



Forest & Bird

TE REO O TE TAIAO | *Giving Nature a Voice*

Clause 6 of Schedule 1, Resource Management Act 1991

Proposed Plan Change 1F – Modification of indigenous vegetation

Submission on proposed Plan Change 1F to the Kāpiti Coast District Plan

11 August 2022

To: District Planning Team, Kāpiti Coast District Council
district.planning@kapiticoast.govt.nz

From: Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand Inc. (Forest & Bird)
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I could not gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission.

I wish to be heard in support of my submission.

If others make a similar submission, I will consider presenting a joint case with them at hearing.

INTRODUCTION

1. Forest & Bird is New Zealand's largest non-governmental conservation organisation. Forest & Bird's mission is to protect New Zealand's unique flora and fauna and its habitat. Key matters of concern therefore relate to the protection of ecological values, particularly the sustainable management of New Zealand's indigenous biodiversity, natural landscapes, coastal environment and freshwater resources including wetlands, rivers, and lakes.
2. Forest & Bird has a long history of conservation action in Kāpiti District. From restoration projects such as Kaitawa and Greendale Reserves to climate change advocacy such as the rewetting of Queen Elizabeth Park to maximise its ability to sequester carbon. We are also the

proud owners of a large reserve, Field Reserve near Otaihanga, which we manage and protect for future generations.

3. Forest & Bird was involved with the development of the now Operative Kāpiti Coast District Plan, we submitted on draft plan change 1F, have now read the s32 analysis and ecological report and have some further points to submit on this proposed plan change.

SUBMISSION

4. Forest & Bird can see that Council's proposed changes have further attempted to tighten the controls under which consent is granted, however, it would still be Forest & Bird's preference to see Rule ECO-R6 changed to Restricted Discretionary. Controlled activity status, no matter how tightly controlled, will ultimately lead to incremental loss of habitat over time to due to Council having no ability to retain discretion to decline consent.
5. We acknowledge that the amendments to the rule seek to significantly reduce the identified issues regarding the extent of adverse effects on indigenous biodiversity possible under the existing wording of the rule, while still enabling people to provide for their health and safety where this can be clearly demonstrated and agreed to by the Council.
6. However, Forest & Bird still requests council retain an ability to decline consent. For example, with all due respect, it would be quite easy to find an arborist to recommend the outcome desired by the applicant who has a vested interest in felling trees that need to present 'a demonstrable imminent risk of serious harm to people or a building(s) or significantly damaging surrounding protected vegetation.' We constantly see ecologists, for example, providing the analysis the developer pays for which in Forest & Bird's opinion, is not actually a good outcome for the environment. If Council has reason to suspect that removal of the trees is *not* necessary to address an imminent risk to people and property, what then? We would not like to see this outcome as a result of keeping ECO-R6 as a controlled activity.
7. **Relief sought:** Make Rule ECO-R6 Restricted Discretionary
8. As stated in our earlier submission, Forest & Bird is concerned that the rule enables the felling of two trees every five years, enabling the incremental loss of habitat over time. While this might sound small scale, the removal of two trees, particularly in the coastal environment, could have significant impacts. The s32 report noted that none of the species listed as a rare and threatened vegetation species in Schedule 3 of the District Plan are tree species. This is actually very concerning. There are many trees in the District that are rare or threatened that should be included in this Schedule: large-leaved milk tree (*Streblus banksii*) and swamp maire (*Syzygium maire*) to name a few.
9. We would like to see Rule ECO-R6 amended to capture all rare and threatened vegetation in the district, not just limited to the incomplete list in Schedule 3. It could be that Schedule 3 could be amended to achieve this.
10. **Relief sought:** Amend ECO-R6 to ensure it captures rare and threatened trees that occur in the district.

Submission ends