

Appendix 1.4 – Officers Recommended Amendments to APP1, Natural character assessment criteria

Note the below provisions represent the Section 42A Report Writing Officer's recommended amendments to the provisions of the Proposed District Plan, in response to submissions (with underline used for new text and ~~strikethrough~~ for deleted text).

Appendix 1 - Mapping methods and criteria

Natural character assessment criteria

Natural character in the coastal environment

Recognise that natural character is not the same as natural features and landscapes or amenity values and may include matters such as the following to identify a range of natural character from pristine to modified:

- a. Natural elements, processes and patterns;
- b. Biophysical, ecological and geomorphological aspects;
- c. Natural landforms such as headlands, peninsulas, cliffs, dunes, wetlands, reefs, freshwater springs and surf breaks;
- d. The natural movement of water and sediment;
- e. The natural darkness of the night sky;
- f. Places or areas that are wild or scenic; and
- g. Experiential attributes, including the sounds and smell of the sea; and their context or setting.

As a guide

- Outstanding natural character generally means entirely natural (such as near to pristine indigenous land cover, negligible human features e.g. buildings, structures, paved surfaces, roading or vehicle tracks) and a very strong experience of naturalness.
- High natural character generally means a high proportion of indigenous vegetation cover, visually unobtrusive land management (e.g. low intensity pasture), few and visually subservient human features and a strong experience of naturalness.
- Areas where natural character is less than high generally means one or more of the following: Mostly modified land cover (e.g. pasture, plantations), limited remnant indigenous vegetation, obvious land management patterns, obvious or prominent human structures, and a modest experience of naturalness.

The Northland Regional Council provides a full copy of the assessment worksheets and methodology used for evaluating coastal natural character for the Regional Policy Statement for Northland:

- Northland Regional Council Northland Mapping Project

Natural character of wetland, lake and river margins

Recognise that the natural character of wetland, lake and river margins are the biological, visual and physical characteristics valued by the community, including:

- i. its biophysical, ecological, geological, geomorphological and morphological aspects
- ii. the natural movement of water and sediment including hydrological and fluvial processes
- iii. the natural location of a water body and course of a river
- iv. the relative dominance of indigenous flora and fauna

- v. the presence of culturally significant species
- vi. the colour of the water
- vii. the clarity of the water¹

¹ Forest and Bird (S511.072) and others.