

# Forestry Policy

## Vision

**Aotearoa New Zealand has large areas of land in healthy, productive, sustainably managed forests, which contain a diversity of species, both indigenous and exotic.**

## Values and Principles

- *Honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi:* The values and tino rangatiratanga of hapū and iwi to determine what is best for forests, the forestry industry and Māori forestry workers in Aotearoa New Zealand should be upheld. This includes returning existing forestry land to hapū and iwi.
- *Ecological Wisdom:* Native forests should be protected and maintained, and most commercially-harvested forest should be in diverse and indigenous species and integrated with other land uses. Soil, water and associated dependent indigenous ecosystems should be protected.
- *Social Responsibility:* The cultural, spiritual, ecological, and recreational values New Zealanders derive from our forests should be protected and maintained.
- *Appropriate Decision-Making:* Forestry should seek to place the right tree in the right place at the right time. Mātauranga Māori should be a leading contributor to forest science and the conservation of forests nationwide. The decision-making of hapū and iwi as outlined in Matike Mai should be celebrated, and relied upon when making decisions about Aotearoa New Zealand forestry.
- *Non-Violence:* Permanent protection forests of indigenous trees (especially on erosion-prone land), shelterbelts, and shade trees should be an integral and valued part of farming operations and the rural landscape.
- *Resilience:* The forestry industry should be viable, innovative and stable with diverse commercially-harvested forests managed and harvested on a sustainable basis. Indigenous forestry should be valued as, and supported to be, a sustainable pathway forward, by all land owners.
- *International leadership:* Aotearoa New Zealand should be a world leader in sustainable management of its forests and play a key role in promoting the sustainability and protection of indigenous forests, and the leadership of Indigenous peoples in forest conservation and management, around the world.

## Summary

The Green Party will support a viable, innovative and stable forestry industry and ensure plantation forests are managed and harvested in alignment with biodiversity, carbon, pest eradication and cultural values and goals, while honouring all Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations. We will protect, maintain and increase native forests, and contribute to the sustainable management of the world's forests.

Authorised by Miriam Ross, Level 5, 108 The Terrace, Wellington

Forestry Policy --- Reviewed: 2011--- Version: 21 July 2023

## Strategic Priorities

The Green Party's strategic goals include:

*"...regenerative practices in all areas of economic activity, including land use and food production, will predominate."*

Actions in this policy that work towards this goal include:

- Provide greater opportunities for communities to create new areas of woodlots and forest reserves for soil and water conservation, recreation and biodiversity. (3.4)
- Work with industry to have at least 30% of the plantation forestry portfolio in superior high value species. (4.1)
- Enable developing countries to protect their forests by actively advocating for the establishment of a compensation and development fund, resourced by developed countries. (5.3)

## Connected Policies

See also our [Conservation](#) Policy, which contains detailed policies relating to protecting the conservation values of publicly owned indigenous forests. This policy is also linked closely with our [Environmental Protection](#) and [Energy](#) Policies.

## Policy Positions

### 1. [Honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi](#)

For Māori, the domain of Tāne, the forest, represents an intrinsic part of our identity and is fundamental to both Māori well-being and the ever-increasing Māori economy. Issues range from climate change increasingly affecting the plantation forests held in hapū ownership, to the continual loss of our indigenous forests and biodiversity. The forest is an incredibly diverse ecosystem with a strong āhua, sensibility, and mauri, that should be honoured, protected and restored for present and future generations.

#### **A. Governance and Industry Leadership**

- 1.1. Ensure that forestry policy upholds Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations and responsibilities, including tino rangatiratanga in relation to land use, and is consistent with hoki whenua mai.
- 1.2. Support an approach to forestry industry representation in policy-making that upholds tino rangatiratanga.
- 1.3. Strengthen partnerships between tangata whenua, the forestry industry and Te Uru Rākau, and other owners of forests.
- 1.4. Encourage and support the forestry industry to be guided by mātauranga Māori and Māori-led governance.
- 1.5. Protect the customary rights and intellectual property of Māori over taonga works relating to indigenous forests, fibre and plants.

## **B. Forest Conservation**

- 1.6. Prevent the degradation of our indigenous forests and support restoration efforts to grow indigenous forests across Aotearoa.
- 1.7. Continue to protect the last remnants of Kahikātea stands by prohibiting the draining of any wetlands and funding wetland restoration, including the establishment of new Kahikātea stands.

## **C. Carbon Farming and Te Tiriti o Waitangi**

- 1.8. Provide credible pathways for Māori leadership in equitably and appropriately changing emission-intensive land uses to permanent forest, to reduce gross emissions.
- 1.9. Ensure an equitable transition for Māori working in primary industries, as determined by Māori.
- 1.10. Fund Māori-led forestry research into climate adaptation and resilience, bioeconomy and biofuels.

