

NFL – Natural Features and Landscapes

The RMA requires the protection of *Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes* in the district from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development. These are the features and landscapes that are outstanding due to a range of factors, e.g. scientific matters, and aesthetic, transient, and cultural values.

The Natural Features and Landscapes chapter comprises identified areas of *Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes* and *Special Amenity Landscapes* throughout the Wairarapa districts. These are district-wide overlays which apply across all zones containing these landscapes and features.

The landscapes within the Wairarapa define the characteristics and unique identity of the area, incorporating rugged and rolling hills, ridgelines, lowland valleys, and coastal escarpments. Some features remain strongly natural while others have been modified through human activity over time. Together these provide a distinct natural identity and amenity unique to the Wairarapa that is valued by the community.

Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes are dominated by natural landscape components and are identified on the basis of their characteristics and values. *Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes* include both outstanding natural features and the broader outstanding landscapes. The District Plan avoids distinguishing between ‘features’ and ‘landscapes’ and instead identifies any outstanding areas collectively as *Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes*. All of the identified *Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes* within the Wairarapa are identified in SCHED9 Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes.

Special Amenity Landscapes are areas where either the natural components dominate and are highly valued but are not outstanding or areas with outstanding values which have been modified by human activity, such as pastoral farming. These landscapes are still important and exhibit characteristics which make them special. There are no specific rules that relate to *Special Amenity Landscapes*; however, the full list of identified special amenity areas within the Wairarapa are identified in SCHED8 Special Amenity Landscapes and shown on the District Plan Maps for information purposes.

Importance must also include cognisance of Te Rohe o Rongokako Joint Redress Act 2022 between Rangitāne Tu Mai Ra Trust and Ngati Kahungūnu ki Wairarapa Tamaki Nui A Rua iwi over the management of Wairarapa Moana and Ruamahanga River catchment in this chapter.

Objectives

NFL-O1	<i>Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes</i>
<i>Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes</i> are protected from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development.	
NFL-O2	<i>Special Amenity Landscapes</i>
<i>Special Amenity Landscapes</i> within the Wairarapa are maintained and where practicable enhanced.	

Policies

NFL-P1	Identify Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes
<i>Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes</i> within the Wairarapa have been identified as being natural features and landscapes where: a. they are exceptional or out of the ordinary; and b. their natural components dominate over the influence of human activity. While taking into account the following criteria: i. natural science factors; ii. sensory factors; and iii. shared or recognised features.	
NFL-P2	Identify <i>Special Amenity Landscapes</i>
Identify <i>Special Amenity Landscapes</i> that are distinctive, widely recognised, and highly valued by the community for their contribution to the amenity and quality of the environment of the Wairarapa, based on the following criteria: a. Natural science factors; b. Sensory factors; and c. Shared or recognised features.	
NFL-P3	Subdivision, use, and development within an <i>Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes</i> outside the <i>Coastal Environment</i>
Only allow subdivision, use, and development within an identified <i>Outstanding Natural Feature and Landscape</i> where it:	

	a. avoids significant adverse effects and avoids, remedies, or mitigates any other adverse effects on the identified characteristics and values of the <i>Outstanding Natural Feature and Landscape</i>; and b. is demonstrated it is appropriate by: i. being associated with conservation activities; or ii. having an <i>operational need</i> or <i>functional need</i> to be located in this area; and iii. minimising earthworks and changes to the landform; and iv. reducing the scale and prominence of any buildings or structures, including any proposed building platforms, and integrating landform and context into the design and through the use of naturally occurring building platforms and sympathetic materials; and v. avoiding or minimising the removal of any indigenous vegetation; and vi. enabling the repair, maintenance, and removal of existing <i>infrastructure</i>; and vii. enabling the continuation, or enhancing, of tangata whenua cultural and spiritual values and <i>customary activities</i>.
NFL-P4	Subdivision, use, and development within <i>Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes</i> within the <i>Coastal Environment</i>
Only allow subdivision, use, and development within an <i>Outstanding Natural Feature and Landscape</i> located within the <i>Coastal Environment</i> where it: a. avoids adverse effects on the identified characteristics and values of the Outstanding Natural Feature and Landscape; and b. is demonstrated it is appropriate by: i. being associated with conservation activities; or ii. it relates to the maintenance, repair, or removal of existing infrastructure; or iii. there is a functional need or operational need for the activity to be located in the Outstanding Natural Features or Landscapes; and iv. the form, scale, and nature of the activity will not detract from the characteristics and values of the Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes by: 1. integrating landform and context into the design and through the use of naturally occurring building platforms and sympathetic materials; 2. limiting the prominence or visibility of built form, including by integrating it into the natural landform; and 3. restoring or reinstating areas of earthworks and replanting areas of modification of vegetation.	

NFL-P5	Increasing public awareness
Increase public awareness of landscape values and their importance and encourage the community and landowners to support protection of the Wairarapa's <i>Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes</i> and support the maintenance and enhancement of <i>Special Amenity Landscapes</i> .	
NFL-P6	Support and incentivise voluntary protection
Provide support and incentives as appropriate to landowners in the protection of <i>Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes</i> .	

