

Manulife *Forest Times*

Brought to you by Manulife Investment Management Forest Management (NZ) Limited

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Hitting the halfway mark of 2025

By Chris Barnes - General Manager

As we hit the halfway mark of 2025, I would like to thank staff and contractors for the excellent work you are all doing across the business. I would like to especially thank our forestry crews who are out planting in what is typically wet and cold conditions. We are planting over 4,100ha this winter across various sites for Taumata and OTPP NZ, and you all do a fantastic job in what is one of the most important tasks in the business. Setting the forest up for success starts with good site preparation and planting.



Since our last edition, the markets have improved slightly with a small lift in export pricing in July. That said, market conditions remain relatively subdued in China. Inventory levels have fallen to circa 3.15 million m³ from 3.9 million m³ in March, largely in response to lower supply as offtake remains relatively unchanged at circa 60,000 m³/day. Freight has remained flat which is a positive given it is sitting below the long-term average. There continues to be uncertainty in the markets in response to global conflict and tariffs, and we are still waiting on news of a Free Trade Agreement between India and New Zealand that will hopefully see the end of tariffs on New Zealand logs. This will make us more competitive with logs out of Australia where there is no tariff.

In March our Taumata and Tiaki HSWE Committee met in Rotorua and then spent the day visiting operations at Hiwi Forest. This field visit was a great opportunity for directors to see first-hand some sensitive harvesting operations and the challenges associated with long distances from market and ports.

Since our last edition, we have had Phil Luton join MFM (NZ) as Health and Safety Advisor. Welcome to the team, and thank

you for choosing to work with us and for sharing your background which can be found later on in this newsletter. Please take the time to welcome Phil when you get the opportunity. I would also like to congratulate Nav Kaur on her recent promotion to Team Leader Accounts and welcome back Kayla Corbett from maternity leave.

There are some excellent articles in this edition and they always highlight how fortunate we are to get to go to work each day in some of the best forests in the world, surrounded by remarkable people, and with great support from each other and our directors.

A final reminder to please ensure you understand our life saving rules and be careful regardless of the task. For example, we have had several injuries from missteps off machinery that could have been avoided, but sadly have resulted in significant injuries to those involved. Please take your time and always remember you are empowered, and have my full support, to stop any operation if you are concerned about safety.

Please feel free to give me a call (027 2577 260) anytime if I can help, or you would like to have a chat or a coffee.

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National Managers' Update



Andrew Widdowson

National Operations Manager

The last few months have seen a lot of rainfall across our operating regions, including two recent days where we had in excess of 100mm over 24 hours. Fortunately, damage to our client forestry roads and land has been minimal, with little

impact on operations.

Our 2025 planting programme this year is 4,113ha in total, and we are approaching the halfway point this week in terms of area planted. Unlike 2024 when we experienced root quality issues, this year we are seeing a marked improvement in seedling quality. A special shout out to our forestry planting crews and staff who, by necessity, worked through some challenging weather conditions to get the job done.

At this time of year, the harvest planning and engineering teams are focusing on harvest planning and maintenance work, as required. We are trialling the use of shredded landing residue on short-term spur roads in place of more expensive aggregate. You can read more about this trial in Scott Triplow's article on page 10.

Our harvesting team has done a great job over the last few months to meet production targets. We move into the new 2026 financial year on 1 July with a harvest programme totalling 4.04 million tonnes. This will be produced from 44 harvesting crews operating across our three client entity forests in Northland, South Waikato, King Country and the Eastern Bay of Plenty.

Our distribution operations continue to operate smoothly including KiwiRail who, over the last few years, have invested in new log wagons and workforce capacity which is now paying off.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the dedication and professionalism of Laresia Heke, Darrell Tahere, Mike Baker and Geoff Gover, their operational teams and our committed and professional contractors who perform to a high level every day.

Stay safe.



