

Natural features and landscapes | Ngā tirohanga whenua

Overview

This chapter contains the provisions relating to outstanding natural landscapes, outstanding natural features, landscapes of high amenity value and the karst overlay. The Act requires the plan to protect outstanding natural features and landscapes in the district from adverse effects, including cumulative effects arising from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. Where natural features and landscapes are located in the coastal environment, this chapter gives effect to the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 and the Waikato Regional Policy Statement by identifying these areas and providing policy direction and matters of discretion.

Landscapes, places and features can be of historical, cultural and spiritual significance to mana whenua. For mana whenua, it is critical to manage and protect these resources in order to fulfil the obligation of kaitiakitanga or guardianship. Wider landscape settings symbolise life and the narratives of the local tribal guardians, as well as providing a tangible connection to ancestors, whenua and significant historical events. Landmarks and discrete features can carry deep levels of meaning and association. These settings are valued for their holistic connection to the local tribal custodians as a collective, through the generations.

It is the view of mana whenua that specific values of significance and associative narratives should not be recorded in respect of the landscapes and features identified in this chapter. Mana whenua representatives acknowledge the contemporary relationships that exists between local tribal custodians and these landscapes and features. This includes valuing customary resources and appreciating these areas for their naturalness, solitude and recreational opportunities. However, the role and obligation of kaitiakitanga precludes sharing the symbolism, values and significance of these sites. The narratives are sacred representations of these natural resources and therefore are taonga because they express through the physical manifestation of a place, the relationship of the local tribal custodians with the intangible.

Outstanding natural landscapes

Landscapes are considered outstanding when they meet assessment criteria associated with factors including aesthetic values, expressiveness and legibility, transient and cultural values, historical association and natural science factors. Both the Waikato Regional Policy Statement and the Manawatū Whanganui One Plan contain assessment criteria and guidance which have been used to identify the outstanding natural landscapes that are protected by the provisions in this plan. Approximately 21% or around 73,000 hectares of the district is identified as an outstanding natural landscape. Of this area, 51% is held as Department of Conservation estate, QEII covenant or Nga Whenua Rahui. Where the land is held in private ownership, the majority is identified as a significant natural area. Only 11% of the land identified as part of an outstanding natural landscape is developed or farmed. Of particular note are the rugged, peaked landforms of the northern Herangi range

which are considered to be an outstanding natural landscape at both a regional and a district scale. The five outstanding natural landscapes are:

- Herangi-Pomarangai
- Northern Coastline
- Western Coast
- Rock Peak
- Mokau Hills

Refer to SCHED7 for the schedule of outstanding natural landscapes.

Outstanding natural features

The district plan is required to identify outstanding natural features and avoid in the first instance, any adverse effects of activities that might compromise their unique values and characteristics. 76 sites or features that contribute to the understanding of geology, are rare or unusual, or meet other abiotic and biotic criteria that make them significant are included for protection in this plan. Approximately 2% or around 4,300 hectares of the district is identified as being an outstanding natural feature. There are six categories of outstanding natural features and provisions apply according to their type. The majority of outstanding natural features are contained or small features such as waterfalls, natural bridges, bluffs, tors, gorges, lakes, sandspits and areas of geological importance. Categories A and F are larger areas with characteristics similar to the outstanding natural landscapes:

- A = Large landforms (non-coastal).
- B = Smaller more fragile landforms.
- C = Dynamic landforms and features in the coastal zone.
- D = Robust exposures of geological material (non-coastal).
- E = Fragile exposures of geological material (mostly in coastal zone).
- F = Caves.

Refer to SCHED8 for the schedule of outstanding natural features

Landscapes of high amenity value

Landscapes of high amenity value are identified in the part of the district that is within the Waikato region. The Waikato Regional Policy Statement requires district plans to identify and appropriately recognise the qualities and characteristics of areas of amenity value. These landscapes are managed to maintain and enhance their rural character and naturalness while allowing for appropriate development, particularly the ongoing use of rural land for agricultural, pastoral and horticultural activities. Consequently, a working pastoral landscape is envisaged for these areas and the provisions heavily rely on the underlying general rural zone to manage the effects of non-farming activities including rural industry, quarrying activities and tourism. Approximately 23% or around 82,000 hectares comprise the four landscapes of high amenity value in the district:

- Awakino gorge
- Limestone country
- Rangitoto range and the Waipa valley
- Kawhia Harbour

Refer to SCHED9 for the schedule of landscapes of high amenity value.

