Communities and Forests

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

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Ecosystem restoration: A new career option?

It's well known that communities throughout the Northwest have been hit hard by the loss of forest industry jobs. Many community activists, economic developers, and restoration ecology advocates hope that some of those jobs can be replaced by ecosystem management work, like thinning overstocked stands, restoring streams and wildlife habitat, maintaining or removing forest roads, and monitoring and inventorying resources.

Proponents of the "high skill, high wage approach" to ecosystem management believe that training a skilled work force to do a wide variety of restoration tasks with minimal supervision is an excellent way to help agencies save time and money while providing stable, well-paying jobs for nearby communities.

Training programs have sprung up throughout the Northwest, many funded by the federal Jobs in the Woods program. Most directly target displaced timber workers and combine classroom work with on-the-job training. Some programs have developed training curriculums, certification systems, and apprenticeship programs to help build the skills of the new ecosystem work force.

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The local fire chief, high school teacher, landowners, kids, and dogs all got involved in all-party monitoring when the Feather River Coordinated Resource Management group restored Wolf Creek in Greenville, California. Photo by Jane Braxton Little.

All-party monitoring taking off

In the Swan Valley in Montana, a group of local citizens kneels on the forest floor identifying plants in a study plot in a recently thinned stand of pines. They've been coming back to this site regularly to survey the plants, census migratory birds, and count tracks in the winter snows, all to assess the impacts of recent thinning and prescribed burning.

In Hayfork, California, a team of Forest Service employees and local community members sits around a table discussing how to measure the social impacts of a new contracting mechanism. Together they ponder how they can measure elusive concepts like improved social capacity and local community welfare.

While they're addressing very different issues, both of these groups are making an effort to develop all-party monitoring programs.

Monitoring is an essential element of adaptive management, something that has been actively promoted in the natural resource management disciplines since the late 1980's. But all-party monitoring–involving a diverse array of stakeholders in monitoring efforts–is a new approach that is being enthusiastically promoted and tested by community forestry practitioners.

For some, all-party monitoring means using a collaborative process to design a monitoring program, which an agency then implements. For others it also means directly involving various stakeholders in data collection and analysis. Either way, it's seen as an excellent way to bring a diverse array of stakeholders–representatives of national interest groups as well as local interests–together in pursuit of better land management.

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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

Monitoring community-based forestry

The status and stature of community-based forestry is growing daily in the United States. In just the last few months, we have seen the announcement of a new multi-year Ford Foundation program to support community forestry efforts. The U.S. Forest Service's stewardship pilots have encouraged community-based, collaborative forestry projects.

Lynn Jungwirth chairs the Communities Committee of the Seventh American Forest Congress.

Photo by Jane Braxton Little

The Quincy Library Group and the Grand Canyon Trust are experimenting with planning for large-scale forest restoration projects on public lands. Watershed councils from Chesapeake Bay to Puget Sound are focusing on collaborative watershed restoration and rehabilitation projects.

States and counties and local communities are finding new ways to work with the federal government and industry to protect waterways and habitat. After years of gridlock, the discovery of common ground is a little heady. Yet it is a bit sobering to realize these new approaches are fairly untried. We are all a little nervous, asking questions about how we will know if we are doing the right thing and how we will know if we are doing more harm than good. The subject, naturally enough, turns to monitoring.

Monitoring programs help us be accountable to the land and to each other.

In May of this year our steering committee met with local groups addressing forestry issues in the Finger Lakes area of New York. We also had a workshop on monitoring, led by Wendy Hinrichs Sanders of the Great Lakes Forestry Alliance. During the workshop we learned that the United States is currently engaged in developing indicators and criteria for forest sustainability. We also discussed various sets of indicators built by different community groups. It is clear that the set of criteria for measuring the successful integration of social goals with environmental goals is sparse at best.

We also learned that some community groups have given up on traditional monitoring approaches and created experiments in "all-party monitoring." As its name implies, all-party monitoring is a system that convenes multiple players and authorities before a project is implemented. This group designs a monitoring program for the project and shares responsibility for conducting the monitoring and interpreting the data. The object is to learn and to improve the next project in both design and implementation (*See related article, page 1*).

