NZ Institute of Forestry develops a new indigenous forest policy

Introduction
Over recent years there has been a degree of concern within the NZIF membership about the apparent poor health of some indigenous forests, the fragmented and uncoordinated nature of the legislation addressing the management and administration of indigenous forests, the scarcity of funding for research concerned with important indigenous forest issues and the divergent views by different organisations and the public at large about the future management of indigenous forests. Some members of the NZIF also perceive that the forestry profession is in danger of being bypassed on important indigenous forest issues.

These concerns influenced the NZIF to establish an Indigenous Forest Working Group in 1993 to examine the major issues surrounding the management of indigenous forests, review the existing legislation and policies pertaining to indigenous forests and prepare an indigenous forest policy statement. In 1994 and 1995 the Working Party met several times, visited a range of managed indigenous forests in Canterbury, Nelson and Westland and collected together a considerable amount of historical, technical, policy and administrative information about New Zealand’s indigenous forests.

Since mid-1995, the Working Party, consisting of Colin O’Loughlin (Convenor), Udo Benecke, Andrew McEwen, Alan Reid, Dave Field and John Holloway, produced several drafts of an indigenous forest policy statement. The latest version, completed in July 1997, incorporates the views of more than 30 NZIF members who have particular interest in and knowledge of indigenous forests. This version will be distributed to all NZIF members for perusal and comment. It is intended then to produce a final statement which will be presented to the 1998 NZIF Annual General Meeting for adoption by the Institute.

Summary of the NZIF Indigenous Forest Policy
The NZIF is of the view that New Zealand’s indigenous forests have important ecological, cultural, production and scientific values that contribute to the economic and social well-being of the nation. As such, a full range of indigenous forest types must be maintained (or expanded) in a healthy state for the benefit of present and future generations. To contribute to this overall objective the NZIF indigenous forest policy consists of the following policy statements.

1) The NZIF advocates and supports a forest ecosystem management approach to sustainably manage New Zealand’s indigenous forests and, in particular, to sustain forest productivity, health, biodiversity, soil quality, water quality, natural landscapes and the full range of natural forest ecological processes.

2) The NZIF advocates and supports the development of a strategy to promote the non-market values of indigenous forests and enhance their status as a contributor to the New Zealand economy.

3) The NZIF advocates and supports the development and maintenance of a comprehensive national database on the condition, health, location and extent of major indigenous forest types.

4) The NZIF supports the maintenance and enhancement of the current integrated research effort concerned with the development of new methods to manage and control animal and plant pests.

5) The NZIF advocates and supports the establishment of a comprehensive national indigenous forest health surveillance system to provide full coverage of the national forest estate on a biannual basis, and which incorporates a rigorous system of border control and emergency response.

6) The NZIF advocates that management for timber and other products must be carried out using silvicultural systems which limit the magnitude of the changes to the forest as a result of that management to levels near those that occur naturally in healthy forests.

7) The NZIF advocates and supports the initiation of a research and development programme to document and develop ecologically sustainable silvicultural systems for indigenous forests with sustainable timber production potential.

8) The NZIF advocates and supports the development and use of reliable and consistent systems to monitor the sustainable management of indigenous forests.

9) The NZIF advocates the development of a streamlined “National Application and Consent System” for the management of indigenous forests for wood production which would be implemented by the Ministry of Forestry under the Forests Act (1993 Amendment) in cooperation with local Government under the Resource Management Act.
10) The NZIF will promote the need for improved cooperation and coordination between government departments, local government authorities, research organisations, NGOs, indigenous forest owners, the Indigenous Forests Section of the Farm Forestry Association and other organisations, in the development of strategies, policies and plans for meeting international commitments that affect the management of indigenous forests.

11) The NZIF will promote the NZIF Indigenous Forest Policy, and with the assistance of indigenous forest owners and other interested parties will maintain an overview of indigenous forest management planning and practice.

12) The NZIF with the help of other interested parties, including forest owners, will jointly develop a comprehensive programme to monitor the effectiveness of the policy and review the policy every five to ten years.

Colin O'Loughlin

Obituary: Dr John David Allen

John Allen, as he was known to many, JDA, died in Christchurch Hospital on September 27, 1997. He was 68 years old; it was only a few days before his 69th birthday.

John was known to many foresters because he was a foundation lecturer at the School of Forestry, University of Canterbury. He taught almost all students between 1970 until he retired in 1993. John was born in Scotland and did a B.Sc (Hons) degree in botany at the University of Edinburgh. After graduation he and his wife, Jan, spent eight years in Nigeria as a research officer for the West African Institute for Palm Research. During this period they lived in a remote area, and as the children reached school age he applied for jobs in more civilised areas. John and the family moved to New Zealand in 1968 and he initially worked on crop diseases as a scientific officer with the DSIR at Lincoln.

In 1962 he moved to Canterbury University as a lecturer in the Botany Department. While there he completed his PhD, and then transferred to the School of Forestry in 1970. John initially taught forest protection, but later branched out into teaching silviculture, wood science, multiple-use forestry and social forestry. He said when he retired, about his time at the University: “My eyes were slowly opened to what could be accomplished in the university situation. I ceased to have narrow interests in things and became enamoured with teaching. I enjoyed teaching and interacting with students - more so than sitting at a lonely lab bench.” Many of his past students will remember JDA with affection and have a soft spot for him. Some will also recall being driven by John on field trips. On one trip the slogan “All the way with JDA” was written on the side of the van.

Dean of Faculty

John rose to the position of Dean of the Faculty of Forestry from 1989 to 1993. He promoted the idea that the School should be seen as a national body, John was also involved with the Arboretum Society and worked on urban projects with the Christchurch City Council.

After he retired in 1993 he continued his involvement in the forestry sector by being on the Editorial Board of “New Zealand Forestry”, a position he retired from only a few months ago. He did sterling service behind the scenes and was heavily used by editors Chris Perley and Hugh Bigsby.

John was a quiet person, slow to anger, and with a gentle sense of humour. He enjoyed telling jokes about himself, He and Jan were also avid gardeners and for many years ran a sideline horticultural business near Kaiapoi. However, they were forced to give this up as John’s health deteriorated. After his retirement John was often in hospital, but he was smiling until the last and forestry was never far from his mind. John was very much a family person and his family were very important in his life. He was always there when they needed him.

John will be missed by former colleagues, students and his family. He is survived by his wife Jan and their four children, Barbara, Kenneth, Margorie and David. They will have all our condolences in the loss of their loved one and friend.

Don Mead