

Name:	Manawatū Gorge	
Location:	NZ Topo BM35	
Description:	A small portion of the Manawatū Gorge is located along the eastern boundary of Manawatū District at the confluence of the Pohangina and Manawatū Rivers. The area of Manawatū Gorge within the Manawatū District would not warrant ONL status by itself, however due to the positioning of district boundary lines, a small area near the western entrance of the Manawatū Gorge must be considered as part of the gorge landscape feature and therefore given some recognition within the Manawatū District Plan. The following description relates to the Manawatū Gorge in its entirety. It is noted that the gorge area identified within Manawatū District contains a land parcel with a Kiwi Rail Designation.	
ONL/ONF/SAF:	Outstanding Natural Feature	
Natural Science:	Geological/ Geomorphological:	Geological feature. Erosion has retained a river passage from east to west as the Ruahine and Tararua Ranges have been formed over the last million years by uplifted greywacke rock between two major faults.
	Biological/Ecological:	Adjacent to the Manawatū Gorge Scenic Reserve, sharing a common boundary with the reserve's western end. Ecological significance and mauri provided by its regenerating indigenous vegetation and remnant native shrubland, dominated by tawa and titoki forest. The area contains kānuka, rewarewa, matai, hinau, ribbonwood, mature pukatea, kahikatea, high value old-growth forests, Threatened-Nationally Critical swamp maire (which is now rare in the Manawatū), and a rare raupō-dominated seepage wetland ecosystem. This forest is also unusual because of the predominance of giant maidenhair fern. The fern is only found in the Manawatū, making it quite unique. This diverse range of flora indicates good ecosystem functionality, and is representative of the vegetation that once covered much of the surrounding area. Recent research surveys show that there are no obvious signs of possum browsing on palatable species, a good indication of ecosystem health. Seven lizard species are potentially present within the area, including At-Risk lizard species. The shingle riverbed habitat of the Manawatū River adjacent to the area supports a diversity of wetland and riverbed birds such as Caspian tern (Nationally Vulnerable), black- (Nationally Critical) and red-billed (Declining) gull, and banded (Nationally Vulnerable) and black-fronted dotterel. The old-growth forests in the area support a diversity of common forest bird species and potentially Threatened and At-Risk species such as North Island kākā (Recovering), whitehead (Declining), and North Island rifleman (Declining). The seepage wetland potentially supports birds specialised for swamp habitats such as marsh crane (Declining) and Australasian bittern (Nationally Critical). This rare biodiversity offers research and educational opportunities.
	Hydrological:	Significant feature that allows the Manawatū River to drain both east and west of the main divide. The Manawatū River is a main artery in the network of rivers of the area and contains a strong amount of mauri. It is the only place in New Zealand (and the Southern Hemisphere) where a river begins its journey on the opposite side of the main divide to where it joins the sea, making it a rare feature. Confluence of the Pohangina and Manawatū Rivers.
	Perceptual:	Memorability:
	Legibility/Expressiveness:	Deeply incised river gorge which illustrates natural process of river erosion.
	Transient:	Continued erosion and slips may reduce the gorge's Outstanding Qualification.
	Aesthetic:	Visual and scenic characteristics, particularly provided by its simple, yet striking, and distinct landform. The deep incision of the gorge reinforces the vividness of the area, while the diverse native vegetation provides a sense of coherence which contrasts distinctly with the surrounding modified landscape.
	Naturalness:	High degree of naturalness, particularly the extensive indigenous vegetation at higher elevations, modified by the presence of road and rail on opposing sides of the gorge.
Associational:	Historical:	Important landmark and travelling route for both Māori and European settlers. Since European settlement surrounding areas have been extensively cleared for use as agriculture or converted into urban areas. This clearance of native vegetation is reflected in today's land cover being predominately exotic. In the 20th century Ashhurst was a prospering town due to its reliance on the nearby Manawatū Gorge, which provided essential industries such as forestry, farming (especially dairying), and tourism. In 1871 work began on establishing the Manawatū Gorge road and was completed in 1872. In the 1880s the Crown created a Forest Reserve along the line of the Ruahine and Tararua Ranges, north and south of the gorge. In the late 19th century a railway line from Napier through the gorge was also planned. To enable this railway project to go ahead land was set aside under the Public Works Act, including an area of land which was gazette for the purpose of a railway in 1880. It covered 83 acres and was situated north-east of the confluence of the Manawatū and Pohangina Rivers and north of Parahaki Island. The railway line was completed in 1891.

