Welcome to the Spring / Summer issue of TREEline. You’ll find inside more great stories about visionary private foresters, committed to their dreams. Well done Brian Baxter for being awarded the Landcare Australia Primary Producer Award 2009 and Mark and Georgina Cornelius, the deserving recipients of the 2009 Stihl-AFG Tasmanian Tree Farmer of the Year award. These committed private forest owners, like most others, don’t pursue their passion for sustainable forest management to win awards, they do it because they are genuinely committed to the principles involved and as a consequence are reaping the benefits. Great role models!

And it’s the Baxters and Corneliuses of the world that contribute in no small way to the findings revealed in a recent report titled “Measuring the Economic Value of Private Forests to the Tasmanian Economy” that was released by David Llewellyn MP, Minister for Energy and Resources late last year. The report (available on the PFT website) was commissioned by the Board of Private Forests Tasmania as part of the review of the roles and functions of PFT. The report was prepared by IMC-Link with the principal consultants being Dr Bruce Felmingham and Alexis Wadsley who were employed to examine and report on:

- The economic value that the private forestry sector makes to the Tasmanian economy;
- This value relative to other sectors of the Tasmanian economy;
- The value that the private forestry sector contributes to the environment; and
- The potential value that the private forestry sector could contribute to the State.

Without going into too much detail, the report highlighted the following economic impacts of the private forestry sector on the Tasmanian economy:

- Contributes $450 to $650 million annually to the Tasmanian Gross State Product (GSP);
- Contributes $225 to $290 million annually to wages income; and
- Is responsible for the creation of 5,171 to 5,400 full time equivalent jobs directly and indirectly across all Tasmanian industries.

These figures succinctly confirm what most of us have known for years that the private forestry sector is a huge contributor to the State with the potential to contribute even more – “the sleeping giant” - but unfortunately as this goes to print we are receiving daily reminders that all is not well in our industry right now. With the global financial crisis still biting hard on our markets, and opponents of our industry seeking to exploit this opportunity by attempting to discredit our products in the highly competitive market place, there is evidence of severe hardship and pain along the entire forestry supply chain. Resource owners (including the State) and their employees, processing plants owners and their employees, contractors and their employees, the massive network of service providers to the industry and communities in general are all being impacted. In the end this is all about people hurting – our friends, our families, our colleagues. We are all in this together and we must do all we can to support each other – particularly those who are shouldering the major impacts.

Tom Fisk
Chief Executive Officer

Brian Baxter, recipient of the Landcare Australia Primary Producer Award 2009

Congratulations to Brian Baxter, recipient of the Landcare Australia Primary Producer Award 2009.

Private Forests Tasmania has had a long association with Brian and recognises Brian as a forest owner who has made a long-term commitment to forest management and has sustainably managed his forests for the benefit of his family, future generations and the wider community.

Brian is an innovative landholder who respects the land and manages it for the benefit of future generations. He is a role model for both Landcare and private forest growers,
Field day at Brian Baxter’s – spreading the word on sound forestry management

Brian Baxter with eucalyptus seedling in regenerating native forest

a member of TAMAR Natural Resources Management Committee, and a member of Australian Forest Growers. Brian has excelled in agricultural production, conservation management and forestry practices. No doubt Brian’s forestry enterprise contributed to him receiving the Landcare Australia Primary Producer Award.

Brian’s 693ha property ‘Greenside’ is an outstanding example of a well-managed mixed-grazing farm which has over 30% forest cover managed over the last 30 years for sustainable wood production and conservation. An outstanding feature of ‘Greenside’ is the integration of forestry and agriculture on the ground such that they complement each other. Brian runs wool, fat lambs and Angus cattle as well as growing poppies, wheat and lucerne. Shelter is important to reduce wind chill and thus both reduce animal food intake and improve animal health.

When the property was further developed in the 1970’s and 80’s about 214ha of native forest, in 2 to 20ha blocks, was retained. This forest showed signs of dieback due to exposure and grazing of the regeneration by livestock. About 30 km of fencing has been put in place around all native forest blocks, creeks and wetlands to control livestock and native browsing animals. Some funding assistance was provided by TAMAR NRM, Envirofund and Greening Australia on the condition that livestock be generally excluded for 10 years. Brian built another 6.5 km of fencing on his boundary with state forest to help exclude wallabies and kangaroos that were grazing forests and pastures on ‘Greenside’.

Over the last 13 years most of the forest blocks have been selectively harvested to maintain shelter, improve quality and health of the forests and provide conservation benefits. Creek edges, and some white gum stands badly affected by dieback, have not been harvested. Brian, being the harvesting contractor, was able to closely supervise the operations. Brian has endeavored to successfully regenerate all harvested areas consistent with Forest Practices Code standards. Soil disturbance during harvesting, exclusion of livestock and native browsing animals together with weed control have resulted in good natural regeneration.