As you go about your work, let us know about your monitoring plans and how you implement and fund them. As the techniques of restoration, rehabilitation, and sustainable forestry are developed, we must find ways to share this incredible learning curve with each other. Your monitoring programs will begin to do that. They will also help us be accountable to the land and to each other.

Lynn Jungwirth

***All-party monitoring**, continued from page 1*

Monitoring is seen as critical to making better land management decisions, and all-party monitoring is promoted as a way to increase both the quality and public acceptability of those decisions. Jonathan Kusel, who has been involved in setting up and assessing the all-party monitoring programs of several members of the LEAD Partnership Group in California and Oregon, notes that innovative projects are often blocked by parties with specific concerns. Bringing groups together to get all their concerns on the table and work out ways to monitor them can allow a project to proceed based on assurances that it will be stopped or altered if the concerns prove justified.

A learning experience for all involved

Participating in monitoring is also a learning experience for all involved. In northwestern Montana, the Swan Ecosystem Center coordinates monitoring projects that look at the impacts of thinning and burning on the plant and animal life in the Ponderosa pine forest, assess the effects of logging on stream morphology, and track water quality in local lakes. According to Anne Dahl, the Center's director, "Our main goal is to elevate the community's understanding of the ecosystem," by promoting volunteer monitoring. "When you participate in monitoring, you see the changes yourself, and you increase your understanding of land management issues." Many proponents of all-party monitoring say bringing people with varying experiences and backgrounds together in the field can also be an excellent way to share different forms of knowledge and build understanding among people with different perspectives.

Public interest and involvement helps make it happen

All-party monitoring can also directly benefit land management agencies, which often have a hard time getting required monitoring done. A recent court decision halting nine timber sales in the Northwest due to inadequate inventory shows repercussions for neglecting inventory and monitoring can be serious.

Teri Raml, a BLM area manager who previously coordinated the Hayfork Adaptive Management Area for the Forest Service, notes, "We [agency personnel] talk a lot about monitoring, but we haven't always put it in the program of work and received funding." She says that if there is public interest and involvement, "it can help make it happen." Also, while it does take time and effort to set up an all-party monitoring program, involving outsiders–volunteers and organizations with other resources–may offer agencies an opportunity to do work that they otherwise could not.

Evaluating stewardship contracting pilot projects

Some of the current interest in all-party monitoring can be traced to the U.S. Forest Service stewardship contracting pilot projects. Thanks to the efforts of many community forestry advocates, the legislation enabling the pilot projects requires that all-party monitoring be used to evaluate them, but leaves groups implementing the projects to figure out how to do it.

In Hayfork, the collaborative team that worked on designing the Grassy Flats stewardship project includes agency employees, a mill owner, local residents, and environmental advocates. The team is looking at how it can monitor the effectiveness of bundling a number of different ecological restoration activities into a single long-term contract. Among the many questions they've come up with are these: Does it mean more employment for local residents? Does it let workers work nearer to home, giving them more time at home and in the community? Does the contractor spend more money in the surrounding area? Is it more cost-effective than using several smaller contracts? The Hayfork team is hoping that over the course of interviews with the contractor, the administrating officials, and others involved, and through site visits and analyses of records and budget, they'll be able to get a sense of the biophysical and socio-economic impacts of the new approach they're piloting.

"Our main goal is to elevate the community's understanding of the ecosystem. When you participate in monitoring, you see the changes yourself and you increase your understanding of land management issues." - Anne Dahl

In the Flathead Valley in Montana, a monitoring team that includes a retired logger, an environmental educator, an adjoining property owner, and a Forest Service forester are working together to develop questionnaires that will help them assess the socioeconomic impacts of the Cedar Flats project (another of the Forest Service stewardship pilots). Another group of volunteers with a broad mix of backgrounds is taking "before" and "after" photographs and plot inventories to assess the biophysical impacts of the project.

Challenges and innovations

Of course, all-party monitoring is not without its drawbacks. Getting stakeholders involved can be a challenge. As Ten RamI points out, "There's so much going on in people's lives with their families and professions, and monitoring takes a lot of energy." According to her, we need to think about what the rewards and incentives are for participants so that we can develop viable programs. Anne Dahl notes that most of the participants in the Swan Valley monitoring program are retirees and students. Many others may not be able to participate unless they have a direct economic interest that makes it worth devoting work time to the program.

