



Hill Country Land Use

Unsustainable hill country land use is one of the issues for our Region that are covered by the One Plan. Horizons works with many landowners in the Region to provide financial assistance and advice for sustainable land use through its SLUI (Sustainable Land Use Initiative), Whanganui Catchment Strategy and other programmes, while the One Plan sets conditions for some farm activities in certain erosion-prone areas.

What are the issues facing our Region?

The Region has 300,000 hectares of hill country land at risk of moderate to severe erosion, where unsustainable pasture-based farming practices can damage the soil structure and accelerate erosion. This results in muddy rivers, increases river siltation downstream and reduces the protection level of flood control schemes.

How does the One Plan address these issues?

While most day to day farming operations are **not** covered by regulations in the One Plan, some activities can only occur **without** resource consents if conditions set under the permitted activity rules are met.

Consents are needed for some activities on land that is steeper than 28 degrees (Hill Country Erosion Management Areas). These include vegetation clearance and land disturbance near rivers, lakes or wetlands. New tracking also requires consent, and there are restrictions on clearance of woody vegetation that has significant canopy cover and can play a role in maintaining slope stability and erosion control.

The One Plan rules covering water quality, water quantity and other land use related activities such as fertiliser and agrichemicals can apply.

What has changed since the Proposed One Plan was released?

References to Highly Erodible Land have been removed and a new term, Hill Country Erosion Management Areas, has been introduced to refer to land that is steeper than 28 degrees.

Rules that appeared in Chapter 12 of the Proposed One Plan notified in 2007 have been deleted and new rules provided that generally permit activities such as land disturbance including earthworks, forestry and cultivation – providing conditions are met.

What do the One Plan rules mean for landowners and others?

Day to day farming activities generally can continue without any regulation but you need to check the rules in Chapter 12 for conditions that cover some types of activities in some situations, such land disturbance including earthworks, forestry and cultivation. Consents are required for certain types of vegetation clearance and land disturbance in Hill Country Erosion Management Areas but Horizons' staff are able to provide on-site consents in many cases. See Chapters 5 & 12, Schedules AA & AB, Glossary.

DID YOU KNOW?

More than 300 farms and 600 individual projects covering over 200,000 ha of erosion-prone land are now part of Horizons' ongoing voluntary Sustainable Land Use Initiative (SLUI) programme. SLUI is the council's key response to the February 2004 floods and is aimed at reducing sediment yields from hill country into our river systems.

SLUI achievements to 2010 include:

- 150 km plus of fencing
- 1,325 hectares of forestry planted
- 19,100 space planted poplar and willow poles
- 700 hectares of riparian retirement.

Hill Country Land Use Rules

Use this guide to find out if the key rules in Chapter 12 apply to any aspects of your farming operation. You will require a consent if you do not meet the conditions of a permitted activity, or if One Plan identifies that resource consent is required.

NB: A range of other rules throughout One Plan apply to many land uses, including intensive farming land uses. See Fact Sheet titled Rules Applying to all Farming Land Uses.

Large-scale land disturbance including earthworks (Rule 12-1)

Resource consent is required for large-scale earthworks on a total area of more than 2,500 sq m per 12-month period on coastal foredune land (defined in the Glossary) but permitted for other areas, providing an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan is prepared and Horizons is notified at least 48 hours before the work begins. (See Rule 12-4 for activities in Hill Country Erosion Management Areas).

Forestry (Rule 12-2)

Forestry operations are permitted, except within coastal foredunes where consent is required. Elsewhere, an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan is required and there are a number of conditions, including: a 5 m buffer zone for any forestry planting or replanting near rivers

or lakes, or habitat that is rare, threatened or at risk. After harvesting, any land that is not left to revegetate naturally must be replanted within 18 months. Other conditions include installing water run-off controls for tracks and landing sites, and management of slash from harvesting.

Cultivation (Rule 12-3)

Resource consent is required for cultivation in coastal foredunes. Elsewhere, it is permitted but within 5 m of rivers, lakes or wetlands, bunding, silt traps or other devices must be installed before cultivation starts, to minimise sediment run-off.

Vegetation clearance and land disturbance (Rule 12-4)

You will need consent for vegetation clearance or tracking on land with a pre-existing slope of 28 degrees or greater (defined as a Hill Country Erosion Management Area); within 5 m of rivers, lakes or wetlands; involving new tracking; or if you wish to clear woody vegetation with a 70% or more canopy cover on 1 ha or more per property per 12-month period. Consent applications under this rule will not be notified and written approval of affected persons is not required.



Need more information?

A copy of the One Plan is available on Horizons' website www.horizons.govt.nz

To request a copy of the One Plan on CD or to speak with someone about how the changes may affect you freephone **0508 800 800**