Communities and Forests

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Forest practitioners in Appalachian Ohio plant "wild-simulated' ginseng—story page 5. *Photo by Jacqueline Murphy Miller*

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Certification, Appalachian style

by Ian Leahy

Conditions in the aged Appalachian Mountains on the Tennessee/Virginia border should strike a common chord with community-based foresters everywhere. A beautiful setting of rolling mountains and lush second-growth forests masks an unemployment rate as high as 40% in some areas, young populations hemorrhaging from the area, and environmental catastrophes looming as a proud culture built on logging, strip mining, and oil and gas extraction dwindles.

The struggle to maintain this (or any) economy and the environmental backlash against extractive industries have caused gridlock, with those advocating clearcutting as the alternative to a history of high-grading logging locking horns with activists organizing tree-sitting workshops. Amid the turbulence, a small, overworked nonprofit, Appalachian Sustainable Development (ASD), has emerged to forge a path through the middle.

Defying those who say "sustainable development" is more rhetoric than reality, ASD has built its own central Appalachian wood-certification program and a $400,000 wood-processing facility. ASD's struggle to balance visionary idealism and market realism provides a strong template for anybody facing similar forest issues.

Not satisfied with tackling just one piece of the puzzle, ASD's staff of nine employs a market-based "forest-to-table" strategy that includes establishing a reliable supply of certified lumber, developing local capacity to process and market value-added forest products, and developing markets for wood from certified lands in central Appalachia.

A home-grown landowner certification program

One critical piece of the sustainable economy puzzle is a reliable supply of sustainably harvested wood. Appalachian Sustainable Development staffers and a community advisory group have developed a set of land certification standards for property management, pre-harvest planning, silviculture standards, harvest planning, post-harvest management, and monitoring.

Landowners interested in certifying their land do so voluntarily, receiving help developing a long-term management plan and then, if they desire it, a separate timber harvest plan. So far, six landowners with a total of about 450 acres have joined the *Sustainable Woods* certification program. Their interests range from maximizing income to protecting a pristine environment. Emily Dunkin, an ASD forester, develops harvest plans to meet each interest.

Though *Sustainable Woods* currently has about 18,000 board feet stockpiled, staff are concerned about the stability of the timber supply. There are some promising opportunities on the horizon, however.

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Listserv:
The Committee's listserv, communityforestry@lists.nau.edu, is a bulletin-board type list where committee members post weekly federal policy updates, announcements of upcoming workshops and conferences, job announcements, and related notices.

Subscribers may also post questions or comments for general discussion. However, use of the listserv for extended debate is discouraged and personal attacks are not tolerated.

To subscribe to the listserv, send the following message to listserv@lists.nau.edu:

subscribe communityforestry NAME

(Type your first and last name in place of "NAME")

A look back at 2002, and a glimpse ahead

by Ann Moote

In 2002, the 107th Congress introduced forestry bills designed to elevate biodiversity as the primary purpose of national forest management, require the U.S. Forest Service to increase its consultations with gateway communities, preserve suburban open space, and create "charter forests" in the West. By fall, however, these initiatives were drowned in a flood of bills addressing wildfire risk. Nearly two dozen wildfire-related bills were introduced, but none were passed by the end of the session.

While wildfires got the press, the May passage of the 2002 Farm Bill was "by far the biggest thing that happened in forest policy in 2002," says Michael Goergen, Senior Director of Forest Policy at the Society of American Foresters. For the first time ever, the new farm bill provides $100 million in mandatory funding for forestry, and virtually every program in the conservation title in the bill can be applied to forestry programs and projects. The forestry title includes an expansive community and private-land fire assistance program and an improved cost-share program for nonindustrial private foresters (see *Communities and Forests*, Summer 2002). The bill has been widely applauded for providing more flexible and accessible programs for landowners. Urban foresters, however, were disappointed that the Urban and Community Forestry Program was not among the programs that benefitted from increased support for forestry.

Restoration and fuels reduction

In June, two restoration bills were introduced in the Senate, one to establish institutes to research forest restoration in the interior West, and one to build a high-skill, high wage forest restoration workforce and create "value-added" centers in rural communities to support small restoration-based businesses (see *Communities and Forests*, Fall 2002). By fall these two bills had been grouped together in a package of several land bills that easily passed the Senate but died at the end of the 107th Congress. Both bills will be reintroduced in 2003.

