

21.22.15 Central Whakatipu Basin ONL

General Description of the Area

The Central Whakatipu Basin PA ONL encompasses the steep western end southern slopes of Mount Dewar and the steep south-facing slopes of Coronet Peak, Brow Peak and Pt 1120 near Big Hill, taking in German Hill and Pt 675. Collectively the mountain slopes form the northern backdrop to the Whakatipu Basin and Arrowtown. The western edge of the PA ONL adjoins Kimiākau (Shotover River) PA ONF and the eastern end adjoins the Haehaenui (Arrow River) PA ONF.

Physical Attributes and Values

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

Important landforms and land types:

1. The steeply sloping, foliated, schistose mountain landforms of Mount Dewar (1,310m), Skippers Saddle (1,036m), Coronet Peak (1,651m), Brow Peak (1,456m) and Pt 1,120 near Big Hill which form part of the wall of mountains framing the northern side of the Whakatipu Basin.
2. Scree slopes throughout the elevated, very steep and rugged areas towards the eastern end of the area.
3. The secondary mountain landforms of German Hill (780m) and Pt 716 that enclose the southern side of Sawpit Gully (north of Arrowtown).
4. The secondary mountain ridgeline on the south side of Bush Creek (to the north of Millbrook), that takes in Pt 897, Pt 929, Pt 842 and Pt 876.
5. The ridgeline descending south-westwards from Mount Dewar summit to Pt 965 and which frame the eastern side of Devils Creek.
6. A small roche moutonnée along the foot of the Coronet Peak slopes between the Skippers Road junction and Willowbank, all on the north side of Malaghans Road. A well-preserved relic glacial landform from the last ice age. This feature exists as several landforms within the PA. Identified as a Geopreservation Site of national scientific, aesthetic, or educational value and being vulnerable to significant damage by human related activities.
7. Exposed schist outcrops and bluffs throughout the south-facing mountain slopes and along the east side of the small ice-melt basin in the vicinity of Littles Road.
8. Glacial till deposits and alluvial fans at the toe of the steep mountain slopes framing the northern side of the Whakatipu Basin and throughout the more gently sloping lower reaches of gullies near German Hill.

Important hydrological features:

9. Devils Creek and its steeply incised tributaries draining the south-western flanks of Mount Dewar and the northern slopes of the secondary ridgeline descending from Mount Dewar to Pt 965, to Kimiākau (Shotover River).
10. The unnamed relatively gently sloping streams and kettle lake in the ice-melt basin around Littles Road which drain south-westward to Kimiākau (Shotover River).

11. The numerous steeply incised streams draining the southern side of the range extending from Mount Dewar across to Coronet Peak, including Dan O'Connell Creek, Station Creek and McMullan Creek.
12. The numerous unnamed streams draining the southern slopes of Brow Peak to Bush Creek, which discharges to the Arrow River.
13. The series of unnamed streams draining to Sawpit Gully and the Haehaenui (Arrow River) from the mountain slopes extending between Brow Peak and Pt 1120 (near Big Hill) and German Hill.
14. The series of small tarns in the vicinity of Coronet Peak ski field and near Skippers Saddle.

Important ecological features and vegetation types:

15. Particularly noteworthy indigenous vegetation features include:
 - a. Pockets of mountain beech forest remnants confined to gullies in the Bush Creek and Sawpit Gully catchments behind Arrowtown, on the Coronet Peak front faces and in the Devils Creek catchment on Mount Dewar.
 - b. Swathes of beech restoration plantings throughout Mount Dewar (as part of consented development).
 - c. Extensive areas of grey shrubland dominated by matagouri (*Discaria toumatou*) and mingimingi (*Coprosma propinqua*) occur in the mid to upper reaches of the Bush Creek catchment, Sawpit Gully catchment and across the steep terrain associated with the lower Haehaenui (Arrow River) Gorge. Scattered patches of grey shrubland occur across the lower slopes of Coronet peak and Mount Dewar.
 - d. Above about 900 m the vegetation is dominated by snow tussock grassland and in places patches of *Dracophyllum* shrubland.
 - e. Indigenous vegetation is more extensive and diverse towards the Arrowtown end of the PA.
 - f. Rough to semi-improved pasture occurs on the mid to lower slopes of Coronet Peak mixed with patches of short tussock grasslands and grey shrubland.
 - g. Woody exotic weeds prevail throughout the PA but are most extensive on the lower slopes of Mount Dewar, where there are dense thickets of mature hawthorn, sweet briar, broom, elderberry and scattered wilding conifers.
16. Rocky outcrops, beech forest, grey shrublands and snow tussock grasslands provide a diverse range of habitats for New Zealand falcon, New Zealand pipit, South Island tomtit. Grey warbler, skinks and geckos and a diverse assemblage of native invertebrates.
17. Areas of production forestry (Douglas fir) occur:
 - a. across the south-facing slopes of the secondary mountain ridgeline on the south side of Bush Creek (to the north of Millbrook) that includes Pt 897, Pt 929, Pt 842, and Pt 876.
 - b. on the lower slopes of Mount Dewar.
18. Wilding conifer spread in the Bush Creek and Sawpit Gully catchments, across Big Hill and in the Devils Creek catchment from areas of production of forestry. Control measures are being implemented.
19. Animal pest species include feral goats, feral cats, ferrets, stoats, weasels, hares, rabbits, possums, mice and rats.

