

Happy New Year from the team at Hancock Forest Management

Hancock Forest Management NZ Limited has been certified by Forest Stewardship Council since 2004 and its operations are audited annually to verify compliance with the FSC Principles relating to economic, environmental and social objectives. At Hancock we believe that good stewardship is good business and we are pleased to share some of our stewardship activities with you in this edition of Hancock Forest Views.

Kiwi in Northland Forests

Forester's kiwi education day

Kiwi in the wild are in decline, largely due to predation by a range of introduced predators. About one-third of all brown kiwi are found in Northland, between Whangarei and Kaitiā, a large region which was extensively planted in pines during the 1970s and 80s, including large tracts of Taumata Plantations' Northland forest estate.

The Northland Forestry Resource Management Forum recently arranged a workshop with Department of Conservation (DOC) to help educate foresters on how to locate (and when necessary relocate) kiwi in plantation forests during harvesting.

DOC used its experience with logging operations in their own Waitangi Endowment Forest to educate a large turnout of forestry workers, capped off by a forest visit during which DOC officials caught and micro-chipped two newly hatched kiwi.

DOC staff encouraged forestry workers to obtain a better understanding of kiwi numbers in their estate, including knowledge of their whereabouts. HFM NZ staff have carried out extensive kiwi monitoring across the Taumata estate which has confirmed the areas with high concentration of kiwi.



HFM NZ forester Denis Te Tuhi holding a one week old kiwi chick

Harvesting is obviously the forestry activity with the greatest potential to impact resident kiwi. Most kiwi will scarp when they hear the logging crews approach, however others, particularly males sitting on eggs, will stay holed up in their burrows. Often kiwi burrows are located in piles of forestry slash or in hollows of thinned tree trunks.

HFM NZ is now working with DOC to develop practicable guidance to foresters for managing harvesting operations in kiwi areas to maximize kiwi survival.

Kiwi egg recovery from Gammons

Following on from the kiwi education day, one of Taumata's Northland harvesting crews, Montana Logging, started off their year by saving two kiwi eggs. Breaker outs Harrison Hauraki and Mark Norman were hooking up logs to hauler ropes for extraction when they spotted a kiwi sitting on a nest containing two eggs.

The crew called HFM immediately and stopped work around the kiwi roost area. DOC were called and DOC staff came to the forest and collected the two eggs. The eggs were placed in an incubator at the Native Bird Recovery Centre and have since hatched. The chicks will be released on Limestone Island for a year to grow large enough to be able to better protect themselves from predators and will then return to the mainland to be released back into the wild.

HFM works closely with DOC to ensure kiwi are protected during forestry operations in forests populated with high kiwi numbers. DOC praised the actions of the crew and said they couldn't have asked for a better outcome - it showed that the recent training was working well.



Montana logging breaker outs Harrison Hauraki and Mark Norman pointing out the kiwi nest (above) and the kiwi eggs in the nest (left)



'Share the Road' programme wins National Road Safety Award

In an earlier article of Hancock Forest Views we reported on the 'Share the Road' Campaign being run by HFM in Northland to help educate rural communities to safely share public roads with heavy vehicles. The programme was aimed specifically at school children, their families, and truck drivers.

The programme has now run for two years and has involved 22 schools and over 2500 students. The programme had input from HFM staff, log truck contractors and their drivers and the many schools who hosted the campaign.

Earlier this year the Northland Regional Council nominated HFM's 'Share the Road' program for the National Road Safety and Achievement Innovation Awards. The awards from the New Zealand Transport Agency recognise road safety innovations initiated by individuals, organizations and communities. In August it was announced that HFM had won the National Award under the Education Category.

The judges commented that 'Share the Road' will have long term safety benefits and provided participants with a comprehensive experience. The judges also noted the proactive inclusion of stakeholders and the ease with which the project could be transported elsewhere within the forest industry.

The programme has recently been extended to HFM's Central Region. Kuratau School in the Central North Island was the first out of the blocks with staff reporting a very successful and enjoyable day.



Nathan Guy (Associate Transport Minister), Mark Yaxley (NZ Transport Agency) present Peter Houston from HFM with the award.



Students at Kuratau School learn about logging trucks first hand from Garry Stewart from Aztec Transport Ltd

'Operation Warm Classroom'

While undertaking the 'Share the Road' day at Kuratau School, HFM staff learned of the recent theft of the school's entire firewood supply. With the school using wood burners to heat their classrooms the theft left the school in the position of having to find funds to replace the firewood or facing a very cold winter.

HFM Foresters and Taumata Plantations Limited contractors harvesting in nearby Waituhi forest decided they would like to help. In what became dubbed 'Operation Warm Classroom' the team swung into action. With some coordination by HFM staff members, waste wood from harvesting sites was pulled to landings by Blackfern Logging, delivered to the school by Dahms transporters and cut up on site by staff from Peacock Logging, JB Logging and Ribbonwood Cable Logging. A great team effort!



Firewood delivery to Kuratau School by Dahms (left) and being cut up on site by HFM contractors Peacock Logging, JB Logging and Ribbonwood Cable Logging (above).



HFM forests host Rally of Nelson

Late September saw the return of the Rally of Nelson, the final round in the 'Vantage Aluminium New Zealand Rally Championship' to the HFM- managed Tasman Bay Forests. Roads normally the domain of logging trucks and 4WD's, were suddenly alive with high performance vehicles, tearing around the twisting forest roads at breakneck speeds.

