



VYTAUTAS  
MAGNUS  
UNIVERSITY  
Faculty of Forest  
Sciences & Ecology



# SILVA Network Annual Conference

16 – 18 April, 2024

**Changing expectations of policy and society  
for higher forestry education**

# Conference program

Tuesday: 16 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	
11.00 – 12.30	Registration & Welcome <i>Venue: Universiteto str. 8A, Academia, Kaunas distr. Lithuania</i>
12.30 – 14.00	<i>Lunch</i>
14.00 – 14.30	Welcome Address: Prof. ASTRIDA MICEIKIENĖ, Chancellor of Agriculture Academy (VMU). Conference Opening: NORBERT WEBER, President SILVA Network & Chairman of Forest Policy and Forest Resource Economics, TU Dresden (Germany) IUFRO Announcement: MIKA REKOLA, <b>IUFRO Research Group 6.09 "Forest Education" coordinator &amp; Director, Master of Science programme, Forest Sciences, University of Helsinki (Finland)</b>
14.30 – 15.45	Keynote Speech Addressing societal expectations through curricular innovation, example from Sweden – VILIS BRUKAS, Southern Swedish Forest Research Centre, SLU (Sweden)  Session 1: Development of a higher forestry education curricula in the context of societal demands and global issues  Human and social science knowledge and curricula in forestry higher education – ISTVÁN LÜKÓ, BÁLINT HEIL, University of Sopron (Hungary)
15.45 – 16.15	<i>Coffee break</i>
16.15 – 18.15	Reflections on the Master <b>"Environmental sciences with specialization in Forest and Landscape Management" in the context of society today and the</b> graduate surveys over the past 10 years – NOËMI BRÜGGEMANN, ETH Zürich (Switzerland)  Irish Forestry Education: Expanded Horizons – MARIE DOYLE, University College Dublin (Ireland)  EUROSILVICS: Open-access repository for education support in silviculture and forest ecology – FRITS MOHREN, Wageningen University and Research (Netherlands)  Education and nature-based solutions: bending the curve for biodiversity – ANŽELIKA DAUTARTĖ, Faculty of Forest Sciences and Ecology, Agriculture Academy, VMU (Lithuania)

Wednesday: 17<sup>th</sup> April 2024

9.00 – 10:15	<p><i>Venue: Universiteto str. 8A, Academia, Kaunas distr. Lithuania</i></p> <p>Keynote Speech</p> <p>Forestry education in a changing policy environment: Lithuanian example - NERIJUS KUPSTAITIS, Forest policy expert, Vilnius (Lithuania)</p> <p>Session 2: Expectations for higher forestry education from forest policy and practice</p> <p>Expectations for higher forestry education from forest owners perspective – ALGIS GAIŽUTIS, Lithuanian Forest and Land Owners Association (LMSA) (Lithuania)</p>
10.15 – 10.45	<p><i>Coffee break</i></p>
10.45 – 12:45	<p>The young forestry network in Germany – a link between practice and higher forestry education – FLORIAN BORN, Junges Netzwerk Forst (Germany)</p> <p>Session 3: Emerging topics in higher forestry education</p> <p>The multidisciplinary nature of urban forest planning and management. Latvian experience – IEVA KRAUKLE, ILZE STOKMANE, KRISTINE VUGULE, Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (Latvia)</p> <p>Bioeconomy perception by students at the Technical University in Zvolen – JAROSLAV ŠÁLKA, Faculty of Forestry, Technical University in Zvolen (Slovak Republic)</p> <p>Comparing the contents of higher forestry education programs at German universities – MIRIAM T. HAUSL, ELISABETH VIEHWEGER, Chair of Forest Policy and Forest Resource Economics, TU Dresden (Germany)</p>
12.45 – 14.00	<p><i>Lunch</i></p>
14.00 – 15.30	<p>Workshop keynotes</p> <p>Forest education in the context of the Forest Europe process – JULIET ACHIENG, European Forest Institute, Bonn (Germany)</p> <p>Rooted in Collaboration: Investing in Youth to Strengthen Forestry Education – ISABELLE CLAIRE DELA PAZ, <b>President of International Forestry Students' Association (IFSA)</b>, Freiburg im Breisgau (Germany)</p> <p>Workshop: Emerging hot topics in higher forest education - Which topics and issues should higher forestry education address?</p>
15.30 – 16.00	<p><i>Coffee break</i></p>
16.00 – 17.00	<p>Discussing the future of SILVA Network - World-Café's</p> <p>Topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) SILVA Network Tasks: What is special about the network and what functions should it take over in future?</li><li>2) SILVA Proceedings: There is space for more – How can we use the good reputation <b>of the SILVA Proceedings to make more out of it?</b></li><li>3) SILVA Network Visions: Which role do we want to play in an European Joint Accreditation and Quality Assurance Systems for higher forestry education?</li></ol>
17.00 – 17.30	<p>General Assembly of the SILVA Network</p>
19.30	<p><i>Conference Dinner: Restaurant "Avilys", Vilniaus str. 34, Kaunas City Centre</i></p>

Thursday: 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024

8.00 – 15.00. *Field visit to the forests of Dzūkija national park*

## Field visit to Dzūkija National Park

Address: Miškininkų str. 61, Marcinkonys, Varėna distr., Lithuania  
18<sup>th</sup> April 2024

