

**THE ONLINE INFORMATION BULLETIN OF THE GLOBAL FOREST SCIENCE NETWORK**

## Nature-based Tourism - From Timber Production to New Products

*Ulrike Pröbstl, RG 6.01.00 Forest Recreation Landscape Nature Conservation*

Traditionally the main function of forests world wide has been wood production. Over the last decades, however, there have been changes in many countries, especially in Japan and Europe, where management for nature and ecological functions of forests as well as the social functions of forests, like recreation and tourism have become more important.

With the decline in the importance of wood production and major structural changes in the agricultural economy, nature-based tourism is often looked upon as a means for rural development. Nature and ecotourism offers new opportunities for a sustainable regional development under consideration of nature conservation or extensive forms of land use. It is therefore important to assess the economic and social impacts of recreation and tourism developments on rural communities. In many regions of developing countries, but also in peripheral areas in developed countries, for example, the possible income from nature based tourism is often higher than the direct income from forestry or agricultural land use.

However, nature based tourism strongly depends on the quality of the environment. There are severe pressures on many forest areas and they are in danger of being ecologically and physically degraded. The exploitation of forests for timber production may in some cases also have negative effects on the qualities of the landscapes in which recreation takes place. In such cases, the forests may lose their possible relevance for tourism. Ecotourism could be one strong argument to protect these endangered forests and their biodiversity. Consequently, this means that adjustments to present forest management practices that aim primarily at timber production are needed. For example, the provision of commercial services such as the establishment of recreational routes and other facilities or guidance to nature areas is not a part of regular forest management. In addition, close co-operation with private landowners is needed when new tourism services are developed.

While there has been considerable research into forest recreation over the years, there is a lack concerning its role in tourism. What is needed, therefore, is a focus on forest related nature tourism, bringing together the best minds and the best research approaches, reflecting not only the general aspects of these functions of forests, but



*Photo by Ulrike Pröbstl:  
Tourists in the Black Forest (Centre/North)  
Nature Park in Germany*

also the regional and local differences in different continents. The demands for research and planning in the field of forest-related tourism offers and recreation have been increasing in volume and have become more diverse. Due to its increased importance and complexity, as well as the potential conflicts with other functions, this additional function of forests has to be dealt with much more explicitly than in the past. This increased attention and awareness is required at different levels, from policy-making, spatial planning, and designing to the management of a specific area.

*The author proposes the establishment of an IUFRO Task Force with the help of which the current relevance of ecotourism, as well as its future potential and requirements shall be evaluated and discussed.*

A [draft proposal](#) was published in the IUFRO Research Group [6.01.00](#) Newsletter 2006.

## What does it mean ?

**Ecotourism** or ecological tourism is a neologism first used in the mid 1980s that differs from classic tourism by using nature and basically protected areas as its focus. Héctor Ceballos-Lascuráin is often credited with coining the term (see definition below). Although differing emphasis is put on the several elements of the concept, - critical considerations of the idealistic concept claim that ecotourism is often simply used as a marketing tool, and has sometimes unpredictable impacts - most of the definitions highlight the following aspects: ecotourism involves travel to natural destinations; minimizes cultural impact; builds environmental awareness; provides direct financial benefits for conservation; provides financial benefits and empowerment for local people; respects local culture.

**Contact:** Renate Prüller, Coordinator [SilvaVoc](#) or Michèle Kaennel Dobbertin, Coordinator [IUFRO 6.03.02](#)

### ECOTOURISM

FR écotourisme - ES ecoturismo - DE Ökotourismus

Environmentally responsible travel to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy, study and appreciate nature that promotes conservation, has a low visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations.

(Ceballos-Lascuráin, 1992, IUCN Ecotourism Program)

Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people. (The International Ecotourism Society, USA)

*Let us know your definition of ecotourism!*

## GFIS – Rendezvous for Forest Information

### Upgraded Gateway

The Global Forest Information Service (GFIS) offers a search tool for global forest information resources and serves to find reliable and accurate information on forests. Since January 2007, the retrieval of information has become even easier with the introduction of **different information categories**, namely **News, Events, Recent publications** and **Job vacancies**. Soon there will also be additional categories for Datasets and databases\* and Library and document collections\*\*. The new GFIS gateway offers more visibility to the information providers and partners of GFIS.

### Improved Information Sharing

In addition to collecting forest information GFIS encourages information providers to develop information sharing in order to face the challenges of modern communication. Like many information gathering centres, GFIS has also introduced the commonly used **RSS feeds**. By following the RSS specification the information provided for GFIS can also be used by other interest groups.

### Searching Across Language Barriers

The user interface is currently available in English, French and Spanish. **The language options will expand in the future**. Translating the user interface to different languages depends mainly on the support from the regional partners of GFIS.

The user interface language does not exclude the search results from the other languages. Using Finnish search terms with an English interface, for example, will deliver Finnish results. Only the latest documents on the GFIS front page are chosen automatically based on the user interface language. So the information providers can enter feeds in their own languages and the information can be found using all interfaces.

