

Concentration of Forestry Knowledge from Around the World

By Paula Konka

In late July, nearly 100 scientists and researchers from around the world gathered in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, to discuss ways of improving forest management. An International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) conference was held to explore stand structures in complex forest types, focusing primarily on measurement and modeling issues.

Complex forests represent an increasing proportion of the productive forest land base throughout much of the world's forested ecosystems due to paradigm shifts in forest management practices. Some of these shifts include variable retention silvicultural systems, natural disturbance pattern emulation and systematic/selection mechanized thinning treatments.



Participants from over 15 countries (as far away as China, South Korea and Australia) came to review and discuss the latest research from a global perspective. The conference was entitled *Complex Stand Structures and Associated Dynamics: Measurement Indices and Modelling Approaches*. Managing complex stand structures in terms of operational logistics, product quality and value outcomes, and economic implications were also discussed.

The four day program consisted of six plenary sessions, a concurrent poster session, and a field tour to view some of the complex stands common to the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence forest region of central Canada. Participants also had the opportunity to visit NRCan's largest forest research facility, the Great Lakes Forestry Centre, as well as the Ontario Forest Research Institute. These tours allowed participants to learn about the diversity of research being conducted in Canada's forests. A summary presentation and panel discussion involving the 6 keynote speakers at the conclusion of the conference outlined and explored the challenges for future research. One of the major challenges identified was how to modify existing measurement techniques and models for use with complex forests. Another included preserving and enhancing global databases for complex forests.

The success of the conference was made possible through the hard work and dedication of conference co-chair Peter Newton, a research scientist at NRCan's Great Lakes Forestry Centre, along with the conference organizing committee. Peter attributes the success of the conference to the collective involvement of the 1) numerous supporting organizations including the Canadian Wood Fibre Centre, Great Lakes Forestry Centre, Ontario Forest Research Institute, Forestry Research Partnership, Canadian Ecology Centre, Canadian Institute of Forestry and Clergue Forest Management Inc., and 2) organizational and scientific expertise among the committee members. The final step is to produce a Special Issue of Forestry which will include a subset of the research presentations given at the conference.

