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# Nondestructive Testing and Evaluation of Wood—50 Years of Research

## International Nondestructive Testing and Evaluation of Wood Symposium Series

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## Abstract

The International Nondestructive Testing and Evaluation of Wood Symposium Series was initiated by Washington State University and the USDA Forest Products Laboratory (FPL) in 1963 with the convening of a symposium on the topic of nondestructive testing of wood at FPL. Including that meeting, 17 symposia have been held during the last 50 years at various sites around the world that focus on non-destructive testing and evaluation of wood. The technical content of these symposia have been captured and published in hardcopy proceedings. The proceedings from this series of symposia are rather large; they contain over 6,000 pages of technical information related to the topic of nondestructive testing and evaluation of wood and wood products. Recently, many have expressed a need to have access to these proceedings in an electronic format. This General Technical Report was prepared to address that need.

It includes a brief history of this symposium series, summaries of each symposium, and readily searchable electronic copies of the proceedings from each symposium.

Keywords: International Nondestructive Testing and Evaluation of Wood Symposium, nondestructive testing, nondestructive evaluation, wood, wood products

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## Contents

Foreword

Introduction

Brief History on International Nondestructive Testing and Evaluation of Wood Symposium Series

Summaries and Proceedings from Symposia

*Symposium on Nondestructive Testing of Wood (1963, Madison, Wisconsin)*

*Second Symposium on the Nondestructive Testing of Wood (1964, Spokane, Washington)*

*Third Short Course on Nondestructive Testing of Wood—Commercial Machine-Stress-Rating for Profit (1970, Vancouver, Washington)*

*Fourth Nondestructive Testing of Wood Symposium (1978, Vancouver, Washington)*

*Fifth Nondestructive Testing of Wood Symposium (1985, Pullman, Washington)*

*Sixth Symposium on the Nondestructive Testing of Wood (1987, Pullman, Washington)*

*Seventh Symposium on the Nondestructive Testing of Wood (1989, Madison, Wisconsin)*

*Eighth Symposium on the Nondestructive Testing of Wood (1991, Vancouver, Washington)*

*Ninth International Symposium on Nondestructive Testing of Wood (1993, Madison, Wisconsin)*

*Tenth International Symposium on Nondestructive Testing of Wood (1996, Lausanne, Switzerland)*

*Eleventh International Symposium on Nondestructive Testing of Wood (1998, Madison, Wisconsin)*

*Twelfth International Symposium on Nondestructive Testing of Wood (2000, Sopron, Hungary)*

*Thirteenth International Symposium on Nondestructive Testing of Wood (2002, Berkeley, California)*

*Fourteenth International Symposium on Nondestructive Testing of Wood (2005, Hanover, Germany)*

*Fifteenth International Symposium on Nondestructive Testing of Wood (2007, Duluth, Minnesota)*

*Sixteenth International Symposium on Nondestructive Testing and Evaluation of Wood (2009, Beijing, China)*

*Seventeenth International Nondestructive Testing and Evaluation of Wood Symposium (2011, Sopron, Hungary)*

*First European Symposium on Nondestructive Evaluation of Wood (1994, Sopron, Hungary)*

## Foreword

We are proud to present this publication, *Nondestructive Testing and Evaluation of Wood—50 Years of Research: International Nondestructive Testing and Evaluation of Wood Symposium Series*, compiled and prepared by our colleagues at the Forest Products Laboratory (FPL).

Efficient use of our timber resources is of critical importance. Nondestructive testing and evaluation technologies have contributed greatly to this theme and to ensuring public safety. These technologies are now widely used to grade structural wood products and to inspect wood structures.

This publication is a compilation of proceedings from a series of symposia on the topic of nondestructive testing and evaluation of wood. Intended to serve as a reference on the topic of nondestructive testing and evaluation of wood and wood products, it provides a primary source of information to scientists, engineers, and others interested in the topic. Continuing nondestructive evaluation research holds promise for wider and more efficient utilization of wood in an increasing number of applications.