Tangata Whenua:	<p>Under the Settlement Act the gorge is an area of interest for Rangitāne o Manawatū, Rangitāne o Wairarapa o Rangitāne Tamaki Nui-a-Rua, and Raukawa ki te Tonga. The Settlement Act and Ōroua Declaration also acknowledge Ngāti Kahungunu in relation to the area. An archaeological survey undertaken in 1997 revealed numerous archaeological sites which clearly showed that settlement of Māori was concentrated in close vicinity to waterways as the rivers and streams provided canoe access to the Central North Island. Most bends of the Manawatū River display evidence of settlement sites, pā, gardens, and kainga, as do the fertile river banks and terraces along the river. The Manawatū River and its tributaries, as well as the adjacent forests, were important food sources and provided plentiful supplies, enabling Māori occupation in the Manawatū Gorge.</p> <p>Rangitāne o Manawatū has an interest in the Manawatū Gorge Scenic Reserve, but their area of interest north of the Manawatū River is within Tararua District. They also have an interest in the scenic reserve south of the Manawatū River, but this is within Palmerston North City. The area of interest for Rangitāne o Manawatū within the Manawatū Gorge Scenic Reserve is not within Manawatū District. A small area of land within Manawatū District abuts the Manawatū Gorge Scenic Reserve's western boundary. This small area is considered to be an ONF and is discussed in detail under ONF 13 Manawatū Gorge. High level of cultural importance to Māori associated with ancestry and legends. Important travel and trade route for early Māori. Parahaki Island at the mouth of the Manawatū Gorge was a kainga (village) and was once a food source and extensive restoration planting is currently underway coordinated by Te Kauru-Hapū Collective and returning a part of it to a mahinga kai site. The island is also a burial site, making it absolutely inalienable being a wahi tapu. The island is said to have been retained by Rangitāne following the sale of the 250,000 acre Ahuaturanga Block (site of the present day Palmerston North) to the Crown in 1864.</p> <p>Rangitāne o Manawatū and Rangitāne o Wairarapa o Rangitāne Tamaki Nui-a-Rua ancestors settled in the Manawatū over seven hundred years ago and have an unbroken connection with the land and waterways since that time. The river was the main route for travel and communication and provided abundant resources. The ancestors of Rangitāne arrive in Aotearoa aboard the Kurahaupō waka. Whatongā, a captain of the waka, is attributed to discovering and exploring the Manawatū River catchment area. He named the great expanse of bush cover Te Taperenui o Whatongā or the great district (food/supply/resources) of Whatongā. The name 'Manawatū' was bestowed on the river by Tohunga over six hundred years ago, his name was Haunui a Nanaia. Whilst searching for his wife Wairaka, Haunui came upon the Manawatū River where it exits to the sea. The sheer width of the river mouth essentially took his breath away (stand still), hence manawa (breath), tū (to stand still).</p> <p>The Manawatū River was central to Rangitāne cultural values system. It was created through the spirit of Okatia who gave life to a tōtara tree growing on the slopes of the Puketoi Range in the Hawke's Bay. The tōtara made its way down the mountain Ranges of Rauhine and Tararua and forced its way through these ranges. It created the Manawatū Gorge, giving the river the ability to make its way out to sea.</p> <p>Te Āpiti, commonly referred to as the Manawatū Gorge, is of paramount importance to Rangitāne. Te Āpiti is the Rangitāne name for the Manawatū Gorge. Te Āpiti has many meanings including split or cleft, to place side by side, or to have two of. It represents the two sides of the gorge. Not only did Te Āpiti provide a means of crossing from east to west but crucially it connected the eastern and western boundaries of Rangitāne. Te Āpiti was a significant route of transport and communication passageway between the western and eastern Rangitāne communities. Thus, the area is symbolic of connectivity between people, places and environments. Also, Te Āpiti is the meeting place of the two great forests of Whatongā, the Ruahine and the Tararua Ranges.</p> <p>Located with the Manawatū River in Te Au Rere a te Tonga, is a red-coloured, tapu rock known as Te Ahu a Turanga which holds the mauri of the river and Rangitāne o Manawatū. The rock rises and falls with the flood waters and is never covered by the waters. It is said that when rock is red in colour it is a call for caution to all who pass by.</p>
Shared/Recognised:	The gorge provides the main transportation link between the east and west for the Central North Island and is widely recognised and remembered by travellers. The adjacent scenic reserve is recognised in the One Plan as an ONFL, as is the Manawatū River down to its confluence with the Pohangina River. The 'Tawa Loop' walking track is also part of Kiwi Guardians, which is a nationwide programme for children to learn about nature.
Recreation:	Manawatū Gorge DOC walking and biking tracks accessed either via the Woodville or Ashhurst end. Also, jetboating, kayaking, canoeing, and steam train.
Summary of Key Characteristics:	High natural character derived from the expressiveness of the formative processes of the Manawatū River watercourse. The dynamic qualities demonstrated by the legibility of the steep incision rising from the watercourse are a highly memorable landscape feature. The majority of the Manawatū Gorge is located outside of the Manawatū District, however protection of the western gorge entrance landform and native vegetation will ensure that the overall values will be maintained. The extent of existing development (road and rail) throughout the gorge is acknowledged, however the openness and simplicity of the gorge entrance landform is an important characteristic.
Potential Issues:	<p>The extent of the Manawatū Gorge Scenic Reserve and the visual extension of the native vegetation cover into Manawatū District, native vegetation and enclosure within the valley 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:</p> <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.

ONFL13 - Outstanding Natural Feature - Manawatu Gorge

