



RIPNET

Riparian Research and Management Network



January 20th, 2009

Dear Sir/Madame;

We are writing on behalf of the Riparian Research and Management Network (RIPNET) to invite you or a delegate from your office/agency to participate in an expert workshop titled “Decision Support Systems for Riparian Management: Integrating Ecological Benefits and Operational Principles”.

There has been considerable effort in recent years to develop forest management policies that integrate riparian systems with landscape level approaches but effective mechanisms that facilitate effective decision-making for managing riparian forests remains elusive. RIPNET was created, in part, to address this need, by developing a science-based decision-support system (DSS) that can be applied by the forest industry and provincial/federal regulatory agencies as part of a sustainable riparian forest management strategy. A previous workshop focused on developing the conceptual basis of the DSS. That workshop considered the different values (hydro-ecological, social, economic) of riparian systems that should be considered, identified and prioritized information needed to make effective decisions relating to riparian forest management, and identified the type of guidance required by forest planners to select appropriate management options when harvesting in riparian areas. Presentations and output from that workshop can be found at <http://www.uoguelph.ca/~psibley/ripnet/workshop.html>.

As forest management guidelines are revised across Canada, many will permit harvesting in riparian areas. A number of studies are currently investigating responses of riparian areas to different harvesting regimes (e.g., partial harvest), but consensus on key questions such as where, how, and how much harvesting should be conducted remains elusive. It is in this context that the current workshop has been developed. The goal of the workshop is to provide a forum for experts from various sectors to develop a practical basis for determining when, where, and how to harvest in riparian areas and to integrate this information into the riparian DSS. Using a unique approach that combines presentations and practical sessions, specific objectives of the workshop are:

- To evaluate and improve the functionality of the riparian DSS by:
 - Establishing a practical basis for deciding *when and where* to harvest in riparian areas;
 - Identifying both constraints and practical approaches of *how* to harvest in riparian areas to provide operators with the guidance needed to achieve management goals;
 - Developing a detailed list of operational criteria, and rationale for their use, related to riparian stand and structure requirements and the equipment that can/should be used;
 - Integrating/linking this information to decision points within the DSS
- To provide practical advice and understanding of riparian management issues by:
 - Developing management plans that incorporate riparian harvesting to identify constraints and limitations, both in the context of the DSS and new Ontario riparian guidelines.
 - Learn about new tools and best management practices that can be used to aid in riparian forest management.

With pending implementation of new forest guidelines in Ontario, we feel that this workshop represents a unique opportunity to bring together operations and planning staff from industry and scientists from

government and academia to discuss the needs and opportunities for riparian management. We hope this workshop will provide practitioners with the information and tools to help them understand and take advantage of potential economic opportunities while maximizing ecological benefits and minimizing ecological risks. We feel that the workshop would benefit greatly from your expertise and experience.

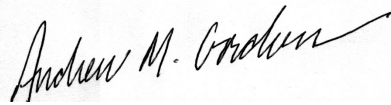
The workshop will be held from March 24-25, 2009 at Sault College of Applied Arts and Technology in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. Registration for the conference is \$100.00 which will cover the cost of breakfast, lunch, and breaks on each day and a dinner on the first day. We will be finalizing an itinerary for the workshop in the next few weeks and will provide attendees with preparatory material that will describe the goals and key questions that we wish to address during the workshop in greater detail.

We thank you for considering this invitation and look forward to your response. For planning purposes, we would be grateful if you could reply before Friday, February 20th 2009.

Sincerely yours,



Paul Sibley
University of Guelph



Andrew Gordon
University of Guelph



David Kreutzweiser
Natural Resources Canada

Cc

Paul Hazlett (Natural Resources Canada)
Brian Naylor (Ministry of Natural Resources)
Brad Sutherland (FPIinnovations)