Wood resources continue to play an important role in the world, from packaging materials to buildings and transportation structures. Wood has been useful to humans for thousands of years; archeological discoveries have shown wood was used by ancient civilizations as a construction material, as a substrate for ornate decorative objects, and for providing the final resting place for royalty. These discoveries—including artifacts that have survived for thousands of years—highlight the unique, long-lasting performance characteristics of wood. The international nondestructive evaluation of wood research community continues its journey of discovery and public service; working cooperatively in laboratories around the world, we are discovering information that covers the entire spectrum of nondestructive evaluation—from inspecting wood used by ancient societies to developing new grading and assessment technologies for seedlings and trees. If our forests are managed wisely, and if we continue to build our knowledge base in nondestructive evaluation to meet the challenges of evolving human needs and changing wood characteristics, this amazing material that is wood will serve the public well for years to come.

International Organizing Committee, International Nondestructive Testing and Evaluation of Wood Symposium:

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Dr. Robert J. Ross, FPL, USA  
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# Nondestructive Testing and Evaluation of Wood —50 Years of Research

## International Nondestructive Testing and Evaluation of Wood Symposium Series

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### Introduction

The field of nondestructive testing and evaluation of materials is constantly evolving. This is especially true in the wood- and fiber-based materials area. For example, early research on nondestructive testing and evaluation technologies for wood products focused on methods to assess the performance characteristics of structural lumber in North America. Nondestructive testing (NDT) techniques, equipment, and evaluation procedures that are now in widespread use resulted from those efforts. Today, worldwide research and development efforts are under way to examine the potential use of a wide range of nondestructive testing technologies for evaluating wood and wood-based materials—from the assessment of standing trees to in-place structures.

Since 1963, symposia have been held at various sites around the world, bringing together research scientists, engineers, and technologists who work in nondestructive testing and evaluation of wood, providing a technical forum for them to present their research findings.

The purpose of this publication is threefold: 1. to provide a brief history of this symposium series, 2. to provide a brief summary of each symposium, and 3. to make available in an electronic format readily searchable copies of the proceedings from each symposium.

### Brief History on International Nondestructive Testing and Evaluation of Wood Symposium Series

The International Nondestructive Testing and Evaluation of Wood Symposium Series was initiated by Washington State University (WSU) and the USDA Forest Products Laboratory (FPL). The first symposium was held at FPL in fall 1963, with proceedings produced and distributed in 1964. At that meeting, nearly 100 scientists, engineers, and industry leaders discussed the possibilities of a wide range of scientific means for testing wood nondestructively. The goals of this series of symposia were to provide a technical and scientific forum for researchers to present and exchange results from their latest research endeavors, and bring

researchers and industry together in an attempt to bridge the gap between the results of the researchers' efforts and use of those results by the wood industry.

Seventeen symposia have been held to date (Table 1) at sites in China, Germany, Hungary, Switzerland, and the United States.

Early symposia focused on basic nondestructive evaluation (NDE) principles and efforts on lumber assessment procedures. The third symposium was devoted entirely to the machine stress rating lumber grading process.

Symposia have attracted researchers and industry representatives from throughout the world. Recently, papers have been presented on new NDT techniques including those that focus on tomography, near infrared scanning, and innovative combinations of stress-wave, laser, and ultrasound techniques. A significant number of papers have been presented on assessment of trees and logs, with most work on lumber focusing on use of well-established techniques for evaluating species in Asia, Europe, and South America.

Approximately 700 technical presentations have been delivered during these symposia, and proceedings containing corresponding papers were produced and published.

### Summaries and Proceedings from Symposia

The following includes a brief summary of each symposium and electronic copies of each symposium proceedings. Please note that the electronic copies were prepared by scanning hard copies of the original proceedings that were obtained from FPL's library and FPL staff files. Papers included in the original proceedings were edited prior to publication; no additional editing was performed on the electronic copy.

