NATURAL FEATURES AND LANDSCAPES – NFL

Overview

The Natural Features and Landscapes chapter contains provisions in response to section 6(b) of the RMA, which requires that outstanding natural features and landscapes be protected from inappropriate *subdivision*, use and development. In relation to Natural Character, section 6(a) of the RMA, this is addressed within the provisions relating to *river* or *stream setbacks* included within the Zones. Part of the protection of these areas requires the identification and management of these areas as a matter of national importance.

The Landscape of the Gore District can largely be characterised as pastural and arable farmland including pockets of valuable indigenous biodiversity. ~~with two prominent natural landscapes / features - the Hokonui Hills and the Te Au Nui Pihapiha Kanakana Mataura Falls.~~ There are two Natural Features of particular note – the Southland Syncline parallel ridges (most notably expressed in the Hokonui Hills), and the Mataura River. [1]

Two areas have been ~~These areas have been assessed and~~ identified in accordance with the Southland Regional Policy Statement 2017 criteria as having high levels of biophysical, sensory or associative landscape values, which makes them either Outstanding Natural Landscapes (ONL) or Outstanding Natural Features (ONF). These are the Hokonui Hills ONL and the Te Au Nui Pihapiha Kanakana Mataura Falls ONF. [2]

The District's Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes are identified on the District Plan Maps and described in Appendix 5. ~~Note there are other provisions relevant to Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes within the Infrastructure and Subdivision Chapters.~~[3]

Objectives

NFL-O1 To protect the values and characteristics of the Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes of the Gore District from inappropriate *subdivision*, use and development.

Policies

NFL-~~P2~~P1[4] Provide for and encourage the restoration and/or enhancement of the ~~natural character~~ values ~~described within Appendix 5,~~ of the Te Au Nui Pihapiha Kanakana Mataura Falls described within Appendix 5[5], where:

1. Restoration and/or enhancement will achieve long-term improvement in ~~natural character landscape and associated~~ Ngāi Tahu cultural values; ~~and/or~~

[1] Decision 46, paragraph 6.2.2
[2] Decision 46, paragraph 6.2.2
[3] Decision 46, paragraph 6.2.3
[4] Decision 46, paragraph 6.4.20
[5] Decision 46, paragraph 7.7.9

2. It will assist in the restoration of indigenous *biodiversity* or *ecosystems* and angling fisheries species; ~~and/or~~
3. It will enhance the *taonga species* and *mahinga kai* and the ability to exercise *kaitiakitanga*; ~~and/or~~
4. It will support improved health and abundance of taonga species, and the ability for *mana whenua* to engage in *mahinga kai* activities; ~~and/or~~
5. Riparian margins provide a buffer from activities that may adversely affect the ~~natural character~~ values of the *river* or *stream*; ~~and/or~~
6. Riparian margins provide spawning or other significant habitats for ~~at risk or threatened~~ *threatened or at risk* species; ~~and/or~~
7. Public *access* is restored or improved; and~~/ or~~
8. Activities are an expression of *mana whenua kaitiakitanga* responsibilities.

[6]NFL-P~~1~~2 ~~Avoid adverse *effects* on the values and characteristics of identified~~ Within outstanding natural features and landscapes, ~~described within Appendix 5 by~~ to the extent practical, avoid:

1. ~~Avoiding d~~Development and land use that results in significant adverse *effects* on ~~landscape~~ their values and characteristics~~avoiding or appropriately mitigating other adverse *effects* on landscape values.~~;
2. ~~Recognising the existence of working pastoral farms and their contribution to the openness and landform legibility of outstanding natural features and landscapes;~~
3~~2~~. ~~Demonstrating how d~~Development that cannot be visually integrated into the landscape ~~by:~~;
3. ~~(a) remedying or mitigating the impacts on the visual continuity of~~ structures and development that alter the Hokonui Hills skyline and ~~visually prominent hillslopes~~ the appearance of mapped ridgelines; and

~~(b) ensuring buildings and structures are appropriately sited, designed, finished, and if required, mitigated by appropriate plantings, to have minimal impact on the landscape values.~~

~~(c) ensuring that building density and form maintains the identified landscape values.~~

