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Editorial

Good news from the Southern Cape

As the year 2025 is drawing to a close, we can probably all testify that the year has been filled with numerous challenges, probably not unlike previous years. We can however gladly report that there has been some significant progress and development regarding forestry in the Western Cape Province. This matter has been on the agenda of Forestry South Africa , the SAIF, SAFCA and numerous others for probably the past ten years by now.

Many of us can recall when government and SAFCOL announced 25 years ago that $\pm 45,000$ ha of former State Forests will be de-commissioned over a period of 20 years. This became known as the "Exit Strategy or - Project ". This was followed by the VECON study commissioned by government which recommended that $\pm 22,000$ ha be returned to commercial forestry. Government also initiated the compilation of the Forestry masterplan in 2020 which also identified the Recapitalization of 22,610 ha of state-owned plantations as one of its key performance indicators.

The transaction for the appointment of Coldstream Timber Company to manage $\pm 50\%$ of the area as the successful bidder was only concluded recently.

The other big news is the formation of Cape Forest Products" the new company formed through a merger of forestry assets, including those from PG Bison and MTO Forestry, to create a sustainable timber future in the Southern Cape region of South Africa. The company is focused on forestry and sawmilling operations, aiming to provide a reliable and efficient supply of sawn timber and support job creation in the region.

The late Dr. Jaap Steenkamp, one of our prominent members like many others would have been very proud of this development.

As this will be the last edition of the Newsletter for 2025, we would like to wish all our readers, all the best for a blessed Christmas & New year season.



Pine logs at Witfontein ready to be transported to the Sawmill for processing



Coming to terms with ourselves

By Bruce Talbot (President of the SAIF)

Any organization should listen to its clients (i.e. members). And while one should be cognisant of the lies, damned lies, and statistics (i.e. biometry), we should take a minute to gently reflect on the outcome of our recent survey. Thank you to all of you that did respond to the questionnaire on how you see or value the connection between the SAIF and our journal, Southern Forests. To those that haven't yet, please do check your email from Intsia, as every voice serves to further solidify the basis from which we can postulate. A questionnaire survey is a difficult thing to do well. It is not always easy to formulate questions that solicit the information in a way that makes a real contribution to understanding or preconceptions. Respondent fatigue is also a well-known phenomenon, both with regard to taking on new surveys, as well as in completing surveys that one has started out on, but now might be regretting due to their sheer arbitrariness (if that is a word).

Despite any fatigue, we had just on 50 responses within the first 48 hours, which well exceeded expectations. The outcome, although preliminary, makes for some interesting reading, which will be partially elaborated on here:

Firstly, regarding the respondents, 70% were full members with journal access, two were members without access to the journal, 23% were retirees who no longer have access through their membership, 1 student member responded, as did one associate member. When asked when they graduated from their most recent forestry related education, around 60% responded that it was more than 20 years ago, and 20% graduated between 10 and 20 years ago, suggesting that 80% of respondents have been in the game for quite a while. Only 3 respondents (6%) graduated in the last 5 years. But some of the real questions are, how does this reflect overall membership and how do respondents feel about their membership benefits and fees? In fact, 81% responded that they thought the fees were low or roughly appropriate for the benefit of being a member. One could immediately ask who this 81% represents and may jump to the assumption that they are retirees who pay less? But no, that was not the case. anomalies to light.

While we have not done actual (damned) statistics as yet, a cursory glance shows that it is an approximately proportional distribution of members across all categories who have this opinion. The second question you should then be asking is, sure, but these respondents probably have their membership paid by their employer or organizational affiliation? Well, no, 63% of the 81% positive respondents paid their own membership fees! This means that the slight majority of our members who think that the membership fee is too high, don't necessarily pay it themselves. That is one for the books and good proof of the need for surveys that can bring these kinds of anomalies to light.

On other questions, for example whether the respondent considered it important that the journal remains affiliated with the SAIF, 40% thought that it was very important to do so, while 15% suggested that it was not that important. The remaining 45% claimed not to have a strong opinion either way. Obviously, it is important to look into other variables to see who the *yea-sayers* and the *nay-sayers* are, with regard to their history, whether they sit on the board, whether they publish in the journal, etc. It is never enough simply to directly interpret the response.

This brings us to the national affiliation debate which results from a binary question on whether it was important that the journal remains in 'South African' hands or not. Around 70% of respondents thought that this was very important. While this is perhaps understandable, it seems like the majority perhaps overestimate the Journal's dissemination of South African based research.

