

Promoting forestry's role in the environment

President's comments

Momentum is gathering over the role of trees and forests in two important and related areas - sustainable land management and climate change. Regional Councils are now listing deforestation as a significant land management issue and the government is acknowledging the important role of forestry.

Since our successful April conference on the value of forestry the NZIF Council has been working on:

- facilitating the developing a carbon market, and
- capturing the monetary value of the environmental benefits provided by forests.

As we move through this exercise, and also in response to the increasing interest in the role of forestry, Council has resolved to:

- scope the potential for the establishment of an environmental services (e.g. carbon trading) market, which was seen as promoting forestry and its role in the environment.
- canvas potential participants to gauge their interest in purchasing environmental off-sets.

Carbon trading is used as the example because forestry

Institute members examine an old man beech at Craigeburn. Photo courtesy Euan Mason.



Radiata pine and Leyland cypress plantings in North Canterbury. Photo courtesy Euan Mason.



Redwood grove in Rotorua. Photo courtesy Euan Mason



has wider benefits than carbon storage and climate change. Council agreed that the NZIF could be involved in the procedures and mechanisms to establish standards for an environmental services market. The NZIF will use this scoping exercise as part of our feedback to government on climate change.

Climate Change Policy - Half the story

In July 2006 Hon David Parker, the Minister Responsible

Plantations established by Ingleby Cox at her farm in Waioitira Northland. Photo courtesy Euan Mason.



for Climate Change, released the next stage in climate change policy development. This included a Cabinet Paper and the whole of government climate change work programme, "Climate Change Solutions". As significant pieces of information on both timing and funding were removed from the document under the Official Information Act, only the general intent of the policy was evident.

Work areas including:

- encouraging afforestation,
 - managing deforestation and reforestation
 - land use and links between forestry and agriculture
- indicate forestry will play a significant role in New Zealand's climate change response. The magnitude of this role is not yet clear. The Minister has started consultation meetings on the policy and the Institute has a clear role in working in this area.

Land Use Change

Environment Waikato has recently released a report on "The Effect of Land Use Change on the Flood Hydrology of Pumice Catchments" which has led the regional council to consider rules that lock in forestry as a land use in these pumice catchments. Unsurprisingly the report concludes that forest cover ameliorates peak flows and a change in land use from forestry to dairying will create greater peak flows. Rather than the regional council taking a stance of penalising forest owners and preventing land use change, much greater gains could be achieved by encouraging forestry and rewarding the forest owners for their land use.

The new afforestation policies linked to climate change will need to take a similar approach and encourage land owners and forest owners. Incentives such as differential rates, access to resource consents and improved roading infrastructure for forestry will be needed to encourage either the maintenance of the existing forest cover or a change of land use to forestry.

The recent high rainfall events over much of the North Island resulting in significant soil loss and downstream damage to infrastructure means we need to manage our land differently on a catchment by catchment basis. Forestry will have a major role. Encouraging land owners to plant trees will take time and involves a large scale change in behaviour within the rural community. This is taking place but the rate of change will need to increase if we are to achieve sustainable land management.

Changes within the NZIF

Euan Mason has successfully taken over from Bruce

Registered Forestry Consultant Application

Clayton Wallwork has applied to the NZIF Registration Board to become a Registered Forestry Consultant.

Manley as the editor of this journal. We thank Euan for taking on this role and look forward to his style of editorship. Other changes are taking place and Peter Brown has been appointed as the Chair of the Registration Board. Peter was elected to council in April and will take over from Rob Miller. To both Bruce and Rob we have appreciated your significant contribution to the Institute of Forestry. Your professionalism and integrity have helped to guide the Institute over the last few years.

NZIF Review

In August the NZIF Council launched a review of NZIF convened by John Schrider. This project will look at the sort of NZIF that the members want and that can lead us into the next decade of two. For some time now, although NZIF numbers have been creeping up to the 800 mark, there has been concern about several aspects of the membership and of NZIF. In a recent newsletter Andrew McEwen asked us to consider:

- The number of students and recent graduates joining and remaining with NZIF is low. Based on available data, there are 65 members in the 20-30 age group, 136 in the 30-40 age group, 209 in the 40-50 age group and 197 in the 50-60 age group. 152 members are over 60. Clearly, we are an aging group. As the 40-60 year olds all become 60-80 within 20 years, the institute is going to be much smaller organisation unless there is a dramatic lift in recruitment of the younger age groups;
- The number of members who seek and maintain registration is dwindling. There are now only 82 Registered Members and Forestry Consultants, compared with 86 at the start of this financial year and 91 at the end of the 2004/05 year;
- The number of those who have placed their membership on hold (and therefore make no financial contribution to NZIF) has increased from 23 to 33 in the last two years;
- NZIF subscriptions, in comparison with those applying in many other professional organisations are very low.

Questions include: How do we reverse these trends? What sort of NZIF would you like to see in 10-20 years time? What services should be provided for members? Should we persist with the registration process or just drop a failing system? Would members prefer us to be a "friendly society" or a full blown professional organisation - an active advocate for forestry and assisting the professional development of its members?

There will be plenty of opportunity to be involved and for members to have their say.

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