



Growth Rings: Communities and Trees



Lessons from the Ford Foundation Community-Based Forestry Demonstration Program, 2000-2010



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Lessons from the Ford Foundation Community-Based Forestry Demonstration Program, 2000-2005

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Across a wide variety of settings, resourceful residents have developed a working framework that integrates many fundamental aspects of CBF. Chief among these principles are an emphasis upon community influence over local natural resources, including ecosystem management; a commitment to include as many local residents as possible in decision making and implementation of forest activities; and the idea that the well-managed forest can support sustainable livelihoods for rural communities. This section includes descriptions of CBF and asset-based community development; a working framework for CBF; a brief outline of how CBF has evolved in the United States, including the dynamics of the mobile workforce; and a description of the Ford Foundation, the National CBF Demonstration Program, and the 13 participating sites.

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CBF recognizes not only the mutual interdependence of forests and people, but emphasizes that each in its own way must exhibit diversity, resilience, and long-term sustainability. Every CBF project encourages local people to ask themselves probing questions about how their communities actually function: Who actually participates in decision making about devising and implementing these projects? How do they plan to make use of local traditions and local knowledge? And, perhaps most importantly of all, *who actually benefits, and who is left out?* This section contains lessons for community-based organizations (CBOs), including cultivating the values of CBF, increasing the community’s capacity to undertake CBF, and describing roles and operating principles for CBOs as they work to build just and resilient communities.

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The Demonstration Program made grants to CBOs in almost every region of the country. Some of these organizations were well established, while others were newly emerging. Organizations with existing missions that served private landowners saw CBF as another possible tool for their clients, so they developed CBF programs within their organizations to serve them. These organizations learned about CBF as they introduced the concepts to the community. For other organizations, CBF was their heart and soul, having emerged in response to the threats posed by changing forest management practices on the neighboring public lands. Still other groups evolved as membership-based. This section includes lessons on governance, structure, operations, staffing, and skills as learned from this broad range of experiences.

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Foreword

The relationship between people and the environment is one of the defining characteristics of place and is particularly strong among indigenous peoples, rural communities, and those whose livelihoods depend on natural resources. The air, the water, the soils, the forests, and other ecosystem services on which local economies ultimately depend are all potential community assets.

The Ford Foundation Community-Based Forestry Initiative helps communities build forest and natural resources assets in order to provide sustainable new jobs and enterprises and increased family income, revitalize land-based cultures, and improve ecosystem health. Undergirding this work is a perspective about livelihoods and asset-building that assumes sustainable development will only occur when strong and resilient communities respect and restore ecological processes, increase economic livelihoods and social well-being, and ensure equity and justice.

Building natural community assets is part of a continuum. In order to become assets, forests must be accessible and secure, in the sense that rights and responsibilities over them are clear and of significant duration. To be productive assets, forests must be properly managed, enriched, and improved to provide a secure flow of benefits, products, and services that add value locally and to society as a whole. To capture these benefits, communities must develop their own institutions, build consensus through collaboration and partnerships, create and strengthen local businesses, develop new

products, and tap into markets. To qualify as true community assets, decision making for community-based forestry needs to be inclusive, transparent, and participatory, and benefits should be equitably shared. Finally, the community must, in turn, serve as an asset base for the land and forests—our non-human neighbors—especially through developing and maintaining a culture of reciprocity so that these assets are conserved and passed on or transferred to future generations as vital, viable, and healthy natural ecosystems.

Sustainable development will only occur when strong and resilient communities respect and restore ecological processes, increase economic livelihoods and social well-being, and ensure equity and justice.

Community-based forestry builds on the assumption that people closest to and most dependent on forest resources are competent and knowledgeable about forest and resource management, and have a right and a responsibility to manage forests carefully. As forest resources become local assets (whether collective, individual, or a combination of both), rural communities increase their resilience and their capacity to add value, improve livelihoods, and retain a sense of belonging with the land.

The Ford Foundation's support for community-based forestry in the United States grew out of its global experiences supporting community-based forestry projects in over 20 countries since the mid-1970s. Recent support has been provided for community-based forestry in Mexico, much of Central America, Brazil, Chile, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, India, Nepal, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and China.

Community-based forestry builds on the assumption that people closest to and most dependent on forest resources are competent and knowledgeable about forest and resource management, and have a right and a responsibility to manage forests carefully.

In each of these countries, a vital element of the Foundation's approach has been to provide support to real communities on the ground, helping them find innovative tools and strategies to tackle the many barriers that frequently have resulted in them being bypassed by decision making, market access, or opportunity. Rooted in collaboration and partnerships—and based on adaptive management solutions—these grounded experiences then serve as demonstrations that can be linked through learning networks at local, regional, national, and even global levels to broaden constituencies and policymaking in order to achieve greater impact at scale.

The 13 implementing partners whose individual and collective experiences form the basis of the learning outlined in this book are part of the Foundation's National Community-Based Forestry Demonstration Program in

the United States and have been funded for five years in their efforts to develop viable community forestry approaches in a wide range of settings.

- The **Watershed Research and Training Center** in Hayfork, California; **Wallowa Resources** in Enterprise, Oregon; the **Public Lands Partnership** in Delta, Colorado; and the **Jobs and Biodiversity Coalition** in Silver City, New Mexico, serve communities of place, dependent on a landscape dominated by public lands.
- The **Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters** in Willow Creek, California, is made up of forest-dependent, mobile communities that work and harvest forest products across a mosaic of public, tribal, and private lands.
- The **Vermont Family Forests Partnership** and the **New England Forestry Foundation** work with small forest owners, woodworkers, and local forest-based businesses in the Northeast.
- The **Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund** in Epes, Alabama, and the **Penn Center** on St. Helena Island in South Carolina work with communities of African-American landowners in the Southeast.
- The **Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities** partnership (part of Sustainable Northwest) in Portland, Oregon, works with a network of small producers of sustainable forest products.
- **Rural Action** in Trimble, Ohio, and **Makah Tribal Forestry** in Neah Bay, Washington, focus on communities and non-timber forest products.

- Lastly, **D.C. Greenworks** works with poor urban communities to develop sustainable green jobs in Washington, D.C.

Each of these settings and circumstances come with their own histories of conflict and struggle, unique cultural contexts, variety of stakeholders and actors, different forest ecosystems and ecological considerations, and levels of experience in community-based forestry. Each also has created important opportunities for the individuals and families they serve. Linked together as a learning community by a wonderful team serving as the Demonstration Program's managing partner, which was based at the Aspen Institute in Washington, D.C., these disparate partners have forged a respect for the diversity of their individual contexts and experiences and a collective identity as travelers along the same fundamental road.

The Demonstration Program set out to test a number of hypotheses: that community-based forestry could improve livelihoods and revive rural communities; that it could restore and maintain ecosystem health; and that community-based forestry could reduce the polarization between extreme environmental groups and fundamental "property rights" advocates to establish a more "radical middle" that would recast the debate altogether.

Along the way, these neat academic hypotheses met the messy and exciting reality of work on the ground. Gaining access to public forestlands for restoration and fuels reduction work took frustratingly long for many groups. The translation of new authorities and rules into completed contracts for actual work in the woods was patchy and slow, often depending more on the local innovation of field staff than on a clearly articulated plan for widespread application or replication.

The process of building collaborative partnerships often was slowed by frequent transfers and changes of professional staff in land management agencies, staff turnover in the community groups, and the slow but steady pace needed to build trust and relationships. Many groups struggled with the difficulties of revitalizing or reinventing a new kind of sustainable, local forest-based enterprise and backfilling an economic landscape abandoned by large industry.

Building new linkages with markets required the creation and testing of local branding and storytelling, as well as the establishment of connections with different clients and buyers. The need to ensure a flow of short-term benefits to "land-rich and dirt-poor" landowners as they waited for the long-term flow of revenues from timber required a slow process of trial and error with different non-timber forest products. Helping build the institutional capacity and effective mechanisms to provide support and services to dispersed and largely "invisible" communities of mobile forest workers and collectors of forest products took time and new governance structures.

The Demonstration Program set out to test a number of hypotheses. But along the way, these neat academic hypotheses met the messy and exciting reality of work on the ground. That's the story this book tells.

Developing effective monitoring systems to measure ecological, economic, and social impacts from community activities required the development of new participatory tools and techniques. Indeed, a fully fledged research component to the Demonstration Program evolved only in the last year and a half, and it will continue to gather and synthesize information beyond the program's formal life span. And perhaps most frustrating of all, community-based forestry groups continued to find it extremely difficult to access funding from private, philanthropic, and public sources.

Yet, in spite of these hurdles, much has been accomplished both at the local and national levels. Additional income has been generated in small towns and communities. A number of jobs and businesses have been created in counties that have seen nothing but decline for a decade. Individual and group capacity for collective action has been strengthened.

Groups that once were unable to sit at the same table have developed constructive dialogues on restoration forestry, and this process is moving gingerly toward a new understanding that conservation and community development are interlinked and interdependent.

Groups that once were unable to sit at the same table have developed constructive dialogues around principles of restoration forestry, and this process is moving gingerly toward a new understanding that

conservation and community development are interlinked and interdependent. New community-level institutions have been created. Innovative solutions were developed for the utilization and marketing of small-diameter timber, sustainably produced wood products, and non-timber forest products. Where access to public lands was finally gained, valuable work in the woods has helped reduce the risk of large-scale fire and improve the vitality of forest stands. On private lands, more acreage now is under sustainable management and forest certification.

At the national level, decision-makers know what community-based forestry means and have incorporated many concerns of community groups into policy and regulation. The rhetoric is changing, and, in more and more places, innovative forestry rangers are seeking to facilitate new collaborative solutions. Finally, remarkable individual leaders and workers have grown in stature and shown the power of their positive actions to revive hope and pride of place.

This book draws from the work of these incredible individuals—some whose names are now familiar in the halls of the U.S. Forest Service and even the U.S. Congress, but also the unsung forest workers, mushroom harvesters, ginseng growers, farmers, ranchers, small business owners, county officers, forest agency field staff, community volunteers, students, family members, doers, supporters, observers, and critics. They are incurable optimists, solution-oriented change agents—cutting through the polemics and polarization of recent forest conflict and the history of structural oppression, and unafraid to stand for dialogue and compromise. Collectively they have done wonderful, selfless, quiet, often unrecognized work on the frontiers of the future.

Fortunately, the many individuals and the 13 implementing partners featured in this book represent only a small (though illustrious) part of the growing community-based forestry movement in the United States. It is our hope that the lessons learned from the work that we have supported, however tentative, when merged with the accumulating force of community action, research, and advocacy around the country, will help move community-based forestry approaches to a significant scale, beyond the pilot phase and into the mainstream.

Studies have shown that the amount of forestlands controlled and managed by local communities and indigenous peoples around the world has doubled over the last 10 years and now accounts for almost 25 percent of the forests in developing countries. Significant changes are still needed to improve policy, practice, and science—and a strong commitment to social justice will need to be bolstered at the level of community practitioners—for community-based forestry to truly prove its viability as a paradigm for sustainable development in the United States. But from these valuable glimpses of local efforts, we can draw confidence that a better world is within reach.

I inherited the responsibility of overseeing this Demonstration Program from my predecessor, Michael Conroy, to whom

The amount of forestlands controlled and managed by local communities and indigenous peoples around the world has doubled over the last 10 years and now accounts for almost 25 percent of the forests in developing countries.

goes the credit for much of its design. However, I have been fortunate to have had the honor of serving these wonderful people and institutions for most of the past five years with my colleagues Brian Mori and Suzanne Shea at the Foundation. It is not an overstatement to say that we could not have accomplished as much as we have as a group without the amazing work of Barbara Wyckoff-Baird and her team of Mary Mitsos, Mary Virtue, Danyelle O’Hara, Robert Donnan, Kelly Malone, and Anne Carpenter—all of whom served as the managing partner at the Aspen Institute. Thanks are due to one and all.

Jeff Campbell

Senior Program Officer
The Ford Foundation
New York, N.Y.

Preface

Over the past five years of implementing our community-based forestry (CBF) projects, an abiding sense of community and camaraderie has developed among a fledgling network of enterprising community development practitioners. All of us have been deeply engaged with the ongoing creativity, problem-solving, and hands-on learning prompted by the **Ford Foundation National Community-Based Forestry Demonstration Program**. Throughout this remarkable shared experience, each one of us has sought to learn as much as possible about this promising new field of practice—CBF—and to adapt its strategies and tools to the particular circumstances of our individual communities.

The Demonstration Program also afforded us the opportunity to engage in an ongoing dialogue with our peers from other participating sites scattered across the country. In so doing, we discovered that all of us were able to learn a great deal from one another, whether by exchanging practical insights or simply through sharing stories about our own unique experiences. At times, just knowing that others were out there, struggling in their own way with similar challenges and opportunities, provided genuine reassurance and much-needed support.

This document presents many of the findings and lessons harvested over those past five years. As such, it reflects our informed opinion, and, as with any opinion, there will be as many differences of interpretation and meaning as there are individuals who hold them. We are

especially grateful for the helpful comments received from this report's reviewers, listed in the Acknowledgments, who thoughtfully critiqued our work. And we would welcome hearing your insights.

Five years, though, is but a blink of an eye in the evolution of changing values, communities, economies, and environments. Like the person who steps into the river, the Demonstration Program may have changed the flow of the water, but CBF's ultimate destination remains unknown. Many successes are noted in the pages that follow, but the journey toward genuine sustainability will take at least a generation, if not more. As such, this document is not a blueprint for overnight success. Moreover, success will be achieved over the long term only if each local community factors very specific local conditions into the design and implementation of its CBF strategies.

“ If we represent knowledge as a tree, we know that things that are divided are yet connected. We know that to observe the divisions and ignore the connections is to destroy the tree.”

—Wendell Berry
Farmer, ecologist, essayist, and poet
Kentucky

This publication will best serve everyone as it inspires communities to embark on their own journeys to create integrated CBF systems that can sustain and benefit both current and future generations.

This publication, then, will best serve everyone as it inspires communities to embark on their own journeys to create integrated CBF systems that can sustain and benefit both current and future generations. For some readers, this actually may be the first time that you have thought of your forest resources as genuine assets upon which to build resilient communities and vibrant economies. Insights from the Demonstration Program may be able to help you to jump-start the process—and possibly avoid reinventing the wheel along the way. For others, the learning here may simply reinforce your own intuition and experiences, affirming that you are on the right track and to continue with your experimentation.

We further hope this publication will serve those whose work it is to nurture and support the creation of those sustainable systems. Donors can learn from the Ford Foundation experiences with engaging a managing partner and providing flexible, sustained funding to new organizations. By learning about the experiences of the CBF field, specifically, donors will be able to deepen their understanding about investing in community and rural capacity building more generally. Policymakers, too, will benefit from this document, which identifies both recommendations and the next steps that are needed to support CBF in a wide variety of settings.

Throughout the Demonstration Program, we have been fortunate in having the ongoing support and technical assistance provided by our funder, the Ford Foundation, and our managing partner, the Natural Assets Program at the Aspen Institute.

For the **Ford Foundation**, community-based forestry represents an important opportunity to build the social, economic, and natural assets of forest-dependent communities so that they generate higher and more stable incomes and sustainable livelihoods. This asset-building approach to the alleviation of poverty and injustice is the key strategy supported by the Foundation's Asset Building and Community Development Program. Overall, the Demonstration Program is but one key element of the Foundation's support to the growing CBF movement. It also supports national and regional networking and learning organizations, research, policy education, and on-the-ground implementation.

The mission of the **Aspen Institute** is to foster enlightened leadership and open-minded dialogue. Through seminars, policy programs, conferences, and leadership development initiatives, the Institute and its international partners seek to promote nonpartisan inquiry and an appreciation for timeless values.

The Ford Foundation also provided a grant early on to the **Institute for Policy Research and Evaluation** at the Pennsylvania University. At that time, the Institute conducted a broad-based social science research, educational, and public service program directed at the design and evaluation of public sector and foundation-sponsored programs in economic development, health, environmental quality, and other policy areas.

More recently, the Foundation provided support to Tony Cheng and Maria Fernandez-Gimenez at **Colorado State University** to coordinate an interdisciplinary, participatory research effort to work collaboratively with community sites participating in the Demonstration Program to test assumptions, build knowledge, and advance the understanding and practice of CBF in the United States. We look forward to their report, expected in late 2006.

Finally, we wish to call the reader's attention to the compact disk (CD) that accompanies this report, as it contains digital files of nearly all of the materials created and distributed by the Demonstration Program over the past five years, including:

- **The National CBF Demonstration Program brochure and other materials** that provide general information on the Demonstration Program, its various partners, and a mid-program assessment of lessons learned;
- ***Planting Seeds***, which was the Demonstration Program's periodic update to the broader field, offering a concise summary of current trends useful to practitioners and the general public; and
- ***Occasional Report series***, which offered case studies and meeting proceedings

that offer more in-depth analysis that will be useful to practitioners of both CBF and, more broadly, rural economic development.

These materials provide a wealth of supplemental information that surely will benefit any community that seeks to build upon what has been experienced by the diverse participants in the Demonstration Program. In fact, the CD also features two additional, brand-new publications:

- The online ***Branding and Marketing Toolkit***, which provides a step-by-step guide to identifying your community's most appropriate forest products, conducting market research, and building a brand.
- ***Staying Power: Using Technical Assistance and Peer Learning to Enhance Donor Investments***, which is also based on lessons from the Demonstration Program and offers donors more in-depth learning on the use and effectiveness of having a managing partner and the roles it can undertake.

Upon the formal conclusion of the Demonstration Program in Fall 2005, all of the above information and documents will be posted and maintained on the **National Network of Forest Practitioners** (NNFP) website (www.nnfp.org).

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, this publication—and, indeed, the whole National CBF Demonstration Program—would not have been possible without the time, commitment, and deep love of people and places brought to this effort by the communities and their partners. Literally hundreds of individuals have contributed to the program’s success, including the many reviewers of this publication.

As was expected, the journey has not always been easy nor smooth, but it has been an incredible one of exploration, learning, and growth, both professionally and personally, for everyone involved.

Specifically, I want to thank my colleagues in the managing partner. Mary Virtue has been a co-creator of many of the managing partner’s activities since 2001, providing a sounding board to help sort through our many ideas as well as contributing chapters to this publication. Danyelle O’Hara offered guidance and education in issues of community engagement and understanding power relations, in addition to her contributions to this report. Robert Donnan advised some of the grantees about their strategic communications and also provided writing and editing for both this report and other publications of the National CBF Demonstration Program.

I especially want to thank Mary Mitsos for her unwavering support, weekend hours, challenging questions, and dreams of a different future—from the very beginning to the very end.

Thanks also are due to the Ford Foundation for its commitment of sustained, flexible funding. Senior Program Officer Jeff Campbell’s personal and professional commitment to grassroots participatory approaches ensured local voices were empowered and heard. His patience and persistence provide incredible examples for others.

Also at the Ford Foundation, Brian Mori and Suzanne Shea provided behind-the-scenes support to all of the CBF partners, without which the road would have been a lot bumpier.

Similarly, at the Aspen Institute, I appreciate the day-to-day administrative support provided so capably by Kelly Malone, as well as the institutional support offered by Kirsten Moy and the Economic Opportunities Program, with which the Natural Assets Program has been affiliated.

Thanks, too, to the many reviewers for this report, all of whom contributed their time and thoughtful comments to improving its content and presentation of the lessons from the Demonstration Program: Jeff Campbell, Mary Chapman, Nils Christoffersen, Cecilia Danks, Jan Engert, Anthony Flaccavento, Rory Fraser, Cece Headley, Sandra Jones, Lynn Jungwirth, Mark Lorenzo, Scott Maslansky, Mary Mitsos, Denise Smith, Diane Snyder, Karen Steer, Ryan Temple, Gus Townes, Jonni Trettevick, Jude Wait, and Carl Wilmsen. In particular, I’d like to thank Erin Melville of Wallowa Resources for suggesting the title *Growth Rings: Communities and Trees*.

Finally, I wish to thank my family for their constant support—whether managing life while I was on the road or listening to me when I was at home—and for their love.

Barbara Wyckoff-Baird

Director, Natural Assets Program

The Aspen Institute

Washington, D.C.



CHAPTER 1

Introduction



In the United States, most community-based forestry (CBF) projects

have been underway for less than a decade. Even so, their early successes and outcomes—chiefly, important first steps toward balancing the long-term sustainability of local forestlands with the diverse needs of the human communities that depend upon them—are providing a promising model and some important lessons for CBF practitioners.

Historically, disputes over the best use and most effective stewardship of America’s forest resources often have been contentious and, at times, even rowdy. Individuals, special interest groups, public agencies, and entire communities, especially in rural areas, have found themselves mired in costly, protracted stand-offs that yield no truly workable solution.

Definition of a CBF Practitioner—

An individual who spends some or all of his or her time and effort engaged in community-based forestry, most often working directly with communities and forests at the grassroots level.

Community-based forestry, on the other hand, offers a broadly based, participatory approach to forest management that strengthens communities’ capacity to work through deeply entrenched, highly polarized conflicts. In so doing, local residents and other stakeholders are finding they can engage one another in an ongoing dialogue about their hopes and fears, as well as create a shared vision of a better future for themselves and their children.

This report documents the rich experiences of 13 diverse communities who participated in the Ford Foundation’s recently concluded six-year National CBF Demonstration Program, which included a one-year start-up and planning phase and a five-year implementation phase.¹ In so doing, it offers a closer look at many aspects of CBF as an emerging field of practice—its origins, key components, challenges, and rewards. As one reviews these findings, it will be helpful to keep in mind that CBF is fundamentally a process of creative adaptation. As such, the deepest learning begins at home among one’s own community, beginning at the moment local people begin to consider launching their own CBF initiatives.

What is community-based forestry?

Community-based forestry had its origins and early development among communities overseas, especially in Asia. Today, many countries in the developing world—India, Nepal, the Philippines, and Mexico—are very advanced in their use of CBF as a practice for alleviating poverty, achieving social justice, protecting forests, and reforesting land.

Across a wide variety of settings, resourceful CBF practitioners have developed a working framework that includes many fundamental aspects of community-based forestry that lately have been exported to the West. Chief among these principles are an emphasis upon community influence over local natural

¹ Throughout the following chapters, this document often may refer to the Demonstration Program as having been five years in duration. In such instances, it refers to the five-year implementation phase, from which the report distills the majority of the lessons presented here.

resources, including ecosystem management; a commitment to include as many local residents as possible in decision making and implementation of forest activities; and the idea that the forest can support sustainable livelihoods for rural communities.

This means that CBF works through a locally directed process whereby community residents accept responsibility for building vibrant local economies, even as they safeguard and manage the natural assets, such as forest ecosystems, that are the source of their community's wealth. They also seek to invite broader community participation in local decision-making processes about natural resources, as well as to make economic opportunities more widely accessible. Most often, they view CBF as one approach nested within a larger set of strategies and tools—including, for example, land-use planning and other incentive structures—that taken together can provide an effective platform for sustainable change.

As a result, CBF today is emerging as a viable alternative or complementary model to forest management, one that may succeed in promoting both effective forest stewardship and sustainable communities in ways that the previous and still widely practiced paradigm of forest management—based on scientific and technocratic strategies—has not. By integrating ecological, economic, and social strategies into cohesive approaches to forestry issues, community-based forestry offers local residents both the opportunity and the responsibility to manage their natural resources effectively, and then to enjoy the benefits of that responsibility.

In the United States, CBF is evolving rapidly, adapting to meet multifaceted local needs and challenges. Initial efforts have focused primarily upon providing a voice for local communities in the management of nearby

public forests as well as promoting best management practices on private lands through education, technical assistance, and new market opportunities. More recent initiatives also have created value-adding enterprises, promoted more effective marketing and branding of certified sustainable products, and enhanced skills of forest workers in ecological restoration.



CBF is forestry that centers in, and is a direct result of, what people in the community see as important.”

—York Glover

Clemson University Extension

Beaufort County, South Carolina

An integrated, three-pronged working framework

Diverse in scope, CBF derives its fundamental strength and versatility via a three-pronged working framework that honors the mutual interdependence of forest and human communities. Within that framework, each component strategy of community-based forestry—social, economic, and ecological—is considered to be equally important.

The **social strategy** promotes the more equitable engagement of all members of the community. In so doing, it builds local relationships of trust and reciprocity among diverse groups—including even those that long may have opposed one another. This strategy draws upon traditional community knowledge and strengthens the community's capacity to learn about, design, and implement not only sustainable forestry

practices but sustainable business practices as well. Its long-term objective is to enable local people to build more resilient communities that are better equipped to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities.

The **economic strategy** builds and sustains livelihoods based upon natural resources. It often involves creating small-scale, and in some cases larger-scale, value-adding enterprises for both timber and non-timber forest products (NTFPs). This strategy further seeks to reinvest the economic benefits of such efforts back into the local community. Ultimately, its goal is to create vibrant, sustainable local economies that draw upon and responsibly steward the natural resources afforded by the local environment, while at the same time making economic opportunity more accessible to all community members.

The **ecological strategy** involves the community in enhancing and restoring forested ecosystems. In so doing, it builds upon local knowledge, traditions, and management

practices. This strategy seeks to assure a healthy forest ecosystem that thrives both in its own right and as a source of natural resources and wealth for the community.

All CBF initiatives—whether rural or urban, working with publicly, privately, or tribally owned forests—strive to integrate all three of these core strategies, as well as their associated outcomes. Taken together, they are the foundation of every CBF program or project. CBF offers a dynamic means to sustain a complex process of creative adaptation over time. It is *not* a simple prescription to achieve an illusion of stability, as might be implied by the metaphor of the three-legged stool. In fact, implementing CBF is a lot more like the challenge of acquiring the skills, strength, and courage required to keep one's balance while standing astride a rolling log as it floats down a river.

Because it exemplifies an adaptive, living-systems approach, CBF looks remarkably different from place to place, from region to region. Strategies that work successfully in one community may only work there because they are well suited to the unique ecological, economic, and social conditions of that particular environment. As those underlying conditions change over time, it's also possible that these same approaches may not even work well there tomorrow.

Moreover, because CBF is a participatory, consensus-building process, it tends to be somewhat messy and improvisational. Along the way, it likely will challenge long-established patterns of behavior, especially regarding who wields power in the community. And, as virtually anyone involved with restoring local ecosystems or building sustainable local economies can attest, accomplishing significant, measurable results can take a long, long time.

“ CBF is a balance of ecological, social, and economic values. All three pieces don't have to be equal all of the time, but they each have to be there and considered at some level. As a forestland manager, I may be able to get to the ecological values, but that isn't the reality of society. Without balance, there will be negative consequences for someone or something.”

—Rick Wagner

Oregon Department of Forestry, northeastern Oregon

In exchange for that patient, broadly based investment, however, CBF appears to convey remarkable rewards:

- It has helped rural communities in the Southwest to gain access to public lands that previously had been denied.
- It has allowed western communities to work through long-standing conflicts over ecosystem management and pull together to create new value-adding enterprises.
- It has enabled limited resource landowners in the Southeast to gain access to needed support services.
- It has supported small entrepreneurs in the Northeast in their efforts to earn a premium for their value-added wood products derived from sustainably managed woodlots.
- It has brought together a diverse group of harvesters in central Appalachia to share information about sustainably growing, harvesting, and marketing herbs and other botanicals.
- It has enabled forest-dependent communities in all parts of the United States to create expanded networks of practitioners and resource personnel that both provide technical assistance and lobby for constructive changes in state and federal policies affecting natural resource management.
- It has brought together diverse cultures and ethnic groups of forest workers and harvesters in the Pacific West to increase their understanding of one another, find mutual respect for their diversity and common ground in seeking just compensation for their labor, and improve the environmental sustainability of techniques and approaches used on the ground.

Because community-based forestry is such a recent development in the United States, most fledgling CBF initiatives are still emerging and adapting to the particular circumstances of their local environments. As such, most do not yet comprehensively address the full range of potential implicit in the CBF movement's early promise. There is a profound need for diverse experimentation and assessment in a variety of settings, including public, private, and tribal lands.

Community-based forestry is a recent development in the United States, and most fledgling CBF initiatives are still emerging and adapting. Accordingly, there remain many unanswered questions—and a profound need for diverse experimentation and assessment.

Accordingly, there are many unanswered questions regarding how forest-dependent communities can best go about devising and implementing their CBF initiatives. Among the 13 sites involved in the Ford Foundation National CBF Demonstration Program, for example, the primary leadership and guidance for specific projects derived from community-based organizations (CBOs). What are the advantages of different kinds of organizational structures for this sort of work? What challenges do they face? What skills do they need? What types of partnerships must they develop to implement their CBF projects effectively? Across the life cycle of their CBF initiatives, what kinds of managerial, structural, and governance challenges and options will they face?

Many of these issues—and more—are addressed in the chapters that follow, including specific, pragmatic lessons distilled from the collective experiences of the participants in the Demonstration Program. For example, many of the organizational issues described in the preceding paragraph are addressed in Chapter 7. Before moving forward to examine those specific concerns, however, it will be useful to step back and briefly consider the larger context and origins of community-based forestry, especially those factors that have influenced current thinking and practice.

Underlying everything that CBF strives to accomplish is the belief that building upon existing assets is by far the best way for local people to achieve sustainable healthy forests and sustainable healthy communities.

Asset-based community development

Underlying everything that CBF strives to accomplish is the belief that building upon *existing assets* is by far the best way for local people to achieve sustainable healthy forests and sustainable healthy communities. But exactly what sorts of assets are necessary? And does *every* group of individuals—even those typically identified as isolated or chronically poor—have a sufficient base upon which to build? What sorts of benefits can those assets genuinely provide?

First of all, in community development work, assets have come to mean far more than just financial holdings, although that is certainly an important kind of asset. Even when people possess relatively minimal amounts

of things—whether savings, property, or even tools—they still have access to what the Ford Foundation affirms as “intrinsic resources, such as intelligence, creativity, diligence, and inner strength. Groups of people also share common resources, such as community-based organizations and cultural values and practices.”

Taken together, these individual strengths and community attributes are important forms of community capital. Used wisely, such assets are sustainable resources that can leverage significant changes in both community attitudes and diverse outcomes, including economic, ecological, psychological, and social benefits.

CBF practitioners are hardly the only community activists embracing asset-based approaches. Other advocates include progressive financial institutions, grassroots organizing groups, other natural resource management organizations, community foundations, labor market intermediaries, and faith-based nonprofits. For all of these groups, as John L. McKnight and John P. Kretzmann have reported, “rebuilding local relationships offers the most promising route toward successful community development and underlines the necessity of basing those relationships upon the strengths of the parties, never on their weaknesses and needs.”

CBF: A working framework

By now, it is clear that community-based forestry inhabits a place all of its own. It is different from the extraction-oriented, timber management models that focus on the single bottom line of economics, tend to use intensive forest management practices (such as clear-cutting, herbicides, lowest bid

contracting, etc.), and convey benefits primarily to a privileged few corporations and large landowners. It is equally different from the “nature knows best” model that assumes that all human intervention in ecosystems is bad.

It will be useful here to introduce and examine key CBF practices that can be considered essential building blocks of any successful community-based forestry project:

- Building capacity
- Collaboration
- Ensuring open and inclusive participation
- Enfranchisement, equity, and benefit sharing
- Resource stewardship and restoration
- Economic vitality/investments at the local level
- Adaptive management/monitoring and learning
- Networking for learning, strengthening the CBF movement, and policy change

At first glance, some of these fundamental building blocks might sound overly generic. Nonetheless, in both their essence and careful application, they are fundamental to a thorough understanding of what is required to adapt and fully implement community-based forestry in a variety of settings.

Community-based forestry inhabits a place all of its own—different from models that focus on the single bottom line of economics *and* from the “nature knows best” model that rejects all human intervention in ecosystems.



We all want a clean, healthy, and safe environment. Working off of the connections built by the tree plantings, there have been a great number of neighborhood cleanups initiated. These activities have brought together all of the various tree stewardship community groups.”

—Deborah Thomas, ANC Commissioner
Washington, D.C.

Building capacity

In the broadest sense, organizational or community capacity refers to a wide-ranging set of skills, characteristics, and resources that, taken together, improves the group’s ability to recognize, evaluate, and respond creatively and effectively to challenges and opportunities. Building capacity, therefore, asks that an organization or community take a hard look at itself—sometimes with a little outside help, to gain better perspective—and then take steps to address any inherent weaknesses or liabilities.

The fundamental question to ask, of course, is “The capacity to do what?” For example, does the community—a group of individuals—already have, or can it develop, leadership with a vision for a different kind of future, and does that leadership have the ability to mobilize community interests? Is the community able to communicate and partner across differences to effectively leverage the community’s diverse perspectives? Is the community willing to strengthen its capacity to launch, support, and expand various sorts of CBF-related value-adding manufacturing enterprises, training programs, and/or other avenues to increase community residents’ access to work?

The interventions required to address these questions can take many forms, depending upon whether one is concerned about enhancing access to financial resources, enhancing local influence concerning natural resources, or simply strengthening the community's social capital (formal and informal networks of social interaction).

“ Because of the collaboration and bringing different expertise and the agencies in, and working as a team, we're getting better results on the land. More treatments are done in a better way, and more people are seeing them and are willing to change strategies if the monitoring shows it works better.”

—Dave Kaufman

Bureau of Land Management, west central Colorado

Collaboration

CBF initiatives inevitably create new avenues for collaboration. They require reaching out to unfamiliar partners, whether to gain access to resources and skills, or, even more fundamentally, to foster a broadly based consensus among diverse community stakeholders about precisely what the community wants to do.

Effective collaboration almost never comes about easily. That's not surprising, given that many CBF collaborators—including some based outside of the local community—once may have been bitter adversaries embroiled in power struggles over the best use of local forest resources. In fact, more than a few successful CBF initiatives got their start *only* because the warring parties eventually grew

so weary of protracted conflict that they were willing to try virtually *anything*—even collaboration!

As such, CBF collaborations represent the antithesis of the prevailing “winner-take-all” attitude that pervades much of American culture. They ask community stakeholders to come up with win-win solutions; to share the burden, expense, and benefits of implementation; and to work together to monitor and assess outcomes. These sorts of workable collaborations seldom arise overnight. They take a lot of time and patience.

In recent years, collaborative stewardship has become increasingly important to the U.S. Forest Service—especially as it has moved toward achieving objectives at the local and regional scale. As Andrea Loucks of the Pinchot Institute for Conservation has reported, the U.S. Forest Service must consider efficient and effective ways of designing and implementing complex new projects that cover vast landscapes. Collaborative projects appear to be the most workable solution. For communities, such approaches can offer a boost to local economies, a stronger voice in determining how stewardship projects are created and put into practice, and enhanced training and job opportunities for local residents.

Ensuring open, inclusive, and widespread local participation, as well that of other stakeholders

Most natural resource-dependent communities are all-too-familiar with having outsiders make crucial decisions about how their local assets will be extracted, processed, and sold. Even where local people have wielded significant influence, that

decision-making power typically has been reserved for and shared among a relatively few individuals.

CBF, on the other hand, broadens the notion of who genuinely is a stakeholder. At one level, CBF includes virtually anyone living within the local watershed or ecosystem who is willing to express his or her viewpoint or contribute time and expertise to develop a workable consensus about how best to manage and use the forest. Admittedly, it can be challenging to ensure that these local voices are not by default those of the same, enduring, insider group of good old boys and good old girls who *always* have spoken up on its own behalf. How does a community learn to listen to its *many* voices and bring all of these stakeholders into the circle of decision making about natural resource management?

Communities of place also must find ways to listen thoughtfully to *other* voices beyond their own boundaries—such as those belonging to national environmental organizations, or those speaking on behalf of the mobile workforce, who periodically may travel to the community to work in the local forest—who also perceive themselves as having a stake in local decision making. It can be challenging to decide how significantly to weigh the active participation of all these stakeholder groups. Having such access to an inherently local process at times will be complicated, especially where local residents themselves have affiliations with national groups.

Finally, communities must find ways to encourage diverse constituencies not only to participate in decision making about natural resource management, but also to share in CBF's actual benefits. They must strive to ensure that emerging *economic* opportunities be made more equitably accessible to all.

“ Participating in these meetings and workshops has made me realize what constitutes a community. It's not just where I live and where my boundaries are marked. It's people that reach out to me, and who interact with me. We help each other out, share ideas, interests, and benefits from the land. I've made a lot of good friends, people I feel comfortable with calling at any time to ask questions.”

—Rosalind Peters, community member
Alabama

Enfranchisement, equity, and benefit-sharing

Within community-based forestry, enfranchisement and equity often refer to the work that organizations and individuals undertake to ensure members of the community, including groups traditionally underrepresented or underserved, have ready access to information, resources, power, decision making, and economic opportunities. In some cases, it may refer to a local community's efforts to assert greater influence over its local economy. In other cases, it involves an effort to find a real voice for forest workers and harvesters. In still others, it is a project to purchase land that can be owned and managed by local residents who otherwise would not hold property.

For all of the community-based organizations in the Demonstration Program, the mandate to assure equity has meant a willingness to work with select groups within their communities that otherwise might continue to be excluded from meaningful participation. For some of these groups, the

task of helping them to achieve a sense of enfranchisement, which includes the belief that their participation actually could matter, is a prerequisite to their active engagement with CBF activities.

Across the United States, individual communities that are experimenting with community-based forestry have demonstrated both genuine progress and residual shortcomings toward attaining their goal of assuring equity for all. As such, despite some painful and continuing disappointments, CBF advocates still hold forth the ideal that CBF, as a movement, will continue to evolve toward being much more inclusive and equitable across a wide range of community participation.

Resource stewardship and restoration

People from various walks of life are attracted to community-based forestry for many diverse and compelling reasons. CBF's most fundamental, enduring appeal, however, appears to be its pragmatic, holistic approach to resource stewardship and restoration. That core attribute speaks directly to the deeply felt kinship that many people have with their natural surroundings. It evokes their respect and appreciation for both the landscape and, within that larger context, the myriad plant and animal species that cohabit along with human beings.

The related concepts of stewardship and restoration also address an underlying, shared sense of responsibility that prompts people to be increasingly mindful about how they make use of the valuable natural assets that constitute the basis of enduring community wealth. Many communities today understand that their non-renewable resources, whether the land's mineral

wealth or unspoiled topography, are finite and therefore must be looked after if they are to serve the long-term interests of local people. Even renewable resources—healthy forests, clean water, and fertile farmland—deserve careful stewardship if they are to remain productive assets.

Once again, it's important to emphasize—within the working framework of community-based forestry—that ecological well-being is not valued simply in the abstract, nor is it viewed in isolation from the health and well-being of human communities. Each one is mutually interdependent upon the other. As such, local economies that are dependent upon natural resources can enjoy vibrant good health *only* when they are based upon management practices that improve and sustain local and regional ecosystems over time.

A related challenge is to cultivate respect for local, community-based knowledge about how to care for the forest. Local people long have felt that public agencies were not willing to listen to their ideas about how to manage forestlands and other natural resources, turning instead to so-called experts who brandish scientific approaches. Increasingly, CBF practitioners are listening to what local people know

Ecological well-being is not valued simply in the abstract, nor is it viewed in isolation from the health and well-being of human communities. Each one is mutually interdependent upon the other.

and building upon their cultural history with the land. In crafting workable strategies for resource stewardship, they work with local people to blend local knowledge with a thorough understanding of the basic ecology of a particular place, ranging from its smallest elements to the system as a whole.

Economic vitality and investment at the local level

A fundamental goal that many communities hope to achieve through CBF is to develop a diversified, resilient local economy based upon the sustainable use of local forestlands. Most are well aware, however, that global markets have a tremendous impact upon local economies, strongly affecting what sorts of local economic development strategies can be attempted and what likely can be accomplished. Where, then, is the best place to begin?

For many communities, the first step is to make investments in restoration forestry. As journalist Jane Braxton-Little has described, restoration forestry offers an opportunity to repair damaged streams and return forests to their natural fire regime, goals generally embraced by both community practitioners and national environmental groups. It also offers communities the opportunity to showcase early successes on the landscape, while at the same time creating jobs for community residents.

Experience from the Demonstration Program vividly illustrates that community-based organizations can play a pivotal role in helping to establish the physical infrastructure needed to support value-adding enterprises. Across the nation, CBF practitioners also are experimenting with a range of other roles, including brokering

Experience from the Demonstration Program proves that community-based organizations can play a pivotal role in helping to establish the physical infrastructure needed to support value-adding enterprises. But the economic benefits that result may not be sufficient to alleviate poverty.

stewardship contracting opportunities for local workers, acting as intermediaries to help rural value-adding producers connect with distant urban markets that can afford to pay a premium for their eco-friendly flooring and furniture, and developing marketing and branding strategies to help small enterprises find an appropriate market niche. In many of these activities, community-based organizations help absorb some of the risk that small producers encounter as they attempt to break into established markets—or even to create new ones.

Even so, the small-scale economic benefits that result may not be sufficient to alleviate poverty. In some instances, they may provide just enough supplemental income to help a family make ends meet, or to help elderly residents pay their rising property taxes and hold onto their land. Indeed, many of the collateral benefits generated through CBF-related activities and enterprises do not lend themselves to being evaluated solely through traditional economic measures.

Adaptive management/monitoring and learning

As with any experimental or emergent approach to ecosystem management, it is essential that community-based forestry projects be thoroughly monitored and carefully assessed. After all, the stakes are high—and the expectations, urgent—for both the health of forests and the economic resiliency of entire communities. Whatever their predispositions about how best to manage the forest, community stakeholders, as well as interested third parties, are eager to find out whether CBF actually can deliver on its widely trumpeted promise.

And yet, measuring CBF outcomes and determining their broader effects upon both ecosystems and communities inevitably require a lot of patience. Neither trees nor new value-adding industry clusters mature overnight. Moreover, CBF practitioners must adapt their strategies to fit the unique circumstances of their particular communities and bioregions. There's absolutely no guarantee that any community can simply get it right the first time. More likely, they will find it necessary to tinker with and adapt both individual strategies and their overall mix of projects. Meanwhile, holding

together a makeshift coalition of community stakeholders—especially the naysayers—can prove to be a real challenge.

For these and other reasons, CBF advocates are developing innovative ways to monitor and learn from their ongoing projects on both public and private land. These monitoring activities often are designed to encourage broadly based participation—which not only engages stakeholders more deeply in what assuredly will be a long-term process, it also facilitates building trust among team members with disparate points of view. Moreover, all-party monitoring programs encourage participants to offer suggestions for mid-course corrections and other program improvements.

Ultimately, CBF requires communities to make a lasting commitment to monitoring and learning—as well as to taking what has been learned through monitoring and using that data to inform future decision making. Of course, at that point, the whole cycle begins anew, as CBF is nothing if not an iterative, long-term process for creative adaptation.

Networking for learning, building the movement, and policy change

Natural resource-dependent communities—especially those in rural areas—long have felt isolated geographically, both from one another and from urban population centers. Even so, they know all too well how it feels to be whipsawed again and again by the actions of powerful agents, whether large corporations, national organizations, or governmental bureaucracies, whose bases of operation are located far away.

In the past, residents of these communities have felt alone and powerless. Today, they are far more likely to link up with their peers

“Community-based forestry needs to be rooted in the proverb, ‘We must live our lives in ways that teach our children about our humanity and our freedom for the next seven generations.’ So that anything we do has an impact for seven generations.”

—*Maria Morales-Lobel, community member*
New Mexico

in other communities, both to share what they are learning in the field as well as to join forces in lobbying for mutually advantageous changes in national policies that could improve the outcomes of their CBF-related activities. Moreover, communities increasingly are utilizing these evolving networks to identify and tap into available sources of technical expertise and financial support.

This emerging, loosely knit confederation of CBF practitioners and resource providers appears to be both self-organizing and gently guided by an informal network of visionary activists seeded throughout the emerging movement. Many of them work day-to-day in the forest or in value-adding enterprises. Others are in community-based organizations that support these workers. And most of the rest are drawn from the ranks of those affiliated with public agencies, extension services, universities, and foundations.

Taken all together, however ad hoc it may be in the aggregate, community-based forestry has become a powerful instrument capable of leveraging significant results. For example, consider the annual pilgrimage known among long-time CBF practitioners as the Week in Washington. Co-sponsored by a far-sighted quartet of nationally focused, forest-friendly organizations—the National Network of Forest Practitioners, American Forests, the Society of American Foresters, and the Communities Committee of the Seventh American Forest Congress—this yearly event provides opportunities for local practitioners to meet with key policymakers, agency officials, and interest groups. They also learn how federal legislative and budget processes actually work. They lobby in favor of funding packages and for regulatory flexibility that could better support their work. And they network with other people involved in community-based forestry, sharing their ideas and experiences.

Opportunities to learn from one's peers undoubtedly help strengthen community-based efforts to design and implement effective CBF projects. Those opportunities exist in myriad forms, ranging from published case studies that document the experiences of a single community to face-to-face, multicomunity gatherings like those sponsored by the Ford Foundation throughout the six-year tenure of its National CBF Demonstration Program.



We are actually getting to be somewhat interchangeable. Sometimes there will be a meeting or conference that one of us can attend. It's pretty odd to hear the hardcore environmentalist say to the U.S. Forest Service guy, 'You go ahead and speak for me.' "

—Gordon West

Jobs and Biodiversity Coalition, New Mexico

Community-based forestry in the United States

In the early 1990s, initial efforts to implement community forestry in the United States focused primarily upon providing a voice for local communities in the management of nearby forests, whether publicly or privately owned. Economic crises and environmental concerns among forest-dependent communities in the western states had reached the boiling point, with the result that many people began to search for new, creative approaches to manage forest ecosystems, especially on public lands, and to revitalize rural economies.

