

Evidence to submission hearing for SR and BJ Williams Charitable Trust

My name is Tim Forde and I currently farm a 211 ha property in the Elsthorpe District and also run a forestry advisory and management business. I have been involved in farming and forestry business for over 50 years, specialising in the integration of forestry in commercial farming ventures.

I originally trained with NZ forest service and NZ forestry school in the 1970's and have worked for numerous companies in a variety of regions in NZ. I have been involved for over 45 years and currently still am a member of the NZ Farm Forestry Assn and am on the executive committee as well as president of our local branch of the association and an appointed trustee of the NZ poplar and willow research trust.

The incorporation of Poplar Agro Forestry development on fragile soils throughout New Zealand for erosion protection to enhance opportunities to sustain livestock farming and create future timber resources, is very much an angle I have experience in and a keen interest.

At a recent site inspection with Lawrence Yule, we were able to see the evidence of considerable soil movement throughout the coastal margin resulting in significant erosion in these areas. The most stable sections of the slopes are where poplars have been planted albeit due the aging of the poplars showing some deterioration is leading to the efficiency of stabilisation by these trees to be lowered.

The SR and BJ Williams Charitable Trust has enlisted my services to progressively plant large areas of the property with open spaced poplars to reduce the risk of storm-based erosion and earth flows.

The planting plan for RM230016 completed by Wayfinder is very comprehensive with some practical and future proofing recommendations.

In my opinion the new proposed native, poplar and eucalypts programme will significantly reduce the erosion risk on the slopes behind the houses. The existing large poplars are nearing the end of their useful life. The new plantings should first be established under these trees and a progressive poisoning regime should be activated to allow a gradual removal of the large poplars. This will allow the new trees to provide root strength against erosion before the existing tree roots die, and will allow for the gradual change to the landscape.

Root structures of the poplar tree can be as much as 18 m from the trunk of the tree in all directions in trees as young as 12 years old, with root penetration to a depth helping to stabilise soils. Poplar tree roots graft on to neighbouring tree roots of the same species which forms a strong network of roots in the ground.

The beautification of the area will be increased with the Wayfinder planting plan and will be complimented by the deciduous nature of the poplar tree. The loss of leaves during the winter allows for other species such as native seedings etc to be established underneath the poplars.

Tim Forde