#### Symposium on Nondestructive Testing of Wood

The first symposium, officially convened as "Symposium on Nondestructive Testing of Wood," was held in 1963 at the FPL in Madison, Wisconsin. The symposium

**Table 1—Background information on the International Nondestructive Testing and Evaluation of Wood Symposium Series**

Symposium	Dates held	Host institution and location
1	October 7–9, 1963	USDA Forest Products Laboratory, Madison, Wisconsin, USA
2	April 1964	Washington State University, Spokane, Washington, USA
3	April–May 1970	Washington State University, Vancouver, WA USA
4	August 28–30, 1978	Washington State University, Vancouver, WA USA
5	September 9–11, 1985	Washington State University, Pullman, WA USA
6	September 14–16, 1987	Washington State University, Pullman, WA USA
7	September 27–29, 1989	USDA Forest Products Laboratory, Madison, WI USA
8	September 23–25, 1991	Washington State University, Vancouver, WA USA
9	September 22–24, 1993	USDA Forest Products Laboratory, Madison, WI USA
10	August 26–28, 1996	IBOIS-Chair of Timber Construction of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Lausanne, Switzerland
11	September 9–11, 1998	USDA Forest Products Laboratory, Madison, WI USA
12	September 13–15, 2000	University of West Hungary, Sopron, Hungary
13	August 19–21, 2002	University of California, Berkeley Campus, CA USA
14	May 2–4, 2005	University of Applied Sciences Eberswalde, Hanover, Germany
15	September 10–12, 2007	University of Minnesota Duluth, Duluth, MN USA
16	October 12–14, 2009	Beijing Forestry University, Beijing, China
17	September 14–16, 2011	University of West Hungary, Sopron, Hungary

organizing committee consisted of R.L. Youngs, H. Tarkow, and D. Kutscha, all from FPL. Six sessions, including introductory and summary sessions, were held. The purpose of this symposium was to bring research and industry leaders together to examine what was being done in nondestructive testing and discuss its applications to the wood products industries. It was sponsored jointly by the National Lumber Manufacturers Association (NLMA) and FPL.

The summary session, which was chaired by A.D. Freas (FPL) and included committee members R.C. Platow (U.S. Plywood Corporation), J.G. Shope (NLMA), G.G. Marra (WSU), W.L. James (FPL), and P.S. Johnson (Society for Nondestructive Testing), was particularly noteworthy. In addition to providing an excellent summary of the papers presented, it outlined key areas where nondestructive testing could be useful to the wood products industry. A proceedings, published by FPL as U.S. Forest Service Research

Note FPL-040, included extended abstracts, notes capturing questions and comments following presentations, and a list of participants.

### **Second Symposium on the Nondestructive Testing of Wood**

Washington State University (WSU) hosted the second symposium in Spokane, Washington. The meeting was co-chaired by G.G. Marra and W.L. Galligan from WSU. Five sessions, including a summary session on the status of nondestructive testing for wood, covered topics that ranged from the fundamentals of nondestructive testing to market-place considerations and implications. Several prominent international scientists, with sponsorship from the National Science Foundation, travelled to the United States to make presentations. Professor F. Kollmann (University of Munich, Germany), Dr. E. Fukada (Tokyo University, Japan),

R.F.S. Hearmon (Timber Research, Forest Products Laboratory, Prince Risborough, England), and Dr. Narayanamurti (Indian Plywood Industries Research Association, Bangalore, India) travelled considerable distances to deliver papers.

The proceedings, edited by W.L. Galligan (WSU), were published with the support of the National Science Foundation.

