



*Far North Branch NZ Farm Forestry Assn.*  
*July 2015 Newsletter*

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**PRESIDENT'S REPORT July 2015**

A few cold days so far this winter, and with any luck its the last of them. Hopefully it will kill off all the unwanted bugs and give our forests a good start in the spring.

I don't know if its the same for you, but I have noticed that there is still a lot of tree felling going on in my neck of the woods, for various reasons, and as a miller it is keeping me very busy. The timber being cut mainly for personal use on building. It seems people are always keen to have wood in the house in some shape or form, and if it comes off the same property all the better.

I would like to take the opportunity at this stage to thank Brian for all his years as president and his dedication to the branch. There were very few field days I attended where he wasn't present, and he always put his hand up to make sure the branch was well represented at events and meetings around the north. It has been a pleasure working alongside him on the committee, and I can confidently take on my new role as president knowing he is still part of a strong and dedicated committee. I am hoping as a branch we will be able to maintain a valuable service to our community of tree enthusiasts in Northland.

So keep up the planting and tending of your trees, and we will look forward to a good catch up at the midwinter dinner!

Li Legler

## Mid Winter Dinner:

**Date:** Friday, 28th August

**Time:** Starting 6PM

**Buffet:** \$ 35 per person

**Drinks:** Paid separately at a discounted rate

**Venue:** Marty's Golf and Archery Range Cafe

Address: 2505 State Highway 10

North Waipapa

Big sign directly on SH10 western side

Phone: 4016608

People can come earlier to use Golf Driving Range or Archery.

Please RSVP with Tony, phone 09 4077776, email [tonyl8er@xtra.co.nz](mailto:tonyl8er@xtra.co.nz)

## Field Day Report: A trip to the Puketi and Omahuta Forests (Saturday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May).

The rain did not stop a good turn out of interested parties. From our meeting place at the boardwalk near Puketi D.O.C campgrounds we all progressed to follow John Beechman and explore the remains of a early 1900's kauri dam located in a deep gut only 100m off Waiare Rd. The main beam along with iron board spikes still bridges the gap roughly 4m off the stream bed. John explained that the technology of kauri dams was not new but adapted to New Zealand conditions. The dam we viewed was used to flush logs rolled into the stream bottom out of the forest to a collection point. Other dams had also been constructed in a way

that enabled logs to float through. Whilst a nice path leads into the area the track has been unkept since the cave creek incident. The viewing platform was removed from the end of the path.

After passing through the forestry gate on Mokau ridge several stops were made. Between road marker 17 to 16 kauri and rimu planted some time in

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the 1980's showed varied growth rates that can be expected when grid planting of trees in a hard site.

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Regardless the possum control work currently in progress a possum was removed from a D.O.C warrior kill trap next to the road. D.O.C has identified 2500ha of forest on the eastern mokau ridge as having rare plants and ecological importance. Every three years possum control work is done in this area depending on funding allocation. 1500ha is being control at present. A target of 5% residual trap catch or lower is the goal. An easy way to understand this is imagine 100 leg hold traps placed in a single line across the landscape, this being Puketi and all its trees, at 20m apart for 2km and catching 5 possums or less in one night.

Next stop was a quick look at some Cryptomeria near the top of a high point. This had been planted where kauri had been removed and the head wood had been used to protect the trees from wild cattle of the time. These trees display larger branching and a lot of taper to the trunks. Along the track a little further was one of Eco-lands prototype automated feeders. This was being used to mop up straggler possums and had been running for the last week timed to deliver poison on the friday night before the field day, regardless of rain 4 possums were



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dead surrounding the feeder yet the two warrior kill traps that were within 30 meters were empty. Whilst a little surprised myself the demonstration was successful in showing two

things - remaining possums regroup at ridge tops after a poison control and possums travel in clusters or groups.

After a good distance we entered the Summit forest area where harvest operations are in full swing. Luckily being the weekend no log trucks or contractors were onsite. We were lucky enough to view a hauler parked up on the road. We were given a good induction on how it operates by one keen member. Barron "Lorax like" forestry landscape meet us under the low clouds that limited our view dramatically.

The use of the forestry roading for public access after harvest was complete was discussed along with the impacts on public second class roads due logging operations in winter. It was mentioned that Mokau ridge and Jacksons roads provides all weather essential access links.

We stopped at a concrete ford where John explained its creation. The stream was redirected 30-50m and now drops off a cliff face to enable kauri logs to be flushed closer to Pupuke Rd for collection. It is presumed they then went to Lanes Sawmill at Totara North.

Jacksons Road bridge was a quick lunch break before a short hike with Maurice and John with maps and data to see a plantation of 60 year old Cryptomeria. Whilst a tight stockings the trees had minimal taper and much useable timber. It was discussed whether production thinning would increase growth and diameter of logs. Historically these trees had been planted after the war in the 1950's they replaced Kauri which had been removed for the war effort, building Kauri hulled boats to manage and remove sea mines. A mixture of Southern pines and Lawsoniana was along the walk track in and western red cedar was mentioned to be further up the track. D.O.C weed managers control and try to eradicate mexican daisy growing near were the forest service buildings had once been. With the Mangapa river working from there down through the forest it is see as a river bank threat.

Omahuta forest sanctuary was the next and last stop for most. It saw a car tyre change with Brian Simms head of the pit crew. Mean while others explored lawson cedar plantings, it was noted that at time of planting the site would have been cleared, the totara were also growing at a comparable rate.

John also gave us a detailed account of Kauri dieback disease. It was described that soil transportation is the most likely means the disease travels. Kauri is possibly lucky in one sense that we don't have continuous forest. That isolation as bush islands in agriculture may protect the species. Die back has been around for a long time and persists in trees that still look healthy. Something triggers the trees to die. More is being researched and trialled such as the injecting of trees at the Omahuta site.

I would like to thank Summit for access and the grading of the road. D.O.C also for access. John and Maurice for the great effort and sharing of knowledge. Also a big thanks to all those who attended to make the day worth while considering its was raining. I would also like to thank those who attended the funeral for Richard Davies Collie, a well pruned tree with lots of heart wood that shed many seeds of wisdom, enabling me to participate in the field day.

Wishing you happy planting  
Shane