



Third International Meeting of the Regional Northeast Asia Wildland Fire Network 28 to 30 September 2006, Khabarovsk, Russia

Report of the Meeting

Introduction

The Third International Meeting of the Regional Northeast Asia Wildland Fire Network was organized by Pacific Forest Forum and Regional Far East Forest Fire Center of Federal Forestry Agency of Russia under the aegis of UNISDR Wildland Fire Advisory Group / Global Wildland Fire Network, Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC) with the sponsorship of GFMC (through financial support by the German Foreign Office), UNISDR, UN University, the Korean Forest Service (KFS), the Korean Forest Research Institute (KFRI), the Pacific Forest Forum (PFF) and the Regional Far East Forest Fire Center, Khabarovsk. It was held in Regional Far East Forest Fire Center, Khabarovsk, 29 September 2006.

Following the decisions of the network foundation meeting (Seoul, South Korea, 2004), the Second Meeting (Sendai, Japan, 2005), a special preparatory Meeting (Mitaka, Japan, 2005) and a regional consultation (Irkutsk, Russia, 2005) the members of the Network organized the Third Meeting in Khabarovsk, Russia.

The Regional Northeast Asia Wildland Fire Network has been established at a foundation meeting at the Korea Forest Research Institute, Seoul, Korea, 5-6 March 2004. In this meeting agreements were made between representatives of the countries of NE Asia belonging to the network (China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation) to initiate cooperation in wildland fire science and management under the umbrella of the UNISDR Global Wildland Fire Network.

The Regional Central Asia Wildland Fire Network meeting is held in conjunction with the “I International Northeast Asia Forest Fire Conference”. The Third Meeting is a response to needs for the further international cooperation development.

1. Opening of the Meeting

The Meeting was opened by Prof. Dr. Johann G. Goldammer, GFMC Director and Coordinator of the UNISDR Global Wildland Fire Network. He warmly greeted all the participants and thanked PFF for organizing the Meeting, which was intended to overview the forest fire situation in Northeast Asia and make contribution to further development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation in forest fire management in adjoining countries. Moreover, he highlighted the importance of elaborating common approach to forest fire management and members' continued support to countries in the region so that fire management implementation may become a reality. Furthermore, Prof. Goldammer, on behalf of UNISDR welcomed the participants and expressed the hope that the Third Meeting would become another step in supporting regional countries cooperation and their practical actions in forest fire management implementation. He also emphasized the global importance of the Regional Wildland Fire Networks as one of the most useful and reliable tools to report on progress towards sustainable forest management and to improve fire management activities over time. He explained the background of the events and processes that led to this Third Regional

Network Meeting. He highlighted that countries must promote a strong partnership in developing the system of forest fires management. Prof. Goldammer also presented the objectives and expected products of the Meeting.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda (Annex I) was discussed and adopted by the participants (list of participants: Annex II).

3. Election of the chairperson

Prof. Goldammer was elected Chairperson of the Meeting.

4. Objectives and expected products of the meeting

The general objective of the meeting was to provide an overview of the forest fire situation in Northeast Asia, support and develop bilateral and multilateral cooperation in forest fire management in the region and adjoining countries, approve Mission Statement, discuss the Fire Management Code, elaborate recommendations, and participate in field trip to burned areas near Khabarovsk city.

The specific objectives were to:

1. Invite experts on wildland fires from the region to discuss forest fire problems and information exchange experience
2. Identify among participants institutions and individuals interested in forest fire cooperation
3. Further discuss the significance of forest fires in nature and society
4. Discuss the forest fire problems in Russia, Republic of Korea, China, Japan, Mongolia and other countries and globally (with the intent to include Democratic People's Republic of Korea – see letter of invitation in Annex IV)
5. Consider the process of monitoring fires and methods of their suppression
6. Suggest recommendations in the field of fire management
7. Identify sources of possible inside and outside technical and funding assistance and support to activities related to the introduction of fire management
8. Approve documents

Based on the general objective of the Meeting the expected results were:

1. Analysis of forest fire situation in Northeast Asian countries with emphasis on the Russian federation and particularly on the Far East of Russia
2. Joint field trip to burned areas
3. General guidelines to participants on how to go on implementing forest fire management
4. Identification of cooperation directions
5. Approval of the Mission Statement of the network (Annex III)

5. Procedure and modality of work

The agenda and programme of the Third Meeting are provided in Annex 1. 31 participants from Mongolia (Ulanbaataar), Republic of Korea (Seoul), Germany (GFMC - Freiburg), Russian Federation (Pushkino, Khabarovsk, Ussuriisk, Birobidzhan), mainly government officers, scientists and experts, attended the Third Meeting (Annex II).