4. ~~Avoiding a~~Activities that are incompatible with the identified values, including ~~plantation~~ *commercial forestry* and mineral extraction~~,~~.
5. ~~Recognising and providing protection for Ngāi Tahu cultural values as they relate to Natural Features and Landscapes.~~

[7]NFL-P3 Avoid the placement of *critical infrastructure* within identified Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes, unless, having regard to the *operational need* or *functional need* of the activity:

1. There is no reasonable alternative ~~due to the operational or functional need~~ for the location; and

[6] Decision 46, paragraph 6.4.20
[7] Decision 46, paragraph 6.4.20

2. Adverse *effects* on landscape values can be avoided or appropriately mitigated to the extent practicable.

[8]NFL-P4 When ~~assessing resource consents~~ considering *subdivision*, use and development within Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes, consider the ~~following matters;~~

1. ~~The~~ extent to which adverse *effects* on ~~landscape~~ their values can be managed~~,~~ where they cannot be avoided. ~~or appropriately mitigated; and~~
2. ~~The extent to which the proposed activity recognises and provides for Ngāi Tahu cultural values, rights and interests; and~~
3. ~~The operational or functional need for the activity to be undertaken within an Outstanding Natural Feature or Landscape.~~

[9]NFL-P5 Enable the continuation of existing lawfully established activities within Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes, including:

1. working pastoral farms, recognising they contribute to the openness and landform legibility of Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes; And

2. the hydroelectric power generating facility and other *structures* that have modified the natural form of Te Au Nui Pihapiha Kanakana Mataura Falls.

[10]NFL-P6 In managing the *effects* of activities within Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes, recognise and provide for those values that *mana whenua* associate with the area.

[11]NFL-P7 Promote and encourage any tree planting within Outstanding Natural Landscapes to be indigenous species and where indigenous species are not planted discourage the planting of wilding tree species.

~~[12]Note 1~~ ~~Provisions in Other Chapters~~

~~The provisions in this chapter apply in addition to the provisions of the other chapters in the District Plan and the Plan should be read as a whole.~~

~~This chapter also implements other chapters in the District Plan that do not have specific rules such as Sites and Areas of Significance to Māori and *Mana Whenua*.~~

[8] Decision 46, paragraph 6.4.20
[9] Decision 46, paragraph 6.4.28
[10] Decision 46, paragraph 6.4.10
[11] Decision 46, paragraph 6.4.35
[12] Decision 46, paragraph 6.4.37

Rules

NFL-R1[13]	***Buildings* and *Structures* (excluding *fences*) within an identified ON~~F/~~L**	
Lower Sensitivity Areas	**Activity status:** Permitted Where: 1. The *building* or *structure* is for farming purposes, excluding *residential* use; (a) Does not exceed 175 m^2 in area; and (b) *Height* ~~shall~~ must not exceed 6 metres; 2. *Buildings* or *structures* for non-farming purposes; (a) The maximum *height* does not exceed 2 metres; and (b) The maximum *gross floor area* is no more than 5 m^2; 3. All *buildings* and *structures* must be finished in materials with a maximum reflectance value of 30 %.	**Activity status where compliance is not achieved:** Discretionary
~~**All zones**~~ **Higher Sensitivity Areas**	**Activity status:** Permitted Where: 4. The *building* or *structure* is for farming purposes, excluding *residential* use; (a) Does not exceed 30 m^2 in area; and (b) *Height* ~~shall~~ must not exceed 3 metres; and (c) Is not located within 30 metres of a mapped ridgeline 5. *Buildings* or *structures* for non-farming purposes; (c) The maximum *height* does not exceed 2 metres; and	