“ The belief in Trinity County was that we would get over the crisis and be able to harvest old timber again. WRTC helped the community see that there could be viable work in the woods by doing forest management in certain sites and setting aside the virgin areas farther back in the woods.”

—Stan Stetson

U.S. Forest Service, northern California

Spurred by local activists, the Seventh American Forest Congress, held in Washington, D.C., during February 1996, became a watershed event, with diverse voices demanding that forest resource management become more responsive to the decentralized, democratic strategies advocated by community-based forestry. Then, in the summer of 2000, large-scale wildfires raged throughout the West. In response, the federal government authorized \$240 million for hazardous fuel reduction at the interface of human development and wildlands areas.

Suddenly, the possibilities for launching community-based restoration work seemed far more feasible. Across the country, more communities began experimenting with CBF, and many, especially in the West, formed regionally based associations to share information and leverage favorable changes in state and national policies. National organizations, such as the National Network of Forest Practitioners (NNFP), American Forests, and the Pinchot

Institute for Conservation, among others, dedicated increased time and resources to support CBF.

Community-based forestry has become increasingly attractive to many people who care deeply both about the natural environment and the long-term sustainability of human communities. Its practitioners and advocates are drawn from many walks of life and diverse points of view, most often because CBF offers a flexible, adaptable, and ultimately *workable* approach that nurtures healthy, sustainable outcomes for both human communities and natural ecosystems.

Seen from a larger perspective, all of these CBF practitioners and advocates—including both individuals and organizations, whether local, regional, or national in their scope of activity—are natural allies who together serve as a de facto CBF support network. After all, collaboration lies close to the heart of effective community-based forestry. Just as no single dimension of CBF can be an effective magic bullet or a panacea for the myriad challenges facing forest-dependent communities, nor can any single community-based organization expect to fulfill CBF’s potential acting all by itself. Networking is essential.

“ Community-based forestry is about change. It’s about working together toward something that is different, something you might not even know yet.”

—Community member

Wallowa County, northeastern Oregon

The mobile workforce

Throughout discussions about CBF, including those in this publication, it is common to speak both of “communities of place” and “communities of interest.” Each of these groups, broadly defined to acknowledge diverse variations, is an essential stakeholder across several dimensions of community-based forestry.

Given their dependence upon—and, in turn, their essential contributions to—healthy forest ecosystems, forest workers and harvesters are a particularly important community of interest. Frequently referred to as “the mobile workforce,” these individuals, who often are people of color, travel from job site to job site, typically among multiple states. They generally are responsible for tree planting, pre-commercial thinning, and other types of seasonal work.

Often they are poorly paid and have limited rights. The average labor-intensive forest worker in Oregon, for example, earns less than \$7,000 annually. Many workers and harvesters are exploited for the gain of others, so thoroughly stripped of their voice that even when they speak, they are not heard. They learn through experience that what they know and desire doesn’t count and is not valued by others. They are denied options and alternatives about how they do their work, and ultimately lack the power to make any sort of meaningful choice.

Nonetheless, workers and harvesters possess valuable knowledge—both traditional ecological knowledge and the experiential knowledge of “the hands that touch the land”—that can lead to more ecologically sound land management practices. As discussed in Chapter 5, civic science and

multiparty monitoring seek to recognize and integrate this knowledge into land management decision making.

Forest workers and harvesters are a particularly important community of interest. They possess valuable knowledge—both traditional and experiential—that can lead to more ecologically sound land management practices.

Beyond the purely utilitarian value of such knowledge, it also is important to highlight the needs and efforts of forest workers and harvesters because they are central to achieving CBF’s social equity goals. If the CBF movement is truly committed to achieving improved outcomes around equity, then it must engage *all* of the people who are doing the work in the woods, including both local residents *and* the mobile workforce. The movement further must strive to ensure that the mobile workforce has access to improved economic opportunities. For example, one promising strategy is to provide training and skills development so that workers are able to compete for and secure more jobs at higher pay, as well as have a positive impact on the environment.

Within the emerging CBF movement, however, tension often exists between local communities and the mobile workforce. When logging on national forests began to decline, associated activities such as tree planting and thinning also declined. The listing of the spotted owl as an endangered species

and the associated decline in timber harvest and related activities, particularly in the Northwest, resulted in significantly reduced employment opportunities, both for loggers, who for the most part were local residents and relatively highly paid, and for the mobile workforce.

In some instances, the federal government has sought to support these unemployed forest workers. The Jobs-in-the-Woods program, for example, had the intent of retraining forest workers to perform ecosystem management activities. Program activities, however, generally were more readily accessible to out-of-work loggers than to unemployed members of the mobile workforce.

In another example, on-the-job training involved Latino workers who were not necessarily forest workers or harvesters. Rather, they were primarily farm workers. Although these farm workers are a huge mobile workforce, they did not necessarily have a strong interest in continuing to work in forestry services. Services and training opportunities targeting Latino populations do not necessarily reach forest workers or address forestry service issues. As such, clear distinctions need to be made.

As they search for new job opportunities, many members of the mobile workforce would like to work closer to home and their

families. They desire year-round work. They also would like to work under fair labor practices and to earn respect. In short, members of the mobile workforce want to have many of the same rights as do members of communities of place.

New job opportunities, however, have not followed upon those hopes. The immigrant labor market continues to support—even require—a disenfranchised underclass of workers. Federal agencies continue to use lowest-cost contracting, among other barriers. The net result is that both workforces are competing for the same jobs, and tensions have increased.

As CBF attempts to build community, retain and expand local job opportunities, and address equity issues, what shape will the continued involvement of the mobile workforce take? As pressures increase on the U.S. Forest Service—such as increasing annual fuels reduction targets and declining numbers of federal employees—that tend to force the agency toward designing larger contracts, how will small contractors be able to access the work? As both local communities and the mobile workforce work to try to create high-skilled, high-wage work in forest stewardship and watershed restoration, what ways will they find to work together?

The National CBF Demonstration Program

The primary goal of the Demonstration Program was to establish successful on-the-ground pilot projects throughout the United States. It was hoped that these pilots would provide critical lessons learned to improve practice and ultimately act as catalysts for a broader movement. Initially developed by Ford Foundation Senior Program

As CBF attempts to build community, expand local job opportunities, and address equity issues, what shape will the continued involvement of the mobile workforce take?

Officer Michael Conroy, the initiative was implemented by Senior Program Officer Jeff Campbell. Joining the New York office from Indonesia in 2000, Campbell's experience with CBF in Asia made him an ideal candidate to lead the initiative.

Early in the planning stage, Conroy awarded a grant to the Aspen Institute and the Pinchot Institute for Conservation² to act as managing partner for the initiative. Experience with other programs had shown the value a managing partner could bring, including more effective use of grant funds, intentional learning and enhancement of programs, and ultimately improved practice within the field. The managing partner had four primary roles: 1) provide technical assistance for the grantees; 2) design and facilitate peer learning opportunities; 3) distill and disseminate experiences from the Demonstration Program throughout the CBF field; and 4) facilitate communication between the donor and the grantees, including assisting with the management of the grants.

Ultimately, over the six years (including both planning and implementation phases), the Ford Foundation invested over \$12.5 million. Twenty groups received six-month planning grants ranging up to \$40,000 each. The Foundation subsequently awarded core grants of \$75,000 to \$150,000 per year to each of 13 implementing organizations (see map on page 18 for location of grantees) for a total of up to \$750,000 over five years.

Moreover, grants were awarded to the Natural Assets Program at the Aspen Institute as managing partner, as well as to the Institute for Policy Research and Evaluation at Pennsylvania State University,

² The Pinchot Institute for Conservation was co-manager with the Aspen Institute from 1999–2001.

The primary goal of the Demonstration Program was to establish successful on-the-ground pilot projects throughout the United States and to harvest the lessons that emerged as catalysts for a broader movement.

and Colorado State University to undertake research. Over the six years, these components used nearly \$3.5 million (drawn from the Foundation's \$12.5 million total investment) to support technical assistance, peer learning, publications, overall management of the portfolio during both the planning and implementation phases, and research. Colorado State University's research effort will be completed in 2006.

A program Advisory Group was established in 2002 to provide guidance to the program and facilitate communications with the broader field.

CBF demonstration sites

The 13 community-based projects in the Demonstration Program reflected some of the broad cultural, ethnic, and geographic diversity of communities using forest resources. These pilot initiatives focused on public, private, and tribal lands, and used differing economic strategies for turning forest resources into sustainable livelihoods.³

Private lands. The **Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund** (Federation) and its Training Center in Epes, Alabama, works to assure that African-American and other historically underserved

³ More thorough descriptions of each site may be found in Appendix A at the end of this document.

individuals of the Southern Black Belt have every opportunity to own land, resources, and businesses, and to live prosperously and honorably. It also assists in the development of cooperatives and credit unions as a collective strategy to create economic self-sufficiency. The Federation’s Forestry Program focuses on training and demonstration programs in goat production.

North Quabbin Woods (NQW), a project of the New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF), seeks to revitalize the North Quabbin economy of central Massachusetts based on the sustainable use of local forest resources, including recreation, tourism, woodworking, and other value-adding manufacturing. The project builds community skills and institutions to address these and other issues.

The **Penn Center** strives to promote and preserve the history and culture of the Sea Islands of Georgia and South Carolina. The Land Use and Environmental Education Program promotes a vision of self-sufficiency and empowerment through education and demonstration programs in goat production, pine straw harvesting, and other non-timber forest products, as well as supports the development of local organizational capacity.

Geographic distribution of the 13 demonstration sites



Rural Action works to promote economic, social, and environmental justice in Appalachian Ohio. Rural Action’s Forestry Program focuses on research, cultivation, and marketing of medicinal plants and other non-timber and timber forest products; landowner education; and building local organizational capacity to undertake these and other activities.

Vermont Family Forests Partnership (VFFP) in Addison County, Vermont, is a working partnership among three not-for-profit organizations: Vermont Family Forests (VFF), the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), and the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund (VSJF). The purpose of the partnership is to develop replicable models and demonstration sites of ownership of forestland that are ecologically sound and financially inclusive, and that interact with socially responsible community-based forest product industries.

Public lands. Most public lands sites are on national forest land managed by the U.S. Forest Service. To varying degrees, these organizations also supported work on private land as they worked across regional landscapes.

The **Jobs and Biodiversity Coalition (JBC)** in Silver City, New Mexico, brings together environmental groups, economic development institutions, small local producers, and the U.S. Forest Service to restore ecological processes in the local community’s public and private forested lands, while creating and supporting sustainable businesses, jobs, and livelihoods in the county.

The **Public Lands Partnership (PLP)** in west central Colorado formed in 1992 as an informal forum to address public lands issues. Members included citizens, local governments, land management agency personnel, businesses, loggers, ranchers,

The 13 CBF demonstration sites

Site	Acronym	Location	Major focus
Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters	AFWH	Willow Creek, California	membership organization
D.C. Greenworks	—	Washington, D.C.	urban
Federation of Southern Cooperatives/ Land Assistance Fund	FSC/LAF	Eples, Alabama	private lands
Grant County Jobs and Biodiversity Coalition	JBC	Silver City, New Mexico	public lands
Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities	HFHC	Portland, Oregon	membership organization
Makah Tribal Forestry	—	Neah Bay, Washington	tribal lands
North Quabbin Woods (New England Forestry Foundation)	NQW	Central Massachusetts	private lands
Penn Center	—	St. Helena Island, South Carolina	private lands
Public Lands Partnership	PLP	Delta, Colorado	public lands
Rural Action	—	Trimble, Ohio	private lands
Vermont Family Forests Partnership*	VFFP	Addison County, Vermont	private lands
Wallowa Resources	—	Enterprise, Oregon	public lands
Watershed Research and Training Center	WRTC	Hayfork, California	public lands

* This project was a working partnership among three not-for-profit organizations: Vermont Family Forests, the National Wildlife Federation, and the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund.

and conservationists. PLP strives to test new models of how to manage conflict and promote collaboration and works to influence the management of public lands in ways

that enhance and help maintain diverse, healthy, and viable economies, environments, and communities.

The mission of **Wallowa Resources** in northeastern Oregon is to promote forest and watershed health and create family-wage jobs and business opportunities from natural resource stewardship. Wallowa Resources facilitates and promotes community planning processes, and designs and manages stewardship contracting with the U.S. Forest Service. Its for-profit subsidiary, Community Solutions, Inc., manufactures and markets products from forest restoration efforts.

The **Watershed Research and Training Center** (WRTC) in Hayfork, California, seeks to promote healthy communities and sustainable forests through research, education, training, and economic development. The independent business incubator started by WRTC is used by community members to create businesses, sustainable jobs, and local revenue.

Tribal lands. The **Makah Tribe's** Forestry Department seeks to create and implement forest management practices that serve to restore and conserve forest, wildlife, fish, and cultural resources. Its community-based forestry initiative promotes awareness and education about non-timber forest products (NTFPs) in local elementary and middle schools. The Tribe also has completed an inventory of NTFPs and collated this information with that of timber stands to ensure forests are managed for environmental, cultural, and economic benefit.

Urban settings. **D.C. Greenworks** in Washington, D.C., seeks to bring ideas, experience, and tools to empower urban communities to improve their natural and built environment. D.C. Greenworks works in partnership with community groups, public agencies, businesses, and nonprofits to develop community-based environmental programs that address the environmental, social, and economic issues, including green-collar job training, low-impact development and environmental design, and community treekeepers.

Membership organizations. The **Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters** (AFWH) is a multicultural organization promoting social, environmental, and economic justice. It exists to share and provide information and education; encourage participation in decision-making processes that affect workers' and harvesters' lives; be mutually supportive and respectful of forest workers' and harvesters' cultures, communities, and individuals; foster communication among all its members; and promote the understanding of its constituents' struggles and issues throughout the Pacific West.

Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities (HFHC), a project of Sustainable Northwest in Portland, Oregon, is a membership organization of businesses and nonprofits that work to build market awareness and demand for regionally and responsibly produced wood products, and to enhance rural capacity to serve those markets to the benefit of both entrepreneurs and forest ecosystems.



CHAPTER

2

Foundations of Community-Based Forestry



This chapter begins a detailed discussion of the many lessons learned during the National CBF Demonstration Program. All are drawn directly from the experiences of the participating communities. Later chapters will look at lessons specific to one or another key aspect of CBF.

The emphasis here, however, will be to identify overarching lessons that are relevant across all of CBF’s interrelated core strategies—specifically, its social, economic, and ecological strategies and their associated objectives. As such, they are essential to understanding how best to go about designing and implementing an integrated CBF program. It will be helpful to review these broad lessons carefully before reading the later chapters, if only to allow the reader to situate those forthcoming specific lessons more comfortably within this larger framework.

Lessons

This section offers lessons about the underlying fundamentals of CBF, some keys to effective implementation, and critical elements to ensuring broader, long-term impacts.

The emphasis here is to identify overarching lessons that are relevant across all of CBF’s interrelated core strategies—specifically, its social, economic, and ecological strategies and their associated objectives.

CBF fundamentals

LESSON 1 Every community-based forestry program has to build community—whether community of place, of interest, or both. These communities, however defined, have to be organized, supported, and well understood before CBF programs can flourish.

All communities, whether they embrace people who are rooted in a particular place or weave together more far-flung people who share similar interests, are fundamentally about *connection*. In some cases, communities engage groups of people whose lives are connected with one another through their ongoing interactions and through a shared sense of identity. In other cases, they are groups of diverse stakeholders whose common concern is to manage natural resources in ways that enable or accommodate the continuation of their many ways of life.

These communities then build relationships and partnerships—of interest and/or power—with other communities, notes Nils Christoffersen at Wallowa Resources. “When successful, benefits may include public support, access to information and markets, etc. In addition, such partnerships may allow for a scaling up of the program to pursue integrated natural resource management across larger landscapes and social orders.”

The path toward building communities is seldom as straightforward as one might wish. Consider the word “community” itself, which in some discussions can evoke images of a homogeneous, wholesome entity whose members inherently share the same values, forge easy agreements, and, once plans are set in motion, work together diligently as honeybees.

Like most fables, this idealized portrait of community does contain an element of truth. It fails, however, to take into account two undeniable facts. First of all, human beings, wherever they may happen to live, are by nature multidimensional. They identify with and have allegiances to many differing types of communities, usually all at the same time. Moreover, as researcher Cecelia Danks has pointed out, even just one of those overlapping communities is, within itself, diverse, stratified, and politically fractured—much like the larger society in which it is embedded.

In light of such observations, what *does* hold a community—or a group of individuals—together? How can its members identify their shared interests and find common cause?

Nearly all of the sites that participated in the Demonstration Program actually did share some underlying basic features. Most are resource-dependent communities. These are communities where the majority of people sustain their livelihoods by developing and using, at some level, the locally available natural resources. Often the residents of the community are multigenerational. One is constantly reminded that there are elders present who recall the community's past and youngsters nearby who represent its future.

Such communities typically are held together by a widely shared commitment to their common landscape, their livelihoods, and their people—in other words, their sense of place. This shared sense of identity and commitment to place make it possible, through face-to-face interactions in a variety of settings, for even fractious communities to develop the capacity for consensus decision making and collective action—especially where long-established values and livelihoods are threatened.

Resource-dependent communities—like most of those in the Demonstration Program—typically are held together by a widely shared commitment to the common landscape and the livelihoods that depend on that landscape.

There are, of course, other types of communities that are more transitional. Once they too may have been more resource-dependent, but today they likely sustain their livelihoods through a variety of means. Many are experiencing rapid development, with a substantial influx of newcomers. In these sorts of places, shared identity and commitment to place are far more complex. People experience myriad relationships, both with the region's natural resources and with one another.

Individuals in such communities also may feel committed to their place, but in differing ways, along differing paths and timelines. Some are just learning about the local ecosystem and the larger social context of their community, while others have been spending vacations or other periods of time in the communities since they were young. The newly arrived are not likely to be connected to place in the same way that longer-term residents might be, or in the same way as those who depend on natural resources for their livelihood.⁴ Moreover, as they do begin to forge a shared sense of identity, it may be around other sorts of factors, such as what

⁴ On a national level, 40 percent of all private forestlandowners have owned their land for only 15 years or less. (Best, C., and L.A. Wayburn, *America's Private Forests: Status and Stewardship*, Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2001.)

Individuals in more transitional communities also may feel committed to place, but in differing ways, along differing paths and timelines. A key challenge there is to create opportunities for shared experiences that can help even seemingly disparate stakeholder groups to develop common knowledge and understanding.

kind of work they do, where their children go to school, or with whom they worship. A key challenge in these transitional communities, then, is for CBF initiatives to create ongoing opportunities for shared experiences that can help even seemingly disparate stakeholder groups to develop common knowledge and understanding.

Another type of community involves people who work together in the woods. Work crews often are tightly knit groups whose membership remains relatively constant over time. Typically, they are mobile, leaving their respective homes in different communities for extended periods of time for work in the woods. Their sense of community arises from their shared experiences and common interests, including socially just employment practices and sustainable forest management. Similarly, many migrant harvesters—who range over an even wider area to gather non-timber forest products such as mushrooms and floral greens—revisit the same sites each year, often with the same people. There is such a strong sense of community among the mushroom harvesters at Crescent Lake in Oregon, for example, that they have been able to organize two labor strikes to demand higher prices for their harvest.

Community in a private land context often is built from the ground up and is likely to flourish wherever there is a strong, shared sense of perceived benefit. The members of a group of landowners, businesses, or other individuals are connected through their need to unite to gain access to resources, markets, information, etc. By sharing news of the benefits of being part of the community, these groups frequently are able then to broaden their reach and engage other local—and non-local—residents.

Vermont Family Forests has found, for example, that only a few landowners will take economic risks simply because they are committed philosophically to the goal of a wood products industry based on “what the forest wants to yield.” Most will not. In addition, many newer residents are unaware of the positive ecological benefits that sustainable forest management can provide. Expanding CBF’s base of support, therefore, means that VFF has had to articulate—or even better, demonstrate—the full range of benefits of its sustainable forest management approach to ever-widening circles of landowners.

In southeast Ohio, **Rural Action** built a community of landowners interested in cultivating medicinal plants and other NTFPs by sharing information, facilitating learning opportunities, and helping individual growers network among themselves and develop a shared voice. Through the Roots of Appalachia Growers Association (RAGA), these landowners are weaving a strong social fabric that can support the community as it faces new opportunities and challenges. In fact, RAGA already has built its capacity to the point where it is having an influence on state-level policies and the legal system.

In north central Massachusetts, **North Quabbin Woods** builds community around place through a number of CBF-related activities. As one community member reported, “NQW is generating a positive buzz and feeling within the community. It offers an opportunity for the community to come together, share ideas, and influence what is going on in their community. This area is forgotten by the state [government], but NQW is bringing it to their attention. Towns have tried to promote this region before, but nothing constructive came out of it. This effort is different because it is based on sound information, resources and funding, community-generated goals, and is facilitated by a dedicated staff person.”

In west central Colorado, the **Public Lands Partnership** is testing new models of how to manage conflict, promote collaboration, and build community. Having seen how polarized other communities were becoming over environmental issues, and knowing that the Wise Use Movement (e.g., the local control movement) was gaining public support locally, a diverse group of citizens organized PLP to encourage civic dialogue and address issues before they could escalate into even greater communitywide conflict. As is the case with other CBF projects on public lands, PLP understood that collaborative decision-making processes must empower the full participation of local people. Accordingly, PLP engaged a broad base of stakeholders, including environmentalists and motorized recreationists, public land management agencies, local governments, and private citizens. It became a catalyst and “idea incubator,” delegating to committees or other groups the task of implementing the activities.

Across the Pacific West, including northern California, Oregon, and Washington, the **Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters**

“ I’ve seen the solidarity between cultures when you are working hard. In the woods, it doesn’t matter. We are all grassroots, with our knees in the dirt. Focus on the person.”

—Oshana Catranides

Lomakatsi Restoration Project, southwest Oregon

is organizing workers and harvesters, one group at a time. As part of this process, outreach workers have conducted hundreds of interviews with workers and harvesters in order to understand fully what they want and need. Through leadership training and mentoring, these outreach workers now have the skills and experience to make presentations and facilitate discussions with forest workers, public agencies, and the general public. They also are networking on a national level. Moreover, AFWH outreach workers have developed ideas and strategies for current and future projects that support the aspirations of the workers. Then they have organized individual groups to address some of these identified issues and pursue projects.

LESSON 2 CBF efforts—whether of communities of place or interest—must have access to the landscape’s natural assets, encompassing land, work in the woods, and the net resources available.

Perhaps the biggest single factor, besides the overpowering forces of global economies, affecting the fulfillment of CBF’s potential is the ability of people to gain access to the landscape’s natural assets.

EXAMPLE

Little Hogback Community Forest

Vermont Family Forests Partnership long had wanted to bring another conservation option to the table—one that would offer opportunities to hold, steward, and enjoy forestland to people who could not otherwise afford to buy land. As a result, the Little Hogback Community Forest Limited Liability Corporation today owns and manages a 115-acre parcel as a single unit. Community members buy shares that entitle them to recreation, firewood, proceeds from timber sales, and the satisfaction of carefully stewarding a beautiful piece of the world.

Implemented by Vermont Family Forests, roughly half of the shares are available to households having incomes less than twice the county median. The rest have been reserved for lower-income members, who will have access to loans provided by a VFF sponsor to cover half of the share price. VFF holds public meetings to introduce community members to this opportunity, as well as hiking tours to introduce them to the land and VFF's style of forest management. Although the marketing has been both low-key and local, the response has been enthusiastic. Many people love the land, love VFF, and love the concept of being able to share ownership and stewardship. VFF has found there is potential to do many similar projects with community members who have enough money to meet their basic needs, yet not enough money to buy a parcel of forestland on their own.

It is clear, however, that purchasing land, even with a favorable loan, is difficult for households with incomes below the county median. In some cases, buying land is something they have never thought about very seriously. VFF is finding that individual discussions—about how the loan works, what the annual obligations would be, liquidity, and how this investment compares with a bank account—help those making the decision become more comfortable. When people are enthusiastic, it is often because they have a personal relationship with VFF staff, and, as VFF builds up its track record, it anticipates more low-income residents will sign up. Even so, many households making close to median income simply don't have any extra savings left over at the end of the year. VFF does not want to be in the position of tempting people to invest in owning land before they even have health insurance, however good an investment shared ownership of forestland might appear to be.

Accessing contract work on public lands

Working with what was possible, the public land groups were able to access some contract work and the byproducts of fuels reduction. Wallowa Resources in northeastern Oregon, for example, assisted local contractors to access work through an indefinite quantity (IDIQ) contract for fencing and weeds. The problem with the IDIQ contracts is that the money is not obligated until a task order is completed. For the last three years, the Washington Office of the U.S. Forest Service has taken back any non-obligated money from the field to pay for fire-fighting expenses, which has meant that money has not been available to implement task orders. For fuels reduction contracts, there are local contractors implementing work through the Oregon Department of Forestry.

In 2004, the U.S. Forest Service awarded a stewardship contract for the Spooner Vegetation and Road Project under the Categorical Exclusion Provision. This contract, which will benefit both the community and the health of the forest, was made possible by years of collaboration between Wallowa Resources, community members, the U.S. Forest Service, local environmentalists, and other stakeholders. As former Wallowa Valley District Ranger Meg Mitchell states, “It represents a lot of potential work in the community. I am very pleased that our combined efforts with all of the interested parties during the planning of this project paid off.”

If people are not able to access the forest, it is questionable whether it is really an asset at all. It may even be a liability.

On private lands, access can be improved through sharing knowledge about the resources in the forest, as well as about how to shape markets for forest products. Vermont Family Forests, for example, has influenced the regional market to include character wood and underused tree species. As a result, landowners are now managing all of the forest. By shifting from a single to multiple-species marketing strategy, the diversity—and, ultimately, the health—of

the forest is enhanced. Networks and other collaboratives also are increasing access to resources that individuals cannot reach on their own, either because they don’t have sufficient volume of either trees or products, or because they are people of color or other historically underserved populations who have not been recognized by technical assistance service providers.

For lower-income people who are not landowners but live in areas where land is available, Vermont Family Forests has initiated a strategy to create opportunities for shared ownership of land.

Access to land is a huge issue for both the mobile harvesting communities and Native American peoples who seek access to their ancestral territories.

The federal permit system for harvesting is only getting more onerous.

On public lands, communities gain access through developing broadly based collaboratives, partnerships, and other contracting mechanisms with public land management agencies. At the outset of the Demonstration Program, communities may have hoped that federal funds would become available, sites for fuels reduction would be readily approved, and the contracts for this work would go to local businesses. The unfolding reality, however, has been a drastic and continuing reduction in federal budgets and persistent regulatory hurdles. These obstacles have severely limited the communities' ability to undertake forest restoration work and create and retain family-wage jobs. In many instances, families and individuals were forced to leave in search of work elsewhere. All too often, these obstacles also resulted in a weakening of one or another community's overall CBF strategy.

The **Jobs and Biodiversity Coalition** in New Mexico was able to secure local contracts for work on national forest lands, but it took a Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP) grant to implement the project. By October 2004, only 80 acres had been restored. CFRP is a U.S. Forest Service program that is only available in New Mexico, and it may not be continued.

Access to land is a huge issue for both the mobile harvesting communities and Native American peoples who seek access to their ancestral territories. The federal permit system for harvesting is only getting more onerous, with a current proposal to charge fees to everyone. Treaty tribes would be allowed subsistence harvesting, but tribes that are not federally recognized might not be given the same rights. The **Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters** has worked with partners in seeking to improve an earlier ruling on this issue, but the struggle continues.

AFWH is providing training and skills development in biophysical monitoring, ecologically sound restoration practices, and other sustainable forestry skills so that workers are able to compete for and secure more jobs at higher pay and have a positive impact on the environment. AFWH also is networking these newly trained individuals with work opportunities in the woods.

LESSON 3 Consider and implement the three objectives of CBF—social, economic, and ecological—as an integrated, mutually dependent whole, rather than as three stand-alone approaches being implemented alongside one another.

Community-based forestry will be more sustainable and have greater impact if strategies to bring about resilient communities, sustainable economies, and healthy forest ecosystems are addressed in an integrated and synergistic manner, so that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

Lynn Jungwirth states, "If the Watershed Research and Training Center [WRTC] just focused on economic impacts, then WRTC could bring in a call center to create jobs. If

WRTC just focused on forest health, then non-locals could do the restoration work. And if WRTC just focused on the community, WRTC would spend lots of time talking and never get to job creation. WRTC needed to work on all parts of this at once to be able to engage the community in their exploration of job opportunities that contribute to forest health.”

In addition to helping achieve these three outcomes, successfully implemented CBF can contribute to other objectives. An overarching goal of the **Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund** in Alabama was to promote and support land retention by African Americans. As one tool in that struggle, CBF provided the opportunity for local landowners, in addition to raising goats, to take advantage of cost-sharing options,⁵ thereby helping them earn enough income to pay their taxes. In the long term, land retention does contribute to economic resilience and vitality, but in a less direct way than other CBF programs. Moreover, regardless of the targeted purpose of a particular initiative, CBF still must be implemented in an integrated way.

Conversion of private forestland to development is a huge issue, and diverse and numerous strategies and incentives are all important for retention of forested ecosystems. The Federation, for example, designed their meat goat program so that local residents could simultaneously address their multiple needs to suppress the forest understory, earn short-term income, and gain more equitable access to government programs and other resources.

⁵ By far the best-known and widely implemented option is the agricultural-use tax exemption. If a landowner has at least five acres devoted to raising crops—including forestry products—then she or he is eligible for the exemption, potentially reducing an individual’s property tax burden by as much as 90 percent.

Using an integrated approach has important benefits. People in rural areas increasingly are seeking economic vitality and sustainability, which require access to both natural and financial assets. The integrated CBF approach brings more people to the table and thus engages the broader range of stakeholders necessary to access and develop natural assets. An integrated approach also is more efficient whenever, as in most small towns, there are limited resources and people have to “wear many hats.” Rather than requiring the resources to operate three stand-alone programs, integration allows community organizations to reach multiple objectives with the same carefully designed activity. Of course, designing and implementing such an activity requires asking upfront, “How will we work toward all three objectives?”

An integrated approach helps to engage a broader range of stakeholders and allows small community organizations to reach multiple objectives with the same carefully designed activity.

For example, the **Watershed Research and Training Center** designed a training program for community members to undertake forest restoration work so that:

- Potential employers described what job skills would be needed to conduct the work, the training responded to those skill requirements, and the training program identified likely job openings before the training began.
- The training program paid trainees, so that anyone could afford to participate. It also recruited them from a broad

cross-section of the community, spreading benefits more widely and thereby building community support for the program.

- Training content reflected sustainable forestry best management practices.

While it is essential to integrate all three core objectives—social, ecological, and economic—it is important to understand that different communities may define these objectives differently.

In the South Carolina Sea Islands, **Penn Center** helped underserved landowners gain access to technical assistance from the South Carolina Forestry Commission and other service providers, so that:

- Landowners formed their own network, the Lowcountry Landowners Association, to share this information, pool resources, and provide mutual support.
- Penn Center staff conducted market research on pine straw and connected the Lowcountry Landowners Association with a resource person who understands that market.
- Penn Center staff educated forestry service providers on the importance of managing forest assets for diversity, including a range of species of timber and non-timber resources.

In the longer term, simply asking the question isn't enough. Related CBF activities must evolve into integrated CBF programs that can demonstrate significant impacts in terms of each of the three core objectives. Not one of the three is truly dispensable,

although the relative importance of each objective likely will wax and wane over time, depending on the opportunities and roadblocks that are presented along the way. Moreover, making headway at the intersection of all three objectives is inevitably a long-term process. It can be difficult to show quick returns, primarily because multiple outside influences and barriers can affect outcomes at the community level for all three objectives.

While it is essential to integrate all three core objectives, it is important to understand that different communities may define the objectives differently. In the case of the **Makah Tribe**, Olympic Peninsula, Washington, cultural perspectives prevented the tribe from pursuing the commercialization of many of the non-timber forest products.⁶

The Makah traditionally have not used non-timber forest products as a source of income, but they do have a long tradition of using them as an element in their economy, whether to engage community members in reciprocal relationships, for cultural purposes, or for their own personal use. The few who use these resources commercially typically have spent time off-reservation and, as one respondent stated, "Their value systems aren't the same. They think more about the commercial than about the cultural."

Interestingly, what tribal members wanted instead of new product and market information was more information on sustainable harvesting practices and where to harvest materials for cultural uses—specifically, information on where to collect cedar bark for basket making before a logging operation is implemented. Integrating harvesting needs

⁶ Other factors were at play to explain why some other NTFPs also were not pursued as commodities.

EXAMPLE

Taking a systems approach

The integration of community, economic, and ecological objectives is the most important and most difficult aspect of community-based forestry. It requires taking a systems approach, which means looking at CBF as an integrated, whole system in which its constituent parts operate together in some way to achieve an outcome or purpose, or, more likely, a range of outcomes.

In this regard, the whole is much more than its parts. So, taking a systems approach to understanding and implementing CBF also means looking at a community of place as a whole system—comprising many mutually dependent, integrated parts, like people—that itself interacts with larger systems, such as regional and global economies.

Here's another way of describing a systems approach, taken from the realm of biology: A living cell is far more than just an assortment of different molecules. Understanding how a cell operates requires looking closely at all its various biological processes, including how the cell relates to its larger environment. Although it is a whole system within itself, the cell also belongs to larger systems, such as a particular organ like the heart. The heart, too, is a whole in itself, but on another level, it too is a part of a larger system, like the circulatory system or even the entire human body.

One advantage of looking at the world this way is that it helps one to identify patterns of organization within and among systems, often revealed as dynamic processes.

Understanding the processes through which a system's constituent parts interact to support the whole can be very helpful, especially if one wishes to identify leverage points that might help change the way that system works. Of course, one also would hope to become aware of leverage points that, if not fully understood or tampered with irresponsibly, might lead to undesirable system outcomes.

with the Makah Tribal Forest Management Plan was an important outcome of the CBF initiative, as was a program in the schools reconnecting youth to the forest.

Regrettably, funding rarely is available to support integrated CBF approaches. Rather, there typically are specific programs to fund resource conservation and then others to

fund enterprise development. Ultimately, it falls to the community-based organization to weave all of the pieces together through their strategic plan.

LESSON 4 The best organization to implement a CBF program is one where there is a sincere commitment to the three long-term objectives of resilient communities, vibrant economies, and healthy forested ecosystems, as well as to participatory, inclusive, and accountable processes. This commitment should be reflected in the mission, values, practice, and intellectual underpinnings of the organization.

The Demonstration Program included a range of implementing arrangements, including community-based organizations, programs within existing organizations, tribal agencies, and nonprofit partnerships. Some of these entities were created as CBF organizations, while others had expertise in one or more elements of CBF and were adding the missing component. Some of the organizations were relatively young, while others were well established but implementing a CBF program for the first time. The most experienced organization had been

implementing CBF for only about six years at the start of the Demonstration Program. One of the newly forming organizations became a membership-based, nonprofit corporation seeking to serve forest workers and harvesters across a three-state region in the West.

The existing expertise of the implementing organization at the outset of its CBF program seems to have limited bearing on the program’s ultimate success. What is far more important is the organization’s ability to use a holistic, systems approach to focus on the integration of the three objectives and to analyze and understand the larger context for CBF, including external factors and their influence on the community.

When established organizations, founded earlier around a different worldview and set of objectives, take on CBF, there needs to be a process in place to ensure that the integration questions are asked—and that the program is implemented to support the whole, rather than just one objective and/or parallel program. Asking these questions early can lead to more effective project design, help an organization get to where it is going faster, and foster a culture of transparency.

While it is not necessary to have in-depth expertise in all three core CBF areas—sustainable economics, community capacity, and healthy forest ecosystems—there needs to be some idea about how these skills will be obtained for the ultimate effectiveness of the program. In short, it is possible to enter CBF through any of its doors, but practitioners and organizations must make a sincere commitment to embrace where opening those doors will take them. If CBF is a new project or program of an existing organization, and if the intention is that CBF is going to be widely adopted by the organization,

“ If you are going to bring this [CBF] in-house and do it, look at everything you are doing and ask from top to bottom, does it mirror the underlying truths of the community-based movement?”

—Thomas Brendler, executive director
National Network of Forest Practitioners

then it is important to ensure the activity is fully supported by the leadership of the larger entity.

While an integrated approach and paradigm shift are important thresholds toward fully implementing community-based forestry, accomplishing them is by no means a prerequisite for getting started. Many organizations begin simply by experimenting with a new activity or project, or perhaps with the redesign of an existing project, evolving from there to a fully fledged program. What is important is that the organization learns and adapts its activities along the way, being transparent and accountable to the group of individuals (or community) it serves.

Keys to effective implementation

LESSON 5 In order to have both the depth and breadth of impact needed for systemwide change, CBF requires an approach that engages a range of different actors, working at different levels and on different activities.

As a values-based approach, CBF seeks to change hearts and minds, as well as the forest, at a systems level. As a result, a range of individuals and interests need to be engaged. Utilizing diversified strategies provides opportunities for working with many players—special interest groups, public agencies, private landowners—and for addressing the overlapping, core concerns within a community, which can be as varied as the people.

In the Southeast, for example, CBF is a good land retention strategy. It approaches the value of the land across three dimensions—economically, by promoting enterprise development for forest-based products;

“ Sometimes saying ‘no’ can lead later to a ‘yes’ on better terms.”

—Dawn Gifford, executive director
D.C. Greenworks

ecologically, by promoting sustainable harvesting; and socially, by promoting the equity of African Americans retaining ownership. As this layered approach engages people who use the forest in differing ways, it also can facilitate a more holistic approach to forest management.

Another advantage to using a diversified approach is that doing so makes it possible to be more responsive over time to the peaks and valleys of group process, as well as to the ebbs and flows of individual lives and economic cycles. Negotiating this “dance” is critical to successful, long-term community empowerment. For example, the staff of the **D.C. Greenworks** Treekeepers Program have developed program implementation standards requiring their neighborhood partners to pledge both a minimum level of financial support and a minimum number of community volunteers. These standards are invaluable in assessing community readiness to ensure long-lasting impact.

Moreover, using a multipronged approach allowed D.C. Greenworks to shift its emphasis to its other CBF activities whenever a particular community was not yet ready to come to the table. Staff also were better prepared to be responsive when the community actually was ready. A key to using this approach is the ability to listen to the community. D.C. Greenworks staff

developed their standards only after they had worked with the community on these issues for three years.

A multilayered approach also allows an organization to experiment with a number of strategies and see which ones actually take hold in the community. It then can be selectively entrepreneurial about which ones it moves forward. **North Quabbin Woods**, for example, launched lots of small projects, including landowner workshops, a community ecotourism planning process, organizing a group of local woodworkers, marketing forest products in a number of outlets, ecotourism guide-training, and a regional branding effort involving local businesses. Clearly, when the possibilities of failure are significant—as with all business development—a diversified portfolio can spread out the risk.

Utilizing diversified strategies provides many advantages, but also can place a strain on staff resources—especially when they are limited.

Furthermore, having many irons in the fire enhances the possibility of creating and celebrating short-term successes, while longer-term investments mature. This is particularly important in CBF, where it takes many years to achieve the long-term goals. Well-publicized early successes can build and sustain interest in the longer-term options.

The challenge to a multipronged approach, of course, is the strain it places on staff resources, especially when they are limited. It is necessary to analyze carefully the skills that are needed and to evaluate how best to access them, whether through

consultants, part-time staff, or training. It is important to avoid becoming so diffuse that one's programmatic impact also becomes limited. Furthermore, the groups in the Demonstration Program found that the market did not quickly pick up the innovative ideas underlying their demonstration projects. The implementing organization had to focus on projects with the most economic potential and stay engaged through several seasons, which also required substantial staff resources.

LESSON 6 Partnerships that are well structured and managed are essential to ensuring access to the variety of skills, knowledge, perspectives, and finances required to implement an integrated program.

The key to developing and implementing effective CBF strategies is to build partnerships that function as true collaboratives. Collaboration among all interests can result in a significant impact, particularly when it is a continually evolving process shaped by all involved.

Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities, for example, has built a network of businesses in the Pacific Northwest. Through HFHC's work, the businesses in this network have been able to receive technical assistance one-on-one and through workshops, to compete for small grants to develop new products and explore new markets, to gain access to urban markets, to make connections that have led to sales between businesses in the network, and to meet others who share their values.

Given the relative newness of community-based forestry in most of the United States, however, such partnerships only recently have been established or have yet fully to

emerge as new CBF programs are initiated. These groups will need the space to test out their ability to work collaboratively and to determine the parameters governing their relationships. They will need support in clarifying expectations, ensuring equal representation, and evaluating their processes.

Partnerships also need a lot of time to develop, as well as the financial resources to support people's time. Fortunately, there is nothing like on-the-ground implementation to push a partnership to identify common ground, clarify expectations, negotiate operations, and "put their money where their mouth is."

LESSON 7 Recognize that large, external forces—operating at the regional, national, and global levels—significantly impact community options. Working through existing networks and coalitions allows groups to influence change at multiple levels.

When working on CBF projects, there are forces bigger than the local effort that profoundly influence what can be accomplished. While the work itself needs to occur at the local level, the national and global levels need to stay "on the radar screen." For example, communities need to be aware of global markets, the flow of wood through the region, policy impacts, and the coalescence of a national movement for systemwide change.

To manage the risk that national policy changes will eliminate local jobs, **Wallowa Resources**, the **Watershed Research and Training Center**, and **Sustainable Northwest** all worked at the regional and national levels. On one hand, their direct experience of the impact of forest management

“Partnerships bring new people and ideas into a process. You must adjust and modify expectations and plans to integrate these new ideas and factors. Keep your focus on maintaining positive relationships, not solely on the outcomes.”

—Scott Maslansky, project director

North Quabbin Woods/New England Forestry Foundation

North central Massachusetts

policies on forest-dependent communities is the unique piece they can bring to policy discussions. On the other hand, each of these organizations has gained enhanced recognition and respect locally as their own communities realized their importance on the national level.

The **Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund** also discovered that having access to networks at the state and national levels was critical for program success. Its state-level connections with the Alabama Forestry Commission and nationally with U.S. Department of Agriculture leveraged and brought in much-needed resources and expertise to underserved communities that otherwise wouldn't have been able to access them.

The **Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters** also is working through a coalition at the policy level to address structural barriers to implementing environmentally sound and socially just practices. All of these barriers limit the economic and other benefits that workers receive. To name just a few, they include the structure of the global economy including the bias against true accounting of environmental costs; the

lack of public investment in restoration; the structure of the immigrant labor market; and lowest-cost contracting in the federal system.

In the struggle to surmount these structural barriers, it is important that CBF assert its position and function as an integral part of multiple, overlapping social movements, including those that focus on community development, the environment, social justice, and sustainable development, among others. To have far-reaching impact, as well as success at home, it is important to build active relationships and networks with all of them. Ongoing participation in these different networks requires both getting up to speed on their core issues, as well as educating other constituencies about CBF.

There are forces bigger than the local effort that profoundly influence what a CBF project can do. The work occurs at the local level, but the national and global levels need to stay “on the radar screen.”

More than a drop in the bucket: Ensuring broader, long-term impact

LESSON 8 Start small, but have a huge vision. After proven success at a small scale, create strategies to move toward increasingly larger scales in order to get to sustainability.

Community-based forestry operates simultaneously at a number of scales:

- From a market point of view, it is necessary to have access to enough wood and NTFPs to be a player. Moreover, a regionally focused or sustainably sourced brand needs to have some volume of product sales to support its development and promotion.
- From an ecological point of view, landscape (or watershed) issues are much larger than a single tract belonging to a single landowner.
- From a community point of view, people have to be connected with one another through both their ongoing interactions and a shared sense of identity, as well as to a particular place.
- From an efficiency point of view, starting small allows collaboratives to build trust, minimize risk, manage mistakes, and be successful sooner than later. And any success likely will create demand for increased scale.
- From a legitimacy point of view, eventually operating at a larger scale—both in terms of impacting ecosystem function and engaging a broader constituency—likely will translate into more respect for CBF from the public agencies and forest products industry.

In actual practice, the appropriate scale for a community’s CBF activities, as viewed from each of these differing perspectives, may be subject to some debate or even conflict. Implementing organizations may find they have to negotiate a careful balancing act. **North Quabbin Woods**, for example, found its target service area, called “North Quabbin,” to be much too large, as it included at least seven different communities, each with its own social and political dynamics, knowledge of the land base, assets, and needs. In other respects, however, North Quabbin actually was too *small* of an area, lacking the resources to

provide sustainably harvested wood products at a scale that could be competitive in the marketplace.

On public lands, the U.S. Forest Service often awards contracts at a large scale as it seeks to find economies of scale and efficiencies. Small businesses in local communities, however, work with limited numbers of employees and often do not have the capacity to mobilize quickly the expanded workforce needed to address larger-scale contracts. Community-based organizations (CBOs) can play a critical role in “repackaging” large contracts into smaller subcontracts that are more appropriate at a local scale. Such a role may require these CBOs to take on a large amount of risk and assume some unfamiliar responsibilities, including quality control and safety issues.

Inevitably, scale and sustainability are linked. If a CBF program cannot get to the appropriate scale to compete in the marketplace or to impact broader ecosystems, then the effort will not be sustainable in the long term. In fact, all of the groups in the Demonstration Program started small, but, within the five years, none of them reached a scale that could support sustainability. Two inputs are critical. Starting small is one key, but having a plan for ramping up the effort also is essential.

