

Back to our roots

Growing a forestry future on a soundly-based foundation

New Zealand Farm Forestry
Association (Inc)

57th Annual Conference



Proudly hosted by the Lower North Branch



Saturday 20 April – Tuesday 23 April, 2013
Orewa Arts and Events Centre, Auckland

Welcome

The Lower North Branch is proud to be able to invite you to Orewa for the 57th Annual Conference of The New Zealand Farm Forestry Association.

Our conference theme “Back to our roots” acknowledges the very early significant forestry export industry in the region (it is recorded that up to 30 vessels at a time were often loading Kaipara kauri logs and lumber for export to Australia and California), the early practice of plantation forestry (some of the earliest planting of the Woodhill sand dunes and Riverhead gumlands pioneered the use of radiata pine, eucalypts and redwood) and of course the formation of The Farm Forestry and Horticulture (Lower North) Association by Neil Barr, Hec Nicholls and Frank Bartlett in 1950.

This followed a discussion on the steps of the Helensville Post Office with shelter and the lack of durable timber for fencing, being major issues at that time. Neil was an enthusiast for trees on farms, and with Forest Service help, travelled around the country encouraging farm foresters to set up local interest groups which in turn led on to our Association as we know it today.

Since those days we have certainly built a forestry future on the foundation created by those events.

Our conference sets out to revisit a little of the past, but particularly to consider the future and how farm foresters can benefit from and contribute to that future in the most positive way possible.


Our Programme

After the preliminaries (Branch Representatives and Annual General Meetings) our conference quickly switches tempo, hopefully lead off by a punchy welcome address by the PM John Key whose electorate we are visiting. For those not involved in the business of the Association a half day tour of the historic settlement of Puhoi including its boutique cheese making plant, possibly a pint at the old hotel and a drive over the Puhoi motorway extension are all part of the experience. We are also just along the road from the Waiwera thermal pools which include a nest of some of the longest and most daring hydro-slides around.

Day Two opens with a focus on the special interest groups with a half day of field visits to view local members’ issues and successes in each case, and to permit the group to discuss their activity for the balance of the year. After a picnic lunch we will all come together for a visit to the property of one of our area’s key farm foresters and look at how forestry fits into Auckland’s periphery and the issues that creates.



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Day Three includes some elements of nostalgia, but also hopefully enables us to better appreciate where the Association has come from, its drivers over the last 60 or so years and how it might best continue to serve its members. The day will commence with a drive by the former Bartlett property – now a major new housing development site but still featuring some of the original Bartlett Eucalyptus saligna which was a widely promoted seed source in the late 1960s. At 10.00am we expect to arrive at “Beresford”, our founder Neil Barr’s farm and now the property of well-known NZ entrepreneur Alan Gibbs. Alan has developed a magnificent display of outdoor artworks which build on the open and quite wild Kaipara west coast character and are now recognised around the world (and he also runs some interesting exotic animals). Hopefully Alan will be able to talk to us about his collection and what has motivated him to do this at this site. Later in the day we return to another of our feature properties, with dinner planned for a very exclusive locality.



Day Four includes visits to three of the Lower North’s feature farm forestry properties. The programme not only covers a wide range of the sites characteristic of this part of New Zealand, it also enables a better appreciation of the species that perform well in more northerly parts of the country, issues associated with incorporating trees into the peri-Auckland landscape, dealing with the presence of 1.4 million people just down the road and so on. Day 4 is the last part of our formal programme but recognising that Anzac Day falls later in the week we have provided for a less formal programme for those who wish to stay a little longer.



Optional Day 5 We are planning a range of options including a visit to Tiritiri Island to see firsthand the restoration of natural forest cover and the associated recovery of wildlife... including a walk amongst species almost impossible to find in one place in mainland settings.

Another option will provide for a bus trip to visit the world-famous Matakoho Kauri Museum with a side trip to Parry Kauri Park at Warkworth where a couple of magnificent old trees still rule supreme.

A further chance to head off-shore is a visit to Rangitoto Island, a prominent feature of the Auckland city landscape created by significant volcanic activity just 600 years ago. This visit will examine recovery of the natural environment and also review the consequences of being located in a peri-urban setting, examine the pest eradication programme and proposed restoration work.



Alternatively we have planned a visit to Woodhill Forest - based around restoring the windblown sand-dune landscape along almost 50km of the Muriwai coastline and in the process creating a commercial forest, and with associated community/recreational programmes utilised by well over 100,000 people annually.

In between, before and after these events there is time to explore some of the magnificent beaches of the east coast area, the wilder side of the west coast, the many markets, craft centres and food and wine trails that are features of this region. You can be sure to get a taste of the latter as a number of well-regarded wineries and eating establishments feature prominently in the catering arrangements for the conference.

Most importantly we hope this conference will provide a great opportunity for foresters from throughout NZ to gather in one place and discuss together some of our most pressing issues.



Orewa Arts and Events Centre, Auckland

The Destination

Auckland City

And of course there is Auckland City itself ... NZ's largest and most cosmopolitan with all the colour and vibrancy that being home to the world's largest population of Pacific peoples provides. In total more than 1.4 million people live within a short distance of its two large harbours. The city provides a host of recreational opportunities and landscapes that lead to it regularly being ranked in the world's top 10 cities, while for those looking to shop or just relax you will find just the spot here. We certainly hope you take this chance to explore, shop, or simply take in the sights while you are here.



Conference Centre and Accommodation

The conference will be held at The Orewa Arts and Events Centre, Riverside Road, Orewa. Accommodation will be in Motels in Orewa and adjacent areas. Details will be advised for booking purposes nearer the time of the conference.

So we encourage you to consider attending our conference, we are sure you will not be disappointed.

Kia ora..

2013 Conference Committee.



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