

Name:	Rangitikei River	
Location:	NZ Topo BK35, BL34 & BL35	
Description:	Rangitikei River from Mangaweka to Vinegar Hill. Incised meandering river valley and gorges with exposed white mudstone escarpments.	
ONL/ONF/SAF:	Outstanding Natural Feature	
Natural Science:	Geological/ Geomorphological:	Incised river valley created by erosion of river through the sedimentary soils, resulting in unique scalloped edges with exposed rock outcrops or mudstone bluffs. Erosion process is evident through the soft sedimentary layers of Plio-Pleistocene fossiliferous sediments. This area contains the Concretion Terrace which is listed in the District Plan (Operative 2002), Appendix 1C(OF1). The Rangitikei River has a limited area of river flats. These flats are well-drained in most places and are a result of alluvium being deposited when the river has been in flood.
	Biological/Ecological:	Exotic vegetation and indigenous forest remnants on valley sides enhances ecological value and river quality while also creating a habitat for birdlife and increasing ecosystem health and mauri. Aquatic species present in the river include eels, koura, freshwater mussels, patiki (black flounder), inanga, and rainbow and brown trout.
	Hydrological:	The source for the Rangitikei River is in the Kaimanawa Ranges, rising from springs on Ngapuketuru. It is representative of one of New Zealand's longest rivers at 241km long, it is the third longest river in the North Island and the sixth largest North Island river in terms of water volume. Water in the river and from stream tributaries has significant quality and quantity values, particularly on uses downstream. A national water conservation order exists on the river as a means of protecting water flow, and in many respects, this has prevented hydro-electric development on the river. The flow of water changes along the river's course, which includes areas of rapids interspersed with deeper, quieter water. The Rangitikei River has a history of flooding and represents one of the educational opportunities of the river, which Massey University recognised and who have undertaken research on the historic channel change of the Rangitikei River at Bulls by assessing aerial photographs between 1955 and 2007. Flooding was traditionally celebrated by Māori as it formed part of the process of spreading mauri from the surrounding landscape, including from the mountains and forests, to nourish and feed the land and everything living on the land.
Perceptual:	Memorability:	Highly memorable landscape due to the scale and steepness of landform incision rising from the watercourse - more dramatic than surrounding folded landforms due to the presence of significant escarpments and waterway which contrasts with the surrounding modified pastoral landscape. The escarpments have a high degree of memorability and contribute to the identity and sense of place of the area.
	Legibility/Expressiveness:	Complex landform features are very expressive of the erosion processes of the river, with 'empty' scalloped ox-bows providing historical references to shifts in the river.
	Transient:	River valley has its own microclimate. Changes in the location of the river bed over time, as evidenced by the 'empty' scallops. River level changes reflective of headwater rains. Deep gorges likely to have some impact on microclimatic conditions, such as creation of mist on colder mornings.
	Aesthetic:	High aesthetic value due to its visually striking steep escarpments, cliffs and scalloping. These are a vivid, dramatic and awe-inspiring landscape feature characterised by a repetition of exposed eroding cliffs combined with a meandering scalloped watercourse in the deeply incised river valley, which provides coherence for this stretch of the Rangitikei River before it transitions into the flatter lands south of Vinegar Hill.
	Naturalness:	High degree of perceived naturalness despite some pastoral use within the river valley. Naturalness significantly contributed to by the dramatic escarpment features, scale of their erosion and the expressiveness of the river's meandering course over time as shown by the scallop shaped former ox-bows. Areas of farm land on the river flats have been included in the ONL because the river valley is viewed as an integrated whole between the river and escarpment top. The dominance of the geomorphology and topography is sufficiently strong to warrant the river corridor being read as a whole despite the presence of modified land cover. The river provides an important wildlife corridor.
Associational:	Historical:	Important travelling route since early settlement. Historic heritage, of particular historical importance are archaeological sites and high potential for archaeological site discovery. From the mid-1840s Pākehā settlers informally leased land from Ngāti Apa at several places south of the Rangitikei River. Rangitāne o Manawatū also leased out large areas of land in the 1840s to settlers in the vicinity of the Rangitikei River. During 1897 the river experienced its most significant flood since European settlement. The flood resulted in destroyed bridges and fords connecting townships, including bridges at both Mangaweka and Vinegar Hill. In addition, tōtara trees more than 300 trees were swept away near Vinegar Hill. At the lower end of the river homesteads were washed away and stock drowned. In 1958 the river was deemed as being navigable and, as such, became property of the Crown via the Coal-mines Act Amendment Act 1903. In 1959 under the Crown it became a soil conservation and river control reserve.