Designing an informative yet logistically feasible monitoring program is also a real challenge. All-party monitoring is often promoted as a way to quell controversies and come up with the facts, but there are many cases where the data that can feasibly be collected just isn't good enough to answer the tough questions participants want answered. As a result, proponents of all-party monitoring are careful not to promise too much.

Nonetheless, many see a bright future for all-party monitoring. One agency employee notes that monitoring, long the domain of the technical expert, could be called the final frontier in collaborative approaches to land management. Yet innovative efforts already abound. Lessons are being learned, and enthusiastic teams of odd bedfellows are being built, all in the hope that by working together, we can gather the information that will let us better manage the landscapes we call home.

Alex Conley

Member Profile

Rebecca McLain

I am a cultural geographer and forest policy analyst working on a doctoral degree at the University of Washington's College of Forest Resources. I have been researching community forestry for over ten years, first in central and west Africa, and now in the United States.

I got involved in community forestry through my work overseas in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when I was a forest policy researcher for the University of Wisconsin. At the time, there was a very big push for community forestry in international work. But the work that was being labeled "community forestry" often took the form of reforestation projects sponsored by the state that were using locals as cheap labor. Also, the governments often found that locals weren't complying with national forest regulations.

People were starting to ask: What do we really mean by community forestry? As part of my work in Mali, I interviewed forest service staff, villagers, and herders to find out what their perceptions of the forest regulations were, and what I found is that the government couldn't enforce the rules because people didn't agree with them. They all had very different visions of what the forests should be managed for.

From the agency standpoint, the forests were there to provide lumber and firewood. The villagers had a much broader view: They preserved or planted certain trees for fruit, shade, or forage for their animals. The herders looked at forests as places to shelter and feed their animals and obtain the products they needed to live.

I started looking at the tensions created by these different visions. I was interested in finding out what local mechanisms for management existed apart from the state rules. It turned out that a lot of places had community institutions that dealt with local forest management. Then the questions became these: What do we mean by local? Where do the herders and the fishermen and other migrants fit in?

I came back to the United States in 1992 and began a Ph.D. at the University of Washington. It was an interesting time to be studying forest policy and community forestry in the Pacific Northwest. The timber wars were on, and the local control/ county movement was prominent. It was hard at the time to talk about community forestry without being labeled a right-wing, local control fanatic. So I started looking at community forestry within the framework of non-timber forest products.

By 1994, people were starting to talk about community forestry in the U.S. context in a more positive way, and the same question was coming up that had come up overseas: Who is "the community"?

In the United States, when people talk about community forestry they are usually talking about communities of place. Some people expand that to include what they call communities of interest. That still leaves the problem of migrant resource users like mushroom pickers and brush pickers who aren't organized and don't have economic, social, or political power. How do they fit in? We need to be very careful and constantly ask ourselves this: What do we mean by community? Who's here and who's not here?

Since 1995, I've been researching wild mushroom policy in central Oregon. Basically I've been asking to what extent wild mushroom pickers are involved in forest management decision-making and particularly in wild mushroom management. The answer is that mostly they aren't. It's not that the Forest Service wants to exclude them, but it doesn't know how to include them.

People tend to think in terms of their own social setting. But I think community forestry in the United States has a lot to learn from international experiences with community forestry. I've talked with people here in the Pacific Northwest about setting up an exchange program for community foresters in Mali and the Pacific Northwest. I'd also like to do some comparative studies. For instance, Canada, Australia, and the United States have a lot of historical and cultural similarities, and they all have community forestry projects. How is community forestry being played out in each of these three countries?

Most recently, I've teamed with three colleagues to form the Institute for Culture and Ecology, a nongovernmental research institute. One of the things we want to do is provide politically and economically weak groups with the skills and tools they need to participate in forest management on a more equal footing.

Rebecca McLain is a co-founder of the Institute for Culture and Ecology, based in Portland, Oregon

Photo by Fumi Moretson

I joined the Communities Committee because I wanted to find out what other people interested in community-based forestry were doing and thinking. I think the Committee has done quite a remarkable job thus far. It has brought together people who weren't together before, and the newsletter and listserv let people know what's happening elsewhere in the country.

