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# Communities and Forests

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

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## Southerners build integrated urban forestry programs

*by Jennifer Shepherd and Ann Moote*

“What if we took all the urban forestry practices we’ve learned about and put them in one city; what would that look like?” That question sparked the development of the Georgia Model Urban Forest, says Susan Reich, urban and community forestry coordinator for the Georgia Forestry Commission.

One-and-a-half years since Reich and others first conceived the idea, the Georgia Model Urban Forest Book is ready for its final printing. Reich says the book is “a how-to guide, with a lot of new information in it,” which its creators hope will be used to incorporate urban forestry techniques into municipal planning efforts throughout the state.

Taking a comprehensive, regional approach to urban forestry is starting to look like the norm in the South. From Georgia to Texas, urban foresters are tying together education, municipal and regional planning, and other community development programs in innovative urban forestry ventures.

Complementing Georgia’s Model Urban Forest Book is the critical forest land study, an interactive model being developed by the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center.

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*Growers plant black cohosh root in Appalachian forest.*

## Cooperatives take root in South

*by Jennifer Shepherd*

Deep in the Appalachian heart of Kentucky and Ohio is America’s most fertile ground for a variety of valuable medicinal herbs. While medical herbs have only recently become widely popular in the United States, Asia’s appetite for them has never waned. Countries such as China and Japan are increasingly looking to North America for their herb supply, and herb distributors have been turning handsome profits.

For centuries, people in this Appalachian region supplemented their income by going into the woods and harvesting the wild roots of ginseng, black cohosh, goldenseal, and a host of other herbs. Linda Heller, chairperson of Mountain Traditions, an herb growers’ cooperative in southeastern Kentucky, estimates that “in the past, 80 percent of the people here supplemented their income by going out and digging herbs,” but it wasn’t an organized effort. “Eventually, through just sitting around and talking, people started to realize that they were losing out on a lot of potential profit that currently was leaving the area.” These talks led locals to develop of the Mountain Traditions Cooperative.

While in other areas of the country forestry cooperatives are focusing on increased self-sufficiency and forest stewardship, in rural southern counties where the unemployment rates are the highest in the country, landowners are turning to both traditional and non-traditional forest products cooperatives as a desperately needed source of income.

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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 the rights and responsibilities of diverse forest landowners.

## Letter to the Members

A flurry of efforts, from local to global in scale, was initiated in the late 1990s to develop sustainable forest management criteria and indicators. Environmental and economic indicators were quickly identified, but few people were considering the impact those would have on local communities. Simultaneously, communities across the country were rapidly charting social indicators. Several Communities Committee members felt a need for the Committee to bring these efforts together, and in particular, to bring the community perspective to national, regional and global discussions. To these ends, the Committee formed the Indicators and Monitoring Task Group at its November 1998 meeting.

Meeting by teleconference, the task group planned a forum for the full Communities Committee meeting in May 1999, where different community group representatives, including Communities Committee members, shared their perspectives on and experiences with developing social/community indicators for sustainable forest management. The steering committee and speakers were then asked to share their ideas through two key questions: (1) What are the pressing needs of communities in general, and how can indicators be used to inform and engage communities? and (2) What can the Communities Committee's task group do to address those needs?



*Wendy Hinrichs Sanders chairs the Indicators and Monitoring Task Group.  
Photo by Jane Braxton Little*

*If your community is developing sustainable forest-management indicators with an intent to monitor, we're interested in hearing from you!*

Four strategies were developed at that forum:

1. Participate in national dialogues and partner with other efforts to promote financial investment in capacity-building and the collection of social, environmental and economic data by partnering with other efforts.
2. Aggregate existing efforts—including local to state, national, and global data collection and monitoring efforts.
3. Advocate a community-based perspective in the indicators dialogue.
4. Identify and pilot efforts to develop indicators and monitoring processes that are flexible, inclusive, and integrated. Provide training on lessons learned.

Task group members focused on the need for information gathering and dissemination. The group hopes to develop a database of local community groups undertaking monitoring efforts, the approaches they are using, and an analysis of those efforts.

If your community is developing local or multi-county sustainable forest management indicators with an intent to monitor, we're interested in hearing from you! We also welcome new task group members. For more information, contact the task group chair, Wendy Hinrichs Sanders of the Great Lakes Forest Alliance, at <forestls@lsfa.org> or by phone at 715-634-2006.

