



Te Tai o Poutini PLAN

Indigenous biodiversity

Why do we need to protect areas when there is so much land administered by the Department of Conservation?

Most rare and threatened plant species and habitats occur in the lowlands, which tend to be on private land, where most development has occurred, and where there is limited legal protection. As a result, some important habitats of species are not in the protected areas network.

The Councils have responsibilities under the Resource Management Act and the West Coast Regional Policy Statement to protect native biodiversity. This includes identification of significant areas of native vegetation and habitat, often called significant natural areas (SNAs).



How will significant natural areas be identified?

The first step will be a desk top assessment using existing known information on vegetation and habitats.

This will identify areas to look at more closely to see if they meet the criteria for special identification in Te Tai o Poutini Plan. Where criteria is perceived to be met, detailed site assessments and evaluation will take place before any decision is made to classify an area as significant.

What is the timeframe?

This desk top process will be undertaken over 2020. Landowners who have bush identified as being potentially significant will be contacted to seek permission for a site assessment.

Site assessments will be undertaken over the summer months of 2020/21 and 2021/22.

Decisions on whether to identify any specific areas in the draft Te Tai o Poutini Plan will be made in 2022.

Who decides bush protection rules on the West Coast?

Te Tai o Poutini Plan Committee will make decisions on any bush protection rules. This Committee is made up of the Mayors and Chair of the four Councils, plus one other member of each Council, as well as iwi representatives from the two hapu on the West Coast.

Can I clear my bush now?

Each of the current District Plans already contain rules to protect native vegetation and habitats. Clearance of any native vegetation larger than a certain area (0.5ha in Buller and 2,000m² in Westland), requires a resource consent.

In the case of the Grey District, there are already identified Significant Natural Areas. Clearance of any native vegetation on a site within a Significant Natural Area requires a resource consent.

Across the region, you need a resource consent to undertake work, including native vegetation clearance, within 10m of a river greater than 3m wide, or a wetland. There are also specific scheduled wetlands that require a resource consent if you want to modify them.

Since there are already rules in place limiting bush clearance, additional SNA identification work may have little or no effect on the majority of landowners.



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