

## Forest Conference Report No. 2, 2024

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### ABSTRACT

Forest Conference Reports provide an overview of selected conferences the JFBR Editorial Team visited during a particular time period. In this issue, we cover meetings throughout 2024.

Forest conferences featured in this report:

- International Society of Forest Resource Economics (ISFRE);
- 7th Sustainable Investor Forum (SIS);
- Short Rotation Woody Crops International Conference (SRWCIC);
- The 20th Symposium on System Analysis in Forest Resources (SSAFR2024);
- IV International Forest Business Conference (IFBC);
- Western Forest Economists (WFE);
- International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) World Congresses.

In addition, we highlight the upcoming 2025 events that align with the mission of the Journal of Forest Business Research and encourage everyone to attend:

- ISFRE
- University of Georgia (UGA) Timberland Investment Conference
- Scandinavian Society of Forest Economics (SSF)
- WFE
- DecisionES Annual Conference

Would you be interested in inviting our Journal to your upcoming forest event? We would love to feature it in our following Forest Conference Reports and share the details with our Readers. Let us know if you would be open to this, and we can discuss the logistics further. Contact Rafal Chudy at: [rafal@forest-journal.com](mailto:rafal@forest-journal.com)

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**International Society of Forest Resource Economics (ISFRE)**

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April 1-3, 2024 / Little Rock, AR, USA / Elaborated by: Shaun Tanger

For the 45<sup>th</sup> time, The International Society of Forest Resource Economics (formally SOFEW) held its annual meeting on April 1-3, 2024. The theme for the meeting was “What’s Over the Horizon? Future Challenges and Opportunities Facing Sustainable Forest Management”. Presenters covered a wide range of forestry topics: aspects of timber management and utilization, timber supply and demand, international trade, forest policy, law and many other current issues involved in the business of forestry. The meeting was held at the Little Rock Marriot in Arkansas and was hosted by the newly formed Arkansas Center for Forest Business, College of Forestry, Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Arkansas at Monticello, which welcomed approximately 80 forest resource economists from around the Country. The meeting consisted of 1.5 days of presentations followed by a half-day field trip.

In keeping with the theme of the meeting, we welcomed industry representatives from Weyerhaeuser, Boise Cascade, and Kingwood Forestry to discuss what they saw as pressing research needs for the larger profession. The meeting was also the first welcoming plenary speakers. Bruce Westerman, who represents Arkansas’s 4<sup>th</sup> congressional district, is the only active congressman with a forestry degree who addressed important issue areas for researchers to explore from his perspective and mentioned several forestry initiatives of his own.



*Congressman Bruce Westerman, AR 4<sup>th</sup> district, plenary speaker.*

The meeting is traditionally capped off with a field trip, and this year, it was held at the Wilson Brothers Lumber Co. sawmill operation in Rison, AR. The Wilson brother's lumber company is unique in that it includes two logging companies, a lumber company, an equipment company, and a forest management company, employing more than 100 people in Cleveland County, Arkansas. Wilson Brothers Lumber Co. was founded in 1970. The company designs record-keeping software for lumber operations, loggers, and landowners and owns over 30,000 acres. Some land is currently piloting both pine/hardwood mixtures and wide-spacing pine plantations as possible larger-scale answers to depressed pine pulpwood prices in the Western Gulf region.



*UAM graduate student Bandana Subedi, winner of one of the Journal of Forest Business Research (JFBR) oral presentation awards and UAM faculty member Dr. Nana Tian. The Journal has partnered with ISFRE to fund these awards for the last few years.*

### 7th Sustainable Investor Forum (SIS)

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May 7-8, 2024 / Frankfurt, Germany / Elaborated by: Jacek Siry

The 7<sup>th</sup> Sustainable Investor Summit (SIS) was organized by the Institutional Capital Forum on May 7-8, 2024 in Frankfurt, Germany. The purposes of SIS were to advance sustainable, responsible and impact investing across a range of asset classes. The program covered the latest developments in sustainable and impact investment, strategy, regulation, data and impact measurement, reporting, and innovation financing.

