

OPEN

MINUTE ITEM

ATTACHMENTS

**Ordinary meeting of the
Forestry Subcommittee
*Te Kōmiti Āpiti, Ngahere***

**Wednesday 23 June 2021
Commencing at 1.00p.m.
Council Chamber**

**Floor 2A, Civic House,
110 Trafalgar Street, Nelson**

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Forestry Subcommittee Hearing

24 June 2021

Kia ora katou katoa, Good afternoon.

My name is Nadine Connock and I am speaking today as a resident of Teal Valley.

Teal Valley residents are here today to advise caution and warning, regarding council's recent executive partnership with Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC) certification.

A partnership with the FSC may be a "milestone" for the finance and treasury interests. But it is a gravestone for environmental and public health. And quite frankly, a nail in the coffin for council's eight values of good governance.

(The following notes are sourced from FSC-watch.com)

Currently, the Environmental and Social Risk Assessment (ESRA) and New Zealand Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Economic Cluster Group support the use of specific herbicides in FSC Certified Plantation Forests. These agencies claim to provide risk assessments for a range of values with detailed reasoning and mitigation strategies defined to reduce risks related to the application of agrichemicals.

FSC has been found to have [serious erosion of reliability and credibility](#); do not carry out audits or conduct a strong enough role in regulating auditors; and conflicts of interest; impartiality; and bias are a factor.

Findings of studies from Sweden, Mexico, Indonesia and other countries have reported FSC certification **did not** reduce forest degradation.

Greenpeace International has withdrawn membership from FSC due to the failure of FSC to protect natural forests from exploitation; citing FSC as no more than a tool for forestry and timber extraction, and a cover for trafficking in illegal timber and industry related scandals.

International NGOs are concerned FSC acts as a market governance tool; a barrier to International Trade; and lack of transparency and accountability regulation has allowed for delays, postponements and excuses into investigations of deforestation and human rights abuses.

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Simon Counsell, ex founding member of FSC set up [FSC Watch](#) as a direct result of the following concerns:

1. The certifying bodies (assessors) are paid by the companies wanting to get certified. It is in the assessors' interest not to get a reputation for being too "difficult", otherwise they will not be hired in future. This is a clear [conflict of interest](#).
2. FSC certifies [industrial tree plantations](#). Vast areas of monocultures have been certified as "well managed", despite the impacts on the environment and local communities.
3. If a company doesn't comply with the Principles and Criteria, assessors can issue [corrective action requests](#). So, at the time a consumer is buying the certified product, the certified company may still be in the process of complying.
4. The [mixed sources](#) label is a joke. No one (possibly excluding a handful of employees at FSC) knows what this actually means. And [controlled](#) (sic) [wood](#) is a sham.
5. FSC is certifying [carbon offset](#) projects. Carbon trading will not address climate change, because it allows pollution elsewhere to continue. Some of FSC's most egregious certifications involved [carbon projects in Uganda](#).
6. The certifying bodies have a [stranglehold](#) over the FSC International Secretariat.
7. FSC certifies the logging of [primary forests](#).
8. The [complaints mechanism](#) doesn't work.
9. FSC does not address the underlying causes of deforestation. If a destructive logging company does not want to get certified (Rimbunan Hijau, for example), there is absolutely nothing that FSC can do. Rather than attempting to address [over-consumption](#), FSC encourages consumption, provided the product carries an FSC label.
10. Despite increasing criticism (including in recent years from [Greenpeace](#)), several key NGO members leaving ([FERN](#), [FoE EWNI](#), [Robin Wood](#), [SSNC](#) etc.), FSC has stubbornly refused to address the structural problems that the organisation faces.

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In addition to a number of concerns, in 2004, a paper written by Dr Barry Tomkins criticising the criteria applied to the use of forestry chemicals (herbicides) was published in Australian Forestry. Dr. Tomkins wrote:

“at that time, the FSC had 3 major criteria and it was quite easy to demonstrate that the approach was pseudo-scientific. The FSC has added another 7 criteria since then but the approach remains pseudo-scientific. Furthermore, the FSC does not recognise national regulatory organisations and processes but seeks to apply their criteria over such sovereign acts of governing bodies. The FSC also never acknowledges external criticisms pertaining to the use of chemicals, despite the fact that their use still comes under labelling, which is controlled by national and state regulation. In short, there is no acceptable peer review; if there was, the FSC processes pertaining to chemical use would be shown to be pseudo-scientific and would collapse. Bad science is just that, but when combined with and governed by ideological considerations, is positively dangerous”.

FSC ‘research’ papers list DowAgro and DowAgrosciences as funders.

Dow Chemical is one of the largest chemical companies. In [2012, the European Parliament suspended funding to the European Safety Authority \(Efsa\) for six months over conflict-of-interest allegations linking scientific and environmental](#) concerns with the pesticide panel after it emerged scientists reviewing the safety of Agrichemicals received a six-figure donation from Monsanto and Croplife International.

Agrichemicals are a \$3.5 trillion industry.

Teal Valley residents are living and experiencing the direct impacts of Forestry Management under FSC guidelines. We can reassure you, as boundary neighbours and stakeholders, that we are not experiencing environmentally acceptable practices; mutual trust or respect; accountability; or credibility.

We are experiencing noise pollution; contamination; breaches of practices and standards; and non – compliance.

Every time we draw attention to TPFL or N.C.C we are shut down with false claims of reassurance that they are just operating under as per FSC standards.

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We are met with evasive communication; stone-walling and closed communication in respect to monitoring and regulation breaches.

Under Forestry Management practices supported by the FSC, Teal Valley has zero environmental or public health protection. There is no recognition for the Teal Valley river status as a significant water body; a taonga; a national treasure of biodiversity and rare aquatic species; a tributary to Delaware Bay and Wakapuaka Inlet, and N.C.C's own FMU. Or any other freshwater and biodiversity values protecting ecological and indigenous ecosystems and freshwater organisms.

There is no recognition for a N.C.C designated SNA site with rare and threatened birds; heritage and native trees which is now disrupted as a boundary infringement activity with a helicopter aerial spraying skid site.

There is no recognition of the proximity to sensitive areas, schools and domestic water abstractions. There is an early childhood education facility operating in the forest.

So we are here today to ask the N.C.C a question:

As a unitary authority, with your responsibilities to uphold environmental and public health protections, maintain successful partnerships operating with ethical behaviour; under law; public trust and values of good governance, with no conflicts of interest, pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests; can you effectively uphold your responsibilities and regulatory functions, now that you are executively partnering with the FSC?

Thank you.

Ends.

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