The karst overlay

The karst overlay contains subterranean caves and catchment areas of high geomorphological and ecological diversity. The majority of these cave systems were identified and protected through provisions in the previous district plan. This plan seeks to manage the main impacts on karst ecosystems which are associated with general vegetation clearance which can impact the hydrology of cave systems and localised vegetation clearance around karst features which can change the environmental conditions in caves with resulting changes to biota. Commercial forestry can cause significant sediment flows to subterranean habitats during harvesting and quarrying activities, dumping of waste or filling of cave entrances, tomos and dolines can also have a serious detrimental effect on karst ecosystems. 5 catchment systems and 31 cave systems comprising approximately 5% or around 17,000 hectares of the district are identified in the karst overlay.

Refer to SCHED12 for the karst overlay schedule.

Objectives and Policies - Outstanding natural features and landscapes

Refer also to the relevant objectives and policies in Part 2 District - Wide Matters

- NFL-O1.** The values and character of the outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes identified in SCHED7 and SCHED8 are recognised and protected from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.
- NFL-O2.** Ensure that the cultural and spiritual relationships of Māori with outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes are appropriately considered as part of subdivision, use and development activities.
- NFL-O3.** Provide for identified activities assessed in this plan as appropriate within outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes.
- NFL-P1.** Ensure the values and character of the outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes are protected from inappropriate subdivision, use and development by:
 - 1. Avoiding adverse effects which compromise the values and character of outstanding natural features and landscapes; and
 - 2. Ensuring the location, scale, materials, design, colour and grouping of buildings and structures avoid adverse effects on the values and character of outstanding natural features and landscapes; and
 - 3. Ensuring earthworks integrate with the existing landform to preserve the values and character of outstanding natural features and landscapes; and
 - 4. Avoiding any activity, particularly earthworks, harvesting of commercial forestry and structures, where this will adversely affect caves and fragile outstanding natural features identified in SCHED8; and

5. Ensuring developments in locations that are of significance to mana whenua appropriately assess those effects and any resulting development is managed in a way that protects the values of the site; and
6. Avoiding in the first instance or minimising the removal of indigenous vegetation; and
7. Ensuring any earthworks or vegetation removal activities focus on protecting existing indigenous vegetation in the first instance, minimising clearance in the second instance and undertaking any measures necessary to rehabilitate the land including restoration and re-planting as a final resort; and
8. Avoiding the adverse effects of mineral extraction activities in outstanding natural landscapes; and
9. Providing for commercial forestry only where there is a clear and on-going land stability benefit and the ensuing operations avoid detracting from the values and character of outstanding natural features and landscapes; and
10. Providing for the continued operation of lawfully established farming activities; and
11. Network utilities are managed in accordance with NU-P12.

NFL-P2. Provide flexibility when considering the development of land returned under Te Tiriti o Waitangi settlements and multiple owned Māori land located in outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes by:

1. Evaluating the extent to which the development enables the relationship of mana whenua with their ancestral lands and the exercise of kaitiakitanga; and
2. Evaluating the extent to which positive economic, social and cultural benefits are achieved for mana whenua now and into the future; and
3. Taking into account the requirement to avoid adverse effects on the values and character of outstanding natural features and landscapes.

NFL-P3. Provide for the appropriate use of natural resources, including land and water, within outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes by:

1. Providing thresholds to allow limited earthworks and vegetation removal, particularly where this is part of the continued operation of lawfully farming established activities; and
2. Ensuring buildings and structures are setback from riparian and coastal margins and do not dominate ridgelines or coastal headlands.

Objective and Policies - Landscapes of high amenity value

Refer also to the relevant objectives and policies in Part 2 District - Wide Matters

