

21.22.17 Victoria Flats ONL

General Description of the Area

The Victoria Flats ONL PA comprises the fluvioglacial outwash terrace on the true right bank of the Kawarau River between Nevis Bluff and the Waitiri peninsula and the immediate mountainous landforms enclosing the flats (including the eastern faces of Mt Mason). It is a small landscape unit within the wider ONL of the Mt Mason/Mt Rosa/Mt Edward range, the southern Pisa Range and the Carrick and Horne ranges and the Doolans (outside the district boundary). The PA surrounds two areas of Gibbston Character zoning - between SH6 and the Kawarau River and on the flats south of the Queenstown Lakes District (QLD) landfill. The Kawarau River ONF passes from west to east through the PA.

There are two sub-areas: the flat fluvioglacial outwash terrace (the Victoria Flats); and the river gorge and steep surrounding mountain slopes and knolls.

Physical Attributes and Values

Geology and Geomorphology • Topography and Landforms • Climate and Soils • Hydrology • Vegetation • Ecology • Settlement • Development and Land Use • Archaeology and Heritage • Mana whenua

Important landforms and land types:

1. A small fluvioglacial terrace on the true right bank of the Kawarau River comprising slightly weathered outwash gravels and measuring approximately 2.2km long in an east-west direction and 1.6km wide in a north-south direction. It is bisected by the Gibbston – Cromwell Highway (SH6). Large boulders scattered across the flats, with a greater density close to Nevis Bluff, are thought to have been deposited by a debris flow from a landslide that dammed the river and formed a lake at the bluff.
2. The Kawarau River.
3. Enclosing schist mountain slopes: including the eastern face of Mt Mason, the lower slopes of Mt Malcolm and the western escarpment of Waitiri Peninsula. Steep strongly eroded slopes with thin leached soils.
4. The upstream boundary of the PA is Nevis Bluff, formed from grey and greenschist. One of the best exposures of greenschist in New Zealand and a limburgite dike cutting the Haast schist. This landform is recognised in the NZ Geopreservation Inventory as having national significance.

Important hydrological features:

5. Kawarau River (refer PA ONF Kawarau River for landscape attributes and values).
6. Water storage ponds for previous mining or farm irrigation.
7. Irrigation water race from a spur of Mt Mason across the flats.

Important ecological features and vegetation types:

8. Mainly unimproved pasture on the flats, with a high density of invasive species such as sweet briar, elderberry and broom. Screen planting of predominantly eucalypts around the QLDC landfill and an avenue of poplars on the access road.
9. Recent indigenous revegetation plantings at the Oxbow commercial recreation facility, the Wakatipu Gun Club and on the screening mounds for the quarry and processing yard north of SH6.

10. Rough pasture on the mountain slopes, with a high density of sweet briar and occasional matagouri on the shadier slopes and wetter toe slopes. Transition within the PA to very dry barren hillslopes in the eastern sector that support little vegetation other than thyme and sweet briar.
11. Flocks of black backed gulls are frequent, attracted by the QLDC landfill.
12. Animal pest species include rabbits, stoats, ferrets, rats and mice.

Land use patterns and features:

13. Mountain and hill slopes within the PA are undeveloped and have largely been retired from pastoral farming. Victoria Flats themselves support several rural industrial and commercial/community recreation activities:
 - a. The QLD solid waste facility dominates the flats, with the designated landfill buffer extending across the terrace from SH6 to the enclosing hillslopes and knolls. The presence of the landfill has influenced the nature of subsequent development, with no established rural living or viticulture, despite Gibbston Character zoning and some approved residential building platforms;
 - b. Quarry, gravel processing and cleanfill operation within the Gibbston Character Zone between SH6 and the river, screened from the road by planted mounds;
 - c. Commercial/community recreation facilities, including the Wakatipu Clay Target Club shooting range, the Oxbow Adventures Facility (jetboat sprinting, clay target shooting, off-road vehicles), and access to the Nevis bungy facility. Remnant tracks from previous off-road 4-wheel drive commercial recreation. Facilities include small buildings, parking areas and planted mounds that screen activities from SH6.
14. The remaining areas of the flats are used for low intensity grazing/baleage, with a few scattered sheds, or have been retired from productive use.
15. Transpower high-voltage transmission corridor along the southern periphery of the flats and over Mt Mason to the Gibbston Valley.

