



Highlights 2020

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

Pandemic triggers rapid change into online mode

Post-2020 Strategy

Major assessment on forests and poverty

30 IUFRO co-sponsored meetings

255 Research Units led by 766 Officeholders

9 Interdisciplinary Task Forces

628 Member Organizations worldwide

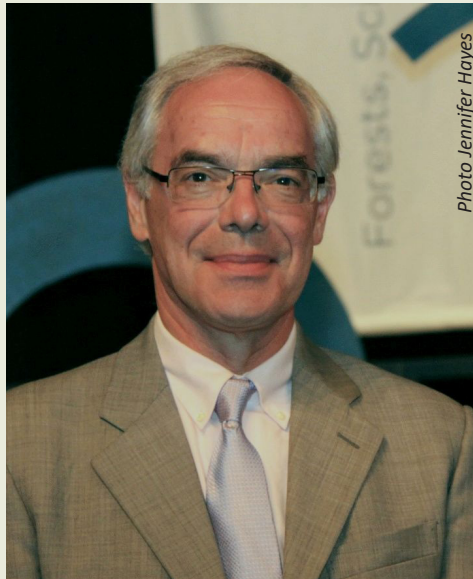
Message from IUFRO President John Parrotta

2020 was a year like no other. While the COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on our daily lives and the work of our organizations, challenging each of us in so many ways, it has also served as a powerful reminder of the importance of sound scientific knowledge and international scientific collaboration for solving global challenges. This is as true for the many forest-related issues we are all working to find solutions for as it is for coping with the pandemic and its economic and social aftershocks.

Despite the obstacles, including the need to scale back in-person meetings and other networking activities in 2020, IUFRO has maintained and in some ways even enhanced collaboration in forest science. During its first-ever virtual meeting in September, the IUFRO Board finalized our post-2020 Strategy, a comprehensive Strategy Action Plan, and a Strategic Communications Plan for 2020-2024. These initiatives represent important steps to enhance research excellence in forest science worldwide, to improve communications and embrace diversity within our network, and to increase IUFRO's visibility, outreach, and education activities.

IUFRO's leadership, from our Headquarters staff and Board, through all levels of our organization, have rapidly adopted new approaches and technologies for networking, including virtual meetings and webinars. These activities, summarized by IUFRO Divisions, Task Forces, and Special Programmes and Projects in the full Annual Report, in many cases attracted many more participants from around the world than comparable in-person meetings otherwise would. Expanding the use of hybrid and virtual meeting formats and other creative online networking activities in 2021 and beyond will further enhance our flexibility and expand involvement in our activities of a larger and more diverse group of scientists and stakeholders, while reducing our collective "carbon footprint" associated with international travel to attend in-person events.

In addition to the meetings and webinars organized by IUFRO Divisional units and Task Forces, officeholders and members collaborated to produce many important publications in all fields of forest science. Among the year's most significant publications, a multi-disciplinary global assessment report, entitled *Forests, Trees and the Eradication of Poverty: Potential and Limitations*, was a major



accomplishment for IUFRO's Global Forest Expert Panels (GFEP) Programme. This report, and an accompanying policy brief, were launched at a high-profile online event in October 2020 in conjunction with the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. Similarly, IUFRO's Special Programme for Development of Capacities (IUFRO-SPDC) quickly modified and successfully implemented its ambitious schedule of networking activities in a virtual environment, including training and knowledge sharing workshops on forest landscape restoration, and systematic evidence evaluation.

In my role as President, it was my privilege to work – almost on daily basis – with IUFRO Headquarters' talented and dedicated staff led by Alexander Buck and Michael Kleine on so many of the behind-the-scenes activities that ensure that the IUFRO network remained dynamic, and engaged with our Members, partner organizations, and our generous donors. A vitally important part of this work has been our communications efforts, both within the IUFRO network, and with our stakeholders and the general public. IUFRO's social media presence and activity continued to expand in 2020, and our publications, including monthly issues of IUFRO News, and the IUFRO Spotlight series, which included a superb series of engaging pieces on the work of our nine interdisciplinary Task Forces, have helped us tremendously in our collective effort to interconnect forests, science and people.

In closing, I thank the IUFRO Board, the IUFRO Secretariat, our more than 700 officeholders, our Member Organizations and participating scientists for your dedication and contributions to forest science, as well as your perseverance and constructive engagement throughout 2020. Through your active participation in IUFRO's forest science networking activities, we will continue to provide science-based solutions to tackle the many forest-related environmental, economic and social issues facing our global society, and our shared home, Planet Earth.