This is unfortunately not going to be a comprehensive report of the outcomes of the survey. There are a number of very interesting issues and especially linkages like the above that still need to be looked into in some depth. On December 4th, a SAIF Council meeting is planned where this matter will certainly be on the agenda. Before that, a special group will meet with NISC, which is the local publisher of the journal and our point of reference, who market the journal globally through a partnership with Taylor and Francis. This survey has and will provide many valuable insights into those discussions, which will likely include new



configurations of memberships and journal access. NISC management have already agreed to put more resources into lifting the Journal's renom  through improved turn-around times and response to subscriber issues.

In ending off this introduction to some of the work that has and is being done, it might be appropriate to share some of what the respondents recorded when asked what they saw as the main benefits of being a member of the SAIF are. I hope that these reflect the thoughts of many of you, and if so, or if they don't, please find that survey link in Intsia's email and fill it out (average completion time was around 3 minutes – which is a lie, but not a damned one).

For me, the main benefits of being affiliated with the SAIF are:

- Remain informed
- Keeping the profession linked and relevant
- Even at my age of 91 years and after having retired 26 years ago, I am still interested in my old profession and any new developments.
- Informative and staying in touch with development
- Association with a professional institute
- Industry symposiums
- I am proud to be a South African Forestry graduate. We need to have an affiliation to ensure professionalism, peer reviewed published science and to form communities with friends and colleagues. Actually the SAIF should be funded at a higher level to maintain a higher status in the larger SA Scientific community.
- Being a part of the South African forestry research landscape
- It is essential to be part of a community of practice that values the practitioner and science nexus.
- Keeping up to date with top class forestry research
- Being updated about the Forestry industry and access to informative webinars.
- The local information from the Newsletter, and Annual Meetings
- Professional membership for consulting purposes
- Staying informed
- SAIF provides a platform on which foresters can recognize one another and share appropriate career aspects.

- It also potentially provides a manner in which to develop professional association.
- SAIF is important to me as a means of remaining current with forestry in southern Africa and providing international standing with similar professional associations (especially in southern hemisphere)Verification of professional status (not currently provided),SAIF organized gatherings (symposium etc.), involvement in an important community of practice, Southern Forests as a peer reviewed journal having international status providing a vehicle for relevant southern African and southern hemisphere research publication (the journal is important in providing SAIF with international standing)
- An independent voice for forestry
- Maintaining professional Membership in case I would like to consult after registering through SACNASP
- It keeps me updated on event happening in South African forestry, and gives me access to literature I need for research and reporting
- Remaining updated on the state of the forest industry in South Africa including the academic institutions and their main foci in terms of the student output.
- Get Industry information, associate with like-minded Forestry professionals and people who work in the SA Forestry Industry
- SAIF is INCREDIBLY important to the future of every aspect of forestry and forests in South Africa. It is the single point that brings foresters, forest scientists together. While I believe the Journal is important and should be supported by South African forest scientists, that is a different question. In my view the Society does not need to own the Journal, but that does not mean that the Journal does not have value. After many years of hard work - shout out to Denis Owen (R.I.P.), the journal acquired an impact factor. That changed the game... we should support the journal but don't need to own it.. unless there is no other option.



- Access to the journal.
- Keep contact with the industry
- To maintain a professional representative institute for all Foresters.
- Maintaining contact with Industry issues.
- Wonderful
- Keeping up to date with current forestry research in RSA
- Emotional, I have been intimately associated with South African forests and plantations (and forestry friends) for more that 55 years
- Being in touch with the forestry community through newsletters and events and the access to Southern Forests

Thanks again to all who have responded. Wishing all of our members, and the sector at large, all the best in dealing with the torrential rainfall currently being experienced in parts of our growing areas.

Regards

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Rob Thompson column

Sentience vs. sapience

Artificial Intelligence (AI) certainly appears to have secured a top position in the news, social media and general conversation. From countless TED talks on the topic - through to AI enhanced videos on YouTube - through to students handing in AI generated essays - through to uninvited AI minute-takers on Teams meetings - through to AI bots on cold-calls selling insurance – through to AI writing SAIF articles (kidding), AI is definitely well on its way to infiltrating literally every aspect of our lives.

What happens when the tech-driven race towards Super AI gains traction? What can we expect when Super AI successfully commences with the design of ever more powerful iterations of itself? What will the role of humankind be once literally every event / fact / discovery / speculation is anticipated and made accessible to all?