Rafal Chudy moderated the expert panel on “Forestry: the little know asset class with a big future,” during which expert panelists Jyri Hietala (Fund Manager, United Bankers), Roger Naylor (Portfolio Manager, Evli Fund Management Company Ltd), Jasper Renk (Senior Investment Manager Forestry & Agriculture, MEAG), and Jacek Siry (Stuckey Timberland Professor of Forest

Economics and Taxation, The University of Georgia) discussed the most recent developments in the world of forest investments. Forestry was recognized as a complex asset class demanding dedicated expertise to develop successful investments. While these investments are less liquid, they provide opportunities to capitalize on illiquidity premiums. Forest investments require patient capital and a long-term vision to produce attractive risk-adjusted returns. The stable demand for wood-based products and the emergence of markets for ecosystem services (carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation) were recognized as key current and future return drivers, allowing the achievement of financial return along with positive environmental impacts.

### **2024 Short Rotation Woody Crops International Conference**

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May 13-16, 2024 / Columbia, MO, USA / Elaborated by: Elizabeth Rogers and Ryan Vinhal

The 14<sup>th</sup> biennial Short Rotation Woody Crops International Conference was hosted by the University of Missouri Center for Agroforestry (UMCA) from May 13-16, 2024, in Columbia, MO. The conference theme was “The Future is Green: Integrating Short Rotation Woody Crops (SRWCs), Agroforestry, and Ecosystem Services for Sustainable, Productive Landscapes”. A joint meeting of the Short Rotation Woody Crops Operations Working Groups and the Poplar and Willow Council of Canada (PWCC), the 2024 conference brought together members of leading SRWC and agroforestry organizations with the goal of enhancing information exchange and fostering collaboration for integrating SWRCs into agroforestry systems. The conference began with tours of UMCA facilities on Monday, followed by technical presentations on Tuesday and Wednesday. The conference’s final day started with a panel discussion among SRWC and agroforestry researchers and practitioners on current challenges and opportunities for integrating short-rotation woody crops into agroforestry systems. That afternoon, the conference concluded with a field tour of UMCA’s Horticulture and Agroforestry Research Farm.

Over 60 participants from around the world attended the conference, including researchers, practitioners, students, and farmers. The conference consisted of three plenary presentations, 31 oral presentations, and 17 poster presentations from a variety of topic areas, including agroforestry, biomass production, economics, ecosystem services, genetics, physiology, and phytotechnologies.

Unique to this year’s conference, there were multiple student-focused initiatives throughout, including: 1) the first-ever Woody Crops Scholars Program, 2) a student career panel discussion,

and 3) a student presentation competition. These initiatives enhanced student participation and engagement at the conference and were supported by the Journal of Forest Business Research (JFBR), PWCC, Mississippi State University, University of Missouri, Intrinsyx Environmental, and Ecolotree. JFBR sponsored the 1<sup>st</sup> place awards for the winners of the oral and poster presentation competitions that were given to Macy Gosselaar (The University of British Columbia) and Ruth Williamson (University of Missouri), respectively, for their outstanding student forest research. JFBR Scientific Advisory Board Member Dr. Austin Himes, who presented on “Biomass yield of *Populus* in experimental monoclonal and polyclonal plantings”, was the chair of the student subcommittee of the conference and presented the awards to the 1<sup>st</sup> place winners.



*Participants of the 2024 Short Rotation Woody Crops International Conference at the Horticulture and Agroforestry Research Farm. Photo Courtesy of the University of Missouri Center for Agroforestry.*

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**The 20<sup>th</sup> Symposium on System Analysis in Forest Resources (SSAFR2024)**

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May 13 to 17, 2024 / Hondarribia, Basque Country, Spain/

Elaborated by: Jordi Garcia-Gonzalo.

