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### OUR VISION

To support, through model forests, management of the world's forest resources in a sustainable manner, reflecting environmental and socio-economic issues from the perspective of local needs and global concerns.

## Model Forest Representatives from Around the World Convene in Canada for a Successful IMFN Global Forum 2008



Participants in the IMFN Global Forum 2008

More than 150 delegates from 31 countries attended the International Model Forest Network (IMFN) Global Forum in Hinton, Canada, from June 16-20. The event was co-hosted by the Foothills Research Institute, the Canadian Model Forest Network (CMFN) and the IMFN Secretariat. Additional support was gratefully received from the Alberta Forest Research Institute and Natural Resources Canada—Canadian Forest Service.

The Global Forum takes place approximately every three years and is an opportunity for IMFN members to identify ways to support and enhance the concrete contributions model forests are making to the sustainable management of natural resources and forested landscapes from local to international levels. And as participants saw, model forests have been registering significant impacts in areas ranging from forest certification to fire management to poverty alleviation, policy influence and education.

A mix of plenary sessions, workshops, group discussions and a field tour of the Foothills Research Institute (formerly Foothills Model Forest) allowed for maximum learning, exchange, and identification of future collaborative links across the Network. The Knowledge Fair mid-way through the week demonstrated significant progress in documenting and understanding of the contributions and impacts model forests are registering globally, while the workshops provided practical information that model forests could bring back to their local stakeholders and apply on the ground. In addition, participating organizations including CUSO, IUCN, FAO, the CBD and IDRC reiterated their continued support for the model forest approach to sustainability.

In this issue of *Connections*, we examine the significant outcomes of the second IMFN Global Forum. This is an important step in ensuring that the discussions that took place in Hinton are integrated into the work and future direction of the Network and translated into concrete action at all levels – from local to international. How well we accomplish these goals will be the subject of the next Global Forum to be hosted by Urbión Model Forest, Spain, in 2011. Hope to see you there.

# Mapping the International Model Forest Network in the Landscape of International Initiatives and Organizations Concerned with Sustainable Forest Management

*An analysis of the current situation and a focus on the future*



Dr. Peter Bridgewater, keynote speaker

*Keynote address by Dr. Peter Bridgewater, Chair, Joint Nature Conservation Committee and former Secretary General, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands*

A very engaging opening address was given by Dr. Bridgewater who began by recognizing that the overall strength of the IMFN lies in its independence and strong stakeholder ownership, but its fundamental weakness lies in a failure to capitalize on existing initiatives and to claim its own space in the landscape of organizational diversity.

So why is the IMFN not better known amongst key sustainable forest management players? The IMFN has been growing internally for more than a decade. While gaining critical mass was deemed important, now that that threshold has been reached the IMFN must establish strong linkages with, and support from, other like-minded organizations or it will continue to suffer low visibility and impact. Dr. Bridgewater suggested that the IMFN ensure some standardization of its strategic objectives with those in use by other international organizations dealing with the sustainable management of forest-based landscapes. In

“ Fundamentally, the IMFN must see itself as a learning, as well as a knowledge-based organization. The future is bright—if the IMFN builds on its strengths, minimizes its weaknesses and continues the spirit of optimism and partnership which has brought it success so far! ”

other words, model forest performance, and that of the Network in totality, should be measured effectively against the targets and goals for established inter-governmental organizations and their sustainable forest management programs.

The IMFN needs to develop partnerships with a number of key inter- and non-governmental organizations through memoranda of cooperation (MoCs) that are program-specific and time-focused—but with whom? Here Dr. Bridgewater presented his idea of one door leading to many rooms: large organizations such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Conservation Union (IUCN) are comprised of many smaller members and partners. They could act as portals to other groups working in similar areas of interest and help promote model forests as platforms through which international priorities, such as the Millennium Development Goals,

can be effectively implemented on the ground. Other groups, such as WWF, the Nature Conservancy and UNESCO’s Biosphere Reserve program should be approached to examine the possibility of joint activities or as sites for developing future model forests.

Fundamentally, the IMFN must see itself as a learning, as well as a knowledge-based organization. The future is bright—if the IMFN builds on its strengths, minimizes its weaknesses and continues the spirit of optimism and partnership which has brought it success so far!

# I Strategic Directions for the IMFN

The IMFN belongs to its membership, and the Secretariat is in place in part to respond to and support the needs and demands of that membership. To increase or bolster that sense of ownership, participants were asked over the course of a half-day facilitated session to provide input on the strategic directions, vision and goals of the IMFN so that the end product would be highly relevant to their work and meet stakeholder needs.