One specific talk I listened to suggested an answer to that question which did not engender much comfort. The speaker simply said...“We’re doomed!”

Or are we?

Of late, I have been thinking of the concept of “sentience” quite a lot. This was not triggered by any AI related discussion but stemmed from a rather tragic incident that I witnessed whilst recently travelling through the Golden Gate Highland National Park. A twitchy aggressive driver behind me had developed an insatiable interest in my exhaust pipe judging by the distance he kept between himself and the rear of my vehicle. I gave him space to pass, and the cretin roared past and disappeared over the hill. As I summited the hill, I observed that the vehicle had struck a baboon infant in the road leaving it lifeless on the tarmac. Of course, the vehicle was nowhere to be seen having abandoned the scene.

The bereaved troop had immediately fanned out in defensive mode, and a huge male made a dash into the road to retrieve the infant, whilst guarded on both flanks by his chattering lieutenants.



The anger and sadness reflected in the eyes of the members of that baboon troop permeated one's inner being and memory of the incident has remained ever since. The event drove home to me (pun not intended but nevertheless quite fitting) the fact that these creatures are indeed sentient beings.

Wikipedia (or is that AI?) tells us that sentience is defined as the ability to feel or perceive sensations (e.g., pain, pleasure, emotions) and have subjective experiences (phenomenal consciousness). Most animals are considered sentient to varying degrees. The baboon troop that I had encountered displayed emotions in bucket loads confirming them to be sentient beasts. On top of that however, there was another noticeable attribute. They displayed cognitive reasoning.

The defensive positioning that they adopted and the tactical approach towards retrieving the victim from danger, were clear illustrations of these creatures possessing a higher intellect and reasoning ability. This observation led me down another rabbit hole which ultimately ended up with the discovery of the concept of sapience. Sapience (again ironically according to AI) is defined as the ability to act rationally, use knowledge and experience to make sound judgments, and engage in complex, abstract thought.

Could it be that these primates were both sentient and sapient or at least possessed some semblance of each attribute?

On reflection it feels to me that the troop had a far more nurturing and caring instinct than the idiot hit and run driver who caused them the duress, which in turn seems to indicate that differing levels of these attributes are likely to be found across the species that inhabit this rock. Humans will obviously lay claim to being the alpha possessors of the sentience and sapience combination, but again the incident I observed proves differing levels even within same species!

Do we even recognize the presence and value of sapience?

The older I get, the more I feel that the concept is merely academic and the majority of humans would far rather live from day to day engrossed in the

alternative concept of self and self-aggrandisement. This explains the above-mentioned drivers' focus on getting to his destination fast, recklessly and at all costs. It explains the actions of politicians the world over who actively pluck mediocrity from the arms of reason. It explains poor service delivery in lieu of provision of excellence. It also explains quite clearly the insatiable appetite that humans have developed for social media, manic scrolling and instant gratification.

If we look at the environment in which we live through a sapient lens, the tragic non-sustainability of the fragmented landscape becomes highly visible. Polluted rivers and abused eco-systems abound. Carbon emissions, habitat destruction, destructive farming methods, overpopulation, economic greed, and rampant solid waste creation, all contribute towards the irrevocable stoppage of the ecological clock on which we all depend so much.

In our own industry for instance, the lack of awareness of sapience and alternative focus on self, gives rise to supply chain breaches, unethical timber flow, staff and supplier issues, and a multitude of other compliance challenges, all necessitating formulated procedures, protocols, certifications, and controls to guide human behaviour. All behaviour that ought to be instinctive and inherent if we are really that alpha species that we claim to be!

Let's go back to my baboon troop. Here you will find very little evidence of self-aggrandisement. The individuals comprising the troop rely on the environment and instinctively utilize such in a far less destructive manner than their human counterparts. They generally look after their fellows rather than competing at all costs. Food sources are shared as opposed to being stocked up by a fortuitous few. An incident befalls the troop, and all members are activated to respond appropriately. There is no evidence of obscene individual benefits or privileges. Leaders live with the troop, experience the same things as the troop, contribute towards the troop and earn their leadership positions through being both physically and mentally capable.

The more I read of the topic, the more I learn of the theories as to just how far the attributes of sentience



and sapience stretch across all of the various life forms on earth.

