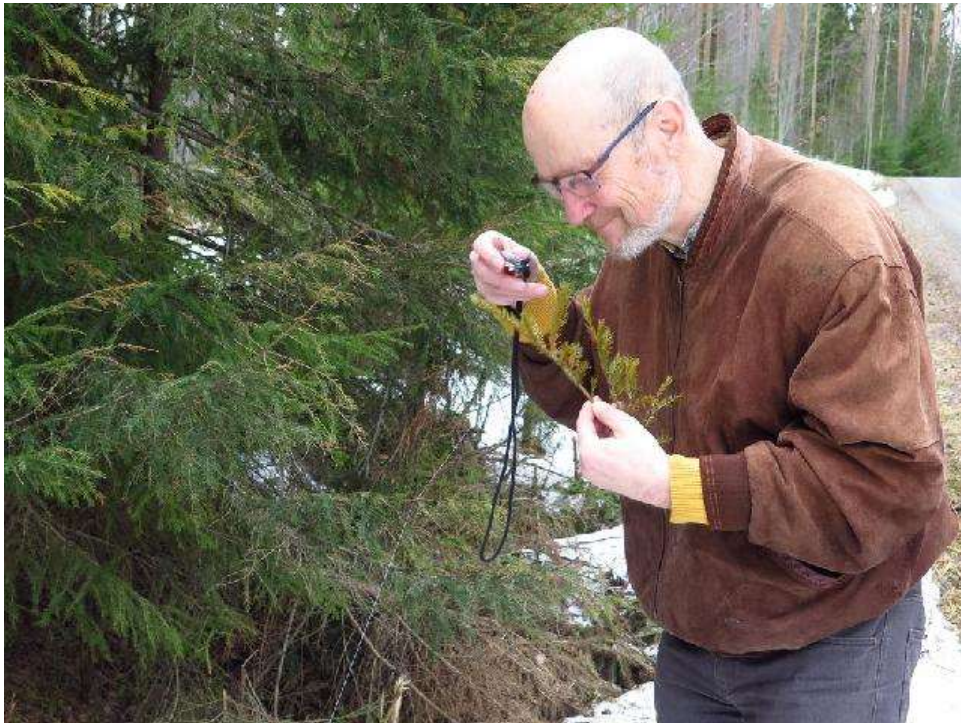


## EXPLORING THE NORTHERN WOODS

Prof. Mike Wingfield spent time in northern Finland with forest pathology colleagues, Profs Jarkko Hantula and Michael Muller (two of the leaders of the group that developed the Montesclaros Declaration calling for substantial controls in the global movement of plant products) during a visit to the country. During a previous visit to Finland, Profs Wingfield and Hantula surveyed *Pinus sylvestris* for the tree pathogen *Sphaeropsis sapinea* and interestingly, they were not able to find the fungus. This situation appears now to have changed with the fungus appearing as a new invasive.



Consequently, Profs Wingfield and Muller made a new collection of samples in order to evaluate the possible presence of the fungus. This work will yield interesting research results. A few distractions included eating reindeer moss (*Cladonia stellaris*), consumed by the Woods Cree (Nihithawak) people to treat intestinal parasites. The moss is the main winter food of caribou and reindeer but is slow growing and like most other lichens, *C. stellaris* grows less than 0.5cm per year - even under ideal conditions. A second, more dramatic, distraction was jumping into hole cut in a frozen lake after sauna – a common practice for Finnish people but not South Africans!

