The ICFR mission is to contribute to the global effectiveness of our sponsors through excellence in technical innovation in sustainable plantation silviculture

August 2004

ICFR News

Trees & Bees...
and the mutual benefits of communication

Over the past three decades the Institute for Commercial Forestry Research (ICFR) has carried out extensive Eucalyptus site-species matching investigations. During this period, the Institute has identified several promising new eucalypt species suitable for commercial forestry within specific target zones of the South African forestry landscape. The main focus of the research has been to identify a small number of potentially viable Eucalyptus species suited to low-productivity sites within the summer rainfall forestry area. While the ICFR does not carry out apicultural research work, many of the observations made during the course of site-species investigations and genetic improvement research, particularly those relating to flowering trends of the different eucalypt species, provenances and families, are undoubtedly of interest to apiculturists. This was evident as ICFR’s Robin Gardner was asked to present a paper to the South African Bee Industry Organisation at Beecon 2004, held during June at Cedara, on current trends in Eucalyptus species for commercial use and nectar production.

In his paper, Robin provided an overview of Eucalyptus and their potential for honey production in South Africa. Eucalypts are endemic to Australasia, and the genus has an immense natural distribution, with species and provenances differing markedly in their adaptation to environmental factors in varying combinations. This variation has been captured and utilised by Eucalyptus breeders and growers over the past few centuries in many parts of the world. The eucalypts rank amongst the best honey plants in the world, and in South Africa, commercial pollination and honey production would not be possible without these trees, as they provide a source of more than 50% of South Africa’s honey crop. Relatively few eucalypt species are generous yielders of both nectar and pollen. Typically the “Boxes” and “Ironbarks” (e.g. E. melliodora, E. radiata and E. sideroxylon) produce large amounts of nectar whilst “Gumbarks” (e.g. E. globulus, E. nitens, E. oreades and E. pauciflora) produce copious pollen. Most of our current successful commercial timber eucalypt species in South Africa fall within the latter group, although E. grandis is an obvious exception. The ICFR is continually refining and updating knowledge of the environmental requirements and limitations of the different existing commercial and “new” eucalypt species.

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ICFR welcomes new NCT Board representative

ICFR recently welcomed a new member to its Board of Control, when Patrick Kime, the newly appointed General Manager for NCT Forestry Co-operative, took over from Peter Keyworth. Although we welcome Patrick, we are very sad to say good-bye to Peter.

Peter has played a significant role in the many changes and developments of the ICFR over the last eight years, not least of which was the appointment the current Director! We wish him everything of the best in his new role as Manager: Special Projects at NCT, and look forward to working with Patrick in the future.

Patrick Kime, General Manager, NCT Forestry Co-operative.
Information: a researcher’s most important tool

The ICFR Library has its origins in the establishment of the Wattles Research Institute (WRI) Library in 1948, and long before the advent of the so called “information age”, it was described as “one of the most important working tools of the research staff”. Close proximity to the (then) University of Natal Life Sciences Library (with its general science and agricultural collections), and the main University Library, enabled the WRI Library to concentrate on building up a specialist forestry information collection. Both institutions were able to benefit from this arrangement, and to this day there is reciprocal sharing and use of each other’s collections.

In the early days the Library was housed on the ground floor. In the 1990s, with the addition of the top (second floor) to the ICFR, the library moved upstairs, despite some minor setbacks described as “the inevitable disruption aggravated by rainwater penetration while the roof was open.”

The first librarian was the self appointed Stan Sherry, Director of the WRI from 1968 – 1972. In 1948 35 scientific periodicals were received by the Library, the book stock numbered 75 items and the pamphlet and bulletin collection numbered 670 items. In addition, the personal libraries of Stan Sherry and Dolf Schönau were bequeathed to the WRI. In these early days the journal spines were all leather bound and these can still be seen on the archive shelves of the ICFR Library. Today, the collection of books numbers approximately 3500 titles, while the combined pamphlet collection numbers approximately 16 000 items. The ICFR Research Database contains some 3481 documents and bulletins.