I'd like to see more regional dialogues and workshops. The Committee has a role to play in creating and maintaining discussion places for community forestry. For instance, the Committee could organize a workshop around the case studies it has sponsored, bringing together people involved in those cases.

Broad national networks like the Communities Committee and the National Network of Forest Practitioners are really important—and I like it that these two groups work together and complement each other so well. Still, they also need to make the link to the regional and the pilot project level. What's really needed is a system of networks, from the local to the national level. It's the projects that inform the national-level work and the national and regional networks that build political support for the projects.

News & Views

Lake County initiative revisits sustained yield

In Lake County, Oregon, community members are working to take an old idea–the sustained yield unit–and fit it to today's reality.

The Lakeview Federal Sustained Yield Unit, established in 1950, is one of six such units created by the Forest Service to link national forest management to the stability of nearby communities. The sustained yield unit worked by offering sawmills within its boundaries preferential access to timber that came off the unit, based on the assumption that the community's economic well-being was directly linked to a constant supply of logs to the area's mills.

Today, all but one of Lake County's mills has closed, and community members have wondered if the Forest Service will call for disbanding the sustained yield unit. The Lake County Sustainability Initiative grew out of community leaders' desire to adapt policies guiding the unit's management to the realities of the 1990's.

The Initiative gained widespread attention when it proposed seeking Forest Stewardship Council green certification for the sustained yield unit. Environmental advocates, many of whom support forest certification on private lands, expressed strong misgivings about certifying public lands, and at a meeting held in Lakeview last summer, they made their views clear. As a result, the Initiative decided not to further pursue certification.

In June 1999, a diverse group of community members and nonresident stakeholders met to develop a vision for the unit. Like many communities, Lake County is hoping to build high-skill, high-wage jobs in forest restoration, but the presence of the sustained yield unit adds a unique twist. Initiative members hope to revise the unit's policies to give local firms preferential access to restoration projects on the unit. They expect that such a policy would help carry a fledgling ecosystem restoration industry through its formative capacity-building years.

The Initiative is now working to turn this broad vision into specific recommendations and projects. To learn more, contact Marcus Kauffman at 541947-5461 or check the Web at *www.sustainablenorthwest.org.*

Making forest restoration pay in the Northwest

Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities Partnership, a new organization in the Pacific Northwest, markets products made from materials harvested during forest restoration activities. The partnership promotes its products using three registered brand names: *Smallwood*, products made from small diameter trees; *ForestRestore*, products made of lesser-known species or dead trees removed as part of restoration efforts; and *WasteKnots*, products made from reclaimed, reused, or recycled wood.

Members of the partnership are motivated by their desire to make forest restoration more economically viable while promoting locally-based, value-added processing. They agree to financially support the partnership through dues and adhere to its vision and principles. In return, the partnership encourages stewardship contracting for ecological restoration; provides training in low-impact harvesting, small-scale wood products manufacturing, and business development; and assists its members with product design and marketing.

Several Seattle and Portland area retailers have joined the Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities Partnership and are now selling its products. To learn more, visit the group's Web site at *www.sustainablenorthwest.org/sdw/sdwone.htm* or contact Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities at (503) 221-6911 or via email at *sustnw@teleport.com*.

New community forestry network in West Virginia

At a recent workshop organized by West Virginia University and the Mountain Institute, participants worked together to develop a community forestry agenda for West Virginia and the Central Appalachian region, then formed a new organization to promote this agenda.

Projects being considered by the Community Forestry Network of West Virginia include organizing a Central Appalachian community forestry conference, developing an applied research agenda to support forest landowners, initiating an ecosystem work force training project, and helping forest landowners form marketing cooperatives. Proceedings from the workshop will be made available. For more information, contact Steve Selin at (304) 293-3721 or at *sselin@wvu.edu*.

Broadcast links urban, rural communities in MN

Last Spring, Minnesota Public Radio listeners were invited to tune in to a series of live conversations between residents of Crookston, a largely white rural town struggling with the farm crisis, and Lucille's Kitchen, in a predominantly black, inner-city neighborhood in North Minneapolis.

