

Name:	Tōtara Reserve (including Regional Park)	
Location:	NZ Topo BL35	
Description:	A Regional Park Scenic Reserve of approximately 350ha of native forest adjacent to the Pohangina River.	
ONL/ONF/SAF:	Outstanding Natural Feature	
Natural Science:	Geological/ Geomorphological:	Erosion process of the river is evident through the creation of a river valley and terrace which scours the adjacent cliffs. The cliffs adjacent to the Pohangina River in the Tōtara Reserve are made of ancient, weakly consolidated, weathered river gravels with sparse consolidated silt (Turitea Formation, about a million years old).
	Biological/Ecological:	Large stretch of indigenous flora and fauna habitat representative of what would have once been throughout the Pohangina Valley. The reserve is a much-prized area of bush with podocarp forest covering hills and valleys and is a rare remnant of lowland forest in the Manawatū District, reflecting the mauri of this area. It is a healthy ecosystem and is considered the finest forest remnant in the Manawatū Ecological District (Manawatū Plains Ecological District – PNA Report – June 1995). It is a valuable ecosystem habitat for many indigenous species of plant of bird species. Predominant trees include tōtara, mātai, rimu and kahikatea. Specifically, vegetation is dominated by kahikatea forest in the wetter areas and tōtara forest in the drier areas. There are also some black beech trees and tree ferns. Native birds in the reserve include tui, fantail, waxeye, morepork, bellbird, kingfisher, and kererū. The Pohangina River is considered to have a valuable trout fishery resource as well as a number of native fish species including bullies, kōkopu, brown mudfish and eels. The diverse ecology of the area provides an educational opportunity for nature studies. Horizons Regional Council have installed wētā hotels in the reserve to demonstrate the lack of predators in the park and are part of on-going research by biodiversity and ecologist employees at the Council.
	Hydrological:	Pohangina River flows along the western edge of Tōtara Reserve Regional Park and is prone to flooding. Flooding was traditionally celebrated by Māori as a means of spreading mauri through the landscape. The river has a low gradient in the reserve and a gentle flow which travels through a series of pools and riffles on a fine gravel bed.
	Perceptual:	Memorability:
	Legibility/Expressiveness:	The extent of indigenous vegetation is sufficient to be clearly legible as a remnant forest area typical of that which would have once been predominant throughout the Pohangina Valley.
	Transient:	Fluctuation in river level and some flooding is likely. Transient values related to fauna of the forest. Pohangina Valley tends to get a lot of cloud and has its own microclimate, being close to the foothills of the Ruahine Range, thus, the very climate itself gives a separate identity to the area.
	Aesthetic:	High aesthetic appeal due to the extent of unmodified indigenous vegetation along the margin of the river which provides a high sense of coherence and reinforces its vividness both as a feature and in contrast to the surrounding modified landscape which results in a high scenic quality.
	Naturalness:	High degree of degree of perceived naturalness exhibited by the vegetation cover which typically extends from the river's edge to the top of the first river escarpment.
Associational:	Historical:	Surrounding area was cleared for farming and timber in the late 1860s, meaning this reserve has value in being a remnant of vegetation that once covered the region. In 1886 the reserve was set aside for state forest purposes, being originally preserved for its timber. When state forest status was cancelled in 1946 the land was declared a recreation reserve and was prized for its scenic values at a time when lowland forest elsewhere in the Manawatū had all but vanished. In 1975 this status was changed from recreation to scenic. It is a popular camping area. The first camping in the area took place in the 1920s at what was originally called the Pohangina Boys' Camp. Established by the YMCA, the site is now known as Camp Rangī Woods after YMCA general secretary Charles "Rangī" Woods and is in farmland at the northern end of the reserve. Today Tōtara Reserve is co-governed by Rangitāne o Manawatū and MDC.
	Tangata Whenua:	Under the Settlement Act, the Upper Pohangina River is an area of interest for both Ngāti Apa and Rangitāne o Manawatū. Ngāti Kahungunu are also acknowledged under the Settlement Act and Ōroua Declaration in relation to the area. During the 19th century Māori occupation sites along the Pohangina River were frequent. The

	<p>The area and river mean 'ulcerated night', 'Po' meaning night and 'hanga' meaning ulcerated. This suggests that the valley had been a place where bloodshed had occurred between Rangitāne o Manawatū and their enemies. Thus, this was a place of darkness and there was a degree of fear attached to the area because of bloodshed. The second level of meaning was the very ulcerated or dissected nature of the landscape itself, lots of little streams with valleys cutting down in to the area.</p>
Shared/Recognised:	<p>Popular camping ground easily accessible from Palmerston North and Manawatū Districts. Administered by the Horizons (WMRC) as a Regional Park. Council interest in Tōtara Reserve is due to the ecological significance and recreational importance of the area. It is used by a wide range of visitors from Feilding and Palmerston North including school groups, scots, guides and army platoons, as well as casual visitors. The reserve is also along the Manawatū Scenic Route, which is an alternative to SH1 and allows travellers to discover stunning scenery.</p>
Recreation:	<p>Public walking tracks, picnic areas, fishing, swimming holes, and camping grounds are contained within the reserve. One of these walks includes the 'Fern Walk', which was developed to encourage Manawatū residents and visitors to the Region to venture into the outdoors.</p>
Summary of Key Characteristics:	<p>Coherence of indigenous vegetation cover of the landform from the valley floor to the top of the river terrace. High level of perceived naturalness due to the composition of the vegetated escarpments adjacent to the watercourse which contrast with the surrounding productive farmland. Popular camping and visitor area. A natural feature that is easily accessible by the public thereby enhancing public appreciation of natural features.</p>
Potential Issues:	<p>The valley floor and terraces filled with native vegetation defines the feature and contributes to the perceived naturalness, aesthetic values and associational recreational 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.

ONFL10 - Outstanding Natural Feature - Totara Reserve (including Regional Park)