*Wendy Hinrichs Sanders*

# Policy Updates

Washington, D.C., recently witnessed some heady days as legislation passed by Congress and signed into law by President Clinton allocated major new funding to land acquisition, preservation, and fire management.

## 2001 Appropriations

The Interior Department received \$18.8 billion in Congressional appropriations for the coming year. The appropriations bill funds several natural resource management agencies, including the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and USDA Forest Service. This year's bill dramatically increases funding for federal land acquisition and for fire management. It also gives the U.S. Forest Service a \$363.8 million budget increase over fiscal year 2000 appropriations. The Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, and Fish and Wildlife Service are receiving a combined \$231.1 million budget increase this year.

## New land conservation funding

It's not quite CARA (the Conservation and Reinvestment Act), but the conservation-funding package passed by Congress as part of the 2001 Interior appropriations bill establishes \$12 billion in land-conservation funding over the next six years. The legislation will fund programs addressing land acquisition, endangered species, urban sprawl, forestland preservation, coastal preservation, and historic preservation.

## \$1.8 billion fire policy

In October, Congress approved \$1.8 billion in emergency firefighting funds for five federal agencies. The money is to be used to purchase new equipment, to hire and train additional firefighters, to implement hazardous fuels reduction and environmental restoration projects, and to provide assistance to communities at risk from wildfire.

The U.S. Forest Service announced that its community assistance efforts would be focused in the urban-wildland interface zone, where residential structures are located in or adjacent to

forested wildlands. The Forest Service plans to work directly with communities and will also provide grants to communities addressing fire issues. More information on this initiative is available at <http://spfnic.fs.fed.us/nfp>.

## County payments bill

President Clinton signed the County Payments Bill (S.1608) into law on October 30, 2000. The new law provides guaranteed payments to counties with federal forestlands, based on each county's all-time-high revenue-sharing payments. Of this payment, 15-20 percent will be given to local Resource Advisory Committees for federal lands or specific community-based management projects such as community forestry, fire prevention, and fire education. The law is intended to provide stable income to eligible states in support of schools, roads, and other services without making those payments dependent on timber sales revenues.

## Roadless area plan finalized

The U.S. Forest Service has published its final environmental impact statement on roadless area conservation and is expected to publish its final rule on the plan any day. The new regulation will prohibit most road construction and reconstruction on 49.2 million acres of inventoried roadless areas. The ban on roads will expand to include 9.3 million acres of the Tongass National Forest in 2004. The agency received 1.6 million public comments on its roadless area plan last spring and summer.

## Keep watching the 2002 farm bill

The 1996 Farm Bill enacted major new land conservation programs and reauthorized others, including the conservation reserve program, the wetlands reserve program, the wildlife habitat incentives program, and the forest incentives program (FIP). The Farm Bill is up for renewal in 2002, and community forestry advocates are watching closely to track the fate of FIP and other incentives programs.

The forestry incentives program provides up to \$10,000 in cost-share funds to private landowners in eligible counties who are working to improve their forestland through tree planting, stand improvement, or site preparation for natural regeneration.

# Committee News

A new chairperson and four new steering committee members were elected at the October steering committee meeting.

**Carol Daly**, president of the Flathead Economic Policy Center in Montana, is the new chair-elect. Carol has been a steering committee member since the Communities Committee's formation in 1995 and has served as vice-chair of the committee since 1997. She is a national leader in the community forestry movement and a strong advocate for stewardship contracting. Carol will officially take over the reins from Lynn Jungwirth at the May steering committee meeting in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

**Ann Ingerson** is a research associate in the two-person Vermont office of the Wilderness Society, where she conducts community economic assessments and promotes forest certification. Ann and her husband also own and manage a 67-acre tree farm.

**Rosemary Romero** is a senior mediator and facilitator with Public Decisions Network, a nonprofit organization based in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She helps agencies and communities undertake strategic planning and community visioning and resolve disputes. Rosemary is a native New Mexican with strong ties to the Pueblo Indian and Hispanic communities in that state.

**Diane Snyder** is executive director of Wallowa Resources, a community-based nonprofit organization dedicated to blending the needs of the land and community in Wallowa County, Oregon. Diane is committed to helping her community build its capacity to deal with major economic and land-use changes.

