Communities and Forests

The newsletter of the Communities Committee of the Seventh American Forest Congress

Volume 3, Number 1 *Spring 1999*

Community gardens on the auction block

Big buildings, concrete, bright lights, a discord of sounds, more smells than I care to describe, and lots of people. Those are the sensations that first come to mind when I describe my hometown—New York City. But for me there is another New York, too.

This New York has neighborhoods that define a strong sense of place and connection to community: the deli on the corner that has been there since before I was born, the dry cleaners who knew my parents when they were first married, the hot air emitted by the laundromat that made the warmest place on the block to wait for the school bus. There is also that place where beautiful trees and flowers are nestled between two buildings, a place where you'll find the rich smell of spring flowers and the friendly nod to a familiar face. The community garden.

There are over 750 community gardens throughout New York's five boroughs, built and maintained by local residents. With vegetables, flowers, art, play areas for children, and sitting areas for adults, the gardens are as diverse as the mosaic of cultures and communities that makes New York so unique. *continued on page 8*

Carla Garrison, Renee Price, and Colin Donahue were three of the practitioners attending the week-long appropriations training. *Photo by Jane Braxton Little.*

Stirring the soup in Washington, D.C.

Maria Antonia Sanchez is sitting at a table surrounded by environmentalists and natural resource policy wonks in a room without windows in Washington, D.C. Although she is far more comfortable harvesting huckleberries, mushrooms, and beargrass in the forests near White Salmon, Washington, Sanchez has committed a week in February to this city. "I came here because I heard the soup is cooked in D.C.," she tells the assembled group.

For Sanchez and 13 other forest practitioners who have converged on the Capitol, the week in Washington not only gives them a taste of how the soup of national forest policy is made, it also displays some of the many ingredients that go into the broth ladled out to rural communities in forest and watershed programs.

Before they leave, the forest workers who depend on these programs take their own turn at stirring the pot. As the people who turn the policies created by federal officials into on-the-ground realities, they have their say with the politicians.

"If you really want to change the world on a large scale, go to the communities. This is where it's happening," Colin Donohue, Rural Action program coordinator in Athens, Ohio, tells a group of Congressional staff members.

"We are the invisible workers in the woods," Cece Headley, an Oregon-based non-timber forest worker, tells an assembly of Senate staff members. "We know what's happened out there and we know what's left. There's lots of work to be done."

The forest workers, all members of the National Network of Forest Practitioners, represent 11 states and organizations that range from Sanchez's Mid-Columbia Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters to the Federation of Southern Cooperatives in the Southeast. *continued on page 3*

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Mission Statement

The purpose of the Communities Committee is to focus attention on the interdependence between America's forests and the vitality of rural and urban communities, and to promote:

- improvements in political and economic structures to ensure local community well-being and the long-term sustainability of forested ecosystems;
- an increasing stewardship role of local communities in the maintenance and restoration of ecosystem integrity and biodiversity;
- participation by ethnically and socially diverse members of urban and rural communities in decision-making and sharing benefits of forests;
- the innovation and use of collaborative processes, tools, and technologies; and recognition of rights and responsibilities of diverse forest landowners.

Letter from the Chair

Dear friends,

I write to you today from Moscow, Idaho, at a conference for nonindustrial forest landowners. As I reflect on this and other meetings I've attended in the last few months, it helps explain why this committee suffers from what our friend Betsy Rieke claims is "an optimism beyond reason."

Last week I was in Alaska at a meeting with community groups, land managers, and those left in their declining forest products industry, who were discussing their options in this transition time for Alaskan forest communities.

In early March I met with Californians experimenting with stewardship contracting on public lands. They were learning about each others' projects and exploring a multi-party monitoring effort that would keep all interested parties involved in and responsible for the stewardship contracting outcomes.

Lynn Jungwirth chairs the Communities Committee of the Seventh American Forest Congress. Photo by Jane Braxton Little .

In February, I traveled to Washington, D.C., to meet with scientists, managers, and community-development workers discussing forest health and ways to utilize the by-products of forest restoration, and spent a week learning about the federal appropriations process (see *Stirring the soup*, page 1).

Why do these meetings give me hope? Because good things are happening on the ground and in communities. Because the work of the Forest Congress continues. Because people are working together to find common ground. When they find it, good things happen.