Going to scale, however, isn’t as simple as just doing more of the same. At a larger scale, ecological, market, and social dynamics inevitably change and must be reconsidered if they are to be understood. As a general rule, competing at a larger scale means expanding one’s operations and competing “with the big boys.” CBF, however, strives to go to scale not by becoming “one of the big boys,” but rather by supporting smaller, community-based efforts and linking them together. With CBF, scale doesn’t come from

With CBF, scale comes less from consolidating into one large organization than it does from networking and leveraging individuals, organizations, and businesses so that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

consolidating into one large integrated organization as much as it does from networking and leveraging individuals, organizations, and businesses so that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

LESSON 9 There is a need for strategic investments in both the capacity of ecosystems to sustain ecological services and the capacity of communities—whether of place or interest—to care for themselves and their land, and to work together toward solutions.

As the emphasis shifts from the short-term flow of market-based products to ecosystem restoration, a critical task facing communities is to figure out how to pay for the work that will be required over the long haul. Certainly environmental organizations, philanthropic foundations, and other parties need to invest in the communities and other actors who are attempting to fill the gaps left by the fiscally strapped public land management agencies. With patience and persistence, CBF practitioners can also collaborate with their diverse partners both within and beyond their own geographic regions to develop investment mechanisms that link the restoration and maintenance of healthy forests with the economic vitality of local communities.

Financial analysis

- 1. Grantees raised over \$12 million of leveraged funds through the end of 2004. Of this total, Watershed Research and Training Center raised over \$3.5 million, Wallowa Resources over \$2.2 million, Rural Action over \$1.8 million, and Public Lands Partnership over \$1.6 million.
- 2. Forty percent of Ford Foundation funds were spent on salaries; 40 percent on soft infrastructure such as staff and community training, convening and collaborating, and office expenses; and 20 percent on implementation of projects.
- 3. Grantees raised over \$8.8 million for implementation of projects on public lands.
- 4. The Ford Foundation’s funding eased cash flow difficulties for grantees that received reimbursement payments for implementation projects.
- 5. Ford Foundation funding paid for staff time and demonstrations over five years; this sustained funding gave the grantees breathing room in which to innovate and experiment.

—Based on data collected from each of the grantees

There are also real costs associated with establishing and maintaining effective collaboratives. Supporting these processes—and people’s time engaged with them—is critical to achieving changes in both ecosystems and communities on the ground. These investments rarely are covered by either public or private sources, which focus much more on “project costs,” such as seedlings planted or acres thinned. Upfront investment is needed in capacity building, whether supporting organizational development—training, creating management plans, learning how to negotiate contracts, etc.—or strengthening other skills throughout the community.

In the current era, when government agencies and private foundations alike are experiencing fiscal constraints, this investment

challenge may appear daunting. Small wonder, then, that some community-based organizations are experimenting with starting their own for-profit subsidiaries, often with the intent of helping to seed or structure a thriving market niche for sustainably derived forest products. Thus far, however, these and other businesses have discovered how difficult it is to secure traditional investment for innovative, relatively untested ideas. Low-interest loans and small grants are needed for equipment, research and development, and the fixed costs of marketing. Most importantly, investors need to be patient in seeing their return. Such patience may be more forthcoming when investors actually are from the community and thus can see their “return” in more than financial terms.

Having created a for-profit subsidiary (called Community Solutions, Inc.), **Wallowa Resources** found that this mechanism made it possible to develop and spin off other for-profit businesses. The first of these businesses was Community Smallwood Solutions (CSS), primarily a manufacturer of posts and poles. In 2004, Wallowa Resources secured \$150,000 in private capital for CSS. Among the 12 investors who provided this capital, nine were residents of Wallowa County. Their investment made it possible for Wallowa Resources to register CSS as a limited liability corporation.

Throughout the Demonstration Program, community organizations spent a significant amount of money in trying to help the U.S. Forest Service implement on-the-ground projects that also could create work for local people. In many cases, this included direct payments for some agency expenses required to get those projects started. Between 2001 and 2004, according to interviews with the grantees working on public lands, five of the organizations spent over \$3 million on efforts to work with the U.S. Forest Service. In some cases, philanthropic foundations provided these funds. In other instances, the implementing organizations used funds from grants, Resource Advisory Councils that work with each Bureau of Land Management district, or other sources to match federal funds, thereby making the federal dollars go farther. While investing in ecosystem stewardship is a critical issue for many public land communities, it is a lower priority for Congress. Sometimes, additional money is needed to make up a shortfall in public investment.

Implementing organizations further recognized that the lack of access to capital severely limits the scope and profitability of community-owned businesses. Through its small grants program, **Healthy Forests,**

Healthy Communities provided funds for product development and market exploration. In addition, HFHC has designed a program with Shorebank Pacific making it possible for businesses to access funds for equipment by using HFHC funds as loan guarantees.

LESSON 10 To achieve substantial, long-lasting impacts at a broader scale, whether in a region or across the country, pursue two strategies. First, saturate the landscape with successful local-level efforts, which then can be connected through a national movement. And second, create an enabling environment, including supportive policies, positive incentives, investment, and research and information.

There is no question that CBF successes are occurring at small scales. Acres are being restored, value-added products are being marketed and purchased, and communities are managing change. Over the past five years, the number of community-based natural resource management programs has grown exponentially.

“ A movement is a transcendent widespread feeling, visionary, fueled by many local organizational efforts—and in turn inspires many local efforts. To become a bona fide movement, there absolutely has to be the two-dimensional ethos [vision] and active life [day-to-day implementation].”

—Hunter Gray
Community organizer

The challenge remains, however, that as long as public agencies view CBF primarily as these tiny little pilots and experiments, they won't make a large-scale commitment to it. If CBF is going to get the political support and system changes that are needed, there needs to be a larger strategy to saturate the landscape and link together these fledgling community efforts.

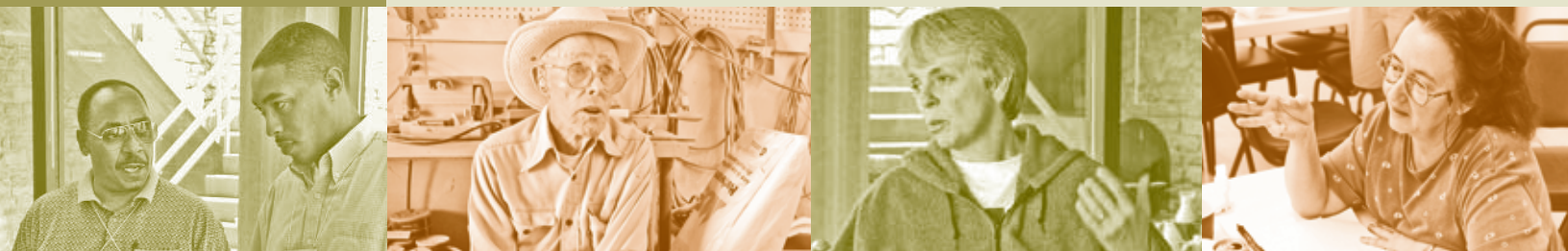
A large-scale commitment ultimately would require the kinds of systemic changes that are necessary. Policy work takes longer than one ever thinks at the outset. It's difficult to build the necessary relationships, and it takes time to effect legislative change in detail. It takes the work of many individuals, agencies, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and other collaborators. Even so, the Demonstration Program found that these investments are well worth it.



CHAPTER

3

Building Just and Resilient Communities



“Community-based forestry is about a meaningful role for a local voice, local knowledge, and local experience in both decision making and implementation for natural resource management.”

—Lynn Jungwirth, executive director

Watershed Research and Training Center, northern California

At its core, community-based forestry is about simultaneously improving both forest ecosystems and human communities.⁷ In so doing, CBF recognizes not only the mutual interdependence of forests and people, but emphasizes that each in its own way must exhibit diversity, resilience, and long-term sustainability.

Every CBF project, then, encourages local people to ask themselves probing questions about how their communities actually function: Who actually participates in decision making about devising and implementing these projects? How do they plan to make use of local traditions and local knowledge? And, perhaps most importantly of all, *who actually benefits, and who is left out?*

Working through these sorts of questions is rarely easy. In fact, doing so likely will make more visible the ways that some within the community persistently have wielded power over others. Not surprisingly, it can take a great deal of effort to repair the damage and establish trust with groups long disenfranchised. Some might ask, then, why even bother? The answer lies in the very meaning

⁷ In this Demonstration Program, as in the CBF movement overall, there was greater emphasis on communities of place than on forest-dependent peoples, such as the mobile workforce.

of the word “resilient,” which the dictionary defines as “being able to recover readily, as from illness, change or misfortune.”

No one could dispute that rural communities—and some urban neighborhoods, too—face increasingly daunting challenges—the loss of traditional jobs, shifting demographics, and tensions around land use and natural resource management. Buffeted by wrenching change, local residents struggle to find new and better ways to earn a living, to provide for families and schools, to take care of aging parents.

All of these challenges demand urgent attention and yet defy easy solution.

While CBF is by no means an easy fix for these complex challenges, it does bring to the table a much broader base of people who are willing to tackle them. Perhaps it is successful because it appeals to the abiding love of place that most people feel. Moreover, it incorporates the wisdom and experience they have accrued in living and working close to the land. And over time it vastly expands the menu of options and tools that they can use to shape a better future.

Pragmatically speaking, then, CBF strives to offer human communities, loosely defined here as groups of individuals and families, the same opportunity that it affords local forests—to enhance their diversity, resilience, and long-term sustainability. And to understand better how this all might actually work—on the ground, in real communities—the CBF Demonstration Program sought to explore, among others, the following questions:

- How do communities reach out to identify and engage all of their potential

stakeholders, including those traditionally disenfranchised?

- How do community leaders know when to lead and when to follow?
- How do communities sustain these ongoing inclusive processes over the long haul?

Not surprisingly, nearly all of the sites participating in the Demonstration Program struggled to find effective ways to include a broader spectrum of community stakeholders in their ongoing deliberations and project implementation activities. Some were more successful than others in this effort.

In many cases, however, it appears that people are most highly motivated to join with others to accomplish the goals of community-based forestry when they fully understand what those overarching goals are, what benefits might be expected from



The more I understand CBF, the more I understand that it's about people. That's the centerpiece of it. The program isn't just about growing trees and harvesting them to make money. It's about creating a decent life and taking care of your business."

—Amadou Diop, director

Forestry Program, Federation of Southern Cooperatives/
Land Assistance Fund, Alabama

particular CBF projects, and how those benefits could be distributed more widely in the community.

Moreover, when those key goals and expectations are clearly understood, then individual projects appear far more likely to evolve synergistically toward a sustainable,

TIP How to build a resilient community

"Wallowa Resources connects people to help the county be better," explains one community member. "When conflict is reduced, it is possible to work together. When you can work together, you can change things and have hope things will get better. Wallowa Resources has shown that it is possible to change and has inspired us all."

Another resident adds, "Wallowa Resources has taken the leadership in creating a new dialogue and the sense that if we all work together, we can get something done. This community has successfully fought the decline of its schools and the closing of our hospital. This is only possible when the community has a sense that we can work together."

Ryan Temple from Healthy Forest, Healthy Communities, also in the Pacific Northwest, adds that "resilient communities must also be engaged in the policy and economic world outside of their immediate area."

communitywide culture of stewardship—one that promotes inclusive decision making, collaborative relationships based on trust and reciprocity, and more equitable access to resources and benefits.

According to Dave Schatz, a professional forester working with **Rural Action**, “Folks are now involved who have never been before. [The people participating] are getting more involved in community meetings, even beyond forestry stuff. They are asking questions about their forests, even if it’s not in crisis. There is a shift toward more proactive forest management. There is recognition by landowners that forests are assets that they can invest in, and that liquidating them isn’t the only option. There is a lot of growing stock in the ground for future harvesting and marketing. People are more empowered because they have choices.”

“There’s nothing like standing on the ground together to see what the other person sees.”

—Community member
Public Lands Partnership, west central Colorado

Impacts

At its outset, the Demonstration Program asked the question, “Can CBF contribute to building resilient communities in ways that can help them weather uncertain futures?” The experience of the demonstration sites suggests that the answer is yes. Evidence that resilient communities are being built includes the following observations:

Communities organize themselves around their natural resources and across their differences—language, history, race, and interests—to build trust and to identify solutions.

- The **Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters** built a community of “people whose hands touch the land,” one person or small group at a time. Staff and board members identified local leadership and fostered dispersed but focused activities—and, in turn, empowerment—through their support of over 25 “Community-Based Organizing Project” grants. AFWH has had to address language, culture, and racial issues, as well as the inherent conflicts associated with commercial vs. subsistence/traditional harvesting and those associated with mobile vs. place-based workforce.
- **D.C. Greenworks** helped inner-city dwellers build community around natural resource issues. It helped strengthen their capacity to shape their environment, whether as residents, consumers, or students. D.C. Greenworks brought the forest to people through tree planting, something all could agree is a good thing. As people get to know each other, working together and sharing meals, they realize they can work together on other aspects of community development.
- The **Watershed Research and Training Center’s** community monitoring program brought people together on the land for a common activity. It also educated community members about the risks of fire and the overall sustainability of the forest. In so doing, WRTC built a broad base of support for a more sophisticated model of land management.

- Through its junior high school wild crafter training, **Makah Tribal Forestry** sought to ensure that longstanding cultural connections to the land and its resources are sustained well into the future. In so doing, it brought together tribal youth and their elders.

“ Three years ago, I’d look at the forest and just see trees. Now I look and see the total watershed and how it benefits people who exist in it. I see the benefits it provides— aesthetically, environmentally, socially, economically.”

—Frank Taylor
Winston County Self-Help Cooperative,
Mississippi

Understanding about, attitudes toward, and participation in CBF have increased.

- **Penn Center** found that the more land-owners learn about CBF, the more eager they are to attend additional learning opportunities with new presenters. As a result, when speakers conclude their remarks at Lowcountry Landowners Association meetings, they have a hard time leaving. Everyone has questions for them and they are not afraid to ask them!
- **Rural Action** promoted community awareness about the benefits of medicinal herbs that grow in local forests through a number of different events that were attended

in all by over 2,500 people, including members of the traditional forestry sector. It also generated media attention and sparked public interest through joint publications with Ohio State University.

- **Vermont Family Forests** developed forest management and harvesting standards, created a monitoring protocol, offered workshops, contacted individual land-owners, maintained a website, prepared written materials, and mailed a regular newsletter. These materials very clearly articulate VFF’s land management position in ways deemed helpful by community members.

Greater public awareness has led to increased community ownership of CBF.

- As a result of their hands-on work harvesting Spanish moss and pine straw on St. Helena Island, South Carolina, youth affiliated with **Penn Center** appear to care more about their families’ retaining ownership of their land holdings. They express greater interest in the local ecosystem and understand why it is important not to over-harvest non-timber forest products (NTFPs) from a single tree. They also have learned how value-added products made from NTFPs might be marketed and sold.

“ 1,313 local people volunteered more than two hours to some aspect of this project during the first four years, according to sign-up sheets and registration records.”

—Mary Chapman, coordinator
Public Lands Partnership, west central Colorado

- Over 300 people have been involved in **North Quabbin Woods** program activities—and interest is still growing, judging from attendance at public meetings. For example, 14 people attended an initial meeting to develop the region’s ecotourism strategy in 2001. Forty people attended the follow-up meeting in April 2002.

Strong local networks are being built.

- The **Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund** has played an instrumental role in catalyzing the creation of vibrant landowner networks. Farmers and landowners independently organize and collaborate to get work done. As one landowner said, “If I have a problem, I ask Amadou [Diop], or I ask another farmer. We share information. Now we’re getting together to buy equipment. We’re coming together to help one another. We’ve learned that we’ve got to stick together, and that we can learn from each other.”
- Peer-to-peer networking among small business entrepreneurs assisted by the **Jobs and Biodiversity Coalition** has created opportunities for reintroducing, relearning, and upgrading traditional

“ It is beneficial that NQW is generating a positive buzz and feeling within the community. It offers an opportunity for the community to come together, share ideas, and influence what is going on in their community.”

—Community member
North Quabbin Woods, north central Massachusetts

trades, such as welding and woodworking. “I tend to do things in a certain way because it’s how I’ve always done them,” observed Jim Smigulec. “But each of us can help one another do things better, more efficiently, and more safely. It nudges people out of their routines.”

Community organizations representing specific interests have been created and strengthened.

- In 2001, **Rural Action** helped organize the Roots of Appalachia Growers Association (RAGA) to assist local residents with local non-timber forest product production and marketing. RAGA serves as a place where they can access information, network among themselves and with service providers, and learn as a group. RAGA has been a valuable institution for these growers. Previously, they had been difficult to bring together. Most had been very secretive about their cultivation and harvesting activities, out of their fear that their ginseng and other herbs might be stolen.
- **Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities** has helped to build rural community capacity through a small grants program and has funded 23 projects. These grants fund research, product prototype development, and marketing support for small community businesses.
- Landowners on St. Helena Island, South Carolina, initially became interested in CBF through workshops and other activities sponsored by **Penn Center**. When they needed additional information and technical assistance, they decided to organize the Lowcountry Landowners Association. Penn Center staff lent ongoing support to help establish the organization.

“ Holding a group together depends on each individual and their stage of growth. You are dealing with their complexity and insecurities. You have to pull people together who are ready for this growth. You need to realize and demonstrate how precious each human being is. If people trust you, you can facilitate a relationship where they trust each other.”

—Carol Kuhre

Rural Action, southeast Ohio

- **Watershed Research and Training Center** provided an organizational umbrella to shelter the early stage development of emerging nonprofits, committees, and informal teams that arose to address specific community issues in Hayfork, California. These groups included the Hayfork Action Teams (HATS), the food bank, the Nor-El-Muk Tribe, the Senior Citizens Center, Hayfork Swimming Pool, and Adopt-A-Watershed.
- **Wallowa Resources** acts as a self-described “docking station” for its community in eastern Oregon. The organization co-creates and disseminates seed ideas that local people can adapt and implement, and it also serves as a mechanism for bringing in resources and ideas from beyond its own rural service area. “Wallowa Resources provides a live-in contact for us in the community,” said a staff member with the Oregon

Department of Forestry. We could not stay connected to the heart of the community without it.”

Communities have enhanced their capacity to negotiate conflict, build trust, and build relationships.

- **AFWH** has long had reducing conflict as one of its objectives. Through building cross-cultural awareness, identifying appropriate representation of constituents, facilitating meetings of diverse groups, and overcoming language differences, AFWH has been able to foster understanding and respect, and reduce conflict.
- **Jobs and Biodiversity Coalition** has built a “community of interest” among environmental, business, and governmental constituencies. The project helps these groups build and maintain relationships that transcend the traditional, deeply entrenched boundaries that once divided them.

“ An indirect benefit is that the Public Lands Partnership has built capacity in the community to address conflict. The coal working group [initially started by PLP] is an example of a group that averted an appeal that would have affected the community. We are better negotiators to protect the environment. There is a willingness and better capacity of community leaders to address these things.”

—Allan Belt, community member

Public Lands Partnership, west central Colorado

“ North Quabbin Woods helped us see the bigger picture. By broadening the base of community support, NOW made it possible for us to see issues from different perspectives. This also facilitates planning and builds human resources.”

—Tom Kussy

North Quabbin Chamber of Commerce, north central Massachusetts

- **North Quabbin Woods** helped estranged community stakeholders get to know one another and find common ground. For example, NQW helped some environmentalists, who formerly saw business as the enemy, to understand that the local business community also has a stake in the success of sustainable development. One local businessman recently reported that he now sees how the forest, through its recreational uses, can benefit both the town and, indirectly, his business. Moreover, the fact that 40 local businesses helped cover the costs of printing NQW’s ecotourism brochure suggests a high level of buy-in.
- **Wallowa Resources** used the countywide community planning process to build and strengthen community. The use of a collaborative process that employed principles of inclusion, transparency, and democracy enabled relationships to change and trust to grow among land managers, landowners, environmental organizations, community members, and other interests. As a result, the local community has gained greater access to the woods and to the work. The community planning process also has helped engage the participation of the Nez Perce Tribe, linking its concerns with other community interests.

The capacity of nontraditional leaders to work with government and other power structures has been increased.

- With support from the **Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund**, small landowners are better prepared to work with loggers, some of whom previously have taken advantage of them. “They [landowners] might never get a fair price for their resources,” said a Federation staff member, “but we want to at least find loggers whose main objective is not to take advantage of the landowners, and we want for landowners to know how to negotiate with them.”
- The **Public Lands Partnership’s** Living History Project is helping local residents, particularly women, to document their families’ history about living with the land, to tell their own stories, and to identify local knowledge that can affect public policy.
- The **Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters** helped a forest worker and his wife to develop the skills necessary to make presentations to forest workers, agencies, and the public. They have listened to the workers, networked on a

“ With hope comes the belief you can make a difference. Now I’m able to tackle other issues.”

—Todd Weed, community member

North Quabbin Woods, north central Massachusetts

national level, and developed ideas for current and future projects that support the aspirations of the workers.

- **AFWH** and its partners also have built the skills of and supported mushroom monitors to negotiate with the U.S. Forest Service and protect their harvest areas from timber sales and their impacts, to engage in policy dialogue regarding harvest permit rules, and to lead the mushroom-harvesting communities to strike against buyers in their demands for fair prices.
- The Roots of Appalachia Growers Association (RAGA) in southeastern Ohio, nurtured in its early development by **Rural Action**, strengthened its ability to lobby on behalf of a unified position shared by its membership. Following a workshop attended by 60 people, the Ginseng Poaching Working Group successfully persuaded Ohio state agencies to delay the ginseng harvest in order to protect the time during which the plant reseeds itself. The state's newly revised "Hunting Manual" also cites these new harvesting rules, which is important because game hunters and ginseng harvesters are active in the woods at the same time of the year. In fact, they often are the same people!
- RAGA has collaborated with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to educate judges about ginseng poaching and its severity as a crime. RAGA advocates that poaching should not be classified simply as a misdemeanor. **Rural Action** also helped a grower whose ginseng had been stolen to obtain pro bono legal counsel and successfully convict the buyer who received the stolen herbs.

The threefold goal of simultaneously fostering healthy forest ecosystems, creating sustainable economies, and building more flexible, resilient communities requires a broad range of strategies.

Lessons

This section offers lessons for individuals, informal groups, and community-based organizations that are interested in community-based forestry, including cultivating the values of CBF, increasing the community's capacity to implement CBF, and developing roles and operating principles for the CBOs.

The threefold goal of simultaneously fostering healthy forest ecosystems, creating sustainable economies, and building more flexible, resilient communities requires a broad range of strategies, including:

- building reciprocal, trusting relationships among diverse social groups;
- including populations typically left out of natural resource deliberations;
- building the capacity of groups to participate in established structures;
- innovating and catalyzing opportunities; and
- opening space for communities to create or respond to opportunities on their own.

Pursuing such an ambitious agenda has required both an approach and leadership that is visionary, proactive, and responsive to and inclusive of the diversity within

any given community. CBF as an iterative reciprocal process has both shaped and been shaped by groups of individuals within the community. On the one hand, CBF offers a forum for defining the community that allows for continual examination and an evolving shared sense of who the community is and how it operates. On the other hand, the interactions in the community catalyzed through CBF help to determine the process, activities, and subsequent measures of success.

It is important to revisit periodically the notion of just who the community is—and to let that group identity evolve as those who engage in the ongoing work define it over time.

Cultivating the values of CBF

Building community is an iterative process.

It will never be possible to identify *all* the members of a community interested in a set of activities, to ensure *everyone* is engaged in planning, and then to move forward with implementation. However, any organization that seeks to implement its CBF program in isolation—without engaging the community in its conceptualization and practice—will find itself out on a limb and more or less alone.

Just as interactions and, ultimately, shared identity evolve over time, so does the community. Similarly, as CBF programs evolve, innovate, and position themselves within the community, new interactions and identities develop, allowing programs to tap into new constituencies. It is important to revisit over

time the notion of just who the community is—and to let that group identity evolve as those who engage in the ongoing work define it over time.

Even CBF organizations with long histories found that they needed to make new efforts to understand the community and its diverse relationships to natural resources, particularly the forest. Time spent listening and learning helped them to understand individual and group values, living strategies, and willingness to tolerate risk. Taken together, these observations made it possible to develop CBF strategies appropriate and relevant to the particular constituencies they sought to serve.

LESSON 1 Engaging the broader community in CBF requires understanding how its unique and multiple historical, cultural, and socioeconomic contexts shape its people, their relationships to one another, and their relationships to the landscape and natural resources.

As Nancy Fishering of the **Public Lands Partnership** observed, “We had to understand ourselves first to be effective.”

For the **Makah**, a Native American people in the Pacific Northwest, it was essential to begin by thoroughly understanding just what is meant by the word “community.” In a tribal context, the word’s operative and embedded layers of meaning are multiple. “Community” can refer just to the Tribal Council, to the people using the forest resources on an everyday basis, or to tribal members living both on and off the reservation. The CBF process itself surfaced these kinds of nuances. Everyone involved soon realized that developing a program that

TIP Tools for community assessment

Listening sessions are public forums you can use to learn about the community's perspectives on local issues and options. They are generally fairly small, with specific questions asked of participants. They can help you get a sense of what community members know and feel about the issue, as well as resources, barriers, and possible solutions.

Asset mapping focuses on the strengths of the community rather than the areas that need improvement. Focusing on assets gives the power back to the community members that directly experience the problem and already have the resources to change the status quo. If the changes are made by the community and for the community, it builds a sense of cohesiveness and commitment that makes initiatives easier to sustain.

Creating a **community timeline** gives the opportunity to all groups to tell their version of the history of the community, the land, and the institutions that exist in it. In addition to visually representing the unfolding life of a community, the timeline process creates the opportunity for all groups to understand the historical perspective of others.

Conducting a **power analysis** allows groups to reflect upon where and how decisions are made in their community in a range of different contexts. They help groups to understand where power lies for different areas of the community's life, and to understand how different actors in the community might be powerful in different and unrecognized ways.

Well-designed **surveys** can be an effective method for gathering systematic and consistent information across a broad range of individuals to learn about any number of topics—their history, their practices, their challenges, and their needs. A well-designed survey is focused, clear in intent, and user-friendly. It also is brief—or provides incentives for completion when it is lengthy.

effectively reached community members who used the forest resources would require distinguishing between these different layers of meaning.

Researching the history of forestry in Alabama enabled the **Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund** to develop an effective CBF program.

Federation staff sought to understand precisely how the rise of large-scale timber management—including the sprawling pine plantations that replaced the cotton plantations—had excluded black tenant farmers and sharecroppers who formerly made their living in the cotton economy. They also studied persistent trends documenting dwindling black ownership of land in the Southeast.

Listening to members of the local community is key to designing an economic development program that is relevant to their circumstances and needs.

All of this knowledge highlighted the importance of developing CBF activities that resonate with black landowners on historical and social—as well as economic and ecological—levels. The choice to introduce silvopasturing with goats, for example, was grounded in multiple factors. Animal husbandry is an activity familiar to local people. Goats also suppress the understory in ways that offer a less expensive, ecological alternative to herbicide use. Finally, marketing the meat goats provides a source of short-term income that can be used to pay property taxes and help protect land ownership.

The history of black landownership in South Carolina shares much in common with that in Alabama. **Penn Center** found that while none of the proposed income-generating activities they tested were sufficient to support an entire family, some of them nonetheless might provide enough income to pay property taxes and hold onto the family-owned land. In the end, this outcome proved to be what a lot of the landowners were seeking. Listening to them was a key

to designing an economic development program that was relevant to their circumstances and needs.

For the **Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters**, this approach meant learning about Latinos, Southeast Asians, Native Americans, and European-Americans who live and work in Washington, California, and Oregon; who may be working for large contractors, landowners, or themselves; and who may engage in many different activities over the year.

LESSON 2 Surfacing and documenting a community's history and culture help build community awareness, support, and pride—all important ingredients for strengthening community resilience.

Focusing on community history helps to link a constructive vision of the future to the strengths and struggles of the past. It recognizes what was, and how this is important to what can be.

Early on in its CBF initiative, **Penn Center** launched an indigo demonstration project. Landowners cultivated indigo plants and sold the leaves to a local artist who distilled a bold blue dye from the leaves. She then used the dye to make cloth featuring traditional West African designs that have with strong links to the Sea Islands' Gullah heritage and culture. Although ultimately this project faltered because of lack of markets for the product, it was successful in fostering local understanding of natural resource issues and renewed cultural pride.

Through its Living History Project (LHP), **Public Lands Partnership** sought to learn about the ways local people have shaped the Uncompahgre Plateau—and vice versa. The video/book project includes stories,

TIP Collaborative leadership

Collaborative leaders can see core ideas clearly and communicate them in a language stakeholders can understand. Collaborative leaders usually are not very visible, as they prefer to put other people forward or to provide some tools or hints so that others will discover their own way. A collaborative leader is one who understands how to bring people together in a constructive way with good information to create authentic visions and strategies for addressing the shared concerns of the community.

Collaborative operators are those who stitch together effective coalitions, task forces, and working groups, and, above all, who understand group process. Collaborative operators have a natural talent for teamwork, listening, and communicating.

local knowledge, and experiences shared by individuals and families who have worked and lived on the Plateau. It also translates the findings from the LHP process into policy development considerations. Like the Penn Center indigo project, the LHP built community awareness and pride, two essential ingredients for resilient communities.



Wallowa Resources moves good ideas, gifts, and passions into action that is appropriate for that community. It is the key to holding *these* communities together, while others have become ghost towns."

—Rick Wagner

Oregon Department of Forestry
Northeastern Oregon

Building community capacity for implementing CBF

A community-based organization can play an important role in guiding and orienting the entire community toward, into, and through the CBF process and what emerges from it. The CBO must be willing to lead without being *the* leader; and, at the same time, to follow the lead of the community. This requires that at certain times the CBO be an innovator and implementer, and at others, a convener and facilitator or broker. One pair of related challenges, then, is to determine what role takes precedent when and how best to sequence the involvement of the community in the overall process.

LESSON 3 There is no clear answer or formula for determining when to lead the community and when to follow the community's lead. Most important was a clear awareness of the need for

the community to be brought into the process sooner or later. To determine when, the CBO must have or develop the capacity to listen consistently and listen well; to be alternatively proactive and responsive as diverse situations demand; and to adjust, adapt, and be ready to change strategies and roles in midstream.

After some initial trial and error, the **Watershed Research and Training Center** found that it was most effective to get results first and then use the results to get people to the table—in other words, to be the innovator and attract the community through its innovations. WRTC also found that economic and environmental programs should be designed in ways that will engage and be integrated with the community, rather than separate from it. To ensure community integration, WRTC’s training programs included one member of every local extended family. This deep level of participation afforded WRTC the opportunity to engage the broader community without having to create a separate, stand-alone initiative.

An “innovate first” approach can provide results that help pull people in, but it also has some disadvantages. It is important to allow the community to challenge the assumptions upon which any project is based—and this kind of community feedback can be difficult to integrate once a project is well advanced.

Taking an “innovate first” approach also has some disadvantages. Some of the demonstration sites found that the longer they waited, the harder it became to draw people to the table. With CBF initiatives, it is important to allow the community to challenge the assumptions upon which any project is based. This kind of community feedback, however, might be difficult to truly integrate if a project already is well advanced.

Even so, **Penn Center** CBF team felt they might have raised false hopes by talking too soon and bringing the community in on the early side. Similarly, the **Jobs and Biodiversity Coalition** sought to avoid raising community expectations before it had developed the capacity to meet them. “We wanted to get something in place, get the wood available, show we could get things done, and then include the community,” said a JBC staff member. “We thought it best to get some things on the ground *before* taking on the community part of the project.” Now, five years later, it is proving difficult to engage diverse constituencies as the project is now seen as “European American.”

CBOs likely can steer clear of both types of these adverse situations, however, by engaging the community early on *and* being clear and realistic about the role the CBO intends to play. Throughout the CBF process, the CBO also must hold fast to principles of accountability and transparency—i.e., delivering on promises or, if it appears that it will not be possible to fulfill them, communicating directly with all stakeholders about any change in plans.

Public Lands Partnership first engaged the community through extensive consensus-building, and then used this solid base of

shared understanding to develop collaborative projects. PLP cautioned, however, that this particular approach uses—and eventually uses up—people’s capacity to participate. Wise and effective use of everyone’s investments in time and human capital are critical to keeping people engaged and participating. An organization must be able to demonstrate to its collaborators that it is accountable for their time and efforts in the same way that it is for funds. Collaboration does breed further collaboration if it amounts to something. If it doesn’t, people turn off from it.

The notion of when it might be best to engage the community is actually not a situation of “either/or,” but rather one of “both/and.” Even when called upon to play the role of innovator and implementer, many CBOs in the Demonstration Program still used a wide range of means for staying in touch with the community, including newsletters (**Vermont Family Forests** and **D.C. Greenworks**), trainings and workshops (the **Federation**), and relationships with the local media (**North Quabbin Woods/New England Forestry Foundation**).

“Keep close contact with the community, so they understand what you’re doing and why,” advises a staff member of one CBO. “You need all the allies you can get.” Maintaining this sort of constant contact and communication, even as the broader community builds its capacity to move into the driver’s seat, creates support for the CBF project, as well as the trust that supports higher levels of engagement in the future.

Supporting emerging community groups and associations must be done on the community’s timeline. Taking the lead and pushing too early won’t work, nor will standing back and waiting for the community to

POLICY

CBOs require flexible funding

If CBOs are alternately to lead and “follow the community,” as the situation requires, they will need flexible funding that permits them to do just that.

take the lead when it lacks the technical expertise, financial resources, and membership to provide volunteer time. A key strategy is to always be available and to know when to push—and when to wait.

LESSON 4 Taking part in community efforts overall—and responding to community needs when they fall within your own strategic focus—increases the likelihood of greater community involvement in your own projects and programs.

Although a CBO may have a particular agenda that it wants to introduce to the community, winning support for a new program is rarely as simple as saying, “We have a splendid CBF program, please sign up!”

After all, every community has its own preexisting agendas and priorities. If the community is to take notice of and consider committing itself to accomplishing a brand-new initiative, it likely will view the sponsoring CBO more favorably if it has contributed substantially to that larger framework of ongoing community development. Part of being treated like an authentic community-based organization is genuinely to become a full-fledged member of the community.

Although a CBO may have a particular agenda that it wants to introduce to the community, winning support for a new program is rarely as simple as saying, “We have a splendid CBF program, please sign up!”

Wallowa Resources, for example, coordinated the “Warm Hearts, Warm Homes” program, conceived by the Oregon Department of Forestry, across three counties. This program delivered more than 60 cords of firewood to low-income families over two years. **WRTC** provided support for community organizations by offering grant-writing assistance, sharing its socioeconomic data and office space, and providing connections to technical and financial resources. **AFWH** focused some of its activities on workers’ whole families, engaging and providing opportunities for women and children. The results of these efforts were multiple. Wallowa Resources, WRTC, and AFWH, among others, helped the local community enhance its own capacity, thereby earning a measure of confidence in themselves as dedicated, community-oriented service organizations.

Sometimes a CBO’s actual physical presence and ready availability in the community create an impression of actual rootedness. **North Quabbin Woods**, for example, found that relocating their offices—from the basement of a medical building on the outskirts of town to a prominent storefront located at busy intersection right in the middle of town—proved far more engaging to the general public. Now people stop by all of the time to find out what is going on. Young people hang out in front of the door and wind up dropping in to hear what **NQW** has

to offer. Tourists and community members alike stop by to learn more about the local area and perhaps purchase a souvenir.

The fact is, CBOs in small towns and rural communities often are asked to do many things and to take on many different roles. Playing multiple roles can create real tension for them, especially since many operate on a limited budget with a small staff. They simply don’t have the capacity to do everything all by themselves. For **Vermont Family Forests**, the temptation was great simply to not answer the phone when the community came calling—or to just say no. Unfortunately, to do so risks having the community begin to think that one’s priorities lie elsewhere.

LESSON 5 Merely asking communities to engage diverse constituencies, including people of color and poor people, won’t necessarily result in lasting, sustainable change. Building a truly diverse program inevitably demands self-reflection, thoughtful action, and ongoing evaluation. It further requires a range of strategies to reach across and engage the full breadth of the community.

While CBOs strive to achieve a broad base of representation and participation in their programs—as decision-makers, implementers, and beneficiaries—this objective must be grounded in a clear understanding of what inclusion means and why it is important for both the CBO and the community. The desire for “social equity” must be internalized through thoughtful reflection, understanding, and commitment to real inclusion. As one community member said of the **NQW** process, “I learned that process

TIP Why is diverse participation important?

- Because if you can bring different types of members into your group, it will be more representative of the full community; your group will stand to gain broader community support.
- Because with a multisector membership, more different opinions probably will be expressed and discussed; that means better decisions may get made.
- Because a diverse, multisector membership is usually also a larger membership. You will then have more talent—and also more varied kinds of talent—at your disposal.
- Because the contacts and connections made in a diverse, multisector group lead to new community relationships. And these relationships can spark new community initiatives that might never have otherwise existed.

Source: *Community Tool Box*, <http://ctb.ku.edu>

is as important as product, and we need to be as inclusive as possible. We'll all get more done in the long term and efforts can be more lasting as there are less people on the sidelines."

Some groups and communities already had operated in this open, equitable way. For others, the concept of truly reaching out to and sharing decision making across racial and ethnic boundaries was new.

To address important issues around diversity, **Public Lands Partnership** needed first to ask some key questions, such as: "What do these terms actually mean? How committed are we? Can we do this and how?" A PLP workgroup explored different opinions through readings and monthly discussions on-and-off for over a year. This sort of patient, reflective process may be a bit more

sincere than just responding to funders' guidelines—and likely results in more sustainable, equitable outcomes.

The **Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters** found there were a number of barriers to engaging workers and harvesters from among people of color. To participate on AFWH's board, for example, many had to forego a day or more of work. Aspects of AFWH's organizational process were unfamiliar to them, including conference calls, set agendas, and time limitations for discussion. During conference calls, some were uncomfortable with not being able to see one another. For others, prior experiences with being disempowered hindered their willingness to speak up.

EXAMPLE

Women in the Living History Project

Throughout the Demonstration Program, the strong leadership provided by women often was the key factor that made productive community collaboration possible. They bridged differences, found solutions, and found innovative ways to act entrepreneurially. And yet, while women actually led the CBF initiatives at seven of the 13 demonstration sites, only a few of those sites developed programs specifically aimed at reaching out to and engaging women in their respective communities.

An exception was the Public Lands Partnership's Living History Project (LHP), which encourages people who live on the land, particularly women, to share their own stories and identify local knowledge that can affect policy. Moreover, through this innovative effort, PLP is finding that documenting local and traditional knowledge about the community is an effective way to surface the contributions that women and others are making to the fields of CBF and community development.

PLP initiated the Living History Project to learn about the myriad ways that people living and working close to the land over several generations have shaped the Uncompahgre Plateau—and vice versa. Starting out, the LHP made a short video that profiled their multiple-use history of the Plateau. PLP later expanded this initial effort into a full-length book project that documents stories, local knowledge, and experiences shared by individuals and families who have worked and lived on the Plateau. Perhaps most importantly, the LHP work group recently developed a new “reflections and considerations” section that translates the book's testimonies into policy development considerations that can assist ongoing community processes, such as the Forest Plan revision process.

The Living History Project has become an effective alternative to public meetings and has diversified public involvement in the overall CBF process, particularly among women. Participants are able to see more clearly the roles they can play and how their knowledge will contribute to the understanding of the connection between the people and the land, which, in turn, informs better decisions about current and future resource uses. The project also may become an important tool for providing newcomers, of which there are many, with greater understanding about the important cultural and social values of the Uncompahgre Plateau.

(continued)

Perhaps this shared knowledge will help to reduce potential conflicts over resource use and management. As Mary Chapman, PLP’s coordinator, writes, “It is a different way of creating civic dialogue, exploring and sharing information and concerns about the land. People who may be less inclined or comfortable with today’s public policy processes, which tend to exclude knowledge that comes from personal experiences, seem comfortable doing so through this project.”

AFWH found that the culture of the organization is more important than simply counting up the number of board, staff, and members according to their ethnicity, which would accomplish little more than tokenism. In order to build a genuinely multicultural organization, AFWH has created a culture viewed by many as humble, cooperative, open-minded, diplomatic, transparent, and inclusive.

D.C. Greenworks also actively engages diverse constituents. To do so, they focus upon doing good work and building credibility in communities of color and poor communities. Often, they seek to develop allies in the communities and then use these relationships to draw forth neighbors and friends. As Dawn Gifford, D.C. Greenworks’ executive director, points out, “Community people trust people they know.”

D.C. Greenworks also practiced patience and persistence. It painstakingly learned about and cultivated values similar to those held by people in the community. In other words, D.C. Greenworks has developed cultural competence—a set of practices, behaviors, and attitudes that allows them to work and engage effectively across different cultures.

Wallowa Resources recognizes the need to engage and partner with all members of the community, including the Nez Perce Tribe. “Wallowa Resources spent the time to learn what was the best approach and channels to work with the Tribe,” observed one tribal member. “Wallowa Resources has always operated correctly with the Tribe. The community planning process has been a key to engaging the Tribe and bridging the Tribe with other community interests. Nothing was rushed through and there were no side deals.”

In addition to race, ethnicity, income, and wealth, diversity also encompasses age and gender. Within the Demonstration Program, several CBF projects attempted to connect young people to community history, the land, and its enduring importance. **PLP’s** Living History Project sought to showcase the quiet yet nonetheless powerful voices of women ranchers who described in their own words the roles that their forebears played during the frontier period. In a similar vein, **AFWH** encouraged women to take leadership roles both in addition to and alongside men. This emphasis offered women the opportunity to contribute to their community’s well-being while men were off working in the forest.

EXAMPLE

Makah Elementary and Junior High School NTFP Program

The Makah community-based forestry initiative collaborated with the Neah Bay middle school to introduce students to the cultural, economic, and environmental value of locally available non-timber forest products (NTFPs). For example, the Makah CBFI program staff and teachers jointly developed a curriculum in forest management for the grade seven science class. They also offered classes in fashioning creative crafts from NTFPs to students in grades seven and eight. Students made an evergreen wreath during the holiday season, a traditional cedar bark mat and deerskin drum wall hanging, a decorated flower press with pressed flowers, and other materials suitable for card-making.

In these sessions and through field trips into the woods, students also studied various ways in which NTFPs are culturally significant to the Makah people, sustainable harvesting practices, the economic significance of NTFPs, and how their value can be enhanced through value-adding processing and marketing.

To date, 68 students have participated in five wild crafting sessions. These students feel pride in their accomplishments. Parents and other community members also have expressed how pleased they are that the Makah CBFI decided to conduct these workshops with Neah Bay students. In response to interest expressed by elementary school teachers for similar workshops, the Makah CBFI plans to arrange for junior high school students who attended the wild crafting sessions to assist in teaching wild crafting to elementary school students.

The **Jobs and Biodiversity Coalition** generated employment and employment opportunities for youth by creating jobs in forest restoration, and through training at the Mill Project site and for the Southwest Fire Fighters program. Similarly, **D.C. Greenworks** has developed and provided hands-on training for inner-city youth in skilled “green industry” jobs.

LESSON 6 A decision and commitment to work with traditionally disenfranchised communities—i.e., communities of color and poor people—must be made many times in an organization’s life.

Continually renewing a commitment to diversity and inclusion requires intention, reflection, time, and resources. As such, the transaction costs of this continuing

TIP Framing the bigger picture

The first steps are to decipher the social and institutional context of the proposed CBF activities, identify the first layer of obvious stakeholders, provide information—and keep providing information—to all interested parties, and engage early adopters. Take a position of “do no harm” in the community. Ask the questions:

- What will this look like after we finish our work?
- Will there be people who will be left out?
- Will there be tensions within the community that have been aggravated by our efforts?
- Will people be frustrated by unmet expectations?
- What can we do differently to avoid having these negative impacts?

There will always be some people who do not embrace a shared identity with others, and they may choose to not get involved. But by defining issues more broadly, engaging in a range of activities, and keeping everyone informed through a number of mechanisms, a greater number of people will have the opportunity to participate in the community’s ongoing development.

commitment can be significant. **Rural Action’s** decision to focus on low-income residents living in its service area drove the organization’s decision to move its offices to a small rural community. As Carol Kuhre, who formerly was Rural Action’s executive director, observes, “If you want to work with the poor, you have to go where the poor are.”

Rural Action’s decision to focus its work upon a multigenerational, typically low-income population also has at times required the organization to take policy positions that were contrary to the perceived interests of other community groups. “There were a few

times I had to show a real preference for serving the poor,” Kuhre says, “even though other interests in the community were doing good work and effecting ecological change.” Colin Donohue, director of conservation-

POLICY Funding for diversity

Funders may need to subsidize the costs to do things differently, if that’s what it takes to achieve inclusion and diversity goals.

based development at Rural Action, adds, “We deliberately created space for local poor folks.” For example, when it became clear that primarily middle-class recent arrivals were engaged in mushroom cultivation and marketing, and the “local folks” weren’t the ones who wanted to pursue this option, Rural Action shifted its focus away from these workshops.

In light of all of these (and more) equity-related concerns, CBF advocates have learned to examine virtually every aspect of their proposed and existing projects, carefully pondering the overarching question, “Who really benefits?” However, there is still an equally important question that is all-too-frequently overlooked: “Who loses?” Thinking about both sorts of trade-offs is

essential to ensuring that otherwise well-intentioned CBF initiatives do not inadvertently perpetuate long-standing community injustices.

