Communities and Forests

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

Volume 5, Number 1 *Spring 2001*

County defines sustainable forestry

by Ann Moote

In 1999, community leaders in Gogebic County, Michigan, decided to develop a community-based definition of sustainable forestry.

In order to address forest issues in their county plan, county economic development staff and the county forestry commission had examined forestry issues in the state, the Great Lakes region, and across the county. Those examinations "showed us the effects of the shutdown of national forests on forest communities in the West," says Dick Bolen, Gogebic County forester.

"We didn't want anyone coming in and imposing their brand of sustainability on us without knowing and appreciating the local community's values, desires, and realities, which is exactly what happened in the West," Bolen explains, so the county decided to "define sustainable forestry for our own community before it was imposed on us."

A community-based definition

An initial planning team recruited members for a forest advisory coordinating team (FACT) that would define sustainable forestry for Gogebic County. "We worked hard to make the working group representative of the community," says Jerry Murphy, Gogebic County economic development director.

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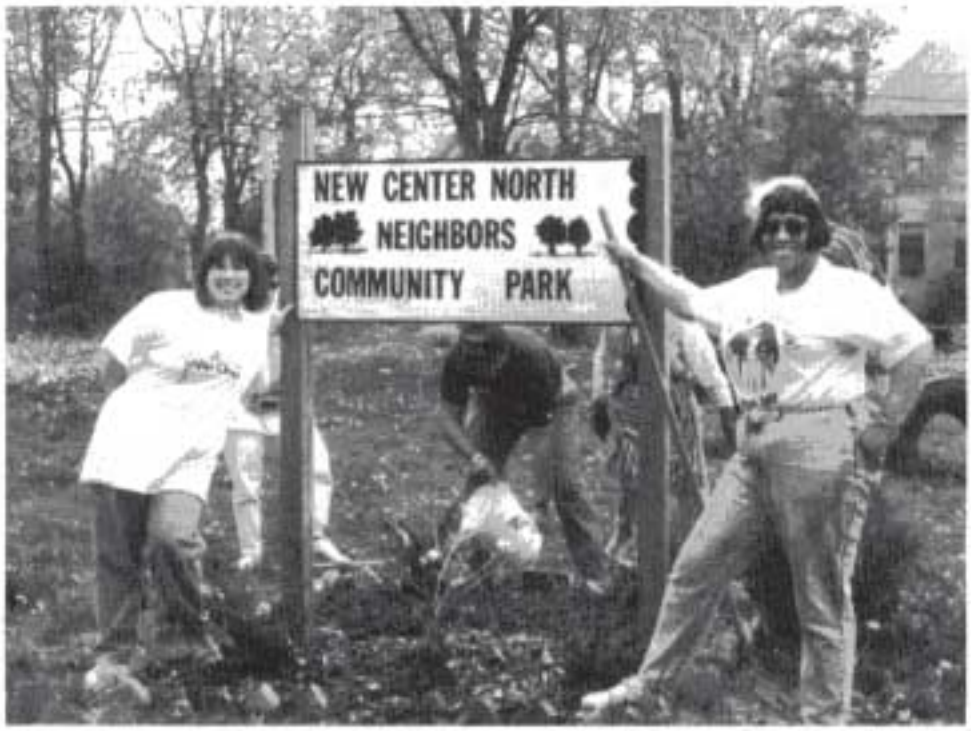

Detroit residents celebrate their community park. *Photo by Kerry Vachta*

Detroit block clubs apply social forestry

by Jennifer Shepherd

Between 1965 and 1990, Detroit, Michigan experienced a severe economic decline that caused over 600,000 people to flee the city, leaving abandoned homes and empty lots in their wake. As a result, the city has accumulated approximately 96,000 vacant lots that have become sites of decay and illegal dumping – lots that are not only eyesores but also are potentially hazardous to area residents.

Yet a pilot project sponsored by Michigan State University (MSU) has been successful in transforming some of Detroit's trash-filled disaster areas into centers of community forestry in low-income neighborhoods.

