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Tena koutou

Kua tae tonu mai te hotoke, na reira kohia nga kai o te ngahuru, hauhakehia te taewa, poroa he wahie hai whakamahana i te kohanga...

Hope all is good throughout the marua. This newsletter updates you on our projects as we go into the first wintry days of 2011.

Tawa Extraction

We have completed our trial for tawa extraction at Te Tahora. The trial went well despite some hiccups and we saw some our millers create some beautiful timber from the logs. Here's some photos of the activity...



Trustee Supervision!!!



Preparing Sawlogs



The bandsawmill at work...



...turns out beautiful timber.

We ran out of time to do Ngati Manunui's milling in the same week so this is being done very soon, hopefully as we go to print with this newsletter. If you're interested take a look.

The issues being put to the test in the trial included:

- alignment with our goal of restoring Podocarps
- what it takes to produce timber in this way - what are the jobs, how to run the operation, marketing and sales
- how many jobs does such an operate create
- the environmental impact and how to minimise this
- running a small-scale operation that will not run the timber resources down
- how much of such an operation we could do ourselves instead of bringing people so it is a Tuawhenua owned and operated operation
- what are the underlying economics and how do these compare with other options like conservation covenants (Whenua Rahui) or carbon credit sales

Out of our trial, we have positive answers to many of these questions but we're interested in what everyone thinks about these issues too. Later in May we will run a discussion workshop and will post a notice at the shop inviting all interested to attend. We will present the results of the trial and further discuss the potential for developing an industry around indigenous forestry in this region.

Deer Recovery

There has been a lot of interest in the trial we are running for this project. Areas have been identified by hunters around the marua for exclusion from the trial, so those accessible deer are still fair game for the locals!

We were going to run the trial in early March but our chopper operator could not do the job until late in the month - too close to the roar!! We have decided instead to put the trial off until May, after the roar is over.

Honey

We are pleased to report that Nick Mitai has taken up the opportunity to train in beekeeping and that he has been for his first week long lesson in the Wairarapa, as well as enrolling on the Telford Polytechnic Correspondence Course. Nick learnt a lot by being 'thrown in the deep end' and worked with hundreds of hives doing different things in just that short time. As the self-claimed resident expert on bee-keeping in Ruatahuna, Taawi feels threatened already by Nick and is working hard to keep his edge!!!

We are planning now for a trial of about 50 hives for the next season in order to crop different honeys and test them in the global market.

Land Capability Assessment

This work is now underway and is being done by Norm Ngapo, a consultant in soil conservation and land use planning, of Ohope. Norm has in hand geological and other kinds of maps to help him in his work. He has looked over the Farm lands and checked out Tuawhenua lands accessible by road. Anthony took Norm out by chopper over the Tuawhenua lands to check them out from the air.

If you see Norm going about his work, please look after him. His report will immensely helpful for all Tuawhenua lands and the Ruatahuna Farm for future planning and land use.

Possum Research

We were honoured to host Bruce Warburton and Chris Jones early in March for a presentation on possums. There were so many interesting things in their presentation, we're unable to repeat them here. But if you're interested in a copy, please see our notice board at the shop or call our office for a copy.

We continue to work with Landcare research on possum research. Beau Riini, Anthony Te Kurapa and Tom Ata were amongst those interviewed on their possuming practices, and Slaine Rangiahua was selected to work with Landcare researchers in setting up a monitoring system for the possum research.

Possums have been researched over many years, but it has focused in the past on methods for control by agencies such as DOC or AHB. The difference with this research is that it focuses on the trapper – what you do, how and why, and the response of possums to trapping.

Overall the research is looking at the underlying economics of possum trapping and how a 'top-up' by say DOC or AHB for the trapper might encourage more people to do more trapping.

Tuhoe Tuawhenua Trust Scholarship

We are committed to encouraging the younger people of the Tuawhenua to learn about and train in the areas that we are focusing on in our strategies for the Tuawhenua. Currently our strategies focus on conservation, indigenous forest management, apiculture (beekeeping), and carbon credits.

Despite our meagre income, we are establishing a scholarship now to signal our commitment to this kind of development. Preference will be given to candidates whose development can be clearly demonstrated to be integrated with the development strategies and programmes of the Trust for the Tuawhenua. The scholarship will be awarded as candidates present themselves, or are identified, for training and development.

This is a different kind of scholarship to the kind of scholarship we are all used to. The scholarship is designed to not just be a monetary award. The scholarship may also involve support for successful candidates in gaining placement in relevant study courses, on-the-job training or work experience. It may also involve employment by the Trust in holidays or at the end of the training period.

In general, the monies associated with the award may be used for the payment of study course fees and/or other expenses associated with study courses or on-the-job training. The Trust will consider the needs of each candidate according to the nature of the development being undertaken.

For 2011, we have awarded a scholarship in apiculture (beekeeping) to Nick Mitai. The scholarship is for a total of \$1500 in 2011. The scholarship involves:

- arrangement of placement in relevant study courses or on-the-job training
- payment of study course fees
- payment of other expenses associated with study courses or on-the-job training

We have been late in establishing the scholarship and making the award this year. In future, we will notify the marua on the target for this scholarship in October each year in preparation for awarding the scholarship in the following year.