The 20th Symposium of System Analysis in Forest Resources was organized by Dr. Jordi Garcia-Gonzalo from the Forest Sciences and Technology Centre of Catalonia (CTFC) in Hondarribia in May 13-17<sup>th</sup>, and it was sponsored by IUFRO Units 4.04.04 and 4.04.06 as well as by the project DecisionES<sup>1</sup> - Decision Support for the Supply of Ecosystem Services under Global Change and partially funded by FireRES project, the Gipuzkoa Provincial Council and the Hondarribia city council. This was the 20th Symposium in a series with previous conferences held in 1975, 1985, 1988, 1991, 1994, 1997, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009, 2017 and 2022 in the USA, 1993, 2002, 2011 and 2019 in Chile, 2005 in Brazil, 2013 in Canada and 2015 in Sweden. This series has long provided a) a venue for the presentation of state-of-the-art applications of operations research and systems analysis in forest resources management planning and policy analysis, and b) opportunities for a fertile exchange of ideas among forest researchers and practitioners.

The symposium brought together researchers and practitioners that develop and apply methods of optimization, simulation, management science, and systems analysis to forestry problems. It reported the state of art on the development and use of operations research and system analysis to enhance forest management planning.

It involved 99 participants from 24 countries in Europe, Africa, America, Oceania and Asia. Its program encompassed six keynote presentations by Drs. Bruce Bare and Sándor Toth focusing on the history of SSAFR, Dr. Margarida Tomé, who discussed forest models and simulators in a global change context and the need for their improvement/adaptation to current forestry requirements, by Dr. Oscar Garcia who made an introduction to forest modelling with stochastic differential equations, by Dr. Keith Reynolds who presented an update on the Ecosystem Management Decision Support System (EMDS), by Dr. Pablo Asiron who presented the Remsoft approach to the application of optimization analytics for solving modern-day forestry planning challenges and by Dr. Jordi Garcia-Gonzalo who presented the European Union H2020 DecisionES project and discussed its strategy to enhance forest management planning and policy

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to: <https://decisiones.ctfc.cat/SSAFR2024/>

analysis by evolving an integrated and multifunctional ecosystem services supply approach. It encompassed further 91 oral presentations organized into 24 sessions focusing on themes such as a) Application of remote sensing in forestry, b) Forest modelling, c) Forest management and planning, d) Forest transportation and supply chain optimization, d) Wildfire risk simulation, management and decision support, e) Forest health, invasive species, and wildlife habitat management, f) Spatially explicit optimization, g) Stochastic process simulation and optimization, h) Quantitative forest and fire economics, i) Forest and watershed management, j) Data science and machine learning and k) Forest systems analysis under the impact of climate change

The conference worked well as a meeting place for experts on system analysis in a broad sense. It brought together researchers from different stages of their careers, from PhD students to researchers taking part in the very beginning of the SSAFR series from different continents. The arrangement in Hondarribia was ideal for the conference, and the three days of scientific work included a much-appreciated visit to the city's historical center.

Conference organizers are grateful to Forests Monitor<sup>2</sup> journal for sponsoring the awards for the winners of the best two oral presentations and the best paper presented by young researchers. The prizes were given to Bibiana Granda (Universidad Politécnica de Madrid), Logan Bingham (Technical University of Munich, TUM School of Life Sciences) and Lucas Murray (Universidad de Chile).

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<sup>2</sup> Refer to: <https://forestsmonitor.com/>

## IV International Forest Business Conference (IFBC)

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May 20-21, 2024 / Sopot, Poland / Elaborated by: Rafal Chudy

The International Forest Business Conference (IFBC) has consistently focused on the theme of “New Forest Business Frontiers,” a concept that explores the evolving megatrends shaping responsible forest and wood industry investments, particularly in relation to the climate and biodiversity action. This year, IFBC 2024 hosted 33 distinguished speakers, offering in-depth discussions on key topics such as international forest investments, the future of wood, the latest research in forest business, and innovative technologies transforming the field of forest investments and natural capital solutions.

The conference featured two expert panels:

- Mobilizing Finance for Forests, Climate, and Biodiversity Conservation.
- Realizing the Value of Carbon and Biodiversity Credits in Forest Investments.

