PERCEPTIONS AND PARTICIPATION IN US COMMUNITY-BASED FORESTRY
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INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, community-based forestry has emerged and evolved into a movement with ecological, social, and economic dimensions. Many groups and individuals from across the country and from public, private, rural, and urban land contexts are actively involved. The diversity of participation is reflected in the broad array of issues with which community-based forestry groups and practitioners grapple. While some matters are of concern to the entire community-based forestry population, others are of intense interest to some but of little interest to others. Tensions over how national groups allocate their resources (time, money, and institutional effort) are particularly evident between those constituents primarily concerned with urban forestry issues and those involved in rural forestry, and between those focused on publicly owned forests and those concerned with private forest lands. This has led to questions about the scope, clarity, and focus of the movement and the roles that national organizations (the Communities Committee, National Network of Forest Practitioners, the Pinchot Institute for Conservation, American Forests, and others) play – or should play -- in assisting local and regional interests' participation in the movement.

This project explores how people across the spectrum understand "community-based forestry;" how they have been or would like to engage in the movement; whether there are other individuals and/or groups who need to be involved but have not been; what the appropriate roles are for the national organizations in facilitating local and regional participation; and how the scope and effect of the community-based forestry movement could be improved.

This survey is the first of a two-phase project. Individuals who have been involved in community-based forestry for a sustained period of time were asked to share their perceptions of the movement. The resulting data will be used to help develop a second-phase quantitative, close-ended survey. Phase two is scheduled to take place in the fall of 2005 or spring of 2006.

The project was developed and implemented by the Communities Committee (with contracted staff assistance from American Forests). Upon completion, survey information will be disseminated to organizational partners and the community forestry constituency nationwide and used to generate broader discussion and action on identified needs and opportunities.

METHODS

Information was gathered using a qualitative survey intended to explore questions on matters affecting current and future participation in community-based forestry. With the help of a small task group, survey questions were developed and possible participants identified.

Surveys were conducted by telephone interviews and ranged from a half hour to one and a half hours. Sixty possible participants were identified for possible participation with thirty-five actually participating in and

completing the telephone survey. The chart below illustrates the criteria used to help select and characterize possible participants. It also shows response rates for those contacted for interviews.

Criteria	Number of potential participants selected for survey (Total = 60 People)	Percentage of potential participants selected for survey from each criterion	Number of participants actually completing interviews	Percentage of participants actually completing interviews
Type of Organization				
Academic	7	12%	5	14%
Agency	7	12%	3	9%
Association, Professional, and Scientific Society	2	3%	0	0%
Conservation	23	38%	17	49%
Environmental	7	12%	4	11%
Foundation	4	7%	2	6%
Industry	6	10%	4	11%
Tribes	4	7%	0	0%
Total	60	100%	35	100%
Region Located				
Southeast (AL, GA, FL, NC, SC, AK, TN, MS)	7	12%	5	14%
MidAtlantic (PA, DC, MD, VA, WV, DE)	9	15%	4	11%
Northeast (RI, VT, NH, NY, MA)	6	10%	2	6%
Midwest (MI, WI, MN, OH)	7	12%	5	14%
Southwest (AZ, NM)	8	13%	4	11%
Intermountain West (UT, CO, MT, ID)	8	13%	6	17%
Pacific Northwest (OR, WA)	6	10%	4	11%
West (CA, NV)	7	12%	4	11%
Pacific Islands (HI)	1	2%	0	0%
Alaska	1	2%	1	3%
Total	60	100%	35	100%
Urban/Rural				
Urban	7	12%	5	14%
Rural	50	83%	29	83%
Both	3	5%	1	3%
Total	60	100%	35	100%

Public/Private				
Public	23	38%	15	43%
Private	9	15%	16	46%
Both	28	47%	4	11%
Total	60	100%	35	100%
Scale of Work				
National	11	18%	5	14%
Regional	33	55%	21	60%
Local	16	27%	9	26%
Total	60	100%	35	100%

The survey includes eleven questions, each made up of several parts. (See Appendix A) The questions were designed to allow for a wide range of possible answers and perspectives on community-based forestry. The intent was to better understand the multiple ways participants perceive community-based forestry, their role in it, and their level of commitment to it. A better sense of how respondents might interpret different sorts of questions will allow clearer formulation of questions for the second phase survey.

The interviews elicited a wide range of perspectives and a large amount of unstructured information. Data analysis involved interpretation and categorization of the content of responses in order to obtain useful results.

ANALYSIS

Analysis

Question 1. General Understanding of Community-based Forestry

This question attempts to understand community-based forestry and look for consistency in understanding over time. By so doing, we may better understand how to communicate clearly about the priorities and goals of community-based forestry to those wishing to become involved and to clarify within the movement what direction makes the most sense to go next.