Today knowledge and strategic information are amongst the most important assets of any organisation. Continuous learning is a necessity in an increasingly competitive environment, where change is the norm and business is customer-focused. It is in this context that the ICFR and its Library operate. The Library offers the following information resources:

- Book stock of approximately 3500 items
- Collection of annual reports
- 23 key overseas forestry journals and a number of local journals
- Participation in a shared cataloguing network through which one is able to access the catalogues of most South African Libraries
- PROSPECT: a wood database which contains information on distribution and timber properties of 1550 species
- TREEDC: an international forestry database
- Woods of the World: a multimedia database on wood
- The ICFR Research Database which is a comprehensive database of research produced at the ICFR
- Pamphlet collection of approx 16 000 items
- Journals contents page service
- Reference and literature searching service

An ethos of resource sharing and networking exists among librarians, enabling them to share and exchange information. Specialist librarians (focusing on a single discipline or subject such as forestry) need to network and share resources, as their collections may not possess the subject breadth required to meet the information needs of their users. As a result of this cooperative ethos ICFR’s members have access to an extremely wide range of information sources and resources from its Library.

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...cont from page 1 (Trees & Bees)

The theme for Beecon 2004 was “Beekeeping for Rural Development”, and there is huge potential for growth in the honey-production industry in the small-grower plantings or woodlots in the Zululand coastal plain and in Maputaland. In most cases, the woodlot owners reside close to their trees, and therefore the problem of hive vandalism and theft is minimal. The woodlots are also close to tourist routes, which would benefit marketing. It makes sense that future woodlots be planted with highly “bee-friendly” eucalypts so that an income can be derived throughout the rotation length, and not only from the timber produced.

Robin believes there are a number of ways of enhancing and securing the future of the Eucalyptus species-related honey-production industry in South Africa. Firstly, by encouraging the conservation and planting of “highly bee-friendly” eucalypt species on farmlands, e.g. *E. cladocalyx* and *E. camaldulensis*, in the South West Cape, essential plants for swarm build-up prior to the deciduous fruit pollination period. These are also potential “alien invader” species in certain terrain types of the same province (mountainous and riparian, respectively) but could be re-introduced on a controlled scale. Secondly, there is a need to improve communication with various groups in forestry. Communicating with forest landowners can overcome perceived threats such as fire and security risks; talking to tree-breeders will ensure inclusion of relevant selection criteria such as abundant flowering; and building strong ties with commercial seed producers can be useful, as production seed orchards are generally long-rotation eucalypt stands, and it would benefit both the beekeeper and seed producer to have beehives working these orchards for the extent of the flowering period. An additional benefit to both parties is the accurate recording of flowering information, together with pertinent site data such as plantation name and compartment number. This pertains to both seedling and clonal stands. Clonal forestry is on the increase in South Africa, and knowledge of the flowering times of the different clones will in future be essential for optimising capture of the nectar flow of these trees.

Contact: Robin Gardner (rawg@icfr.unp.ac.za)
On tour with international weed scientists

The recent 4th International Weed Science Congress (see below) provided a unique opportunity for ICFR research staff to interact with international forest vegetation management (FVM) scientists. To take full advantage of this, ICFR’s Keith Little, with the support of his team, organised a range of post-congress tours to showcase forestry systems in the summer rainfall region of South Africa (highlighting some of ICFR’s research). The tours provided an opportunity to demonstrate the type of forestry practiced in South Africa, as well as collaborate and learn from experts in the FVM field.

Twelve delegates joined took part in the first tour of the KZN-Midlands region, which included visits to ICFR vegetation management trials as well as stops at the Sappi Shaw Research Centre and Mondi Mountain Home Nursery. A second tour group then moved on up to Zululand, where ICFR’s Paul Viero and Denis Oscroft shared their wealth of knowledge of the region with the visitors. The group was particularly impressed with the extensive forestry systems, especially those delegates from the colder climates (UK and Finland) where rotations between 80-100 years are not unusual. The tour to Zululand ended with a relaxing cruise on Lake St Lucia, with impressive African sights and sounds of hippos, crocodiles and fish eagles! Finally, the last tour group headed on to Kruger to view some big game and take a break from forestry-related issues. The trip to Mpumalanga concluded with a visit to a typical pine-sawlog plantation followed by a tour of Sappi Ngodwana Nursery and the chance to view some of Sappi’s research trials.

The tours were a resounding success and the contacts and impressions made invaluable. ICFR would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those in its member companies who willingly hosted the guests. Without their time, assistance and enthusiasm, we would not have been able to put these tours together. The delegates were highly impressed with our industry and no doubt we will all benefit from this international exchange.