### **Third Short Course on Nondestructive Testing of Wood—Commercial Machine-Stress-Rating for Profit**

The third Nondestructive Testing of Wood Symposium was unique because it is the only one devoted entirely to one topic area—Machine Stress Rating (MSR) of structural lumber. Commercial Machine-Stress-Rating for Profit was sponsored by WSU, co-chaired by Roy F. Pellerin and Robert J. Hoyle (both from WSU), and held in Vancouver, Washington. It consisted of four sessions, all of which dealt with a specific aspect of the manufacture, marketing, or use of MSR lumber. Representatives from academia, lumber companies, trade associations, and building component manufacturers prepared a series of talks that covered topics including manufacture, marketing, and use of this type of lumber product. The proceedings from this meeting, edited by R.J. Hoyle, included an appendix that contains then-current MSR grade rules, and building code and U.S. Federal Housing Authority (FHA) documents in addition to information on commercially available machines for grading or testing lumber.

### **Fourth Nondestructive Testing of Wood Symposium**

One hundred sixty individuals from academia and industry participated in the fourth Nondestructive Testing of Wood Symposium. Chaired by R.F. Pellerin (WSU), it was held in Vancouver, Washington. Technical papers covered topics including scanning with ultrasound and lasers, quality assessment of in-service wood, nondestructive testing for quality control applications, and market developments. F. Alan Tayelor (Western Forest Products Laboratory, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada) closed the meeting with a discussion of the challenges and opportunities industry addresses when it considers adaptation of nondestructive testing technologies. A 315-page proceedings, edited by R.F. Pellerin, was published by WSU.

### **Fifth Nondestructive Testing of Wood Symposium Proceedings**

Roy Pellerin (WSU) and Kent McDonald (FPL) co-chaired the fifth symposium. Sponsored by WSU and FPL, it was held in Pullman, Washington. Thirty-five papers were organized into five sessions and covered the following topics: 1. NDT of plywood, reconstituted wood, and parallel laminated lumber, 2. NDT applied to trees, logs, poles, and pilings, 3. NDT of in-place structures and members, 4. NDT

applied to lumber, and 5. Applying NDT: Relating market requirements to QA procedures. The 664-page proceedings were published by WSU.

### **Sixth Symposium on the Nondestructive Testing of Wood**

The sixth Nondestructive Testing of Wood Symposium was sponsored by WSU and FPL. Co-chairs Roy Pellerin and Kent McDonald prepared a program comprised of four sessions, including sessions focused on the fundamentals of nondestructive testing as applied to wood, nondestructive testing research, application of nondestructive testing in the wood products industry, and the future direction of nondestructive testing of wood. A considerable number of attendees were from outside of the United States, with individuals from Canada, China, Denmark, England, Japan, and Sweden participating. The proceedings were published by WSU.

### **Seventh Symposium on the Nondestructive Testing of Wood**

In recognition of the growing international involvement with the symposium, the title was changed to “International Symposium on Nondestructive Testing of Wood.” Held in Madison, Wisconsin, and co-chaired by Roy Pellerin and Kent McDonald, it attracted representatives from Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, South Africa, United States, and Yugoslavia.

Twenty-four technical papers were organized into four sessions. The themes for the sessions were 1. acoustic emission and acousto-ultrasonics, 2. NDE facilities and research programs around the world, 3. sensing properties and characteristics in wood products, and 4. sensing internal characteristics in round wood products. A poster session was also held. Proceedings were published by WSU.

### **Eighth Symposium on the Nondestructive Testing of Wood**

The eighth International Symposium on Nondestructive Testing of Wood was sponsored by WSU and FPL. Co-chairs Roy Pellerin and Kent McDonald organized a meeting that included a keynote address by B.A. Jayne, “World Forests, Wood Products, and Nondestructive Evaluation Century Twenty One,” three technical sessions, and a poster session. The themes for the technical sessions were 1. strength-process control, 2. internal NDE, and 3. in-situ NDE.

Representatives from Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Japan, Korea, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States were in attendance.

### **Ninth International Symposium on Nondestructive Testing of Wood**

The FPL was the host for the ninth International Symposium on Nondestructive Testing of Wood. K.R. Peterson (FPL)

presented a keynote address, “The Role of Nondestructive Evaluation in Assuring the Wise Use of Our Timber Resources.” Co-chairs Roy Pellerin and Kent McDonald prepared a strong technical program, with sessions on acoustic emission, deteriorated wood determination, NDT and nondestructive evaluation (NDE) of panel products, and NDT/NDE of lumber and timber products. A poster session attracted 13 papers. Scientists from Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, United States, Sweden, Switzerland, South Africa, and the United States participated in the meeting. Proceedings were published by the Forest Products Society (Madison, Wisconsin).