Important land-use patterns and features:

20. Human modification which is concentrated throughout the low-lying glacier carved terrace areas along the northern edge of the Whakatipu Basin; on the western flanks of Mount Dewar and across the south-facing slopes of the secondary mountain ridgeline on the south side of Bush Creek (to the north of Millbrook) that includes Pt 897, Pt 929, Pt 842, and Pt 876 where production forestry dominates; across Mount Dewar more generally, where development is anticipated; on the elevated south-facing slopes of Coronet Peak where the ski field, carparks, buildings and roading (including Skippers Road, which provides access to the Skippers Bungy site, outside the PA) is located; and throughout the western portion of the PA at Coronet Peak Road.
21. Built development patterning which includes a very limited scattering of rural and rural living dwellings around the margins of Arthurs Point; the scattering of small-scale development within regenerating beech forest at Mount Dewar along with approximately 50km of publicly accessible hiking and biking trails; and the occasional farm building or dwelling towards the eastern end of the unit (adjacent the southern boundary of the PA). Generally, development is characterised by very carefully located and designed buildings that are well integrated by plantings and remain subservient to the more 'natural' landscape patterns. Elsewhere, the modest scale of buildings, together with their distinctly working rural character and sparse arrangement, ensures that they sit comfortably into the setting.
22. Pastoral farming including rural and farm buildings (as described above), fencing, shelterbelts, tracks, ponds and the like.
23. The location of the Coronet Peak Ski Field across the elevated south-facing slopes, together with the exposed nature of the access road climbing up the steep slopes at the western end of the area, make this development prominent in views from much of the western and northern portion of the Whakatipu Basin. Night-time lighting of the ski field during the winter season adds to its prominence.
24. The Shotover Canyon Track, the Mount Dewar Track, Hot Rod and Devils Creek track on Mount Dewar; the Dan O'Connell Track and Coronet Face Water Race Trail across the lower slopes of Coronet Peak; the ridgeline track linking between Coronet Peak and Big Hill that runs along the northern edge of the PA; the Bush Creek Track between Coronet Peak and Arrowtown; the Te Araroa Trail that winds its way to the west of German Hill (between Arrowtown and Big Hill) and the Sawpit Gully Track; the Rude Rock, Zoot, DH, XC mountain bike trails within the Coronet Peak ski area. Associated with these tracks are signage, stiles, and seating, typically of a modest scale and low-key character.
25. The general absence of rural and rural living buildings throughout the eastern end of the PA.
26. Infrastructure is evident within the corridor and includes: the power line (on poles) traversing the steep slopes up to Coronet Ski Field; telecommunication masts at the top of Mount Dewar; forestry tracks; farm fencing; and farm tracks.
27. The Arthurs Point Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) which adjoins the south-western margins of the PA and the Arrowtown UGB which adjoins the south-eastern end of the PA.
28. The Coronet Peak Ski Area Sub Zone which provides for the ongoing use and development of that area for ski field related activities.
29. Other neighbouring land uses which have an influence on the landscape character of the area due to their scale, character, and/or proximity include: the urban residential and commercial development adjoining the south-western edge of the PA at Arthurs Point; the urban residential and commercial development adjoining the south-eastern edges of the area at Arrowtown; the rural living development throughout the western and northern sides of the Whakatipu Basin; Millbrook Resort towards the north-eastern end of the Whakatipu Basin; and Malaghans Road which runs along the northern side of the Whakatipu Basin, roughly parallel with the PA.

