

Strategic, governance, and leadership

1. All Nelson City Council forested lands (the 10,000+ hectares) should be managed as a single, multi-purpose forest system encompassing all conservation, water and landscape reserves.
2. Nelson City Council should create a senior-level, forest systems leadership role (reporting directly to the Chief Executive), with accountability for ensuring strategic oversight, integration and coordination of all Nelson City Council forest management – including restoration, weed and pest control, investment and transition operations.
3. Nelson City Council should develop a long-term strategic plan for all Nelson City Council forested lands that is designed to achieve desired values and opportunities while mitigating major risks, e.g. weeds, pests and particularly climate change.
4. Future governance and management of Nelson City Council's forest lands should include an independent community entity to maintain a tangata whenua and intergenerational input, plus facilitate private and public investment in all future forest management.
5. Given the high numbers of invasive weeds and pests in the entire forest estate and the potential (and actual) biodiversity loss in indigenous forests, there is an urgent need to acknowledge this degradation and to develop and implement strategic, landscape-based approaches to reduce pest damage and thus protect biodiversity.

Commercial forested lands

6. All current commercial forests should be transitioned to continuous canopy forest systems (mostly of mixed species) to best meet community values and address climate risks.
7. To improve the transition's affordability, Nelson City Council should undertake an independent costs and benefit analysis to identify opportunities to raise revenue via:
 - a. selling identified cutting rights to select stands for one rotation, inclusive of conditions relating to: ongoing public access, forest management, harvesting, time frames and hand-back
 - b. optimising New Zealand Emission Trading Scheme benefits from eligible stands
 - c. using local government powers to raise loans or levies through facilities specifically supporting nature-based investments.
8. All forest returns (and carbon credits) earned since the forests were reregistered into the New Zealand Emission Trading Scheme are to be 'ring-fenced' in Nelson City Council accounts, to help fund forest transitions and restoration
9. Nelson City Council should implement a Geographic Information Systems - based, forest management system for data storage, mapping, analytics, and financial records for all forested lands.

10. All forest stand transitions should have a site-specific plan based on assessing and mapping, for example, using Geographic Information Systems mapping and landscape planning (of soils, slope, aspect, access, weed profile, soil moisture, and any cross boundary impacts), to determine or identify: goals that the plan addresses, species fit, the resilient forest type desired, and projected costs to canopy closure.

11. The species included in any and all transition plantings should be those, based on the current state of knowledge, that best contribute to the ultimate goal of a resilient, biodiverse, continuous-canopy, tall-tree forest, within soil and topographical constraints

12. Passive regeneration (without any augmented plantings) should not be attempted on Nelson City Council commercial forest lands, whether pre-1990 or post-1989, New Zealand Emission Trading Scheme registered or not, without a thorough assessment of the risk that the land could end up being classified as 'deforested'.

13. All transitions should take account of realistic transition costs

Recommendations requiring immediate action:

14. Recommendations to Nelson City Council Chief Executive to cease all harvesting immediately

Note: Recommendation accepted and actioned

15. Recommendations to Nelson City Council Chief Executive to commission essential weed control on cleared stands over the 2023/24 summer and

Note: Recommendation acceptance pending

Catchment transition options and high priority areas for action

16. It is recommended that all currently bare land, identified in catchment stand-by stand assessments as 'currently cleared or awaiting transition' be a priority for transition planning and action, and any reforestation requirements of pre-1990 stands or post1989 New Zealand Emission Trading Scheme requirements be taken into account.

17. Priority should be given to transitioning stands 9.04, 9.05 and 9.07, of young P. radiata and draining into the Maitai Dam reservoir and the south branch of the Maitai River just upstream of the water intake, and stand 9.02, a cleared stand but now infested with wilding pines and also upstream of the water intake

18. Priority should be given to enhancing protection of the Roding water catchment areas upstream of the supply intake. Enhancement of riparian margins and transition options should both be priorities.

19. Priority should be given to riparian plantings on the steep gully section of stand 42.05 in the Marsden catchment below Glider Road. It is at high risk of erosion, with the sediment potentially entering Poorman Stream.