

from Nordic Forest Research SNS



Forest economics is a broad field, constantly developing with the surrounding society. Photo: Mats Hannerz and Wikipedia (background and industry).

Forest economists maintain a strong network - SSFE celebrates 60 year

One of the oldest and most enduring scientific networks supported under the SNS umbrella turned sixty this year. The Scandinavian Society of Forest Economics (SSFE) has brought researchers in the Nordic countries together since 1958. Biennial conferences have been organised almost without interruption. The anniversary was celebrated at a conference in Denmark in May 2018.

The history of SSFE dates back to Stockholm in 1958, when a group of young forest economists initiated a seminar that was held in conjunction with the Nordic Forestry Congress. Two years later, the first formal meeting of the society took place in Ås, Norway. It was a three-day event filled with lectures with titles such as “The problems with formulation

of goals in a company”, “An example of long term planning by linear programming” and “Use of computers and numerical methods”.

In a story published on the society webpage and originally written in 1988, Professor John Eid described the first 30 years of the society. Besides the many and regular conferences and its proceedings,



Photo: Mats Hannerz.

Bo Jellemark Thorsen: “Many colleagues have attended the society from their MSc year and well up into their retirement.”

he highlighted achievements such as the cooperative project “Readings in Forest Economics”, resulting in a book published at Universitetsforlaget, Oslo. The next large project “Newsletter” was developed in Finland. The newsletter was distributed during the period 1972-1984. The society also compiled “Who’s who in Scandinavian Forest Economics” in 1979.

Sixty years is a long time, even from a forest perspective. Forest economics is an old field, starting with the German forester Martin Faustmann and his formula of present value from 1849. Even though the Faustmann’s formula is still used, the scientific field does change. In the 30-year chronicle, John Eid predicted increased globalisation and international cooperation for



SSFE 60 years, cont.

the coming decades, and also that new scientific fields such as the combination of economics and ecology would become important. And he has turned out to be right, when looking back 30 years later.

Economics is broadening

Bo Jellesmark Thorsen, Professor at University of Copenhagen, has been chairing the board the last few years. He agrees with John Eid that the field of economics has developed.

– I consider forest economics to be one of the original core fields of resource economics (the others are fisheries and energy). Over the 60 years SSFE has been active, the area has branched out. We now include several specialisations with a forest twist. Examples include the economics of trade, forest sector modelling, environmental valuation studies, the multi-criteria planning paradigm and so on.

He also stresses that the subject of forest economics develops with the surrounding society.

– Current challenges from globalisation, climate change and biodiversity losses all demand still more integrated system approaches to analyse possible paths for future policies to solve and balance the issues. Forest economics is challenged by this complexity, like many other sciences. Still, it is important to offer clear advice and insights.

Welcoming atmosphere

Networks come and go, but the society has maintained its continuous collaboration over the years. What are the secrets for making the network so strong?

– I think there are a few elements that explain this. First and foremost is probably the welcoming atmosphere in a stable structure. We put great emphasis on the social aspects of the programme, and we make it cheap for PhD students to attend – thanks to SNS! Many colleagues have attended the society from their MSc thesis year and well up into their retirement. The second element is that we, as a group, are not turned inward towards our own specialisation. Instead, members of the network interact with many other disciplines and participate in other high-level conferences. This ensures that we, when we meet, are up-to-date and can share the latest insights across all sub-fields. A third reason is the collaborations in many international projects. This binds us together in a large and extended network.

– There are maybe some 70-90 people at a typical SSFE meeting, of which some 30-40 participate almost every time. But this is out of several hundreds of researchers who are in fact connected to the SSFE and occasional participants. So, the network reach is substantial, says Bo Jellesmark Thorsen.

SSFE conference in Helsingør, May 2018

The jubilee conference attracted some 90 participants, many from outside the Nordic area. There were more than 50 presentations during the four-day event, which also included an in-conference excursion.

Extracts from the conference:

Jenni Miettinen & Markku Ollikainen, Sustainable forest-based bioeconomy: A case of biorefinery

Traditional forest industries are now turning into biorefineries, producing energy and a variety of sidelines for bioproduct companies. In a perfectly competitive market, the opportunity for bioenergy production being combined with the sale of sidelines by a pulp company increases the use of wood. When a pulp mill is a monopoly seller, it sells fewer sidelines and uses more wood in energy production compared to when there is perfect competition. As a result, the bioproduct company may not be able to buy enough raw material and cannot maximise its profits.

Gintare Baublyte et al., “Being one of the boys” - perspectives from female forest industry leaders on gender diversity and the future of the Nordic forest-based bioeconomy

Women are underrepresented in the top leadership positions in the Nordic forest sector, despite an increasing proportion of women entering higher education programmes. Interviews with female leaders show that the norm is still to “be one of the boys”. The ability of Nordic forest companies to adapt to strategic developments in the bioeconomy will require a more diverse company culture.

Dianne Staal Wästerlund et al., How do forest owners develop trust in their timber procurement organisation?

Non-resident forest owners have a tendency to judge whether the timber procurer can be trusted rather than the company they represent. Most forest owners also judge the timber procurement organisation's ability to deliver what they promise when making the timber deal. Forest owners who lack experience in selling timber try to assess and interpret the companies' motives and, if found to match their own, the forest owners also express high levels of trust.

About Scandinavian Society of Forest Economics (SSFE)

About 90 members from Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway.

Promotes:

- co-operation between forest economists in the Nordic countries
- planning and delivering collective Nordic research in forest economics and closely related areas
- co-operation on common Nordic actions for higher education in forest economics and closely related areas.

Organises biennial conferences and working group meetings. Promotes “Honorary Fellows” among senior colleagues and also honours the best PhD presentations during the conferences.

