Appendix E2

Criteria for identifying ecologically significant natural values

The purpose of these criteria is to identify ecologically significant values to encourage their wider public appreciation in Hurunui, and to promote their protection.

In determining whether an area is ecologically significant under Part II of the Resource Management Act the Council will have regard to the following criteria:

(A) Criteria relating to the ecological values of the area – the values of the place itself

(a) Representativeness – whether the area contains one of the best examples of a vegetation type, habitat, or ecological process which is typical of its Ecological District.

(b) Rarity – whether the area supports or is important for the recovery of, an indigenous species, habitat or community of species which is rare or threatened within the Ecological District or is threatened nationally.

(c) Diversity and pattern – the degree of diversity exhibited by the area in:

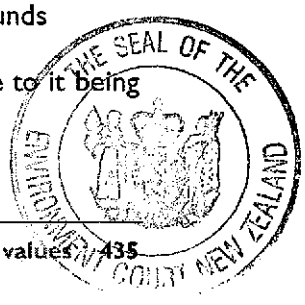
- Vegetation
- Habitat types
- Ecotones
- Species
- Ecological processes

(d) Distinctiveness/special ecological characteristics – the type and range of unusual features of the area itself and the role of the area in relationship to other areas locally, regionally or nationally, including:

- Presence of species at their distribution limit
- Levels of endemism
- Supporting protected indigenous fauna for some part of their life cycle (e.g. breeding, feeding, moulting, roosting), whether on a regular or infrequent basis
- Playing a role in the life cycle of migratory indigenous fauna
- Containing an intact sequence, or a substantial part of an intact sequence, of ecological features or gradients
- Supporting predominantly intact habitat or habitats with evidence of healthy natural ecosystem functioning

(B) Criteria relating to the ecological context of the area – its relationship with its surrounds

(e) Size and shape – the degree to which the size and shape of an area is conducive to it being or becoming ecologically self-sustaining.



(f) Connectivity – the extent to which the area has ecological value due to its location and functioning in relation to its surroundings. An area may be ecologically significant because of its connections to a neighbouring area, or as part of a network of areas of fauna habitat.

(C) Criterion relating to future or potential ecological value of an area – the prospect for future significance.

(g) Long-term sustainability – the degree to which the area is likely to maintain itself, taking into consideration:

- Extent to which criteria in groups A and B are met
- Degree of historic modification to the area and its surroundings which affect its future
- Degree of resilience of species and habitats present
- The effects of current management on identified ecological values
- The extent to which the area has achievable potential, with management input, for restoration of ecological values which are significant in the Ecological District.

The fact that a particular area satisfies one of the criteria above will not necessarily mean that the area is significant.

The Council will take criteria (a) to (g) into account together with any other relevant considerations (including those noted in the explanation following Policy 2.1) in deciding whether an area should be included in Appendix A7.1 (Schedule of Significant Natural Areas).

Glossary of terms used in conjunction with ecological significance criteria

Endemic:	refers to species of plants and animals which are unique to an area or animals which may migrate but only breed in the area.
Ecological District:	one of the major levels used for the ecological classification of land. New Zealand has been divided into 85 ecological regions and 269 ecological districts according to geological, topographical, climatic and biological features and processes. This reflects the small scale variability of New Zealand's ecological patterns. An ecological district is a land where topographic, climatic, soils and biological features and broad cultural patterns produce a characteristic landscape of biological communities. An ecological region comprises adjacent ecological districts with closely related characteristics, or may only include one ecological district with very distinctive features.
Habitat:	the environment in which a particular species or group of species live. It includes the physical and biotic characteristics that are relevant to the species concerned. For example, the habitat of whio/blue duck consists of swift water with an abundance of freshwater insects.
Ecotone:	a transitional zone between two habitats, which has distinct species or ecological characteristics of its own.