- NFL-O4.** Recognise, maintain, and where practicable, enhance the qualities and values of the landscapes of high amenity value identified in SCHED9, including those values associated with working agricultural, pastoral and horticultural landscapes.
- NFL-P4.** Maintain and where practicable, enhance the qualities and values of the landscapes of high amenity value during subdivision, land use and development by:
1. Ensuring that the effects of any activity which could compromise the qualities and values of the landscapes of high amenity value are minimised; and
 2. Ensuring that buildings, structures and infrastructure are integrated into landscapes of high amenity value to minimise, to the maximum extent practicable, any visual impacts; and
 3. Managing the adverse effects of earthworks for buildings, driveways, new tracks and farm quarries through appropriate subdivision and development design; and
 4. Ensuring developments in locations that are of significance to mana whenua appropriately assess those effects and any resulting development is managed in a way that protects the values of the site; and
 5. Minimising the removal of indigenous vegetation as far as practicable; and
 6. Providing for the continued operation of lawfully established farming activities.
- NFL-P5.** Maintain and where practicable, enhance the qualities and values of the landscapes of high amenity value, while providing for:
1. The continued operation, maintenance and repair and minor upgrading of lawfully established renewable electricity generation activities; and
 2. Nationally and regionally significant infrastructure and industry, and for those activities associated with significant mineral resources; and
 3. The recognition of the positive benefits of new renewable electricity generation activities.

Objective and Policy - The karst overlay

Refer also to the relevant objectives and policies in Part 2 District - Wide Matters

- NFL-O5.** Ensure the unique geomorphological, hydrological and ecological values of the karst overlay identified in SCHED12 are recognised and protected.

- NFL-P6.** Recognise, protect, and where practicable, enhance the values of the karst overlay by:
1. Ensuring that the effects of any activity which could compromise the values of the karst overlay are avoided in the first instance, and where this is not practicable, minimised; and
 2. Managing the adverse effects of earthworks through appropriate development design, mitigation measures and rehabilitation; and
 3. Avoiding as far as practicable, any activity, particularly vegetation clearance and large-scale earthworks including quarrying activities, where these will adversely affect the values of the karst systems or features; and
 4. Avoiding developments in locations that are of significance to mana whenua to the maximum extent practicable; and
 5. Minimising the removal of indigenous vegetation; and
 6. Providing for commercial forestry only where there is a clear and on-going land stability benefit and the ensuing operations do not significantly detract from the values of the karst overlay; and
 7. Providing for the continued operation of lawfully established activities; and
 8. Providing for the removal of non-significant indigenous vegetation in the rural production zone where the effects of clearance do not adversely affect the values of the karst systems or features.

Rules

The rules that apply to activities in natural features and landscapes are contained in the tables listed below. To undertake any activity, it must comply with the rules listed in:

- NFL - Table 1 – Activities Rules; and
- NFL - Table 2 – Performance Standards; and
- Any relevant provision in Part 2 District-wide matters; and
- Any relevant provision in Part 3 Area Specific matters.

Where an activity breaches more than one rule, the most restrictive status shall apply to the activity.

Refer to Part 1 - How the Plan Works for an explanation of how to use this plan, including activity status abbreviations.

Note: Where an activity is not provided for in this table, see the applicable provisions in the underlying zone or district wide chapter.

Buildings

	The rules apply to all zones	The rules apply to all zones except Te Maika precinct (PREC7)	The rules apply to all zones except the rural production zone & Aria settlement zone	
Rule	Outstanding natural features	Outstanding natural landscapes	Landscapes of high amenity value	Karst overlay
NFL-R1.	Any building that is less than or equal to 5 m in height and/or less than or equal to 30 m² in size.			
	PER: Category F NC: Category A,B,C,D,E	PER	PER	N/A see zone rules
NFL-R2.	Any building that is less than or equal to 5 m in height and/or greater than 30 m² but less than or equal to 100 m² in size.			
	RDIS: Category F PR: Category A,B,C,D,E	RDIS	PER	N/A see zone rules
	Where the activity status is RDIS, the matters over which discretion is restricted are: (a) Whether the location and scale of the building detracts from the outstanding natural feature or a landscape; and (b) Whether the grouping of buildings detracts from the outstanding natural feature or the landscape; and (c) The extent to which the building extends above a ridgeline or coastal headland or dominates an outstanding natural feature; and (d) Whether the colour and materials integrate the building into the wider landscape; and (e) Whether the building uses low reflectivity glass and building form to minimise reflectivity; and (f) Whether the building is setback from riparian and coastal margins; and (g) The location, timing of construction, design and density of soil disturbance and vegetation removal activities; and (h) Any measures necessary to rehabilitate the land following the completion of the activity; and (i) The protection of existing vegetation and/or mitigation/enhancement planting to assist the visual integration of built form; and (j) Effects on the relationship of mana whenua and their culture and traditions with the site and any wāhi tapu or other taonga affected by the activity; and (k) Measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects of the building on the outstanding natural feature or landscape.			

