

IUFRO

Interconnecting
Forests, Science and People



Annual Report *Highlights 2017*

*IUFRO 125th Anniversary Congress:
Interconnecting Forests, Science and People*

*The Global Teak Study:
Analysis, Evaluation and Future Potential of Teak Resources*

64 IUFRO co-sponsored meetings

249 Research Units led by 706 Officeholders

10 Interdisciplinary Task Forces

628 Member Organizations worldwide

International Union of Forest Research Organizations
Union Internationale des Instituts de Recherches Forestières
Internationaler Verband Forstlicher Forschungsanstalten
Unión Internacional de Organizaciones de Investigación Forestal

Highlights in 2017

Mike Wingfield, IUFRO President

By far the most important highlight of 2017 for IUFRO was the celebration of our 125th anniversary. And the high point of a suite of celebratory events was an extraordinary and inspiring Anniversary Congress in Freiburg, Germany. Allow me to share with you some impressive figures regarding the Congress: 1,934 participants from 90 countries were registered; 1,517 participants gave scientific presentations; 171 sessions were included in the Congress program, and five all-Division meetings were held. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all of those involved in the organization of this splendid Congress. And likewise to all who attended the event, shared their knowledge and expertise and broadly contributed to making our 125th Anniversary an important milestone in IUFRO's history.

For the Anniversary Congress the IUFRO leadership defined three key goals. These were that the event should provide a platform for scientists from around the globe to meet and share their research findings and that it should celebrate the achievements of the organization throughout its history. But there was another important objective. This was for IUFRO to reach out more strongly to its stakeholders, national and international policy and decision-makers, business representatives, and research managers to discuss with them the challenges of sustainable development. In all, the Congress participants had many opportunities to interact with leading representatives from different societal groups and, among other issues, to learn how forest science can provide them with more effective support in addressing the forest-related Sustainable Development Goals.

The IUFRO 125th Anniversary Congress will be remembered for many of the offered events but also as the occasion when we adopted our new slogan of "Interconnecting forests, science and people". This slogan captures in a nutshell what IUFRO stands for and now forms an inseparable part of the IUFRO logo. For the launch of the slogan, a short video was presented which can be used to share with IUFRO stakeholders and other interested parties how IUFRO functions and what we achieve. It is available on our website and I would encourage you to use it at meetings and other relevant IUFRO events. All other relevant information related to the Anniversary Congress can also be found on our website under the "Events" section.

Despite the fact that most IUFRO activities in 2017 were focused on the Anniversary Congress, more than 50 other remarkable IUFRO meetings were held during the year. Of these, one of the major events certainly was the all-Division 5 Conference in Vancouver, Canada. The conference was arranged under the theme of "Forest Sector Innovations for a Greener Future". Vital questions were considered including just as examples "How will fibre and forests be used in the near- and long-term?" and "Will there be enough biomass and sustainable products to support the growing global population?"

One of IUFRO's key interests and objectives during the current Board Term is to better understand and promote education in forestry. IUFRO made considerable progress towards this objective in 2017. In a podcast interview published by IUFRO's Division 3 in early 2017, I was asked, among other things, to name the areas of activity that would be amongst the most important in the future. My response was clear - "Communication, collaboration and education." Education, in particular, is rapidly moving



Mike Wingfield, IUFRO President (Photo FVA/Klaus Polkowski)

to the center of our interest. We must ask ourselves, "What will forests and forestry look like in the future?" And against that background, "How should forestry education respond in order to be relevant to the forests and forestry in the future?" Research will surely underpin the future of forests and forestry and we must ensure that students educated in forestry will be suitably equipped to provide the research needed.

As part of our focus on forestry education, I am proud to report that in 2017 we were very successful at further intensifying our collaboration with students and early career scientists. In this regard, you might read the report from the Joint IUFRO-IFSA Task Force on Forest Education (JTF) in the full Annual Report. You will also be interested to know that the IUFRO-EFI Young Scientists Initiative (YSI), a recent collaborative venture between IUFRO and the European Forest Institute (EFI), was established in 2017. This exciting initiative is rapidly gaining traction and I believe that we will be able to grow the project and greatly increase the number of students supported in the future.

Collectively, the initiatives noted above, together with enhanced communication and networking cooperation, contribute to equipping IUFRO for the important task of providing relevant quality research to inform policy and responsible decision-making. Our overall aim here is to increase the policy impact of scientific knowledge. And to achieve this goal, IUFRO participates actively in major forest-related policy processes. In 2017, for example, IUFRO was again well represented at the 12th Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) in New York. Likewise at the Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) in Bonn, where we co-hosted two discussion forums, one on forest and water interactions and one on capacity building for forest and landscape restoration.

2017 was an exciting and very productive year for IUFRO. It has been a privilege for me to be able to lead this remarkable organization. There are many details that I have not been able to include in this short report but please see our full Annual Report for 2017 published on our website under "Publications". Let me conclude by expressing my warmest thanks to all our donors, partners, supporters and stakeholders as well as to each and every one in IUFRO, our members, scientists, officeholders and headquarters staff, for contributing to a truly outstanding year!