The 60 ha of eucalypt plantations include two large shelterbelts which were harvested for poles and pulpwood in 2006. About 50ha is in joint venture which will be harvested in about 7 years. In hindsight, Brian would have planted plantations much earlier so as to have received income by now.

Other recent forestry activities include revegetation with direct seeding and environmental plantings in partnership with a Melbourne-based furniture retailer, who manufactures furniture in Tasmania, and is keen to ‘put back into the environment’. Over the years Brian has hosted field days to share his experiences and knowledge with other farmers, private forest owners and foresters. The private forestry sector is proud of the many private forest growers, like Brian, who manage their forests for future generations to both enjoy and share the benefits.

Arthur Lyons
Regional Forester

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Stihl – Australian Forest Growers Tasmanian Tree Farmers of the Year 2009

The coveted Stihl-AFG Tree Farmer of the Year 2009 (TAS) award was awarded to Mark and Georgina Cornelius in recognition of the native forest estate they have developed and managed for sustainable forest production and conservation. The award was announced by Warwick Ragg, Executive Officer, Australian Forest Growers and presented by Mr Rob Beseler, Victorian Territory Manager for STIHL at the Annual Farm Forestry Dinner in Launceston in August. Mark and Georgina received a plaque; a Stihl MS390 Farmboss chainsaw and $1,500 from AFG (TAS) to assist them attend the 2010 Biennial National AFG Farm Forestry Conference.

Mark & Georgina Cornelius decided they needed a business ‘tree change’ from fishing and began to purchase land from 1996 with the objective of producing high quality eucalypt sawlog timber well into the future. Today they own nine properties totalling about 5,700 hectares over three renowned forestry areas of Tasmania – the central highlands, southern Tasmania and the east coast. Mark and Georgina have set aside over 1,900 hectares in reserves and conservation areas. They selectively harvest wood annually, producing products ranging from high-value sawlogs to lower-value pulpwood. Through careful forest management they are demonstrating that this approach to land stewardship will be sustainable for many future generations. Over 56% of the total estate is managed for native forest wood production, 9% for eucalypt plantation and significantly 34% of the forest is reserved including 1,344 hectares of conservation covenants. This is highly commendable by anyone’s standards.

Mark and Georgina purchased their first property in 1996 and their most recent in 2008. Their holdings are briefly summarised below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
<th>Production (ha)</th>
<th>Informal Reserves (ha)</th>
<th>Conservation Covenants (ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woodbury Hill</td>
<td>Tunbridge Tier</td>
<td>2200</td>
<td>700 450</td>
<td></td>
<td>1050 Poa grasses, E. rodwayi, E. viminalis and peppermints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enfield</td>
<td>Tunbridge Tier</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>280 16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17 E. viminalis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cahill</td>
<td>Tunbridge Tier</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>320 50</td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Clyde Run</td>
<td>Central Highlands</td>
<td>1550</td>
<td>1,000 E. delegatensis</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>150 E. rodwayi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Leake</td>
<td>Lake Leake</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>380 E. delegatensis</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>77 E. rodwayi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badger Hill</td>
<td>Badgers Hill</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>270</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judds Creek</td>
<td>Huon Valley</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>80 E. regnans</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braeside Road</td>
<td>Huon Valley</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>37 E. obliqua 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogs head</td>
<td>Lake Sorell</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>121 E. delegatensis</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The jewel in the crown is ‘Woodbury Hill’. This was the first property purchased by Mark and Georgina. It is 2200 hectares and is located near Tunbridge Tier. Not long after purchase Mark obtained a lucrative contract to produce 10,000 hop poles for hop fields in the Derwent Valley. The poles were selectively harvested from a combination of Eucalyptus dalrympleana and E. delegatensis forests. Prior to being purchased by Mark and Georgina ‘Woodbury Hill’ had a long history of producing top
quality sawlogs that were highly sought after by local sawmills. Unfortunately, previous poor forest practices left some areas degraded and Mark and Georgina decided to lease 450 hectares of this land for plantation forestry. Mark and Georgina have set aside over 1,050 hectares of ‘Woodbury Hill’ in a conservation covenant to maintain Poa grasses, *E. rodwayi, E. viminalis* and Peppermints for future generations. About 700 hectares of predominantly *E. delegatensis* forest are managed through selective harvesting for commercial forestry production.

