

IUFRO comes to Canada!

Dedication to forestry extension, a number of site visits by key committee members, and several proposals later, Canada – the Ottawa Valley in particular – finally won the honour of hosting the ninth symposium of the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations' (IUFRO) Extension and Technology Transfer working parties! This event, a few years in the making, brought an eclectic suite of 55 forestry extension professionals from five continents to experience Canada's rich forestry and cultural heritage, starting in Mattawa and following our chief trade route of old down to Ottawa.

The presentations given by almost every participant were extremely enlightening, covering the general practice of forestry in countries ranging from Ghana to the Philippines, Japan, Slovenia, Argentina, to the US and Canada, and their particular challenges and issues. Somewhat surprising is the fact that many of these countries and organizations faced similar challenges in terms of extension. The main themes that surfaced repeatedly throughout the symposium

included: the need for increased community-level participation, utilizing multiple channels for knowledge acquisition, recognizing and responding to diversity, using knowledge of the diffusion process to develop targeted delivery methods, and connecting policy and public interests.

It is always quite a humbling experience to see the challenges that other people and countries face in terms of administration, governance, and climate – it definitely serves to make one appreciate the policies and processes in place at home! It also, however, brings attention to the initiatives and advances being made in other parts of the world that could be adopted locally.

As interesting and important as the presentations were, this couldn't have been a true IUFRO event without taking time to experience the culture and traditions of the host country. The lovely September weather allowed participants to enjoy everything from a



lumberjack show to campfires with local lore and music, to paddling voyageur canoes down the Mattawa River for a reward of a shore dinner of French-Canadian fare, all the way to exploring the city of Ottawa and meeting a very personable RCMP officer on Parliament Hill! The tours of the 90 year old Petawawa Research Forest, a Quebec logging



museum, an old growth hardwood stand, and the Eastern Ontario Model Forest were very effective in conveying the progress that Canada has made in terms of forest operations, policy, and research over the past century. I'm sure most of the participants will never forget their first-ever taste of maple syrup – straight out of the sugar bush in Limerick!

A fantastic website has been put together by Natural Resources Canada (www.iufroextension.org); please have a click through it to see the program, presentations, and especially to look at the multitude of fun-filled photos in the gallery! For any participants or even those who simply wished to participate, copies of the popular summaries booklet and the stylish, multipurpose IUFRO thermoses are available for order online.