

JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

REPORT ON CONFERENCE

Conference Title: European Geosciences Union General Assembly

Travel Dates: 2nd – 9th April 2011

Location: Vienna, Austria

Group Member: Theresa Meacham

Aims:

- a) To give an oral presentation on 'The variability and environmental drivers of soil respiration in a deciduous forest: A cyclic sampling analysis'.
- b) To learn about recent advances in monitoring and modelling belowground carbon dynamics.
- c) To discuss methodological issues and meet other researchers working in the field of belowground carbon dynamics.

Outcome:

I am grateful to the James Rennie Bequest for providing me with the funding to attend The European Geosciences Union conference in Vienna, Austria. The conference is held every year and has the goal of bringing researchers together from all over the world into one meeting, covering all disciplines of the Earth, Planetary and Space Sciences. The meeting held 2nd - 9th April 2011 was an inspiring meeting, filled with good quality talks and innovative research. Attending my first international conference has allowed me to gain valuable experience in preparing to give an oral presentation to a large audience.

The conference consisted of about 10 000 scientists and 700 sessions. I presented my talk 'The variability and environmental drivers of soil respiration in a deciduous forest: A cyclic sampling analysis' in the session 'Interacting Biogeochemical Cycles: Linking Carbon, Water and Nutrient Fluxes from Organisms to Globe'. This session was attended by over 250 scientists, enabling me to present my work to a large audience, many of whom are experts in my field. After my presentation I received positive feedback and useful suggestions about the direction of my project.

The other oral presentations in my session provided me with an overview of the interesting work happening in my field. After the session I was able to make key connections with leading researchers, including Andreas Ibrom (Technical University of Denmark) whose research focuses on the ecosystem carbon balance at the European scale, Jerome Ogee (INRA, Bordeaux) who focuses on modelling wood growth using stable isotopes and tree ring data and Jorge Curel Yuste (CREAF, Spain) who researches soil organic matter

decomposition and its response to temperature. The connection I made with Jose was particularly important because his research on identifying the factors that control soil respiration at different spatial scales is very similar to my own.

A large number of parallel sessions took place at the conference, many of which were relevant to my research. I therefore attended sessions from the wider research community that included 'Peatlands and the Carbon Cycle', 'Tropical ecosystem function and Response to Environmental Change' and 'A plant's perspective of extremes: Plant and ecosystem responses to changing climatic variability'. Attending these sessions was useful for placing my current research in a much wider research context.

The conference was enjoyable and has enabled me to return to Edinburgh with much enthusiasm for my project, many new ideas and connections for developing it further. I would again like to thank James Rennie Bequest for enabling me to take advantage of this opportunity.