Dr. Maureen McDonough, a researcher with extensive experience in international rural community forestry efforts, noted similarities between the issues she encountered in rural villages in northern Thailand and those of inner-city neighborhoods in Detroit. With faith that mobilizing communities around common resources could greatly enhance American inner cities, McDonough and colleagues designed the Detroit project with help from the U.S. Forest Service and the Kellogg Foundation.

The MSU project's success in involving traditionally marginalized communities is particularly noteworthy. McDonough and graduate assistant Kerry Vachta began by contacting leaders in the established network of neighborhood associations, called "block clubs," and conducting a needs assessment.

"Rather than going in and telling them all about the benefits of trees, we wanted to let them tell us their major areas of concern," McDonough says. The meetings revealed several common goals in all of the neighborhoods: improved aesthetics; improved safety; and increased participation in block club projects, particularly by youth.

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Comments, subscription requests, and submissions may be sent to:
Communities and Forests
Communities Committee of the Seventh American Forest Congress
919 Elk Park Rd., Columbia Falls, MT 59912
406-892-8155 (phone), 406-892-8161 (fax)
cdaly@digisys.net
www.communitiescommittee.org

Editorial Board:
Maia Enzer, American Forests
Wendy Hinrichs Sanders, Great Lakes Forest Alliance
Bryant Smith, U.S. Forest Service

Ann Moote, Editor
Kathleen Veslany, Copy Editor

Contributors:
Richard W. Bolen, Thomas Brendler, Mary Mitsos, Janette Monear, Ann Moote, Wendy Heinrichs Sanders, Jennifer Shepherd

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 ecosytems;
- 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

This issue of **Communities and Forests** focuses on community forestry in the Lake States of Michican, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, where traditionally forest-dependent communities are exploring ways to manage forests for ecological health and economic viability, and where both cities and small towns are experiencing forest management challenges related to rapid growth. The Communities Committee offers several forums for sharing information about community forestry efforts around the country, including the opportunities listed below.

www.communitiescommittee.org

The Communities Committee has a new Web site located at <http://www.communitiescommittee.org>. On it, you'll find photos of steering committee members, descriptions of Committee activities, copies of our publications, information on how to join the committee and subscribe to our listservs, and an extensive list of Internet links. Like the Committee itself, the Web page is a changing, growing entity. We invite you to send your input and suggestions for change to <moote@u.arizona.edu>.

Logo contest!

How do you visualize the Communities Committee? What image comes to mind when you talk about community forestry in the United States? We want your ideas! On the top left-hand corner of the Web page, you'll notice a draft community forestry logo. Think you can do better? Send your logo ideas to Ann Moote, Chair, Communications Task Group, Communities Committee of the Seventh American Forest Congress, c/o Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy, 803 East First Street, Tucson, AZ 85719, or via email to <moote@u.arizona.edu>. The deadline for entries is May 1, 2001. The steering committee will select a winning logo at its May meeting, and the winning logo will be displayed on the Committee's Web page.

Join the newsletter's editorial board

The communications task group is looking for additional editorial board members for this newsletter. Editorial board members suggest newsletter themes and article ideas, review each newsletter's content before it goes to print, and participate in two to four one-hour conference calls annually. Editorial board members are identified in the newsletter. If you're interested in joining the editorial board, contact Ann Moote, Editor, Communities & Forests, Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy, 803 East 1st St., Tucson, AZ 85719, 520-884-4393, <moote@u.arizona.edu>.

Ann Moote

Forest landowner cooperative follows Scandinavian model

by Mary Mitsos & Richard W. Bolen

For the past 15 years, a remarkable story has been unfolding in Michigan's Upper Peninsula (U.P.), the isolated strip of forest land situated between the shores of Lake Superior and Lake Michigan. In part it is the story of a Finnish forestry consultant and a state legislature willing to take risks. Most of all, however, it is the story of the pragmatic, resourceful residents of the westernmost portion of the U.P. who took advantage of state funding and technical assistance to form a forest landowner cooperative, the Western Upper Peninsula Forest Improvement District (WUPFID), and then made it an economically self-reliant entity.

