

Bulletin

Christmas 2023

A SUMMER TO BURN?

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FOA CEO reports from COP 28



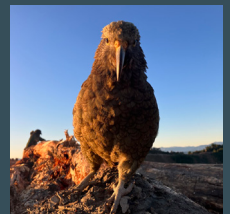
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Easy coupling in the forest



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Valuing the contribution of our forests to the climate crisis at a global scale

Greetings from Dubai and the United Nations Conference of the Parties on the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

There has been considerable cynicism about a major oil producer hosting a climate conference, and given the lack of hard commitments on fossil fuels as this goes to print some of that skepticism may be justified.

Climate Conferences of the Parties, or COPs, used to be largely United Nations negotiations where officials would gather to haggle over multilateral agreements on climate change while industry and environmental group representatives peered in from the sidelines.

In recent years, however, the climate trade show element has grown as successive COPs have tried to find more ways to incorporate affected stakeholders – 2023's COP in Dubai has well and truly become the main event for anyone working in anything climate related. With over 70,000 participants from around the world, the partnerships formed on climate change action at this COP are going to be critical to meet the challenge.

There were some great announcements for forestry and wood products, including the Forests and Climate Leaders Partnership commitment to, by 2030, advance policies and approaches that support low carbon construction and increase the use of wood from sustainably managed forests in the built environment.

This commitment recognises that wood from sustainably managed forests provides climate solutions within the construction sector and is vital to bio and circular economies. Construction accounts for a third of global emissions, and decarbonising using wood and sustainably produced bio-based materials at scale, while also increasing the stored carbon in buildings, will go a long way towards

addressing global emissions.

We will be working with NZ Wood Processors and Manufacturers Association to lobby for New Zealand to become a party to these important commitments and recognise wood's role in decarbonising the built environment.

I spoke on a South African panel about nature-based solutions and the bioeconomy with fellow association leads from Brazil and South Africa, chaired by Ross Hampton from the International Sustainable Forestry Coalition.

The South African Minister of Environment Barbara Dallas Creedy highlighted the connection between international climate commitments and biodiversity commitments from the Kunming-Montreal global biodiversity framework.

The theme of our talks was about what plantation forests can offer with carbon and biodiversity, and the need for greater recognition of the value of plantations in global discussions of the joint biodiversity/climate crisis.

The panel discussion ended with a question about small to medium scale foresters and farm foresters. There are different support models globally but there's a shared recognition that if we recognise the ecosystem services forests provide and bring those values into the economy, forestry will be more accessible to those with less access to capital.

I also emphasised that carbon income enables foresters to undertake more intensive forest management, which in turn contributes to the biodiversity values in the forest – a great example of how a market approach can have wide ranging non-market benefits.

I also sat in several talks focused on the importance of ensuring that the costs of participation in carbon markets is not a barrier to entry, and that accessibility is a

key principle that must be balanced with integrity and verification.

Obviously, those discussions are highly relevant to our current struggles with the New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme and the recently increased fees and charges.

The integrity of carbon units and markets is under intense scrutiny with a lot of conversation about what's called article 6 of the Paris Agreement – this is the part which allows countries to pursue voluntary cooperation in the implementation of their nationally determined contributions.

Given current projections of falling short of our Paris target, we are likely to need to seek some sort of cooperation, which could take the form of carbon purchasing, so we will need to stay heavily engaged in the discussions of what 'good' looks like for carbon market integrity and measures of sustainable development and environmental integrity are included in those agreements.

There is some great work developing products from our forests, and in talking to some of our corporate partners in Japan there's a shared enthusiasm for developing bioproducts. These materials will make the best use of forestry residues and replace less sustainable and higher emitting products.

Scalability is a key challenge globally though. I heard repeatedly that there is no lack of innovation, but there is a gap between those innovations and the capital and connections needed to produce them at scale. I know Scion is still working hard to get a biopilot built in New Zealand that will help with scalability, and hopefully NZ Inc can work with some of these international partners to bridge the gap.



OPINION

Pure Advantage had a panel discussion in partnership with World Wildlife Fund-NZ on Recloning Papatūānuku, the native afforestation programme seeking to plant or regenerate 2.1 million hectares of native forest in the next 10 years.

The new Climate Change Minister, Simon Watts told the panel the government was considering how to support the proposal. Simon Watts will be acting Forestry Minister when Forests Minister, Todd McClay is overseas shortly as well, which is a great signal that the two portfolios will be closely connected.

Back in New Zealand prior to my travel to COP, our pan-sector NZ Forest and Wood

Forum met with Todd McClay. It was a brief meeting, but he reiterated his commitment to forestry including creating certainty in the Emissions Trading Scheme, recognising the value of wood through increased processing and standards, and his interest in undertaking trade missions with forestry representatives onboard.