	The rules apply to all zones	The rules apply to all zones except Te Maika precinct (PREC7)	The rules apply to all zones except the rural production zone & Aria settlement zone	
Rule	Outstanding natural features	Outstanding natural landscapes	Landscapes of high amenity value	Karst overlay
NFL-R3.	Any building that is greater than 5 m but less than or equal to 8 m in height and/or greater than 100 m² but less than or equal to 300 m² in size.			
	DIS: Category F PR: Category A,B,C,D,E	DIS	PER	N/A see zone rules
NFL-R4.	Any building or structure that is greater than 8 m in height and/or greater than 300 m² in size.			
	NC: Category F PR: Category A,B,C,D,E	DIS	RDIS	N/A see zone rules
	Where the activity status is RDIS, the matters over which discretion is restricted are: (a) Whether the location and scale of the building detracts from the landscape; and (b) The extent to which the building extends above a ridgeline or coastal headland; and (c) Whether the colour and materials integrate the building into the wider landscape; and (d) Whether the building uses low reflectivity glass and building form to minimise reflectivity; and (e) Whether the building is setback from riparian and coastal margins; and (f) Whether the grouping of buildings detracts from the landscape; and (g) The location, timing of construction, design and density of soil disturbance and vegetation removal activities; and (h) Any measures necessary to rehabilitate the land following the completion of the activity; and (i) The protection of existing vegetation and/or mitigation/enhancement planting to assist the visual integration of built form; and (j) Effects on the relationship of mana whenua and their culture and traditions with the site and any wāhi tapu or other taonga affected by the activity; and (k) Measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects of the building on the landscape or coastal environment.			
NFL-R5.	Any building that is sited on a building platform approved as part of a subdivision consent issued before 20 October 2022			
	PER	PER	PER	PER
Note: All buildings and structures, must also comply with NATC-R2, CEH-R1 and CEH-R2.				

Tanks & silos

	The rules apply to all zones	The rules apply to all zones except Te Maika precinct (PREC7)	The rules apply to all zones except the rural production zone & Aria settlement zone	
Rule	Outstanding natural features	Outstanding natural landscapes	Landscapes of high amenity value	Karst overlay
NFL-R6.	Any tank or silo that is less than or equal to 3.2 m in height and/or has a capacity less than or equal to 50,000 litres or less			
	PER: Category A,F NC: Category B,C,D,E	PER	N/A see zone rules	N/A see zone rules
NFL-R7.	Any tank or silo that is greater than 3.2 m in height and/or has a capacity greater than 50,000 litres.			
	RDIS: Category A,F NC: Category B,C,D,E	RDIS	N/A see zone rules	N/A see zone rules
	Where the activity status is RDIS, the matters over which discretion is restricted are: (a) The location, scale, materials and colour of the tank or silo and whether these factors detract from the outstanding natural feature or the landscape; and (b) The extent to which the structure extends above a ridgeline or coastal headland or dominates an outstanding natural feature or the landscape; and (c) Whether the structure is setback from riparian and coastal margins; and (d) The protection of existing vegetation and/or mitigation/enhancement planting to assist the visual integration; and (e) The location, timing of construction, design and density of soil disturbance and vegetation removal activities; and (f) Measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects of the activity on the outstanding natural feature or the landscape.			
Note: All buildings and structures, must also comply with NATC-R2, CEH-R1 and CEH-R2.				

Earthworks

The rules apply to all zones			The rules apply to all zones except the rural production zone	
Rule	Outstanding natural features	Outstanding natural landscapes	Landscapes of high amenity value	Karst overlay
NFL-R8.	Earthworks			
	PER: Where less than or equal to 100 m ³ and/or no greater than 1 m in depth in Category A,C,D,F. Applies per holding per calendar year NC: Category B,E	PER: Where less than or equal to 250 m ³ per holding per calendar year	PER: Where less than or equal to 500 m ³ per holding per calendar year (general rural & natural open space zones only) Otherwise see the earthworks chapter	PER: Where less than or equal to 250 m ³ per holding per calendar year
	NC: Where greater than 100 m ³ and/or greater than 1m in depth in Category A,C,D,F. Applies per holding per calendar year	RDIS: Where greater than 250 m ³ per holding per calendar year	RDIS: Where greater than 500 m ³ per holding per calendar year (general rural & natural open space zones)	RDIS: Where greater than 250 m ³ per holding per calendar year
Where the activity status is RDIS, the matters over which discretion is restricted are: (a) Whether the location and scale of the earthworks detracts from the landscape or adversely affects the hydrological and geological values of a karst system or feature; and (b) The extent to which earthworks impact ridgelines or coastal headlands; and (c) For new tracks and driveways, measures taken to follow the contour of the landscape, use visually recessive materials, and avoid large batter slopes or retaining walls; and (d) Whether the earthworks are setback from riparian and coastal margins; and (e) The protection of existing vegetation and/or mitigation/enhancement planting to assist the visual integration and to avoid, mitigate or remedy adverse effects on the hydrological and geological values of a karst system or feature; and				

