



**Media statement**  
**24 November 09**

**Environmental Group calls for clarity on use of Conservation land for ETS forest sinks**

The Environmental Defence Society has called on the government to clarify exactly what forestry will be permitted on Department of Conservation land arising out of the agreement with the Maori Party on the emissions trading scheme.

“It is one thing to allow permanent native forest sinks to be established on low value DOC land. It is quite another to allow commercial, rotational exotic forestry to be established on high value DOC land. Nothing the government has said so far makes it clear what is proposed,” said EDS Chairman Gary Taylor.

“We would be supportive of iwi and others partnering with DOC to establish permanent native forests in appropriate locations such as low value farmland and general stewardship land. Not only could we capture carbon but also the biodiversity benefits would from such afforestation.

“However we would be very concerned if high value land, such as the tussock lands of the South Island High Country, was made available for commercial rotational pine forests. Such afforestation could destroy native grassland ecosystems as well as important landscape values. Much of the High Country is precious because the bare bones of the land are visible.

“We have checked with DOC and with ETS officials and it seems that policy in this area is yet to be made. That is a positive thing because it should enable careful assessment of the options, the land that should be made available and the kind of forests to be established.

“The DOC estate is already under potential pressure from mining operations. We should take care that it is not also out under pressure from inappropriate and ill-considered forestry activities arising out of political negotiations and not out of considered policy development. We are concerned at the casual ease with which government is willing to grant concessions on the DOC estate.

“EDS calls on the government to establish a proper consultative process in which all stakeholders can have a say on how ETS forests on DOC land should proceed,” Mr Taylor concluded.