

Welcome to Hancock Forest Views

Welcome to our seventh edition of Hancock Forest Views, a newsletter compiled by Hancock Forest Management (HFM) to help keep you informed of what is happening in our forests. This edition includes a range of topical articles from each of our forest regions. We hope you find the newsletter interesting and welcome your feedback.

Planting Season 2011

The 2011 tree planting season is now in full swing. This year, HFM contractors will be planting approximately 4.4 million trees during the planting season which runs from late April through to August. The main species planted is Radiata Pine, however, we will also be planting approximately 139,000 Douglas Fir seedlings on higher altitude sites in the Central North Island, and 6,000 Macrocarpa seedlings along coastal areas in Woodhill forest near Auckland.

When planning replanting, our foresters assess the area that has just been harvested and identify any environmental, safety and community issues that may affect the area available for replanting. At this early stage, any necessary adjustments are made to the production area to manage these issues. Typically, changes are made to increase the riparian margin on waterways or wetlands, to protect archaeological sites, or to retire areas that were hazardous to harvest.

Where the land is owned by another party (e.g. lease and Joint Venture forests) the landowners are consulted in any retirement decisions and their wishes are also taken into account.



ETS impacts on replanting decisions

Since 2008 an additional issue to be considered when replanting, is whether any retirement of production land could result in Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) liabilities. If an area is not replanted and does not naturally regenerate back into species meeting the Kyoto definition of a 'forest', it will be considered 'deforested' under the ETS and can therefore incur significant carbon liabilities.

Any decision to retire land must balance up environmental and safety outcomes and landowner wishes, with the ETS adding another factor to these considerations.



Planting of Radiata Genetic Archive

This year, in addition to planting of commercial seedlings, Hancock Forest Management will be planting around 3 hectares of Radiata Pine sourced from seed collected in 1978 from native populations of Radiata pine (Monterey Pine) in Mexico.

Monterey pine occurs naturally over a very narrow range in three coastal areas in California and two islands off the coast of Mexico (Guadalupe and Cedros Islands). The seedlings come from genetic stock from seed collected from native populations on Guadalupe and Cedros Islands. Existing commercial Radiata plantations in NZ were developed from stock sourced from the California populations.

Planting of the genetic archive material in New Zealand is part of an initiative by the Radiata Pine Breeding Company to help maintain genetic diversity in the radiata pine stocks in NZ, should a biosecurity issue occur in the future threatening the commercial Radiata crop. It will also help preserve genetic material should anything happen to the native population in California and Mexico.



Commencement of Harvesting in Potikirua Forest

Potikirua Forest, managed by Hancock Forest Management, is located near Cape Runaway in the Eastern Bay of Plenty. The land on which the forest is growing is owned by the Potikirua Incorporation, who have occupied the area for generations. The forest is situated approximately 265 km from the Port of Tauranga and 200 km from the nearest processing facilities at Kawerau.

The forest was planted in 1981 by Caxton Paper Mills Ltd who entered into a lease agreement with the Potikirua Incorporation to establish approximately 960 ha of farmland into plantation forest, with a further 650 ha set aside as native reserves. In return for leasing their lands to the forest company, Potikirua Incorporation receive a share of the stumpage return at harvest time. Taumata Plantations Ltd is now the owner of the lease. Apart from looking for a better economic use for their land than farming, a major reason for the Potikirua Incorporation entering into the lease was to provide work opportunities for their people in the future.



Nu Callaghan, Tuihana Pook and John Waenga (minister who conducted the karakia).



Potikirua shareholder Pita Maanga after felling the first tree in Potikirua Forest

Potikirua Forest is now ready for harvest, with the first engineering operations starting earlier this year. This work will provide employment opportunities for local people, some of whom already work in other forests on the coast.

On the 4th of January 2011 a blessing ceremony was held in the forest to mark the commencement of operations with the symbolic felling of the first tree. Prior to the first tree being felled, a blessing (karakia) was conducted by John Waenga, a Potikirua kaumatua. The first tree was felled by Pita Maangi, who is a beneficiary of the forest.

Approximately fifty local people attended the ceremony, along with representatives from Hancock Forest Management and Eastern Bay of Plenty harvesting and engineering contractors. Following the ceremony in the forest, everyone was invited back to the Kauaetangohia Marae at Cape Runaway for a fantastic lunch featuring local crayfish.

FSC NZ National Standard

Hancock Forest Management is certified by Forest Stewardship Council, an international stakeholder owned system for the promoting responsible forest management. Forest managers must be audited annually for compliance with a standard international set of 'Principles and Criteria', developed through FSC processes, which apply to all FSC certified forests worldwide.

In addition to the standard Principles and Criteria, the intent of FSC is that each country or region develops a National Standard that provides further guidance on interpretation of the Principles and Criteria at a local level.

Local standards are developed through a democratic process, with 'chambers' set up to represent various interest groups. In NZ, the Standard Development Group included 4 chambers (social, economic, environmental and Maori).