LESSON 7 If the goal is broad-based participation, benefits must be articulated to all and support for participation provided to some.

People are most likely to get involved with community projects when they see how CBF can help them accomplish their own objectives. As such, it is important for advocates to articulate clearly how this can happen.

Benefits can be defined in a range of ways. Sometimes they are tangible, like financial rewards. Sometimes they are less so, like the feeling of belonging to a community or owning a parcel of forested land. And sometimes they combine elements of both. Ginseng growers in Appalachian Ohio, for example, sought involvement in RAGA because they saw opportunities for fellowship, mutual support, and marketing.

The **Public Lands Partnership**, on the other hand, found that until public agencies overhaul stewardship contracting systems, and they begin to hire workers from the local area—instead of from neighboring states like Arizona—there will continue to be fewer opportunities for local Hispanic residents to get jobs. As things stand, those workers are far less inclined to participate in CBF activities.

Through its new Community Equity Project, **Vermont Family Forests Partnership** will offer opportunities to hold, steward, and enjoy land to people of limited incomes who could not otherwise afford to buy land. Among the benefits will be increased

“ Bethie [Miller, with D.C. Greenworks] knocked on doors with community members. She got information translated so that Hispanics in the neighborhood knew what was going on. They even joined us in the second tree planting that fall. We know everyone on our street now. We are less isolated. It almost feels like living in a small town. It is different than moving into a neighborhood where everything is already done. Here we know that we have made a difference that will be there for years. Planting trees along the street gives people an incentive to think about the plantings in their own yards.”

—Mathew Ruest and Tanya Shand
East Enders Group, Washington, D.C.

POLICY

Start-up capital aids diversity

Demonstrations alone are not sufficient.

There is a need for start-up capital in low-wealth/low-income communities.

opportunities for poor people to own income-producing assets and long-term investments.

VFFP conducted public information sessions (including walks on the sites), posted information in a variety of forums, and ran articles in the local newspapers, but they found that was not sufficient to reach the target audience that matters most. Now they will attempt to use more targeted approaches to solicit interest from low-income residents and answer their questions about the program, including how to evaluate the investment value of this sort of shared ownership.

Many of the CBF sites work in communities where resources for risk and experimentation are limited. In those areas, people are inclined to see how new initiatives work for their neighbors before jumping in themselves. The **Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund** has provided funds for demonstrations that other community members observe, and it also has provided technical assistance to all who are interested. To involve a critical mass of landowners in goat production, however, the Federation recognizes it will need to provide more resources for start-up, just as it has for the demonstrations. And for those farmers already involved, at some point access to investment capital will become critical to bring their activities to scale.

Roles and operating principles for community-based organizations

LESSON 8 For underserved communities to access services and resources that are not generally available within the community, there often is a need for a “bridge” or broker to bring outside service providers and community members together, and to provide “translation” of technical jargon.

The communities with which the **Federation** works often do not connect with technical services and funding that otherwise ought to be available to them. Either they don’t have the necessary information to take advantage of those services, or they experience discrimination when trying to access them. The Federation plays a critical role in providing information about government services, brokering relationships with government agencies on behalf of community people, and advocating for them. Many community members questioned what they would do if it were not for the role played by the Federation, because there are no other institutions that advocate as directly and effectively for limited-resource landowners of color.

Penn Center played an important bridging role for agencies and funders who were interested in working with communities but did not know how to access them. Because Penn Center staff spoke the language of both the communities and the agencies, they could do the translation necessary to help each side see the value of partnership and help the partnerships operate effectively by leveraging what each partner had to offer.

An example of this kind of brokering was in the partnerships Penn created with Clemson University Extension Service, South Carolina Forestry Commission, and community members to form the ecological component of its CBF program. In particular, Penn Center staff worked closely with these technical resource partners to help them incorporate traditional knowledge into their consultations with Gullah landowners. Without Penn, the traditional wisdom of the Gullah people, who have lived for several centuries in close harmony with the Lowcountry ecosystem, might not have been integrated with the more typically used “scientific” or professional knowledge.

Penn Center also was able to increase access to service providers by bringing landowners to the table. The agencies had little interest in working with just one small landowner, but their mandate did include working with larger numbers of minority landowners. When Penn Center staff could bring larger groups together, the state forestry commission was able to meet its objectives, and the small landowners received technical assistance.

Another example of bridging is the role that CBOs have occasionally played in building relationships and working with government officials, which often are necessary steps to creating a successful CBF program. **D.C. Greenworks** knows that its community volunteers often cannot go to the city offices during the day. In fact, they may not know exactly whom to call. Since D.C. Greenworks understands these connections, they are able to make the calls. D.C. Greenworks also understands the impact that a letter with lots of signatures has on an elected official, so they provide this service as well.

Finally, **AFWH** worked with partners to integrate forest workers and harvesters with practitioner organizations and forest managers/planners to create multisector dialogue, understanding, and learning, where each knowledge base is respected and valued. As an intermediary, AFWH was able to get the agencies to pay more attention to worker and harvester issues.

Most of the demonstration sites found it was a good idea to start small and minimize risks of failure. Even small successes helped to get the community involved in the effort.

LESSON 9 Implementing projects helps promote community pride and cohesion, and it builds organizational credibility.

If CBF is to bring genuine hope to communities, its CBO advocates must build community confidence in both their own and the community’s capacity to implement beneficial projects.

The community needs to see tangible projects to demonstrate the possibilities and keep them engaged. In other words, they need even small successes to get them started and involved. Communities also want to see projects that respond to their everyday needs and challenges. Most of the demonstration sites found it was a good idea to start small and minimize risks of failure. Most importantly, they found it

necessary to move forward and definitely do *something* that could clearly show the organization was not all talk and no action.

The **Watershed Research and Training Center** sought to build community support through devising practical solutions for community needs. For example, they created a small business incubator. This 10,000-square-foot building houses much-needed wood products processing equipment. While only one major business works there, employing 30 people, the incubator staff have provided assistance and access to equipment to several other businesses.

Through its incubator, WRTC also has partnered with the local community college and small business development center to offer courses that can help Hayfork residents to begin developing viable businesses, focusing on literacy skills, computer skills, financial training, and business plan development.

When implementing CBF projects, high profile and high quality definitely matter. **D.C. Greenworks** found that even just one well-publicized demonstration project can put one's name on the map.

"We knew that the 1425 K Street greenroof would be our best marketing tool, both for us and the technology itself," said Dawn Gifford, D.C. Greenworks' executive director. "I carefully strategized [about] this three years ago as part of the long-term plan for D.C. Greenworks and greenroofing. I knew where market forces were going and wanted to be a first mover. That's why I chose K Street and Casey Trees, despite the hard sell I knew I'd face. Over 600 people have toured that roof since July 2004. Call it lazy marketing! It took a careful three years, but now I can sit back as they are almost selling themselves."

LESSON 10 The ability to influence state and local politics and policies that will impact CBF work requires access to the political process. Gaining access depends upon patiently building relationships with political leaders. Throughout this process, community support is essential.

Community support is essential to facilitating access to the political process. Political access is vitally important, because it affords CBF advocates the opportunity to negotiate regarding local- and state-level policies with their elected and appointed representatives, who need to be included in any collaborative effort.

The **Jobs and Biodiversity Coalition** recognized the importance of a community engagement strategy for garnering community support for its work and CBF when it faced challenges in working with the Fort Bayard biomass plant. "One of our gaps is figuring out how to formalize membership and relationships with the community leaders," said Todd Schulke, forest policy director at the Center for Biological Diversity. "It's a glaring thing. We have scientific expertise, legal and administrative expertise, experience in the woods, and knowledge about product development. We work fine together. Now we need to learn as a group to engage in the political processes."

Community support is essential to facilitating political access—and political access is vitally important because it affords CBF advocates the opportunity to negotiate regarding local- and state-level policies.

EXAMPLE Hayfork mobilizes in support of its business incubator

When the Planning Department staff in Hayfork recommended to the Planning Commission that the special-use permit for WRTC’s business incubator be denied, the town mobilized. People called the planning department. They called their county supervisors. They called the Planning Commissioners. Sixty people showed up at the Planning Commission meeting and in a very civilized and informed way, championed this project. The incubator project changed during that meeting from WRTC’s incubator to Hayfork’s incubator. Workers, school teachers, business people, U.S. Forest Service folks, moms, dads, kids...everyone explained to the Commission how important the project is, how much they support it, and how much the town needs it. Even an old detractor of the project read a prepared statement voicing his support, burying a hatchet that needed burying, allowing the town not to feel divided.

For the first time since 1990 and the Dwyer decision to close the forest, Hayfork is a community feeling hope and voicing it—a community realizing its own power.

—Excerpted from WRTC Annual Report to the Ford Foundation

Wallowa Resources, too, found it was critical to have the support of the county government and leadership, especially of the County Commissioners, in ensuring the success of the planning process. “They have brought their power and influence in support of this effort,” said one staff member. “Their engagement was essential to engage the community and develop confidence and trust in the organization.”

In 1997, the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners passed a formal resolution designating Wallowa Resources as an implementing body of the county’s strategic plan for economic development, which seeks to promote a natural resource-based economy. This designation gave Wallowa Resources added legitimacy and reinforced

coordination between the local government, other community-based nonprofits, and the organization itself.

LESSON 11 Engaging a broad base of the community requires a sustained, multifaceted effort that includes a diversity of approaches, options, and opportunities.

Rural Action found that having several “irons in the fire” allowed them to emphasize certain activities when the community was ready for them—and to not feel the need to push a certain activity when the community was not. For **North Quabbin Woods**, multiple strategies for reaching the

community facilitated getting community feedback and obtaining support from different constituents.

Similarly, the **Watershed Research and Training Center**'s broad range of projects has brought in different parts of the community. The non-timber forest product project brought in the wildcrafters, training brought in some of the former loggers, working on the fire plan brought in the emergency response team and homeowners, and the youth camp brought in parents and children. Another advantage of a multipronged approach, WRTC found, is that projects mature at different rates, thereby enabling the organization to work with different groups at different stages. After all, it is not possible to involve everybody all the time, in everything.

LESSON 12 Communicate frequently, be available, and follow through.

A community-based organization can add real value to any long-term project by staying with things when the going gets tough. This persistence is particularly critical in marginalized communities that persistently have seen promises made and promises broken. Many feel jaded and need tangible proof that new initiatives can play out differently than they have in the past. Other marginalized communities have never had *anyone* promise *anything*. If there is no follow-through, their trust also risks being broken. Over the long haul, the coalition of community members who are implementing a particular project is likely to change. As personnel come and go, a CBO can provide continuity, offer new ideas, and impart an enduring sense of purpose.

When a CBO takes the lead in a community planning process, it can help focus the exercise both on the long-term needs of the com-

munity and on those of the larger ecological systems that characterize the surrounding watershed. In addition, a CBO may be the best partner to take on the facilitation and leadership role specifically because it can ensure continuity in the process. "**Wallowa Resources** has carried the torch through the whole process," said one observer. "It is the relationship-building arm for the county." In fact, the lead staff at Wallowa Resources did not change throughout the more than five-year implementation phase of the Demonstration Program.



D.C. Greenworks has found that successful community organizing depends upon getting out and knocking on doors, listening, behaving consistently, keeping promises, and sticking around."

—D.C. Greenworks staff
Washington, D.C.

The **Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters** emphasizes the importance of keeping in close contact with members so that they understand what one's organization is doing and why. Communicating and sharing information go a long way toward forming and strengthening relationships and trust. When people understand what exactly is being done and why, they are more inclined to participate in and support an effort. When there is no communication, an information vacuum likely will be filled with misperceptions and suspicions that erode trust and credibility—and that will take considerable staff time and energy to rebuild.

LESSON 13 Learning from mistakes made along the way and leveraging the benefits from those lessons can earn greater respect from your constituency, as well as enhance their willingness for further involvement.

Throughout the Demonstration Program, CBOs found they needed to share with the community the lessons learned from projects that did not work out as well as had been hoped. In so doing, the CBOs discovered that community members themselves became more willing to talk openly about their own situations.

“A lot of times people don’t want to admit their failures,” observed a staff member with the **Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund**. “We noticed that no one wanted to talk about timber theft when the issue first came up, until we [the Federation] told the story of how we had been victims of timber theft ourselves. Then people were willing to tell their stories and we could talk about strategies for avoiding theft.”

Lessons learned from projects that did not work out as well as had been hoped sometimes had an unexpected silver lining in facilitating new input from the community.

One of **Wallowa Resources’** early CBF efforts was an attempt to help a marginally successful sawmill become more profitable. The venture failed for a number of reasons, all of them outside of Wallowa Resources’ control, including depressed lumber prices

due to increased import subsidies, limitations on supply from the surrounding public lands, and insufficient working capital.

Although Wallowa Resources was not able to keep that sawmill operating, there were several positive outcomes. “Their efforts helped strengthen community trust in Wallowa Resources’ work,” said one community observer. “It showed their strong commitment to the community and businesses—that they weren’t just ‘green’.” Wallowa Resources fully disclosed their motives for buying the sawmill and communicated regularly with the community about the project’s progress. This transparency ensured that the community continued to see Wallowa Resources as responding to community needs, rather than as operating on its own and undermining the community.

LESSON 14 Effective working relationships between CBOs and the community depend upon having the patience and persistence to build and sustain them, as well as upon having the technical expertise to do the job required, whether that capacity exists in-house or is procured elsewhere.

Community members need to feel comfortable with a CBO, as well as to know that they can rely on an organization to have the capacity or find the necessary expertise to get the job done.

The **Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund** found that a mix of relationship building and providing technical expertise engaged local residents in a genuine way, helping them feel comfortable enough to ask the organization for help. The **Penn Center** staff already had credibility on land retention issues, but it could not—and

did not—go into the community presenting themselves as experts on CBF. Staff worked one-on-one with individuals or with groups in workshops, placing paramount importance upon establishing a genuine dialogue. **D.C. Greenworks** established credibility by knowing and doing. It worked alongside community members to plant trees, and community members appreciated that D.C. Greenworks staff were not afraid to get their hands dirty.

The **Federation** also has been attentive to *who* might foster a conducive learning atmosphere for the people with whom it works. “The Federation puts people in front of me that look like me—women, and people of color,” said one community member.

The Federation has been sensitive to the fact that for some people, this sensitivity creates critical space for participation.

Common language also creates a space for participation, and sometimes it falls to the CBO to find that bridging language. While Grant County community members rarely communicated their interests in terms of environmental degradation, conservation, and restoration, many of their areas of interest overlapped with those of the **Jobs and Biodiversity Coalition**. In order to engage with these community members, however, JBC needed to find a common language to communicate with them.



CHAPTER

4

Fostering Sustainable Economies



Early on, the Ford Foundation Demonstration Program asked the question, “Can community-based forestry produce economically viable local jobs with good wages or otherwise augment local income and reduce poverty?”

At the end of five years, it certainly can be said that CBF created some jobs and augmented local income. It is not possible, however, to claim that CBF has become a driver for the local economy. With those observations in mind, this chapter will explore what has been learned about building an economic strategy based on natural resources and how that work can be more accurately assessed.

While it is not possible to claim that CBF has become a driver for the local economy, the economic dimension of CBF cannot be measured solely by jobs and income.

This economic dimension of CBF cannot be measured solely by jobs and income. People who live in forest-dependent communities typically are looking for an enduring sense of economic resiliency. They want to retain ownership of their land. They want sustainable opportunities so that their children and grandchildren have a choice about staying or returning after college. Most are very resourceful, having grown accustomed to having multiple income streams. They are used to collaborating with their neighbors, and they are willing to support strategies that foster equity rather than competition.

Many of these communities have witnessed the failure of the one sawmill in the town and the devastation that wrought. Most of them don’t want to be that vulnerable again. They want to create an economic diversity that matches the varied resources of the forest, not economic dependency that leads to extraction and over-harvesting. They love the place where they live, and they want to leave the forest in better shape for the next generation.

Not surprisingly, most of the CBF demonstration sites began with the assumption that they needed to find and nurture local entrepreneurs. They were looking for the classic entrepreneur—an ambitious person willing to take on the financial risk of the initiation, operation, and management of a given business or undertaking with the expectation that the business will grow and become profitable. In most instances, they didn’t find them, both because dramatic growth was not necessarily what small business owners or other individuals really wanted, and because community-based forestry itself is more often small-scale, with limited access to public lands or, alternatively, with goals to earn only supplemental income on private lands.

In this context, entrepreneurship needed to be redefined. So the communities set out to find new ways to develop small-scale, sustainable livelihoods from the forest. Local entrepreneurs identified innovative uses of small-diameter wood or underutilized forest resources and began to develop them into an income stream. In rural communities, small-scale entrepreneurs typically have multiple sources of income, most often in the informal sector. A few will form businesses and hire community members, but most are more comfortable with a one-person enterprise. It suits the way they want

to work, and it lowers their risk when the resource flow—whether sustainably sourced wood or other non-timber forest resources, such as herbs—isn't there.

Within the Demonstration Program, the role of the community-based organizations that anchored the CBF efforts typically centered around mitigating risks for individual entrepreneurs, creating and strengthening community assets, and accessing opportunities for individuals, grassroots associations, and the community as a whole. The focus has been on cooperation and collaboration, rather than competition.

All of these CBOs have faced persistent barriers. Often, they—or the entrepreneurs they sought to serve—could not access sustainably harvested wood and other non-timber resources in any reliable, steady flow. Like all natural resource-based businesses, they also struggled to gain access to financial capital, because banks are leery about lending to businesses faced with an intermittent or otherwise problematic supply of raw materials. Most operated at a distance from robust urban markets, and nearly all felt threatened by the vicissitudes of global markets.

Adapting to the realities of their circumstances, these resourceful CBOs focused on having many irons in the fire, rather than attempting to create just one or two businesses that could hire a lot of people. Their multipronged approach may have moved forward slowly, with many ups and downs, but over the long term, it likely has a much better chance of being sustainable. Even so, it will take many years to know with any certainty whether or not CBF is going to have a truly substantial impact. After all, communities are working toward the goal of *long-term* economic vitality. The Demonstration Program itself covered just

“ It is amazing when you start looking at all their strategies. We have people that work on my restoration crew during the season and then run their own firewood business in the wintertime. We have people that use non-timber forest products as part of their multiple income strategy and create a business around that. We have the non-taxable income entrepreneur—the cash entrepreneur. They don't have a business license, they don't file to become a Subchapter S corporation, but they use business principles—and they do use their assets to go out and make things or get things they can sell. At first I was very discouraged that I could not offer full-time employment. They said they were very grateful for the seasonal work, because it makes it possible for them to stay in their hometown.”

—Lynn Jungwirth, executive director

Watershed Research and Training Center, northern California

a little more than five years. It is plausible to think that the communities' shorter-term strategies are moving them toward their longer-term goal, but it is simply too soon to know that for sure.

Meanwhile, from all the evidence gathered thus far, it is possible to say with confidence that traditional economic development policies based on old, industrial models of natural resource management are not working for many rural communities. It clearly is time to try another approach.

From the evidence gathered thus far, it is clear that traditional economic development policies based on old, industrial models of natural resource management are not working for many rural communities.

It is time to try another approach.

Impacts

Across the breadth and scope of the CBF Demonstration Program, significant short-term impacts toward diversifying local economies based on sustainable natural resource management have been documented on public, private, and tribal lands. Most of the grantees are place-based. **Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities**, as a regional market intermediary, is a very different model.

Land retention

- Aiming toward African-American land retention, both **Penn Center** and the **Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund** demonstrated ways to generate at least some income on small forested landholdings in the Southeast. The most successful demonstration conducted by the Federation is harvesting meat goats. In this effort, 20 landowners have earned an average of \$1,000 per year. This income can make the difference between being able to pay one's property taxes and losing one's land.

Getting the market to cover the cost of good forestland management

- In search of a way for the market to cover the costs of good management, **Vermont Family Forests Partnership** shepherded sustainably harvested timber from the forest to the final product. Significantly, the landowners received on average twice the standard amount for their wood. To date, however, VFFP has not been able to replicate this process in the marketplace without grant subsidy.
- **Vermont Family Forests** also has developed a brand identity that helps landowners earn a premium for their sustainably managed and harvested timber. VFF is exploring how to license its brand.

Growing the market for local, certified wood

- Aiming to expand the market for local, certified wood, **VFFP** provided technical and financial support to develop Cornerstone, a network of large Vermont institutions that has written purchasing procedures that allow these institutions to consider placing a top priority upon buying certified wood products that are sourced in-state.
- **VFFP** provided technical, financial, and marketing support to Vermont WoodNet, a group of Vermont woodworkers that share a Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

chain-of-custody certification⁸ among two dozen members. This support helped Vermont WoodNet to open a gallery in Stowe, Vermont.

Utilizing small-diameter wood

- To develop businesses that utilize small-diameter wood, the **Jobs and Biodiversity Coalition** nurtured five businesses that use wood from forest restoration projects in Gila National Forest. The craftspeople who run these businesses are experimenting with using different materials and developing the new technologies needed to use more of the material coming from a restoration project.
- **Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities** began with a clear focus on marketing. In the course of linking businesses to the market, it became clear that they needed technical assistance in several areas, including small-diameter wood product development and production improvements. To assist these small businesses, HFHC linked with other service providers. HFHC helped these technical support providers understand the realities of these small wood businesses, and they helped the businesses be open to learning a new approach.

Educating the consumer

- In order to educate potential consumers of sustainable forest products, **North**

⁸ FSC requires that a “chain of custody” be established from the FSC-certified harvest site to the customer to ensure that what they purchase is truly certified product. Any value-adding business along this chain must be certified that it has a means of separating and tracking certified from non-certified product, among other factors.

Quabbin Woods (NQW) designed and exhibited a woodworkers’ display, ran two field tours for a total of 35 architects, submitted articles to local newspapers, made referrals of over \$80,000 worth of projects to local businesses, and had direct sales in 2004 totaling \$6,600. NQW’s regional branding program continues this process. NQW is making local people more consciously aware of their region for its forests and its small-wood products businesses.⁹

- **HFHC** constructed a portable display booth to take to tradeshow. With this booth, HFHC has been able to educate consumers about the many rural local businesses in the Northwest and has introduced new customers to their products. HFHC and its partner businesses have attended U.S. Green Building Council, Home & Garden, Remodel, San Francisco Gourmet Products, and Log Home tradeshow.

Restoring the forest and stimulating the local economy

- In order to restore the forest and stimulate the local economy, **Public Lands Partnership (PLP)** made possible a salvage sale of four million board feet of timber. The timber was sold to two local mills, and the resulting byproducts provide raw material for a three-person Hispanic firewood business.
- **PLP** also pioneered an innovative approach to pooling and leveraging agency resources, creating a nonprofit fiscal agent called Unc/Com. This

⁹ NQW’s *Regional Identity Guide* is included on the CD that accompanies this report (see Appendix B).

mechanism has enabled over \$1 million to be brought into the Uncompahgre Plateau.

Supporting local entrepreneurs and businesses

- To support local entrepreneurs, **Rural Action** sold over 700 pounds of ginseng rootstock through its planting stock program. At harvest, in about six years, the ginseng is expected to yield \$2 million in anticipated revenue for over 300 growers.
- **Rural Action** also provides much-needed market connections for a growers' association by attending tradeshows that promote natural products. The growers thereby gain access to niche markets, where they can sell directly to the retailer. While there have been some limited sales to date, most growers are still planting non-timber forest products in anticipation of future income.
- **Rural Action** supports a pine cooperative as its members develop better marketing outlets for white pine.
- To support local entrepreneurs, **HFHC** offers workshops to its 52 members—including wood manufacturers, retailers, landowners, and nonprofits—so they can learn from each other and from service providers. Through these shared experiences, HFHC members build ongoing relationships and then start to buy and sell from each other.
- Through developing its own brand, **HFHC** is both raising awareness in the urban marketplace about sustainable, rural businesses and selling their products.
- **HFHC** supported a flooring broker who has linked small rural businesses to regional and national markets. He also has offered technical support to these businesses so that they can meet the quality and customer service requirements of the marketplace.
- **HFHC** conducted market analyses on regionally sourced wood and lumber. It also attended and then assessed the benefit of tradeshows for various market sectors.
- Responding to businesses' struggles with access to capital, **HFHC** will make some revolving funds available as loan security so that it is possible for businesses to get equipment loans at reasonable rates.
- To support local businesses, **Wallowa Resources** has assisted local businesses through market research and demonstration trials on a range of small-diameter products including post and pole, new small-log building kits, flooring, paneling, and furniture.
- **Wallowa Resources** acts as a contract administrator. This role has proven invaluable in matching the size of the U.S. Forest Service contracts and type of work more closely with the small scale of the businesses and skills available in the community.
- To support local businesses, **Watershed Resource and Training Center** established an incubator that houses two locally owned, forest-related small businesses. Thirty-five employees work there.
- **WRTC's** small business incubator offered flexible terms for raw materials, bought equipment, and let businesses lease space by the hour. It also linked

businesses to **HFHC** and the U.S. Forest Service Forest Products Lab.

- To support local entrepreneurs, **Gila Woodnet (GWN)**, a member of the **Jobs and Biodiversity Coalition**, provided emerging wood products businesses and entrepreneurs with physical and virtual incubation services such as website assistance, direct and indirect marketing support, and use of equipment.
- **GWN** also encouraged collaboration among businesses. Local entrepreneurs cited networking as one of the most significant forms of non-technical support they received from GWN.
- To support local entrepreneurs, the **Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund** provided training, workshops, and brochures in budgeting and management for goat businesses.
- The **Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters** created the opportunity for restoration byproducts—i.e., boughs from small trees thinned for fuels reduction—to be used by forest workers and their families to make “restoration wreaths” for the 2004 holiday season.

Creating and retaining jobs in the community

- Providing jobs in the community, **Wallowa Resources** offers employment to 34 full-time equivalents, which represents over 1 percent of the county’s non-farm workforce. This is through its nonprofit office, its for-profit arm Community Smallwood Solutions, and restoration contracting.
- Providing jobs in the community, **WRTC** trained 48 people for jobs in the forest products industry. Twenty have seasonal full-time work on WRTC’s fuels reduction crews.
- Eighty percent of **Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities’** business members reported increased levels of employment after joining HFHC.
- In order to increase environmental knowledge and access to jobs in the horticultural field, **D.C. Greenworks** offered horticultural training to 80 young men and women in Washington, D.C. Since only 40 percent retained their jobs for six months, D.C. Greenworks is developing a Low Impact Development business that will offer full-time seasonal work opportunities as transitional employment.
- In order to increase environmental knowledge and access to jobs in the eco-friendly green sector, **NQW** ran two North Quabbin Woods Ecotourism Guide Programs. Seventeen people graduated, three have earned income in this field since the training, and four are using their newly acquired skills as volunteers for local organizations.
- The **GWN** sort yard employs four full-time and one part-time workers. These employees do sorting, hand peeling, machine peeling, firewood processing, marketing, sales, and general management. All of the GWN sort yard employees currently are trained to work at the Mill Project site. At any given time, two of them are likely to be present at the site.
- To enable forest workers to access more local jobs, **AFWH** facilitated connections between forest workers, environmentally sound contractors, landowners, and land

managers with the result that employment in these cases has been more consistent, of longer duration, and at higher levels of compensation.

Building economic diversity

- To build economic diversity that matches the diverse resources of the forest, **WRTC** is planning a Small Diameter Utilization Facility that will use all of the material coming from fuels reduction and restoration projects. WRTC plans to employ 30 people.
- **Wallowa Resources**, its for-profit subsidiary, and local investors are building an Integrated Wood Center with similar goals and objectives as the facility planned by WRTC. A key future component of this center will be the generation of various forms of renewable energy.

Lessons

This section offers lessons about asset management, small business networks, business basics, markets, and the role of the community-based organization.

Asset management

LESSON 1 Value-adding is the way to make the smaller scale work, because raw commodities directly reflect prices on the global market.

Although there are times when value-adding production and sales of raw commodities can be mutually supporting, the former is typically preferred over the latter. After all, profit margins typically are greater, and

the producer is more insulated from price fluctuations, if the product is seen as unique and special. In this context, flooring and cabinetry made with local wood by local producers have an edge in the marketplace that cannot be taken away by global competitors. Smaller production levels limit the size of the market and type of product, but add to the uniqueness of the product.

Value-adding mechanisms include superior service, creating a unique product, the ability to change quickly in response to markets, and a “story,” among other strategies.

Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities and its members, for example, found that, after considerations about quality, the personal stories behind their brand identity (about the people who actually harvest or create their products) gave them an edge in the market. These stories proved the most valuable when the product itself could be displayed or seen, and where the customer easily could share the story with friends.

Obtaining loans or attracting the direct investment necessary to set up a manufacturing facility, however, can be daunting. Banks are hesitant to loan money to unproven small ventures, especially when their raw material flow is uncertain. Public agencies and philanthropic organizations usually have restrictions regarding how their grant allocations can be used. Sites in the Demonstration Program often found it

While value-adding manufacturing typically is preferred over trading in raw commodities, obtaining the funds necessary to set up a manufacturing facility can be daunting.

TIP Consider a rural business incubator

If funders do not want to provide direct assistance to rural businesses, they can support rural business incubators. The incubator becomes a community asset with an income stream from leasing.

The businesses that transition through the incubator are able to get access to the equipment that is needed for their production and that they could not afford otherwise. After several years in the incubator where they can lease equipment, the businesses may have built up enough of a customer and sales base to encourage a bank to lend to them. Without this capital, a small business usually will not be able to purchase or access the equipment needed for value-adding manufacturing.

difficult for small businesses to grow past “one-person shops” to a level of production that could employ more people.

WRTC founded a rural business incubator that provides value-adding manufacturers with equipment and manufacturing space at a leased rate. For businesses that cannot get access to loans, this rural business incubator gives them a place to start their business and build up the sales history that might make a bank more interested in them.

Consequently, it often is desirable to couple value-adding wood manufacturing jobs with other economic strategies, especially forest restoration contracts. As Diane Snyder at Wallowa Resources has pointed out, “More robust economic conditions are experienced [by adding] wood manufacturing jobs than with just restoration contract jobs. A healthy mix of both provides unique diversity and economic return for the community.”

A more diverse economy emphasizing local production also enhances the multiplier effect, which refers to the benefits accrued when a single dollar circulates repeatedly through the local economy. Furthermore, value-adding wood manufacturing jobs, when they are located in new start-up businesses, result from strategies that create and build local wealth. Over the long run, this outcome is much to be preferred over short-term strategies that merely redistribute federal and foundation dollars.

LESSON 2 Forest restoration work and harvesting non-timber forest products are most likely to offer benefits to the local community when they are integrated with value-adding strategies.

Demonstration Program sites located near public lands led collaborative processes for restoration projects so community members could get access to the woods. **Wallowa Resources** and the **Watershed Resources**

Training Center, for example, designed and managed restoration projects that provided seasonal full-time forest work to community members. Both organizations also nurtured local businesses that took the material from these restoration projects and turned it into marketable products.

The **Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters** and partners supported and provided connections and training in biophysical monitoring and other skills to workers to ensure that they are able to compete for and secure higher-paying jobs, as well as improve the forest. As a result, several members successfully competed for new work under improved conditions.

On private lands, forest restoration work is a niche market, generally for affluent landowners. **Vermont Family Forests** members work closely with loggers who focus on the overall health of the forest rather than the most lucrative harvest. The loggers and the landowners face a problem of scale, however, whenever a particular landowner only has a few trees that are ready to cut. In such instances, VFF coordinates bringing together groups of their members to achieve better economies of scale and to make the overall harvest more interesting, and thus more valuable, to the sawmills.

Penn Center ran several demonstration projects with indigo, a culturally and historically significant NTFP in the region. Penn was

successful in growing indigo on a few sites and ultimately had a lot more indigo on its hands than the one textile artist in the local community could use. Even given this local surplus, however, there still was not enough indigo to justify efforts to reach a wider market. Balancing the scale of the harvest with the available market always will be a critical factor.

LESSON 3 A small community-based business should focus its marketing efforts at a manageable scale, addressing a particular segment of the larger marketplace.

This needs to be a scale that small businesses can meet in terms of wood supply and production capacity. Figuring out the appropriate scale and particular market segment can present a major challenge to community-based organizations—particularly those establishing new CBF programs—that needs to be addressed early on and revisited periodically. The scale likely will need to offer a higher price point, although not the highest prices. Individual businesses must refine and clarify their story, so that it can be told to the customer. The most important points to convey concern how one’s products are unique and why they are worth paying for.

Small business networks

LESSON 4 Facilitating business-to-business commerce can strengthen local and regional economic capacity and resilience.

From their unique vantage point, nonprofit CBOs often have a bird’s-eye view of emerging opportunities. This favored

Balancing the scale of production with the available market—and seeking to benefit from economies of scale—always will be critically important.

position enables them to more effectively draw upon local assets, develop new products, and tap new markets. In the Demonstration Program, CBOs often took a second look at the raw commodities produced by their communities and searched for ways to use them in local value-adding manufacturing.

The key to making things happen, however, lies in bringing together local entrepreneurs, whether formally or informally. These are the people who actually start businesses and sell products. **Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities** brought its partners together at workshops. As business owners started talking to each other about their enterprises, they soon realized they could work together or sell services to one another. The potential benefits became obvious. One local supplier or manufacturer, for example, could help another with an overflow order. Such cooperation vastly increases the stability of small businesses.

Before **North Quabbin Woods** formed its woodworkers advisory group, most business owners simply turned down jobs they couldn't handle. Now they are likely to refer the customer to someone else in their local network. After all, doing so keeps the business, and the economic benefit, within the community. Small businesses are discovering that this sort of informal collaboration works better for all of them.

LESSON 5 **Small business networks can lower costs and increase overall market share.**

Small, rural wood products manufacturers rarely do the volume of business that would allow them to reduce costs through running three shifts a day. Nor are they positioned, especially in sectors that

strive to manage natural resources and ecosystems sustainably, to outsource their labor costs.

If these businesses are forced to compete solely on the basis of the cheapest, bottom-line manufacturing costs, they may not be able to survive. However, they may be able to stay profitable if they can cut some of their costs through strategically collaborating with other businesses and other community stakeholders.

In the Demonstration Program, for example, restoration projects usually went forward when local stakeholders agreed not to use judicial appeals to prevent U.S. Forest Service projects. Negotiating these multi-party agreements significantly lowered the transaction costs associated with the restoration projects.

Small, rural wood products manufacturers may not be able to compete solely on the basis of the cheapest manufacturing costs, but they can minimize their costs through strategic collaborations.

Moreover, the projects were designed to feed the sustainably harvested wood into local businesses, who themselves were part of the overall collaborative effort. Wood that is processed locally significantly lowers transportation costs, thereby offering a further competitive advantage to local businesses.

Business basics

LESSON 6 A social enterprise needs to track its costs carefully. The costs to operate the business itself should be in line with other similar businesses whether they have a social mission or not. Social costs, such as training traditionally disenfranchised workers, cannot be passed on to the customer in a competitive market.

D.C. Greenworks' low-impact development business includes its labor and materials costs when it bids on jobs. The additional training and oversight costs for its inexperienced workers are covered by profits from the business and by government and foundation funding.

Sales skills and knowledge of urban consumer preferences are essential assets to develop or acquire.

The **Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters** works with contractors to conduct its training programs. The trainees' salaries are covered by the job itself, but the training costs cannot be passed along to the customer and must be covered with foundation funding. This strategy gives the trainees a fair wage for their work hours and on-the-job training. The cost per trainee is lower than more traditional training programs, however, because the contract with the customer is covering their wages.

LESSON 7 Small businesses cannot sell their product effectively unless they offer high-quality customer service and a fair price.

Small businesses clearly benefit when they have a compelling story and a brand identity behind them, but they also must have a solid product. Finding out what urban customers want and developing that insight into a profitable product, however, can be tough for a one-person business. **Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities** helped business owners learn more about urban consumer preferences by bringing them to tradeshow and by engaging a flooring broker.

HFHC also worked closely with its rural business partners to help them determine how to handle problems with their customers. Producers typically are not also effective salespeople. They like to make things, and they certainly hope to have customers. In fact, they understand very well that they need to sell their product to stay in business. HFHC staff have taught effective sales skills and sometimes even identified sales leads for their business partners. The organization is adamant, however, that making and sustaining sales are the responsibilities of the individual business.

To sell at a fair price, a business needs to understand both its own costs and the selling prices for comparable products in the marketplace. HFHC has developed a pricing tool¹⁰ to help businesses capture their costs for each item produced. This tool allows them to compare unit costs at different levels of production, using different pieces of equipment, and in different marketing situations, whether to end-users or retailers or distributors.

¹⁰ This HFHC pricing tool is included on the CD that accompanies this report (see Appendix B).

Markets

LESSON 8 Multiproduct and multimarket economic and marketing strategies offer a higher likelihood of achieving economic vitality and supporting increased forest restoration.

As the communities in the Demonstration Program surveyed their economic opportunities, they began to see a diverse menu of options that might be built upon the resources of their local forests. These choices ranged from timber to non-timber forest products, from ecotourism to value-adding manufacturing. They looked at starting small bed-and-breakfasts, restoration contracting, designing equipment for restoration work, monitoring and scientific analysis, running sawmills, setting up biomass plants, and offering GIS services.

Before long, however, each community found that it could not choose just one path. Local residents needed to have multiple irons in the fire, often because of limited access to the forest, to wholesale and retail markets, or to start-up and working capital. They also found they needed to dig in deeply and stick around for the long haul with anything they did. However innovative their business plans might be, the market just did not embrace their ideas and pull projects forward easily.

Even so, there were a few exceptions. In the LaForce Project, **Vermont Family Forests** worked with Middlebury College on a very high-profile demonstration project using local wood that had been harvested sustainably. VFF expected the market to pick up this idea—and from the point of view of using certified wood, it did. Middlebury College had several vendors for certified wood to choose from when it accepted bids for its

Communities found that they needed to pursue multiple paths and to take a long view of each. However innovative their business plans, the market just did not materialize immediately.

next building. However, both this building and later construction projects did not offer forest landowners as valuable a price premium as they had hoped.

Penn Center conducted initial research on several possible products and then followed through with demonstrations featuring two of them—indigo and meat goats. Landowners viewed these demonstrations as potential options they could consider. As landowner Walter Mack said, “The land can be a liability without money, if you have nothing to do with it. Now I am utilizing what I have been taught by **Penn Center** and the Lowcountry Landowners Association. The different ideas they present allow me to choose. If it helps me keep the land in good condition and get some money then I will use that idea.”

Making a living in rural America usually means developing many different skills. Specialization seldom works in a small community. “When policymakers or funders look at our communities, they don’t see the specific skills that our society demands,” says Lynn Jungwirth of the **Watershed Resources and Training Center**. “They push for focus and training. We are all for training, but we see this diversification as a strength. When you have the harvester join the monitoring team, *everyone* learns. When schoolteachers bring the children into

EXAMPLE

Wallowa Resources' business ventures

Wallowa Resources in northeastern Oregon invested in a local mill that complemented its interests in small-diameter processing and niche marketing. In fact, the Joseph Timber Company became the only FSC-certified timber mill in the region. The small business was able to reach the market and write advantageous agreements with customers because it could back up its story about rural community, local jobs, and good forest management.

Wallowa Resources' willingness to take a risk that would create jobs encouraged many people in the local community. After all, consultants had assisted the organization in writing a business plan that would improve the mill's profitability and sustain cash over the winter months. Everyone expected that the mill would be operating profitably by spring.

When Wallowa Resources' business partners proved unwilling to fulfill their investment agreement, however, the mill had to be shut down. Even given an uneven supply of raw material, the Joseph Timber Company closed with a full woodlot. In the end, Wallowa Resources learned the importance of conducting better due diligence about outstanding debts and binding investment agreements.

Nonetheless, Wallowa Resources recognized that both a more diversified economy and more value-adding manufacturing jobs still were needed in the community. Staff knew they would need to try again. By the time Wallowa Resources opened a new venture, called Community Smallwood Solutions, it had learned a lot about mill economics and financing. Staff knew the best people to fabricate and maintain machinery, and they better understood the cash flow needs that a small enterprise faces across the business cycle.

the woods for monitoring project, they learn a skill, and they get closer to the beauty of the place in which they live.”

Nowhere is this more important than for the mobile workforce. Forest workers and harvesters are especially tied to seasonal work. For example, during the dry summer

months, the forest is often shut down for thinning—and even for surveys—as the threat of fire looms large. Similarly, mushroom harvesting times are narrow windows of seasonal opportunity. Diversification of skills and connections are key to gaining employment on a year-round basis.

POLICY

U.S. Forest Service recommendation

Smaller-scale, community-sized operations fill a much-needed niche that is too often ignored. Emphasizing them will require the U.S. Forest Service, when developing restoration projects, to improve its ability to consider how the forest materials that are cleared or harvested might be used to create viable products. It also will mean the agency needs to synchronize forest project timelines and scale to assist in getting past start-up problems and other costs associated with launching new businesses and products. For small, rural businesses, predictability of supply is much more important than overall volume.

LESSON 9 The appropriate scale for community economic development balances the costs of getting to market with the product volume that small businesses can reliably produce. Networking small businesses both locally and regionally is one way to get to this appropriate scale.

Communities work on a small scale primarily out of necessity. Doing so minimizes

risk and affords opportunities to enhance community cohesion. Moreover, it usually makes better sense to work a familiar, well-known landscape. Operating at small scale, however, drives the costs of getting to market much higher. Orders from regional or national distributors can be too large for local businesses to handle. It also can be a problem to procure the working capital that is needed to cover the costs of raw material and value-adding manufacturing *before* the customer actually pays. Moreover, retailers typically are looking for lines of products that they can order from one source.

Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities has found two answers to these seemingly daunting challenges. One solution is to retain a broker. The other is to introduce business owners to one another. Once such connections can be made, the business owners inevitably will find ways to buy from and sell to each other.

TIP

Include training in proposals

When developing proposals, CBOs should design their CBF projects to include training for community members wherever it is needed. When assessing these proposals, funders should support this training and recognize that in small communities, people must build multiple skills rather than focus on specialization.

EXAMPLE

Working with the middleman

Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities viewed the middleman as an opportunity rather than an added cost. After all, retailers were accustomed to buying flooring products from brokers and were quite resistant to buying directly from the manufacturer. The manufacturers, on the other hand, were busy at their plants and did not have time or interest in cultivating customers.

For several years, HFHC offered financial support to a local entrepreneur who was building a wood flooring brokerage business. With this financial support, the broker was able to provide technical assistance to manufacturers so that their products would be better suited for the market. These manufacturers became part of the group of businesses that the broker represented to the retailers. Today, this brokerage system works entirely without subsidy. The percentage of the overall sales that the broker takes turns out to be money well spent, for rural businesses gain vastly improved access to urban customers.

The **Federation of Southern Cooperatives/ Land Assistance Fund** credits an independent network that has arisen among meat goat producers with contributing a substantial economic impact. The goat producers are now coordinating their marketing efforts, as well as sharing information, equipment, and labor.

Networking simply to share information works well, too. Communities in the West, for example, have begun to exchange information about small-scale gasification biomass plants and are beginning to work together toward designing projects. One community procured cutting-edge information from a community in Austria. Another community worked with a company in Sweden. Today, these two communities are exchanging information. People are getting in touch with groups

like the **Watershed Resources and Training Center** and asking, "You wrote that biomass grant. Would you send a copy of it to us?" As one result of this cooperative information-sharing, the next wave of biomass grants that goes to the federal government likely will feature some well-integrated youth programming.

LESSON 10 Branding helps build a market for small businesses that are rooted in the community and committed to sustainability.

Effective branding can help create a distinctive identity for products derived from a particular local area or region. It also can help consumers readily discern whether or not forest products have been harvested

TIP Supporting the brand over the long haul

A nonprofit organization needs to be a stable long-term player in the marketplace if its brand is to offer sustained value for forestry products. One question that landowners ask is whether Vermont Family Forests will still be supporting its brand in 20 years, when the landowner is ready to harvest their trees.

and manufactured in ways that support healthy ecosystems, healthy communities, or, ideally, both.

Among businesses affiliated with the Demonstration Program, however, the marketing story that seemed to resonate best with customers had mostly to do with local people and their small businesses. Trumpeting a product's environmental benefits appeared to arouse less interest, although it's possible that consumers may presume there is some degree of environmental stewardship when they think about local people and small businesses, especially in rural areas.

It is important to have high-quality materials promoting the brand. As businesses grow and expand their marketing efforts, the producer likely will not be selling directly to the customer. As such, the marketing materials, logo, tag line, and story all have to carry the full impact of the branding story by themselves. Producers and their distributors certainly can work diligently to educate the sales force at retail outlets, but they cannot be certain that retailers will tell their story effectively—or at all—to prospective customers unless the product provides higher margins for them or expands their market share.

LESSON 11 Verifying the claims made by their brands was a challenge for CBOs participating in the Demonstration Program. Different partners used different strategies to accomplish this task.

Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities

started out with a plan to set up monitoring and verification for all the products sold with its label. It soon found this was impractical and not even demanded by the market. Consumers simply wanted to know that the products were made locally, which HFHC actually could claim. One of HFHC's chief goals is to encourage its business partners (and the network's customers) to think about where their wood comes from. To do this, HFHC has implemented a relatively simple Wood Tracking System.

North Quabbin Woods sought to establish a label that focused customers' attention on the local region and its natural resource assets. To use this brand, businesses are required to follow clear guidelines.

