

Women in Urban Forestry and Natural Resources Management

Commemorating International Women's Day

To celebrate International Day of Women on March 8, 2019, the U.S. Forest Service International Programs will present a videotaped panel discussion on gender. The exchange was held last November in Mantova, Italy, during the World Forum on Urban Forests. It features six colleagues from around the world. These urban forestry experts had previously participated in or contributed to our annual International Seminar on Urban Forestry and Community Engagement. Together, they engaged in a frank and thought-provoking discussion on the challenges and opportunities they faced professionally as well as offered insight on the experiences of women and girls in the communities where they work. Join us on Friday, March 8, at noon for a viewing at the Office of International Programs or by clicking on the link below (see page 2 for more details). Learn more about each of the panelist (biographies below) and also peruse through other women-led activities and highlights from around the world : https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YPIP9rkkg3BkT_KL-Qga5vfOmCMiKDP-/view?usp=sharing



Elida Fundi (Tanzania; Urban Seminar 2017)

works with the Tanzania Community Forest Conservation Network known as *Mtandao wa Jamii wa Usimamizi wa Misitu* Tanzania (MJUMITA). Elida is a trained sociologist and Community Development expert. Elida advocates for improved natural resources governance, policy reforms and implementation of laws and regulations so that they contribute to sustainable development for local communities. She is responsible for building the capacity of local level stakeholders to include women and youth in

the design, implementation and monitoring of effective and natural resources management strategies. She also works on promoting tree planting programs in schools and within the communities as well as monitoring the performance of governance in the forest sector using a community dashboard monitoring tool.



Maria Arroyave (Colombia; Urban Seminar 2017)

graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Forest Engineering from the National University of Colombia. She has a Masters of Science in Ecosystems. Maria works as an Associate Professor and a researcher at the Universidad EIA (Colombia), where she teaches courses on Biodiversity, Ecology, and Urban Forestry. Her main topics of research are urban forest ecosystem services, economic value of trees, tree species phenology, and tree health. Maria is the co-author of several publications related to biodiversity, urban ecology, ecosystem services, and urban

forest management. She worked on the assessment of urban forest ecosystem services in Medellin city and the Aburrá Valley. The project used the i-Tree Eco

software, developed by the U.S. Forest Service, to analyze the structure of the urban forest. Maria was the recipient of an award (2018) given by the Colombian Association of Arboriculture.



Dr. Adrina C. Bardekjian (Canada; Urban Seminar 2017)

is an urban forestry researcher, creative writer and public speaker. She is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow with the University of British Columbia, a Totten Fellow of the U.S. Forest Service Northern Research Station, and she also works with Tree Canada as Manager of Urban Forestry Programs and Research Development. Dr. Bardekjian's academic research focuses on the social aspects of

arboriculture and urban forestry, specifically arborist perspectives towards identity and labor, and women's participation, leadership and gender equity. She has a number of publications and is one of the editors the book, *Urban Forests, Trees and Greenspace: A Political Ecology Perspective* (2014). She also produces short films to communicate her research to wide audiences including the most recent, *Women Branching Out* (2018). Dr. Bardekjian is the recipient of several awards including the Society of Municipal Arborists Award of Achievement (2018) and the International Society of Arboriculture's Honourary Membership Award (2016) in recognition for her efforts to promote and advance the ideas of arboriculture and urban forestry.

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Rossana Landa-Perera (Mexico; Urban Seminar 2018)

is an Agricultural Engineer in Production from the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM). She holds a diploma in Sustainable Development and Environmental Policy in Mexico from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México and a Master of Science in

Ecology, Landscape Design and Management from the University of London. She now works at the Fondo Mexicano para la Conservación de la Naturaleza (FMCN) where she is involved in monitoring and evaluating projects related to forest conservation, fire protection, fire management and restoration. Since 2010, she has coordinated the Watershed Conservation Program, which provides financing and technical accompaniment to local initiatives that favor the protection and recovery of watersheds that supply water to important cities in Mexico. Since 2005, Rossana has been involved in wildfire protection and fire management in natural protected areas.