**Alice Walker** is executive director of the National Alliance for Community Trees, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the support and professional development of urban community tree planting and conservation organizations. An Atlanta, Georgia native, Alice previously worked for Trees Atlanta and American Forests.

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# Member Profile

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## Rodney Stone

I currently serve as liaison between the U.S. Forest Service and the urban forestry degree program at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, one of 12 national recruitment initiatives supported by the agency. My responsibilities include recruitment, placement, career counseling and research, and community forestry project collaboration. The goal of the projects I have worked on is to improve the quality of life in cities. The Forest Service currently supports eight students as part of a multicultural workforce initiative aimed at attracting under-represented minority populations and people with disabilities into natural resources professions.

### Advocating for youth

My urban background gave me the incentive to work with young people and serve as an advocate for their success. After completing a degree in economics at Tuskegee University, I returned home to Chicago where I worked as a juvenile probation officer for several years. During this time I also became a certified counselor. The skills I acquired while working with the Cook County, Illinois Juvenile Court system have benefitted me throughout my professional endeavors.

In 1989, I was awarded the National Urban/Rural Fellowship, funded in part by the Ford Foundation. The Fellowship was established to prepare minorities to become managers within the public employment sector. I earned my M.S. in public administration from City University of New York, Bernard Baruch College.

Not long after completing the public administration degree I accepted a position with the USDA Forest Service as a residential program manager at one of the 18 Civilian Conservation Centers that the agency operates cooperatively with the US Department of Labor. These centers provide education and vocational skill training for around 75,000 youths ages 16-24 across the country. Every dollar invested in one of these young people comes back as a \$1.50 return when that person becomes a productive tax-paying citizen.

### Moving past the illusion of inclusion

I recently got an eye-opener at meeting in Washington, D.C., where about 400 people were gathered to plan a natural resources agenda for urban communities. I was one of four minorities in attendance. How can you plan a natural resource agenda for urban communities and not approach the plan from a multicultural perspective? What struck me most was that it did not bother others that there were so few minorities in attendance. I guess the idea was that we could give the illusion of inclusion.

If the future is going to include us it has to start now. We need to be involved in the management and planning of our own communities. We cannot sit back and wait to be invited to the table. I would like to see organizations involved in community-based forestry take the lead in promoting programs that are inclusive of all communities and ethnic groups.

### Representation and infrastructure for communities

When I met Gerry Gray, American Forests vice president and a member of the Communities Committee steering committee, I knew our mindsets were in sync on such issues as equal access and participation as well as the need to develop infrastructure in urban communities. I joined the steering committee of the Communities Committee of the Seventh American Forest Congress in the spring of 2000.

Through the Communities Committee I've realized that rural communities confront many of the same problems we face in urban communities: Both lack representation and a voice in the decisions that affect us. When I was in Hayfork, California in October for the Committee's biannual meeting, I learned more about life in a logging community. I am dedicated to working collaboratively from the local level to the national level to build capacity and make communities an effective force in decision making. I would really like to build a solid infrastructure in underserved and underrepresented communities, rural or urban. We truly lack that.



*Rodney Stone is urban forestry liaison for the U.S. Forest Service at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.*

### A dream-maker for young people

My own goal is to move forward professionally within the Forest Service. I would like to be a forest supervisor in charge of one of the major urban forests in the country. There I could work on issues that involve entire communities and continue my work as a dream-maker for young people. This continues to be my niche in life.

When I reflect back on all I have done and where I came from, I've truly been blessed to have the opportunity to be involved in aiding others to improve their quality of life. I'm not financially rich, but spiritually I'm a million-dollar heir. And I'm happy. When you get up every morning and look forward to doing your job, you are in high cotton, as we say in the South.

# News & Views

## Southerners debate chip mills' costs, benefits

Chip mills, which allow rapid timber harvesting via clearcutting for paper and particleboard production, have proliferated in the South over the last decade. According to the environmental coalition The Dogwood Alliance, over 100 chip mills have been constructed in the Southeast since 1985, largely in response to declining timber production in the Pacific Northwest.

Chip mills have been hailed as an economic boon to private forest owners, but at the same time have caused alarm among those concerned with the health of forests and rural communities.

