



LOGGING MURCHISON CAMPING GROUND

Introduction

Overhead 1: Location of Murchison in Relation to Nelson, Picton, Blenheim and the West Coast.

The Murchison Motor Camp is located 2kms north of Murchison on State Highway 6 and bordered by the Buller River, DOC Kahikatea reserve, and the Murchison Cemetery.

11,000 volt and 240 volt powerlines are present both in and around the camp.

Some 1,250 vehicles pass daily including the local area school bus and as no rail service exists a large number of freight trucks.

The camp site is a Reserve and administered by the Tasman District Council who lease out the management.

PF Olsen and Company Ltd received a Letter of Commission from the Superintendent of Parks and Reserves stating there is a conflict with too many trees on the site, thus causing excessive shade and the taller trees represented a danger to campers

Present on the site were around 500 tonnes of 60 year old Douglas fir. Removal of these trees would have a large visual impact and may not be well received by the local residents.

Selective logging leaving the smaller trees could be a consideration.

Tasman District Council required the job to be done professionally in all areas, and efficiently, leaving the site clean and useable on completion. Revenue from the log sale would build a new ablution block.

Physical constraints

Overhead 2: Camp layout/location

The existing physical restraints were the powerlines, ablution blocks, septic tanks, State Highway, playground, caravan points, and water pipes, all very obvious.

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Not so obvious initially were the expectations of other parties including the leasees, DOC, Power Authority, Transit NZ and an arborists report commissioned by TDC.

For example:

1. 50% of the camp was to be inhabitable from 4pm each afternoon;
2. DOC, Kahikatea Reserve on boundary of NO GO area;
3. Transit: ✦ maximum of 10 minute stoppages,
✦ news paper advertisements in 4 news papers,
✦ applicants must meet the cost of supervision by Works Consultancy Services.
4. Power Authority - could not do any prevention work without charging for it, ie pulling fuses etc.

The weather played a big part in the timing of the operation and Summer was the obvious time to harvest, but that was the busiest time for the camp with school holidays and presented the potential for loss of income.

Tackling the problems

Firstly to choose a logger who would willingly work in this situation and appreciate the other values of the area, and would work diligently and methodically through the task and its problems.

An on site inspection was arranged involving the camp managers (lessee), TDC Parks and Reserves superintendent (owners' representative), logger (Craig Fiddymont) and Olsens' manager (Arnie Richards).

This inspection would take a few hours and I decided this was an appropriate time to start paying for the loggers services (hourly/daily rate). The logger would be paid for his expertise and time spent on the site planning if need be tree by tree.

I had visited the site before this visit and had given considerable thought to how the job would be addressed. I had a plan in mind and some field notes.

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The site visit took place 29 April 1996, four hours were spent discussing the job from skid location through to final expectations of all parties.

This proved a very worthwhile exercise although I do not believe some people understood the magnitude of the change about to take place.

Overhead 3: Arborists report - 1 page

More discussion

The arborists report identified 25-30 specimen trees with individual recommendations. These were discussed and found to be unworkable. However all reasonable steps were to be taken to avoid damaging all other trees and regenerating native.

Unanimous agreement was crucial to the job going ahead. Agreement was reached and all D.fir excluding a small clump on the northern end of the camp would be felled. One large D.fir was to be left near the cemetery and road to the caretaker's residence.

Reality

How would this work and who needed to be involved?

1. Logger - Craig Fiddymont
2. Tasman Energy - local power authority electricians
3. PF Olsen and Company Ltd manager - Arnie Richards
4. Transit NZ

Logger

Craig Fiddymont, 15 years logging in the Nelson region. For the last 5 years Craig has worked for PF Olsen and Company Ltd both ground based and highlead hauler.

For this job Craig would have two men and two machines, a Clark 666D skidder and a LX 100 Hitachi RTFEL.

Craig would do all the felling and the communications with the road workers. The job would be run from the felling area and four radios were required to speak to the Stop/Go people.

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For example where possible more than one tree would be felled at any one traffic stoppage in order to minimise the number of stoppages. This would depend upon the degree of felling difficulty of each tree.

Local Power Authority

Electricians would be on site when requested, they would remove lines and one pole in advance and do some minor changes around the camp to assist with caravan points and camp operations. All their communication was with the camp lessee.

PF Olsen and Company Ltd - would:

1. gain all necessary permits from Transit NZ;
2. submit a Traffic Management Plan;
3. employ staff to carry out traffic management;
4. place advertisements in 4 news papers;
5. communicate with all interested parties, DOC, TDC, camp mangers etc;
6. set up log sale, contracts, etc.

Positive involvement in the community

Having the community supporting the removal of the trees would be a huge plus in the eyes of Council.

To minimise potential bad feeling that could be caused by the sight of assets being taken from the local community in the form of logs, it was pertinent to try to involve the community in some way.

can enlarge on, time permitting, eg white for traffic control, explaining to people waiting to go through etc

The obvious way to me was to employ local people as Traffic Managers. The local bowling club was approached two weeks before the operation was due to commence. Three retired gentlemen volunteered and they would gladly invoice for their services.

Not only were they briefed early on Traffic Management but also the reasons for the trees being felled, in this case to reduce shading and ice on the corner in winter and to build new ablutions in the camp ground.

The "bush telegraph" worked superbly, not one bad comment was heard on the job but many positive ones were. The local bowling club was on the payroll and it was definitely a win win situation.



Job details

On the 20th of May the job started, the mean top height of the D.fir was 38.4 meters with mean DBH 72.4cm (ranging from 28 to 120cm).
420 tonnes would be harvested and sold to a Nelson sawmill.

Harvesting

Projected vs Actual Value

Following a MARVL inventory a letter outlining the volume for sale was sent to prospective purchasers.

The accuracy of this information is crucial especially when dealing with high value species.

Overhead 4: Letter to Purchasers

This overhead shows consistency of both the log maker and the MARVL inventory.

Cutting Instructions

Overhead 5: cutting instructions

Cut to purchasers instructions 100%. It is dangerous to assume you know better.

Why cut 2.5m from Butt and then 12.9m?

Summary

Each party relies totally on another to do exactly what they have been employed to and not deviate without notification to others. One party in this job got out of step and caused a four hour delay.
(Example)

Overhead 6: (as per overhead 1) Camp

In the final analysis, did we collectively achieve the initial goal? I believe we did.

1. The Council had the job done on time and without incident;
 2. The camp remained open throughout the job;
 3. The sawmiller received the projected volume on time and within specification;
 4. The local community had positive input and supported the job being done;
 5. All parties would be happy to work together in the future. This was the case September 1996, Hunter Brown archaeological reserve.
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Final comment

Professionalism

The success of this operation depended on prior agreement between all interested parties of work timing, method, and implementation. If one interested party had not been included in discussions prior to commencement, the success of the operation could have been compromised, eg loss of 2 hours only.

Overhead 7: loggers
