



Cool Forests at Risk?/IBFRA18 Conference – Short Report

Summary

Organisers:

International Boreal Forest Research Association (IBFRA), International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), International Union of Forest Research Organisations (IUFRO), Pan-Eurasian Experiment (PEEX)

Participants:

around 200 representatives from science, politics, business and civil society from around 30 countries:

- **150 science (40 students/early career scientists)**
- **21 administration, politics (regional, national, international)**
- **15 Business/Timber industry**
- **13 civil society/international NGOs**

Central content and goal of the conference

Scientific preparation of key challenges followed by a science stakeholder dialogue to identify possible pathways for politics, industry and civil society to preserve and promote the critical values of the Cool Forests for the climate, the bioeconomy and for people and nature; Improving the communication of scientific content to raise awareness and integrate Cool Forests into high-level political forums

Date: 17th - 20th September 2018

Main program content:

- **Scientific sessions.** (100 presentations and 40 poster presentations)
- **Reflection in practice.** Excursion to the alpine spring zone of the first Vienna Spring Water Main
- **3 Science Keynotes.** Merging of the most important scientific statements
- **3 stakeholder dialogues.** Discussion of the scientific key messages, identification of the central challenges and possible pathways for politics, industry and civil society
- **Communication and future collaboration.** Discourse on strategies for improved communication of scientific content and collaboration of science with politics, industry and civil society
- **Cool Forest Ambassador Initiative** including **media event**

Central messages:

- Cool Forests play an essential role in climate protection, but they cannot solve the climate problem alone
- Addressing key challenges requires enhanced collaboration and improved communication between science and key stakeholders in politics, industry and civil society
- Increased promotion of applied research should be aimed at when educating scientists and communicating results

Media resonance: Press release, 5-page article in *Profil* magazine, well over a dozen recordings in online media and platforms as well as social media (Twitter: #ibfra18)

Ambassador initiative: Successful launch of the Cool Forest Ambassador Initiative with high-level representatives and broad participation in the signature campaign (see picture 5)

What's next: Cool Forests Special Issue in the *Forests Journal*, issuing a policy brief, participation in national and international thematically relevant events (e.g. IUFRO 2019), further development of the Cool Forests Ambassador initiative



Conference report

From 17 - 20 September, the "Cool Forests" conference was held under the direction of the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) in Schloss Laxenburg. The event was co-organized with the International Boreal Forest Research Association (IBFRA), the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) and the Pan-Eurasian Experiment (PEEX).

Around 200 representatives from science, politics, business and civil society came together in Laxenburg.

In addition to exchanging state-of-the-art research on the broad field of boreal and mountain forests (Cool Forests), the conference has been successful in strengthening the dialogue between scientists and stakeholders from politics, business and civil society.

More than 100 scientific lectures and 40 scientific posters brought together the expertise of scientists from around 30 countries. In addition to Austria and its direct neighbouring countries, countries such as Finland, Japan, Canada, Korea, Mexico, Mongolia, Nepal, Russia, Sweden or Spain were also represented.

The most important messages of these scientific inputs were systematically compiled to the central questions on important challenges and possible solutions. On the third conference day (Wednesday, 19th September), they were presented to the three stakeholder dialog rounds in the form of scientific keynote speeches, before being discussed with representatives from politics, business and civil society (see picture 3). The dialogues on the three topics of the conference - climate, bioeconomy and people and nature - were able to illustrate the following points, among others:

- Cool Forests' response to climate change can further accelerate global warming: widespread forest fires increase carbon emissions, which in turn drive climate change.
- Cool Forests are also an important mechanism for mitigating climate change, but at the same time are strongly affected by it - this increases their importance and the need to develop regionally appropriate mitigation and adaptation strategies both in mountainous areas and in boreal forests.
- In addition to the commonalities of the Cool Forests, there are also essential and decisive location-based socio-economic and ecological differences.
- Despite its significant contribution to climate protection, its role is limited and can by no means replace other necessary measures such as the abandonment of fossil fuels
- The effects of climate change also affect the foundations of the wood industry and related jobs and the income of many people. Therefore, a holistic approach that looks at the whole ecosystem and better cooperation between science (and also between disciplines, such as social science and science), industry and civil society must be promoted.
- Solving future challenges - not just climate change - requires an exchange of perspectives - between the social sciences and the natural sciences as well as with non-academic actors
- Science should focus more on the issues and problems posed by the various stakeholders from politics, business and civil society



- At the same time, industry should increasingly rely on scientific support. Through applied research cooperation, the exchange between science and industry can be improved, which can lead to direct implementation of scientific findings
- Despite the high complexity of the challenges, such as protection and simultaneous use of forests, it must be possible to make scientific communication easy to be heard accordingly. This requires the involvement of communication experts to train scientists on how to do this better.
- In addition, there is a need for common messages from scientific actors and civil society to policy-makers.
- Therefore, the education and transmission of (scientific) knowledge cannot begin soon enough to gain attention and build awareness and to prepare the coming generations to deal with the great challenges of the Cool Forests.

It is planned to present a comprehensive compilation and discussion of the core messages in the Cool Forests Policy Brief to the international community.

Thus the dialogue resulted in an active contribution to the exchange between scientific and stakeholder perspectives and thus a positive effect on the further (scientific) development in the field of Cool Forests was achieved.

By complementing perspectives from countries with boreal ecosystems (including the Nordic countries, Canada and Russia) with perspectives from countries with a high share of mountain forests (such as Austria or Nepal), the conference fulfilled the desired goal of focusing on the special connection between the two ecosystems - boreal and mountain forests.

With the introduction of the term "Cool Forests" and through the vivid scientific discussions and stakeholder dialogues, the conference has successfully contributed to a sweeping exchange of experience and scientific knowledge between boreal and mountain forests.

The scientific content of the conference was complemented by an extraordinary excursion to the alpine spring zone of the first Vienna Spring Water Main (Revier Gahns). Almost 100 experts from the conference enthusiastically participated in the excursion, which primarily presented the protective function of the forest for the origin of the waters of Vienna (see picture 2).

An additional goal was the explicit involvement of early career scientists – which the conference fulfilled by their active participation in the program as well as with the focus on the perspectives of this target group. These efforts successfully intensified international networking among the scientists of all groups and will culminate into a follow-up report on the important and diverse perspectives, ideas and suggestions proposed at the conference.

In the early evening of the third conference day several high-ranking representatives from politics, economics, science and civil society – all "Cool Forest Ambassadors" – participated in a signature campaign (see picture 5). The "Cool Forest Ambassadors" initiative, which had already been launched very successfully in the run-up to the conference, was further advertised throughout the event. The aim of the initiative is to



create awareness for the diverse and critical values of the boreal and mountain forest-relevant ecosystems and to preserve and promote these for people, bioeconomy, climate and nature.

Results of the conference:

Together, we were able to gather the knowledge and expertise of well-known and junior scientists, formulate clear messages and discuss these with experts from politics, business and civil society in the science stakeholder dialogues.

The results of this process will feed into a "Cool Forests Policy Brief" to be published by the end of 2018 and made widely accessible and available.

In addition to individual publications, scientific articles from this conference are also compiled into a "Special Issue" and published in the *Forests Journal* of the MDPI (Impact Factor: 1.956 (2017)).

One example of a planned follow-up event to the conference is a "Cool Forests Session" at the XXV IUFRO World Congress 2019 in Curitiba, Brazil from September 29 to October 5, 2019.

Conclusion:

Overall, the conference can be considered a complete success. Both from the perspective of the organizers, as well as judging from the extremely positive responses of participants the conference was a great accomplishment much to the satisfaction of everyone involved.