Passage of the 2002 Farm Bill was "by far the biggest thing that happened in forest policy in 2002." – Michael Goergen

In an effort to expedite hazardous fuels treatments, Senator Daschle (D-SD) added a rider to the Defense Supplemental Appropriations Bill that implemented an agreement that had been negotiated among the U.S. Forest Service, the State of South Dakota, community officials, the timber industry, and environmental groups. This amendment, which passed with the appropriations package, exempted approximately 8,000 acres in the Black Hills of South Dakota from extensive environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the National Forest Management Act and from appeals or litigation. In return for giving up appeal and litigation rights on the 8,000 acres, environmental concerns saw almost 3,500 added to a local wildlife preserve.

While the Daschle amendment was based on a negotiated settlement agreement specific to the Black Hills, it nonetheless inspired a flurry of proposed legislation by lawmakers hoping to provide similar expedited processes in other parts of the country.

Forestry budgets go up in flames

Seven million acres of forest and more than 2,500 structures burned in the U.S. 2002 wildfire season, the second-worst on record. By mid-summer the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management had exhausted their fiscal 2002 fire-suppression budgets and were forced to start borrowing from

other program accounts – including state and private forestry, national forest management, research, and land acquisition.

While the borrowing is legal, it freezes the other accounts, leaving many approved projects and land management purchases uncompleted. Together, the two agencies borrowed over $1.2 billion from accounts intended for forest management, university and agency research, landowner assistance, state forestry agencies, wildlife conservation, and local communities. Thus far, no funds have been allocated to replace the borrowed dollars.

Fairly significant policy changes can be made outside of the public's eye.

Efforts to enact supplemental funding for the land-management agencies failed repeatedly in 2002, apparently because the funding was being debated alongside funding the War on Terrorism.

The fiscal 2003 Interior Appropriations Bill which funds both agencies was also deferred to the 108th Congress while the 107th Congress focused on defense. In January 2003, the Senate took up an Omnibus measure that includes all 11 appropriations bills that were not passed last year. The bill would provide $825 million to reimburse some of the funds borrowed during the 2002 wildfire season. Although the bill has not yet passed, it seems clear that most appropriations bills will be cut. Interior's 2003 appropriations bill is set at $18.95 billion, $800 million less than the amount passed by the House in 2002.

Bush's Healthy Forests Initiative

In the face of a raging wildfire season, the Bush Administration took its cue from the Daschle amendment and proposed the Healthy Forests Initiative (HFI) in August. HFI would change the appeals process and require expedited judicial review on up to 10 million acres of public lands rated class-3 fire risk or higher. The Initiative would also make the stewardship contracting demonstration program law. Legislation based on the HFI was introduced in the House in early September but received little debate.

While the Senate talked of riders to the appropriations bill to expedite forest thinning, Rep. McInnis (R-CO) introduced an alternative to the Healthy Forests Initiative in the House. The final McInnis bill would require only environmental assessments (not more detailed environmental impact statements) on up to two million acres of fuels-reduction projects and would limit both the appeals and judicial review processes, but would also extend the public comment period and emphasize collaboration. Despite considerable bipartisan support, the McInnis bill did not pass the House.

Changing regulations

As the year drew to a close, the Administration began moving the Healthy Forests Initiative forward on another front: regulatory changes. Between November 27, 2002 and January 8, 2003, five regulatory changes were proposed.

The first proposed change would revise U.S. Forest Service planning regulations to "accelerate environmental reviews and expedite the planning process" in an effort to address "process gridlock" and allow projects to move forward on the ground.

The next two proposed changes, announced in early December, would "clearly state that the appeals process is available only for those who commented during the time period for the opportunity to comment and that appeal issues are limited to those raised during that comment period." These changes would affect both Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management regulations.

Two more changes proposed in January would "categorically exclude" fire management projects and small timber sales from full NEPA review, meaning environmental impact statements would not have to be prepared for these types of projects.

"It is conceivable that the courts could further constrain standing, making environmental litigation far more difficult." – Hanna Cortner

Making policy shifts via regulatory changes is easier than changing law, because regulatory changes don't receive the public attention that legislative changes do. Regulatory changes are not debated in Congress and typically receive little media coverage. The five regulatory changes proposed over the holiday season have short comment periods (from four to nine weeks).

The regulatory changes do not specifically limit litigation options, but Hanna Cortner, professor of forest policy at Northern Arizona University, points out that it wouldn't take new laws or regulatory changes to effectively stop lawsuits over forest management. "I'm not saying it will happen," she says, "but it is conceivable that the federal courts could further constrain standing, making environmental litigation far more difficult."