With its small group of landowners, **Vermont Family Forests** developed a brand that goes beyond green certification to embrace a larger vision of sustainable forestry that involves local communities and individuals. VFF also offers a group FSC certification.



The distinction is local first, then character, and then certification.

I see benefits of all the different brands for different reasons and different markets.”

—Jeff Parsons, woodworker/entrepreneur Vermont

The stringency of its branding standards appeals to local landowners, most of whom do not need to harvest for economic reasons and have other primary forest management goals, such as preserving wildlife habitat and biodiversity. For some, in fact, VFF forest management guidelines may be the only reason they would consider cutting down any trees. Although VFF is still working on ways to deploy and effectively use its brand, demonstration projects indicate that the regional market appears willing to pay a premium for VFF-certified products.

Whenever verification involved making a statement about the way the wood was harvested, communities in the Demonstration Program used FSC’s certification system. HFHC and VFF worked with FSC to offer group custody and chain-of-custody procedures. This made FSC more cost-effective for small businesses and landowners.

Businesses have found that FSC can help with market penetration, but it usually does not offer a price premium. Moreover, FSC has been marketed and widely accepted as an environmental label. Some feel that it does not have strong social standards, although FSC is trying to address this. Some businesses consider FSC important,

but for many producers, a brand that says “local” (or a combination of local and FSC) is more important in their local and regional markets.

LESSON 12 Communities may localize and regionalize their target markets, especially for high-end products, but global markets will still impact them.

Many communities in the Demonstration Program chose not to compete at the global level and focused instead on value-added products that they sold at the local and regional levels. For the **Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund**, this meant selling goats on the hoof rather than trying to bring its small number of goats to more distant slaughterhouses.

All of the community partners realized that this marketing strategy is self-limiting. They further realized that global markets affect prices in their regional and local markets. The local market often is quite small, especially for higher-end, value-added products. Yet, if businesses chose to supply raw commodities, they faced severe price competition and price fluctuation, chiefly as a result of global market forces.

Think locally and think globally

If you care about communities, design your subsidies and investments so that they protect communities’ interests as they engage in the global market.

They did not discover viable strategies to get around these market forces, and most look with some worry upon emerging trends toward further market consolidation and less regulation.

At least one sector within community-based forestry, however, does stay local—forest ecosystem restoration. Local residents sometimes must compete for jobs with migrant workers, but the forest itself cannot be sent overseas to be restored. In rural northern California, **Watershed Resources and Training Center** trains and runs crews, because forest ecosystem restoration is very labor-intensive work. In metropolitan Washington, **D.C. Greenworks** can feel assured that neighborhoods will need to care for their street trees more or less in perpetuity.

As small, chiefly rural businesses take the leap and attempt to access global markets, they need a great deal of information about how those markets actually work. That information can be hard to come by. Most forestry schools no longer have economists on staff who conduct research about how wood flows through global value chains, including ongoing monitoring and analysis of supply and demand.

Large companies have access to this sort of information and know how to work in the global marketplace—including leaving the United States to set up shop elsewhere. They also operate at a scale that affords a measure of resilience in the face of changing conditions. Smaller businesses, on the other hand, are at a decided disadvantage. They are extremely vulnerable to market fluctuations, as they do not work at a scale that easily can absorb the impact.

LESSON 13 Helping rural producers build a bridge to the urban consumer can benefit both constituencies.

Sites participating in the Demonstration Program soon learned to broaden their market reach to incorporate urban or metropolitan areas. **Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities**, for example, works closely with rural producers but actually is based in Portland, Oregon—a large city—and involves partners who are urban retailers. These ties to the urban marketplace are invaluable for HFHC's rural business partners. In turn, products from rural areas provide urban dwellers with a valuable link to rural places and rural values.

“ There are 18-20 variables with pricing in the wood products industry. Wood can sell for three times more in the southern part of Vermont, because it goes into different markets. Seasonal variations are also significant. The most reliable way to get more money for certified wood is with character woods.”

—Mark Lorenzo

Northeast Natural Resources Center, Vermont

Even so, an important challenge remains: How do rural producers reach beyond the existing market niche of relatively wealthy urban consumers and develop products that can be sold to poor or middle-class people—and still make a profit? Are there products that could be developed that can be profitable and reach a broader market? Ultimately, doing so will be important to achieve both small business sustainability

TIP Keeping the door open to global

One Portland, Oregon, wood products retailer, a partner with Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities, says that businesses like HFHC members have to be open to the wider, global market. They need to cultivate an awareness of the tastes and preferences of potential customers who live in other regions of the world.

Trading company representatives from Japan and China have come through Portland wood products showrooms. Local wood species are of interest to them, says Ed Mays of Eudora Wood Products. In fact, Oregon has a good reputation in those overseas markets. Small is seen as a plus, because Japan and China also have networks of tiny businesses. Opportunities indeed may arise, but the research that is needed for small businesses to expand to a global market can be daunting.

and to fulfill expectations about CBF's role in helping to bring about greater social justice.

The role of the CBO

LESSON 14 To build a sustainable forest-based economy, it is necessary to coordinate all the pieces of the entrepreneurial puzzle—resource flow, product development, production capacity, and effective marketing. Often, a community-based organization can be well positioned to play this coordinating role.

An individual entrepreneur or landowner may not be able to see all of the pieces that must come together to complete the entrepreneurial puzzle, but sometimes a nonprofit community-based organization (CBO) is better positioned to do so. It often has more developed networks that extend both across and beyond its service area.

Moreover, it can attract both technical expertise and financial resources that likely are not available to individuals.

From this unique vantage point, the CBO may be able to assess and take steps not only to fortify each element within the larger entrepreneurial puzzle, but also to operate at the intersection of the three elements: materials, manufacturing, and markets.

- **Material/resource flow** depends upon availability and access. Reliably sourcing raw materials is essential to the success of any venture, whether for a single business or for a network of producers who seek to establish their product in a larger market. Even so, the CBO can assist in assessing whether local harvesters and entrepreneurs can gain access to sufficient quantities of a given resource for their businesses to be viable.

EXAMPLE Finding a good use for all of the wood

The Watershed Resources and Training Center has spent 10 years trying to gain better access to the woods and finding uses for the small-diameter wood that comes off these restoration projects. Through this experience Lynn Jungwirth, WRTC's executive director, has seen that, for any one component of the value-adding enterprises that it helps develop to be profitable, *all* the harvested wood needs to have a productive use.

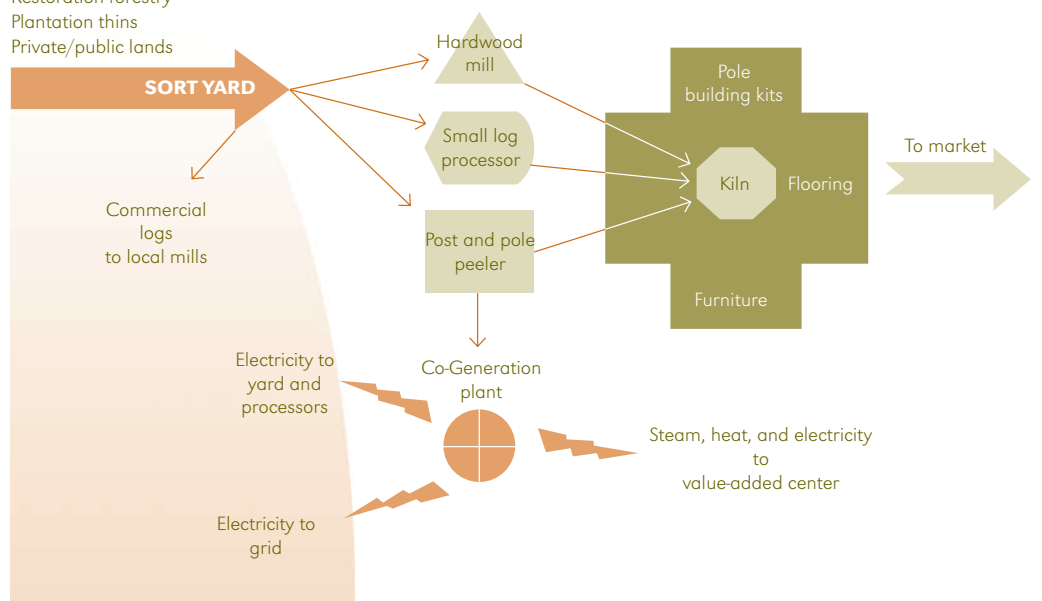
The schematic that follows illustrates how the wood travels through this system. WRTC does not own each element. Rather, WRTC does a lot of research and development and pays for prototypes and alpha testing. Then staff members assist local entrepreneurs who are ready to take over businesses.

Material In

Small-diameter trees
Brush chips
Hardwoods

Sources

Fuels reduction
Restoration forestry
Plantation thins
Private/public lands



Watershed Resources and Training Center—Fall 2004

POLICY

Rural businesses have special marketing assistance needs

Resources need to be dedicated to providing training to traditional small business service providers, as well as to supporting new organizations that can offer the kind of marketing assistance needed by CBF businesses. In the Demonstration Program, traditional service providers either did not understand the special needs of rural businesses, or did not fully understand the product flow associated with small-wood manufacturing. Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities designed its technical assistance workshops to bridge this gap but felt like the workshops achieved only mixed success.

Just as importantly, the CBO may be able to assess whether sustainable harvests can be maintained as demand increases. **Rural Action** took steps to provide root-stock at a low price to local growers, so that landowners could increase their yields of non-timber forest products, such as ginseng.

In some instances, CBOs may negotiate with other players—such as public agencies or landowner associations—to gain access to forest resources on behalf of constituencies that might otherwise be excluded. Slow-moving U.S. Forest Service procedures and legal appeals, for example, can delay harvesting, leaving small businesses without a reliable supply of wood. **Public Lands Partnership** spearheaded a collaborative process that led to expanded local access to public lands and increased timber sales to local mills.

- **Manufacturing/product development** also benefits when CBOs provide entrepreneurs with better information, technical assistance, and access to equipment and incubator facilities. **Wallowa Resources** works with community businesses

because wood manufacturing jobs create and build new wealth. New value-adding manufacturing jobs do much more than just redistribute existing resources, such as federal and foundation dollars. One of **Gila WoodNet**'s goals was to get more local wood into building construction. Its staff assembled construction kits so that contractors would find it easier and cheaper to use local hardwood when building porches.

Even so, product development can be risky. The **Watershed Resources and Training Center** worked with a local business and the U.S. Forest Service Forest Products Lab to develop a production process for madrone veneer. By the time the process was ready, however, the prospective customer already had found an alternative through an overseas source.

Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities recognized that its small business partners often struggled with issues related to their production capacity. Its staff then organized workshops on production techniques such as lean manufacturing. When one HFHC partner

EXAMPLE

More than a matter of taste: Ecology and architecture

An important part of Vermont Family Forests' work has been its ongoing collaboration with architects to suggest alternative wood specifications that are both aesthetically pleasing and ecologically sustainable for Vermont's forests.

The Architectural Woodwork Institute (AWI) ranks wood quality using such criteria as color, grain pattern, and the presence and size of knots. AWI ranking requires uniformity of color and grain pattern in Grade I wood, and allows more "flaw" and "characteristics" in the wood as the grade ranking increases.

Clear-grained, evenly colored wood, however, comes predominantly from large-diameter trees, which have the most heartwood and the fewest knot-forming side branches. Removing only large-diameter trees from a forest is called high-grading, a practice that has deprived large tracts of Vermont's forests of their largest, most vigorous members, leaving the smaller, weaker trees behind. Over time, high grading undermines the vigor and health of entire forest ecosystems.

There's no denying that clear-grained, Grade I timber is structurally stronger than Grade II or III wood. Not all of the wood procured for the recent construction of Middlebury College's new Bicentennial Hall, however, needed to be allocated for structural, load-bearing purposes. Some of the wood simply needed to look beautiful.

Architects originally specified that 125,000 board feet of clear-grained red oak be designated for Bicentennial Hall's interior paneling. Because central Vermont's forests could not sustainably yield this wood, however, VFF recommended that the building showcase seven hardwood species common to local forests. VFF also suggested using character-grade wood.

Once College trustees and officials had a chance to see samples of the indigenous wood, the beauty of its character was obvious—not just tolerable, but well worth featuring. The finished

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Hall bears testament to that beauty, offering an unexpected, eye-pleasing streak of creamy tan through the burnt sienna of cherry wood, a splash of chocolate staining the honey-colored ash, a subtle palette of pastel variations in a wall of red maple.

Carpenters on the project, accustomed to handling Grade I lumber, initially were taken aback by the variability in the character-grade lumber. However, Mark McElroy of Barr and Barr, general contractors for Bicentennial Hall, said that attitudes soon changed as carpenters got to know the wood. "By the end of the process, they realized that it takes a better eye, more creativity, and a higher level of craftsmanship to make the most of the wood," he said. "And they came away with a sense of pride in what they had done."

—Adapted from Vermont Family Forests’ website, www.familyforests.org

contracted with the workshop presenters to visit his shop and analyze his production process, they were able to make suggestions that ultimately made his production process twice as effective.

- Small businesses, especially those located in remote, rural areas, often have difficulty with learning about and gaining access to distant markets. CBOs offer a great service when they are able to help make that connection. **HFHC** conducted well-planned campaigns to educate consumers about sustainably harvested and value-added wood products. It also worked with rural businesses to help develop marketing materials designed to appeal to urban markets. Currently, HFHC is establishing a brand identity that further will assist regional small businesses in taking their products to a wider market.

In many instances, the CBO also can serve a brokering role, connecting entrepreneurs with complementary business partners. Because its parent organization, Sustainable Northwest, works on a regional level, HFHC is well positioned to hear about a possible harvest and thus can link the landowner, a logging firm, a sawmill, and a value-adding manufacturer. To reach a scale of production that is of interest to sawmill operators, **Vermont Family Forests** coordinates timber harvests and sales on several member woodlots. This brokering role appears to provide greater income to the landowner at little cost to VFF.

LESSON 15 In order to build greater economic resiliency for the community, nonprofit CBOs took risks, mitigated risks for entrepreneurs, and structured investments that shared risks with the community.

The risks involved with starting a business with poor, rural, and/or marginalized people are substantial. These constituencies have limited access to credit and limited access to public or private lands. If they are to access the opportunities and share the benefits of community-based forestry, communities must identify and attempt to mitigate the risks they face.

Across the Demonstration Program, CBOs adopted various strategies related to risk. They took risks themselves, they mitigated risks for the entrepreneurs, and they shared risks among community members and stakeholders. Some strategies encompassed all of these, while others touched just one. Consider the following examples:

Taking risks themselves

- Almost all sites conducted demonstrations.
 - **Wallowa Resources** formed a social enterprise as a vehicle to fulfill the nonprofit's mission.
 - **Wallowa Resources** became a contract administrator.
 - **Watershed Resources and Training Center** built an incubator.
 - **WRTC** purchased equipment and leased it by the hour.
 - To assist harvesters, **WRTC** bought their licenses and paid for materials when they brought them in.
 - **Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities** offered extended terms for wood until manufacturers had sold finished product.
- The **Jobs and Biodiversity Coalition** and **WRTC** designed and built equipment for better harvesting.
 - **Vermont Family Forests Partnership** and **HFHC** networked businesses to others in their respective regions.
 - **HFHC** supported a flooring broker.

Mitigating risks for the entrepreneur

- Almost all sites conducted demonstrations.
- **WRTC** built an incubator.
- **WRTC** purchased equipment and leased it by the hour.
- To assist harvesters, **WRTC** bought their licenses and paid for materials when they brought them in.
- **HFHC** offered extended terms for wood until manufacturers had sold finished product.
- **HFHC** connected entrepreneurs with service providers.
- **VFFP** and **HFHC** networked businesses to others in their respective regions.

If poor, rural, and/or marginalized people are to access the opportunities and share the benefits of community-based forestry, communities must identify and attempt to mitigate the risks they face.

POLICY

Do nonprofit enterprises enjoy an unfair advantage?

Some for-profit businesses may feel that demonstration projects and social enterprise ventures are simply ways for nonprofits to enter the marketplace with an unfair advantage.

Even though the Middlebury College demonstration projects generated profitable work for many local businesses, Vermont Family Forests nonetheless encountered criticism that charged unfair advantage. Had VFF been able to make its costs more transparent, perhaps some of this criticism might have been tempered or avoided altogether. After all, in hindsight it was plain that the demonstrations could not have succeeded had VFF not contributed an enormous amount of staff time to the projects. At the time, however, these costs were not completely clear to local businesses.

Following a lot of community discussion, Wallowa Resources bought into the existing Joseph Timber Company, the only FSC-certified sawmill in the region. The business eventually failed, but people in the community did not criticize the nonprofit. They understood that Wallowa Resources was trying to create jobs in the community, and they understood why the enterprise failed. This obviously speaks to the importance of timely communication and operational transparency.

- **HFHC** made referrals and gave leads.
- **HFHC** supported a flooring broker.
- Sites near public lands led collaborative processes for restoration projects so community members could gain access to the woods.
- Sites near public lands designed restoration projects so local people could get work.

- **HFHC** ran a small grants program so businesses could develop prototypes and explore markets.
- All sites brought money into the community from outside sources.
- All sites designed workshops and trainings.
- Most sites trained community members in forestry and business skills.

Sharing risks among community members and stakeholders

- **WRTC** built an incubator.
- **WRTC** purchased equipment and leased it by the hour.
- **JBC** and **WRTC** designed and built equipment for better harvesting.
- Sites near public lands led collaborative processes for restoration projects so community members could gain access to the woods.
- Sites near public lands designed restoration projects so local people could get work.
- All sites brought money into the community from outside sources.

LESSON 16 Demonstration projects are an important way to test the viability of a specific economic strategy, provided they are conducted in ways that can be replicated by community members.

Demonstration projects can be important tools, albeit with certain caveats.

Community members can be skeptical about demonstration projects, especially if the demonstration appears to be designed more for the benefit of the nonprofit than for the community itself. They also are likely to be skeptical if they have questions about the knowledge and skill of the demonstrator. They are sure to be wary if the funds supporting the demonstration are not used transparently, or if they don't understand why some community members have been included in the demonstration while others were left out. Finally, demonstrations risk being deemed

irrelevant if community members cannot easily make the connection between what they see and how they (with their limited resources) might implement a similar project on their own property.

The **Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund** chose to run parallel demonstrations on its own land and with local landowners. These parallel demonstrations assured community members that the Federation was willing to place itself on their level, assuming similar risks. As such, local people were much more open to learning from the Federation.

Vermont Family Forests ran demonstrations that included local businesses and landowners. In fact, over 30 individuals and businesses benefited from the Middlebury College projects. However, the projects were large enough—and went through enough changes along the way—that community members (and even Middlebury College) were not always sure about the costs at each stage. This ambiguity left some people leery about who actually was receiving the economic benefit.

Across the five-year tenure of the Demonstration Program, communities learned there are some key questions to ask before initiating a demonstration project, in order to qualify whether or not the endeavor is genuinely worthwhile. (See Checklist for Demonstration Projects on the following page.)

TIP Checklist for Demonstration Projects

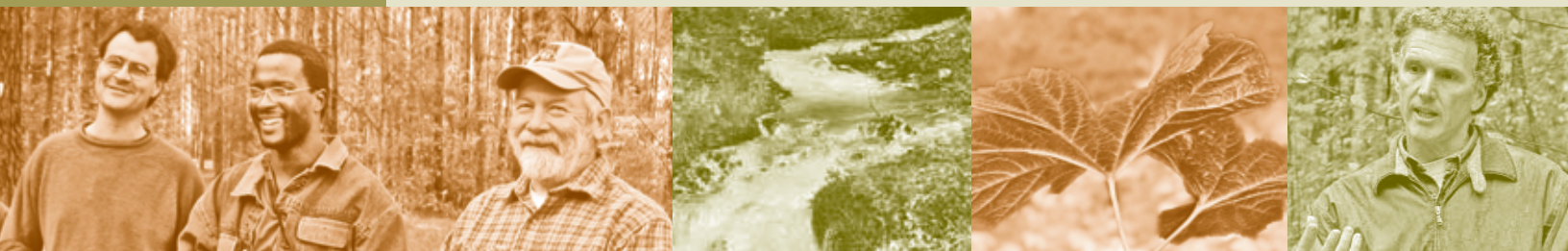
- Does the product or service draw on the community's history, traditions, skills, and assets?
- Are community members interested in the project?
- How will you let the community know about how your funds were used?
- Will community members see this demonstration as something "people like us" can do?
- Is it possible to run the demonstrations together with landowners and businesses?
- By what standards will these partners be selected?
- How will the process and the results be documented and disseminated?
- What role will you play in supporting community members to follow-up and continue the work based on your demonstration projects?
- Does the demonstration have the potential secondary benefit of catalyzing networking and information exchange among entrepreneurs?



CHAPTER

5

Restoring and Maintaining Forest Ecosystems



At the heart of community-based forestry, particularly in the United States, lies a deeply felt desire among landowners and the public to take better care of the nation's forests. In fact, as North America grows more and more urbanized, this need to kindle and practice a viable stewardship ethic is becoming increasingly urgent and more important.

Stewardship embraces multiple, interrelated goals. It is about caring for and healing the land, so that forests may thrive and provide the goods, services, and other benefits that people need. It is about protecting and restoring biological diversity so that native plant and animal species can contribute to the overall *well-being* of forests. And it also is about pledging to pass along to future generations restored and maintained ecosystems.

As it has evolved among contemporary CBF practitioners, this stewardship ethic most often focuses upon how best to implement an integrated, whole system approach to ecosystem management, with a particular

emphasis on forest restoration. These forest restoration efforts are ongoing, long-term, and uniquely adapted to address the complex needs of their specific environments. Most are today just in their beginning stages. As such, their vision of comprehensive, sustainable restoration will take many years to fulfill.

Moreover, this approach to forest restoration represents a dramatic shift away from previous forest management models that sought to achieve more immediate gains through maximizing a sustained yield of just one high-value product—timber. CBF, on the other hand, seeks both to diversify the sustainable uses of the forest—including non-timber forest products and ecotourism, for example—and to ensure those products and services are regarded primarily as the byproducts of good forest management. As professional forester David Brynn, founder of Vermont Family Forests, likes to say, CBF seeks to harvest “what the forest is ready and willing to yield.”

In the ecological component of community-based forestry, then, communities enhance and restore forest ecosystems for the full range of social, ecological, and economic values. In so doing, stakeholders typically use science as a guide, but they also build upon and incorporate local knowledge into their forest management practices.

As they experiment with both old and new approaches, however, CBF practitioners would be the first to admit that they don't have all the answers. If anything, they are the first to point out that CBF essentially is about the ongoing need to learn and adapt—both to particular communities in particular locations, and over time, as communities go through cycles of action, reflection, and adaptation.

“For me, CBF is fundamentally a humble approach. We don't necessarily know what the right answer is, but we're making efforts to understand how to mitigate risks, learn from one another, and continually adapt approaches. As we are trying to build support for CBF, we don't want to close doors by giving the impression that everyone else has been wrong and we are right.”

—*CBF practitioner*
Western United States

Hands-on ecosystem management vs. no management at all

As significantly different as CBF may be from timber management, generally speaking, its fundamental approach, which carefully balances the long-term needs of forest ecosystems and human communities, nonetheless draws criticism from some traditional environmentalists, who may insist that any sort of human intervention in the forest likely leads to destructive consequences. From their perspective, forested ecosystems are at their best only when one simply leaves the forest alone to take care of itself.

This “nature knows best” point of view typically finds support among people who have lived most of their lives in urban areas. And it sometimes gains strength in rural areas where there has been an influx of people moving away from crowded cities and suburbs in order to live closer to what they perceive as wilderness. Examples can be found throughout rural New England, where substantial tracts of land no longer are actively managed.

What people often do not realize, however, is that their apparently undisturbed parcel of forestland or favorite wilderness area likely has been heavily impacted by past management practices. The forest may have become progressively vulnerable to invasive plants, blight, or fire. Native wildlife, too, may be dwindling, as its once resilient habitat becomes less accommodating. As such, a rigidly “hands-off” approach to forest management, whatever its inherent popular appeal may be, ultimately presents a formidable challenge to genuine forest restoration.

A rigidly hands-off approach to forest management, whatever its inherent popular appeal may be, ultimately presents a formidable challenge to genuine forest restoration.

To move beyond such limiting beliefs, CBF practitioners, some of whom started out as classic environmentalists themselves, seek to educate themselves and others about the natural history and cultural uses of their local watershed. Understanding changes in their local forest over time, they are better prepared to assess the effects of past forest management practices. Blending a solid awareness of scientific information with local knowledge gained from a long-standing, intimate relationship with the land, they become skilled at customizing hybrid strategies for actively restoring their forests as healthy, functioning ecosystems.

Of course, no one group can accomplish all of this learning all by itself. Along the way, CBF practitioners do well to share their findings with a diverse mix of community partners—including landowners, technical service providers, government officials, and even apparent adversaries. As Carol Daly, a CBF practitioner who lives in Columbia Falls, Montana, has said, “One thing that most people have in common is their concern for the land itself, however divergent their views about managing its resources may appear to be.”

That’s indeed fortunate, because community-based forestry demands that everyone be willing to learn together. CBF practitioners can help nudge everyone along the learning curve by carefully monitoring and documenting the outcomes that their

CBF practitioners who own their land and those who work on public lands may have somewhat different priorities, but both are likely to seek a more comprehensive, holistic approach than public agencies.

projects accomplish in the ecosystem. In most cases, few are likely to argue when they see positive results. CBF depends therefore upon a widely accessible, ongoing education effort—as well as a host of other factors, most requiring significant investment of time and skills, such as utilizing selective harvesting, controlling invasive plants, reforestation with underrepresented species, and reducing the threat of fire, among others.

Restoration on private and public lands

Low-income landowners often need a steady flow of income to pay the taxes or management expenses required to retain ownership of their properties. Because they typically have off-farm employment and other sources of income, the actual revenues they need to generate from their forest holdings may be quite modest. Nonetheless this income is essential for both land retention and sustaining the integrity of their local community. And while CBF may give the edge in such situations to revenue over restoration, it still represents a significant shift away from the priority that timber management places upon wholesale commodity resource production.

CBF practitioners working on public lands, such as the forests managed by the U.S. Forest Service, appear to demonstrate

much greater awareness—or perhaps, urgency—about the need for holistic ecosystem restoration.

Even so, subtle but real differences exist between the CBF perspective and the strong emphasis public agencies place upon fire prevention, including fuels reduction. Fuels reduction is critical to restoring the forest, but other investments also are needed. Communities often advocate for more comprehensive forest treatments, but typically to little avail. In fact, they generally have to secure outside sources of funding—beyond what is available from the U.S. Forest Service—to make any sort of forest restoration possible, beyond just what can be achieved through fuels reduction projects.

These limitations ought not imply that public agencies aren't evolving and changing. In actual fact, they are. Although some public agency employees still focus exclusively on timber management, increasingly there are more and more who want to help restore healthy ecosystems. Even so, while common ground with CBF advocates can be found in “cleaning up the damage,” the underlying challenge will be to move from restoration to longer-term adaptive management and stewardship.

The emergence of civic science

Fortunately, across multiple dimensions of practice, the formerly dominant timber management paradigm is giving way to an emerging, alternative approach that favors greater collaboration in the objectives of resources management, the structure of decision making, and the actual work on the ground.

As the paradigm shifts, so, too, must the practice of science. As this report has noted, CBF practitioners are blending scientific approaches with the local and experiential knowledge that often is embedded in a community's cultural traditions. Communities, too, are embracing adaptive learning and management—i.e., ongoing, iterative processes of planning, implementing, monitoring outcomes, and making adjustments based on what has been learned—so that they can move forward even in the face of uncertainty.

Civic science recognizes the importance of engaging local practitioners. It insists that complex development challenges require a careful interdisciplinary assessment of possible solutions. This type of research and analysis involves well-placed stakeholder committees who incorporate and integrate community perspectives and goals as they advise all assessment actions. It is an approach, says Ajit Krishnaswamy of the National Network of Forest Practitioners, that effectively counters a deeply entrenched tendency for communities to rely primarily upon specialists and outside experts to assess their own needs. Communities initially may need technical assistance and facilitation to help them seek out answers, but, as a general rule, they already know the questions that are important to them.

Does CBF make a genuine difference?

In order to assess whether community-based forestry, as implemented by the sites participating in the National CBF Demonstration Program, resulted in more sustainable solutions, two fundamental questions must be asked. First, did more forest restoration

and sustainable management happen as a result of CBF? And second, did this management lead to healthier ecosystems?

As highlighted in the sections that follow, the answer to the first question is a definitive yes. On both public and private lands, more active management and restoration are taking place than if CBF had not been implemented. On public lands, the collaborative and participatory processes characteristic of CBF have been able to lay a foundation for new and enhanced forest restoration efforts, often avoiding litigation and leveraging additional financial resources and expertise. On private lands, landowners enjoyed increased access to information, management strategies, technical assistance, and funding. A significant number of these landowners went on to implement best management practices.

On both public and private lands, CBF has resulted in more active management and restoration. Whether that has led to healthier ecosystems is more difficult to ascertain over this short a time.

The answer to the second question is more complicated and difficult (if not impossible) to answer over the limited time span of the Demonstration Program. Given the shift to what are presumed to be more integrated and sustainable practices, it is likely that the ecosystems are healthier. On public lands, the shift away from focusing solely on resource extraction to including forest restoration activities probably is leading to healthier forests. Only a few of the demonstration sites were able to put monitoring programs in place that satisfactorily could answer this

question. In practice, monitoring is labor-intensive, expensive, and takes a long time. Five-to-six years is a relatively short period to see significant change. Nonetheless, the monitoring that did occur showed the CBF practices that were implemented are beginning to have a positive impact.

“Because of the collaboration and bringing different expertise and the agencies in, and working as a team, we’re getting better results on the land. More treatments are done in a better way and more people are seeing them and are willing to change strategies if the monitoring shows it works better”

—Dave Kaufman

Bureau of Land Management, west central Colorado

Impacts

Across the breadth and scope of the National CBF Demonstration Program, significant impacts toward restoring the integrity and sustainability of forest ecosystems have been documented on public, private, and tribal lands.

Restoring public lands

■ As of July 2004, the **Watershed Research and Training Center** in northern California had treated over 1,500 acres on public land for fuels reduction and 100 acres on private land. WRTC also completed the Trinity County Fire Plan, as well as planning for fuels reduction on an additional 3,000 acres in the Post Mountain Road system. Monitoring of these areas shows that habitat for old-growth forest and

riparian species has improved. Critical to long-term impact, WRTC and others are changing the conversation from extraction to restoration and ecosystem health.

■ By bringing diverse interests to the table—particularly local-, regional-, and state-level environmental groups—the **Public Lands Partnership** (PLP) in western Colorado has been able to move forward a number of ecosystem restoration projects on both U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands.

As of January 2005, for example, the Uncompahgre Plateau Project had implemented habitat restoration treatments over more than 3,000 acres of publicly managed land. PLP is a key player in that project, representing both local communities and other interests. With its support, the agencies have developed and implemented a habitat mosaic model that more fully describes the dynamic, complex patterns of bioresources and ecological niches within any given geographical area. All the ecosystem treatments of the Uncompahgre Plateau Project are determined by this model, regardless of public lands jurisdictional boundaries.

■ **PLP** also established multiparty monitoring protocols at both Burn Canyon and the Western Area Power Administration power line restoration sites, both of which had favorable outcomes, allowing restoration treatments to go forward. Following a field trip to Sims Mesa, which included all interested parties, the participants agreed not to appeal the Categorical Exclusion provision. As a result, the U.S. Forest Service was able to implement the proposed habitat restoration project. Today, there is consensus that the treatment was both appropriate and effective.

- Although the U.S. Forest Service's funding priorities largely have shifted from timber extraction to fire prevention and fire fighting, **Wallowa Resources** still has been able to leverage money and carry out several substantial on-the-ground restoration projects. Local residents involved in these collaborative projects have demonstrated they are motivated to do a good job in the woods. Monitoring shows they have completed thinning and forest restoration with minimum impacts on soil compaction.

With facilitation by Wallowa Resources in northeastern Oregon, a communitywide planning process sponsored by the County Commissioners made it possible for widely divergent interests to come together and find common ground. Watershed Stewardship Principles jointly developed by the community, environmental groups (the Nature Conservancy, Hell's Canyon Preservation Council, and Defenders of Wildlife), and the U.S. Forest Service are now in place. Building upon this foundation, restoration work in the national forests is moving ahead, where it previously had been appealed and stopped. For example, the 47,000-acre Spooner Vegetation and Road Project—including aspen restoration, prescribed burning, road decommissioning and maintenance, and non-commercial thinning—was released as a stewardship contract.

- The **Jobs and Biodiversity Coalition** in New Mexico secured the 1,400-acre Mill Project site after two years of endless meetings, delays in completing the NEPA requirements, and other contractual and bureaucratic hurdles. A Collaborative Forest Restoration Program grant finally enabled JBC to implement the project. As of October 2004, 80 acres have been

restored. This U.S. Forest Service program is only available in New Mexico, and it may not be continued. Multiparty monitoring is underway with steps being taken to ensure this work can be integrated at the broader landscape level. For example, the extent to which and how the Mill Project site affects adjacent areas will be examined.

- The **Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities** partnership works with its 40 member businesses to monitor the sources of the wood they use and to find buyers for wood harvested from eight different restoration sites.¹¹ HFHC assisted nine enterprises to get chain-of-custody certification from the Forest Stewardship Council.



If we didn't have Wallowa Resources, we wouldn't have a forest restoration program."

—Ken Bronec

U.S. Forest Service, northeastern Oregon

Educating landowners and implementing best management practices

- **Vermont Family Forests** successfully promoted the message that it is possible to manage a healthy forest whether or not one chooses to cut wood from it. Today, over 8,064 forested acres are protected under VFF management standards, which include a careful monitoring and Forest

¹¹ See Appendix B and the CD accompanying this book for the tool that HFHC uses to keep track of sustainably sourced wood.

Stewardship Council certification process. Where such plans are implemented, erosion and sedimentation have been measurably reduced, leading to improved water quality. Moreover, an additional 183,074 acres in Vermont are FSC-certified, largely thanks to VFF's partner, Northeast Resource Center/National Wildlife Federation.

Significant impacts toward restoring the integrity and sustainability of forest ecosystems have been documented on public, private, and tribal lands.

- Over 550 participants have visited demonstration sites or attended workshops sponsored and co-sponsored by the **Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund** in Alabama and Mississippi to increase awareness about forestland management options and practices. Sixty percent of the landowners involved in the Federation's meat goat program are implementing new best management practices on their lands, including cultivating meat goats as an alternative to using herbicides to suppress weeds. Twelve landowners, with the Federation's assistance, have received government support to implement improved forest management practices, including developing a management plan. Hunters recently have noted that local wildlife populations, including some thought to be dwindling, appear to be returning to forest areas that are under improved management.
- In South Carolina, **Penn Center** has held numerous workshops and demonstration projects to build awareness and knowledge of sustainable forestry options. The Lowcountry Landowners Association, which has about 50 members, has been involved in many of these events. Several members have planted long-leaf pine, a native species typically absent from today's ecosystem. They anticipate harvesting pine straw that can be used as mulch by professional landscapers.
- **North Quabbin Woods** in Massachusetts sponsored 18 workshops and tours for landowners, drawing a total of 249 participants. Six of the 18 participants in the "Coverts Workshop" jointly sponsored by NQW and the Massachusetts Extension Service have taken their newly acquired knowledge of the local ecosystem and, with support from NQW, sponsored their own workshops and projects in local neighborhoods.
- With assistance from **D.C. Greenworks**, inner-city residents in Washington, D.C., have planted more than 160 street trees. Ninety-nine percent of these trees are still living and being cared for today. Moreover, 300 participants in the D.C. TreeKeepers program have adopted an additional 100 trees. D.C. Greenworks has presented 36 TreeCare Workshops, helped community members build five rain gardens, and constructed greenroofs that taken together would cover almost 4,000 square feet. Moreover, as of February 2005, D.C. Greenworks had secured contracts to build additional greenroofs totaling 2,500 square feet.
- With assistance from **Rural Action** in Appalachian Ohio, landowners are investing in their forests by reintroducing non-timber forest products and implementing ecosystem improvement activities, often guided by forest management plans. They have planted over 700 pounds of ginseng

EXAMPLE Trees forestall a loss of open space in Washington, D.C.

A neighborhood group planted 25 trees in a schoolyard in the Shaw neighborhood, accompanying other neighborhood improvements and a rise in property values. Later, a developer came in and offered to build a new school for free, provided the neighborhood agreed to deed over half of the school property so that he could build condos. The neighbors protested and thus protected the open greenspace as a community resource. The trees today stand as a symbol of the community's ownership and commitment to be good stewards of that open space. Recently, the same developer proposed moving the children's playground to the roof of the school, hoping yet again to make room for his condos. Once more, protests by local residents successfully prevented this transfer of property from taking place.

seed as well as thousands of goldenseal and black cohosh roots. They increasingly recognize the threat of exotic invasives and therefore are seeking and implementing solutions. Well over 2,000 people have participated in one or more of the educational activities sponsored by Rural Action's forestry program.

Changing forest management policy on tribal lands

- The **Makah Tribe** in northwest Washington State has begun to integrate non-timber forest products as part of its efforts to implement more holistic forest management. For the first time, the Makah Tribe plans to include NTFPs in its next 10-year Forest Management Plan. As a result of interactions with the National CBF Demonstration Program, the tribal fisheries department already includes NTFPs in its restoration work on the reservation, and the tribal forestry department nursery is propagating NTFPs to assist in that effort. The tribe recently completed

a thorough inventory of the commercially viable NTFPs found on its reservation, sketching them across one layer on GIS forest maps. These maps will serve as a basis for the tribe's overall forest management decisions.

- The **Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters** supported 25 community-based organizing projects designed to enable localized small-scale projects led by communities of place and/or interest. Outcomes included: 1) mushroom harvesters use less destructive tools in central and southwest Oregon; 2) there is less poaching and illegal harvest on public land in the Klamath River corridor; 3) forestry practitioners and workers consider ecosystem restoration and traditional ecological knowledge when performing thinning and restoration contracts; and 4) there is less violence in the woods, thanks to cross-cultural communication, both at the harvest sites and in the communities from which the harvesters come.

Lessons

This section offers lessons about ecosystem monitoring, tools and approaches for promoting forest restoration and ecologically sound practices, and taking projects to a landscape scale.

Ecosystem monitoring

LESSON 1 It is critical to monitor the ecological conditions of the forest and use that information for management decisions. This requires ongoing investment and the full engagement of the community.

Community-based forestry goes beyond purely science-driven forest management approaches. Too often the science is conflicting and perceived as interest-based. Experience demonstrates that integrating established scientific approaches with local knowledge can lead to a more robust understanding of resources and ecosystems *within the local context*.

“ It was a strategic decision to focus on non-timber forest products. It was an area where the community had expertise and the interest to develop more. They were further along than the agency and other official folks. The scientists would have to listen to the community.”

—Colin Donohue, director of conservation-based development
Rural Action, southeast Ohio

In fact, there are many ways to know and understand a landscape. Longtime community residents often possess deep knowledge based on historic interactions, personal observations, and practical on-the-ground learning. Civic science, therefore, requires community practitioners to create mutual learning systems that involve local people and respect their local and experiential understanding.

A key component of **Rural Action**'s work in southeastern Ohio is ensuring that local knowledge is heard and fully integrated into community decision making. A recent meeting between scientists, agency personnel, and local landowners is one example. “The scientists were surprised at how many of us attended and how much we knew,” remarked one participant. A key to the meeting's success was that all the participants' various realms of expertise were recognized and viewed as valuable. Such an inclusive approach stands in stark comparison to many other rural communities where longtime residents continue to struggle for recognition of their local knowledge.

Rural Action also has engaged a few herb growers as researchers. The Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) “producer grant,” funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Environmental Protection Agency, provided funds for growers to run rigorous field tests on their land and to collect and analyze the data. These and other efforts are working to shift forestry practices from relying solely upon so-called “experts” to developing and relying more upon local expertise.

The **Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters** and its partners supported mushroom harvesters to conduct monitoring of the harvests, practices, and biophysical aspects of the mushroom-producing sites. This low-cost

approach is empowering of the monitors and harvesters, as they are trusted by their communities and able to represent their concerns to the U.S. Forest Service. Additional effort is needed to collaborate with the Forest Service staff so that they acknowledge, value, and support the mushroom monitors and the data they are collecting.

A major challenge in helping public agencies (which long have focused on resource production) shift to a forest restoration ecology model is that baseline scientific information often doesn't exist at the community level, although a considerable amount of effort has been invested into research for timber management. In an effort to broaden everyone's perspectives, some of the demonstration sites brought in federal landscape ecologists to learn about their forests using a holistic ecosystem approach. Regrettably, the transaction costs for this sort of learning, as with any research, are significant and it is difficult at best for communities to secure these large amounts of funds. **Public Lands Partnership**, for example, spent \$55,000 to pull together baseline data and GIS information about their region.

LESSON 2 Invest in community-based multiparty monitoring.

Working together to monitor restoration projects allows stakeholders with diverse interests to have equal access to information and thus to participate more equitably in shared decision making about the forest. Moreover, multiparty monitoring actually provides a face-to-face opportunity for them to find common ground. As stakeholders gather data, they build working relationships. In that process, they are more likely to discover zones of agreement where they can support one another.

POLICY

Investing in methodology

There is a need for more cost-effective, easy-to-implement methodologies to increase understanding of long-term impacts of agency and other organizations' actions on the ecosystem. Investment is needed for developing and implementing these protocols, as well as for ensuring the results are acceptable to all parties, especially the science and research establishment.

Research also suggests that while monitoring is an essential first step to establishing long-term adaptive management, it is not complete in itself. CBF practitioners also must create appropriate reporting mechanisms and processes that, as the need arises, can promptly devise and implement corrective strategies.

As a concept, all-party or multiparty monitoring is sound. The reality, as the Demonstration Program discovered, appears somewhat more problematic. The trust-building potential of multiparty monitoring tends to break down, for example, when only a few interests are involved. Many of the demonstration sites also discovered there is rarely such a thing as "absolute science" upon which everyone can agree. Each interest group, at least at the outset, likely prefers to rely upon their own scientists and their own data.

To resolve this tension among competing points of view, many sites elected to take people into the woods. There, they could see

EXAMPLE

Multiparty monitoring in Burn Canyon, Colorado

In Summer 2002, roaring forest fires swept through much of Colorado, including the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forest (GMUG). By the following spring, the U.S. Forest Service had proposed salvage timber sales on the GMUG as part of its plan to restore the forest's burned areas.

Realizing that leadership and timing were critical, the Public Lands Partnership invited all concerned parties on a field trip to the GMUG to view the proposed salvage logging sites. During this site visit, representatives of diverse groups—including national, state, and local environmental organizations, the timber industry, U.S. Forest Service personnel, and PLP members—were able to get to know one another and find common ground. Instead of moving forward with legal appeals, these stakeholders agreed to participate in long-term monitoring of the ecological and economic impacts of the salvage logging effort on the forest and on the local community.

The willingness of national and state environmental groups to participate in the field trip and talk over their concerns was essential to launching the project. While no one knows for sure, some hypothesize that the presence within the PLP of local environmentalists, who assured the state and national groups that they would be respected and listened to, paved the way for their participation. The timber sale of approximately four million board feet went forward successfully, and the U.S. Forest Service awarded contracts to two locally owned and operated sawmills, providing them with paid work for several years. In addition to these significant economic benefits, it is hypothesized that the removal of salvaged wood also will benefit the health of the forest in the long run.

To coordinate multiparty monitoring, local stakeholders established the Burn Canyon Workgroup, co-chaired by Art Goodtimes, a respected county commissioner and environmental advocate. The Workgroup includes community members and representatives of local and state environmental groups, the timber industry, and the U.S. Forest Service. It is looking at a range of socioeconomic impacts, including the benefits (jobs, products, and local economic outcomes) and costs of fire containment, suppression, and rehabilitation.

(continued)

The Workgroup has decided upon its indicators and protocols. It also is sponsoring a professionally accredited curriculum-training program for high school science teachers, as a means of involving faculty and students to help collect data over the years to come. The Workgroup also will ensure that monitoring results are disseminated throughout the community through workshops, signboards, and other distribution outlets. This outreach effort further provides a mechanism for community members to contribute local knowledge and data to the sustainable management of public lands.

for themselves what had been done, as well as the effects that project work was having over time. Moreover, as they trekked about the terrain, observing and discussing, diverse interests began to find common ground.

Out in the woods, many stakeholders realize that formal science is not the only criteria for making good management decisions. In actual practice, the complexity of implementing “pure science” is beyond the capabilities and requirements of most collaborative groups. In fact, as one-time adversaries become newfound allies, they often are willing to give less weight to their previously held beliefs and opinions, however well supported by their preferred brand of scientific data. This does not mean that CBF advocates “sloppy science.” Rather, it asks collaborative groups to design and blend alternative indicators and monitoring methods.

While there are well-established guidelines for multiparty monitoring, it is critically important to build knowledge and skills in understanding ecosystem processes *before* one begins the complex task of ecosystem monitoring. It is also an essential prerequisite to jointly develop indicators and legitimize them among all of the monitoring partners. This

shared process inevitably leads to a much clearer understanding of what all of the partners are trying to accomplish. It also can help all concerned parties to identify and discuss whatever assumptions are being made.