Increasingly, Southerners are asking whether chip mills mean more efficient technology or symbolize a gradual loss of control over forest harvesting practices.

Concern over the negative impacts of chip mills led Missouri legislators to enact a two-year moratorium on new and expanding chip mills in April 2000. Missouri, Virginia, and North Carolina have all undertaken statewide studies of chip mills, and a separate four-agency federal study of chip mills and industrial forestry is also underway.

The Southern Center for Sustainable Forests, a cooperative organization of the North Carolina State University's Forestry Department, Duke University's Nicholas School of the Environment, and North Carolina's Division of Forest Resources, recently released its study evaluating the economic and ecological impacts of wood chip production in North Carolina.

The North Carolina study found a correlation between chip mills and increased financial return for non-industrial private forest landowners.

The study also found that chip mills were statistically correlated with increased timber production and harvest in that state. Increasing timber removal was estimated to have outstripped

softwood growth in 1990 and is projected to exceed hardwood growth by the year 2005. A shift in forest structure on private lands to younger seral stages with fewer old-growth forests is also projected as are adverse impacts on bird, amphibian, and reptile habitat in the state.

The North Carolina study also surveyed community members near chip mills, revealing severe polarization among these residents. While some believe that chip mills provide a market for poor quality timber, allowing it to be cleared and the land replanted with more productive softwoods, others say that chip mills are causing widespread clearcutting and are accelerating the conversion from hardwoods to pine monocultures, with negative impacts on tourism, landscape, and local economies.

The final results of the study, *Economic and Ecological Impacts Associated with Wood Chip Production in North Carolina* are available from the Southern Center for Sustainable Forests at

<http://taxodium.env.duke.edu/scsf/>.

The Dogwood Alliance critiques chip mills and clearcutting on its Web site at <http://dogwoodalliance.org/>

## Stewardship pilot projects in the South

In an effort to assess the effectiveness of different restoration activities, the Forest Service implemented the Stewardship Pilot Projects Program, authorized by Section 347 of the 1999 Omnibus Appropriations Act. This law allows for the exchange of goods for services, the retention of receipts, the awarding of contracts on a "best value" basis, and the designation of timber for cutting by prescription.

There are currently three stewardship pilot projects in the southeastern United States. In North Carolina, a project is in effect to use logging service contracts to complete the vegetative management of an area.

In the Cherokee National Forest in Tennessee, a project was designed to create high elevation, early successional habitat for neo-tropical birds. The plan is to trade timber for work done to clear openings in the forests that will create old-field, early successional habitat.

In the George Washington/Jefferson National Forest in Virginia, a project has been initiated to combine contract logging, road construction, and fisheries-habitat improvement into one contract vehicle. It also is intended to demonstrate the benefits of an alternative logging system that results in less ground disturbance than conventional methods.

The stewardship contracting program reflects a shift in the national forest timber sales program from supplying wood fiber to using timber harvesting as a tool to achieve various management objectives like improving forest health, reducing forest fuels, and creating desired habitat conditions for wildlife.

## Forest management plans due for an update

Revisions to the national forest management plans in the Southern Appalachians are long overdue. Existing management plans were put into effect during the 1980s when timber production was considered the primary purpose of national forests. The plan revision process has been underway since 1996, when authorization for the current plans officially ran out; since then, conservationists have been struggling to improve habitat and species protection in the new plans.

A draft forest management plan is expected to be released in the fall of 2001, and the planning process continues to be open to public input. For more information, visit the agency's Web site at <http://www.southernregion.fs.fed.us/resources/plan.htm>.

## Special forest products and forest cooperatives

Rural Action, located in southern Ohio, provides training and workshops on harvesting non-timber forest products and forming cooperatives. In addition to the Roots of Appalachia Growers' Association (*see Cooperatives, page 1*), Rural Action has helped to start the relatively new Center for the Preservation and Study of Medicinal Herbs in Miesgs County, Ohio. For more information, contact Colin Donahue, Rural Action's community-based development coordinator, at [rural@frognet.net](mailto:rural@frognet.net).

**Cooperatives**, *continued from page 1***Coop focused on restoring species, responsible harvesting**

“Because a lot of the traditional herbs, such as black cohosh, American ginseng, and goldenseal, are on the Plant Savers ‘at risk’ list, we decided that we need to grow these herbs to prevent further loss,” Linda Heller says. “With us the environment comes first, and then of course it’s, ‘Let’s try to make some money.’”

