

## Section 2.3 Natural Features and Landscapes

---

Landscapes reflect relationships between landform, land cover and land use and continue to evolve through natural and cultural processes. The District is encompassed by a range of landscapes, from those dominated by natural processes and patterns such as those in Fiordland and Rakiura National Parks to those which reflect human modification and settlement such as ‘working’ rural landscapes and urban areas. Notable natural landforms and geological features also form a key part of the District’s landscapes. Natural features and landscapes contribute to the character and identity of an area and afford a range of natural science, aesthetic, transient, scenic, natural character, ecological and open space values. Many also have historical or cultural significance. While natural features and landscapes change gradually over long periods of time through natural processes, they can be vulnerable to modification and destruction through inappropriate land use, subdivision and development.

Two tiers of landscapes are identified in the District Plan: Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes and Visual Amenity Landscapes. Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes have been identified as the top tier of landscape under Section 6 of the Resource Management Act 1991. Visual Amenity Landscapes have been identified as the second tier of landscapes under Section 7 of the Resource Management Act 1991. To date Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes have been identified in the District’s coastal environment and in the Fiordland/Rakiura Zone. Visual Amenity Landscapes have been identified in the coastal environment and in the Te Anau Basin. The two tiers of landscape have been identified through the following studies:

- Landscape and Ecology Southland District Report 1993
- Southland Regional Landscape Assessment 1997
- Southland Coastal Landscape Study 2006
- Te Anau Landscape Capacity Study 2006
- Te Anau Scenic Zones Visibility/Visual Landscape Assessment 2012.

Activities located in areas of Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes should be managed to ensure that outstanding values are protected from inappropriate subdivision, land use and development. It is expected that identified Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes will not change significantly over time as a result of subdivision, land use and development.

Visual Amenity Landscapes have a mix of human and natural elements and generally have high aesthetic value. The majority of these landscapes identified within Te Anau Basin are visible from the main highways and contribute as a scenic resource of the area. Activities located in Visual Amenity Landscapes should achieve a balance between the maintenance and enhancement of natural feature and landscape values, with a focus on the visual aspects of amenity, whilst enabling continuation as predominantly a working rural environment.

**Note to Plan Users:** Schedule 5.9 Significant Geological Sites and Landforms contains information sourced from the Geoscience Society of New Zealand, ‘New Zealand Geopreservation Inventory’. Any resource consent application for subdivision, land use or development activities on land with significant geological sites and landform as listed in Schedule 5.9 - Significant Geological Sites and Landforms should consider whether or not it is likely to an effect on that feature or landform.

## **Objective NFL.1**

Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes are protected from inappropriate subdivision, land use and development.

## **Objective NFL.2**

Within Visual Amenity Landscapes, subdivision, land use and development is undertaken in a manner that maintains amenity values and visual qualities.

## **Policy NFL.1**

Avoid inappropriate subdivision, land use and development within areas identified as Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes.

**Explanation:** Natural features and landscapes throughout the District can be vulnerable to modification and destruction from inappropriate activities. Within areas identified as Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes activities should be undertaken in a manner that avoids adverse effects on these landscapes and ensures their protection. It is expected that identified Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes will not change significantly over time as a result of subdivision, land use and development. Particular consideration should be given to the design, siting and scale of buildings and structures and associated curtilage, utilities, signage, earthworks and landscape plantings and the way in which these factors integrate and respect the landform, natural character and landscape quality. Consideration should also be given to the visibility of buildings, structures and activities from public places.

## **Policy NFL.2**

Ensure that subdivision, land use and development located within Visual Amenity Landscapes achieves appropriate integration with that landscape.

**Explanation:** Visual Amenity Landscapes contribute to the District's locally distinctive and valued character and activities within these landscapes should integrate with and respect landform, natural character and landscape and visual qualities.

Adverse effects on Visual Amenity Landscapes should be avoided, remedied or mitigated through consideration of the design, siting and scale of buildings and structures and associated utilities, signage, earthworks and landscape plantings. Particular consideration should also be given to the visibility of activities from public places.

## **Policy NFL.3**

Avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects of subdivision, land use and development on the District's natural features and landscapes that have not been assessed by Council for landscape values.

**Explanation:** Policies NFL.1 and NFL.2 provide specific direction for Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes and Visual Amenity Landscapes. However there are a range of natural features and landscapes within the District that have not been assessed to determine their landscape values. These landscapes are the Inland Mountains (Takitimu, Livingstone, Eyre, Garvie and Umbrella Ranges), the Southland Hills (Longwoods, Taringaturas, Hokonuis and Inland Catlins), the Southland Valleys and Plains (Lower Waiau Valley, Waimea Plains, Southland Plains). As landscape assessments of these areas are undertaken Council, through the plan change process, may identify and protect additional Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes and Visual Amenity Landscapes.

Subdivision, land use and development requiring resource consent should give particular consideration to the location to which they are proposed, to ensure that they achieve integration with the landscape.

#### **Policy NFL.4**

Through the Lakeside Protection Area, avoid adverse effects on the character and visual amenity values associated with Te Anau township's lakeside.

**Explanation:** Te Anau township's lakeside is locally distinctive and valued for its open space character and scenic views across Fiordland National Park's Lake Te Anau towards the mountains. The height of buildings in the Lakeside Protection Area is restricted to maintain and enhance these values. Subdivision, land use and development should also consider relevant non-regulatory guidelines.

#### **Natural Feature and Landscape Rules**

The Natural Feature and Landscape rules apply to those areas identified on the District Plan Maps as Outstanding Landscapes and Natural Features and Visual Amenity Landscapes. These rules are contained within the Rural and Fiordland/Rakiura Zone provisions of the District Plan.

#### **Non-Regulatory Method**

##### **Method NFL.1**

Increase awareness of the District's Outstanding Landscapes and Natural Features and Visual Amenity Landscapes and encourage their protection through the use of non-regulatory design guidelines.

##### **Method NFL.2**

Undertake landscape studies and assessments focussed on those areas of the District where natural features and landscapes have not been assessed.