Todd McClay also mentioned his intention to get the settings right for planting trees. FOA's Environment Committee has been working with Ministry for Primary Industries and Ministry for the Environment officials on the guidance and implementation issues around the new National Environmental Standards for Commercial Forestry. We will keep you

informed of developments in this area, and keep pushing to ensure officials and Ministers understand how we're managing risk in our forestry operations.

It has been a busy and difficult year for many, and I hope that you all have restful holidays with family and friends over summer. The FOA team and I will be off from 25 December, with the office reopened on 8 January for another year of working for our forests and growers.

Elizabeth Heeg
Chief Executive, FOA



POLITICS

National points to policy with 'Forests for a strong economy' manifesto launch

NOW FORESTS MINISTER TODD MCCLAY COMMITMENTS AT RED STAG, IN ROTORUA, 26 SEPTEMBER

"There's a very strong role for forestry to play in New Zealand from an economic development point of view.

"There's an even more important role for forestry to play when it comes to meeting our carbon obligations."

"The ETS is a very good vehicle, in fact probably the only vehicle that enables New Zealand to meet its climate change reduction obligations.

"We'll work with the sector to get the balance right, so we can have certainty into the ETS and it's not a boom bust cycle of plant now, because the price might be high, but if next year the government tinkers with that and the ETS price comes down the investment doesn't look as certain as it should have been."

"When the Labour government came out and said councils would be responsible for deciding exactly where you would plant trees, plus they floated a consultation document with many changes to the ETS that people weren't ready for the carbon price crashed.

"We will look to partner with the private sector to plant forests to meet carbon obligations on Crown Land that is suitable not only the private sector.

[ETS Administration charge] "We have to review that and all costs and everything we're doing. You know you should only be paying what you need to and it feels like there is excessive cost, in that either because they are looking to what they paid for in the future or set up a system that's very very expensive."

"You know there's wood in this building that's been sequestered. It will be here for 50 years or longer longer than a rotation of pine trees. It helps all New Zealanders meet our carbon reduction obligations by being smarter on what we do."

"If you want to export logs those who invest in that then actually there won't be restriction upon that. If you want to process wood for export and add value there won't be restriction. We'll find ways to encourage and help."



"The commitment in there to support the development of adoption of a forestry plan that's industry led. It's for you to decide what that should look like. We'll engage and we'll talk it through."

"If somebody wants to come and partner, if you've got some land and if someone overseas wants to plant and go into the NES, you're welcome to work that out it. As far as foreign enterprise is concerned it [policy of denying carbon credits to overseas investors was only about the ownership of land."

Fire risk predictions for the coming summer

NIWA predictions are for a dry summer on the east coast of both islands, especially Northland and Tairāwhiti.

The fire risk will be exacerbated by strong northwesterly winds and the fire intensity risk made greater by the lush growth leading up to Christmas drying out to create wildfire fuel.

Of course, there are qualifications to this dire apprehension of the 2023 – 2024 El Niño – weather is erratic, and regions vary. The West Coast and Southland are likely to be wetter than usual into early next year, and with stronger winds than usual.

While the climatologists know how El Niño behaved in the past, the widespread warmer oceans are made predicting the weather even more fraught than usual. The trademark El Niño hot spot in the eastern Tropical Pacific is there, but it is just as unusually hot elsewhere in the Pacific, Indian and Atlantic oceans.

MPI is strongly urging landowners to be prepared for greater fire risk. NIWA is posting a Drought Monitor, Drought

