



achieving environmental excellence

**principles**  
**for** commercial  
**plantation**  
**forest**  
**management**

in new zealand

# principles for commercial plantation forest management in new zealand

## Objectives

To promote understanding between the signatory parties with a view to New Zealand achieving environmental excellence in plantation forest management and participating as an effective advocate internationally for the sustainable management of plantation forests and the protection, preservation, and sustainable management of natural forests. These principles are complementary to the New Zealand Forest Accord (August 1991).

## Scope

These principles have been written to apply to New Zealand's plantation forest management and do not cover environmental and social issues associated with processing, products and use beyond the forest gate. It is recognised that criteria and standards for plantation forest management are being developed through various processes.

## Definitions

**Natural forest** - Areas of land which are predominantly covered in indigenous tree species that are naturally established, including managed indigenous forest areas where regeneration is supplemented by planting of indigenous species.

**Plantation forest** - Areas of land predominantly covered in trees grown for cropping and managed primarily for commercial purposes and excluding natural forests as defined here.

**Natural Areas** - Areas of land with a predominant cover of indigenous vegetation, including natural forests as defined above, and also naturally occurring water bodies.

**Sustainable Management** - In the context of New Zealand's Resource Management Act (1991) sustainable management includes:

Managing the use, development, and production of natural and physical resources in a way, or at a rate, which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural, well-being and for their health and safety while:

- Sustaining the potential of natural and physical resources (excluding minerals) to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations; and
- Safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of air, water, soil and ecosystems; and
- Avoiding, remedying, or mitigating any adverse effects on the environment.

## New Zealand Forest Accord

The objectives of the New Zealand Forest Accord form the basis for these Principles. These objectives are:

- to define those areas where it is inappropriate to establish plantation forestry;
- to recognise the important heritage values of New Zealand's remaining natural indigenous forests and the need for their protection and conservation;
- to acknowledge that the existing area of natural indigenous forest in New Zealand should be maintained and enhanced;
- to recognise that commercial plantation forests of either introduced or indigenous species are an essential source of perpetually renewable fibre and energy, offering an alternative to the depletion of natural forests;
- to acknowledge the mutual benefits emanating from an accord between New Zealand commercial forestry enterprises and conservation groups and the example that this unique accord can provide for the international community.

## Global Consensus on Sustainable Forest Management

The parties recognise that the process of inter-governmental consensus building on sustainable forestry management is ongoing under the aegis of the United Nations and that non-governmental organizations continue to work towards complementary goals. These Principles represent a New Zealand response with regard to commercial plantation forests.

## Principles For Plantation Forest Management

The parties agree that:

- the inter-dependence of ecological, economic and social sustainability must be recognised;
- efficient and effective monitoring is required in the implementation of these Principles;
- in the implementation of sustainable land management, rural and users should be treated equitably, based on the environmental effects of their activities;
- management practices must meet or improve on all statutory requirements and accepted best practices.

## 1 Ecological Principles

Recognising the need for operational flexibility, forest management activities shall be carried out in accordance with the following principles:

### 1.1 Indigenous Biodiversity

The parties agree that the protection of New Zealand's indigenous biodiversity and, where appropriate, its restoration, are important objectives.

- Indigenous biodiversity will be protected primarily in natural areas.
- The protection of indigenous biodiversity in plantation forests is not the primary objective but should be recognised and provided for where appropriate.

- Where threatened species are known to occur within plantation forests and their presence is considered significant by the Department of Conservation, plantation managers shall consult with the Department of Conservation on management practices with the objective of conserving the population.
- Plantation forests shall not replace natural forest and other natural areas, as agreed under the instruments of the New Zealand Forest Accord.
- Plantation managers shall take all practical steps to protect indigenous vegetation along the margins of water bodies where appropriate.
- Plantation managers shall recognise, and where appropriate, facilitate the restoration of depleted indigenous habitat on critical areas under their management.
- Plantation managers shall take all practical steps to safeguard designated reserved natural areas within or adjoining plantation forest boundaries from any adverse effects of forest operations.
- The spread of wilding trees into natural areas is a matter of national concern. Plantation managers acknowledge their responsibility to prevent, to the best of their ability, the spread of wilding trees from within their plantation forest boundaries, while recognising the property rights of adjacent land owners.

