

Newsletter for September 2006

View from the Treetops

Bleating and hypocrisy seems to have become our national sport. Who wants anything new to happen?

Everyone seems to be against power generation but no one will turn off the multitude of gadgets in their house. They hammer the pig farms smell, but who boycotts bacon. We banned sustainable forestry in Westland and then simply replaced managed Rimu and Beech with wood pillaged from overseas rainforest destruction.

We have to understand that our actions spread wider than we can see. Our footprint extends to wherever our resources come from. In NZ's case this includes Middle East fossil fuel, rainforest timbers, chicken battery farms and Chinese manufactured goods.

We need to celebrate our ability to produce sustainable quality timber from our back country not pillory foresters with vexatious bullshit.

We have been hearing a lot of noise lately about the Port Underwood road. That's more of the same tired nimby whining that's been offending logic for some time now. I raise this because it's an issue that faces all of us in some way. When you buy property with the intention of developing it and producing something from the land you expect your property rights to remain in place over time. What we are facing is the relentless creeping theft of our rights at the expense of those at the town end of the road. They have no intention of sharing or understanding the history of the area. What annoys me particularly is the tone of the attacks on us, the lack of logic, and emotive blackmail tactics being used. It's not just the Port road; other county roads are in the firing line if we back off on this one.

Let's examine the arguments;

Hazards of log trucks on narrow roads,
Will someone show me a log truck that doesn't travel on a narrow road at some point of the

journey! There has not been a truck accident on that road, and meanwhile we see carnage on wider straighter roads. Road hazard is based on speed. The trucks are travelling so slow that they can pull up well before hitting anything.

Hazards of traffic past schools,
Most schools are on main roads, Havelock, Renwick and Rai Valley for example. I don't hear moves to ban traffic in Renwick.

Traffic through town;
Look at the traffic volumes heading for the ferry terminal, all passing schools and houses, what's the difference? (I hope it has nothing to do with the Waikawa glitterati having more influence than the low rent terminal side of town)

Don't drive at night, its annoying the locals.
Separating truck traffic from kids on bikes, and Mums travelling to shops would be the single safest thing available. You won't see many granny cars and dog walkers after dark. Also the road congestion as a whole would be reduced.

Why not widen the road?
Because people have built private structures on the road reserve. That is to say the public road can be used for private carports and driveways but not vehicles.

So why don't we barge it all?
Barging works well from the Tory channel side which has less roading in place and is close by sea to Picton. Travelling direct from Port Underwood to Picton by barge means going outside into Cook Strait and round the heads to Picton. It's a lot more difficult and expensive. Trucking to the Tory channel side means yet more trucks, handling and costs. Its more expensive than trucking directly to Picton currently. There would need to be subsidies to cover this if we are to give up rights to our public roads.

The poor old forest owner who pays for everything could have his return diminished to a pittance. How is that fair? Forest owners took a risk, spent time, labour and capital, nurtured the land, for what? So people who live in an area for a few months can pretend to be offended by long term, productive industry while really defending property price. That's not fair or reasonable. We hear the argument that extra costs are just bad luck, maybe that poor decisions have led to planting these forests, that we should just miss out on our investment. The fact is that when the forests were planted there was a legal road available and today there still is. If society wants those costs to fall on current landowners then society must compensate for the loss of existing rights. That is a principal which goes with private property rights. Those access rights legally exist and can't be wished away by spurious bylaws.

This appears to be an attempt by some citizens to rezone their flash houses and keep out the riff raff. If we don't stand up to this pretty soon we will have no pig farms, no electricity generation, in fact no industry of any kind. And before I get songs of praise for tourism let me ask how loggers would go retraining in icecream rolling or house maid jobs? Tourism is in the most part low paid and semiskilled work, and its not for everyone. I worked for overseas for several years in international hotels and major travel firms and I left it because I wanted to do an honest day's work in the sun without tourists talking to me like a servant.

Some of us respect property rights and the law, making something sustainable from the land, and that should be universal.

Bert Hughes

Wilding Pines

The spread of wilding pines and Douglas fir into Marlborough hill country and the Sounds has long been an issue and in many places the problem is getting more widespread.

The Proposed Regional Pest Management Strategy requires, amongst other things, land owners to destroy all Contorta pine trees on their land before the trees develop seeding cones.

Although not an issue for most of our members, those in south Marlborough and the Sounds may incur some negative reaction to potential spread of pines and Douglas fir from plantations. Ensis (formerly Forest Research Institute) is carrying out a project to:

- Improve the assessment of wilding conifer spread risk and prioritise control operations.
- Determine the most appropriate and cost-effective techniques for removing wildings and killing standing conifers.
- Investigate vegetation successions after wilding invasion and control.

If any members wish to find out more about this issue please contact Nick Ledgard at Ensis, P O Box 29237, Fendalton, ChCh or phone him on 03 364 2949.