Contact: Keith Little keith@icfr.unp.ac.za or Carol Rolando carol@icfr.unp.ac.za

4th International Weed Science Congress

ICFR’s Keith Little and Carol Rolando recently attended the 4th International Weed Science Congress (IWSC) held at the International Convention Centre (ICC) in Durban, along with more than 400 delegates from 54 different countries. South Africa was represented by 78 scientists from various weed-related disciplines. The programme for the congress was extensive, including aspects related to herbicide use and technology, the role of biotechnology in crop management and herbicide resistance, weed biology, integrated weed management and forest vegetation management, to name but a few! While exposure to a diverse array of weed-related topics at an international level was informative, ICFR staff found the most productive part of the programme to be the full-day session on Forest Vegetation Management (FVM).

An impressive array of well-recognised scientists from various countries around the world, including the USA, Canada, New Zealand, France, Britain, Finland, Nigeria and South Africa, presented interesting and topical talks. Of particular mention were the invited papers synthesising global trends in FVM research. Keith Little presented a collaborative paper on “Reducing herbicide use through integrated forest vegetation management” exploring global trends in forest herbicide use and examining some of the problems related to the integration of recommendations into commercial operations. Dr Jerry Michael (USA) reviewed the lack of worldwide evidence for long-term detrimental impacts on soil and water resources through responsible herbicide use. The “Role of vegetation management for enhancing productivity of the worlds forests” was reviewed by Dr Robert Wagner (USA) who presented the results from the longest-term studies demonstrating the benefits gained from vegetation management. All of the talks presented within this session were excellent ranging from ecophysiological fundamental type research to the application of this understanding to model development and data analysis.

The benefits of international conferences lie not only in the opportunity to discuss ideas but also in the contacts made for future collaborative type research. It was a privilege for us to have the opportunity to meet and discuss forestry-related (vegetation management) issues with these delegates.

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Focus on...ICFR

This issue of ICFR News focuses on the second of ICFR’s satellite offices, based at Sabie in Mpumalanga. The office, opened in 1992, comprising four staff members, led by Sandy Freimond, and was located at the Mondi Tree Improvement offices. At that time, it mainly provided a support function for Eucalypt Tree Improvement research as well as Pests and Disease research. As the demand for research grew in the Sabie and Tzaneen areas and the Highveld, the office expanded at the request of the Forestry Industry and in 1996, moved to SAFCOL Rietfontein Plantation. By 1998 the staff complement was 10, including three researchers serving the Nutrition, Tree Improvement and Vegetation Management programmes respectively. In addition, a small nursery was added for grafting research as part of the Eucalypt Tree Improvement programme. New trials in Forest Nutrition, Vegetation Management and Site-species Interaction were established during this time, as were further trials in Eucalypt Tree Improvement. In 2000, the office moved to the present premises in town, at the front of Mountain View Workshop, and currently has six permanent staff. Since its inception, a number of staff have come and gone from the Sabie office including Sandy, Neil Eccles, Jurgens Kritzenger, Ross Allen, Colleen Carlson, as well as the tragic and untimely death of Sam Soko.

Staff based at the Sabie office provide support in terms of trial establishment, measurement and maintenance for a number of the programmes at the ICFR. The office is managed by Tammy Swain, very ably supported by the administrative skills of Kariena Mol. Tammy also heads up the Eucalypt Tree Improvement programme, working with Colin Chiappero, Pat Thabethe and Rob Nkonde. Colin, Pat and Rob are also currently involved in Forest Nutrition and Vegetation Productivity research, and Pat together with Gavin Higgs is working in the Re-establishment Research Programme. Contract workers are employed, as necessary, at times of extreme workload.

An important function of the office is liaison with the Industry, on both a one-to-one level and through the newly established Mpumalanga Regional Interest Group. The Group holds field days twice a year, and is managed by a committee comprising representatives from the different forestry companies and growers in Mpumalanga.

Past and Current Research Initiatives

Eucalypt Tree Improvement (tammy@icfrsabie.unp.ac.za)

The aim of this programme is to selectively improve cold tolerant eucalypt species (CTE) for growth on sites subject to low temperatures, frost and/or snow during a rotation, and to produce improved seed of these species. The programme has teams based both in Sabie and Pietermaritzburg, with the majority of trials serviced by the Sabie staff being sited on the cold, high altitude sites of the Highveld Region. These trials mainly comprise the traditional CTE species, E. nitens and E. macarthurii, and the majority of the E. nitens, E. macarthurii and E. benthamii seed orchards for the whole programme are established on the Highveld, as these sites are cold enough to promote flowering and seed production. Specialist trials for flowering research have been established in the mountains around Sabie. Since the early 1980s, these trials have led to the development of improved material of the commercial CTE species. They also provide a better understanding of the growth requirements and limitations of several new CTE species with commercial potential, such as E. badjensis, E. benthamii, E. nobilis and E. cypellocarpa. This information will assist with correct siting of eucalypt species on temperate sites.

