

Chapter 13

Landscapes and Vegetation



13. LANDSCAPE AND VEGETATION

13.1 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES

13.1.1 OUTSTANDING NATURAL FEATURES AND LANDSCAPES

1. Inappropriate land use activities and subdivision can compromise the values of the outstanding **natural features and landscapes** of the District.
2. Tracking, **roads**, earthworks and the location of **buildings** and structures, including **signs** and **network utilities**, can modify outstanding **natural features and landscapes**.
3. The location of new planting, such as **production forestry**, shelterbelts and cropping, can change the visual character of landscapes through loss of openness, screening, and planting near **ridgelines** and in patterns that are not sympathetic to natural contours.
4. The clearance of areas of **indigenous vegetation** for conversion to other land uses can modify valued landscapes.
5. Enabling development of multiple-owned **Māori land** may conflict with the requirement to protect outstanding **natural features and landscapes**.

13.1.2 INDIGENOUS VEGETATION AND HABITATS

1. Modification, degradation and destruction of **habitats** of indigenous fauna through urbanisation, land development and drainage has led to a decline in **biodiversity** in the District, particularly in the lowlands.
2. All areas of **indigenous vegetation** are important to maintain indigenous **biodiversity** in the District and contribute to its unique character, and they need to be maintained or enhanced.
3. **Ecosystems** are valuable for their intrinsic values and essential to the wellbeing of people and communities. They may be destroyed or degraded by inappropriate vegetation clearance, drainage, earthworks, pests, land use change, urban development and fragmentation through subdivision.
4. There is a need for education and incentive mechanisms to provide for the sustainable management and restoration of privately owned **indigenous vegetation**, including **dunelands** and **wetlands** which are individually important and contribute to ecological corridors, enhancing indigenous fauna and conservation values.
5. Plant and animal pests have contributed to the degradation of **indigenous vegetation** and **ecosystems** and the decline of indigenous **biodiversity**.

13.1.3 WETLANDS

1. There has been a significant decline in **wetland** extent and condition within the District through inappropriate drainage, modification, land use, and land development.
2. **Wetlands** are affected by activities occurring in their catchments. **Ecosystem** restoration and environmentally sensitive land management practices need to be encouraged within the catchments of **wetlands**. It is also important to maintain and enhance connectivity among freshwater **wetlands**, and between **wetlands** and other **ecosystem** types such as terrestrial forests and estuaries.
3. **Wetlands** need to be maintained to sustain **ecosystem** services including **habitats** of indigenous fauna, improve water quality by filtering of pollutants and sediments, and reduce flood flows.

13.1.4 NATURAL CHARACTER

1. Inappropriate management can lead to a decline in the **natural character** of the coastal environment, **wetlands**, lakes, and rivers, and their margins.
2. Qualities and values of estuarine and coastal margins and riparian areas can be threatened by inappropriate **access**, land use and development.
3. Some land use activities can adversely affect estuarine and coastal margins and riparian areas, and subsequently water quality, species **habitats**, and the margins of **waterbodies**, harbours, estuaries and the open coast.

13.2 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**13.2.1 OBJECTIVE - OUTSTANDING NATURAL FEATURES AND LANDSCAPES**

To protect outstanding natural features and landscapes from the adverse effects of inappropriate subdivision, use and development.

POLICIES

- 13.2.1.1 The adverse effects of inappropriate subdivision, use, and development, including **buildings**, structures and earthworks, on the values of outstanding natural features are avoided.
- 13.2.1.2 Adverse effects of inappropriate subdivision, use, and development, including **buildings**, structures and earthworks, on the values of outstanding natural landscapes are avoided, and where avoidance is not practicable, remedied or mitigated.
- 13.2.1.3 Continuation of existing rural production activities is recognised and provided for.

13.2.1.4 Change in vegetation patterns as a result of land use change associated with new activities such as **production forestry** or other crops is managed to minimise adverse effects on natural contours and avoid straight lines to maintain or enhance the landscape values of identified **natural features and landscapes**.

13.2.1.5 Development of multiple-owned **Māori land** is enabled through compliance with performance standards to protect outstanding **natural features and landscapes**.

