



## FORESTRY NEWSLETTER 2019/20

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2019/20 year saw harvest of a further 32 ha of mature trees in Waitane, replant of the previous year's harvest and continuation of the high quality sawlog regimes across all forests.

COVID 19 disruptions to markets were being felt by the end of the period, with NZ entering stage 4 lockdown at the end of March.

### **Management Objectives**

The primary objective for Craigpine Forests is to produce high quality pruned radiata sawlogs. Detail on how this is achieved is published in the Forestry section of Craigpine's website, [www.craigpine.co.nz](http://www.craigpine.co.nz). The Forestry section also includes detail of forest resources, preferred silviculture regime, harvest policy, forest monitoring, environmental safety and protection of rare, endangered and threatened species.

### **Activity**

We harvested a further 32 ha of mature forest in Waitane early in winter 2019. This harvest was well managed with very little soil disturbance and good protection of waterways and riparian vegetation. We had a couple of small, low quality indigenous areas in one of the harvest area, and these have been carefully protected. The nearby seed resource of the forest in the large Dunsdale Reserve will eventually raise the quality of these areas, though it may take a few lifetimes.

51 hectares of land in Waitane forest was planted in winter 2019. Stock and stocking remained as previous years. Survival has been exceptional across these plantings.

An area of some 60 ha along the southern boundary of Waitane forest was sprayed for gorse. The tree crop was being smothered by the very dense gorse crop, and seedling death was being seen. The spray was

very successful. We left a strip un-sprayed as an unscientific control area to observe the effect of the spray, and improvements to tree growth from the spraying were visible within a few months.

Pruning and thinning operations continued in Rugged Hills, Monavae and Pinnacle Pine forests. Maintenance activity in all forests was focused on road and track upkeep, weed control, fencing and security.

The National Environmental Standard for Plantation Forestry is proving a good framework to work within. The clarity of having all the rules in one place has simplified the assessment of operations. No resource consents were required during 2019/20, with just a small operational load other than pruning and thinning.

### **Rural Women**

Further harvest of wind damage area was needed during 2019. The damaged stand had a wind exposed face along a ridgeline and eventually the entire stand was harvested down to the gully bottom. This has markedly reduced further wind incursion.

Pruning and thinning programs continued as due.

A digger caught fire in the forest late at night toward the end of 2019. Fortunately it was on a skid well clear of slash and the fire was controlled before it could spread.

### **Log Markets**

Log markets have been on a wild ride over the course of 2019-20. After peaking at near record prices in March 2019, they dropped by over a quarter during winter. The following spring saw firming prices, only to be devastated in February 2020 as China locked down due to COVID. Stability for a while would be a good thing!

### **Health and Safety**

Craigpine has committed to Safetree certification and it will become mandatory for all crews working in Craigpine forests to be Safetree certified. There is an introductory period to allow crews to achieve certification.

Just one minor incident was recorded in the forests over the period, a cut hand on the harvest site.

We had significant poacher troubles in the estate during 2019. 6 names were given to police in just one week. A helicopter operation was halted for half an hour in one incident, due to a poacher on the operational area during broad daylight.

### **Environmental**

There were two Forestry Stewardship Council audits of Craigpine forestry operations in 2019 – FSC Forestry Management assessment in November and FSC Chain of Custody in August. Certification was confirmed with a few minor corrective actions noted and completed.

Pest control operations continued and intensified during 2019. Predator control work has been planned and started in one HCVF area with more to be added next year. Deer and pig control has been active. The deer had a good year due to lockdown. Thrashing of young trees was intense in some areas. In one forest pigs may be a problem for some time. Harvest operations in an adjacent forest area are creating refugees who are flooding across the border into the Craigpine estate. Perhaps a border wall might be the solution...

Stream monitoring was disrupted by COVID and is now delayed to summer/autumn 2020.

Don Frengley  
Forestry Manager