Through on-air dialogue, participants explored their differences–and some unexpected similarities. To learn more about the project and listen to the broadcasts (and perhaps get inspired to hold a similar on-air dialogue focusing on urban and rural attitudes toward forestry) visit *news.mpr.org/features/199904/20_newsroom_crookston/index.shtml#links.*

Urban forestry research

Researchers need to focus on understanding the interrelationships of urban trees and forests with people and communities, says Gerry Gray, vice president for policy at American Forests. Gray addressed the National Research Council's Committee on National Capacity in Forestry Research in July 1999. Gray called for developing better information on the ecological services provided by urban trees and forests; developing tools to help communities understand and address conditions and trends in urban forests; addressing critical policy issues through research. thus making it relevant to policymakers, community groups, and planners; and working toward a civic science by integrating practitioner and community knowledge in research methods. For the full text of Gray's speech, contact him at 202-955-4500 or *ggray@amfor.org*.

Perspective: Grassroots collaboration efforts on the Okanagan National Forest

Sam Gehr was supervisor on the Okanagan National Forest from February 1990 through July 1999. He currently works on the Cooperative Forestry staff in State & Private Forestry in the USDA Forest Service's Washington, D.C. office.

During mid-winter 1993, I was approached, individually, by several representatives from different Local interest groups. These interactions followed a similar trend, acknowledging past history before getting to question of the day.

All the interest groups had participated in a multitude of meetings between 1986 and 1989 associated with providing input to and negotiating on the Okanogan National Forest Plan that became final in 1989. Following that experience, 19901992 was characterized by a "no need to meet further" mindset. Meeting weariness was evident. The prevailing attitude was that interest groups would now simply duke it out as necessary to assure that respective interests were met by what the Forest Plan "guaranteed."

But by 1993 appeals were rampant and tensions were rising within Okanogan County regarding natural resource issues. Beyond appeals, at least three events pointed toward escalating tensions: There were spotted owl concerns (the western half of the Okanogan National Forest is in spotted owl range), Forest plan timber outputs would be reduced, and an environmental impact statement for the Crown Jewel Gold Mine was underway. Potentially the largest gold mine in the lower 48 states, Crown Jewel's cyanide heap leach proposal quickly pitted economic development in the county's north end against environmental concerns.

The Okanogan County Citizens Coalition (OC3), a coalition of approximately two dozen county commodity interests, had united for multiple use. Some within the group were beginning to display intimidation tendencies; they determined to ensure that Okanogan County would no longer be steamrollered by "west side environmentalists," who were seen by OC3ers as employing their own intimidation tactics.

The question posed to me was this: Would I, as forest supervisor, work to get local interests to the table to interact on natural resource issues? My response was yes, so long as it was understood that my role was not to lead the process. I would convene and facilitate, bringing interested parties to the table and keeping them focused on the issues at hand. Further, all were reminded that those who chose to be involved in natural resource issue collaboration needed to be committed for the long haul.

Twenty-four people from within Okanogan County, representing mixed interests, were assembled in March 1993. The two-hour evening session had a twofold purpose. The first was to hear from southern Oregon guests associated with the Applegate Partnership and seek to understand the Applegate Partnership's successes, remaining challenges, and view of the future. The second goal was to determine, prior to returning home, whether participants were ready to commit to grassroots collaboration in Okanogan County.

This evening session was the genesis of the Consensus Group, a committed core of 12-16 individuals coming together and working, for over six years now, to improve the general public's understanding of resource issues and to foster a collaborative approach to achieving a healthy economy across a healthy rural landscape.

For the next two years, the core group established relationships among individuals and interest groups. Understanding and genuine respect began to emerge. Areas of common agreement became evident early on, including the desire for a healthy economy coupled with a clean environment.

This period featured field trips to examine and discuss stewardship projects on both the National Forest and private land. Also during this period, the group agreed that the roadless issue could not be on the local issue table. The group recognized that even if local agreement was achieved on this issue, it would quickly be subjected to regional and national interest group override.

From April 1995 to May 1996 the group focused on the Forest Service's Electric Project, a broad-scale forest restoration project that served as a prototype for future Forest Service projects. The Electric Project included several thousand acres of commercial and non-commercial thinning from below, much of it small diameter material; road closures for erosion control; and changes to grazing management. Two field trips were made to the project area, and the group provided feedback to the Forest Service. There was common agreement on big tree retention, consistent marking in the "leave/take" plots, and road closures. The group did not reach common agreement on understory seeding related to noxious weed control and livestock grazing.