A Scandinavian model

In the mid-1970s, in an effort to address both economic decline and forest health problems, a group of Michigan state legislators traveled to Finland, a country well-known for its use of forest resources as an economic development tool. Impressed by what it saw, the state contracted with a Helsinki forestry consulting firm to study the forest resources and opportunities in the U.P.

Jaako Poyry and Co. completed an intensive study of the condition and potential of the forests in the U.P. that suggested the forest resources were being economically underutilized and that more active management of the forest would increase its productivity and value.

In addition, the study showed that the U.P. had limited markets for small diameter timber. In the late 1970s, most woody material produced when forest stands were thinned was left in the field because there was no market for it.

The Finns suggested developing locally-owned wood processing facilities to utilize the abundant low-diameter wood available in the region. Forest improvement districts have been widely implemented in Northern Europe since the 1930s and achieved considerable success in Scandinavian countries with small private land ownerships.

State legislation

In 1980, the Michigan legislature passed the Forest Improvement Act, which recommended the creation of forest improvement districts in language taken virtually verbatim from the Poyry study of the U.P. forest. Once the Michigan forest improvement districts met certain conditions set by the legislation, they would be eligible for state funding for forest management and the development of new forest industries. The districts also would be exempt from taxation and would have the power to issue bonds.

The timber industry was very vocal in its opposition to the legislation, claiming the state funding and technical assistance would give forest improvement districts a competitive advantage over private forestry companies. Others complained that the legislation was introducing Scandinavian socialism to Michigan.

In 1984, the Act was amended to remove some of its most contentious points and with help from Dominic Jacobetti, a state legislator from the U.P. and chair of the appropriations committee, an amendment was added to allow a forest restoration pilot project in the U.P.'s six westernmost counties with a $400,000 appropriation to start operations.

In 1985, local leaders undertook a local promotional campaign, signing up 202 landowners with a total of 74,000 acres in fourteen months. Two years later, in April 1987, WUPFID became official.

How it works

Any private individual, business, or government entity (such as a school or municipality) that owns or leases 20 acres or more of forest land may join WUPFID. While individual members may enroll up to 15,000 acres and both governments and businesses may join the District, the enabling legislation stipulates that at least 25% of the District's land base must owned by non-industrial private forest landowners in 40- to 640-acre tracts. This stipulation was included to ensure that small landowners would join the District and receive its benefits.

WUPFID has three major functions:

1) providing forest management services to its members,
2) marketing forest products harvested on members' land, and
3) developing industrial sites to utilize members' forest products.

An elected, seven-member board of directors provides member services and mediates landowner-contractor conflicts.

When landowners join WUPFID, they work with a District forester who inventories the land and develops a long-term management plan according to best management practices set by the board of directors. The management plan is designed to meet the landowner's economic, recreational, and aesthetic objectives while maintaining or improving the land's health and productivity.

The District also assists landowners with timber harvest, product marketing, wildlife management, recreation planning, and funding assistance. In return, landowners must manage their land in accordance with their management plans.

The measure of success

Because WUPFID was designed as a pilot project, the legislature agreed to fund it through state appropriations for five years. The project's success would be determined by improved forest growing capacity, increased economic opportunities for forest industry in the U.P., and the District's ability to become financially independent.

By the end of the pilot period, WUPFID was not financially independent, so the District's board of directors undertook a marketing study to look for alternative funding options. As a result of the study, the District established both a fee for services previously provided at no cost and a log yard to collectively concentrate and aggressively market wood products harvested from member's lands.

Since 1995 the District has been a self-funded enterprise. Its operating budget is $1.5 million. Today, the District employs one financial manager, one office support staff person, and two full-time foresters. In addition, 10 local logging firms contract almost exclusively with the District.

