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To: k.briffa@uea.ac.uk  
Subject: Russia  
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Hi Keith:

As you are aware, the situation in Russia is very uncertain with their unfortunate economic condition, especially science support. There is interest, hope, and dots on maps showing intent but actual activity is difficult to judge. In the particular area I am interested in, the Taymyr, there is no current active tree-ring research going on although it has been previously sampled and some reports are in preparation. Ed probably told you that I have submitted a proposal to do work there. My understanding is that unless there is some external funding support, such as my project, tree-ring sampling there is in abeyance. Several people, including yourself, recognize the great potential in the region. From my perspective it seems that the Polar Urals are being studied, Yakutia to the far east is being studied, some work has been done by Szeicz and Macdonald at the Lena but there is need for more intensive effort in Taymyr. I would like to hear your perspective on the situation.

In a related topic, I am thinking of using the option in Ed's new ARSTAN to use the regional standardization method. In Russia and other locales the establishment of trees is episodic. In particular, in Alaska Glenn Juday has data showing cohort groups being established in favorable times. In Taymyr also, the establishment of trees is not evenly distributed through time. There are times of growth and times of demise. This concerns me as it could affect the development of a regional curve. do you see problems arising from this?

I am also curious to hear any comments you care to make about my recent letter to Fritz Schweingruber. He obviously will pursue any style of sampling and analyses he chooses to. My only contention is that he should not represent his data as the definitive tree-ring information, particularly ring-width data. His opinions are influential but there is an accumulating body of ring-width data that clearly shows him to be missing much important information with his style of sampling. Scientists and others should be aware of this fact.

Cheers,        Gordon