



Australian Forest Growers
Creating the future for private forestry

Tassie blue gum plantations field day post mortem

Mt Lofty Ranges-Kangaroo Island Branch Newsletter
Winter 2010 Issue no. 45



ABL may be 'no longer', but the trees are still growing, ... what will their future hold?

Some rather random points for consideration and future discussion:

Some said if the trees provided nothing other than habitat and amenity that would be fine.

After hearing a little about past projects evaluating firewood harvesting and marketing, a number of other options yet to materialise at least locally were mooted:

- Carbon markets—currently limited to voluntary markets eg CarbonSmart
- Pyrolysis (cooking wood chips) to produce diesel-like fuels
- Bio-energy harvesting as per Europe
- Production and export of fuel pellets eg 400,000 tonnes export from Albany
- Hardwood sawlog—limited by reliability of supply, lack of any local hardwood industry, regardless of any technical challenges of growing Tassie blue gum sawlogs



Firewood is however a real local (Adelaide) market, but is currently almost entirely based on red gum

- The future of Adelaide's tens of thousands of tonnes of red gum firewood coming from NSW is 'in question' so in the long run 'beggars (consumers) may not be choosers'; even if there is currently a strong preference for red gum over other species of firewood

**AGM: 6.30pm Friday 27th August Willunga Old Bush Inn (top pub main street).
All welcome; free first drinks (beer, wine and soft drink) for members.
RSVP by 21/8 to p_bulman@bigpond.com or stone.jm@bigpond.com**

- Past and future progressive price increases in energy/firewood have the scope to increase returns to growers if the harvesting, processing and marketing is coordinated and efficient
- A ‘good result’ from marketing of the 200t of mixed gum from the Meadows project by Greg Traeger from *Adelaide Wholesale Landscaping Supplies* (Lonsdale) and a forward contract is essential for ‘satisfaction’ from the *Twin Oaks* trees

Twin Oaks experience—Nick Anderson

- The plantation will go back to pasture at some stage; either now or in a few years pending a few factors
- Young trees <11-12 years old are mainly sapwood – good for pulp but not for firewood (too light and quick burning, expensive to harvest/process and almost hygroscopic)
- The *Twin Oaks* trees are now progressively increasing their proportion of heartwood which is much denser – becoming better for firewood rather than pulp
- The current standing volume and air-dried tonnage have been estimated and compared with predicted volumes and weights after 3-5 more growing seasons
- Subject to a forward contract at an agreed price for delivered dry debarked logs to Lonsdale ready for processing, the net returns for the grower are expected to be vastly superior if the trees are allowed to grow on and increase density for a few years



Another option for growers might be if Tony Williams from *SAPlantation Logging* develops a firewood enterprise. He is currently evaluating a prospective firewood enterprise with a 500t-trial from Alistair Just’s younger plantation somewhere near Myponga. Tony is considering offering a per green tonne upfront payment—so he takes the risks and rewards associated with the processing and marketing.

It would seem that growers would need to make comparisons of their own risks and rewards before deciding which path if any to follow.



Where to from here?

1. All the ABL plantations are a fair way off harvesting, maybe there is nothing to do other than keep a finger on the pulse of what happens at *Twin Oaks*.
2. Other ideas suggested was a follow up in spring for a session with Greg Traeger and Tony Williams (both would have liked to attend the field day but were unable to make it).
3. Pursue non-firewood options as per dot points on the first page.

The *Mt Lofty Ranges-Kangaroo Island* branch of *Australian Forest Growers* will continue to respond and help so long as the level of interest warrants it.

What you need to do:

Email (preferably) or call and provide feedback on the field day, advise what you would be interested in (as above or whatever), and if you can help in any way (local AFG members are all volunteers). Contact Jill Stone President stone.jm@bigpond.com (04) 0769-5029 or Peter Bulman p_bulman@bigpond.com 0408 395 055]

Register of growers so far

Name			E-mail	Phone	Address
Geoff Hodgson (PIRSA)	AFG	Attended	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jill Stone AFG	AFG	Attended	Yes	Yes	Yes
Robert Long AFG	AFG	Attended	Yes	Yes	Yes
Clare Buswell AFG	AFG	Apology	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ben Harris	AFG	Attended	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rosemary, Gordon & Brad Smith	AFG	Attended	Yes	Yes	Yes
Roger Hughes	AFG	Attended	No	Yes	Yes
Peter Thompson	AFG	Attended	Yes	Yes	Yes
Diana & Graeme Pinkney	Joining?	Attended	Yes	Yes	Yes
David Kleinig	AFG	Attended	Yes	Yes	Yes
Power, Damian	In hand	Attended	Yes	Yes	Yes
Allan Straiton (& Karen)	AFG	Attended	Yes	Yes	Yes
Colin & Pauline Blacker	Joining?	Attended	No	Yes	No
Alan Brown	\$20 pd	Attended	No	Yes	No
Tony and Barbara Walter		Absent?	No	Yes	No
Wayne & Helen Airey	Joining?	Attended	No	Yes	No
Trevor Paech	AFG	Attended	Yes	Yes	Yes
Charlie Nott	\$20 pd?	Absent?	Wrong	No	No

This list of names was put together from the names list (left over name tags) prepared from those who registered and two receipts (one with and one without a name?).

The bits **highlighted in red** are what’s needed for effective communication, preferably by email.

The other ABL growers who didn’t attend the field day will probably appreciate being updated, but they will need to be contacted through Geoff Hodgson as the ABL go-between.

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