District membership has grown substantially as well. In it's first year, the District gained 199 members. As of December 31, 2000, there were over 900 members in the district with a combined ownership of 170,000 acres. The District works closely with the timber industry.

Income from timber harvesting on District members' land plays a large role in the economy of the U.P. Since 1987, District members have received well over $5 million in stumpage receipts, and the total economic impact to the region has exceeded $100 million.

Member Profile

Wendy Hinrichs Sanders

I am the executive director of the Great Lakes Forest Alliance, a forum that fosters and facilitates cooperative efforts to enhance the management and sustainable use of public and private forest lands in Michigan, Minnesota, Ontario, and Wisconsin. I live and work in Hayward, Wisconsin, the small rural community that my family moved to when I was five year's old.

Social issues brought me to community forestry

I started my career as a teacher and then worked for Head Start and childcare programs. In my social work, I dealt all the time with families who struggled economically—people who couldn't focus on having a meaningful dinnertime conversation with their four-year-old child because they were too worried about how they were going to put food on the table. That work made me aware of the relationship between a community's economic base and its social needs.

I also was involved with Wisconsin Rural Partners, a program that brings together representatives from rural areas to talk about ways to solve the problems these communities are facing. That was a very diverse group of people from the private sector, social service agencies, faith-based communities, and natural resource fields. We dealt with everything from flood risks to urban encroachment. My experience with Rural Partners taught me that the issues of the future aren't going to be solved by people in any one profession sitting around and talking amongst themselves. You get much more creative solutions when people from different fields work together.

I joined the Great Lakes Forest Alliance in 1994 because I saw it as a forum where diverse participants were working together to address complex economic, social, and environmental problems. Alliance members include representatives from municipal, county, state, provincial, and federal governments. The Alliance functions as a regional think tank, exploring issues affecting the region's forests and working on creative strategies to address those issues.

Guiding forest management in a unique region

The Alliance really feels the need to take a region-specific approach to forest management. What works in the Pacific Northwest or New England may not work here. We have a different forest type, and Midwesterners are very pragmatic, product-oriented people who don't want to spend a lot of time talking when they could be doing. We like to get out and try things, to learn as we go, and to change what we're doing in response to what we're learning.

I think Midwesterners' pragmatism as well as our willingness to collaborate come in part from the realities of our climate. In this part of the world, if your car breaks down and it's 30 degrees below zero, you don't sit there for half an hour discussing your options. You pick one option and start doing it immediately, and if that doesn't work you try the next option. If someone offers help, you take it. We know that individually we don't have all the resources we need. I think that the closer you are to the land, the more pragmatic and open to collaboration you have to be.

Region-specific indicators of sustainable forestry

For the last two years the Alliance has been working on an exciting sustainable forest management project that grew out of people's desire to assess the forest resources in the Great Lakes region. The forests here were decimated by cutting and fires over 100 years ago, and people want to be able to measure and monitor their health today.

The Alliance held a three-day intensive meeting and invited academic experts to present the state of the knowledge on economic, social, and ecological indicators. We asked each of them to identify the top 10 indicators for their field, and they each identified 11—so we had a list of 33 indicators of forest sustainability. A diverse work group, with representatives from environmental groups, large industry, public agencies, and small private woodland owners, took that list and reworked it to reflect issues in this region.

Based on the work group's efforts, we now have a prioritized list of 33 indicators of sustainable forestry in the Great Lakes region and have identified some of the research needed to start using these indicators to monitor forest health.

Wendy Heinrichs Sanders is Executive Director of the Great Lakes Forest Alliance

Perhaps in recognition of this work in developing indicators of sustainability, the Alliance recently received a request from the regional research community—universities, industry research and development departments, state agencies, and the U.S. Forest Service research station—to convene all of the research units in the region and facilitate a process where these representatives can collectively set an agenda that addresses social, ecological, and economic issues.

