

LAND OWNER CONSULTATION

Timaru District Plan Review Draft Ecosystem and Indigenous Biodiversity Chapter
We want to hear from you

Look inside for:

- | Information about the draft chapter | How to get involved |
 - | How Council can help you protect indigenous vegetation |
-



YOUR PLAN OUR FUTURE
TIMARU DISTRICT PLAN REVIEW

www.timaru.govt.nz

HE WAKA EKE NOA

We are all in this together

This document is about getting your feedback on something that is important to us all, the District Plan's management of the district's ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity, or as I like to call it our natural heritage.

The district plan is being reviewed and Council has decided to consult on some draft district plan ecosystems provisions that have been developed and recommended by a stakeholder group, which included, amongst others, Federated Farmers and two landowner representatives.

We're here to listen!

We really want to hear from landowners regarding how they might be effected by these provisions. While the stakeholder group has come up with the provisions, we need to get feedback from the people most likely to be affected. The provisions are only draft at this stage and have not been formally proposed, so there is plenty of time to change our views and the provisions.



We are all in this together

The issues relating to ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity are broad and varied and are of interest to a range of parties. Generally the protection of indigenous biodiversity provides benefits to the environment and the community, but can come at a cost for landowners. In many cases significant areas of indigenous biodiversity remain because of the choices made by landowners in managing their properties.

The Council does not wish to be unnecessarily regulatory but is required to provide for protection of indigenous biodiversity to meet statutory requirements and to ensure there is a level of protection against any land use activities, which could have a detrimental effect on biodiversity. The Council wishes to reach an appropriate balance between recognising and acknowledging private property rights and working with landowners as custodians and managers of the land, while also recognising and implementing the Council's statutory responsibilities for protection of biodiversity.

The Council also wishes to ensure that there is certainty around the management of indigenous biodiversity and the areas that will be affected by the District Plan provisions. To achieve these

outcomes, the Council wants to pursue a mix of regulatory and non-regulatory approaches – some in the District Plan and many outside the District Plan.

We're here to help

The Council wants to provide landowners with as many options as possible to best manage the protection of indigenous biodiversity. To achieve this, the Council has recently adopted a Biodiversity Policy incorporating a range of methods to assist landowners. These methods acknowledge the public benefits in protecting biodiversity and the subsequent need for Council to actively assist and work with landowners to achieve protection.

This document is designed to give you the whole picture on biodiversity management in our district. Please take the time to read it and please take the time to have your say.

He waka eke noa (we're all in this together).

Ngā mihi

Damon Odey

Please give us your input

At the back of this document you will find a link to an online questionnaire asking for your feedback on the draft chapter.

Please complete this and return it to us. Your feedback will help us to design a District Plan which works for, and with, those who live and work within our unique district.

Feedback
due **20 May**
2019

THE BASICS

What is the District Plan?

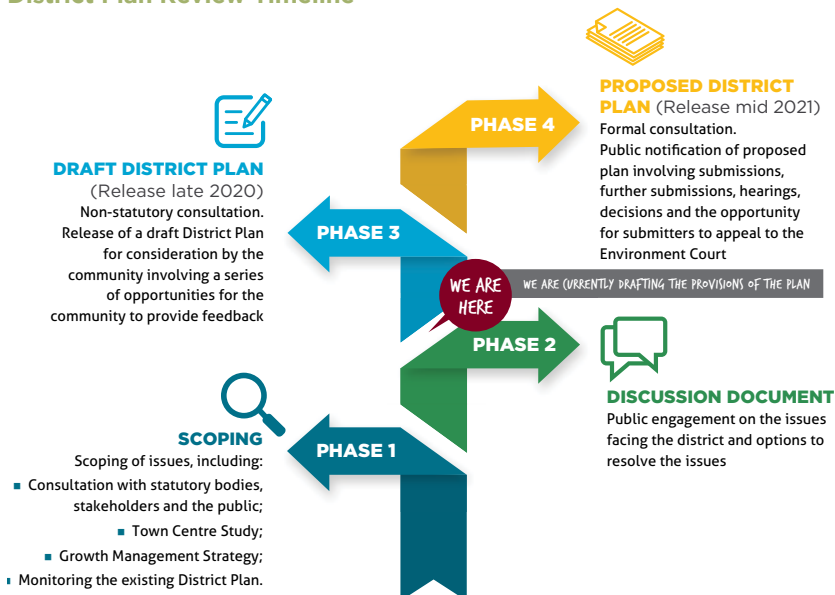
The District Plan is required under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) to sustainably manage all land use and subdivision activities within the district and includes objectives, policies and rules to achieve this. The RMA requires District Plans to protect areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna as a matter of national importance. We term these areas as 'SNAs', which is short for significant natural areas. The RMA also requires maintenance of indigenous biological diversity, which can include areas outside SNAs.

