

New issues raised for members to consider

President's comments

1 NZIF Newsletter - funding offer 30 June 2007

Members have repeatedly made it clear that they see the weekly Newsletter as a vital part of the Institute. Andrew McEwen, who has made an amazing contribution, announced he wished to stand down as the Newsletter Editor, after more than three and a half years in the role. Until we can find a replacement, Andrew is currently sharing this role with Hamish Levack. We are now looking to raise funds to pay for a person/people to prepare the newsletter for 2007/2008. Council will recommend a subscription increase to take effect in the 2008/2009 financial year to cover these costs in the future.

In early May it was announced that a NZIF member has anonymously offered to donate funds to the NZIF for the newsletter. **If NZIF members, or other interested people, give funds to the NZIF the donor will match it dollar for dollar, up to a maximum of \$10,000. The offer expires on 30 June 2007.** The donation, while not being dedicated specifically to the newsletter, is being made on the understanding that the newsletter will continue and that the funds are there to assist the Council to find ways to make this happen.

This is an extremely generous offer. Our donor has laid down a challenge. I encourage you to make a contribution.

2 Upcoming ANZIF Conference, Coffs Harbour, Australia

In early June a strong contingent of NZIF members will attend the ANZIF 2007 conference, "Growing Forest Values". Every four years we hold a conference with the Institute of Foresters of Australia. This year it's at Coffs Harbour, NSW, Australia, from 3 to 7 June, 2007 with the NZIF 2007 AGM on the evening of Wednesday 6th June. Our Australian sister organisation has put together an interesting programme of Australian and New Zealand speakers.

3 The New Zealand Institute of Forestry Review

Councillors have been presenting the findings of the recent NZIF Review to the NZIF Sections. Council is using this consultation round to firm up on a number of proposals on the direction of the NZIF over the next few years. The meetings have been well attended. Our initial recommendations will be discussed at the 2007 AGM.

Every membership organisation must address its relevance to members and the value of the services offered, and the Institute is doing this. Three key areas arising from the review are the need to change our membership and administration structures as well as look at the relevance and procedures around Registered Forestry Consultants.

Early feedback from the meetings has been positive and there is agreement that if the Council needs to make changes it has the mandate to do so. However we must market and promote our services to help sell our relevance

as an organisation and to gain new members. CPD and strengthened local sections were seen as critical components in the mix as well as finding ways to share membership and services with other organisations.

4 New Zealand's Climate Change policy taking shape

Following a number of informative and successful NZIF section meetings around the country in February and March, the Institute came out in favour of a carbon tax rather than a cap and trade emissions trading scheme. We submitted on all six of the Government's climate change documents and focussed on the Sustainable Land Management and Climate Change ("SLMCC") document.

When members of the council met with the Minister of Climate Change, David Parker in mid March he indicated his preference for an emissions trading scheme. As we developed our submission we agreed that there needs to be a carbon charge and concluded that a hypothecated carbon tax would meet our core principles better than a cap and trade system. Our main concern was that a cap and trade system with "grandparenting" of existing emissions (a right to emit) would provide too much opportunity to "game" the rules.

Our policy principles centred on effectiveness, simplicity, equity, relevance, comprehensiveness, cohesiveness and long term sustainability.

We recommended that:

government introduce a broad-based carbon charge on fossil fuel and other sources of GHG emissions, as this would incentivise investment in emissions reductions. Hypothecation of the revenues arising from a broad-based carbon charge could allow for investment in, and therefore more rapid adoption of GHG emissions reduction technology, afforestation and research pertinent to New Zealand's adaptation to climate change.

Our reasoning was that:

it is increased emissions, particularly from the energy, transport and agricultural sectors, rather than deforestation, which have caused most of the change in our national carbon balance since 1990. The NZIF recommends that, if the government is serious about combating climate change, it should concentrate on managing emissions rather than on targeting carbon sinks.

