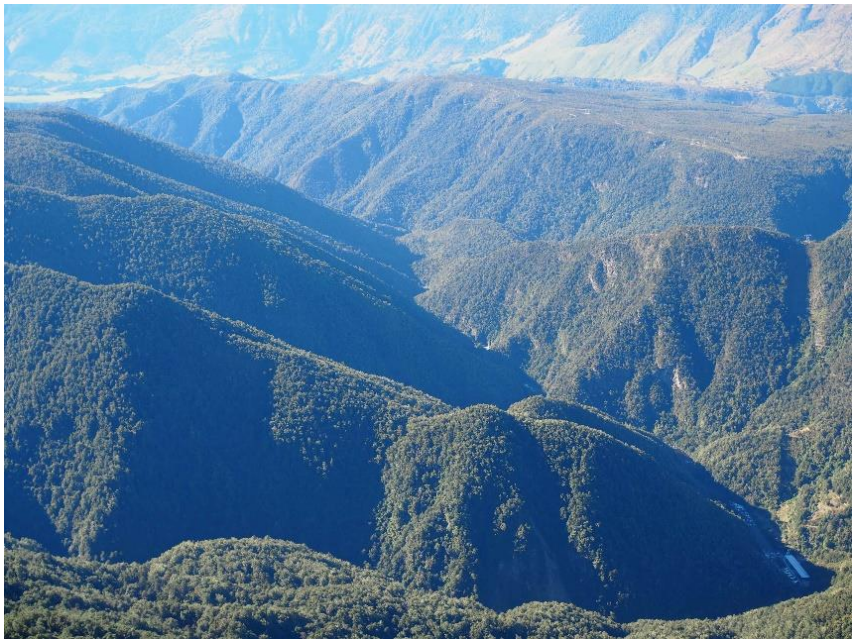


PHOTO 15:
Upper Takaka Valley from the south-west (right), with Cobb River Valley in foreground. The Cobb Power House is visible at bottom right. Proposed Sams Creek ONL includes both sides of both valleys.

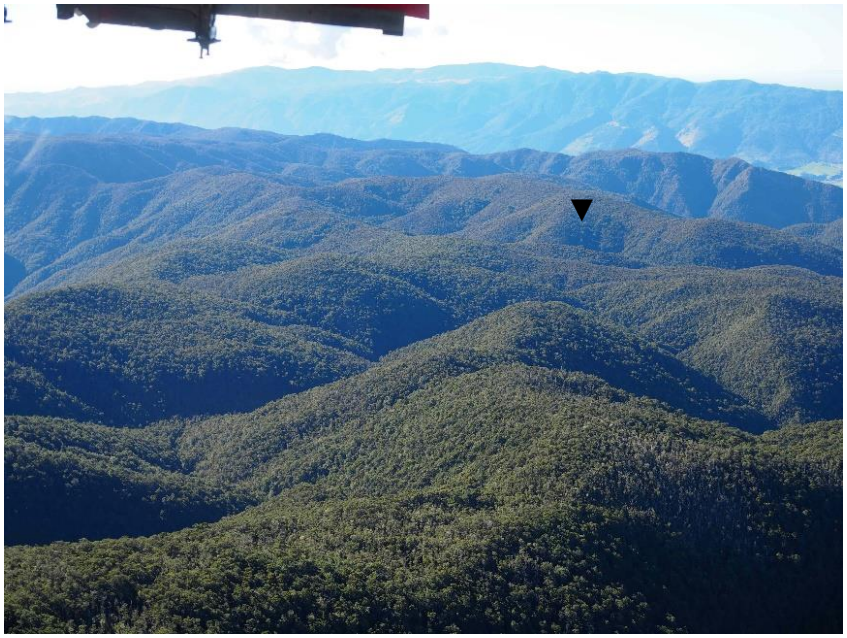


PHOTO 16:
Upper levels of the proposed ONL, from the south. Vegetation and terrain are highly natural. Catchment of Sams Creek is in middle distance (marked).