Selection of comments on Twitter:

 **PEEX_HQ**
@PEEX_News Folgen

From our side, we want to thank all the participants and organisers of the well succeeded Cool Forest Event #ibfra18
[@ibfra18](#) : Thank you! [@IIASAVienna](#) [@IUFRO](#)
[@BorealForest](#)

 **IBFRA** @BorealForest
A big thank you to all the participants, as well as to @IIASAVienna, @PEEX_HQ and @IUFRO as co-sponsors, for a very successful #IBFRA18! We are looking forward to continued discussions and work on Cool Forests. #borealforest #research

Tweet übersetzen

05:19 - 21. Sep. 2018

2 Retweets 1 „Gefällt mir“-Äußerung

 **Jaana Bäck**
@JaanaBäck Folgen

We had a very inspiring conference in Laxenburg [@IIASAVienna](#) [@ibfra18](#) . Cool forests have a great future!

 **Aleksi Lehtonen** @aleksi_juke
New president of @BorealForest #ibfra2018 Florian Kraxner takes new vice president @RaisaMakipaa to waltz in Vienna. Ex president Rasmus from @NIBIO_no follows new steps. Looking forward next meeting of the IBFRA

Tweet übersetzen

07:48 - 20. Sep. 2018

3 Retweets 1 „Gefällt mir“-Angabe

3 1



 **Jeff Wells** @Bird_Wells · 21. Sep. ▼
Fabulous meeting! Well done! @IIASAVienna @BorealForest #ibfra18
blog.nationalgeographic.org/2018/09/14/coo...



Aleksi Lehtonen @aleksi_luke
New president of @BorealForest #ibfra2018 Florian Kraxner takes new vice president @RaisaMakipaa to waltz in Vienna. Ex president Rasmus from @NIBIO_no follows new steps. Looking forward next meeting of the IBFRA

 Tweet übersetzen

   

 **Jeff Wells** @Bird_Wells · 21. Sep. ▼
Really well done conference! And look forward to next steps for Cool Forest!
blog.nationalgeographic.org/2018/09/14/coo... #IBFRA18 @IIASAVienna @BorealForest @borealsongbird @Borealconserve @PEEX_News @IUFRO @IUCN_forests @globalforests @WorldResources

PEEX_HQ @PEEX_News
From our side, we want to thank all the participants and organisers of the well succeeded Cool Forest Event #ibfra18 @ibfra18 : Thank you! @IIASAVienna @IUFRO @BorealForest twitter.com/BorealForest/s...

 Tweet übersetzen

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Impressions of the conference

(More pictures available at: www.ibfra18.org)



Picture 1: Permanent poster-exhibition during the conference,
17. September 2018 (Erwin Moll, IFSA)



Picture 2: Excursion to alpine spring zone, guided by
OFR DI Peter Lepkowitz and OF Ing. Emanuel Schlapfer,
18. September 2018 (Erwin Moll, IFSA)



Picture 3: Stakeholder Dialog on „Cool Forests – People and Nature“,
19. September 2018 (Enrico Confienza, IIASA)



Picture 4: Group Photo of conference participants, 19. September 2018
(Karen Everett, IIASA)



Picture 5: Cool Forest Ambassador Signing-Ceremony with (from left) Lukas Mandl (Member of the European Parliament), Minister of the State Government Martin Eichinger (in representation of Governor of Lower Austria Johanna Mikl-Leitner), Maria Patek (head of the section forestry and sustainability, BMNT), Christiane Schmillius (University Professor and Chair of Department for Earth Observation, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena) and Florian Kraxner (Conference-Chair and head of the Center of Landscape Resilience & Management, IIASA), 19. September 2018 (Karen Everett, IIASA)



Picture 6: Signed poster of the Cool Forests Ambassador initiative (Karen Everett, IIASA)



Press review and social media announcements:

Profil: Baumsünden. Article written by Jochen Stadler, Profil 37, 10 September 2018