Held at the Sheraton Sopot Hotel, the conference welcomed 100 registered participants, further emphasizing its international scope with over 30 speakers representing more than 20 countries. This diverse participation in the event, helped spark meaningful discussions on the challenges, opportunities, and risks within global forest investments and wood products markets, particularly in 2024 and beyond.

Among the active contributors from the Journal of Forest Business Research (JFBR) editorial team, notable presentations included:

- Dr. Virginia Morales on South America’s role in international forest trade, focusing on major exporters in the region.
- Dr. Andreas Stephan discussing the issuance of green bonds by timberland and forestry companies.
- Dr. Bruno Kanieski da Silva presenting a case study on the impact of carbon offset programs on timber supply in the US South.
- Dr. Frederick Cabbage analyzing global forest investments, returns, costs, and the integration of carbon offsets.



- Dr. Jacek Siry moderating the panel on the value of carbon and biodiversity credits in forest investments.
- Dr. Rafał Chudy moderating the session on the future of the wood industry.

The conference provided an excellent platform for bridging the gap between business and academia, advancing new frontiers, and driving progress in the global forest sector. It offered a space for deep analysis of current trends and future directions, with the goal of fostering actionable insights for professionals in forest business and investment sectors.

The International Forest Business Conference (IFBC) is held biannually, with its next edition scheduled for **May 20-21, 2026**, at the prestigious Sheraton Sopot Hotel in Poland. In addition to the main conference sessions, an excursion is planned for May 19, 2026 (Wednesday). Further details about the upcoming conference, including the full agenda, registration information, and more, will be available soon. Additionally, a **Call for Speakers** will be announced shortly, inviting experts from around the world to submit their presentations and contribute to the event's diverse program. Stay tuned for more information on the official conference website: <https://fba-events.com/>



*JFBR Editorial Team: Drs. Bruno Kanieski da Silva (left), Rafał Chudy (middle), Jacek Siry (right).*



*IFBC 2024 attendees had an opportunity to learn about international forest investments, the future of wood, the latest research in forest business, and innovative technologies transforming the field of forest investments and natural capital solutions.*

### **Western Forest Economists (WFE) 2024 Meeting**

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May 22-23, 2024 / Victoria, BC, Canada / Elaborated by: Mindy Crandall

The Western Forest Economists (WFE) 2024 Meeting was held at the Pacific Forestry Centre in Victoria, British Columbia, on May 22 & 23. More than 60 people from primarily around the Pacific Northwest were in attendance, with a dominant Canadian contingent. May 22<sup>nd</sup> opened with a lunch gathering and a thought-provoking presentation from G. Cornelis van Kooten on Forestry and the Carbon Offset Conundrum, followed by short presentations and a round table discussion on Carbon Opportunities and Developments in Canada featuring David Stevenson of Finite Carbon, David Beleznyay from Mosaic, and Warren Greeves from the Office of the Chief Forester of BC. A plenary session on the economics of wildfire wrapped up the day before the group convened at a local restaurant directly on the water for socializing and networking.

In keeping with the format from 2023, day two started with a regional round-up panel discussion on news, developments, and trends from BC and Oregon, including recent changes to Oregon's Forest Practices Act and the US Forest Service response to the National Old-Growth Amendment. This opening session was followed by concurrent sessions with presentations on topics ranging from markets to social values to models, ending with lunch and a business meeting.

A highlight was the judging and distribution of three awards for student presentations sponsored by the Journal of Forest Business Research (JFBR). The WFE 2024 recipients of the Forest Business Economics Awards for outstanding research presentations of young scholars in the forest business field went to Philippe Ambeault (University of British Columbia, who presented "From Tradition to Transformation: The Potential of Carbon Credits from Cultural Burning", Jeffrey Ross (University of Idaho), who presented "Incentivizing Investments and Interventions in the Forest Product Industry's Supply Chain to Reduce Scope 3 Emissions and Achieve Emission Reduction Targets: A Supply Shed Approach", and Victoria Diederichs (Oregon State University, who presented "Innovation and Sources of Knowledge in the Western North American Hardwood Sector". Congratulations to these emerging scholars!