Creating an environment where communities can flourish

The Alliance is now preparing a handbook to guide communities through developing a forest-management program specific to their unique social, economic, and ecological situation. The handbook will include case studies and examples, an overview of sound forest science practices, the list of 33 indicators, and guidelines for developing both a community-specific process for gathering data and a local knowledge base.

What the Alliance is trying to do is create an environment in which communities can flourish in partnership with state foresters and federal agencies.

News & Views

The following viewpoint article by Janette Monear, director of outreach at Tree Trust in Minneapolis, Minnesota, describes ways in which urban community foresters can address growth management. Additional Resources addressing the relationship between urban forestry and growth management are listed on page 7 of this newsletter.

Speaking out for smart growth

by Janette Monear

As we move ahead into the 21st century, it is a time for us to step forward and speak for all those things that cannot speak for themselves: the trees, wetlands, prairies, woodlands, rivers, and our future generations.

But, how do we speak for all the voiceless and keep a balance? How do we grow smart, and what is the role of community forestry in smart growth?

Community forestry is changing

Community forestry now is much more integrated than in previous times. In the old days, city foresters jut had to deal with tree planting and maintenance. That is no longer true.

It has taken many years for most people to understand the role of community forestry in community planning and development. It is taking care of the green infrastructure and helping to incorporate the gray infrastructure in a way that protects, preserves,and enhances our natural environment.

Mark Schnobrich, forester for the City of Hutchison, Minnesota, says, "Community forestry is the integration of people, trees, environment, and the continual change in how they interact with one another. It used to be about planting trees, removing dead ones, and pruning existing ones. It is now a multidisciplinary connection of communities and how they perceive their physical surroundings: development/ green space/conservation/infrastructure.

"Community forestry has evolved to a point of necessity," Schnobrich says. "It has moved beyond the preconceived notion of being a luxury in communities. More is still needed, however, if we are to make community forestry a part of every community's budget and comprehensive plan."

Since most developers and builders use comprehensive plans as their development guidelines, it is necessary to clearly state in those plans what can and cannot be done in terms of protection, restoration, and replanting.

Planning for green infrastructure

It has taken many years for most people to understand the role of community forestry in community planning and development. Community forestry is taking care of the green infrastructure and helping to incorporate the gray infrastructure in a way that protects, preserves, and enhances our natural environment.

The challenge in doing this can be met in many ways, the most important of which are education and policy.

Often there is wetland protection policy in place, but then construction moves to the woodlands and this makes the woodlands "at risk."

Many communities still do not have tree protection ordinances in their comprehensive plans. Since most developers and builders use comprehensive plans as their development guidelines, it is necessary to clearly state what can and cannot be done in terms of protection, restoration, and replanting. If we are to "speak for the trees," then protection and planning must include the trees as well as all our natural resources.

Tools for smart growth

So, how do we reach a balance in community forestry? And how do we help with smart growth?

- **Put tree protection and preservation in local plans and ordinances** that set standards for more creative development design.

- **Implement best management practices** (BMPs) in woodland areas. The Minnesota Department of Natural communities with a better understanding and appreciation of the economic, social, and environmental benefits of wooded areas and individual trees.

- **Integrate thinking to include all areas** of concern. This means that a natural resource inventory must be done in every community as well as at the county and/or watershed level.

- **Integrate different groups, agencies, and organizations** at the beginning of the planning process so a broad focus is attained and greater resources are available.

- **Engage citizens** in the planning process and project implementation. This broadens the base of support and empowers the public for long-term community sustainability.

- **Provide education** that integrates thinking and identifies options for better choices to link the gray and the green infrastructures that make communities desirable places to live.

- **Speak out!** Speak out for the trees, for the trees have no tongues; speak for the waters even though they have a mouth; speak for the soil even though it's older than dirt; and most importantly speak for our future generations.

Growing greener is growing smarter.