It is essential that multiparty monitoring does not stop with data collection. Collaborative data analysis and interpretation are critical to ensuring that all parties are on the same page and able to see each other’s perspectives before making land management decisions. It also is important that the results of any monitoring process are shared with the broader community through meetings, newspaper articles, and other public communications.

Collaborative groups also need to consider how their monitoring efforts will be sustained over the long term. Schools and teachers, for example, can engage youth in ecosystem monitoring as part of their education. Involving young people in civic science-based activities can help ensure that monitoring efforts are carried out over the long term.

Citizen involvement in monitoring is essential to long-term success, but it is certainly not cost-free. Too often, community

stakeholders are asked to invest hundreds of hours of volunteer time, while agency staff and other special interests are able to stay involved as part of their employment. Even modest remuneration for dedicated community volunteers can go a long way toward establishing a level playing field.

Tools and approaches for promoting forest restoration and ecologically sound practices

LESSON 3 Make stewardship relevant to the everyday lives of landowners and other community stakeholders.

Some communities, while very committed to maintaining the ecological viability and productivity of the land for the long term, are not willing to give immediate attention to engaging in ecosystem management. In the short term, they face far more pressing needs.

For limited resource landowners working with the **Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund**, earning enough revenue to retain ownership of their land was far more critical than increasing biodiversity

within their forests. Historically, they rarely had viewed forestlands as an integrated system to be managed for the long term. In fact, many referred to their forestlands as their “bank account.” They either cultivated loblolly pine as an eight- to ten-year monocrop, or they simply left the forest alone until such time that they needed an influx of cash. It had never been difficult to find loggers willing to pay a flat fee for all of their timber—especially since the sale price often was well below market value.

Federation staff sought to identify and explore options that would both respond to landowners’ short-term needs and contribute to longer-term forest sustainability. They determined that raising meat goats could do just that. Grazing goats in the forest understory permits landowners to control weeds without resorting to expensive, damaging pesticides. Selling the increasingly popular goat meat provides an income supplement large enough to pay taxes and retain their land.

Accordingly, goat production quickly became the platform from which the Federation could advocate for broader forest management. The Federation even reframed its ongoing work as land and forest management for goat production, as opposed to ecosystem management, because this approach speaks the language that landowners are most interested in, tying stewardship directly to the economic benefits.

The Federation provided education—through workshops, demonstration programs, and direct technical assistance—on ecosystem management, economic opportunities, and estate planning, among other topics. In many cases, the Federation was the only local entity providing training in ecosystem stewardship skills in a relevant way and in language landowners can understand.



Forest ecology and ecological change are important pieces of the work, but when you just talk about trees, it’s hard to get people to come out.

Goats and the income they generate are the organizational center for other topics.”

—Amadou Diop, director
Forestry Program, Federation of Southern Cooperatives/
Land Assistance Fund, Alabama

D.C. Greenworks also connects environmental activism to what people care about. Their inner-city audience may not lose sleep worrying about the Amazon rainforest, but most care deeply about the neighborhoods where they live. They definitely want the tree in front of their house to look healthy. D.C. Greenworks makes ecosystem management relevant and accessible to urban residents by using language and metaphors that are familiar to them. They provide templates and pictures that people can use to custom-design neighborhood tree plantings or choose specific trees, shrubs, and flowers. They encourage each person to contribute suggestions and then bring everyone's ideas together to complete the design. In so doing, D.C. Greenworks promotes more than tree planting; they are fostering a culture of stewardship.

LESSON 4 Foster diverse, site-specific approaches to local ecosystem management.

One size definitely *does not* fit all. Is there a place, then, for developing a set of standards or guidelines for implementing and evaluating community-based ecosystem management?

CBF practitioners have yet to come to any firm agreement about whether such standards would ultimately prove useful. Even so, most natural resource management decisions must address unique and complex ecological and social conditions as they already exist—on the ground, in specific locations. As such, overarching scientific principles, broad-brush policies, and even best practices cannot be applied unilaterally.

National organizations—whether government agencies that manage public lands, the timber industry, or environmental

groups—sometimes miss this point entirely. In this light, community-based monitoring, as a context-based management approach, may be one of the only alternatives that ultimately benefit both the health of the forest *and* the community. CBF advocates who understand the value of biodiversity across the landscape will do well to foster diverse management and evaluation approaches as they scale-up their own ecosystem restoration efforts.

“ Within the existing regulatory framework of public land grazing, what makes the system work is the relationship built between people on the ground. Through open and direct communication, understanding is reached about how best to achieve improved range conditions and herd production. Without this on-the-ground relationship, formal rules and guidelines—even if well intended—seem inflexible and are resented.”

—Public Lands Partnership Living History Project
West central Colorado

LESSON 5 Before seeking to persuade landowners that stewardship, including cutting down trees, is a good idea, demonstrate first that it can be done efficiently and well. Then they'll gain the trust to comprehensively manage their land.

Public and private landowners manage their land for a variety of reasons—to provide habitat for wildlife, to maintain open space, to preserve biodiversity and ecological processes, and, finally, to earn income. Landowners who do not require income

“ The Professional Development Program was a great way to get the information and messages regarding NTFPs into the hands of the professional foresters. It also had the secondary benefit of building respect for Rural Action and forging relationships and partnership that will last into the future.”

—Dave Schatz, retired service forester
Forestry Action Board, Rural Action,
southeast Ohio

from the sale of their wood typically will not harvest unless they trust that logging will be done sustainably. In Vermont, David Brynn, who is both the Addison County Forester and one of the founders of **Vermont Family Forests**, is well known within the community for his integrity and high-quality forest management skills. His sterling reputation greatly helped VFF in recruiting landowners to develop management plans that included the cutting of trees.¹²

On private lands, landowners rarely have all the skills necessary to put together a thorough Forest Management Plan that can be implemented in its totality over time. Instead, they tend to pick up scraps of information here and there, implementing the strategies that make the most sense to them. They take inspiration from what has worked locally and try out bits and pieces of those plans on their own land. If bottom-line economics is not the most important driver, they will embrace adaptive management—which views every management action as an experiment and acknowledges the uncertainty associated

¹² VFF's *Forest Management Checklist* is included on the CD that accompanies this report (see Appendix B).

with each action—to develop site-specific best practices. Accordingly, the **New England Forestry Foundation** found it useful to offer a broad range of workshops that appealed to the multiple objectives held by landowners.

LESSON 6 Leverage the extension and technical resources available through universities and government to promote and support community-based forestry, even though it likely will be necessary first to provide them with new information and effective tools.

One strategy for multiplying the impact of community-based forestry is to engage both state and private forestry professionals. The inherent challenge, however, given the newness of the CBF approach, is that these service providers will interpret this new information as a challenge and threat to their existing position in the community. Some may question whether CBF partisans are in fact expressing a lack of confidence in the forester's existing approach. In fact, any change is difficult. CBF practitioners can help everyone along the learning curve by good-naturedly sharing information and demonstrating a patient, inclusive attitude toward such partnerships.

Rural Action, operating in southeastern Appalachian Ohio, pursued several avenues for ensuring that non-timber forest products such as ginseng, goldenseal, and other herbs became one of the options offered by professional foresters and the state extension service. By implementing the NTFP Professional Development Program for both state and private forestry professionals, Rural Action leveraged the outreach capacity of these agencies and individuals to increase the awareness and practice of growing NTFPs.

Rural Action also has partnered with Ohio State University Extension Service on a number of activities, all of which have increased the Extension's understanding and commitment to NTFPs. As one consulting forester notes, "Extension laughed in 1997. Now they are writing and distributing fact sheets."

The **Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters** collaborated with other practitioners to facilitate cross-sector exchange of information and approaches to restoration forestry. The training included professional foresters, agency resource managers, forest workers, Native Americans, contractors, and community-based groups. Everyone learned something new and gained greater understanding of the other perspectives.

Another significant challenge in leveraging public extension and other technical resources is their dependence on state and federal budgets. The past few years have seen cutbacks in everyone's budgets. Within the Alabama Forestry Commission, for example, two of the four outreach forester positions targeted to work with underserved landowners in the state have remained vacant due to budget constraints. Consequently, building resilient communities with secure access to resource management information requires reaching beyond state and federal resources. Communities must enhance skills at the local level, as well as help build the peer-to-peer networks and associations needed to support landowners.

LESSON 7 Economic opportunity and market positioning can be effective tools for encouraging and rewarding sustainable forest management.

Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund, one of the partners in the **Vermont Family Forests Partnership**, provided technical and

financial support to Cornerstone, a network of large Vermont institutions, that developed purchasing procedures for procuring Vermont-certified wood products. The goal was to have people consider buying in-state certified wood first and having procedures that made those purchases easy to accomplish. When the Vermont Law School used these procedures to procure wood products, nine additional manufacturing shops chose to join Vermont WoodNet's FSC group certificate in order to supply certified wood.



Things have changed at the S.C. Forestry Commission, U.S. Forest Service, and Clemson Extension Service. Joint workshops with service providers and landowners, facilitated by Penn Center staff, have helped to build capacity, whether among the resource providers, who learned a lot about how to work with a previously underserved clientele, or among the landowners themselves."

—Barbara Edwards, consultant to Penn Center
St. Helena Island, South Carolina

Restoration on federal lands is more economically viable if manufacturers and jobs are located in local areas near where the restoration work is done. Since many of these manufacturers are quite small, it can be hard for them to connect with the restoration work that will be taking place. **Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities** has made those connections and found buyers for wood that is sourced from eight restoration projects.

Taking projects to a landscape scale

LESSON 8 Design, test, and learn from small-scale projects before moving up to the watershed or landscape level.

A smaller-scale approach allows stakeholders and practitioners more opportunities to find common ground and to learn together about good science and best practices. Indeed, sustainable ecosystem management takes place within a social process where multiple interests and perspectives must be negotiated. Cultivating that shared understanding, trust, and creative adaptability is best pursued first at smaller scale. Once success has been accomplished at that level, it should be easier to move on to tackle and work through larger issues at the landscape level. However, it is only easier if the time is taken to learn from the smaller-scale approaches and design appropriate methods, based on that learning, for managing at the larger scale. Finally, starting at a smaller scale also lessens the risk for all involved.

A smaller-scale approach allows stakeholders and practitioners more opportunities to find common ground and to learn together about good science and best practices.

The **Jobs and Biodiversity Coalition**, for example, found that it was more successful to begin with managing a single tree species—the ponderosa pine—where there was already agreement about the science. It can be far more difficult to build trust when conflict is present right from the start.

Wallowa Resources found that small-scale demonstration projects were key to making their community's long-term vision a reality. Through those projects, it discovered nearly everyone held—but had not previously acknowledged—hidden assumptions and differing perspectives. The demonstration projects made it possible to feel, touch, and look more closely at what genuinely would be required to accomplish their community vision. Without those small-scale projects, participants believed there would have been a lot more conflict down the road.

In almost every situation, Wallowa Resources has learned, it is important to start at a smaller scale. The Community Planning Process, for example, originally had been designed to encompass the entire county. This proved to be too big an area for participants to work on effectively, raising too many points of conflict all at once. Instead, the collaborative group in Wallowa County scaled back and chose to work instead with the Upper Joseph Creek watershed.

In northern California, **Watershed Resource and Training Center** staff and partners helped develop Hayfork's community fire plan. Following meetings with residents, absentee landowners, the fire department, and the road supervisor, WRTC was able to facilitate a widely accepted community fire plan for Post Mountain. The community looked first at the wild-urban interface where local residents easily could get involved. By starting with what needed to be treated first—the ridgelines and the perimeter areas around towns—WRTC was able to build support for a broader approach to land management. Not a lot of acreage initially was treated, but it was the *right* acreage.

LESSON 9 Ecologically significant restoration projects require CBF practitioners to work effectively with multiple types of land ownership.

Fearing increased regulation and other interventions, private landowners may be reluctant to share information about the state of their land and resources with public agencies and other groups. Even so, without their participation, it can be impossible to manage the land and its forest resources as a continuous ecosystem.

With support from the County Commissioners and other local partners, **Wallowa Resources** slowly has earned the trust required to work with these independent land managers. Wallowa Resources takes their concerns to heart, advising them when it is in their best interest to collaborate. As a result, over 100 landowners in both Wallowa and Baker counties participated in community projects ranging from fire reduction and aspen restoration to manufacturing small-diameter wood products.

Without these successful partnerships across diverse ownerships, people likely would make assumptions about the cumulative effects of ecosystem management efforts that might not be sound. Moreover, flawed data inevitably would serve to limit the restoration opportunities within any particular area.

Community-based organizations can help bring together private landowners and public land managers to address landscape effects and data that can be very difficult to collect and consolidate.

Community-based organizations can help bring together private landowners and public land managers to address landscape effects and data that can be very difficult to collect and consolidate. To protect the private landowners' confidentiality, Wallowa Resources has elected to present any data that it gathers only as an aggregate. To affirm that pledge, the organization worked with Oregon State University's Extension Service to develop and maintain a confidentiality agreement with each landowner.



CHAPTER **6**

Collaborating for CBF Action



Collaboration lies at the very core of the community-based forestry approach. It's what gets the work done.

In fact, CBF's ability to bridge seemingly intractable differences among stakeholders and forge innovative, productive new collaborative partnerships has been perhaps the strongest impetus for its recent emergence in the United States.

CBF first took root in the western United States, where much of the land is publicly owned. In the early 1990s, when the federal government decided to greatly curtail logging in many coastal forests in the West, whole communities suddenly found themselves without their traditional livelihood. Inevitably, they questioned what their future would be. They also found themselves at the center of conflict and deep divisiveness among various natural resource stakeholders—environmentalists, loggers, ranchers, public land management agencies, and virtually everyone in-between.

“ I get very frustrated being whipsawed between the users of forests who want to use it for economic purposes and the recreational users of the forest, and the environmentalists on the other side. The only way you can get rational public policy in an area like the forest is to sit down and work out compromises.”

—U.S. Congressman David Obey (Democrat-Wisconsin)

In the 1990s, responding to former President Clinton's Forest Plan, some rural communities organized collaborative dialogues for the purpose of encouraging civic debate and collaboration, resolving conflicts, and addressing issues before they escalated. The U.S. Forest Service funded redevelopment strategies that required collaboration and communication (i.e., the Northwest Economic Adjustment Initiative and the Jobs-in-the-Woods programs). Over time, these dialogues helped to set the table for the emerging CBF movement.

More than a decade later, CBF has helped to heal some of the divisiveness that exists across the United States regarding forest management issues on federal lands. It also has helped to create landscape-scale approaches to managing forests on private lands. Just as importantly, communities more widely are using collaborative approaches to redefine the economic benefits from the forests, as well as to widen the circle of stakeholders who have access to these benefits.

On privately owned forestlands, collaboration has become an essential means for landowners to gain economies of scale, especially in terms of producing various types of forest products. In fact, it is virtually impossible to practice watershed-scale ecosystem management unless private landowners actually do collaborate. Collaboration also is recognized as a means for matching technical assistance providers and funders with communities to whom they otherwise might not have access. It can be used to leverage additional resources as well as extend the impact of any one of the partners.

In southeastern Ohio, the Roots of Appalachia Growers Association (RAGA) developed out of workshops held by **Rural Action** staff in which forest herb and ginseng growers learned about new production and

Collaboration and partnership, defined by the U.S. Forest Service

Collaboration: A process for addressing a problem in which people who see different aspects of a problem constructively and voluntarily explore their differences and search for solutions that reach beyond what any one of them could accomplish alone.

Partnership: People associated with a specific agreement. A voluntary legal relationship for sharing resources to accomplish mutually beneficial projects and programs.

An integral part of some partnerships is a **collaborative process**. In natural resource management, collaboration increasingly refers to a process where groups with different interests come together to address management issues at some agreed-upon scale. Through collaboration, groups that usually disagree explore their differences, identify common interests, and seek common-ground solutions. The goal of collaborative groups is to build and promote a collective vision for how to manage the land. Such relationships can lead to one or many partnership projects.

—U.S. Forest Service National Partnership Program (www.PartnershipResourceCenter.org)

marketing options. RAGA has since proved indispensable for growers, who slowly have overcome their traditional reluctance as individuals to share any information about their crops, especially their whereabouts, out of fear those crops might be poached.

“I was really eager to get in contact with the folks at RAGA because I knew they knew something I needed,” one grower remarked. Today, with their slowly developing ginseng seedlings finally starting to mature, RAGA is ready to go to market. As individuals, most of these growers do not have a significant volume of product to influence the marketplace. Together, however, they will have the volume needed to negotiate better prices and reliably fill larger orders.

Three different examples of collaboration

Looking back across the experiences of the Demonstration Program, there were three general types of collaboration: 1) those that developed among diverse *individuals and institutions*; 2) those that took place primarily upon *private lands*; and 3) those that occurred upon *public lands*.

First, in collaborative activities based more on a business model, people, organizations, churches, and enterprises are joining together for specific periods of time to accomplish specific projects. These partnerships generally are opportunistic by nature. By collaborating, the individual entities

“ Extension is more focused on agriculture than on natural resources. Rural Action fills the void of what extension can't do. It has helped me reach a whole different group of people I wouldn't have been able to reach on my own. Different levels of outreach are a positive. Rural Action is helping to fill in for declining state and federal programs. As a result of collaborating with Rural Action, we have broadened our own views and approaches to these issues. Through this interaction, Rural Action has also broadened their views.”

—David Apsley

Ohio State University Extension, southeast Ohio

are able to leverage the diverse skills and resources required to implement CBF effectively and efficiently. Sharing power with other groups over a short-term project can lead to stronger relationships as well as wider community buy-in to the larger vision. As a result, diverse groups may find it easier to work together on larger initiatives later on. Members of the Woodworkers Group of the **North Quabbin Woods** CBF project, for example, have collaborated for marketing, completing orders, participating in trade-shows, and learning.

Not all short-term activities, however, lead to enhanced capacity for shared work. Partnerships devised solely to access grant monies and other funds rarely serve the community well, as they may lack the common vision and shared definitions needed to sustain the collaboration over time—especially as external conditions, implementation strategies, and even the participants themselves all evolve and change. The

key players in the **Vermont Family Forests Partnership**, for example, shared a common vision but didn't work out some important details, such as the definition of good land management or how stringently to set criteria for inclusion in program activity. Lacking agreement on such practical matters, groups may be more likely to look for funds to support strategies and activities they already have planned than to develop shared objectives and plans.

Second, on private lands, collaborations most often are groups of individuals who come together to access information, resources, and, sometimes, markets. They are tied together by their interest in a specific resource or range of opportunities. This type of collaboration often includes service providers. Such relationships typically are reciprocal: Community organizations gain access to needed expertise, while technical partners gain valuable hands-on experience, as well as the trust and confidence of the landowners associated with the community organization. The challenge in this example often becomes how to connect individual landowners and their properties—which may likely exist as parcels that are not geographically connected—into a more contiguous land base capable of significant ecological impact.

The **Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities** partnership is a network for building awareness of and demand for regionally and responsibly produced wood products, and to enhance rural capacity to produce and market goods that benefit both entrepreneurs and forest ecosystems. The partnership is developing its own unique brand as well as other marketing tools and materials. Service providers and member businesses provide technical assistance through site visits, peer learning, and workshops so that multiple members can benefit.

Third, on public lands, participants typically come together to collaborate regarding what happens to their closest neighbor—the forest. It is a public convening of political and social interests for finding common-ground solutions on decision making over public resources. It is place-based and interest-based. As such, it must strive to engage *all* members of the community.

People typically will engage in a shared process only when they see that their interests can be addressed. As such, the partnership must work to keep all groups informed and even broaden or diversify the issues as a way to engage everyone. By meeting or even exceeding all relevant national environmental laws, for example, the partnership may be able to address the concerns of even those national interests that are not formally represented at the table.

This sort of shared activity is called “multi-party collaboration,” wherein individual participants frequently are representing institutions. When this is the case, it is essential to clarify that their objectives—their reasons for collaborating—are indeed shared by their affiliated institution and do not reside solely with the individual. Partnerships also must ensure individuals have buy-in and/or the mandate to make binding agreements from their whole organization. Representatives themselves need to be careful and not make decisions/agreements that later on cannot be kept. Accordingly, at certain times, it also will be important to involve higher-level decision-makers.

In the Demonstration Program, some of the implementing groups needed first to organize a particular constituency so that they could engage in multiparty collaboration. The larger objective was to change the power dynamics among the various stakeholder groups. It was necessary to this

process to put in place mechanisms for holding individuals accountable to a specified constituency. Transparency and disclosure also are essential. Only then could an individual be viewed as authentically “representing” that constituency.

The **Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters**, for example, has supported outreach staff, who are forest workers themselves, to conduct hundreds of interviews in order fully to understand what workers and harvesters want and need. They have listened to the workers, networked on a national level, and developed ideas for current and future projects that support the aspirations of the workers. Representing forest workers and harvesters, they have carried this information and the priorities identified to broader conversations, including partnerships addressing control of invasive plant species, collaborations with the U.S. Forest Service, and to broader issues of policy education.

“Whether you do salvage work on a burn is primarily a social question, although there are some ecological aspects of it. They [PLP staff] have been able to bring people together socially and work through the ecological question.”

—Sam Burns

Four Corners Partnership, southwest Colorado

It also is possible to keep the collaborative conversation informal, as the **Public Lands Partnership** has done. PLP sets no formal membership requirements and encourages people to speak only for themselves, so anyone could participate. This approach

also helps keep the focus on the community and what is best for it, rather than trying to manage specific conflicts between groups. Trying to engage people who care only about one issue and not the broader community is almost useless, PLP discovered, because it takes a long time to find common ground if there is no unifying connection to place.

“ In Wallowa County, Oregon, they are more willing to work things out than in other places. I’ve got to think that Wallowa Resources has been a key enabler, if not the driver, in making that happen.”

—A representative from Governor Kitzhaber’s office
Oregon

Why collaborate?

People organize and form institutional mechanisms for collaboration when there is a genuine need for them. Regardless of where they live, their specific concerns (whether defined in the short or longer term), or their ultimate objectives, people work together because they believe their interests will be better served by engaging than by not engaging. Moreover, as self-interests, opportunities, challenges, and even the people involved change over time, so does the nature of their collaboration.

Everyone has a right to engage in decision making over public lands. Public lands collaboratives typically are organized less around accessing services and market opportunities than are those formed among private landowners. Even so, public lands

stakeholders still feel the need to see that their own interests are being served, even if it is only “to make sure the other person at the table isn’t going to [negatively affect] me or my self-interests.”

Through providing information, especially in communities where CBF was a relatively new concept, implementing organizations in the Demonstration Program found they could help people identify their self-interests and develop appropriate responses. Workshops, field tours, and peer exchanges all helped local residents to assess those interests relative to emerging opportunities. In fact, many of the networks formed during the Demonstration Program first organized around being able to access more information and resources for their members, whether simply from each other or from outside sources. However, merely seeing the potential to meet one’s needs is not enough. There also must be the sense that collaboration is the best, and perhaps the only, way to achieve the desired outcomes.

Finally, many geographically isolated communities, particularly those adjacent to public lands, over time seem to have developed a “culture of cooperation.” Perhaps as the result of frequent face-to-face interactions, ongoing reciprocal relationships, and a general lack of government services, the community itself simply stepped in to fill the gap. Lynn Jungwirth at the **Watershed Research and Training Center** put it this way: “It is culturally appropriate to work cooperatively. What was new [to CBF] was thinking that we could do that *and* ask the communities of interest and the federal government to behave as a member of our community.”

Some benefits to collaboration

On both public and private lands, collaboration often is a response either to dwindling public investment in forest resources or to a perceived threat to livelihood, such as the listing of an endangered species or a prolonged drought. Collaboration offers a mechanism for leveraging the resources and expertise of diverse partners in order to find solutions and get the work done.

In western Colorado, PLP's formation of Unc/Com, a nonprofit organization, provided the formal mechanism needed to leverage and pool federal, state, and private funds. Those monies were then made available to address issues and needs common to all partners involved in the local collaborative effort. Unc/Com further provides a way to better secure funds that otherwise might be lost at the end of agencies' annual funding cycles. It also offers the means to coordinate the receipt and administration of funds from federal, state, and local agencies that do not necessarily share the same funding cycles. Finally, pooling resources in a locally managed nonprofit such as Unc/Com makes it possible to ensure that as many benefits as possible stay close to home.

Collaboration also offers benefits for the federal agencies. In each of the four sites where community-based organizations have worked directly with federal land managers and environmentalists, the litigation and appeals process—with its associated delays in implementation of forest restoration work—has been avoided at critical times. In the case of Hells Canyon Preservation Council (OR) and the Center for Biological Diversity (NM), representatives of both organizations have argued in favor of stewardship contracting and further collaboration with the communities and agencies based on their experiences in the Demonstration Program.

“ Working together allows us to raise the bar. With declining budgets and staff, the only option is to collaborate. The only way to reach our objectives is through collaboration.”

—Alicia Glassford

U.S. Forest Service, northeastern Oregon

“ I see a lot of collaboration—on Burn Canyon, the Uncompahgre Plateau Project, and the native seed project, among others. I think there is far more conflict resolution than there is conflict.”

—Alan Staehle, community member and

PLP participant, west central Colorado

Collaboration often fosters a process where public lands management agencies more readily can consult the community about its proposed plans, because the agencies and the community have built improved relationships and greater trust through undertaking shared projects. In such cases, differences and potential conflicts are often surfaced and dealt with *before* implementation, in part because there is more broadly derived public input, guidance, and direction. Moreover, agencies also cite the significant benefits that some collaborative activities—such as hands-on, on-the-ground field trips—can provide simply through educating everyone involved.

Some community members, however, are skeptical about this role. It is one thing for communities to be consulted, they say, and quite another actually to be heard. “Too often, if there is this kind of group, it becomes another box that the agency can check off,” one community member reports.

“Cooperation and collaboration add value and benefits in several dimensions in terms of relationship building, fair and open processes in decision making, and better decisions at the project level and in strategic plans and future goals. If we can make progress and achieve those benefits, ultimately the decisions are more durable. People support them; they withstand appeals. They are sustained.”

—Carmine Lockwood

U.S. Forest Service, west central Colorado

“It can let the agencies off the hook in terms of their need to be collaborative, without really *being* collaborative. A partnership shouldn’t be that. The input should be seriously considered.”

At its outset, the Demonstration Program posed the question, “Can CBF help heal the divisiveness that currently exists nationally regarding forest management issues, particularly on federal lands?” Five years later, the answer is a qualified “yes.” With that said, there are many challenges that remain toward working effectively with the diverse members of any partnership. There needs to be a common understanding of the partnership’s vision, structure, authority, and accountability. There need to be clearly articulated ground rules, well-defined expectations, and reliable communication mechanisms. The legitimacy of the community needs to be recognized by all parties, and everyone needs new skills. The pressing question is whether collaboration is even possible, given each member’s history, policies, and personnel. If not, the next question is whether enough objectives can be met to make some sort of shared initiative worth the effort.

Design considerations

Collaborative CBF programs inevitably reflect the realities of community history.

If a relationship between individuals or groups has been strained, then it takes time to repair it. Conversely, a positive past history can make it easy to come together. For example, the preexisting relationships between state and federal agencies, academic institutions, and the **Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund** helped bring about truly effective collaboration around forestry during the Demonstration Program. As one partner summarized, “We have a past history together, which makes it easy to come together.” As a result, it has never been necessary to force anyone to join or stay. “People are involved because it’s the right thing to do,” explained another partner. “They feel that they are part of the process, and their involvement is characterized by deep levels of commitment.”

Just as past conflicts among prospective collaborators cause tensions, differing levels of organizational maturity and resources can lead to power struggles and challenges. Relatively young organizations may lack the staff time to dedicate the many hours of effort required to manage collaboration successfully. Furthermore, these young organizations often rely upon volunteer staff, which can create a double standard regarding who is reimbursed for their time and who is not. Within a fledgling partnership, staff from more mature organizations sometimes can take a condescending attitude, as younger organizations struggle to find their place. Getting into partnerships where there is a lot of tension, or that are weak from the start, inevitably means that more work will be required over time.

EXAMPLE

Public Lands Partnership: Principles of collaborative conservation

As it brought together a broad range of individuals and interests, the Public Lands Partnership (PLP) learned that it is necessary to clarify language and meaning. PLP developed the following principles as a means to ensure that everyone involved shared a common understanding and vision.

1. All people have a right to participate in decisions affecting our public lands.
2. There is value in every voice added to the dialogue—each should be honored and given the opportunity to be heard.
3. The best and longest-lasting decisions incorporate the common values and needs of as many people as possible.
4. While public lands management decisions may legitimately reflect national priorities, these decisions should incorporate the unique character of the area under consideration, including geography, climate, biology, culture, history, and local values.
5. The voices of those who possess a clear and personal understanding of local conditions should be granted the maximum level of deference possible in making public lands management decisions.
6. Decisions should be based on the very best scientifically credible information available. When information is lacking, flexibility should be incorporated into the land management plan that will allow for new information when it becomes available.
7. Decisions reached during the collaborative effort deserve the respect of all the participants and should be defended by them from outside pressure.
8. Local, state, and federal legislative bodies have a responsibility to ensure that standing bureaucracies do not invalidate the fruits of collaborative efforts.
9. Public lands management is a dynamic process—all the land management decisions should be flexible enough to incorporate change.
10. The ultimate success of collaborative efforts rests on the willingness of the group to stay with the process over time (and adversity).

TIP Structuring the collaborative process

Tips learned by the demonstration sites:

1. Leave assumptions and agendas at the door.
2. Have clear objectives, be practical, and stay focused. Take action and celebrate success early in the process. Remain open to varied ways of organizing the collaboration and accomplishing the work.
3. Ensure the ground rules of the process are clear with everyone, including agreeing when not to agree. It gets easier each time. Members of the group need to feel “ownership” of both the way the group works and of the result or product.
4. One ground rule is “no surprises.” The members of the partnership should hear from a member *first* if he or she is going to take a public action seemingly in opposition to another member or the partnership itself.
5. It isn’t necessary to get everyone together *all* of the time. Focus on reaching out to those specific interests that will be vested in the outcome, while making information available to all.
6. When stakeholder groups are not present, partnerships should table any decisions relevant to their interests until such time when they can be present. Doing so builds trust among all parties that everyone’s interests will be fully considered. Establish a protocol: “If we are talking about an issue and the interest group who cares about that issue isn’t there, then we don’t have that discussion until the right people are present.”
7. Ensure the most affected stakeholders are deeply involved in discussions and the decision-making process—for example, by participating in a subcommittee. Others can register their viewpoint at the time of the final recommendation.
8. Use both formal and informal communication mechanisms. Time spent with stakeholders in between meetings is just as important as the time spent in meetings. For example, Hells Canyon Preservation Council didn’t always attend every meeting, but Wallowa Resources staff kept the Council advised and made sure it was on the same page.

(continued)

9. To attract and include multiple levels of an organization in the effort, vary the mechanisms you use. For example, Public Lands Partnership is implementing a new quarterly meeting structure that includes: one meeting of general information and education on a resource management issue; one meeting on committee reports on progress in implementation; and one meeting attended by upper-level agency staff to keep both the agency and community informed of policy-level issues and to allow for community input.
10. Partnerships do not run by volunteers alone. There has to be someone whose job it is to keep things moving. All partnerships need sufficient funds, staff, materials, time, and skilled leadership.

In the Demonstration Program, the **Vermont Family Forests Partnership** had three primary partners. Vermont Family Forests was a very young organization with very little staff whose scope of work covered a single county. The Demonstration Program was its primary focus, as well as its major source of funds. The second partner, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund, worked statewide developing business clusters in sustainable industries, including wood products. The third partner, the Northeast Natural Resource Center of the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) was an established, older organization with a lot of staff, working on several national initiatives. These differences in the scale at which each organization worked, each organization's maturity, and their ability to access to resources outside of the Demonstration Program contributed to imbalances of power and tensions between the three partners.

As other CBOs in the Demonstration Program soon discovered, simply taking one positive step toward fulfilling even a hint of

the partnership's original goals often is better than attempting to force progress toward what *you* thought was going to happen when *you* entered the partnership. Collaboration continually draws new people and new ideas into the process, and it is necessary to adjust and modify one's expectations and plans to integrate these emergent factors. Ultimately, the initiative's long-term outcome will be shaped by this shared process and its dynamic relationships, certainly at least as much as by the content of the group's discussions. Formal agreements between organizations are no doubt relevant, but when it gets right down to it, personalities are what make collaboration work—or not.

Collaboration isn't always the best approach in every situation. When one of the partners is not willing to relinquish authority or to negotiate its position, real collaboration will not be appropriate. On Native American land, for example, federally recognized tribes are seen as sovereign governments. As such, negotiating land management with the U.S. government would more than likely result in the tribes *losing* rights and authority.

Similarly, if a collaborative process has been tried but one or more issues have resulted in a breakdown in the dialogue, then other approaches might be necessary.

Lessons

This section offers lessons about essential ingredients for successful collaboration, strategic roles different organizations can play, and institutional barriers within the U.S. Forest Service.

Essential ingredients for successful collaboration

LESSON 1 To get started, do an inventory of the players, the resources they can bring, the interests they represent, and the mission overlap. Look for common ground but also build mutual dependence on each partner's unique resources and skills. Know the roles and responsibilities of the different actors in a partner organization to be sure you are focusing your efforts in the right place.

As partners join the partnership and roles are discussed, the group needs to make explicit what the benefits will be for each partner. In any event, organizational self-interest is appropriate and must be

As partners join the partnership and roles are discussed, the group needs to make explicit what the benefits will be for each partner. Organizational self-interest is appropriate and must be recognized.

recognized. Most importantly, however, the group needs to establish ways to communicate clearly and effectively, so that it can address *changes* in these roles and expectations, as they come up.

In many partnerships, there is strength in having a proficiency that no one else has and in being willing to share that knowledge. **D.C. Greenworks**, for example, is both a nonprofit organization and one of the few businesses in Washington, D.C., that is able to build green roofs. As a result, it would be difficult to move ahead with any collaborative activity organized around low-impact development without D.C. Greenworks' participation. Dawn Gifford, executive director, has clearly defined the expertise of her organization, as well as the role it expects to play in its service area. She delivers on her commitments, she knows D.C. Greenworks' strengths and limitations, and she loves to educate people about low-impact development.

During the six-year Demonstration Program, community-based organizations that work with the U.S. Forest Service soon learned that it is not enough simply to collaborate with the local ranger assigned to their district. Rather, it is essential to engage the institution itself at different levels. Addressing the forest supervisor level, for example, is essential, for that is where allocations of human and financial resources are made, decisions affecting policy consistency across districts can be implemented, and support for a collaborative approach can be conveyed as a value to the rest of the organization.

It also would be beneficial to have the U.S. Forest Service grants and agreements coordinator and/or the contracting officer involved from the beginning of the design and negotiation of collaborative projects. The Demonstration Program participants recommended engaging at least two

TIP Whom to engage?

Basically, the answer is: “Anyone with an interest in the resources—and then some.” CBOs in the Demonstration Program learned that it is critical to work simultaneously with several public agencies, as well as with private landowners, so all the community’s eggs are not in one basket. It is important to engage county governments, particularly in the western United States, as they provide legitimacy, authority, and access to resources. Moreover, they are accountable to all of the people in a particular area. It also may be important to engage people who do not live in the immediate area, but who have historical and cultural connections and rights to the resources. Public Lands Partnership included the Northern Ute Tribe, Wallowa Resources, the Nez Perce Tribe, the Watershed Research and Training Center, and the Nor El Muk. It’s best to find people within interest groups who also care about other issues, as well as about the community as a whole. Those are the people one can engage first; then perhaps they will bring others along with them.

representatives from the same federal agency. Exactly who is involved will differ between regions and over time as dynamics internal to the agencies change.

When engaging regional, state, and national environmental organizations and their respective offices, there are several things to remember. First, start with the local representatives. Engage individuals who are able to represent their interests through the lens of conditions in the local community. Even so, while involving local representatives is essential, they often are unable to take positions on behalf of the larger body. Help these local representatives communicate with the national level. This engagement may be managed through email or even providing resources to support staff travel to local meetings. For example, Hells Canyon Preservation Council and **Wallowa Resources** co-hosted a tour of the environmental groups as part of a

peer-review process nested within the larger Community Planning process. This approach can help to diffuse potential issues with the national levels of their organizations and avoid surprises.

LESSON 2 Membership in the partnership will change over time. It is important periodically to assess whether all of the critical parties are still at the table, and if the right organizational levels of the member organizations are engaged at the right time. It also is important to rebuild credibility with new constituents and individuals.

As players at all levels will inevitably change, especially for partnerships involving public lands, continual investments must be made in getting to know new partners. Often these transitions are the result of

The elements of coordination and collaboration

Elements	Cooperation “Informing others of our related activities”	Coordination “Linking our complementary agendas”	Collaboration “Co-creating the future”
Vision and relationships	<p>Basis for cooperation is usually between individuals but may be mandated by a third party.</p> <p>Organizational missions and goals are not taken into account.</p> <p>Interaction is on an “as-needed” basis, may last indefinitely.</p>	<p>Individual relationships are supported by the organizations they represent.</p> <p>Each organization’s mission/goals are reviewed for compatibility.</p> <p>Interaction is usually around one or more specific project or task of definable length.</p>	<p>Commitment of the organizations and their leaders is fully behind their representatives.</p> <p>Common, new mission and goals are created.</p> <p>One or more projects are undertaken for longer-term results.</p>
Structure, responsibilities, and communication	<p>Relationships are informal; each organization functions separately.</p> <p>No joint planning is required.</p> <p>Information is conveyed as needed.</p>	<p>Organizations involved take on needed role, but function relatively independently of each other.</p> <p>Some project specific planning is required.</p> <p>Communication roles are established and definite channels are created for interaction.</p>	<p>New organizational structure and/or clearly defined interrelated roles that constitute a formal division of labor are created.</p> <p>More comprehensive planning is required that includes developing joint strategies and measuring success in terms of impacts on those served.</p> <p>Beyond communication roles and channels for interaction, many “levels” of communication on other topics are created as clear information is critical to success.</p>

Adapted from the works of Martin Blank, Sharon Kagan, Atelia Melaville, and Karen Ray in Mattessich, Paul PhD, Marta Murray-Close, Barbara Monsey, *Collaboration: What Makes it Work?* Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 2001.

(continued)

Elements	Cooperation “Informing others of our related activities”	Coordination “Linking our complementary agendas”	Collaboration “Co-creating the future”
Authority and accountability	<p>Authority rests solely with individual organizations.</p> <p>Leadership is unilateral and control is central.</p> <p>Authority and accountability rest with each organization, which acts independently.</p>	<p>Authority rests with the individual organizations, but there is coordination among participants.</p> <p>Some sharing of leadership and control.</p> <p>Some shared risk, but each organization assumes most authority and accountability.</p>	<p>Authority is determined by the collaboration to balance ownership between organizations and accomplish purpose.</p> <p>Leadership and control are dispersed and are shared and mutual.</p> <p>Equal risk is shared by all organizations in the collaboration.</p>
Resources and rewards	<p>Resources (staff time, dollars, and capabilities) are separate, serving each organization’s own needs.</p>	<p>Resources are acknowledged and can be made available to others for a specific project.</p> <p>Rewards are mutually acknowledged.</p>	<p>Resources are pooled or jointly secured for a longer-term effort managed by the partnership.</p> <p>Organizations share in the products; more is accomplished jointly than could be individually.</p>

shifting national priorities and agency staff reassignments. Over the five-year implementation phase of the Demonstration Program, **Wallowa Resources** worked with no less than eight different U.S. Forest Service district rangers (including interim rangers). During such staff transitions, a key to working with the U.S. Forest Service was to have a few of the “long-termers” assigned as the key agency contact for Wallowa Resources, thereby providing a measure of consistency and organizational memory. This person

could then better inform the newly arrived staff. A tool to help communities understand why, when, and how to collaborate with the multiple entities within the U.S. Forest Service is included on the CD that accompanies this report. (See Appendix B.)

Local communities need to locate themselves at the hub of long-term collaborative processes. They are the stakeholders most likely to remain constant; moreover, they hold some of the most vested interests

in the outcomes. It takes time to build trust, individual by individual, requiring consistency and continuity. This all takes long-term investments of resources, both financial and human.

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both financial and human.

LESSON 3 Clarify expectations— cooperation, coordination, or collaboration.

Inconsistent and unrealistic expectations of collaboration, as well as a lack of criteria for measuring the effectiveness of shared activity, can lead to unfair criticism of collaborative efforts, accusations of failure, and both participant and agency burnout.¹³

Over and over again, in both private and public lands settings, the partner organizations emphasized the importance of clarifying expectations, roles, and capacities. Differences in understanding, which occurred often, created many challenges, some misunderstandings, and a few resentments. This issue is further confounded by the use of language, as the choice of words can be seen as *implying* certain agreements. Defining collaboration is made complex by ambiguities in practical usage.

¹³ Workshop: September 17-19, 2003, Hart Prairie, Flagstaff, Arizona. Sponsors: Ecological Restoration Institute, Society of American Foresters, Pinchot Institute for Conservation, American Forests.

In that light, it will be useful to draw distinctions among and clarify expectations about cooperation, coordination, and collaboration:

- **Cooperation** is characterized by informal relationships that exist without any commonly defined mission, structure, or planning effort.
- **Coordination** is characterized by more formal relationships and an understanding of compatible missions. Some planning and division of roles are required, and communication channels are established.
- **Collaboration** connotes a more durable and pervasive relationship. Collaborations bring previously separated organizations into a new structure with full commitment to a common mission.¹⁴

The lesson learned here is, as a first step, to check assumptions at the door and clarify meaning and definitions of the relationship. Only then can members work together out of the same framework. It is not that one framework is better or worse, rather that it is necessary to know which framework the group is using and to base the selection of the best framework on what the group is trying to accomplish. Often, defining joint responsibilities in practical terms is the best way to clarify what the word “collaboration” really means. As parties and relationships change over time, it is necessary periodically to revisit this issue.

When players find themselves in different places on the cooperation-coordination-collaboration continuum, which often is the case between communities and the public lands management agencies, they can pursue a number of different strategies. First,

¹⁴ Ibid.

they can work to get to the same place. If the parties involved are shifting from cooperation to coordination to collaboration, then this takes significant time and effort, and requires recognition of the existing differences, as well as changes in each entity's culture, skills, regulations, and behaviors. The question is whether this is possible within each partner's history, policies, and personnel.

Second, parties can jointly examine the issues they wish to address; in so doing, they may find that there are some issues that present options for collaboration, while others may not. It may be easier to collaborate on an issue or project that is new for everyone and where there is less ownership over a certain position or activity. If not, the next question is whether enough objectives can be met through coordination to make shared activity worth the effort.

LESSON 4 Trust—the partnership will only be successful if there is trust among all of the players. Transparency, time, success, and celebration are all keys to building that trust.

Partnerships are about relationships. Developing good relationships with key people is essential. Find them and support them within their agencies and organizations. “Those people [federal agency employees] are frustrated, too, because there are roadblocks within the agencies,” reports one community member. Many of the parties found the time they spent working through the specific issues together, even talking about specific trees in the field, was painstaking, but it built a lot of trust and gave the partners a chance to see where each of them was coming from. Recognize that all parties to a partnership are mutually accountable to each other. When one member cannot deliver, they lose

the trust and respect of the other players. It is better to not make a commitment at all, than to make it and break it.

Members of a partnership need to be transparent about their limitations. If not, time and trust are wasted as participants work toward a solution that ultimately is impossible. This means that an organization must take the time to know itself, its plans, and its operating costs, and then take the time to share this information. Having limited staff resources can prevent an organization from being able to do this. The facilitator plays a role in keeping the partners transparent and accountable.



This is an innovative approach.

I have seen opposing sides come together—
and different sciences coming together.

People have to be willing to listen.

People are learning to listen and
taking the time to listen.

It takes a long time to lay a foundation.”

—Joe McCormick

Nez Perce tribal member, Idaho

LESSON 5 Find common ground in order to take action.

All parties need to come to the table ready to collaborate—not to try and convince everyone of their own position. They must be willing to invest energy in striving for the shared common ground, if they actually want to get something done and not fall into extreme, polarized positions. All parties also need to operate with respect and willingness to acknowledge what each other is saying, even if they don't agree.

EXAMPLE

Bringing together environmentalists, agencies, and small business

The fact that the Jobs and Biodiversity Coalition partners—particularly governmental (U.S. Forest Service), environmental (Center for Biological Diversity), and industry (Gila WoodNet)—chose to collaborate already was a significant step, given their contentious history with one another. The partnership began with an assumption that there was something they could do to improve the ecosystem and then proceeded with the long and deliberate process of building trust.

“I kind of jokingly say we spent a lot of hours talking about individual trees, but the reality is we *did* spend a lot of hours talking about individual trees,” recalls Gerry Engel of the U.S. Forest Service. “I think that was something that had to happen. It made it agonizingly slow in some ways, but it was all about that trust-building process and understanding where the other folks were coming from.”

JBC today is characterized by deep levels of trust and respect among its members, Engel says, making it somewhat of a model. “We had trust in terms of where we were going, and we had people within the environmental community...basically saying to [other environmental groups], ‘We think this is good, and we would just as soon you guys didn’t ruffle the waters on this.’ It meant that we could move forward without having to do as much i-dotting and t-crossing. We could focus on the real work.

“People look at what we did and how we did it, and they say, ‘Wow, that’s pretty cool, they didn’t get any appeals.’ We were able to work through this process and not have to have a project workbook that’s three feet thick. But there are still some people that just feel like we’re collaborating with the enemy.”