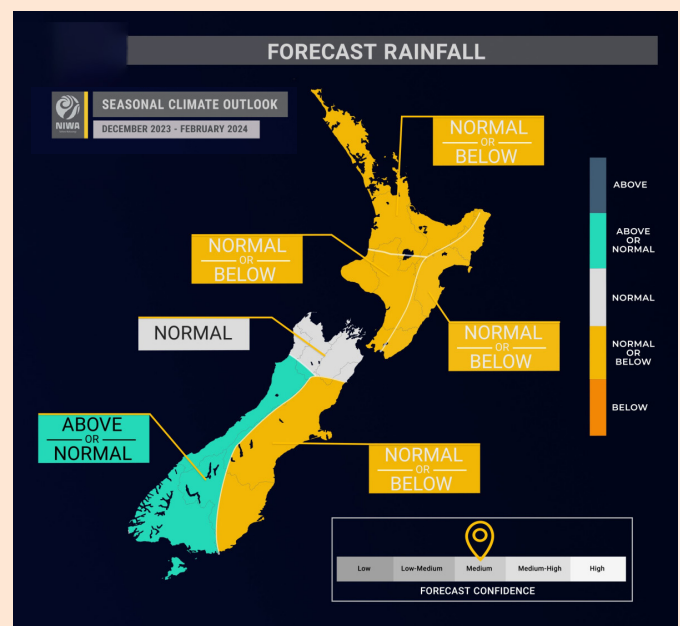
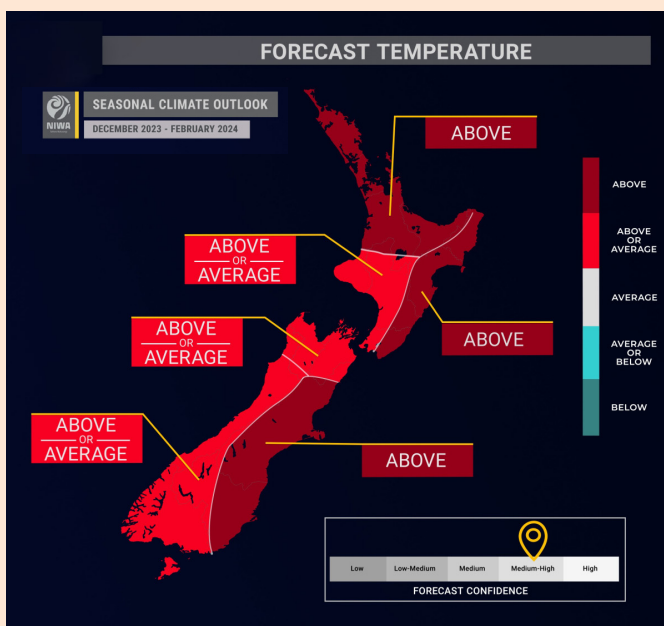
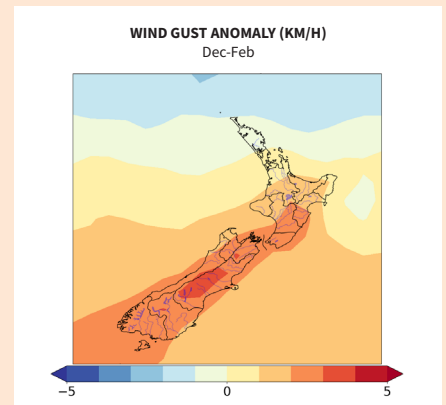
Forecasting Dashboard, Seasonal Climate Outlook, Hotspots and Daily Climate Maps, so there is no excuse for not knowing what the risk situation is.

The Chair of the FOA/FFA Fire Committee, Sean McBride says now is the time that forest owners should be ensuring fire season planning is on schedule and personnel and equipment are ready to respond. This will be critical as the season progresses and risk increases.

“It is also critical that forest owners take measures to mitigate the risk of ignition and there are guidelines on how to effectively manage this in the NZFOA Forest Fire Risk Management Guidelines.”

“Finally, communicating closely with neighbours and other stakeholders to jointly manage the risk of wildfire will inevitably lead to better outcomes and so we encourage you to open discussions with external parties as part of your fire season preparations.”

IT IS ALSO CRITICAL THAT FOREST OWNERS TAKE MEASURES TO MITIGATE THE RISK OF IGNITION

Foresters' skills vital in wildfire efforts

When unprecedented wildfires broke out across Canada this year, local forester Steve Gatenby was quick to volunteer his forestry skills and expertise for deployment.

He was one of seven in the Timberlands Crew deployed to Alberta, Canada in mid-July – hand-selected to fight wildfires that engulfed an area 95 times greater than Kaingaroa Forest Estate.

Thinking back on five weeks of intense heat, Steve uses one phrase to describe the experience.

“Fluid. You had to be fluid every day,” Steve says. “Everything could change in an instant, and all of a sudden you had a whole new plan you had to adapt to.”

“The scale of the fires was incredible. We often had to fly in a helicopter for half an hour to get to the start point of where we would be fighting fires for the day. You’d see next to no houses while you were in the air, and just this immense, remote, smouldering forest.”

An Area Forester for Timberlands, the Canadian wildfires marked Steve’s 11th deployment, with an impressive seven national deployments and three Australian deployments already under his belt.

“I’m a volunteer for our local fire brigade too – and that’s the case for a lot of people that work in forestry,” Steve says. “They like to keep their fire skills up to date by joining volunteer fire brigades.”

Deployment opportunities are gold for New Zealand forestry crews, who are typically exposed to fewer wildfire incidents than their overseas counterparts.

“Foresters are skilled and trained in managing and preventing fire, but keeping those skills fresh requires real experience too,” Steve says. “When a fire event does occur, you rely solely on response time and the expertise of the people called out.”

“To spend four to five weeks in the thick of it, getting up to speed on things like radio communications and specific firefighting techniques is invaluable for a country like New Zealand which rely mostly on expert volunteers.”



An aerial view of a 65,000-hectare fire

Despite Steve having more experience than most foresters in the fire space, he says the contrast of vegetation and landscapes in Alberta compared to those in New Zealand presented a unique challenge.

“It was a real variety of forest vegetation that I hadn’t experienced back home,” Steve says. “There would be an expanse of forest, then suddenly, a rocky outcrop, followed by swamp.”

“The unknown vegetation raised challenges – how the vegetation might react at different temperatures and humidities, and how to control that.”

