

Forest Communicators' Network (FCN)

16th Meeting, 28-30 September 2009

Forestry Training Centre, Lyss, Switzerland

Note of Meeting

The following is a brief summary of the addresses and presentations given at the meeting. To see the full presentations, go to www.bzwlyss.ch and follow the 'Forest Communicators' Network' link.

Day 1 - Monday 28 September

Opening and Welcomes

**1. Mr Alan Kocher
Principal and Managing Director of the
Forestry Training Centre, Lyss, Switzerland**

Mr Kocher welcomed delegates and guests, thanked them for attending, and wished them a pleasant visit to Switzerland.

He passed on apologies for non-attendance from members Mr Ingwald Gschwandtl (FCN leader) and Mr Ed Pepke (who were detained by pressure of work) and Ms Katarina Ekberg (who was ill). He explained that Mr Tomass Kotovics would chair the meeting in Mr Gschwandtl's absence.

He outlined the history of the Centre, including the fact that the building, completed in 1996, included 2000 tonnes of Swiss timber, equivalent to the amount of new wood grown by Swiss forests in one and three-quarter hours. It had for a time been the largest wooden construction in Switzerland, but as Swiss wood consumption had increased, bigger buildings had since been built.

He outlined the courses offered by the Centre for foresters, rangers and forestry workers, as well as the opportunities presented by visits from members of other sectors, such as the police, architects and interior designers, when the Centre was able to promote forestry and wood to those sectors.

**2. Mr Andreas Götz
Deputy Director-General
Swiss Federal Office of the Environment (FOEN)**

Forests, Forestry & Environmental Policy in Switzerland

Mr Gotz welcomed delegates to Switzerland, and gave a presentation about Swiss forests and forestry and environmental policy, explaining that the Federal Constitution includes an Article on Forestry, and the FOEN was responsible for 4 key objectives of forest management. These were:

- Security – using forests to protect people and infrastructure from natural hazards such as floods, landslips, rock falls, avalanches etc;
- Health and environmental protection – protection from pollution, conservation of soil and water, and contribution to air quality;
- Biodiversity – flora and fauna conservation; and
- Sustainable management of forest resources.

Forests comprise one-third of the land area of Switzerland, and there are 250,000 forest owners. The main tree species are Norway spruce (47%) and birch (18%). The FOEN budget was 700,000,000 Swiss francs, of which 92,000,000 were spent on forestry.

Key recent developments had included the establishment of the Swiss Forest Forum to bring together all parties with an interest in Swiss forests to work towards balanced, sustainable management of the forests for social, economic and environmental benefits.

The FOEN worked to the Swiss National Forest Programme which was programmed from 2004-2015, which had the following priorities:

- International engagement priorities were focused on the World Forestry Congress in October 2009 and the next UNFF meeting in 2011, and the Year of Forests 2011;
- Research priorities included climate change; and
- Market priorities included a wood action plan that aimed to ensure sustainable timber supplies and a strong added-value chain.

3. Ms Annina Sorg Assistant to the Chief Forester Canton of Berne Forest Service

The forests of Berne

Ms Sorg gave a presentation on forests and forestry in the Canton of Berne, explaining that she worked in a new, small communications team comprising 3 foresters and 1 sociologist.

Canton Berne had 170,000ha of forest, $\frac{3}{4}$ of which were dominated by conifer species, with 70 million cubic metres of standing wood. Ownership was divided about 50-50 between private and public owners.

Forest management in the canton involved the co-ordination of a number of different functions and uses at the same time, such as protection, plant and animal habitats, and accessible public recreation.

About 150 people worked in the forest service. The recent establishment of a professional communications team had resulted from the service's recognition of the growing importance of a professional approach to communications, and that foresters needed to adapt to this.

**4. Mr Hermann Moser
Mayor of Lyss**

Welcome to Lyss

Mr Moser welcomed delegates to Lyss, and outlined the history, geography and political landscape of the town and its district.

The town was currently celebrating the 1000th anniversary of its foundation in 1009 AD. It has a population of 11,500 people, and was recently given the title of Swiss "Energy Town". Situated halfway between the cities of Berne and Biel, it struggled to avoid becoming just a commuter/dormitory town and to retain an identity and community spirit of its own. A big challenge for the next generation was to achieve good collaboration between town and countryside.