What good things, you ask? Usually what happens is the birth of a project that attempts to integrate the values of a diverse group of people. Over the last three years we have seen the rapid development of at least two strong mechanisms for that integration: certified forestry on private land and stewardship contracting on public land. Both programs attempt to integrate environmental, economic, and social values. Both programs base their integrity on knowledge and their credibility on monitoring.

I encourage you to get involved in these programs in you area.

It is your knowledge and your monitoring that will make this integration successful. These are fledgling flights today. We need to help them become strong.

"I am encouraged by you and your steadfastness. You have seized the day and you are creating new beginnings. You have found strength, not fear, in diversity."

It has been said that history is littered with odd happenings that were allowed to fade away into nothing instead of being seized on as a new beginning. The Forest Congress, the work of community-based groups, and the programs and the projects you are now developing are wonderful and encouraging "odd happenings."

I am encouraged by you and your steadfastness. You have seized the day and you are creating new beginnings. You have found strength, not fear, in diversity.

So you see why the Communities Committee operates with an optimism beyond reason. Literally hundreds of community-based efforts are resulting in new beginnings. People are finding common ground, even if they have to dig for it. Government is getting the idea. One day soon these "odd happenings" won't look so odd.

Lynn Jungwirth

Stirring the soup, *continued from page 1*

The National Network sponsored the week in collaboration with American Forests, the Communities Committee of the Seventh American Forest Congress, and the Pinchot Institute for Conservation. Designed as a training workshop, the seminar includes an overview of the federal legislative and appropriations processes with emphasis on how they affect the U.S. Forest Service.

Most of the participants are newcomers to the halls of Congress, but they are veterans in their respective forests. They come armed with their own knowledge of what works—which programs have improved the forest ecosystem and which have provided the best working conditions for the local labor force. In separate sessions with Senate, House, and Forest Service staff, and with national and international environmentalists, they share their own hands-on experiences with a variety of federal programs.

Federal programs

One of the best is Rural Community Assistance (RCA), among the several Economic Action Programs administered by the Forest Service, says Malcolm Dell. As coordinator of the Woodnet Development Council in Orofino, Idaho, Dell helps entrepreneurs whose businesses run the gamut from medicinal plants and wood recycling to horse logging and mobile milling. RCA funds helped Woodnet work through the start-up process of finding out what works and what doesn't, Dell says.

Other federal programs and activities beneficial to forests and communities include Watershed Restoration Jobs in the Woods, Multiyear Reforestation Stewardship Contracts, Rural Development Through Forestry, and the Rural Business Enterprise Grant program. These efforts generally integrate a broad range of forest activities over a several-year period, allowing the local work force to develop forest jobs in their own communities.

"We want these people to be able to stay on the land. A lot of them live on roads named for their great-grandfathers," Donohue says.

Unfortunately, some of the programs most beneficial to rural communities are threatened by budget cuts. Several Congressional representatives have cited the nation's current economic prosperity as a basis for eliminating Economic Action Programs altogether. As a relatively small federal allocation—$17.3 million in the 1999 budget—some Congress members may view these budget allocations as ones that can be eliminated without much fuss, says Maia Enzer, American Forests director of forest policy.

Practitioners endorse Forest Service

The forest practitioners used some of their time in Washington to lobby for funding to continue on-the-ground economic development programs. They endorsed the Forest Service, a federal agency with a widespread presence in rural communities, as the best bureau to administer money for forest restoration work. All they really need is continued funding, says Taylor Barnhill, grassroots program director for the Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition in Asheville, North Carolina. "The tools are there. The money is not," Barnhill says.

Elected officials listening

Several elected officials seem to get the message. Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), whose staff members attended the practitioners' briefing, called the Economic Action Programs "positive, proactive approaches to ensuring the long-term sustainability of communities as well as the environment." During a Senate Budget Committee meeting to discuss the agency's appropriations requests, Bingaman invites Forest Service officials to champion their own economic development programs.

In response, however, Michael Dombeck, chief of the U.S. Forest Service, enumerates statistics about the increase in woodland owners and the decrease in the acreage per owner. If Dombeck is familiar with the Economic Action Programs administered throughout rural America by his own agency, he doesn't tell the Senate Budget Committee.

Participants are newcomers to the halls of Congress, but they are veterans in their respective forests and come armed with their own knowledge of what works.

