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Forest work studies: who, why, how

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Forest Work Science developed into an independent field in the late 1920's, and its general approach has been shared by forest work scientists worldwide, since the very beginning. There was a general agreement among the international forest engineering community concerning the goals and the methods of work studies. That facilitated strong international cooperation, started informally in late '50s and later formalized within the scope of several scientific networks, such as NSR and IUFRO. By the end of the 1990s, the international forestry scholar had available a number of useful reference documents, such as the IUFRO Workstudy nomenclature and several how-to guides. Despite all these efforts, the evolution of the discipline has inevitably generated local adaptations in response to different work environments and individual preferences. The increasingly larger number of scientists conducting work studies implies that the mutual understanding achieved within the older small community has largely been lost. Therefore, the Authors of this paper conducted a global survey among forest work study specialists, with the purpose of determining who does forest work studies today, with what goals and according to which methods. Overall, the Authors interviewed 172 scientists conducting forest work studies. Questions were asked about funding sources, reference methods, treatment of delays and the main areas for development in the field. This study can contribute valuable knowledge about the current status of forest work science, providing useful elements to the debate on the future of Forest Engineering.