



Summer in the Nelson office: Ready, Set, Go!

By Rhys Black (Graduate Forester)

As I am a recent acquisition to the IFS Growth family as of December last year, I can only offer a snapshot view of personal experience and opinions I have developed since climbing aboard, but here are my two cents as a graduate forester in IFS Growth's Nelson office.

Rolling up the sleeves and getting down and dirty with my mate blackberry

Initially, I needed to familiarise myself with the new area and forests, and what better way to do that than branching out in the forest and experiencing the benefits of thick understory growth. Pictured is one of the more severe blocks that summer student Dan Montgomery and I had to cut and climb our way into. Safe to say Nelson management made good use of us over the summer by getting us to complete a series of jobs that no one was particularly keen on. Almost as if we were going through a bit of a right of passage. Thorns and prickles aside, it was a good way to get familiar with the area, even if it was at our sacrifice.



Fire season

It is pleasing to inform that we did not have any of the forests we manage affected by the recent fires in the area. We were also very fortunate to have contractors fall outside of the machine restriction zone during the ban, so it was very much business as usual for us over that period. It is a scary reminder of just how quickly things can get out of control over such a short time span and is a crying shame to see peoples livelihood going up in smoke. Pictured is the earlier stage of the fire. I would like to commend those who assisted with the firefight and the wonderful community support that came out in abundance throughout the trying times. It was also encouraging to see this risk being mitigated in-house with Upper Hutt Forester, Colin Bradley, reiterating Forest Fire Risk Management Guidelines. Moving forward I believe that this is something that every community should invest time into understanding and cultivating as New Zealand's climate continues to more frequently visit extremities.

Southbound

Recently I was fortunate to visit the IFS Growth team down in Southland. The main purpose of my visit was to utilise the experience and wisdom rooted deep within the southern office, particularly around the woodlot procurement and harvesting operations. I learned of the company's humble beginnings where the OneForest model was germinated and has since grown to be one of the company's core strengths. For those who aren't familiar, it is the benefit we can offer to individual woodlot owners by representing their forest as a collective entity to provide the benefits of a large-scale operation. I would like to use this space to say thank you to those who shared their time and experience with me. It's times like these that really make you appreciate growing alongside an inclusive and family-oriented company. As a budding forester, I truly am at an advantage with the level of support available within this diverse workforce portfolio.

Moving forward, what is on the horizon?

The Nelson office has a growing opportunity to develop a strong relationship with the Nelson, Tasman and Marlborough communities as a series of woodlots and large-scale forests come "online" and near harvest maturity. Just like any other region we have healthy competition among other well-established contractors, small, and large-scale forest management companies in order to successfully conclude woodlot procurements and forest acquisitions. As we continue to build our reputation in the area, it is refreshing to hear positive responses and inquiries about our movements. It doesn't take long for communities to work out there are some quality new pine nuts on the scene.