The exchange between Bingaman and Dombeck is instructive for the forest practitioners, says Thomas Brendler, the National Network's northeast coordinator. It confirms the complex and politically tangled process that results in national policy and how far the architects of policy are from the natural resources their agencies manage. It also demonstrates that elected officials are listening.

They leave with hope

Some of the forest practitioners leave Washington inspired. "We have to try for a new beginning," says Ian Barlow, an animal packer and Forest Service wilderness ranger from White Bird, Idaho. "There's a lot of fear in these communities, but there's also a lot of hope. Where there has been very little trust, now we're building it back."

They don't leave Washington with a promise of federal funding for forest programs or with any confidence that anyone will retain the messages they brought. But at the least, the forest practitioners leave knowing more about how the federal policy soup is cooked and how they can help stir it. Natural resource management is about the people who do the work of management as well as the natural resources being managed, says Sanchez. "We invite everybody to be a part of the solution," she said. "That's why we're here."

Jane Braxton Little

Corrections

The telephone number listed for the Pinchot Institute in the Fall 1998 issue of the newsletter is incorrect. The correct number for ordering *Land Stewardship Contracting in the National Forests* is 202-797-6580. The article, "Stewardship contracting, QLG bill pass as riders" incorrectly implied that a coalition of national, regional, and local-level organizations had lobbied members of Congress. While these groups gave feedback on the proposed rider, they did not advocate for it.

Member Profile

Genevieve Cross

In 1990, I was working in Orange County, California, as director of marketing for a computer company. Every month I gave money to environmental groups, and I read their literature. I thought their work was really important. One day it dawned on me that people must work in those organizations. So I began looking for work in that field. I wanted to do something with a positive spin rather than fighting what someone else was doing. And I wanted something other people wouldn't oppose.

There weren't a lot of environmental jobs opening in Orange County, but there were two that year and I got one of them. The Trust for Public Lands was looking for someone to help coordinate their new urban forestry program. I knew nothing about urban forestry, but I learned.

As someone who had grown up in a rural environment, I found the way urban people (at least in southern California) related to plants and animals really alien. They didn't seem to be in touch with natural cycles or seasons. It seemed that trees were no different to them than benches or traffic lights—amenities that someone else puts in and fixes or replaces when they're broken. And they seemed to see no difference between the landscaped world and the natural world.

I liked that urban forestry puts people in touch with nature and teaches that natural things need care. I liked that in urban forestry people learn by doing. Urban forestry teaches people how to select a tree for planting, how to plant it, and how to care for it once it is in the ground. People learn that, like a child, a tree needs nurturing. You can't just set a young tree in the ground on a busy city street and expect it to grow and thrive on its own.

The more I got involved with urban forestry, the more I realized that getting people to plant and care for trees in their neighborhoods could result in a lot more than connecting with nature—it could connect people to each other and to their community, and help them learn how government works and how to raise money for a community project.

Today I manage the California ReLeaf (urban forestry) program for the Trust for Public Lands, a program that gets urban people involved with urban forestry. We help coordinate a network of over 60 community-based groups in the state that are all working to plant trees, care for trees, or educate people about the value of urban trees. We support the network by bringing groups together to learn from each other at an annual statewide meeting, through monthly mailings and a quarterly newsletter, and by administering two small grant programs.

One of the remarkable things about the grant proposals we receive is that, while they all involve trees, each one is unique. Some communities want to beautify their community; some want to do ecological restoration; and some are more interested in the social benefits of tree planting. That's what makes it community forestry—do-it-yourself, design-it-yourself projects.

In 1995 I was asked by our network advisors to apply to serve on the National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council (NUCFAC). The council's mandate is to develop a national urban and community forestry action plan, evaluate the implementation of the plan, and develop criteria and make recommendations for a $1 million per year challenge cost-share grant program. I was completely stunned when I was selected to serve and even more stunned when I was asked to chair the council. I served as chair for three years.

Serving on NUCFAC was fascinating. I got to see urban forestry programs in different parts of the country and see how issues differ between regions. I also learned a great deal about how agencies, legislation, and government in general works. I got to know people from really different walks of life —academics; local, state, and federal government employees; landscape architects—who all have urban forestry in common.

photo by Jane Braxton Little

"The Communities Committee can help make the link between urban and rural people."