The rules apply to all zones			The rules apply to all zones except the rural production zone	
Rule	Outstanding natural features	Outstanding natural landscapes	Landscapes of high amenity value	Karst overlay
	(f) The extent to which existing vegetation is retained in order to mitigate the effects of streambank and slope erosion, sedimentation, water quality degradation and loss of indigenous species habitat; and (g) The location, timing, design and density of soil disturbance and vegetation removal activities; and (h) Any measures necessary to rehabilitate the land following the completion of the activity; and (i) Effects on the relationship of mana whenua and their culture and traditions with the site and any wāhi tapu or other taonga affected by the activity; and (j) Measures to maintain slope stability or prevent exacerbation of any pre-existing deep-seated land instability; and (k) The method of sediment retention and sediment runoff control to be adopted; and (l) The extent of adverse cumulative effects at a catchment scale on hydrological and geological values of a karst system or feature; and (m) Measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate damage to riparian vegetation or soil; and (n) Measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate the adverse effect of the activity on the landscape; and (o) Measures to control the effect on air quality from objectionable particulate matter.			
<i>Note: All earthworks must also comply with NATC-R4 and CEH-R3.</i> <i>Note: This rule prevails over the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Commercial Forestry) Regulations 2017 in outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes and in the karst overlay.</i> <i>Note: In the landscapes of high amenity value, for zones other than the general rural zone and natural open space zone, the provisions in the earthworks chapter apply.</i>				

Quarrying activities

The rules apply to all zones			The rules apply to all zones except the rural production zone	
Rule	Outstanding natural features	Outstanding natural landscapes	Landscapes of high amenity value	Karst overlay
NFL-R9.	Farm quarrying and forestry quarrying			
	PR	PER: Where less than or equal to 250 m ³ per holding per calendar year	PER: Where less than or equal to 500 m ³ per holding per calendar year	PER: where less than or equal to 250 m ³ per holding per calendar year

			See the NES for Commercial Forestry for forestry quarries	
		RDIS: Where greater than 250 m ³ per holding per calendar year.	RDIS: Where greater than 500 m ³ per holding per calendar year.	RDIS: Where greater than 250 m ³ per holding per calendar year.
Where the activity status is RDIS, the matters over which discretion is restricted are: (a) Whether the location and scale of the earthworks detracts from the landscape or adversely affects the hydrological and geological values of a karst system or feature; and (b) The extent to which earthworks impact ridgelines or coastal headlands; and (c) Measures taken to avoid large batter slopes or retaining walls; and (d) Whether the earthworks are setback from riparian and coastal margins; and (e) The protection of existing vegetation and/or mitigation/enhancement planting to assist the visual integration and to avoid, mitigate or remedy adverse effects on the hydrological and geological values of a karst system or feature; and (f) The extent to which existing vegetation is retained in order to mitigate the effects of streambank and slope erosion, sedimentation, water quality degradation and loss of indigenous species habitat; and (g) The location, timing, design and density of soil disturbance and vegetation removal activities; and (h) Any measures necessary to rehabilitate the land following the completion of the activity; and (i) Effects on the relationship of mana whenua and their culture and traditions with the site and any wāhi tapu or other taonga affected by the activity; and (j) Measures to maintain slope stability or prevent exacerbation of any pre-existing deep-seated land instability; and (k) The method of sediment retention and sediment runoff control to be adopted; and (l) The extent of adverse cumulative effects at a catchment scale on hydrological and geological values of a karst system or feature; and (m) Measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate damage to riparian vegetation or soil; and (n) Measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate the adverse effect of the activity on the landscape; and (o) Measures to control the effect on air quality from objectionable particulate matter.				
<i>Note: All earthworks must also comply with NATC-R4 and CEH-R3</i> <i>Note: This rule prevails over the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Commercial Forestry) Regulations 2017 in the outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes and in the karst overlay.</i>				
NFL-R10.	Quarrying activities and mineral prospecting and exploration			

