

Forestry Policy

The Green Party will support the forestry sector to store carbon long-term and provide habitats for diverse species. We will ensure that forestry supports and protects the local community, including encouraging a value-added approach to forestry that involves diverse products and services. We will honour the kaitiaki role of tangata whenua and support a kaupapa Māori approach to forestry governance.

Vision

Sustainable and diverse forests benefit local communities and ecosystems.

Values and Principles

- *Honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi*: Forestry must uphold Tino rangatiratanga and respect hapū interests. Forestry practices to care for forests and their workers should align with mātauranga Māori.
- *Ecological Wisdom*: Forestry must protect and regenerate soil, water, and biodiversity. Plantings must be guided by the concepts of 'right tree in the right place' and ecosystem restoration.
- *Social Responsibility*: Forestry must safeguard cultural, spiritual, ecological, and recreational values. The industry must meet the needs of local communities, hapū, workers, and future generations.
- *Appropriate Decision-Making*: Forestry needs to be adaptive and embody kaitiakitanga, recognising deeply uncertain future growth conditions. Decision-makers should involve affected communities.
- *Non-Violence*: Forestry should be safe and productive for everyone in our forests. This includes protecting the health and safety outcomes for workers and recreational users.
- *International Leadership*: Collaborative efforts in sustainable forestry are crucial for addressing global issues. Aotearoa New Zealand must influence global forestry practices, including promoting indigenous leadership.

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:

- Ensure that the forestry industry is led by Tiriti-based governance. (1.1)
- Develop a biodiversity credits scheme for forestry, including a plan to transition to permanent indigenous forests as an alternative to the ETS. (2.2.2)

- Regulate in partnership with mana whenua for the 'right tree in the right place', to minimise damage to ecosystems. (4.1)
- Ensure that more logs are processed domestically than are exported whole. (5.2)
- Ensure that health and safety standards protect forest workers. (5.3)
- Fund and proactively support the work of Te Pou a Tane to implement its National Māori Forestry Strategy 2040. (6.1.2)

Connected Policies

Conservation and restoration of indigenous forests are covered in our [Biodiversity and Environmental Regeneration Policy](#), erosion management in our [Land Use and Soils](#) Policy, and wildfires in our Emergency Management Policy. Our [Business Policy](#) covers commercial activities more broadly and our [Climate Change Policy](#) has more on the Emissions Trading Scheme. See also our policies on the use of forestry products for [Energy](#), [Trade and Foreign Investment](#), and building [Housing and Sustainable Communities](#).

Policy Positions

1. [Māori land and Forestry](#)

Issues

Forestry is often the best option for remote, fragmented, inaccessible and erosion-prone land. Existing rules and regulations for forestry often conflict with tino rangatiratanga. This prevents iwi and hapū from realising the economic, social and environmental benefits from forestry. Māori freehold land is often held in smaller, fragmented titles rather than fee simple. This adds to the cost, complexity, and timeframes for decision-making, and creates barriers to raising capital.

Actions

- 1.1. Ensure that the forestry industry is led by Tiriti-based governance, including by:
 - 1.1.1. Resourcing iwi and hapū to work with territorial authorities to develop local forestry plans and guides;
 - 1.1.2. Supporting iwi and hapū to tailor forestry systems to suit their land; and
 - 1.1.3. Requiring forestry governing bodies to work in equitable partnership with iwi and hapū.
- 1.2. Ensure strong investment in Māori-led forestry enterprises, including by:
 - 1.2.1. Requiring public and private financial institutions to provide for collectively-held titles; and
 - 1.2.2. Developing mechanisms that enable private investment into Māori forestry projects without alienating Māori land.

2. [Carbon sequestration](#)

Issues

Long-term carbon sinks by trees are not currently prioritised. Current Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) settings provide greater incentives for exotic plantations than long-term indigenous forests.

Actions

- 2.1. Ensure that accurate information is available on how much carbon is sequestered by newly planted or reverted forests, including by:
 - 2.1.1. Funding research to monitor, collect, and disseminate accurate information on carbon sequestration in Aotearoa New Zealand, particularly for indigenous forest regeneration and long-term use of processed wood products; and
 - 2.1.2. Ensuring ETS look-up tables are regularly updated to reflect the latest research.
- 2.2. Ensure that ETS settings encourage restocking forestry in perpetuity and replanting of permanent native forests, including by:
 - 2.2.1. Ensuring any changes to the ETS guarantee security and certainty for foresters and landowners;
 - 2.2.2. Developing a biodiversity credits scheme for forestry, including a plan to transition to permanent indigenous forests, as an alternative to the ETS; and
 - 2.2.3. Returning revenue from carbon farming to regional communities to support novel forms of employment.

