Newsletter for July 2005

View from the Treetops

I have recently been involved in trying to reconcile my interpretation of a resource consent with the views of other people. The process involved the Mayor setting up a meeting with Tasman Forest Management (TFM), other Councillors, staff from the MDC and Peter Beech from the Guardians of the Sounds. The meeting was called due to concerns that TFM had altered the harvest plan in a way that would cause damage to the environment. The upshot appears to be that not everyone sees what we do in resource consents and the District Plan. The process started in a stressful way for all participants and I guess we were all expecting some sort of melee in the council chambers with a resulting winner and a loser. I was reasonably keen not to be the loser as I was worried about my client's interest and the work prospects for the logging contractor. As the meeting developed I had to admit that there would not be a good outcome even if we won the day with my rights to do what I want where I want. The Guardians are sincere in their beliefs that we are not doing the best we can as an industry to sustainably manage our sites. They have reasonable grounds to this view given a couple of notorious poor jobs done previously in the Marlborough Sounds. However as the Council staff said, in this case we were inside the terms of our consent and of the District Plan in a technical sense. By the end of the meeting though I had come to think that being technically correct but marginally so would not be a course that we could hope to follow as a business. And so I agreed to raise the possibility of an accord for logging standards with our members. Accords are not a golden bullet to resolve all issues but are the beginning of the process of drawing the edges of the debate towards the center, in order to improve relationships (and outcomes).

There is more to this conflict between greenies and loggers than we first imagine. We may think we will win, the greenies will give or go away or somehow we can just forget them. This is not going to happen though. Greenies are

not people living in a yurt, drinking organic yoghurt and riding a wooden bicycle. They are often regular people with jobs and families who may not have seen some of the good things that we can do in the forest.

Something that bemuses me is that I consider myself to be an active conservationist. I plant trees, I care about the environment, I swim in the sea and walk in the forest. Yet many people exclude me and all in our industry from having care for our environment because of our working lives.

Our products are wood, and secondarily forest environments. These are good things. Why then are we the bad guys? I suggest we take a hard look at what people think of our industry with a view to setting things straight. The green movement should be our ally, we are all against pollution and waste. Our competition peddle steel, brought from China, in ships powered by fossil fuels, and smelted with fossil fuels shipped to China from here and elsewhere. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to realize that building from local trees is better in so many ways than steel. And don't get me started on plastic.
So let's look at what we can do to mend fences, and get on with business. Who knows we may even sell them some of our fine wood. And lastly if you don't use wood yourself then who are we going to hope to sell wood products to? Buy some wood today! (Maybe some wool too, my last wool cheque was a joke!)
Bert Hughes

Bert Hughes

Marlborough Rural Environment Awards

The 2005 Forestry Category and Supreme Award winners were Rob and Anneke Shuckard, Taipare, French Pass Road.

Of the three judges involved, I was the only one who had visited Taipare previously. My first visit to Taipare was in 1992 and was followed by a number of visits over the next few years, then a lapse of 10 - 11 years until I visited with the two other judges, Anna and Julian, earlier this year. What a change had taken place in the landscape of Taipare in the interim years. Rob and Anneke's planning and vision has already acheived a remarkable transformation, and it is still evolving.

First impressions in 1992 from a commercial forestry perspective were that some areas of Taipare were "tiger country" - steep slopes, areas of low nutrient soils, combined with relatively heavy regrowth of weeds, due in part to past land use and weathering of exposed soils. Right from the early days of purchasing Taipare in 1989 Rob and Anneke were interested in achieving a balance of conservation and commercial uses for their property and were prepared to consult with a wide range of information sources. They developed a vision for their property, of a 300 year plus regime.

The situation now in 2005 is that some 75% of the property has been protected to encourage natural regeneration of indigenous species with enrichment plantings of locally sourced native species from seed collected from remnant pockets of native. These have been propagated in their own nursery and Rob and Anneke's efforts have resulted in raising and planting 20 - 30,000 native seedlings per annum.

The 25% of the property planted in commercial forest, mainly Pinus radiata plus other minor species such as Cu. Macrocarpa have been planted on generally more fertile soil types and more gentle slopes. Although commercial species occupy only 25% of this property this amounts to some 300 ha and provides economies of scale for future harvesting and marketing opportunities. Although harvesting is still many years away Rob and Anneke have given careful consideration to future roading and harvesting operations to minimise the effects on the environment. Early measures such as native buffer zones are being encouraged to help protect downstream water values. More detailed planning for harvesting is intended at least 5 years in advance

Ron and Anneke are still very interested in planting other species but are cautious after having experienced canker and poor form in their plantings of macrocarpa. Their are very few micro-sites of sufficient soil quality and shelter from salt laden winds to sustain viable alternative species.