**5. Mr Tomass Kotovics
Communications Director, State Forest Company of Latvia
Deputy-Chairman, FCN**

Introduction to the 16th Meeting of the FCN

Mr Kotovics thanked the opening guest speakers for their interesting and informative presentations. For the benefit of new members he then introduced the work of the FCN, explaining that it worked to:

- improve members' and the forestry sector's ability to communicate effectively within and outside the sector, by sharing experience, expertise and skills;
- provide a forum for international interaction and co-operation in forest-related communications; and
- develop the professionalism of forest communicators by introducing and encouraging state-of-the-art communication approaches.

He then explained that in October 2008 the FCN had been given a new 5-year mandate by the UNECE/FAO Timber Committee, and following discussion it was agreed that the major outputs by the group during the period should be:

- A European forest communication strategy;
- Proposals for marking the Year of Forests 2011;
- Communications advice to UNECE-/FAO and the MCPFE;
- Dissemination of common messages through the FCN network.

He then outlined the programme for the meeting, which would comprise:

1. A presentation and discussion of research into public perception of forests and forestry in Europe;
2. Presentations and discussions of the use of new media in forestry communications;
3. Presentations on current communication initiatives by members' organisations;

4. Discussion of best practices in forestry communications, such as European Forest Week (EFW) and new initiatives and approaches such as those by the MCPFE; and
5. FCN activities, including the strategy, International Year of Forests 2011 and the next FCN meeting, probably in spring 2010.

**6. Mr Tamas Szedlak
DG Agriculture & Rural Development, European Commission**

Shaping forest communication in the European Union: Public perceptions of forests and forestry

Mr Szedlak presented the preliminary findings of a study of the “understanding gap” between the facts and public perceptions of forests and forestry in Europe. The study was part of one of 18 key actions in the European Forest Action Plan, namely to improve communication by the forest sector.

The work was divided into three “tasks”. The first was meta-analysis of previous studies of public opinion, the second was a survey of key stakeholders’ beliefs about what ordinary European citizens believe and feel about forests and forestry, and the third a public opinion survey.

FINDINGS: The synthesis of the findings of the 3 tasks was as follows:

- The public perceives protection of forests and prevention of deforestation as key concerns;
- The public perceives the general condition of European forests to be worse than it actually is, especially perceiving that the total forest area as well as the level of biodiversity are decreasing;
- Some key threats and damages to forests, such as storms, diseases, pests and invasive species, are not well known by the public, whereas forest fires are perceived as a major threat, possibly as a result of the way threats are covered by the news media;
- The public places a higher value on forest conservation and forests’ protective functions than on forest utilisation;
- Public perception of preferred management styles for various forest uses and benefits varies widely, and generally favours more active management to better address issues such as biodiversity, climate change, and recreation; and
- The public is interested in the interconnections between forests and climate change, and most people believe forests can help in one way or another to tackle climate change:

CONCLUSIONS: The conclusions about the key implications of the study for forest communications were:

1. There is a need for a clear message presented in a neutral manner that allows the public to make appropriate distinctions depending on the relevant specific issues and challenges, including forest area, biodiversity and damages, for various geographic contexts (i.e. local forest, European forests, forests worldwide);

2. there is a need to stress the important role of forests and wood in tackling climate change; and
3. there is a need to address specific audiences.

**7. Mr Bob Burt
Former Head of Communications
Canadian Forest Service**

New Media – Boon or Bane? Tools, tips and techniques

Mr Burt then led a programme of presentations and discussions about the use of 'new media' in forestry communications.

He explained that communications were going through a period of rapid change, with 'new' and 'social' media changing the way the world communicated. It was causing difficulties for traditional media, e.g. newspaper sales were declining and newspaper companies were cutting employment as readers turned to new sources of information.

The recent Iranian elections demonstrated the changes, in that some of the protest events were first 'reported' to the outside world via 'social' and 'new' media rather than 'traditional' media such as radio, TV and newspapers. Politicians, including US President Barack Obama, and celebrities were now using these media to promote themselves and their causes, and their use was forming a key part of marketing strategies.