The sets of regional and national-level and international reports on forest fire problems served as the framework for discussions and recommendations. The Third Meeting was conducted in a highly interactive participatory way and its programme was designed to ensure the optimal participation of all participants. In general all presentations set the framework and scenery of the Meeting and provided information on international fire management and fire suppression goals and tasks and recommendations elaboration.

6. Discussions

The presentations and the draft Fire Management Code were further discussed in the second half of the Meeting.

The following is a summary of the outcomes of the major points discussed during the Meeting:

1. Countries of Central Asia should take into account the experience of fire suppression accumulated in Russia and Northeast Asia states.
2. There is a need to ensure and strengthen national capacities for efficient and timely response to fire. The new Forest Code of Russia will offer an opportunity to strengthen fire management capacities both at regional level and at national (federal) level.
3. Northeast Asian countries should create a mechanism of joint work on fire management and information exchange.
4. There is a need to harmonize definitions and terms related to fire management.
5. It is expected that after the Meeting participants will have a better understanding of fire situation in Russian Far East and Northeast Asia.
6. Participants requested assistance and further cooperation from GFMC, UNISDR, FAO and other international organizations and the donor community.

These proposals, describing the “road forward” in the region, were discussed and agreed upon by the participants of the Third Meeting. These proposals identify and recommend actions that countries need to follow in order to improve forest fire management and international cooperation taking into account countries’ overall ecological, socio-economic, political and cultural conditions.

The offer of the delegate from China, Dr. Shu Lifu, Forestry Academy (Beijing) to host the 4th Regional Wildland Fire Network Meeting in China in 2007 was greatly appreciated and agreed by the participants of the Meeting.

7. Main results of the Third Regional Wildland Fire Network Meeting

This report summarizes the results achieved by the participants from Russia, Mongolia, China, Republic of Korea, and Japan. It presents the outcomes that can be used for further development of international cooperation and forest fire management. One of the important steps is the organization of the follow-up work at national level in each country.

The participants of the Meeting unanimously approved the Mission Statement of the Network (Annex III).

The major steps in cooperation must be carried out on the national level including annual meetings of the Regional Wildfire Networks, joint projects implementation. The participants discussed the significance of forest fires in nature and society, forest fire problems in Russia, Republic of Korea, China, Mongolia and other countries, the process of monitoring fires and methods of their suppression, identified sources of possible inside and outside technical and funding assistance and support to activities related to the introduction of fire management, made a joint field trip to burned areas. The plan of work of Regional NEA Network could include consultations, conferences, training courses for fire specialists and investigations, participation in global assessment of forest fires. The Regional NEA Wildland Fire Network is to summarize its contribution in a form of a report during the International Conference in Madrid (May 2007).

The participants in hot discussion talked over the financial questions of functioning the Regional NEA Network. This problem is actively elaborated by Korean Headquarters, GFMC and PFF. Mr. Kim Dong Hyun informed that there were negotiations with some business companies but this detailed information needs further checking.

In general, all the participants showed their enthusiasm and support and fully agreed that the topic discussion was of utmost importance for the protection, conservation and management of the forest resources in the Northeast Asia. The discussions were very active and provided some interesting inputs on this issue. A special thanks were expressed to the hosting organization – the Regional Far East Forest Fire Center.

8. Conclusions and recommendations

1. Countries of the region must unite their efforts and resources to combat uncontrolled forest fires and prevent extreme damage.
2. It was noted that results from such meetings do not always reach the decision-makers and, when they do, the necessary support from higher forestry authorities is not always forthcoming.
3. Member countries should continue to strengthen their commitment to promote the joint cooperation including joint investigations, joint projects, consultations, conferences.
4. National discussion of the Fire Management Code could attract the society attention to forest fire problems.
5. Education and awareness related to forest fires should be a continuing campaign by governments in order that their implementation becomes a reality in the future.
6. There is a need to continue supporting efforts to better define terms and definitions related to fire management.
7. Increased international cooperation and help from GFMC and Governments is necessary to get good results.
8. Participants recommended that the report of this Third Meeting be published and distributed among participants and other interested parties.
9. The Third Meeting was well organized by the Pacific Forest Forum and Khabarovsk subdivision of Avialesookhrana, thanks to full support given by GFMC through funding of the German Foreign Office, UNISDR, UN University, KFS and KFRI, participants considered it a success. The usefulness and necessity of future meetings was also underlined.

Group Photo of Participants of the Third Regional NEA Wildland Fire Network Meeting



Upper row (from left to right): A.P.Sapozhnikov, J.G.Goldammer, V.V.Ostroshenko, A.M. Doroshenko, E.V.Brusova.

Bottom row: (from left to right): Lkhamjav Tumurkhuu, Kim Dong Hyun, Lee Myung Bo, Cho Byung Cheol, N.V. Vyvoldtsev, G.A. Missioura, L.G. Kondrashov, G.V. Sokolova, E.P. Davidenko, Bayartaa Nyamjav, M.A. Sheshukov, V.G. Kryukov, A.G. Grechko, K. Makoto.

For the complete list of participants of the conference and network meeting see Annex II.

9. Field trip to burned areas near Khabarovsk city

On 30 September the local Avialesookhrana subdivision of Khabarovsk Territory arranged a visit of participants to local fire patches. The participants received information on type of fires, their number and covered area, witnessed the consequences of fires, were introduced the possibilities of local fire service personnel to suppress fires. During the field trip the participants discussed the problems of post-fire forest recovery and gave recommendations. According to the information, there is a need in more financial resources and even attraction of international sponsors, taking into account the value of these forests.



On 30 September 2007 a helicopter expedition to the areas burned in 1976, 1998 and later years in the Northeast of Khabarovsk was offered to the international participants of the Network Meeting.



Itinerary of the helicopter expedition to areas burned in 1976, 1998 and later years

1. Nanaiski Leskhoz – Anyuiskoe Forest District and Upper Anyuiskoe Forest District

- middle part of Anyui river basin (basins of Anyui feeders – Dymni and Udzhaki in the north-east; Talyuke and Damboli – in the west);
- area burned: > 200 000 ha;
- mountain forests, prevailing species (pre-fire): spruce (*Picea microsperma* (Lindl.) Carr., fir (*Abies nephrolepis* Maxim.), and larch (*Larix principis-rupprechtii* Mayr.)

2. Nanaiski leskhoz - Anyuiskoe Forest District

- lower part of Gobbili river basin (Anyui river feeder);
- area burned: about 8 000 ha;
- mountain forests, prevailing species (pre-fire) – spruce (*Picea microsperma* (Lindl.) Carr., fir (*Abies nephrolepis* Maxim.).

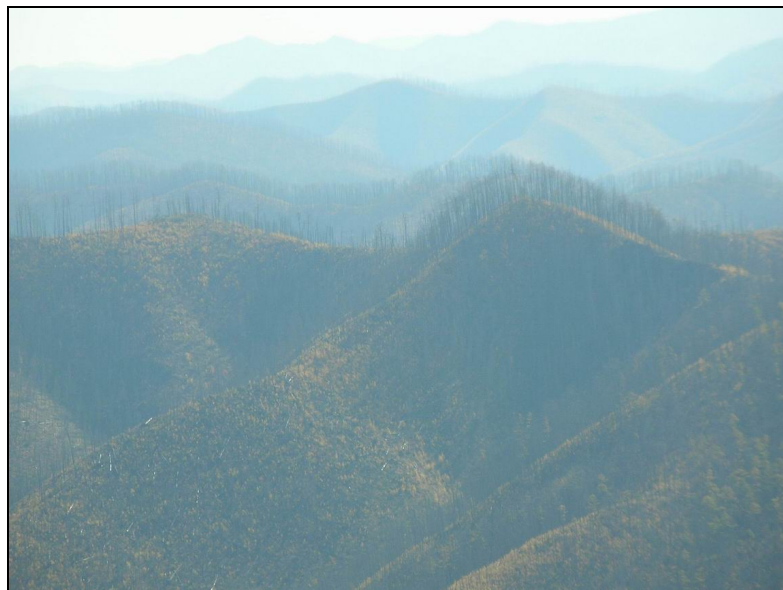
3. Gurski leskhoz – Dappinskoe Forest District

- lower part of Chernaya river basin (river Gur feeder);
- area burned: about 60 000 ha;
- mountain forests, prevailing species (pre-fire) – white birch (*Betula platyphylla* Sukacz.) and larch (*Larix principis-rupprechtii* Mayr.)

Source of ecological information: E.V. Brusova



General landscape views from the helicopter



Large fire-affected areas (1998 fire episode) in NE of Khabarovsk city

Annex I – Agenda

1. Discussion of Forest Fire Management Code
2. Discussion and approval of Mission Statement
3. Plans, financial questions and cooperation directions
4. 4th Meeting of Regional NEA Wildland Fire Network
5. Participation in International Forest Fire Conference in Spain in May 2007

Annex II – List of Participants

RUSSIAN PARTICIPANTS			
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Annex III – Mission Statement



Regional Northeast Asia Wildland Fire Network

Mission Statement

Approved at the Third Regional North East Asia Wildland Fire Network Meeting
29 September 2006, Khabarovsk, Russia

The Regional Northeast Asia Wildland Fire Network, founded in 2004 by representatives of governments and civil society of China, Japan, Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation, and organized under the umbrella of the UNISDR Global Wildland Fire Network, advocates the interests of its members and supporters towards reducing the negative impacts of wildland fires on the environment and on societies. The network aims at realizing these goals through enhanced international cooperation in wildland fire management research, development, capacity building, sharing of knowledge and resources, and mutual support. The cooperation is based on the principle of partnership between the participating countries and the international community.

Rationale

The countries of Northeast Asia (NEA) are experiencing growing impact of wildfires in forests and other vegetation (wildland fires) on the natural environment and on society. The fires contribute to the degradation of the soil, water resources and the atmosphere, endangering the sustainability and biodiversity of ecosystems, and threatening human populations, especially human health. NEA countries and the international community are increasing their efforts to manage the fires by reducing their occurrence and negative impacts. The problem is, however, so scaled that there is an urgent need to unite efforts and arrange bi- and multilateral cooperation in the field of fire management and to mitigate the consequences of fire. The NEA countries intend to work together with the Global Wildland Fire Network under the auspices of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) and the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC).

The Regional Northeast Asia Wildland Fire Network has been established at a foundation meeting at the Korea Forest Research Institute, Seoul, Republic of Korea, 5-6 March 2004. In this meeting agreements were made between representatives of the countries of NE Asia belonging to the network (China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation) to initiate cooperation in wildland fire science and management under the umbrella of the UNISDR Global Wildland Fire Network. The participants agreed to hold the Network meetings once a year in each country by turn.

NEA Network carries out its mandate by supporting and fulfilling research and natural resource management activities through personal and working groups or interested institutions. The NEA Network is a forum for exchanging experience and knowledge on wildland fire prevention and control; for cooperation among the Network countries to develop strategies and actions to solve policy, technical and management problems; and to actively participate with domestic and international agencies to implement and promote cooperation activities.

The Regional NEA Wildland Fire Network members discussed and expressed their support for bilateral and multilateral agreements on cooperation in wildland fire management, based on international standards as proposed by the FAO and the International Wildland Fire Summit; planned to investigate the introduction of the Incident Command System (ICS) as the international standard for all wildland incident management participating in international or interagency agreements and exchanges; underlined the importance of cooperative regional wildland fire research projects and programmes; acknowledged the importance of training / capacity building in wildland fire management; community involvement in fire management; bilateral and multilateral wildland fire emergency exercises; exchange visits and programmes to share lessons learned and solving problems; considered the necessity to develop arrangements to support collection and dissemination of wildland fire information, facilitation of regular regional dialogue and joint projects between the countries, and to technically support countries in need of aerial assets and personnel for wildland fire suppression.

The organizations and individuals participating in the Regional NEA Wildland Fire Network intend to inform regional and national governments about the results of the Third Meeting to enhance international cooperation in wildland fire management.

Annex IV – Invitation to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to Join the Network Meeting



A delegation of Foresters from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) visited the Regional Far East Forest Fire Center, Khabarovsk, ten days before the network meeting, on 19 September 2006. The photo shows the delegation briefed by the Director of the Regional Fire Center (center, standing), Mr. A. Lyubyakin, and by the President of the Pacific Forest Forum, Dr. L. Kondrashov (left).

Prof. Goldammer (GFMC) made an attempt to invite the forest fire specialists from DPRK to participate in the Network Meeting in Khabarovsk. The following letter was handed to the head of the delegation from DPRK. However, DPRK did not take part in the conference and the Network Meeting.



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Date: 15 September 2006

To
Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Pyongyang

DPR Korea

To Whom it May Concern

Invitation to participate in the "First International Northeast Asia Forest Fire Conference" and the "Third Meeting of the Regional Northeast Asia Wildland Fire Network", Khabarovsk, 28 to 30 September 2006

Taking the opportunity of the occasion of the visit of a delegation of forest officers from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in Khabarovsk Krai, Russian Federation, I would like to take the opportunity and invite representatives on the Forest Administration to participated in the "First International Northeast Asia Forest Fire Conference" and the "Third Meeting of the Regional Northeast Asia Wildland Fire Network", Khabarovsk, 28 to 30 September 2006.

This conference is organized by the Russian hosts in Khabarovsk and the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC).

As the Director of the GFMC I am entrusted with the coordination of the Global Wildland Fire Network which is an activity of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN-ISDR).

The GFMC is assisting the colleagues in Russia and South Korea to build the "Regional North East Asia Wildland Fire Network". This regional network aims at strengthening regional cooperation in forest fire management and control.

Currently member countries of the network include Russia, South Korea, Japan, and China. The DPR Korea is warmly welcome to participate in the regional activity.

The visit of your delegation offers a unique opportunity to receive some first impressions of the magnitude of forest fire problems in North East Asia, and the visions that countries of the region would work together to find collective solutions to reduce the occurrence and effects of forest fires that are harmful to the regional and global environment.

I am looking forward to hear from you. Meanwhile you may also take advantage of availability of the local organizer and host of the conference, Dr. Leonid Kondrashov. He is available for further information (the address is given below).

Yours sincerely



Prof. Dr. Johann G. Goldammer
Director, GFMC
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cc

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Enclosure: Conference Programme in Russian