

5.0 Landscape

5.1 Introduction

The Wairau/Awatere area is made up of many different landscapes. It is the diversity of Marlborough's indigenous, working and built landscapes that give it and its inhabitants their identity.

The indigenous landscape is composed of the unmodified alpine and mountain grasslands, native forests in the north and western ranges, and unaltered beaches and bays. Other areas include those dominated by indigenous vegetation, such as oversown tussock grasslands, native trees and shrub species, and coastal plant associations.

The working landscape is composed of the dynamic rural landscape utilised for primary production, including both land and water based activities. It is predominantly composed of introduced species such as pine forests, pasture grasses, vineyards, arable and horticultural crops, mussels and salmon. The working landscape includes structures and associated activities involved in creating economic benefits from the use of land and water. Fences, tracks, sheds, rafts, and other structures all form part of the character of the working landscape.

The built landscape includes towns and settlements ranging from Blenheim, the major town, to small communities such as Rarangi. These landscapes are dominated by buildings, roads, and utilities such as telecommunication facilities, power and street lighting reticulation.

The boundaries between these landscapes are not absolute and consequently there is overlap between them when managing landscape at the regional level. In addition, the dynamic landscapes and seascapes of the coastal environment are important components of natural character and amenity values.

Landscapes and seascapes are the visual expression of physical, biological and cultural processes both past and present. The landscape is dynamic. Buildings, tree planting, land use activities and roading can all change the character of an area, be it the aesthetic or cultural value or the intrinsic value it provides for much social, recreation and economic value.

Section 6(b) of the Resource Management Act 1991 (the Act) requires that provision be made in this Plan for

“the protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.”

The Marlborough Regional Policy Statement develops this further in Policy 8.1.3

“avoid, remedy or mitigate the damage of identified outstanding landscape features arising from the effects of excavation, disturbance of vegetation, or erection of structures.”

Just as important is the need to encourage appropriate development within the working landscape.

5.2 Resources and Values

At a coarse level the Plan area is made up of the bush clad mountains, hills and valleys of the Richmond Range, the large river valleys of the Wairau and Awatere, the high

inland hill ranges, the dry eastern hills, the high country plateau of Molesworth, glaciated mountains of the St Arnaud and Raglan Ranges, the high rugged Inland Kaikoura Mountains and the coast.

Within this coarse level it is necessary to identify smaller units with which to work. The following table provides a breakdown of the study area placing an emphasis on the core characteristics of each area rather than defining the precise boundary between each.

Summary of Landscape Characteristics and Values of the Wairau/Awatere						
Landscape Type	Places Landscape Character Areas	Features	Visual Quality	Outstanding	Landscape Sensitivity	
Bush clad mountains and forested hills	Lake Chalice		Very High	Yes	High	
	Richmond Range		High		High	
	Eastern hills & valleys (Onamalutu, Kaituna, Tuamarina)	Onamalutu Scenic Reserve		Medium		Low
		Tuamarina River		High		High
		Para Swamp		Medium High		Medium
			Medium Low		High	
Ultramaphic grasslands and shrublands	Red Hills Ridge		High		High	
Glaciated mountain ranges	St Arnaud Range Rainbow/Wairau Valley	Rainbow skifield and road	High		High	
High country plateau	Molesworth		High	Yes	High	
		Sedgemere		Very High	Yes	High
		Lake McRae		Very High	Yes	High
High rugged mountain range	Inland Kaikouras	Tapuae-o-Uenuku	High	Yes	High	
High inland hills	Upper Waihopai, Awatere, Medway, and Waima		Medium High		Medium Low	
		River Gorges		High		Medium
Large river valley	Tophouse Locality	Six Mile Reserve	High		High	
	Upper Wairau Valley		Medium		Medium	
	Mid Wairau Valley		Medium Low		Low	
	Wairau Plain			Medium		Low
		Intensive horticultural landscape				
		Wairau River		Medium High		Medium High
		Spring Creek		Medium		Medium
	Tributary river valleys (Waihopai, Taylor, Omaka)			Medium		Low
	Lower Awatere Valley			Medium		Low
Seddon rail/road bridge			Medium		Low	