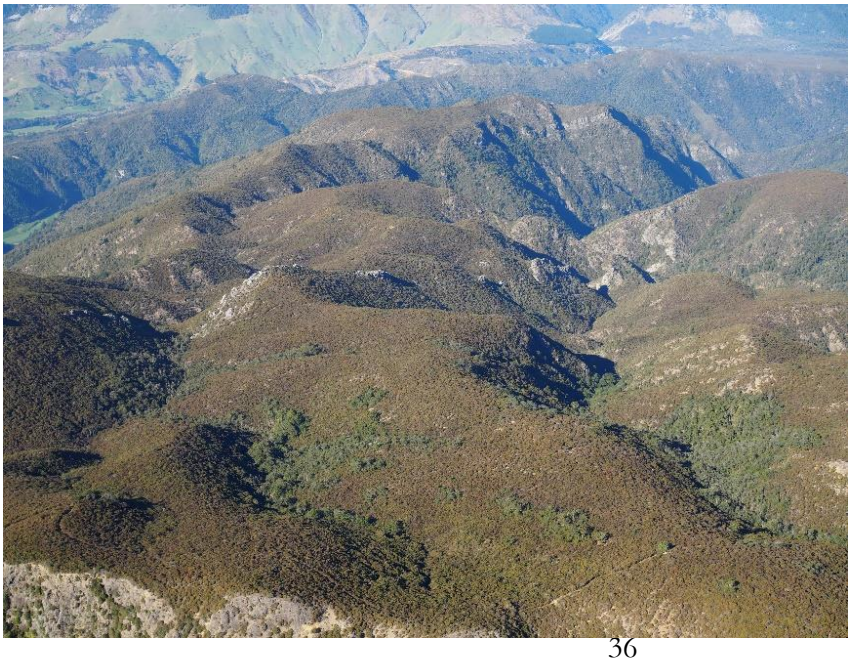
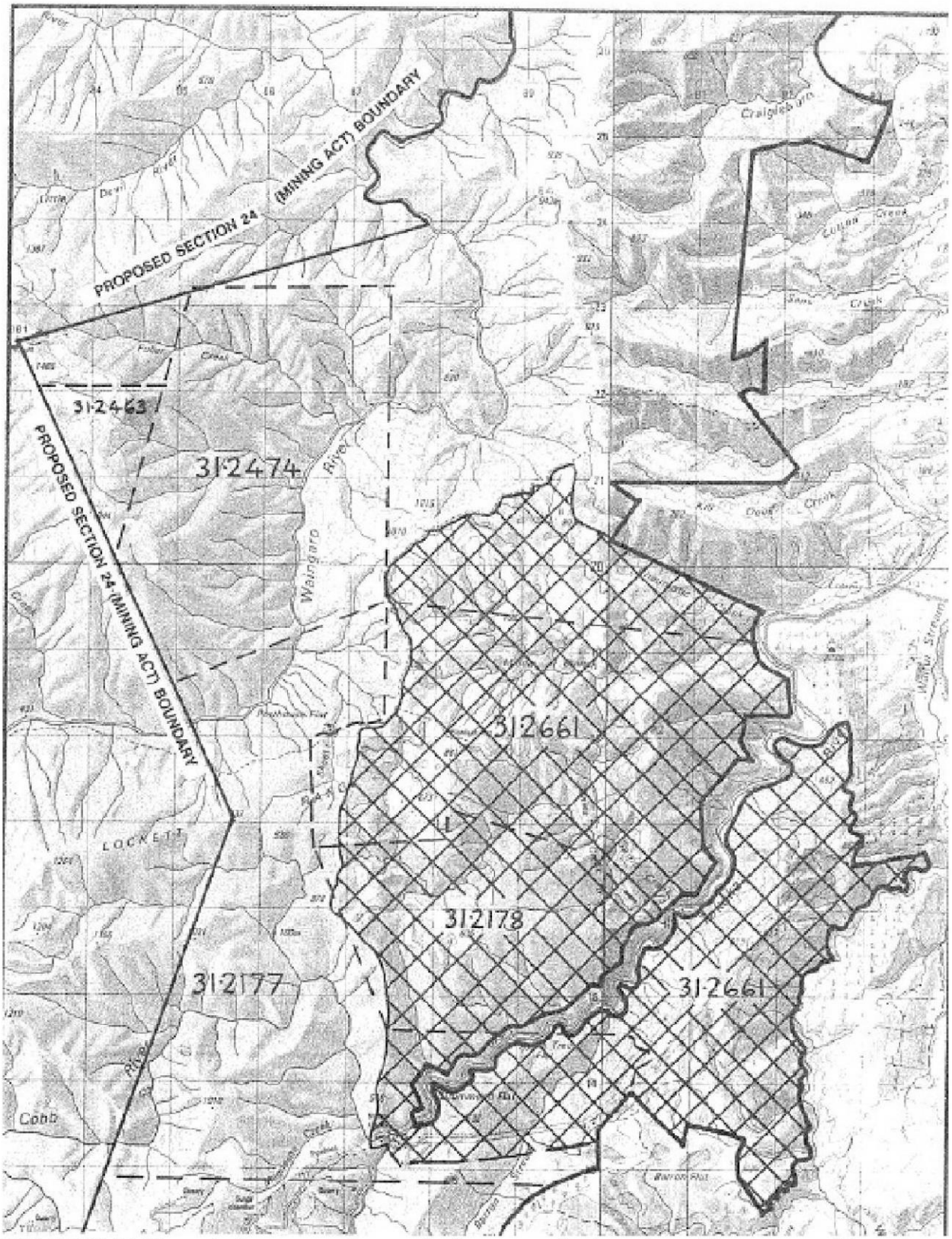