Important archaeological and heritage features and their locations are:

30. The Macetown Heritage Area Overlay (MHAO) which extends throughout the eastern end of the PA roughly coinciding with Sawpit Gully. This forms part of the much larger area of heritage significance due to its concentration of historic gold mining sites, focussed on the deserted mining town of Macetown, which span from the earliest exploitation of gold in the Arrowtown area in 1862, through to the end of gold mining in the 1930s. Such a continuum of mining activity – first alluvial then hard-rock or quartz – has left a distinct and intelligible landscape with diverse features and stories linked by a series of mining tracks that still allow access to this remote and stunning countryside. Macetown (outside the PA) is highly significant, representing the surviving remains of a remote 19th century mining village to which stories are still attached and some history has been traced to its founders, occupants, and demise. Situated within its larger mining heritage context (which includes part of the PA), Macetown can be interpreted as part of a community of gold mining activity sites, which are a key part of the wider Otago gold mining story.
31. Various inter-related complexes of gold sluicings, tailings, water races, dams, etc., and associated domestic sites in the area (for example, archaeological sites F41/288, F41/851, and F41/653).
32. Cockburn Homestead, Malaghans Road (District Plan reference 125).
33. William Fox Memorial, Police Camp Building, and Stone Wall, Arrowtown (District Plan references 309, 375, and 311).
34. Macetown Road (District Plan reference 6).
35. Scholes Tunnel (District Plan reference 304).
36. Coronet Peak ski area.

Mana whenua features and their locations:

37. 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.

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:

38. Kāi Tahu whakapapa connections to whenua and wai generate a kaitiaki duty to uphold the mauri of all important landscape areas.

Important historic attributes and values:

39. Gold mining in the area and the associated physical remnants (including Skippers Road). The sites associated with Macetown represent a particularly rich archaeological landscape.
40. Early pastoral farming across the area.
41. The historic significance of Coronet Peak as one of New Zealand's earliest commercial ski fields.

Important shared and recognised attributes and values:

42. The descriptions and photographs of the area in tourism publications.

43. The popularity of the postcard views from Coronet Peak and the ski field access road (which has several lookout points) out over the Whakatipu Basin to the Remarkables, as an inspiration/subject for art and photography.
44. The identity of Coronet Peak Ski Field as an integral part of the Whakatipu Basin. The very close proximity of this recreational feature to Queenstown urban area and its visibility from much of the Whakatipu Basin (and including from the airport, particularly at night when the ski field is lit for night skiing) play an important role.
45. Skippers Road is popular with commercial tourism activity providers using the access road for scenic tours and white-water rafting. The road is used for mountain bike access out of the valley.
46. The identity of the sequence of mountains stretching from Mount Dewar across to Big Hill as a dramatic (northern) backdrop to the Whakatipu Basin (including Arrowtown).
47. The identity of Mount Dewar as part of the dramatic backdrop to Arthurs Point.

Important recreation attributes and values:

48. Very popular year-round destination for skiing, walking, running, mountain biking, paragliding, hiking and enjoying the view from the various lookouts and café/restaurant facilities at Coronet Peak.
49. Aotearoa's National Walkway, the Te Araroa Trail passes through the eastern side of the ONL via the Motatapu Alpine Track connecting with the Whakatipu Track heading to Lake Hayes.
50. Walking, running, and mountain biking on trails and tracks in the area.
51. Coronet Peak Road, Skippers Road and Malaghans Road as key scenic routes either within the PA or in close proximity.
52. The recreation area to the north of Millbrook.

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:

53. The area's natural landforms, land type, and hydrological features (described above), which are highly legible and highly expressive of the landscape's formative glacial processes.
54. Indigenous gully plantings and remnant beech stands which reinforce the legibility and expressiveness values throughout the area.
55. Good examples of landscape evolution in response to slope and fluvial processes and alternating climatic conditions.

Particularly important views to and from the area:

56. The postcard views from various lookouts on Coronet Peak Road and the ski field out over the Whakatipu Basin, Waiwhakaata (Lake Hayes), Whakatipu Waimāori (Lake Whakatipu), the Remarkables and the broader mountain context.
57. The spectacular panoramic views from Mount Dewar and the summit of Coronet Peak, of the Whakatipu Basin to the south and the rugged and dramatic expanse of the Harris Mountain range to the north.