13.2.2 OBJECTIVE – INDIGENOUS VEGETATION AND HABITATS

The sustainable management of indigenous vegetation and habitats of indigenous fauna to maintain and, where appropriate, enhance biodiversity of the District.

POLICIES

13.2.2.1 To protect significant **indigenous vegetation** and **habitats** of indigenous fauna, where significance is assessed in accordance with the criteria in Appendix 13.9.3, by avoiding adverse effects of inappropriate subdivision, land use, or development and, where avoidance is not practicable, adverse effects are remedied or mitigated.

13.2.2.2 Where appropriate, to require restoration and rehabilitation of significant **indigenous vegetation** and habitats of indigenous fauna on or off the **site**, where avoidance of adverse effects is not possible, giving priority to the sites listed in 13.9.4 and by reference to the criteria in Appendix 13.9.3.

13.2.2.3 To encourage the restoration and rehabilitation of degraded **indigenous vegetation** through plant and animal pest control and revegetation, using genetically suitable **indigenous flora** where appropriate and considering the **habitat** requirements of **indigenous fauna**.

13.2.2.4 To encourage the protection, restoration and management of **ecosystems** that are rare and threatened at a local (ecological district), regional or national level.

13.2.2.5 To avoid, or, where this is not practicable, remedy, mitigate or offset the adverse effects of activities on indigenous **biodiversity**, including protecting indigenous **ecosystems**, rare, at risk, or threatened species and their **habitats**.

13.2.2.6 To encourage landowners through the use of a variety of methods including advocacy, education and, where possible, incentives, to recognise natural values and to protect areas of significant **indigenous vegetation** and **habitats** of indigenous fauna.

13.2.2.8 To promote the restoration of **ecosystems** that have been damaged or degraded to ensure their continued viability.

13.2.2.9 To use **riparian management areas** to protect and restore whitebait spawning **habitats**.

13.2.2.10 To encourage the restoration and enhancement of riparian margins to support indigenous flora and fauna **habitats**.

13.2.3 OBJECTIVE – WETLANDS

Wetlands within the District continue to support indigenous flora and fauna habitats as part of a wider ecological system and the natural character of the wetlands is maintained and enhanced.

POLICIES

13.2.3.1 To protect the **natural character** and **habitat** values of **wetlands**, including maintaining their extent and ability to sustain indigenous species.

13.2.3.2 To promote the restoration and enhancement of **riparian management areas** and best practice land use as a means of reducing and mitigating the adverse effects of activities on **wetlands**.

13.2.3.3 To avoid, remedy or mitigate, or offset adverse effects of inappropriate activities on **wetlands**, including maintaining the overall extent of **wetlands**.

13.2.3.4 To require the restoration and rehabilitation of **wetlands** on or off sites, where the avoidance of adverse effects is not possible.

13.2.4 OBJECTIVE – NATURAL CHARACTER

Coastal and estuarine margins, wetlands and riparian areas within the District continue to support indigenous flora and fauna as part of a wider ecological system; and their natural character is maintained and enhanced.

POLICIES

13.2.4.1 To manage the effects of land use activities adjoining and within coastal and estuarine margins and riparian areas of the District so that **natural character** of **waterbodies**, harbours and estuaries and their margins are not degraded.

- 13.2.4.2 To preserve **indigenous riparian vegetation** areas and coastal and estuarine margins within the District for their **natural character**, ecological, **biodiversity**, historical, and cultural character and value.

13.3 ACTIVITY STATUS

Resource consent is required for all Controlled, Restricted Discretionary, Discretionary and Non-complying activities. Resource consent is not required for Permitted Activities, provided all relevant Standards are met.

13.3.1 Additional controls may apply in the Zone Chapter and the following Chapters:

- Chapter 12 – Surface of Water Activities
- Chapter 14 - Heritage
- Chapter 15 – Natural Hazards

Subdivision is managed through Chapter 15 - Subdivision in all zones.

Network utilities are subject to the provisions in Chapter 17 and this Chapter.

13.3.2 PERMITTED ACTIVITIES

13.3.2.1 The following activities do not require land use consent if they comply with all relevant standards and the requirements of other Plan Chapters.