What is the District Plan Review?

A review of the District Plan has to be conducted every ten years and is an opportunity to reconsider everything in the current District Plan. The RMA sets out the process for the review. Our review is in the drafting stage i.e. developing the provisions. There will be another opportunity to make comment on the draft provisions when Council releases the entire draft plan and also at the proposed plan stage. Once the plan is notified, there will be opportunities to make submissions, further submissions, attend a hearing and lodge an appeal.

The current consultation on the ecosystems chapter is occurring before the release of the draft plan so that Council can benefit from landowners views before going to the public for their comments.

District Plan Review Timeline



Want to know more about the District Plan Review?

Go to www.timaru.govt.nz/dpr

You can also receive regular e-mail updates about the District Plan Review by registering your interest at the before mentioned web address.



YOUR PLAN OUR FUTURE
TIMARU DISTRICT PLAN REVIEW

What is biodiversity and indigenous biodiversity?

Biodiversity is short for 'biological diversity', it describes the variety of all biological life, including plants, animals, fungi and microorganisms, the genes they contain and the ecosystems they live. It is the diversity of life on earth. Indigenous biodiversity refers to the plants and animals that are originally occurring in New Zealand.

What's important about ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity?

Ten reasons why ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity are important:

1. it's a key part of our natural heritage
2. it's part of what makes NZ unique, and contributes to our sense of identity, and forms a key part of our cultural traditions, customs and motifs
3. it's part of Ngai Tahu's spirituality, ancestry, cultural traditions and practices
4. it has intrinsic values – we like it simply for what it is
5. it contributes to biodiversity
6. it contributes to amenity and transient values of our landscape
7. it protects our water resources; aids our soils formation; boosts nutrient resources, storage and recycling; helps to breakdown and absorb pollution
8. it provides food and medicines
9. it has value for tourism, recreation, science and education
10. it is a marketing asset to primary producers and proves that we're farming sustainably.

How are SNAs classified?

For vegetation or habitat to be classified as an SNA, it has to meet the criteria specified by the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement. SNAs have been identified by an ecologist (Mike Harding) contracted by Council who conducted a district wide survey.

If you have SNAs on your property you should have already been provided with a copy of the property report and an opportunity to comment on it. The survey reports will be used by Council to identify SNAs in the District Plan.

If you have not received a copy of your property report, please contact

Kaitlin.Amos@timdc.govt.nz

THE DISTRICT WIDE SNA SURVEY

The district wide SNA survey commenced in 2005 and completed in 2016. A total of 772 SNAs covering an area of 7260 hectares on 200 properties had been surveyed and mapped.

Nearly all (95%) of the properties allowed access to Council to conduct a field survey. Draft property reports were sent to landowners prior to finalising to give them an opportunity to comment.

The district SNA survey was conducted as a result of advice Council received from a Steering Committee. The Steering Committee recommended the district SNA survey as a result of requests by landowners who wanted District Plan rules regarding the clearance of indigenous vegetation to specifically relate to surveyed SNAs identified on individual properties. The alternative was to rely on District Plan rules that used imprecise vegetation maps, or require consent for clearance of indigenous vegetation.