Forest Nutrition (ben@icfr.unp.ac.za)

The nutrition team manages several empirical pine fertiliser trials from the ICFR Sabie office. Groups of trials testing the application of fertiliser at establishment, in late rotation stands (thinned and unthinned) as well as mid-rotation thinned crops have been completed recently, and the results documented. Two intensively-monitored, process-type experiments deal with nutrient optimisation (Driekop) and slash management (Longridge). The Driekop trial demonstrates the maximum potential response to fertilisation under dryland conditions. Large growth responses have been obtained, which are being monitored against the backdrop of annual foliar nutrient concentrations and the development of leaf area index.

Nutrition research in Mpumalanga is standing on the threshold of a new and exciting chapter: The focus will be on site-specific fertiliser recommendations and slash management scenarios (including the appropriate use of fire). A start has been made in this regard with the work on biomass studies (ICFR Bulletin 20/2001), slash loading (ICFR Bulletins 11 & 12/2004 – in preparation) and the role of fire as a management tool (ICFR Bulletin 08/2003). The achievements of the nutrition team and our continued presence in the Sabie office hinges on the long-term support from pine growers for the above mentioned research thrusts.

Forest Productivity (colin@icfr.unp.ac.za)

Projects in this programme are investigating the effects of harvesting operations on site productivity as well as looking at various aspects associated with site-species interaction.

The effect of harvesting operations on long-term site productivity. The five-year old harvesting impact trial at Usutu Forests in Swaziland is investigating the effect of a range of harvesting extraction operations on soil damage and long-term site productivity of Pinus patula. Since
in Sabie, Mpumalanga

this trial is located on soils typical of the Mpumalanga highveld, the results have relevance to much of the region. While the Swaziland trial deals with P. patula grown on a pulpwood rotation, a similar trial will be implemented in December 2004 at GFP’s plantations in Jessievale, with P. patula grown for sawtimber.

Another initiative in the Mpumalanga area is a joint project with Saasveld (PE Technikon) aimed at determining the extent to which various harvesting methods affect the soil quality during thinning operations in pine sawtimber stands, for a range of extraction systems and soil types. Harvesting systems will include cable and grapple skidding, tractor winching and forwarding. The compartments will be chosen according to the main soil and geological groupings occurring in the Mpumalanga region.

Site-species productivity

Site-species productivity trials were established during the mid-1990s throughout Mpumalanga and KwaZulu Natal. The objectives of these trials was to determine the effects of a limited number of site variables on the productivity of the major forestry tree species, as well as the interaction of species and site over a range. Information gathered from these trials has led to a greater understanding of the range and productivity of principal commercial tree species, and has been critical to the development of the ICFR Toolbox and site classification.

Growth and Yield Optimisation

Several spacing trials are located in the Mpumalanga region. These trials investigate the effect of stand density on the growth and yield development of a range of hardwood species. At present, there are five spacing trials in the region involving Eucalyptus macarthurii, E. nitens, E. dunnii and E. grandis x camaldulensis.

Programme). Initial weeds trials in this region focused on investigating methods to control the competitive vegetation on the site, as well as understanding the development of vegetation across a range of site types. Factors investigated include the effects of intensive and selective vegetation control on pine tree growth, the effects of site preparation and residue management on pine tree growth and competition control, as well as the interaction of vegetation management and fertilisation. Initial results from these trials (up to canopy closure) have been reported on, and the trials will be maintained to felling when the long-term affects of competition at establishment on pine tree growth (grown on a sawlog rotation) will be determined.

More recently, trials investigating the commercial application of these results were implemented, to determine the most cost-effective method of controlling the vegetation across a range of site types. In addition, several trials aimed at understanding factors affecting the success of pine regeneration have been established. These trials have examined aspects related to pest and residue management, as well as the function of the application of water at the time of planting.