PHOTO 17:
Upper Sams Creek catchment from the west, Kill Devil Track right foreground and Upper Takaka Valley in middle distance. Vegetation is regenerating from burning for rough pasturage in 1930's – 40's.



APPENDIX 13. Macrae's five prospecting application areas, the boundary of the area sought by the Department in 1990 as closed to mining under Section 24 of the Mining Act, and the recommended national park boundary.

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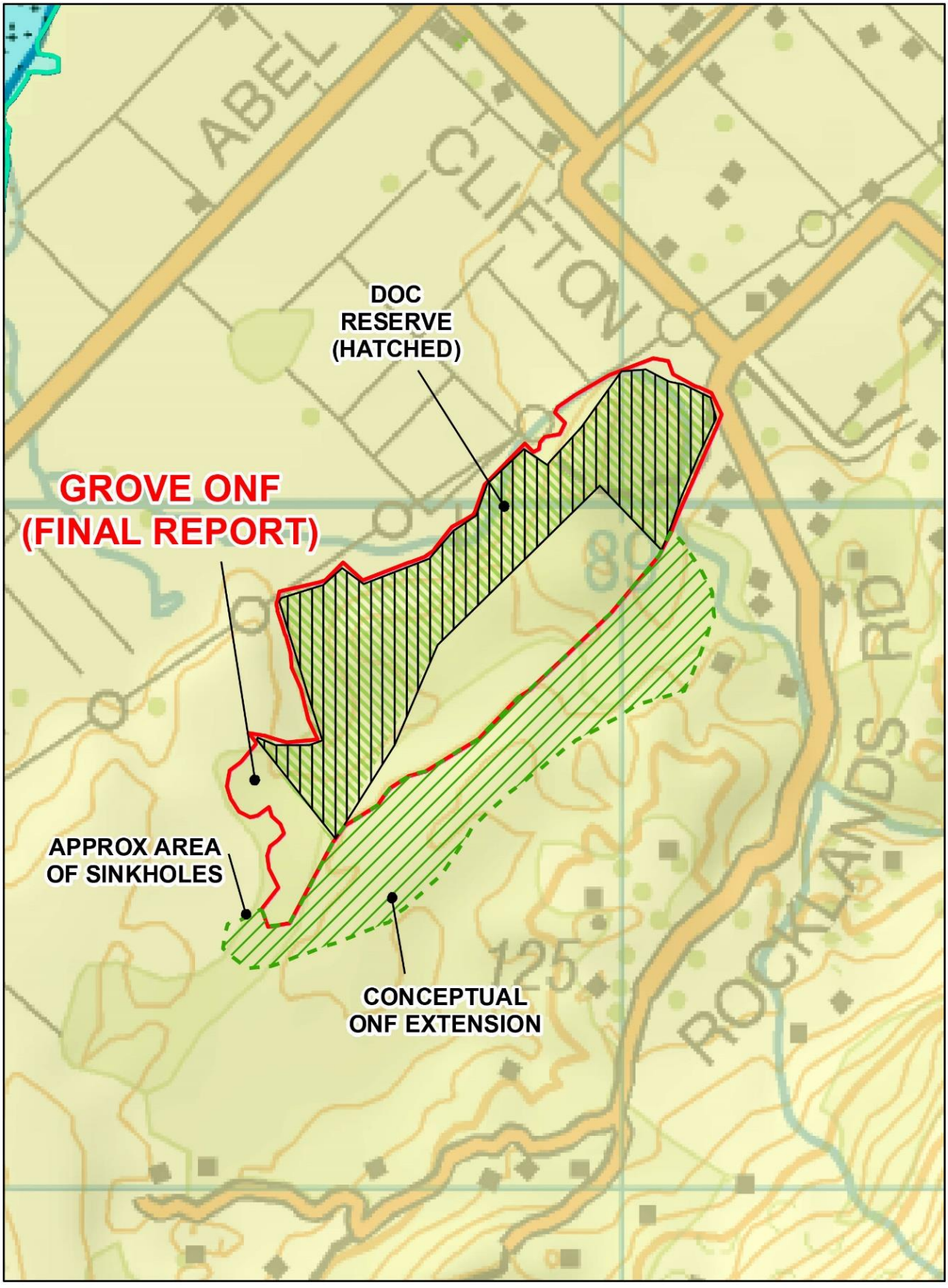
DOC MAP, MINING LICENSES, 1993 Map 6



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THE GROVE

Map 7

THE GROVE

The Grove was accepted as an ONF by the Small Working Group as an excellent example of indigenous forest on limestone landforms. This assessment considers whether extensions of the ONF are warranted, in the south-east and south, within the same landforms and forest types, but on private land.

FEATURES

The features of the Grove, which lead to its ONF status, are:

- The Karst landforms and topography;
- The mature lowland coastal forest containing northern *rata, rimu* and other podocarps, *nikau, kowhai* and *ake ake*;
- The natural state of the ONF and some surrounding areas.

These together form a distinctive and scenic natural feature, with native forest in vivid contrast to surrounding farmlands. The ONF, as accepted by the Small Working Group, covers the DOC reserve and some private lands to the south-east and south (Photos 20, 21). At issue is whether any additional private land should be included.

The Grove is a Category C listing in the Geopreservation Inventory.

IS EXTENSION WARRANTED?

Having visited the site but without access to the private land, it is concluded that the ONF values do indeed spread onto the private lands beyond the ONF shown. Therefore, detailed consideration should be given to judicious extensions on the Rocklands Road side and Motupipi end of the ONF area accepted by the Small Working Group. This is shown and discussed on pages 46 and 47 of their *Final Report*. There could be approximately ten residential properties and one farm involved, but it is unknown if other unbuilt lots may be affected.

At face value, it is concluded that judicious extensions may be warranted. These should occur in consultation with the Council, various neighbours and DOC, to ensure an equitable and manageable outcome.

REASONS FOR EXTENSION

The reasons for the extension would be to ensure the landforms and vegetation giving rise to the ONF are not devalued by inappropriate subdivision, earthworks, clearance or building on private land. It is probable that most neighbours value the environments noted, but the Council's aim, in incorporating an extended ONF into the District Plan, would be to ensure the values are maintained in the longer term, as properties may change hands over time.