Murray Turbitt

Eucalypt Trials

There has been progress over the last 3 years by locally based Vineyard Timbers Ltd to develop a naturally durable eucalypt post for the vineyard industry.

The total area of vineyards in Marlborough is now over 17,000 hectares and is still expanding. With there being a minimum of 550 posts per hectare this is a total of over 9 million posts already in the region. The average life of a vineyard post is 20 years with replacement generally due to post breakage rather than failure from loss of durability.

The project is focussed on two key areas.

- The first of these is the selection and trial of suitable eucalypt species that can produce ground durable timbers. A wide selection of species have been planted into formal trials at Marlborough Regional Forests with the support of MDC, Proseed NZ Ltd and Ensis (formerly Forest Research). There have also been many species planted informally at sites in the Sounds, the Wairau Valley including Council river reserve land, Fairhall/Hawkesbury as well as Kekerengu.

At all sites, there has generally been good survival of most species with a range of growth rates between species and sites. The picture emerging from these trials of the need to match species to the right sites in order to get high survival and optimal growth rates.

The most promising species include *E. bosistoana* (class 1 durability), *E. globoidea* and *E. macrorhyncha* (both class 2 durability). Other species with potential include *E. quadrangulata* (class 1/2 durability) and *E. microcarpa* (class 1 durability), while *E. saligna* (class 2/3 durability) is another option.

- The second part to the project has been to seek the support of the NZFFA, Eucalypt Action Group and Ensis to conduct some

durability testing of the wood properties of NZ plantation grown eucalypt.

This research work is being planned in conjunction with CSIRO in Australia as they have a long history of research knowledge on wood durability.

Members wanting more information about the project can contact Paul Millen 03 574 1001 or 021 662 147. E mail paul@vineyardtimbers.co.nz

Cheers

Paul Millen

New MAF Forestry Publication – Nelson / Marlborough

Small forest growers will have a major impact on future wood availability in the Nelson/Marlborough region, creating both opportunities and challenges, reports the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF).

The Nelson/Marlborough Forest Industry and Wood Availability Forecasts report was released on September 20. It is the first in a national series of new forecasts for local industries.

The Nelson/Marlborough region had the potential to increase the annual forestry harvest over the next 20 years from 2.3 million cubic metres in 2005, to some 3.2 to 3.5 million cubic metres, MAF Policy Regional Team Leader Chas Perry said.

To make the forecasts easier to understand more regional context and descriptive information (eg. wood processing capacity, forest ownership structure, and infrastructure) has been presented along with comments on the opportunities and constraints facing the region's forest industry.

Future Marlborough Harvest

The forecasts indicate that over the next 10 years the harvest in Marlborough has the potential to increase from 646 000 cubic metres in 2005 to between 900 000 and one million cubic metres. The size of the increase will depend on the harvesting decisions of a large number of small-scale forest growers in the region.

Five different scenarios for Wood Availability Forecasts are presented in the report. An example of one scenario for Marlborough is shown in the figure below.

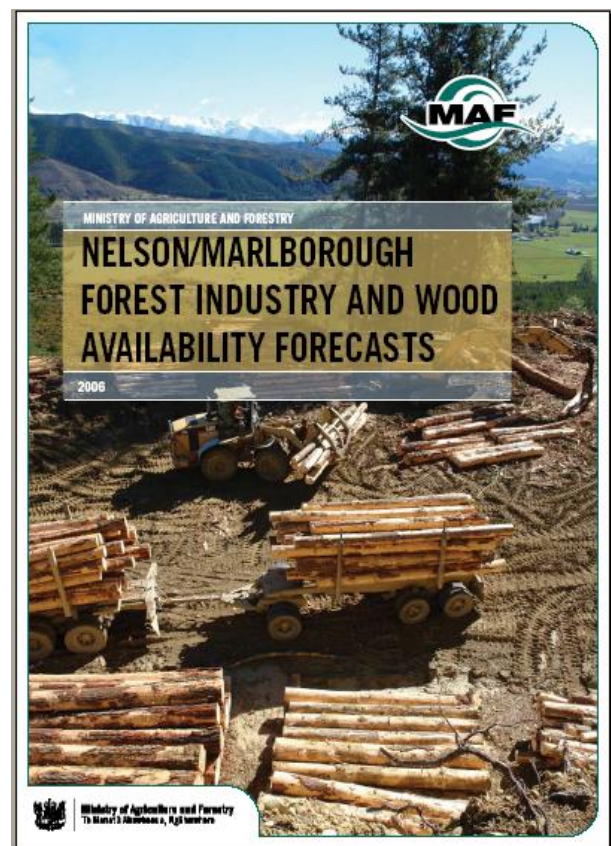
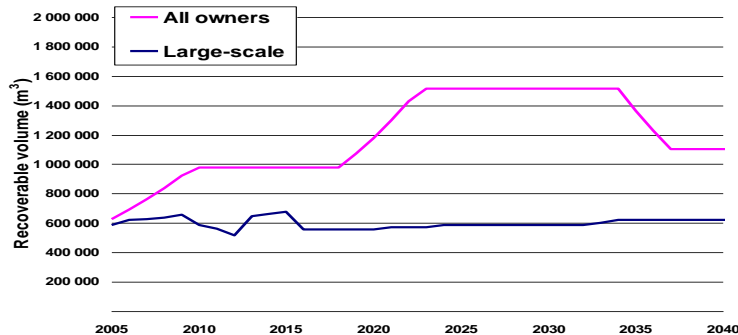