1.1 If someone asked you to explain community-based forestry, what would you say?

Participant responses vary widely, however, some themes appear consistently. Almost all participants feel that community-based forestry is participatory, collaborative, and involves cooperation across diverse, interested parties. It is a movement that allows 'non-forestry professionals' and communities of place and/or interest to get involved in resource management decision-making using local, practical, and historical knowledge. Many participants discuss the importance of considering economic, social, and ecological concerns so as to more holistically accomplish land management. Some explain community-based forestry as a movement creatively addressing social, economic, and environmental justice issues, reengaging disenfranchised communities, and creating locally based, family-wage jobs.

Some discrepancy in definitions occurs due to the varying sectors of work respondents come from. For example, those working in urban forestry view community-based forestry as an urban phenomenon, whereas those in rural settings perceive it as a rural phenomenon. Many of the overriding philosophies, however, such as collaboration and the participatory nature of community-based forestry, remain constant regardless of whether respondents work in an urban or rural setting.

The one constant amongst all respondents is a sense that community-based forestry somehow implies a taking of responsibility for forest stewardship by those who care about those forests, whether they live in an urban setting, on a forest they own, or in communities surrounding publicly or privately owned lands.

1.2 Do you understand community-based forestry differently now than when you first became involved? If yes, how?

Most survey participants' perspectives have changed in some way since they first became involved in community-based forestry. Some respondent's understanding of community-based forestry has deepened. They have developed networks they were not engaged in prior to their involvement. Some discuss the growing respect they have for traditional knowledge and the role it can play in planning and decision-making. Some have learned to trust and work with groups they formerly would not have. This is largely due to the collaborative methods community-based forestry employs to accomplish holistic forestland management. Experiential learning is hugely important and a number of survey participants note that simply getting to know a few people and starting to learn about community-based forestry may be enough to further engage them down the road.

Others discuss the impacts of their previous involvement in international community-based natural resource management. That involvement eventually led them to community-based forestry in the United States, which they find to be different. . Various participants see community-based forestry in this country involving a more diffuse and diverse set of players and incorporating more issues of social, economic, and environmental justice. Some who have been involved in strictly U.S. community-based forestry believe that the movement has become more diffuse and diverse, even divided, since its beginning as new issues have surfaced and been embraced by community-based forestry practitioners. It is a larger movement that helps to bring in new voices and strives to increase capacity across the movement.

Finally, some who became involved early in the community-based-forestry movement and initially saw it as a way for opposing groups to find common ground and avoid litigation maintain that perspective. However, they now feel that community-based forestry does more than that. It gets people involved in and informed about what is going on in the forests around them, and engages people in management by using collaborative processes to achieve goals.

Question 2.   Past and Present Involvement in Community-based Forestry
This question, made up of four parts, examines involvement in community-based forestry, from the time of initial involved to present involvement. An estimate of the average length of time participants have been involved in community-based forestry may help to better understand how long community-based forestry is perceived to have existed as well as the depth of experience existing amongst survey participants. It may be possible not only to understand how those currently involved became involved, but also to determine how

others might become engaged. It also paints a portrait of which groups or venues are currently best serving the needs of community-based forestry practitioners and which activities are occupying the greatest portion of their time.

2.1 How long have you personally been involved in community-based forestry?

The average length of time participants have been involved in community-based forestry is 12.5 years, though results vary due to interpretation differences amongst participants. Some participants feel that all of their experience going back to their earliest days camping should be counted as involvement in community-based forestry, while others who have been involved in natural resource management for many years only count those years of involvement since the beginning of the "community-based forestry movement," as they perceive it. The greatest length of involvement is 34 years and the least is 4 years.

2.2 How did you initially become involved in community-based forestry?

The most common ways participants became involved in community-based forestry were through:

- A job (an assignment or project that engaged them and put them in touch with community-based forestry networks);
- Work in international community-based resource management;
- Graduate work and academia; or,
- A connection with a community group such as the National Network of Forest Practitioners, the Communities Committee, Wallawa Resources, and many others.

Several respondents say that crisis drove them to seek new ways of accomplishing goals, the result being collaboration and community-based forestry.

2.3 How are you currently involved? (Include professional and non-work lives) and;
2.4 How have you been involved in the past? List all the ways. (Include professional and non-work lives)

The most common activity in which participants are or have been involved is through a role in a local or regional organization or coalition to accomplish economic development, forest restoration and sustainable forestry, ground-level project implementation, local policy development, and a wide array of other community-based forestry related activities. At a national level, many participants have been and continue to be involved with the National Network of Forest Practitioners, the Communities Committee of the Seventh American Forest Congress, and the National Alliance for Community Trees. Several participants have worked and continue to work in partnership with organizations working in national level policy such as American Forests, the Pinchot Institute, and the Society of American Foresters. Some participants specifically mention their efforts to either educate others of all ages, or to educate themselves through workshops and trainings such as the National Week in Washington. Some have even done extensive research on the subject of community-based forestry and have published papers and books on their findings. A few have moved into the area of social justice within community-based forestry.