Darrell Tahere

National Harvesting Manager

We are now fully immersed in a really wet winter, with rainfall over the last three months a lot higher than the long-term averages across all regions.

Harvesting contractors have stood up to the challenge and are still delivering strong production. This is testament to solid planning together with good infrastructure.

There has been a strong focus on reviewing the Manulife tree felling policy to bring it inline with increased mechanisation happening across the harvesting crews. All crews now have access to winch assist machines to further reduce the reliance on manual tree felling.

A lot of work has been done to move all documentation into the cloud through the use of SharePoint. Congrats to the harvesting team.

A number of contractors have taken part in the loader driver/truck driver workshop facilitated by Dr Hillary Bennett. Several recommendations will be implemented in the future.

The financial year for Tiaki and Taumata has come to an end, and harvesting production levels have been very close to budgeted volumes despite market enforced slowdowns and wet weather.

An RFP for a five-year work package in the King Country Hiwi Forest is drawing to a close with some strong presentations.

Ngā mihi.

Competition

Winner of Best Article in the April 2025 Newsletter

By Helen Moffatt - Administrative Coordinator, Tauranga

Congratulations Cameron Fenton on your article Tokoroa Pumpkin Competition.

We loved this light-hearted article because of the way the group were able to apply their silviculture skills in a fun, competitive and social way.

Better luck with the pumpkin growing this year.



Remember anybody is eligible to win and another \$50 gift voucher will be awarded to the person who contributes our favourite article from this edition. If you have a favourite, please email Helen: hmoffatt1@manulife.com



Mike Baker

National Forestry Manager

Tēnā koutou.

Being mid-year, and with most silviculture crews moving from thinning to planting, it is an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of our contractors and crews in our thin for value programme across all

MFM (NZ) clients over the last 12 months.

Over this period, more than 7,000 hectares of thinning has been completed by over 50 motor-manual thinners, as well as a mechanised thinning crew, working across 10 contracting businesses. To provide some perspective, the area completed is equivalent to the size of Lake Rotorua.

Ten motor-manual thinners from across all regions have also been certified as part of the MFM (NZ) thin for value certification programme.

I would like to thank our contractors and crews for their efforts in completing this programme of work. This is an important operation in increasing the value of the client's estate by ensuring the optimal final crop stocking is carried through to harvest, and has been completed in variable conditions, particularly understorey hindrance, terrain and of course the weather!



Hareti Taiatini, Edward Amouta, Paula Iorangi and Mana Petero receiving their MFM (NZ) Thin for Value Certification.

Noho ora mai.



Geoff Gover

National Harvest Planning & Engineering Manager

I sit writing for Manulife Forest Times, watching coverage on the television regarding the flooding and damage in Nelson. It seems an annual event now that each winter we have floods and

damage somewhere in New Zealand as a result of intensive rainfall.

We are now all working with soils that are saturated, which don't absorb any more water, so everything that falls from the sky will flow off into the waterways. All our operations at Manulife could have similar events happen to them at any time, so consider this when you depart the site each day. Ensure water control structures are open and able to do the task.

With the wet comes an increase in pavement damage, with engineering crews focused on pavement repairs as potholes develop on a daily basis. If any crew notes a concerning issue with the road, report it immediately in Velocity and it will be highlighted to the engineering crews for repair.

The engineering team are continually looking for opportunities to improve the network and general safety. Some of the recent changes you may have noticed out there are:

1. Reviewing centre line marking on seal network to improve visibility - paint type and reflective markers.
2. Reviewing roadside markers to improve guidance of carriageway width.
3. Analysis to determine possible extension of seal network.
4. Use of harvest waste to pave stub roads.



Now that most engineering contractors have the Velocity mobile, we have noticed a significant increase in near misses reported. A year ago we received six to eight per month, compared to now where we receive 12 to 18 per month. All the reports we have been receiving have value and have led to some form of change or works to remedy. Keep the reports coming in.

Drive carefully - you don't know what's around the corner.