To illustrate the way in which communications had evolved, Mr Burt traced some key developments since 3500BC, when the Phoenicians' development of the first known alphabet enabled humans to communicate in writing for the first time, and included the advent of homing pigeons, the printing press, microphone, telephone, radio, television, the Internet etc. He went on to:

- Give examples of new media and social media;
- Provide definitions of 'new' and 'social' media;
- Analyse three important aspects of social media marketing;
- discuss the key opportunities presented by social and new media;
- discuss the challenges presented by new and social media;
- give examples of some useful social media newsrooms; and
- provide a guide to useful further reading.

Two topics worth further research were 'Equalman' and 'socialnomics'.

8. **Dr Patrick Seifried**
Director
YooSocial, Your Social Media Agency and Translationartwork.com
Switzerland

“Marketing and Communication through Social Media - Talking about the rules 2.0”.

Dr Seifried’s presentation gave an overview of the development and potential uses and benefits of new and social media.

He divided digital media users into:

- Digital ‘immigrants’, who use an average of 1.8 digital media and are aged more than 25, who prefer personal contact in their communications; and
- Digital ‘natives’, who use an average 5.2 digital media. They are mostly aged under 25 and have grown up with new media and don’t care about personal contact.

He explained new media development as:

- Web 1.0, which was static, one-way communication – e.g. the seller talking to the consumer;
- Web 2.0, which allowed two-way communication – e.g. the consumer could talk back to the seller; and
- Web 3.0, which facilitated ‘3D’ communication, e.g. consumer to consumer as well as seller to consumer and consumer to seller.

He presented statistics on new media use which showed how significant they had become in a very short time when compared with the usage statistics for traditional media such as radio and TV.

He explained the roles of new media in community building, on-line promotion, on-line conversation and search engine optimisation.

He then analysed Facebook’s growth and use as an example to illustrate some of the geographic and demographic trends and uses of new media.

He also looked at the influence of new and social media on public relations, advertising and marketing, and in particular how they had blurred the lines between PR and marketing. Consumers were now more motivated by marketing strategies that allowed them to participate and interact with suppliers and other users of the products and services, than they were by the ‘one-way traffic’ of older forms of PR and marketing communications.

He next looked at the social media platforms and tools available in the marketplace and how to combine use of them into a coherent, integrated marketing strategy, using his own company, Yoosocial, as an example. It uses a full range of tools such as blogs, podcasts, updates, posts, fan pages, followers, business networking media etc. It takes the company 74 hours’ work per month to keep them running, excluding blogs.

He also gave the example of Translationartwork.com, which provides document translation and design services via the Web using translators in many countries working in a wide range of languages.

He concluded by recommending that organisations use Facebook, LinkedIn and fan pages on business topics to build up a 'community'; that social media should be part of an organisation's communications budget; and that the return on investment could be calculated using Google Analytics and social media analytics.

**9. Mr Charlton Clark
Senior Communications Officer
British Forestry Commission**

The Director-General's Blog

This presentation examined the Forestry Commission Director-General's use of a blog on the Commission's Intranet to communicate with staff. The presentation looked at:

- The reasons why the DG decided to have a blog, such as to inform staff who wanted to know about what was happening;
- The issues that had to be considered when deciding to start a blog, such as 'tone', demands on time etc;
- The rules for the blog, e.g. no anonymous posts allowed;
- The blog's track record since it began, e.g. 'readership' averaging 1325 hits/month, rising occasionally to 1800;
- The topics covered on the blog;
- The reasons why people read it, especially when readership significantly exceeds the average;
- The possible reasons why the DG sometimes does not blog on a topic when staff might expect him to do so;
- The types of things the DG says, and the tone of his comments;
- The use - and lack of use - of the comment facility by staff; and
- The lessons learned so far from use of the blog.

'Tell us what you think'

Mr Clark's second presentation looked at the Commission's experience of a new comment and star-rating facility on the recreation pages of its website (www.forestry.gov.uk/placestogo). This presentation covered topics such as:

- Why it was set up (e.g. to get users writing about FC forests);
- The results (e.g. first comments posted within 24 hours of going live; 1500 comments posted in first 6 months);
- What people are saying on the facility (mostly positive);
- The comment and counter-comment dialogue between users that it has generated (such as disagreeing with each other);
- Inappropriate use of the facility (e.g. as an enquiry service);
- The potential of the facility as a forest management tool (such as bringing problems to the Commission's attention);

- The lessons learned from the first few months' use (such as the importance of waiting for a trend to develop, rather than reacting immediately to the first negative comment);
- The opportunity for the Commission to engage with and explain to users why things happen the way they do, or to reassure users that it is aware of problems and is doing something about them;
- How comments are "moderated", and sometimes referred to local forest offices for comment/explanation, before being published;
- The facility's value as a 'marketing' tool (e.g. its ability to exploit the value of third-party endorsement of Commission 'products');
- Possible next steps in developing use of this type of facility.