“Our members are all certified organic. But we realize that there are still going to be people who are going to dig, so we have developed a model that shows them how to dig and harvest responsibly,” Heller adds.

Mountain Traditions has received funding from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, and they expect funding to continue for several years. So far, funds have been used to buy seed, set up experimental greenhouses, and provide seed money for experimental growers.

“We have one girl who’s doing all kinds of experimental salves,” Heller says. “We’ll help people individually who want to do their own projects, and they can sell privately or through the coop. We don’t say, ‘You have to sell through us—or else.’”

**Organizing provides protection**

The Roots of Appalachia Growers’ Association is a collection of medicinal herb growers in southeastern Ohio’s Morgan County, also one of the poorest, most rural areas in Appalachia. It was incubated by Rural Action’s Sustainable Forestry Program (*see Special, page 5*).

Lyda Gunter has been working with the group for the past year, and was instrumental in getting it incorporated. She says, “Most of the people in the group are either first or second year growers. Often people don’t understand that these plants are on a three to 15-year growing cycle before they’re ready to harvest. We’re working towards having enough of the growers in a position to be [harvesting and forming a coop] in two years.”

Currently, the group has about 25 growers. The threat of poaching or theft, combined with the slow growing cycle, makes medicinal herb production a

delicate process and adds incentive for growers to come together to purchase insurance and ensure the highest possible prices for their products.

**Alabama cooperative works with marginalized forest landowners**

The Mandingo Legacy Forestry Program in Epes, Alabama is a new initiative by the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund Minority and Limited-Resource Landowner Forestry Project. It’s focused on helping African-American and other traditionally marginalized landowners and rural dwellers across the deep South retain, operate, and manage their own tree farms, forest services, and forest products industries.

Derek Wilkerson, program director, believes these rural forest landowners with small acreages are often overlooked by forestry assistance programs: “Up to now, they’ve been uninformed about the opportunities available to them to get funding, to cooperatize, and to manage sustainably,” he says.

The Mandingo Program aims to enhance rural economic development, environmental conservation, and ecosystem management while providing skills training and human resource development among historically underserved people.

Program organizers list a number of specific objectives, including:

- to provide forest ecosystem and forest industry training;
- to organize cooperatives and rural community-based forestry enterprises;
- to organize trained minority landowners into a cooperative enterprise that can provide sustainable forestry services;
- to provide forest herb training and production assistance; and
- to establish a cooperative, portable sawmill enterprise so forest owners and workers can cut and prepare lumber on site, adding value to their products.

Currently, there are about 80 landowners participating in the Mandingo Legacy Forestry Program, many of whom attended the program’s first workshop, held in November 2000.

**Forest landowner cooperation**

*by Katie Fernholtz*

Low commodity prices, windstorm damage, high taxes, and forest sustainability concerns are common issues for private forest landowners throughout the United States. These are also some of the reasons landowners are finding value in cooperation.

Since 1998, 12 forest-owner cooperatives have formed in the Midwest, at least three have formed in the Northeast, and interest continues to grow in the South.

Landowners and others who join these groups include farmers, forests-products business owners, ecologists, loggers, sawmill operators, and others who recognize the potential to improve the local economy and the quality of forest management through cooperation and stewardship.

By forming a group, small landowners can access services that they may not be able to afford on their own. These services may include management plan writing, harvesting, processing, ecological restoration and enhancement, and marketing. A landowner cooperative can also make it easier to tackle issues like habitat conservation and ecosystem restoration on a landscape level.

Many of the cooperatives are developing value-added businesses to process and market kiln-dried lumber, flooring, and other products. Some are also interested in non-timber forest specialty products such as maple syrup, mushrooms, and medicinal herbs.

Many groups have also been utilizing Forest Stewardship Council green certification as a means to ensure their principals are met, to ensure that benefits remain local, and to differentiate their products in the market.