[13] Decision 46, paragraph 6.5.9

	(d) The maximum *gross floor area* is no more than 5m^2, and (e) Is not located within 30 metres of a mapped ridgeline 6. All *buildings* and *structures* must be finished in materials with a maximum reflectance value of 30%	
NFL-R2[14]	**Tree planting, other than ~~*plantation*~~ *commercial forestry* or *woodlots* within an identified ON~~F/~~L**	
Lower Sensitivity Area	**Activity status:** Permitted 1. The tree planting is *indigenous vegetation*; or 2. It is within 100 metres of a farm *building* or stockyard;	**Activity status where compliance is not achieved:** Restricted Discretionary **Matters of discretion:** 1. *Effects* on the values as listed in NFL-APP Appendix 5. 2. Impacts on Ngāi Tahu cultural values~~, including those~~ listed in MW-~~2.3~~ 1.2.[15]
~~**All Zone**~~ **Higher Sensitivity Areas**	**Activity status:** Permitted Where: 3. The tree planting is of *indigenous vegetation* ~~species~~ and for restoration, *conservation*, or hazard ~~prevention~~ management measures. 4. The tree planting is of *indigenous vegetation* and for a shelterbelt of up to 40 metres in length.	
NFL-R3[16]	***Land disturbance* and *Earthworks* within an identified ON~~F/~~L**	
Lower Sensitivity Areas	**Activity status:** Permitted Where: 1. The depth of the *earthworks* cut and/or *earthworks* fill ~~shall~~ must not exceed 3 metres below or above the original	**Activity status where compliance is not achieved NFL-R3 (1) – (4), (5) - (8) and (10):** Restricted Discretionary

[14] Decision 46, paragraph 6.5.13
[15] Consequential to Decision 14
[16] Decision 46, paragraph 6.5.24

surface of the ground, except that for *fencing* and tracking, this *height* may be exceeded for a distance of no more than 30 metres within any one 100 metres distance; ~~and~~

2. The area of the *land disturbance* and *earthworks* (other than associated with *cultivation, fencing*, tracking or a building platform) ~~shall~~ must not exceed 100 m^2 in any 12 month period; ~~and~~
3. *Earthworks* and *land disturbance* (other than for *cultivation* or *farm tracks*) are reinstated to blend in with the surrounding natural landform and sown in grass to achieve at least an 80 % coverage by the end of the next growing season immediately following the completion of works; and
4. The works are undertaken in accordance with Earthworks Standards EW-S3, EW-S4 and EW-S6.

Activity status: Permitted

Where:

~~All zones~~ Higher Sensitivity Areas

5. ~~The depth of the earthworks shall not exceed 1m below the original surface of the ground; and~~ The depth of the *earthworks* cut and/or *earthworks* fill ~~shall~~ must not exceed 3 metres below/above the original surface of the ground, except that for *fencing* and tracking, this *height* may be exceeded for a distance of no more than 30 metres within any one 150 metres distance; and
6. ~~the depth of fill shall not exceed 1m above the original surface of the ground; and~~ The depth of *earthworks* cut or height of fill ~~shall~~ must not exceed 1 metre within 30

Matters of discretion:

1. *Effects* on the values as listed in NFL-APP Appendix 5.
2. Impacts on Ngāi Tahu cultural values~~, including those~~ listed in MW-~~2.3~~ 1.2.[17]
3. The extent of any *earthworks* or *land disturbance*~~;~~ ~~and~~~~:~~
4. Whether the works are undertaken in accordance with Earthworks Standards ~~EW-S2,~~ EW-S3, EW-S4~~, EW-S5, EW-S6~~ and EW-S~~7~~6 and consideration of the matters of discretion for any infringed standard.

Activity status where compliance is not achieved NFL-R3 (9):

Discretionary

[17] Consequential to Decision 14

	metres of the mapped ridgelines; ~~and~~ 7. the area of the *earthworks* (excluding *earthworks* for *cultivation, fencing*, tracking or a building platform) ~~shall~~ must not exceed 100 m^2 in any 12 month period; 8. ~~the width of land disturbance for fencing shall not exceed 1m; and~~ *Earthworks* and *land disturbance* (other than for *cultivation* or *farm tracks*) are reinstated to blend in with the surrounding natural landform and sown in grass to achieve at least an 80 % coverage by the end of the next growing season immediately following the completion of works; and 9. ~~the ground for fencing related land disturbance is reinstated to original levels within 48 hours of work being completed. and~~ Earthworks for new *roads*, *farm tracks*, walking and cycling tracks are not located within 30 metres of a mapped ridgeline area. 10. The works are undertaken in accordance with Earthworks Standards EW-S3, EW-S4 and EW-S6.	
NFL-R4[18]	**Maintenance of ~~*critical*~~ *existing infrastructure*, existing *roads*, *farm infrastructure*, *farm tracks*, walking and cycling trails within an identified ONF~~/L~~ or ONL**	
All ~~zones~~ NFL areas	**Activity status:** Permitted Where: 1. The scale of the ~~*critical*~~ existing *infrastructure*, *farm infrastructure*, ~~existing *roads*,~~ *farm track*, walking or cycling trail is not increased.	**Activity status where compliance is not achieved:** Restricted Discretionary **Matters of discretion:** 1. *Effects* on the values as listed within NFL-APP Appendix 5. 2. Impacts on Ngāi Tahu cultural values~~, including those~~ listed in MW-~~2.3~~ 1.2.[19]

