



RECENT EVENTS



WWF and IUCN global forest conservation strategy

At the XI World Forestry Congress in Turkey last October the world's two largest conservation NGOs — the World Wide Fund for Nature and the ICUN, the World Conservation Union — presented their strategy for forest conservation. Their strategy recognised that

- worldwide, forests face serious problems from both deforestation and loss of forest quality;
- the forest policy must take into account the needs and desires of local people, including indigenous people;
- the principal of participation of these peoples must underpin the strategy.

There were five key objectives in the strategy:

1. Establishment of a network of ecologically-representative protected areas. This is required for conservation of biodiversity and maintenance of ecological processes and the areas may have people living in or around them. They recommend a network covering at least 10% of the world's forest area by the year 2000.
2. Environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable forest management outside these protected areas.
This objective aims to improve forest quality and to manage forests for a variety of values including those of people and the environment. They suggest that management should meet or exceed the criteria laid down by the Forest Stewardship Council Principles and Criteria or an equivalent form of timber certification. Where possible, management should be in secondary forests and be participatory with local peoples.
3. Development and implementation of ecologically and socially appropriate forest restoration programmes.
The objective is to increase the area of semi-natural forest. Forests should be restored under criteria of high forest quality, stressing multiple use and restoration of natural dynamics and biodiversity. Use of local and native species are encouraged and plantations should not be created through the replacement of other natural or semi-natural ecosystems.

4. Reduction of forest damage from global change, including a decrease of pollution below damage thresholds, as measured by critical loads.
5. Use of forest goods and services at levels that do not damage the environment. The levels of consumption of forest products should minimise environmental effects, taking into account the effects of over-consumption, the potential for forest products to substitute for other products and visa

versa, and the need for greater equity in availability of forest products.

The emphasis of their strategy is on conserving and managing natural or semi-natural native forests in a sustainable fashion for a variety of values. They also emphasise the need for reforestation, but only in exceptional circumstances should non-native species be used.

Don Mead

West Coast Crown forests commitments

Peter Allan*

Over the past 12 months the news media have tended to give prominence to efforts by certain conservation organisations to persuade Government to stop logging of West Coast Crown indigenous forests, particularly those in Buller.

It therefore seems timely to review the obligations entered into in 1986 between parties to the West Coast Accord.

Because litigation has dealt with certain aspects only, there is a need to focus on the full intent of the commitments entered into. The West Coast Accord was a contractual part of those overall commitments made to ensure both the setting aside of additional reserves and the facilitation of a planned transition from unsustainable harvesting of podocarp forest to sustainable harvesting of exotic, podocarp and beech forests.

Primary objectives of West Coast Accord commitments

The primary objectives that Government felt had been met by the commitments were:

- for industry and the West Coast community — allocation of sufficient area of Crown forest for production to maintain the industry in Buller, North Westland and South Westland at the (1986) level of allowable cut until

exotics become available in adequate quantity in each area;

- for conservation groups — the approval of substantial additional national park, reserve and wildlife corridor proposals.

The strategy to fulfil the objectives

The strategy to fulfil the primary objectives was:

- allocate an area of indigenous State forest for production purposes,
 - (a) with sufficient volume to maintain the sawmilling industry at its (1986) level of allowable cut in the subregions of Buller, North Westland and South Westland
 - (b) with sufficient beech and beech/podocarp forest to establish a sustained yield beech scheme (yielding initially a minimum of 150,000 m³/an. log production);
- offer the allocated indigenous State production forest and exotic State forest to the appropriate State Owned Enterprise;
- immediately call tenders to enable maintenance of the Buller and Karamea allowable cut and align existing log supply licences to those for the rest of the region;
- immediately call tenders for a sustained yield beech scheme on the basis that environmental evaluation of the allocated forests had been satisfied (in terms of commercially viable logging and management prescriptions);

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- Government complete the planting of 10,000 ha of special purpose timber species (by 2024) in South Westland south of the Waitaha River (to honour its 1981 quid pro quo compensation deal), or work out an alternative deal with the West Coast United (Regional) Council for satisfying the planting commitment;
- work out by December 31, 1991 acceptability and conditions for logging within wildlife corridors;
- immediately gazette proposals for reserves and wildlife corridors on State forest land;
- immediately establish the Paparoa National Park subject to
 - (a) preserving the right to develop the Pike River coal field
 - (b) meeting the needs of New Zealand Cement Holdings for limestone quarrying
 - (c) Government funding the establishment and maintenance of the National Park;
- allow continuation of mining operations within reserves;
- allocate to the Department of Conservation the balance of State forest land outside of production forest and specific reserve proposals;
- maintain access to gazetted reserves and the rest of the conservation estate for development of mineral, hydro-electric power and other resources with the consent of the responsible Minister, actual development being subject to economic value being shown to outweigh reservation values;
- manage Saltwater and North Okarito Forests as a single sustained yield podocarp working circle;
- identify Crown areas for reserve and production in South Westland south of the Cook River once the South Westland Management Evaluation Report was completed;
- maintain public access to publicly or privately managed West Coast Crown forests.

The strategy was promoted as (a) minimising social impact by making possible the continuation of all jobs as at 1986 in the timber industry, (b) providing additional jobs through the beech scheme, and (c) recognising that there would be some adverse environmental impacts which had been outweighed by the benefits of the new national park, reserves and wildlife corridors.

Unresolved issues

Not resolved in the High Court or the Court of Appeal are issues relating to production which only Government can settle. These issues are:

- Adequate podocarp resource was not allocated in South Westland south of the Cook River to make possible the sustaining of the South Westland allowable cut until the special purpose timber species become available in adequate quantity.
- Government has not provided for the previously agreed additional planting of exotics required in Buller and North Westland to make possible the transition from podocarps to exotics at the planned dates and maintain a commercially viable timber industry in those subregions at the levels set in 1986.
- Subsequent alteration of proven management prescriptions has thwarted the establishment of the sustained yield beech scheme in Buller/North Westland.

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First Maori/Crown lease forest to become totally Maori owned

Kawhia-based Tainui Kawhia Incorporated was in November 1997 the first Maori Incorporation to buy out the Crown's interest in a Maori lease forest. The Incorporation paid \$9 million for the Crown's 80% interest in this 1000 ha forest situated on the sand dunes by Kawhia harbour. It was planted in the 1970s.

The Incorporation financed the buy-out of the Crown by on-selling the trees to Rayonier New Zealand. The Incorporation will own the second crop outright after Rayonier replant the forest after harvesting.

The forest is one of 21 Crown lease forests involving 52,500 ha established

by the Crown with Maori owners.

MDF plant expands

Nelson Pine Industries Ltd commissioned a third production line at its Richmond medium density fibreboard plant in November 1997. It increases output from 200,000 to 350,000 m³ and increases log demand to 700,000 tonnes per year. Nelson Pine Industries Ltd is the largest single-site producer of MDF in the world. The company is wholly owned by Sumitomo Forestry Company Ltd of Tokyo, so most of the output will go to Japan.