



Press Release

International Union of Forest Research Organizations

Largest forest research conference worldwide to be held in Salt Lake City

More than 3,500 scientists and experts will be gathering from 5-11 October at the 24th IUFRO World Congress – New IUFRO publication series now available

(2 October 2014, Salt Lake City/Vienna) Forests and trees are key components of responses to a growing number of problems society is facing today such as the need for renewable resources, climate change, water scarcity, and poverty. The 24th IUFRO World Congress “Sustaining Forests, Sustaining People: the Role of Research” aims at showcasing the scientific expertise and activities in current forest research to address the range of sustainability challenges and opportunities. The Conference is the largest global scientific conference on forests with an expected number of more than 3,500 participants from all over the world. It will be held from 5-11 October in Salt Lake City, Utah, United States. It is organized by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) and hosted by the U.S. Forest Service in cooperation with the National Association of University Forest Resources Programs (NAUFRP) in the USA, the Society of American Foresters (SAF), and the Canadian Institute of Forestry (CIF/IFC).



*Fall foliage: trembling aspen in Utah
(Photo by Rich Guldin, Chair of the
Congress Organizing Committee)*

“Forests and trees play a critical role in the sustainable development of human societies worldwide. The 24th IUFRO World Congress takes place one year before a new United Nation’s post-2015 development agenda will be launched and the Sustainable Development Goals come into effect. Forests and their appropriate management are crucial to achieving these goals, and for this endeavor we need the best available knowledge and a solid base of scientific forest data”, says John Parrotta, IUFRO Officeholder and Chair of the Congress Scientific Committee. There will be more than 1,200 oral presentations and nearly as many poster presentations in five plenary, 19 sub-plenary, and over 170 technical and poster sessions during the Congress next week.

“Approaches on how to manage forests for the provision of a multitude of goods and services have to consider research from various fields such as biophysical, social, economic, and political sciences. The most important role of IUFRO is to connect people from different scientific disciplines and from different regions of the world, in order to exchange knowledge and learn from each other”, says Niels Elers Koch, President of IUFRO, the only worldwide organization devoted to forest research and related sciences.

New publication series: IUFRO Research Letters

The seven Congress themes encompass IUFRO's scientific priorities for the benefit of forests and people worldwide: Forests for People, Forest Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, Forests and Climate Change, Forest and Water Interactions, Forest Biomass and Bioenergy, Forests and Forest Products for a Greener Future, and Forest Health in a Changing World.

Information on each of these topics can also be found in a new IUFRO publication series entitled "Research Letters" which will be published on the occasion of the Congress.

"The Research Letters highlight the scientific findings of nine IUFRO Task Forces between 2011 and 2014 on some of the most relevant issues on forests and related fields such as forests and climate change, forests and human health, and forest bioenergy", says IUFRO Vice President Su See Lee: "These topics are high on the political agenda and of strong concern when discussing sustainable development. The Research Letters hopefully provide a better understanding and useful insights about these topics for all who are interested in the future development of forests and society."

New IUFRO President to be appointed

During the Congress week, IUFRO's International Council will appoint a new President to follow Niels Elers Koch who served IUFRO as President for the past four years.

Furthermore, the Council will adopt the new IUFRO Strategy 2015-2019, which will lead the work of IUFRO up to the 25th IUFRO World Congress in 2019.

IUFRO Research Letters – Topics

- ***On Forests for People***
Forests provide a broad range of goods and services, which contribute to the livelihoods of around 1.6 billion people worldwide. Urbanization, globalization, and changing consumption patterns have an impact on forests. Understanding the main societal causes of these changes and their consequences on forests and people is a major challenge for forest research.
- ***On Forests and Human Health***
Forests ecosystem goods and services include food and herbs, pharmaceuticals and nutraceuticals, as well as the provision of recreational, cultural and spiritual benefits, which positively impact on human well-being. But the interplay between forests and human health is complex.
- ***On Forests and Climate Change***
Human activities exacerbate climate change, affecting the functioning of forests and their subsequent provision of goods and services. But forests are also part of the solution through carbon sequestration, and material and energy substitution.
- ***On Education in Forest Science***
Education plays a key role to ensure appropriate forest management. Traditional forest knowledge is a crucial component of forest education. Considering today's new societal demands - such as increasing demands for ecosystem services and novel resource governance systems - other forms of learning have gained importance.
- ***On Resources for the Future***
In addition to its use as a source of energy, wood has traditionally been used for construction and for paper-making. A wide range of uses is apparent for the components of wood, and many of these are now commercialized such as the use of wood in biotextiles. A variety of new products are emerging, such as nanocrystalline cellulose and related products.

- ***On Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services***

Biodiversity is a key determinant of forests' ability to effectively provide ecosystem services such as soil formation, food, water, and erosion control. Deforestation and degradation are major causes of biodiversity loss. Other threats include climate change and diseases. These factors represent, or are expected to create, considerable challenges to the sustainability of forests.

- ***On Forest and Water Interactions***

More than one in six people worldwide do not have access to safe drinking water and approximately 80 percent of the global population are living in areas where water resources are insecure. Forest watersheds play an important role in providing domestic, agricultural and commercial water, and therefore the conservation of forests is key to sustaining the availability and quality of water.

- ***On Forest Bioenergy***

Natural, planted and plantation forests are our most important sources of renewable materials. The intensity of forest management and harvesting is expected to increase as the change to a bio-based economy continues. It is important to support the movement towards a more efficient and less wasteful use of globally limited biomass resources.

- ***International Forest Governance***

Efforts to address global deforestation and forest degradation led to an array of initiatives. Today concerted efforts are emerging over two fairly new policy instruments: legality verification and reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD/REDD+). One key question is whether these efforts might succeed in finding new ways to improve forest conditions and livelihoods.

IUFRO Research Letters: <http://www.iufro.org/publications/iufro-research-letters/>

24th IUFRO World Congress 2014

5 – 11 October 2014, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA

Information on the program: <http://iufro2014.com/>

Media and News: <http://iufro2014.com/news/>

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The International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) is the only worldwide organization devoted to forest research and related sciences. Its members are research institutions, universities, and individual scientists as well as decision-making authorities and other stakeholders with a focus on forests and trees. www.iufro.org