

Informal notes on inaugural Hurunui Biodiversity Group field day, 19 March 2018

Venue: Dave and Treen Nicholls, Davaar farm, Greta Valley

Stop 1: Pinus radiata plantation,

David Janett (FML) outlined eligibility for carbon forestry programmes, e.g.,

- no forest tree cover pre-1990, management options (planted, natural regeneration),
- planting type – indigenous mix, manuka/kanuka, indigenous regeneration, exotic
- area criteria, \$ rate/ha, top-up options
- annual cash flow model for P. radiata

Stop 2: naturally regenerated tall Kanuka stand (remnant)

Miles Giller (QE II) and Jamie McFadden (Hurunui Native Plants)

- Outlined QE II Trust strategy – emphasis on (subsidised) pest/weed and stock control (fencing), rather than on active planting.
- QE II also offers legal protection beyond current ownership (regd on land title), landowner retains ownership and management responsibilities.
- Major pests in the area – deer, (clip regenerating broadleaves), old man's beard, Muehlenbeckia australis, cherry, sycamore, hawthorne + usual gorse/broom, blackberry etc

Mark Christensen, BP Conservation Trust

- Based on leadership rather than compulsion
- Emphasis on information sharing (e.g. weed/pest control), group funding access, able as group to make higher level strategy etc.
- BPCT has ca. 20 years of experience, willing to share learnings.

Stop 3. Options for planting/managing a 'typical gully' (steep sides, bare ground/local erosion, sedimentation risk, patchy existing vegetation, etc). Nick Ledgard and Gary Fleming (FFA), David, Jamie

General principles

- No simple or right solution (e.g., see entry for radiata)
- Everything is dynamic – change one thing, other factors change also – grazing regimes, weed dynamics, short term vs. long term, climate change trajectories, etc)
- Look (and learn) what other similar sites are doing under various regime elsewhere on property, neighbours etc – don't reinvent the wheel or make avoidable mistakes.
- Think about graze/no graze, weed/pest control needs, inputs, costs.
- Weed/pest status of site/locality crucial, as is local availability of indigenous species seed sources if seeking native regeneration.
- Should one begin factoring-in future climate change scenarios in making species selections? That's one option, but maybe better to seek to enhance current species mixes and ecological integrity. In the, longer term, maybe let species mixes transition in their own ecological terms and time scales.
- General agreement larger planting stock (e.g., \$9.00) safer bet than the smaller ('\$3.00') pots, as the latter are vulnerable and need longer term care. Go for robust stems at ground level (ca 6mm good) versus tallest but 'willowy' stock.

- If you are seeking future timber harvest, be aware of edge effects, especially in linear gully sites such as this – e.g., sedimentation, fence damage.
- Whatever your planting selections, order stock early – already some suppliers are fully committed for 1-2 years. The commercial growers of plantation species are able to scale up stock supplies faster than for natives.

Pinus radiata

- 'No' because site not suitable for short rotation (ca 30-40 yrs) – trees too quickly become a liability (topple over fences, into water course) or need harvesting. New legislation would simply make the site un-harvestable (setbacks, sediment etc) on the other hand, maybe...
- 'Yes' because no reason why it can't stay on site longer (ca 100 years) – by then biodiverse understorey developing (check adjacent plantations to learn what to expect) – but watch those sedimentation, windthrow risks 😞

Native plantings

- 'No', if high weed risks/costs as things like OMB, Muehlenbeckia, gorse/broom are already present. Est. costs \$9000-\$65,000/ha. (Best base for active planting of natives is clean grassland – simplest weed control.)
- 'No' also to passive retirement – lower costs but intensive weed control – end up with a weedy good-for-not much gully (though this might be OK for sediment control)
- Jamie offered summary notes on costings for various plant/no plant, species selection options.

Amenity/alternative trees

- Eucs, cypress, poplars, oaks etc – longer rotations
- Pick species with bee and bird benefits as well
- If timber potential, can mill small coupes over many years, or selective harvest

Funding agencies, advice, packages

Something of a beneficial minefield – our world is rich with programmes and funds, the challenge is to make sense of them and make projects long-term sustainable beyond the 'funding life'.

- One billion trees fund – indigenous mix, manuka/kanuka, indigenous natural regeneration, exotic (exotic - not confined to P radiata)
- ETS programmes
- QE II Trust
- Hill country erosion Fund (ECan)

Supporting agencies

- MPI – have regional advisors
- Project Crimson Trust /Trees that count. Started out to protect pohutukawa, evolved into Trees that Count, a national initiative to mobilise NZers to plant native trees Programme managed in collaboration with The Tindall Fdn, Pure Advantage and DOC. TTC Community Marketplace connects funders with planters. (CEO Adele Fitzpatrick but have regional advisors as well.
- Hurunui Landcare Trust (funded by subscription and Beef & lamb). Contact Josh Brown
- Ecan? NZ Landcare Trust?

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