## Program priorities

After lengthy and lively debate, four key programming priorities for the IMFN were identified: community sustainability, adaptation to climate change, knowledge sharing and environmental services.

Community sustainability emerged as the number one programming priority because, quite simply, people are at the centre of each model forest. Communities are fundamental to the model forest vision and participants in this session felt that the niche model forests could fill with respect to this critical issue included strengthening participatory sustainable development, acting as a facilitator for communities in conflict and promoting alternative economic opportunities. Climate change was viewed as a topic of global importance that could potentially attract both new funding and partners in addition to creating new and important knowledge. The Network's comparative advantage would be to position model forests as a series of landscape-scale platforms from which climate change studies and community adaptation strategies could be carried out, implemented and monitored over the long term. Participants also felt that climate change

adaptation work as it relates to issues of shared importance—such as effects on biodiversity, water and food security—would be of value to them.

Knowledge sharing is the *raison d'être* for the Network. As such, participants felt that the production, handling, synthesis and sharing of knowledge was a priority. In addition, establishing a model for knowledge sharing that can be applied to all levels (local to international) would be of great value. One of the most referenced ways of facilitating knowledge sharing was through the creation or improvement of databases and other online tools.

Environmental services is a topic that has local applicability but global reach. It can be applied to issues of shared importance to the IMFN, including water management, climate change and rural development. Further, participants indicated that its application provides a tangible, measurable product and some expertise already exists within the IMFN. The network structure could help expedite the testing and implementation of potential models. Participants suggested the creation of an inventory of potential environmental services be undertaken.

## Next steps

The IMFN Secretariat pledged to participants to carefully review all of the information and issues raised during the strategic planning session and further develop the identified program priorities as potential Network Strategic Initiatives that could be championed and take shape through the IMFN Networking Committee.



Water bomber demonstration during field tour of Foothills Research Institute

# Regional Reviews

## Canadian Model Forest Network

By: *Dave Winston*

In the opinion of all 14 Members of the Canadian Model Forest Network, the Global Forum was a great success. Significant achievements included the development of many new opportunities for collaboration between Canadian Model Forests and other sites internationally. Most notably, the Lac-Saint-Jean Model Forest signed an agreement for collaboration with the Model Forest program in Cameroon, and the Foothills Research Institute and the province of Alberta developed a close working relationship with Model Forests in Argentina. In addition, the posters provided a tremendous opportunity for the exchange of information regarding a wide range of topics that will lead to future partnerships and collaboration.

The CMFN wishes to thank and congratulate our partners, the IMFN Secretariat and Foothills Research Institute for their tremendous efforts in the organization of the Global Forum. The funding of travel costs for many delegates by IDRC is also gratefully acknowledged.

## Mediterranean Model Forest Network

By: *Maria del Pilar Valbuena, Urbión Model Forest*

The Mediterranean Model Forest Network (MMFN) was officially launched at the IMFN Global Forum 2008. The MMFN is comprised of 10 members, three of whom (Spain, Turkey and Morocco) attended the event. In these early days, the Forum represented a very important step because it provided us with more information about other regional networks, principally their way of working and governance structures. It also gave us the opportunity to establish new contacts and identify potential future collaboration opportunities with other members. As a case in point, during the Global Forum an important meeting between the Baltic Forest Initiative and the MMFN took place where we identified common strategies that both networks are pursuing in the European Union.

## Ibero-American Model Forest Network

By: *Ronnie de Camino, Fernando Carrera and Marie-Eve Landry*

The IMFN Global Forum 2008 provided a wide range of opportunities to link with other model forests through priceless personal contacts. The workshops and themes identified for examination during this intense week were highly relevant to the issues and concerns that model forest members and supporters face on a regular basis. The event also reinforced the importance of policy influence at all levels (local to international), while the Knowledge Fair proved an efficient mechanism for sharing experiences and building new alliances. It is our view that both model forests and the IMFN should be pro-active in merging issues such as food security, energy and climate change, among others, and we should continue to fortify ourselves as a community of practice by providing greater support to each other.



Participants in a capacity building workshop

The IAMFN wishes to thank event organizers for their outstanding work in organization the Global Forum, as well as for the support provided to many model forest and national representatives from Ibero-America and abroad.

## African Model Forest Network Initiative

By: *Mireille Zoa and Chimère Diaw*

There were six African delegates at the Global Forum—two of them women—representing the following groups: the models forests of Dja and Mpomo and Campo-Ma'an in Cameroon, the African Model Forest Network Initiative (AMFI) and WWF, a partner of the AMFI. The African delegation participated in the Forum with joy and excitement and with a spirit of discovery and collaboration. Delegates feel that they have learned, shared and found new perspectives and friends from all continents; for them, the Forum was a resounding success.

