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Forestry Monitoring Report: Agricola El Brinzal

Original Report: http://ciperchile.cl/pdfs/03-2013/harvard/Informe_AIFBN.pdf

Translation by David Gullette, '62 for the Responsible Investment at Harvard Coalition

Forestry Monitoring Report: Agricola El Brinzal, Ancud, Chiloé

Document prepared according to the protocols of "Citizen-based Forestry Monitoring" as part of the larger project REDUCTION OF LEVELS OF DEFORESTATION AND DEGRADATION OF NATIVE WOODLANDS

ASSOCIATION OF FORESTRY ENGINEERS FOR NATIVE WOODLANDS (AIFBN) First Semester 2012

INTRODUCTION:

The company known as Agricola El Brinzal, with offices in the city of Viña del Mar, has been buying up rural property in the province of Chiloé, mainly in the township of Ancud. Since 2010, according to the conservation registry of Real Estate transactions in Ancud, the company has acquired 24 different rural properties amounting to a total of roughly 2,800 hectares.

Although the eucalyptus plantings undertaken in Chiloé in recent years (thanks to the subsidies offered under the decrees of Law 701) have been in small to medium-sized properties, these massive purchases of contiguous properties to create huge plantations of eucalyptus is something never seen before in Chiloé. This situation is a perfect example of the expansion of the disastrous model of forestry currently being practiced in central Chile.

What has happened here is that the company changed their initial plans for more than one of the plantations, and has undertaken the destruction of native woodlands—trees in various states of growth and density— with the aim of replacing them with large plantings of only eucalyptus. This report on the activities of Agricola El Brinzal is based on the work done by the ASSOCIATION OF FORESTRY ENGINEERS FOR NATIVE WOODLANDS as part of its program of Forestry Monitoring.

Materials and Methods

Given the characteristics of the work undertaken by Agricola El Brinzal, we've worked up a registry of all the parcels registered with the Conservator of Real Estate of Ancud. From all these we chose one property, Parcel #18 in Colonia Degañ, which according to informants is where the company has been massively substituting a monoculture of eucalyptus for the native woodlands.

Our decision to focus on this particular parcel was partly based on satellite images that indicate a great loss of native woodlands

Thanks to the Google Earth satellite images from 2005 and 2010, we made a "photo-interpretation" of the various types of land use, following the methodology of the Survey and Evaluation of Plant Resources of Chile (CONAMA-CONAF). As a result we worked up a preliminary map of the current land use in the area, and a simple comparison between the situation in 2005 and

In 2010, looking for changes in surface vegetation. With his cartographic information, we selected four sectors in the zone to visit.

During our first visit to the area we were able to walk around 2 of the 4 selected sectors, but later we visited other sectors where we were able to witness large scale replacement of native woodlands (with eucalyptus).

We also looked carefully at presumably protected watershed areas, large and small, to see if they too had been planted with eucalyptus.

Results

Although our original plan was to study Parcel 18 in Colonia Degañ, we added Parcel 23, located slightly north of the first one. This too is one of the properties bought by the company, and is composed of 7 smaller holdings which total 1,240 hectares.

In both Parcels 18 and 23 we saw areas intensively planted with eucalyptus in place of native Woodland; there were also open fields and bushy shrublands, both planted without respect for the watershed.

As for the supplanted native woodlands, there are variables that make it difficult to identify all the trees.

Using our work with “photo-identification” of satellite images back in the office, in addition to noting the obvious degradation and loss of native woodlands between 2005 and 2010, we were able to identify the woods that had been lost as mature evergreen forests composed of Coigüe, Canelo and Tepú, plus others composed of Ulmo, Tapa and Canelo. This process of degradation was caused for the most part by extracting wood, and can be described as a way of “preparing” the land for plantations of eucalyptus. The situation we encountered in these sectors corresponds to what informants had already told us, some of whom the company had offered cash to buy out their parcels, putting a higher price on land “already cleared of its trees.” These practices encourage eucalyptus plantations on already-degraded native woodlands, which currently represent about 25% of the tree cover in the area.

In the following boxes we identify the different sectors where this substitution of eucalyptus for what was previously native woodlands:

Box #1: Sectors where native woodlands have been degraded or clearcut to prepare for eucalyptus

Number	East Coordinate	North Coordinate	Observations	Registry number
1	610216	5342360	Replacement of recently degraded woodland of Coigüe-Tepú-Canelo; At present only scattered remnants of mature Coigües replaced by eucalyptus	1192-18
2	610191	5342429	Replacement of recently degraded woodland of Coigüe-Tepú-Canelo; At present only scattered remnants of mature Coigües replaced by eucalyptus	1192-18
3	609002	5342988	Degraded Woodland, scattered Coigüe-Tepú,	1192-18
4	609527	5342115	Clearcutting of Coigüe-Tepú-Canelo	1192-18
5	610002	5342468	Replacement of recently degraded woodland of Ulmo, Luma, Avellano, Tapa, Meli y Luma, with eucalyptus	1192-18
6	610180	5342542	Replacement of recently degraded woodland of Ulmo, Luma, Avellano, Tapa, Meli y Luma, with eucalyptus	1192-18
7	609950	5342420	Replacement of recently degraded woodland of Ulmo, Luma, Avellano, Tapa, Meli y Luma, with eucalyptus	1192-18

What’s more, in a series of other sectors we observed eucalyptus plantations in what should be protected watershed area: (Box #2)

Number	East Coord.	North Coord.	Observations	Registry number
12	611098	5342556	Eucalyptus	1192-15

			planted 3 meters from the Caulle estuary	
13	610747	5342392	Eucalyptus planted 2 meters from the Caulle estuary	1192-15
14	611146	5342412	Eucalyptus planted 3 at the head of the watershed	1192-18
15	611916	5341055	Eucalyptus planted 3 meters from a stream	1192-63

Conclusions

According to the data compiled on location we conclude that the company [Agricola El Brinzal] is committing a series of violations of the Law on Native Woodlands (Law 20.283) These violations correspond mainly to the cutting of native hardwood trees in various states of development and density, followed by replacing them with eucalyptus plantations. Although these woodlands have been undergoing a steady process of degradation for the last seven years, it is obvious that the remaining trees are still covered by what the legislation defines as "woodlands."

An important element to consider is that the properties visited have been massively planted—both in the sectors with degraded native Woodland, as well as Woods composed of saplings, or with open fields or scrub growth. In those areas where there is no evidence of pre-existing woodlands before the planting of eucalyptus, one would need to determine if these properties are bound by agreements to engage in reforestation or "natural regeneration" [by native species], according to the original management norms laid out by the decrees of Law 701. If this is the case, we are witnessing a series of new infractions. In terms of watersheds, we witnessed at least 4 eucalyptus plantations in protected zones which could represent infringements of the rules that cover Regulation of Soil, Water and Wetlands in the Law of Native Woodlands.

On the basis of all we have reported here, we intend to denounce the conditions described above to the corresponding authorities and to begin a process of informing the public about what is happening, incorporating issues that go well beyond questions of the woodlands themselves.

[The photos that follow in the original Spanish language report are keyed to the numbers in the charts above.]

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