Laresia Heke

National Distribution Manager

In this edition of Manulife Forest Times, I will be sharing some photos and commentary around:

- Loader Driver Truck Driver Workshops
- Sleep and Fatigue Management Workshops
- New Technology – Safe-T-Loader
- Recognition – Cutting Edge Safety Technology
- Daylight Saving Barbeques
- Wood is Good.

Loader Driver Truck Driver Workshops

Dr Hillary Bennett (Leading Safety) was engaged to facilitate a series of Loader Driver Truck Driver workshops. These were held to identify what supports loading and transporting logs safely, what prevents safe loading and transporting of logs, and what loaders and drivers can personally do to ensure the safe loading and transporting of logs. A total of 54 people (23 loader drivers and 31 truck drivers) took part in three workshops – two in Tokoroa, one in Kawerau.

The basis for Hillary's workshops was on learning from what goes right and engaging with the loader drivers and truck drivers as they have the best knowledge and understanding of the work. The focus was on learning and improvement, not on assigning blame, and the achievement of practical actions. More often than not the work goes well, even when the work gets challenging.

Feedback from the workshop participants was that the following things make the work easier:

- Positive, respectful relationships (even when the work gets challenging)
- Teamwork and collaboration (common goal of safe load)
- Respect and confidence (ability to load and check loads correctly).

Next steps involve gauging the effectiveness of the workshops, understanding the different learnings for different people, and a follow up session to guide us on what might support loader drivers and truck drivers further.

Sleep and Fatigue Management Workshops

During May, a Fatigue Management Workshop was held in Tokoroa by Katrina Aubrey of Autosense, with a group of Manulife Forest Management (NZ) Limited staff. Katrina is a fatigue and sleep consultant and the workshop focused on the importance of getting good quality sleep. During the workshop Katrina shared top tips for a good night's sleep. It was useful to hear the content of this seminar as some distribution contractors have already booked this educational seminar for their log truck drivers as part of their ongoing fatigue management processes.

New Technology – 'Safe-T-Loader'

Aztec Forestry Transport Developments Limited (AZTEC) have designed a nine axle multi logger capable for winching the trailer up onto the back of the empty truck. This unit, coined the Safe-T-Loader, was designed to eliminate third party trailer lifting after a load is delivered, and eliminates the risk of a suspended trailer dropping during this process. The electric winch also eliminates the risks of hydraulic spills.

Safety features of the Safe-T-Loader include:

- Trailer breakaway system prevents trailer rolling away in event of component failure while winching
- Wireless remote winch control enables operator to remain in safe zone
- Dynamica nylon rope eliminates risk of recoil.



Safe-T-Loader designed by Peter Phillips (Director, Aztec Forestry Transport Developments Limited).

Recognition – Cutting Edge Safety Technology

Rotorua Forest Haulage Limited (RFH) was recognised by the Taumata Plantations Limited (TPL) Board at the PEAK HSE Committee dinner on 14 May. This accolade recognised RFH for being a leader in implementing cutting-edge safety technologies and training practices, and their contribution to the industry's evolving commitment to worker wellbeing and road safety. RFH were thanked for their dedication and commitment to continuing to invest in the safety, efficiency and environmental performance of the distribution operations within Taumata Plantations Limited and the wider New Zealand log transportation industry.



Award being presented to RFH. From left Laresia Heke (Manulife Forest Management (NZ) Ltd), Matt Perry (RFH Operations Manager), Angeleen Jenkins (Chair HSE Committee), Tony Sargison (RFH Managing Director), Sam Sargison (RFH Operations Manager) and Murray Taggart (Taumata Board Chair).

Daylight Saving Barbeques





Daylight Saving barbeque event at Kawerau Processing Yard.