Conclusion

We have made some progress on our projects this year but still have a busy time in front of us. If you are interested in any way in our activities or projects then please let our trustees or the office know.

A, kati...

Na nga Kaitiaki o Te Tuawhenua

Do you know this about tawa?

The Tree

Tawa is a kind of laurel and belongs to the same family of trees as the bay laurel (from which we get bay leaves) and the cherry laurel which we know locally as kotukutuku.

The flowers are inconspicuous, minute and green and are borne sparsely in clusters, which are 3-6cm long. The flower stalks are slender, loosely branched, and arise from leaf axils near the branch tips. The flowers are pollinated during the spring months but many drop off during the summer. Those that remain persist as undeveloped structures through the following winter, but during the ensuing spring the fruit develops. It ripens and falls off the tree between January and March, some eighteen months after the appearance of the flower buds. The fruit is produced annually in quantity, but in some years fruiting is more prolific than in others.

When ripe the fruit is a plum-shaped, dark purple, smooth and shiny berry, each with a single enclosed seed. The berries are an important late summer source of food for the kereru. Apart from gravity, this bird is the main agent of dispersal for the species with the seed passing unharmed through the birds' digestive tract.

Tawa is a strongly shade tolerant species which characteristically forms a dense all-aged underwood beneath a partial canopy of tall, emergent podocarps. In heavy shade, suppressed seedlings and coppice can survive, making negligible height growth for as long as fifty years. However, following death or windthrow in the canopy, tawa saplings and seedlings will grow actively to fill the gaps which are created. Tawa is most at home, and reaches its best form, as part of a high forest where its crowns are sheltered by scattered emergent podocarps. Following the removal of protection afforded by these emergents, either as a result of age, wind damage or timber harvesting, the tawa canopy deteriorates. Dieback especially of the larger trees, probably as a result of frost, sun scorch or wind desiccation follows.

The Uses

Tawa was used as a medicine in combination with rimu bark and tutu as a lotion for treatment of wounds while the bark purportedly provided concoctions which alleviated pains in the stomach, and cold symptoms. An infusion of the bark from a related species in Malaysia was used for the treatment of internal complaints following childbirth.

The timber which is easily split and straight grained, provided our tipuna with a favourite raw material for fashioning bird spears, some of which were over 10 metres in length. Logs were split longitudinally to half or quarter sections, and spears were fashioned from the whitewood, termed 'ngako'. The requirements were very specific, and only the wood that was located half way between the centre of the tree and the outside was used. The spears were split from this region of the tree and then scraped with stone flakes and finally rubbed smooth using pumice stones. The creation of spears was often spread over a period of up to two years and usually only one, but occasionally up to three spears, could be fashioned from one tree. Needless to say such spears were highly prized. Long straight rods of tawa were also used for battens in the roofs and sides of Maori houses, and war canoe paddles were also furnished out of tawa timber.

The fruit of tawa was known as 'pokerehu'. Both the flesh and the kernels were used as food in olden times. Tawa berries were collected in quantity from under the tawa trees. They were placed in water and trampled to separate the outer pulp from the kernels. The kernels were then steamed and dried. The dried kernels could be stored for long periods without deterioration and when ready to be used they were steamed or boiled to soften them. Kernels treated in this way are quite palatable, vaguely reminiscent of potatoes.

The wood of tawa is a whitish colour turning to a bright creamy-brown on seasoning. There is little difference in appearance between the heartwood and sapwood though large trees have a contrasting black pathological central zone known as 'black heart' in the timber trade. The grain is very straight making it easy to split. The texture is moderately fine and the figure is lustrous and even with a tendency to be flecked. Its sawing qualities are good and it dresses and polishes well, and it is easy to turn.

The wood of tawa has an inherently low moisture content even when freshly cut. This has led to its use as firewood, though it has generally been recognized as a species which does not provide a great deal of heat. The timber is odourless which undoubtedly had an influence on its early use in the dairy

industry. During the 1800's it was used in the manufacture of butter churns, butter kegs, buckets, tubs and casks. Later its machining, turning and staining qualities, which are similar to oak, led to the better grades being used in house trims, rotary cut veneer, furniture, flooring, turned handles, clothes pegs, etc. Poorer grades found their way into house framing, and heads for loose cooperage and dunnage on boats. The biggest single use of tawa occurred in the 1990's when significant quantities of it were converted to short fibred pulp for the manufacture of fine writing and printing papers.

Next to the beeches, tawa ranks as the major native hardwood for production of furniture, dowelling, handles and general turnery, as well as in strip flooring.

Te Kūrapa, spearing birds, depicted here on the rafter of the great house Te Whai-a-te-motu, Mātātua marae, Ruatāhuna.

His tao (spear) is made of tawa, as is the taahu (centre ridgepole) of Te Whai-a-te-motu.

