

Oc Significant Indigenous Vegetation Criteria

The following criteria are to be used to identify areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna as they exist at the time the criteria are being applied. These are derived from the Waikato Regional Policy Statement, Appendix 3. This material is reprinted here to assist plan users to access the text. For full context, it is necessary to refer to the Waikato Regional Policy Statement.

Previously Assessed Site

Oc1

It is indigenous vegetation or habitat for indigenous fauna that has been specially set aside by statute or covenant for protection and preservation unless the site can be shown to meet none of Criteria Oc3-Oc11.

Oc2

It is indigenous vegetation or habitat recommended for protection by the Nature Heritage Fund, or Nga Whenua Rahui committees, or the Queen Elizabeth the Second National Trust Board of Directors, unless the site can be shown to meet none of Criteria Oc3-Oc11.

Ecological Values

Oc3

It is vegetation or habitat that is currently habitat for indigenous species or associations of indigenous species that are:

- threatened with extinction; or
- endemic to the Waikato Region¹.

Oc4

It is indigenous vegetation or habitat type that is under-represented (10% or less of its known or likely original extent remaining) in an Ecological District, or Ecological Region, or nationally.

Oc5

It is indigenous vegetation or habitat that is, and prior to human settlement was, nationally uncommon such as geothermal, Chenier plain, or kaarst ecosystems.

Oc6

It is wetland habitat for indigenous plant communities and/or indigenous fauna communities² that has not been created and subsequently maintained for or in connection with:

- waste treatment; or
- wastewater renovation; or
- hydro electric power lakes; or
- water storage for irrigation; or
- water supply storage;

unless in those instances they meet the criteria in Whaley et al. (1995).

Oc7

It is an area of indigenous vegetation or naturally occurring habitat that is large relative to other examples in the Waikato Region of similar habitat types, and which contains all or almost all indigenous species typical of that habitat type³.

Oc8

It is aquatic habitat⁴ that is a portion of a stream, river, lake, wetland, intertidal mudflat or estuary, and their margins, that is critical⁵ to the self-sustainability of an indigenous species within a catchment of the Waikato Region and which contains healthy, representative populations of that species.

Oc9

It is an area of indigenous vegetation or habitat that is a healthy and representative example of its type because:

- its structure, composition, and ecological processes are largely intact; and
- if protected from the adverse effects of plant and animal pests and of adjacent landuse (e.g. stock, discharges, erosion), can maintain its ecological sustainability¹ over time.

Oc10

It is an area of indigenous vegetation or habitat that forms part of an ecological sequence¹, that is either not common in the Waikato Region or an ecological district, or is an exceptional, representative example of its type.

Role in Protecting Ecologically Significant Area

Oc11

It is an area of indigenous vegetation or habitat for indigenous species (which habitat is either naturally occurring or has been established as a mitigation measure) that forms, either on its own or in combination with other similar areas, an ecological buffer, linkage or corridor and which is necessary to protect any site identified as significant under Criteria Oc1- Oc10 from external adverse effects.

Footnotes

1. See Waikato Regional Policy Statement Glossary for definition of endemic to the Waikato Region, ecological sustainability, and ecological sequence.
2. Does not include exotic rush / pasture communities.
3. This criterion is not intended to select the largest example only in the Waikato Region of any habitat type.
4. Excluding artificial water bodies, except those created for the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity or as mitigation for a consented activity.
5. Critical means essential for a specific component of the life cycle and includes breeding and spawning grounds, juvenile nursery areas, important feeding areas and migratory pathways.