During the Forum, the African delegation and the Lac-Saint-Jean Model Forest (Canada) established the basis for a partnership aimed at developing African and Canadian model forests as sustainable economic models for communities and looking at sharing knowledge and technology as well as the cultural heritage of their local peoples. We hope that such initiatives will develop throughout the Network; African model forests will be ready to contribute.

On behalf of the African delegates, we would like to thank all delegates, from all world regions, as well as the IMFN Secretariat, the Canadian Model Forest Network, the Foothills Research Institute and the Lac-Saint-Jean Model Forest for having displayed the spirit of model forests in such a beautiful fashion in Hinton.

## Regional Model Forest Network—Asia

By: *Lourdes Wagan, Ulot Watershed Model Forest*

The Global Forum was a great learning opportunity for the Asian delegation. We enhanced our network with new members such as

Korea and Japan, we shared ideas, and enriched our vision of an emerging regional Asian Model Forest Network. Integrated landscape management will be the focus of our regional network, and we will use collaborative tools such as websites to disseminate our upcoming work with other model forests. We will continue to support the model forests of our region in abiding to the principles and attributes of all model forests, therefore ensuring quality and sustainable growth.

### **Russian National Model Forest Network**

*By: Przemyslaw Majewski, Komi Model Forest*

Russia attended the Forum in two parts, said Mr. Majewski: as model forest delegates and government officials. We are very pleased that our government is showing such interest in this program. Twenty-two per cent (22%) of the world's forests are found in Russia—we have a large responsibility to maintain them, and therefore hope that our model forests will be true to the model forest principles and attributes accepted by the membership this week. We also need a strategy as a network, especially because we are expanding so quickly. The meeting was very useful, and it was great to meet old friends and make new ones in places far away from Russia, but with many similar problems and challenges.

## **US, Poland, Finland Express Interest in Circumboreal Model Forest Initiative**

*By: Mark Johnston, Prince Albert Model Forest*

Representatives from across the circumboreal biome met during the IMFN Global Forum in Hinton, Canada, in June to identify model forests and other groups that may be interested in participating in a Circumboreal Model Forest Initiative, to determine the level of interest and to identify the types of activities that such an initiative could undertake. The occasion marked the first time representatives from the US Forest Service, Poland and Finland actively participated in the initiative.

The International Model Forest Network (IMFN) has been developing the concept of a circumboreal model forest initiative for the past three years. A concept paper describing the goals of such a network and some suggested activities circulated in the spring of 2008. In addition to the countries listed above representatives from the Canadian Model Forest Network and model forests in Sweden, China and Russia participated.

A series of presentations highlighted activities taking place across the Circumboreal Region, including studies on reindeer herding and forest management in Sweden, impacts of drought on forests in Poland, effects of climate change on tourism in northern

### **Baltic Sea Initiative**

*By: Per Sandström, Vilhelmina Model Forest*

We would like to thank the organizers at the IMFN and our hosts at the Foothills Research Institute for organizing this great event. Equally, we would like to thank all of the participants who attended the Global Forum providing the opportunity to connect with us. Through all of you—the participants and the places, the landscapes and the issues you represent—we were offered countless opportunities to meet, to learn and to cooperate.

Our goal was to strengthen ties with other model forests. We succeeded in this by moving forward on our work on the Baltic Landscape Initiative. We have also formed part of the Circumboreal Model Forest Initiative, a group that came together with the goal to involve all boreal nations in the examination of common challenges emerging across the entire boreal forest landscape. We also initiated work on joint proposals to strengthen our ties with the newly formed Mediterranean Model Forest Network. As important, we formed many connections that are not dependent on geographical location, but instead on related issues and concerns demonstrating that, while we may be far apart in distance, we can share goals and methods leading to better solutions around issues of sustainability in forested landscapes.

Finland, biodiversity conservation in northwest Russia and others. Existing network relationships in the Baltic Sea region and between Canada, Sweden and Russia were highlighted as examples of how the Circumboreal Network might function.

A lively discussion followed the presentations in which a range of potential activities were suggested. These included comparative studies of indigenous peoples' access to natural resources, understanding impacts and adaptation to climate change, developing innovative strategies for sustainable forest-based communities, exploring the options for reforming forest tenure agreements, carrying out research on effects of fire and establishing a circumboreal monitoring network for assessing forest health.

The next step will be further exploration and discussion among potential partners led by the IMFN Secretariat, as well as continued networking among model forests in the region. As an example, partners from the Prince Albert Model Forest in Canada met with partners from the Vilhelmina Model forest in Sweden in August to further define collaboration in the areas of indigenous resource use, climate change and sustainable forestry communities.

