School of Forestry news

Successful 25th Reunion
Feedback from all those who attended attest that the School of Forestry's Reunion and Conference was an outstanding success. It was great to meet the many past staff and students who returned to help celebrate the School's 25 years of quality education and research in forestry. A real highlight was the visit by John and Martha Barker, who travelled from British Columbia for the reunion. John taught Silviculture in the School for many years, and is now with Western Forest Products in B.C. John is also the incumbent President of the Canadian Institute of Forestry and brought the School a message of congratulations from the CIF.

Another highlight was the presentation of a wood sculpture to the School by the members of FORSOC, the student Forestry Society, to commemorate the 25 years. A magnificent piece of art, the sculpture depicts New Zealand, with each province made out of wood which is characteristic for that region - kauri for Northland, rimu for Westland, etc.

Publication of the conference proceedings is expected to be complete by the beginning of March and forwarded to all delegates. For those of you not so fortunate as to attend the conference, the proceedings will be available for sale, the price to be determined on delivery to the printer in mid February. Contact Jeanette Allen on (03) 364-2117 or fax (03) 364-2124 to place an order.

Expansion of the School Under Way
The School of Forestry entered a new era recently with the expansion of the Wood Technology Lab at the southern end of the building. The extension will more than double the size of the lab, to provide space for more wood-working machinery as well as make room for some of the specialised equipment the FRI people will require when they move into the other new extension.

Prizes, Prizes, Prizes
Following the examination results, the School has announced that Andrew Hays has won the NZIF Schlich Memorial Prize as best all-round student at the School of Forestry. The presentation to Andrew will be made at the NZIF Conference in Invercargill.

Also from last year's graduating class, Gareth Buchanan was recently presented with the Works Civil Construction Prize for his work in the forest harvesting and forest transportation projects. Gareth received his prize of $1000 in a ceremony at Works Civil office in Wellington.

Undergraduate students also fared well this year. Lisa Winthrop and Jan Derks are the recipients of the Rayonier Study Scholarships, while Philippa Kay received the Holt Forest Trust Scholarship.

The School would like to congratulate these students, and thank the sponsors of...
these awards, for giving recognition to the excellent work they have done.

Forestry History Group Mooted
Following an idea which developed in discussion between Professor Peter McKelvey and Dean Ron O’Reilly, a number of individuals were contacted to ascertain what support, if any, existed for a New Zealand Forestry History Group. The response was strongly in favour, and thoughts are now turning to the aims and structure of such a body. The Institute of Forestry has been asked for its comments on the development of a forestry history interest group, which will be centred, for the moment, at the School of Forestry. Comments are invited from anyone with an interest in New Zealand Forestry History. Write to the Dean, School of Forestry, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch.

Another NZFEI Course Completed
Nineteen mid-career logging specialists from throughout New Zealand recently completed the 1995-96 Forest Engineering Institute course, held at the School from late November to early February. The course, designed to upgrade logging planning and analytical skills, covered aspects as diverse as economic and production analysis, operations research, human resources and public perception. The course was directed by Bill Liley, and involved many School of Forestry staff as well as industry experts. Pictured above are FEI participants and Bill Liley (far right).

Ron O’Reilly

New Zealander elected chair of international organisation

Mr Don Wijewardana of the Ministry of Forestry has been elected chairman of the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO), based in Yokohama, Japan.

The ITTO comprises 53 countries and one of its main objectives is the sustainable management of forests. New Zealand has been a member since 1992.

The ITTO was established in 1983 (under the umbrella of UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) which was responsible for a number of commodity agreements since the late 1960s. These agreements were aimed at stabilising the major fluctuations in the price of various commodities.

ITTO has sustainable management of tropical forests as a major component of its mandate, with the increasing international concern about the rapid depletion of tropical forests. New Zealand NGOs urged that we join the ITTO as a positive way of helping to protect the tropical forests which are the major reservoirs of biological diversity. The New Zealand forest industry considered that joining the organisation gives us the opportunity to learn of the market opportunities for our own timber.

The ITTO has pioneered the following initiatives relating to sustainable management:
- criteria and indicators of sustainable management;
- work on timber certification schemes;
- forestry missions to countries at their invitation, e.g. to Sarawak and Bolivia;
- considerable project finance for helping countries at work towards sustainable management.

The Council has also established “Objective 2000” which aims at sourcing all tropical timber traded by year 2000 from sustainably-managed forests. Member countries are now working towards achieving this objective.

Mr Wijewardana said the unanimous support for his election from producers and consumers of tropical timber shows the respect these countries have for New Zealand’s sustainable forest management policies.

“New Zealand’s own objectives for international sustainable management of forests are remarkably similar to the aims of the ITTO. I am hoping my work as chairman will help further these significantly,” said Mr Wijewardana.

Major new genetic research project

Forestry Corporation has announced a major new research and development project aimed at genetically improving the quality of radiata pine.

The Corporation has entered into a development project with the New Zealand Forest Research Institute (NZFRI) to further research and commercialise fascicle cuttings technology for radiata pine forestry. A fascicle cutting is a plant produced from the small buds at the base of each bundle of three mature pine needles or “fascicles”. High multiplication rates of individual seedlings can be obtained using this technique, compared to conventional cuttings propagation in nursery stoolbeds.

“Forestry Corporation is committed to using the most appropriate technologies to increase the quality of its breeding stock and hence the value of the wood harvested from its forests,” said Resources General Manager.

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