Important archaeological and heritage features and their locations:

16. History of 19th century and early 20th century gold mining along the Kawarau River, with numerous archaeological sites along the river's edge and frequent evidence of sluicing and tailings. Within the PA, sites include ferry crossings, the historic road formation across the flats, stone ruins, the sites of the Victoria Bridge Hotel (archaeological site F41/195) and Edward's Ferry Hotel (archaeological site F41/202), areas of sluicing and tailings and significant gold mining sites such as Doolan's Creek Tunnel (archaeological site F41/2080).
17. The supports of the Victoria Bridge over the Kawarau (constructed in 1874) are a QLDC Category 3 listed heritage feature (QLDC Ref. 223).

Mana whenua features and their locations:

18. The entire area is ancestral land to Kāi Tahu whānui and, as such, all landscape is significant, given that whakapapa, whenua and wai are all intertwined in te ao Māori.
19. The ONL overlaps the mapped wāhi tūpuna Kawarau River.

Associative Attributes and Values

Mana whenua creation and origin traditions • Mana whenua associations and experience • Mana whenua metaphysical aspects such as mauri and wairua • Historic values • Shared and recognised values • Recreation and scenic values

Mana whenua associations and experience:

20. Kāi Tahu whakapapa connections to whenua and wai generate a kaitiaki duty to uphold the mauri of all important landscape areas.
21. The Kawarau River was a traditional travel route that provided direct access between Whakatipu-wai-māori (Lake Whakatipu) and Mata-au (the Clutha River).
22. The Kawarau is a significant kāika mahika kai where weka, kākāpō, kea and tuna (eel) were gathered.
23. The mana whenua values associated with the ONL include, but may not be limited to, ara tawhito, mahika kai and nohoaka.

Important historic attributes and values:

24. The strong associations of the Kawarau River valley with 19th and early 20th century gold mining and early European settlement, with physical evidence of ferry sites, mining activities and associated settlement.
25. Historic route between the Clutha River Mata-au and Whakatipu-Wai-Māori (Lake Whakatipu).

Important shared and recognised attributes and values :

26. Shared and recognised values as part of the dry, barren and wild rural hinterland of the Kawarau valley downstream of Nevis Bluff, experienced by people travelling between Cromwell and the Whakatipu Basin.

Important recreation attributes and values:

27. Destination for commercial and community recreation activities.
28. Walking trail connecting Victoria Flats and Gibbston Valley over Mount Mason and Mount Rosa.

Perceptual (Sensory) Attributes and Values

Legibility and Expressiveness • Views to the area • Views from the area • Naturalness • Memorability • Transient values • Remoteness / Wildness • Aesthetic qualities and values

Legibility and expressiveness attributes and values:

29. Moderately legible glaciofluvial outwash terrace, partially modified by alluvial gold mining, landfill activities and screening mounds.
30. Legible evidence of an historic landslide near Nevis Bluff in the large boulders scattered across the flats.
31. Highly legible and expressive river gorge and highly legible processes of uplift and erosion in the open and craggy mountain slopes.

Particularly important views to and from the area:

32. Views from SH6 across the flats to the enclosing mountain ranges and hills. Little built development is evident in views, as the landfill and other activities on the flats are (or will be) screened by mounding and

planting. The flats appear relatively unkempt, with rough pasture and predominantly natural patterns of vegetation spread (mainly exotic sweet briar and elderberry) and are dominated and strongly enclosed by the dry rugged slopes of the mountains. There is a strong contrast between the remote rough rural character of the flats and the viticultural landscape of the main Gibbston Valley west of Nevis Bluff.

33. Views from the Mt Rosa walking track as it ascends the hillslopes of Mt Mason take in the entire northern area of the flats, including the gravel processing facility within the Gibbston Character Zone, clay shooting range and Oxbow Adventures facility. The landfill is largely screened by planting or topography. The aesthetic coherence and perceived naturalness of the flats is undermined by the spread of rural industrial and recreational activities, but the surrounding mountains remain dominant in the views.

Naturalness attributes and values:

34. Despite modified vegetation cover, weed infestation and farm tracks, the mountain slopes and knolls around the flats retain a high level of naturalness.
35. Within the wider ONL, the small landscape unit of the Victoria Flats has been substantially modified and retains only a low-moderate level of naturalness. However the level of naturalness perceived from SH6 remains relatively high, as most activities are effectively screened.

