



## INDIGENOUS VEGETATION AND HABITATS OF INDIGENOUS FAUNA - POLICY

This chapter does not form part of this Plan change. The existing provisions of the Ruapehu District Plan (May 2000) will continue to have effect.

A copy of the Objectives and Policies from the May 2000 document is provided on the following pages for completeness.



## INDIGENOUS VEGETATION AND HABITATS OF INDIGENOUS FAUNA - POLICY

### IV2.1 Introduction

One of the District's greatest natural assets are its large tracts of indigenous forest and wetlands. The majority of these natural assets are on land administered by the Department of Conservation and the Department of Defence. However, large areas are still within private ownership.

The Resource Management Act 1991, with its emphasis on sustainable management, means the Council has a responsibility to provide for the protection of areas of "significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna" as a matter of national importance (section 6(c), Resource Management Act 1991).

Because an area is "significant" based upon the evidence of scientific research, in terms of its vegetation and/or fauna habitat, this does not automatically mean that no activity can take place on the site. Rather, Council is required to exercise its statutory obligations and may place controls on an activity and use of an area through the resource consent process, in order to maintain and protect the significant natural values of the District.

Determining significant areas of indigenous vegetation and fauna habitat within the District is at present constrained by the lack of a complete inventory of the natural resource. An inventory is desirable for the long-term, but in the immediate future criteria termed Fauna and Flora Screening Procedure (FFSP) have been developed to determine "significance". If a proposed activity triggers one of these FFSP criteria a resource consent will be required.

An information checklist has been developed to assist the applicant to evaluate the ecological values of their resource. This checklist is available from the Council.

The Council expects to exercise its powers and functions in partnership with the Manawatu-Wanganui Regional Council, the Ministry of Forestry, and the Department of Conservation. The requirements of this Plan are in addition to those provisions contained in the (1993 amendments) Forests Act 1949.

### IV 2.2 Issue

- (a) Loss and destruction of significant areas of indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna caused by human action.

#### IV 2.2.1 Outcome

- (a) Retention of the values of the areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna.

#### IV 2.2.2 Objective

- (a) Protection of areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna.



## IV 2.2.3 Policies

- (a) To promote the protection of areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna through the resource consent process and by voluntary means.
- (b) To apply the Fauna and Flora Screening Procedure (FFSP) to all land use activities to determine significance and whether the activity shall be a permitted activity, discretionary activity or a non-complying activity. Permitted activities do not constitute "significance".
- (c) To take into account any Sustainable Forest Management Plan or a Sustainable Forest Management Permit approved by the Secretary of Forestry, under the Forests Act 1949, when considering a resource consent application.
- (d) To recognise that the following may contain significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna within the District:
  - (i) Indigenous wetlands, including flax-monoao communities, peat bogs, tarns and alpine soaks.
  - (ii) Kaikawaka-pink pine associations.
  - (iii) Kaikawaka forest.
  - (iv) Rata-podocarp and rata-tawa forests.
  - (v) Beech forest remnants.
  - (vi) Tawa forest.
  - (vii) Kahikatea-matai associations.
  - (viii) Gunnera and Jovellana communities.
  - (ix) Mixed podocarp forest.
  - (x) Indigenous montane grasslands.
  - (xi) Totara forest on river terraces.

## IV 2.2.4 Explanation of Policies

These policies recognise the important value of significant areas of indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna within the District.

The requirement of the Act is for the Council to recognise and provide for the protection of areas of indigenous vegetation and habitats of indigenous fauna that are significant. The policies set out the FFSP as the most appropriate and effective method to allow "significant" to be determined. The rules set out the FFSP criteria to determine significance. Permitted activities are not contrary to Part II of the Resource Management Act 1991.

The FFSP criteria for discretionary and non-complying activities requires Council be provided with information in order to determine the effects of an activity on the environment. This information will assist Council determine the type of conditions that may be required as part of a resource consent or determine whether a consent can be granted at all.

The policies recognise that protection can be promoted as well as provided for by statutory means. Both techniques may be effective in different situations.

## IV 2.3 Methods

- (a) In consultation with other agencies, Iwi and landowners, to develop a register of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna within the Ruapehu District.
- (b) To promote the protection of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna through the use of voluntary covenants and other similar mechanisms.



- (c) To consider providing for rate relief for areas of vegetation that have been protected or purchased by the Forest Heritage Fund, the QEII National Trust or the Nga Whenua Rahui programme.
- (d) The Fauna and Flora Screening Procedure (FFSP) shall apply to any activity involving the modification of indigenous vegetation or habitats of indigenous fauna to determine whether the activity shall be a permitted activity, a discretionary activity or non-complying activity.