1. Existing rural production activities including **production forestry**.
2. **Conservation planting and management of indigenous vegetation, including replanting and rehabilitation.**
3. Exotic weed and pest animal control and eradication programmes.
4. Maintenance and pruning of pohutukawa trees where such maintenance or pruning is necessary for the health of the tree or the safety of people and a report from a suitably qualified and experienced person is lodged with the **Council** before work commences, confirming that the work is necessary and outlining the methodology.
5. Rehabilitation of **wetlands, wetland** networks, and natural drainage channels, with **indigenous vegetation** that naturally occurs (or would have been likely to have naturally occurred in the past) in the locality.
6. **Except for sites listed in 13.9.2 and as provided for in 7 below, indigenous vegetation clearance and disturbance, where:**
 - (a) It is up to 100m² of coastal dune vegetation;
 - (b) Within sites listed in 13.9.1, it affects an area less than 100m² in any 12 month period;
 - (c) In the Coastal, Coastal Settlement and Ohiwa Harbour zones, it affects an area less than 100m² in any 12 month period; and otherwise -

- (d) In the Ōpōtiki or Taneatua Ecological Districts, the sum of all clearance in any five year period shall not exceed 400m²; or
 - (e) In the Waioeka, Motu or Pukeamaru Ecological Districts, the sum of all clearance in any five year period shall not exceed 2000m².
7. **Indigenous vegetation** clearance and **disturbance**, unless otherwise specified in this chapter, subject to compliance with 13.4.1, where:
- (a) It is naturally regenerating **indigenous scrubland** that is less than 3.5 metres in **height** and that has been cleared in the past ten years for **farming** purposes and further clearance is required to maintain an existing **farming** operation.
 - (b) It is required to maintain an existing fence line and is within 2m of the fence line.
 - (c) It is for maintenance of open space within 5m from an existing lawfully established **building**.
 - (d) It is **indigenous vegetation** under an existing production forest, including skid sites.
 - (e) It is within the existing formation width to maintain existing walking and cycling tracks, driveways, public or public **roads**, farm and forestry tracks, and **network utilities**.
 - (f) The sustainable harvest of plant material for rongoa Māori (customary medicine), raranga (weaving) and mahi whakairo (carving).
 - (g) It is in accordance with a Conservation Management Strategy or a management plan under Reserves **Act** 1977, Conservation **Act** 1987, or Te Ture Whenua Māori **Act** 1993.
8. **Agriforestry** on sites listed in 13.9.1, including establishment and/or harvesting of manuka.
9. Within **sites** listed in 13.9.1 and 13.9.2, earthworks for the following purposes:
- (a) In a site listed in 13.9.1, affecting an area less than 400m² or 200m³ in any 12 month period.
 - (b) Ploughing and maintenance of drains associated with normal pastoral **farming** practices (definition) within a **pastoral landscape**.
 - (c) Troughs, and their associated pipe networks, and realignment of fencelines, associated with normal **farming** practices.
 - (d) Earthworks in association with an approved subdivision or for an activity which is authorised by resource consent.
 - (e) Earthworks including land preparation and vegetation clearance undertaken as part of an existing production forest.
 - (f) **Maintenance** of existing **roads** and **accessways** within the same formation width
 - (g) **Maintenance, upgrading and replacement** of existing infrastructure including high voltage transmission lines.
11. Within a **site** listed in 13.9.1, new **buildings accessory** to existing **farming** activities, subject to compliance with 13.4.4.
12. Within a **site** listed in 13.9.1 or 13.9.2, maintenance and replacement of existing lawfully established **buildings** and structures, subject to compliance with 13.4.4.

13. Within a **site** listed in 13.9.1, land based **aquaculture**, subject to compliance with 13.4.4.

13.3.2 CONTROLLED ACTIVITIES

13.3.2.1 The following activities may be established after land use consent has been granted by **Council**. Activities must comply with the Zone Standards and any other relevant Standards.

1. Relocation of pohutukawa including for enhancement or protective purposes, provided that a report from a suitably qualified and experienced person has been provided to **Council** before work commences.
2. Within a site listed in 13.9.1 or 13.9.2, earthworks and vegetation clearance and **disturbance** for the construction of new walking and cycling tracks.
3. Except for a site listed in 13.9.1 or 13.9.2, or in the Coastal, Coastal Settlement or Ohiwa Harbour zones, **indigenous vegetation** clearance and **disturbance** on **sites**, where necessary to provide for a stable **building** platform and **access**, and no alternative location are available within the **site**.