### **Tenth International Symposium on Nondestructive Testing of Wood**

Lausanne, Switzerland, was the host city for the 10th International Symposium on Nondestructive Testing of Wood. This meeting was organized by IBOIS-Chair of Timber Construction of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne. Jean Luc Sandoz chaired the symposium, working in collaboration with Roy Pellerin, Kent McDonald, and Friedrich-Wilhelm Bröker (Federal Research Centre for Forestry and Forest Products, Germany). It attracted over 120 participants, with 43 speakers. Papers were organized into seven technical sessions. The proceedings were edited by Professor Sandoz.

Professor Pellerin and Kent McDonald were formally recognized for their longstanding leadership of the symposium series.

### **Eleventh International Symposium on Nondestructive Testing of Wood**

The 11th International Symposium on Nondestructive Testing of Wood was hosted by the FPL in Madison, Wisconsin. Conference co-chairs were Roy Pellerin and Kent McDonald. Twenty-three papers were organized into four technical sessions that covered the following four topic areas: 1. nondestructive testing of wood and wood-based composite products, 2. nondestructive evaluation of lumber, 3. nondestructive evaluation techniques for logs, lumber, and standing timber, and 4. in-situ nondestructive inspection of timber structures. W.L. Galligan presented a keynote address, “Refocusing the Nondestructive Testing of Wood for the Millennium.” The symposium proceedings were edited by D.G. Pollock (WSU) and published by the Forest Products Society.

### **Twelfth International Symposium on Nondestructive Testing of Wood**

The University of West Hungary (UWH), Sopron, Hungary, was the host for the 12th International Symposium on Nondestructive Testing of Wood. F. Divos (UWH) served as proceedings editor and program coordinator, with the help of an

international organizing committee. Roy Pellerin served as meeting chair. Emeritus Professor Jozsef Bodig presented a keynote address, “The Process of NDE Research for Wood and Wood Composites.” Presentations were organized into seven subject areas: 1. sound and ultrasound, 2. strength and MOE, 3. standing timber, 4. nuclear techniques, 5. microwave, 6. thermography, and 7. inspection of structures.

This symposium was sponsored by the following organizations: University of West Hungary; OMF (National Committee for Technological Development, Hungary); and Forestry, Forest Products, and Pulp&Paper Foundation (Sopron).

### **Thirteenth International Symposium on Nondestructive Testing of Wood**

The University of California Forest Products Laboratory was the host for the 13th International Symposium on Nondestructive Testing of Wood. F.C. Beall served as proceedings editor and program coordinator, with the assistance of co-chairs Roy Pellerin and Kent McDonald. Thirty-six oral presentations were organized into eight technical sessions, and nineteen posters were presented. A keynote address, “Bridging the Gap,” was presented by Roy Pellerin. The proceedings were published by the Forest Products Society.

### **Fourteenth International Symposium on Nondestructive Testing of Wood**

Hanover, Germany, was the venue for the 14th International Symposium on Nondestructive Testing of Wood. Hosted by the University of Applied Sciences at Eberswalde, it was led by Friedrich-Wilhelm Bröker. Professor Bröker, with the assistance of the international organizing committee, produced a strong program—nine technical sessions that included over 50 papers. Professor H. Resch provided a keynote address, “NDT—An Original Challenge to Wood Technology.” The nine technical session themes were 1. introduction, 2. wood composites, 3. gluing, 4. structural members, 5. evaluation of trees, 6. grading, 7. applied NDT/NDE, 8. new developments in ultrasound evaluation, and 9. timber. Proceedings were compiled and edited by Professor Bröker and published by Shaker Verlag, Germany.

