



Public Briefing Paper for

**Forest Management FSC Certification Annual Audit 2013 of  
Hikurangi Forest Farms Ltd  
in Gisborne, New Zealand**

**June 13, 2013**

**Introduction** - The Rainforest Alliance is conducting forest management and chain of custody Annual Audit of Hikurangi Forest Farms Ltd. The forest area under the scope of this certificate (SW-FM/COC-001605) is located in Gisborne, with a total certified area of approximately 35,000 hectares consisting mainly of Pinus Radiata plantations.

At this Annual Audit 2013, the audit team will visit a sample of sites from the **16<sup>th</sup>** to the **18<sup>th</sup> of July of 2013**.

**Scope of the Annual Audit 2013** – The forest management certification audit will assess the environmental, silvicultural and socioeconomic aspects of the forests and plantations managed by Hikurangi Forest Farms Ltd., using the *Rainforest Alliance Interim Standard for Assessing Forest Management in New Zealand* and *FM-35 Rainforest Alliance Chain-of-Custody Standard for Forest Management Enterprises (FMEs) February 2009*. To obtain a copy of the applicable guidelines or to make comments about these standards, please contact Rainforest Alliance by telephone, fax, email or website listed below. Please note that the standard may be modified to take account of stakeholder comments. Rainforest Alliance is accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council™ (FSC®) and this assessment process must follow procedures which have been approved by the FSC.

The forest under evaluation contains areas either identified as High Conservation Value Forests or where high conservation values, as defined by the FSC, are likely found. Mainly cultural and historic sites belonging to HCV6 (forest areas critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity) and a much smaller area belonging to HCV3, forest areas that are in or contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems. Rainforest Alliance evaluates the identification, management and protection of these High Conservation Values and solicits related comments from stakeholders

**Audit Team Composition** - The audit team will be led by Mr. Bruce Hall (Forester) and will include Dr. Brenda Baillie (Freshwater Scientist).

**Audit Steps and Schedule** – Following is a short description of the certification process and a tentative agenda:

- ◆ Audit organization – The audit team will assemble at the Hikurangi Forest Farms office in Gisborne on the 16<sup>th</sup> of July, 2013.
- ◆ Field visits – The team will visit sites managed by Hikurangi Forest Farms during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of July, 2013
- ◆ Stakeholder consultation – Throughout the fieldwork, the team will contact local stakeholders regarding Hikurangi Forest Farms forest management in towns surrounding the forest area. This may include private interviews and discussions, and public stakeholder meetings.
- ◆ Final audit briefing – On the 18<sup>th</sup> of July, the team will meet with Hikurangi Forest Farms managers to finalize their data collection and present preliminary findings.
- ◆ Draft report production – The audit team will produce a confidential draft report that will be submitted for comment to Hikurangi Forest Farms as well as internal Rainforest Alliance reviewers.
- ◆ Certification decision – Upon receipt of comments on the draft report from Hikurangi Forest Farms forest managers and reviewers, and other general stakeholders comments, Rainforest Alliance will reach a certification decision. Barring unforeseen obstacles, this should occur by mid August 2013.

**Your Input Sought** – As a part of the forest certification process we invite stakeholders to offer comment and feedback on Hikurangi Forest Farms forest management in relation to compliance with the requirements of the forest management standard referenced above as well as comments on the management and protection of High conservation Values within the forest under evaluation. We welcome input, either public or confidential, in whatever form is easiest and most secure for you. Your input will be valuable at any stage of the process, but we would prefer to receive your comments either prior to the Audit, during the Audit, or prior to 18<sup>th</sup> of July so that we can take them into consideration in reaching a certification decision. Your options for communicating your observations to us are as follows:

1. Meet with a Rainforest Alliance audit team member during or shortly after the fieldwork. Please, contact Lead Auditor Mr. Bruce Hall for arrangements.
2. Call and give comments to Anita Neville, Representative of the Rainforest Alliance. If this person is not in the office, please contact Task Manager, Maria R Gismero.
3. Submit written comments by mail, fax or email to Anita Neville. Unless you request otherwise, these comments will be kept confidential and are solely for the purposes of assessing Hikurangi Forest Farms.

The source of any information provided will be kept confidential available to only the FSC and Rainforest Alliance staff.

Stakeholders who may wish to dispute any aspect of the forest certification process or decision can access Rainforest Alliance's Complaints, Appeals and Dispute resolution procedures at [www.rainforest-allaince.org](http://www.rainforest-allaince.org),

## Contacting Rainforest Alliance

- ◆ Email: [aneville.consultant@ra.org](mailto:aneville.consultant@ra.org) for Rainforest Alliance Representative.
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