# Knowledge Management and Sharing in the IMFN: A Burgeoning Priority

By: Allister Hain (CMFN), Marie-Eve Landry (IAMFN), Christa Mooney (IMFNS)



IMFN Knowledge Management Workshop

For millennia human beings have sat in circles to share knowledge, to tell stories, to celebrate victories and to console one another. At the basis of it was the sharing of knowledge.

On the last morning of the Global Forum, 40 participants gathered in a circle to talk about knowledge management and sharing (KM/S) in the IMFN context. There was a common recognition and understanding that knowledge is much more than just papers, reports and colourful brochures. Knowledge is mainly about conversation, dialogue and exchange.

During the session, participants shared their thoughts about KM/S with others, first through an open discussion, then later through a modified World Café process. The World Café is an intentional technique of creating a living network of conversations around questions that matter. It replicates “informal” conversations bringing the dialogue into a more “formal” process. World Cafés can happen with multiple languages at the same table, without the use of formal

translators. And one of the lessons learned by session participants was that within the IMFN we have the capacity to break through the language barrier, communicate and share knowledge with one another. Participants also recognized that KM/S is already occurring in the Network, but it tends to be ad hoc and limited.

**Therefore, participants were asked to discuss two specific questions:**

- What are the fundamental elements of an effective KM/S strategy for the IMFN?
- What actions do we need to take, and when, to make KM/S more effective?

In response to the latter question, participants were asked to suggest actions to be taken in the next three,

six and 12 months, and to put names against those actions. For example, it was suggested that within the next three months, an inventory of the Network’s communication infrastructure (internet access, computers, etc.) be created, including the needs and strengths in each model forest. In six months’ time, the focus should be on upgrading the website identifying appropriate system-wide tools to support and increase networking activities. One long-term suggestion was for each country with more than one model forest to develop national networks. Another was for model forests to bridge the gap between scientists and communities.

Finally, the developing Knowledge Sharing Committee was formally announced to the group and several participants volunteered to join. Near-term objectives are to conduct a survey of the Network’s communications infrastructure as requested during the workshop, and work on a KM/S strategy has also begun.

## I Perspectives from Other Participating Organizations

*Merle Faminow, International Development Research Centre (IDRC)*

The Forum agenda provided a mix of interesting plenary presentations, smaller workshops, field trips and networking activities. Preferences often differ on the right balance between activities, but I thought that the organizers had gotten this one about right. The group was very diverse, with many participants visiting a boreal forest region for the first time in their lives. The personal and professional commitment to networking and learning from the other model forests was widely evident, probably a result of the “shared vision” that the model forest system invokes. It was important for IDRC to be present at the Forum for several reasons. First, the IMFN has a long history with IDRC and continues to be an important recipient of our funds. Second, the emerging vision of a research agenda in some themes and regions of the IMFN may lead to interesting ideas for synergies in the future. The Forum provided an excellent opportunity for us to learn more about the evolving interests and activities of the IMFN.

*Marion White, CUSO*

CUSO, as a Canadian volunteer-sending organization, found the IMFN Global Forum an excellent opportunity to learn about model forests around the globe. We were able to network with model forest staff and CUSO Cooperants working in the Latin American region. The combination of former and current Cooperants, along with a Cooperant enroute to the field, gave a vital picture of the role CUSO plays in the IMFN and the strong connection our volunteers feel to the International Network and the model forests where they are placed. CUSO continues to recruit for model forest placements in Latin America and we received inquiries from seasoned as well as young potential recruits. For example, a promising link was made with the Campo-Ma’an Model Forest in Cameroon.

*Froylan Castañada, FAO*

FAO’s interest in model forests as a means for developing, testing and demonstrating innovative approaches to forest management mainly at the field level, including the use of local-level indicators to monitor progress at a landscape and ecosystem approach, continues to grow. The subject is part of the Organization’s program of work and as such it is in its interest to keep abreast of the development of, and be part of, on-going regional and international networks on model forests. I recently participated in the IMFN Global Forum in Hinton, Canada. The Forum was very well organized and attended by experts from five continents; the themes discussed were of

current global interest and the modality of group discussions was innovative. For FAO this was a good opportunity as the results of the Forum can help us explore continued support to the Network, and put into action supportive national forest programs in member countries. My participation in the Forum is indicative of FAO’s interest to continue supporting the various networks on model forests, and others, as effective means of promoting sustainable forest management.