Day one of the rally saw over 50 cars take on the formidable Gordon's Road in the Waimea Forest of the Eastern Hills. Over 28km's of more bends and hairpin corners than one would encounter driving over the Swiss Alps, coupled with a road surface designed to give maximum grip and stability for loaded logging trucks, but more likely to shred the tyres of any lesser vehicle provided the competitors with a real challenge, right from the word go.



Race winner Hayden Padden tearing up the Arterial Rod in Moutere Forest



Rally Nelson - Gordons Road, Waimea

In the next stage competitors drove through the Moutere forests, following the main ridge road down to one of Tasman Bay's main sawmill customers where speeds in excess of 160km/hr were reached.

This year's rally was organised by the Nelson Car Club, a group that holds a license to operate events in forests managed by HFM. The group has hosted the rally here for several years and also run regular club events and championships in Tasman Bay forests.

While plantation forests are an ideal location for car rally events, they can cause headaches for the roading engineers, with damage to forest roads required for harvesting. However HFM Nelson staff confirmed they give the Nelson Car Club their full support for their extremely professional management around safety plans, ensuring public notification, marshalling and the restoration of roads after the events.

Te Araroa Walkway

Te Araroa 'the long pathway' when complete will be a continuous 3 000 km walking track stretching from Cape Reinga to the Bluff. The vision is a step closer to completion with the creation of a 4km bypass track through Ngunguru forest in Northland. Seventy per cent of the track in Northland is open but before the Ngunguru by-pass was opened walkers who arrived at the coastal settlement of Ngunguru had to walk along 20km of public roads to link up with the next track section.

The forest at Ngunguru has a track popular with horse riders and in November it was upgraded for walking access. Te Araroa's northern project manager, Fiona Mackenzie, worked with conservation volunteers to cut back bush, build stiles and mark the route through the forest. The trail follows logging roads, trails on pine forested hills and riverbanks crossing the Waitangi and Taheke rivers to finish on Pataua North Road.

The track team spent three days clearing the track. All equipment - hedge clippers, scrub cutters and posthole borers - had to be carried through the forest and both rivers.

The area of the track is a working pine forest which will require the track to be closed for safety reasons when forestry operations are underway (approximately every 28 years).

To see details of the Te Araroa trail visit www.teararoa.org.nz.



Conservation volunteers building tracks in Ngunguru Forest



Wood in forested streams

A recent study in Taumata's Houpoto Forest in the Eastern Bay of Plenty has shown the benefits of woody material in streams in providing habitat for our native fish. PhD research currently being undertaken by Brenda Baillie from Scion shows that large pieces of wood left in streams helps to trap sediment, create pools and provide cover for native fish, especially for the banded kokopu and longfin eels which favour this type of habitat.



Brenda Baillie electric fishing a stream in Houpoto Forest with HFM NZ
Environmental Planner Robin Black

Part of the study monitored and compared sections of stream after harvesting, both with woody harvesting debris left in place, and with all of this material removed. Max Butler, James McPhee, Junior Ngaro from Maungawaru Logging and Robin Black from HFM helped Brenda remove the wood from the stream channel for Brenda so she could monitor



Wood pools like this one provided habitat for banded kokopu and longfin eels as well as common and redfin bullies, smelt and occasionally the rarer shortjaw kokopu (Photo by B.Baillie, Scion)

the effects of removing woody debris. Brenda found that removing the wood released stored sediment resulting in infilling of down stream pools. By comparison, the section with wood intact not only retained sediment but provided cover for native fish species. Brenda found this had the greatest effect on the large banded kokopu and longfin eels resident in forest streams on the east coast. 85% of all the banded kokopu caught were in the sections where the wood had been retained, with only 15% in the section where the wood had been removed. For the large eels, 74% of all the large eels caught were in the sections where wood had been retained. Information from Brenda's study is being used by both foresters and Regional Council staff to develop practical guidance on slash management to achieve the best environmental outcomes.

Woodhill Forest — 4 Track Adventure Safaris

Woodhill forest near Auckland is home to a range of outdoor recreation companies and one of the originals is 4 Track Adventures, a family owned quad bike safari company which has been operating in Woodhill for over 20 years.



Quad bike safaris are 4 Track's core business however, they also offer team building activities like archery, target shooting, a



moat Challenge and blindfolded "human sheep herding".

4 Track offers a range of different ride lengths from 1 to 3 hours incorporating a range of forest and sand dune tracks (above), Muriwai Beach (left), and a ride up to the Woodhill lookout to take in the spectacular coastal scenery.

Over the summer months 4 Track operates a Twilight Safari which they report is a great chance for their customers to spot some wild Fallow deer that inhabit the forest.

Being a sand dune forest 4 Track Adventures are able to operate all year round, in all types of weather – in their words they are "Fun In The Sun – Awesome In The Wet!"

We're on the web!
www.hnrg.com

Hancock Forest Management (NZ) Ltd
P O Box 13404
Westpac Bldg, L2, 2 Devonport Road
Tauranga

HFM—Northern Area Office: Phone: (09) 470 1300, Fax: (09) 470 1317
HFM—Central Area Office: Phone: (07) 885 0350, Fax: (07) 885 0392
HFM—Eastern Area Office: Phone: (07) 350 0080, Fax: (07) 345 7332
HFM—Southern Area Office: Phone: (03) 541 7000, Fax: (03) 541 7001