



STAFF REPORT

TO: Environment & Planning Subcommittee

FROM: Colin Michie, Compliance Officer

REFERENCE: RM010362

SUBJECT: **FORESTRY COMPANY MANAGEMENT OF THE SEPARATION POINT GRANITES – EP06/02/09** - Report Prepared for 15 February 2006 Environment & Planning Subcommittee Meeting

1. INTRODUCTION

Weyerhaeuser NZ Ltd was the recipient of the 2001 Tasman District Council environment award for industrial activities. That award being for three separate but related projects – one being the formation of a granite management plan to cover harvesting in Newports forest.

The timing for the plan was appropriate in that it complied with the requirements of Weyerhaeuser's Environmental Management System (ISO 140001 and ISO9001: 2000 accredited) and initial harvest planning of Newports forest block, Wangapeka catchment (comprising some 1000 hectares) was due to commence. The first trees were to be felled in 2003.

It was also seen as an opportunity to bring into one document practical working knowledge of the Separation Point granites gained by the District's forest workers and Council staff over the previous 10 years.

The plan is a "living document" – a document that has not been buried but one that has reviewed regularly to ensure that forest activities comply with standards and to recognise technical improvements that result from monitoring of activities and storm events.

The wind storm which occurred on 14 October 2004 was one such event. This leveled some 350 hectares in Newports Forest and raised a number of issues which need to be addressed by both forest management and Council staff. These include helicopter logging, the use of holding sprays*, burning as a means of preparing wind thrown areas for reforestation, and the need to clear wind thrown material from water ways. The review of the "Granite Management Plan" completed in September 2005 recognises these matters.

- Sprays which can be used to hold vegetative growth until land preparation options are finalised without exposing the ground to surface erosion.

2. HOW RELEVANT IS THE PLAN TO COUNCIL?

Weyerhaeuser NZ Ltd's, Environmental Management System (the EMS) sets out the company's standards for environmental forest management. These are comprehensive and subject to ongoing revision.

Weyerhaeuser NZ Ltd's granite management plan is specific to the Separation Point granites and along with the EMS forms the minimum acceptable standard within Land Disturbance Area 2. Collectively the requirements equal to, or tighter than required under the TRMP Land Disturbance Rules.

It has strong support from Council staff working in the Land disturbance area and is accepted by forest operators working in the area. It is also the base upon which the effects of any new techniques involving earthworks are able to be compared.

Note: All environmental incidents and EMS audits are made available to members of Weyerhaeuser NZ Ltd's Environmental Improvement Committee. This committee has met three monthly for seven years and includes a Tasman District Council representative.

3. EXAMPLE OF INCIDENT

Weyerhaeuser Environmental Incident 251

Date: 5 September 2005

Description: Boundary fence was bladed off after logs came off landing and damaged fence. Fenceline was within 10 metres of stream.

Issues Identified

By Weyerhaeuser: Potential sedimentation of waterway.

Relationship with neighbour.

Boundary had not been walked by co-ordinator.

Action Required: Ensure works are within EMS and Council rules. Complied with Council, did not comply in this instance with EMS.

4. COMMENT

One of the reasons for the formation of the granite management plan was a belief that Council would pursue through its Resource Management Plans an approved operator status. It would be my recommendation that this matter be revisited by our policy planners especially where the operator is working under an environmentally certified management system.

5. RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Subcommittee receives this report.
2. That the Subcommittee considers the possibility of pursuing, through its Resource Management Plans, an approved operator status for forestry operators.

Colin Michie
Compliance Officer