Watch all three branches of government

If there's a lesson in this, it's that all three branches of government have considerable power to change federal forest policy and significantly affect forest practices across the country. Tracking legislative, regulatory, and judicial decisions is no simple task, however, and fairly significant policy changes can be made outside of the public's eye.

Ann Moote coordinates a community-based forest restoration program at the Ecological Restoration Institute in Flagstaff, Arizona.

Michael Goergen

My first taste of community forestry came when I was a White House intern under the first Clinton Administration, at a time when they were grappling with the concept of ecosystem management. The initial discussions of ecosystem management left people out of the equation; it seemed to be more of an effort to balance the concerns of different national interests. The national groups had valid concerns, but no one was considering the fact that the national concept of ecosystem management might conflict with the goals and way of life of local people. More importantly, no one involved in ecosystem management was tapping into local knowledge. That really bothered me.

When I returned to university for my Master of Science degree, I did my thesis research with the USDA Forest Service, exploring the concept of collaboration and how to make it work. Jack Ward Thomas, then chief of the Forest Service, wanted to know what it really took to be collaborative and to involve locals in natural resource decisionmaking. I found there was a lot of interest in collaboration within the Forest Service and a lot of commitment to do it, but also many concerns about the lack of institutional and legal support.

The recognition that there were huge hurdles in front of people trying to do the "right thing" led me to policy advocacy work. After completing graduate school in 1996, I started work as a congressional liaison at the Society of American Foresters (SAF). I've been at SAF ever since.

The recognition there were huge hurdles in front of people trying to do the "right thing" led me to policy advocacy work.

Everything we do at SAF is about community forestry. It may not be put in those terms, and not every member of SAF thinks about communities in their work, but whether we're working on science and education, policy advocacy, grassroots support, or in our interest-specific working groups, foresters today are focusing on the needs and desires of society, especially at the local level. Foresters live in communities and have a vital stake in community well-being. That's why SAF has difficulty adopting national standards for forest health; forest health is something that needs to be looked at from the local level. Forests are so diverse that it doesn't make sense to set national standards for something so dependent on local conditions, knowledge, and values.

Every time I go to Capitol Hill I think about the four principles of community forestry: stewardship, process, reinvestment, and monitoring. Those core principles, and SAF's priorities, are behind all of my conversations with congressional representatives and their staff. Even more importantly, we bring SAF members (many of them who are involved in community forestry) to D.C. and let them explain how these principles play out on the ground. I've seen representatives and their staff reverse their positions in the course of a single meeting, based on testimony by practitioners. That kind of turn-around is not something you often see on the Hill.

SAF has published several issue papers and articles in the *Journal of Forestry* that explain and advance community forestry issues. We also work to identify people among our membership who are interested in community issues and link them with community forestry activists. For example, a group of SAF members came together in 1994 and developed a policy statement on stewardship contracting. That group played an important role in the development and passage of the original stewardship contracting legislation in 1998.

Michael Goergen is the Senior Director for Policy and Programs and the Interim Executive Vice President of the 17,000-member Society of American Foresters. He was recently elected Vice President of the Communities Committee.

Today, foresters are more active in local communities than they ever have been. People used to say foresters had "fire tower syndrome," meaning they wanted to be isolated and to not have to interact with people. It is true that many foresters had the attitude, "If people would just understand our work and leave us alone, we could take care of the forest."

Now foresters are asking, "Do you understand forestry?" and working to bring that understanding to the public. Increasingly, we see SAF chapters leading forestry tours for school children and developing forestry curricula. One chapter has even developed a forestry coloring book.

The major challenge for community forestry right now —and it is also an opportunity—is the need to provide a forum and bring one voice to community forestry in this country. We can be singing a lot of different songs, but somehow we need to make them fit together into one program. There is a real desire in the community forestry movement to make sure all voices are at the table. The Communities Committee plays an important role in giving those voices a forum and amplifying them. It is not easy to work with such a diverse cast of characters and provide a forum where people can be heard, but that is what we need to do.

Engaging forest landowners in Appalachian Ohio

by Scott Bagley

Appalachian Ohio: Sounds odd, with much of Ohio being flat and devoted to large-scale agriculture, but a full third of Ohio is actually hill country on the western flank of the Appalachian range. The 29 Appalachian counties in the southeastern part of Ohio have much in common with the rest of the region, most notably economic distress and poverty. Forests are largely in private ownership and most timber harvests are conducted without trained foresters, leading to systematic high-grading, or "taking the best and leaving the rest."

