

OUFC AGM 2007 – October 18, 2007

Climate change and the future of Ontario's forests: Can we help our urban and rural forests adapt?

The theme outlined above for our annual meeting is intended to discuss the impact of global warming on Ontario's Urban Forests and what, if possible, would be involved in adapting urban tree plantings to climate change. In planning the annual meeting theme, we left the debate on yes or no global warming to the 2000 climate change scientists, since they have the best knowledge that global warming is a yes event.

The Toronto Star, Friday January 19, 2007 carried a short article under the heading "Landmark UN study backs climate theory", and that the 2000 scientist of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate change (IPCC), all but ended the debate that Human activity causes global warming. The IPCC report from the United Nations is due on February 2, 2007.

Yes there is doubt whether we can be successful in attempting to adapt the urban forest to climate change. However, only death and taxes are a certainty in this world. It takes some courage to take on this workshop, but consider one member's observation: "I hope we urge speakers to give us some practical things that we can do to help-- we can't just wring our hands or worse, throw up our hands!"

A year ago the global warming topic hardly appeared on anyone's radar screen, but today at least Canadians have forced the topic on the political agenda with all parties stumbling over each other to become the leader. Recent polling figures note a huge surge in environment as an issue of concern with the Canadian public...now #2, right after Health care, formerly # 6 or 7. There are signs that awareness is unevenly growing elsewhere in the world. My Dutch relatives report that many Hollanders are becoming aware that 1/2 of Holland with 10 million people may become flooded in 100 years and thus become a modern Atlantis.

Yes, we must discuss climate impact on trees and urban forests. OUFC, ISA, OPFA, Landscape Ont., L.A's, ecological organizations, OMNR etc. are the organizations our Society would look to asking the question "what can be done about the impact on our trees and urban forests?"

Our preliminary meeting theme therefore is: Climate change and the future of Ontario's forests: Can we help our urban and rural forests adapt?

~A message on behalf of the OUFC Executive, Bill Morsink and Jack Radecki.