



Harvesting Of Trees On Sacred Site Has Blessing Of Owners

Case Study No. 3:

Harvesting of 20ha of radiata pine on land sacred to Tuwharetoa included harvesting around the site of Te Wai U O Tuwharetoa - the spring whose waters nurtured Tuwharetoa himself. Collectively known as the Kawerau A8D Block, they are administered by the Kawerau A8D Trust.

Trust chairman Tomairangi Fox says it goes without saying the sale of the trees was not a decision that was taken lightly by the Trust, given the spiritual and cultural significance of the site. "In the end, we went with Woodmetrics. They offered a competitive tendering process and undertook to achieve the best prices on our behalf. As well as achieving top dollar, the process was totally transparent. That's what really appealed to us. All the bids were on the table and we could see who was offering what. However, what really clinched it for us was the rapport we struck up with Woodmetrics' regional account manager, Peter Harington, from Rotorua. Peter provides tremendous service and is totally open in his dealings with us. And he respects our culture."

Fox, who recently put his seal of approval on the forest sale, says the planting of trees on and around Otukoiro, the mountain which overlooks the spring, saved it (the spring) from extinction. Fox thanks the foresight of his late father, Haki Peata (John Henry Fox), and others of his generation for planting the area in trees back in the Sixties. "The spring site and surrounding land were earmarked under the old Tasman Enabling Act to become a sludge pond for one of the nearby Kawerau mills," says Fox. "Without utilisation of the land for forestry, its existence today would be confined to history." Speaking from Tohia O Te Rangi, the Ngai Tamarangi Tuwharetoa marae his father founded, Fox says many people don't realise the iwi of Tuwharetoa had its origins in the vicinity of the spring known traditionally as Waitahanui or Te Kete Poutama. "Tuwharetoa himself was nurtured by the spring. Its warm waters were used to suckle the future rangatira. The literal translation of Te Wai U O Tuwharetoa is the breast milk of Tuwharetoa."