In February of this year, after many years of discussion and negotiation, the Standard Development Group finally achieved agreement on the standard. The next phase is for the standard to be reviewed and approved by FSC International.

Feed back has recently been received from FSC and it is hoped that with some minor amendments the NZ Standard will be finalized for approval later this year. This will be a major milestone for all involved and the culmination of a process that commenced in 2000.



'Share the Road' Programme

In an earlier issue of the Hancock Forest Views we reported on the "Share the Road" programme; a road safety programme developed in HFM's Northern Area, but now extended to schools in the Central North Island.

Over the past few months, several primary schools have been visited in the Central North Island and more recently it has been kicked off in the Eastern Bay of Plenty with a visit to Te Kura Mana Maori o Whangaparaoa and Potaka Schools near Cape Runaway.

The aim of the project is to educate young children about road safety and how to safely share public roads with heavy vehicles. The programme includes an interactive presentation by HFM staff and truck drivers. This is followed up by a colouring competition reinforcing the road safety messages from the programme.

At each of the schools visited, one of Taumata Plantations Limited's distribution contractors also brings along a loaded logging truck for the children to experience at close hand. The children get the opportunity to climb all over and around the truck and get a better appreciation of the difficulties truck drivers have driving on our roads.

The children all receive a gift donated by the distribution contractors, with hi-viz caps being a very visible example. We have received many favourable comments from mo-

torists who pass the Upper Atiamuri School about how visible and safe the children are while waiting for the school bus.

This initiative is a great co-operative effort between Hancock Forest Management, our distribution contractors and the local schools, and HFM will be extending the programme to include all rural schools in the areas in which we operate.



Students at Upper Atiamuri School with their new Hi Viz caps donated by Rotorua Forest Haulage

Waikato River Trails Planting Day

We have previously reported on the Waikato River Trails, a community project to develop a 100 km long walking and cycle trail along the banks of the Waikato River from Lake Karapiro to the Atiamuri Dam. Hancock Forest Management has been fully supportive of the project, which passes along the edge of Kinleith Forest for a considerable distance bordering Lakes Arapuni, Waipapa and Whakamaru.

In June, Hancock Forest Management staff got up close and personal with the trail, with 22 staff spending the afternoon planting 630 native trees alongside the trail to enhance areas disturbed by the trail construction.

As can be seen by these photos, our staff thoroughly enjoyed doing their bit for the River Trails, and checking out some of the more impressive structures, including the 75 m long swing bridge at Mangarewa Gorge.





Management of Reserves in our Plantations

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) requires that certificate holders have in place systems to protect and manage all indigenous remnants within our plantation forests. To achieve this requirement, qualifying areas are mapped out as reserve and ecological assessments have been completed for all reserves over 0.1ha in area, to identify the values present and any threats to those values. Hancock Forest Management uses this information to guide our reserve restoration programmes. We currently have approximately 38,000 hectares of indigenous reserves identified for protection.

FSC also identifies particularly important reserves known as High Conservation Value (HCV) areas. These are reserves that have been identified as being of particularly high ecological or cultural value that meet the HCV criteria (e.g. nationally significant ecological values, areas that are critical to the cultural identity of a community or critical habitat for threatened species).

Hancock Forest Management staff have been through a process of assessing all reserves in the estate with input from various stakeholders and experts from Department of Conservation and Regional Councils. Through this process, 30 areas meeting the HCV criteria have been identified to date.

As required by FSC Hancock Forest Management then prepares management plans for these areas to ensure the values contributing to the area meeting the HCV criteria are protected as far as possible.

In situations where a reserve is in good condition, this may simply require the area to be protected from disturbance with little active management. In other areas, active restoration work has been undertaken, typically to control plant or animal pests.

Into the future HFM will continue to assess and update the list of HCV areas as new information comes to light and to regularly monitor the condition of each of the identified areas.



Part of 'Endean's Bush' in Kinleith Forest, a 780ha area of Rimu, Matai and Tawa forest identified as HCV— the largest example of remaining intact indigenous vegetation in the Ecological District with a diverse range of bird

Chrome Creek ultramafic zone



Wilding pine control in the Chrome Creek Ultramafic zone

One of the areas identified as HCV in our Tasman Bay Estate is the Chrome Creek Ultramafic Shrubland in Lee Forest. The ultramafic zone that extends through the Richmond Range has unusually infertile soils with low levels of some minerals (e.g. potassium), and high concentrations of magnesium, iron and nickel. These conditions make it difficult for most plants to grow, resulting in unique plant communities. The Chrome Creek reserve is a 98ha manuka shrubland, containing plants such as red hills snow tussock (*Chionochloa defracta*) only found in this area of New Zealand.

The ecological assessment of the area identified wilding pines to be the key management issue in the reserve. As part of our management plan for the area, a forestry crew spent a week in December, as the start of an ongoing project, to clear wilding pines to restore the area to its natural state.