Another key factor in the Jobs and Biodiversity Coalition’s success as a partnership was the involvement early on of people with decision-making authority—for example, the local Forest Supervisor. Perhaps most important, however, has been the willingness and ability of coalition members to keep their “professional egos” in check and to let go of opinions or beliefs that block consensus. Members were willing to do this in part because of the small scale of the project—meaning, there was less at risk for all of the different participants.

There will be conflict in any partnership, but this conflict can be a valuable ingredient to creative decision making. While it takes time to understand the rationale behind differing beliefs and opinions and genuinely to work through these different points of view, it is the “working through” that creates new approaches and solutions, and builds trust. Rick Wagner of the Oregon Department of Forestry advises his colleagues, “Don’t ask, ‘What can communities give us?’ Ask instead, ‘How can we work together so everyone meets their objectives?’” Furthermore, the public agencies need to be risk-takers. As one agency staff member emphasized, “We need to be willing to listen and change our minds, too.”

It may be necessary to broaden the definition of an issue to find more accessible common ground. Likewise, narrowing the issue can avoid unnecessary conflicts. Start as small as necessary, but be sure to strive for and celebrate even modest successes together as a way to build trust.

In the **Jobs and Biodiversity Coalition**, relationships across the different stakeholder interests represented were based upon each partner’s commitment to find and operate within a “zone of agreement”—the area in which the partner’s individual interests overlapped with shared objectives. With multiple agendas to manage and balance, the context of the partnership will change, and the “target point” for the zones of agreement must be revisited and renegotiated from time to time. If that does not happen, what was at one point considered relatively successful later may be considered a failure.

There is a fine line between working to find common ground and ensuring that the parties, particularly the public lands management agencies, keep to their word and meet their commitments. Having grown accustomed to

“ Collaboration means having to share decisions and, by definition, giving up some control. At times, it is even necessary to let go of ideas and plans that you thought were really important. The focus is: What can we agree on?”

—Sophia Millar

U.S. Forest Service, northeastern Oregon

“ The zone of agreement concept is to design a project by listening to all the participants’ issues, addressing them all, and carrying out that project, no matter how small. In the process, language, education, and trust all develop, thereby making more things possible.”

—Gordon West

Jobs and Biodiversity Coalition, southern New Mexico

“ If an organization chooses to be both the convener/facilitator and implementer group, then you create a tension in that organization, because the facilitator leader/community organizing piece is, ‘The bus doesn’t leave until everyone is on.’ The implementer is, ‘Get that bus going, go down the road, and people will come later.’ This is the opportunity. The entrepreneurial impulse is always at odds with the idea, ‘Is everybody there yet.’”

—Lynn Jungwirth, executive director

Watershed Research and Training Center, northern California



Now the Public Lands Partnership has two faces: the homespun, sit-around-and-talk-about-the-issues, good solid citizen discussion; and the business part. Both are critical, but if you try to combine them too much, you hurt both of them.”

—Allen Belt, community member
West central Colorado

delays, reallocation of funding, and commitments not being kept, communities sometimes put themselves in the role of watchdog to hold the agencies’ accountable. When this sort of vigilance defines the relationship, it is difficult to view each party as equal and mutually accountable.

Strategic roles

LESSON 6 For effective collaboration on public lands issues, three different managerial roles are needed: convener/facilitator, implementer, and fiscal manager. While a single organization can play more than one role, it is important to be clear about who is assuming which role and when. It also is important to make sure the organization is comfortable with its role(s).

The convener/facilitator “sets the table” and creates the platform for “civic dialogue,” an “idea incubator,” and a “table of trust.” This role creates a neutral space to discuss and debate natural resource issues facing all of the stakeholders. It must be inclusive and bring together individuals and organizations able to look at their interests through the lens of the community.

As such, the convener/facilitator focuses on broadening partner engagement around a diverse set of issues, coordinating group activities, promoting shared learning, and acting as a catalyst. It needs some clarity on a few “rules of the road” related to group values, communications, ground rules, and a clear statement of expectations. It may encourage working groups to address specific opportunities and challenges, but these should be ad hoc. The community planning processes facilitated by both **Wallowa Resources** and the **Public Lands Partnership** provide examples of this convener/facilitator role.

Collaborative processes also need the capacity to implement the day-to-day details of activities that emerge from the idea incubator—specifically for those led by the community, although other stakeholders also may be involved. Wallowa Resources frequently performs this role, receiving grant funds from multiple sources, contracting out work, and implementing projects. This implementing organization needs to be accountable to the community, even as it upholds the larger vision and value of collaboration with all the partners.

There also may be a need for an entity able to coordinate and implement projects specifically rooted in interagency collaboration and partnership initiatives. In such efforts, it is best to establish clear leadership authority over the implementation of activities, rather than managing by committee. If multiple agency funds are involved, there needs to be an entity capable of receiving, managing, and coordinating public agency funds. This fiscal agent also can be an effective way for the agencies to co-fund and leverage additional resources for activities. Moreover, in an environment where the capacity to manage private funds is lacking, this entity might manage those resources as well.

Obviously, different skills are needed for these roles. The convener/facilitator needs skills in structuring dialogue, conflict management, community organizing, and listening to all perspectives. The implementer likely needs skills in specific technical areas, planning, and evaluation.

It is important to clarify why the group is collaborating. Is it to find common ground and agree on priorities, or to implement projects, or both? When there is confusion among these roles, it can be difficult for stakeholders to know where and how to engage.

Institutional barriers within the U.S. Forest Service

The following institutional barriers and recommendations were identified by Mary Mitsos, National Forest Foundation, during interviews with Demonstration Program partners that were working on public lands:

1. **Put collaboration rhetoric into actual practice.** This requires committing money, time, and staff resources to community-level collaboration projects. Communities in the Demonstration Program report that U.S. Forest Service employees who are interested and participate in collaborative activities still do not receive much support from their own institution. While most believe that the forward-thinking leadership exists in the Washington office of the U.S. Forest Service and that more field personnel are committed to collaborative approaches, it appears there is little to no support coming from the regional offices and very little support from the Forest Supervisors' offices. While everyone recognizes that collaboration takes significant investments of

time and resources, there has been no apparent effort within the U.S. Forest Service to reduce the other responsibilities of selected staff to allow them to participate fully in collaboration. The expectation is that support in this context means both allocating money, time, and staffing *and* establishing relevant performance measures. **There needs to be strategic investment in collaboration. In addition, within local U.S. Forest Service budgets, there needs to be a designated and dedicated fund for financial and human resources for community-based collaborative efforts.**

2. The State and Private Forestry Economic Action Programs (EAP) continue to be the most effective federal capacity-building tool at the local, rural level. **Continued support from the agency and the administration for this program is essential.** The National Fire Plan, while effective for getting fuels reduction work done on private lands, has not been as useful as expected for either small, locally based contractors or for getting work done on federal lands. **Agency support for appropriately sized contracts for community benefit and tool development to improve this aspect of the National Fire Plan also is essential.**



As an agency staff, we need to look at each activity that we want to do and find the appropriate implementation mechanism to match each situation. It takes longer, but is worth it. Streamlining this process would be a big improvement.”

—Judy Wing

U.S. Forest Service, northeastern Oregon

3. One of the biggest barriers experienced in CBF projects around the West involves the difficulties rural communities and small contractors confront in accessing restoration or fuels reduction work on federal lands. While there is support for access to the work and “best-value contracting,” the existing contracting mechanisms—as well as the lengthy amount of time it takes to negotiate them—often present significant barriers to accessing the work. Even when there are appropriate mechanisms, they often are not used. **There need to be focused efforts at using appropriate contracting processes and mechanisms, and contracting officers need to be trained and required to use them. In addition, the agencies need to finalize a proposed policy change that would allow projects implemented through cooperative agreements to have a mechanism to permit poor communities to be exempt from the 20 percent match requirement.**
4. Some rural communities lack an in-depth understanding about contemporary requirements and opportunities presented by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). They also lack access to readily available U.S. Forest Service staff who are needed to complete the NEPA process. U.S. Forest Service staff felt it would be beneficial if communities could broaden their understanding of NEPA, stating that “when you don’t understand the process, you have different expectations of what is possible and when.” **Training in the NEPA process needs to be provided to local communities, and local contractors must be recognized and used to undertake NEPA activities.**
5. Collaboration with communities—and all of the time it takes—is not specified in the formal objectives, job descriptions, or performance standards of federal employees, so staff are neither held accountable nor rewarded for their efforts to work with communities. **Work plans, job descriptions, and other performance criteria need to be modified to include community collaboration as an explicit goal.**
6. Implementing landscape-level change without the necessary resources is impossible. While the long-term benefits are clear, public and private investment levels in ecological restoration are inadequate. **Additional funds need to be authorized for forest restoration work on public lands that require ecosystem management—and not just for fuel load reductions.**
7. Performance targets emphasizing acres of treatment per year jeopardize local community benefits and undermine local investment in small log harvesting, processing, and manufacturing. They shift the focus from areas most in need of restoration to those that are easiest to treat. Local U.S. Forest Service staff experience pressure to implement large-scale contracts, which may be inappropriate for local contractors and likely use techniques (such as widespread burning) that reduce the amount of small-diameter timber available as byproduct. **The U.S. Forest Service needs to separate forest restoration from its fire and timber programs—as well as give forest restoration a priority status and its own budget. Performance targets and techniques need to be set that address the needs of local conditions as well as national-level goals.**

NEPA's Categorical Exclusion provision

Facilitate up-front collaborative processes that can shorten the time and investment required for environmental analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act to get to the implementation stage of ecosystem restoration projects on public lands.

The Categorical Exclusion (CE) provision of NEPA permits forest management projects that are deemed to have no significant environmental impacts to be exempted from the more lengthy and rigorous analysis, evaluation, and public input process mandated by NEPA.

Among the Ford Foundation demonstration sites that worked most closely with publicly managed forests, upfront collaboration processes, transparency, and trust among all parties allowed appropriate use of categorical exclusions for some proposed restoration projects. This sometimes broke a logjam that had held back project proposals for months or even years.

In Spring 2003, for example, the Public Lands Partnership facilitated a field trip and stakeholder discussion to consider a proposed categorical exclusion for a project to use a mechanical hydro ax to improve habitat, reduce wildfire risks, and protect power transmission lines at Sims Mesa. Representatives from local environmental organizations, the timber industry, public agencies, and the community inspected the site. Largely as a result of their visit, the categorical exclusion option was supported by all and the treatment implemented. Since the hydro ax treatment, the stakeholders have revisited Sims Mesa at least twice. Today, they concur that the treatment was both effective and appropriate.

On the other hand, one observer who is familiar with a number of U.S. Forest Service Districts has noted that at least one district tends to recommend the CE provision for nearly every proposed action that might be difficult to get approved. If the CE is used in this way, it inevitably will result in increased community suspicions and lingering questions. Therefore, it is vitally important to have a collaborative process in place that can facilitate broadly based agreement *before* the CE provision is invoked.

8. The federal budgeting and funding cycle makes it difficult to plan multiyear projects and to implement them with partners. Community-based nonprofits, such as Unc/Com or **Wallowa Resources**, can help iron out some of the difficulties. **The federal agencies need to recognize that organizations such as Unc/Com are providing services that require both human and financial resources. Therefore, the agencies should provide compensation for these services.**



We have been able to implement projects designated through the community planning process that fall under the categorical exclusion provision because we had already gotten input and worked through the issues with the various stakeholders, including the community, environmentalists, the U.S. Forest Service, and others.”

—Diane Snyder, executive director
Wallowa Resources, northeastern Oregon

9. There is a disservice to both the agencies and the communities when U.S. Forest Service staff constantly are relocated. Relatively brief tenures in a particular place deprive U.S. Forest Service staff of the continuity necessary to have an intimate knowledge of the woods and the community itself. As a result, they

often are reluctant to take necessary risks in decision making, nor do they easily develop collaborative and reciprocal relationships. Even when employees do engage with the local community, they typically move on to their next assignment well before projects or initiatives have been completed. More than likely, the newly arriving employee that replaces them may not have the same level of buy-in for existing projects. **The U.S. Forest Service culture of “you must move out to move up” needs to be reconsidered. Rewarding employees for staying in place needs to be incorporated into the current system.**

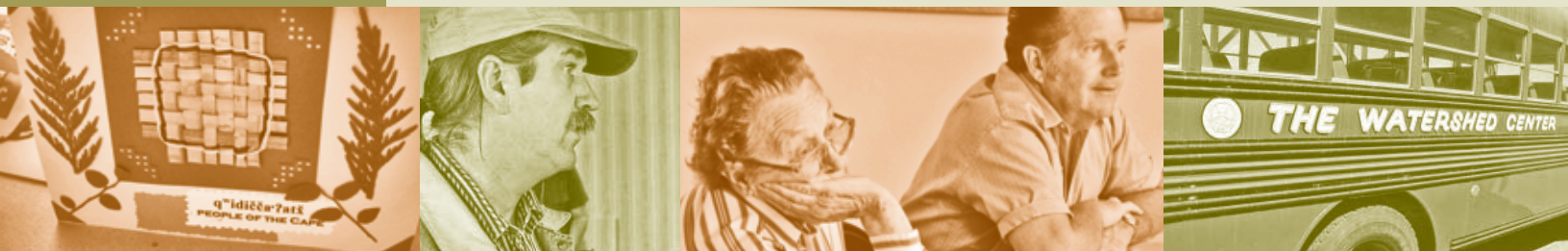
10. From the community’s perspective, local knowledge is too often dismissed as not good enough or unreliable. For the agencies, the lack of “good science” can become the reason for not moving ahead with implementation of a collaborative project. Often, there are different, competing scientific viewpoints on what ought to be done within an ecosystem. As one community member states, “It is hard to get [the agencies] to quit playing the science game. It’s so easy for them to hide behind it.” **Agencies need to further support multiparty monitoring with financial and human resources. This approach, where all stakeholders have agreed upon what information is most important and are jointly collecting and analyzing it, is one successful example of how to address this issue.**



CHAPTER

7

Implementing CBF through Community-Based Organizations



The CBF Demonstration Program made grants to community-based organizations in almost every region of the country.

Some of these organizations were well established, while others were newly emerging. Organizations with existing missions that served private landowners saw CBF as another possible tool for their clients, so they developed CBF programs within their organizations to serve them. These organizations learned about CBF as they introduced the concepts to the community. For other groups, CBF was their heart and soul, having emerged in response to the threats posed by changing forest management practices on neighboring public lands. Still others evolved as membership-based organizations.

The Demonstration Program worked with four basic types of CBOs. Each type of organization had specific advantages in implementing community-based forestry; each also faced particular challenges.

Across the board, then, the Demonstration Program worked with four basic types of CBOs. Each category reflects both the organization's structure and its degree of commitment to CBF. Those four categories included:

- CBF organizations;
- CBF programs within a CBO that did not have a CBF-specific mission;
- Partnerships for the purpose of accomplishing a shared CBF-related goal; and
- Unincorporated CBOs (at least at the beginning of the Demonstration Program).

Obviously, each type of organization enjoys specific advantages with regard to implementing community-based forestry; each also faces particular challenges. The chart that follows below summarizes some of those strengths and challenges, as experienced by sites participating in the Demonstration Program.

To help individual sites meet those challenges successfully, the Ford Foundation contracted with the Natural Assets Program of the Aspen Institute to provide technical assistance focused on organizational development throughout the six-year overall tenure of the Demonstration Program.

In providing that support, resource personnel had the opportunity to work closely with staff and board members from each of the CBOs in a variety of settings, including one-on-one discussions during site visits, telephone and email consultations, workshops, and peer-to-peer strategy discussions.

From those rich conversations, a set of lessons emerged that reflects the full spectrum of organizational approaches to implementing CBF in widely different environments. This chapter documents many of those lessons, paying particular attention to those that transcend organizational differences.

After all, the means may vary, but for all of these organizational structures, there need to be a sustained commitment to mission and vision, a provision to meet the continuing need for basic skill sets, and a clear accountability to the community.

Four types of organizational design: Advantages and challenges

The Demonstration Program offers richness in the lessons related to organizational design in part because the grants were made to four different organizational structures. Each structure presented key advantages and distinct challenges.

Structure	Examples	Advantages	Challenges
CBF organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ D.C. Greenworks ■ Wallowa Resources ■ Watershed Research and Training Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ When hard times came, it was possible to shift funds from one CBF area to another. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Must find ways to build organizational structure in field where funds are project-based.
Program within CBO with non-CBF-specific mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund ■ Penn Center ■ Rural Action ■ Makah Tribe ■ Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities/SNW ■ North Quabbin Woods/NEFF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Program can build on reputation and network of parent organization beyond CBF field. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Board and management of the parent need to honor the program's commitment to CBF aims. ■ Parent needs to allow experimentation and flexibility. ■ Parent needs to keep funds dedicated to the program within the program and give the program manager substantial control over the program fund
Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Vermont Family Forests Partnership ■ Jobs and Biodiversity Coalition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Resources and networks of several organizations working toward CBF goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lack of clarity about CBF led to conflict within partnership, or no work on one leg of CBF. ■ Partnership cannot manage staff; staff must work for one of participating organizations. ■ Division of funds among the partners can create tensions.
Unincorporated CBO at the start of the Demonstration Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters (which is a formal membership organization) ■ Public Lands Partnership (did not incorporate, but formed and incorporated a fiscal entity, Unc/Com) ■ Jobs and Biodiversity Coalition (never incorporated) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Informality offered flexibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Informality left partners confused about what they could expect. ■ A lot of time was spent on systems and procedures that had already been determined in incorporated organizations (this also applies to VFF, one of the VFFP partners). ■ With unincorporated CBOs, accountability and tracking of funds can be more difficult.

Lessons

This section includes lessons on governance, structure, operations, and staffing and skills.

Governance

LESSON 1 CBF programs, organizations, and collaborative processes are community assets. They need to find appropriate mechanisms for ensuring accountability and transparency to their communities.

CBOs in the Demonstration Program used both formal and informal means to stay connected with their communities. **North Quabbin Woods** has a community advisory council, but it was not terribly effective. When the organization moved its office to Main Street, however, people started to drop by informally and ask about its work. This more immediate, accessible presence connected NQW to the community in a way that its formal structure had not.

Some of the CBF efforts also became accountable and more transparent by being part of the community. This means not only responding to community needs but also engaging regularly with other community organizations and efforts. For example, Dawn Gifford (**D.C. Greenworks**) attends most of the Area Neighborhood Commission meetings in her target neighborhoods, and Scott Maslansky (**North Quabbin Woods**) is a member of the North Quabbin Economic Development Group.

Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities used both formal and informal mechanisms to stay attuned to its partners' needs. HFHC conducted an annual survey and then held a partners' meeting. Staff members talked to partners regularly and visited many of them during the course of a year. For HFHC, the partners are the community to whom they respond. HFHC is responsive to its members, but it must continue to ask some important questions. Do the members reflect the wider community? As HFHC develops a brand identity for its partners'

EXAMPLE

HFHC governance structure

When Sustainable Northwest first started Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities, it organized a governance group that worked on vision and values and was very engaged in the workings of the project. Now, an advisory committee of HFHC partners works to set strategic direction. This is submitted to the full partnership at the annual meeting and via email for feedback. Following review by the advisory committee, the final version is then submitted to the board of directors of SNW for approval. Staff then design subsequent workplans with input from the SNW staff and advisory committee. The governance group is most relevant at the strategy and evaluation levels, and less so at the project implementation level.

products, will this brand provide benefits broadly to the community or to a relatively small number of businesses?

How a CBO is governed and managed also matters to the community. Some of the CBOs in the Demonstration Program defined their accountability in terms of place. They brought community members onto their boards and advisory committees. Other CBOs defined their accountability in terms of a community of interest. As a result, they formed membership structures that could accommodate that approach. But, if CBOs are to be true community assets, there is a need for flexible, new structures that ensure organizations stay accountable to broader interests than just their board or their active members.

The **Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters** found that decentralizing its governance structure, sharing program implementation with members through Community-Based Organizing Project subgrants, keeping regular communications through diverse mechanisms, delivering on commitments, and maintaining a consistent presence are all ways to maintain accountability to the organization's constituency.

LESSON 2 Find and recruit board members who have significant and active links to the community and can provide governance.

The **Watershed Research and Training Center's** board represents all the different constituencies in Hayfork. Each board member also is active in other organizations in town and routinely is asked to explain to those respective constituencies what WRTC is doing. This helped keep WRTC responsive and accountable to the community.

TIP Open board meetings

Hold your board meetings in the community—and include members of the community—in order to broaden understanding and ensure accountability.

D.C. Greenworks includes strategic partners on its board to foster collaboration and accountability. These board members also have the potential to engage at the political and policy levels in order to support the organization's efforts.

Many of the Demonstration Program sites struggled with being fully responsive or accountable to the broader community.

Vermont Family Forests had only five board members. They cannot represent all of the different constituencies in Addison County. Unfortunately, at times this helped create the impression that VFF was an exclusive club rather than a responsive community-based organization.

While the **Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters** initially structured its board to include workers and harvesters, most forest workers did not identify with that structure or the rhetoric. Furthermore, they were struggling to make a living and often missed valuable employment opportunities while they were attending board meetings. Most importantly, without the broader community of workers and harvesters being organized and without mechanisms in place for ongoing communication with them, the question remains whether those workers and harvesters selected to serve on the board were truly representing their constituencies or simply speaking as individuals.

The **New England Forestry Foundation** held its annual board meeting at NQW's office in downtown Orange, Massachusetts. Thirteen community members attended, including two state representatives, one state senator, and Congressman Oliver's aide. Staff gave a presentation, led a tour of the showroom, and then everyone walked through downtown to the river. Board members and community members alike offered positive comments about how this meeting increased their understanding of NQW's CBF projects.

Many of the participating CBOs were relatively new organizations emerging from—or still engaged in—an informal structure. As they grew, they had to determine how much of that informality they should—and could—maintain.

Structure

LESSON 3 There is tension between informal and formal structures.

At the outset of the Demonstration Program, many of the participating CBOs were relatively new organizations emerging from—or still engaged in—an informal structure.

These groups cited several key benefits of an informal structure. First, without strict membership criteria, people were able to engage as individuals and not feel obligated to represent specific policy positions or institutions. This flexibility created space to “speak from the heart.” People felt comfortable, as they didn't have to give up their personal power to an organization. In the case of the **Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters**,

informal gatherings around a meal allowed for equitable participation and engagement of all interests. Other benefits to informal structures included being able to be flexible and responsive.

As these informally structured entities grew, however, their day-to-day operations began to require greater and greater amounts of funds. The very fact that they now were in the Demonstration Program led most of them to seek and obtain their 501(c)(3) status. In some cases, this resulted in a level of formalization at the expense of their informal process. Often the structure of the organization balanced what leadership thought the community would find acceptable with requirements for financial accountability and transparency.

AFWH, for example, initially structured its board to include only workers and harvesters. However, the need for a more formalized structure to receive funding (especially funding as substantial as the Ford Foundation grant), as well as the resulting new responsibilities to their funders, wrought unforeseen changes. Individuals who were more comfortable and familiar with such matters gained more control over the organization. Today, the AFWH board is a mixture of people who are directly engaged with the work in the woods and other individuals who bring in an outside perspective.

The **Public Lands Partnership** incorporated Unc/Com as a parallel organization to act as the necessary formal fiscal entity, so that PLP could stay informal. The organizational mission of Unc/Com is “to provide efficient and effective fiscal administration for greater community good.” A five-person board, elected by PLP members, provides financial administration to organization(s) working on issues related to public lands. It does not provide any programmatic or

policy direction, rather taking its lead from the various committees—specifically, the PLP executive committee and the technical committee of the Uncompaghre Plateau Project.

The advantage of this arrangement is that the technical input comes chiefly from those partners with specific expertise—principally, the public agency and PLP representatives who serve on the committees. However, this also means that implementation is left primarily to the committees, which may lack the time, human resources, and/or accountability for carrying out these activities. Another disadvantage is that Unc/Com runs the risk of becoming a “pass-through” for grant funds for which, legally speaking, it is assuming responsibility and liability, but over which, in actual practice, it has little say regarding actual use. As a pass-through/fiscal agent, it is almost impossible to raise funds from private sources and Unc/Com must rely on the agencies to pay an administrative fee. This situation is compounded by the willingness of funders to support on-the-ground projects, but not the staff time and infrastructure to make them work.

The **Jobs and Biodiversity Coalition** decided not to incorporate, because the group felt the coalition’s strength derived from the informal bonds of sharing a stake in the work, as opposed to a formally binding structure. JBC’s informality means it has no authority over what individual partners do and do not do. In fact, just two partners, Gila WoodNet and the Silver City-Grant County Economic Development Corporation, carried out actual implementation of the coalition’s CBF project work. “We’re like a club, and it’s worked well,” said Gordon West, a logger and master woodworker. “When we meet, we don’t have a formal way we do business and we haven’t needed it. JBC actually doesn’t exist except when we come to the table and sit down.”

JBC’s informality has raised the question whether its decision to hire paid staff really made sense. Instead, as Gordon West has suggested, JBC could have approached bringing on a leader for its community development efforts in the same way it would have approached bringing on a new member of the coalition. This person, as a coalition member, could have developed a proposal that the coalition could have funded. Although JBC would have provided advice and input to such a project, it would not have wielded supervisory responsibilities that in reality have been difficult to fulfill.

Operations

LESSON 4 Organizations implementing CBF need to be clear about their mission and vision and use it to set the parameters for when and how to respond to community needs.

The most effective implementing organizations balanced clarity of vision with flexibility. They could explain their purpose to the community and to their partners. Within this framework, they were able to respond flexibly to community needs.

The **Watershed Research and Training Center** responded to requests by the community to run a summer camp for youth by getting a camp started. Keeping true to WRTC’s mission, programming at the camp offered environmental education and experiences in monitoring CBF projects. Without this direction from the community,

The most effective implementing organizations balanced clarity of vision with flexibility.

“When we first interacted with Wallowa Resources as a grantee in 1999, it was clear that they were a nascent organization struggling to define their niche in Wallowa County. But now the sophistication they have is tremendous. This shows me they have done some very thoughtful strategic planning to be aware of what they can do and , more importantly, what they cannot do.”

—Ken Bierly

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Oregon

WRTC would have put jobs for community members at the top of its to-do list, but it was able to adjust to community needs and still stay within its mission.

With all the opportunities that CBF offers, it can be easy to lose one’s grounding. At first, **Wallowa Resources** responded to nearly every community request. It tried to be everything to everyone. Over time, however, the organization has learned to sort out and manage these competing priorities. “Strategic planning and keeping our focus were critical to managing our growth,” said Diane Snyder, Wallowa Resources’ executive director. “Our greatest strength is staying focused on our mission.”

Vermont Family Forests articulated a clear vision and upheld strict land management standards. The community largely understood this commitment, but some felt excluded by the implicit statement that VFF has the *only* good approach to taking care of the trees. Clarity of vision was there, but this vision lacked the flexibility to bring others into the fold.

At **Penn Center**, CBF staff were clear about their goals. Board and management, however, did not have the same priorities. They were focused on the survival of their organization. While one cannot deny they had a fiduciary responsibility, their decisions limited the success of Penn’s CBF program and resulted in funding cutbacks.

Early on, **Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities** spent months clarifying its vision and values. Over the course of the Demonstration Program, the focus of staff activities shifted often in response to the needs of the overall partnership, but the enduring vision and values provided solid ground for staff as they made these adjustments.

LESSON 5 **Whatever their organizational structure, community-based entities need to keep an equal focus on getting the work done, building staff and systems, and fundraising.**

It is easy for a small organization or program to stay focused on the needs of the grant, especially when it is project-focused. While the long-term funding provided by the Ford Foundation offered some longer-term security and created the space to focus on project implementation, many groups focused on this implementation to the detriment of their own core fundraising.

The **Public Lands Partnership**, on the other hand, worked hard to maintain an informal organizational structure while still developing the systems it required to get its work done and respond to the needs of its partners. For example, when PLP found that it needed a formal structure to receive and administer funds allocated from various agencies, it created a separate nonprofit entity, called Unc/Com, to be that fiscal administrator.

At the end of Demonstration Program, PLP is asking what kind of an organization it ought be. It would like to preserve its informal table for civic dialogue, but recognizes this informal conversation also needs to lead to implementation. The implementing organization would have to be more formally structured, although still accountable to the community.

PLP may very well decide to continue to serve as the informal entity that would listen to and respect diverse opinions, find common ground, educate and broaden understanding, garner public input, and incubate ideas. Out of PLP, then, would flow the ideas to be implemented. Unc/Com could be the fiscal administrator and, as such, it would continue to be closely aligned with the agencies.

LESSON 6 With limited resources and staff, implementing organizations had to focus their activities, and they had to keep asking, “How does this particular activity impact the forest, the community, and the economy?”

Throughout much of the Demonstration Program, **Penn Center** dedicated only one staff person to implementing its CBF objectives. She chiefly focused on the community capacity-building aspect of CBF by nurturing the Lowcountry Landowners Association. With its limited staffing, Penn was not able to take its initial marketing research to the next step and thus was not able to reach its CBF-related economic objectives.

Vermont Family Forests, on the other hand, tried to work across all dimensions at once. It chose to hire three individuals for a few hours a week who each were very skilled in their areas of expertise. Community members and customers became frustrated

when staff was not available. They also were concerned about potential conflicts-of-interest. With all the different roles that an individual staff member might seek to fulfill during the week, it was not always clear which particular hat he or she might be wearing—VFF staff member, business owner, or state forester.

Decisions about staffing priorities can make the difference between progress and stalled efforts.

LESSON 7 Organizations should make the investment in continuous learning and an ethic of adaptive management.

The staff at **D.C. Greenworks** recognize that it is Dawn Gifford’s interest and investment in learning that affords them flexibility in how they do their jobs. Although they can get a little nervous about this discretionary freedom, they understand that Gifford wants them to learn from their creative experiments, rather than be judged for failure. As such, Gifford has created a learning organization.

Diane Snyder has created an organization that is responsive to community needs through ever-improving project design and implementation. When the Joseph Timber Company sawmill went bankrupt, **Wallowa Resources’** board and management took what they had learned and started another business venture. They understood that the community still needed manufacturing jobs. Snyder, her board, and her staff were willing to take another, this time better-informed, risk in the business world.

Public Lands Partnership found that a monitoring plan was essential to keeping the organization focused on the big picture and desired outcomes, especially while it was trying out different strategies to reach those outcomes. Each year, PLP reviews the impact its programs are having. It also assesses how its different strategies are working. PLP then adapts its programs to respond to this learning and to adjust to changes in the organization's external context.

The varying skill sets that CBF requires pose a number of staffing challenges: how to attract and keep people who have the needed technical expertise, how to train local community members, and how to forge partnerships that can supplement staff abilities.

Staffing and skills

LESSON 8 CBOs must find ways to retain younger staff by devolving authority and creating new opportunities.

One of the **Federation of Southern Cooperative's** greatest assets is the long-term commitment of its leadership, some of whom have been with the organization since the founding. However, the true challenge has been in retaining staff that often go on to work for other organizations, agencies, and businesses—many of which partner with the Federation in one way or another. While on the one hand the Federation can feel pride in serving as a training ground, on the other hand the Federation could retain and continue benefiting from the contributions of these same people if greater opportunities existed within the organization.

There are myriad reasons for staff turnover at the Federation, but a critical one may be that there are few leadership roles for staff to grow into. One step toward creating such roles might include providing program directors the resources and power necessary to do their work. Another step might involve including new leadership in the strategic and decision-making levels of the organization.

The **Watershed Research and Training Center** has a very dynamic executive director. She has built a very horizontal organizational structure. This approach demands a lot from the staff, and WRTC offers training opportunities so that staff can meet these challenges. There will always be limited opportunities for advancement in a small organization, but each job can be designed to stretch skills and offer expanding responsibilities.

LESSON 9 Forging synergies with partners and other organizations is a great way to expand the scope of work when an organization has a small staff, but it still needs core staff.

Public Lands Partnership had one staff person who kept an eye on the organization's overall schedule and commitments. Without her, PLP's partnerships, committees, and consultants would not have been able to move from discussion to action.

The **Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Lans Assistance Fund** works in close partnership with the Alabama Forestry Commission (for outreach and management plan development), the U.S. Forest Service (for accessing resources, particularly for small farmers), and universities (for veterinarian services and additional demonstration sites). The Federation staff keep these connections up-to-date and vibrant.

LESSON 10 Look for the skills that are needed to capitalize on opportunities. Don't expect to build the full-spectrum skill base right away. Instead, develop skills organically, depending on what the on-the-ground practice requires.

Much of what was learned about staffing CBF initiatives derived from the challenges that staff actually faced. Judging from the Demonstration Program, CBF had a significant impact only where staff stuck around for the longer term. CBF requires a lot of different skill sets and few of the participating sites had all those skills on staff. Even so, they were learning by doing. And, given the fact that it is usually difficult to get people who have the needed technical expertise to move to and stay in rural areas, several sites were able to identify and effectively train local community members to meet the need.

Credibility in the community comes from keeping one's commitments and knowing how to do one's chosen work well. In that light, then, the following appear essential to long-term success:

1. **It is necessary to have at least one full-time staff person.** Because Ford Foundation funding was divided among the three partners who actively participated in the **Vermont Family Forests Partnership**, VFFP itself could not afford to retain even one full-time staff person. It tried to get everything done by hiring several part-time people. One focused on education, another on business, and another on forestry. When community members or potential customers called the VFFP office, they typically felt discouraged by—and often resented—the lack of response. No one was in the office every day to answer the phones and follow up on requests.
2. **Project directors, whatever their title, need to be self-reflective, systems thinkers. They also need to be risk-takers and early adopters.** They need to be able to identify resources and know how to interact with them. They need to be “collaborative leaders” and to be willing when necessary to adopt a low profile, offering good information and providing tools so that others can discover their own way. Project directors and staff

“ In the beginning, we couldn't conceive of doing it ourselves. Now that is all we can conceive of. When other people don't think you have the skills, you don't think you have those skills. We wouldn't have said that we could do it, but through our struggles we saw that we were the only ones that could.”

—Cece Headley, founding member

Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters, Pacific West

Similarly, members of the Roots of Appalachia Growers Association emphasized how important it has been to have continuity among their dedicated support staff, all of whom were provided through **Rural Action**. One of the added values of a community-based organization is that it more likely remains committed for the long haul, even when other organizations and individuals have moved on.

The lone staff person at **North Quabbin Woods** was able to accomplish more than most single-person offices, because he tapped into the skills and expertise of community members and marketing consultants.

need to be competent, willing to get their hands dirty, and people-oriented. As one community member said, “When I’m in a bind with something and Amadou [Diop, with the Federation of Southern Cooperatives] gives me some advice, I can be sure that he’s done some of the things himself. You don’t just have to take his word for it. You can look at the demonstration he’s established here at Epes.”

3. **Women play key roles in the leadership of CBF organizations.** Forestry historically has been a man’s field. When CBF programs are located in larger, male-dominated organizations, men tend to staff these programs. More recently, however, women have stepped in, chiefly because the old systems have not been working for their communities. They are the executive directors of CBF community-based organizations and the backbone of informal collaborative groups. Experience demonstrates that women tend to be less limited by history and more interested in finding new answers.
4. **When hiring additional staff, find people who think in different ways.** Just one person ran **D.C. Greenworks** for an interim period. When she finally was able to hire others, Dawn Gifford was amazed by how much more quickly everyone could learn and adapt to new challenges and changing conditions.

Demonstration sites found that it was essential to have at least one full-time staff member, but that it was equally essential to bring to the table a mix of people, backgrounds, and ideas.

5. **A mix of outsiders and local people is healthy for a CBO.** Local people generally understand the larger context and bring a long-term commitment to place, while outsiders can bring new perspectives. For those who come in from the outside, organizations need to make an investment in building a bridge for them to the community. Diane Snyder, executive director of Wallowa Resources and a fourth-generation resident of eastern Oregon, made an important investment early on in newcomer Nils Christofferson’s tenure. “She had me spend time creating and building relationships and getting to know the history, issues, and personalities,” he explained.

The **Watershed Research and Training Center** looks first to its own community and then goes outside for the added skills it needs. Young people often leave the community to seek education and other life experiences, yet eventually want to return. They provide an excellent pool from which to recruit staff. Their commitment to place and experience with bridging diverse cultures typically prepare them well for the work of CBF.

An **AFWH** board member suggested that one way to strengthen the organization’s board training would be to have a mentoring program that allows grassroots members to spend a year “learning the trade” as non-voting board members before they become full-voting board members.

6. **An organization implementing CBF cannot get far without a grant proposal writer.** However, this position must be matched with effective program development. Every site in the Demonstration Program found this out. It is equally

important, however, to diversify the CBO's funding base. Several of the groups now include both fundraising from individual donors and earned income as key ways to generate unrestricted, core funding. For example, in order to raise funds from a wider pool of donors, **Wallowa Resources** clarified its message (about the importance of its work in eastern Oregon) to reach potential contributors who live in cities across the Northwest, especially Portland.

7. **CBF organizations need to know how collaborators think, speak in their language, and be recognized as legitimate by them. Private lands groups need forestry expertise, and public lands groups need to know how the agencies work.** **Rural Action** brought a retired forester into its CBF program. Doing so earned it credibility with both public agency partners and community members. **Wallowa Resources** learned how the U.S. Forest Service has worked with communities and how other regions were making their own CBF programs work. This knowledge kept its collaborative projects moving forward. The **Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters** hired as executive director an individual who previously had been both a worker and a harvester. AFWH also translated its newsletter into Spanish to reach more of the forest workers, many of whom are Latino.
8. **Rigor is necessary for multiparty monitoring and participatory research projects.** Successful multiparty monitoring requires careful design and thorough analysis in which all stakeholders engage. CBOs find that it takes a lot of time to do this monitoring effectively. Not all communities are prepared for participatory approaches. CBOs must

Consultants can supplement staff resources, but it is up to staff to structure the consultancy so that the scope of work is clear and the consultant understands the specific community setting.

clearly explain what participatory research actually is and the roles the community can play.

AFWH, for example, partnered with the Ecosystem Workforce Program (EWP) of the University of Oregon to undertake a participatory assessment. EWP provided rigorous sampling and survey protocols, while AFWH staff conducted the actual interviews of low-wage forestry contract laborers. AFWH then used the information to guide its outreach and services. Together, AFWH and EWP disseminate the results within the CBF movement, and to broader policy and agency audiences.

9. **Consultants can provide needed skills, if their scope of work is clear. Staff likely better understand the community and its needs.** Consultants may provide the expertise needed to take advantage of an emerging opportunity, but they are not likely fully to understand the local context. It is up to staff to structure the consultancy so that the scope of work is clear and to orient the consultant well enough that their work is useful in the specific community setting.
10. **All CBF organizations need community-organizing skills.** It is possible for a CBO to develop a CBF program by adding forestry to its community capacity-building and -organizing skills.

TIP What makes a good community organizer?

by Hunter Gray, community organizer (www.hunterbear.org)

- Be bright, alert, and sparky. And, hopefully, be intelligent about theory and content.
- Formal academic training can certainly be useful to any organizer, but it isn't absolutely necessary.
- Be a person who is thoroughly ethical and honorable. Set a good personal example.
- Race and social class are not usually critical for a good organizer, rather the ability to bridge between diverse groups. In other words, be sensitive—but be yourself.
- Be able to communicate clearly and well.
- The good organizer will have some sort of altruistic ideology couched as an integrated, cogent set of beliefs embodying goals and tactics. The organizer can convey a general perspective, which the grassroots people can take or not. They will certainly want some time—and should have it—to think it all over. And soon enough, together the organizer and the grassroots people can develop solid goals and effective tactics. The organizer brings gifts—and the grassroots people provide at least most of the reality.
- The organizer must have a genuinely powerful and enduring commitment. This involves a very real and deep belief in both the people and the cause.
- The organizer has to have a healthy but controllable ego—and be willing to let go of control.
- An organizer has to be a person with a tough hide.
- A good organizer has a vision—one that is two-dimensional: “over the mountain yonder” and the “day-to-day needs.” Something with vision only can easily wind up a small, in-grown sect, and something that is only day-to-day can become a tired service program. And when an organizer has lost her/his way, people will leave.

It may not be quite as feasible the other way around. The Federation, which had a decades-long history of effective community development, organizing, and stewardship, was able to effectively add forestry to its skill base; CBF provided yet another tool for building community capacity.

On the other hand, the **Jobs and Biodiversity Coalition** chose to hire someone strictly focused on the community and did not integrate his work with the forest restoration and business development initiatives. While some good community organizing has taken place, it is not necessarily connecting people with the principles and activities of CBF.



CHAPTER

8

Designing and Supporting CBF Programs



In 1999, as the Ford Foundation initially designed what would become its National CBF Demonstration Program, the community-based forestry movement in the United States was still relatively young. CBF practitioners and communities were negotiating to establish their place at various tables where decisions about natural resource management were being made. They sought to advocate community-based approaches that could improve the forests while generating sustainable jobs and strengthening local economies. The usual response to such assertions was, predictably, “Show me.”

There are benefits and disadvantages to awarding larger, longer-term grants to a small number of applicants. Such awards allowed for stability, risk-taking, and experimentation. However, 180 applicant groups were disappointed, and some of the more recently established groups have since closed their doors.

Following consultations with emerging leaders and organizations in the fledgling CBF field, the Ford Foundation program officer at the time responded to the challenge. He agreed to invest about \$15 million over five years in on-the-ground projects that could demonstrate CBF as a viable management alternative capable of meeting the interrelated objectives of healthy forests, sustainable economies, and resilient communities.

Ultimately, over the six years (including both planning and implementation phases), the Ford Foundation invested a total of more than \$12.5 million. Twenty groups received six-month planning grants ranging up to \$40,000 each. The Foundation subsequently awarded core grants of \$75,000 to \$150,000 per year to each of 13 implementing organizations (see map on page 18 for location of grantees) for a total of up to \$750,000 over five years.

Moreover, grants were awarded to the Natural Assets Program at the Aspen Institute as managing partner, as well as to the Institute for Policy Research and Evaluation at Pennsylvania State University, and Colorado State University to undertake research. Over the six years, these components used nearly \$3.5 million (drawn from the Foundation’s \$12.5 million total investment) to support technical assistance, peer learning, publications, overall management of the portfolio during both the planning and implementation phases, and research. Colorado State University’s research effort is still ongoing.

A multilayered initiative such as the Demonstration Program—with active roles played by the managing partner and research team—requires additional commitments on the part of the grant recipients, including managing relationships, attending workshops and completing assignments, and participating in research.

This chapter closely examines three components of designing and supporting CBF programs—grantmaking; use of a managing partner, including peer learning and technical assistance; and conducting research to test assumptions, build knowledge, and advance the understanding and practice of CBF more broadly in the United States.

Grantmaking

In response to an open national competition held in 1999, the Ford Foundation received 193 proposals for Phase I planning grants. All of these groups were included on a mailing list receiving periodic publications, and several have been engaged in peer learning and other program activities. Even so, 180 groups were disappointed, and some of the newer groups have since closed their doors.

In the fall of that year, the Natural Assets Program of the Aspen Institute established a project selection committee to review both the planning grant proposals and the final proposals, and to provide guidance to the Ford Foundation program officer in his selection of the grantees. When considering such a large number of applicants and using a selection committee, there may need to be a compromise between the committee and the foundation program officer who, in this case, ultimately had the decision over selection of the grants in order to ensure the Ford Foundation's investments were made in support of its goals.

Twenty groups received a six-month, \$40,000 planning grant and were invited to submit a Phase II full proposal. The Foundation also invited an additional five groups to submit a full proposal, but they did not receive planning grants. Representatives from most of the applicants attended a three-day workshop highlighting the program elements, including the roles of the managing partner and evaluation team, project design, methods of monitoring, and partnerships between for-profits and non-profits, among others. No other technical assistance was provided.

The Demonstration Program was intended to meet at least three objectives: First, it would provide the evidence that CBF was a viable alternative to the continuing jobs versus the environment debate on public lands and that it could generate sustainable livelihoods. Second, the program was to be national in scope, reflecting the diverse practices and forms that CBF takes in different regions of the country. And third, given the mission of the Ford Foundation to “reduce poverty and injustice,” it would promote CBF practice by minority communities and in regions of persistent poverty on public, private, and tribal lands. Given CBF's historical track record in the United States, however, it was apparent that these three objectives do not always work in tandem. Accordingly, the project selection committee used multiple sets of criteria to evaluate the pending proposals.

Across the country, the applicants themselves differed dramatically, whether assessed by their prior experiences or simply by their level of organizational development. Several communities adjacent to public lands in the Northwest, for example, already had been struggling with CBF issues for several years. Communities in other parts of the country, however, were just starting their CBF programs. Even given these differences, the selection committee sought to ensure that communities from every region of the country would be included in the Demonstration Program. Moreover, the committee selected CBF programs that represented differing stages of organizational maturity, level of staff skills and knowledge, and levels of community awareness, interest, and involvement, among other factors. As a demonstration program, however, there were still expectations that by the end of the full six years, *all* of the sites would illustrate the successes and challenges of implementing CBF.

Planning grants proved useful but perhaps might have focused more broadly upon building capacity or skills useful for the future, regardless of whether the proposal itself was successful or not.

The selection committee further believed it would be critical to award grants to all of the demonstration sites under the same terms. Nonetheless, there was a lot of debate within the committee whether the approach of “one size fits all” was the most appropriate. Some members argued that it was difficult to judge an organization’s potential when it had no track record and had never before implemented a CBF program. Some suggested, then, that perhaps the grant period for some of the groups initially should be shorter. Others expressed concern that \$750,000 would be too much money for the newer organizations. Some committee members felt that the funds would have greater impact supporting a total of more projects, but for lower amounts. Still more voiced concern that if a two-tiered approach were used to separate established programs from newer ones, a “second class” of grantees would be created. Prior experience had demonstrated that such tiered systems require a high level of familiarity with the grantees in order to place them correctly.