Rules

NFL-R1		<i>Earthworks, modification of indigenous vegetation, or buildings and structures (including construction, additions, and alterations) within Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes</i>
	All zones	1. Activity status: Permitted Where: a. Compliance is achieved with: i. NFL-S1; ii. NFL-S2; and iii. NFL-S3; or b. <i>Earthworks, modification of indigenous vegetation, or buildings and structures</i> are associated with <i>conservation activities</i>; <u>or</u> c. <i>Earthworks, modification of indigenous vegetation, or buildings and structures</i> are associated with the maintenance, repair, minor upgrading, or removal of existing National Grid infrastructure; or d. <i>Modification of indigenous vegetation</i> required to remove vegetation infected by an unwanted organism under the Biosecurity Act 1993; and e. The <i>Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes</i> is not located within the <i>Coastal Environment</i>; and f. Is not associated with <i>plantation forestry</i>.
	All zones	2. Activity status: Restricted discretionary Where:

	a. Compliance is not achieved with NFL-R1(1)(ee); and b. Compliance is achieved with NFL-R1(1)(a). Matters of discretion: 1. The degree of change to the natural landform. 2. The effects of activity on the identified characteristics and values of the <i>Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes</i>. 3. The effects of activity on the identified characteristics and values of the <i>Coastal Environment</i>. 4. Whether the activity has an <i>operational need</i> or <i>functional need</i> for the location. 5. The effect of the reflectivity and colour of external materials on the identified characteristics and values of the <i>Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes</i>.
All zones	3. Activity status: Restricted discretionary Where: a. Compliance is not achieved with NFL-R1(1)(a); b. The <i>Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes</i> is not located within the <i>Coastal Environment</i>; c. The maximum area of <i>earthworks</i> within an <i>Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes</i> does not exceed 500m² per <i>site</i>; d. The maximum area of any <i>modification of vegetation</i> does not exceed 500m² per <i>site</i>; and e. Any <i>building</i> or <i>structure</i> does not exceed: i. a <i>gross floor area</i> of 200m² per <i>site</i>; and ii. a maximum <i>height</i> of 5m. Matters of discretion: 1. The effect of non-compliance with any relevant standard and the matters of discretion of any standard that is not met.
All zones	4. Activity status: Non-complying Where: a. <i>Earthworks, modification of vegetation, or buildings and structures</i> is not otherwise provided for by Rule NFL-R1(1), NFL-R1(2), or NFL-R1(3).

NFL-R2	<i>Plantation forestry</i>
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 All zones	1. Activity status: Non-complying.
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Standards

NFL-S1	Earthworks
1. <i>Earthworks</i> must not exceed: a. a maximum cut or fill <i>height</i> greater than 1.5m above ground level; and b. a maximum area of 50m² per <i>site</i>. This standard does not apply to: a. <i>Earthworks</i> associated with maintaining existing farm tracks, fence lines, water supply infrastructure and access ways are exempt from the above area standards but must comply with NFL-S1(1)(a).	Matters of discretion: 1. The degree of change to the natural landform. 2. The effect of the earthworks on the identified characteristics and values within an <i>Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes</i>.
NFL-S2	Modification of indigenous vegetation
1. <i>Modification of indigenous vegetation</i> must not exceed, in total area, 50m² in any 12-month period. This standard does not apply to <i>modification of indigenous vegetation</i> that is: a. 3m either side of, or within, an existing formed <i>road</i>, stock crossing, or accessway; b. 3m either side of a fence, or other lawfully established <i>structure</i>; or c. within 10m of an existing lawfully established <i>residential unit</i>.	Matters of discretion: 1. The scale of the <i>indigenous vegetation</i> modification. 2. The effect of the vegetation modification on identified values and characteristics within an <i>Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes</i>.
NFL-S3	Buildings and structures
1. Buildings and structures within an <i>Outstanding Natural Features and Landscape</i> must meet the following standards:	Matters of discretion: 1. Whether the <i>building</i> or <i>structure</i> is integrated into the landform to limit prominence and protect the identified characteristics and values within an

a. the <i>gross floor area</i> of any <i>building</i> or <i>structure</i> on a <i>site</i> must not exceed 50m² per <i>site</i>; b. the <i>building</i> or <i>structure</i> must not exceed one storey and must not exceed a maximum <i>height</i> of 5m, except for telecommunications poles, which must not exceed a maximum height of 8m; c. maximum of one <i>residential unit</i> per <i>site</i>; d. any roof cladding must be of matt finish in a natural range of browns, greens, and greys to complement the tones found in the natural surroundings, with the colour having a light reflectivity value (LRV) percentage between 5 and 25%; and e. cladding is limited to natural materials and/or recessive colours with light reflectivity value (LRV) of 35% or less.	<i>Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes.</i> 2. The effect of the scale and location on the identified characteristics and values within an <i>Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes.</i> 3. The effect of the reflectivity and colour of external materials on the identified characteristics and values within an <i>Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes.</i>
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