

Natural Areas



Establishing Vegetation, Stock, And Buildings In The Natural Areas

Introduction

Waitakere City's Operative District Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Resource Management Act 1991, and uses a new two-layered zoning system.

Natural Areas

Every part of Waitakere City fits into six Natural Areas. (See Natural Area Maps) These Natural Areas are governed by rules managing the effect of people's activities on natural resources. For example, bush and tree removal and earthworks.

Human Environments

Waitakere is also divided into 11 Human Environments which reflect the human character of the City. (See Human Environments Maps). These Environments are governed by rules managing the effect of people's activities on other people. For example, the effect of noise, or night time lighting, car parking or building a house.

Every property in Waitakere City has at least one Natural Area and one Human Environment zoning. The establishment of vegetation, stock and buildings in the City's Natural Areas is governed by the Natural Area Rules. These activities may also be subject to Rules in the Human Environment in which they are located. (See Rules Section of District Plan).

Natural Areas Rules

General Rule That Applies To All Natural Areas

Where development involves land that has more than one natural area identification on it, each part of the development shall comply with the Natural Area Rules applying to the Natural Area in which that particular part of the development is located.

Establishment Of Vegetation

The District Plan gives the Council responsibility for the use, development and protection of land. Establishing vegetation, such as planting trees in a newly created subdivision, is a land use, and it

therefore comes under the Natural Area Rules. The Natural Area Rules state that the establishment of any vegetation is a permitted activity in all Natural Areas.

The exceptions to this Rule are:

- The establishment of any vegetation listed in the Operative District Plan as an environmentally damaging plant; or
- Any vegetation established for woodlot or forestry purposes.

Environmentally Damaging Plants

The Council considers the establishment of invasive plants to be a major threat to the native eco-systems within Waitakere City. These are listed in an Appendix in the Policy Section of the Operative District Plan.

Woodlots and Forestry

The establishment of vegetation for woodlot or forestry purposes will require a resource consent. A woodlot is defined as forestry covering one hectare or less of any site.

In the General Natural Area, the establishment of vegetation for woodlot purposes, where the woodlot is not on a sensitive ridge or headland/cliff/scarp, is a controlled activity. This will be granted, subject to conditions imposed as part of the consent.

In the General Natural Area, the establishment of more than one hectare of vegetation for forestry purposes, where the forestry is not on a sensitive ridge or headland / cliff / scarp, is a discretionary activity. This may be granted, and if it is granted, will be subject to conditions imposed as part of the consent.

In all other Natural Areas, the establishment of vegetation for woodlot or forestry purposes is a non-complying activity - the most stringent type of resource consent. (Note, the Council cannot grant this consent unless it is satisfied that the adverse effects on the environment will be minor, or that granting the consent will not be contrary to the objectives of the Operative District Plan).

Stock

The grazing of stock is a land use, and therefore comes under the Natural Area Rules. The grazing of stock creates adverse effects on the environment. Native vegetation and fauna habitat may be damaged or eaten, soils may be compacted, and weed species spread.

In the Managed, the Protected and the Riparian Margins/Coastal Edges Natural Areas, the grazing of stock is a non-complying activity and will require a resource consent.

In the Coastal Natural Area, the grazing of animals where they are excluded from all native vegetation, streams, riparian margins and coastal edges by a permanent stock proof fence is a limited discretionary activity. Resource consents may be granted, and will be subject to conditions imposed as part of the consent. If the Operative District Plan requirements cannot be met, the activity will be considered as non-complying.

Buildings

Rules about buildings only apply in the Restoration Natural and the Riparian Margins/Coastal Edges Natural Areas. The Rules aim to direct the location and design of structures away from riparian margins, to protect native vegetation, and to minimise the runoff from impermeable surfaces and driveways.

In the Restoration Natural Areas, buildings are permitted. However, where the erection or alteration of a building increases the area of the site that is covered, a resource consent will be required.

In the Riparian Margins/Coastal Edges Natural Area, a resource consent will be required for the following:

- Where the erection or alteration of a building increases the coverage of the riparian margin within the site; and
- The erection of a bridge

Check whether you need to also obtain resource consent for earthworks and / or impermeable surfaces associated with your activity in the Restoration Natural and the Riparian Margins/Coastal Edges Natural Areas.

Any other activity will be considered as a non-complying activity, and will also require a resource consent. (Note, the Council cannot grant this consent unless it is satisfied that the adverse effects on the environment will be minor, or that granting the consent will not be contrary to the objectives of the Operative District Plan).

Applying For A Resource Consent For An Activity In A Natural Area

When applying for a resource consent, you will need to provide all the details requested on the application form(s) and pay the appropriate fees.

Resource consent application forms, fee schedules and other information is available from the Council. To avoid delays in processing your application, discuss what information is required with the resource consent staff. This discussion will clarify what information you need to supply, and whether your proposal needs a resource consent for other matters besides the effects of your activity on the Natural Area.

If you submit an application that has insufficient information, the Council will request you supply the missing information. Once this is supplied, the processing of the application will begin.

This brochure is only a guide to the establishment of vegetation, stock and buildings in the Natural Areas. The complete Rules are found in Volume One of the Rules Section of the Operative District Plan. If you have any queries, or require further information, please ask the Civic Centre Counter Staff or telephone the Council Call Centre on (09) 839 0400.