During discussion afterwards **Dr Seifried** suggested the Commission could pose some questions on the facility to build up a 'community' that could follow the Commission.

He summarised key points from the day's presentations as:

- It's important for organisations to start using social media;
- it takes time to establish a community base in new media;
- most people are digital 'immigrants' who find it hard to keep up with new media;
- blogs are effective because they are close to Web 1.0 and therefore perfect for easing digital 'immigrants' into new media use;
- corporate blogs are well worth using;
- many FCN members were not yet using new/social media, and he recommended they establish accounts on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, and link to one another other; and
- negative comments were not always a bad thing because organisations can influence the commentators and others by reacting and responding to the negative comments in a constructive way.

10. Evening activity

During the evening the FCN members and guests were treated by the hosts to a barbecue meal, accompanied by a recital by an alpenhorn group, in the forest house in woodland near the Training Centre.

DAY 2 – Tuesday 29 September 2009

11. Mr Reinhard Lässig Communications Officer Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research

www.waldwissen.net / www.forestknowledge.net

Mr Lässig gave a presentation on the forestknowledge.net "knowledge platform", a website that provides a wide range of forestry and forest research information and advice in several languages. Four research institutes in three different countries - Switzerland, Germany and Austria - currently took part.

It aims to:

- enhance communication on forest-related topics;
- help to integrate science, forest management and forest ownership;
- raise awareness of forests and forest research; and
- present scientific results internationally.

Its main target audiences are forestry practitioners and forest owners, but it also aims to attract interested public. All topics covered follow IUFRO classification, and it aims to make the content relevant, scientifically reliable, understandable and easily accessible, with attractive layout and design.

It currently carries 2500 articles and 8000 images. Every article has a comment/feedback and rating facility for readers to use as well as links to other related material. There are procedures for quality assurance, and a user survey was conducted in 2008, attracting 748 respondents.

New media channels might become more important as time goes by, but the managers are finding that forestry professionals still value personal contact and traditional media very highly.

In future the platform was likely to aim for more interactivity, as well as become more problem orientated.

Current funding comprised basic needs funded by the participating research institutes, with external funding sought for international co-operation events such as workshops, seminars and excursions.

**12. Mr Tomass Kotovics
Communications Director
Latvian State Forest Company**

New Media Portal for Latvia's State Forests

Mr Kotovics gave a presentation on the Latvian State Forest Company's use of a new-media portal.

The company manages about 50% of Latvia's forests, and has about 1,500 important business partners – B2B communications are therefore very important. A high proportion of its communications is conducted through traditional means such as personal contact and the media (e.g. press releases).

The new portal is aimed mostly at recreational and educational audiences. It has a section devoted to "Pigman", which raises awareness of the problem of rubbish dumping in Latvian forests.

It targets a young audience by using social media such as MySpace Latvia and Facebook. An experiment with Twitter did not get many followers

It also features a forest holiday guide, green mail, a carbon dioxide calculator and competitions to get people interacting with the company.

No particular promotion is done for the company website. Social media are used to drive visitors to the new portal.

The company has not yet found the most effective way to address serious topics through social media (e.g. the public perception that Latvia's forest area is decreasing).

**13. Mr Tarun Bathija
PR & Communications Officer
IUFRO**

IUFRO's pilot project in new media

Mr Bathija reflected on IUFRO's pilot project to trial the use of new media to communicate forest science to a broader public audience.

The objective was to increase the visibility of IUFRO and to communicate forest science to a broader public. Among the new tools it was using were a IUFRO blog and podcasts, YouTube and Twitter.