In February 1996, 1 participated in the Seventh American Forest Congress, and in March I briefed the Consensus Group on the highlights of that Congress, including the roundtable process. After extended deliberation, 80% of the group expressed strong interest in not only working to do a grassroots forest congress in Okanogan County, but to produce it by year's end.

Since June 1996, the group has choreographed five resource forums and is presently planning for a sixth, all patterned after the Seventh American Forest Congress process. One hundred sixty-four individuals attended the first symposium, titled "Forests of Okanogan County ... A Balanced Resource Symposium." Topics at other symposia included conservation education and forest management leadership, the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project, roadless areas and transportation systems, the Okanogan County Economic Summit, and water and fish issues. The topics brought forward have been timely, and consequently, people are more aware of these significant local issues. Beyond the symposium efforts, the group continues to monitor restoration projects.

A challenge the group has faced in the past and will continue to face in the future will be to remain focused on the issues and be neither derailed nor intimidated by extreme interest groups, be they local, regional, or national. My impression is that this group will continue to move forward, providing a robust focus on watershed restoration and broad-based stewardship

Sam Gehr

Resources

Events

Small diameter utilization workshop. September 30October 1, Hayfork, California. This workshop will identify existing information and research about the harvesting and processing of underutilized species and diameter classes. For more information, contact the Watershed Research and Training Center, P0 Box 356, Hayfork, CA 96041, tel. 530-628-4206, *wsc@tcoe.trinity.k12.Ca.us.*

Non-timber forest products meeting: October 2, Hoopa, California. This workshop will look at plant propagation, seed saving, sustainable harvesting, and medicinal uses of local native plants. For more information, contact the Collaborative Learning Circle at P0 Box 1137, Ashland, OR 97520, tel. 541-482-4421, *c1c@mind.net.*

Ways of the Woods. November 4-5, Jackson, New Hampshire. This conference will bring together people from Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York to discuss the culture, heritage, and evolving economy of the Northern Forest. It will focus on working together to build regional vitality. To learn more, call 603-229-0679 or email *nfc@northernforest.org* and ask to be added to the conference mailing list. Be sure to give them your address, email, and phone number.

National Network of Forest Practioners annual meeting. November 10-14, Red Mountain State Park, Georgia. Topics to be addressed this year include alternative and non-timber forest products, landowner cooperatives, job training, coalition building and conflict resolution, advocacy strategies, new opportunities for forest jobs and businesses, information technology for grassroots organizations, land ownership trends and implications, and lots more. For more information, contact Thomas Brendler at *tbrendler@igc.org* or at 617-338-7821.

Publications and Web sites

Beyond the Hundredth Meeting: A Field Guide to Collaborative Conservation on the West's Public Lands. This new publication categorizes collaborative efforts that deal with public land issues as place/community-based collaborations or policy/interest-based collaborations. It presents a number of case studies of each type and uses these to identify the key features of constructive collaborative efforts. The 80-page report was written by Barb Cestero and is available for $15 from the Sonoran Institute, tel. 520-290-0828.

Directory of Funding Sources for Grassroots River and Watershed Conservation Groups. This directory, published by the River Network, profiles private, corporate, and federal funding sources for grassroots groups; explains how to write grant proposals; and includes a bibliography of state and local foundation directories. The 93-page directory costs $35 and can be ordered from the River Network's Web page, *www.rivernetowr.org/rnpublic.htm* or by email from *info@rivernetwor.org*.

SAF task force report on forest management certification programs. This just-released report from the Society of American Foresters reviews six forestry certification programs in the United States and assesses challenges facing domestic and international certification programs. Available online at *www.safnet.org/policy/fmcp1999.html* or by calling the Society of American Foresters at 301-897-8720.