The advantage of the survey approach was that it provided landowners with **certainty** as to what indigenous vegetation on their properties was protected by the District Plan and what was not. Landowners considered that this was crucial information for the on-going operation and future planning and development of their properties. It means that landowners know where their SNAs are and can avoid contravening the District Plan.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE SNA SURVEY

Biodiversity in decline

Although indigenous vegetation in the remote parts our district is relatively intact, it is substantially depleted in low altitude parts of the district. Most indigenous species of fauna are on the decline. Within the identified SNAs are populations of nine 'threatened' and 21 'at risk' plant and animal species, including long-tailed bat and a locally-endemic limestone gentian. Most SNAs are remnants of previously widespread areas of vegetation and habitat.

Main threats

The main threats to SNAs are plant and animal pests, grazing and clearance. Many SNAs are small, isolated, poorly buffered and modified by plant and animal pests. Some are threatened by land-use change. Management and protection of these SNAs is urgent.

Priorities for protection

Priorities for protection are those SNAs which contain vegetation at lowland alluvial sites (herbfield, grassland, shrubland, forest and wetland), vegetation on limestone bluffs, old-growth forest on river terraces, inland wetlands, shrubland and regenerating forest on dry hill slopes, and habitats for threatened animal species.



Blue duck, was found in the district in 2005, no longer present.

THE DRAFT CHAPTER

Previous Consultation

Council has previously consulted on the District Plan's management of ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity through a discussion document released on 5 November 2016.

A discussion document can be found at www.tdc.govt/dpr

Development of the Draft Chapter

The draft District Plan's Ecosystem and Indigenous Biodiversity chapter was developed by Council's Biodiversity Steering Group. It has subsequently been adopted by Council's Environmental Services Committee as suitable for consultation.

Membership of the group included:

Tracy Tierney (chair)
Initially Councillor, later
Environmental Services
Group Manager

Mark Geddes
District Planning Manager

John Henry
Te Runanga O Arowhenua

Andrew Stevens
Federated Farmers

Brent Isbister
Landowner

Peter Evans
Landowner

Joy Sager
Forest and Bird

Julia Forsyth
Environment Canterbury

Geoff Deavoll
Department of
Conservation

Angela Christensen
Fish and Game

The key reason for using the steering group, is that we are all in this together.

Protection and enhancement of our biodiversity is a responsibility of both the Regional Council, the District Council and DoC and is also of significant interest to stakeholders.

Landowners also have a key role as custodians and managers of the land.

The steering group has worked well together and with the exception of Forest and Bird, the group has reached consensus on the draft provisions.



Alan Cone, obtained funding in the 2017/18 financial year for fencing palustrine wetland area on his property at Pleasant Point.



Our Biodiversity Steering Group out in the field

The Draft Ecosystem and Indigenous Biodiversity Chapter

Without Resource Consent

The draft chapter provides for a number of activities that can be carried out as a permitted activity (without resource consent) including clearance of indigenous vegetation:

- not located in an SNA
- that is an imminent danger to human life and structures etc
- for the purpose of mahinga kai or other customary uses

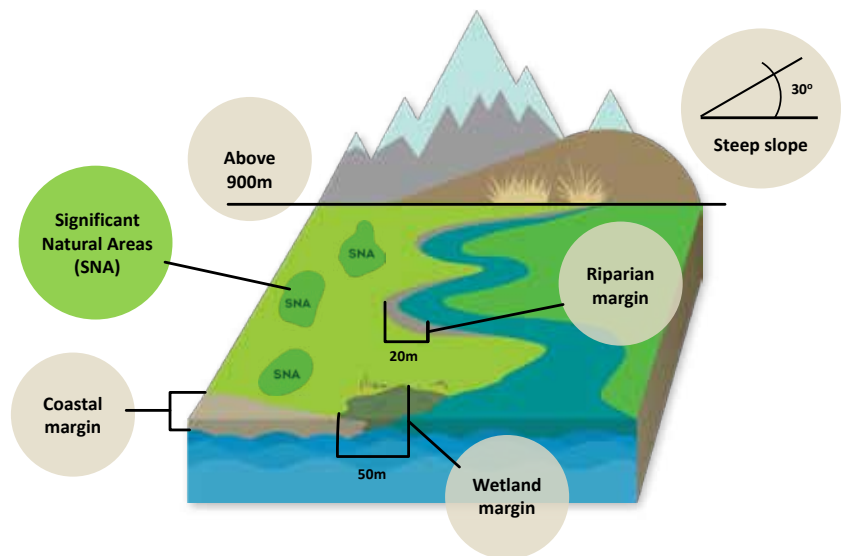


Resource Consent required

The draft chapter requires resource consent for the clearance of indigenous vegetation:

