

FORMAK and Other Resources

FORMAK is a set of forest monitoring procedures and equipment for use by private landowners, community groups and others who wish to establish some basic monitoring of forest ecosystems. There are other valuable publications, initiatives and resources that are relevant to FORMAK that people may need to consider, depending on their situation. Some of these are outlined below.

Native Forest Monitoring

The publication Native Forest Monitoring (NFM), supplied with FORMAK kits, provides a useful summary of a wide range of indicators of forest condition and approaches that can be taken to measure these. The contents of FORMAK are a selection from this wider range of options.

NFM functions very effectively as a reference for users of FORMAK. It includes discussion of designing more specific monitoring programmes, and approaches to measuring other aspects of the forest ecosystem. It is a valuable reference if people wish to design more specific monitoring, beyond the ongoing examination of trends that FORMAK is designed to provide.

Bush Vitality

This publication by Helmut Janssen, published under a joint project between Horizons Regional Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council, provides a range of information for people interested in the care and management of native forest remnants on private land. It also provides a visual assessment process for forest remnants linked to consideration of management priorities. This assists with the development of broad understanding and management, while FORMAK provides the means to monitor the trends over time that relate to these management actions, to improve and validate management approaches.

Ministry for the Environment – Terrestrial Biodiversity Indicators

Work has been undertaken at the Ministry for the Environment to consider and draft approaches to measuring terrestrial biodiversity indicators that can be used in state of the environment reporting at a national level. This will also potentially allow monitoring of these indicators at a regional or district level by local authorities.

The indicators have been developed with the intention of national level reporting of biodiversity trends. By comparison, FORMAK is designed to provide local “hands on” monitoring data that provides ongoing feedback about the management of a particular site.

While these projects are different, there is a useful potential relationship between some of the condition indicators, such as assessment of understorey species and bird counts, used in the two projects. Some of the measurements in FORMAK have been designed to be compatible with the Draft Biodiversity Monitoring and Reporting Protocol developed by the Ministry for the Environment. This provides potential for some of the data collected using FORMAK to be utilised for wider environmental reporting at a regional or national level.

Expert Advice

Always seek expert advice if you need to look at developing a specific monitoring programme, or need help interpreting results. Advice can potentially be obtained through a range of organisations including regional councils, Department of Conservation, Crown Research Institutes and private ecological consultants.