“Fire behaviour under specific settings is a really hard thing to learn until you’ve experienced it. Some days would flare up and be far more volatile than others. So there was a lot of on-the-job learning on how to control the fires in those sorts of environments.”

The days were long – briefings started at 7am, then crews returned to camp at 7pm after a day of fighting fires for more briefings and prep for the next day’s efforts.

“The way the Canadian team presented their incident action plans was next level and obviously as a result of the scale and number of fires this country deals with on an annual basis,” Steve says.

“These crews have been in these roles for years, battling a wide variety of conditions each summer and translating their experiences into practical plans.”

“You can’t really learn these skills without being exposed to these wildfires and every experience allows you to build on your abilities and confidence.”

Although the Canadians set the bar, Steve says the Kiwi crew brought a particular skillset and work ethic to the scene that was incredibly valuable too.

FIRES

“With our forestry background, the Timberlands crew were used to the early starts and more vigilant around forestry hazards that some of the other crews had less experience in.

“There was always someone within our crew that could fix a seized pump or strip a carburetor in the middle of a forest and manage to get that equipment operating again too,” Steve says. “It was pretty neat observing all that talent, can-do attitude and skillset within one team.”

As the crew’s deployment came to an end, the reality of wildfire outbreaks in the context of global warming became clear.

“When fighting fires in Australia and New Zealand, you often stay there until the fire is out or at least contained,” Steve says. “Despite our best efforts, it was going the other way.”

“One day, the whole sky turned a deep red. That phenomenon only happens when you get a very large-scale fire. The smoke turns into a cloud and obscures the sun, creating this red glowing haze.”

“We were pulled out of that fire just a few hours before because it had got too hazardous. The whole camp was evacuated and that saw the end of our deployment.”

“By the time we left, an area greater than the size of the South Island of New Zealand was burnt – over 18 million hectares.”

Steve says it was an intense time, and a rollercoaster of emotions.

“The ferocity of these fires was hugely frustrating. We were so disheartened to see it spread like that, but equally the crew were so motivated to keep helping.”

“To think they had been away from their home country and families for more than a month and were putting their hands up offering to stay and protect the community was humbling.”

With wildfires projected to increase by 30 percent by 2050¹, adopting new technologies will be an increasingly important tool for fire management.

Steve believes there’s an opportunity for New Zealand to take up technologies that are being used by the likes of Canada before wildfire becomes a widespread issue.

“Plenty of what we saw in Canada would be beneficial to use in our forests,” Steve says.

“Instead of one large 42mm hose, they used an ‘econo-hose’ that had multiple small hoses running off a main line.”

“It’s an incredibly effective way of distributing water and navigating through a forest, and the smaller hoses can be used to reach different parts of the forest simultaneously. We’re hoping to introduce it here.”

While technology may help, Steve maintains that the skills and expertise of foresters, loggers and contractors will be the pinch point for preventing and responding to future events.

“Safety is everyone’s highest priority and forestry personnel have so much to offer with some of the high risk tasks, including tree felling to machine operators,” he says. “The rural fire service would rely heavily on the resources and skills of its volunteers and expert foresters if a big fire event came along.”

“That’s why foresters, loggers and contractors hold such an important role in preventing and responding to wildfires.”

“Foresters are just one group though, and the increasing risk of fire is a scenario that everyone – and every primary sector in our country – needs to be better prepared for.”

With El Niño having officially arrived in New Zealand this year, conditions are predicted to be warmer and drier than usual, particularly over Eastern parts of the country, and stronger than usual winds².

Such a weather concoction makes for the perfect fire breeding ground – particularly in forests and in the high country.

Steve says increasing awareness of the increased fire risk this summer will be crucial after the quiet fire seasons we’ve had.

INTERNATIONALLY
WILDFIRES ARE PROJECTED
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BY 2050



“Just having conversations with your crew and the community raises fire awareness. But it’s also important we maintain relationships with partner organisations like Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ).”

“Crews should be checking their fire gear is well maintained, that their fire training is current and up to standard, and that they know what procedures to follow in the event of a fire.”

“It will be important for companies to instil a mindset of preparedness this summer too. Increase communications with staff, have a plan for the Christmas break and make sure there is someone on board in case a fire does occur.”

Steve’s dedication to forest and community fire protection was recognised at the Central North Island Wood Council Forestry Awards in August, where he received the Forest Protection and Services Excellence award. Steve is a strong community figure, undertaking extensive pest management to protect the likes of Pōhutukawa and rata, and volunteered his time as Air Support, supporting on the ground Cyclone Gabrielle relief efforts.

1. <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/number-wildfires-rise-50-2100-and-governments-are-not-prepared>
2. <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/499022/el-nino-officially-declared-by-niwa>



Some of the New Zealand crew that were deployed – a blood red sky from the fire’s smoke lighting up the sky behind them

Automatic forestry quick coupler now commercially available

The introduction of an automatic quick coupler is opening up big possibilities for saving time and increasing safety in the forest, as well as reducing the range of machines needed on site.

