



## President's Comments

# FUNDING FOR INDIGENOUS FORESTS

The issue of indigenous forest management, with particular concern for protection and the state of the forest health, has emerged as a topic of public concern.

This has been noted in the discussion on funding levels for Department of Conservation, with the appreciation that inter-departmental competition for funds allocated at an unsatisfactory low level has resulted in priorities being biased towards activities having a high public and media approval level. Mundane issues such as the state of the forest, classification into forest types which reflect vigour and growth, and measurement of the CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration capability have been casualties of this process.

Ministry of Forestry work using remote sensing technology to enable identification of strata within forest boundaries and the extent of forest accretion, both indigenous and exotic, has commenced in four regions. This needs more dedicated funding and greater focused concern for the derivation of a data base which can be used as a reference point for comparative studies, on forest growth by both area and volume, forest health and species composition shifts, management impacts in both production and protection terms and of course off-site benefits of Resource Management Act significance.

The tenure of land outside of the DOC estate, where private and Maori indigenous forest is significant, can be seen as a further priority for data accumulation. Of the area, which I noted in my previous journal comment, and which is under indigenous cover of varying quality and development, only a small proportion, of the order of 10%, is under the control of the larger forest owners who are members of the NZ Forest Owners' Association. These owners are voluntarily bound by the Forest Accord. The greatest area of non-Crown-owned indigenous forest is in private or Maori tenure with owners outside the Accord aegis.

Land ownership is a burden which needs to be recognised by the community if specific non-economic benefits are to be delivered.

Forest with a production capability, and this includes Forest Accord areas, can be managed within the constraints of sus-



Peter Olsen

tainability as defined by the Forests Amendment Act 1993 and perhaps provide a sufficiently economic return to enable landowning costs (such as rates and protection) to be defrayed. If this is not seen by the community as acceptable, or the level of income allowed by the Forests Amendment Act is inadequate to cover costs, then there is a case for the community to fund these if the returns are of community benefit. This could include CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration, indigenous biodiversity requirements, landscape quality protection and other Resource Management Act benefits if profitable production forestry cannot be practised.

Some three million hectares could fall into the category of land whose owners are potentially disenfranchised by either inappropriate application of the Forest Accord principles or Resource Management Act presumptions improperly required without adequate proof of outcomes to be required of landowners. Recognition of carbon sequestration capability and the payment for the benefit obtained could be a powerful incentive to retain indigenous forest cover and meet other community demands for indigenous forest retention.

Data to enable this quality of environmental enhancement to be quantified are urgently needed and Government budgets for this work should be expanded.

P.F. Olsen

## John Wendelken

When I was discussing a National Forest Survey history publication, John Wendelken told me, after his return from RAF celebrations of the 50th anniversary of VE day in the UK, that he had been poorly but he was still full of life. He died on August 1 in Wellington. To Peggy-Ann and their family, the Institute extends our condolences. A full obituary will be published in the next issue of NZ Forestry.

P.F. Olsen

## ITTO Fellowships

Each year the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO) allocates around \$US300,000 for travel and study fellowships. These are normally awarded to producer ('developing') country applicants for travel or study overseas. The principal destinations are consumer ('developed') countries. Many such countries such as Australia organise study courses and tours that utilise these funds, whereas New Zealand has not so far taken advantage of the opportunity. The fellowships would not only earn overseas income for New

Zealand but would also enable other countries to become familiar with New Zealand forestry, and our forest management and expertise.

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