Participant responses do not shed much light on possible trends over time, such as activities that are seen as less useful as the movement evolves or the development of more specialized groups or activities within the movement. Responses indicate that many participants have continued to be involved with the same organizations and activities over time. If they have become less involved, it has largely been due to a lack of resources and time to remain engaged, rather than a lack of interest or a specific concern. Finally, several participant responses are unexpected as they discuss specific current versus past (but sporadically ongoing) activities in which they have been involved.

Question 3. Desired Future Involvement in Community-based Forestry

This question again looks at participant involvement in community-based forestry, however, it attempts to discern information about desired future involvement. It looks at whether participants believe there is still opportunity for further involvement and growth within the community-based forestry movement and whether interest in community-based forestry is continuing or flagging. In order to facilitate the involvement of existing practitioners as well as new people to community-based forestry, it is necessary to have some idea of what they need to become involved. This question also attempts to discern some of those needs.

3.1 Are there ways that you would like to be more involved in community-based forestry? If yes, please describe.

About two-thirds of participants discuss that there are ways they would like to become more involved in community-based forestry. Those that say there are not ways they would like to increase their involvement are already committing as much time as they are able.

Interest is expressed in becoming more involved in:
- National level policy - Some participants voice concern that only a few voices are heard at the national level and that more voices and diversity of experience need to be heard.
- Doing more work on specific issue areas, such as social justice, town forests, the Farm Bill, and development of biomass alternatives.
- Doing pilot projects for such areas of work as wood use markets and sustainable harvesting.
- Research and information sharing opportunities. Such opportunities might include attending more workshops and conferences, doing more research and information gathering, informing their own communities about community-based forestry, training people to do work in community-based forestry, linking together regional groups to address national interests, and informing policy based on research synthesis and assessment.
- Involving the community-based forestry movement work more closely with the environmental community, though in a way that does not blur their independent roles.

3.2 What would it take or what would need to change for you to become involved in the ways you just described?

- Funding, whether from the government as grants or from foundations. Time and staff assistance follow close behind (This is the most commonly stated need)

- Mentoring, peer-to-peer learning, or some sort of venue for sharing information, research, and stories about community-based forestry
- Invitations to participate in coalitions, planning groups, and government decision-making processes
- Technical assistance
- Workshops and training
- Stronger connections between community-based forestry practitioners and social scientists
- Community-based forestry must deal with integrated, whole systems if it is to achieve the goals it strives to accomplish. For this, practitioners must maintain their idealism and patience.

Question 4. Level of Priority Given to Community-based Forestry

This question looks at the prioritization of community-based forestry in participant's lives with the intention of discerning information about the strength of the movement.

4.1 What percent of your time do you estimate you spend on community-based forestry activities?

	Paid Work	Volunteer
Local		
State		
Regional		
National		
International		

Survey responses to this question vary greatly due to differing interpretations. As a result, the data is of limited use. Participant responses reflect various interpretations of "time" such as the percent of work-time spent, the percent of overall waking hours spent, the number of hours in a given work-week spent, and the number of waking hours overall spent doing community-based forestry activities.   In addition, some participants note that there is a great deal of ebb and flow to their work, so that sometimes they are very busy and other times less so, making it difficult to determine an average number of hours or percent of time spent per certain period. .

A small amount of qualitative information is discernable from the responses. Many participants' involvement in community-based forestry goes far beyond the regular forty-hour workweek. For some, it essentially occupies all of their waking time. Others report that they regularly work fifty or more hours per week solely on community-based forestry. For still others, community-based forestry is a piece of their overall work so it is difficult for them come up with a percentage or number of hours spent per given period of time on community-based forestry. On the whole however, there is a clear indication of a wholehearted and unflagging commitment to community-based forestry. Several participants express their perception that there is no alternative option for them, that community-based forestry is the only answer they see to many of the economic, social, and ecological issues facing them in their community.

It is recommended that this question be refined and asked quite differently in the second phase of this project. A better term for "time" must be established in order to gather data in a consistent fashion - perhaps number of hours spent per month or percent of work hours or something to that effect. Alternatively, the question might

be approached differently using something other than amount of time spent on community-based forestry activities in order to gauge commitment to the movement. It might be more informative to directly ask participants to prioritize community-based forestry activities amongst other activities in their lives.

Question 5. Information Needs

Question five explores the types and sources of information participants find most useful about community-based forestry. By understanding this, it becomes possible to improve and focus future information dissemination efforts and prioritize funding towards what works best.

5.1 Where/how do you get your information about Community-based Forestry?

Listserves are the most useful mechanism by which information is received and shared. E-mails from friends, colleagues, and other natural resources related partners follow close behind. Most also mention the importance of networking and information sharing within those networks. Conferences and workshops are the most effective means of networking, and face-to-face conversations, as well as discussions by phone, are useful for discussing and sharing information within developed networks. Newsletters from partner organizations are also useful for general information sharing. A few say that for them, newsletters work best because the burden of seeking information is then lifted from their shoulders. This is also likely the reason for the popularity of listserves. Websites are also listed as a useful resource for information gathering.