The commonly held belief is that invertebrates do not possess much by way of sentience but merely react automatically to external stimuli. I like to argue this point given my experiences in dealing with bee hives and ant formicarium's. It is my contention that queen bees and ants display more than adequate evidence of nurture and care to warrant a re-look at the invertebrate theory.

Just how far do the attributes stretch through the vertebrate species? Anybody who has owned a dog will know that dogs are definitely sentient creatures and you can extrapolate that to birds and any number of domestic animals. In the realm of wild animals, the late Jane Goodall proved countless times the sapience of chimps whilst other naturalists the world over regale countless stories of sentient animal encounters.

With all this said, one might contend that sentience and sapience are both very real. All living creatures demonstrate these attributes in a lesser or greater manner. OK so I'm a forester so don't get me started on the attributes of trees. Just imagine the angst of the poor chainsaw operator should all the neighbouring trees begin to growl as he stealthily approaches his target!

In any event, back to the reality of sentience and sapience. What is it that prevents humans from acknowledging and applying the attribute of sentience? Why do we not accept that deep within our core there lurks a considerable dose of sapience? We actually do have the ability to act rationally, use knowledge and experience to make sound judgments, and engage in complex, abstract thought, and yet we don't...or at least not effectively! We are allowing ourselves to implode. We are gradually destroying all of our natural lifelines, and we are focusing on matters that will ultimately hasten our demise as well as other lifeforms around us.

What will it take to revive our seemingly suppressed sapience back to the forefront of our consciousness where it can guide us appropriately? What do we have to do and if we do it will it actually make a difference?

Can we turn back the tide of human indifference and a rapidly developing raw and un-tempered reverence for AI?

As foresters we have a closer link to natural systems than many others do. We see the effect of our actions on the environment and other lifeforms on a daily basis and therefore ought to be more in "contact" with our sentience than many others. Therein lies at least one answer to the questions that I have raised.

We need to learn to extract real lessons from the observations we make of the environment and events that occur around us. Every external stimulus tells a story and we need to programme ourselves to find that story and apply it to our lives appropriately. Interpreting real life tangible events teaches us so much more than a convenient lifeless algorithm on social media. Applying lessons learnt contributes so much more than absorbing reams of inane inanimate digital servings.

Actively recognising one's own sapience via interpreting life observations, provides a lens through which one recognises the value of real-life, the need to preserve tangible and productive lifelines responsibly and identifies the omnipresence of AI. The sapience lens further allows one to assess the merits or not of accepting the AI offering, in what format to accept it if we choose that path, and to what extent.

AI is here to stay. Of this I have no doubt. Our own actively regenerated sapience, however, may well be the final and only remaining defense against Super AI's inexorable advance into our very state of being and humanity.

Rob

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The logo for NCT (NCT Forestry Agricultural Co-operative Limited) features the letters 'NCT' in a large, bold, dark green sans-serif font.

NCT FORESTRY AGRICULTURAL CO-OPERATIVE LIMITED



Is Paulownia species a viable alternative for pine/gum plantations in SA ? (Part 2)

Several people have suggested in the recent past that planting *Paulownia* might be an alternative to planting pine in South Africa for the production of high quality wood



Table: Fast growing trees

Species	Annual growth	Height of a tree of 3 years	Maximum height of an adult tree
Paulownia	3-5 m	10,5-15,5 m	15-28 m
Salix sepulcralis	1,5-4 m	7,5-12 m	15-25 m
Populus nigra	1,5-2,5 m	4,5-9 m	15-20 m
Populus deltoides	2,5-3,5 m	9-12 m	20-25 m
Quercus falcata	2,5-3,5 m	9-12 m	20-30 m
Eucalyptus tereticornis	2 -2,5 m	7,5 -9 m	15-20 m
Salix babylonica	2-2,5 m	6-9 m	10-15 m

As can be seen in the table above , Paulownia is reported to out-perform several other commercially planted species. This is however only possible under optimal conditions.

Although some articles and writers claim that Paulownia species can withstand very low temperatures and drought, this might be debatable

Paulownia is grown in South Africa for its rapid growth, valuable timber, and environmental benefits like carbon sequestration and reforestation. Several species, such as *Paulownia tomentosa* and fast-growing hybrids like the Shan Tong, are cultivated for timber production, biofuels, and as ornamental trees. Projects are using it to restore degraded land, like in the Northern Cape near Koekenaap, to create biodiverse forests. Some small pockets have been planted with Paulownia in areas near Plettenberg Bay and Riversdale. Photos taken on a farm near Wittedrif outside Plettenberg Bay .