13.3.3 RESTRICTED DISCRETIONARY ACTIVITIES

13.3.3.1 The following activities require land use consent from the **Council** and consent may be granted or refused.

1. Within a **site** listed in 13.9.1 or 13.9.2, **indigenous vegetation** clearance and **disturbance** for new **buildings** and **building** platforms not provided for above.
2. Within a **site** in the Coastal, Coastal Settlement and Ohiwa Harbour zones, **indigenous vegetation** clearance and **disturbance** for new **buildings** and **building** platforms not provided for above, subject to:
 - (a) Vegetation clearance for a house site and its curtilage shall be no more than 250m² on land contained in one title or partition order, where a building consent has been issued and where there is no existing building and no suitable previously cleared land.
 - (b) An access way up to 30m in length and 3m wide may be cleared to service the house site.
 - (c) There shall be no disturbance of individual pohutukawa, or other coastal species greater than 3.5m in height.
3. **Indigenous vegetation** clearance and **disturbance** over 100m² within a 12 month period, within a site in the Coastal, Coastal Settlement and Ohiwa Harbour zones, except as otherwise provided for as a Permitted or Controlled Activity.
4. Modification, infilling or drainage up to 100 metres² of a **wetland**.
5. Within a site listed in 13.9.1 or 13.9.2 or within a **wetland**, **indigenous vegetation** clearance and **disturbance**, where necessary to provide for a stable **building** platform and **access**, and no alternative locations are available within the **site**.

13.3.4 DISCRETIONARY ACTIVITIES

13.3.4.1 The following activities require land use consent from the **Council** and consent may be granted or refused:

1. Clearance or **disturbance** of any pohutukawa tree in the Coastal, Coastal Settlement and Ohiwa Harbour zones or not provided for above.
2. **Disturbance of indigenous estuarine vegetation** or more than 100m² of **coastal dune land vegetation**.
3. Within a **site** listed in 13.9.1 or 13.9.2, **indigenous vegetation** clearance and **disturbance** not otherwise provided for as a Permitted, Controlled or Restricted Discretionary Activity.
4. Within a **site** listed in 13.9.1 or 13.9.2, new **buildings** and structures where the highest point of the **building** or structure is within 10 metres vertical distance of natural ground level on a ridge.
5. Within a **site** listed in 13.9.2, earthworks not otherwise provided for.
6. Within a **site** listed in 13.9.1 or 13.9.2, **production forestry**.
7. Within a **site** listed in 13.9.1 or 13.9.2, **mining** and **quarrying**.
8. Modification, infilling or drainage of a **wetland** over 100m² in area.
9. Removal of vegetation within **wetlands**.

13.3.5 PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

13.3.5.1 The following activities are prohibited activities for which no resource consent shall be granted:

1. Keeping, holding, or **farming** of wallaby species.
2. Keeping, holding, or **farming** of ferrets, stoats and weasels.

13.4 PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

13.4.1 VEGETATION DISTURBANCE IN OUTSTANDING NATURAL FEATURES OR LANDSCAPES

13.4.1.1 Where vegetation clearance is undertaken in an Outstanding Natural Feature and Landscape, the following performance standard shall apply:

1. The area cleared and not otherwise surfaced shall be replanted with locally sourced indigenous species within the next growing season.
2. Pohutukawa trees shall not be removed or trimmed as part of vegetation **disturbance** under this rule.

13.4.2 EARTHWORKS IN OUTSTANDING NATURAL FEATURES OR LANDSCAPES LISTED IN 13.9.1 OR 13.9.2

13.4.2.1 Where earthworks are undertaken in an Outstanding Natural Feature and Landscape, the following performance standards shall apply:

1. The total area shall not exceed 400m²; and
2. The total volume shall not exceed 200m³; and
3. The maximum cut and/or fill face shall not exceed 3m; and
4. Where the earthworks are visible from a public **road**, public reserve, coastal marine area or the foreshore, bare surfaces shall be stabilised with mulch, hydroseeding or similar stabilisation mechanism; or where the earthworks are not visible from these areas, bare surfaces shall be revegetated in the next growing season.