\*Based on the USGS/BIO/FGDC biological data profile, <http://biology.usgs.gov/fqdc.bio/>

\*\*Based on FAO's AGRIS information system, <http://www.fao.org/agris>

### Training Workshops

In order to further expand the GFIS concept in terms of **partnership development** and **information provision**, several GFIS training workshops have been arranged in different regions of the world by the GFIS core partners. The first workshop was organized in **May 2006 in Moscow, Russia**. The Russian workshop gathered many potential information providers from the region. Another workshop was held in **October 2006 in Beijing, China** where GFIS was presented to information providers from Asian countries. A training workshop for the information providers in Latin America will be held in **Turrialba, Costa Rica in March 2007**.

So far the workshops have been sponsored by the Korea Forest Research Institute (KFRI), the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the Swiss Confederation, Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) and the Austrian Government (Bundesministerium für Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wasserwirtschaft). The Moscow State Forest University (MSFU), the Chinese Academy of Forestry (CAF) and CATIE have been local hosts.

### Ready to Serve - Willing to Improve

The GFIS project has faced several challenges during the years of development but now the GFIS core partners are proud to provide you with a modern gateway which can be used for communication and finding information in the forest world. GFIS is constantly developing and therefore all feedback is important to further improve the system.

## Get to know the upgraded GFIS at

<http://www.gfis.net/>

### Contact:

Eero Mikkola, Coordinator, GFIS Coordination Unit, c/o IUFRO HQs, E-mail: [gfis\\_coordinator\(at\)iufro.org](mailto:gfis_coordinator(at)iufro.org)

## Announcements

### Book Review Section in *Forest Policy and Economics*

The journal *Forest Policy and Economics* will be starting up a book review section. The reviews will cover the latest high quality books in the fields of forestry, forest policy, forest economics and forest politics and will feature the latest books that drive forward thinking within individual forest disciplines or which contribute to new interdisciplinary approaches.

If you have written or published **a book that you would like reviewed**, or if you know of a book that should be reviewed for the journal, please **arrange for a copy to be sent to:** Dr David Humphreys, Faculty of Social Sciences, The Open University, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA, United Kingdom  
Tel: (+44)-1908-654488

If you would **like to review a book for the journal**, please **email to** <d.r.humphreys(at)open.ac.uk>.  
**Note:** Reviewers keep the books they review.

### Reprint: Tropical Timbers of the World

Martin Chudnoff  
United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service  
Agriculture Handbook 607, 1984  
Kessel Verlag, ISBN 3-935638-82-5  
Web site: <http://www.forstbuch.de>

### COST Invites Proposals (European Cooperation in the field of Scientific and Technical Research)

<http://www.cost.esf.org/>

COST invites researchers throughout Europe to submit proposals for research networks and use this unique opportunity to exchange knowledge and to embark on new European perspectives. A two stage process will be followed to assess proposals. Preliminary Proposals should provide a brief overview of the proposal and its impact. A pre-selection will rank the remaining Preliminary Proposals of which some 75 per collection date will be invited to submit a Full Proposal. The next collection date for Preliminary Proposals is 30 March 2007.

### Environmental Benefit Valuation Studies

Elsasser, Peter & Meyerhoff, Jürgen (2007): A Bibliography and Data Base on Environmental Benefit Valuation Studies in Austria, Germany and Switzerland. Part I: Forestry Studies. Hamburg: Bundesforschungsanstalt für Forst- und Holzwirtschaft. Arbeitsbericht 2007/01

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## IUFRO Meetings

**NOTE: The following list of meetings is just a selection!**

For a full list of IUFRO events, please visit our online [calendar](#). Find more details on the [homepages](#) of IUFRO Units involved.

Non-IUFRO meetings are also announced on the IUFRO [Noticeboard](#) on our web site.

17-19 May 2007

### Building Insights of Managerial Economics and Accounting Towards Sustainable Forest Management

Lviv, Ukraine

[IUFRO 4.05.00, 4.05.01, 4.05.02](#)

**Contact:** Lyudmyla Maksymiv, maksymiv(at)forest.lviv.ua,  
<http://enareco.narod.ru/iufro.htm>

29 May 2007

### Challenges and Opportunities for Forest Research in the Policy Making Process

Beijing, China

Symposium preceding the IUFRO Board meeting

**Contact:** John Innes, john.innes(at)ubc.ca

16-20 July 2007

### Pan-American IAWA Regional Group Meeting

San Luis Potosi, Mexico

[IUFRO 5.01.00](#)

**Contact:** Teresa Terrazas, iawa(at)ibiologia.unam.mx  
<http://www.ibiologia.unam.mx/barra/congresos/iawa/index.html>

12-19 August 2007

### 12th Int'l Meeting on Root and Butt Rots of Forest Trees

Berkeley, California, United States

[IUFRO 7.02.01](#)

**Contact:** Matteo Garbelotto,  
matteo(at)nature.berkeley.edu  
<http://nature.berkeley.edu/IUFRO2007/rootrot/>

19-23 August 2007

### International Symposium on Forest Soils and Ecosystem Health: Linking Local Management to Global Change Challenges

Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia

[IUFRO 8.01.03](#)