By virtue of serving on NUCFAC, I was asked to go to the first meeting of the Communities Committee of the Seventh American Forest Congress, which was held in 1995, prior to the Forest Congress. The first thing I noticed at that meeting was that I couldn't tell the good guys from the bad guys. I realized I had a very urban and black-and-white way of looking at the world. As an urbanite, I believed I knew who was destroying the rural forests and who was working to protect them. But the reason I was so certain who the good guys were and who the bad guys were was that I didn't know the first thing about rural forestry. It is always easier to hold strong opinions about things you know nothing about. The second thing I noticed was that I wasn't the only one with that problem. It was really fascinating for me to see urban forestry through a rural forester's eyes.

I got hooked on the Communities Committee because I was learning so much and because I realized there was a great disconnect between urban and rural people who all thought they knew what was best for the environment. I also saw the imbalance in urban people outvoting rural people, and I thought urbanites would welcome opportunities to be better informed.

I think the Communities Committee can help make the link between rural and urban people, connect them to each other so they can learn each others' issues, and help avoid the problem of good people who think they know what they're doing making bad decisions because they lack a connection to and understanding of an issue.

The Communities Committee provides a way to get people on the same page without conflict—and that's what I always liked about community forestry.

News & Views

SW Appalachia ripe for special forest products

Ginseng, goldenseal, reishi mushrooms, and other herbs and mushrooms are native to the mixed hardwood forests of the southwestern Appalachian region of Ohio, West Virginia, and Kentucky. Ginseng and goldenseal are currently bringing high market values and are considered globally threatened due to overharvesting. In short, the ecological and economic conditions are right for expanding the special forest products industry of this region.

Rural Action Forestry, an Ohio-based non-profit organization that provides technical assistance on growing and marketing special forest products and on forming wood products cooperatives, is encouraging local landowners to explore this growing industry. Two herb production companies that have recently purchased land in southwest Appalachia to begin producing special forest products say they want to work cooperatively with other local producers. Rural Action Forestry is hosting a special forest products workshop for woodland owners June 18-20 (see *Upcoming events*, page 6). Contact Colin Donahue at *rural3@frognet.net* or at 704-767-4938 for more information.

California group explores volunteer-based urban forest inventory and monitoring

Representatives from federal, state, municipal, non-profit, educational, and private forestry organizations met in Sacramento on February 17-18 at a two-day workshop on volunteer-based urban forest inventory and monitoring. The workshop was sponsored by the Sacramento Tree Foundation and the U.S. Forest Service Western Center for Urban Forest Research and Education.

Participants worked collectively to determine what makes volunteer-based inventory and monitoring compelling, and to describe how inventory and monitoring programs help empower neighborhoods and contribute to sustainable environments.

Break-out groups explored ways to integrate volunteer-based monitoring in schools, neighborhoods, municipal and non-profit partnerships, and rural and unincorporated areas. A fifth group considered the broader concept of "sustainable communities."

A report on the workshop will be available in late May. To find out more, contact Greg McPherson at 530-752-5897 or at *egmcpherson@ucdavis.edu*.

Minnesota foresters build "Forests for Humanity"

Under a new Minnesota Society of American Foresters project, forest managers, private landowners, loggers, truckers, and mills are partnering to provide wood to Habitats for Humanity homebuilding projects in Minnesota.

Minnesota's "Forests for Humanity" project starts at the timber sale, where forest managers give private landowners the opportunity to donate a load of wood to the "Forests for Humanity" project. If the landowner agrees, the logger is asked to donate his or her time spent harvesting that load. The donated wood is trucked to one of several "partnership" mills for processing and then given to Habitat for Humanity projects within Minnesota.

"Forests for Humanity" signs are placed in front of Habitat for Humanity homes built with donated wood, and the local press is told of the collaboration. All recipient homeowners must spend some of their 300 hours of sweat equity planting trees or teaching sustainable forestry in local schools. Call David Johnson at 218-847-1596 to learn more.

Partnerships fuel Baltimore community greening projects

"Plant PEAS for trees!" is the motto of community foresters at the Parks & People Foundation in Baltimore, MD. PEAS stands for "Partnerships +Education yield Action+Sustainability."

Parks & People's successful community forestry program depends on building partnerships, or "planting PEAS for trees." The most obvious partners are the community residents who want to improve their neighborhoods. Behind the scenes, city and state agencies provide many services to support community greening efforts, and community associations and other private and nonprofit groups provide the on-the-ground support needed for long-term project maintenance.