DEGREE OF EXTENSION

It is proposed a new boundary line would be selected to include firstly, the most coherent areas of limestone topography, and secondly, the most developed areas of original or

regrowth native forest. Without the benefit of owner permissions and site analysis to date, it is envisaged that extensions may advance up to 100 metres onto private land. An earlier draft boundary is shown on Map 7 as a starting point for discussions.

OTHER ISSUES

Sunlight: Mature native forests should not develop on private land to the extent that commonly used parts (houses, gardens) are unduly overshadowed. This is a management issue but also requires private owners to avoid locating structures or activities in parts of their land likely to be overshadowed, where that might be a problem.

Public Access: Management of public access from the Grove Reserve to private land within the ONF is a matter requiring resolution. It is possible that users of the Reserve might equate ONF status with public access rights. Private owners should not be encumbered by onerous risks from unauthorised public access. This could perhaps be resolved by fencing and signage along the Reserve boundaries and tracks, or by opening agreed private areas to public access on designated tracks, with an agreement for management and liability by DOC.

This matter requires resolution between the Council, owners and DOC.

Recommendation 7:

That the Council investigate extending the proposed Grove ONF on its south-west and south sides, and in consultation with the affected neighbours and DOC, identify and agree appropriate boundary extension and management of the Grove ONF.

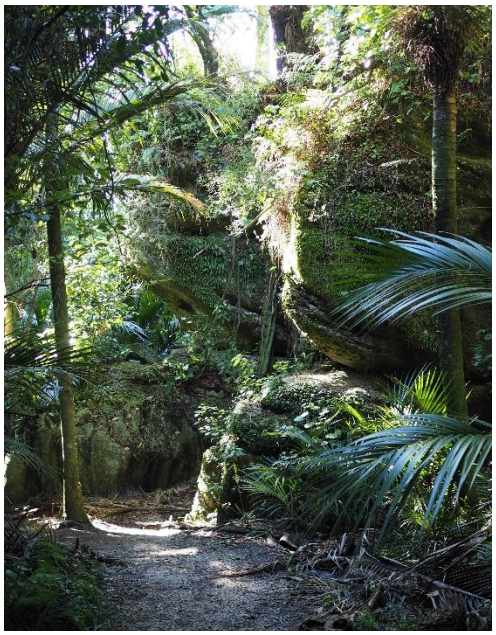

PHOTO 18:
Distinctive lowland coastal forests create the atmosphere of public tracks within the Grove Scenic Reserve.

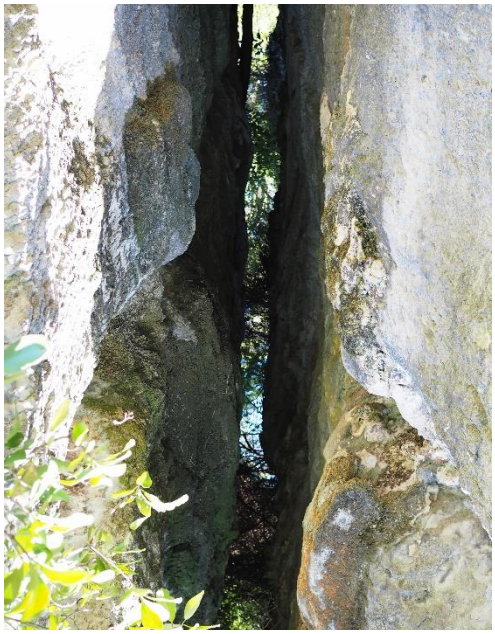

PHOTO 19:
Tracks in the reserve also pass through impressive large limestone landforms. The extent of limestone features suggests possible extensions to the ONF.

PHOTO 20: *The Grove ONF from the north-east, Takaka lowlands beyond and Takaka town in the right distance.. The Scenic Reserve is on the right of the forested area, while the residential land is in the centre and left.*

PHOTO 21: *Grove ONF from the north-west, Scenic Reserve in foreground and residential properties beyond. The proposed ONF extension would cover limestone areas on private land, between the reserve and houses.*

GOLDEN BAY / MOHUA LANDSCAPE PROJECT

WAINUI HEADLAND

Map 8

WAINUI HEADLAND

The Wainui Headland is part of the Wainui Bay Inlet ONF, accepted by the Small Working Group.[26] The issue for the Council is whether the existing proposed boundaries on the headland, based on property lines, is the best delineation, or whether some better delineation may exist.