- in an SNA
- on land above 900m in altitude
- 50m of any wetland
- 20m from any water body including springs
- 20m from mean high water springs (the coast)
- On land with an average slope of 30 degrees or greater

Earthworks within an SNA also require consent.



Long-tailed bats are found in the Timaru District and are classified as nationally critical.

Photo courtesy of Department of Conservation

Planting of species prone to wilding spread

(e.g. contorta pine) and other problematic weed species (e.g. Darwin's barberry and Old Man's beard) requires consent.



Within the Long-tailed Bat Protection Area

Clearance of trees over a certain height within the proposed Long-tailed Bat Protection Area also requires consent





Copper butterfly

How does the proposed chapter compare with the current District Plan?

There are changes between how the current District Plan manages indigenous biodiversity and how the draft chapter proposes to manage it, although it's not a significant policy shift.

Requiring resource consent for the clearance of indigenous vegetation within SNAs, above 900m and in close proximity to waterbodies **remains the same.**

Allowing the clearance of indigenous vegetation that is an imminent danger to human life/structures and for the purpose of mahinga kai/customary use, **is new.**

Also new is the proposed consent requirement for clearance of certain vegetation within the proposed Long-tailed Bat Protection Area, or on land with an average slope of 30 degrees or greater.

The Long-tailed Bat Protection Area is proposed in order to protect the Long-tailed bat which is classified as the highest threat classification 'national critical'. The South Canterbury population of Long-tailed bat is the only known population on the east coast of the south island.

The protection of vegetation on slopes over 30 degrees recognises that these steep areas of the district often contain significant ecology.

A full copy of the draft chapter can be viewed at

www.timaru.govt.nz/draft-eib



The Peacock family of Orari Gorge Station received funding to assist with weed control to help protect Orari Gorge, Podocarp-hardwood forest, bird habitat and long-tailed bat habitat.

HERE TO LISTEN

How could the draft provisions affect you?

This is what we need to know from you.

There could be practical, financial or time implications of the draft provisions. Please let us know!

Who to talk to?

You can talk to Council staff in one of the drop-in sessions to be held in Geraldine and Pleasant Point.

If you are unable to make the drop-in days, feel free to book a slot for a one-on-one meeting with a staff member.



Kereru

How to get involved?

This consultation is directed at affected landowners only.

Only persons receiving this letter may provide feedback on the Draft Chapter. Feedback must be received by Timaru District Council no later than **20 May 2019**.

Online feedback

The Council would prefer to receive feedback through the electronic feedback system available on its website:

www.timaru.govt.nz/draft-eib

Hard copies are available on request.



Scan to open the online feedback form

Drop-in sessions

Geraldine

Monday 6 May 2019

1-4.30 pm

Geraldine Library Service Centre
78 Talbot St
Geraldine 7930

Pleasant Point

Tuesday 7 May 2019

1-4 pm

Pleasant Point Town Hall
5 Halstead Rd
Pleasant Point 7903

The drop-in sessions will provide an opportunity for you to discuss the Draft Chapter with Council staff and elected members, and also to view information about the draft chapter and submit your feedback.

One-on-one meetings

If you're not available to attend the drop-in sessions you are invited to book a one-on-one meeting with a Council staff member.

The meetings will be held on 8-9 May 2019 and will be 20 minutes per session. Please note that sessions are limited and booking is essential.

Bookings can be made by calling the Planning Customer Services Office on 03 687 7271 or online via www.timaru.govt.nz/draft-eib

Feedback due by 20 May 2019

LAND OWNER ASSISTANCE

We're here to help

Federated Farmers have been a supporter of the Timaru District SNA survey and have been an active member of the Council's biodiversity steering group that have developed the draft district plan chapter; Council's biodiversity policy; and are also now involved in implementing that policy.