Daylight Saving barbeques were held in April for distribution contractors at Kinleith Export Yard and Kawerau Processing Yard. This was an opportunity to talk to the drivers and other yard staff about fatigue management and wellbeing. Two competitions were run; one to understand how people are managing their own fatigue and what affects them, and the other to identify the Top 10 most dangerous parts of the forest to drive in. Those who entered went into a draw to win a \$50 Prezzy card. The information was reviewed to identify any areas where safety improvements could be made.

Wood is Good

'Wood is Good' was undertaken at both Ngutunui and Te Waotu School during May. This programme is a New Zealand forestry initiative aimed at educating young people about the benefits of forestry. It provides resources and activities for primary school students to learn about trees, their uses and the importance of sustainable forestry. We appreciated the support of Sheldrake Haulage Limited (SHL) and Rotorua Forest Haulage Limited (RFH) who provided the trucks for these events.



RFH truck and driver Shane Hepi, and Manulife Forest Management (NZ) Ltd staff Nina Paton and Alexander Thompson (TJ) educating the children at Ngutunui School.

All the best for quarter three 2025.
Noho ora mai.

Forestry



Spartan and co with a happy ending.

A dog's tail tale

By Geoff Parsons - Forestry Manager, Central Region

The pig hunting season is in full flight with over 500 permits being issued this season. In the Central Region, apart from having to contend with the blackberry (where pigs usually hang out), there is also the odd tomo to contend with, as two pig hunters from the Bay of Plenty Pig Hunting Club experienced recently.

Their main dog ended up in a precarious situation down a rather large tomo on a Saturday afternoon. After two days of digging and no result, the hunters decided to reach out to MFM (NZ). The dog was still alive on Monday morning, and given the proximity to the road, a rescue operation was then set into motion. After consultation, the regional council declared it an emergency and gave the go ahead to enter the native reserve where the tomo was located. Sean Clarke arrived on site at 10am with his trusty digger and began excavation. Four hours later, there was finally light at the end of the tunnel for "Spartan" and his soon to be delighted owners.

Spartan was shaken but in good spirits after his ordeal and is now back in business. The pig hunters were extremely ecstatic and grateful to MFM (NZ) and Sean Clarke for their assistance.



Ngunguru Forest Orca Road. Kieran Sullivan (Burn Supervisor) briefing Department of Conservation and Forest Protection Services' personnel. Photo Michael Sullivan, Forest Protection Services.



Prescribed Burning

By Peter Houston - Forestry Manager, Whangarei

Over the last month, Taumata Northern has completed the prescribed burning of 13 landings (log processing areas).

Prescribed burning is carbon neutral because the carbon released is a tiny proportion of the carbon dioxide absorbed from the air by the trees since they were planted in 2000.

Prescribed burning of landings has three benefits:

1. The burns provide real world fire training in controlled areas for our forest workers. This year we had the Department of Conservation and Fire and Emergency New Zealand attend the burns so they can learn practical skills such as dry firefighting and back burning. These skills are then used during the fire season, providing social outcomes to our community firefighters.
2. The burns can cost-effectively remove unmerchantable parts of the trees from steep terrain on the edge of the landing. Removing this weight reduces the risk of slope failure, improving environmental outcomes.



Whanui Forest Scallop Road. Two acres of unmerchantable off-cuts made plantable in 24 hours.

Left image: Drone photo from Ian Waterhouse, Engineering Forester, above time series photos of the skid burning over 24 hours from Keiran Sullivan, Burn Supervisor, Forest Protections Services.



3. The burns allow the replant of areas that would otherwise be unplatable.

As the burns on steep terrain are generally located at high points, the burns can be seen from a significant distance.



Ngunguru Forest, Orca Road. This burn was seen from over 20km away. Photo Greg Edmunds, Forester.

As prescribed burns have an element of risk, each burn plan is completed locally, checked, and reviewed by the Forestry Manager before the approval to burn is provided by the National Operations Manager.

