



The Forest Owners Association (FOA)/Farm Forestry Association (FFA) Fire Committee (FBC) met in Tauranga on 29-30 May and was kindly hosted by Rayonier Matariki Forests. The following represents a summary of topics that the committee wanted to highlight from this meeting.

Strategy update

A subcommittee has been formed to develop a draft strategy after the workshop late last year. Good progress is being made on drafting a strategy document and it is hoped this will be completed within the next couple of months.

The Plantation Forestry Rural Fire Control Charter – August 2021

The Charter is due for its three yearly review, with the current document covering the period until August 2024. It is envisaged that we will use outputs from the strategic plan development process to inform a more effective charter that becomes a more relevant document giving better effect to forest owner/FENZ relationships.

FENZ levy

The Committee submitted to FENZ over its proposed increase in insurance levy value. This is especially important to forest owners with the removal of the exemption of forests with regards to insurance levy. The submission has seen some follow up queries from Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) which have been responded to. We are also intending to further engage with DIA concerning insurance levy funding and performance measurement of FENZ in the rural landscape which DIA are responsible for.

Matakana Island Field Visit

Our recent committee meeting was held in Tauranga with the second day including a field visit to Matakana Island to discuss the two recent fires in that location. Thanks very much to Steve Riddel and Port Blakely Ltd, NZ Forestry for hosting us. Some interesting conversation points were covered including assistance that the fire Committee can give to try and improve readiness for future events.

Operational reviews

Concerns were raised that after significant events Operational Reviews are undertaken with findings published in a formal report, but there are no formal action plans to address issues and recommendations identified. There is some doubt that issues are remedied to improve future response. These reviews are also inwardly focused for FENZ learnings so are of limited benefit for participating partners.

It is proposed that all recent Operational Reviews are assessed to identify and progress addressing issues from rural fire incidents – Matakana Island (Field Visit) and Hawkes Bay fires being two recent examples. Outcomes from this investigation will be communicated to FENZ to increase accountability. The Committee plans to explore how it can improve these reviews to benefit forestry and other rural partners.

FENZ Regional Manager Region 2

David Guard (FENZ Regional Manager Region 2) attended the recent meeting. He highlighted the importance of forest companies being proactive in establishing and maintaining regional relationships with FENZ. This approach was endorsed by committee members and forest owners are encouraged to embrace this opportunity.

His attendance provided an excellent opportunity for the Committee to engage at the regional level with FENZ and the Committee will explore opportunities for similar engagement in other regions.

Landscape Fire Governance Framework Endorsed

The 8th International Wildland Fire Conference (IWFC) in Portugal last year endorsed a Landscape Fire Governance Framework - Guiding Principles for Adjusting Strategies, Policies, and Management to Global Change. To better prepare societies to achieve sustainable development goals and ensure lower losses in fires, it is proposed a fire governance model (Landscape Fire Governance Framework) that brings governments, businesses, academia and members of civil society together in balanced and technically supported solutions. This framework presents the guidelines for the development of this model.

The Committee agreed that this approach is beneficial, and a proposal will be put forward to the full FOA executive seeking FOA endorsement of this approach at a future meeting.

Industrial Brigades

A small sub-committee has been formed to assess the potential of creating Industrial Brigades. These will provide another avenue under the FENZ act to achieve sector specific outcomes.

It will give forest owners the opportunity to autonomously manage rural fire within their estates. For companies that have extensive equipment and skilled staff there are benefits in this approach. More details will be provided as this project progresses.