Summary of Landscape Characteristics and Values of the Wairau/Awatere					
Landscape Type	Places Landscape Character Areas	Features	Visual Quality	Outstanding	Landscape Sensitivity
Dry hills	Wither Hills		Medium		Low
		Lake Elterwater	Medium High		Low
		The Passes (Dashwood, Redwood, Taylor)	Medium		Medium
The coast	Cloudy Bay		Medium		High
		Boulder Bank and Wairau Lagoons	Medium High	Yes	High
		White Bluffs	Medium		High
	Clifford Bay		Medium		Medium
		Awatere River Mouth	Medium		High
		Muritai Reserve	Medium		Medium
		Lake Grassmere	Medium		Low
		Marfells Beach	Medium		Medium
		Cape Campbell	Medium		High
	Cape Campbell to Waima Coast		High	Yes	High
		Chancet Rocks	High	Yes	High
		Ward Beach	High	Yes	High
		Needles Point	High	Yes	High
		Waima Mouth	Medium		High
	Waima to Willawa		Medium High		Medium

5.3 Issue

Degradation of natural features and landscapes which have special characteristics.

Significant Regional Features

Within the Wairau/Awatere Plan area, four natural features/landscapes have been identified as outstanding in a regional context:

(a) Lake Chalice (A predominantly indigenous natural feature)

An attractive small mountain lake at the head of the Goulter River surrounded by steep bush clad slopes. Some forestry on the skyline to the south. Access is by foot. Chalice Hut is located nearby.

Values

Expressive of its formation and one of the few natural lakes in the Wairau catchment. It is very attractive - its blue water contrasts with the deep greens of the surrounding beech forest. The lake provides a habitat for both a landlocked galaxids population and koaro. Rare wildlife are found in adjacent areas. Introduction of built elements will contrast strongly unless very carefully sited and designed.

Sensitivity

High due to naturalness and high aesthetic quality. The lake is within Mount Richmond Forest Park.

(b) Molesworth, Sedgemere, Lake McRae

At the head of the Awatere Valley the landscape of Molesworth is highly legible with a well documented natural and cultural history. It is mostly 1000 m or more above sea level and has an alpine climate. Within Molesworth there are a number of places of landscape significance with exceptional historical, cultural, biological and geological values. These are identified in the Molesworth Management Plan. Of particular aesthetic merit are the lakes and wetlands eg. Sedgemere and Lake McRae. The landscape experienced from the road through the station is also of major significance.

The characteristics and qualities of the station are not uniform, however for the purpose of this Plan the whole station is treated as an entity. This is a predominantly indigenous landscape despite the extensive modification to vegetation that has occurred.

The entire area is of exceptional landscape quality and variety, with its huge scale, barren wind-swept appearance, low rolling hills, many creeks and rivers, tussock vegetation cover, dramatic rock outcrops and rugged scree-sided mountains. Public vehicle access is restricted to the Hanmer to Wairau Valley track much of which is beyond the District boundary to the west, and the Molesworth road which follows the Acheron River through the centre of the station and is open to the public for a restricted period between December and February. There are a wide range of recreation pursuits carried out in the area and the landscape context is important to the enjoyment of many visitors.

Inevitably there is potential to visually absorb sensitively sited development in such a varied landscape however the lack of tall vegetation and the spaciousness of many areas mean that in general the visual absorption capability is low.

Sensitivity

Landscape sensitivity is high due to the areas' ecological fragility, the scale and visual simplicity of large parts of the station, and its high cultural profile.

(c) Boulder Bank and Wairau (Vernon) Lagoons (A predominantly indigenous landscape)

This is a very special area with rich historical associations for both Maori and Pakeha. The boulder bank is a shingle spit extending for approximately 7 kilometres, backed by shallow lagoons and wetlands. The water passes through the boulder bank between the wetlands and the sea. All these areas are included in the coastal environment. The inland boundary to the coastal environment is close to the Redwood Pass Road more than 4 kilometres from the boulder bank. Even this far inland there is a strong visual connection to Cloudy Bay and the coastal headlands. The area is biologically very rich and has a predominantly natural character.

The formation of the bank and lagoons is highly legible and the area has very high cultural and historical significance. There are recorded geological sites (geopreservation inventory) and the biological values of the area are exceptional.

Sensitivity

The aesthetic qualities of this landscape are of lesser significance although many will find the simplicity and wild qualities of the area to be very beautiful. The ability of this landscape to absorb change is very low. Landscape sensitivity is very high. The area immediately inland is administered by the Department of Conservation.

(d) The High Rugged Mountains of the Inland Kaikoura Range

North east of Molesworth and south of the Awatere Valley there is a small area of the north western slopes of the Inland Kaikouras within the district.

The district boundary follows the ridgeline and includes the northern face of Tapuae-o-Uenuku - the highest point at 2885 m above sea level. This dramatic rugged mountain country is a very significant natural feature when seen towering above the hills and valleys forming the district to the north. This is particularly significant when Tapuae-o-Uenuku is snow-covered, contrasting strongly with the dull browns and greens of the lower country.

The range is very exposed. It is of recent geological formation and is exposed to extreme climatic conditions and as such is of biological and geological interest. Tapuae-o-Uenuku in particular is of very special significance to the Tangata Whenua and is an icon for many climbers and trampers.

Visual absorption capability is barely an issue because of the distance from which the mountains are generally seen. The mountains' exposure and restricted access suggest that future pressures are likely to be few.

Significant District Features

At a more local level the following natural features and landscapes are considered to be outstanding:

Red Hills Ridge -	Geologically unusual mountain range - bleak, barren, stark and exposed.
Onamalutu Scenic Reserve -	Remnant bush. Major concern is the protection of natural processes and natural character.
Para Swamp -	Impressive swamp. Of major concern is the protection of natural processes and natural character and the need to avoid invasion by exotic species.
Wairau River -	Although partly modified the river remains a significantly important multi-recreational landscape.
Spring Creek -	Although modified the river remains a picturesque and tranquil feature.

The Coast from Cape Campbell south to the Waima (Ure) River - a predominantly indigenous landscape, the least modified coastal environment on the East Marlborough Coast. The coastal landscape is highly expressive of its geological formation. The diversity in coastal conditions results in a rich marine life and a very interesting and attractive stretch of coast. Cape Campbell, Chancet Rocks, Ward Beach and Needles Point are all special places on this coast. The broken topography suggests that the areas absorption capability may be moderately high in places. This will not be the case with the headlands.

This landscape is outstanding and consequently highly sensitive to change. However access is very restricted and well sited development within the coastal environment may avoid adverse effects. The environment is unlikely to be under substantial pressure for development due to its relative isolation and difficulty of access.

5.4 Objectives and Policies

Objective 1 Management of the visual quality of the Wairau/Awatere plan area and protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.

Policy 1.1 Recognise and provide for the following natural features and landscapes as outstanding in the regional context:

- Lake Chalice;
 - Molesworth;
 - Tapuae-o-Uenuku and associated peaks of the Inland Kaikouras;
 - Boulder Bank and Wairau Lagoons;
 - Isolated Hill Scenic Reserve and associated Waima River reaches; and
 - Richmond Range.
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Policy 1.2 Recognise the following natural features and landscapes as outstanding in a more localised context:

- Red Hills Ridge;
 - Onamalutu Scenic Reserve;
 - Para Swamp;
 - Wairau River;
 - Spring Creek;
 - The coast from Cape Campbell south to Waima including Chancet Rocks, Ward Beach and Needles Point;
 - The Rainbow and Upper Wairau Valleys including the Wairau Gorge;
 - White Bluffs;
 - Cliffs and gorge of the Awatere River; and
 - Lake Alexander.
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Policy 1.3 Ensure that structures built on land do not compromise outstanding landscape values.

Policy 1.4 Ensure that structures associated with activities in the coastal marine area do not compromise the outstanding landscape values of the Plan area.

Policy 1.5 Ensure that any significant long-term effects on the landscape of land disturbance, earthworks and cultivation are avoided, remedied or mitigated.

Policy 1.6	Within identified areas of outstanding landscape value, ensure that any land disturbance, earthworks or cultivation undertaken incorporates measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate any short-term adverse effects.
Policy 1.7	Require activities involving tree removal and vegetation clearance to incorporate measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate any adverse visual landscape effects.
Policy 1.8	Encourage plantations of exotic trees, established in areas of outstanding or other important landscape value, to be planted in a form which complements the natural landform and surrounding landscape features.
Policy 1.9	Avoid sprawling or sporadic subdivisions for residential activity outside areas already occupied by residential settlement, or incursion into landscape sensitive areas.
Policy 1.10	Retain significant areas or stands of indigenous vegetation where they contribute to landscape character and quality.

The objective, and the policies to achieve landscape protection, are included in the Plan primarily because the Act and the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement require, as a matter of national importance, the protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.

The Marlborough Regional Policy Statement also indicates the need for this Plan to address the protection of visual or landscape values.

The objective and policies are intended to apply specifically to those areas identified as having outstanding landscape value (refer to Volume Three - Maps). However, the policies also apply in general to all other areas, particularly when an application for a moderate or large-scale activity is being assessed. That is, when some type of visual or landscape assessment is necessary in order to ensure that any adverse visual effects are avoided, remedied or mitigated.

5.5 Issue

General Degradation of and Detraction from the Landscape and Visual Amenity Values of the District

The vast bulk of the district is made up of very pleasant hills, valleys and plains landscape. Different areas have different characteristics. In the wilder country this reflects underlying natural processes - for example different vegetation patterns on north and south facing slopes, or greener areas in gullies and where moisture lies. Even in highly modified areas there may be indicators of what lies beneath still evident to the observant. The significance of these characteristics may not be sufficient (as it will be in the special places and outstanding landscapes), to suggest that development must take account of them, but they should be seen as potential qualities that can be used to create a vibrant and diverse environment.

Section 7 of the Act requires that management decisions have particular regard to the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values. These values relate to both natural features and landscapes, and cultural features and landscapes. It is often the cultural landscapes that are most familiar and important to many people. They live out their lives in these areas. Consequently they are valuable both in the diversity they bring to

an area but also individually as places that have meaning to those that live, work and visit them.

In areas where rural subdivision occurs care should be taken to develop in a way that retains the essential rural characteristics. The location of dwellings should reflect the landform and this may require retention of any natural features such as meandering streams or trees. Where feasible these characteristics should be maintained and enhanced. The planting of trees in the valleys and out on the alluvial plains is very important. Inappropriate 'urban' development will be resisted vigorously.

Land use activities involving vegetation clearance, excavation, filling and changes in land use from, for example pasture to forestry or vice versa, result in inevitable alteration to the landscape. If an area is considered to be suitable for such activities on landscape criteria (ie; land outside the outstanding and special places or where the activity would not compromise the outstanding qualities of these special places) and would not compromise physical or biological values, then these activities are likely to be acceptable. Such development should follow industry guidelines and other studies. Where possible, earthworks, subdivision boundaries, fencelines and land use changes, should reflect natural land form. Excavation and vegetation clearance, or changes in land use that may result in these activities in the future, are of particular significance as these may result in accelerated erosion and visual scarring. Property boundaries often follow ridges and in these circumstances, visually prominent features such as trees and buildings, should be kept down from the ridge top if breaking the skyline would mean that these features would be visible from settlements or public roads beyond. In tussock country, changes in land use, such as forestry, can have significant effect on the spacious, open vistas. However, it is possible to minimise impact if care is taken over siting and layout. Care should be taken to provide a visual as well as biological buffer between various land use activities and wetlands or other sensitive habitats.

The townships in the Wairau/Awatere District retain their rural nature. They are spacious, with wide roads, predominantly single storey buildings, frequent open spaces, numerous trees and strong visual connections to their surroundings. Each settlement also has its own particular 'sense of place' - its own history, its own unique landform and microclimates, and its own use patterns. Local communities can be encouraged to reinforce the special aspects of their settlement through an understanding of both the underlying natural landscape and the settlement's unique historical and cultural features.

The East Marlborough Coast has a relatively low profile compared with the Marlborough Sounds. Nonetheless, it is largely natural, enjoys considerable diversity and there are a number of very special locations, including headlands, lengths of unspoilt coast, and areas of dramatic rock outcrops. In relation to coastal development, siting should be considered in terms of the character and use of adjacent areas and landscape values.

Landscape and amenity values should be a major consideration in any decision to develop the coastal foreshore.

The rivers of the Wairau/Awatere District are other very significant features. The presence of natural water and vegetation is an attraction and the rivers are a focus for recreation. The scenic qualities of these areas are very important and provide opportunities for combining flood management practices with recreational, ecological, heritage and landscape objectives. This is the case in both rural and urban locations.

