

**FOREST RESEARCH INSTITUTE**  
**PROFOREST CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE**

# **LARGE-AREA FOREST FIRES**

Editors: Józef Piwnicki, Barbara Ubysz



This publication has been carried out with the financial support of the Commission of the European Communities, specific RTD programme "Quality of Life and Management of Living Resources, Key Action 1-Health Food and Environment, QLK1-CT-2002-30315 / PROFOREST: Protection of forest resources in Central Europe. It does not necessarily reflect its views and in no way anticipates the Commission's future policy in this area.

Forest Research Institute, Warsaw 2004

ISBN 83-87647-36-5

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Language Editor:  
Karol Mierzejewski

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**Forest Research Institute (IBL)**

is affiliated to the Polish Ministry of Environment

3 Bitwy Warszawskiej 1920 r.; 00-973 Warsaw, POLAND

tel. +48(22)823201.05, fax. +48(22)8224935;

e-mail: [ibl@ibles.waw.pl](mailto:ibl@ibles.waw.pl); [www.ibles.waw.pl](http://www.ibles.waw.pl)

**PROFOREST Centre of Excellence**

devoted to protection of forest resources

in Central Europe is led by the Forest Research Institute in Warsaw (FRIW), Poland

Druk i oprawa: Sowa - druk na życzenie; [www.sowadruk.pl](http://www.sowadruk.pl) tel. 022 431-81-40

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## INTRODUCTION

A collection of articles is presented here which originates from the seminar on "Large-area Forest Fires" that was held in Poland on 7-8 September 2004 under a Project titled "Protection of Forest Resources in Central Europe" (WP.5.5 – Forest Fires) aimed at the PROFOREST Excellence Centre and organised by the Independent Laboratory for Forest Fire Protection of the Forestry Research Institute, in Warsaw.

The aforementioned Project included a workshop that was organised for specialists on forest fire protection and attended by relevant participants of Eastern European Countries, including those of Russia.

The principal objective of the seminar was to familiarise its participants with the large-area fire hazards in Eastern European forests and to present the major issues relating to their origins and impacts.

The reason that the area of the Rudy Raciborskie Forest Inspectorate was chosen as the venue for the seminar was that the largest catastrophic forest fire in the history of post-war Poland took place there in 1992 and burned a forest area of more than 9 thousand hectares. Subsequently, the fire propagated throughout the forest areas in two adjacent Forest Inspectorates of Kędzierzyn and Rudzieniec.

The programme of the seminar included a scientific session with relevant participants' presentations and a discussion summing-up their presentations, and also an outdoor session that included field site visits and discussion of the history and course of the aforementioned catastrophic fire, including the methods for management of the area burnt.

The representatives of both the host country and certain Eastern European Countries (including some new Member States of the European Union) participated to the seminar – i.e. Slovak Republic and Hungary, and also those from Russia, as well as the representatives of the Global Fire Monitoring Centre in Germany.

For the Polish participants, the seminar provided an opportunity for familiarisation with fire protection conditions and issues in the neighbouring countries, including up-to-date research techniques applied in the scope of forest fires (e.g. the analysis of satellite images).