What was very apparent during the site visit to the Wittedrif site, was the small scale of plantings (plot) as well as the fact that the trees were being irrigated unlike pine , gums and wattle plantations which survive on rainfall only. Growth after five years were not really that impressive. In a country known for low rainfall, water scarcity and frequent droughts, this could be problematic especially on large scale planting similar to pine and gum plantations.



Photo of paulownia trees planted near Wittedrif outside Plettenberg bay

Although Paulownia is reported to be a versatile species which can be used for Timber, restoration projects, Biofuels and biochar, Windbreaks , ornamental and medicinal purposes including honey production , it is still early days to prove the financial viability of planting Paulownia.

Some of the challenges identified include:

- Invasive potential: Some Paulownia species have become invasive in other parts of the world, so managing its cultivation in South Africa is important.
- Water and soil needs: Projects may require advanced irrigation systems to succeed in certain environments, such as arid or salty soils

Paulownia tomentosa (empress tree, princess tree); Family Scrophulariaceae has been classified as Legal status: Category 1a under NEM:BA (priority for control). Based on this fact taken from SAPIA News Issue no. 42 published by the Agriculture Research Council, it should therefore be approached with severe caution as we might have another weed on our hands.

Resources: ARC Sapie News No. 42; Google: Paulownia in South Africa





Focus on Forestry 2026

Dear Forestry Colleague,

CMO, Forestry South Africa, and Nelson Mandela University are delighted to welcome you back to Focus on Forestry 2026, which will be held at Karkloof Country Club, just outside Howick in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands, South Africa. Our 2023 event was the largest to date, attracting a record number of delegates and visitors — and 2026 promises to be even bigger and better! Focus on Forestry 2026 will be held over three days from 21–23 April 2026 under the Theme: “Operational Excellence in African Forestry: Building Resilient, Productive and Safe Forests”.

We are thrilled to announce that the registration site for our highly anticipated Focus on Forestry event is now live. To register and book your ticket(s), please visit our online registration site at <https://cmogroup.io/focus-forestry/>

There, you will find a simple and user-friendly interface that will guide you through the process effortlessly. Don't delay, as spots are limited, and we anticipate a high demand for attendance. To reward early birds, we are offering a special discount on registration fees. The cost for early bird registration is R3250.00 (exc VAT) until the 15th of December. Afterward, the regular registration fee will be R3950.00 (exc VAT)

We recommend completing your registration as soon as possible to secure your participation. Feel free to share this information with your colleagues or anyone who might be interested in joining this enriching experience.

If you have any questions or encounter any issues during the registration process, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at focus@cmogroup.io, we will be more than happy to assist you.

Thank you for your interest, and we can't wait to see you there!



Press Release: 30 October 2025

Cape Forest Products creates a Sustainable Timber Future

The merger of PG Bison's Southern Cape sawmilling operations with MTO Forestry Southern and Eastern Cape operations to create a new company, Cape Forests Products, creates a more sustainable timber and sawmilling industry in the Southern Cape.

The devastating fires in recent years have severely impacted the forestry and sawmilling operations in the area and it would take several years for operations to recover to pre-fire levels. As a result, the various businesses were operating at suboptimal levels.

CEO of the newly formed Cape Forests Products, Greg Woodbridge says “This merger heralds an exciting new dawn for an industry that is so important to the region in terms of sustaining jobs.” Cape Forests Products will employ directly and indirectly over 2 500 forestry and sawmilling people in the region.

“Our customers are situated predominantly in the Western, Southern and Eastern Cape. The merger means we can offer them a more reliable source of supply and a wider variety of quality products from our various operations”

Cape Forests Products will consist of PG Bison Southern Cape's c. 10 200 hectares of forestry plantations; the Thesen sawmill in George and their Woodline pole plant in Groot Brakrivier and MTO Forestry's c. 31 700 hectares of leased forestry plantation and sawmills in George and Longmore.

“The merger has created a significant black controlled business in the forestry and sawmilling industry with increased production and reliability of sawlog supply, improved efficiencies and sustainable sawn timber supply, all of which will encourage further investment and enhanced competitiveness” says Woodbridge. The merger is subject to Competition Commission approval. For further information contact: investors@kap.co.za



Commercial forestry in South Cape to be revived

An unfortunate environmental impact was that thousands of hectares of land succumbed to dense infestations of invasive alien plants in these vast areas formerly managed as commercial plantations.

