

NFL - NATURAL FEATURES AND LANDSCAPES

Introduction

The Manawatū District is home to a range of natural features and landscapes worthy of recognition and protection. As landscapes they contribute to the identity of the Manawatu, and particularly for those people who reside in and visit the Manawatu.

The District's landscapes extend from the expansive and densely vegetated Ruahine Ranges through to the deep, meandering river valleys and terraces of the various rivers within the District through to the undeveloped coastal foredunes of the Manawatū coastline.

The purpose of this chapter is to:

- a. Recognise and protect landscapes as a significant resource and to protect outstanding natural features and landscapes (ONFLs) from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.
- b. Recognise those areas of the District that do not meet the criteria for Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes but have amenity values and characteristics that distinguish them from the wider rural area as Significant Amenity Features.
- c. Respond to the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS) and the One Plan, including the Regional Policy Statement requirements to identify and protect ONFLs.

Council has identified two (2) Outstanding Natural Landscapes, and twelve (12) Outstanding Natural Features. The report also identifies four (4) Significant Amenity Features. Each ONFL has its own characteristics and values which justify their classification as outstanding and make their use, development and protection important when considering future management of these areas. Each area is mapped as an overlay.

Issues

The following issues have been identified in relation to landscapes in the Manawatū District:

- NFL-I1 The District has specific natural features and landscapes that are outstanding and which require protection from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.
- NFL-I2 Adverse effects from subdivision, use and development can result in significant adverse effects on the identified characteristics and values of Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes, including cumulative effects.
- NFL-I3 There are areas within the Manawatū that have characteristics and values that are greater than those associated with the rural area and these should be recognised and protected from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.
- NFL-I4 The opportunity to maintain and enhance Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes through management and planting.

Objectives and policies

NFL-O1

To identify Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes and Significant Amenity Features within the Manawatū District.

Relevant policies 1, 2, 3

NFL-O2

To protect, maintain and enhance the characteristics and values of the Outstanding Natural Landscapes identified in NFL-APP1 from inappropriate use and development.

Relevant policies 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9

NFL-O3

To protect, maintain and enhance the characteristics and values of the Outstanding Natural Features identified in NFL-APP1 from inappropriate use and development.

Relevant policies 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16

NFL-O4

To protect the characteristics and values of Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes and Significant Amenity Features from the fragmentation of land through subdivision of land.

Relevant policies 17, 18

NFL-O5

To restore, where appropriate, indigenous plant species to contribute to a healthy functioning ecosystem within all Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes and Significant Amenity Features.

Relevant policies 19, 20, 21

NFL-O6

To maintain and where possible enhance areas of Significant Amenity Features as identified in NFL-APP2.

Relevant policies 22, 23, 24

NFL-O7

To protect, maintain and enhance the characteristics and values of the Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes from the use and development of network utilities

Relevant policies 25, 26, 27, 28

Policies

NFL-P1

To identify and spatially define outstanding natural features and landscapes consistent with the following factors:

- 1) Natural science factors
- 2) Aesthetic values
- 3) Expressiveness (Legibility)
- 4) Transient values
- 5) Shared and recognised values
- 6) Cultural and spiritual values for tangata whenua
- 7) Historic heritage values.

NFL-P2

To classify areas as Outstanding Natural Features, Outstanding Natural Landscapes and Significant Amenity Features based on their identified characteristics and values.

NFL-P3

To identify the spatial extent of Significant Amenity Features.

NFL-P4

To avoid use and development within identified Outstanding Natural Landscapes which diminishes the identified values and characteristics of the areas, including:

- 1) The extensive unbuilt coastal strip along the Manawatū Coastline Outstanding Natural Landscape.
- 2) The unmodified and continuous indigenous vegetation values and the ridges and hilltops of the Ruahine Ranges Outstanding Natural Landscape.

NFL-P5

To avoid the significant adverse cumulative effects of use and development on the identified characteristics and values of Outstanding Natural Landscapes.

NFL-P6

To avoid adverse effects on the characteristics and values of Outstanding Natural Landscapes as far as reasonably practicable, and where avoidance is not practicable, remedy or mitigate adverse effects on the characteristics and values of those landscapes.