[18] Decision 46, paragraph 6.5.33
[19] Consequential to Decision 14

NFL-R5[20]	Fences within an identified ON~~F~~/L	
~~All zones~~ ONL	**Activity status:** Permitted Where: 1. The *fence* is a post and wire fence; including deer *fencing*, waratahs and mesh *fencing*; 2. The *fence* is post and rail provided the distance does not exceed 6 metres either side of a gate for reinforcing purposes; or 3. In the Lower Sensitivity Area the *fence* is for stockyards. ~~*Note: fences are a structure and therefore subject to the river setback rules*~~	**Activity status where compliance is not achieved:** Restricted Discretionary **Matters of discretion:** 1. *Effects* on the values as listed within NFL-APP Appendix 5. 2. Impacts on Ngāi Tahu cultural values~~, including those~~ listed in MW-~~2.3~~ 1.2[21].
[22]~~NFL-R6~~	~~Indigenous Vegetation Clearance within an identified ONF/L~~	
~~All Zones~~	~~**Activity status:** Permitted~~ ~~Where:~~ ~~1. The clearance is within the Hokonui Hills ONL; and~~ ~~2. The clearance is necessary for a permitted, consented or otherwise legally established activity; and~~ ~~3. Clearance does not exceed 20m^2 over a 12 month period; or~~ ~~4. The clearance is for the construction of a fence associated with stock exclusion under national regulations or regional rules.~~	~~**Activity status where compliance is not achieved:**~~ ~~Restricted Discretionary~~ ~~**Matters of discretion:**~~ ~~1. Effects on the values as listed within NFL-APP Appendix 5.~~ ~~2. Impacts on Ngāi Tahu cultural values, including those listed in MW-2.3.~~

[20] Decision 46, paragraph 6.5.36
[21] Consequential to Decision 14
[22] Decision 46, paragraph 6.5.41

~~**NFL-R6**~~[23]	~~**New *Roads, farm tracks*, walking and cycling tracks within an identified ONF/L**~~	
~~**All zones**~~	~~**Activity status:** Restricted Discretionary~~ ~~**Matters of discretion:**~~ ~~1. *Effects* on the values as listed within NFL-APP Appendix 5.~~ ~~2. Impacts on Ngāi Tahu cultural values, including those listed in MW-2.3.~~ ~~3. The necessity of what is proposed and any alternatives.~~ ~~4. Mitigation measures proposed.~~	~~**Activity status where compliance is not achieved:** N/A~~
NFL-R~~7~~6[24]	~~**Mining and** ***Farm Quarry**ing* **within an identified ONF/L***~~	
Lower Sensitivity Areas	**Activity status:** Permitted Where: 1. the total area of extraction open at any one time does not exceed 1,500 m^2;~~ and~~ 2. the *quarrying* activity is *setback* 100 metres from any side or rear property *boundary*; ~~and~~ 3. the *quarrying* and associated activities is not visible from a formed public *road* or other public viewpoint; and 4. The disturbed area is progressively stabilised, filled or recontoured when exhausted of material. 5. The works are undertaken in accordance with Earthworks Standards EW-S6.	**Activity status where compliance is not achieved: NFL-R7 (1) – (4):** Restricted Discretionary **Matters of discretion:** 1. *Effects* on the values as listed within NFL-APP Appendix 5. 2. Impacts on Ngāi Tahu cultural values listed in MW-1.2. 3. Any alternatives to the location. 4. Mitigation measures proposed. **Activity status where compliance is not achieved: NFL-R7 (5):** Non-Complying
High Sensitivity	**Activity status:** Non-Complying	~~**Activity status where compliance is not achieved:** N/A~~