- Blog - The blog aimed to reach forestry scientists, IUFRO members and the interested public, and was used to promote IUFRO projects in particular. It was promoted through the IUFRO newsletter and other media, and users had an opportunity to provide feedback.
- Twitter – IUFRO used Twitter to increase awareness of IUFRO, drive more users to the IUFRO website and its other media by providing links, and to attract new members and donors. IUFRO 'tweeted' daily and used Twitter as a notice-board to alert users to new developments.
- YouTube - IUFRO was using YouTube to reach the public and potential new members and donors. It makes videos about IUFRO activities and posts them on YouTube and its own website. It announces them, and provides a link to them, on Twitter and in its blog and newsletter.
- Podcasts - Downloadable IUFRO podcasts are a more personal way of reaching the target audiences. IUFRO aims to record and upload two five-minute interview podcasts a month. Sometimes there is an attractive offer to incentivise people to download the podcast, and there is an opportunity for listener feedback.

Benefits - Mr Bathija then listed the potential benefits that IUFRO hoped to achieve from these uses of new media, including attracting new audiences and better connection with its audiences. It believed it had to use these new tools to increase the awareness and visibility of IUFRO and forest science generally, and to demonstrate its commitment to communicating with the public in a changing world.

During discussion, the point was made that blogs need a "face" and need to be "personal", and although a top person in an organisation might be a good

person to blog, it should be done in such a way that it did not present the organisation as excessively hierarchical in structure.

**14. Mr Colin Morton
Head of Corporate Communications
British Forestry Commission**

EU Forest Communications Strategy

Mr Morton gave a presentation bringing members up to date with work to develop a European Union Forest Communications Strategy.

He explained that the strategy project arose from Key Action No. 18 of the Forest Action Plan, to improve communication, and it had started with forests and wood research done by the MCPFE. He covered:

- The **problems** that had been identified, such as the gap between reality and public perception, for example, people's incorrect belief that the area and condition of forests in Europe are declining;
- The **aims** of the strategy, for example, to close this gap between fact and perception, and to do this partly by building on pan-European communication successes already achieved, such as European Forest Week (EFW);
- The **strengths** upon which the strategy could be built, such as the forest sector having a good story to tell and good evidence to back it up;
- The **weaknesses** that forest communicators had to overcome, such as the current lack of a common voice for the sector, a diversity of languages and cultures to negotiate, a lack of financial support, and a low level of public understanding;
- The **opportunities** that would help the strategy to succeed, for example, the public's use of and appreciation of forests and forest resources, and their belief that forests could be part of the answer to climate change;
- The **threats** that would work against the strategy, including other 'hot topics' competing for the public's attention, public attitudes to timber harvesting, and competition to forest products from sectors producing other products; and
- The **key objectives** of the strategy, for example, to increase the attractiveness and use of wood and to increase awareness of the positive state of Europe's forests.

The good news was that the FCN was recognised by the EU as a key mechanism for taking forward the EU Forest Communications Strategy.

Mr Morton concluded by outlining options for taking the work forward.

**15. Ms Lada Prylova
Manager of External Relations
Forest Management Institute of the Czech Republic**

The EU Director-Generals' Declaration on Communications on Forests & Forestry

Ms Prylova's presentation built on Mr Morton's by outlining the work done at Jihlava in the Czech Republic in June 2009 to produce the Jihlava Declaration on Communication on Forests and Forestry. It expressed:

- A wish to develop an EU forest communications strategy;
- The desirability of sharing communications experience and expertise more effectively; and
- The need for the strategy to take individual national circumstances into account.

It recommended:

- Activities in support of EFW;
- A programme of forest pedagogics (education); and
- Promotion of the use of forest products.

It particularly identified International Year of Forests 2011 as a good opportunity for forestry communication activities.

It recommended that the EU's Standing Committee on Forestry establish a communications working group, including experts from the FCN, to take this work forward, and the SCF had communications on the agenda for its meeting during the week following this meeting (8th October).

During discussion, **Mr Szedlak** commented that the FCN had an important role to play in the development of the strategy. Although all 27 member states could nominate people to serve on the communications working group, its membership would be restricted to about 15 to 18 people. A beneficial side-effect of the process would be greater respect for the FCN from member states.

It was agreed that once the working group had started work, the FCN would recommend that it publish a regular newsletter to keep FCN members and others up to date on progress. It was also agreed that the FCN should plan to contribute to this process at its 2010 meeting by considering a strategy for International Year of Forests 2011 and inputs to the strategy.

It was raised that it was important to be aware that there would be costs involved in drawing up the strategy, and that Terms of Reference (TORs) would be necessary to guide the work of the group. Financial matters should be covered by the TORs.