Focusing on the natural and cultural assets of the region, Rural Action, a membership-based organization, is confronting Appalachian Ohio's challenges. Forestry is one part of our effort to encourage rural community development that creates economic opportunities, conserves and restores the environment, and strengthens communities.

The Appalachian herb basket

Recognizing non-timber forest products (NTFPs) as a niche with promise, in 1997 we began teaching landowners about medicinal herbs and other valuable understory species. With wild populations of such species as ginseng, goldenseal, and black cohosh at risk from over-harvesting, we have promoted herb cultivation as a strategy for providing income while protecting wild stocks.

In a region where average forest parcel sizes are just over twenty acres, cultivation can provide a substantial supplemental income for landowners with good growing sites. Though expected returns vary depending on market conditions and land area devoted to cultivation, growers are making $2,000 to 15,000 per year—more than enough to pay the taxes and keep the land.

Through the years, Rural Action has organized dozens of workshops focusing on the economic opportunity offered by NTFPs, along with an annual Landowners Conference that highlights both forest- and field-based opportunities. We employ a retired state Service Forester to conduct NTFP site assessments, and are convening professional development trainings to create new institutional channels and expand local capacity to teach the NTFP message and provide assistance to landowners.

A community of interest grew from these educational efforts, first meeting for potluck dinners and talks, then formally organizing as a growers group, the Roots of Appalachia Growers Association (RAGA). The group is now up to nearly 70 grassroots members from southeast Ohio and beyond. To date, RAGA has focused largely on education and networking, but the group plans to form a marketing cooperative as more member-producers come on line.

Digging cultivated black cohosh.
Photo by Jacqueline Murphy Miller

"Call Before You Cut"

Rural Action's NTFP work originated through our member-based advisory committee, a group of individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences, including landowners, foresters, ecologists, small business owners, and herb growers. Committee members came up with the idea for a *Call Before You Cut* brochure that offers information about issues to consider before cutting timber.

Following up on the bridge-building that resulted from developing the *Call Before You Cut* brochure, we convened a committee to plan for the Southeast Ohio Forest Congress, which was held in December 2000. Modeled after the Seventh American Forest Congress, this gathering brought together people from diverse perspectives to find common ground related to conservation and stewardship of the region's private forests. We're now implementing two landowner education projects that grew from the creative thinking generated at the Congress.

Innovative education

Like many other areas where private lands predominate, Appalachian Ohio is experiencing a substantial influx of newcomers seeking a "get-away" from larger population centers.

To help alleviate the problems of parcelization and fragmentation, Rural Action, in partnership with Ohio State University Extension, has created the *New Landowner Welcome Wagon Initiative*. We are targeting these new forestland owners information related to their forests and forest management options.

The second effort is a GIS-based project that encourages landowners to think about their place in the larger forested landscape. Landowners are given maps of regional forest cover and a finer-scale map that offers a closer look at their forest in the context of the overall landscape.

Citizen-driven research

Rural Action has been managing, and now owns, a 68-acre forested property devoted to researching best management practices for at-risk Appalachian herbs. Formerly the National Center for the Preservation of Medicinal Herbs, this site now houses the Appalachian Forest Resource Center (AFRC). One of four regional centers of the National Community Forestry Center, AFRC encourages citizen-driven research that solves real problems and leads to action in communities all across Appalachia, from Pennsylvania down to Alabama. Hosting AFRC adds great value to our work in southeastern Ohio and provides an exciting opportunity to strengthen community forestry across the region.

Scott Bagley coordinates Rural Action Forestry in Glouchester, Ohio.

— Certification, continued from page 1

The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) new Conservation Forest Program (formerly Forest Bank; see *Communities and Forests*, Summer 1999) has just acquired a 5,750-acre conservation easement on the nearby Stuart Land and Cattle Company's Rich Mountain Farms. Appalachian Sustainable Development's Executive Director Anthony Flaccavento and Steve Lindeman, TNC's Conservation Forestry Program Manager, are both interested in including this land into ASD's certification and wood marketing efforts.

ASD is exploring the option of linking its regional certification program into the international certification program, Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), but Dunkin says the international stamp of approval isn't as appealing as it might seem. Few people in the region have even heard of FSC, and it is cost-prohibitive at this point for ASD to join. There have been a few downsides to the decision to stay local, however: ASD missed out on a couple of contracts for projects that required such certification, it does not qualify for grants from potential funders who favor FSC, and lack of an independent third-party certifier could potentially detract from their credibility.

