



BIODIVERSITY - Summary of Community Feedback

Issues

- Generally across all feedback received there was recognition that biodiversity needs to be protected and enhanced.
- Focus on what indigenous vegetation is left on private land. Priority to be given to particular areas of concern, eg, those with the least vegetation remaining or under the most pressure.
- Recognise and protect wetlands with significant indigenous vegetation and/or native tussock.
- Growing concern about hill country clearing.
- Need for research, identification and mapping of remaining significant areas of biodiversity, with each assessed on a case by case basis. Need for a better understanding of biodiversity values in the region.
- Absence of ecological/botanical expertise within territorial authorities concerning.
- Highlight weed and pest control and the threat pest plants and species pose to biodiversity.
- Private property rights – possibility of compensation for owners if their rights to develop their properties were reduced.

Options

- Both support and opposition to regulations. Suggestions include:
 - *District and City Plan rules that require consent for removal of significant indigenous vegetation.*
 - *Refining existing rules to allow for native vegetation removal in certain circumstances, such as fencing, pruning and thinning trees as part of sustainable native forest management.*
 - *Developing a combined Land Plan – both support and opposition.*
- Broad support for non-regulatory approaches including:
 - *Financial support for any group undertaking riparian fencing and planting, or restoring and protecting indigenous vegetation.*
 - *Rates relief for protected areas and buying of land containing significant indigenous vegetation.*
 - *Education and advocacy.*
 - *Provision of ecological expertise through Councils.*
 - *Support for the use of landuse sustainability officers and experts to promote biodiversity protection*
- Support for a combination of both regulatory and non-regulatory approaches.

Councils' Commentary

Environment Southland and the Southland District Council know the key issue of biodiversity needs to be focused on in the Regional Policy Statement for Southland and the Southland District Plan reviews.

Both Councils consider a combination of regulatory and non-regulatory approaches is the best way to address the issues.

It is proposed to set clearer policy around regional biodiversity priorities in the revised Regional Policy Statement.

This would then flow on to more appropriate District Plan provisions, which will give more certainty for all parties and maintain and enhance non-regulatory biodiversity initiatives.