GARDEN ROUTE NEWS - Cobus Meiring of the Garden Route Environmental Forum (GREF) gives his take on some good news for the forestry industry in the Southern Cape:

For close on two centuries, forestry formed the bedrock of the Southern Cape economy.

Unfortunately, this vital industry, supporting thousands of jobs and an extensive downstream value chain, including sawmills and the selling of timber, fell into sharp decline as major plantations on state land were not replanted and only pockets of the formerly prospering sector remained on private land.

One of the unfortunate environmental impacts were that thousands of hectares of land succumbed to dense infestations of invasive alien plants in these vast areas formerly managed as commercial plantations.

This in turn created considerable risks for the region, such as increased potential for wildfire disasters, a threat to water security and loss of biodiversity.

Over and above the environmental risks, the demise of commercial forestry coincided with substantial job losses, loss of skilled labour, experience and a generational forestry management culture that had been developed over a century.

The recent reversal of government policy allowing the Cold Stream Timber Company (CTC) to replant a number of dormant plantations is a welcome relief to the Garden Route. Commercial forestry can create a huge amount of jobs to skilled and unskilled labour at a time when unemployment in the region carries enormous socio-economic risks. Plantations used to cover large tracts of land in the past.

The recently formed Garden Route Risk Reduction Task Team (RRTT) welcomes the additional capacity of the



. Plantations used to cover large tracts of land in the past.

forestry industry in protecting the region against overwhelming fire risks as a result of more available manpower and resources.

Increased capacity will enable more controlled burns, large-scale management of invasive plants and the development of essential firebreaks and critical biodiversity corridors free of invasive plants.

As the Southern Cape again enters a period of low rainfall in the medium term, fire risk increases exponentially, as the recent wild fires in Ruitersbos are testimony to. Combatting wildfires are extremely costly, and since its reoccurrence is guaranteed, it requires an integrated approach, constant planning, vigilance and a high state of preparedness.

Garden Route Environmental Forum is a public platform for environmental managers and a climate change think tank. Visit www.grefscli.co.za for more information

Posted on: 14:02 Fri, 26 September 2025

Source:

<https://www.georgeherald.com/News/Article/Environment/commercial-forestry-in-south-cape-to-be-revived-202509241149>

'We bring you the latest Garden Route, Hessequa, Karoo news'

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News from Forestry South Africa

Pressure Points Understanding FSC Pesticide Communication in Timber Processing

By Jacqui Meyer, TIPWG Coordinator

As Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification standards evolve, forest managers and timber processors are being called to work more closely together on pesticide communication and transparency. The article explains how the FSC Pesticides Policy (FSC-POL-30-001 V3-0) affects third-party processing plants.



Evolving Standards in the Forestry Value Chain

As forest certification standards continue to evolve, the entire forestry value chain, from seedling to sawmill, is under increasing pressure to demonstrate transparency and sustainability. A recent talking point has been the FSC Pesticides Policy (FSC-POL-30-001 V3-0) and what it means for third-party timber processing plants, especially those involved in preservative treatment of poles and sawn timber.

At the centre of this discussion lies a simple but important question: *“Are timber treatment chemicals used in pole plants and sawmills subject to FSC’s list of prohibited pesticides?”*

Informing, Not Enforcing

Clause 4.12.12 of the FSC Pesticides Policy requires certified forest managers to: *“Inform third-party processing plants ... of the list of FSC prohibited chemical pesticides, encouraging them to avoid these pesticides*

in their processes ... and request a list of such pesticides in use.”

This clause aims to extend sustainability beyond the forest boundary, encouraging awareness throughout the supply chain. However, it does not require forest managers to enforce pesticide restrictions on downstream partners. Their responsibility is to engage, inform and document, ensuring transparency as certified material moves through the value chain.

Processing Plants and the Pesticide Question

Processing facilities under the South African Wood Preservers Association (SAWPA) and the South African Utility Pole Association (SAUPA) have sought clarity on whether timber treatment substances such as creosote or copper chrome arsenate (CCA) fall under FSC’s definition of pesticides.

While some overlap may exist in chemical classification, FSC defines pesticides as substances used to control, destroy or repel pests during forest operations, not those used for post-harvest preservation or timber treatment.