DESCRIPTION

The Headland is defined for the present purpose as the left-most area shown in purple in the *Final Report* 'Wainui Bay Inlet ONF' map p.33. This is shown enlarged on Map 8.

Seawards, the boundary follows close offshore of the tidal strand and includes the Tata Islands, although these are not an issue in this additional assessment (Photos 21, 22, 26, 27). Landwards, the boundary in the south follows the edge of residential development in Tata Beach and also that along the lower section of Abel Tasman Drive as it begins to climb the headland. In the upper section of Abel Tasman Drive, the ONF boundary then abuts the road up to the summit between Tata Beach and Wainui Bay (Photos 23, 24).

The Wainui Bay Inlet ONF accepted by the Small Working Group is stated *'to be surrounded by the Abel Tasman ONL'*.[27] However, at a site-specific scale the boundaries between the ONL and ONF are uncertain at the summit of Abel Tasman Drive, appearing from the map on page 33 to exclude an area north of Abel Tasman Drive, at the summit, from both the ONF and ONL. It is not known if this exclusion is intended, may result from the map scale (p.29), or if it even exists at all.

The ONF comprises a hook-shaped north-south ridge, with summits up to 150m above sea level. This divides the site into a larger southern valley and smaller northern slopes in the west, north and east, facing the sea. The internal valley drains south into the residential area of Tata Beach. It is widely seen by the public from Abel Tasman Drive and is taken to be the source of the Small Working Group's uncertainty, due to its 'zig-zag' boundary around the residential sections in Tata Beach. Within the ONF, an area of Council land faces westwards to Tata Bay, immediately north of the residential area (Map 8 and Photo 21). Otherwise the proposed ONF area is believed to be privately owned.

There are two houses within the ONF, one on the ridgeline 200m north of Abel Tasman Drive, the other facing the sea in the far north, about 500m from Abel Tasman Drive (Photos 26 & 27). Neither house is visible from the land but both are visible from the water. Near the north-east point is an area of marine farms which have no bearing on this assessment.

FEATURES

The landscape features of the headland ONF are as follows:

- Prominent north-south headland jutting into the sea, with hook-shaped ridge and steep slopes (Photos 21 - 23);
- Steep coastal cliffs on the west side, and headlands with sandy beaches, backed by steep slopes, on the north and east sides (Photos 21, 22, 26, 27);

[26] Small Working Group *Final Report*, pp 32 – 33.
[27] Small Working Group *Final Report,* pp. 28 – 29, and quoting p.32.

- Small islands in the north-west;
- Internal valley draining south to Tata Beach, overlooked from Abel Tasman Drive and abutting Tata Beach residential area in the south (Photo 23).
- Unbroken, continuous cover of emerging regrowth native bush, comprising *Mahoe, Manuka, Ake Ake*, and *Coprosma*, without obvious earthworks or developments.
- Tata Beach settlement immediately adjacent to the ONF, to the south (Photo 24).

VALUES

The Craig *Evaluation* of 2011[28] identified 'Very High' values of Vividness, Legibility, Historic and Tangata Whenua in the Wainui Bay Landscape Unit as a whole. Additionally, it stated that coastal environments within the unit have 'Very High' naturalness values (but not the Unit as a whole), and what are implied as, but not stated as, 'High' values of Natural Science and Coherence in coastal areas. (Implied, because the value for the Unit as a whole is 'Moderate High' but the coastal areas are stated to be 'highest within the Unit').

Following a road-based inspection, and without having access to the private land, the Craig values are accepted as applying to the headland generally. It is believed those facing outwards to the sea are not in question, and it is those of the internal valley which require this additional assessment. Values of the internal valley are confirmed as 'Very High' in Vividness, Coherence, Legibility and Naturalness, for:

- the unbroken expanse of emergent native regrowth bush;
- the sense of valley-and-ridge landform engendered by the vegetation continuity; and
- the strong contrast of naturalness within the internal valley with the subdivided residential environment and the seascape adjacent.