APA Science: Wald-Gipfel zum Schutz der "kühlen Wälder"

http://science.apa.at/rubrik/natur_und_technik/Wald-Gipfel_zum_Schutz_der_kuehlen_Waelder/SCI_20180917_SCI39391351444445730

National Geographic: Cool Forests Conference Puts Boreal Forest on World Stage

<https://blog.nationalgeographic.org/2018/09/14/cool-forests-conference-puts-boreal-forest-on-world-stage/>

FAO Forestry Newsroom: Workshop shows scientists how to communicate complex forest issues

<http://www.fao.org/forestry/news/94881/en/>

Interreg – Alpine Space: Cool forests at risk? The critical role of boreal and mountain ecosystems for people, bioeconomy, and climate <http://www.alpine-space.eu/event-details/3800>

ФБУ «Авиалесоохрана»: FBU "Avialesoohrana" presented a report on combating forest fires at the International Conference of the Association of Boreal Forest Researchers (IBFRA18)

<https://aviales.ru/popup.aspx?news=4934>

EFICEEC – EFISEE network announcements: Cool forests at risk? The critical role of boreal and mountain ecosystems for people, bioeconomy, and climate, 17-20 September 2018, Laxenburg (Vienna), Austria

http://www.eficeec.efi.int/files/images/eficeec/library/network_announcements/eficeec-efisee_network_announcements_11_may_2018.pdf

Climatelinks: Cool Forests at Risk? The Critical Role of Boreal and Mountain Ecosystems for People, Bioeconomy, and Climate

<https://www.climatelinks.org/events/cool-forests-risk-critical-role-boreal-and-mountain-ecosystems-people-bioeconomy-and-climate>

SDG Knowledge Hug: IBFRA18 – Cool Forests at Risk?

<http://sdg.iisd.org/events/ibfra18-cool-forests-at-risk/>

CAKE – Climate Adaptation Knowledge Exchange: Cool forests at risk? The critical role of boreal and mountain ecosystems for people, bioeconomy, and climate

<https://www.cakex.org/community/events/cool-forests-risk-critical-role-boreal-and-mountain-ecosystems-people-bioeconomy-and-climate>

ICOS – Integrated Carbon Observation System: Cool forests at risk? The critical role of boreal and mountain ecosystems for people, bioeconomy, and climate

<https://www.icos-ri.eu/event/382>

BOKU: IBFRA Conference: Cool forests at risk

<http://www.boku.ac.at/international/themen/internationale-kooperationen/international-newsletter/newsletter/detailansicht/newsitem/48042/>



Research gate: IBFRA18, Cool Forests at Risk?

<https://www.researchgate.net/project/International-Boreal-Forest-Research-Association-IBFRA>

Open Network – powered by future earth: Cool Forests at Risk? IBFRA18

<https://network.futureearth.org/events/event-description?CalendarEventKey=fbc2e0bd-2547-4c2c-818e-d3c76f119325&CommunityKey=63908af7-7873-44b7-8525-d63a5445de07&Home=%2Fhome>

Bio4Energy: IBFRA18, Cool Forests at Risk?

<http://www.bio4energy.se/about-us/latest-events/117-events/570-ibfra18-cool-forests-at-risk-laxenburg-austria.html>

ileaps –Integrated Land Ecosystem Atmosphere Processes Study: 18th The International Boreal Forest Research Association (IBFRA) Conference

<https://www.ileaps.org/news-and-media/news/18th-international-boreal-forest-research-association-ibfra-conference>

PIPAP Pacific Islands Protected Area Portal: IBFRA18, Cool Forests at Risk?

<https://pipap.sprep.org/events/ibfra18-cool-forests-risk>

Relevant internet pages:

IBFRA18: <https://ibfra18.org/> (The website will still be used for the conference outcome and other follow-up announcements)

IBFRA: <http://ibfra.org/>

IIASA: <http://www.iiasa.ac.at>

PEEX: <https://www.atm.helsinki.fi/peex/index.php/2-uncategorised/60-home>

IUFRO: <https://www.iufro.org/>

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