13.4.3 BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES IN OUTSTANDING NATURAL FEATURES AND LANDSCAPES

13.4.3.1 The following performance standards shall apply:

1. All external surfaces of **buildings** shall have a maximum reflectivity value of 35% or shall be finished in natural materials that fall within this range; and
2. The highest point of new **buildings** and structures, including rooflines, shall be a minimum of 10m below the natural ground level of any ridge; and
3. Where the **building** or structure is to be located within an established vegetation canopy, the highest point of the **building** or structure shall not be higher than the existing canopy; and
4. The maximum **height** of new **buildings** and structures shall be 7m.

13.5 ASSESSMENT OF CONTROLLED ACTIVITIES

13.5.1 The **Council** has reserved control over the following matters for all Controlled Activities and may impose conditions in relation to these matters.

1. The location and extent of **vegetation** to be cleared in relation to the minimum area required for the house and curtilage.
2. The management and protection of any rare and threatened species.
3. Protection of ecological values of remaining vegetation from the effects of domestic pests and exotic plant species (including garden varieties).
4. Mitigation and offset measures including on-going protection, maintenance and restoration of the feature, and/or planting of any indigenous species to offset that which is lost and ensure positive environmental effects from the activity.

5. The necessity for the activity and alternative methods and locations available for applicants to carry out the works or activities.
6. Measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate:
 - (a) The adverse effects of vegetation clearance on indigenous **biodiversity**, including cumulative effects;
 - (b) adverse effects on **natural character** and **natural features and natural landscapes**; and
 - (c) adverse effects on ecological linkages and corridors.
7. The treatment of the area surrounding the **building** platform and **access** to minimise adverse effects on adjoining vegetation.
8. The degree to which any clearing will adversely affect the representativeness of the **indigenous vegetation**.
9. The need for buffer planting or riparian planting to ensure positive environmental effects from the activity.
10. The legal protection and management of **indigenous vegetation**.
11. The location and design of **building** platforms and **access**.
12. The ways to achieve maintenance and enhancement of the values identified in Appendix F of the Bay of Plenty Regional Policy Statement.

13.6 ASSESSMENT OF RESTRICTED DISCRETIONARY ACTIVITIES

13.6.1 **Council** has restricted discretion control over the following matters for the identified Restricted Discretionary Activities. Consent may be granted or refused in relation to these matters and, if consent is granted, **Council** may impose conditions on these matters.

13.6.2 EARTHWORKS WITHIN A SITE IDENTIFIED IN 13.9.1 and 13.9.2

1. The scale and location of earthworks in relation to the values and characteristics of the **site**.
2. Whether earthworks maintain the existing landform profile and align with the contour of the Outstanding Natural Feature or Landscape.
3. How the effects of cut and fill can be minimised and the final contours re-vegetated.
4. The opportunities available to enhance or restore the values of the Outstanding Natural Feature or Landscape.
5. The location of earthworks in relation to areas of significance to tangata whenua and significant natural areas.
6. The significance of the earthworks in relation to landform of landscapes or features listed in 13.9.3 and 13.9.4, and the effect on landscape values.
7. Measures implemented to manage the sedimentation and siltation effects of activities on natural resources and associated natural drainage courses.

8. Mitigation proposed, such as planting, to mitigate the visual effects of the activity on the surrounding environment.

13.6.3 CLEARANCE OR DISTURBANCE OF INDIGENOUS VEGETATION

1. The scale and location of the clearance or disturbance of **indigenous vegetation** in relation to the values and characteristics of the **site**, in terms of quantity, type, ecological and landscape significance.
2. How the effects of clearance or disturbance can be minimised and the final contours re-vegetated.
3. The opportunities available to enhance or restore the values of the Outstanding Natural Feature or Landscape.
4. The location of works in relation to areas of significance to tangata whenua and areas of **indigenous vegetation** including significant natural areas.
5. The significance of the **indigenous vegetation** affected as assessed in relation to 13.9.3 and 13.9.4, and the effect on ecological and biodiversity values, including rare and threatened vegetation types.
6. The potential effects on ecological and biodiversity values of **indigenous habitats** and their contribution to ecological corridors.
7. The need for replanting of vegetation to compensate for that which is lost.
8. The treatment of the area surrounding the building platform, where relevant, so that adjoining vegetation is not adversely affected.
9. The need for buffer planting or riparian planting to ensure positive environmental effects from the activity.
10. The legal protection and management of indigenous vegetation.