Other useful sources of information noted by survey participants include academic researchers, the Forest Service Forests Products Lab, agency and government officials, coworkers, newspapers, magazines, hard copies of literature, and individual's own research and experience.

5.2 Is there information that would increase or improve the effectiveness of your community-based forestry efforts? If yes, what kinds of info?

Many participants need stories of other communities' successes and failures. They feel much could be learned from others' experiences. Closely related to this is a need for a way to share timely information, research, and experiences. Some respondents discuss the need for information filters, as there is simply too much information to sort through and make sense of.

Participants list a number of specific issues about which they would like more information including biomass, botanical plants, and salvage logging. One participant points out the need to clarify the community-based forestry message and to think strategically about who ought to be targeted for that message.

Question 6. Resources Needs

This question also looks at the non-information needs of community-based forestry practitioners, both in regards to what practitioners feel is lacking and where they think support should go to meet those needs in the future.

6.1 Are there resources or services besides information that would increase or improve the effectiveness of your community-based forestry efforts? Is yes, what?

The most common need is financial assistance. Several respondents suggested long-term, flexible grants that they may be used to pay for operational costs, while others mentioned government funding that would allow them to better accomplish their organizational missions. Many of the other resources respondents mention also depend on higher levels of financial support – resources such as more staff and an ability to attend more networking opportunities and training workshops. Also listed is the need for mentoring and peer-to-peer learning with practitioners from other regions so as to learn from their experiences. There is a high level of concern for how to get the community-based forestry message across to the public and to decision makers. Many feel that stronger connections to the media would help to accomplish that objective.   Respondents also discuss the need for greater involvement of the scientific community. Social scientists, economists, and researchers from a variety of fields could participate with and help inform the work of community-based forestry practitioners and lend credibility to their efforts. This might help meet another need—gaining a greater level of support and acceptance from government agencies.

Question 7. Who Could Additionally Become Engaged in Community-based Forestry

This question attempts to discover who should be involved in the community-based forestry movement and why. Strengthening the community-based forestry movement means growing the movement. Growth will come by better understanding the issues that must be dealt with and attaining the resources necessary to accomplish that work. Growth will also come by better understanding who is and who should be involved in community-based forestry. By looking at this, it may become possible to determine if outreach can be done to these groups and individuals. Responses to why they are not already involved may also allow for reflection about what the community-based forestry movement needs to do to better embrace a broad coalition of groups and individuals.

7.1 Do you think there are groups and/or individuals who should be engaged in community-based forestry movement who are not currently?
  a. **Who are they?**
  b. **Why do you think they should be engaged?**
  c. **Why do you think they are not?**

Survey participants identify a large number of groups and individuals who should be engaged in community-based forestry. The table below lists these groups and individuals and includes comments about them. These comments reflect the diverse perspectives of survey respondents and are sometimes contradictory.

Groups/Individuals who should be engaged in community-based forestry who are not currently	Why they should be engaged	Why they are not currently engaged

Academia	▪ There are connections between many academic fields and community-based forestry (landscape architecture, etc) ▪ They could help legitimize the movement within the scientific community	▪ They are not aware of the community-based forestry movement
Non-forest-industry businesses and corporations	▪ Forests are a renewable resource and forestry affects their costs	▪ They are not informed about the benefits of trees
Children of private landowners	▪ To keep forestlands in families	▪ They are not being asked to engage - they are not being brought into forest management soon enough and they don't know how to engage with their parents about their forest's management ▪ Some are heirs and therefore are adults dealing with inherited properties
City and County Planning Departments	▪ Urban forestry at the local levels starts in the planning departments	▪ Historically, City Parks and Recreations departments were responsible for landscape management
County Commissioners	▪ They have political influence at the local level in regards to what happens with the Forest Service and land-use planning ▪ They are the official representatives of communities	▪ They are busy ▪ They have not been sufficiently reached out to in order to show them why they have a stake ▪ There are not clear structures in place by which they could become involved ▪ CBF sometimes presents itself as too liberal and environmental

Educators	▪ They educate the children who will become the public and the private landowners ▪ Future land managers	▪ They do not always have the time, resources, or skills
Elected Officials	▪ They need to understand what we are talking about and they need to tell us about what they need to make good decisions (information sharing) ▪ They can act as champions for community-based forestry	▪ They have not been invited into on-the-ground conversations and activities ▪ There is some fear by those officials that empowerment of people disempowers elected officials
Environmental organizations	▪ They are interested in supporting a transition to a new way of doing things - community-based forestry needs to meet the needs of all stakeholders including environmentalists ▪ It could give them an opportunity to get new members ▪ They are the watchdogs - they force the fuels and fire agency people to pay attention to the environmental impacts of their decisions on the ground	▪ There is a lot of distrust ▪ It is not clear to many environmentalists how community-based forestry is going to lead to long-term environmental benefits