### **The following are examples of connections made between model forests during the IMFN Global Forum 2008:**

- Chiquitano Model Forest (Bolivia) will share its experience with the Lachuá Model Forest (Guatemala) regarding strategic planning vis-à-vis oil companies operating in their territory
- Sabanas de Manacas Model Forest (Cuba) will develop projects with Urbión Model Forest (Spain) in relation to pine forest management
- The Regional Model Forest Network—Asia will continue discussions and information exchange on valuation of environmental services
- Foothills Research Institute and Eastern Ontario Model Forest (both of Canada) agreed to exchange information and experiences on GIS technologies, biodiversity conservation and environmental education experiences with Jujuy Model Forest (Argentina)
- Neuquén Model Forest (Argentina) reached a preliminary collaborative agreement with the Foothills Research Institute (Canada) on topics such as fire management, conservation of biodiversity, watershed management and a twinning agreement between the provinces of Neuquén and Alberta
- Campo-Ma’an Model Forest (Cameroon) and Lac-Saint-Jean Model Forest (Canada) signed a collaboration agreement to look at ways to identify resources with commercial potential and use them to improve local incomes
- Chilean Model Forests agreed to work on forming a national network
- Chilean forest service (CONAF) representatives held discussions with FAO and IDRC regarding potential project proposals related to indigenous knowledge
- Collaborative agreement between Prince Albert Model Forest (Canada) and Alto Malleco Model Forest (Chile) in an I-CURA project proposal, traditional indigenous medicine and non-timber forest products
- The Ibero-American Model Forest Network is to remain in contact with the African Model Forest Initiative to work on common themes and challenges such as financial sustainability of regional networks

# Workshop Summaries

The IMFN Global Forum offered a mix of collaborative and practical opportunities. Over the course of two mornings, IMFN Global Forum participants attended workshops on subject areas determined by a Network-wide online consultation process. The goal was to offer model forests practical information in critical areas. Where possible, model forest experiences in the subject areas were used as examples.

Workshop and facilitator(s)	Description
Effective Resource Mobilization: the Concepts, the Strategies and the Tools <i>Kafui Dansou, Consultant</i>	Why is effective resource mobilization not just about money? This workshop reviewed the fundamentals of effective resource mobilization, and helped participants better understand the steps that lead to financial sustainability.
Strategic Planning in Model Forests: Participatory Approaches <i>Stacy Barter, Consultant</i>	This interactive workshop examined approaches to strategic planning in model forests, and introduced participants to various strategic planning tools and processes.
Introduction to Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) <i>Ricardo Ramirez, University of Guelph</i>	This session focused on matching the plurality of model forest goals and stakeholders with a M&E methodology that integrates quantitative, qualitative and narrative approaches. It reviewed the relevance of conventional approaches (results-based management) and introduced emerging qualitative approaches such as Outcome Mapping and Most Significant Change.
Assessing and Developing the Eco-Cultural Tourism Potential of Your Model Forest <i>Patrick Twomey, Eco-cultural tourism guide and consultant</i>	This workshop was principally designed to link the concepts of cultural tourism with ecotourism. Participants were given the basic tools with which to analyze their potential and, more importantly, their realistic 'eco-cultural' tourist market.
Biodiversity Restoration using Analog Forestry Methodology <i>Jean Arnold, Falls Brook Centre</i>	Participants who completed the workshop were able to understand the basics of applying analog forestry to their field work activities. It is a useful tool for forest extension workers or managers of landscape planning to have in their toolbox of restoration applications.
Forests, Climate Change and Carbon Accounting <i>Werner Kurz, Stephen Kull and Michael Magnan, NRCAN-CFS</i>	Participants gained a general understanding of climate change, potential impacts on forests and how forest management can play a role in mitigating climate change; the science of forest carbon accounting, and the operational-scale Carbon Budget Model of the Canadian Forest Sector and what would be involved in applying it in their country.
Team Process for Assessing Progress and Deriving Lessons Learned <i>Hugo Bastidas, Centre for Intercultural Learning</i>	In this workshop, participants used and learned a "Self Monitoring and Lessons Learned Tool". Using the tool, participants practiced being "learning practitioners", and also came to better appreciate the accomplishments and strengths they offer that can be brought to bear on their work. The tool and the workshop used the steps in the learning cycle—identify significant experience, derive learning from it and plan for its application in the future.
The Model Forest Development Process: From Site Selection to Multi-stakeholder Governance Processes <i>Brian Bonnell, IMFNS</i>	This workshop was designed for those new to the model forest concept. An overview of the Principles and Attributes of a model forest, as well as the general process for establishing a model forest and becoming involved in the IMFN, were reviewed.



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