13.6.4 NEW BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES ON SITES LISTED IN 13.9.1 and 13.9.2

1. The location, orientation and scale of the proposed **buildings** and structures.
2. The colours, finishes and reflectivity proposed to mitigate the visual effects on the landscape or feature
3. The siting, orientation, design, and bulk of any **buildings** and materials used for their construction, and how they will integrate the **building** or structure into the surrounding natural environment.
4. The separation of the finished **building** roofline or structure from the nearest **ridgeline**.
5. Proposed planting or **landscaping** to mitigate potential adverse visual effects of **buildings**, structures and earthworks on the values of the **site**.
6. The location and design of associated vehicle access, manoeuvring and parking areas.

13.6.5 MODIFICATION OF WETLANDS

1. Programme for **site** management, vegetation clearance and replanting;
2. The relationship with adjacent areas and the potential effects on their values.
3. The necessity for the activity and alternative methods and locations available for the works or activities.
4. Effects on the ecological and biodiversity values of the **wetland**, including rare and threatened and at risk species and originally rare ecosystems.
5. Mitigation proposed, including restoration and rehabilitation on or off the site, in relation to the maintenance of wetland areas in the district.

13.7 OTHER METHODS

13.7.1 The objective and policies of the Zone are implemented by the rules and the following other methods.

1. Raise public awareness of significant indigenous **habitats** and natural features and freshwater **ecosystems**, by making information available on the importance of these areas.
2. Consult and liaise with landowners, Iwi, Bay of Plenty Regional Council, the Department of Conservation, and other organisations for the management, conservation, and protection of natural resources in the District, including the protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes by retiring and fencing off of land.
3. Investigation into the use of rates relief as a method of encouraging landowners to protect areas of **indigenous vegetation**, significant natural areas and riparian areas.
4. To investigate the use of the Natural Heritage Fund, and the implementation of Queen Elizabeth the Second National Trust Covenants or other legal mechanisms of protection within the District to ensure protection of lands with important values for **biodiversity** and to the community.
5. To promote to iwi Nga Whenua Rahui to protect significant natural areas on their land.
6. Encouragement of voluntary methods of protection for riparian and **wetland** areas.

13.8 EXPECTED ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS

Environmental outcomes anticipated from the implementation of the objectives, policies and methods of this section are:

- A. Protection and enhancement of the District's outstanding **natural features and landscapes**.
- B. Protection, enhancement, and sustainable management of significant **indigenous vegetation** and significant **habitats** of indigenous fauna.

- C. Protection and enhancement of the District's **biodiversity** resource.

- D. The restoration of **habitats** that contribute positively to the District's high environmental quality.

- E. Maintenance of rare and threatened **habitat** types, including **wetlands**, dune lands and originally rare ecosystem types.

13.9 APPENDICES

13.9.1 OUTSTANDING NATURAL LANDSCAPES

The following are identified as outstanding natural landscapes in the District and subject to the rules in this Chapter.

No.	Name of ONFL	Description
1	Ikawhenua Forest and Urewera Forest Inland	Extensive area of contiguous native forest modified at edges along main river valleys. Large areas of cleared bush within forest have been excluded. Managed under a variety of mechanisms, for example includes part of Whirinaki Forest Park, Te Urewera, Waioeka Conservation Area, Waioeka Gorge Scenic Reserve, Urutawa Conservation Area, Toatoa Scenic Reserve and Whitikau Scenic Reserve and Ruakumara Forest Park. An extensive area of upland forest of national significance with high ecological values and landscape integrity in relation to landscape structure and landscape function. Very high Cultural Values.
2	Otamaroa Inland	Steep upland range continuum from the Mangatoetoe Stream corridor to Whangaparaoa River corridor and the seaward slope of Tapuaeharuru-Tutaewhakaipiki ridgeline west to Otamaroa and State Highway 35. Majority of area outside of the regional boundary.
3	Steep Coastal Hills between Cape Runaway & Lottin Point	Steep coastal hill land with dramatic landforms depicting the natural volcanic and coastal processes of the landscape. Productive agricultural practices occur on the land which contribute to the recognition of the coastal patterns. Productive rural practices have contributed to the identification of the landscape as Outstanding with the natural science and aesthetic values forming key attributes to this landscape.