Detroit, *continued from page 1*

"There really was some strong leadership in these block clubs," McDonough notes, "especially leadership by women. They saw the urban forestry project as a way to pull the neighborhood together that could empower them to deal with other issues."

Neighborhoods designed projects

After these initial meetings, McDonough and her team informed neighborhood leaders about the resources available for urban forestry projects in the vacant lots. A landscape-design software package and manual were particularly helpful in enabling leaders to design their own lots and visualize the outcomes.

Some block clubs chose to develop community nurseries where they grow trees for sale or for planting in other neighborhood projects. Others focused on agroforestry and community gardening; several established fruit-tree orchards. Still others developed pocket parks.

Block clubs gain land ownership

In a parallel effort, project members negotiated with the city of Detroit for ownership of the vacant lots. McDonough explains their success: "In Detroit you don't have the problems you do in cities like New York where property values are high and there's heavy pressure to develop. The city of Detroit viewed these lots as an added maintenance expense, and as a result willingly agreed to give the lots to the block clubs. As long as the block clubs maintain the sites they're not responsible for paying property taxes."

The MSU team also helped mobilize government agencies and non-governmental organizations to leverage resources for the block clubs' projects. The city's public works department removed rubble and trash from the sites for free. The Kellogg Foundation provided plants and planting materials, and the Wayne County Forester showed community members how to maintain their trees.

Participant evaluations

McDonough's team conducted a rolling evaluation of each lot project, surveying participants immediately after each project was established, and repeating the surveys every six months through the end of the overall experiment in late 1999.

The project team found four common themes among the survey responses. Participants perceived that they had achieved:

- a sense of control over their neighborhood, including improved aesthetics, less dumping, and greater feelings of safety;
- increased youth participation in block club activities;
- improved ability to identify and access resources, such as technical assistance and funding from city programs and nongovernmental organizations; and
- skill-building and education, which participants identified as the most important resources they acquired from the project.

McDonough says that although the MSU team expected participants to say funding was the most critical factor for project success, they didn't. Instead, they identified technical assistance and the empowerment of local residents as the key to their success. Many of the people involved said that before their involvement in the project, they didn't know so many government and community resources existed.

Spreading the word

These new skills and knowledge are now spreading to other neighborhoods and cities. Recently, residents of a housing project in Chicago traveled to Detroit as part of a Forest Service program aimed at organizing women in public housing to develop community greening projects.

They heard from block club leaders who discussed their experience with the reclaimed lots. McDonough commented that the Chicago women gained a lot of good ideas while the Detroit women were encouraged by their own level of expertise and progress, and by the fact that they were being held up as a model.

With the pilot study now over, the project has been handed over to the block clubs, and McDonough is confident that the model will continue to spread. Leaders in other Detroit neighborhoods are turning to project participants to find out how to start projects of their own.

Last year, the Environmental Protection Agency selected this project from all others in Michigan as one demonstrating excellence in an effort to create sustainable communities.

Neighborhood residents in Detroit break ground on a vacant lot.
Photo by Kerry Vachta

Resources

Web sites, publications, and videos

Communities Committee of the Seventh American Forest Congress Web site. Find the complete text of our newsletters and quick guides, projects and program descriptions, steering committee information, and an extensive links page at <http://www.communitiescommittee.org>.

Task Force Report on Forest Management Certification Programs. This 1999 Society of American Forests publication provides a detailed assessment of six national and international efforts to develop sustainable forestry standards. Available free online at <http://www.safnet.org/policy/fmcp1999.html>; print copies are available for $5 from the Society of American Foresters, 5400 Grosvenor Lane, Bethesda, Maryland 20814, 301-897-8720, <safweb@safnet.org>.

Treeord. This interactive CD-Rom, developed by Katie Himanga and Peter Bedker at Tree Trust, walks users through the steps of creating a municipal tree ordinance that meets the specific needs and conditions of their community. It includes sample tree ordinance text from over 1,800 communities across the United States. Available for $60 from Tree Trust, 6300 Walker Street, Suite 227, St. Louis Park, MN 55416, 952-920-9326, <treetrust@treetrust.com>.