Tangata Whenua:	<p>Under the Settlement Act, the Rangitikei River is an area of interest for Ngāti Hauiti, Ngāti Apa, and Rangitāne o Manawatū (for the latter two iwi it is also a statutory acknowledgment area). Ngāti Tūwharetoa is also recognised under the Settlement Act and Ōroua Declaration in relation to the river.</p> <p>The naming of the Rangitikei River occurred during Haunui a Nanaia's pursuit of his wife, Wairaka, naming the rivers that he crossed along the way. Rangitikei has been literally translated to be the day of the long stride, however it refers to the good progress that was made by Haunui during his day travels before he encountered the river. The Rangitikei River is of historical, cultural, spiritual and traditional significance, as well as taonga to these iwi. The river is significant as a marker of the boundary of the rohe of Rangitāne o Manawatū. The river was a means of communication and was used as the main highway between the Central North Island and sea, and as a migration route (such as for Ngāti Tūwharetoa and Ngāti Raukawa). During the arrival of Europeans, Māori were noted in the Rangitikei area for travelling up and down the river by waka at pā sites along the way.</p> <p>The use of the Rangitikei River as a route relied on lack of conflict with the various iwi and hapū whose boundaries border the river. In this way the Rangitikei River was not only a physical link between tangata whenua but also a central component to the relationship link between the people. The Rangitikei River and the district's waterways were a vital means of gaining access to settlement, cultivation and mahinga kai sites. The soil was fertile, and transport to mahinga kai was significantly aided by river access, making rapid communication between pā possible, and hence it was an essential means of trade. During the migration of foreign iwi the river provided an easy method to gather and mobilise warriors from surrounding areas. The Rangitikei River, with its sheer cliffs, was ideally suited for traditional kainga (settlements) and elevated fortified defensive pā site.</p> <p>For Ngāti Apa (North Island), the Rangitikei River is the tribal domain for many hapū. The Rangitikei River was occupied by two major descent groups - Ngāti Tauira and Ngāti Kauae who descend from Papawhenua and the other group including Ngāti Tupua, Ngāti Tupataua, Ngāti Ika/Tumoetere, and Ngāti Tamatea who descend from Tuariki. Many of the Tuariki hapū were strongly interconnected with other hapū in the Whangaehu and Turakina areas. Ngāti Tupua and Ngāti Tupataua occupied the central reaches of the Rangitikei on a permanent basis but many of the other hapū only went to the upper areas of the Rangitikei for refuge from war parties and to snare birds, hunt pigs and catch eels. In 1840, Ngāti Apa signed the Treaty of Waitangi at Tawhirihoepā, a Ngāti Apa kainga near the mouth of the Rangitikei River. This signified their first major engagement with the Crown. Ngāti Raukawa also have an interest in the Rangitikei River north of Ngāti Apa's specific areas of interest and they came to settle in the Manawatū district by travelling down the Rangitikei River valley sometime prior to 1840. For Ngāti Hauiti the Rangitikei River is defined as the heart of their lands, providing both physical and spiritual sustenance for generations.</p>
Shared/Recognised:	The Rangitikei River is widely recognised by local people and forms a key part of the identity of the central Manawatū Region. Widely recognised for its boating and fishing opportunities. Iconic feature of the area which is widely written about, photographed, filmed and described. The white Papa cliffs contribute to the genius loci of the district.
Recreation:	High level of recreational use, including swimming, rafting, jet boating canoeing, kayaking (including an annual kayaking race) guided and unguided fishing (known for trophy rainbow and brown trout), walking, picnicking, and camping. Jet boating, rafting canoeing and kayaking on the Rangitikei River are rated highly at a country-wide scale. There are many access points to the river from roads leading off SH1. Access across private land is also available for those who wish to walk up the river to view the cannonball concretions (spherical boulders) in the forest adjacent to the river.
Summary of Key Characteristics:	High degree of perceived naturalness derived from the expressiveness of the formative processes of the Rangitikei River course which contrasts with the surrounding terrace landform. The dynamic qualities demonstrated by the legibility of the scallop features (formerly river bed), the dramatic appearance of the enclosing curved escarpments, the dominance of the river corridor, the prominence, visibility and beauty of the white, sheer, papa (mudstone) cliffs, and the unbuilt simplicity of the cliff edges and escarpment tops result in a highly memorable landscape feature. Areas of indigenous riparian vegetation contribute to the ecological and water quality values. Existing areas of grazing and productive land uses allow for visibility of the landform. A Trans Power high voltage transmission line Powerco pole lines cross this ONF.
Potential Issues:	<p>Earthworks and/or quarrying that may affect the integrity of the mudstone cliffs and scallops (including roading across the escarpments). Further degradation of native riparian vegetation which may lead to sedimentation of the river and destruction of wildlife habitat. Activities, including pine plantations, on the escarpments or terraces which may screen the geological features. It would assist protection of the key characteristics if the following were to occur:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discourage the loss of native vegetation; • discourage the establishment of exotic vegetation; • discourage earthworks; • discourage adverse effects on cultural values; and • restrict built development.

ONFL3 - Outstanding Natural Feature - Rangitikei River