	PR	See zone rules for mineral prospecting and exploration NC: Quarrying activities	See zone rules for mineral prospecting and exploration DIS: Quarrying activities	See zone rules for mineral prospecting and exploration NC: Quarrying activities
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Hydroseeding

The rules apply to all zones				
Rule	Outstanding natural features	Outstanding natural landscapes	Landscapes of high amenity value	Karst overlay
NFL-R11.	Hydroseeding			
	PER: Category A,F RDIS: Category B,C,D,E	PER	PER	PER
Where the activity status is RDIS, the matters over which discretion is restricted are: (a) Whether the location and scale of the hydroseeding detracts from the outstanding natural feature; and (b) The location, timing of hydroseeding, recontouring and vegetation removal activities; and (c) Effects on the relationship of mana whenua and their culture and traditions with the site and any wāhi tapu or other taonga affected by the activity; and (d) Measures to maintain slope stability or prevent exacerbation of any pre-existing deep-seated land instability; and (e) Measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate damage to riparian vegetation or soil.				

Forestry

The rules apply to all zones				
Rule	Outstanding natural features	Outstanding natural landscapes	Landscapes of high amenity value	Karst overlay
NFL-R12.	Commercial forestry afforestation			

The rules apply to all zones				
Rule	Outstanding natural features	Outstanding natural landscapes	Landscapes of high amenity value	Karst overlay
	PR	PER: subject to criteria See NFL-S2.	See the NES for Commercial Forestry	RDIS
Where the activity status is RDIS, the matters over which discretion is restricted are: (a) The effects of the location, layout, and extent of planting including the arrangement, distribution and choice of species on ecological, hydrological and geological values of the karst system; and (b) The extent to which existing vegetation is retained in order to mitigate the effects of slope erosion, sedimentation, water quality degradation and loss of indigenous species habitat; and (c) Whether the afforestation is setback from riparian and coastal margins; and (d) The location, timing, design and density of soil disturbance and vegetation removal activities and any rehabilitation measures proposed; and (e) Effects on the relationship of mana whenua and their culture and traditions with the site and any wāhi tapu or other taonga affected by the activity; and (f) The benefits of afforestation in respect of ecological, hydrological and geological values of the karst system or coastal landscape; and (g) Measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate damage to ecological, hydrological and geological values of the karst system or coastal landscape. <i>Note: This rule prevails over the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Commercial Forestry) Regulations 2017 in the outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes and in the karst overlay.</i>				
NFL-R13.	Commercial forestry harvesting			
	NC	PER: subject to criteria See NFL-S3.	See the NES for Commercial Forestry	PER: subject to criteria See NFL-S3.
Where the activity status is RDIS, the matters over which discretion is restricted are: (a) The effects of the location and extent of harvesting on landscape values; and (b) Whether the harvesting activity is setback from riparian and coastal margins; and (c) The location, timing, design and density of soil disturbance and vegetation removal activities and any rehabilitation measures proposed; and (d) Effects on the relationship of mana whenua and their culture and traditions with the site and any wāhi tapu or other taonga affected by the activity; and (e) The effects of harvesting in respect of slope stability or exacerbation of any pre-existing deep-seated land instability; and				

The rules apply to all zones				
Rule	Outstanding natural features	Outstanding natural landscapes	Landscapes of high amenity value	Karst overlay
(f) The effects on soil erosion post-harvest; and (g) The extent to which vegetation is retained in order to mitigate the effects of streambank and slope erosion, sedimentation, water quality degradation and loss of indigenous species habitat; and (h) The extent of adverse cumulative effects at a catchment scale; and (i) The effect of the activity on traffic safety, efficiency and impacts on roading infrastructure; and (j) Measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate damage to riparian vegetation or soil; and (k) Measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects of the activity on areas of high/very high natural character, including the adverse effects of flood-borne slash and debris damage. <i>Note: This rule prevails over the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Commercial Forestry) Regulations 2017.</i>				
NFL-R14.	Continuous cover forestry and/or sustainable forest management/sustainable harvesting.			
	PER: Category F subject to criteria See NFL-S1. PR: Category A,B,C,D,E	PER: subject to criteria See NFL-S1.	PER: subject to criteria See NFL-S1.	PER: subject to criteria See NFL-S1.

