

THE SMALL SCALE FOREST RESOURCE

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While the seminar definitions do not necessarily imply that limited scale logging is confined to small-scale forests, these are nevertheless worthy of attention, as the problems we wish to consider are clearly evident.

How much of the national resource is actually contained within small scale forests?

The Forest Owners' Association publication "Forestry, A Growing Investment" provides the following Forest Service statistics for forest ownership :

- 54% - New Zealand Forest Service
- 35% - Private companies
- 7% - Private individuals and other
- 4% - Local Authorities and Government Departments

The "small growers", who in general are those responsible for establishing the small-scale forests, own some seven percent of the resource, a relatively minor component of the total forestry sector. As the Forest Owners' Association points out though, the forest resource already owned by some of these growers is nevertheless of significance on a regional basis.

The variation in regional distribution and the size characteristics of the smaller forests is illustrated in the following table, the data for which has been obtained from the New Zealand Forest Service's PRIFO inventory records (N.Z.F.S. 1980). While in area terms the forests may represent only 7% of the resource, in numerical terms there are a very large number, especially in the very small size classes.

NUMBER OF WOODLOTS BY SIZE
NON-STATE EXOTIC FORESTS 1984

Conservancy	2 ha & Less	3-4 ha	5-19 ha	20-49 ha	50-99 ha	100 ha	Total
Auckland	986	403	656	196	70	95	2406
Rotorua	401	195	318	111	36	139	1200
Wellington	2815	662	1017	239	106	80	4919
Nelson	347	109	257	121	57	94	985
Westland	68	33	68	17	4	3	193
Canterbury	1520	576	764	138	40	29	3067
Southland	574	285	542	140	27	34	1602
New Zealand	6711	2263	3622	962	340	474	14372

Source : PRIFO AS AT 31.3.84

The age distribution of the woodlots is strongly skewed towards the younger age classes as the following table shows :

AREA BY AGE CLASS FOR WOODLOTS

(UNDER 20 HECTARES IN SIZE - AS AT 31 MARCH 1984)

Conservancy	1985	1980	1975	1970	1965	1960	1955	1950	1945	TOTAL
Auckland	1049	2294	1811	882	545	376	345	320	1045	8767
Rotorua	1155	1636	843	283	120	38	38	33	139	4285
Wellington	2547	5237	2438	1048	869	478	354	332	1587	14890
Nelson	260	564	827	563	235	187	175	204	465	3480
Westland	74	447	257	76	65	-	-	-	2	921
Canterbury	1007	2172	1091	1071	985	838	749	446	2351	10710
Southland	1459	1838	1394	683	332	446	290	126	211	6779
	7551	14188	8661	4606	3251	2363	1951	1461	5800	49832

1985 age class only contains 3 years planting as at 31/3/84 (Source : PRIFO 1985)

There has been considerable encouragement for the small grower. In its most tangible form this has been the work of the Forest Service's Advisory Services Division, but policy statements from various sources have also promoted the cause. One of the more recent of these is the CNIPS study. It pointed to the need for a new initiative in forest planning.

"The sector should shift from a tradition of extensive estates on marginal back country or low fertility land to smaller scale, lower cost, clearwood regimes on better quality and more accessible sites" (Inter Regional Planning Group, CNIPS, 1983).

The CNIPS report recommended a national policy commitment to achieving this change.

A slightly sobering corollary to these proposals is contained in a paper presented by Ogle to the 1984 Institute of Foresters Conference. He noted that small grower plantings had not reached the recommended target level set at the 1981 Forestry Development Conference. Small grower plantings are only running at one-quarter of their targeted level.

In connection with small-scale forestry, it should be noted that numerous district schemes have restrictions on the size of forest that can be established. Fowler and Meister (1983) completed a study of the forestry policy of 21 counties representing the southern half of the North Island. More than half the counties specified limits to forest size of 20 ha or less (in some cases only 5 ha) applying to more than 50% of those counties' area.

References

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- Fowler and Meister 1983. Rural Planning and Forestry : Formulation of Policy at County Level. Discussion Paper in Natural Resource Economics No. 7, Massey University, Palmerston North.
- Ogle, A. 1984. Financial and Taxation Implications for the Small Grower. Paper presented to the 1984 Institute of Foresters Conference, Christchurch.