Objective 2	To provide for appropriate development practices within areas not identified as outstanding natural landscapes.
Policy 2.1	Encourage the development of landscape identity areas such as the Wairau Plains, the rurality of small towns.
Policy 2.2	In areas where rural subdivision occurs retain rural features and characteristics (eg. meandering streams, indigenous vegetation patterns, trees).
Policy 2.3	Maintain an open character to the rural zones and in particular the more intensively developed Rural 3 Zone.
Policy 2.4	Encourage rural residential settlement in areas outside of the Rural 3 Zone provided they are contained, retain rural character and do not lead to “suburbanisation” of the rural environment, and do not adversely affect physical resources.
Policy 2.5	Encourage forestry development to reflect natural landforms.
Policy 2.6	Recognise the value of rivers as significant landscape features providing opportunities for access into the landscape as well as providing opportunities to maximise aesthetic and intrinsic values.
Policy 2.7	Ensure consideration of landscape and amenity values in relation to coastal development.

Several major landscape divisions in the Wairau/Awatere landscape can be identified. The bush clad mountains and forested hills north of the Wairau Valley, the glaciated mountain ranges and valleys in the west, the rugged Inland Kaikouras, Molesworth, the high inland hills, the lower dry coastal hills, the Wairau and Awatere valleys and the coast, all have their own characteristics and qualities.

Within these landscapes many special ‘places’, or landscape character areas exist. These areas are sensitive to development but do not have the same values as the outstanding landscapes. In these landscapes change may be appropriate, but landscape issues will need to be carefully considered. The way that the change is handled will be critical. Special places are the Richmond Hills, Tuamarina River, Rainbow Valley and the Upper Wairau, the Tophouse area, Wither Hills, Dashwood, Redwood and Taylor Passes, Wairau Mouth, White Bluffs, Muritai Reserve, Marfells Beach and Waima Mouth.

Elsewhere in the Wairau/Awatere the landscape is less sensitive to change. For both residents and visitors these modified landscapes contribute significantly to the identity of Marlborough. The best known examples are the vineyard landscapes of the Wairau and Awatere Valleys.

The Plan assists in the protection of outstanding and special landscapes - usually those retaining a high level of natural character - and reinforces and enhances the characteristics and qualities of the diverse working and built landscapes of the district.

5.6 Methods of Implementation

Area Identification	Landscape and features of outstanding landscape value are identified on the planning maps.
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Rules	Landscape values underpin the construction of rules, in particular subdivision rules, and the zoning pattern adopted for the Plan.
Assessment Criteria	Landscape impact has been included as a matter for assessment on a number of Discretionary Activities where visual or landscape effects are likely. Such assessments will be required to take into account the values identified and shown on the planning maps.
Guidelines	The Council will develop landscape guidelines in consultation with major land user groups in accordance with policies outlined in this chapter. Such guidelines will provide subdividers, land users and building applicants with information on suitable siting, design and appearance of buildings and structures.
Education	The Council will provide landowners in areas identified as being of outstanding landscape importance with information on the values attributed to their land.
Voluntary Action	The Council will encourage the use of voluntary conservation covenants or other agreements as a means of protecting an area of landscape value.
Subdivision	The Council will impose conditions of consent for subdivision, where appropriate, requiring landscape covenants be registered on the land title or the vesting of certain land as reserve in order to protect landscape values.
Land Acquisition	The Council may consider acquiring a site with outstanding landscape values where land purchase is the only means available for protection of the values.

The methods provide a general framework for the protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. It is important to note that it is not outright protection which is sought by the objective, policies and methods above, but rather protection from inappropriate subdivision, use or development.

There are numerous means available to moderate landscape impact. For example, a structure on land, such as a residential dwelling or a transmission mast can have a lesser visual effect if it is appropriately located on the site, the shape and size is moderate and reflects the surrounds, and the external finish is non-reflective and incorporates neutral colours.

5.7 Anticipated Environmental Results

Implementation of the policies and methods relating to landscape will result in:

- Maintenance of the outstanding landscapes and natural features of the District;
- A reduction in the conflict between developments and the landscape;
- Development located in a manner, style and character which is sympathetic and complementary to the landscape;

- Protection of the visual and landscape resources and values of the rivers, wetlands and lakes, and the coastal environment ; and
- Improved public awareness and acceptance of the fundamental importance and value of the landscape to the wellbeing of the District.