Plea: “Please don’t weed or fell our vegetation management trials. They form an excellent series and the data which will be gained from them will be globally unique!!!”

Although snakes, insects and a wide range of weeds (bramble, inkberry, bugweed) “hampre” the research in Mpumalanga to a point, it is certainly not to the degree that animals and reptiles do in Zululand. However, weather events play an important role in this region, whether it be the flooding of the area, the flooding of the offices, or the arctic temperatures outside. Many thanks to the companies that have provided office and trial space over the years, as well as assistance with trial establishment and maintenance.

Latest ICFR bulletins

02-2004
Final results from a Eucalyptus dunnii coppice trial.
K M Little

03-2004
Post-establishment vegetation control in a Eucalyptus grandis stand situated in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands, South Africa.
K M Little

04-2004
Competition for nutrients during pine re-establishment in the summer rainfall regions of South Africa: Results from four trials.
C A Rolando & K M Little

06-2004
Early survival and growth responses of Pinus patula seedlings to planting treatments and micro-environment in two pilot trials.
C A Rolando & K M Little

07-2004
Nutrient distribution in black wattle at four ages on three sites with the effects of harvesting practices.
S Dovey & B du Toit

10-2004
Report on a visit to Brazil and Ecuador including report to the Innovation Fund: Application of process-based models at Aracruz Celulose, S.A.
C W Smith

Re-Establishment Research (keith@icfr.unp.ac.za)

The Re-Establishment Research Programme has been active in the Sabie region since the mid-1990’s (then the Vegetation Management
The Zululand Regional Interest Group recently held its first field day of the year at Kwambonambi, focusing on Eucalypt Research. The 60 plus members attending the event were keen to hear ICFR’s Paul Viero’s in-house presentation on an overview of past, present and future research initiatives in eucalypt establishment and re-establishment. While many of the ICFR trials conducted since the 1980’s have yielded useful information on land preparation methods for both eucalypt establishment and re-establishment, there is still a need to look at specific factors such as the effect of pit size on survival and initial growth, stand density and competition dynamics, interactions between plant, site and climate, as well as the long-term sustainability implications of site and harvest residue management. There was a strong call for the ICFR to concentrate on operational research yielding “best operating practices”. Robin Gardner then provided members with an update on the performance of the “new” eucalypt species in Zululand, highlighting the promising exceptional drought and heat tolerance potential of Eucalyptus henryi and E. longirostrata. ICFR’s Editor and PRO, Sally Upfold, followed with a talk on accessing ICFR’s extensive research information, with the aim of assisting members in using both the library and website resources.

Then it was time to head into the field for the comprehensive and much anticipated report-back by Keith Little on harvesting and extraction impacts on coppicing in the Region. This trial at Sappi’s Trust Plantation has provided a wealth of information, revealing that the various manual and mechanical methods of harvesting and extraction tested do not impact adversely on stump survival or stem number after final reduction. However, the upper half of the stumps, particularly those in the extraction route and immediately adjacent to it, were more damaged and showed less coppice. In addition, manual felling, debarking, cross-cutting and stacking, with loading and extraction by a Bell 3-wheeler plus Bell tractor and trailer, had a small but significantly positive effect on diameter at breast height (dbh) when compared to combined manual and mechanical methods. The exception to this was the fully mechanised method tested using a Flexiloader and Bell forwarder, which also had a small but significantly positive effect. The day ended with a walk-through of the promising two-year-old E. henryi and E. longirostrata trials, where results suggest that these two species could be considered viable replacements for commercial E. grandis on the drier sites of the Zululand Coastal Plains. The next Regional Field Day is planned for 18th November.

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Exploring the potential role of Precision Forestry

A Precision Forestry Workshop, organised jointly by the University of Stellenbosch and the ICFR took place on 22 and 23 June 2004. The theme was “Preparing for precision forestry: adding value to the existing resource base”, and covered the following main topics:

- Overview of the potential role of precision forestry in key silvicultural operations in the Southern African Forestry context:
  - Field trip to Newlands plantation, looking at sites, tree growth and the value of the existing soil and terrain database;
  - Workshop session demonstrating tools that can be used to interpret soils data to assist management, followed by group discussions;
  - Presentation of software developed and remote sensing tools tested to enhance precision in management; and
  - Discussion of the commercial applications and experiences in Precision Forestry.