Radmila Ustych (Ukraine; Urban Seminar 2018)

has over 14 years of experience in various international projects including coordinating a range of outdoor programs and activities for various user groups – school kids, students, persons with disabilities, forest summer camps, forest fest events – and forest pedagogy activities. She currently works for the NGO FORZA, which provides consultancy, marketing support and technical assistance to public and private stakeholders for the implementation of sustainable, multi-functional forest management and

wood industry development in the Carpathian region. In 2015-2017, the NGO FORZA partnered with the Municipal Forest Enterprise of Kosice (Slovakia) to jointly develop opportunities urban forests can bring, with special focus on special recreational facilities in the urban forests accessible for people on wheel-chairs, mothers with children, cyclists and skaters. In 2017, FORZA has established a model educational facility “outdoor green class” in Uzhgorod city botanical garden. In 2019, she will be involved in a project that will increase stability and adaptability of Carpathian forest ecosystems to climate change impacts, including by restoring the climate-affected peri-urban forests and setting up a Demonstration and Education Center “Forest and Climate”. Radmila Ustych is also engaged in support and training of wood processing companies in improving their efficiency in using wood for energy and marketing of wood-based products.



Dr. Lindsay K. Campbell (U.S. Forest Service; Urban Seminar Resource Expert)

is a research social scientist with the USDA Forest Service Northern Research Station, based at the NYC Urban Field Station. Her research explores the dynamics of natural resource stewardship and sustainability policymaking.

She is joint PI on the Stewardship Mapping and Assessment Project (STEW-MAP), the Living Memorials Project, and the Landscapes of Resilience Project. Dr. Campbell is the author of *City of Forests, City of Farms: Sustainability Planning for New York City's Nature*. In 2015, Dr. Campbell won the Northern Research Station Director's Award for Early Career Scientists. Dr. Campbell holds a BA in Public Policy from Princeton University, a Masters in City Planning from MIT, and a PhD in Geography from Rutgers University.

Women in Urban Forestry: A Panel Discussion

When: Friday, March 8 at 12 noon EST

Where: Office of International Programs in the LACC Conference Room
1 Thomas Circle, NW, Suite 400.

You can also view the video by clicking on the link:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YPIP9rkkg3BkT_KL-Qga5vfOmCMiKDP-/view?usp=sharing

or via GoTo meeting

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/451937405>

You can also dial in using your phone.

United States: [+1 \(872\) 240-3212](tel:+18722403212) | Access Code: 451-937-405

U.S. Forest Service Support Gender Equity Globally

VIETNAM

Mrs. Vu Thi Bich Hop, Founder, former Executive Director (2006-2017) and Chair



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of the Hanoi-based NGO Sustainable Rural Development (SRD), has been working to combat the effects of climate change since 2008 by co-founding the Civil Society Organization (CSO) Network for climate change in Vietnam and mobilizing funding to support dozens of CSOs to build capacity in hundreds of rural communities. More than ten thousand direct beneficiaries were supported by SRD to diversify and sustainably develop their livelihoods in the context of climate change, with a focus on poor women. In addition, her organization implements projects for climate change mitigation, e.g. REDD+, FLEGT, fighting for legal timber and better forest governance.

Mrs. Vu Thi Bich Hop participated in a U.S. Forest Service study tour in Oregon and Arizona in May of 2017. The tour included visits to US National Forests to meet with U.S. Forest Service staff and partners to discuss technical topics such as climate change adaptation, collaborative forest restoration, and participatory land use planning approaches. The connection between her organization and the U.S. Forest Service has facilitated an exchange of ideas and technical expertise on climate change mitigation and adaptation, which has benefited both the United States and Vietnam.

MEXICO

For the past three years, the U.S. Forest Service Mexico Program has supported activities to integrate gender and support gender equity in its cooperative work around wildfire management. The program began with several workshops to promote leadership of women in fire management from Latin American countries in Tucson, Arizona at the Coronado National Forest. These workshops provide an opportunity and space for women involved in wildfire management to receive training, meet other women who work in the sector, and learn about the Incident Command System, incident stress management, fire prevention, prescribed burns and leadership development.