	▪ They do the work ▪ There are social justice issues ▪ There is a lot to learn from them	▪ They belong to a different culture and there is a lack of regional and local networks that can reach out to them and provide resources for them to get involved ▪ CBF is sometimes seen as opposed to worker interests – like "a bunch of environmentalists" ▪ Many of the people involved in community-based forestry are urbanites who have moved to rural areas - this makes for difficult cultural differences ▪ They are too busy trying to make a living
Forest Workers and Harvesters		
Fringe groups (zero-cut and extreme pro-cut groups)	▪ They would bring interesting perspectives and perhaps provide some new solutions	▪ Finding solutions may not be in their best interest - it would be a change to a status quo that they are already very much entrenched in
Funders of conservation and environmental organizations	▪ If they better understood the mission of community-based forestry, it might help to reduce litigation	▪ In some cases, they have lumped community-based forestry in with industry
Government Agencies	▪ Traditional protocols have changed and they need to change too and learn how to reengage communities - their lack of understanding acts as a barrier to community-based forestry ▪ Public lands make up a large portion of US Forestlands - decisions on these lands affect	▪ They have become accustomed to traditional process and protocol ▪ They don't know how to do community-based forestry or even that it exists in many cases

	- public land communities as well as private land owners adjacent to the public lands - They set the funding priorities	
Hunting, fishing, and other recreational groups	- People who live in rural communities who hunt, fish, and use forests have a stake in wildlife and are affected by jobs, the environment, and so on - They often carry political support that could help community-based forestry	- Many of those types of people are apolitical, making outreach efforts largely ineffective so far - They need to be told about community-based forestry - They don't have a significant enough national presence
Landowners	They make the land management decisions (especially in the east)	- They haven't heard about community-based forestry - Not sure what is in it for them
Media	- It is important to share the philosophies of community-based forestry with the public - the media can be the messenger of the community-based forestry message - Lots to learn from the media	- Media is mainstream and they will not challenge the mainstream - Media is looking for conflict - community-based forestry is not about conflict - it is too gray and complex - People involved in community-based forestry need to do a better job of staying connected with people in the media - they need to be informed of what's going on with community-based forestry

Minority Groups	- They constitute a significant portion of the workforce - They have suffered under an abusive labor system - They are involved with and dependent on natural resources (poverty and resource degradation go hand in hand) - Broadens the advocacy base which could provide CBF with more resources	- They are not embraced enough by community-based forestry groups - It is difficult to get people who have been disconnected from their lands to return to and reinvest in forestlands - Traditions are hard to crack - 'old, white guys' feel like they lose power
Municipal governments	They have influence over such things as fragmentation and development	It is not perceived as being part of the public services they are responsible for providing
Professional Foresters	- They achieve a larger public benefit than just providing a service for a private landowner - The bring technical expertise and assistance to the table	- It is not perceived as being part of their job - we are not doing an adequate job of incorporating a social component to forestry education - There is competition amongst foresters for jobs - they don't want to disadvantage themselves for those jobs
Professional Societies (including the social science fields)	- They could help lend credibility to community-based forestry - They could provide additional networking opportunities	Professionals were taught a certain way - they need to be taught and outreached to about CBF

Rural Economic Development/Rural Policy People/RC&D's/Community Development Corporations	- They also work to help people, just as community-based forestry does - They have money and other resources that would be useful to community-based forestry - They do on-the-ground implementation - it would be good to involve implementers	- Many people see community-based forestry as an environmental movement. Because the urban-based society sees the environment as separate from people, community-based forestry falls prey to that question 'is it environmental or is it rural development?' Community-based forestry is both of those things, which many have a difficult time grasping - They need to be shown the economic and social benefits of urban trees as well
Small businesses; Small mill owners	- They play a role in the end results - products, workforces, other services - CBF is about being economically viable and equitable	- They don't have time - They are too busy trying to survive - Outreach is needed to show them they have something to gain - Much of CBF is oriented towards the nonprofit sector - CBF needs to come up with creative ways to involve the private sector
States	They get a lot of money for community assistance	Traditions - old ways of doing things are imbedded and 'old, white guys' are disinclined to change how things have always been done
Traditional Forest Industry	- They could help community-based forestry practitioners in efforts to rebuild and maintain infrastructure - As with other interest-groups, they can block community-based forestry efforts if they	- They do not see the benefits for their companies - Distrust amongst various players - litigation and attacks against them, exploitation from them