3. Diversity and resilience

Issues

Plantation forests that lack diversity of species and age are vulnerable to fire, pests, and disease. They are also limited in providing suitable habitats for indigenous biodiversity. Overreliance on monocultures also poses future economic risks.

Actions

- 3.1. Ensure that our forests are capable of meeting present and future pressures, demands and needs, including by:
 - 3.1.1. Incentivising foresters to develop more varied commercial forest crops and related products;
 - 3.1.2. Incentivising foresters to develop more varied management practices;
 - 3.1.3. Requiring foresters to proactively maintain and enhance indigenous biodiversity in forestry blocks, including by managing pest species and replanting felled indigenous species;
 - 3.1.4. Investigating commercial indigenous forestry outside of conservation protected areas and significant natural areas, with limited, select felling and sustainable regeneration practices; and
 - 3.1.5. Facilitating the development of new markets for diverse forestry crops.

4. Environmental protection

Issues

Clear-fell harvesting is not suitable for trees grown on erosion-prone land. The slash from harvesting on that land has led to devastating impacts on soil, water, the marine coastal environment, and neighbouring communities. There is also major infrastructure damage and a

loss of biomass. In some areas, poor management of exotic forestry has led to the spread of wilding pines, which are an environmental nuisance.

Actions

- 4.1. Regulate in partnership with mana whenua for the 'right tree in the right place', to minimise damage to ecosystems, including by:
 - 4.1.1. Ensuring resource management processes set environmental standards and provide direction for locally appropriate forestry that contributes positively to its environment, including:
 - 4.1.1.1. Managing forestry slash;
 - 4.1.1.2. Avoiding large-scale clear felling; and
 - 4.1.1.3. Managing impacts on water.
 - 4.1.2. Requiring forestry activities to establish plans to minimise and mitigate adverse ecological impacts, before getting planning permission.

5. Benefits and opportunities for local communities

Issues

Some commercial foresters are not always compliant with industry standards. Whole logs exported without processing, and biomass waste are missed opportunities. Resources for monitoring health and safety standards for forest workers are insufficient.

Actions

- 5.1. Ensure that forestry operators comply with industry standards, including by:
 - 5.1.1. Strengthening penalties for failure to comply with legal obligations, including environmental standards and health and safety requirements; and
 - 5.1.2. Increasing local council resources to monitor and enforce forestry standards.
- 5.2. Ensuring that more logs are processed domestically than are exported whole, including by:
 - 5.2.1. Increasing domestic processing of timber;
 - 5.2.2. Supporting the implementation of Te Ara Whakahou-Ahumahi Ngahere;
 - 5.2.3. Incentivising domestically produced wood products that retain the long-term carbon stored by the timber; and
 - 5.2.4. Prioritising the public procurement of domestically produced forest products, such as engineered timber for public buildings.
- 5.3. Ensure that health and safety standards protect forest workers, including by:
 - 5.3.1. Improving the protections and security of forestry workers' employment;
 - 5.3.2. Enabling sector-based bargaining in the forestry sector to include the representation of casual workers and contractors; and
 - 5.3.3. Resourcing WorkSafe and the Labour Inspectorate to monitor, review and enforce standards in the forestry sector.

6. Kaitiakitanga and Forestry

Issues

Values shape the Māori approach to whenua. As kaitiakitanga, Māori place great importance on protecting forest and water ecosystems. Forests are also a source of food and medicines. There are challenges related to the high cost and need for proven methods to establish native forest. Incentives are not enough to address the true costs of establishing indigenous forestry on whenua Māori.

Actions

- 6.1. Ensure that Mātauranga Māori informs Māori stewardship of forestry, including by:
 - 6.1.1. Funding ongoing Māori-led forestry research into climate adaptation and resilience, bioeconomy and biofuels; and
 - 6.1.2. Funding and proactively supporting the work of Te Pou a Tane to implement its National Māori Forestry Strategy 2040.