

Mackenzie District Mayor

From: Alpine Recreation <climb@alpinerecreation.com>
Sent: Saturday, 30 March 2013 3:05 p.m.
To: Mackenzie District Mayor; Graeme Page; Graham smith; annette money; Evan Williams; Alpine Vista B & B; John Bishop
Cc: MURRAY COX; PETER MUNRO; Alan Hayman; radlee@xtra.co.nz
Subject: Proposed clear-felling of Section A and B in Tekapo Forest - refer to map provided by Council

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

Before you make a decision to fell all the mature trees in the Tekapo plantation you need to ask yourself the following questions:

- 1) Will there be sufficient net profit from milling the trees, after all costs are taken into account, that will justify the loss of wind shelter, odour protection, recreation and aesthetic amenity? If the Forestry Board generally aims for a 3% net return for harvesting operations in the Mackenzie Basin, in this case will that be achieved, once all the additional, out-of-the-ordinary costs are deducted, and even if it is achieved, is that small a return worth it, when you consider the negative effects?
- 2) The Tekapo forest was planted originally for wind shelter and screening for the sewerage ponds and rubbish dump and has been recognised for over 40 years as a valuable recreational resource and green belt, backing the township. Does the Council have a right to mill the majority of the trees?
- 3) As Tekapo continues to develop as a tourist town and the harvesting of trees in this area becomes increasingly problematical, because of the adverse effects so close to residences, does it make sense to mill all of the best areas for recreation, when in the longer-term this forest will no longer be used primarily as a production plantation?

Unless you can answer the above questions with a totally confident "yes", then you should NOT be voting to mill the trees now.

This is the forest we have now (in Section B):



The next photos show the area of forest which has been milled previously. Even after 15 years we are not going to get back the kind of park-like forest we have in the top photo.



- c) Delaying felling for a year would allow time for a cost benefit analysis to be undertaken to assess whether the trees (specifically those in section B) are more valuable to the Lake Tekapo Community and Mackenzie District intact, as part of the region's existing natural assets that are VITAL in attracting tourist dollars. Lake Tekapo is a growing community and apart from the necessity of Council providing quality recreation areas for existing and future residents, natural areas such as the Lake Tekapo Forest provide an additional activity for tourists that (cumulatively with other natural assets in the town) encourage them to stay longer. Recreational use of the Tekapo Forest has increased over the years and its convenient access makes the forest a desirable recreation destination. Also, the low cost of recreational experiences for walkers, runners and cyclists and quality recreation opportunities contribute to the attractiveness of the forest and the township as a whole, providing a point of difference with other places, where such outdoor recreation opportunities are not so accessible. Currently, the Mackenzie District records approximately 450,000 guest nights per annum (source: Christchurch & Canterbury Tourism). A significant number of these guest nights occur in Lake Tekapo. It follows that the more quality activities we have to offer, more tourists will visit the region and stay longer. If visitors stay longer in Lake Tekapo, they are more likely to make day trips to visit Fairlie, Twizel and Mt Cook and thus the whole region benefits. **The Tekapo Springs I-Site have stated that the most frequently asked question from tourists is where the local walks are.** The pine forest (Section B) is the closest sheltered walk/cycle way within easy reach from the village and forms an integral and aesthetically pleasing part of the Cowan's Hill Track.
- e) Delaying milling the pine forest would allow time to develop a long term management plan for the forest, which explores all the options that best serve the community and region as a whole. For example, options of milling, part milling or no milling and purchase of the trees by individuals or the community could be further investigated as well as roles and responsibilities for future management. Models for long term management could be developed, including the community taking over managing the forest (as is currently the case for the Tekapo Regional Park). **The advice given to the Tekapo Community Board at the time of their making the decision to support the Forestry Board's proposal to fell was misleading. They were told it would be a heavy burden to ratepayers to take on the management of the forest and yet the amount spent in the last financial year was less than \$1000.**

It should be noted that increasingly in New Zealand, forested areas are providing real and tangible benefits for local and regional communities in multiple ways other than for timber harvesting. For example, the Whakarewarewa Forest in Rotorua generates millions of dollars through provision of mountain bike and walking trails and The Goat Adventure Run in Tongariro is a good example of forest outdoor events that stimulate local economies and raise funds for community groups by increasing local and international tourists. The most recent issue of 'Tourism Business (Feb-Mar 2013) includes a feature article on tourism regions reaping increasing benefits from the growth of outdoor adventure events. It is feasible that in the future, the Mackenzie region could host more outdoor events or even promote a network of 'Great Mackenzie Country Walks' or similar, building on the success of the Great Walks network.

If Councillors are honest with themselves they will acknowledge that the future of this forest lies in recreation primarily, not commercial forestry. That being the case it does not make good sense to clear-fell all of Section B. Section B has been selectively logged previously and is quite an open forest. Wind-throw has not been a problem in this area. To quote one of our local residents from Switzerland: "Clear felling is certainly no option for Lake Tekapo, if we want to be a destination for recreation and tourism." The outskirts of Tekapo are already showing the devastation of clear-felling, creating a "rape and pillage" impression. Let us not make it worse by clear-felling so close to the village itself.

In conclusion, given the value placed on this forest by the community, it would be beneficial for the Council to be seen to be engaging with the local community and other stakeholders to find a way forward to allow for the wide range of uses the forest can provide. As a first step the Council simply needs to defer the decision to log for a year. Once the trees are cut down it's too late to go back and try to re-create what was there.

Mackenzie District Mayor

From: Tim Rayward <tim@airsafaris.co.nz>
Sent: Monday, 1 April 2013 10:07 p.m.
To: Mackenzie District Mayor
Subject: Tekapo Pine Forest

Hi Claire,

Hope you had a good Easter and got a bit of a break.

We wanted to express our concerns at the proposed clear felling of the Tekapo Pine Forest.

This area is a tremendous recreational asset to the local community (young & old) and visitors alike. The tracks and trails are all well used and it is amazing to see the number of huts and bike jumps throughout the plantation being built by kids (I grew up playing there in the 1970's and early 80's and it's really nice to see the next generation getting the same enjoyment of the area)

It is concerning to see the push (from some) for short term financial gains over the well-being of our community. I believe the plantation was not planted primarily for commercial logging more as a recreational asset and shelter to the town.

We are also seeing first hand the mess left behind by recent commercial logging around town. There are also plenty of areas logged years ago with messy piles of trees that will take forever to rot away in our climate.

We are in full support of the submissions from Tracey Bell and others.

A 12 month hold would give everybody time to explore all options going forward.

Look forward to catching up.

Kind Regards,
Tim & Penny Rayward
8 Mackenzie Street
Lake Tekapo