

billion in annual non-wood values, and enable Fenton to marshal other evidence against the conservationist critique, noting that hardwoods already supply most pulp chips at very high cost, are nearly exhausted, and low-yielding.

Dr. Fenton concludes that Japan's pulp, ply and sawlog needs cannot be met by the domestic forest for at least two decades, which is sombre fare for local forest managers whose billions of expensive softwood logs will be too small and too late, a situation bluntly but accurately described as "managerial

failure on a grand scale". The author outlines an alternative strategy at the close of the book, comprising a mix of total protection, thinning to waste, an end to thinning larch and pine, changes to spacing and nursery techniques, and laminated instead of solid wood building components. Despite the fact that these proposals can be logically deduced from evidence they themselves have gathered, strong traditions may still prevent Japanese foresters from establishing the necessary trials.

The great NZ forestry bungle explored

The Great Wood Robbery? Political bumbling ruins New Zealand Forestry

Hamish Levack, Lindsay Poole and Julian Bateson. Bateson Publishing Ltd, Wellington. 2006. pp 71, 41 refs. 8 photographs. ISBN 0 958 248621.

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The authors commence by asserting that no other country has a system of governance of its forests as peculiar as that found in New Zealand. They point out that forest governance is at odds with that of most other developed countries and is quite inconsistent with recommendations made at the 13th Commonwealth Forestry Conference held in New Zealand in 1989 when it was recommended that 'governments ensure the existence of an effective, unified, institutional framework for forestry' and that 'governments raise the level and effectiveness of investment in forestry to recognise more fully the importance of multiple social, economic and environmental benefits conferred by forests'. In particular, the authors argue in several places through the book how important it is for government to be closely involved in providing direction and encouragement of forestry because it can take a long-term view of the role of forestry and that it is in the national interest to do so.

Building on this position the authors proceed to explore the significant and mostly negative effects of unrealistic and poor forest-related policies that have been formulated over the past 15 or more years. The authors review the role of wood to mankind in an historical, well as a contemporary context, and go on to describe the wide range of values and uses that wood and forests have now and will continue to provide in the future in a modern progressive society and economy. Their review provides the background to an accurate and engaging historical account about the shaping of forestry in New Zealand, commencing from the time of European exploration and settlement of the country. The conflicts between settlement and agriculture on the one hand and conservation on the other at various times over a period of nearly 200 years, and the influence of these positions on policy-making, are portrayed in an unambiguous manner.

The role of forestry as being a long term use of land having a diverse range of social, economic and environmental values emerges often and the authors lament the loss of recognition of these values by several recent governments which they see as being short-sighted and mostly politically motivated. Lost too is recognition of the fundamentally important concept of sustainability that was first expressed by the early foresters, ecologists and botanists that provided direction for forestry early in the 20th century and of the

need to plan and manage forest resources with a long-term perspective in mind. It is these fundamentally important features that, to its shame, continues to set New Zealand apart from most other countries in forest policy formulation and in forest management.

The authors summarise effectively and logically the many changes that have influenced how different sections of New Zealand society have viewed forests and forestry, especially from the 1970s, the revolution in forestry governance of the 1980s and 1990s, the locking up of Crown indigenous forests, the sale of plantation forests and the deterioration of Crown forests and government services. A short but poignant chapter discusses the bungled climate change policy of recent years and of the amendments that are needed, sooner rather than later, including the incentives to encourage new forest plantings that will contribute to the role of forests as carbon sinks thereby helping reduce the risk of climate change as a threat to the world.

In a concluding chapter the authors set out their views on the reforms that are needed to provide a more significant and meaningful future for forestry in New Zealand. They argue that the formation of a new forest service, possibly modelled on public forestry institutions that manage and protect forests in the United States, or in the UK would be a possible basis for providing improved government leadership of forest policy and management.

The Great Wood Robbery? Political bumbling ruins New Zealand Forestry can be firmly recommended as essential reading by all who are actively involved in forest and land policy formulation, by politicians, students, forest managers, forest investors, by those having an interest in the sustainable management of the natural environment, and by readers who are simply interested in the recent history of New Zealand forestry. The authors use facts derived from a range of official sources as well as their own knowledge and set out their arguments in a relaxed and easily readable style that is likely to appeal to a wide range of readers. The book provides a novel and positive perspective based on the collective experience of three people who write with first-hand knowledge and who have contributed greatly to the development of the forestry sector through much of the 20th century.