16. Mr Thomas Baschny
Austrian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment & Water
Management

European concept for forest pedagogics

Mr Baschny's presentation brought members up to date with the FCN sub-group on forest-related environmental education (FREE), which had been established by a resolution of the 2008 FCN meeting in Spain. He

- Summarised its objectives, which included development of a common European forest pedagogics concept;
- Looked at forest pedagogic activities which already happened, dating back 30 years in some countries;
- Said that 16 countries were taking part in the current initiative, and they were keen for more to join in; and
- Outlined its activities to date, which included:
 - drafting a working document for a common European Framework on Forest Pedagogics as a basis for further co-operative activities;
 - considering the next steps for developing it further;
 - establishing a forest pedagogics website, www.forestpedagogics.eu;
 - taking part in EFW;
 - conducting a survey of practitioners in several countries; and
 - launching a forest pedagogics newsletter.

He also said that forest education would be discussed by the EU's Standing Committee on Forestry on October 8th 2009.

Among the challenges facing the group included lack of funding and the fact that much of the work had to be undertaken on a voluntary basis.

17. Ms Andrea Perlis
FAO Forestry Department
Rome, Italy

European Forest Week – a model of decentralised communications

Ms Perlis gave a review of activities undertaken to mark European Forest Week, and the lessons learned from those activities. She

- Reviewed the objectives, which included raising the visibility of the forest sector;
- Outlined the strategy, which included the key messages that forests are growing and we can use them responsibly;
- Summarised the development of a logo, which highlighted different attitudes to the use of language when the proposed text, "Save the planet - use a tree", was rejected by some;
- Gave examples of in-country events held to mark the week (150 organisations held activities in 32 countries, ranging from scientific panels to children's events, nature excursions and awards);

- Considered possibilities for future EFWs; and
- Looked at some of the lessons learned, which included the desirability of 'keeping it simple' and using a feedback mechanism.

The decentralised approach had proved to be a strength because it helped to compensate for a lack of resources at the centre.

**18. Mr Paul Nicholas
Deputy Managing Editor
'News of the World' newspaper, United Kingdom**

'Seeds For Schools'

Mr Nicholas's presentation focused on the 'Seeds For Schools' campaign that his Sunday newspaper had launched in partnership with the British Forestry Commission, with support from the Royal Mail (which owns the UK Post Office) and, later, Google Earth.

The objectives were to get 1 million new trees planted in the UK and to raise children's awareness and understanding of the value of trees by offering, through the pages of the newspaper, free packs of tree seeds to every school in the UK. Included with the packs would be instructions for sowing and looking after them and planting out the young trees when they were big enough, and a schools version of the Commission's DVD about trees and climate change.

The newspaper had approached the Commission, which assessed the risks of working in partnership with a sometimes controversial newspaper, and had decided that the potential benefits outweighed the risks. He paid tribute to the atmosphere of trust in which the two partners – one a sometimes controversial newspaper, the other a government department - had worked together.

The Commission organised the supply of seeds from its forest nursery business, and the production of the packs and DVDs. The Royal Mail provided free postage to the schools. The programme was supported by articles in the newspaper every week. Harnessing the fact that it is a celebrity-driven newspaper, the articles featured pledges of support by leading sports and entertainment celebrities and politicians, including the Prime Minister. In other words, when readers see a picture and headline about one of their favourite celebrities, they stop and read it, and this "drawing power" was used to draw readers' attention to the campaign.

A stand-alone website, www.seedsforschools.org, was established, and featured guidance notes for teachers on how they could use the initiative to support teaching in a wide range of subjects on the school curricula.

The packs were delivered to schools as an insert inside an edition of the 'Teachers' Post' newspaper, which is sponsored by the Royal Mail. That edition carried an article on its front page about the campaign, ensuring that teachers could hardly miss it.

Competitions were also held to make participation attractive. For example, among the celebrities endorsing the campaign was the popular music band McFly, and a package of free tickets to a McFly concert were offered as a prize to schools taking part in the campaign.

The publicly stated aim of the campaign was to get school children to plant a million new trees in the UK. Enough seeds (about 12 million) were distributed to all 31,500 schools so that only an 8% success rate would be needed to achieve a million trees. More important, however, was to use the campaign in a hands-on, relevant way to raise children's awareness of the importance and benefits of trees, especially in the effort to tackle climate change.