## **2. Protecting, Maintaining and Increasing our Indigenous Forests**

### *Issues*

Originally, over 80% of Aotearoa New Zealand was covered in forest. Indiscriminate clearing of forest and conversion to farmland, together with the introduction of exotic animal and plant species, has caused significant environmental degradation with increased erosion, loss of biodiversity, and more severe flooding in deforested catchments. Although steps have been taken to preserve and restore our remaining native forests, more needs to be done.

### *Actions*

- 2.1. Amend the Forests Act to provide for public consultation on sustainable management plans and improve compliance, monitoring and enforcement of plans and permit conditions.
- 2.2. Protect the health of indigenous forests by applying clear ecological guidelines to control of introduced species, including deer, possums and goats, wilding tree species; and taking of non-timber resources (e.g. sphagnum moss and honey).
- 2.3. Increase funding, for pest control of invasive species and native forest regeneration and restoration.
- 2.4. Review and increase incentives for private and Māori landholders to protect, maintain and expand indigenous shrublands and forests on their land by:
  - 2.4.1. including all indigenous forest in the ETS and making it easier to claim carbon credits for native forests; and
  - 2.4.2. increasing funding for local authorities, the QEII National Trust and Ngā Whenua Rāhui to help landholders protect and manage areas with high conservation values.
- 2.5. Review the implementation of the Forests Act and its effectiveness in ensuring sustainable logging of indigenous forests.
- 2.6. Protect forest ecosystems from the risk of GE contamination, including by maintaining zero tolerance to viable GE-derived seed and plant imports.

### 3. Forestry and Climate Change

#### *Issues*

Our forestry sector is mostly foreign-owned and dominated by pinus radiata, a rapidly growing monoculture (and potential pest), for carbon offsets under the ETS and off-shore profits. Exotic forestry crowds out native forests and the indigenous biodiversity that they support. We are not managing or using our native forests, which are overrun by predators, and instead, we import timbers from more than 50 countries for our use.

#### *Actions*

- 3.1. Undertake research that informs and regularly updates:
  - 3.1.1. the methods used to measure carbon sequestration rates of large forests, and
  - 3.1.2. the Ministry for Primary Industries lookup tables used for smaller forests.
- 3.2. Ensure that forestry sequestration rates used by different government agencies are consistent.
- 3.3. Incentivise planting of native forest species over exotic species.
- 3.4. Provide incentives for more trees on agricultural land, by combining trees with other farming activities (such as agroforestry, silvopasture and tree intercropping), and protect our prime agricultural land and soils for regenerative and organic food production.
- 3.5. Encourage wood-based construction as a means of carbon sequestration and explore other uses for woody biomass residues that sequester carbon, such as insulation, engineered wood, soil inoculation, etc. (see our [Housing and Sustainable Communities Policy](#)).
- 3.6. As a fallback option, also explore the use of woody biomass residues for bioenergy applications to maximise on-shore use of Aotearoa New Zealand forestry products (see our [Energy Policy](#)).
- 3.7. Incentivise permanent native afforestation on land that has been fully specified, for the avoidance of doubt, as 'marginal' and prone to climate hazards (e.g., slips caused by extreme precipitation events).
- 3.8. Ensure alignment between government policies that promote carbon farming and exotic afforestation to ensure they do not also promote wilding conifer spread and adversely affect indigenous biodiversity.
- 3.9. Support research and development to encourage more domestic wood processing including:
  - 3.9.1. Developing and promoting wood as an alternative to energy and carbon intensive building products, such as steel and concrete.
  - 3.9.2. Funding research and development into converting lignin and cellulose from wood into fuels, chemical feedstock and other products to replace oil and coal derived materials.

## **4. Promoting the Environmental, Recreational and Cultural Values of our Forests**

### *Issues*

Inappropriately sited forestry can be detrimental to local cultural or scenic values. Forests need to be recognised as important for a range of social, aesthetic, recreational and environmental reasons.

### *Actions*

- 4.1. As part of environmental education, ensure that curricula, at all educational levels, teach the value of trees and forests, the ecosystems they support, and their contribution to biodiversity and carbon sequestration.
- 4.2. Support and increase public campaigns to educate all New Zealanders in the importance of trees and forests and using wood products instead of concrete, steel or plastic.
- 4.3. Encourage volunteers and public participation in tree planting, forest development and management.
- 4.4. Provide greater opportunities for communities to create new areas of woodlots and forest reserves for soil and water conservation, recreation and biodiversity.
- 4.5. Encourage the integration of research programmes, landowner's experience and educational institution's programmes to improve the development and implementation of locally appropriate tree planting and appreciation of their ecological values.

## **5. Supporting a Viable, Stable and Sustainable Forestry Industry**

### *Issues*

Commercial forestry is a key contributor to the economy and is critical to the livelihoods of many New Zealanders. Our commercial forests are particularly vulnerable to biosecurity and climatic threats due to the current dominance of pinus radiata as a plantation species and cloning.