This coupler allows a base forestry machine to rapidly change from one implement to another – for example from a processor head to a log-loading grapple – without the operator even needing to leave the cab.

The Steelwrist SQ80 quick coupler on a Sumitomo SH300 base machine is an exciting new development for New Zealand harvesting operations. It is the first time a coupler has been installed with a large grapple processor and other heavy-duty logging attachments.

Having a quick coupler means one machine can multi-task on the forest landing, so a single machine can replace a set of dedicated machines.

In small-scale operations this could be from two machines to one, halving the machinery and labour costs for the contractor and less space is needed to work in.

In 2021, Forest Growers Research (FGR) became aware of the Steelwrist range of tilt rotators and quick couplers, when Synergy Equipment of Auckland demonstrated the equipment at the National Agricultural Field Days at Mystery Creek. Interest was ignited.

Synergy Equipment was asked if there was a Steelwrist was large enough for forestry work, such as on a Waratah 624 harvester. The larger Steelwrist SQ series couplers, which are manufactured in Sweden, were thought to have sufficient capacity, and the company was keen to collaborate with FGR to expand their range into the forestry sector.

A project partnership was established between FGR, Synergy Equipment, Total Hydraulic Solutions of Rotorua (THS) and AB Equipment at Taupō.

The team set out to develop a machine suitable for New Zealand forestry conditions. Synergy Equipment supplied the Steelwrist SQ80 Quick Coupler and adaptors, and AB Equipment supplied, free of charge, a brand-new Sumitomo SH300-6 excavator with a Waratah 624 harvester head, an Ensign 1770 fixed head grapple and a standard bucket.

THS installed the quick coupler and adaptors to the machinery and attachments and provided backup technical support.

THS programmed the base machine computer to adjust settings to match the implement connected. The operator manually selects the attachment on the touch screen, and the hydraulic settings are adjusted.

THS also built a cradle to support the processor for easy coupling and decoupling. This was essential for easy connection and to prevent contaminating the hydraulic system. FGR funded the coupler, installation and commissioning.

The set-up has now been trialed by two commercial logging contractors, Loggabull Logging in south Waikato, and more recently, by Fast Logging in Turangi. Time-study and cost analyses are currently being analysed and results are now available.

FGR's project leader, Rob Prebble, of Rob Prebble Consulting has overseen the project together with Keith Raymond, the FGR Automation and Robotics programme manager.

“We are excited about the potential for the quick coupler,” says Keith. “We believe it will bring substantial cost savings, especially in lower volume operations such as woodlot harvesting and road-lining operations.”

“But every forest in New Zealand has difficult, low production harvest areas. Sharing attachments with one base machine by using a quick coupler will likely be advantageous even for owners of large forests.”

The quick coupler mounted on the Sumitomo 300 loader is now available to buy or lease. Anyone interested should contact Phillip McKenzie at AB Equipment Ltd, Taupō e: phil.mckenzie@abequipment.co.nz



The Steelwrist SQ80 Quick Coupler attached to the Waratah 624C grapple processor



The Ensign 1770L fixed top continuous rotating grapple allows a skilled operator to carry out all log handling operations including sorting, stacking, loading, and shovel logging



Four generations of kea thrive in Tasman Pine Forests

Kiwi ingenuity and the ecological benefits of pine forests have seen a group of kea return for six consecutive years to a Motueka Valley forestry site.

The kea pair were discovered in 2017, nesting in a culvert during a routine site check by a Tasman Pine Forests Ltd logging contractor.

Tasman Pine Forests Technical/ Environmental Forester, Dan Montgomery, has been keeping a watchful eye over the culvert since 2020, working with the Kea Conservation Trust (KCT) to safeguard the nationally endangered bird.

“It became clear in 2020 that the kea had no plan on leaving,” Dan says. “The female, Lillian, had laid eggs in the culvert for the first time, so we immediately closed the area to keep them safe, set up a network of traps and installed cameras to monitor them.”

Dan’s cameras revealed the vulnerabilities faced by many kea nesting sites – regular predator visitation from the likes of weka, possums, rats, and stoats – which ultimately led to chick predation.