Community market gardens, for example, are developed through "Baltimore Grows," a partnership between the Center for Poverty Solutions and Parks & People, funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture. "This project is exciting because it's teaching [people] how to grow their own food and sell fresh produce locally,"says Ralph Moore of the Center for Poverty Solutions.

This year, Parks & People is seeking business partners to support increased tree planting in East Baltimore. Through the Neighborhood Partnership Program, Maryland businesses that make donations to community forestry projects will receive a state tax credit equal to 50 percent of the value of the donation. For more information, contact Patricia Pyle at 410-396-0718.

Wisconsin township tests collaborative planning

A township in northeastern Wisconsin recently partnered with two groups interested in promoting community-based problem solving and tried a new way of doing business that proved both productive and pleasant. "Not only have we already gotten a lot accomplished, but it was entertaining!" commented Charlie Gumm, supervisor of the town of Washington.

The Great Lakes Forest Alliance and the Wisconsin Rural Partners facilitated four sessions of the township's Land Use Planning Forum, using the Collaborative Learning Process developed by Drs. Gregg Walker and Steven Daniels of Oregon State University. The most critical issue facing this community of great lakes and forests is the ever-increasing pressure of new development.

So far the township has identified strategies ranging from helping monitor lakewater quality to making land-use and zoning changes. The group plans to recognize good corporate citizens, sound new developments, and good stewards of the lake and forest. Contact Wendy Hinrichs Sanders at 715-634-2006 or *forestls@lsfa.org* to learn more.

Vermont landowner alliance, a first in forest certification, spurs unique building design

The construction of Bicentennial Hall on the Middlebury College campus marks a new era in both forestry and building design. The facility is the largest academic structure in the nation to contain "green-certified" wood—timber that has been harvested and processed through ecologically sensitive means. The source of the wood is Vermont Family Forests, the first Vermont source of green-certified wood and the first group of small landowners in the country to band together for sustainable forest product certification.

Certification

Certified wood is evaluated against more than 60 criteria to ensure that it comes from forests under environmentally sound management. This kind of forestry is often referred to as "sustainable."

"Sustainable forestry, as defined by the Forest Stewardship Council and all the groups that support it, is practical and affordable. It also makes it possible to pay landowners and loggers substantially more money without increasing the final cost of wood," explains Richard Miller of the Forest Partnership, a firm based in Burlington, Vermont. The Forest Stewardship Council is an internationally-recognized monitoring organization for forest product certification.

According to David Brynn, Addison County Forester and director of Vermont Family Forests, "It is a type of forestry that is very, very careful ... of water quality, site productivity, and biological diversity."

"The main reason for doing this was to figure out how all these small landowners interested in sustainable forestry could get a little bit more power in the marketplace."

The assessment process for green certification is stringent. Final decisions regarding certification are made by the Rainforest Alliance and its partner organization in the region. In this case, the National Wildlife Federation in Montpelier, Vermont, reviewed the wood using regional certification guidelines, and forest and ecology experts will inspect it periodically. SmartWood, a 10-year-old program, has certified about three million acres. However, the Middlebury College project draws on the first source of certified wood in Vermont.

Vermont Family Forests

Normally, certification is not a viable option for small landowners due to acreage requirements. By banding together, the Vermont Family Forests can use green certification and direct marketing of the forest products to obtain a higher "stumpage" price. Stumpage is the value of the trees standing in the forest. Normally, these values can be as little as four percent of the retail price of the finished product, according to David Brynn.

"Brokers often make more on logs than the land stewards who took years to grow the trees," says Brynn. "By-passing brokers allows savings to be passed on to the forest steward," explains Brynn. Vermont Family Forests landowners will receive 50 to 100 percent more for their green certified trees than they would have in the past.

"The main reason for [creating Vermont Family Forests] was to figure out how all these small landowners interested in sustainable forestry could get a little bit more power in the marketplace. This is an experiment in trying to expand the economic options for woodland stewards," Brynn says.

Originally, owners of 45 parcels of land were asked to indicate their interest in joining the alliance; 31 owners in nine towns were interested in membership. Bicentennial Hall marks their first endeavor as a certified organization. "All of them were very excited about having a local market where they can actually go to see their trees as a finished product," Brynn says.

