

Water Supply, Parks & Forests Division Update for period ending 31 August 2007

Reserve Forests and Conservation Forestry (Tom Ward)

Reserve Forests

1. Tauanui Logging

Despite the wharves no longer accepting export logs, buyers were found for the export quality logs generated from the area currently being worked by the logging contractor and on the skids during July.

The total volume produced for July was 1454 tonnes of which 205 tonnes (14%) was export quality material. These logs are characterised by large branches and large diameter logs which generally do not meet the domestic sawlog specifications required by local sawmills to produce framing grade sawn timber.

The existing logging crew has moved to the north side of the Tauanui River where they have commenced clearing a new roadline.

A hauler crew from the South Island, with a good reputation for work in environmentally sensitive areas, has inspected the forest. Subject to satisfactory contractual arrangements they may move to the North Island while they have no work available in the Marlborough area.

Options for an appropriate form of crossing of the Tauanui River continue to be explored.

2. Silviculture

One crew has done a small area (3.5 hectares) of pruning and 1.7 hectares of thinning in Hiwinui as a fill in between planting and other winter work.

3. Forest Health

The field work for our annual Forest Health Inspection Report had been undertaken by Target Pest which went into receivership in mid May 2007. The report was completed by SPS Biosecurity, a newly formed company co-owned by the Forest Health Inspector who had carried out the field work "as a goodwill gesture to GWRC for its support of the author over the past two decades".

No new pests or diseases were found during the inspection.

The pests and diseases that were found are common Forest Health results and in every case the recommendation was no action required.

4. Rough Hill Fence

There has been no further progress on this matter due to winter conditions and since Mr Franks has been asked to obtain quotes to substantiate his information that there was no difference in cost between a conventional fence and a deer fence on this line.

Our quotes for materials alone showed a 50% higher cost for deer fencing and ongoing maintenance costs are anticipated to be higher.

5. Rural Fire

The on going drier than usual underlying conditions were highlighted when on the weekend of 11th & 12th August, as a result of extreme winds, a fire flared up in a private forest and escaped to burn 15 hectares of Juken Nissho Forest at Whareama.

The practice of burning out birds nests (accumulations of logging slash on logging skid sites) has mostly been abandoned due to environmental considerations and the risk of flare up months after burning. In this case the Forest Manager had under-estimated the risks associated with this procedure and was caught out as a result.