Fig 4.24 Marlborough Radiata Pine Availability Under Scenario 4



Opportunities and Constraints

The report highlights several challenges for the local forest industry.

Mr Perry said the Resource Management Act had proved to be a “costly and uncertain process” that had encouraged forest companies to expand existing plants rather than build new facilities. Engagement by the industry in the 10-year reviews of the councils’ Resource Management Plans would be very important, he said.

Other challenges faced by the industry included the short-term uncertainty around the future

ownership of the Weyerhaeuser Joint Venture forests and sawmill, and the potential sale of Nelson’s Carter Holt Harvey forests. These two companies own 50 percent of the forestry resource in the Nelson/Marlborough region and also have significant sawmilling capability. The MAF report warns that sales may result in the fragmentation of the industry, which could “weaken the leadership and profile of the forest industry at a local level”.

A future shortage of skilled labour and the lack of a collective body in Nelson to promote the local industry were also identified as potential constraints for the local industry.

On the upside, Mr Perry said the Nelson/Marlborough forest industry had many attributes that could help it develop in the future.

“The region has a mature forest industry with a well-managed forest estate. It also has a good mix of wood processing plants including sawmills, a laminated veneer lumber plant, a world-scale medium density fibreboard plant, and the largest post and pole processing plant in New Zealand.”

He said the industry had been very innovative in the past, giving the examples of GoldenEdge Liteboard, which is 20 percent lighter than regular MDF, and the setting up of Zindia to export logs from Marlborough direct to Indian sawmillers.

The report can be downloaded from www.maf.govt.nz, or you can request printed copies from policy.publications@maf.govt.nz or from sheryl.harding@maf.govt.nz

Chas Perry, MAF Policy

Field Excursion to Marlborough Regional Forestry Forests & AGM

Members and friends are invited to attend the Association’s Annual General Meeting on 14th October.

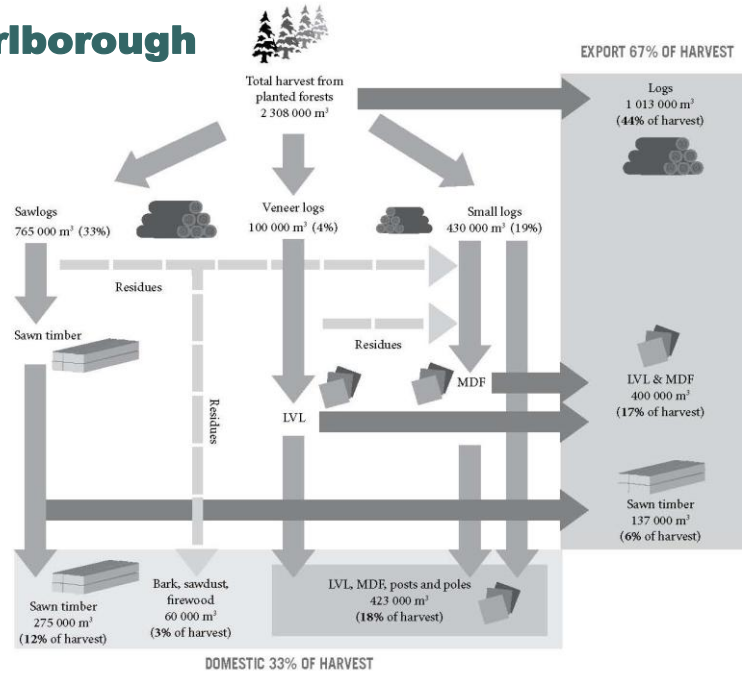
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Ron Sutherland

Do you know where all the wood goes in Nelson / Marlborough?

In Nelson/Marlborough

**Where
Does
All
The
Wood
Go?**



Note
The estimated harvest is derived from export data and forest processing data in Nelson and Marlborough. It does not include logs harvested in Nelson or Marlborough and processed on the West Coast, which are estimated to be about 50 000 cubic metres.

Reproduced from: *Nelson/Marlborough Forest Industry and Wood Availability Forecasts 2006.*