Supporting local economy

Not only are the logs straight from Vermont forests, but most of the profit from this project will stay within the state. Managing the harvesting, processing, and milling, Natural Forest Products is working with 35 companies, 80 percent of them in Vermont. Almost all of the kiln-drying and over half of the sawing is taking place in Vermont. Milling is the only operation that must take place outside of Vermont because there are few facilities with appropriate certification in the state.

By keeping most operations local, "the end-user is much more directly in touch with the source," according to Miller. In Middlebury's case, this close relationship has already proven beneficial. With the building scheduled for full use by next fall, the college was able to buy the trees right in the forest instead of waiting to choose the wood from a warehouse.

Unique design reflects local wood

Middlebury College and its architects, Payette Associates, had to adapt the original building design to accommodate the local wood. Originally, the whole building was designed to be red oak, but when the college learned that sustainably-harvested red oak is difficult to obtain, they adjusted their plan.

In a creative approach to what originally appeared to be a problem, the planners decided to use several woods, with each variety identifying a corridor. Now Bicentennial Hall will have a "cherry corridor," a "maple corridor," an "oak corridor," and so on. A large 40 x 60-foot paneled wall in the Great Hall will be comprised of red oak. The building will feature nine native Vermont woods in all: hard maple, beech, yellow birch, red oak, black cherry, poplar, basswood, ash, and soft maple, a species which has rarely been used for architectural milwork.

"We learned a lot through the process," says Bob Schaeffner, speaking for his architectural firm, Payette Associates. "We learned that [the use of certified wood] was doable; we weren't previously aware of its potential use." Richard Miller adds, "This project demonstrates that you can rely heavily on wood of this size without going to the tropics and elsewhere; it is possible to use a wide and natural range of species, and it is possible to incorporate lower grades of wood."

Amy Seif

Resources

Publications and educational tools

Case Study of Catron County Citizens Group. The Catron County Citizens Group was convened by the only practicing doctor in the county in response to heightened levels of community stress over contentious natural resource conflicts. This case study documents the formation, development, governance, and functioning of the group over a three-year period. Available for $15 from New Mexico Center for Dispute Resolution, 800 Park Avenue SW, Albuquerque, NM 87102.

Catron County video and study guide. The documentary *Whose Home on the Range?* looks in-depth at the people of Catron County and the land they love, and demonstrates how "community health" has been used as an organizing principle to make peace. A four-page study guide suggests how to use segments of the film to teach about collaborative processes. It provides exercises and activities in conflict analysis and collaborative problem solving that can be used in academic and training settings. Available for $99 from the Center for Dispute Resolution, 800 Park Avenue SW, Albuquerque, NM 87102.

Forest of Discord: Options for Governing our National Forests and Federal Public Lands. This report by the Society of American Foresters Proposed Public Land Management Legislation Task Force offers recommendations on clarifying the purposes of national forests and public lands, improving forest management planning, and financing land management plans. Available for $15 ($12 for members) from the Society of American Foresters, 5400 Grosvenor Lane, Bethesda, MD 20814, 301-897-8720, *http://www.safnet.org*.

Sustaining the People's Lands: Recommendations for Stewardship of the National Forests and Grasslands Into the Next Century. The long-awaited final report of the Committee of Scientists is now available. This report on the Forest Service's land and resource management planning process recommends focusing on ecological, economic, and social sustainability; taking a landscape-scale focus; and building stewardship capacity and collaborative planning. This report is available only on the World Wide Web, at *http://www.fs.fed.us/news/science*.

World Wide Web sites

Community stewardship exchange. Take a walk down the community stewardship Main Street in this new site by the Sonoran Institute. Head to the bank to "learn about fundraising strategies and tools" or to town hall to learn about "local governments' critical role in community stewardship." The post office and coffee shop will connect you to related issues and individuals. The community garden has case studies; the library will take you to a glossary of terms, answers to frequently asked questions, and on-line publications; and the train station will link you to other helpful Internet sites. *http://www.sonoran.org*.

Special forest products. This new and growing Web site covers a cornucopia of special forest products (SPF). Photos and text describe the products, and separate pages explain how to grow, harvest, and market them. Directories list people interested in buying or selling different SPFs, and extensive links to other sites offer more. *http://www.sfp.forprod.vt.edu*.