	- are not on board with what community-based forestry is trying to accomplish - They have lots of expertise to share	
Tribes	There is importance to traditional knowledge – there is a lot that might be learned about how their knowledge might be incorporated into forest management.	- Traditional knowledge has historically been excluded from western science and forest management - Trust is an issue for many tribes - there is a longstanding fear of exploitation
Uninvolved communities	- Community-based forestry helps communities and forests and allows for better decision-making and more support for decisions at the local level - They benefit from the forestlands around them - Important for the rural community voice not to get drowned out by either the urban voice or the special interest voice	- They don't know about it - Not funded adequately - They are not aware of the impacts of the forested lands around them - There is a lack of interest and commitment to the protection of forest lands
Uninvolved urban groups/individuals (garden clubs, etc)	Urban forestry provides economic and community cohesiveness benefits to communities and improves quality of life	- They don't know about it - Not funded adequately to be able to build and maintain capacity - They are not aware of the impacts of the forested lands around them - There is a lack of interest and commitment to the protection of forest lands

University Extension Service	▪ They have an obligation to show resource-based communities how to manage the land in a good way ▪ Extension is place-based	▪ Community-based forestry provides data and research material on holistic results, rather than results showing how research accomplished a result that made things better or bigger - hard to get University interested in that holistic type of result (not showy enough)
Watershed organizations	▪ Forests are a benefit to watersheds	▪ People involved with watersheds are generally engineers - a forest is not an engineer's typical solution

Question 8. Primary Concerns Amongst Community-based Forestry Practitioners

The four parts of this question serve to inform about the priorities of community-based forestry practitioners and to show where there might be needs going unmet or needs overly attended to. They also highlight areas where differences of opinion might be observed amongst community-based forestry practitioners. An astonishing element of community-based forestry is the diversity of fields and specializations it embraces and requires in order to work. Responses understandably address a broad range of issues and concerns as a result, depending on the particular concerns and needs of each respondent.

8.1 What issues are of greatest concern/importance to you regarding community-based forestry?

Responses generally fell into four board categories - funding; clarity and strength of the community-based forestry movement; agency interactions affecting community-based forestry; and ecological, economic, and community related issues.

- The first and most common is a concern that **community-based forestry is not receiving the resources it needs**, particularly in regards to funding. Several areas emerge as ones of particular concern to respondents. Communities have diminishing capacity to "keep forests as forests" as development pressures force many private landowners to sell their forestland, resulting in more and more fragmentation of forest landscapes. Key programs like the Economic Action Programs (EAP) are receiving reduced funding or are proposed for elimination and there is great concern about where funding for local capacity building and infrastructure will come from in the future. The on-the-ground staff capacity of the Forest Service is also dwindling as budgets decrease.

- The second category of concern involves **the clarity of the goals of the community-based forestry movement**, which affect the movement's strength and appeal. Several participants discuss the need for a broad social and governmental paradigm shift, wherein community-based forestry and collaboration would become institutionalized as primary tools of forest management. Participants also express that the diverse groups and individuals in the movement need to think bigger and come together to develop

and advocate for a strong, clear agenda. Some are concerned that if progress continues to proceed slowly, interest will diminish from both the practitioners who carry out community-based forestry activities and the foundations and agencies that fund those activities, and the movement will ultimately disintegrate. Many discuss the need for better outreach and communication, noting that by sharing more of what they do and what they know; community-based forestry practitioners could increase public interest, which in turn could increase interest from the agencies and Congress. Several participants also discuss the need for identification of a community-based forestry 'champion,' in Congress and/or the Administration who would fight for funding and legislation to help community-based forestry efforts.

- A third category includes **issues of how agency operations and interactions affect community-based forestry**. Respondents express some resentment to the frequent turnover in Forest Service personnel, stating that the greatest impacts were on the local groups and private businesses that had to continue to support work crews and make payments on new equipment and facilities during delays caused by staff turnover, including delays in projects due to different decisions made by new staff. Respondents also express displeasure with the use of targets as the primary means for reporting and assessing work accomplishment. They feel that emphasis ends up being placed on quantity and the ease of treating acres rather than quality and longevity of work accomplished. Finally, many community-based forestry practitioners struggle with the agencies' propensity to work in isolated sectors rather than through integrated decision-making approaches. Community-based forestry works by integration of many fields and by attempting to bring a holistic mentality into forest management and care. This fundamental difference in approach has left many participants frustrated and demoralized.

- The final category includes several **ecological, economic, and local community issues that impact participants' work and lives**. Ecological issues include invasive species, forest insects and diseases, wildlife habitat, fire hazard mitigation, biomass cogeneration and utilization, and holistic forest health. Economic and local community issues include economic development challenges, land tenure and rights of access for local people, finding the balance between community needs and ecological needs, and how to pass on an interest for forestland management to future generations within families.

8.2 What issues are not receiving enough attention?

Several participants suggest that there should be funding specifically designated for community-based forestry activities and for holistic restoration. One participant notes that funders do not adequately recognize the capacity of nonprofit organizations to do analysis and research.

Many participants discuss the importance of getting the community-based forestry message across to the public so as to build greater support for the movement's efforts. They feel that more attention from the media and from Congress was needed. It is also mentioned that the federal agencies should be more aware of community-based forestry and become more adept at operating in a participatory manner. Several participants working within the realm of urban forestry are concerned that many members of the public and press are not even aware that urban forestry exists, let alone the benefits it provides in neighborhood and community building.