The workshop was attended by 60 delegates who participated with great enthusiasm in various sessions. The organisers would like to thank the speakers for the high quality of their presentations. Extended abstracts of these are currently being collated for publication.

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A new Centre of Excellence linked to TPCP

TPCP is soon to encompass one of South Africa's first Government-sponsored Department of Science and Technology (DST) Centres of Excellence. This follows the decision by the DST and the NRF to establish Centres of Excellence at South African universities, as part of the National Research and Development Strategy to "create centres and networks of excellence in Science and Technology as a key component of the human capital and transformation dimensions of government policy".

Following a call for pre-proposals during 2003, thirteen teams were invited to prepare full proposals by mid January of 2004, and after rigorous review, a final list of six Centres were selected. Serving terms of ten years or more, it is believed these Centres will assure sustainability of key research groups in South Africa.

The University of Pretoria was delighted to learn they would have the honour and privilege of housing one of the six DST/NRF Centres of Excellence, the Centre of Excellence in Tree Health Biotechnology, based at the Forestry and Agricultural Biotechnology Institute (FABI). The Centre will be directed by Prof. Mike Wingfield, concurrently Director of FABI, who has conducted research on disease and pest problems of trees for more than twenty years. Receiving the award of a DST Centre of Excellence in Tree Health Biotechnology is certainly one of the most important accomplishments for the TPCP formally established in 1990 and currently the world’s largest programme focused on plantation tree health. TPCP is housed in FABI, which was established in 1998. Approximately 150 scientists, including post-graduate students, sharing a common interest in plant improvement and biotechnology, work in this unique and vibrant environment. The Institute has substantially boosted post-graduate research in the plant sciences in South Africa and made substantial contributions to forestry. Clearly, these accomplishments contributed to the selection of the TPCP group to lead one of South Africa’s most exciting new science ventures.

The formal launch of the first six DST Centres of Excellence was held at the Sheraton Hotel in Pretoria on Tuesday 27 July. At a high profile ceremony, including leaders of the South African Science System, University heads and members of the teams of the new Centres, gathered to hear Minister of Science and Technology, Mr Mosebudi Mangena, the Director General of DST, Dr Rob Adam and the President of the NRF, Dr Khotso Mokele, express their excitement and vision for the Centres. Trophies presented to Centre Directors by Minister Mangena.

Other Centres of Excellence include “Birds as keys to Biodiversity Conservation” (University of Cape Town); “Invasion Biology” (University of Stellenbosch); “Strong Materials” (University of the Witwatersrand); “Ca-Talyis” (University of Cape Town); and “Biomedical TB Research” (co-hosted by universities of the Witwatersrand and Stellenbosch). All Centres are directed by internationally recognised scientists and the Centres of Excellence Programme will be managed by Dr Robin Drennan of the NRF. Centres are currently being formally established and boards of directors will be appointed before the end of 2004.

Due to be launched formally later in the year, participants in this Centre include Dr Jolanda Roux, Prof Teresa Coutinho, Prof Brenda Wingfield, Dr Gert Marais and Mr Brett Hurley who are all staff of the University of Pretoria. Other participants include Prof Wally Marasas (PROMEC, Medical Research Council), Prof Janusz Zwolinski (Forestry and Agricultural Biotechnology Institute, University of KwaZulu-Natal) and Prof Pedro Crous, (Director: Centraalbureau voor Schimmelcultures, Utrecht, Netherlands). The team also includes a highly qualified group of scientists with a passion for issues pertaining to tree health and mycology. In receiving the Centre of Excellence award, Prof Mike Wingfield believes this new venture is not only a great honour for the research team involved, but also recognises a large group of exceptional past and present students, many strongly supported by the South African Forestry Industry. He expressed his delight that the TPCP group at FABI was chosen to host one of the six Centres of Excellence in South Africa and noted that this provides a major opportunity to elevate the research and student output linked to tree health.
Southern African Institute of Forestry

The Southern African Institute of Forestry (SAIF) aims to represent the profession of forestry by promoting all aspects of forestry and improving standards of practice in the professional and technical aspects of forestry.

SAIF – KZN

Recently, the Branch organised a Forest Contractors Productivity Initiative (FCPI) seminar on the University of KwaZulu-Natal’s Pietermaritzburg campus. (Similar events were held in Sabie and Piet Retief in Mpumalanga – see below.) Attended by 80 delegates including numerous contractors, the seminar had a number of highlights including the positive approach of contractors to empower and skills development issues; development of an industry charter to improve competitiveness, productivity and profitability through business management training, skills development and a contractor upliftment programme; development of an industry standard cost model; and development of a strategy for Broad Based Black Empowerment Enterprises (B.B.B.E.E) in forestry contracting.