[23] Decision 46, paragraph 6.5.46
[24] Decision 46, paragraph 6.5.50

Areas		
NFL-R7[25]	***Woodlots* within an identified ONF/L**	
Lower Sensitivity Areas	**Activity status:** Restricted Discretionary Where: 1. The area of planting does not exceed 1 hectare. **Matters of discretion:** 1. *Effects* on the values as listed within NFL-APP Appendix 5. 2. Impacts on Ngāi Tahu cultural values listed in MW-1.2. 3. Any alternatives to the location. 4. Mitigation measures proposed.	**Activity status where compliance is not achieved:** Non-Complying
High Sensitivity Areas	**Activity status:** Non-Complying	
NFL-R8[26]	***Mining* and *Quarrying within an identified ONL***	
ONL	**Activity status:** Non-Complying	**Activity status where compliance is not achieved:** N/A
NFL-R~~8~~9	***~~Plantation~~ Commercial Forestry within an identified ONF/L***	
	Activity status: Non-Complying	**Activity status where compliance is not achieved:** N/A

[25] Decision 46, paragraph 6.5.54
[26] Decision 46, paragraph 6.5.50

Appendix 5 – Natural Feature and Landscape Values – NFL-APP

Hokonui / Waterfall Range Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL)

Description

This area includes that part of the Hokonui Hills within the boundaries of the Gore District including the Waterfall Range, East Peak / Hokanui, Dolamore Park and Croydon Bush / Haumuri.

The Waterfall Range forms a dramatic and highly expressive part of the Southland Syncline. Alternating harder sandstone and softer mudstone have been eroded to form strike ridges, which define the northern limb of the syncline. This ends abruptly at the *Murihiku* Escarpment, the geomorphic expression of the Hillfoot Fault. The mapped area is generally consistent with the *site* mapped in the New Zealand Geopreservation Inventory, described as 'some of New Zealand's most distinctive strike ridges' and ~~has a~~ 'trellised' drainage pattern along the Southland Syncline. The Range is a very legible part of the broader Southland Syncline and a distinctive and memorable landform with its pattern of repeated pyramidal peaks and ridge forms.

~~It~~ The area contains several significant ecological and scenic areas. Croydon Bush is a particularly significant area of remnant vegetation, and the only substantial area of indigenous forest remaining near Gore. It supports a range of successional communities that show recovery from fire and logging, including kahikatea and mataī, and contains several nationally threatened and locally uncommon species. At least 35 indigenous birds breed within the forest remnants, including the korimako / bellbird, pīwakawaka / fantail, pīpipi / brown creeper and kererū. Red tussock is found on the summit areas, often with mānuka.

~~The Range is a very legible part of the broader Southern Syncline and a distinctive and memorable landform with its pattern of repeated pyramidal peaks and ridge forms.~~

The southernmost part of the ONL is public *land* that takes the form of Croydon Bush and Dolamore Park. The vegetative cover of this public *reserve land* is dominated by regenerating native systems. ~~Naturalness is reduced where the land is under pasture but is high in areas with indigenous bush cover. The area is largely free of structures and has naturalness and wilderness qualities as experienced from within and is a scenic feature of the district.~~ Croydon Bush / Haumuri is managed as a Scenic Reserve and used for recreation including walking and tramping and there is a mountain bike track in Dolamore Park. The remainder of the ONL is managed under a predominantly pastoral farming land use regime and has been for many decades. The resultant grassland cover contributes to landform legibility. The patterns of indigenous forest and scrub on steeper, rockier terrain with pasture on the more amenable slopes, contributes to a high degree of landscape coherence. Naturalness is reduced where the *land* is under pasture but is high in areas with indigenous bush cover. The area is largely free of *structures* and has naturalness and wilderness qualities as experienced from within the public parts of the ONL, and, as a whole, is a scenic feature of the district. The Southland Murihiku Regional Landscape Study (Boffa Miskell, 2019) identifies this area as an ONF and the Waterfall Range is a well-recognised and valued feature of the Gore area (often referred to in promotional material).