Each burn plan has:

- Maps and a landing area reference number for burning, plus a checklist that the burn has been checked and is out before the following summer starts.
- Detailing parameters to burn, planned resources on site, light up sequence, how to mitigate the risk of smoke impacting neighbours, escalation plan and an escape plan.
- A notification plan. MFM (NZ) foresters either email, text or ring neighbours 1-2 days prior to burning (local community Facebook pages are also used). On the day, we notify Fire and Emergency (the burn is recorded on their 111 mapping systems), all Taumata Northern contractors (including Skywork Helicopters), the local airport and police.
- A burn record of events.

On the day, if all parameters are in the green, we light a small test fire to verify the weather, terrain and fuel conditions are safe for burning.

Only if the test fire behaves as we expect, will we then start burning the landings.

When practical, we will look to plant the burnt landings at the end of the planting season. Otherwise, we plant these areas first the following winter.

Looking forward, Engineering has shredded some landing waste to use as an aggregate for short stub roads. If this trial is successful, then there are further opportunities to reduce the growing and harvesting costs for our clients.

Health, Safety & Wellness



Why Near Miss Reporting Matters in the Forest Industry: Learning Before It's Too Late

By Glen Coleman - Health and Safety Manager, Tauranga

In the rugged and high-risk world of forestry, where workers operate heavy machinery, navigate unpredictable terrain and face dynamic environmental hazards, safety is not just a priority - it's a lifeline. While injury statistics often drive safety conversations, near-miss reporting is an equally vital, yet often underutilised tool for preventing serious harm.

What Is a Near Miss?

A near miss is an unplanned event that didn't result in injury, damage, or fatality, but had the potential to. Think of it as a warning shot: a moment when something went wrong, but luck or timing prevented a tragedy.

Why Near Misses Are Goldmines for Safety

In the forest industry, where serious injuries and fatalities (SIFs) can occur in seconds, near misses offer a rare opportunity to learn without paying the price. They provide insight into:

- Hidden hazards that may not be captured in routine risk assessments
- Breakdowns in procedures, such as skipped steps or unclear responsibilities
- Human factors like fatigue, distraction, or overconfidence
- Systemic issues including poor planning, inadequate supervision, or missing controls.

Forestry involves many high-energy, high-risk tasks. Remember, critical tasks deserve critical attention. Research shows that serious incidents often stem from missing or poorly executed controls and work plans, not just human error.

By reporting and analysing near misses in these critical tasks, we can:

- Identify weak points in planning and hazard control
- Spot patterns that precede serious incidents
- Test and improve safety systems before someone gets hurt

What the Data Tells Us

Recent studies in construction and other high-risk industries have shown that serious injuries and fatalities often have

different causes than minor injuries. In particular, two factors stand out:

- Absent or not followed work plans
- Missing direct controls (like lockouts, or safety devices).

These same lessons apply in forestry. A near miss involving a falling tree or equipment malfunction may reveal that a critical control was missing, or that the work plan was not followed. Catching this early can prevent a repeat with far worse consequences.

Building a Culture of Reporting

To make near miss reporting effective, it must be:

- **Easy:** Simple forms, mobile apps, or verbal reports can lower the barrier

- **Non-punitive:** Workers must feel safe to speak up without fear of blame
- **Actionable:** Reports should lead to real changes, not just paperwork.

Conclusion: Learning from the Almost

In the forest industry, the difference between a close call and a catastrophe can be a matter of inches or seconds. Near-miss reporting gives us a second chance to learn, adapt, and protect our people before tragedy strikes.

By treating near misses as valuable data, especially in critical tasks, we shift from reacting to incidents to preventing them altogether. That's a shift worth making.

Harvesting



Harvesting Mechanisation Update

By Peter Auge - Harvesting Manager, Rotorua

As part of MFM (NZ)'s focus on mechanisation to eliminate critical risk to manual fallers, all ground-based harvesting crews operating in Tiaki now deploy tethered falling systems where terrain restricts access by conventional falling machines.

