Dear Forest Pathology Colleagues

Greetings from Boston where many forest pathologists will meet on the occasion of the International Congress of Plant Pathology (ICPP) organized by the International Society of Plant Pathology (ISPP). This meeting includes many presentations and posters covering topics of interest to those interested in forest and tree health. There will also be a forest pathology field trip, the programme for which looks really excellent. The ICPP in Boston comes shortly after the very successful International Mycological Congress (IMC) in Puerto Rico that also included many excellent presentations relating to tree health. In addition to these meetings, there continue to be many larger and smaller IUFRO meetings that deal with tree health issues. Suffice to say that forest pathology research is being afforded substantial attention globally.

I was recently asked by the ISPP leadership for an update on the current status of the ISPP Forest Pathology Subject Matter Committee (SMC). This came to me purely through personal contact and perhaps because I chaired this committee many years back. One of the aims of this note is to inform you that there will not be a meeting of the ISPP Forest Pathology Subject Matter Committees (SMC) during the ICPP in Boston. In fact, most Forest Pathologists are probably not even aware of this structure and the fact that there have been meetings of this SMC at past ICPP’s. Allow me to share some details with you.

My understanding is that the role of the ISPP Forest Pathology SMC is to support the interests of forest pathologists that are linked to the ISPP. At least as I recall the situation, the committee should seek to ensure that ICPP’s include Forest Pathology content, ideally including a field trip and to provide ‘linkage” to the very extensive forest pathology activities of IUFRO. I don’t recall the full history of the committee but I took over as chair from Dr John Gibbs at the time of the ICPP in Edinburgh in 1998. Dr Jolanda Roux took over this responsibility from me (if I remember correctly) at the Torino ICPP in 2008. Jolanda was Chair of the Committee at the time of the last ICPP in Beijing (2013). She had to resign from this position some time back due to a change in her employment circumstances. The situation now arises where the ISPP SMC for Forest Pathology requires a new Chair and structure.

As far as I am aware, the ISPP Forest Pathology SMC has never had a formal constitution (perhaps it needs one!). A norm in the past (although I don’t think this is “set in stone”) appears to have been to have a Chair that has strong connections to IUFRO. This is justified because IUFRO includes substantial forest protection activity with a relatively strongly constituted structure. Because the ISPP Forest Pathology SMC is currently without a leader, I have asked Dr. Tod Ramsfield who is the Co-ordinator of the IUFRO Division 7 (Forest Health) Research Group (RG 7.2) that deals with Tree Diseases to help the ISPP to choose a leader for the Forest Pathology SMC. Potentially then also to assemble a committee that will lead up to the next ICPP, which will be held in France in 2023. Tod has agreed to do so and has also kindly provided a report on Forest Pathology activities for the ISPP Executive (ATTACHED).

I look forward to seeing many of you in Boston during the coming week. Furthermore, that you will be planning to attend the next IUFRO World Congress in Curritiba (Brazil) next year (29th September-5th October, 2019). I have already seen some of the proposals for Scientific Sessions at the meeting – there is sure to be very strong Tree Health content and the meeting is being held in a spectacular part of the world.

With best regards

Mike Wingfield

IUFRO President