During the FCPI proceedings, FSA’s Mike Edwards presented the first Load Accreditation Programme (LAP) award, and congratulated Andries Smith of Timberland Transport on this fine achievement. Through the accreditation, timber land is liable for the first concession awarded by the KZN Road Traffic Inspectorate, namely to be stopped less at test weighbridges. Other benefits include discounted insurance premiums and excess payments, and discounted licence fees and toll fees. Forestry Engineering South Africa (FESA) is directing the project and the project team consists of the National Productivity Institute (NPI), CSIR Transportek and Crickmay and Associates.

SAIF – MPU

The Branch recently held its AGM at the Barnyard Theatre in White River, after which non-members and partners joined in for the picnic supper and excellent show. The SAIF long service excellence reward was presented to Shaun McCartney in recognition of his long service. The Branch also welcomed new members.

The second CAFI feedback session was held in White River during May, dealing with the water shortages in the White River area, and excellent presentations were given by Peter Roberts and Michal Braak. The FCPI seminars held in Sabie and Piet Retief were very well attended, and proved extremely successful and informative.

The latest edition of the Mpumalanga Branch Newsletter, “The Woodpecker”, was produced in May – if you are interested in this, or more information on the happenings of the Mpumalanga Branch, please contact Nikki Meinesz 0836361060 or nikki@hotorange.co.za

Inauguration of the UKZN forestry building

The University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) recently celebrated the inauguration of its new Forestry Building, next to the ICFR, on the Pietermaritzburg campus. Guests attending the event were afforded the opportunity to participate in a colloquium of papers on various topics. Opening presentation by UKZN interim Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Salim Abdool Karim on the “Relevance of Academic Output for Society”, provided an informative overview of Aids research in South Africa, highlighting the importance of original, innovative and adaptable scientific research in generating new knowledge. Special guest Mrs Linda Mossop-Rosseau, Chief Director of Forestry, Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAfF), gave insight into Government’s role as a regulator and policy maker for the South African Forestry Industry, emphasising links between the academic, business and government sectors. Mr Andrew Thompson (CEO and Chairman: Mondi South Africa) addressed the role of the Forestry Industry in this Public-Private Partnership, critical for forestry-based economic development. He believes that one of the key issues for the future is closer and better communication between all the stakeholders in the private and public groups, aimed at developing a shared vision for forestry in southern Africa.

Of particular interest to the audience was NCT Manager of Development Services, Mr Vusi Dladla’s talk on “Pushing back the frontiers of poverty through forestry-based rural development”. Vusi highlighted the needs of the rural foresters to expand and grow their projects, and secure the supporting infrastructure to accomplish this. Professor August Temu, leader for the International Centre for Research in Agro-Forestry (ICRAF) spoke on the map of African networks which provide a means of sharing and receiving knowledge, expanding research opportunities across borders and creating a platform for funding of international collaborative projects. The session ended with NEPAD’s Dr John Mugabe defining criteria for Centres of Excellence as instruments for capacity building. These included the need to be proactive, efficient and effective groups focused on specific issues, while remaining flexible and receptive to managing change.

After lunch, Mrs Mossop-Rosseau unveiled the plaque officially opening the new building, in the presence of Neil Roberts and Michal Braak. The UKZN foresters planted commemorative trees.

Diary of Events

AUGUST
4th SAIF MPU
Topic: Sirex Awareness Day
Venue: GFP Club, Jessievale

10th SAIF KZN
Topic: “Forestry out of Africa”
Venue: ICFR, Pmb
Contact: Trevor Morley, ICFR

SEPTEMBER
13th SAIF KZN
Topic: “Digital forest fire detection systems”
Venue: ICFR, Pmb
Contact: Trevor Morley, ICFR

OCTOBER
11th SAIF KZN
Topic: Mondi, BEE
Venue: ICFR, Pmb

12th NCT Midlands Field Day
Contact: craig@nctforest.com

13th ICFR / MPU Regional Interest Group Field Day
Contact: Tammy Swain, ICFR/Sabie

19th NCT Vryheid/Central Field Day
Contact: craig@nctforest.com