13.9.2 OUTSTANDING NATURAL FEATURES

The following are identified as outstanding natural features in the District and subject to the rules in this Chapter.

No.	Name of ONFL	Description
4	Pataua Island	A significant natural habitat within the Ohiwa Harbour, the island resides under Conservation Management. The island also forms part of the Region's only mainland (Ohiwa Harbour) Outstanding Natural character Areas, under the Regional Policy Statement.
5	Waiotahi Spit	The Waiotahi Spit forms significant dune sand spit to the mouth

LANDSCAPES AND VEGETATION

No.	Name of ONFL	Description
		of the Waiotahi Estuary. The large area comprises relatively unmodified duneland landscape with very high natural character values at a regional level.
6	Pohutukawa tunnels over State Highway 2 at Waiotahi	A distinct and memorable feature and gateway to the Ōpōtiki township and Waiotahi settlement. The Pohutukawa clad coastal escarpment forms a striking tunnel through which the State Highway passes through. The feature is distinctive and iconic to the District.
7	Tarakeha (Opape)	Tarakeha defines the eastern end of the long open Tirohanga beach coastline east of Ōpōtiki township. This forms a gateway into the steeper and rocky coastline that extends to Cape Runaway. This headland along with other similar headlands along the coast are also recognised as areas of Very High Natural character .
8	Haurere Point	Haurere Point defines the western end of the Torere beach and settlement. This headland along with other similar headlands along the coast are also recognised as areas of Very High Natural character .
9	Pehitairi Point	Pehitairi Point defines the eastern end of the Torere beach and settlement. This headland along with other similar headlands along the coast are also recognised as areas of Very High Natural character .
10	Haumiaroa Point	A collection of individually identified features as one larger feature, this coastline comprises the formation of a coastal escarpment and headlands that extend between Hawaii and Haupoto. Comprising steep coastal escarpments clad with native bush cover the area is identified as having High Natural character at a Regional level.
11	Whituare Bay	A highly distinctive large river mouth, the Motu River provides a braided river mouth alongside a steep bush clad hill range. Identified as an area of Very High Natural character at a Regional level, the extent of the feature resides in part Regional Council and part Ōpōtiki District Council jurisdiction.
12	Maraenui Escarpment (Whituare Bay)	A large coastline dominated by a rocky shoreline and native vegetation cover. The area extends inland to encompass part of the vegetated coastal ridgeline between Waihapokopoko and Waioria Streams. Identified as having high natural character values at a regional scale.
13	Motu River Mouth	A narrow rocky shoreline iconic of this coastal landscape, the Pohutukawa clad volcanic rocky shoreline is also identified as having High Natural character at a regional scale.

LANDSCAPES AND VEGETATION

No.	Name of ONFL	Description
		The area excludes the settlement of Whanarua Bay and is aligned to the coastal edge.
14	Orangoihunui Point & Whitianga Bay, Whitianga Bay to Ohae Point	A distinctive river mouth, lagoon and stoney shore the feature includes the native bush along the river margins and the dune feature at the river mouth.
15	Motunui Island and Associated Reefs	The area extends from a rocky shoreline west of Oruaiti Beach to incorporate the beach, dunes and rocky headland of Te Ahikehe Point and shoreline east of Waikanapanapa. This includes coastal fringe of Pohutukawa but does not extend into the cultivated terrace top paddocks.
16	Whanarua Bay	An extensive coastal duneland with intact cover of vegetation, wetlands and river system backing a long open beach.
17	Ruakokere River Mouth	Two ONF features combined to create the broader ONF which is known as Cape Runaway. The headland forms a key landmark to the turning point of the Eastern Bay of Plenty toward East Cape. A dominant headland covered in regenerating native bush cover the headland forms the largest of its kind within the District.
18	Oruaiti Beach, offshore rocks and Waikanapanapa cliffs	A significant natural habitat within the Ohiwa Harbour, the island resides under Conservation Management. The island also forms part of the Region's only mainland (Ohiwa Harbour) Outstanding Natural character Areas, under the Regional Policy Statement, Variation 1.
19	Whangaparaoa dunefield, wetland and estuary	The Waiotahi Spit forms significant dune sand spit to the mouth of the Waiotahi Estuary. The large area comprises relatively unmodified duneland landscape with very high natural character values at a regional level.
20	Kopongatahi Point	A distinct and memorable feature and gateway to the Ōpōtiki township and Waiotahi settlement. The Pohutukawa clad coastal escarpment forms a striking tunnel through which the State Highway passes through. The feature is distinctive and iconic to the District.
21	Cape Runaway	Tarakeha defines the eastern end of the long open Tirohanga beach coastline east of Ōpōtiki Township. This forms a gateway into the steeper and rocky coastline that extends to Cape Runaway. This headland along with other similar headlands along the coast is also recognised as an area of Very High Natural character .

