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 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.
Digital systems help create more accurate maps

The Department of Survey and Land Information has streamlined its map production in terms of presentation and also improved the whole approach to updating the maps.

Digital mapping systems have helped the Department of Survey and Land Information (DOSLI) create more accurate, attractive maps, customised to client needs.

The new edition of the popular Wellington Street finder maps will be a completely digital production. Information from DOSLI’s Digital Cadastral Database was combined with the latest aerial photography and field data to produce a map series and a book covering the Wellington region from Otaki south and including the Wairarapa.

“Digital systems allowed us to make these maps more accurate as well as upgrade the colour and appearance,” said Neville Lapthorne, coordinator for urban mapping. “In future we will be able to update these sorts of maps much more easily.”

With the same emphasis on flexibility and customised products for clients, computer systems must be reliable at all times in order to deliver information to the public nationwide.

The pcs are in fact diskless workstations.

The pcs are required for DOSLI’s Synet network which connects 17 offices nationwide.

The supplier is Silicon Systems of Petone which has a staff of 16 and was founded in 1991 and was accredited with ISO 9001 in 1993.

It was the first New Zealand pc producer to receive this accreditation.

Its pcs are bespoke, made to order, and Bill Wilde of DOSLI Computer Services commented that the Silicon Systems offering was not the cheapest on the slate to be chosen from.

Mr Wilde said that three or four of the competing brands were well-known names.

In fact, the selection was strongly centred on six factors: quality, consistency, delivery, support, warranty, and of course, the price.

“We didn’t select the cheapest as the rigorous evaluation process covering all six factors identified Silicon Systems as the preferred supplier.”

Factors influencing selection of the Silicon models was Silicon Systems’ own testing on-site of its product under network conditions, and the company’s proven expertise over the whole network area.

According to Mr Wilde the contractual 48-hour “problem resolution time” – to distinguish it from merely taking a faulty system away – was another important element.

Kerry Elton, manager of Computer Services, comments that “over the months that the contract has run the performance of the pcs has exceeded DOSLI’s expectations and has made them a cost-effective choice.”

R&D in NZ still barely 1% of GDP

Science and technology research spending was 0.98% of gross domestic product in 1992/1993 - little changed from the previous two years, according to the latest Ministry of Research, Science and Technology figures. A total of $754 million was spent on research activity in the higher education, business and government sectors of 1992/93, the report, New Zealand Research, Science and Technology, states. The Government funded $443 million (0.57% of GDP) and the business sector $226 million (0.30% of GDP). Funding from other sources, including $47 million from universities, $19.4 million from overseas, and $19 million from private non-profit funds, amounted to 0.11% of GDP.

University sector R&D spending is considerably higher than previous surveys at $232 million because of new survey methods (no previous year comparisons are given). This is the first survey carried out according to OECD recommendations, which include university medical faculties, all of the humanities, support staff, external funding, and overheads such as libraries and computers.

Of the nine university R&D spending areas, social sciences was the biggest with $58.6 million and second was medical sciences with $49.8 million.
United Nations group visits South Westland

Fifty representatives from 24 countries recently made a visit to Okarito Forest in South Westland as part of the UNCED Montreal Process.

Stemming from the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the Montreal Process has aimed to develop criteria for the conservation and sustainable management of forests.

In a four-day, nationwide field trip following a conference in Auckland, delegates from developed and developing nations in both hemispheres, including representatives from international NGOs, studied New Zealand’s application of and experience in practical forest management and its role in achieving sustainability.

The West Coast visit was seen as an important focal point transcending many of the boundaries that make up the key issues and challenges facing the world over sustainability.

In a cooperative effort between the Department of Conservation, Timberlands West Coast Limited and the Ministry of Forestry, delegates were able to view a case study which demonstrated New Zealand’s approach to integrated landscape management for both wood production and conservation.

Discussions included themes such as the World Heritage park, threats to the maintenance of biological biodiversity, the role of plantations in protecting natural forest in New Zealand, sustainability within the regional, national and international contexts, and the practical application of natural forest timber production as being implemented by Timberlands West Coast.

In Okarito Forest representatives from countries such as Brazil, Canada, Ecuador, Finland, Korea and Russia also had the opportunity to see aerial harvesting in progress. This attracted much enthusiasm from group participants.

The efforts of Timberlands West Coast, Department of Conservation, Ministry of Forestry and the Whataroa-based people who made preparations for the visit were well received, with many delegates commenting very favourably and constructively on what they had seen and learned.

TWC Chief Executive, Dave Hilliard, said the whole exercise had been “extremely positive and worthwhile and had been a litmus test against which the West Coast and its sustainability issues could be gauged in the international view”.

“In this respect,” Mr Hilliard said, “I believe the Coast can hold its head high.”

Having viewed heli-harvesting in Okarito Forest earlier in the day, field trip members were able to inspect the Mi-17 close-up. Photo: Ian Platt, Ministry of Forestry

Dr Jam Williams of Canberra planting a rimu as part of Timberlands activities covering sustainable forest management in Okarito Forest. Photo: Ian Platt, Ministry of Forestry

William Mankin from Washington has a “play” with Dr John Warde’s mini-skidder at Woodside Forest in North Canterbury on the final day of the Montreal Process field trip. Photo: Ian Platt, Ministry of Forestry