

Name:	Nitschke/Gorton's Bush (Waitapu Stream Bush)	
Location:	NZ Topo BL34	
Description:	Series of gullies steeply incised into the landform primarily containing dense native vegetation.	
ONL/ONF/SAF:	Outstanding Natural Feature	
Natural Science:	Geological/ Geomorphological:	Representative of a deeply incised stream valley with steep sided faces and dense native vegetation which is characteristic of this area. Expressive of the erosion processes of the water catchment area which has cut through soft marine sedimentary layers.
	Biological/Ecological:	Indigenous vegetation enhances ecological value, biodiversity, ecosystem functionality, and mauri. The feature is representative of land cover that was once common in the area but is no longer, making it a rare feature. It was a Recommended Area for Protection (RAP) in DOC's PNAP survey report (1995) and is listed in the District Plan (Operative 2002 - Appendix 1B) as Natural Area SA40. As part of DOC's survey research was undertaken on the vascular plants present in the area. The plant habitats range from very dry ridges through to dripping wet mudstone banks, and the vegetation from kānuka scrub and kānuka forest, with tōtara and kōwhai to patches of tall tawa and rimu.
	Hydrological:	Riparian vegetation improves mauri and water quality from agricultural land runoff, adding to ecosystem health. Tributary to the Waituna Stream, which feeds into the Rangitihei River.
Perceptual:	Memorability:	Memorable feature due to the steeply incised gully spur terrain with its dense dark native vegetation which covers these gullies and their contrast with the modified folded/flattened landforms of the pastoral surrounds.
	Legibility/Expressiveness:	A highly legible small scale topographical feature set within a simple landform of gently rolling pasture. The steeply incised gullies contrast with the relatively flat terrain of the surrounding landform. This contrast is accentuated by the variance in colour form and texture between the dark native vegetation within the gully and the light pasture grass of the surrounding landforms.
	Transient:	Strong transient values are not readily apparent, although likely fauna values and microclimatic conditions in gullies.
	Aesthetic:	Extensive indigenous vegetation throughout the valley system has a high degree of legibility and coherence which reinforces its vividness both as a feature and in contrast to the surrounding modified landscape. The combination of indigenous vegetation cover with the incised valley system has significant aesthetic appeal within the district through their rarity.
	Naturalness:	Whilst the area is surrounded by a largely modified pastoral landscape, there is a high degree of naturalness within the gullies due to their containment and the extent of indigenous vegetation remnants.
Associational:	Historical:	Old tōtara stumps indicate past logging.
	Tangata Whenua:	Under the Settlement Act the bush is an area of interest for both Ngāti Apa and Rangitāne o Manawatū. Ngāti Apa extensively used Waituna Stream for its plentiful fishing resources and built pa tuna or eel weirs in the stream. In a general sense, Tikanga Māori Principles such as Kaitiakitanga (Guardianship), Wairua (Well-being) and Mauri (Life force) are assumed to be important.
	Shared/Recognised:	Managed as a QEII National Trust property, the 200ha Nitschke Bush is recognised for its botanic values, although there remain ongoing management challenges due to its relative smallness and isolation and proximity to productive agricultural activities and potential weed sources. Large remnants of forest such as Nitschke's Bush are rare on the Manawatū Plains, especially those with some flat terrain, and this area of bush gives a glimpse into the District's pre-agricultural landscapes.
	Recreation:	Limited opportunities for the public to experience this feature.
Summary of Key Characteristics:	High degree of perceived naturalness derived from the combination of vegetation and expressiveness of the landform's formative erosion processes. This feature stands out due to the contrast with the flatness of the surrounding agricultural land use. Areas of indigenous riparian vegetation within the gully systems contribute to the botanical, ecological and aesthetic values.	
Potential Issues:	The incised valley system with native vegetation defines the feature and contributes to the perceived naturalness, aesthetic values and associational factors. It would assist protection of the key characteristics if the following were to occur: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> discourage the loss of native vegetation; discourage the establishment of exotic vegetation; discourage adverse effects on cultural values; discourage earthworks; and restrict built development. 	

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