

## **JOINT FOREST COMMUNICATORS WORKSHOP**

UNECE-FAO Forest Communicators Network and IUFRO Communications & Public Relations Work Party

**29 August - 01 September 2016, Portland, Oregon, USA**

**Report** by Ingwald Gschwandtl based on notes taken by Elina Warsta

The annual meeting of the UNECE-FAO Forest Communicators Network (FCN) was organised jointly with the IUFRO Communications and Public Relations Working Party from 29 August to 01 September 2016 in Portland, Oregon, USA. It was kindly hosted by the US Forest Service and conducted in form of a forest communication workshop.

### **Key issues discussed**

- a) Communications as a strategic tool for policymaking
- b) Forest communications across continents
- c) Communication campaigns
- d) Working with the media in the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- e) New technology-based approaches to communicating about forests

The goal of the workshop was to help participants address major challenges and opportunities for communications about forests. The meeting opened at the World Forestry Discovery Center, where participants observed world-class techniques in communicating with the public about forests. Then, participants shared case studies and best practices, identified collaborative opportunities, and engaged in training sessions for the following two days.

The meeting was co-chaired by Cynthia Miner, Leader of the IUFRO Communications and Public Relations Working Party, and Ingwald Gschwandtl, Leader of the UNECE-FAO Forest Communicators Network. Parts of the Workshop were moderated by Jan Engert, Yasmeen Sands, Jennifer Hayes, Gerda Wolfrum, Maria DeCristofaro, Cynthia Miner and Ingwald Gschwandtl. The meeting was attended by 55 participants from 16 countries and 9 international organisations.

The meeting agenda and the list of participants are attached.

### **Conclusions**

- Participants found the meeting in Portland to be extraordinary rewarding, as it involved more experts from the US and Canada as usual, where the level of professionalism in forest communication is highly advanced.
- The cooperation of the UNECE-FAO Forest Communicators Network with the IUFRO Communications and Public Relations Work Party once again proved to be extremely fruitful. The involvement of experts from both groups widens the scope of issues addressed to

scientific aspects and also provides opportunity to exchange with colleagues from other regions of the world.

- The participants of the Portland workshop agreed to explore the possibility of holding the next annual FCN meeting together with the IUFRO Work Party again. One option would be to organise it in conjunction with the 125th IUFRO Anniversary Congress in September 2017 in Freiburg, Germany, if this was logistical feasible.
- Participants of the Portland workshop not being member yet expressed interest in joining the UNECE-FAO Forest Communicators Network. The FCN Leader pointed out that this was possible and most welcome as the network is open to all sharing its objectives of improving the forest sectors ability to communicate effectively.
- In addition participants suggested to explore the possibility for establishing a specific regional forest communicators network for the North American region. Maria DeCristofaro offered to bring this request to the attention of FAOs Forestry Commission for North America for consideration.

**The field trip to Mount St. Helens** provided at the spot presentations and discussions on communication about research findings regarding the natural recovery of forest ecosystems and about man-made forest restauration after the volcano outbreak.

More information about the meeting to be found at

<http://www.iufro.org/index.php?id=6367#c25698>

<http://www.iufro.org/science/divisions/division-9/90000/90100/90102/activities/>