

# Environmental Forestry at the core of New Zealand Modern Practice in New Zealand

Chris Jenkins

The Environmental Forestry division of the New Zealand Forest Service, often known affectionately as the "EF" division can, like the Forest Service, trace its origins to concern over the health of indigenous forests at the start of the last century.

Dr Leonard Cockayne, noted botanist, saw and drew public attention to the devastating impacts of introduced animals and plants (Cockayne 1967). Dr Cockayne went on to serve as the secretary of the 1913 Royal Commission on Forests. One of the results of this commission was strengthening of the administration and conservation of New Zealand's rapidly diminishing indigenous forest resources (Fleet 1984).

By the 1920s New Zealand had an autonomous Department of State responsible for managing forests. Staff of the new State Forest Service quickly made their political masters aware of the impact of introduced animals and in 1922 a report by staff member Alan Perham was tabled in Parliament (McKelvey 1995). The report described the impact introduced game animals were having on New Zealand's forests. The report was an important step towards removal of protection of these animals and highlighted the Forest Service's interest in wild animal control. After protection was removed and official animal control operations began, the Forest Service continued to express concern about the impact of deer and the ineffectiveness of the control operations run by the Department of Internal Affairs.

A picture of the true impact of introduced animals on New Zealand's forests emerged during the national forest survey run by the Forest Service between 1948 and 1955. The survey results, knowledge of forests, ongoing lobbying by the Forest Service and willingness by the Department of Internal Affairs to transfer control led to change. In 1956 the responsibility for control of deer and a range of other introduced pest animals went to the New Zealand Forest Service under the Noxious Animals Act 1956. The Protection Forestry Division of the New Zealand Forest Service was born.

The National Forest Survey had shown the value of systematic studies of forest condition. The Forest Service, having been critical of the performance of the previous administration, was determined to have objective, professional management of the introduced animal problem. To do this the Service needed a group of conservancy based, university trained foresters to collect, interpret and use quantitative data for animal control operations and associated mountainland rehabilitation work (McKelvey 1995).

Chris Jenkins  
 Conservator  
 Bay of Plenty Department of Conservation

The Forest Service had a shortage of qualified foresters and its research division (Forest Research Institute) was still developing catchment, animal and vegetation monitoring techniques. To speed up the process the Forest Research Institute established a Forest and Range Experimental Station (FRES) based at Rangiora and led by the late Dr Jack Holloway. Later a FRES outpost led by Ash Cunningham was created at Napier to deal with the protection forest issues in the North Island.



A F+RES survey team at the end of the Taranaki Survey 1963-64 (R. Hodder, R. Washbourne, P. Painter, P. Kibblewhite, P. Jenkins, P. Beaumont, J. Turner)

From these stations, protection scientists and technicians ran surveys of vegetation condition. Each summer teams of foresters and ranger trainees spent three months in the field collecting data. The remainder of the year was spent analysing data, writing reports and preparing for the next summer's survey. The research stations also refined survey techniques, animal control methods, gathered critical information on the biology of pest animals and trialled various exotic and native species for mountain land rehabilitation. Most of these foresters retained an interest in the protection forestry work and if not working full time on protection forestry work, were often involved as technical advisors from positions such as district foresters.

Following the establishment of the Canterbury School of Forestry in 1971, there was an increase in the number of forestry graduates and conservancies began to appoint full time foresters to work on protection forestry management.

By the 1970s, public concern about logging of native forests led to changes in the Forest Service and its work with indigenous forests. No longer was the work focused on killing pests, rehabilitating mountainlands or logging timber. New roles emerged such as identification and establishment of ecological areas, identifying and



D. Lowry and R. Hart walking to NoMans Hut NE Ruahine Range during a field check of data collected in the 1974-75 Animal Vegetation Kaweka Survey (1976)

Unfortunately today fewer graduate foresters seem to wish to work in conservation management and the history of forest rangers and foresters' working in protection forests appears to be coming to an end.

### References

- Cockayne, L., 1967 "New Zealand Plants and Their Story" 4th Edition. Government Printer Wellington
- Fleet, H., 1984 "New Zealand's Forests" Heinemann Auckland
- McKelvey, P. J., 1995 "Steepland Forests A historical perspective of protection forestry in New Zealand" Canterbury University Press, Christchurch

The role of the forester in protection forestry became more complex and sophisticated. With this change came a change in name from Protection Forestry Division to the Environmental Forestry (EF) Division reflecting the broadening of duties in this area of work. The establishment of the Environmental Forestry Division saw a growing level of professionalism with dedicated foresters taking over the running of the catchment surveys from the Forest Research Institute. The Forest Research Institute concentrated on its research role and foresters continued to work for the Institute. Foresters such as Rob Allan and John Lethwick joined the Institute from the Forestry School and became scientists rather than environmental foresters serving an apprenticeship.

Indigenous forest research broadened by incorporating the ecological research previously carried out as part of indigenous forest management group in Rotorua. The results of work by people such as John Nichols of FRI Rotorua were profound. They helped to identify ecological areas and key elements of New Zealand's biodiversity more than two decades before the term *biodiversity* became a recognised word in conservation

The environmental restructuring in 1987 saw most of the staff from the EF division transfer to the newly created Department of Conservation. The knowledge and experience of the foresters and rangers along with those of the other government departments was critical to the establishment of the new department.

The legacy of the EF division is a core of experienced staff who have passed on their knowledge to new staff. It is interesting to note that five of the thirteen Conservators in the Department of Conservation have in the past worked as environmental foresters.

## Change in Status

The following have changed from Registered Forestry Consultant to Registered Member Status:

Jaquetta Rosemary Bradshaw	Wellington
Kevin Snowdon	Rotorua

The following has changed from Registered Member to Registered Forestry Consultant Status:

Stephen Sanford Strand	Wellington
------------------------	------------

## Applications for Registration

The following have applied to become Registered Forestry Consultants:

Jim Shirley	Rotorua
Terence Burrows	Timaru
Barry Poole	Auckland
Peter Lissington	Marton
Rob Lawrence	Blenheim

Under the NZIF constitution, any members of the Institute may send objections in writing within 20 days of Journal publication to the Registrar, NZIF Registration Board, PO Box 1340, Rotorua.