Concerns with the federal agencies mainly have to do with programs and specific legislative provisions that participants feel have been poorly implemented. Many say the agencies does not know how to apply tools such

as stewardship contracting and elements of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, such as those dealing with local collaboration and community assistance, and that not enough has been done to increase the level of knowledge among Forest Service personnel. Participants also note that agency interpretation of how to apply these tools is inconsistent among personnel. Several respondents are concerned with the agencies' capacity to operate internally and feel that not enough is being done to remedy this situation.

Many participants feel that not enough attention has been paid to social justice and cultural diversity issues. Others feel that economic equity both within and amongst organizations and people is an issue not receiving enough attention. Several participants have concerns about workforce development and the lack of attention paid to maintenance of a skill base, resulting in an increasing erosion of the forest workforce. Ecological issues such as invasive species, salvage logging, and appropriately sized energy sources are also perceived to be issues in need of higher levels of scrutiny.

8.3 What issues are getting too much attention?

Fire is most commonly perceived as getting too much attention. Respondents indicate that they want to see more attention paid to overall forest health and holistic restoration than so exclusively to fire prevention and suppression. Other issues many respondents believe are paid too much attention include bioenergy and salvage. Finally, some respondents are concerned that cultural diversity receives too much attention within community-based forestry. It is apparent that some amount of disagreement is occurring within the movement in regards to what issues ought to receive more versus less attention (for example, some participants felt that salvage and cultural diversity issues need more attention, while other participants felt exactly the opposite). This is not surprising considering the broad diversity of the movement and many foci of the various respondents.

8.4 What emerging/future issues do we need to be ready to address?

Participants' responses range from issues such as global warming and global trade to topics like urban sprawl and wood shortages in mills. Several people believe that air and water quality and quantity will require our full attention, while others say that the role of public lands will be most scrutinized. Perceptions of where community-based forestry should be looking are all over the map. While it might indicate a fragmented view of where community-based forestry is headed, it seems more likely that participants see community-based forestry as a reasonable and responsible way to approach many different issues in a broad range of natural resource related fields. One participant discusses that it is not so much important to concern ourselves with specific issues, but rather to focus on building up and strengthening the structures and processes of the community-based forestry movement so that the movement will be able to deal with whatever issues may come along, both expected and unexpected.

Question 9. The Future of Community-based Forestry

This question continues to probe the direction in which participants see community-based forestry moving. This particular question however, gets at the bigger picture. It asks participants to detail the long-term results they would like to see as a result of the community-based forestry movement. The responses to this question are important as they illustrate the deeply comprehensive nature of the community-based forestry movement, involving integration of so many natural resource fields, specializations, scales, and sectors. While we examine

where we want to go, the inevitable question of how to get there is also looked at. The responses demonstrate that these visions will not be easily attained, however there is inspiration and hope to be found in the clarity and boldness with which participants respond to this question. They think big and are not afraid of the challenge.

9.1 Think down the road 50 years. In an ideal world, what is your vision of the role community-based forestry will play in the United States?   What will it take for us to achieve that vision?

Many respondents said that in their ideal vision of fifty years from now, community-based forestry will be a given. It will be the way in which people in communities, those in government agencies, and all other stakeholders will collaboratively accomplish comprehensive, balanced, and sustainable land management. The public will be informed about and involved in forest management and decision-making. They will understand the importance of forests and trees in both the rural and urban landscapes. They will see that the best way to achieve economic health and living wage jobs in resource dependent communities is through the community-based forestry participatory process. Children will want to stay in their communities because they will be able to live and do meaningful work as adults.

Community-based forestry will have grown into the larger and more integrated field of community-based natural resource management and occur on both public and private lands. A balance between economic, social, and ecological needs will be achieved through application of community-based forestry principles. The value of local and cultural knowledge will be embraced and appreciated by researchers and land managers. There will be an emphasis on and demand for products coming out of communities that are producing through value-added processes and made by local craftsmen. The issues of local control versus national level decision-making will be resolved.

The most commonly named resource needed to accomplish the vision stated above is stable and adequate support of community-based forestry activities, from ground-level projects to research and advocacy efforts nationally. It will also take education of our youth, the public, and Congressional and other national level officials. It will take evaluation and sharing of experiences and lessons learned. It will require continued multi-stakeholder partnering and collaborative efforts to build capacity. All of it though, will contribute to a necessary paradigm shift – a change based on underlying beliefs about how land management should be achieved and who should accomplish it. These beliefs are that clearer connections need to be made to reflect that communities must sustain forests and forests must sustain communities. Much of the change they describe may take longer than fifty years as it relies on fundamental social change. Community-based forestry practitioners who participate in this survey are not concerned with the timeline but mainly indicate that they will continue to work as they have, with persistence, courage, and patience, to achieve the vision of community-based forestry they have laid out.