NPL-P7

To have regard to the adverse effects from use and development on the characteristics and values of Outstanding Natural Landscapes when viewed from public spaces.

NFL-P8

To avoid large scale earthworks within Outstanding Natural Landscapes.

NFL-P9

To allow passive recreation, conservation and customary activities within Outstanding Natural Landscapes where this does not diminish the characteristics and values of those Landscapes.

NFL-P10

To enable the use and development within Outstanding Natural Features where it is demonstrated that the identified characteristics and values of the area are protected, maintained or enhanced.

NFL-P11

To recognise the existing farming activities within the Rangitikei River Outstanding Natural Feature includes existing farming activities and enable continuation of these activities where they do not adversely affect the characteristics and values of the feature identified in NFL-APP1.

NFL-P12

To avoid the significant adverse cumulative effects of use and development on the identified characteristics and values of Outstanding Natural Features.

NFL-P13

To avoid adverse effects on the characteristics and values of Outstanding Natural Features as far as reasonably practicable, and where avoidance of is not practicable, adverse effects on the characteristics and values are remedied or mitigated.

NFL-P14

To ensure new buildings, structures and earthworks do not compromise or degrade the identified characteristics and values of Outstanding Natural Features.

NFL-P15

To discourage large scale earthworks within the Outstanding Natural Features.

NFL-P16

To allow passive recreation, conservation and customary activities within Outstanding Natural Features where this does not affect the characteristics and values of the Feature.

NFL-P17

To avoid subdivision within Outstanding Natural Landscapes unless the fragmentation of land does not compromise or degrade the characteristics and values of the Landscape identified in NFL-APP1.

NFL-P18

To manage subdivision within Outstanding Natural Features and Significant Amenity Features to protect the characteristics and values identified in NFL-APP1 are not adversely affected by fragmentation of ownership arising from subdivision.

NFL-P19

To control the removal of indigenous vegetation from Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes and Significant Amenity Features identified in NFL-APP1 and NFL-APP2.

NFL-P20

To restrict the introduction of exotic vegetation species, including forestry, within Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes and Significant Amenity Features.

NFL-P21

To encourage and enable the protection of existing native vegetation and the restoration and planting of Significant Amenity Features with locally sourced plant stock.

NFL-P22

To enable the continuation of existing stock grazing within Significant Amenity Features where this does not compromise the characteristics and values identified in NFL-APP2.

NFL-P23

To provide for use and development within Significant Amenity Features where the activity does not compromise the characteristics and values identified in NFL-APP2.

NFL-P24

To discourage drainage, native vegetation removal and earthworks in the Significant Amenity Features.

NFL-P25

To enable the operation, maintenance, replacement or minor upgrading of existing network utilities located within or adjacent to Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes and Significant Amenity Features.¹

NFL-P26

To avoid significant adverse cumulative effects of network utilities within Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes.

¹ Requires cross reference to Policy 3A.3 Policy 1.1

NPL-P27

To protect the characteristics and values of the Outstanding Natural Landscapes defined in NFL-APP1 by avoiding the use and development of new network utilities in these areas unless:

- 1) There is no practicable alternative location.
- 2) The infrastructure is of national or regional importance, including the National Grid.
- 3) The development does not diminish the characteristics and values of the identified area.²

NFL-P28

To restrict the use and development of new network utilities within Outstanding Natural Features where the identified characteristics and values of the features are diminished.

Rules

Rules in this chapter apply to all activities within the areas identified as being Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes, and Significant Amenity Features as spatially defined in Appendix 5.1. The Chapter needs to be read in conjunction with Chapter 3 District Wide Rules as Rules applying to earthworks and network utilities may also apply.