During the discussions leading up to this submission we concluded that New Zealand is still working out the best land use for different areas and that we must be able to maintain some flexibility around the margins. When trying to explain this to a RadioNZ interviewer, I suggested that if a vineyard owner was asked to keep the land as a vineyard in perpetuity, or face a tax for changing, it would certainly alter their investment decision. Forestry is no different.

More recently the government has announced its "preferred policy" is to set up an emissions trading system, covering all sectors and all gasses, and this seems likely to gain cross party support. This will have an impact on the options presented in the consultation documents. The Institute intentionally did not comment on the options preferring to take a wider and long term view.

For a copy of our submission go to www.nzif.org.nz.

PFSI Consultation Document

One policy option taking shape ahead of the main policy, which involves the creation of another Kyoto compliant forest category, is the Permanent Forest Sink Initiative (PFSI). MAF has released the consultation document on the proposed regulations, cost recovery methods and forest sink document for the PFSI. The document is located at <http://www.maf.govt.nz/forestry/pfsi/index.htm>. We are currently preparing a submission.

5 Green is Green in the United States

We're often told that the US is not playing its part in taking action against climate change because they are not signatories to the Kyoto Protocol. Don't be fooled. There is action alright.

'Green is green' is the catch cry of GE Plastics head, Jeff Immeld. This was quoted by a GE employee as he accepted a Society of Plastics Engineers' environmental award on behalf of his company.

Over the two day Global Plastics Environment Conference in March 2007 there were numerous references to the environmental businesses opportunities and the greenback, particularly in the area of bio based and renewable plastics, biofuels and biomaterials. With the rush towards ethanol and bio based plastics, such as polylactic acid, the price of corn has increased and this has had major flow on effects and price increases for grain feed food sources such as eggs and beef.

Another environmental awardee at the conference was ALERT, a company selling wood/plastic decking to Weyerhaeuser. Plastic is often referred to as a competitor to wood. If the US companies in NZ are embracing these composites, we need to learn from this.

It was interesting to attend a conference of professionals similar in nature to our own membership. Certainly for me it was educational and eye opening with lessons for both plastics and forestry.

6 Climate change and forestry in Sweden

This year there was insufficient ice on Lake Mälaren to skate between Stockholm and Uppsala in the annual ice skating race. Another example that Europe has had its warmest winter since records began - a 0.7 degree centigrade increase in the average temperature. This warming helps to make a society like Sweden take action. But with energy provided by nuclear power, natural gas and waste incineration, there weren't obvious signs that energy efficiency, or indeed improved resource recovery, have 'gone up a notch' since last year. Other than sales bins

of compact fluorescent light bulbs in the Ikea store near Stockholm, there appears to be little overt action. There is talk of a household carbon budget to divide between travel, heating and holidays.

And so to the Swedish forestry scene. What's happening there and how are they reacting to climate change other than seeing the noble hardwoods such as beech, oak and maple moving northwards?

Olaf Johansson, Director Environmental and Social Responsibility for Sveaskog and a former FSC chair had some answers and is working towards making their forests more resilient. As Sweden's largest forest owner with 15% of the country's productive forest land (3.35 million hectares out of total 4.45 m ha estate) and leading supplier of sawlogs, pulpwood and biofuel, their vision is to lead the way in the development of the values of Swedish forests. This is largely centred around landscape values.

The 3.35 million hectares (including set asides) have been divided into 160 forest landscapes across Sweden. This ecological landscape planning began in the 1990's and classifies each landscape into four nature conservation classes. With 5% of the productive area in 34 ecoparks there is a move towards ecosystem resilience, but in a managed way. This includes the reintroduction of fire into the boreal ecosystem.

Sveaskog's annual sustainability report details their close working partnership with WWF Sweden and WWF International. With the latter they are working on forest policy in Europe where climate change is a key issue along with illegal trade, bioenergy and nature conservation.

Sveaskog certainly take 'measure to manage' seriously and in their quest to have a reduced greenhouse gas impact they have recorded their SO₂ and NO_x air emissions since 2001. While we translate our emissions into CO₂ equivalents and concentrate on the carbon market, it is these gases, plus methane, that we will be judged by in the future.

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