



**INTERNATIONAL YEAR
OF FORESTS • 2011**

Forest Heroes Programme & Awards

In Celebration of Forests 2011

Concept Note

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed 2011 as the International Year of Forests (**Forests 2011**) -- a year that offers a unique opportunity to raise public awareness of the challenges facing many of the world's forests, and the people who depend on them.

There are countless individuals and groups dedicating their lives to sustainably managing forests around the world in their own quiet, heroic ways. They are not celebrities, but their inspiring efforts deserve acknowledgment and appreciation. We seek to identify and celebrate these "unsung" heroes around the world with the **Forest Heroes Programme and Awards**, as a cornerstone to the celebration of Forests 2011. By reaching out to everyday people from around the world, we would like to show that **everyone** can make a positive change for forests.

Unique opportunities will be afforded to the Forest Heroes to share their experiences, and to work with the wider community on both a local and global level. Connecting heroes in different regions will help to elevate diverse local approaches onto the international stage.

OBJECTIVES

1. Recognize and honour everyday unsung Forest Heroes around the world.
2. Inspire people to get involved and take action in their local communities.
3. Promote partnerships between heroes around the world to share knowledge and work together locally, regionally and globally.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. Key Events and Timeline:
 - **Launch:** The programme will be announced during the Forests 2011 launch at UNFF-9.
 - **Year-Round Recognition:** The programme will span the entire Forests 2011, and the stories of these heroes will be featured monthly on the Forests 2011 website.
 - **Heroes as Messengers and Partners:** UNFFS plans to work with heroes to create video documentaries, spread and promote the forest message, and develop new regional/global partnerships on their efforts throughout 2011 and beyond.
 - **Year-End Awards at the Forests 2011 Closing Ceremony:** UNFFS plans to award heroes from different regions at the Forests 2011 closing ceremony.





2. Global Platform for Partnerships:

Partner participation in every aspect of the programme is crucial to its success – from identifying/nominating heroes, to recognizing them and promoting their “best practices” and success stories. Many countries and organizations have existing programmes with a similar vision. UNFF is asking our partners, including Member States, CPF members, and major groups to help promote, nominate, and recognize Forest Heroes.

In addition, the programme is intended as a global platform and support network. It will empower existing and aspiring heroes to share knowledge and work together locally, regionally and globally throughout, and beyond, 2011.

3. Multimedia Web Feature

Forest Heroes will be featured on the Forests 2011 website throughout the year, with multimedia presentations of their stories, as a way of showcasing the diverse Forest Hero stories, and continue to inspire nominations.

4. Beyond Forests 2011

The programme is designed to carry through Forests 2011 **and beyond**, providing a prime opportunity to continue to inspire the achievements of everyday people around the world working together well into a greener future.

APPLICATION & SELECTION CRITERIA

The spirit is that a Forest Hero can be **anyone** - from scientists, to school teachers that created innovative forest curriculum, or simply a group of individuals dedicated to actively promoting forest values. If they share a passion and commitment for forest values, we want to know them!

Selection criteria:

- Individuals that have received little or no previous recognition for their work.
- Conducted work that has delivered environmental, social, educational, or community benefits.
- Willingness to participate in Forests 2011 events and activities.
- Unique/Inspiring dedication to forests that stands out.

Submissions/Nominations should include:

- Descriptions of candidates' achievements, and the impact of their actions.
- References for UNFF Secretariat to contact.
- Photos, a video clip or any other multimedia, if available, that could make their stories and personalities come alive!
- Please submit applications to forests@un.org with the subject: **“Forests Heroes Nomination”**