Google Earth agreed to provide an on-line tool which would record in graphic format on the website the efforts of every school that emailed in to notify that it had taken up the challenge.

Finding land on which to plant the trees was made a project for older children to go out and recruit people and organisations who would donate land for them to plant the trees. Significant donations of land received favourable publicity in the newspaper. The chairman of the 2012 Olympic Games organising committee pledged that some of the trees would be planted in the Olympic Village. Football clubs would be asked to allow some trees to be planted alongside their training grounds.

The species of trees chosen were Scots pine, silver birch and alder, which were chosen for their ease of growing and the fact they were native to the UK.

Mr Nicholas said the newspaper gained little commercial benefit from the campaign, but it was doing it "because it's the right thing to do".

He said a key to success was to "make it fun".

**19. Mr Roman Bunyai
Managing Director
Werkstatt Natur (Nature Workshop), Austria**

Nature Workshop - A Pedagogic Success Story

Mr Bunyai's presentation outlined the work of the Nature Workshop, a forest and hunting education organisation which worked with children to introduce them to forests and nature.

It was opened in 2003 by the Hunting Association of Burgenland and catered for 10,000 children a year. It hoped to expand to take 15,000 a year. It targeted children in the kindergarten age group and grammar school children (7 - 11 years old), and was very 'hands-on' in concept.

Its programme was based on the seasons, so the topics and the way things were taught were based on the time of the year, and what the plants and animals were doing at that time of year. It could provide nature-themed birthday, Christmas and Easter parties and after-school childcare.

The centre was sited in a mixed forest and had a pond for pond dipping, a stream, a barefoot sensory trail, a labyrinth, a "tree telephone", a squirrel tree and a barbecue area.

It made special offers of programmes, such as a "Day in the Forest", "A Forest in 4 Seasons" and "A Year in a Forest", the latter of which involved 10 visits spread over a year.

Quality control was the key to success.

**20. Mr Thomas Baschny
Forest Education Officer
Austrian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment & Water
Management**

Waldzeit

Mr Baschny outlined the initial work of Waldzeit, an association of forest-related organisations which aimed to become the leading 'voice' of forestry in Austria. It began this year with a mandate to continue until 2013, and has a budget of 3.8 million Euros. Its activities so far included:

- a public opinion survey of 1000 Austrians between the ages of 14 and 59 about the attributes they saw in Austrian forests;
- cultural events, such as a "forest opera" during EFW;
- publication of a booklet on forest etiquette for forest visitors;
- a publicity project involving all towns and villages in Austria with "forest", "wood" or "forester" in their names; and
- a challenge to children aged 11 to 14 to come up with ideas for forest education activities.

**21. Mr Marcel Riedl
Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Wood Science, University of Life Sciences
Prague, Czech Republic**

Marketing and Brand Management

Mr Riedl's presentation outlined the importance of good "brand management" in forest communications.

He pointed out that in the Czech Republic almost 23% of people never visit a forest at all, and another 35% average only one visit a year, making a total of 58 per cent – well over half - with little or no personal contact with forests. This represented a considerable challenge to people who wanted to influence these people to value, appreciate and use forests and forest products.

He said that names and brands can influence the values of things as perceived by the public and consumers.

A key to success was 'KISS' – 'keep it short and simple', because people hear too many messages and don't remember the complicated ones.

Good brand management allows an organisation to deliver a 360-degree coherent message. Brand management strategy must align the organisation's vision, culture and image; the 'think, feel and do' aspects of the brand and image; and the 'emotion, experience and relationship' evoked by the brand.

These aspects needed to be blended in a co-ordinated mix to reach target audiences most effectively.

Good brand management also had to 'touch' people, or reach into their hearts, to be most effective, because people are not always logical in their reactions and behaviour (head versus heart).

A brand does not have to be stuck with one image – it can reinvent itself. Skoda is a classic example – once the laughing stock of the motor manufacturing world, it turned its fortunes around with a highly successful advertising campaign based on making fun of itself ("So good I can't believe it's a Skoda!").

Mr Riedl stressed the importance of thorough planning, and understanding different audiences' different "realities".