Both SAWPA and SAUPA have confirmed that their member facilities comply fully with South African legal and environmental regulations, including SANS standards. As national chemical legislation continues to tighten, this compliance provides a strong foundation for responsible practice in timber treatment.

A Grey Area with Room for Collaboration

The link between FSC policy and timber treatment remains a grey area. While FSC’s Chain of Custody (CoC) standards do not regulate preservative treatment or restrict treatment compounds, the Pesticides Policy encourages voluntary avoidance of high-risk substances and clear communication throughout the chain.

Forest managers are therefore expected to share the FSC Prohibited Pesticides List and request information on chemicals used by their processing partners. This is not about enforcement; it is about transparency, due diligence and shared commitment to sustainability.



Their strong record of legal compliance and stewardship already meets the spirit of FSC's policy, even where treatment chemicals fall outside its direct scope. This mutual understanding reinforces trust across the forestry supply chain and supports the Sector's wider sustainability goals.

Final Thoughts

The treatment and preservation of timber, particularly utility poles and structural products, remains essential to the forestry sector. SAWPA and SAUPA member plants continue to operate with integrity, meeting national standards and upholding responsible chemical management.

Forest managers can fulfil their FSC obligations by simply engaging with these partners, sharing the relevant policies and documenting the exchange. In return, processors can demonstrate their own strong governance, ensuring that South Africa's forestry value chain remains both credible and sustainable.

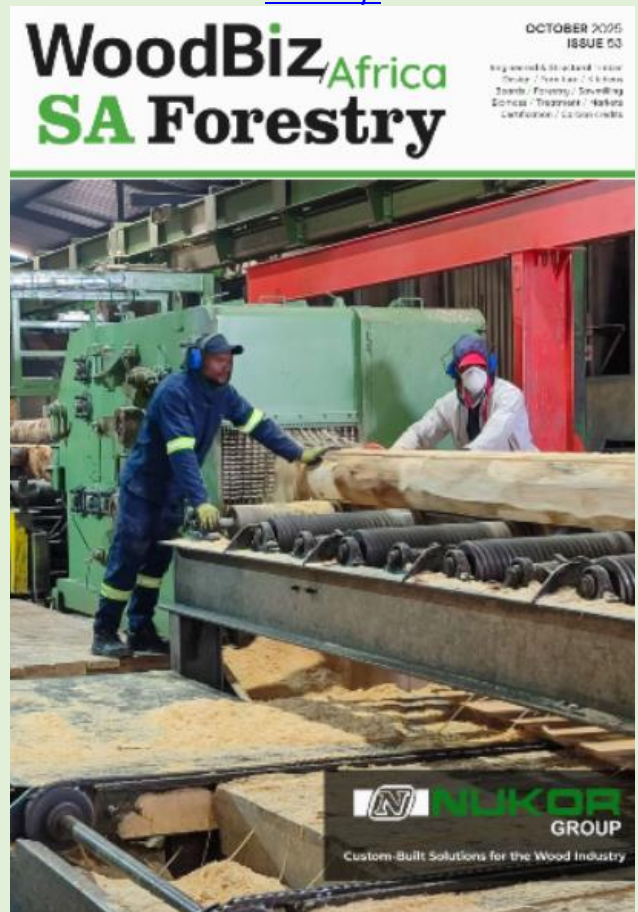
In a world of changing standards and growing expectations, collaboration remains the strongest preservative.

<https://www.tipwg.co.za/pressure-points-understanding-fscs-pesticide-communication-in-timber-processing/>



Latest Edition of WoodBiz Africa/ SA Forestry : Newsletter 53,2025

[October 2025 | Issue 53 • WoodBiz Africa / SA Forestry](#)



<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/Latest Edition of Forestry in Focus>

Journal of Forestry Research > Article

High-resolution climate downscaling using terrain features and global circulation models: applications for species suitability in the management of plantation forestry

Original Paper | Published: 11 November 2025
Volume 37, article number 3, (2026)
[Cite this article](#)



Journal of Forestry Research

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Western Cape	Dr. Justin Erasmus	western-cape@saif.org.za
DFFE representative	Vacant	