As an example, the areas in yellow in the harvesting area map above (25-to-35-degree slope class) would typically require manual falling. With the introduction of tethers to provide traction assisted operation to harvesters, these areas can now be successfully felled mechanically.



Newton Logging Ltd Crew 41 – New EMS tether in operation.

How Technology is Transforming Tools and Traditions

By Darrell Tahere - National Harvesting Manager, Tokoroa

Reading the July 2025 edition of the Logger Magazine, one can't help but reflect on how technology has reshaped the forest industry.

From Axes to Algorithms

There was a time when the axe was the cornerstone of every bushmen's toolkit. Mastery of the axe wasn't just about strength - it was about precision, technique, and most importantly, maintenance. Knowing how to sharpen your axe was a rite of passage. A dull blade didn't just slow you down, it invited the unsolicited advice of a seasoned colleague who was always ready to point out your inefficiencies.

Fast forward a few decades and the chainsaw emerged as the dominant tool - one of the most powerful and versatile hand tools in forestry. It revolutionised productivity, allowing workers to fell trees faster and with greater control. But the same principle applied: if you didn't know how to maintain your chainsaw and operate it safely, you weren't going to get far. Efficiency still hinged on knowledge and care.

Enter the Age of Automation

Today, we stand on the brink of another transformation. Robotics, artificial intelligence and precision forestry technologies are beginning to take root in harvesting operations across New Zealand. Machines equipped with GPS, LiDAR and AI-driven decision-making are now capable of identifying, selecting and eventually felling trees with minimal human intervention.

These technologies promise to improve safety, reduce environmental impact and increase operational efficiency. But they also demand a new kind of expertise. Just as the axe required sharpening and the chainsaw required tuning, today's forestry professionals must learn to calibrate sensors, interpret data, and troubleshoot software while understanding its limitations.

The New Skillset

The modern logger is a hybrid of operator, analyst and environmental steward. Understanding how to maintain a machine is still essential but so is understanding how that machine fits into a broader system of sustainable forest management.

Training programmes are evolving to meet this transformation and now include modules on digital tools, remote sensing and even machine learning. The future of forestry will be shaped not just by those who can swing an axe or start a chainsaw, but by those who can adapt to, and lead, in a rapidly changing technological landscape.

Honouring the Past, Embracing the Future

As we adopt new technologies, we must hold onto the values that define us: respect for the land, pride in our work and a commitment to safety and sustainability. Technology is not replacing these values, it's enhancing them.

So, whether you're sharpening an axe, maintaining your chainsaw, or programming a mechanical processor, the principle remains the same: **the better you understand your tools, the better you'll perform your task.**

New staff



Phil Luton

Health and Safety Advisor, Rotorua office

I'm Phil and I am the new advisor in the health and safety team based in Rotorua. My partner, Kit, and I live near Tauranga with a collection of rescue animals (much like myself).

I have a son (Isaac 20), a daughter (Amelie 18), and a stepdaughter (Tian 24). My son's partner is counted as a daughter to me as well (Porscha 21). They all live in Nelson and Wellington and I don't feel old enough to have grown up kids! Being a dad is a big love of mine.

Work-wise I have been in the military and police, with my final role in the NZDF working in the wellbeing space. I did a BSc at Lincoln University in soils and plants, with some economics thrown in for good measure. My forestry experience includes silviculture (when the body lets me) and being a forestry inspector with WorkSafe NZ. In the health and safety sector, I have worked for the regulator as well as for an agricultural retailer/manufacturer and in the non-profit sector.

In my spare time I do some ongoing education and like to get out trail running... while trying to keep up with my partner who does regular ultras. I have done a few myself but have yet to catch up to her! I've also added yoga to my week in an attempt to keep the inflexibility at bay.

Thanks for having me along to join the team. Cheers



Engineering



The northern team inspecting the Tana Shark shredder



Shredded piles of binwood and slash stockpiled. The cleaner material in the foreground is shredded binwood. Shredded slash is in the second pile back.