58. The highly attractive short to long-range views from parts of the Devils Creek Track, the Hot Rod, the Mount Dewar Track, the Dan O'Connell Track, the Coronet Face Water Race Trail, the ridgeline track linking Coronet Peak and Big Hill that runs along the northern edge of the PA, the Bush Creek Track, the Te Araroa Trail west of German Hill, and the Sawpit Gully Track out over the Whakatipu Basin, the Remarkables and the broader mountain context.
59. The appealing short to long-range views from the Shotover Canyon Track and parts of the Devils Creek Track along the gorge of the Shotover Corridor, across the rugged and largely undeveloped slopes of Bowen Peak and northwards to The Point.
60. The dramatic mid and long-range views from Arthurs Point, the Kimitiākau (Shotover River) ONF, Arrowtown, the western and northern parts of the Whakatipu Basin (including Malaghans Road), and sections of the Queenstown Trail network coinciding with those parts of the basin, to the coherent sequence of mountains framing the northern side of the basin. In these views the continuity of the large-scale and largely open, dramatic landforms, together with their seemingly undeveloped appearance (as a consequence of the diminishing influence of distance in relation to the ski field and access road), means that the PA is of critical importance in shaping the visual amenity values of the area from which they are viewed.
61. The engaging early evening views from Frankton and the airport to the Coronet Peak Ski Field when the ski field is lit for night skiing.
62. The appealing long-range views from more distant elevated vantage points such as the Remarkables Ski Field Access Road, Tobins Track (east of Arrowtown), and the Crown Range Zig Zag lookout in which the scale and shape of the glacial valley landscape, of which the PA is a part, is legible in its entirety and confers a sense of grandeur to the outlook.
63. The highly engaging short-range views from Littles Road, Arthurs Point Road and trails in the vicinity across the pastoral ice-melt basin to the dramatic and rugged bluffs and rocky outcrops near Pt 558.
64. In all of the views, the dominance of more 'natural' landscape elements, patterns, and processes evident within the ONL, along with the generally subservient nature of built development within the ONL and, in the case of the western and eastern ends of the area, the contrast with the surrounding 'developed' landscape character, underpins the high quality of the outlook.

Naturalness attributes and values:

65. The 'seemingly' undeveloped character of Central Whakatipu Basin PA ONL set within an urban (Arthurs Point and Arrowtown) or mixed working rural and rural living (Whakatipu Basin) context, which conveys a relatively high perception of naturalness. While modifications related to its forestry, pastoral (including farm buildings, rural dwellings, ponds, fencing, tracks, shelterbelts and the like), recreational, and infrastructure uses are visible, the sheer scale of the continuous high mountain-scape ensures that, for the most part, these elements remain subservient to more natural landscape elements, patterns, and processes.
66. The irregular patterning and proliferation of grey shrubland, exposed rock faces and scrub in places adds to the perception of naturalness.
67. While the ski field and its access road form a bold manmade element on the southern slopes of Mount Dewar and Coronet Peak, the connection this development establishes and enables between the mountain setting and the inhabited Whakatipu Valley adds a degree of interest to the view, meaning that it is not an overwhelmingly negative visual element. The scale of the seemingly 'undeveloped' mountain setting within which this development is viewed, together with its identity as a popular recreational feature, also play a role in this regard. Because these landscape modifications also make an important contribution to Queenstown's recreational values (see above), there is a degree of landscape 'fit' associated with them. During the ski season the patterning of lights throughout the groomed slopes forms an engaging element.

68. The forestry plantings and wilding spread at the western and eastern ends of the area (noting that recreational landuses are anticipated across the slopes at the eastern end, north of Millbrook) contribute a reduced perception of naturalness. However, the underlying natural (and largely unmodified) schistose landform character of the area remains legible and dominant, thus ensuring these parts of the PA display at least a moderate-high level of naturalness. The visual appearance of these parts of the PA during and after harvesting cycles forms a prominent negative visual element within the broader landscape setting and serves to (temporarily) further reduce the perception of naturalness in this part of the PA.

Memorability attributes and values:

69. The appealing and engaging views of the continuous 'wall' of mountains framing the north side of the Whakatipu Basin from a wide variety of public vantage points. The juxtaposition of the large-scale and continuous rugged mountain sequence beside the basin landform, along with the magnificent broader mountain and lake context within which it is seen in many views, are also factors that contribute to its memorability.
70. The 'close up' experience of the alpine setting that the PA affords for many residents and visitors to Queenstown as a consequence of the relatively high accessibility of the area (via the ski field access road, ski field and tracks, gondola and chairlifts in close proximity to Queenstown and Arrowtown)
71. The panoramic alpine landscape views afforded from Mount Dewar, Coronet Peak Road, Coronet Peak Ski Field and Coronet Peak.

Transient attributes and values:

72. Seasonal snowfall and the ever-changing patterning of light and weather across the mountain slopes.
73. Autumn leaf colour and seasonal loss of leaves associated with exotic vegetation.
74. Night lighting of the ski field during winter months.