Looking Ahead

John Parrotta and Björn Hånell,
IUFRO Vice-Presidents

Our view from the outlook tower is dominated by the great challenges we face, including the urgent need to replace fossil fuels with renewable energy to limit climate change and its impacts, a growing and increasingly urbanized population estimated to reach 9 billion by 2050, and the need to produce more food, goods and services from the same, or even smaller, land area than today in the face of ongoing land degradation, erosion of biodiversity and loss of natural forests, particularly in the tropics. There is no doubt that forest science should – and will – be instrumental in creating the future we want. Land degradation and forest loss must be reversed. Urban citizens need greener, healthier cities and the opportunities to connect with the natural environment. New products from the forest to replace those based on fossil fuels will likely require significant changes in forest management.

It is said that we are now on the brink of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (following the First which used water and steam to mechanize production, the Second in which mass production was powered by electricity, and a Third using electronics and IT to automate production). This Fourth Industrial Revolution is characterized by a fusion of technologies, building on the digital revolution but differing in its velocity, scope and systems impact (Schwab, 2016). How and to what extent can the global forest science community respond to the opportunities – and challenges – presented by this new era? In our view, new knowledge about forests, forest management and forest products will be indispensable if we are to help steer these developments in constructive and sustainable directions rather than reacting defensively to them, and perhaps too late. An important element of the digital age, which we are already well into as we straddle the Third and Fourth Industrial Revolutions, is that billions of people are connected by mobile devices with unprecedented processing power, storage capacity and access to knowledge, or at least information. A new era of fundamentally improved opportunities for collecting, analysing, and sharing information is a wonderful prospect for science.

There is, however, a downside associated with this unprecedented expansion of available information and its public accessibility. The old computer science expression, “garbage in, garbage out” (i.e., flawed, or nonsense input data produces nonsense output) is worth remembering. This principle also applies to the information consumed by society, and the resultant opinions formed and decisions made. As we know, influential interest groups and irresponsible actors pursuing their ideological, political or personal agendas increasingly make use of media outlets (including social media) that exercise little if any “quality control” to spread misinformation, including biased information about the reality and impacts of “inconvenient truths” like climate change, land degradation, biodiversity loss, and unsustainable production and consumption of forest-based goods and services. Any fool with a Twitter account can easily - in 280 characters or less - sow confusion and indifference in the minds of millions of people. Amid such confusion, the scientific community – including all of us connected via IUFRO – has an obligation to communicate facts and to educate the public and decision-makers about the importance of forests, forest science and global scientific collaboration to people’s lives, and those of generations to come.



A well-informed public convinced of the importance of forests is needed to get messages through to decision-makers at all levels. All of us have a role to play in educating the public about the many important ways we depend on forests for our individual and collective well-being, and how solutions for many of the problems we face depend on the knowledge, expertise and imagination of the forest science community. In recent years, IUFRO has made very significant advances in our forest science communications activities. We have also stepped up efforts to provide decision-makers – particularly at the global level – with policy-relevant scientific assessments on topics of great importance that help to inform forest-related policy discussions, including those related to the Sustainable Development Goals. These efforts need to continue, and expand, through collaboration with organizations and scientists within the IUFRO network and those beyond the IUFRO “family”. In doing so, we can achieve one of IUFRO’s most important objectives, fostering the development of science-based solutions to forest-related challenges for the benefit of forests and people worldwide

Reference: Schwab, K. (2016). *The Fourth Industrial Revolution*. Crown Business. New York.



**XXV IUFRO World
Congress 2019
Curitiba, Brazil:
29 September -
5 October 2019**

Congress website: <http://www.iufro2019.com/>

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TF Foresight for Forest Sector Planning:
Jerry Vanclay, Australia
TF Sustainable Forest Biomass Network:
Viktor Bruckman, Austria
TF Resources for the Future: Transformation in Forest Use:
John Innes, Canada
TF Contribution of Biodiversity to Ecosystem Services in Managed Forests: Hervé Jactel, France
TF Sustainable Planted Forests for a Greener Future:
Christophe Orazio, France
TF Forest Adaptation and Restoration under Global Change:
Andreas Bolte, Germany
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FAO Representative:

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Janice Burns, Canada
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Daniel Boehnke, South Africa

IUFRO Honours and Awards

Distinguished Service Award (DSA)

Margarida Tomé, Konstantin von Teuffel (2017); Hans Heinemann (2016, handed over in 2017)

Special Recognition Award (SRA)

Jan Heino (2016, handed over 2017)

Certificate of Appreciation (CoA)

Jung-Hwan Park, Min-Jeong Jo, Eli Koleva, Robert Kozak, Jamie Barbour, Jorma Neuvonen, Laura Cottle, Tim Christophersen, Horst Freiberg, Monica Gabay, Bernard de Galembert, Tatenda Mapeto, Jun Xia, Mercy Gichora, Andreas Bolte, Helen Desmond, Janina Radny, Carol Grossmann, Uwe E. Schmidt

IUFRO Headquarters Publications 2017

- World Series Vol. 36 - The Global Teak Study. Analysis, Evaluation and Future Potential of Teak Resources
- IUFRO News Issues 1-12 (3 double issues), 2017
- 3 Scientific Summaries related to IUFRO News
- 14 IUFRO Spotlight issues
- IUFRO Annual Report 2016

Editorial

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Full report at: <https://www.iufro.org/publications/annual-report/>



Anniversary Congress, Konzerthaus Freiburg. (Photo EVA/Klaus Polkowski)