



Far North Branch NZ Farm Forestry Assn.
July 2013 Newsletter

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**‘Out of the Wood Work’
Far North Branch**

2013 MID-WINTER DINNER

Taipa Bay Resort

Friday August 2nd

From 6pm in the bar

Dinner 7pm in the Kupe Room

Buffet Meal \$30.50pp

Guest presentation between mains and dessert!

Bring a friend

RSVP by July 26th to:

Richard 408 4241 rrenwick@xtra.co.nz

Or Tony 407 7776 tony18er@xtra.co.nz

REPORT: FIELD DAY IN WAITANGI 29th June

The first stop was by Mt. Bledisloe, which is near Haruru falls. There is a planting of 1936 Kauri here, which makes it one of the first kauri plantations in New Zealand. From Mt Bledisloe the views were spectacular, a beautiful clear winters day was ideal for a farm forestry field day to Waitangi forest. Just a shame more of our membership weren't in attendance. From Mt Bledisloe the wetlands between each landform were very obvious. These occupy a large part of the forest and are protected, with no harvesting undertaken into



The view from Mt Te Puke

the wetlands. From this viewpoint our host John Beachman from DOC described the distinct landholdings within Waitangi forest. Some 2000 hectares of Waitangi Forest are under crown lease, managed by Northland Forest Managers, while 500 hectares is the Endowment Forest, administered by DOC. This land has its own legislation and is not aligned with other forest or national policies. It is being managed as a scenic backdrop to Waitangi. A further 500 hectares surrounding the treaty grounds is being managed by the Waitangi Trust, but this is not all in forest.

There are two predominant types of soil in the Waitangi forest, greywacke and recent volcanic. The volcanic is very fertile while the greywacke is impoverished. Much of the forest is in its 3rd rotation. There is a significant fire risk here during the summer.

The changing of the guard – Catherine hands over the treasury to Tony. Many thanks Catherine for many years service!



Te Puke is the most recent volcano in Northland and we had lunch here and admired the crater.

Much of Waitangi is in radiata pine, but there is a fairly large area of lusitanica which is in its second rotation. The Southern pine, once a significant area of this forest, has mostly gone but there are still small pockets of *Pinus taeda* and *P. elliotii*. We had a look at one small stand of 1950's *P. taeda* and saw specimens with their feet under water. This is remarkable for a pine and the species could perhaps be useful for wetter areas not suitable for radiata.

We saw a small area of *Eucalyptus globoidea* (white stringybark), which was planted in 1951. This species is durable and makes excellent posts, decking or hard, honey-coloured flooring. These small stands of old trees may not be harvested but provide excellent kiwi habitat. Kiwis are located and transmitters before logging and are tracked during the logging operations. Logging contractors have responded well to kiwi preservation methods and have kiwi clauses in their harvesting procedures.

We stopped at a stand of radiata planted in 1985 which is due for logging in 2015. These trees have done well on the volcanic soil, were ultra-high pruned and have been held at a fairly high stocking. There have been endless debates about whether to thin, but because the block was so exposed to the east the stocking was kept high. This looks to have been the right decision. Ian Page and Peter Bullen have been described as “licking their lips” over this stand, which is expected to provide a good return.

Next stop was the sewerage works which have been running 35 years. They looked a bit neglected, with two ponds preceded by settling “sludge” traps. A nice simple system that

seems to work well if maintained. There were questions about the actual maintenance though...



Brian beside a stringybark and a Waitangi bayou complete with southern pines

From there we went to a 12 hectare stand of blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*) that Maurice Williamson had planted around 1985. The land was verging on swampy so trenches were dug with a digger and mounds were made using the soil from the trenches. This system is innovative and clearly works. There were not many casualties and the trees grew. The pruning wasn't very high but there is plenty of volume of pruned buttlogs. Stocking has remained a bit high in places and growth has not been spectacular, but overall a productive stand. Brian Sims commented that stockings should be a minimum of 8-9 m between trees for good sized buttlogs.

Our last stop was to look at a rare fern called *Todea barbara*, which is thriving under the canopy of some very large old radiata that have not been harvested in order to preserve the fern.

This was definitely one of the most interesting farm forestry field days that I've been to, there were so many different things to see. A thoroughly enjoyable day, many thanks to Maurice Williamson for organising the field day and John Beachman for hosting it.

Dean Satchell