### **Fifteenth International Symposium on Nondestructive Testing of Wood**

The University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD), Duluth, Minnesota, was the host for the 15th International Symposium on Nondestructive Testing of Wood. Co-chairs for the meeting were B.K. Brashaw (UMD), R.J. Ross (FPL), and X. Wang (UMD, FPL). Thirty-six technical papers were organized into nine sessions. A poster session attracted 13 presentations.

Distinguished Service Awards were presented to three individuals in recognition of their research and development efforts and long-standing support of the symposium

series. Voichita Bucur, John R. Erickson (FPL), and Thomas M. Maloney (WSU) were officially recognized during the opening session of the meeting.

A post-symposium workshop on inspection of historic structures was conducted at a local historic site. Proceedings were published by the Forest Products Society.

### **Sixteenth International Symposium on Nondestructive Testing and Evaluation of Wood**

Beijing Forestry University (BFU) and the FPL were the sponsors of the 16th International Symposium on Nondestructive Testing and Evaluation of Wood. Held in Beijing, China, it was chaired by Dr. Weilun Yin (BFU) and co-chaired by R.J. Ross (FPL) and G. Yu (BFU). Professor H. Zhang (BFU) and X. Wang (FPL) served as technical program chairs and as editors for the proceedings. Proceedings were published by Beijing Forestry University.

Special Recognition Awards were presented to two Chinese professors for their pioneering research on nondestructive testing and evaluation of wood in China. Professor Bozhang Shi (Nanjing Forestry University) and Research Professor Zhitong Wang (Chinese Academy of Forestry) were formally recognized during the opening session of the meeting. Distinguished Service Awards were presented to Dr. Peter Niemz (Institute for Building Materials–ETH, Zurich, Switzerland) and R.J. Ross.

Fifty-six papers were organized into nine sessions. A poster session contained 13 presentations.

### **Seventeenth International Nondestructive Testing and Evaluation of Wood Symposium**

The University of West Hungary, Sopron, Hungary, was the host for the 17th International Symposium on Nondestructive Testing and Evaluation of Wood. F. Divos (UWH) and R.J. Ross (FPL) served as co-chairs. Support for the symposium was provided by University of West Hungary, Hungarian Academy of Science (Wood Science Sub-committee), and the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations (IUFRO). Proceedings were edited by F. Divos and published by UWH.

Technical session themes were 1. tree and log quality, 2. urban tree evaluation, 3. structural lumber grading, 4. engineered wood products, 5. wood-based composites, 6. vibration-based methods, 7. condition assessment of historic structures, and 8. other NDT-related areas. A poster session was also included. A Distinguished Service award was presented to Professor F. Divos during the opening session.

Two pre-symposium workshops were conducted in the Sopron area prior to the meeting; one focused on structural lumber grading and the other on evaluation of historic structures. During these workshops, participants received formal

classroom and hands-on training and an in-depth exposure on the interpretation and use of NDT/NDE-related assessments.

### **Another Significant Meeting in the Development of the International Nondestructive Testing and Evaluation of Wood Symposium Series—The First European Symposium on Nondestructive Evaluation of Wood**

The 1<sup>st</sup> European Symposium on Nondestructive Evaluation of Wood was sponsored by the University of Sopron, Sopron, Hungary, with the assistance of Washington State University and the Forest Products Laboratory. Held on the University's campus on September 21–23, 1994, it attracted one hundred four (104) participants. Fifty-six papers were presented. It is significant to note that after this initial meeting, it was combined with the International Nondestructive Testing and Evaluation of Wood Symposium Series. After this meeting, an international organizing committee was formed to select the sites and plan for future International Nondestructive Testing and Evaluation of Wood Symposia. Since that time, the International Nondestructive Testing and Evaluation of Wood Symposium has been held in the following countries: China (Beijing), Germany (Hanover), Hungary (Sopron), Switzerland (Lausanne), and the United States (Berkeley, California; Duluth, Minnesota; Madison, Wisconsin).