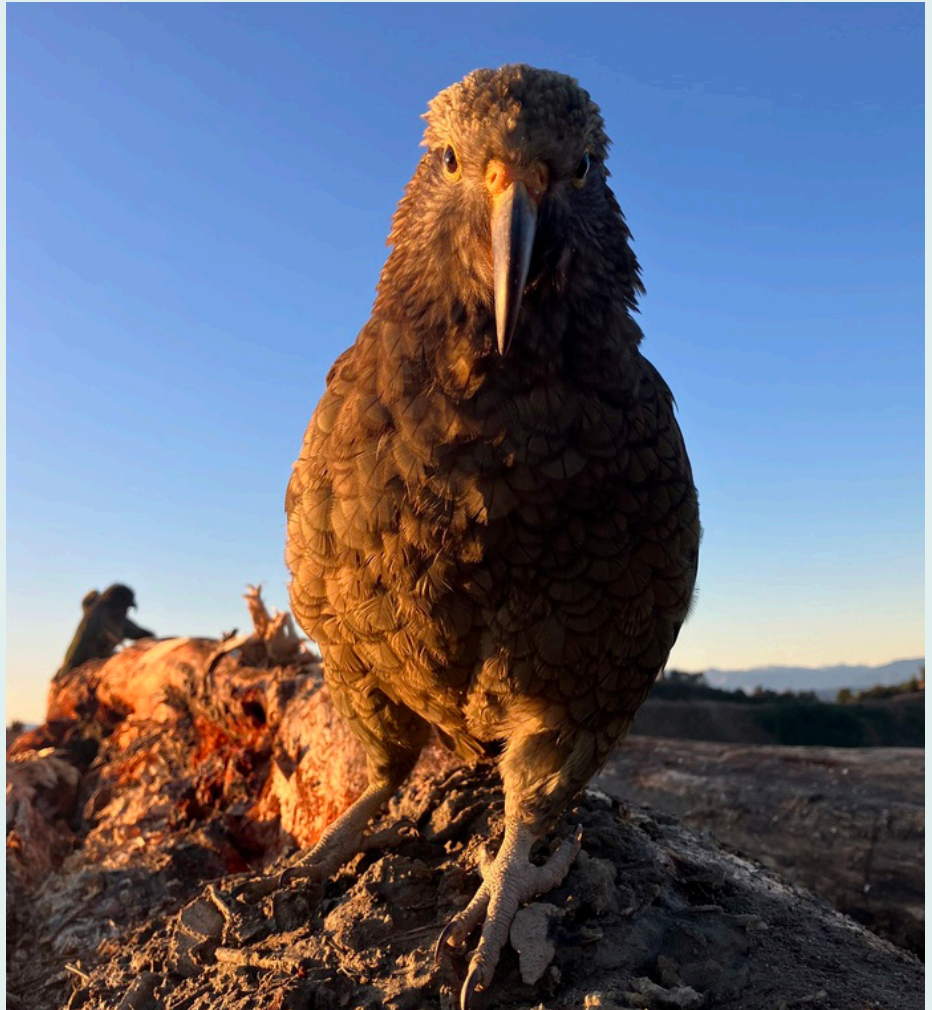
“The kea had made the culvert their home,” Dan says. “So, we decided we had to come up with a more permanent and proactive solution to protect them and their chicks.”

Under guidance from the KCT, Dan, his mate Richard Johns and a group of volunteers called the ‘Lead Heads’, took it upon themselves to build a predator-free fence. Tasman Pine Forests donated the timber and netting. Dan – a builder prior to his forestry days; and Richard – a blacksmith; donated their time, materials and skills.

In all, the fence cost less than a thousand dollars.

“When you think predator fences, you think big money,” Dan says. “It was a really good showcase of how you can achieve cost-effective biodiversity gains, as long as the motivation to help is there.”

The frame was prefabricated off site at



One of the kea that have made the Tasman Pine Forests culvert their home

Richard’s workshop then installed in the culvert in two stages with the help of the volunteers. A specially designed platform makes it near impossible for predators to climb up and over the fence while still allowing the adult kea to leave the culvert.

“The theory is that when the kea chicks are old enough, they can fly up and over the top of the platform,” Dan says.

Measuring four by three metres, the structure now envelops the site, successfully protecting the kea and their chicks from outside predators.

THE KEA HAVE
CONTINUED TO
USE THE CULVERT
AS THEIR HOME
SINCE THE FENCE
WAS INSTALLED,
SUCCESSFULLY
FLEDGING

**FOUR
CHICKS**





BIODIVERSITY

The kea have continued to use the culvert as their home since the fence was installed, successfully fledging four chicks.

“There’s some cool stuff we’ve caught on camera – particularly the family dynamics,” says Dan. “We haven’t seen any more breeding this year, but we’re hopeful the adults – and juveniles that have been raised here – will continue to return and add to the kea population.”

The birds’ appearance in the culvert has been crucial for helping build a picture of how kea use and benefit from pine forests.

“We’re not sure why the kea picked this particular culvert,” Dan says. It was a national first – finding the birds dwelling in both a man-made structure and in exotic plantation forest. Regardless, they seem to really love pine forests.

“Pine seeds are readily available to them and you see them feeding on bugs and grubs in the rotting radiata debris.”

The benefits of pine were echoed by a recent study looking at kea habitat use and diet in plantation forests in Nelson. The study found that kea were spending a notable amount of time in pine plantations, exploiting these areas for their daily activity and food resources¹.

It was suggested that kea, being highly mobile and curious, could be using plantation forests as a corridor between patches of native forest too.