Although forest-owner groups may take different forms in different regions, they can all have the similar goals of assisting landowners, improving forest management, and building local economies. *Katie Fernholtz is a forester and GIS specialist with the Community Forestry Resource Center. For more information, visit its Web site at <<http://www.forestrycenter.org>>.*

# Resources

## Publications and Web sites

**Forest Community News.** If you're a subscriber to this Internet newsletter, you've already got most of the information on this page! *Forest Community News* arrives in subscribers' email boxes about twice a month with news on current community forestry policy and politics and announcements of new resources and events. The newsletter is written and distributed by the National Network of Forest Practitioners. Subscribe today by sending a blank email to <[nnfp-fcn-subscribe@igc.topica.com](mailto:nnfp-fcn-subscribe@igc.topica.com)>.

**National Network of Forest Practitioners Web site.** The Network's new Web site includes resources and events listings for "rural people, organizations, and businesses finding practical ways to integrate economic development, environmental protection, and social justice" at <<http://www.nnfp.org/>>.

**Forest Community Research Web site.** Forest Community Research (FCR) has unveiled its new Web site with information on FCR's education and research activities, including the new Community Based Forestry Center and Pacific West Community Forestry Center. On the Community Based Forestry Center page you'll find an annotated bibliography of community-based forestry literature. Read more at <<http://www.fcresearch.org/>>.

**Interactive, Web-based forest resource model.** The Mountain Association for Community Economic Development, based in Berea, Kentucky, recently developed a model to "illustrate the benefits of good management while educating the user about various aspects that influence the health and quality of their forest." The *Forest Resource Model* is designed for Central and Southern Appalachia but be adapted for other areas. The model is available at <<http://www.maced.org/>>.

**Forest Management for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**, a report published by the environmental network The Dogwood Alliance, outlines a variety of revenue-generating options for southern forest landowners and discourages clearcutting. The report is available for \$8 from the Dogwood Alliance, PO Box 7645, Asheville, North Carolina, 28802, call the Alliance at 828-698-1998, or its Web site at <<http://www.dogwoodalliance.org/>>.

**1999 Health of American Forests**, a report by the U.S. Forest Service, covers forest wildfire threat, exotic species invasions, management challenges in the urban/wildland interface, air pollution, degraded riparian areas, and other ecological conditions. The report is available on the agency's Web site at <[http://www.fs.fed.us/foresthealth/fh\\_update/index.htm](http://www.fs.fed.us/foresthealth/fh_update/index.htm)>.

**Criteria and indicators database.** Sherry Wormstead, USDA Forest Service, Northeastern Area State & Private Forestry, has compiled a *Database of Sustainability Criteria and Indicators Efforts* that includes 36 projects from throughout the United States. Click on "Criteria and Indicators Project Database" at <<http://www.na.fs.fed.us/sustainability>> to access it.

**Patterns of a Conservation Economy.** You've never seen a Web site like this before! Ecotrust has designed this new interactive Web site based on a "bioregional pattern language" that ties together broad and detailed principles of sustainability in a giant flow chart. Click on any of dozens of "patterns," ranging from "stormwater management" to "fair terms of trade" to "beauty and play" and delve deeper the details of that aspect of sustainability, seeing how it links to the other patterns. Experience it at <<http://www.conservationeconomy.net/>>.

## Events

**Collaboration and Decisionmaking in the National Forests: Can it Work?** January 23-24, 2001, University of Montana School of Forestry and Resources for the Future, Missoula Montana. For more information, contact Kate Sullivan at 406-243-6305 or at <[kates@selway.umt.edu](mailto:kates@selway.umt.edu)>, or visit the conference Web site at <<http://www.forestry.umt.edu/kiosk/Conference/Plumcreek/pccad.htm>>.

**A Million Acres in Minnesota: A Conference and Celebration for Woodland Owners and Users**, March 2-3, 2001, Duluth, Minnesota. Over 75 topics will be presented, in the categories of wildlife forest health, forest products, backyard issues, nontraditional forest products, growing trees, and forest taxes and policies. The conference is sponsored by the University of Minnesota Extension Service, USDA Forest Service, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and Minnesota Forestry Association. Contact Mimi Barzen at 218-327-4119 or at <[mimi.barzen@dnr.state.mn.us](mailto:mimi.barzen@dnr.state.mn.us)>.

**Global Initiatives and Public Policies: First International Conference on Private Forestry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**, March 25-27, 2001, Atlanta, Georgia. Several conference sessions will focus on forest certification on private land in the United States; other topics include market globalization and changing forest policy. For more information, visit the conference Web site at <<http://sofserv.forestry.auburn.edu/\fpregistration/index.htm>> or contact Larry Teeter at 334-884-1045 or <[fpc@auburn.edu](mailto:fpc@auburn.edu)>.

