

HEARING 21A: SIGNIFICANT NATURAL AREAS
SUBMISSION BY KCH TRUST: SUBMITTER NO. 437
170 Port Waikato-Waikaretu Road

by: Dave Serjeant, Merestone Limited

Submission 437.1

KCH Trust sought: *“Amend the planning maps to reduce the extent of the Significant Natural Area at 170 Port Waikato-Waikaretu Road, Tuakau. AND Any further relief or amendments to address the concerns outlined in the submission. “*

KCH Trust value the significant indigenous vegetation on their land at 170 Port Waikato-Waikaretu Road. They see its retention and enhancement as being consistent with their enjoyment of the property as a lifestyle block and the potential to establish some beehives.

The Trust’s concern with the mapping related to the exact definition of the SNA boundary. This can be discussed with reference to the attached maps and plans – refer to Planning Map 11.1 and to marked up aerial photo. SNA has been applied to all of the property with the exception of the south-eastern corner, which has a small pine plantation.

The KCH Trust submission was treated in a similar way to many other submissions where landowners have questioned the SNA mapping. The recommendation to accept in part is set out in the following passage:

“No site visit was undertaken for this property, and as discussed previously in this report, I recommend that the SNA be ground-truthed before being identified on the planning map, although an area will still be deemed to be an SNA if it meets the criteria in Appendix 2. I therefore recommend that the Panel accept this submission point in part, on the basis that further ground-truthing would need to be undertaken, and the SNA be deleted from the planning maps for this property.”

I have discussed the recommendation with Ms Chibnall. While I agree with the general approach of ground-truthing prior to mapping, in my view the deletion of the SNA from this property has not been sought by any party.

I note that in Ms Chibnall’s rebuttal statement the definition of an SNA has been modified so that it:

Means an area of significant indigenous biodiversity that is identified as a Significant Natural Area on the planning maps or that meets one or more of the criteria in Appendix 2 Criteria for Determining Significance of Indigenous Biodiversity.

I support this amendment to the definition.

In this regard, I was a planning witness for a party in the case *Cabra Rural Developments Limited v Auckland Council Decision No. [2020] NZEnvC 153*. The definition of SNAs was an appeal point in this AUP case. During the case Auckland Council agreed to amend the references to Significant Ecological Areas (SEA) in the Auckland Unitary Plan to include not only areas identified in the SEA Overlay but also areas meeting the SEA factors identified in Policy B7.2.2(1). The SEA factors are very similar to those in Appendix 2 Criteria for Determining Significance of Indigenous Biodiversity.

KCH Trust’s submission also recognised the considerable cost of ground-truthing. In that regard I support the introduction of Policy 3.1.2D Significant Natural Area Assessment Funding Policy as detailed in Ms Chibnall’s rebuttal.