—



The following SAIFmembers celebrate their birthdays in December

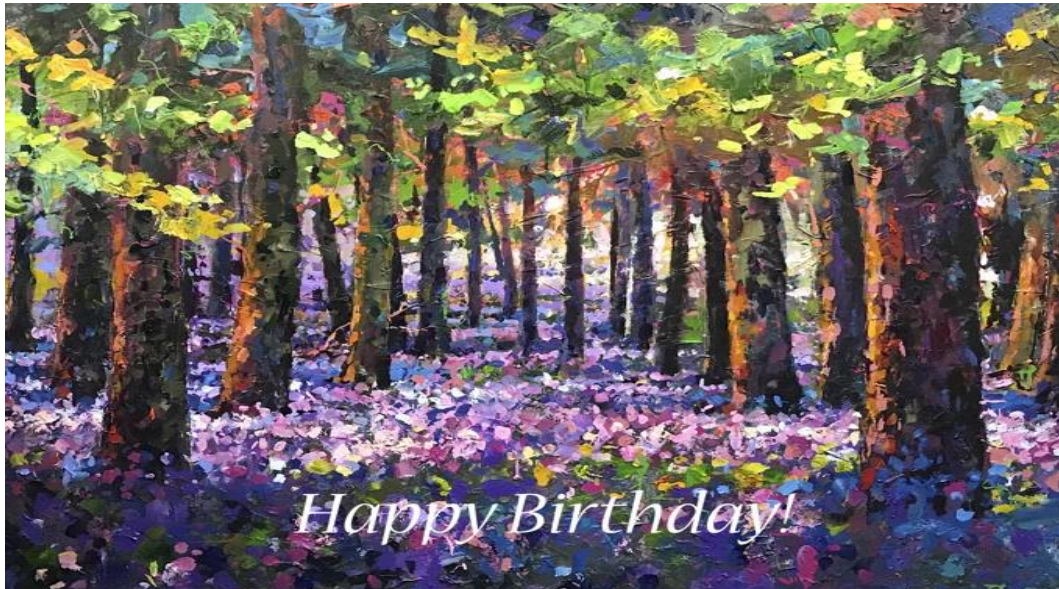


DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

02 Dec	FRITZ VON KROSIGK	15 Dec	MAURITS PEROLD
02 Dec	RONALD HEATH	15 Dec	PHILLIP FISCHER
02 Dec	CHRIS CHAPMAN	16 Dec	GERARD LINDNER
03 Dec	JOHAN BESTER	18 Dec	JOSUA LOUW
05 Dec	GEOFFREY LYLE	20 Dec	WILLIAM DAVIDSON
05 Dec	WESSEL VERMEULEN	20 Dec	JOHN LE BRASSEUR
06 Dec	MCOSELELI JAKAVULA	27 Dec	NONDUMISO ZONDO
06 Dec	DARYL RAJBAL	28 Dec	PHILA NDHLOVU
08 Dec	DEMISSEW TESHOME	29 Dec	CHRISTOPHER KOMAKECH
10 Dec	PIETER ODENDAAL	30 Dec	BRETT HURLEY
11 Dec	ULRICH MEYER	30 Dec	SANELE ZUMA
11 Dec	MURRAY MASON	30 Dec	LESLEY KAPFUMVUTI
14 Dec	DACE ROGANS		



The following SAIF members will be celebrating their Birthday in January



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

02 Jan	PHILIP CRAFFORD	17 Jan	LEE CUNNINGHAM
03 Jan	JAMES BALLANTYNE	18 Jan	DIRK LÄNGIN
05 Jan	MIKKA PARAG	21 Jan	CARL SEELE
06 Jan	SANDISO SOTIYA	24 Jan	GAVIN BURNHAMS
07 Jan	ED HAYTER	25 Jan	LUKE VAN VUGT
08 Jan	DUANE ROTHMAN	25 Jan	LOUIS VAN ZYL
08 Jan	WILLEM KOTZE	25 Jan	JOH SCRIBA
09 Jan	CRAIG NORRIS	26 Jan	RICHARD MULLER
11 Jan	PETE ODELL	27 Jan	GARY HODGE
12 Jan	DAVE DOBSON	28 Jan	JIM MATSHO
13 Jan	P.E VON BUDDENBROCK	30 Jan	CHURCHILL MKWALO
16 Jan	GJALT HOOGHIEMSTRA	31 Jan	RICHARD LIVERSAGE
16 Jan	ERIC DROOMER	31 Jan	JACK SWART

The SAIF would like to wish a very Happy Birthday to every member who celebrated their birthday in November, as well as to those who will celebrate their birthdays in December and January. Congratulations on reaching another milestone. Thank you for your continued support, and may God bless you in the year ahead.





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