

Name:	Upper Ōroua River and River Valley	
Location:	NZ Topo BL35 & BL36	
Description:	Upper Ōroua River corridor consisting of incised valley with a mix of exotic and indigenous vegetation.	
ONL/ONF/SAF:	Significant Amenity Feature	
Natural Science:	Geological/ Geomorphological:	Deeply incised stream valleys with steep sided faces. Representative of the erosion processes of the water catchment area which has cut through soft marine sedimentary layers leaving old ox-bows and exposed papa mudstone escarpments.
	Biological/Ecological:	Mix of exotic and indigenous vegetation. Ecological value is reduced by the presence of pasture in the valley. This area contains the Hopkins Property which is listed in the District Plan (Operative 2002), Appendix 1B (SA37). Trout recorded in the Ōroua River.
	Hydrological:	The Ōroua River is one of the main rivers flowing out of western Ruahine Forest Park. Riparian vegetation improves water quality from agricultural land runoff, contributing to ecosystem health and mauri. Received 2018 New Zealand River Award for demonstrating long-term trend improvements in water quality, specifically in relation to dissolved reactive phosphorus. Information based on research data for the river collated by LAWA. The Ōroua River was the most improved in the Horizons Region, making it a unique waterbody in the area with enhanced ecosystem functionality.
Perceptual:	Memorability:	Memorable due to the dramatic geomorphology with bends and escarpments which contrast with the folded/terraced landforms of the surrounding pastoral landscape.
	Legibility/Expressiveness:	Clearly legible landform features very expressive of the erosion processes of the river, with 'empty' scalloped ox-bows and white papa escarpments providing historical references to shifts in the river.
	Transient:	Possible fauna values and likely microclimatic conditions in gullies.
	Aesthetic:	Significant aesthetic appeal as a result of the native vegetation, which provides a general pattern of land cover coherence, combined with the striking scale of the incised river valley with its old river bends and vivid white cliff escarpments.
	Naturalness:	Whilst the area is surrounded by a largely modified pastoral landscape, a moderate degree of perceived naturalness exists within the gullies due to the presence of mudstone cliffs and indigenous vegetation. This character is, however, reduced by the extent of pastoral farming on both the valley slopes and valley floor.
Associational:	Historical:	Slightly upstream, to the east of the SAF boundary, is the Alice Nash Memorial Heritage Lodge. Access to the lodge is via a track which was a former logging road, indicating past forestry activities in the area.
	Tangata Whenua:	Under the Settlement Act the SAF is an area of interest for Ngāti Apa and Ngāti Hauiti. Ngāti Tuwharetoa are also acknowledged under the Settlement Act and Ōroua Declaration in relation to the area. Ngāti Apa (North Island) acknowledge that other iwi have interests in the Ōroua River. These include Ngāti Kauwhata, Ngāti Hauiti and Rangitāne. Ngāti Taurira was a shared Rangitāne – Ngāti Apa hapū located around the Ōroua River above Mangawhata (meaning eel drying), extending to the Rangitikei River and coastal area. Ngāti Apa (North Island) is linked to the Ōroua River through the ancestor Matangi. Flocks of birds would gather along the river and occupy certain areas. Matangi heard of this and travelled from the Wairarapa region to see these birds. As he drew near the birds would take flight and soar into the sky, hence naming the surrounding land on the lower left bank of the Ōroua River 'Aorangi'. Hapū of Ngāti Apa (North Island) - Ngāti Tumokai, Ngāti Taurira, and Ngāti Rakei, and Ngāti Apu - occupied the surrounding lands of the Ōroua River. The land was fertile and would be cultivated extensively by these hapū. Kainga, pā, urupa, and eel fisheries were located along the Ōroua River. The Ōroua River is of historical, cultural, spiritual and traditional significance to Rangitāne o Manawatū. The histories and traditions of Rangitāne o Manawatū such as waitata, korero and whakairo outline the connections Rangitāne o Manawatū have with the Ōroua River. One of the most significant qualities is the mauri that flows from the central Ruahine Range through the rohe connecting the Range to the wetlands and sand country and finally to the Manawatū River. This fertile land also contained some of the richest food supplies in the Manawatū Region, with the most desired item being tuna (eel) which could be caught in huge quantities from the waters of the swamps adjacent to the riverbanks and streams. Other traditional resources gathered along the river included the mountain cabbage (tōi, Cordyline indivisa) and harvesting of medicinal plants.

Shared/Recognised:	The Ōroua River was the recipient of a 2018 New Zealand River Award from Accord member Horizons Regional Council. The awards were judged by a panel of scientists using long-term data collected from New Zealand Rivers and awarded to rivers which showed long-term trend improvements in water quality. The Ōroua Catchment Care Group, through the leadership of Ngāti Kauwhata representatives, are partnering with landowners in river quality improvement work, such as riparian planting and fencing. Additionally, the area is along the Manawatū Scenic Route, which is an alternative to SH1 and allows travellers to discover stunning scenery.
Recreation:	Public walking tracks, camping, hunting, and fishing. Just to the east upstream, outside the boundary of the SAF, is the Iron Gate Gorge, Alice Nash Memorial Heritage Lodge, and Iron Gate Hut Track.
Summary of Key Characteristics:	More modified than an ONF in terms of vegetation cover and presence of pasture. Moderate degree of perceived naturalness derived from the expressiveness of the formative processes of the river corridor landform which contrasts with the surrounding agricultural landform. Areas of indigenous riparian vegetation contribute to the perceived naturalness and ecological and water quality values. A pole transmission line crosses the river valley at Apiti Reserve linking Ōroua Valley Road and Main South Road and does not adversely affect the key characteristics of the Amenity Area.
Potential Issues:	The incised river channel, with large areas of native vegetation defines the feature and contributes to the perceived naturalness, aesthetic values and associational factors. It would assist preservation of the key characteristics if the following were to occur: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • restrict adverse effects on cultural values; limit the loss of native vegetation; limit the establishment of exotic vegetation; limit earthworks; and limit built development.

SA2 - Significant Amenity Feature - Upper Oroua River & River Valley