Timaru District landowners are now in an enviable position that they know where their SNAs are as opposed to other Councils that have general indigenous vegetation clearance rules. This significantly lessens resource consent requirements and means that landowners can plan around their SNAs.

Council is also trying to actively support landowners through their SNA fund; targeted protection work; and also through education and information. Federated Farmers encourages landowners to get involved in this consultation; avail themselves of Council's SNA fund and protect and enhance their indigenous biodiversity.

Andrew Stevens



While Council has statutory responsibilities it has to meet regarding protecting biodiversity, it does not want to be unnecessarily regulatory.

Instead Council wants to work with and encourage landowners to protect and enhance biodiversity as custodians and managers of the land. Council believes that working with landowners, providing encouragement, education and support will ultimately provide better environmental outcomes than taking a tougher regulatory approach.

To support landowners, Council has recently adopted a broad Biodiversity Policy incorporating a range of methods to assist landowners in a number of ways, including:

Free ecological surveys for identifying Significant Natural Areas.

Rates remission for properties containing an identified Significant Natural Area.

Financial support through the Significant Natural Area Fund for beneficial activities such as fencing and pest control.

Waiver of charges for resource consents involving Significant Natural Areas where protection is achieved.

Assisting applications for covenanting and purchase to QEII Trust, Nature Heritage Fund, etc.

Education, information, advice and encouragement.

Significant Natural Areas Fund

If you want assistance protecting your SNA, the SNA Fund is currently open for applications for the 2018/19 financial year.

Please visit www.timaru.govt.nz/services/community-and-culture/community-funding/natural-areas for more information.

The fund provides grants to both landowner/community initiated projects.

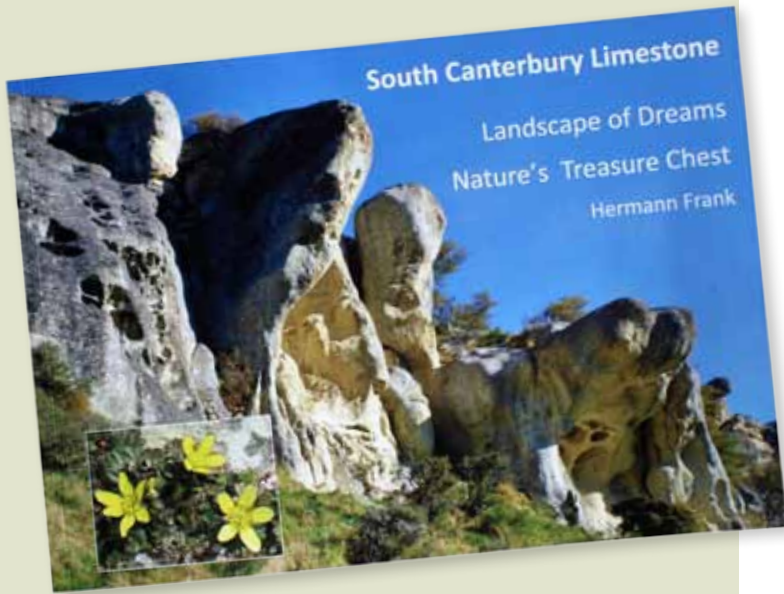
Council targets high value SNAs

To provide further support for landowners, Council has recently increased the SNA fund from \$30,000 to \$100,000 annually.

Approximately \$30,000 will be set aside for landowner/community group applications, with the remainder to be used by Council to protect and enhance the highest priority SNAs. Work has commenced in 2019 on protecting limestone SNAs.



Bruce and Rosa Allan received funding to assist with weed control on their property at Peel Forest in order to protect hardwood forest, wetland forest and forest bird habitat .



**For landowners with limestone SNAs,
please find included a copy of Hermann
Frank's book South Canterbury Limestone.**



Timaru District Council

2 King George Place
Timaru 7910

enquiry@timdc.govt.nz

P: 03 687 7200

F: 03 687 7209



www.timaru.govt.nz/draft-eib

Cover photo: The Jewelled gecko