

National Resource Management 'Umbrella Group'

A proposal has been floated to form a Natural Resource Management Group under the auspices of the Royal Society of New Zealand to act as a "clearing house and co-ordinator" of environmental issues. Other roles are also suggested. Thirteen representatives of various societies and institutes met in Wellington to discuss the umbrella group's formation. Many of these other bodies have suffered from falling membership, increased administration costs and static annual fees.

Unanimous agreement for the formation of such an "umbrella" group was given, although several bodies, including this Institute, stressed the need to retain autonomy and identity when, and if, a conflict of interest arose. Like most meetings of this sort in New Zealand, a working group of mainly Wellington-based people was formed to consider roles and administration of the group. This Working Party was to meet in late January or early February.

The Royal Society was seen by those present as the most suitable vehicle to expedite any new role by virtue of its:

- contacts in Wellington, e.g. the new Ministry of Science (Foundation for Research, Science and Technology);
- establishment in this area of work, mitigating 'set up' costs;
- computerised filing and membership systems as well as managerial continuity and back up.

Antagonists towards the Royal Society said that is was "a bunch of self-ingratiating old fuddy duddies". Few of the bodies present countered this statement.

The "Scientific Societies" such as this Institute could possibly form a separate group within the Royal Society distinct from the fellowship. A simplified schematic representation of the proposal appears below.

The Scientific Societies would possibly comprise seven separate sub-groups, viz: Land, Earth, Social, Maths/Physics, Biological, Medical/Human, Technical.

The Institute is interested in your

views on this matter and is preparing a preliminary submission to the Working Group. If you wish to present your views, please contact either Paul Baker, Fax (04) 264-171, C/- P.O. Box 40-847, Upper Hutt, or Lindsay Vaughan, Fax (073) 462-886, C/- LIRA.

Paul Baker
Institute Representative

Wellington Section report

Paul Baker, Chairperson
Susan Keenan, Secretary

The Wellington Section had an interesting year with evening seminars, a meal, closer relations forged with the local Farm Forestry Association and actively participating in environmental issues affecting forestry.

New Venues, Topics

It was pleasant to do things a little differently, with new venues and discussion topics. Farm Forestry Association members showed an active interest in all events held by the section, and Institute members reciprocated by attending several Farm Forestry field days. Octo-

genarian Stan Reid certainly showed his continuing enthusiasm for looking at a sawmill on a trip to Featherston last year.

The firepower of two former Directors-General of Forests was brought to bear on the presenters of an evening lecture on the sale of State forests. A lively, often fiery session ensued with interjection and explanation. The meeting went well, with good company, civility and refreshment.

At a different level, the section utilised senior members' experience to draw up a submission on Indigenous Forest Policy. Accolades are due to Lindsay Poole. The Rural Fire Service's Review and Resource Management Law Reform Bill were also commented upon. A suggestion was made to the Minister of Employment and his opposition counterpart to utilise some of the nation's 180,000 unemployed on forestry projects, with the individual only receiving a benefit when he/she works, rather than be paid for doing nothing. The Minister of Employment's private secretary's response was: pass the message on to the Hon. Phil Goff and the Department of Labour. Their response, in turn, was to use the RESTART scheme which is funded quite differently!

Last but not least, I would like to thank the Section's Secretary, Susan Keenan, for her unstinting enthusiasm and dedication.

Paul N. Baker
Chairperson
Wellington Section

Figure 1. Natural Resource Management "Umbrella Group" - Relationship to the Royal Society of New Zealand.