#### 1.2 Air, Water, Soil and Ecosystems

Plantation managers shall safeguard the life-supporting capacity of soil, water, and air.

Plantation managers shall maintain or enhance soil quality and minimise soil erosion for the purpose of maintaining site productivity and water quality.

Forestry operations shall be conducted in a manner that safeguards stream margins and water bodies with the objective of achieving healthy aquatic ecosystems.

Any applications of agrichemicals, including fertiliser, will be undertaken in a manner to avoid adverse environmental effects.

#### 1.3 Resource, Energy, and Waste Management

Plantation managers will, to the best of their ability, conduct forestry operations in an energy and resource efficient manner, minimising and disposing of waste in an environmentally acceptable way.

#### 1.4 Agrichemicals, Biological Control, Pests

Animal and plant pests can substantially reduce crop productivity and therefore should be controlled. Plantations can also harbour weeds and other pests that can spread to nearby natural areas.

The application of agrichemicals should be conducted according to the New Zealand Agrichemical Users Code of Practice and minimised to levels essential for ensuring a commercially viable crop without causing adverse environmental effects.

An integrated management approach to pest control, will be adopted recognising that pest problems can be minimised by appropriate management regimes.

Pest control methods should have minimal and environmentally acceptable impacts on non-target species.

Biological control agents and the introduction of other new organisms are limited to those that have been screened for non-target impacts and a precautionary approach taken with respect to potential adverse environmental effects.

## 2 Social

### 2.1 Public Access

Access to some plantation forests for recreation is important to the general public.

Plantation managers should provide for responsible public access to forests where appropriate.

### 2.2 Tenure and Use Rights

Secure tenure and use rights to land and forest resources are important to provide investor confidence in plantation forestry.

Long-term tenure and use rights to the land and forest resources shall be clearly defined, documented and legally established.

### 2.3 Landscape, Aesthetics, Recreation and Cultural Heritage

New Zealand contains many distinctive natural landscapes that are important for public use, appreciation and identity.

Landscape, amenity and recreation values should be considered and, where appropriate, provided for in the planning and management of plantation forests.

Plantation management will provide for the protection of discrete sites of important cultural and historical significance on the recommendation of a recognised authority.

### 2.4 Community Consultation

Community consultation is an important component of responsible forest management.

Plantation managers should consult on management operations that impact on significant public use, environmental, and amenity values of plantation forests and neighbouring areas.

### 2.5 Social Effects

Plantation management provides both social benefits and costs to communities and society.

Plantation managers shall protect the health and safety of their people and the public through meeting statutory requirements and using codes of practice.

All industry employees will be qualified in the skills that are relevant to the tasks they are performing or be under training to acquire such skills.

## 3 Economic

Plantation management is primarily concerned with the establishment and harvesting of tree crops for commercial purposes. The industry operates in a market environment and managers need the freedom to change management practices to meet changing consumer preferences in pursuit of maximising economic returns.

Plantation managers will be free to maximise the economic return from plantation forests provided their operations meet statutory requirements and comply with these Principles.

The costs and benefits of environmental effects should be incorporated into forest industry annual statements.

## Implementation:

The parties to these Principles agree to meet from time to time to monitor their implementation and address issues which may arise.

Additional interested parties are welcome to become signatories to these Principles with the full support of the signatory parties.

The Principles are agreed between the following parties and signed in Wellington on Wednesday 6th December 1995:

New Zealand Forest Owners Association Inc:



New Zealand Farm Forestry Association Inc:



Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society of New Zealand Inc:



WWF-NZ (World Wide Fund for Nature New Zealand):



Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand Inc:



Maruia Society Inc:

