



Report from the Canadian Urban Forest Conference

by Dr Andy Kenney, Past President

The Ontario Urban Forest Council, the Region of York and Tree Canada Foundation hosted the 5th Canadian Urban Forest Conference in Markham Ontario from October 7 to 8, 2002. Previous urban forestry conferences were held in Winnipeg (1993), Windsor (1995), Halifax (1997) and Lake Louise (hosted by the City of Calgary) (2000).

The theme of the conference was: "Urban Forest Planning: Sustainable Forests for Healthy Communities." The organizing committee was determined that the conference would be more than a three-day series of presentations. The goal was to ensure that the conference would be a starting point for a collaborative, sustained, and nationally based effort to advance urban forestry in Canada.

Delegates were brought up-to-date through a series of presentations in the Cross Canada Check-up forum. Invited papers dealt with a broad range of issues related to urban forests and planning. Presentations were in three concurrent streams addressing urban forests and planning at the single-tree, community, and bioregional levels. On Tuesday October 8 a series of "break-out sessions" took place. Participants in each of the seven facilitated sessions were asked to develop a list of the highest priority issues relating to their particular session. They were then asked to identify four action items relating to each of these issues.

These issues and actions items formed the basis of a submission to the National Forest Strategy Coalition intended to ensure that Canada's urban Forests, the forests where the vast majority of Canadians live and work, are included in the next version of the Forest Strategy.

The proceedings of the conference are currently in production.

An internet mailing list has been established as a first step towards maintaining the momentum gained at the conference. Since December 2002, approximately 175 participants from across the country have shared ideas through the list

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