

## Forestry Extension and Technology Transfer - Meeting Needs of People and Forests

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Report from the 9th Extension Working Party Symposium of IUFRO [6.06.02](#) and [6.06.01](#) on "Evolving Challenges and Changing Expectations for Forestry Extension and Technology Transfer - Meeting needs of people and forests around the globe" in Mattawa and Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. Meeting website: <http://www.iufroextension.org>

### Inter-dependency between humans and forests

Early in the 21st century, the inter-dependency between humans and forests has never been greater. Ecosystems are strained by multiple natural and human-caused disturbances. Demand for raw materials is on the rise. Forests are supporting a range of non-timber needs such as conservation of soil and water resources. Thousands of small communities that are economically dependent on forests are facing new challenges brought by globalization.

### Increased need for information

Forest communities desire greater participation in planning and decision-making about forest land use. Consequently, there is increased need for information and educational resources to enable local people to become engaged. Extension programs are helping to meet this demand and are working to help build the capacity for incorporating local knowledge into plans and management actions.

### Process of knowledge adoption

An understanding of knowledge adoption is important for effective extension. The process of knowledge adoption has many variables and involves multiple channels for knowledge exchange. Extension work is supported by research into behavior change and adoption. This research investigates various knowledge adoption systems including peer-to-peer learning models, communities of practice, social networks, open source models for science communications, and cross-boundary cooperation. Such research is informing extension planning systems and organizational delivery models.

### Diversity in target groups

Extension programs are recognizing and responding to increasing diversity in target groups. Urbanization, changing demographics, shifting racial and ethnic population patterns are among diversity factors. Extension efforts, particularly in developing countries, are giving greater attention to gender



strategies that target and empower women, and to rural development for poverty reduction. In all regions, intergenerational knowledge transfer is seen as a key need for extension program support.

### Connect policy interests to public interests

To be relevant to human needs, the transfer of knowledge should help connect policy interests to public interests, which again relates to increased interest for participation at the local level. Sharing of information is aimed at taking advocacy positions to influence the policy process. Extension specialists are playing the role of policy educator, helping people to appreciate policy options and consequences. Connecting policy interests to land ownership interests places emphasis on helping to engage forest owners, and encouraging the sharing of information across boundaries.

### Benefit from the sharing of best practices

The event, over two years in the making, positioned Canada as a leader in promoting and demonstrating innovative approaches to putting science and technology into practice. Nationally and internationally, knowledge exchange professionals continue to benefit from the sharing of best practices that was promoted at the symposium.

### Summaries

The summaries of the symposium are intended to serve as a basis for producing an in-depth paper for publication and can be downloadable from the following website: <http://www.iufroextension.org>

The event took place from 21-26 September 2008 and attracted approx. 60 participants from five continents.

**Presentations:** 4 keynotes, 32 volunteer papers, 5 posters.

**Sponsors:** Natural Resources Canada, Canadian Ecology Centre, International Union of Forest Research Organization, CSREES, United States Forest Service, United States Department of Agriculture, Canadian Institute of Forestry, FP Innovations, Eastern Ontario Model Forest, Forest Research Partnership, Sustainable Forest Management Network, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Slovenia Forest Service and Network of Centres of Excellence.