Indigenous vegetation removal

The rules apply to all zones				
Rule	Outstanding natural features	Outstanding natural landscapes	Landscapes of high amenity value	Karst overlay
NFL-R15.	Removal of indigenous vegetation outside of a significant natural area			
	RDIS	PER: Where less than or equal to 5000 m ² per holding per calendar year ^{A2}	N/A see zone rules	PER: Where less than or equal to 5000 m ² per holding per calendar year ^{A2}

^{A2} ENV-2025-AKL-000159 - The Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand Incorporated

The rules apply to all zones				
Rule	Outstanding natural features	Outstanding natural landscapes	Landscapes of high amenity value	Karst overlay
		RDIS: Where greater than 5000 m ² per holding per calendar year. ^{A2}		RDIS: Where greater than 5000 m ² per holding per calendar year. ^{A2}
Where the activity status is RDIS, the matters over which discretion is restricted are: (a) Whether the removal of vegetation detracts from the feature or landscape or adversely affects the hydrological and geological values of a karst system or feature; and (b) Whether the vegetation removal is setback from riparian and coastal margins; and (c) The location, timing, design and density of soil disturbance and vegetation removal activities; and (d) Any measures necessary to rehabilitate the land following the completion of the activity; and (e) Effects on the relationship of mana whenua and their culture and traditions with the site and any wāhi tapu or other taonga affected by the activity; and (f) Measures to maintain slope stability or prevent exacerbation of any pre-existing deep-seated land instability; and (g) The method of sediment retention and sediment runoff control to be adopted; and (h) Measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate damage to riparian vegetation or soil; and (i) Measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate the adverse effects of the activity on the karst feature or landscape. (j) <i>Add new matter of discretion</i> ^{A2} <i>Note: See the rules in the ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity chapter if the activity is undertaken within a significant natural area.</i> <i>Note: This activity must also comply with NATC-R1.</i>				

Caves & sinkholes

Note: For tourism activities in caves see the underlying zone provisions. For tourism activities on the surface of water underground, see the activities on the surface of water chapter.

The rules apply to all zones				
Rule	Outstanding natural features	Outstanding natural landscapes	Landscapes of high amenity value	Karst overlay
NFL-R16.	Creation of new entrances into caves, structures within caves or other modifications to cave features			

^{A2} ENV-2025-AKL-000159 - The Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand Incorporated

The rules apply to all zones				
Rule	Outstanding natural features	Outstanding natural landscapes	Landscapes of high amenity value	Karst overlay
	NC	DIS	DIS	DIS
NFL-R17.	Any earthworks or clearance of vegetation (other than plant pest species, wilding pines, or when required in emergency situations such as the recovery of stock) within a 20 m radius of an entry or opening into any cave or sinkhole			
	NC	DIS	DIS	DIS
<i>Note: This rule prevails over the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Commercial Forestry) Regulations 2017 in the outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes and in the karst overlay.</i> <i>Note: Where vegetation clearance is proposed in a significant natural area the provisions in the ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity chapter apply.</i> <i>Note: for the avoidance of doubt fencing to protect a karst feature and associated digging holes for fence posts within the 20m radius is permitted</i>				
NFL-R18.	Any fill or rubbish placement into any cave or sinkhole OR within a 20 m radius of an entry or opening into any cave or sinkhole			
	DIS: Rural production zone PR: All other zones	NC	DIS	DIS: Rural Production Zone PR: All other zones

NFL - Table 2 – Performance Standards

NFL-S1.	Continuous cover forestry and/or sustainable forest management/sustainable harvesting	
Activity Status: PER Where: The harvesting must be subject to a sustainable forest management plan or permit under Forests Act 1949; and		Activity status where compliance is not achieved: RDIS Matters over which discretion is restricted: - The location and extent of the activity and its effects on the feature and wider landscape; and - The location of trees to be harvested; and

