

Managing Forests for Ecosystem Services: Can Spruce Forests Show the Way?

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(<http://www.iufro.org/science/divisions/division-1/10000/10100/10108/>)

At the conference 'Managing forests for ecosystem services: can spruce forests show the way?' in Edinburgh, Scotland, October 2012, scientists, policy makers and forest managers from various countries discussed how knowledge about forest resources and societal demands could be combined to develop effective methods for providing ecosystem services in the face of changing climate conditions. A strength of the meeting was the number of presentations illustrating case studies on ways of managing forests to sustain and enhance a range of ecosystem services.

This conference followed the successful 2009 conference held in Halmstad, Sweden on the topic of 'Spruce in the context of climate change' (<https://arbetsplats.slu.se/sites/esf/tematillvaxt/spruce2009/default.aspx>)

The aim of the meeting was to use spruce-dominated forests as a 'model' system to evaluate the concepts promulgated by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA) and successor documents (e.g. the UK National Ecosystem Assessment) and to see how these could be translated into strategic, tactical and operational forest management regimes. Scotland was chosen as the venue because of the importance of introduced spruce species such as Sitka spruce in planted forests in north-western Europe.

The meeting was held in Edinburgh, Scotland from October 8-11, 2012, and was attended by 92 delegates from 15 countries. The participants included research scientists from different disciplines, practicing forest managers and policy makers, as well as representatives of sector stakeholders. There were 34 oral presentations including ten from invited keynote speakers. Most of the presentations are now available as PDFs on the conference website (www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/iufro2012). Webcasts of all keynote speeches and of all the presentations on the last morning which was devoted to aspects of operational management of forests can be accessed from the same website.

The papers and posters presented covered a wide range of aspects relevant to spruce dominated forests including: biodiversity in planted forests, biotic and abiotic risks that may influence management practice, the development of mixed species stands in spruce forests, impacts of



Delegates assembled outside the conference venue at Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, Scotland.

management upon carbon stocks in spruce forests, and the role of decision support tools in evaluating trade-offs in the provision of different ecosystem services. A number of operational case studies were presented to illustrate how forest managers were adapting their silvicultural regimes to sustain or enhance the provision of particular ecosystem services.

These points were developed in a field trip to spruce dominated planted forests in the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park where aspects presented included the design of forest landscapes for multiple objectives, management to reduce the risk of wind damage, measures to improve biodiversity of riparian zones, and the development of intensive outdoor pursuits in a managed forest.

Selected papers from the meeting will be submitted to 'Forestry', an international Forest Science journal in mid-December. After normal peer review, selected papers will be published in a special issue of the journal in 2013.

The meeting was organized by Forest Research and sponsorship was received from 8 partner organizations (UPM Tilhill; the Scottish Forestry Trust; Confor; the Institute of Chartered Foresters; Scottish Enterprise; Forestry Commission England; Forestry Commission Scotland; and Forestry Commission Wales).