### *Actions*

- 5.1. Work with industry to have at least 30% of the plantation forestry portfolio in superior high value species.
- 5.2. Facilitate a greater level of collaboration between growers, researchers and industry to accelerate the exchange of new information on the propagation, establishment, care and maintenance of forests in alternative species and ensure information is accessible to small operators.
- 5.3. Maintain a high level of biosecurity protection (see our [Conservation](#) policy), including taking a precautionary approach towards any proposals to create international airports in major forestry regions (see also our [Transport](#) Policy).
- 5.4. Facilitate the planting of new and diverse permanent and harvestable forests on non-conservation and State Owned Enterprise land.
- 5.5. Research, promote and encourage:
  - 5.5.1. longer rotation plantation species as an alternative to pinus radiata;

- 5.5.2. increasing the diversity of tree species grown for timber, especially encouraging those that provide high value timber and those that do not need to be treated chemically (e.g. macrocarpa, cedar, tōtara, eucalyptus);
  - 5.5.3. restoring genetic diversity to plantation forests;
  - 5.5.4. farm forestry and woodlots on agricultural land, especially lower productivity, erosion prone land and sensitive catchments;
  - 5.5.5. the establishment of collaborative marketing strategies for small lots of high value timber species; and
  - 5.5.6. a higher level of value added products and to move away from producing low value export products such as logs.
- 5.6. To support the appropriate regional implementation of resource management legislation in order to ensure that forestry is treated fairly along with other land uses.
  - 5.7. Investigate current rating mechanisms for forestry to ensure that the contribution of forestry to regional transport funds is being determined fairly when compared to other land uses.
  - 5.8. Support the regional organisation of fire services for the management and control of rural and forest fires.
  - 5.9. Ensure that the economic and social benefits of forestry are enjoyed by local communities, including by:
    - 5.9.1. Encouraging national coordination of regional training and research programmes to develop skills in all aspects of forestry and provide trade certification assessment in consultation with relevant agencies;
    - 5.9.2. Assisting regional forestry communities to develop so that nursery work, planting, environmental assessment, training, pruning, logging, processing and marketing can all be carried out by suitably qualified local people; and
    - 5.9.3. Encouraging the processing of timber products in the region in which they are grown.
  - 5.10. Retain and expand government ownership of state forests, unless they are required for settlements under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

## **6. Contributing to the Sustainable Management of the World's Forests**

### *Issues*

The effects of world forest destruction reinforce the need for us to preserve, protect and extend ours and to act internationally to improve the stock and health of the world's forests. The large-scale destruction of tropical forests as deforestation accounts for a significant amount of global carbon emissions.

### *Actions*

- 6.1. Actively work with and learn from other countries to combat unsustainable logging and trade.
- 6.2. Enable developing countries to protect their forests by actively advocating for the establishment of a compensation and development fund, resourced by developed countries.

## **7. Ensuring Wood Products are from Sustainably Managed Forests**

### *Issues*

Currently much of the world's wood is being produced on an unsustainable basis. Illegal harvesting of timber – both in Aotearoa New Zealand and overseas – undermines efforts to ensure sustainable forestry. Importing illegally harvested timber can undercut our local forestry industry. New Zealand's timber product imports have increased by approximately 70 percent over the last decade, which raises a risk of New Zealand being a conduit for the illegal timber trade.

### *Actions*

- 7.1. Prohibit the import and sale of all illegally harvested timber and wood products.
- 7.2. Require all wood products from indigenous forests (both domestic and imported) on the domestic market to be independently certified by a credible third party as being sourced from sustainably managed and harvested forests.
- 7.3. Require all timber and wood products to have clear country of origin labelling.
- 7.4. Ensure penalties provide an effective deterrent to illegal and unsustainable harvesting, processing and clear felling of indigenous forests.
- 7.5. Significantly increase funding for the Department of Conservation and other relevant government agencies, so that these agencies can effectively enforce existing legislation to protect Crown owned indigenous forests and to ensure that indigenous forests on private land are managed sustainably.
- 7.6. Require all state forests and local council forests to obtain Forest Stewardship Council certification.
- 7.7. Encourage all larger plantation forests to gain Forest Stewardship Council certification.
- 7.8. Until bans of other products are in place, promote a public education campaign in partnership with the forestry industry to encourage consumers to only buy timber and wood products that have been certified as sourced from sustainably managed and harvested forests.
- 7.9. Actively promote the use of locally grown Forest Stewardship Council-certified timber in the construction industry, particularly for government and other public buildings, as a less energy intensive alternative to concrete and steel.
- 7.10. Work in partnership with both local and foreign companies on an international marketing program for Aotearoa New Zealand wood products that are certified as sustainably grown.