Rob, a biologist by profession, is also a very keen ornithologist who is encouraging the increase of birdlife on their property through a programme of controlling predators and habitat enhancement. During the recent field day to Taipare Rob made the interesting observation that there were more birds present in his exotic forest prior to canopy closure than in remnant native forest

Taipare's commercial and native regenerating forests appear to have reached a sensible balance for each forest type - commercial species growing on more viable, environmentally acceptable sites, with the balance of the property being restored to native cover for the benefit of future generations.

John MacKenzie

Visit to the Nelson Pine Industries Plant

It was a cool but sunny afternoon for the visit to the Nelson Pine Industries plant at Richmond, Nelson on the 3rd June 2005.

We had a great turn out of members for this tour through the plant that has produced MDF sine 1986 and LVL from year 2002 (which is a form of ply). This plant has cost a total of $305 million to develop and is the biggest producer of MDF in the world.

All of there heating requirements come from using there waste products from burners to create the heat for cooking and curing the finished products. They have saved 80 per cent of the engany costs by using the waste produces to produce they heat requirements.

The plant consumes 60 truck and trailer loads a day of logs are delivered five days a week.
Logs are only allowed to be delivered between the hours of 8am and 5pm five days a week.

The LVL plant runs 24 hours a day and seven days a week producing 70,000 cubic metres per year with 90 percent being exported.

The logs are put through a mechanical debarker and then cut to 2.4M lengths before being put into concrete bunkers and covered over with concrete lids to be cooked. This makes the logs easier to peel the veneers from. The veneers are graded and dried, then to the process of making the LVL sheets up to 60mm thick. The process starts with two layers of veneer and then keeps adding layers of veneer further down the line up to the thickness that they need with layer joints being staggered. Each layer is glued as the layers are built up and then it goes through a series of pressing rollers, then cut off to the required lengths. The grain of the veneers are all laid the same way which gives this product the high strength needed for beams, planks etc.

The difference between LVL and Ply is that with ply the grain of the veneers layers are laid at right angles to each other.

The MDF Plant runs 24 hours a day and seven days a week producing 400,000 cubic metres per year with 80 percent being exported.

The logs start by being debarked in a drum debarker, with the rolling of logs against each other taking the bark off each other. This process does not use water which has cut down on water cost, costs of treatment and the disposal of waste water.

The logs are then put though a chipper that operates five days a week eight hours a day producing enough chip for the MDF plant. They use a bulldozer to push the chip into an elevator to be taken on to be washed, then cooked. The chip is cook for a longer time than paper chip which makes the product darker and more pliable. The cooked chip is then pulverized into little fibers then glue is added. The glued fibres are blown up into a silo and then these fibers drop out of the air flow, then starts the process of producing the MDF sheets (these fibers look like a bundle of fluff).

The MDF sheets start off at about 450mm thick and then pressed down to about 50mm thick through a series of rollers, then go through a final set of rollers inside a cooking unit that binds these fibers together and this lot comes out at a approx 12mm thick. This process produces a continuous board which is cut into large sheets and the individual sheets are put into a cooling wheel

rack to cool them, to prevent over cooking, which is critical to the strength of the board.
These sheets go on to be sanded and cut into the required sizes.

The plant of Nelson Pine Industries is a great asset to Nelson and Marlborough it is creating added value and demand for our trees.

Kevin Parkes

Obituary of the Founding Member of the Association – Ross Smith Macarthur

Ross Smith Macarthur, who died this month aged 82, was the father of forestry in Marlborough.

At a memorial service at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church Ross was remembered by friends and colleagues as a visionary and a man ahead of his time.

In 1971 he became a founding member of the Marlborough Forest Owners' Association and remained on the committee until 1992. In 1995 he was made an honorary member.

Ross worked with a number of professional organisations involved with regional planning, forestry, conservation and the environment both at the National and Local scene.

Born in Wellington in 1923, he was educated at Scots College, Victoria University, Lincoln College and finally Oxford University where he graduated with an Honours Degree in Forestry in 1948.

