



The 125th Anniversary Congress on 18-22 September 2017 in Freiburg, Germany, will offer a wide selection of scientific sessions highlighting innovative research and interdisciplinary research approaches of relevance to forests, and focus on the transfer of scientific knowledge on critical global forest-related challenges to national and international political agendas. In a series of “Congress Spotlight” articles individual sessions shall be showcased to give a foretaste of the richness and scope of research findings that will be presented at the Congress. Keep updated at: <http://iufro2017.com/>

IUFRO 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Congress Spotlight / Division 3 - #46 / July 2017

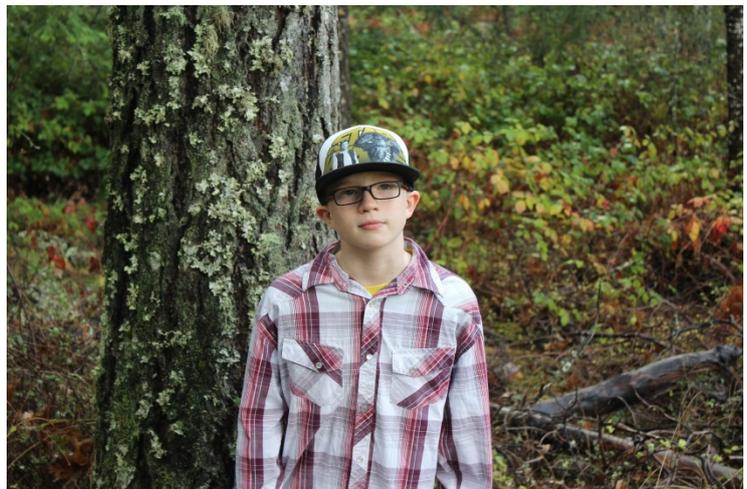
## Getting a handle on future needs of forestland owners

Private owners control nearly 70 million hectares of forestland around the globe and account for well over 50% of the forestland in many countries in Europe and North and South America.

These owners – many of them families, individuals and other small holders – operating within social, financial and political constraints, will largely dictate the future of the forests.

That is the underlying reason for a session at the upcoming IUFRO 125th Anniversary Congress in Freiburg, Germany in September entitled: **History, Findings and Future Directions of Forest Landowner Research.**

Dr. Brett Butler, of the U.S. Forest Service, is coordinating the session and says: “There are numerous individual researchers and institutions that study these private owners, but the opportunities to directly compare findings and methods across countries are limited.



*What does the future hold for owners of forestland? (Photo Pixabay)*

“The IUFRO Congress provides a venue in which we can facilitate a dialogue among those who research private forest owners. It will give us a chance to ask what common trends we are seeing and what are the differences.

“We can use this session to discuss the history of the research, synthesize the current state and chart a path forward for forestland owner research,” he said.

Looking to the future – though pointing out that it is difficult to generalize on how forestland owners around the globe will manage their land – he foresees developed countries increasing emphasis on service-oriented management and also better incorporating the value of ecosystem services into future management efforts.

In the developing world, he sees a need for continuing efforts to improve livelihoods through practices such as agroforestry and emphasis on gender issues.

He also expects that new technologies will be providing new ways for owners to interact with their land and new ways for researchers to interact with owners.

Going forward he expects to see greater changes for foresters rather than forestland owners. “We need a paradigm shift, so that we look at trees through the eyes of the owners. Foresters, and more broadly forestry, must do a better job of meeting the needs of owners,” said Dr. Butler.

“To do that, we have to overcome the inertia of forestry – we tend to do what we’ve always done – and we have to do a better job of working across disciplines; getting out of our silos,” he added.

In his opinion there is also a need for more holistic studies – studying more than just the treed part of an owner’s property.

One way to move forward is to look at, and learn from, health-care research, he said.

“The gold standard for research is the medical field. Two of their stronger methods are longitudinal studies – tracking a group of people over an extended period of time – and evidence-based practices, which means basing treatments and other recommendations on science that measures actual outcomes,” Dr. Butler said.

“We have much we can learn from health care research. I think that long-term, longitudinal studies and more reliance on evidenced-based practices will help move us forward.

“These are the types of tools we need to use to answer some of the ‘wicked’ problems we are trying to address – such as what influences landowner decisions and what are the impacts of policies and programs,” he added.

Dr. Butler believes the Congress, in addition to facilitating a dialogue among the various researchers, will also provide an opportunity to encourage new partnerships for facilitating future comparisons and can potentially lead to harmonization across research efforts.

*The September 18-22 Congress in Freiburg will celebrate IUFRO’s 125th anniversary. Founded in 1892 in Eberswalde Germany, IUFRO has grown to unite more than 15,000 scientists (who cooperate in IUFRO on a voluntary basis) in almost 700 member organizations in more than 120 countries.*

*IUFRO promotes global cooperation in forest-related research and enhances the understanding of the ecological, economic and social aspects of forests and trees. It disseminates scientific knowledge to stakeholders and decision-makers and contributes to forest policy and on-the-ground forest management.*

*About 2000 scientists from 89 countries are expected to attend the Congress. The Forest Landowner Research session in Freiburg will be one of 172 scientific sessions that will cover a wide array of topics dealing with various aspects of forest research.*

***See you at the IUFRO 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Congress in Freiburg, Germany!  
Look out for [#IUFRO2017](#) on Twitter and [@iufro2017](#) on Facebook!***

*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. Visit: <http://www.iufro.org/>*

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