Dan says the study reiterates the important role of pine forests in managing the kea population.

“Extensive pest management occurs in our forests as part of our daily operations. We’ve put further measures in place since their arrival to protect them from predators.

“There’s this misconception that foresters don’t care about the environment or the biodiversity in and around forest ecosystems.

“The opposite is true – conservation is a core element of our work – Tasman Pine staff and contractors are really passionate about the cause. We work and play in the bush.”

The birds have become a regular discussion point at the Tasman Pine Forest crews’ weekly team meetings, and



Dan Montgomery (second from left) with some of the volunteers who helped assemble the predator fence



Lillian, the first female adult kea observed nesting in a plantation forest



Installation of the predator fence

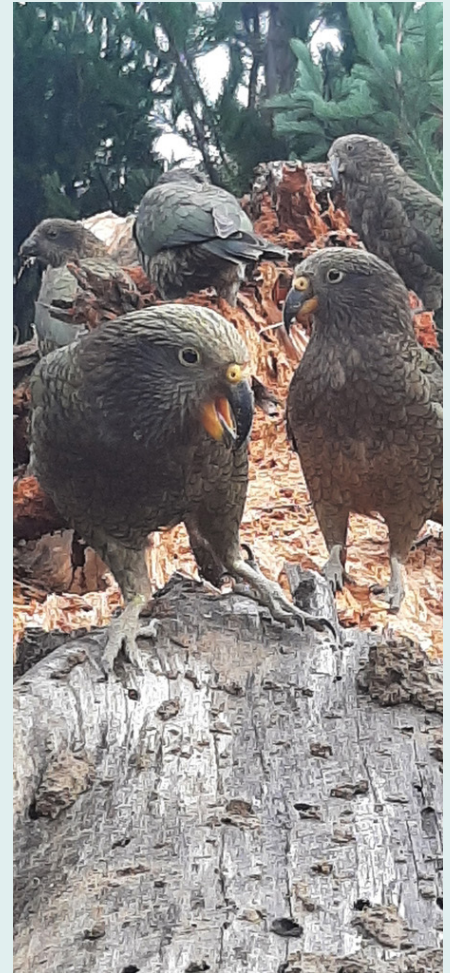

contractors have been educated to look out for them and record where they’ve seen them.”

“At one point, the kea were targeting utes, so, one of our planting crews had the initiative to buy a car cover,” Dan says. “The keas lost interest. It was a smart, quick-thinking solution from the crew member, so we recognised their initiative.”

“We see that all the time – and try and foster their environment in our day-to-day work.

“After all, there’s only about 3,000 of them and five million of us. We have to look after them.”

1. A preliminary study of kea *Nestor notabilis* habitat use and diet in plantation forests of Nelson New Zealand. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03014223.2023.2251904>

KEA WERE SPENDING A NOTABLE AMOUNT OF TIME IN PINE PLANTATIONS, EXPLOITING THESE AREAS FOR THEIR DAILY ACTIVITY AND FOOD RESOURCES¹.

Can the forestry sector play a bigger role in a sustainability transition?

Substantial effort is being devoted to transitioning the global economy to address climate change, the loss of nature, and pollution and waste, while seeking opportunities for economic development.

The solution has been seen as a series of transitions – in energy systems, transportation systems, the materials we use in society, the built environment and land use. The global forestry sector has become a key contributor to these transitions.

Forests represent a substantial part of the global carbon cycle, support a significant proportion of biodiversity on earth, regulate freshwater, and provide sustainable, renewable materials for society. We can manage forests for conservation, but also utilise them for sustainable, recyclable and naturally decomposing materials in society. However, unlike the energy transition, the land use and materials transitions have not been well-understood or prioritised. Human society has been based on a process of using materials and then disposing of them. A circular economy reuses, recycles, or repurposes materials. Materials like plastics do not naturally decompose and remain as waste for centuries, often finding their way into the ocean or impacting other ecosystems.

This can be addressed by increasing the use of biomass-based materials like forestry or agriculture production. As many readers will know, a tree is composed of cellulosic fibers held together by a glue called lignin. When used as a building material the combination of cellulosic fibers and lignin has great strength and flexibility.

Refined cellulose can be used in paper, packaging, fabrics, sanitary materials, and absorbents. The complex molecules in wood can be used in a biochemical industry

that can substitute for everything made in the petrochemical industry. For this reason, creating a circular bioeconomy is a policy priority for governments around the world.

There is also a growing consensus on what a land use transition might look like. The opportunity for our land use systems to efficiently provide food, fiber, and timber as well as conservation of nature has finally been recognised, but unrealised. But the extent of carbon pricing now affecting land use, and the efforts to implement biodiversity crediting point to new option to support balancing conservation and production in the landscape.

Our current economic system treats nature as a free good, but we now have experience with multiple carbon price signals for forests and proposed policy measures to price biodiversity. Land management quickly responds to changing price signals. A rising carbon price leads to conservation of marginal forests, to reforestation of marginal agriculture lands, and to a reduction in deforestation.