Ford Foundation Community Forestry Research Web site. If you're a graduate student looking for funding, or if you'd like to learn more about recent academic research that focuses on community forestry, this is a program you should know about. The Web page lists past and present fellows and their research topics, provides preliminary research results, and describes how to apply for fellowships. Point your browser to *www.cnr.berkeley.edu/community_forestry/.*

Services and training programs

Ecosystem Work force Program. This program at the University of Oregon publishes a newsletter, *The Stewardship Chronicle*, and ecosystem management employment studies including *Improving Jobs, Community and the Environment: Lessons from the Ecosystem Work force Project* and *The High-Skill Approach to Ecosystem Management: Combining Economic, Ecological, and Social Objectives.* Contact Charles Spencer, Ecosystem Work force Program, 5247 University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403-5247, tel: 541-346-0676, *cspencer@oregon.uoregon.edu* for more information.

Bureau of Land Management National Training Center. BLM's national training center offers short courses on a wide range of topics including planning, biodiversity, and information resource management. The Partnership Series includes the following courses: • *Learning Community: Linking People, Place, and Perspective*, • *Community-Based Partnerships and Ecosystems for a Healthy Environment*, and • *Alternative Funding: Looking Beyond Traditional Sources.* To learn more about these and other course offerings, contact the Center at 828 North 31st Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85051, 602-906-5500, or check out their Web site at *www.ntc.blm.gov.*

EPA's Watershed Academy. The Environmental Protection Agency's Watershed Academy is a source for training materials and courses on topics ranging from community outreach to watershed planting techniques to designing an information management system for your watershed. Courses are offered around the country, and some are also available as online training modules. A list of publications, course descriptions, and the fall 1999 Watershed Training Course Schedule are available online at *www.epa.gov/OWOW/watershed/wacademy/.*

***Ecosystem restoration**, continued from page 1*

In an interesting twist, the King County Conservation Corps in Washington state provides training for young adults, half from the Seattle area and half from other countries around the world. Together, the multinational teams have restored streams, planted trees, built trails, and established native plant nurseries.

Providing training is only one part of the picture, however, and many graduates have been frustrated by their inability to find work in the new field. To this end, many current efforts are striving to connect the new work force to the jobs that will support it.

In Tillamook County, Oregon, the local Economic Development Council puts out The Connection, a newsletter that notifies community members of ecosystem management jobs and contracts in area. The Council also maintains a database of local contractors to help them pool their resources to bid on large or complex projects that would otherwise go to a bigger firm from outside the area. In Lake County, Oregon, community members are hoping to be able to revise a Long-standing Forest Service sustained yield policy that offers local mills preferential access to logs to also give local contractors first options on restoration contracts. *(See News & Views, page 5, for more on this initiative.)*

The long-term viability of this new industry depends on the availability of funding. Some ecosystem restoration work, such as thinning overstocked stands, may produce by-products that can help pay for the work, but much of it does not. Most restoration work relies on the willingness of the U.S. Forest Service–and other agencies and foundations–to invest in the Land.

Washington state runs a grant program called Jobs for the Environment that provides funding for watershed improvement projects. It requires projects it funds to employ displaced timber and fisheries workers, and to provide them with training, health insurance, and living wages.

In the Northwest, newly available funding to restore salmon habitat has boosted ecosystem restoration employment. The Forest Service recently announced a plan to restore 2.5 million acres of forest in Oregon's Blue Mountains as a prelude to establishing similar projects around the country. While this is encouraging, the long-term prospects for funding ecological restoration remain unknown.

Funding is not the only question raised by ecosystem restoration efforts. Implicit in much of the rhetoric around high-skill, high-wage ecosystem jobs is an emphasis on hiring local workers.

A study conducted by the Watershed Research Center in Trinity County, California, found that many of the jobs that the Forest Service contracted out were not going to local workers. They concluded that the way contracts are typically structured favors larger firms with greater access to resources. Other communities have had similar experiences and are welcoming the Forest Service's stewardship contracting pilot project. Under the pilot project, local Forest Service offices can experiment with best-value contracts, bundled contracts, and longer-term stewardship contracts–mechanisms that proponents hope will provide local residents with stable, well-paid jobs.

Yet in the clamor to hire local workers, few have looked at the impact on the seasonal, often minority, work force that currently does much of the contract forest work.

Despite the many challenges, practitioners in the new field of ecosystem restoration are forging ahead, working hard to establish themselves in a new industry, one that gives them an opportunity to make a living stewarding the landscape they live in.

Alex Conley

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