Strong cultural values are present in this landscape from *mana whenua*. Many of the peaks within this landform link to Ngāi Tahu cultural histories – specifically pūrākau ~~&~~ and creation stories related to the Tākitimu waka, and Matamata ~~&~~ and Te Rakitauneke. These pūrākau connect this area with the wider Otago/Southland region both geographically ~~&~~ and via *whakapapa* links. Hokanui (East Peak) is of particular importance to *Hokonui Rūnanga* as it is considered an ancestral mountain for *whānau* who *whakapapa* to this area. *Mana whenua* also have strong cultural associations with the various waterways originating within the Hokonui/Waterfall Range, such as the tributaries of the Ōtamatea (Otamita) Stream, Mānuka (Charlton Stream), and Waimumu. Haumuri in its

entirety is also an area with strong connections to Ngāi Tahu *mahinga kai* practices, which are a key vehicle for expressing and perpetuating Ngāi Tahu culture and identity. Finally, the Hokonui/Waterfall ~~r~~Range is near a number of historic *Māori* reserves, including a range of SILNA reserves, which have historic and contemporary significance for Ngāi Tahu.

The area identified as ONL has a complex landform and vegetation cover, and variable degrees of visibility and natural character. Given the majority of the ONL is private farmland, the community's appreciation of it is largely visual and from an external perspective. Reflecting this, two management areas are identified (termed low and high sensitivity areas) with some differences in management provisions, so as not to unduly constrain rural *land* use activities, whilst still protecting landscape values. Both areas are included within the ONL and are mapped as part of the ONL, as well as mapped ridgelines that are part of the high sensitivity area.

Management Areas

A High Sensitivity Area has been identified to include:

- The peaks and ridgelines along with associated upper slope areas. These are a primary feature underpinning ONL identification and major character defining elements of the ONL. These are generally more visually dominant than lower elevation valley areas, and at least some of these have Kai Tahu cultural landscape significance.
- All areas assessed as containing *significant indigenous vegetation*.
- Along with upper slope areas, mid and lower slope / valley areas with high visibility from surrounding areas and public viewpoints.

Low Sensitivity Areas have been identified to include:

- Mid – low slope, low visibility areas from surrounding areas and public viewpoints.
- Areas with more modified rural character.

Mapped Ridgelines have been identified to include:

- Strike ridge features.
- Highlighted with rocky outcrops and *indigenous vegetation*.

Values to be protected

- The geo-heritage values of the distinctive and memorable landform, including the strike ridges and trellised drainage pattern.

- Perceptual values based on high ~~N~~natural landform ~~and its~~ legibility and landscape coherence (i.e. patterns of vegetation cover that reflect the natural landform and / or stature, uniform grassland providing for landform legibility).
- The ~~quantity and quality~~ ecological / biodiversity values associated with significant presence of *indigenous vegetation* cover.
- ~~Where possible this should be managed to enhance its natural and~~ Ngāi Tahu cultural landscape values~~, including habitat value for~~ associated with *indigenous* ~~fauna~~ *vegetation*~~, and Ngāi Tahu~~ (habitat for indigenous fauna, *mahinga kai*, ~~and/or~~ *taonga species*), waterways, and peaks (links with cultural histories and creation stories).
- ~~Coherence of the landscape created by the vegetation patterns reflecting the natural landform.~~
- Landmark values for Gore generally – the Hokonui Hills are a significant contributor to the identity of the district, and have value for recreational opportunities in a natural setting.
- Aesthetic values associated with the memorable hill forms (including the distinctive pattern of pyramidal peaks and ridges) and natural or rural character.
- The natural character of the area generally and in particular, of the visually prominent skylines and hillslopes.
- Naturalness values based on the significant dominance of natural elements and patterns in the landscape and low influence of built form, human modification of landforms or lineal block or lines of exotic trees.
- Qualities of naturalness and wilderness as experienced from within the area.
- ~~Qualities that contribute to Ngāi Tahu cultural associations, including the naturalness of the hill profiles, the natural character of waterways, and the ability to practice *mahinga kai* .~~

Potential threats to landscape values

- *Quarrying* / *earthworks* that significantly erode the legibility of the natural landforms and the landscape coherence.
- Clearance of or damage to areas of *indigenous vegetation*.
- Visually prominent *buildings* and *structures*.
- Visually prominent exotic forestry and shelter plantings.
- Lighting.
- Alterations to the naturalness of waterways.
- *Pest* plant and animal infestation.