**Northern Forest Regional Conference**, April 18-20, 2001, Jackson, New Hampshire. The Northern Forest Center's third regional conference, "Ways of the Woods: Exploring a Deeper Meaning of Wealth in the North" will bring together people from across the Northern Forest of New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine to explore the community, cultural, economic, educational, and environmental future of the region. The conference will feature workshops, presentations, field trips, craft demonstrations, and musical performances that celebrate the region's rich cultural heritage. For more information, contact The Northern Forest Center at <[nfc@northernforest.org](mailto:nfc@northernforest.org)>.

**National Urban Forest Conference**, September 5-8, 2001, Washington, D.C. The theme of this year's National Urban Forest Conference is, "Investing in natural capital in urban places: A green revenue stream for metro America." For more information, contact American Forests at 202-955-4500 or visit its Web site at <<http://www.americanforests.org/>>.

***Regional urban forestry, continued from page 1***

Lee Carmon, the development center's planning director, says, "I work with local governments to develop comprehensive plans, and in the development of those plans officials talk about a need to protect resources. But we had no tool to help them identify where those resources were."

The critical forest land model will help local governments identify and weight the forest benefits, such as air quality and water quality, that they want to preserve. The model will then identify forest tracts that should be protected to maximize these benefits. "It's going to allow them to base their decisions on their local needs rather than having us tell them, 'This is how you should do it'" Carmon says.

**Houston NGOs developing innovative programs**

Houston is the largest city in the United States without zoning, and its residents tend to oppose environmental regulation on principle. So when the city passed a tree and shrub ordinance, urban forestry advocates knew it wouldn't be enforced. Rather than lobbying or legislating against the city, however, they took a proactive approach. Trees for Houston, The Park People, and Scenic Houston joined together to form Treescape Houston, a voluntary program designed to educate developers about the ordinance and show them how to comply with it.

In another city-wide effort, American Forests, working with local urban forestry groups, recently completed a City Green ecosystem analysis for greater Houston. The analysis of 27 years' worth of satellite images shows that forests in this area have declined substantially, with economic and ecological costs to the city. The analysis is available on the Web at <<http://www.americiranforests.org>>.

Peter Smith, urban forestry partnership coordinator for the state of Texas, says the state plans to build on the results of the City Green analysis by bringing tree planting and tree maintenance into Houston's overall ozone abatement effort.

Sparks, another Houston NGO, uses community development block grant funds from the mayor's office to create neighborhood parks on community schoolgrounds. Sparks

works with schoolchildren to design the parks, which include upgraded playground facilities, public art, and a volunteer tree planting and maintenance program. Trees for Houston frequently partners with Sparks to plant street trees around a school at the same time Sparks develops the park.

Meanwhile, I Have a Dream Houston is using tree planting in its effort to help poor, inner-city children finish high school and attend college or vocational school. Its TreeKids Program teaches youth tree-planting skills, then puts them to work planting trees on public and private property around the city. Students earn stipends for trees planted on public lands, and go door-to-door selling trees to private homeowners and then planting them.

**Baton Rouge Green**

Baton Rouge Green in Louisiana also has been extremely successful in implementing a comprehensive urban forestry program. Lynn Morris, director of Baton Rouge Green, is most proud of that group's educational activities. "Through our program 'Trees for our Children's Futures' we have worked with 75 to 80 schools and planted over 6,500 trees in schoolyards alone since 1992. We have developed a curriculum in which the students learn about the trees and their environmental importance, and then are responsible for the trees' maintenance after they plant them. It's been a great success."

Baton Rouge Green has also developed a tool that helps teachers bring geographic information systems into the classroom. Through the GIS-based Urban Forestry Ecosystem Analysis Program, students are taught how to use aerial photography and GIS to analyze the value of the urban forest on school campuses across the city.

Recently, Baton Rouge Green initiated an urban riparian reforestation effort focused on restoring viable buffer zones along the city's waterways. Through all these efforts, Morris explains, Baton Rouge Green has worked to develop effective partnerships among city government, civic groups, and schools, among many others.

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**Communities and Forests**

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