2. Harvesting must be located at least 10 m from the edge of any water body as measured from the bankfull channel width (see NATC – Figure 1); and 3. Harvesting must not occur within 20 m from the open coast as measured from the toe of the nearest natural bank adjoining the sea, or where that is not able to be defined, from the edge of common terrestrial vegetation. <i>Note: See the rules in the ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity chapter if the activity is undertaken within a significant natural area.</i>	(c) The area of trees to be harvested on an annual basis; and (d) Whether the harvesting activity is setback from coastal or riparian margins; and (e) The extent to which existing vegetation is retained in order to mitigate the effects of streambank and slope erosion, sedimentation, water quality degradation and loss of indigenous species habitat; and (f) The location, timing, design and density of soil disturbance and vegetation removal activities and any rehabilitation measures proposed; and (g) The effects of the activity in respect of riparian margin and bank stability and soil erosion; and (h) Measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects of the activity on the outstanding natural feature, karst feature and wider landscape.
NFL-S2.	Commercial forestry afforestation
Activity Status: PER Where: 1. In outstanding natural landscapes other than the western coast outstanding natural landscape, the afforestation must not exceed 2 ha of exotic commercial forestry per holding per calendar year; or 2. In the western coast outstanding natural landscape, the afforestation must not exceed 5 ha of exotic commercial forestry per holding per calendar year; AND 3. Afforestation must be located at least 10 m from the edge of any water body as measured from the bankfull channel width (see NATC – Figure 1); and 4. Afforestation must not occur within 20 m from the open coast as measured from the toe of the nearest natural bank adjoining the sea, or where that is not able to be defined, from the edge of common terrestrial vegetation. <i>Note: This rule prevails over the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Commercial Forestry) Regulations 2017.</i>	Activity status where compliance is not achieved: RDIS Matters over which discretion is restricted: (a) The effects of the location, layout, and extent of planting including the arrangement, distribution and choice of species on landscape values; and (b) Whether the afforestation detracts from the outstanding natural landscape; and (c) Whether the afforestation is setback from riparian and coastal margins; and (d) The extent to which existing vegetation is retained in order to mitigate the effects of streambank and slope erosion, sedimentation, water quality degradation and loss of indigenous species habitat; and (e) The location, timing, design and density of soil disturbance and vegetation removal activities and any rehabilitation measures proposed; and (f) Effects on the relationship of mana whenua and their culture and traditions with the site and any wāhi tapu or other taonga affected by the activity; and (g) The benefits of afforestation in respect of slope stability or preventing exacerbation of any pre-existing deep-seated land instability; and (h) Measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate damage to riparian vegetation or soil; and

<i>Note: See the rules in the ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity chapter if the activity is undertaken within a significant natural area.</i>	(i) Measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate the adverse effects of the activity on outstanding natural landscapes.
NFL- S3.	Harvesting of commercial forestry
Activity Status: PER Where: 1. In outstanding natural landscapes and in the karst overlay, clear-felling of (exotic or indigenous) commercial forestry must not exceed 2 ha per holding per calendar year; and 2. Replanting must occur within 12 months; and 3. Harvesting must be located at least 10 m from the edge of any water body as measured from the bankfull channel width (see NATC – Figure 1); and 4. Harvesting must not occur within 20 m from the open coast as measured from the toe of the nearest natural bank adjoining the sea, or where that is not able to be defined, from the edge of common terrestrial vegetation. <i>Note: This rule prevails over the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Commercial Forestry) Regulations 2017.</i> <i>Note: See the rules in the ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity chapter if the activity is undertaken within a significant natural area.</i>	Activity status where compliance is not achieved: RDIS Matters over which discretion is restricted: (a) The effects of the location and extent of harvesting on landscape values or on ecological, hydrological and geological values of the karst system or feature; and (b) Whether the harvesting activity is setback from riparian and coastal margins; and (c) The location, timing, design and density of soil disturbance and vegetation removal activities and any rehabilitation measures proposed; and (d) Effects on the relationship of mana whenua and their culture and traditions with the site and any wāhi tapu or other taonga affected by the activity; and (e) The effects of harvesting in respect of slope stability or exacerbation of any pre-existing deep-seated land instability; and (f) The effects on soil erosion post-harvest; and (g) The extent to which vegetation is retained in order to mitigate the effects of streambank and slope erosion, sedimentation, water quality degradation and loss of indigenous species habitat; and (h) The extent of adverse cumulative effects at a catchment scale on ecological, hydrological and geological values of the karst system or landscape; and (i) The effect of the activity on traffic safety, efficiency and impacts on roading infrastructure; and (j) Measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate damage to riparian vegetation or soil; and (k) Measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects of the activity on ecological, hydrological and geological values of the karst system or landscape, including the adverse effects of leaching, flood-borne slash and debris damage.