WFE aims to provide space for forest economic professionals across industry, agencies, and academia to discuss current research, issues, and trends while fostering a unique professional community. The board thanks Harry Nelson, UBC, and Tim Bogle, BC Ministry of Forests, for hosting; JFBR, for helping to encourage student participation at these conference events; and all the attendees for good discussions and the chance to reconnect. We look forward to seeing everyone again at WFE 2025. Mark your calendars now for May 15 & 16, 2025 in Seattle, Washington.



WFE Board Member Ted Helvoigt (middle) with student award winners Philippe Ambeault (left) and Victoria Diederichs (right).



WFE Board Member Greg Latta (right) with student award winner Jeffrey Ross (left).

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**The 26th IUFRO World Congress “Forests & Society Towards 2050” (23-29 June, 2024)  
Session: “Planted Forests for Achieving a Sustainable Planet”.**

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June 27, 2024 / Stockholm, Sweden / Elaborated by: Jacek Siry

The 26<sup>th</sup> IUFRO (International Union of Forest Research Organization) World Congress gathered more than 4,000 participants and featured nearly the same number of presentations. JFBR editors and scientific board members Jacek Siry, Rafal Chudy, Virginia Morales and Fred Cabbage developed a technical session titled, “Planted Forests for Achieving a Sustainable Planet.” The session featured eleven technical presentations and seven poster oral presentations from around the world, which were moderated by Rafal Chudy and Bob Izlar. Presenters and their co-authors recognized that planted forests have been increasingly important for provisioning services of wood fiber and commodity production, and have emerged as a unique regulating Nature-based solution (NBS) for climate change adaptation and mitigation. Forest plantations account now for at least 30% of global industrial roundwood production and their contribution can be further increased, while reducing pressures on natural forests. Planted forests have been proposed as one of the most efficient and cost-effective means to store more atmospheric carbon and reduce adverse impacts of climate change in the short- to medium-term, along with improved forest management and reduced emissions from forest area loss.

Increasing the amount and productivity of planted forests is a crucial method to meet increasing timber and climate demands by capturing carbon in forests and subsequent wood products and providing short-run terrestrial energy. They also can help adapt to forest species migration by purposeful introduction of forest species adapted to new climate in a warmer planet, and provide additional forest biodiversity, soil health, and water quality and quantity benefits.

Increases in planted forests to achieve their promise for economic provisioning and climate regulating services mandate that a host of technical, research, policy issues must be resolved quickly. Session presenters addressed and provided insights into technical questions such as (1) the trends and magnitude of planted forests extent needed to increase production and climate roles; (2) the relative benefits of plantations versus natural forest restoration or retention for carbon storage; (3) questions of where such plantings can occur and how to deploy well-performing species to new regions; (4) the technical capacity required to produce seedlings; (5) the rapid development of forest products research and development of engineered forest and mass timber

products, and (6) the environmental benefits and impacts of planted forests. Presenters also noted that massive expansion of planted forests must also resolve issues such as (7) rural land tenure status and rights in developed and developing countries, (8) regulations promoting or limiting intensive public forest land management, (9) infrastructure requirements and development; (10) cooperation, partnerships, and policy implementation, (11) investment opportunities, costs, returns, and incentives required to attract private landowners and outgrowers to plant forests, and (12) the effects on local and global timber markets. The session increasing our understanding how these issues must be resolved for planted or other forests to achieve their potential to produce desirable wood fiber and products supplies, realize bioenergy opportunities, or store and offset vast amounts of global carbon emissions.

### Upcoming 2025 events aligned with the mission of the Journal of Forest Business Research

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Finally, we highlight the upcoming 2025 events that align with the Journal of Forest Business Research mission. We encourage everyone to attend.