**22. Ms Kristin Dawes
Communications Officer
Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe
(MCPFE)**

Recent communications developments by the MCPFE

Ms Dawes' reviewed the recent communications work of the MCPFE, including the development of a communications strategy. She began by outlining exactly what the MCPFE is, what it does, and its recent achievements, including the agreement of guidelines and criteria for sustainable forest management in the 46 countries involved.

She outlined the organisation's communications strategy and activities, noting that it worked in an environment of poor knowledge and understanding of the MCPFE and its work. This lack of knowledge applied to policy-makers in relevant related sectors as well as the public.

The key objectives of the communications strategy were to strengthen the political position of sustainable forest management and strengthen the position of the MCPFE.

Implementation of the strategy required co-ordinated communications actions from the MCPFE countries. To this end it had identified "dialogue groups" as key target audiences, and these included:

- Policy makers at national, EU and international level in forestry and relevant sectors;
- Decision makers in other sectors in MCPFE signatory countries, such as the climate, energy, water, biodiversity and agriculture sectors;
- the media; and
- the public.

Having identified these groups it had developed a "strategic roadmap" and measures it needed to take to build the dialogue with them.

Ms Dawes concluded by summarising some recent activities, including the launch of a new website, www.mcpfe.org.

23. FCN Decisions and Conclusion

During the discussions of the reports the following decisions were agreed:

1. A Working Group for the preparation of the EU Forest Communication Strategy should be established, to work in close co-operation with the FCN and building on the work already done by the FCN;
2. The EC survey "Shaping Forest Communication in the European Union: public perceptions of forests and forestry", once adopted officially, should become a basis for the preparation of the EU Forest Communication Strategy;
3. Devote the next FCN meeting, planned for May 2010, to elaborate a Communication Plan for the International Year of Forests (2011) as well as for preparing inputs to the development process of the EU Forest Communication Strategy;
4. Hold the next meeting of the FCN as a joint activity together with the Working Group for the preparation of EU Forest Communication Strategy; and
5. Recognize the high quality and scope of the work done by the sub-group on Forest Pedagogics during the last period between FCN meetings, and strongly suggest that all members of the FCN facilitate an increase of the number of countries participating in the sub-group on Forest Pedagogics and to continue the work.

Concluding the session, Mr Kotovics congratulated members on the success of their activities so far, and encouraged members to recruit more members from more countries. The exact date and location of the next meeting would be discussed by a sub-group and notified to the membership in due course.

On behalf of the group he thanked Mr Kocher and his colleagues from the Forestry Training Centre Lyss for their excellent organisation and hosting of the meeting.

24. Evening activity

During the evening the members and guests enjoyed a dinner cruise on Lake Biel, including a stop at a wine-making village on the shores of the lake to learn about the local wine industry.

Day 3 – Wednesday 30 September

25. Field Trip

The third day was spent visiting a site in the Entlebuch Mountains in the Canton of Lucerne to see at first hand some of the work of the Mountain Forest project.

This project is run by a conservation foundation, and it aims to protect and enhance forests in the high mountain regions of Switzerland which serve important protective functions, such as helping to prevent landslips, erosion, rock falls and flooding.

The site visited by the FCN had once been heavily deforested by local people unsustainably harvesting the timber for industrial purposes. This had led to serious erosion and flooding. The forests had been replanted and protected for the past 100 or more years, and the Mountain Forest project works to ensure their long-term sustainable management.

Work includes selective felling of trees for timber production and for opening up small areas to encourage natural regeneration. On the day of the visit the Foundation staff were supervising a team of 'corporate volunteers' from a Zurich office of the Credit Suisse Bank, who were removing brash from such a felling site to allow seeds to regenerate. Corporate volunteers form a significant part of the workforce used by the project, and a member of the Credit Suisse team gave a talk on why and how the bank gets involved in it.

The day also included a video presentation about the Unesco Biosphere Reserve of Entlebuch, the only such reserve in Switzerland. Under this initiative, Unesco works with local people on exemplary concepts for the protection, maintenance and long-term sustainable development of local resources. The Biosphere Entlebuch represents pre-alpine moor and karst landscapes: Switzerland's largest and most numerous moorland landscapes are within a 400 square kilometre area of Entlebuch, and contain flora and fauna of national and international importance.

ENDS

Minutes by Kristin Dawes and Charlton Clark