Paving the Way with Slash

By Scott Triplow - Engineering Forester, Whangarei

A new road trial is underway in Ngunguru Forest to test whether shredded logging waste can perform as a cost-effective, sustainable alternative to metal aggregate on forestry roads.

Trial Overview

The trial involves using shredded binwood, slash, and a 50/50 mix to form the pavement layer on a two-stage forestry road. The shredding was completed using a Tana Shark slow-speed shredder, fitted with a 200mm screen.

We processed:

- ~2,450m³ of material over 33 hours (~ 74m³/hour)
- 1,100m³ was laid on a 470m road section
- Drone surveys were conducted to measure the volumes.

Cost Snapshot

Costings show that shredded material continues to be more economical than traditional metal, even when laid at nearly twice the depth (0.47m vs 0.25m for metal):

Road Type	Volume Used	Cost/km	Cost/m ³
Shred Road	1,100m ³	\$61,745	\$26.38
Metal Road	588m ³	\$82,989	\$66.39

Anticipated Benefits

- **Reduces truck traffic** on narrow, shared public-access roads – safer for the public and less wear and tear
- **Avoids smoke nuisance** – no need to burn slash near neighbouring properties
- **Frees up landing space** for replanting
- Shredded material could be a **potential replacement for cord logs** on loader runways on landings. Instead of paying the harvesting contractor to process logs, only to put them in the ground for machine tracking, the logs can be carted out and sold to customers, creating extra value.
- **Uses on-site waste material** – no need for costly quarry metal or long transport runs
- **Overall cheaper option** – even when applied at greater thickness than metal.

What's Next?

The road's down and ready – now we wait to see how it holds up. The harvest crew is due to move onto a landing at the end of the road in the next five–seven weeks and that's when the real test begins.

A two-stage truck will cart around 7,000m³ of logs out along the shred surface, so we'll be keeping a close eye on how it handles the load, especially through wet winter conditions. If it performs well, it could be a real game changer for how we build roads in the future – saving money and making better use of on-site waste.



Shred material laid on the road. Shredded binwood has a lighter, cleaner appearance. Shredded slash is the darker material with more bark content.

Environmental



Motu Bluffs, May 2025, showing the effects of the manual poisoning operation.

Retirement of Unharvestable Stands in Houpoto Forest

By Sally Strang - Environment Manager

Those who have spent time in the Eastern Bay of Plenty will be familiar with the Motu Bluffs section of SH35 that passes along the edge of a very steep face, down to the Motu River bridge.

If you have ever looked above the highway you would have seen an ageing stand of radiata on the steep face directly above. That area was planted by the former forest owner, Caxton, in 1981 and was originally planned for harvest by Carter Holt Harvey in 2005! Difficulties accessing the area with roads, the need to manually fell trees directly above the highway, and to tie the hauler off over the highway (requiring prolonged highway closures), meant that over many years it had been placed in the too hard basket.

In 2022 the stand began to windthrow and we became concerned about the potential for a major debris flow onto the highway. The decision was made to go ahead and salvage as much of the face as could be reached without closing the highway, and this was undertaken by Maungawaru Logging in the summer of 2022/2023. The following August, during a heavy rain event, debris washed out of the area that had been harvested. The MFM (NZ) local team responded immediately, and with assistance from the forest landowners, our contractors took the lead on clearing debris from the highway and carting it to a secure location.

The next challenge was to come up with a plan to de-risk and retire the area. The first step was to remove as much debris from the face as we could, using Kahu NZ's Black Hawk heavy lift helicopter to pull any large material off the face and relocate it onto nearby landings. The next step was what to do with the remaining 13ha of standing 40 year-old trees still above the road. In consultation with the landowners, community



Left: Kahu NZ's Black Hawk, removing debris from the face. Right: Debris clean up underway in August 2023 by Maungawaru Logging and Wilson Bros Earthmovers.

representatives, Waka Kotahi and Bay of Plenty Regional Council, all options were considered, with the group deciding that manual drilling and poisoning of the trees was the best option. This was successfully completed last summer by Howard Forestry. In total, we drilled and poisoned 18ha of trees, dealing with a number of legacy stands in the area. Those who have driven through the area in recent months will no doubt have noticed the stand clearly dying off on the face.