Additionally, the U.S. Forest Service and the Mexican Forest Service, CONAFOR, organized the "Fellowship to Leadership" L-280 fire management leadership course specifically for women wildland firefighters. Participants from

Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and the Dominican Republic represented government, civil, and community organizations. One of the highlights of this work was the inclusion of two Mexican women firefighters on an elite "hot shot" firefighting crew in California for several months in 2018, along with two of their male colleagues. This experience marked the first time a woman from Latin America served on a U.S. hotshot crew.

JORDAN

Women only constitute 16% of Jordan's formal workforce, a staggeringly low number, especially when compared to the high rates of unemployment across the Kingdom. Women are also missing from the decision-making sphere of managing natural resources, especially in rural areas. With support from US Agency for International Development/Jordan, the U.S. Forest Service is rehabilitating arid watersheds by producing native seedlings grown in community nurseries. The nurseries provide rural women in Jordan with jobs, vocational skills and professional development opportunities. The skills are portable and working at a nursery entirely run and operated by women boosts confidence, ownership over natural resources, and civil engagement. One of the Forest Service supported nurseries is run by the Northern Badia Women's Cooperative in partnership with a local non-governmental organization – the Hashemite Fund for the Development of the Jordan Badia - and their engagement in natural resource management has fostered social cohesion and increased financial independence. Providing a niche for women from disadvantaged communities with economic opportunities not only promotes gender equity and economic growth, but training women in natural resource management is a powerful tool for promoting inclusive community-led natural resource governance.



GHANA

The Western Region of Ghana is one of the fastest-growing areas in West Africa. Land-use pressures are enormous, with most land in



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the region outside forest reserves and other protected areas having been deforested and converted for agriculture, charcoal and timber production, or artisanal mining. To address these threats, the U.S. Forest Service, with funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development, launched the Coastal Sustainable Landscapes Project (CSLP) in 2013. CSLP has focused its primary conservation efforts at the community level. A key component of CSLP's strategy was the implementation of a Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) model—a social entrepreneurial concept that not only increased the financial security of Ghanaians but also helped to empower women and generate resources to invest in climate-smart agribusinesses.

A VSLA is a self-selected and self-managed group of 15-25 individuals who meet on a regular basis and pool their savings to provide loans to members. Once the loans are repaid, all members share in the profits that the interest on the loans generated. This program has provided a platform for women to take on leadership roles, develop entrepreneurial and management skills, and organize to support each other, their household and their community. By the end of the project, 51 VSLAs were established, with a total membership of 1,311 people — more than two-thirds of whom are women. The VSLAs have brought intangible benefits in the form of social cohesion to their Ghanaian communities. For example, women VSLA members report feeling more empowered, now that they have a source of funding for their economic activities and voice in an organization that impacts their communities



UKRAINE

In the Ukraine, the U.S Forest Service works closely with the non-governmental organization *FORZA: Agency for Sustainable Development of the Carpathian Region*. FORZA promotes the sustainable development of local communities and natural resources in the Carpathian region of Ukraine. Six years ago, FORZA conducted a study dedicated to gender issues in the forestry sector in Ukraine. In addition to determining that women make about half the salary of men, they uncovered some pervasive stereotypes in this male-dominated forestry sector, such as: perceived lack of strength; inability to hold top management positions; and discouragement of women from working outside of accounting, economics, tree planting and non-timber forest product collection and processing.

Nowadays, although it is still rare, women are beginning to hold higher leadership positions in official forest management institutions. It helps that a law which barred women from holding most forestry jobs (e.g. felling; tapping trees; driving large trucks; operating diesel-fueled equipment; etc.) was repealed.

The U.S. Forest Service works with FORZA to design training and education programs which promote gender neutrality. Special efforts are made to engage USFS experts who are diverse, including engaging women as trainers and experts for training in Ukraine; exposing Ukrainian visitors to the U.S. to women working in roles considered non-traditional in Ukraine. In 2018, an interpreter who works closely with FORZA passed both the written and physical exam for certification as a wildland firefighter in the U.S. She did so alongside four veteran firefighter leaders, while simultaneously serving as their interpreter.

The group continues to face many challenges, like how to change people's perceptions and attitudes towards nature, forests, the environment, as well as gender roles. Changing traditional behaviors and habits towards more environmentally friendly alternatives has been difficult, but successes make the effort worthwhile.