

Water Supply, Parks & Forests Division Update for period ending 8 June 2007

Reserve Forests

Tauanui Logging

Logging has progressed steadily as a result of the unseasonably dry conditions.

This has allowed us to capitalise on the good returns from export logs (until the last week in May when the wharves were closed because of log stockpiles), and clear some localised low stocked areas of trees with large branches that did not meet the domestic sawlog specification. When export is limited, these logs are downgraded to oversize pulp which gives a negative return after logging and cartage costs or to firewood.

During April, 1,105 tonnes were produced (this figure was not available at time of writing the last report).

For May, 1,622 tonnes were produced.

The crew has moved back into an area of predominantly sawlogs and, as long as the conditions remain reasonably dry, should produce a similar volume for June.

Access roads have handled the additional traffic well with very limited maintenance required. One logging truck driver was reminded that access was restricted to daylight hours to limit the disturbance to neighbours. Despite the ongoing dusty conditions, there have been no complaints from the Whakatotomo Road residents.

Silviculture

8.5 hectares of thinning were completed in Hiwinui. This work had been on hold because of extreme fire danger and prohibition of chainsaw thinning throughout the Wairarapa. High priority silviculture has been completed for the year. Any additional silviculture due to stands reaching trigger height will be dependant on contractor availability.

Planting

Replanting of harvested areas will be delayed until ground conditions are considerably wetter. The small area ready for replanting will be considered at the end of July or early August.

Rural Fire

Since the lifting of the restricted fire season in early May there have been numerous burn off escapes and this week a spate of wild fires. The most significant of these was a fire at JNL forest on Flatpoint Road attributed to power line arcing in extreme winds.

Fuel is extremely dry, with risks often being underestimated by those lighting fires. As a result there have been discussions about re imposing a restricted fire season (permit required).

Stoney Creek Wind Farm Proposal

Two further prospective tenderers inspected the proposed site.

Rough Hill Fence

The Rough Hill Fence line has finally been cleared. Mr Franks (and his staff) acknowledged that the agreed line was much steeper in places than they anticipated.

The line has been accurately measured and materials re estimated. The costs will include the use of a helicopter to fly materials in to the steeper parts of the line as it is impractical to lay them by hand.

We have requested an onsite meeting with Mr Franks, and while we have pointed out that time is running out we have not yet had a response.