Directories

National Network of Forest Practitioners Directory. The fourth edition of the National Network of Forest Practitioners' Directory is now available. The new directory features member listings, a map of members, charts depicting member specialties and areas in which they can assist fellow members, and a section describing additional resources available to members. Available for $15 (prepaid) from NNFP Directory, PO Box 519, Santa Fe, NM, 87501-0519.

Cultural Connections: Organizations Working with Culture & Heritage in the Northern Forest. The 26-million acre Northern Forest dominates the rural, often remote landscape of northern Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York. This new directory from the Northern Forest Center provides an introduction to the many organizations dedicated to recording, interpreting, fostering, and using the rich heritage and culture of the Northern Forest. Available for $5 ($4 for orders of 11 or more) from the Northern Forest Center, PO Box 210, Concord, NH, 03302-0210, 603-229-0679, fax: 603-229-1719, *nfc@northernforest.org, http://www.northernforest.org*.

Upcoming events

Regional forum on involving communities in planning and monitoring on National Forest lands. May 24-25, Missoula, Montana. This two-day workshop, sponsored by the Bolle Center for People and Forests, will bring citizen participants from various collaborative groups in the northern Rockies region together with natural resource agency personnel to share experiences, learn about challenges, and explore potential benefits to collaboration. The second day will focus on skill-building workshops, including training in grant writing, conflict resolution, and setting up nonprofit status. The meeting will be held at the 4B's South Conference Center in Missoula, Montana. For more information, contact Kristen Aldred Cheek at 406-243-6652 or at *cheekk@forestry.umt.edu*.

Special forest products workshop for woodland owners in Appalachia. June 18-20, Hocking County, Ohio. Interested residents of southwestern Appalachia are invited to a workshop sponsored by Rural Action Forestry to learn about growing and marketing special forest products such as medicinal herbs and mushrooms. The workshop will also cover sustainable forestry cooperatives—what they are and how to form them. The workshop will take place at camp Oky-okwa in Hocking County, Ohio. The $75 registration fee covers two nights lodging and meals as well as site visits and training sessions. For more information, contact Rural Action Forestry at 704-767-4938 or at *rural3@frognet.net*.

Community gardens, *continued from page 1*

While many of New York City's community gardens were built and are maintained with money raised by local community groups, many others were developed under the tutelage of GreenThumb, a 21-year-old community gardening program sponsored by the City of New York's Parks & Recreation Department. Until recently, GreenThumb licensed city-owned vacant property to neighborhood groups for the establishment of community vegetable and flower gardens.

GreenThumb's staff of 10 works with garden sponsors by training them in garden design and horticultural techniques. The groups attend a series of design, construction, and planting workshops, after which they are issued tools, materials to build fences, lumber to build raised beds for growing vegetables, picnic tables and benches, soil, ornamental and fruit trees, shrubs, seeds, and bulbs.

Privatizing the urban gardens

In a controversial decision, New York's Mayor Rudolph Giuliani is demanding that over 130 GreenThumb gardens be auctioned to the highest bidder in May 1999.

Mayor Giuliani's office did not return phone calls on this issue, but those opposed to the auction claim the mayor's main motivation is to privatize city land in order to generate tax revenue. Giuliani has said the lots are being sold for housing development, a claim community activists question. The Mayor has chosen to sell the gardens through an auction process that would open the bidding process to anyone—including land speculators.

The Mayor's office reportedly says the community gardens were always meant to be temporary. Community activists do not dispute this but point out that many of the gardens on the auction block have been in existence for more than a decade—some for over 20 years. The communities that built and now maintain these gardens invested their time, money, and spirit into restoring the lots that the city abandoned during leaner times.

Cities are often perceived as anonymous places where people have little connection to each other or the environment. But these community gardens exist because neighbors work together and share a desire for a clean, beautiful space that provides an opportunity for positive community interaction. In hundreds of neighborhoods these gardens are stepping stones to renewed community vitality and improved environmental conditions.

Nonprofit groups like the Green Guerrillas are asking the Mayor to reconsider the value of these gardens, recognize the stewardship communities have demonstrated, and reconsider the temporary nature of the land-use designation. Community activists worry that if these gardens are bulldozed and fenced for auction, they will lay fallow and become points for community decay rather than revitalization.

For more information on the auctioning of New York City's community gardens, contact Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, City Hall, New York, NY 10007, 212-788-9600, *giuliani@www.ci.nyc.ny.us,* or the Green Guerillas at *http://www.greenguerillas.org.*

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