During the war years he served as a pilot and navigator with the New Zealand Air Force, and after the war, as a general reserve until 1957.

From 1948 he worked for the New Zealand Forest Service in Canterbury at the Forest Research Institute.

From 1953 to 1957, he worked as a soil conservator and land classifier with the Southland Catchment Board.

He then moved to Blenheim, taking up the position of chief conservator of the newly formed Marlborough Catchment Board, a position he held until he retired in 1985.

During this time he and his able team initiated the first high country run plan on Rainbow Station.

He also commenced whole catchment approaches to land management which included Wairau Valley flood protection, and the restoration of the severely eroded Wither Hills.

He was an integral part of the design, planning and execution of erosion control and conservation projects over a wide range of hill country farms and catchments in Marlborough.

Another key initiative of the time was the introduction of fire processes to reduce burning of the landscape on the Northbank hills of the Wairau.

The Northbank catchment control scheme led to a change of land use in the area to forestry.

As a consequence of that development the New Zealand Forest Service, private land owners and the Marlborough regional forestry acquired land to develop into forest, which has brought significant economic benefits to Marlborough.

Ross was concerned about logging and steep land and investigated the possibility of skyline logging to remove mature trees from steep hills, causing minimal damage to soil, and travelled extensively to America, Canada and Europe to learn from their advanced extraction methods.

Ross and former mayor Sid Harling were the driving forces behind the formation of the Marlborough Forestry Corporation, which was formed with various local authorities and is now the Marlborough Regional Forest owned jointly by the Marlborough and Kaikoura District Councils.

Ross managed the organisation and was its chief executive officer until his retirement.

Ross was a member of the Nelson Lakes National Park for 12 years and was involved in the building of the Rotoiti Lodge for school use. He also supported the building of the Lake Chapel.

Organic crop growing interested him and he was an honorary life member of the New Zealand Soil Conservators Association as well as being president from 1965 to 1966

In recognition of Ross's outstanding service in the Marlborough district, the Blenheim Rotary Club awarded him the Paul Harris award.

Ross died peacefully on June 9, and is survived by his wife Sylvia and sons Ian and Peter.

Parts extracted from The Marlborough Express

ROUNDWOOD REMOVALS: Nelson/Marlborough 1 January – 31 March 05

March 05 Quarter

	Nelson (m^3)	Marlborough (m^3)	Total (m^3)	%
Sawlogs	302,200	120,600	422,800	81%
Chiplogs, posts, poles	84,500	15,900	100,400	19%
Total	**386,700**	**136,500**	**523,200**	**100%**

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Regional Survey, 2005

The table below compares the March 04 quarter with the March 05 quarter.

	Nelson (m^3)	Marlborough (m^3)	Total (m^3)
March quarter 2004	340,400	160,700	501,100
March quarter 2005	386,700	136,500	523,200
Difference	**+ 14%**	**- 15%**	**+ 4%**

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Regional Survey,2004-05

The data below is based on the last four quarters data.

Year Ending 31 March 2005

	Nelson (m^3)	Marlborough (m^3)	Total (m^3)	%
Export Sawlogs	395,600	321,900	717,500	35
Domestic Sawlogs	732,450	174,750	907,200	44
Total Sawlogs	1,128,050	496,650	1,624,700	79
Export Chiplogs, posts, poles	59,900	16,400	76,300	4
Domestic Chiplogs, posts, poles	298,000	60,000	358,000	17
Total Chiplogs, posts, poles	357,900	76,400	434,300	21

Total	**1,485,950**	**573,050**	**2,059,000**	**100**

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Regional Survey, 2005

A comparison of the March 2004 year with the March 2005 year is provided below.

	Nelson (m^3)	Marlborough (m^3)	Total (m^3)
Year ending 31 March 2004	1,548,700	634,300	2,183,000
Year ending 31 March 2005	1,485,950	573,050	2,059,000
Difference	**- 4%**	**- 10%**	**- 6%**

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Regional Survey, 2004-05

Qtr to 31 March 05	Total Pruned Volume	% of total harvest
Nelson/Marlborough	37,200	7%

	Harvest from forest >1000 ha	% of total harvest
Nelson/Marlborough	433,500	83%

I hope you find the summary of these roundwood removals interesting and informative.

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this collated information from the forest industry, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry accepts no liability for any error or omission.

Chas Perry
Seniour Policy Analyst
NELSON