Training loggers

To ensure proper follow-through from forest to table, ASD trains and educates loggers in sustainable timber harvesting and promotes environmentally sensitive timber-harvest technologies, including both animal-powered and mechanized logging practices. Staff then connects loggers with contracts and jobs, establishes a payment system rewarding environmental performance, and monitors the harvest operation, providing in return a premium above what is being paid locally for the tree species.

Still, says Flaccavento, there is always a struggle with loggers, who are never satisfied with the marked trees. They may claim that not enough trees were marked, too many were low quality, there's not enough land, or the ASD restrictions are too cost-prohibitive. Some just walk right out of the forest.

ASD staffers acknowledge that profit margins for loggers in general are low, but point out that they compensate by paying 20% above the average price per board foot. "If loggers couldn't at least break even, then they wouldn't keep bidding," reasons Dunkin.

The wood processing facility

As the transition point between lumber supply and demand, the new *Sustainable Woods* primary processing center in Castlewood, Virginia is the most tangible barometer of the future for central Appalachia's sustainable forestry. With prime real estate on three and a half acres in an idyllic valley between rolling Appalachian peaks, the $400,000 processing center boasts a kiln powered by solar and wood-waste biomass energy capable of processing up to 20,000 board feet. It also includes a log yard, a shed, and an office.

The processing center had humble beginnings as a 4,000 board-foot solar kiln purchased through a $5,500 demonstration grant in 1995, giving ASD staff time to learn the ups and downs of drying lumber. As the certification program grew and research indicated a growing market for sustainably harvested wood, the County Industrial Development Authority paid $125,000 to purchase the new site, which was in high demand for its proximity to highways. Three federal sources—the USDA Rural Development Program, the Economic Development Administration, and the Appalachian Regional Commission—provided most of the remaining $275,000.

In 2002, two full-time and one half-time employees cut an average of 1,200 board feet per day, with a goal of reaching 1,900 when a new de-barker is installed, and 2,500 if they can hire another employee. ASD sold about 24,000 board feet in 2002, but has an ambitious goal to sell 150,000 in 2003.

Flaccavento says the facility shows significant promise of running in the black within a few years. Not having to pay back the government start-up investments helps meet that goal and provides an advantage over more traditional businesses.

But a traditional business this is not. Walking that thin line between building social value and making profit puts *Sustainable Woods* on the precarious front lines of an unstable, but seemingly emerging, economy.

Building market demand

ASD marketing consultant Andrew Grigsby says that selling at 20% above average lumber costs keeps ASD well within the competitive ballpark—as long as it chooses its markets wisely and minimizes the cost of lumber in finished products. This means avoiding competing with the low-end markets, where retailers such as the Home Depot dwell, and instead carving a niche within the region's custom-building industry by selling dried hardwoods to flooring and fine furniture manufacturers.

While Grigsby admits that the marketing strategy has yet to establish a reliable demand for this certified wood, ASD has seen mild success. Grigsby also sees hope in ASD's new strategy, selling its certified wood to new public facilities to garner free advertising, residual sales, and create public education displays for the wood. With a small retreat center already under its belt, ASD is pursuing a contract with the Bristol Regional Public Library, which is undertaking a major expansion focused on celebrating local culture and economy.

Ian Leahy is a freelance writer in Washington, DC.

Working with media bias

Viewpoint

by Jane Braxton Little

Bias abounds. Some biases are the harmless preferences that make individuals and communities unique. Others are the roots of racism, intolerance and other commonly accepted evils.

"...Dateline... The West," a daylong conference held December 6, 2002 in Boise, examined biases in media coverage of western issues and their impact on public policy. Puckish journalists explored everything from conventional prevailing biases (headline: Peace Finally Triumphs) to those that contribute to significant misunderstandings (headline: Wildfires Destroy Yellowstone).

Organized by the Andrus Center for Public Policy, the premise of the conference was that the national media, generally based in the East and controlled by eastern corporations, do not understand the vast and varied West and, as a result, do not report western issues fairly. The debate involving more than 400 journalists went into the evening and included such notables as ABC's Peter Jennings, Timothy Egan of The New York Times, and former U.S. Forest Service supervisor Gloria Flora.

The lessons for me as a freelance journalist included recognizing bias as a part of gathering information and learning to manage it effectively. The conference was a reminder to validate what I think I know and be clear about how I know. It provided a refresher in documentation, verification and humility. The challenge is not just getting the facts right but getting the right facts.

