

The Facets of Continuous Cover Forestry

Arne Pommerening

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Continuous cover forestry has become an important element of current forest policies in Europe. Forest decline and the certification debate have stimulated greater public involvement favouring environmentally-friendly forest management. This has increased the interest in new silvicultural systems such as "continuous cover forestry", which is one out of many synonyms (discussed by Pommerening and Murphy *in Forestry*, 77, 27-44) that stand for practices that favour mixed uneven-aged stands, site-adapted tree species and selective harvesting.

It was therefore timely to provide a forum at which the first results of research activities in this area could be presented and discussed. The conference on "Transformation to Continuous Cover Forestry in a Changing Environment" from 4-7 September 2004 served that purpose. Locating this forum in Bangor, Wales, was appropriate, given that those responsible for forest policy in Wales have strongly embraced the concept of continuous cover forestry. One of the aims of the Welsh Forestry Strategy of 2001 is to convert half of the National Assembly forests to continuous cover within the next 20 years. The event was co-organised by the EFI project centre CONFOREST, a European network of excellence focusing on the conversion of pure secondary coniferous forests on sites naturally dominated by broadleaves.

The conference was conducted under four different subject headings "Forest management", "Economics & politics", "Biometrics & information technology" and "Ecosystems & biodiversity". The papers dealt with a range of different woodland types and climatic zones, including Mediterranean forests, continental beech and Norway spruce woodlands, American hardwood forests, and British coniferous forests. The link between inventory and modelling, modelling applications, and risk analysis were discussed. The session about ecosystems and biodiversity dealt with productivity, nutrient cycling, and biodiversity. Economic aspects were also presented.

The presentations highlighted again the diversity of opinion on what continuous cover forestry comprises. The Mediterranean papers, especially, presented a very different idea of transformation. The conference was also informed about the technical and biometric approaches to ease trade-offs arising from more mixed and uneven-aged forests. Together with the interesting poster session, these presentations show that there is a considerable number of methods to solve problems already available but that there is a need for much more work to be done in both research and training.

The conference "Transformation to Continuous Cover Forestry in a Changing Environment" held in Bangor, Wales, UK, from 4-7 September 2004, was attended by 140 scientists from 17 countries. It featured 4 days of oral and poster presentations and one and a half days of field trips. Shortly, 8-10 of the best papers will be published in a Special Issue of Forest Ecology and Management.

Organizer: School of Agricultural and Forest Sciences of the University of Wales, Bangor

Sponsors: Forestry Commission Wales, BSW PLC and UPM-Kymmene (UK) Ltd, European Forest Institute (EFI), EFI Project Centre CONFOREST, and IUFRO Unit [1.17.02](#) (Temperate and boreal forest restoration).

The scientific seminars were hosted by IUFRO Unit [4.04.01](#) (Scenarios for transformation forest management).

For further details see the website: http://www.efi.fi/events/2004/cover_forestry/.

Conference photos can be found on <http://www.bangor.ac.uk/~afs005/EFI/ccf/eficcf04.html>