Where a network utility is to be located within an Outstanding Natural Feature or Landscape or a Significant Amenity Feature and requires a resource consent then the Objectives and Policies of both Chapter 3 and 5 are applicable.³

Permitted Activities

The following activities are Permitted Activities within Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes and Significant Amenity Features:

- NFL-R1** The use and maintenance of existing tracks and walkways for passive recreation, conservation, and customary activities.
- NFL-R2** Planting and restoration of indigenous vegetation within Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes and Significant Amenity Features using locally sourced plant stock.
- NFL-R3** Removal and control of weeds and pests, including wildling pines.
- NFL-R4** Fencing off of areas.
- NFL-R5** Indigenous vegetation clearance only for the purpose of:
 - 1) Fencing to exclude stock and or pests up to 1m from the fence centreline
 - 2) The gathering of plants in accordance with Māori customs and traditions
 - 3) Removal of vegetation that endangers human life, existing structures or network utilities
 - 4) Maintaining existing roads, tracks or fences and the clearance is within 1m either side of that road, track or fence.

² Requires cross reference into Policy 3A.3 Policy 3.2 that this policy applies

³ Requires cross reference to be included in Chapter 3A to direct plan users to this chapter.

- NFL-R6** Maintenance of existing structures.
- NFL-R7** The operation, maintenance, replacement or minor upgrading of lawfully established or consented network utilities or those that are existing as at 22 February 2017 within an Outstanding Natural Feature and Landscape as identified in Appendix 5.1.
- NFL-R8** Buildings and structures within the Totara Reserve Regional Park no greater than 50m² in area.
- NFL-R9** Continuation of stock grazing within the Rangitikei River Outstanding Natural Feature and within Significant Amenity Features as at [insert notification date]
- NFL-R10** Earthworks involving less than 50m³ associated with a permitted activity listed above.

Guidance Notes:

1. Earthworks within an Outstanding Natural Feature and Landscape except as provided for above are a Non-Complying Activity under Rule 3D.4.5.
2. Earthworks are also regulated by the Manawatū-Whanganui Regional Council and a resource consent may be required under the rules of the One Plan.

Restricted Discretionary Activities

The following activities are Restricted Discretionary Activities:

- NFL-R11** Development consistent with the Reserve Act status or relevant Management Plan for the specific Outstanding Natural Feature or Landscape.

For these activities, the Council has restricted its discretion to considering the following matters:

- MD1 Effects on the characteristics and values of the specific Outstanding Natural Feature or Landscape identified in NFL-APP1.
- MD2 Size, bulk, height, colour, design and location of any buildings, structures, car parking and manoeuvring.
- MD3 Sighting and visibility of buildings from public viewing locations.
- MD4 Effects on the overall amenity and ecological value resulting from any proposed vegetation clearance.
- MD5 Effects resulting from earthworks on the amenity and natural character values.
- MD6 Cumulative effect of development.

- NFL-R12** Buildings greater than 50m² and less than 200m² in area within the Totara Reserve Regional Park.

For these activities, the Council has restricted its discretion to considering the following matters:

- MD7 Effects on the characteristics and values of the specific Outstanding Natural Feature or Landscape identified in NFL-APP1.

- MD8 Size, bulk, height, colour, design and location of any buildings, structures, car parking and manoeuvring.
- MD9 Sighting and visibility of buildings from public viewing locations.
- MD10 Effects on the overall amenity and ecological value resulting from any proposed vegetation clearance.
- MD11 Effects resulting from earthworks on the amenity and natural character values.
- MD12 Cumulative effect of development.

Assessment Criteria for NFL-R11 and NFL-R12

In determining whether to grant a resource consent and what conditions to impose, the Council will, in addition to the objectives and policies of the Outstanding Natural Feature and Landscapes Chapter and Chapter 3 District Wide Rules, assess any application in terms of the following assessment criteria:

- AC1 The impacts of associated vegetation clearance on the landscape and ecological values of the area concerned.
- AC2 Whether the location of any buildings or structures are visible from a public space and create a visual intrusion or bulk on naturalness or other natural landscape characteristics and values.
- AC3 The degree to which the landscape or feature will retain the characteristics or values that make it outstanding, including naturalness, visual and amenity values.
- AC4 Whether the proposal creates an adverse cumulative effect on the characteristics and values of the Landscape or Feature, taking into account any existing consented or permitted activities that may have already degraded or compromised the characteristics and values of the feature or landscape.
- AC5 Whether the proposal enhances the restoration of indigenous plant species recognising the contribution to healthy ecosystems of Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes.

