

REPORT
INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON EROSION AND
SEDIMENTATION IN THE PACIFIC RIM
3-7 August 1987, Corvallis, Oregon, U.S.A.

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This Symposium was the fourth in the "Pacific Rim" series, which began with the Christchurch meeting of 1981 and has continued with Symposia in Hawaii (1984) and Tsukuba, Japan (1985).

A pre-Symposium tour began in San Francisco and travelled north along the Pacific coast to Corvallis, visiting research sites, areas affected by large floods and slips, a timber mill, a winery and lots of hostelrys. The tour was an invaluable scene-setter for the Symposium discussions, providing a preview of the landscape, vegetation and personalities that featured prominently in the formal papers. I strongly recommend taking part in such tours whenever possible, because they allow participants to obtain a much better appreciation of factors which cannot be easily told or written down; there is also time for relatively relaxed discussion with many of the local researchers.

A one-day visit to the H. J. Andrews Experimental Forest on the day before the Symposium opened was also most enjoyable and covered many aspects of erosion in forests and its effect on fisheries.

The Symposium itself had four special sessions, one each on zero-order basins, debris flows, sediment transport and basin response. There were also general sessions on mass movements, channel morphology, land use effects, sedimentation, infiltration and surface erosion, and effects of fires, which ran concurrently in pairs. An afternoon was devoted to videos and movies of debris flows, and a morning to films and videos of landslides, some of which were repeated by popular demand.

Following the Symposium a two-day field visit to Mt St Helens gave an awesome impression of the eruption of 1980 and the blast, avalanche, pyroclastic flows and debris flows which followed.

About 200 people attended the Symposium, more than the optimum for a "working party" type of meeting, but ideal for the opportunity to meet a wide variety of people ranging from famous personalities to fascinating graduate students. This was certainly one of the best conferences I have attended in this respect. The standard of the papers was variable, in technical content and presentation, reflecting the difficulty of effectively pre-selecting papers on the basis of abstracts alone. The five-minute discussion period following each paper is normal, but was often insufficient to generate lines of questioning suitable for vigorous debate in the 45-minute general discussion at the end of each session, hence these general discussions were sometimes a bit turgid. By contrast, the private discussions that raged in the evenings in bars, clubs and rooms more truly reflected the vigour and enthusiasm of the participants, and were

stimulating enough that I could get up in the morning after four hours' sleep eager for more. Lots of coffee was provided.

The contribution made by participants from New Zealand was very much appreciated, and great interest was expressed in our erosion problems and solution techniques. Likewise, delegates from Brazil, Peru, the Phillipines, China, Taiwan, Korea and Italy described a wide range of problems similar in principle to our own and, allowing for different social, cultural and economic constraints, had a similar philosophy for solutions.

Thus, while no epoch-making breakthroughs were made, many solid and constructive papers were given and some very frank discussions took place. The next Symposium in the series will be held in Indonesia in 1989, in the shadow of active volcanoes, and the rumbling of lahars should stimulate urgent decision-making.

The proceedings of the Symposium are published by I.A.H.S. (Publication No. 165) and can be obtained from I.A.H.S. Publications, Institute of Hydrology, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, OX10 8BB, U.K.

I am most grateful to Lincoln College, the New Zealand Hydrological Society and the Symposium organisers for assistance with funding.