ASSESSMENT

The Craig assessment, which was of the ONF as a whole, is confirmed as also applicable to the Headland and internal valley specifically, for their 'Very High' Vividness, Coherence, Legibility and Naturalness values.

DISCUSSION

Boundary Line: The issue is whether some other boundary line might be more appropriate for the ONF, than the unnatural 'zig-zag' one adjacent to Abel Tasman Drive and Tata Beach. Could a more natural line be drawn, or one including less land in the ONF, freeing unneeded land for development?

The alternatives could be:

- Eliminate a small, square-edged enclave of ONF adjacent to the upper half of Abel Tasman Drive, and return that land to Rural zoning;
- Move the boundary northwards in the valley floor adjacent to the residential area, creating a band of residential land in what is currently the ONF;
- Include land at the summit of Abel Tasman Drive within the ONF blue on Map 8).

Alternative 1: ONF Boundary in Upper Half of Abel Tasman Drive:

This section considers bullet points 1 & 3 above. The key features of this area are that:

(i) it gives public views from Abel Tasman Drive into the impressive natural valley, and also views south over the Tata Beach coastline; and

[28] Craig, pp.8 & 19

(ii) it maintains the skyline around Tata Beach in a natural, bush-clad state.

Regarding views from Abel Tasman Drive, housing is spreading up the west side of the Drive. At the time of site visits for this project, site works were underway for a further house at the upper limit of the non-ONF land on Abel Tasman Drive. The existing housing, with its associated bush, significantly screens views from the Drive to the ONF valley and Tata coastline. Good reason therefore exists to maintain the upper 'zig-zag' of ONF frontage onto Abel Tasman Drive, to ensure the impressive public views are maintained along this section. Additionally, the ONF land adjacent to the road is very steep in the upper section, and unbuildable without major earthworks and structures.

Regarding views towards the Abel Tasman Drive summit from the Tata Beach settlement, it is highly desirable to maintain what remains of the natural setting of the Tata Beach settlement by keeping further development off the surrounding skylines, spurs and upper slopes. This is a second reason to maintain the ONF along upper levels of Abel Tasman Drive, allowing the Council to set conditions on potential future development applications.

For the same reason, it is highly desirable that private land north of the Abel Tasman Drive summit (blue on Map 8), be within either the Wainui Bay Inlet ONF or the Abel Tasman ONL. This land contains an existing house and other possible building sites, and is important as it forms the skyline from both the Tata Beach and Takapou Bay sides (for instance, see photo, *Final Report*, p.32). The Council should be in a position to require the ridgeline remain in a natural state by including it within the ONL or ONF. Ideally, there should be no further development in this location, beyond the existing house. It is emphasised that these views are based on an unclear view of the proposed ONF and ONL boundaries at a site-specific level.

It is therefore concluded that the 'zig-zag' boundary in the upper parts of Abel Tasman Drive should remain, and the blue area on Map 8 should be included in the ONL/ONF, to ensure the naturalness of these areas is maintained.

Alternative 2: ONF boundary with the Tata Beach residential area:
This section considers bullet point 2 above. An awkward boundary exists between housing in the Cornwall Place cul-de-sac in Tata Beach and the south end of the ONF valley. The land on the ONF side is unseen from outside, except by immediate neighbours, is low and shaded, and likely to be at risk of flooding in extreme event, being the point of outflow from the valley to the north. This lowest area of the ONF, hatched dark red on Map 8, has lower landscape values than the ONF overall, and therefore could be considered for other possible land uses in this area.

Were ONF restrictions to be removed from the residential margin, further residential development would seem the most likely alternative. However, site observations suggest that land is both shady and in the flow path of drainage from the valley to the north. Probably, it is at best only marginally suited to housing. For these reasons it is concluded that the best use of the lower valley is as conservation land not development land, and that the existing ONF boundary should be maintained in the red area on Map 8.

