

NEWS RELEASE

Date: 30 June 2010 For Immediate Release



Press Contact: Director Shin Joon-hwan (+82-2-961-2600)

2010 IUFRO Congress Organizing Committee
Korea Forest Research Institute
57 Hoegiro, Dongdaemun-gu, Seoul 130-712, Republic of Korea

The Spirit of “Baekdu-daegan” Promoted to the World at the Seminar in Moongyeongsaejae

Lectures by Keynote Speaker of the XXIII IUFRO World Congress Ko Un, and Other High-profile Speakers

Seoul, Korea—Poet Ko Un, one of the XXIII IUFRO World Congress keynote speakers, and Professor David A. Mason of Kyunghee University were invited to the “Seminar on the Baekdu-daegan” hosted by KFRI in Moongyeongsaejae, North Gyeongsang Province on 10~11 June 2010. The seminar shed light on the historic implications and global significance of the Baekdu-daegan mountain range with some 1,000 participants present including local government officials, civic groups, forest science majors and teenagers.

The first-day program on 10 June included a lecture called “Journey to the Origin of the Baekdu-daegan” by Poet Ko Un, presentations on “Baekdu-daegan, from Korea to the World” by Professor David Mason and “The Baekdu-daegan and Korean Forests in Nature” by Director Shin Joon-hwan of the Korea Forest Research Institute (KFRI) to review the global value of the Baekdu-daegan. Followed by the seminar, a trip to the routes of the Moongyeongsaejae provided the participants with insights into the Baekdu-daegan. On the second day of the seminar, the participants discussed the traditional Korean forests under the theme of “Tour to the traditional Korean forests, a partner of the Baekdu-daegan,” looking around the village forests near the seminar venue.

The discussions during the seminar and the field trip will be shared with forest scientists around the world at the XXIII IUFRO World Congress in COEX, Seoul (23~28 August 2010). On the sidelines of the Congress, the “The Baekdu-daegan and Tradition in Korea” at the Trade & Exhibition will make the beauty and value of the Baekdu-daegan and village forests known to more people around the globe.

The seminar was organized by KFRI in an effort to further share research activities and outcomes on the Baekdu-daegan with the world. The Baekdu-daegan has been underestimated so far despite the fact that it is a hotspot of biodiversity, a historic place for the Korean people and has a rich cultural heritage. Indeed, the Baekdu-daegan serves as the habitat of diverse flora and fauna. For example, it is home to 54 protected species (46.3 percent of the total plant species in Korea) and 15 wild animal species including the “mountain goat” designated as the natural monument. Introduction of the Baekdu-daegan can be a hot-button issue in Sub-plenary session 4: *Forest biodiversity – the key to healthy and resilient forests*.

The inventory by the Korea Forest Service (KFS) well demonstrates the biodiversity of the Baekdu-daegan: 144 families, 626 genus, 1,475 species and 332 varieties which are translated into 46.3 percent in South Korea. The world’s best reforestation made restoring the ecosystem of the mountains along the Baekdu-daegan possible. Seen from another perspective, the Baekdu-daegan is a unique geographic system that helps to understand the Korean territory. Standing for the whole ecosystem across the country, it has upheld the resilience of the Korean people all through its turbulent history. The Baekdu-daegan also fenced the Korean Peninsula against extreme weather conditions caused by interactions between the sea and the land east of the world’s largest Eurasian continent and west of the Pacific Ocean.