

Forest Land Use & Management Strategies to Deliver European Climate and Bio Economy Policies – Relevance to California?

A lecture by

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Abstract: Global forest area continues to decline while the area of more intensively managed forests (plantations) is increasing. Demand for timber is predicted to continue to increase but there are striking ongoing changes in markets and in where regional investment is occurring. Tropical and semitropical areas are more productive, but transport costs mitigate for local supply and there is huge geographical variability in land-use pressures. Paper markets have declined while the demands for wood fuel, conventional and novel wood-based building materials are increasing. In addition to the overall uplift in demand for wood products, there are new requirements for forests to contribute to climate mitigation and to supply the emerging circular bio economy. Conservation of biodiversity, soil and water protection and public use of forest lands appear to conflict with the need for more intensive management to meet supply and policy objectives. In many parts of the world the intensive management of forests is unpopular and in the last couple of years there has been a reemergence of public protest in Europe.

A recent evaluation undertaken for the European Forest Institute (Freer-Smith et al 2019 http://www.efi.int/sites/default/files/files/publication-bank/2019/efi_fstp_9_2019.pdf) asked how our current understanding of forest systems can help policy makers to balance the apparently competing demands on forest lands. This evaluation will be summarized along with comment on the associated and ongoing policy implementation. Relevance to California of the context and analysis undertaken in this study will be discussed.

Bio: Peter is Adjunct Professor in the Department of Environmental Science and Policy and co chair of the IUFRO Task Force “Resilient planted forests serving society and the bio economy”. He has current research funding from the California Air Resources Board on the best use of biomass to meet air quality and climate goals. Peter is also a member of the California Board of Forestry & Fire Protection, Effectiveness Monitoring Committee. He has worked on forest sustainability, the benefits of urban greenspace on air quality and the role of forests in climate mitigation, and he was the UK Forestry Commission’s Chief Scientific Adviser from 2010 to 2017.