Recommendation 8:
That the existing boundaries of the Wainui Headland section of the Wainui Bay Inlet ONF be retained, except that inclusion of land north of the Able Tasman Drive summit be considered.

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PHOTO 21:
The steep west coast of the Wainui Headland ONF. A small section of Tata Beach settlement is at right and Ngawhiti, one of the Tata Islands is at left. The road cuttings of Abel Tasman Drive can be seen on the right.

PHOTO 22:
Wainui Headland from the south-east. The central valley of the ONF is at left distance, and the eastern shoreline facing Wainui Inlet at right distance, with various shoals and islets. In the right foreground is Abel Tasman Drive on the Wainui side and left foreground on the Tata Beach side.

PHOTO 23:
The central valley of the Wainui Headland ONF, illustrating its relationship with the Tata Beach settlement and Abel Tasman Drive. Motu and Ngawhiti, together comprising the Tata Islands, are at upper left.

PHOTO 24: *The view from Abel Tasman Drive to Tata Beach and Tarakohe. The uppermost residential section is on the spur left foreground. The ONF is important in maintaining views and natural character along the rapidly developing coastline.*

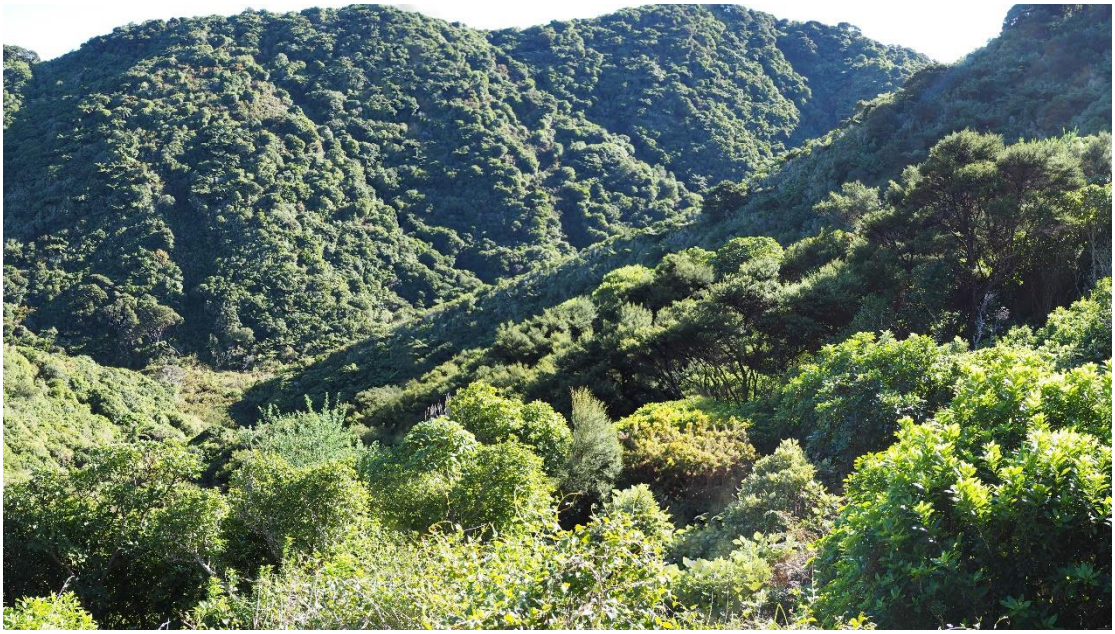

PHOTO 25: *Upper sections of Abel Tasman Drive have views of the regrowth vegetation within the ONF. These views are crucial to mitigating effects of the built development nearby. All is private land.*

PHOTO 26:
One house occupies the north end of the Wainui Headland ONF, seen only from the sea. Wainui Inlet is in the distance.

PHOTO 27:
Another house within the ONF is just north of the Abel Tasman Drive summit (seen at left). It too is unseen from land except near Taupo Point.

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