Webpage: www.ssfe-network.org

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Perspectives: Climate change – Forest sector needs action now

By Johan Wester

The past summer was very hot and dry in most of the Nordic and Baltic countries, and therefore the effects of climate change have been highlighted. The heat contributed to increased awareness and discussions about a reality we might be facing sooner than expected.

A high risk of forest fires and consequent restrictions on forests operations as well as the impact of severe drought on forest plantations are some of the obvious consequences affecting forests owners, forest machine operators and the forest industry.

The forest sector has, of course, a very important role in mitigation of climate change. Indeed, SNS has recently presented information on that subject. The dual benefits of forests and forestry with both substitution of products based on fossil carbon and further carbon sequestration are emphasised.

Adaptation is crucial

Adaptation of forests and forestry to climate change is another important issue. Trees planted in 2018 will grow and finally be harvested under different climatic conditions according to the IPCC scenarios.

Even though timber production in, for example, Sweden is predicted to increase by some 20 to 40 % over this century, the forests will also face increased risks. Storm damage, forest fires and the risk of severe drought during the summer will probably increase.

There will also be a greater risk of insect damage. New pests and pathogens may spread northwards from regions with warmer climates. Higher temperatures and more precipitation during the winter will probably make forest operations and transport more difficult. In addition,

biodiversity will be affected in various ways.

This is what you can do

All these risks can, however, be counteracted to various degrees if they are adequately taken into account in forest management. There is a range of potential measures that can be taken by the forest owner to adapt to the changing climate, addressing different issues. These measures include:

- Using forest regeneration material adapted to climate change.
- Controlling population size of moose and roe-deer to prevent damage in young stands and improve the chance of regeneration of species other than spruce.
- Trying to establish stands with other tree species in case of high dominance of a single tree species, or establishing stands with mixed tree species.
- Practicing early and robust thinning, retaining the species mixture in mixed stands.
- Avoiding thinning in older stands and the creation of forests edges exposed to wind damage, especially in stands dominated by spruce.
- Preventing damage from root rot and bark beetles.



- Undertaking environmental protection measures during all forest operations, for example by leaving buffer zones along streams, lakes and mires, and minimising damage to soil and water during off-road transport.
- Improving the use of guidelines for forest operations based on fire risk and landslide/erosion assessments.

The forest sector will meet the challenges of combining and balancing the objectives to secure and increase timber production, avoiding increased costs and maintaining other ecosystem services and preserving biodiversity.

We need to know more

Further research is needed about the anticipated climatic changes and their effects on forests. We will need the continuous development of strategies and forest management practices to be able to handle the consequences from the short and long term perspectives.



Johan Wester works for the Swedish Forest Agency, and is a member of the SNS board. Photo: Mats Hannerz.

Climate change is big in global media

A survey undertaken by Meltwater, a media monitoring company, found that climate change issues are frequently reported in the media around the world. The survey covered the period 2014-2018. The number of articles about climate change written by journalists has increased twofold over the period. Most of the articles are judged to be neutral to the topic, reporting facts. There is also a trend towards a slightly more positive tone in the articles. Journalists and society look forward to efforts to combat climate change, particularly after the Paris agreement.

The survey also covered social media, back to 2017. In that year, over 22 million posts dealt with climate and global change. The number of posts has increased dramatically in 2018 to twice

as many compared to the same period the previous year. While journalists report on climate impact, private individuals communicate more emotionally.

Most articles are written in the USA and China, followed by Australia, Brazil and Canada. Since Donald Trump became president of the USA, many articles from that country deal with his controversial statements.

The report “*Klimatpåverkan i digitala medier internationellt*” [Climate impact in digital media internationally] was published by Meltwater in cooperation with the organisation WeDontHaveTime. It was launched during Politicians’ Week in Almedalen, Sweden, in June.

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Shortcuts

Climate change in the media – scientists can learn how to report

A new handbook for scientists has been launched by The Lookout Station. The incentive to publish the book stemmed from the fact that journalists often get lost in scientific language, uncertainty and the “it depends” narrative during the process of journalistic research. Scientists, on the other hand, find that the media does not present the scientific evidence and facts in an accurate way, and as a consequence, they lose trust in journalists and the media.

The Lookout Station is a science-media initiative by the European Forest Institute (EFI). The “*Handbook for Scientists: Driving Scientific Research into journalistic reporting on forests, environment and climate change*” is written by Elisabetta Tola, a science communication expert and data journalist.

The book can be downloaded from <https://thelookoutstation.com>.

Join the next Matchmaking Day

On November 8 2018, SNS, EFINORD, NordGen Forest and NKJ organises a new Matchmaking Day in Ås, Norway. The event is a good chance for scientists to meet, expand their networks and initiate new cooperation projects. Besides workshops, there will be lectures on how to make research networks creative and effective.

Read more www.nordicforestresearch.org

Norway and Sweden: Forest film across the border

Young forests are not much different in Norway and Sweden, and so are the instructions given about precommercial thinning. A new film about tending forest stands combines expertise from *Skogkurs* in Norway and *Säker Skog* in Sweden. The scenes were shot in August in Biri, Norway. The film will be completed in early 2019. The content will be a combination of practical instructions with facts about the biological prerequisites for different types of forests.

The film will be freely available on the Swedish knowledge system www.skogskunskap.se, and also through Skogkurs and Säker Skog.



Mathilda Clausén Wingårdh, Sweden, and Jannicke Modell Røhmen, Norway, acted as instructors in the film, shot by Heurgren Film AB. Photo: Mats Hannerz.

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More info about SNS:
www.nordicforestresearch.org

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