Discretionary Activities

The following activities are Discretionary Activities within Outstanding Natural Features and Significant Amenity Features:

- NFL-R13** Any new Network Utility, including windfarms and new transmission and distribution electricity lines within any Outstanding Natural Feature or Significant Amenity Feature as identified in NFL-APP1 or NFL-APP2.
- NFL-R14** Subdivision within an Outstanding Natural Feature or Significant Amenity Feature as identified in NFL-APP1 or NFL-APP2.
- NFL-R15** Construction, alteration or addition of buildings within an Outstanding Natural Feature and Significant Amenity Feature as identified in NFL-APP1 or NFL-APP2.
- NFL-R16** Construction, alteration or addition of buildings greater than 200m² within the Totara Reserve Regional Park.
- NFL-R17** Stock grazing, except for the existing stock grazing within the Rangitikei River Outstanding Natural Feature and Significant Amenity Features.

Assessment Criteria for NRL Rules NFL-R13 – NFL-R17

In determining whether to grant a resource consent and what conditions to impose, the Council will, in addition to the objectives and policies of the Outstanding Natural Feature and Landscapes Chapter and Chapter 3 District Wide Rules, assess any application in terms of the following assessment criteria:

- AC6 Whether the proposal will result in any adverse effects, including cumulative effects on the characteristics and values of the Outstanding Natural Features or Significant Amenity Features.
- AC7 The impacts of associated vegetation clearance on the landscape and ecological values of the area concerned, including the impacts of grazing on ecological values.
- AC8 The degree to which subdivision avoids the unnecessary fragmentation of land that could affect the characteristics and values of the Outstanding Natural Feature or Significant Amenity Feature.
- AC9 The degree to which any buildings or building extensions are visible from a public space and the degree of adverse effects from the visual intrusion on the naturalness, characteristics and values of the Outstanding Natural Feature or Significant Amenity Feature.
- AC10 Whether the proposal creates an adverse cumulative effect on the characteristics and values of the Landscape or Feature, taking into account any existing consented or permitted activities that may have already degraded or compromised the characteristics and values of the feature or landscape.
- AC11 Whether earthworks associated with the activity compromises or degrades the characteristics and values of the Outstanding Natural Feature or Landscape or Significant Amenity Feature.

Non-Complying Activities

The following activities are Non-Complying Activities:

- NFL-R18** Construction, alteration or addition of buildings within an Outstanding Natural Landscape as identified in NFL-APP1.
- NFL-R19** Subdivision within an Outstanding Natural Landscape as identified in NFL-APP1.
- NFL-R20** Stock grazing within an Outstanding Natural Landscape as identified in NFL-APP1.
- NFL-R21** New Plantation Forestry within an Outstanding Natural Feature or Landscape and Significant Amenity Feature.
- NFL-R22** Earthworks that are not ancillary to a permitted activity⁴
- NFL-R23** Any activity not otherwise provided for as a Permitted, Restricted Discretionary or Discretionary Activity.
- NFL-R24** Any new Network Utility, including windfarms and new transmission and distribution electricity lines within any Outstanding Natural Landscape as identified in NFL-APP1.⁵

⁴ Requires a cross reference to Rule 3D.4.5 to say that rule applies.

⁵ Requires a cross reference to Rule 3A.4.5 to say this rule applies.

Guidance Note

1. The National Environmental Standard for Plantation Forestry (2017) also applies to activities within Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes and a resource consent may also be required under those provisions.

NFL-APP1 – Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes**NFL-APP2 – Significant Amenity Features****Other Amendments**

1. Amend Rule 3D.4.5 as follows:

Any **earthworks** within an Outstanding Natural Feature or Landscape identified in NFL-APP1 Appendix 1C, except within an existing **road** corridor, or in the **National Grid Yard** that do not comply with 3D.4.2 f. v) or vi) is a Non-Complying Activity.

2. Amend Policy 3D 1.3 as follows:

To restrict **earthworks** in Outstanding Natural Features or Landscapes as scheduled in NFL-APP1 Appendix 1C, except where **earthworks** are necessary to manage risk to human health and safety.