

Meeting

IUFRO, Gainesville, Florida

About 680 delegates from 58 countries (including 7 from Ireland, two of whom were engaged in post-graduate studies in the U.S.A.), got together at the University of Gainesville, Florida, for the 15th Congress of the International Union of Forest Research Organisations, which took place from March 14th to 20th, 1971. Apart from the technical discussions, which are always the primary purpose behind any gathering of research workers, an important item of business was the adoption of an entirely new structure for the organisation. The old Sections will be replaced by a number of fairly clearcut Divisions, which will avoid the overlap between Sections which had developed during the years.

Within each Division there will be a number of Subject Groups and Project Groups. It is envisaged that the former will be relatively permanent while the latter will each have a specific goal, after the achievement of which the group can be dissolved. The basic division, as before, will be into Working Groups, which can overlap the Subject and Project Groups. This is the level of close personal contact at which the useful work gets done.

The arrangements for the Congress itself differed somewhat from those for previous meetings, concentrating more on plenary sessions at each of which an invited paper, summarizing the present state of a particular field of forest research was read. This arrangement, while well-intentioned, was not entirely a happy one. The plenary sessions were too large and formal for any discussion, and their number seriously depleted the time available for the Working Group meetings, which are, after all, the main business of the Congress.

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