**Contact:** Tim Blumfield, t.blumfield(at)griffith.edu.au ,  
Peter Clinton Peter.Clinton(at)ensisjv.com  
<http://www.griffith.edu.au/conference/ists2007/>

27-28 August 2007

### Scientific Framework of Environmental and Forest Governance - The Role of Discourses and Expertise

Göttingen, Germany,

[IUFRO 6.12.02](#)

**Contact:** Daniela Kleinschmit: dkrumla(at)gwdg.de;  
<http://www.iufro.org/science/divisions/division-6/60000/61200/61202/activities/unit/6.12.02/>

28 August – 1 September 2007

**VI Congreso Iberoamericano de Derecho Forestal y Ambiental**

[IUFRO 6.13.01](#)

**Contact:** Carla Ximena Cardenas,  
carlaximenac(at)yahoo.com

<http://www.iufro.org/science/divisions/division-6/60000/61300/61301/activities/>

3-8 September 2007

**Woodland Cultures in Time and Space: Tales from the Past, Messages for the Future**

Thessaloniki, Greece

[IUFRO 6.07.00](#)

**Contact:** Eirini Saratsi, e.saratsi(at)exeter.ac.uk

<http://www.uec.ac.uk/geography/woodlandculturesconference.php>

6-7 September, 2007

**Forests and Forestry in the Context of Rural Development IUFRO European Congress**

Warsaw, Poland

organized in conjunction with the EFI Annual Conference Warsaw, Poland

**Contact:** Piotr Paschalis-Jakubowicz,  
paschalis(at)delta(dot)sggw(dot)waw(dot)pl

<http://conference2007.wl.sggw.pl/>

9-14 September 2007

**Natural Enemies and Other Multi-scale Influences on Forest Insects**

[IUFRO 7.03.05](#), [7.03.06](#), [7.03.07](#)

**Contact:** Michael L. McManus, mlmcmanus(at)fs.fed.us,  
Barbara J. Bentz, bbentz(at)fs.fed.us,  
Rudolf Wegensteiner, rudolf.wegensteiner(at)boku.ac.at  
<http://www.wabo.boku.ac.at/7512.html?&L=1>

**Change of date and venue!**

22-25 September 2007

**Workshop on Complex Diseases**

[IUFRO 7.02.06](#)

Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry, Brno, Czech Republic

**Contact:** Danut Chira, chira(at)rdsbv.ro

<http://www.iufro.org/science/divisions/division-7/70000/70200/70206/activities/>

25-28 September 2007

**Processing and Marketing of Teak Wood Products of Planted Forests**

Peechi, India

Regional Teak Wood Workshop organized jointly by IUFRO 5.06.02, KFRI and ITTO

**Contact:** K. M. Bhat, kmbhat(at)kfri.org

<http://www.iufro.org/science/divisions/division-5/50000/50600/50602/activities/>

5-7 November 2007

**ForestSat'07**

Montpellier, France

[IUFRO 4.02.08](#)

**Contact:** Matthias Schardt,

mathias.schardt(at)joanneum.at  
<http://forestsat07.teledetection.fr>

1-4 April 2008

**Linking Forest Optimisation and Inventory**

Freising, Germany

[IUFRO 4.02.00](#) and [4.04.00](#)

**Contact:** Thomas Knoke, knoke(at)forst.tu-muenchen.de

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## Non-IUFRO Meetings & Courses

8-10 May 2007

**Sustainability for Success in the Forest & Paper Sector**

Vancouver, BC

ForestLeadership Conference

**Contact:** Jean-Pierre Kiekens,  
conference2007(at)forestleadership.com

<http://www.ForestLeadership.com>

18-21 June 2007

**Renewable Energy for Sustainable Development in Africa**

Mauritius

International Field Workshop organized by the ICSU Regional Office for Africa and the Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute (MSIRI)/University of Mauritius, in collaboration with the AU, UNECA, NASAC/AAS/TWAS and UNESCO

**Contact:** j.chantson(at)icsu-africa.org

ICSU (Africa) - <http://www.icsu-africa.org>

21-22 July 2007

**Workshop on Natural and Human-induced Hazards and Disasters in Africa**

23-25 July 2007

**Conference on the East African Rift System (EARS-07)**

Kampala, Uganda

Both organized by the Geological Society of Uganda, IGCP 482/489 & the ICSU Regional Office for Africa

**Contact:** Genene Mulugeta,  
genene.mulugeta(at)falw.vu.nl;  
a.enow(at)icsu-africa.org

<http://www.icsu-africa.org>

5-8 September 2007

**Propagation of Ornamental Plants**

Sofia, Bulgaria

Int'l Plant Propagators' Society, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, University of Forestry

Contact: Ivan Iliev, iviliev(at)ltu.bg

Web site: <http://www.journal-pop.org>

24 September – 6 October 2007

**International Summer School**

Sustainability in Forestry and the Wood Industry

Technische Universität München

Centre of Food, Landuse and Environmental Sciences Weihenstephan, Germany

Deadline for applications: May 1, 2007

Contact: summerschool(at)forst.wzw.tum.de

<http://www.forst.wzw.tum.de/summerschool>