Remoteness and wildness attributes and values:

75. A strong sense of remoteness at the western and north-eastern ends of the PA despite their respective proximity to Arthurs Point and Arrowtown, due to the contained nature of the area and the limited level of built development evident.
76. A sense of wildness across much of the PA as a consequence of the large scale and continuity of the majestic mountain range framing the northern side of the basin along with its generally 'undeveloped' and in places, seemingly unkempt character. The contrast with the 'settled' and more manicured character of the basin plays an important role in this regard. Such feelings are lesser in the parts of the PA where forestry and the ski field/access road are located.

Aesthetic qualities and values:

77. The experience of the values identified above from a wide range of public viewpoints.
78. More specifically:
- a. The highly attractive and memorable composition created by the continuous 'wall' of rugged and dramatic mountains framing the northern side of the Whakatipu Basin.
 - b. At a finer scale, the following aspects contribute to the aesthetic appeal:
 - i. The large scale and dramatic character of the steep mountain landforms backdropping Arthurs Point and Arrowtown.
 - ii. The precipitous bluffs and rocky outcrops along the east side of the small ice-melt basin in the vicinity of Littles Road.

- iii. The everchanging play of light and weather patterns across the mountain slopes.
- iv. The openness of the mountain landforms and scree slopes.
- v. The rugged and wild character of the western and north-eastern ends of the PA.
- vi. The confinement of appreciably visible built development to the Coronet Peak Ski Field and its access road.

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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These various combined physical, associative, and perceptual attributes and values described above for Central Whakatipu Basin PA ONL can be summarised as follows:

- 79. **High physical values** due to the high-value landforms, vegetation features, habitats, species, hydrological features and mana whenua features in the area.
- 80. **Very high associative values** relating to:
 - a. The mana whenua associations of the area.
 - b. The historic features in the area.
 - c. The very strong shared and recognised values associated with the area.
 - d. The significant recreational attributes of Coronet Peak Ski Field, Skippers Road and the network of walking and biking tracks in the area.
 - e. The scenic values associated with Coronet Peak Road.
- 81. **High perceptual values** relating to:
 - a. The high legibility and expressive values of the area deriving from the visibility and abundance of physical attributes that enable a clear understanding of the landscape's formative processes.
 - b. The high aesthetic and memorability values of the area due to its distinctive and appealing composition of natural landscape elements. The visibility of the area from Arthurs Point, Arrowtown, the Whakatipu Basin, the scenic route of Malaghans Road, parts of the Queenstown Trail network, the Remarkables Ski Field Access Road, the Zig Zag lookout, and Tobins Track, along with the areas' transient values, play an important role.
 - c. A moderate-high to high perception of naturalness arising from the dominance of natural landscape elements and patterns across the PA.
 - d. A strong sense of remoteness and wildness throughout the western and north-eastern portions of the PA.

Landscape Capacity

The landscape capacity of the PA ONL Central Whakatipu Basin for a range of activities is set out below.

- i. **Commercial recreational activities – limited** landscape capacity for activities that 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; and protects the area's ONL values.
- ii. **Visitor accommodation and tourism related activities – no** landscape capacity for tourism related activities. **Very limited** landscape capacity for visitor accommodation activities that are: co-located with existing development; sited to optimise the screening and/or filtering benefit of natural landscape elements; designed to be visually recessive, of a modest scale and have a 'low key' rural character; integrate appreciable landscape restoration and enhancement; enhance public access; and protects the area's ONL values.
- iii. **Urban expansions – no** landscape capacity.
- iv. **Intensive agriculture – no** landscape capacity.
- v. **Earthworks – very limited** landscape capacity for earthworks associated with farming, existing recreational facilities, or public access tracks, that protect naturalness and expressiveness attributes and values and are sympathetically designed to integrate with natural landform patterns.
- vi. **Farm buildings – in those areas of the ONL with pastoral land uses very limited** landscape capacity for modestly scaled buildings that reinforce existing rural character.
- vii. **Mineral extraction – no** landscape capacity.
 - i. **Transport infrastructure – very limited** landscape capacity for trails that are: located to integrate with existing networks; designed to be of a sympathetic appearance and character; integrate landscape restoration and enhancement; and protect the area's ONF values. **No** landscape capacity for other transport infrastructure.
- viii. **Utilities and regionally significant infrastructure – limited** landscape capacity for infrastructure that is buried or located such that they are screened from external view. In the case of utilities such as overhead lines or cell phone towers which cannot be screened, these should be designed and located so that they are not visually prominent and/or co-located with existing infrastructure.
- ix. **Renewable energy generation – no** landscape capacity.
- x. **Production forestry – no** landscape capacity.
- xi. **Rural living – no** landscape capacity.