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	Response Date	Jul 22 22
	Notes	
Q1	Select the chapter you want to provide feedback on	
	General Rural Zone Ecosystems & Indigenous Biodiversity	
Q2	In general, to what extent do you support the contents of this chapter?	
Q3	Objective/Policy/Rule/Standard reference:	
Q4	Feedback/Comments	
Q5	Objective/Policy/Rule/Standard reference:	
Q6	Feedback/Comments	
Q7	Objective/Policy/Rule/Standard reference:	
Q8	Feedback/Comments	
Q9	Objective/Policy/Rule/Standard reference:	
Q10	Feedback/Comments	
Q11	supporting documents?	
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Q12	If you need more space, or have any other general comments, please leave them here	

Feedback from the Ōhau Conservation Trust on the Draft Waitaki District Plan

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General Rural Zone

Conservation activities in the General Rural Zone

The Ōhau Conservation Trust undertakes conservation activities on public conservation land and road reserve, within the Ōhau Basin.

The majority of this land is zoned “general rural zone - GRUZ”. The objectives and policies for the GRUZ zone do not acknowledge that the Department of Conservation and community groups such as the Trust, undertake conservation activities on this land.

The only statement acknowledging the rural zones includes conservation values is in the introduction to the Rural Zones (RURZ) where it states:

The purpose of the Rural Zones is to manage the effects of development and ensure that rural amenity values, rural production values, rural living and settlements, and conservation values are appropriately managed to enable their ongoing use for providing for agriculture, horticulture, conservation, tourism and other rural activities within the wider rural area.

This lack of recognition flows through to the GRUZ rules, where there are no specific rules for conservation activities – even though the draft contains a definition for conservation activities. The only place where conservation activities are addressed in the rules are in the Open Space Zone.

Conservation Activities are defined in the draft District Plan as:

means the use of land and/or buildings for an activity undertaken for the purposes of maintaining, protecting and/or enhancing the natural, historic, cultural and/or ecological values of a natural or historic resource (for example; fencing and restoration planting). It includes ancillary activities which assist to enhance the public's appreciation and recreational enjoyment of the resource (for example; access tracks, interpretative signs, visitor facilities and vehicle parking).

The Department of Conservation is able to undertake its conservation land use activities on public conservation land pursuant to section 4(3) RMA, but others such as community groups are not able to use section 4(3) RMA for their activities.

Non-commercial conservation activities on public conservation land are subject to the District Plan as well as an authorisation process by the Department of Conservation. To potentially require community groups that rely on donations and grants for funding, to have to seek a resource consent for conservation activities as well as an authorisation from DOC seems an unreasonable approach.

To make it clear that conservation activities (as defined in the draft District Plan) are able to be undertaken on public conservation land, the Trust requests conservation activities on public conservation land is a permitted activity in the GRUZ. Objectives and policies should also be included to establish and acknowledge the GRUZ includes large areas on public conservation land and to support conservation activities occurring in the zone.

It is acknowledged the draft District Plan contains a number of overlays to recognise outstanding natural features and landscapes. There is policy support for activities by a range of people and groups to undertake restoration and enhancement of the values of these features and landscapes. This policy is quite narrow and doesn't cover the wider conservation activities undertaken on public conservation land.

Significant Natural Areas overlay

The Trust has been undertaking possum trapping along the Barrier and Ōhau ranges and terraces since 2017. The purpose of the trapping is primarily to maintain and enhance the mistletoe in the Lake Ōhau beech forests and remnants. The beech forests around Lake Ōhau contain nationally and internationally significant mistletoe populations of scarlet mistletoe (*Peraxilla colensoi*), red mistletoe (*Peraxilla tetrapetala*) and yellow mistletoe (*Alepis flavida*).

All three of these species are ranked as 'Declining' according to the *Conservation Status of New Zealand's Indigenous Vascular Plants* (de Lange et al 2012). The Lake Ōhau area is recognised by DOC as one of the highest ranked South Island priority areas for mistletoe conservation.

The Trust will soon be installing traps for mustelids, rodents and feral cats in order to protect the native birds, particularly bellbirds / korimako, in these beech forests. The bellbirds / korimako pollinate the mistletoe and are vital for healthy mistletoe and beech forest.

The draft District Plan does not recognise these beech forest areas (or the other beech forest in the Ōhau basin containing mistletoe) as a significant natural area (SNA). When looking at the draft district plan maps there are very few SNAs and none on the public conservation land in the Ōhau Basin. This doesn't give an accurate representation of the ecological values present.

The Trust requests the SNAs on public conservation land within the Ōhau Basin are included in schedule 6 and shown on the planning maps.