

Phillip Hope, chief executive officer of Eastland Wood Council:

The Eastland Wood Council has participated in the consultation process by filing a submission.

Whilst our members are focused primarily on productive forestry that can be sustainably harvested, we acknowledge there are areas in Tairāwhiti that should be in permanent cover to combat soil erosion, reduce sediment loads and improve water quality.

We also acknowledge every official report written about managing climate change in New Zealand has promoted the use of forests for carbon sequestration. This includes the latest report from the Climate Change Commission.

Since we must plant trees, we need to have conversations about where they should go.

The carbon market provides an opportunity to accelerate much needed afforestation. We encourage forums whereby council, landowners and community have conversations about where they plan the regeneration of native vegetation and where they plant forests.

Who gets to say which is the right place? Ideally, these should be science-based decisions, ultimately it is the land-owners decision.

This is an important conversation that needs to continue and we encourage the community to provide feedback.”

Joanna Noble, Chief of Strategy and Science, Gisborne District Council

Trust Tairāwhiti commissioned this report to get a better understanding of carbon farming in Tairāwhiti and encourage ongoing conversations about how the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) is working in Tairāwhiti.

Whilst GDC is a member of TEAP, we don't agree with all aspects of the report, but we do agree that there are some significant challenges, and opportunities, posed by permanent carbon farming in Tairāwhiti. We need to be talking about these now. We look forward to working with mana whenua, landowners, stakeholders, and Trust Tairāwhiti to identify the further research needed to develop solutions that go beyond regulation. We agree that the Emissions Trading Scheme, and other Government policy settings, should be reviewed to ensure they support wider community outcomes and a more resilient Tairāwhiti, alongside removing carbon from the atmosphere.

Manu Caddie, co-founder of Hikurangi Bioactives Limited Partnership welcomes the debate and sees much potential in the regional conversation it is designed to stimulate.

“However the report seems to have had a pre-determined view of the issues and significant inconsistencies in the way it treated available evidence” said Mr Caddie.

“The report largely ignores or underplays the opportunities permanent native forests being re-established in the region will bring. There seems to be an inherent bias in the framing of the issues, with an assumption the impacts of more permanent forests will be only negative. Late in the writing process there was a suggestion that the report now is only talking about permanent exotic forests but that certainly wasn’t the case at the outset, but even now the report shows permanent forests have significant environmental benefits over harvested ones, let alone pasture.”

Mr Caddie said evidence included in the report shows that the environmental benefits of permanent forestry – exotic or native – points to permanent forestry having a far more positive impact than production forestry or farming on most land in the region.

“There is also no analysis of the cultural impacts of permanent forests in the region and the report doesn’t quantify the impacts – positive, negative or benign of permanent forestry in Tairāwhiti but instead reads as an advocacy piece for farmers who can see change is happening but don’t want to accept it.”

HBLP has investments in the latent kānuka industry including oil, honey and tea products, and is working with local and national partners to develop a new export industry.

“We subsequently see an opportunity in permanent indigenous forests that can begin with kānuka and transition to more diverse plant species over time. There is significant potential in the commercialisation of indigenous species with associated cultural, economic, social and environmental benefits like water quality, soil conservation, biodiversity and carbon sequestration.”

Mr Caddie said several workstreams were agreed to by regional stakeholders during a consultation meeting in July on the draft report with the goal of helping the region better understand the evidence and options.

“These workstreams will enable stakeholders who have very different views on land use to continue talking and build a collective understanding of the issues.”

Hikurangi Bioactives Limited Partnership is focused on the development of high value industries based in Tairāwhiti that utilise bioactive extracts from plants and other organisms.

David Battin, CFO of Mangatu Blocks Incorporation, supported further review of opportunities and issues before making blanket views and recommendations to the public.

"Several participants aired our concerns about the bias and narrow view of the report. A number of gaps in the science and research painted a nasty picture for all pine trees and we called for balanced perspectives and realistic solutions. Those which would be addressed by other workstreams and discussions prior to confirming a 'community' position. Trust Tairāwhiti ignored these concerns in favour of a select group. The recommendation made by the author highlighted who the report is in favour of supporting and a lack of context."

Mr Battin outlined the flaws in the report's recommendations and lack of consideration for opportunities in our region.

"Additional regulations would see Council make land use decisions for landowners based not only on environmental considerations but social and economic factors. Council further controlling landowners' rights to make decisions on their land above environmental concerns. Is this what our community wants and where does the rope end? Do Trust Tairāwhiti make the same recommendations for farming, horticulture and viticulture landowners?"

"The report should have explored the opportunities for Te Tairāwhiti with permanent forestry to provide a broader and balanced view. There was no emphasis on climate change issues or the important reason pine outperforms natives trees for carbon sequestration. No real consideration of the extremely expensive, near on impossible, task of mass establishment and maintenance of native trees. Thereby vilifying those who cannot afford to plant native trees."

Mr Battin also asks Trust Tairāwhiti and participants in this report to be transparent to the public on who really has the issues and where threats will realistically come from. Mr Battin stating "Trust Tairāwhiti need to do better at consultation before representing the community in publicised information. Be transparent on who is driving this report. Especially before recommending a bias land use restriction and regulations on other

peoples' land. This type of report does not bring us together with solutions but provides another wedge in our community."

Mangatu Blocks Incorporation is a Māori held landowner with significant investment in Native and Indigenous Forests, Production (Pinus Radiata) Forests and Sheep and Beef Farming.

Daniel Williams, CEO of Ngati Porou Whanui Forests, believes landowners need to have options and the BDO report was too narrow in scope.

"There is an increasing interest in native plantings and regeneration. A key challenge remains as to how the landowners and then wider community can thrive, with a transition from what has been farming or exotic tree land use. A higher carbon price can help this" said Mr Williams.

"There also remains an interest in planting exotics for carbon. This is due to the current growth rates of exotics compared to most natives, the subsequent units allocated, then lead to financial benefits for exotics over natives."

Some forest owners will continue to harvest, as their land is pre-1990 land and does not qualify to earn carbon credits.

Mr Williams says landowners want these options. A balance between maximising financial return and maximising environmental and ecological benefits.

"This is the reason we are not in favour of anyone trying to take away these options, as has been suggested, by some, in the regional stakeholder discussions."

Renee Raroa, operations manager Toha NZ.

Toha welcomes the release of the BDO report. It is critical that all information on the projected impact of carbon markets and existing policy settings on land use in our region is available for public debate.

We believe that markets offer a solution for climate change and environmental breakdown but we need these markets to bring the regeneration of nature, financial resilience and the stability of communities into the centre.

Toha looks forward to supporting all stakeholders in Tairāwhiti find solutions that protect what is special about this region. Let's take this opportunity to harness our region's innovative spirit and shared values in this moment of significant challenge.