



Forest Biodiversity in a Changing Climate: Understanding Conservation Strategies and Policies

International Conference

- Call for papers -

Freiburg, Germany, 22-23 September 2011

Background

With the average global surface temperature predicted to rise at an unprecedented rate and anticipated changes in precipitation and disturbance regimes, climate change poses new challenges to forest ecosystems, their management and biodiversity conservation. Climate change will lead to an accelerated revision of what might be defined as 'natural' in forests. Given the high degree of uncertainty regarding future developments, static conservation strategies such as habitat specific conservation or reference to representative natural vegetation types are being questioned and dynamic approaches are gaining importance. There is a distinct need to reassess and refine conservation strategies for forests, raising questions such as: how should forest ecosystem management be adapted in order to sustainably protect forest biodiversity? What kinds of forest landscapes and inherent biodiversity should be conserved in the future?

At the same time, mitigation and adaptation create a major task for forest related policies. On the one hand, given the long-term ecological and economic cycles of forest ecosystems, there is a need to base future strategies on long-term considerations and make them adaptable to new conditions. On the other hand, regarding present societal and political responses, climate change is utilized to legitimize both continuity and changes in political strategies and instruments. In some cases, new and innovative forest policy strategies and instruments have been invented. In other cases, strategies and instruments addressing climate change have either been added to a pre-existing mix of forest policy instruments or existing instruments have been gradually amended. This takes place within the context of diverse political and institutional settings and related power constellations that notably influence the way in which climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies and policy instruments are designed.

Objectives and topics

The aim of this conference is to generate profound theoretical and empirical insights into how climate change is influencing both biodiversity conservation and management strategies in forests and related policies. The interdisciplinary and international approach of this conference provides a great opportunity to combine both conservation and political science perspectives and facilitates an international exchange of experiences and cross-national comparisons.

The conference will be divided into plenum sessions with key note lectures and plenum discussions and will have two separate thematic sessions. We are calling for paper contributions for the thematic sessions according to the conference's two main topics: **"biodiversity conservation in forests in times of climate change"**, referring to a reassessment of the objectives, strategies and reference systems in forest biodiversity conservation within a changing climate, and **"forest and conservation policy in a changing climate"**, examining current and desirable policy responses to climate change in different countries and at different policy levels, focusing particularly on forest biodiversity.

Session I: Biodiversity conservation in forests in times of climate change

We invite theoretical or case study based papers for this session which address one or a combination of the following aspects:

- analyze the main impacts of climate change on forest ecosystems, possible forest ecosystem responses and their relation to biodiversity conservation objectives;
- evaluate general principles, objectives and reference systems of biodiversity conservation in a changing climate;
- identify promising strategies to adapt biodiversity conservation in forests and forest biodiversity management in light of climate change and related uncertainties; and
- discuss measures to adapt forest management, recognizing their impacts on biodiversity conservation in forests.

Session II: Forest and conservation policy in a changing climate

In this session, we invite theoretical and empirical papers which:

- analyze how climate change has influenced forest and forest-related conservation policies and the forest policy subsystem, e.g. how it has been adopted by diverse actors, legitimized policy change and stability and influenced perceptions and discourses;
- assess new forest and biodiversity policy instruments addressing climate change as well as gradual amendments of already existing instruments, regarding both their potential effects and the way they are developed and implemented in policy practices; and
- identify innovative instruments and governance arrangements for forest policy in order to address the issue of climate change.

Each session can accommodate about fifteen papers. Following the two thematic sessions, the outcomes of the conference will be published in special issues of two international journals, prominent in the respective fields.

Keynote presentations

The conference will include keynote presentations given by:

- Jeffrey McNeely, Cornell University and Senior Science Advisor at IUCN
- Marcus Lindner, European Forest Institute
- Benjamin Cashore, Yale University
- Robert Flies, EU Commission, DG Environment

Participants

The conference aims to provide a forum for scientists and decision-makers from different disciplines of forest and conservation research, including forestry, forest ecology, landscape ecology, landscape management, forest and environmental politics, institutional economics and climate change science.

Deadlines

Please send an abstract (300 words) using the abstract template from the conference website and indicate the relevant session. Abstracts should be sent to Georg Winkel (session II) or Harald Schaich (session I) by **March 31, 2011**. Notifications of acceptance will be sent to authors by **April 30, 2011**. Complete manuscripts are due by **August 15, 2011**.

Costs

For contributing participants the costs of the conference will be covered. Participants are expected to cover their own expenses for transportation and accommodation as well as the cost of the conference dinner. The conference is sponsored by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) and is part of a R&D project on forest conservation and climate change.

Contact

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Conference homepage

www.freiburgconference2011.de

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