Through careful management Mark and Georgina are endeavouring to produce mainly sawlog and peelers with a minimal amount ending up as pulpwood. They aim to leave a high basal area to allow for more regular harvests. Mechanical harvesters are preferred as these allow for more precise felling and reduce the damage to retained trees. Mark and Georgina work very closely with the harvesting crew to ensure the objectives are met and good forest practices are maintained to enable maximum returns now and in the future. The residue from the harvesting areas is formed into small heaps using an excavator and burnt at the optimum time to produce a good seed bed for regeneration and to reduce potential fire risk. They collect their own seed on site and this is used to regenerate the harvested areas. Mark chemically culls dense stands of regrowth saplings to allow the trees with good form to continue growing.

Mark maintains a ‘hands-on’ approach to inventory and has up to 30 tree plots on each property to monitor tree growth. This inventory data helps Mark work out timeframes for future harvesting.

Each year an attempt is made to do cool fuel reduction burns to safeguard these valuable areas from wildfires. Fire breaks are maintained on regular bases with contract machinery.

When Mark was asked where his initial knowledge was gained he replied, “I read up all I could on the long nights I spent as a commercial crayfisherman. The rest of the knowledge has been acquired from watching, listening, asking and adapting ideas to suit our own goals.” Knowledge gained at various forestry field days has been an invaluable part of shaping our outlook. Mark is exploring avenues to see a portion of future harvested timber going to the peeler market for overseas export.

*Arthur Lyons*
Regional Forester
One of Private Forests Tasmania’s (PFT) functions, in fact it is more appropriate to call it a passionate obsession, is to encourage and facilitate an increase in the area of “plantations” (in all their forms) on private property throughout Tasmania for the multiple benefits that accrue to all those involved – income for landowners, resource for industry, shelter for crops and livestock, aesthetic enhancement of properties, biodiversity, salinity and erosion control, carbon sequestration – the list goes on and on, but I know we are preaching to the converted here.

However, the creation of new forests can be a costly and long-term activity and the truth of the matter is it isn’t an easy task to achieve a quality outcome. So bearing this in mind PFT has been looking for ways to assist landowners achieve their tree-planting goals in a cost-effective way without compromising quality. One way of doing this is to bring together forestry professionals with funds and a willingness to plant trees with likeminded landowners who are prepared to enter partnership agreements to achieve their common objectives – more trees in the landscape.

One such opportunity that we can help you with is now available through Forestry Tasmania’s “Trees on Farms” project and we include below some comments from Forestry Tasmania in relation to their initiative:
In time PFT hopes to have a range of such initiatives to introduce to landowners including options from some of the industrial plantation companies and even options specifically targeting biodiversity, biomass and / or carbon plantings. In the meantime the Forestry Tasmania initiative is an opportunity well worth considering. As indicated above information is available directly from Forestry Tasmania but you can also get information from your local PFT office.

Tom Fisk
Chief Executive Officer
Invitation
Farm Forestry Field Day

Presented by Private Forests Tasmania and Carol & Tony O’Neil

When: Thursday 4 March 2010
Location: Carol & Tony O’Neils’ property ‘Ark Rest’
574 Castra Road (Cnr Edinborough Rd), Abbotsham
Time: 10:00 am to 3:00 pm
Free BBQ Lunch and Olive Oil Tasting

The O’Neils’ 13 ha hobby farm was initially maintained as a small cattle grazing unit. In 1982-85 they took up a State government Special Species Grant and planted 2.5ha of non-productive steep land with Blackwood, inter- planted with nurse-crops of Pinus radiata, Eucalyptus globulus, E. nitens and E. delegatensis. In 1995 they embarked on a new venture and planted 500 olive trees of 15 varieties. In 2008 they harvested the mature eucalypts and pines. The remaining blackwoods will be grown on for another 10 or so years to produce high-value timber. The O’Neils have invested in a brand new olive oil press to produce their award-winning Cradle Coast Olive Oil.

Topics of the day:-

• Harvesting volumes and returns
  Eucalyptus globulus, E. nitens, E. delegatensis and Pinus radiata - look at the clearfelled site and coppicing regeneration
• Blackwood Trial
  Growth and volume projections following the removal of outer perimeter pines
• Olive production
  Newly commissioned olive oil press - walk through the olive grove - replanted with proven varieties
• Future venture
  Avocado prospects
• Maximising land use
  Cattle farming; tree growing; olive production; and conservation

RSVP by Tuesday 2 March 2010

For additional information and RSVP, please contact
Henry Chan 6434 6285 or Tracey King 6434 7260 Email: tracey.king@privateforests.tas.gov.au

Disclaimer: TREE Line is published quarterly by Private Forests Tasmania as a means of communicating to those interested in sustainable native forest and plantation management in Tasmania. Every reasonable endeavour has been used to ensure that the material is accurate at the time of publication. No legal responsibility can or will be accepted by Private Forests Tasmania for the accuracy, completeness, or relevance of such information to the user’s purpose. Before undertaking any significant forestry project it is recommended that you seek personal professional advice from Private Forests Tasmania on the particular matter.

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