

Editorial

FOREST CANOPIES 1998: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

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At the first international forest canopy conference in November 1994, more than 150 scientists, educators, and conservationists from 25 countries gathered at the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens in Sarasota, Florida. They covered a range of issues and formulated a new vision of forest ecosystems (Lowman *et al.* 1995). That vision included not just the ground level layers studied for more than a century, but also the vast and relatively unexplored region above the reaches of conventional field observations. Participants at the first symposium included pioneering canopy scientists from all over the world who had dedicated their careers to designing methods and asking questions about the crowns of trees and the biodiversity housed there. The 1994 conference represented the first time that many of these distinguished researchers had the opportunity to meet and compare notes on their vital studies.

Now, four years later, the Second International Forest Canopy Conference is about to convene. This symposium, entitled **Forest Canopies 1998: Global Perspectives**, represents a maturation of our initial methods and ideas. The proof is in our recent achievements:

- the *Radeau des Cimes* (or canopy raft expedition) completed its third expedition in 1996, this time in French Guyana, where an international team of scientists tackled biological questions of a South American tropical forest site (Hallé 1998);
- the Canopy Crane Network had its inaugural meeting in Panama in 1997, and seven cranes are now in use (or near completion) in forest canopy regions around the world;
- Indonesia, Cameroon, Peru, and Western Samoa have joined the many countries now implementing canopy research programs;
- Many regions of the world are beginning to recognize that forest canopies house a wealth of global biodiversity, medicines, foods, and important products needed to sustain life on Earth as we know it.

The Second International Forest Canopy Conference promises to bring together a wealth of knowledge and ideas relating to some of the world's most precious resources—our forests and their inhabitants (the majority of them can-

opy dwellers). Tropical rain forests are under threat, and both biological and political data are needed to implement sound conservation practices. With time running out for rain forest ecosystems, participants at this meeting can take a major step in facilitating international policies to conserve them.

The sessions for the conference include:

1. biodiversity in forest canopies (chairs Nigel Stork and Joachim Adis)
2. advances in South American canopy biology (chairs Sérgio Ribeiro and Talita Fontoura)
3. canopy-atmosphere dynamics, including trace gas exchange (chairs Manuel Lerda and Gary Lovett)
4. global perspectives in forest conservation and education (chairs H. Bruce Rinker and M. V. Subba Rao)
5. how can canopy scientists integrate their research with global policy-making? (chairs Meg Lowman and Tom Lovejoy)
6. epiphytes and vines in forest canopies (chairs Bruce Holst and Wilhelm Barthlott)
7. canopy ecophysiology (chairs Steve Mulkey and Kaoru Kitajima)
8. canopy-forest floor interactions (chairs D.A. Crossley, Mark Hunter, and Tim Schowalter)
9. ecology and behavior of vertebrates in forest canopies (chairs Hans Winkler and Dave Shaw)
10. temperate forest canopy research (chairs Steve Sillett and Neville Winchester)

In addition, a Careers in the Canopy Day was hosted for local teachers and school students the day prior to the official conference. At this workshop, scientists representing different canopy disciplines presented hands-on activities about their methods for conducting canopy research. At the same time, a methods workshop was conducted for scientists and educators who wanted to discuss particular details about different canopy access techniques.

The conference proceedings will be forthcoming in the next several issues of *Selbyana*. In addition, a separate volume of selected articles will be published by Smithsonian Press as a semi-popular volume. We hope you enjoy the results as published, as canopy research continues to expand and progress into an international

discipline. On behalf of the participants and session chairs and co-chairs, I extend profound thanks to our major sponsors: National Science Foundation, United Nations Environmental Program, Horticultural Industries, Sarasota Bay Rotary Club, Founders Circle Garden Club, Harcourt Brace Publishers, Diana Lager Foundation, Dr. and Mrs. Bobby Shewmake, Dr. and Mrs. Michael Lamensdorf, IMC-Agrico, Marty and Jane Faust, and Dr. and Mrs. Richard Perry. A special thanks to the volunteers who assisted with the program: Tom Roberts, Louise Henderson, Barry Walsh, Ralph Skinner, Tom Giles, and many others.

Thank you for your support and participation

in this conference. In future years, we may look back and recognize the value of this gathering in promoting global perspectives of forest conservation.

LITERATURE CITED

- HALLÉ F., ed. 1998. *Biologie D'une Canopée de Forêt Equatoriale III. Pro-Natura International & Opération Canopée*, France. 153 pp.
- LOWMAN M., F. HALLÉ, B. BOURICIUS, P. COLEY, N. NADKARNI, G. PARKER, K. SATERSON, AND S.J. WRIGHT. 1995. What's up? Perspectives from the First International Forest Canopy Conference at Sarasota, Florida, 1994. *Selbyana* 16: 1-11.

DEDICATION

This conference and its published proceedings are dedicated to the late Professor Tamiji Inoue (Center for Ecological Research, Kyoto University) who died in the act of conducting canopy research. Our fondest thoughts are with his family, students and friends.