### Program

Departure from Kaunas city center (K.Donelaičio str. 27)	8.00
Arrival to Dzūkija National Park	10.30
Coffee break	10.30
Visit of Čepkeliai raised bog (Strict reserve)	10.45
Visit of the rhizotrons	12.00
Lunch	12.30
Visit of the European bison ( <i>Bison bonasus</i> ) paddock	13.00
Nature conservation project in the continental dunes	14.00
Departure	15.00



Established in 1991, Dzūkija National Park is the largest protected area in Lithuania, located in the southern part of the country. Dzūkija nature is renowned for its vast forests, sandy continental dunes, raised bogs and marshes, picturesque rivers, streams and springs which flow through the valleys overgrown with lush meadows. Majority of the national park is covered by pure Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) forests intertwined with traditional villages protected for their region-specific old wooden architecture and rich ethno-cultural heritage, alive traditions and customs, hollow-tree beekeeping, old crafts and folk songs. During the field visit, we will travel to the largest village in Lithuania – Marcinkonys, sightsee Dzūkija nature, its conservation practices, and ongoing scientific research.

**Stėgalios bison paddock** was opened in March of 2023 aiming to conserve and increase European bison (*Bison bonasus*) population in Lithuania. Bison is European wide protected species, nationally listed as near-threatened. Enclosures protect newly formed herd translocated from Central Lithuania, where their numbers have rapidly increased in the recent years. The smaller enclosure is open to the public, visitors can observe grazing bison from a viewpoint.



**Čepkeliai State Strict Reserve** was established in 1975 in order to protect Čepkeliai mire. Čepkeliai is the largest raised bog in Lithuania (58.6 km<sup>2</sup>) which formed in the watershed of Katra, Ūla, and Grūda rivers with relict eutrophic lakes and islands. The raised bog has unique flora and fauna as the area is inhabited by many protected and rare species. The mire is surrounded by sandy plains, continental dunes, forests.



Čepkeliai raised bog

In **Dzūkija**, continental dunes had formed as early as 15 thousand years ago, by strong winds shaping land formations. In the past, open sandy plains and dunes were a common part of the landscape. Dunes are associated with many specialized vascular plant species. Nowadays, only a few continental dunes remain open. In 2023, a nature management project LIFE-IP NATURALIT restored three dunes in geomorphological reserves. It is expected, a long list of red-listed species such as Eastern pasqueflower (*Pulsatilla patens*), Woodlark (*Lullula arborea*), Nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*), hymenopterans and others will be favoured.



Eastern pasqueflower (*Pulsatilla*)



Rhizotron in Dzūkija forests

During the summer of 2023, an international group of scientists installed rhizotrons in the Dzūkija National Park Living Lab. Rhizotrons are underground constructions with observation windows for long-term root and soil interaction study. The main objective is to compare tree root mortality among pure Scots pine, silver birch and their mixtures. Rhizotrons were installed in a frame of *eco2adapt*, a Horizon Europe project which aims to address challenges concerning climate change effects and increase of forest resilience.

## TOPIC OF CONTRIBUTIONS

### Changing expectations of society and policy for higher forestry education

Forestry is becoming increasingly complex as a result of the requirement to balance numerous stakeholder interests. Forestry is challenged by issues such as climate change, carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation, rural development, and adaptive ecosystem management. In the course of the energy transition, forests are seen as an important source of bioenergy. On our way towards more bioeconomy, forests shall sufficiently supply us with raw material. Forest products and services satisfy a wide range of ecological, social and economic needs and address a variety of interests, people and organizations. The number of forestry stakeholders is continually growing, spanning territorial, social, economic, and political borders. Nevertheless, or perhaps precisely because of this, social expectations and values have changed considerably in recent years. Forestry has partly lost its social license to operate and its position in land use consultation, due to its bad name as wood cutter and its introvert attitude. The question arises, how forestry can regain acceptance. Forestry education should provide the equipment and the attitude to engage in this challenge.

Forestry education has a long history and has changed considerably: Having focused on forest management in the past, it now emphasizes the management of natural resources for valuable connections between humans and ecosystems. How can forestry education help to address contemporary forestry practice challenges? How should present and expected future societal needs be incorporated into forestry education and its curricula? To transform forestry education, efforts must be made to coordinate and connect relevant institutions and stakeholders. A collaborative effort from all stakeholders appears to be the way ahead in changing the existing forestry education model to accommodate new courses and skills that will better train future foresters.

We look forward to contributions from students, teachers, and administrative staff regarding:

- The current problems and coping techniques in higher forestry education.
- The actual and expected role which forestry education plays in society today and in the future.
- Surveys of higher forestry education forest curricula to meet stakeholder demands.
- Expectations for higher forestry education from forest policy and practice.
- Changes in higher forestry curricula, teaching and learning experiences, tools, and strategies for meeting societal needs.
- Development of a higher forestry education curricula in the context of societal demands and global issues.
- Competencies in higher forestry curricula to integrate and disseminate knowledge across discipline boundaries.
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation as major concerns in higher education forestry courses.
- Various organizations' perspectives on higher forestry education.