Outlook

*Daniela Kleinschmit and Shirong Liu,
IUFRO Vice-Presidents*

The term “outlook” has two principal meanings: firstly, the perspective on future situations and secondly, the view from a specific place.

Despite the many path dependencies to which we are tied, since 2020 at the latest we have learned that predictions encompass many uncertainties that are unforeseeable. The pandemic situation has made 2020 a staggering year in almost every respect. IUFRO has not been spared from these consequences: well-planned activities needed to be cancelled, working and travel conditions changed having effects on collaboration and networking, and all researchers and organizations involved in IUFRO needed to find ways to adapt to the new situation. However, as forests are still growing, IUFRO is still vigorously working. The IUFRO family has learned together, adapted to the new situation, developed new ways for collaboration and activities and with this learned to value our network even more. Although we cannot foresee the details of the future, we are certain that global collaboration and solidarity are of key importance for building a resilient forest science community.

Despite all uncertainties, environmental challenges are a part of future scenarios and will persist. Climate change, the loss of biodiversity, deforestation and soil degradation as well as their consequences for people and livelihoods will accompany us during the next year and beyond.

The post-2020 IUFRO Strategy provides an inclusive framework embracing these challenges in a proactive way. Setting out from the overarching goal of interconnecting forests, science and people, we will focus on people’s well-being, climate change, green development, biodiversity, eco-security and ecosystem services, and interaction between forests and other ecosystems. The goals are set and 2021 will be the year when implementation (re-) starts. The goals are also very much in line with diverse global initiatives responding to global challenges, such as the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration to be kicked off in 2021. IUFRO supports these processes by providing scientific knowledge about the problems and about options for the future.

It has been recognized already for some time that understanding forest-related problems and presenting options for the future is not a task that can be fulfilled by a single discipline. The global challenges as well as the global goals set out in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) come along with many different perspectives and needs. Consequently, interdisciplinary research comprising natural sciences, social sciences, the humanities and engineering is called upon to respond to these challenges



Blue Ridge Mountains, Virginia, USA. Photo John Parrotta

and materialize the inherent potentials of forests in helping attain the SDGs.

In 2021 IUFRO will continue to provide strong disciplinary competence as represented in the diverse units of IUFRO and be the motor of interdisciplinary scientific activities with its Task Forces, for example. Furthermore, IUFRO with its new strategy and its dedicated officeholders and members, will expand its networking and outreach beyond the union and pool all possible knowledge, expertise and experience to provide science-based solutions to the common challenges that humanity is facing.

Another phenomenon that will persist in 2021 is the trend of fake news, supported by the increasing scope of social media and fueled by the uncertainty of the pandemic situation. IUFRO plays an utterly important role, particularly in times when sources of information are essential, to ensure the quality of news. IUFRO is the organization that will continue to provide scientific information in an overarching and encompassing way and develop evidence-based solutions for forest-related problems globally. With this, IUFRO will counter the trend of fake news and be a reliable source for forest information also in 2021.

With this outlook we have addressed some scenarios of the future situation. However, as defined in the beginning, outlook also refers to a view from a specific place. As we are two Vice-Presidents from different parts of the world, one could assume that we might have different views. And this might be true. We are only two out of about 15,000 forest scientists involved in IUFRO. We do not only have different disciplinary backgrounds but also different cultural and social backgrounds and knowledge about specific areas. Together, we are like pieces of a puzzle allowing to provide a bigger - a global - picture of the diverse forest situations, problems, needs and possible solutions. Being part of this global forest science network puzzle provides us with the perfect place to have a view from.

Forested areas have their boundaries, but the benefits and threats related to forests are boundless. Let us look forward to a new journey of fruitful interaction between forests, science and people in 2021!

IUFRO Board

IUFRO Senior Officeholders:

President: John Parrotta, USA

Vice-President Divisions: Daniela Kleinschmit, Germany

Vice-President Task Forces, Special Programmes, Projects and IUFRO-led Initiatives: Shirong Liu, China

Immediate Past President: Michael Wingfield, South Africa

Division Coordinators:

Division 1: Jens Peter Skovsgaard, Sweden

Division 2: Santiago C. González-Martínez, France

Division 3: Woodam Chung, USA

Division 4: Donald Hodges, USA

Division 5: Pekka Saranpää, Finland

Division 6: Cecil C. Konijnendijk van den Bosch, Canada

Division 7: Eckehard Brockerhoff, Switzerland

Division 8: Sandra Luque, France

Division 9: Mónica Gabay, Argentina

President's Nominees:

Hubert Hasenauer, Austria

Erich Gomes Schaitza, Brazil

Xiao Wenfa, China

Wubalem Tadesse, Ethiopia

Elena Paoletti, Italy

Kugbo Shim, Korea (Rep)

Olga Shaytarova, Russian Federation

IUFRO Executive Director:

Alexander Buck, Austria

IUFRO Headquarters Host Country Representative:

Maria Patek, Austria

Task Force (TF) Coordinators:

Forests and Water Interactions in a Changing Environment:

Xiaohua (Adam) Wei, USA

Fire\$: Economic Drivers of Global Wildland Fire Activity:

François-Nicolas Robinne, Canada

Gender Equality in Forestry: Gun Lidestav, Sweden

Resilient Planted Forests Serving Society & Bioeconomy:

Christophe Orazio, France

Strengthening Mediterranean Nursery Systems for Forest Reproductive Material Procurement to Adapt to the Effects of Climate Change:

Giovanbattista de Dato, Italy

Unlocking the Bioeconomy and Non-Timber Forest Products:

James Chamberlain, USA

Transforming Forest Landscapes for Future Climates and Human Well-Being: Andreas Bolte, Germany

Joint IUFRO-IFSA Task Force on Forest Education:

Sandra Rodríguez-Pineros, Mexico, and Alex Onatunji, Nigeria

Monitoring Global Tree Mortality Patterns and Trends:

Henrik Hartmann, Germany

Special Programmes, Projects and Initiatives:

IUFRO Special Programme for Development of Capacities

(IUFRO-SPDC): Michael Kleine, Austria

Global Forest Expert Panels Programme (GFEP):

Christoph Wildburger, Austria

IUFRO World Forests, Society and Environment

(IUFRO-WFSE): Pia Katila, Finland

Global Forest Information Service (GFIS):

Eero Mikkola, Finland

Special Programme Directors' Forum (IUFRO-SPDF):

Peter Mayer, Austria

XXVI IUFRO World Congress Organizing Committee (COC) Chair:

Fredrik Ingemarson, Sweden

XXVI IUFRO World Congress Scientific Committee (CSC) Chair:

Elena Paoletti, Italy

IUFRO Headquarters (Vienna)

Executive Director: Alexander Buck, Austria

Deputy Executive Director and IUFRO-SPDC Coordinator:

Michael Kleine, Austria

Operations Manager: Andre Purret (GFEP Project Manager until Oct.)

Project Coordinator: Renate Prüller, Austria (until October)

Finances and Administration: Astrid Toppel, Austria

Finances and Controlling: Judith Stöger-Goiser, Austria

Web Management, Network Communication and Social Media:

Brigitte Burger, Austria

Communication, PR, Publications and Translation:

Gerda Wolfrum, Austria

Library and Database Administrator: Sylvia Fiege, Austria

System Administrator: Heimo Schaffer, Austria

GFEP Coordinator: Christoph Wildburger, Austria

GFEP Project Manager: Lena Lackner (until October)

GFEP Project Manager: Nelson Grima, Spain

GFEP Project Manager: Dikshya Devkota, Nepal

IUFRO-SPDC Deputy Coordinator and Thematic Networking Manager:

Janice Burns, Canada

IUFRO-SPDC/GFEP Project Management, Membership and Translation Services: Eva Schimpf, Austria

IUFRO-SPDC Project Manager: Daniel Boehnke, South Africa

IUFRO-SPDC Junior Project Administrator: Ioana Grecu, Romania

IUFRO Publications 2020

- World Series Vol. 39 - Forests, Trees and the Eradication of Poverty: Potential and Limitations. A Global Assessment Report
- Policy Brief - Forests, Trees and the Eradication of Poverty: Potential and Limitations
- Occasional Paper 33 - Forest Landscape Restoration Implementation: Lessons Learned from Selected Landscapes in Africa, Asia and Latin America
- The Distinguished Service Award of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations: 1981–2019 (Victor Teplyakov)
- Enabling Factors to Scale Up Forest Landscape Restoration: The Roles of Governance and Economics (Stephanie Mansourian) - Full Report with Case Studies
- IUFRO News Issues 1-12 (with 3 double issues), 2020
- 2 Scientific Summaries related to IUFRO News
- 11 IUFRO Spotlight issues
- IUFRO Annual Report 2019

Editorial

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



HQ team members. Photo Alexander Buck