Memorability attributes and values:

36. Forms part of a highly memorable journey through the barren, seere and strongly enclosed landscape of the Kawarau Gorge, downstream of Nevis Bluff. The wildness and inhospitable nature of the gorge add to its memorability.

Transient attributes and values:

37. Changing colours of pasture across the seasons, spring flowering of sweet briar and elderberry, and the play of light and shadow on the craggy mountain slopes.

Remoteness and wildness attributes and values:

38. A sense of relative remoteness and wildness, particularly in contrast with the viticultural landscape of the Gibbston Valley to the west.

Aesthetic attributes and values:

39. The experience of the attributes identified above by a significant number of residents and visitors travelling on SH6.
40. More specifically, this includes:
 - a. The strong sense of enclosure by steep dry eroding mountain slopes.
 - b. The sense of relative remoteness and wildness and the contrast with the more tamed and inhabited Gibbston Valley.
 - c. The relatively high level of naturalness perceived from the highway, with most development effectively screened by mounding and/or planting, and natural patterns of vegetation spread (albeit largely exotic weeds) apparent.

Summary of Landscape Values

Physical • Associative • Perceptual (Sensory)

Rating scale: seven-point scale ranging from **Very Low** to **Very High**.

Very low	low	low-mod	moderate	mod-high	high	very high
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The physical, associative and perceptual attributes and values described above for PA ONL Victoria Flats:

- (a) **Moderate-high physical values** relating to the river and its escarpments, the unmodified uplifted mountain ranges, and the mana whenua features associated with the area.
- (b) **Moderate associative values** relating to the mana whenua associations of the area, the historic attributes of the river and flats and the shared and recognised values as part of dry rural hinterland of the Kawarau valley downstream of Nevis Bluff.
- (c) **Moderate-high perceptual values** relating to:
 - i. The legibility and expressiveness attributes of the river gorge and mountain slopes.
 - ii. The aesthetic and memorability values of the area due to its strong enclosure by dramatic eroded mountain ranges, its dryness, barrenness and relative wildness and remoteness.
 - iii. A relatively high impression of naturalness arising from the dominance of the more natural landscape over visible built development.

Landscape Capacity

The landscape capacity of the PA ONL Victoria Flats for a range of activities is set out below.

- i. **Commercial recreational activities – some** landscape capacity for activities that are set back from SH6; integrate with and complement/enhance existing recreation features; are located to optimise the screening and/or camouflaging benefit of natural landscape elements; designed to be of a sympathetic scale, appearance, and character; integrate appreciable landscape restoration and enhancement; enhance public access (where appropriate); and protect the area's ONL values.
- ii. **Visitor accommodation and tourism related activities – no** landscape capacity.
- iii. **Urban expansions – no** landscape capacity.
- iv. **Intensive agriculture – some** landscape capacity on the flats for intensive agriculture that maintains views to the surrounding mountains from SH6.
- v. **Earthworks – limited** landscape capacity for earthworks and trails that protect historic, naturalness and expressiveness attributes and values, and are sympathetically designed to integrate with existing natural landform patterns.
- vi. **Farm buildings – limited** landscape capacity for modestly scaled buildings that reinforce existing rural character.
- vii. **Mineral extraction – some** landscape capacity for extraction that is screened from SH6 by landform and/or vegetation and is remediated to enhance the naturalness and aesthetic values of the ONL.

- viii. **Transport infrastructure – limited** landscape capacity for modestly scaled and low key ‘rural’ roading on the flats.
- ix. **Utilities and regionally significant infrastructure – some** landscape capacity for infrastructure that is co-located with existing facilities and is designed to minimise visual prominence from SH6.
- x. **Renewable energy generation – limited** landscape capacity for discreetly located and small-scale renewable energy generation. **Very limited** landscape capacity for commercial-scale renewable energy generation that is screened from SH6 and protects the area’s ONL values.
- xi. **Production forestry – very limited** landscape capacity for small scale production forestry on the flats that maintains views to the surrounding mountains from SH6.
- xii. **Rural living – no** landscape capacity within the Rural-zoned PA ONL. **Some** landscape capacity for rural living development within the areas of Gibbston Character Zone on Victoria Flats. Rural living development is constrained by the presence of the QLD solid waste facility.