### International Society of Forest Resource Economics (ISFRE) Symposium

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March 10-12, 2025 / Myrtle Beach, SC, USA

The International Society of Forest Resource Economics (formally SOFEW) hosts its annual meetings every spring to bring together representatives of industry, consulting, academia, and federal and state agencies to discuss current issues in the economics of forestry, timber markets, timberland investments, and forest products trade. Forestry and natural resources professionals, academics, executives, and students (undergraduate and graduate) from all disciplines and career levels are welcome and encouraged to submit an abstract and attend this annual gathering. The meeting will focus on the economics of climate-smart forestry and climate-smart commodities that present new challenges and opportunities to forest landowners, managers, and industries for implementing resilient and adaptive practices with market-based or non-market-based financing solutions.

The Journal of Forest Business Research (JFBR) will offer awards to recognize outstanding research presented at ISFRE 2025. Each award recipient will also receive a complimentary publication option in the JFBR.

Past Meetings - <https://www.isfre.msstate.edu/proceedings.php>

For additional information, contact Dr. Puskar Khanal, [pkhanal@clermson.edu](mailto:pkhanal@clermson.edu)

### **University of Georgia (UGA) Timberland Investment Conference**

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March 12-13, 2025 / Amelia Island, FL, USA

The 2025 Timberland Investment Conference is presented by the University of Georgia Harley Langdale Jr. Center for Forest Business. The conference brings an opportunity to learn more about timberland markets and trade on a global level. You can hear from experts about changes in policies, economics, markets, and investments. Network with more than 500 international investors; managers of public and private funds, TIMOs, REITs, and family offices; attorneys, banks, lenders, consultants, and other forest industry experts.

Conference website: <https://cfb.uga.edu/conferences-events/conference/>

For additional information, contact Erin Lincoln, [erin.lincoln@uga.edu](mailto:erin.lincoln@uga.edu)

### **Scandinavian Society of Forest Economics (SSFE) 2025 Biennial Meeting**

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May 20-22, 2025 / Oslo region, Norway

The meeting addresses climate change mitigation and adaptation while mitigating the biodiversity crisis. This international meeting aims to present research, exchange ideas, and promote collaboration among researchers on forest economics-related issues. The society covers a wide range of topics, including:

- Business Economics of Forestry & Forest Management and Planning
- Forest Policy
- Forest Industry & Forest Products Markets
- International Forestry

The Journal of Forest Business Research will sponsor three young scholars awards and an APC waiver. The Journal also offers a discount for all participants publishing in JFBR.

More information will be shortly available at <https://www.ssfe-network.org/>  
For additional information, contact Dr. Per Kristian Rørstad, [per.kristian.rorstad@nmbu.no](mailto:per.kristian.rorstad@nmbu.no)

### Western Forest Economists

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May 15-16, 2025 / Seattle, WA, USA

The conference focuses on topics related to forest or resource economics, management, and policy.  
Session themes include:

- Bioenergy and bioproducts
- Public lands issues
- Economics of wildland fire
- Innovations in the forest sector
- Markets and trade
- Non-market values and valuation

The Journal of Forest Business Research will sponsor three young scholars awards and an APC waiver. The Journal also offers a discount for all participants publishing in JFBR.

Conference website: [https://westernforesteconomists.org/?page\\_id=947](https://westernforesteconomists.org/?page_id=947)

For additional information, contact Dr. Indroneil Ganguly, [indro@uw.edu](mailto:indro@uw.edu)

### DecisionES 2025: Symposium on Ecosystem Services, Forest Management and Decision Making

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June 30-July 4, 2025 / Porto Seguro, Brazil

DecisionES project organizes an annual conference with its next edition scheduled for June 30<sup>th</sup> to July 4<sup>th</sup> 2025 in Porto Seguro (Brazil) and co-organized by the University of Sao Paulo, specifically by professor Luiz Carlos Estráviz Rodríguez (ESALQ-USP). The title of the conference is “DecisionES 2025: Symposium on Ecosystem Services, Forest Management and Decision Making”. In addition to the main conference sessions an excursion is planned to visit interesting forests in the area. Further details about the upcoming conference, including the full agenda, registration information, call for speakers and more, will be available soon at: <https://decisiones.ctfc.cat/conference2025>