~~Mata Ura / Mataura River High Natural Character Feature (HNCF)~~

~~Description~~

~~The feature identified includes the entire main stem of the Mataura River within the Gore District, including the *river* margins. The *river* and its margins are defined as including the active *river* floodplain to the top of the defining terraces.~~

~~The Mataura River is clearly a major natural hydrological feature of the district, responsible for the creation of many of the adjacent landforms and subject to powerful natural processes. The *river* corridor morphology strongly expresses the natural fluvial processes in features such as gravel beds and channels,~~

~~*river* terraces and meander loops. The natural character of the *river* margins are now generally highly modified by farming, and the presence of stop banks, exotic trees, scrub and grass species. Whilst natural character attributes are modified, they are still present, and the river has been designated an 'important bird area' by Birdlife International because it supports breeding colonies of endangered tarāpuka/Black Billed Gulls. The *mahinga kai* values of the *river* have also been recognised through the establishment of the Mataura River Mātaitai Reserve in 2006, which recognises its importance as a habitat for a range of *mahinga kai* species – most notably kanakana/lamprey. Additionally, the river is famous for its Brown Trout fishery and is covered by a Water Conservation Order (1997). Under this, the recognized outstanding values relate to fisheries and angling amenity.~~

~~The river is a memorable natural feature for its scale and power, but memorability is reduced by its modified natural character. Perceptual natural character remains due to the flowing water and *river* landforms but has been significantly modified by agricultural land use on the floodplain. *Indigenous vegetation* presence is minimal. There are transient values associated with various flow regimes, and the presence of bird and fish life. The river has some wildness qualities due to its scale and power but these, and its scenic values are modified by the exotic character of the vegetation along its margins and by the presence of urban development in the vicinity of the towns of Gore and Mataura.~~

~~The Mata-ura (Mataura River) has significant cultural values for *mana whenua*. It is considered an ancestral river for local whānau, and has fed and guided generations of Waitaha, Ngāti Māmoe and Ngāi Tahu as they have traversed the Murihiku region. A number of ara tawhito (historic trails) follow the Mata-ura linking coastal Murihiku and its offshore islands (such as Ruapuke) to the Central Lakes area, connecting a number of kāiks (settlements), nohoanga (seasonal settlements), mahinga kai resources, and communities along its length. The presence of these trails has also seen a number of tribally significant historic events occur along the length of the Mata-ura. This importance is formally recognised through a Statutory Acknowledgement within the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1996. The Mata-ura and its tributaries are also areas with strong connections to Ngāi Tahu mahinga kai practices, which are a key vehicle for expressing and perpetuating Ngāi Tahu culture and identity. Finally, the intrinsic value of wai and its mauri are key cultural values for the Mata-ura.~~

~~Values to be protected.~~

- ~~Remaining natural characteristics including natural riverbed, floodplain and terrace landforms, and any remaining *indigenous vegetation* and areas of *wetland*.~~
- ~~Attributes that contribute to its habitat value for birds and aquatic fauna, particularly *indigenous species* and Ngāi Tahu *taonga species* and *mahinga kai* species.~~
- ~~Low visual impact of built elements.~~
- ~~Qualities of naturalness and wilderness as experienced from within the area.~~
- ~~Qualities that contribute to Ngāi Tahu cultural associations, including mauri, river access, and the ability to practice *mahinga kai* .~~

~~Potential threats to natural character values~~

- ~~*Quarrying activities / Earthworks* that significantly erode the legibility of the natural landforms and the landscape coherence.~~
- ~~Clearance of or damage to, areas of *indigenous vegetation.*~~
- ~~Visually prominent *buildings* and *structures.*~~
- ~~Exotic tree planting that obscures the legibility of the natural *river* landforms.~~
- ~~Alterations to the naturalness of the waterbody.~~
- ~~Activities resulting in inappropriate discharges to the waterway.~~
- ~~Structures and land-uses that restrict access to the Mata-ura for Ngāi Tahu cultural activities (including *mahinga kai* practices).~~

Te Au Nui Pihapiha Kanakana / Mataura Falls Outstanding Natural Feature (ONF)

Description

The Mataura Falls are a natural feature of the Mataura River located adjacent to the town of Mataura, just north of the State Highway 93 bridge. The falls are natural insofar as they are the result of natural geological and hydrological processes, however, they have been much modified by human activity –including intentional destruction to create hydroelectric *infrastructure* - and their setting is now industrial. Despite this, Te Au Nui Pihapiha Kanakana/Mataura Falls is still appropriately afforded ONF status due to its geo-heritage, cultural, historic, and remaining landscape values.