In the United States where wetland mitigation banks and endangered species banks have been operating for 20 years, there is evidence that scarcity of critical ecosystems can create prices that support conservation and restoration work.

The international forestry sector, increasingly working with agricultural interests, conservation stakeholders and local communities and indigenous peoples, is starting to put this together.

The rising set of commercial options for land management – food, fiber, timber, climate finance, biodiversity finance, wind farms,



David Brand, Executive Chair, New Forests

solar farms, etc are starting to rationalise and optimise land use.

This leads to intensification of production systems, better conservation, and restoration of degraded lands. Information systems including geospatial mapping tools, and modelling of landscape dynamics help drive more optimal land use. Former silos of agriculture, forestry and conservation are being merged into a natural capital asset class that operates across landscapes to optimise returns and benefits to society.

This needs a policy architecture that standardises natural capital accounts for carbon, water and biodiversity; instruments to create value for that natural capital; new technologies for monitoring landscape condition and creating resilience to physical impacts like cyclones; and investment models that integrate the interests of investors and stakeholders to create landscapes producing sustainable materials for the circular bioeconomy. There's no doubt that the forestry sector can play an important role in the sustainability transition.



ACHIEVEMENT

FOA picks up promotion award

Wood our low carbon future won this year's primary industry promotion campaign award sponsored by the New Zealand Guild of Agricultural Journalists and Communicators.

The prize is for 'an outstanding agricultural communications project or campaign, either short or long term, undertaken by a corporate, an agency, comms team, or an individual within an agricultural organisation'.

Judges said of this campaign: 'Polished and professional-looking across a variety of mediums. Good breadth of storytelling that definitely improved reach beyond those only in the industry. And a very comprehensive survey. (We also loved the original name of the campaign.' *'It's time for wood'*).

'*Wood our low carbon future*' is jointly funded by the Forest Growers Levy Trust and Te Uru Rākau.



FOA Communications Manager Don Carson, (left) who produced the campaign, receives the award from Guild President Neil Wallace

The platforms for the campaign were television commercials, print advertisements in magazines and newspapers, social media and a hybrid on-line campaign operated by NZME.

The campaign ran between August 2022 and August 2023.



CYCLONE RECOVERY

Pan Pac is celebrating milestones in its recovery from Gabrielle

Staff and contractors have been working hard since the cyclone in February to fix the damage caused by two metres of silt which was dumped on its Napier site from the Esk Valley flooding.

The Whirinaki business incurred around \$300 million in damage to its business and forests.

To recognise the incredible efforts made by everyone over this period, the company held a thank you hui in mid-November.

More than 600 workers enjoyed a spit-roast lunch, as Pan Pac's leadership team acknowledged the months of hard mahi and the progress that has been made.

The company screened a video about its Sustainability Programme, filmed before and after the cyclone, that also features interviews with staff on the impact of seeing their workplace inundated with water.

Pan Pac marked a milestone in October, when its chipmill became operational again. It expects its lumber division to begin operating in mid-January, while the pulp business will begin the first phase of operations later in February.



Tony Clifford MD Pan Pac speaking to workers at the hui



LEVY REFERENDUM



FLGT move for Levy Referendum in 2024

Since 2013, the Forest Growers Levy has funded about \$10 million per year on forest industry good activities in a work programme which is mostly in research and development.

The Levy Order was renewed in 2019 with strong forest owner support from both large and small scale voters.

The Forest Growers Levy Trust has set the 2024 levy rate at 33 cents per harvested tonne.

At its meeting earlier this month the Trust Board also resolved to conduct a forest grower referendum in late 2024 for a new six year levy order running to 2031.

Consultation on this new order, plus seeking feedback on a proposal for a levy on carbon, is soon to begin.

See <https://fglt.org.nz/> as the details of the proposal are developed and posted.

Feedback on the 2024 work programme is being sought and is also due to be posted on the FGLT site.



WOOD COUNCILS

Regional wood councils set up coordinating group

New Zealand's regional wood councils have signed an accord to work together on mutual interests to better represent the interests of the forest industry.

The now eight councils have previously worked in a loose collaboration, with each council's membership and goals strongly reflecting their local interests and issues.

The new chair of the wood councils, Peter Davies-Colley of Northland Wood Council says the accord signals a new age of collaboration in the New Zealand forest industry.

Regional wood councils reach across the whole supply chain in each region to work on the important issues for their industry.

He says often the members are natural competitors, but they put their agendas to one side to collaboratively improve the industry.

“While the focus is at a regional level the Wood Council Group will be able to help each regional wood council achieve their

goals especially in the crucial areas of health and safety, environment and social licence. It has never been a more important time for everyone to work together.”

Peter Davies-Colley says the new group looks forward to collaborating with national organisations and projects, including the forest and wood processing forum and Discover Forestry



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