Question 10. Survey Reflection

This question is intended to help draft a survey in the second phase of the project that elicits sound and useful data.

10.1 Was there any part of this survey that you found unclear or confusing? Please be specific.

Most respondents do not find the survey confusing or unclear. A few comment about the broad nature of the questions, indicating that they sometimes find it difficult to decide how to answer the questions. While this is understandable, the questions are intentionally broad and somewhat vague so that the widest possible range of responses would surface. The second phase survey should be carefully crafted however so as to avoid similar confusion. Some respondents also believe that those currently involved should be asked about as well as those not currently involved. This could be considered for the second phase survey as well. Finally, while not about the survey itself but rather about survey process, several participants note that they would have found it useful to have seen the questions ahead of time so as to have time to more carefully consider their responses. Respondents were given questions ahead of time upon request, but not as a matter of course. This should be avoidable in the second phase, as surveys will be disseminated in a written format as opposed to in an in-person conversation.

SUMMARY

The Communities Committee surveyed individuals involved in community-based forestry in order to gather information on how individuals and organizations understand community-based forestry, how they are involved, who else should be involved, the appropriate roles for national organizations, and how the movement might be strengthened.

Responses from participants indicate that community-based forestry means many things to many people. The wide range of perspectives is a direct result of the diversity of community-based forestry practitioners. Diversity is a defining element of the movement and has been the catalyst for some of the key messages that have emerged. Community-based forestry is generally seen as a successful and growing movement because it embraces a multitude of cultures and perspectives, particularly taking care to include local practitioners. It then builds on the knowledge received from all sources to implement projects, monitor results, and adapt to an ever-changing social, ecological, and environmental context.

Those participating in the survey have been involved for some time. They remain committed to the movement and see many possibilities for growth. The list of those they think should be involved who are not currently is long and covers a wide array of sectors. This is largely due to the sense that progress and success will come through integration and inclusion of greater numbers of people, government agencies, organizations, and communities.

Participants identify many needs for community-based forestry, both to help their own work and to strengthen the movement overall. Some of these needs include providing opportunities for networking between and across regions, providing training to those already involved as well as those increasing their level of involvement, in making their voices heard in the national decision-making arena, and in sharing information between and across all scales. The roles organizations play to strengthen the community-based forestry movement, including those working at the national level, must continue to be defined by and responsive to the needs of the movement.

While participants are generally optimistic about the future of community-based forestry, they also discuss the many challenges that stand in the way of the movement's success. By far, the greatest obstacle is a lack of consistent funding and resource allocation for community-based forestry efforts. There are also concerns about issues such as the continued focus by public land managers on fire suppression and prevention. A large number

of respondents express the need for a holistic approach to land management that would include fire efforts but would more effectively address forest health issues. As the movement grows and attempts to bring in more people, ideas, and perspectives, one of the challenges is in maintaining unity within the movement. While a number of participants express concern about splintering within the community-based forestry movement, others acknowledge that it is the common vision and principles of community-based forestry that attract diverse groups to community-based forestry and holds them for the long term. Several participants note that it is important to focus more on the structures and priorities for the movement rather than on the specific issues within the movement.

APPENDIX A

Phase 1 Survey Questions

1. If someone asked you to explain community-based forestry, what would you say?
   Do you understand community-based forestry differently now than when you first became involved? If yes, how?

2. How long have you personally been involved in community-based forestry?
   How did you initially become involved in community-based forestry?
   How are you currently involved? (Include professional and non-work lives)
   How have you been involved in the past? List all the ways. (Include professional and non-work lives)

3. Are there ways that you would like to be more involved in community-based forestry? If yes, please describe.
   What would it take or what would need to change for you to become involved in the ways you just described?

4. What percent of your time do you estimate you spend on community-based forestry activities?

	Paid Work	Volunteer
Local		
State		
Regional		
National		
International		

5. a. Where/how do you get your information about Community-based Forestry? (e.g. People you work with, National, regional, or local network of partners sharing information, Internet (e.g. Searching the web, websites, and so on), Newspapers, magazines, or newsletters (Printed or Electronic), etc.)
   b. Is there information that would increase or improve the effectiveness of your community-based forestry efforts? If yes, what kinds of info?

6. Are there resources or services besides information that would increase or improve the effectiveness of your community-based forestry efforts? Is yes, what?

7. Do you think there are groups and/or individuals who should be engaged in community-based forestry movement who are not currently?
   a. Who are they?
   b. Why do you think they should be engaged?
   c. Why do you think they are not?

8. a. What issues are of greatest concern/importance to you regarding community-based forestry?
   b. What issues are not receiving enough attention?
   c. What issues are getting too much attention?
   d. What emerging/future issues do we need to be ready to address?

9. Think down the road 50 years. In an ideal world, what is your vision of the role community-based forestry will play in the United States?
   What will it take for us to achieve that vision?

10. Was there any part of this survey that you found unclear or confusing? Please be specific.