SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT NETWORK | RÉSEAU DE GESTION DURABLE DES FORÊTS | Networks of Centres of Excellence / Réseaux de centres d'excellence

Media Release

University of British Columbia researchers receive $627,900 research award

Drs. Bruce Larson, Paul McFarlane and Dan Moore to conduct research to help sustain Canada's forests, improve their management

Vancouver, B.C., April 25, 2007 – Three University of British Columbia (UBC) researchers have been awarded a total of $627,00 over two years to help better protect Canada's forests and make their management more effective and efficient. This award is part of a $3 million investment by the Sustainable Forest Management Network.

Dr. Bruce Larson, FRBC Chair of Silviculture at the University of British Columbia will receive $196,500 over two years to assess the progress and effectiveness of current certification programs on Canada's forests, including evaluating the standards of such organizations as the Canadian Standards Association (CSA), Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). As part of the research project, supported by the Government of British Columbia, Canadian Forest Products Ltd., Daishowa-Marubeni International Ltd., Louisiana-Pacific Canada Ltd. and Weyerhaeuser Company Ltd., the research team will evaluate management changes caused by the programs, including changes in forest industry and government organizations, as well as among Canadian consumers and retailers.

"We will determine whether forest certification has made forest operations more sustainable, if it has led to improved social conditions in such areas as employment and equity, and if forest certification impacts a company's public image, wood product pricing, market share and market access," says Dr. Larson, who will work on the project with Drs. Anna Tikina, John Innes, Robert Kozak and Ron Trosper of UBC, and Dr. Peter Duinker of Dalhousie University.

Dr. Paul McFarlane, Professor and Head, Department of Wood Science, Faculty of Forestry at the University of British Columbia, will receive $241,400 over two years to investigate the effects of innovation in sustainable forest management on the forest products industry. As part of the project – supported by the Government of Alberta, Government of British Columbia, Tembec Inc. and Ducks Unlimited Canada – he will analyze trends in material consumption and production, and industrial productivity and employment, as well as use technological benchmarking, to better understand the impact of economic, social and ecological changes on industrial roundwood consumption in Canada.

"Our hypothesis is that innovation along the forest products value chain has resulted in less roundwood consumption to produce a given amount of product, which has the potential to significantly decrease the consumptive pressure on forest ecosystems in the future and increase forest sustainability in Canada," says Dr. McFarlane, whose project team includes Dr. Rodger Beatson of the British Columbia Institute of Technology and Dr. Mohini Sain of University of Toronto.

The team's work will involve researching how technological innovation affects the amount and type of roundwood used by the forestry industry, and determining the material flow impacts of "super mills," providing valuable insight that could enhance Canadian competitiveness in the global forest products industry.

Dr. Dan Moore, FRBC Chair of Forest Hydrology at the University of British Columbia, will receive $190,000 over two years to investigate the effects of major forest disturbances – such as the mountain pine beetle epidemic, which kills trees – on the way water moves through the landscape. With support from Environment Canada, Government of Alberta, and the Government of British Columbia, the project will involve the development of new models that will help government and industry to choose the best options for dealing with major forest disturbances.

"Dead trees intercept less rain and snowfall, which means that more water than usual will reach the forest floor. Combined with a reduction in the amount of water taken up from the soil, tree death over large areas can lead to an increased risk of flooding," says Dr. Moore, explaining that hydrologic models currently used by government agencies and forest companies are not appropriate for dealing with such large areas of dead timber and the increased runoff that results.

Moore adds, "Logging the dead trees may have an even more severe impact."
"Our goal is to create a new model that demonstrates, in a realistic manner, the effects of various scenarios of forest disturbances and the effects of harvesting over large areas," explains Dr. Moore, whose team includes Dr. Sarah Boon of the University of Northern British Columbia, Dr. Darryl Carlyle-Moses of Thompson Rivers University, and Dr. Markus Weiler of UBC.

About The Sustainable Forest Management Network

The Sustainable Forest Management Network facilitates collaborative, applied research partnerships among 32 industry, government, Aboriginal, and non-government partners in supporting the work of more than 190 researchers. Their research efforts are accomplished thanks to 300 highly qualified personnel working at 35 participating institutions across Canada. The SFM Network represents one of the few forums to bring Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal forest resource managers and policy makers around one table to promote dialogue and the development of a common understanding in a non-confrontational environment.

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