The conference also offered insights for forest practitioners and community activists working to improve the health of forests and local economies. Here are several, which I pass on through the filter of my own preconceptions.

1. When journalists come to town looking for a story, try to understand the constraints that limit them. These may be as banal as deadlines and jaundiced editors. They may include biases ranging from a subconscious aversion to cutting the spindliest white fir to the romance of the rugged rural pioneer who goes singing into the sunset one glorious day after another.

2. Learn what journalists know and don't know and work to expand their knowledge. Share what you know. Don't pretend to know what you don't.

3. Let them in. Communicate your fundamental values and how they drive the activities that attracted them to your community. Show them what's important to you: the willows your group planted to stabilize a stream; the community center built with forest thinnings; the burn that threatened your neighbor's house. Don't assume they understand the worth of these projects. Tell them.

4. Recognize your own biases. Understand, for example, that the two-million-acre national forest that surrounds your small town is not yours alone to manage. It belongs equally to the Wall Street broker, the Chicago cabby, and the Florida environmentalist. As a neighbor, you may have a more immediate interest in the management impacts of the forest. As an adjoining landowner who has experienced floods, droughts and fires, you may have expertise beyond a distant stakeholder's. Journalists know, however, that under the law you do not enjoy privileged ownership.

5. Use your biases to educate the journalists who don't share them. Success may be as simple as conveying an understanding that the administration's forest health initiative, for example, is not just a policy story but also one that affects real people.

Jane Braxton Little is a freelance writer from Greenville, California.

Resources

Publications:

Wild Logging: A Guide to Environmentally and Economically Sustainable Forestry, by Bryan Foster, 2002. $16 from Mountain Press: 800-234-5308, www.mountainpress.com.

Nontimber Forest Products in the United States, edited by Eric T. Jones, Rebecca J. McLain, and James Weigand, 2002. $30 paper, $60 cloth from The University Press of Kansas: 785-864-4155, www.kansaspress.ku.edu/jonnon.html.

Community Forestry in the United States, by Mark Baker and Jonathan Kusel, 2003. $25 paper, $50 cloth, from Island Press: 800-828-1302, www.islandpress.org.

Organizations:

Rural Action Forestry works with landowners, agencies, and small businesses in Appalachian Ohio to develop sustainable practices, including cultivation of non-timber forest products. For more information: 740-767-2090, www.ruralaction.org/forestry.html.

Appalachian Sustainable Development's Sustainable Forestry and Wood Products (SFWP) Program works to improve the quality of forest practices on private lands and encourage local processing of forest resources in southwestern Virginia and northwestern Tennessee. For more information: 276-623-1121, asd@eva.org, www.appsusdev.org/susfor.html.

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Events

Tri-State Forestry Conference, March 22, 2003, Keokuk, Iowa. Forest health and management conference for landowners from Iowa, Missouri, and Illinois. For more information: 515-294-1168, phw@iastate.edu, www.ag.iastate.edu/departments/forestry/ext/keokuk.pdf.

Conserving Biodiversity in Working Forests, Forest Stewards Guild 2003 Annual Conference, May 28-31, 2003, Sewanee, Tennessee. Technical workshops, tours, and discussions on the role of the working forest landscape in biodiversity conservation. For more information: 505-983-3887, info@foreststewardsguild.org, www.foreststewardsguild.org.

4th Annual Landowner Conference: Income Opportunities from Field & Forest, June 8-9, 2002, Hocking County, Ohio. Forest management, special forest products, business development and more. For more information: 740-767-2090, forestry@ruralaction.org, www.ruralaction.org/conference.html.

2nd Annual Sustainable Forest Management Summit: Meeting Emerging Ecological, Economic, and Social Challenges, June 9-11, 2003, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. Forest resource and sustainability issues in the Great Lakes Region. For more information: 715-634-2006, forestls@lsfa.org, www.lsfa.org/news_notes.html.

XII World Forestry Congress, September 21-28, 2003, Quebec City, Canada. Forest assessment, protection, privatization, and certification; sustainable livelihoods; traditional knowledge; and participatory decisionmaking. For more information: 418-694-2424, infocongres@qvc.qc.ca, www.wfc2003.org.

Mission statement:

The purpose of the **Communities Committee of the Seventh American Forest Congress** 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
- the recognition of the rights and responsibilities of diverse forest landowners.