The falls are the result of the Mataura River flowing over a *bed* of resistant sandstone. They also represent an outstanding outcrop of the Late Permian to Early Cretaceous *Murihiku* Terrane, composed of gently dipping interbedded sandstones, conglomerates, and mudstones, representing the fore-arc or back-arc basin of the eastern Gondwana margin. Discontinuous lignite/coal lenses exposed in the surrounding could reveal important insights into the paleoenvironmental history of the *Murihiku* Terrane, including at the Cretaceous-Tertiary (K-T or K-Pg) extinction event. Their natural form is now much modified due to blasting by adjacent landowners, however, they are a hydrological feature, with natural processes still operating, albeit in a modified context. The *river* margins are highly modified with little *indigenous vegetation* character remaining, and bank forms modified by weirs and water races upstream.

The Falls are identified in the New Zealand Geo-preservation Inventory as a feature of national importance. The Mataura Falls and gorge are described as 'eroded over and into nearly flat-lying Jurassic sedimentary rocks of the *Murihiku* Supergroup. These rocks contain rich plant debris and fossils.

The Falls have an austere memorability based on the juxtaposition of powerful natural hydrological processes with grim industrial buildings. There are naturalness qualities associated with the *river* flow but the natural *river* forms are now much modified and the setting is highly modified. There are transient values (varying moods) associated with the various flow regimes of the *river*. The *river* in this area retains some wildness values associated with its powerful flow in a constrained channel. Scenic values are low from publicly accessible areas due to the industrial setting, however they retain some values when viewed from a close proximity.

The Falls were once a spectacular tourist attraction for early European settlers prior to blasting to minimize spray for a pedestrian bridge and works associated with hydro-electricity schemes for industrial uses (paper mill and freezing works) on the adjacent banks. The importance of the Falls is still recognised, however, through the Statutory Acknowledgement of the Mataura River within the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1996 (in part due to the presence of the Falls), and the Mataura River Mātaitai Reserve – the latter having historic value as the first *freshwater mātaitai* in New Zealand.

Whilst the Mata-ura (Mataura River) in its entirety has significant cultural value for *mana whenua*, Te Au Nui Pihapiha Kanakana / Mataura Falls has specific value due to its intrinsic mana and mauri, its *mahinga kai* values and histories, and its connections to Ngāi Tahu historical events. The Falls elicit a strong sense of identity for local *mana whenua*, and accounts of its discovery by the Ngāti Mamoe tipuna Paroparo Te Whenua create linkages between today and the ancient world. The historic abundance of *mahinga kai* species – particularly kanakana/lamprey – supported by the Falls is also of historic and cultural significance to Ngāi Tahu and a point of local pride and identity. *Mana whenua* also have an ongoing relationship with this feature that supports the revitalization and intergenerational transfer of cultural knowledge, particularly through practical environmental projects and *mahinga kai* activities.

Values to be protected.

- Geo-heritage values.
- Remaining natural characteristics associated with rocky banks and outcrops and powerful *river* flow.
- Attributes that contribute to its habitat value for kanakana and other fauna, particularly indigenous and Ngāi Tahu *taonga* and/or *mahinga kai* species.
- Qualities of wildness.

- Qualities that contribute to Ngāi Tahu associations, including *mauri*, *river access*, and the ability to practice *mahinga kai* and *kaitiaki* responsibilities.

Potential threats to ~~landscape~~ values

- Further blasting and modification to the *riverbed* and banks.
- Built development and / or exotic plantings on the adjacent banks that further modifies the natural character of the area.
- Further reductions to access for Ngāi Tahu cultural activities.
- Activities resulting in inappropriate *discharges* to *water*, including dumping.