13.9.3 CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING SIGNIFICANT INDIGENOUS VEGETATION AND HABITATS OF INDIGENOUS FAUNA***Representativeness***

- Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna contains associations of indigenous species representative, typical or characteristic of the natural diversity of the region or any relevant ecological districts.

Rarity or distinctive features

- Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna supports an indigenous species or associations of indigenous species threatened or rare nationally, regionally or within the relevant ecological district.
- Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna is distinctive, of restricted occurrence, or at the limits of its natural distribution range, or has developed as a result of factors such as natural geothermal activity, historical cultural practices, altitude, water table, or soil type.
- Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna is one of the largest remaining examples of its type within the region or any relevant ecological district.
- Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna is significantly reduced in area and is degraded but retains key natural ecosystem functions (for example hydrology) and has a high potential for restoration.

Diversity and pattern

- Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna contains a high diversity of indigenous ecosystem or habitat types, or changes in species composition, reflecting the existence of diverse natural features (for example landforms, soil types or hydrology), or communities along an ecological gradient.

Naturalness

- Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna is in a natural state or healthy condition, or is in an original condition.

Ecological context

- Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna contributes to the ecological viability of adjoining natural areas and biological communities, by providing or contributing to an important ecological linkage or network, or providing a buffer from adjacent land uses.
- Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna provides habitat for indigenous species at key stages of their life cycle.

Viability and sustainability

- Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna is of sufficient size and compact shape and has the capacity to maintain its ecological viability over time.
- Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna supports intact habitats and healthy functioning ecosystems.

- Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna can contribute to the maintenance or recovery of a species threatened or rare nationally, regionally or within the relevant ecological district.
- Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna is of sufficient size and compact shape to resist changes initiated by external agents.

Māori

- Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna contributes to the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu and other taonga.

Historical

- Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna is known and valued for its connection to the history of the place.

Community association

- Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna is known and valued by the immediate and wider community for its contribution to a sense of place leading to community association with or public esteem for the place, or due to its value for recreation or education.
- Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna is valued for the contribution it is making to research into the Bay of Plenty's or New Zealand's ecosystems.

13.9.4 PRIORITY ECOSYSTEMS AND HABITATS FOR PROTECTION

- (a) coastal **dunelands**
- (b) freshwater wetlands
- (c) estuarine vegetation and **habitats**
- (d) **indigenous vegetation** in riparian areas
- (e) **indigenous vegetation** associated with land environments (defined by Land Environments of New Zealand at Level IV) that have 20 percent or less remaining indigenous cover
- (f) forest remnants in Ōpōtiki Ecological District
- (g) remaining **indigenous vegetation** on alluvial flats and terraces in the Tāneatua and Waioeka Ecological District
- (h) large, intact areas of primary and secondary forest
- (i) coastal forest in the Mōtū and Pukeamaru Ecological Districts
- (j) areas of **indigenous vegetation** and **habitats** which connect (provide wildlife corridors) with other areas of **indigenous vegetation**;
- (k) indigenous vegetation associated with 'originally rare' ecosystem types
- (l) habitats of rare and threatened species (particularly, locally endemic, and nationally and regionally threatened species)

(m) vegetation/ecosystem types that have been significantly reduced relative to their original extent at a local, regional and national level.