The CEOS Global Observation of Forest Cover Boreal Forest Initiative Summary of August 28 - September 1 Workshop

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Introduction

The Global Observation of Forest Cover (GOFC) is a panel of the Global Terrestrial Observing System (GTOS). It was originally developed as a Committee on Earth Observing Satellites (CEOS) pilot project as part of their Integrated Global Observing Strategy. GOFC's overall objective is to improve the quality and availability of satellite observations of forests at regional and global scales and to produce useful, timely and validated information products from these data (together with *in situ* observations) for a wide variety of users. Details are available on www.gofc.org.

Background

In March 1999, a workshop on Regional Networks for Implementation of the GOFC Project in the Tropics was held in Washington, D.C which was followed by regional coordination *tropical* workshops during 2000. In August 2000, a group of scientists and forest data users gathered in Novosibirsk Akademgorodok, Russia, to discuss issues specific to the *boreal* forest, with the goal of developing recommendations for the eventual development of GOFC data sets specific to the boreal forest region and the information networks required to distribute them. The workshop location enabled a large participation by the Russian forestry community.

Workshop Objectives

The goal of the GOFC Boreal Forest workshop was to promote a coordinated effort among scientists towards building an observational boreal forest network which would result in operational monitoring of forest cover and forest cover change on a continental scale, and to make data and information on forests usable and accessible.

Workshop Summary

The workshop was organized into six plenary, two poster and three breakout sessions. On Day 1 of the meeting, an overview of GOFC was presented in Plenary Session 1, and information requirements for the boreal forest were reviewed from the perspective of resource managers and researchers in Plenary Sessions 2 and 3. These requirements were then reviewed and prioritized by the workshop participants based on regional perspectives (North America, Western Russia/Fennoscandia, and Eastern Russia/Far East) in Breakout Session 1. On day 2, the variety of remote-sensing data products that are potentially available for the boreal forest region were reviewed during Plenary Sessions 4 and 5 and Poster Session 1, with a particular focus on products that are being generated for specific purposes, such as fire monitoring. The utility of these products with respect to the information requirements identified during Day 1 were evaluated during Breakout Session 2. Day 3 of the meeting focused on information networking requirements in Plenary Session 6, Poster Session 2, and Breakout Session 3. Specific attention was paid during this last Breakout Session on the need for regional networks in the boreal forest, and how these networks should be created from the different regions that comprise the boreal forest.

Plans for the Future

While the Novosibirsk GOFC Boreal Forest Workshop represented a good first step in implementing GOFC in the boreal forest region, it is clear that much work remains. First and foremost, the recommendations derived from this workshop need to be circulated and reviewed by the broad group of users who comprise the boreal forest management and research community. A report from the workshop is under preparation and should be published in early 2001. Next, a series of more focused workshops need to be convened within specific regions of the boreal forest. Two such regional workshops are recommended for the next 18 months, one for the Western Russia/Fennoscandia region and a second for the Eastern Russia/Far East region.