Pleasingly, the understory is now clearly starting to show through. It is expected the dead trees will gradually break down and allow the understory vegetation to take over. The next step is to spray some small wilding pines on the steep face above the road using a drone, and to manage the radiata regen on the harvested area. The long-term goal is to manage the area back into native forest cover, right to the ridge top. MFM (NZ) would like to acknowledge the input from the contractors involved (Maungawaru Logging, Wilson Bros Earthmovers and Howard Forestry), and also the ongoing support of the landowners, in particular the Chair of Houpoto Te Pua Piki Koopu who has worked alongside us throughout this period, assisting with consultation and decision-making.

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 **Manulife**
Investment Management

forestCHAT

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The Peak HSE Committee plays a vital role in driving health, safety and environmental (HSE) excellence across all MFM (NZ) operations. Its purpose is to identify key HSE risks – both current and emerging, set strategic goals to improve performance and oversee the work of the subcommittees dedicated to specific initiatives.

One such group is the Mental Health & Wellbeing (MHWB) Committee which is focussed not only on reducing psychological risks in the workplace but also on identifying opportunities to actively improve wellbeing.

Guided by our vision 'Everyone goes home safe, everyday', our goal is to create a safe, inclusive and supportive environment by building on the things we do well and providing meaningful resources for all our staff and contractors. We're focussed on both reducing risks and improving wellbeing. From developing guidance to supporting recovery and reintegration, our goal is to build resilience and promote a culture of shared responsibility for mental health.

Our committee is made up of a diverse group of representatives from both MFM (NZ) staff and our valued contractors, ensuring a broad and inclusive perspective on mental health and wellbeing across the organisation.

We're excited to welcome our two newest members, Treen Hawker, our GIS Analyst, and Keaton Dahm, from Rob Dahm Ltd. Their insights and contributions will be a great asset to our ongoing efforts.



Championing Wellbeing

An update from Richard...

We have recently promoted some key events - Pink Shirt Day (anti-bullying), Men's Health Week and Matariki. These events have helped raise awareness and encourage conversations. We are currently in preparation for the Run the Forest event taking place in Rotorua in August – if you want to hit the trails, let me know!

We're always open to your ideas and feedback; if you have suggestions or information to share around health and wellbeing, please do not hesitate to reach out. Your voice matters.

Be a Mate

The Hey Mate programme, the first level in a four-part training series, continues to be delivered across MFM (NZ). So far, 39 workshops have reached over 300 participants, with 71 individuals expressing interest in the next level, Co Mate.

Wellbeing Trends

Through conversations with crews and support calls, the top three challenges people are facing right now are finances, relationships and tamariki – especially around social media and bullying.

Please remember that EAP offers free and confidential support, including counselling, financial advice and legal guidance. If you or someone you know is struggling, help is available.

Embracing movement in a mechanised world

As our work environments continue to evolve with increasing mechanisation, many of us find ourselves in sedentary roles – whether it be behind the wheel, operating machines, or seated at a desk.

While technology has brought incredible efficiencies, it has also introduced new challenges to our physical wellbeing.

Recognising this, we're working on a new initiative focused on workplace ergonomics, a proactive step to improve our understanding of ergonomic principles and empower individuals with the right tools to move better, think clearer and take charge of their wellbeing.

Watch this space....



The team at Niha Contracting

Published on behalf of the Peak Mental Health & Wellbeing Sub-committee

Need to talk or need help, phone Richard on (027) 777 0894 or via email at richard@fit4work.co.nz