Conserving wooded areas in developing communities: Best management practices in Minnesota. This 100-page manual by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Shade Tree Advisory Committee, and the USDA Forest Service describes the benefits trees and wooded areas bring to developed areas and offers best management practices for conserving wooded areas at the landscape, subdivision, and lot level. Available from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, 651-296-4484.

Treelink. The Treelink Web site hosts several online discussion forums, urban and community forestry listservs, and newsletters, including the *Urban Forestry Coordinators Newsletter*. Several publications can be ordered from the Treelinks site, and the full text of some is available online at <http://www.treelink.org>.

1999 National Urban Forest Conference Proceedings and video. Full proceedings of the 1999 Seattle conference, including papers by leading experts in urban forestry, are now available from American Forests. The video *Building Cities of Green*, by American Forests and ESRI, also from the 1999 conference, focuses on technology tools that are being applied to save trees, salmon, and the landscape of Puget Sound. Activities in Chesapeake Bay and Altanta, Georgia, are also documented. The proceedings are available for $35 and the video for $7 plus shipping from American Forests, PO Box 2000, Washington, D.C. 20013, 202-955-4500, and on the Web at <http://www.amfor.org/trees_cities_sprawl/products_pubs/pubs.html>.

Building Cities of Green. This special issues of *American Forests* magazine examines the relationship between trees and urban sprawl. Case studies in Seattle, Chesapeake Bay, and other metropolitan areas show how uncontrolled development has resulted in tree loss. GIS techniques for measuring tree loss are also discussed. Available for $3 plus shipping from American Forests, PO Box 2000, Washington, D.C. 20013, 202-955-4500, and on the Web at <http://www.amfor.org/trees_cities_sprawl/products_pubs/pubs.html>.

Events

Ways of the Woods: Third Northern Forest Regional Conference, April 18-20, 2001, Jackson, New Hampshire. For more information, contact the Northern Forest Center at 603-229-0679 or at <nfc@northernforest.org>, or visit its Web site at <www.northernforest.org>.

Forest Stewards Guild 2001 Annual Meeting, April 19-21, 2001, Silver Bay, New York. The meeting will feature technical workshops, panel discussions on current issues, presentations on sustainable forestry projects, and field trips to FSC-certified forests. For more information, contact The Forest Stewards Guild at 505-983-3887 or at <info@foreststewardsguild.org>.

National Conference on Locally-led Conservation Efforts, June 3-4, 2001, Nebraska City, Nebraska. This conference will addresss prioritizing conservation issues and working with public and private organizations at local, state, and/or national levels to marshal the necessary technical, educational, and financial resources to deal with those issues. For more information, visit the Arbor Day Web site at <http://www.arborday.org/programs/conferences.html>.

International Society of Aboriculture Tour des Trees, August 5-12, 2001, Minneapolis, Minnesota, to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The Tour des Trees is a 600-mile bike tour to promote urban tree research. Contact the tour coordinator, Karl Parker, at 707-976-8984 or at <karlparker@fcs.net>, or visit the Tour Web site at <http://www.tourdestrees.org>.

2001 National Urban Forestry Conference: Investing in Natural Capital in Urban Places, September 5-8, 2001, Washington, D.C. For more information, contact American Forests at 202-955-4500 or visit its Web site at <http://www.amfor.org>.

MidAtlantic Governors Conference on Greenways, Blueways, and Green Infrastructure, September 15-19, 2001, Arlington, Virginia. Contact Paul Revell at 804-977-6555.

Funding opportunity

Weyerhauser Family Foundation Sustainable Forests and Community Initiative. Grants ranging from $5,000 to $30,000 are available for new and recently begun projects in the Pacific Northwest, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and the South. Funded projects will enhance the ecology, economy, and community in forested landscapes. Cover sheets are due May 1 to Judith Healey, 332 Minnesota Street, Suite 2100, St. Paul, MN 55101-1394. For more information, Call Judith Healey at 651-228-0935.

***Gogebic County**, continued from page 1*

While the working group includes foresters, land managers, and forest products manufacturers, it also includes school principals, ministers, and business leaders, among others with non-forest-related occupations. "We wanted to build a community constituency and to incorporate community issues into the definition and indicators of sustainability," Murphy says.

When it came time to define sustainable forestry, the working group took a lesson from the United Nations, where FACT member Clyde Eilo once worked as an advisor. To avoid getting bogged down in debates over wording, the group used parentheses to highlight words and phrases that people generally agreed with but weren't sure they were all using in the same way. The definition the group agreed on reads:

> *"Sustainable forestry is [forest management] that contributes to the [economic health] of Gogebic County while maintaining [ecological and social/cultural values] for the benefit of present and future generations of Gogebic County."*

Community buy-in

Once the definition of sustainable forestry was drafted, the FACT executive committee took it on the road. "The working group gave us an educational mandate, so we made public presentations and took the definition to every unit of government in the county," Murphy says. All of the three cities, six townships, the Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, the County Board of Supervisors, the County Economic Development Commission, the County Forestry Commission, and the Rotary Club formally approved the definition. "There were no naysayers at all," Bolen says. No one wrote a negative letter to the editor or spoke out against the definition at a public meeting.

"One lesson I'd like to offer to other communities is that you genuinely need to put energy into getting the word out as you go," Murphy says. "People don't like to hear results once the process is over, even if they agree with the outcome."

Bolen adds, "We used a very transparent process. One member of our working group is a media representative, and we got very good media coverage of the process."

Sound, measurable, and locally applicable indicators

Now that it has agreed on a definition of sustainable forestry, FACT is drafting a list of criteria and indicators for each of the bracketed phrases. For instance, the group's draft list of indicators for "forest management" includes logger certification, best management practices, and amount of forested land. For "economic health," possible indicators include per capita income, number of businesses, sales tax revenues, and diversity of occupations. Indicators for "ecological and social/cultural values" might include plant and animal communities, water quality, civic responsiveness, and wetland acreage.

"We haven't tried to reach consensus on these criteria and indicators for measurement yet, but we did try to come up with technically sound, measurable terms that are applicable here in Gogebic County," Bolen says.

The group got help measuring social values by enlisting Maureen McDonough, a forest sociologist at Michigan State University. McDonough's graduate student Leanne Spence spent a summer interviewing Gogebic County residents about their forest values. "They did very scientific, objective work, and showed us that people on the ground have a definite sense of value in the forest," Murphy says. "Using their work, we were able to come up with some measurable indicators, like population structure, lifestyle, civic responsiveness, and number and type of forest users." Still, Murphy notes, finding social and cultural data at a local scale is a challenge.

Comparing local, national, and international standards

The next step, Murphy says, is to validate the list of criteria and indicators, and determine whether some need to be deleted or others added. FACT plans to do this by comparing the Gogebic County list to other lists of sustainable forestry indicators.

Since the 1992 U.N. Conference on Environment and Development, there have been many national and international efforts to develop criteria and indicators of sustainable forestry. In 1993, twelve non-European countries met in Montreal, Canada, to develop criteria and indicators for the conservation and management of temperate and boreal forests. The seven criteria and 67 indicators that resulted from the "Montreal process" have been endorsed by the U.S. government.

Maureen Hart of Sustainable Measures and Gerry Gray of American Forests are currently designing a project to compare locally developed indicators of sustainable forestry to the international standards developed through the Montreal process. Gogebic County is one of the local communities whose criteria and indicators of sustainable forestry will be compared to the international standards.

"We were only trying to define sustainable forestry for ourselves," Clyde Eilo says, "but if it helps others, great."

Communities and Forests
Communties Committee of the
Seventh American Forest Congress
919 Elk Park Road
Columbia Falls, MT 59912