In the end, given the experience of past programs and the inherent complexity of implementing CBF, it was agreed that all 13 demonstration sites would receive funding for five years in amounts ranging up to \$750,000 per grantee, generally awarded in equal yearly installments. The

Ford Foundation awarded and administered these 13 core grants, with all of the decisions on proposals and final awards made by the senior program officer. Shortly after the grants were awarded, however, a new person took over this position.

Lessons learned

LESSON 1 Planning grants can be an effective means of enabling communities to begin to think through new ideas, build community around natural resource issues, and establish new partnerships.

In general, implementing groups—all of which were community-based organizations—found the Demonstration Program planning grants useful, with a couple of caveats:

- Some grantees believed the planning grants could have been designated for a longer time period, allowing them to more deeply learn about and engage the community. Given the relatively short time frame of about six months, several of the newer sites found it necessary to continue this work through the first year of the core grant. As a result, the anticipated partnerships and project activities changed for some groups *after* the initial grant award, creating tensions in the community as some organizations felt “dropped” when they were not engaged in the modified activities. Other grantees, who did not receive planning grants, felt it would have been beneficial for all of the Demonstration Program sites to have received them.

- The planning grants provided the resources necessary to write the proposal. While this subsidy was essential, especially for newer organizations, the planning grant activity sometimes became narrowly focused upon just competing for the grant. The planning grants might have focused more broadly upon building capacity or skills useful for the future, regardless of whether the proposal itself was successful or not.

LESSON 2 Some groups could have benefited from technical assistance during the planning grant phase, including assistance in community organizing, business planning, developing and structuring partnerships, and designing CBF programs.

A missed opportunity during the planning grant stage would have been to work much more closely with the recipients in understanding CBF and designing their programs. As discussed in Chapter 2, the best organization is one where there is a sincere commitment to the integrated approach. Not all organizations have had the opportunity to explore this aspect of their work. They likely need assistance in asking the questions necessary to ensure that their planned activities integrate the three core CBF components of resilient communities, sustainable economies, and healthy forest ecosystems. During this process, a third party can better gauge the capacity and needs of the organization, and where and how to focus funding, as discussed below. Additional support in other technical areas also may be necessary. To avoid a conflict of interest, the assistance provider should not be part of the selection process of the final awards.

LESSON 3 Differentials in power—such as access to resources, information, and decisions—exist between donors and grantees and need to be recognized and addressed. Clarity about expectations and objectives, transparency, and honesty are required to negotiate power imbalances.

Awarding a grant can alter the power relationship between donors and grantees, no matter how hard one may try not to let that happen. One group wants the funds; the other group has the power to decide whether or not it receives them. Rather than ignore these dynamics, it is more beneficial to discuss them openly. Admittedly, funders face the dilemma of working toward their specific objectives on the one hand, and remaining hands-off and respecting the autonomy of the grantee on the other. In the Demonstration Program, this trade-off further was complicated by the complexity of CBF, the flexibility of funding, and the longer-term commitment, which allowed for significantly more evolution and change in organizations and programs over the funding cycle.

Awarding a grant can alter the power relationship between donors and grantees. Rather than ignoring these dynamics, it is more beneficial to discuss them openly.

“ If a funder is going to fund a partnership of groups, make sure they have worked together before and have established trust and transparency. If not, there will be a lot of suspicion.”

—*Renee Stauffer, board member
Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters, Pacific West*

CBF programs frequently involve new relationships with diverse and unfamiliar partners. Funders inadvertently may add to the inherent challenges and shift the balance of power among the parties when they fund one or more particular organizations within a larger partnership. When funders award a number of grants to competing organizations addressing similar issues, often in the same place, this can increase conflict and place the funder in the position of possibly having to choose sides.

LESSON 4 When supporting innovation, implementation, and learning about complex, multidisciplinary, and integrated programs, funders need to support core operations and infrastructure.

Funds designated for general or core support allow organizations to be more entrepreneurial and responsive to opportunities and to community needs. In the Demonstration Program, flexibility allowed the evolution of ideas within the parameters of project goals. Flexibility also increased the potential for leveraging additional resources. General support funds could be used as a match to other sources, as well as reallocated where they were most needed to complement and increase the effectiveness of other resources.

For example, the implementing groups found it much easier to raise funds for implementation of specific, on-the-ground projects—such as planting trees—than for the networking and collaboration needed to identify the on-the-ground work in the first place.

Flexibility in the use of funds also meant grantees sometimes unilaterally made changes that the funder was not fully aware of—or might not have agreed with, had these activities been outlined in the original proposal. For groups to enjoy all of its benefits, such discretionary flexibility requires that the funder, too, become more flexible. Where this is a new or less familiar approach to grantmaking, such flexibility may require building greater awareness and transparency around project activities, as well as ensuring that systems are in place so that all parties are accountable for the use of funds.

TIP Trust and transparency

Trust and transparency are critical for any partnership. To explore new partnerships and build trust, donors could award small grants during the early stages for joint implementation of small activities. This would provide the group the opportunity to really learn more about each other and how best to work together, as well as have a small success. Then the group may be ready to move into implementation of larger and longer-term CBF projects.

LESSON 5 A longer time frame for grants is essential to successfully implementing a complex program seeking systemic and sustainable change, although this can create challenges for newer organizations and the funder.

The five-year funding commitment by the Ford Foundation offered security and reliability, thereby allowing groups to embark on implementing complex CBF programs, hiring staff, and making their own long-term commitments to partners. It relieved staff from the all-consuming and seemingly endless task of writing grant proposals and reports for numerous, short-term, small grants. This commitment also provided the opportunity to put in place a learning and adaptive management cycle. For groups that had several “cost reimbursable grants” from the federal government (which only releases funding after funds have been spent and accounted for), the Ford Foundation awards made it possible for groups to deliver on commitments to the community and get the work done even while waiting for reimbursement.

Most importantly, the first round of Ford Foundation funding, albeit reduced from original expectations, was firmly committed through the period immediately following the events of September 11, 2001—a time when many donors and government sources reduced or eliminated their grantmaking. Without the long-term support received through the Demonstration Program, some of the implementing groups may have had to close their doors. In addition, for CBF organizations (as distinguished from CBF programs within organizations), the flexibility of the Ford Foundation funds contributed to their overall financial solvency, as these funds could be moved to where they were needed most and still support the CBF objectives.

“Donors always want something new and innovative, [but] staying for the long haul is important.”

—Dawn Gifford, executive director
D.C. Greenworks

The five-year funding commitment also presented pros and cons for the funder. On the one hand, it can help create the opportunity for a genuine sense of partnership with the grantees—one that promotes honesty and transparency, as the grantees do not censure their comments out of worry about the next year’s grant. With this commitment, both parties seem more willing to work together on reaching outcomes acceptable to all—including, when this is not possible, adjusting funding levels.

On the other hand, when an organization is not performing to standard and no new agreement can be reached, it can be difficult for the donor to withdraw support for upcoming funding cycles. As a corollary, grant recipients may feel that they must report that they are being and doing what the donor wants, when, in fact, they are not.

LESSON 6 Several years in advance, prepare organizations for the time when long-term funding will end, including assistance in developing alternative fundraising strategies.

At the outset of the Demonstration Program, one of the important criteria used by the selection committee was the anticipated financial sustainability of the project/program at the end of the six-year program. The committee thought that perhaps, after five years of the implementation phase,

the economic “leg” would help provide that financial sustainability. Furthermore, the committee believed other donors would join the Ford Foundation in their support of CBF. Looking back today, these may have been overly optimistic assumptions. Regardless, even though each implementing group knew that the length of the implementation phase was five years, the managing partner could have stressed this point more often.

In fact, while there were many benefits of the long-term flexible funds provided by the Ford Foundation, there also were some drawbacks. Particularly for newer organizations less familiar with the shorter time frames used by the majority of the funding world, the five-year duration of the grants provided a false sense of security. For several of the groups, the grants were large enough to fully support the organization and its work, so that it was not motivated to seek additional sources of funds. As a result, many did not make fundraising a priority until the last year of the Demonstration Program—which was almost too late. During the Demonstration Program’s last year, groups attended a peer learning workshop on fundraising, which they described as helpful and effective. Some of the implementing groups, however, commented that it would have been more beneficial if it had been offered earlier.

While there were many benefits of the long-term flexible funds provided by the Ford Foundation, there also were some drawbacks. For some groups, the five-year duration of the implementation grants provided a false sense of security that delayed efforts to seek other funding.

LESSON 7 Community-based forestry requires varying amounts of funding that can be allocated to different uses over the lifecycle of an individual program. Funders may be entering at any point in this cycle. Consequently, funders require the skills to discern where the organization is along that cycle, and then the flexibility to respond to that point.

While there is certainly no formal guideline, groups at different stages of both organizational development and project implementation require different types and levels of investments.

In the beginning, CBF groups need resources for building community around natural resource issues and engaging the community in priority setting and project planning. As described throughout this report, accomplishing these objectives requires significant investments in training, outreach, demonstration, technical assistance, networking, collaboration, and community planning processes. As the CBF program grows, groups will identify new products and develop appropriate technologies, and landowners will adopt best management practices. They then will need investments in land management, business development, marketing, and, ultimately, in production capacity, including capital and machinery. For many projects, there also is a time when the local workforce needs training in sustainable forestry practices for ecosystem restoration and other skills.

It is often very difficult for community-based organizations to obtain capital from traditional sources, such as banks and federal loan funds. CBF is viewed as “high risk” and offers slow returns. In fact, CBF requires

“patient capital” that typically is best provided by a foundation. Too often, however, donors limit their support to the soft costs of salaries, training, and technical assistance. They are less willing to make hard investments in equipment, infrastructure, and operating capital.

Flexibility also is needed in the flow of funds. Some of the groups stated it was best to receive fewer funds in the first years, allowing the amount to increase as project activities moved along into on-the-ground land management and enterprise development. For other groups, generally further along in their project implementation, receiving more funds up front, followed by reduced funding in later years, actually strengthened both their motivation and capacity to conduct fundraising efforts. And for some groups, the relatively large amounts of grant funds pushed them into an administrative morass they were ill-equipped to handle, with the result that their early efforts focused on learning and creating bureaucratic systems, meeting reporting requirements, and generally pleasing the donor, rather than on serving the constituent group.

LESSON 8 The diversity of the implementing groups may require that the starting point for measuring success of the individual projects be different for each one. At the same time, especially in the case of new organizations, funders need to be willing to accept less “foreseeability” and more risk.

CBF is situation-specific; there is no single prescribed model or list of required components that must be in place. Rather, it adapts to and builds on the local ecological and social context. CBF today is being implemented by organizations ranging from those

Investing in infrastructure

Foundations need to invest, through a mix of financial instruments, in the infrastructure needed for adding value to the resources. Within the constraints of the foundations’ funding cycles, they also need to allow for flexibility in the flow of funds.

that “just started” to older, more-established organizations, some of which have never before practiced community-based forestry. Clearly, it is necessary to start where organizations are and recognize that for some groups it will be nearly impossible to foresee where they might evolve. “Success,” then, is measured from this initial vantage point, upon which all parties need to agree.

Although the starting point for measuring success of the individual programs may differ, it is important that the implementing groups hold themselves accountable for deliverables against annual targets, even when the measurement cannot be quantitative. There must be a balance between the need for accountability and results to justify continued investment in the short term, and the need for flexibility and dedicated funds in the longer term. Even so, many of the implementing groups were seeking stronger internal accountability.

Monitoring, then, starting where a group is and including annual reviews, is a critical element of the relationship between the funder and the grantee. In the Demonstration Program, the managing partner worked with each group to develop a “self-monitoring plan.” This step, including

TIP Strategies donors can use to foster capacity building

- General operating support grants
- Grants specifically to increase organizational effectiveness
- Capital financing for nonprofits and intermediaries
- Grant support for monitoring and evaluating projects/programs and organizations
- Direct management assistance by the donor
- Grant support to a full-time, dedicated, and consistent managing partner focusing on organizational development
- Networking grantees and promoting peer learning

Adapted from: Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, *Funding Effectiveness: Lessons in Building Non-Profit Capacity*, San Francisco: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2004.

the technical assistance that was provided, was critical to helping the implementing groups develop their CBF programs. Implementation of these plans can be an effective tool for managing risk, although partners may need encouragement to carry them out in light of other pressing priorities.

LESSON 9 Provide support for building organizational capacity.

There is no doubt that strengthening the organizational capacity of community-based groups increases the effectiveness of grant funds and, ultimately, the resiliency of the community itself. Support is needed in strategic planning, monitoring, leadership development, board and staff training, operating systems, and financial management, among other areas.

While there are several different strategies for accomplishing this objective, the Demonstration Program found that a managing partner, described below, was effective. Several individuals stated that if the funds for organizational development had been disbursed to them directly, it would have been difficult to use them for the intended purpose. More likely, they would have used the funds to respond to immediate needs in the community.

LESSON 10 Multidisciplinary, integrated sustainable development programs such as CBF require a similar shift within the donor community—including both private and public funders—to integrated programming and grantmaking, as an alternative to the current “stovepipe” approach.

An effective community-based forestry program is one that integrates CBF's interrelated ecological, social, and economic components. As long as donors are willing to only fund one of these CBF "legs," the implementing organization must identify—no doubt with varying success—additional, often very different, sources of funding. When any one of the core CBF components is not funded, this reduces the effectiveness of the overall program—as well as that of the grants.

The managing partner

To ensure that funds allocated to the community grantees had the maximum impact possible and that lessons applicable to the broader field were analyzed and captured, the Ford Foundation awarded a grant to the Aspen Institute and the Pinchot Institute for Conservation to act as managing partner for the overall initiative. Experience with other programs had shown the value a managing partner could bring, including more effective use of grant funds, intentional learning and enhancement of programs, and, ultimately, improved practice.

As co-manager, the Pinchot Institute for Conservation was essential to developing the design of the CBF Demonstration Program and in providing support from 1999 until mid-2001. When a key staff person left the Pinchot Institute in 2001, the Aspen Institute assumed full leadership of the managing partner role. However, the staff person was able to continue to be a member of the resources team, providing valuable assistance and a longer-term perspective.

There are four primary roles a managing partner can provide (as described in the box on page 172). For the National CBF

An effective community-based forestry program is one that integrates CBF's interrelated ecological, social, and economic components. When any one of the core CBF components is not funded, the effectiveness of the overall program—and that of the grants—is reduced.

Demonstration Program, these roles were combined and implemented by five individuals working part-time.¹⁵ This working group, then, served as the managing partner.

Combining these functions ensured coordination between all of the elements and that they were mutually reinforcing. By working on several components simultaneously, the managing partner was able to interact with a number of individuals within the implementing group on different elements. As a result, the managing partner was able to take a more holistic and integrated approach to the support it provided. These multiple levels of interaction also resulted in the managing partner gaining a deeper understanding of the implementing group in a shorter amount of time.

It is not always necessary to put all of these support components in place. Similarly, these elements could be implemented by a number of different organizations. As discussed in the pages that follow, learning from the Demonstration Program seemed to indicate that splitting out the fourth function is beneficial and potentially can improve the effectiveness of the first three.

¹⁵ A total of about 1.7 full-time equivalents, including Robert Donnan, Mary Mitsos, Danyelle O'Hara, Mary Virtue, and Barbara Wyckoff-Baird. In addition, Kelly Malone served as a full-time program coordinator until Fall 2004.

TIP Organizational coaching

Increasingly, funders seek to pair their grantees with organizational coaches—individuals trained in areas such as organizational development, team-building, and leadership development—to help them hone their strategic direction, build more sustainable and vital institutions, and create the kinds of partnerships that will ensure greater impact over the long term. Unlike in the sports context, this approach to coaching involves the active and collaborative participation of both the coach and the client.

- Effective coaches have a level of expertise and knowledge that makes a difference in the quality of the service they offer.
- Effective coaches are always learning, formally and informally.
- Effective coaches have, and use, a network to refer clients.
- Effective coaches are proactive and continually touch base with organizations and communities to ascertain what kinds of assistance they need.

These outside consultants provide a host of possible supporting roles for the staff within an organization. A few of the most common include:

Guide/mentor. Coaches most commonly act in a one-on-one capacity with organizational leaders, helping them to think through strategy and complex interpersonal relationships as well as providing them with moral support.

Skills developer. Coaches can train individuals within an institution in specific skills ranging from fundraising to brand development to time management.

Facilitator. Coaches can facilitate board and staff retreats to hone vision and strategic direction, build more effective teams, or enhance board capacity.

Bridge. Coaches can act as a bridge between different partner organizations, helping each to understand the needs of the other and thus work together more effectively.

TIP
(continued)

Networker. Coaches can open doors to help grantees make vital connections with public agencies, foundations, or other potential partner organizations.

Korten, Alicia, with Barbara Wyckoff-Baird. *Staying Power: Using Technical Assistance and Peer Learning to Enhance Donor Investments*. Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute, (forthcoming).

The Aspen Institute hired Barbara Wyckoff-Baird to act as director and lead coach for the initiative. In an effort to ensure each site felt comfortable with their coach and to create a safe place for grantees to discuss their strengths and weaknesses and to solve problems, Wyckoff-Baird then identified a team of four additional resource people. In addition to organizational coaching, these resource people also provided support to grantees in areas such as branding, marketing, community organizing, collaborating with public land management agencies, and communications.

Several of the implementing groups stated that it was useful to have access to the broader range of skills that was available by having multiple resource people. Collaboration and communication within the resource team, as well as their long-term commitment to the program, meant that the consultants generally knew the history and context of the implementing organization and its CBF program. This resulted in more effective technical assistance and avoided the repeated briefings by project staff often required to bring new or short-term consultants up to date. Getting the right person on board for each site is one of the biggest challenges facing a managing partner.

While the managing partner had a significant role in supporting the implementing groups, it also had a crucial role in interfacing

with the funder. With its “bird’s eye view,” external to the implementing groups, yet integral to them, the managing partner was able to aggregate learning in a way that might not have emerged from any one individual group’s perceptions. The managing partner had more interactions with each of the grantees than any of the implementing groups had with one another. The managing partner captured this knowledge by periodically bringing together the resource team and the funder in a series of facilitated dialogues. As a result, there was a continual distilling of the groups’ individual learning toward a higher level of knowledge-building. This level of strategic thinking helps the donor to see the overall impact and relevance of the work on the ground to the national-level CBF movement.

“ For me, distilling the grantees’ individual learning toward a higher level of knowledge-building is very critical...because it sets the Demonstration Program in my broader portfolio of working in the community-based forestry movement.”

—Jeff Campbell, senior program officer
The Ford Foundation, New York City

TIP

Four roles of a managing partner

1. Identify technical assistance for the grantees, including providing ongoing coaching from a resource team;
2. Provide peer learning opportunities, foster the interconnectivity of the group, and maintain continuity;
3. Distill and disseminate experiences from the Demonstration Program throughout the CBF field; and
4. Facilitate communication between the donor and grantees, including assisting with the management of the grants.

Obviously, designating a managing partner requires financial resources that otherwise could be allocated to communities and projects on the ground. A foundation program officer has to consider carefully the challenges facing the grantees and decide whether organizational capacity building, technical assistance, and peer learning are critical to their success. Foundation staff also need to consider the need and best strategy for distilling lessons learned and building knowledge in the field.

Grantees took advantage of the coaching opportunities to varying degrees. In some cases, the coaches spent hundreds of hours with grantees, visiting project sites as often as three times a year, and speaking with grantees by phone as often as once a week. In other cases, the coaches played more of a background role, scheduling visits only about once a year and talking by phone with grantees closer to once a month. The amount of attention a grantee received depended largely on its needs and how often the grantees themselves initiated contact and encouraged strong

ties. The amount of support any one grantee received varied over time as the organization's needs changed.

Lessons learned

LESSON 11 Relationships that are built on trust, respect, and a willingness to learn are at the heart of a managing partner's work, making it largely personality-driven. At the same time, the managing partner needs solid skills in both CBF and institutional development. In other words, he or she must be a good generalist.

One of the biggest challenges of using a managing partner to provide ongoing capacity building is selecting the right organization, and, ultimately, the right person. How, then, does a funder identify the right individual for the job? What skills are important? How does one know that the managing partner's staff will be consistent over

the long term? As a corollary, the success of a managing partner also depends on the personality of the foundation program officer and his or her willingness to work in partnership. As a result, this is not a model appropriate for all situations.

Some of the characteristics essential to a managing partner's success include: a holistic and integrated approach to community development, skills in organizational and community capacity building, a commitment to ongoing learning and personal growth, humility, cultural competency, and shared core values and trust with the grantees (e.g., commitment and ties to land and community), among others. The managing partner also has to have legitimacy and respect within the broader field, but be able to stay neutral and outside of movement politics. This can be challenging as with growing legitimacy comes increased engagement in the movement and the likelihood of being drawn more into the politics

Given the diversity of implementing organizations and their changing needs over time, as well as the principle of starting and building wherever each organization is, a team approach was effective. This allowed the managing partner to engage the most appropriate individuals for each implementing group. Collaboration and communication among team members ensured that

One of the biggest challenges of using a managing partner to provide ongoing capacity building is selecting the right organization, and, ultimately, the right person.

each resource person's experience with an implementing organization was complementary and built on previous interactions. Convening the resource team for "learning meetings" provided a forum for sharing and distilling lessons learned across sites.

LESSON 12 The managing partner's relationship with the implementing organization is a dance, sometimes leading and sometimes following. The key is to have the skills to know when to do either.

For the Demonstration Program, the managing partner used an approach of highlighting and offering services, but in no way insisted that any group use them. In this way, the decision to engage or not was in the hands of the implementing organization. However, differences in power among the implementing groups played into whether, how, and to what extent they tapped into support for organizational development.

Consequently, it was important to be proactive—and persistent, to a certain extent—in asking the groups if they needed or wanted assistance. It also was critical that the managing partner continue to offer these services throughout the Demonstration Program to all levels of the organization. While an implementing group might not be ready for assistance at one point in time—and therefore might not even be able to hear those offers—it likely will be ready at another.

As the larger context changes, so does the leadership role the managing partner plays. At times it is most appropriate to follow the lead of the implementing organization, while at other times it is critical to take on a leadership role. Some of the implementing groups stated they wished

the managing partner had been more proactive and had pushed certain reforms more adamantly, particularly after trust and respect had been established. In any case, it is important that leadership and the roles each partner plays periodically be questioned and assessed together.

Some groups found it beneficial to conduct an organizational self-assessment¹⁶ as a way to identify a capacity-building plan and opportunities for assistance from the managing partner. Conducted annually, this assessment also served as a monitoring tool. By involving all of the staff and some board members, the self-assessment captured a range of perceptions at different times.

Some groups found it beneficial to conduct an organizational self-assessment as a way to identify a capacity-building plan and opportunities for assistance from the managing partner. Conducted annually, this assessment also served as a monitoring tool.

Finally, the lesson of starting where an organization actually is, culturally and developmentally, is equally important for the managing partner as it is for the donor. This may necessitate the use of different outreach strategies, changes in the design of technical assistance delivery, a range of communication mechanisms, or other similarly flexible approaches. The managing partner needs to be open to nurturing such alternative structures and processes.

¹⁶ A sample Organizational Assessment Tool is included with the Toolbox on the CD that accompanies this report (see Appendix B).

LESSON 13 The managing partner may need to work with both the funder and the implementing organization to address the impacts of significant external events.

Inevitably, external events will impact both the funder and the implementing organizations. During the Demonstration Program, the events of September 11, 2001, had significant impacts on fundraising from both public and private sources, with some donors at best awarding grants at much lower levels, and, at worst, canceling grants outright. While the Demonstration Program never talked as a group about the impact of September 11 on fundraising, it is obvious in retrospect that transparency about these issues and hardships, sharing ideas, and offering encouragement would have helped both experienced and less-experienced grantees.

LESSON 14 Regardless of whether CBF is the core mission of the organization or just one of its programs, the managing partner needs to foster capacity building within the entire organization. A program is only as strong and sustainable as the organization in which it exists.

Generally speaking, when CBF operated as a program within the larger organization, the managing partner worked primarily with the program director. This proved invaluable in many cases, especially when these individuals were relatively new to the CBF field. However, there were occasions when issues central to the whole organization impacted the CBF program. These situations included changes in leadership; decreased funding levels; across-the-board reductions in staff, financial systems, and procedures; and reorganization, among other areas. In such cases, it was necessary to work with the entire organization.

When working with a program that is part of a larger organization, the technical assistance provider should know the whole organization, both programmatically and institutionally. It is also beneficial to maintain communication with the person who knows the history of the program. This creates the ability to straddle relationships when there is organizational and programmatic turnover. Such versatility enables the technical assistance provider to identify opportunities for strengthening the organization in ways that also will improve the CBF program. It also can help the managing partner to maintain consistency and continuity when there are staff changes.

LESSON 15 Peer learning and networking are essential for many things, ranging from moral support to political action to swapping good ideas.

The implementing groups repeatedly emphasized the multilayered benefits of peer learning and networking. For some groups it was the opportunity to learn new skills, for others it was to jump-start an idea and avoid recreating the wheel, and for still others it was to share trials and tribulations and receive moral support. Some of the most beneficial meeting sessions were those where partners were able to pose a question or challenge to their colleagues and then give and receive peer advice.

The Demonstration Program's formal meetings laid the groundwork for continued networking between meetings, as individuals contacted each other to follow-up. For the funder, who attended most meetings, the gatherings provided an opportunity to learn alongside the implementing groups, rather than in the more removed style of the traditional donor-grantee relationship.

Peer learning and networking have multilayered benefits: an opportunity to learn new skills; a way to jump-start an idea and avoid recreating the wheel; and a chance to share pitfalls and receive moral support.

For the first 18 months of the program, two individuals from each site (always including one person who had attended a previous meeting) came together every six months. This provided everyone with an opportunity to understand fully the components of the Demonstration Program, really learn about each other's work through site visits, give and receive peer advice, identify some of the emerging lessons, and build relationships of trust and honesty with one another and the funder. The opportunity to get to know each other on a personal level—undergirded by the continuity between meetings and through informal events—further created possibilities for deeper understanding, openness, and different kinds of collaboration. These relationships, which take time to build, then formed the foundation for the entire peer learning effort.

For the following two years, peer learning included a mixture of a programwide annual meetings, skills workshops, and cluster meetings around specific topics. The cluster meetings allowed the groups in attendance to bring many more of their constituents with them to the meeting and to go into greater depth on specific topics. A key to the success of the peer learning component was an annual questionnaire to ascertain the most critical issues the implementing groups were facing and to ensure that the peer learning responded to these needs. The fourth year of peer learning focused on putting systems in place for the sustainability

Peer learning

The philanthropic community uses peer learning as a means to help grantees build relationships with colleagues and reflect together on ways to develop high-impact strategies to achieve common goals.

Peer learning forums are events that bring together clusters of people working on common issues so that they can share experiences and coach one another. These events can last a couple of hours to many days and can be a one-time activity or an ongoing commitment.

Peer learning builds on the well-documented fact that adults learn best when they are both working on real-life problems and engaging in feedback and analysis with others in similar situations.

Korten, Alicia, with Barbara Wyckoff-Baird. *Staying Power: Using Technical Assistance and Peer Learning to Enhance Donor Investments*. Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute, (forthcoming).

of the organizations, primarily environmental monitoring and fundraising. The final peer learning meeting in September 2005 focused on lessons learned and implications for policymakers, funders, and the public.

LESSON 16 Organizational learning systems can contribute to more effective implementation as people assess their activities, learn what works and what doesn't, and adapt their programs accordingly.

A participatory approach to this overall learning process requires some level of internal monitoring, including collecting and analyzing data, whether quantitative or qualitative. As discussed above, each of the groups developed a self-monitoring plan,

with assistance from the managing partner, although more assistance in *using* the plans would have been beneficial.

There also was a need, however, for a process to capture the learning that was *not* foreseen—for which no data have been collected. Several of the implementing groups stated that the formal annual learning meetings¹⁷ facilitated by the managing partner were effective in promoting reflection that probably wouldn't have happened otherwise. A set of formal conditions—that the managing partner

¹⁷ The objectives of the learning meetings were to: 1) document the progress to date, through a review of quantitative and qualitative results compared to the targets set in the self-monitoring plans; 2) analyze this work and reflect on what has been learned; 3) discuss key issues and make recommendations for the ongoing work; and 4) sharpen and improve the indicators being used to show impact.

regularly visited the sites, the implementing groups were required to gather and present data against their indicators, partners were invited to participate, and everyone was asked to share the lessons they had learned—made this reflection possible. In addition, the managing partner—with its knowledge of the organizations and their individual contexts, team approaches, and continuity—was able to highlight possible lessons and potential changes to the program.

LESSON 17 There were advantages and disadvantages to having the managing partner work closely with the funder, although the managing partner maintained distance on certain issues.

According to the implementing groups, the chief benefit of having a partnership relationship between the managing partner and funder was that communications on issues related to the grant were made easier. There were many questions the managing partner could answer. When the managing partner could not, they were referred to the foundation program officer. The managing partner also could add context and understanding to some of the responses from the funder, as well as provide advice in writing proposals.

For the funder, the managing partner was able to provide background information and updates on progress at a detailed level the program officer never could have reached, given the number of grants for which he was responsible. This partnership further ensured that the program officer actually received ongoing reports about learning derived from the Demonstration Program.

One of the biggest challenges facing the managing partner was the potential confusion of accountability and roles. In short, did the managing partner primarily work for the Ford Foundation or on behalf of the grantees? The role of technical service provider, for example, was at the request and service of the grantees. Distilling and aggregating lessons learned, on the other hand, was at the service of the collective, including the implementing groups and the funder.

Across the six-year Demonstration Program, the managing partner also needed to be clear with all parties about any shift in emphasis among its respective roles. For example, when the managing partner facilitated the performance of an external review about one of the grantees, it was no longer clear to whom the managing partner was accountable.



We credit the fact that our original goals and objectives are as viable today as they were three years ago to the continued influence of the Aspen Institute. They have been sticklers on things like clear goals, objectives, ongoing self-evaluation and strategic adaptation. Without their help in establishing this kind of structural support, we would have fallen off our proverbial pumpkin truck long ago.”

— *Grant proposal to the Ford Foundation*
Public Lands Partnership, west central Colorado

“ The agreement we developed is [that] I am trusting [the managing partner] not to tell me things that will unnecessarily jeopardize the relationship with the grantees, but to tell me things which will jeopardize the Ford Foundation’s program. There is a bit of a judgment call there. I am trusting her not to share my off-the-cuff comments.”

—Jeff Campbell, senior program officer
The Ford Foundation, New York City

The roles of the funder and managing partner sometimes may be conflated. If they are, it is helpful to separate the technical assistance services from the donor liaison services that the managing partner provides. This division of tasks clarifies that the technical assistance provider is accountable to the organization, not the funder, and may allow for a more trusting relationship.

As is the case with any intermediary, a managing partner can potentially become a “gatekeeper” of information, resources, and skills, with the end result that grantees are disempowered. In addition to having the right person for the job, it is critical for the foundation program officer to maintain some direct interactions with grantees, especially the review and approval of proposals and budgets. This also is essential to ensuring that the learning occurring within the program is translated and shared within the broader donor organization.

LESSON 18 While the managing partner did not work explicitly for the funder (although its funding also came from this donor), it was closely associated with it, with the result that the imbalances of power between the funder and the implementing group may have complicated the relationship between the managing partner and the organizations.

Just as the funder and the implementing groups need to discuss these issues openly, so does the managing partner. It is important to recognize that it most likely will not be the grant recipient who raises such issues, meaning that the managing partner needs to take the lead. The managing partner also may be in the position to support the implementing group in raising the issues with the funder, and, as one participant suggested, to explore ways “to speak truth to power.”

TIP

Maintain confidentiality

Develop clear expectations regarding confidentiality and communication and be transparent with the implementing groups about these agreements. Any report to the funder from the managing partner should be in some restricted or summary form, without revealing confidential information about the nonprofit implementing organization.

TIP The managing partner, funder, and implementing group

While there clearly are benefits to having the managing partner act as a liaison between the implementing group and the funder, there are also disadvantages, especially where there are significant differences in power. In these cases, it is more effective to separate the managing partner—including the provision of technical assistance, peer learning, and documentation of best practices—from the funder and the grantmaking and management function.

The managing partner also needs to be understanding of the power relations within the partnerships implementing a particular CBF program. It is all too easy inadvertently to take sides—or be perceived as taking sides—and thereby fall into the midst of internal power struggles. A managing partner needs to be aggressive in ensuring information is available and widely shared among everyone, and not just with the primary point of contact.

The research component

In addition to the grantees and the managing partner, the Ford Foundation program officer selected the Institute for Policy Research and Evaluation at Pennsylvania State University to undertake research for the evaluation of the CBF approach as demonstrated by the national program. The Demonstration Program's initial research component, as developed by Penn State with input from the Ford program officer, sought to gather data and provide analysis around the following four questions:

1. Can CBF lead to improvement in the sustainable management of U.S. forests?
2. Can CBF produce economically viable local jobs with good wages or otherwise augment local income and reduce poverty?
3. Can CBF help heal the divisiveness that currently exists nationally regarding forest management issues, particularly on federal lands but also on private lands?
4. Can CBF provide a viable process to build the social capital of communities and help them weather uncertain social, ecological, and economic futures?

Active from 2000–2002, the Penn State team established a baseline of economic indicators, drafted ethnographic case studies of three of the sites, provided assistance in conducting opinion surveys, and published a number of papers.

In 2003, the Ford Foundation program officer, the implementing groups, and an advisory team worked together to redesign the research component—specifically, to be more participatory in its approach. In

Research questions must be appropriate to the scale of the program. Objectives such as institutional change and the promotion of new business enterprises take time for even the most-seasoned organizations—clearly more than five years.

2004, Colorado State University¹⁸ received a grant to lead a diverse team to research the impacts and learning from the CBF Demonstration Program. It is focusing on questions derived from discussion sessions with the grantees. This research component will be completed in 2006.

Lessons learned

LESSON 19 Research questions and methodologies applied to a demonstration program must be appropriate for the participating projects in terms of scale and time frame.

The four broad questions that Penn State asked about CBF (detailed on the previous page) are important ones. They represent four of the principal claims of CBF, and the ability of CBF to deliver on those claims is of interest to funders and practitioners alike. Such questions cannot, however, be answered in five years with quantitative data

¹⁸ The Research Team includes: Tony Cheng and Maria Fernandez-Gimenez, Colorado State University, Coordinators; Heidi Ballard, University of California-Berkeley; Shorna Broussard, Purdue University; Steve Daniels, Utah State University; Cecilia Danks, University of Vermont; Melanie Hughes McDermott, Rutgers University; Andy Seidl, Colorado State University; and Vicky Sturtevant, Southern Oregon University.

collected from the 13 projects participating in the Demonstration Program. The Demonstration Program selected projects that represented different regions, CBF approaches, ethnicities, levels of experience, and organizational models. They presented a diverse pool from which to ask questions about the conditions under which CBF can impact the community, the economy, and the environment. But these very differences made it nearly impossible to use cross-site, quantitative data to answer questions about programmatic impacts.

Not only did it become increasingly evident to researchers that this “sample” of cases was ill suited to answer these research questions, but the grantees themselves did not feel that these questions alone were a fair test of whether or not they succeeded in achieving their goals. The size of the projects undertaken by most groups could not be expected to show results at the scales being measured. While groups were seeking to make change at the community level, most of the secondary economic indicators assessed were collected at a larger geographic scale.

Objectives such as institutional change and the promotion of new business enterprises take time for even the most-seasoned organizations—clearly more than five years. Many of the groups that were newly embracing CBF were just getting up to speed in their first few years. Moreover, the time needed to effect desirable ecological impact clearly exceeded the Demonstration Program time frame. And while all agreed that landscape-scale ecological change was the desired goal, most projects that were implemented affected relatively small, discrete areas.

While the time frame, scale, and selection of projects were not well suited to answering the outcomes-oriented research questions that were originally posed, they were quite

appropriate for answering process-oriented questions and case study analyses. In the redesigned research component, the CSU-led team developed a new set of research questions based on topics identified through iterative discussions with the grantees. These questions, which include both outcomes and process elements, can be synthesized as follows:

1. What is the role of ecological knowledge, monitoring, and outcomes in community-based forest stewardship?
2. Who benefits and who loses from these CBF efforts, and how are those benefits distributed?
3. How does a full-cost accounting of the costs and benefits of CBF activities contribute to understanding the economic viability of CBF and its ability to achieve its multiple objectives?
4. In what ways do CBF organizations act as intermediary institutions and what does that suggest about the policies, practices, and capacities needed to sustain these efforts?

Most notable about these questions is that grantees played a key role in shaping them. For example, the researchers and grantees kept their questions open-ended in order to avoid evoking simplistic “yes, it can” or “no, it can’t” responses.

LESSON 20 Conducting research that evaluates a particular CBF strategy may be misinterpreted by grantees in a demonstration program as an attempt to evaluate their project performance.

While the Penn State team was trying to evaluate the ability of CBF as a national

strategy to deliver on its claims, grantees often felt that they were being evaluated on their ability to deliver on the promises set forth in their grant proposals. Efforts to collect research data early on were at times interpreted as premature efforts to determine the success or failure of a given project. This issue was compounded by several factors including the annual nature of the grants, terminology such as “evaluation” that was initially used for the research component, and the “arms length” approach pursued by the Penn State team.

Penn State fundamentally respected the grantees as partners in the Demonstration Program. However, by attempting to conduct “objective” research for an external audience that might be critical of CBF, the Penn State team set up a research relationship in which grantees felt they were being judged by outsiders. Grantees valued program evaluation as a way to improve their own efforts, and they wanted assistance in self-evaluation. However, as discussed in Lesson 19, the frequent accounting to researchers about outcomes did not contribute to self-learning; instead, it fueled concerns that grantees were being held to unrealistic expectations, given the scope of their projects.

Several changes helped to alleviate those concerns. Over time, it became clear to the grantees that the Ford Foundation was not using the research data to determine whether or not a given project would continue to receive funding for another year. In the redesigned research effort headed up by Colorado State University, there was a conscious effort to use the terms “research component” rather than “evaluation.” Most importantly, the shift in research strategy to a participatory approach allowed grantees to contribute their knowledge as co-learners about CBF, rather than as

research subjects. The managing partner played a key role by offering resources to help groups with self-evaluation. The researchers and managing partner worked together to make the difference between the research component and the self-assessments clear to all.

LESSON 21 Due in part to CBF's history and scale of activities, participatory research approaches are well suited to advance learning on significant issues in CBF.

At the beginning of the Demonstration Program, the Ford Foundation made a conscious decision to engage an external research team that was not an active part of the CBF movement, so that the researchers could speak to an audience not already familiar with (or persuaded by) CBF's goals and strategies. This team designed its methodology to answer the core research questions (described earlier) with credibility and validity for a general and perhaps skeptical audience. As discussed previously, this led researchers to design a research program that kept the role of the researcher very separate from that of the grantees.

While the researchers strove to show professional respect and provide ancillary benefits to the grantees, they also made it clear that they were in charge of the research agenda, including questions asked, methods used, data sought, interpretations given, and publications produced. It was thought that maintaining this separateness was necessary for maintaining the academic integrity of the results.

This approach, however, did not achieve the desired outcomes and in fact compounded the other problems discussed earlier. Both

in the United States and abroad, academic researchers have been heavily involved in community-based forestry programs. As part of the sustainable development community, those researchers have been steeped in the practices of participatory processes and generally have employed participatory research methods. These methods include practitioners as co-producers of knowledge, while maintaining rigorous academic standards. The Ford Foundation has considered participatory research a cornerstone of their community-based forestry work abroad. In the United States, many of the grantees had come to expect a participatory, peer-to-peer relationship with academic researchers.

The lack of true participation in the initial research design made grantees feel as though they were sources of data rather than sources of knowledge. The Penn State research team's methodology provided for limited sharing of information or consultation with the managing partner and the grantees. Filling requests for information took much of the grantees' time and made them nervous, because they did not know how the data were going to be used.

Moreover, it felt as though information was flowing mostly one way—toward the researchers. The grantees had expected more of a partnership relationship to evolve as the researchers led a learning process that could help everyone better tell their stories. With these stories in hand, the grantees anticipated being able to affect public policy and garner resources. This significant difference in expectations made it very difficult for the research to proceed effectively.

A redesigned research component—that recognized the roles of the implementers as theorizers, experimenters, and

interpreters—was well suited to address the issues of scale and scope of research appropriate to the groups involved in the program. There is a great deal to be learned from these 13 cases, much of which is presented in this book. In addition to the lessons learned from implementing of their projects, participants have gained insights by grappling with issues that extend beyond the reach of their projects. While these projects may be ill suited to some quantitative, cross-site analyses, they are well suited to case studies and participatory research methodologies that get at questions about why and under what conditions certain CBF strategies are successful.

Moreover, the collective learning of this group of projects has implications that go beyond CBF. CBF groups are dealing with issues of integrating sustainable livelihoods, ecological integrity, and community well-

Research on these 13 projects may not provide a yes or no answer on the ability of CBF to achieve its long-term goals, but it may provide insight into the conditions under which people can live sustainably and peaceably with their neighbors and the natural environment.

being in the context of a global economy and public policies that extend well beyond forest communities. Research on these 13 projects may not provide a yes or no answer on the ability of CBF to achieve its long-term goals, but it may provide insight into the conditions under which people can live sustainably and peaceably with their neighbors and the natural environment.



CHAPTER

9

Building on the Past, Creating the Future



“ The proper business of a human economy is to make one whole thing of ourselves and this world.”

—Wendell Berry

In *Distrust of Movements*

More than five years have passed since the beginning of the Demonstration Program.

As it draws to a close, it is timely to ask whether the community-based forestry strategies the program explored are making a significant difference. Have these pilot experiments lived up to early expectations about their likely outcomes? What has been learned that might encourage or instruct other communities as they proceed with their own CBF initiatives? What can be said about CBF's prospects over the long term?

As the preceding chapters vividly attest, there is indeed a great deal about which to feel encouraged. After all, when the Demonstration Program began in 2000, a number of communities in the United States already had been working with CBF and adapting its basic strategies for about 10 years. Moreover, the 13 sites participating in the Demonstration Program were chosen from among the more than 100 community-based organizations that had applied for the grant. So, in fact, the gains that have been accomplished over the past five years not only have been accomplished by this cohort of 13 grantees, but by hundreds of others as well. Some of those overall achievements include the following:

- Communities, especially in the western United States, are far less polarized around natural resource management. Controversy that once teetered on the

brink of violence has given way to a newfound willingness to engage in productive discussions about the ongoing and future management of forested ecosystems. Often, community-based organizations (CBOs) play an essential, catalytic role by helping diverse stakeholders lay aside their differences, find common ground, and implement and monitor projects ranging from ecosystem restoration to value-adding manufacturing businesses.

- Small private landowners and community-based businesses in the Northeast, Appalachia, Southeast, and elsewhere are working together—whether by organizing formal associations or through informal networks—to share information and realize economies of scale. Especially in areas where local residents have not had easy access to technical assistance from traditional service providers, such as university extension services or government agencies, this emerging willingness to collaborate has opened doors to much-needed resources and to new opportunities.
- New working partnerships are developing between forest-dependent communities and public agencies, such as the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management, in ways that scarcely could have been imagined a decade ago. While much remains to be accomplished, CBF practitioners and the agencies are engaged in an ongoing dialogue, allowing some communities greater access to public lands and paving the way for substantive negotiations and implementation of more effective ecosystem restoration projects.
- Communities are becoming far more adept at bringing more diverse stakeholders to the table during their decision-making processes about natural resource management. Again, most communities

acknowledge that they have a long way to go, but, increasingly, they understand that a more inclusive, equitable community ultimately is a far more resilient community.

- CBOs are proving to be remarkably capable at providing the flexible, resourceful leadership that is needed to launch CBF initiatives and to sustain these efforts as they develop and mature over time. In so doing, CBOs play a wide range of roles, including convener, facilitator, neighborhood organizer, business incubator, technical assistance provider, project administrator, field monitor, funding prospector, fiscal administrator, and policy advocate, among others. Along the way, they are helping their communities acquire and strengthen needed skills and capacity.
- Networks of individuals and organizations are emerging across the country, both within and reaching out beyond the fledgling CBF movement, which augur well for the future of sustainability efforts in the United States. These formal and informal networks increasingly are well positioned to provide both peer-to-peer support and to lobby state and federal governments on behalf of shared policy goals. It also appears that CBF is attracting interest and participation from among some environmentalists who today see CBF as a workable alternative to their previously favored, “hands-off-the-landscape” point of view.

All of these early accomplishments are important milestones in a much longer journey of progress. After all, CBF’s modest gains thus far have unfolded within a relatively short period of time. As such, they serve as promising indicators of a more substantive transformation—a paradigm shift, as it was called earlier—that likely will take years to come to fruition.

Some may feel frustrated that accomplishing this larger arc of progress can take such a long, long time. In that light, it will be worthwhile to ask, “But what would have happened *without* CBF?”

Admittedly, CBF has not yet succeeded at reviving entire local or regional economies. Its fledgling value-adding, sustainable businesses barely have begun to reach beyond their local markets. Nonetheless, CBF is making a significant difference at the margins—for example, providing supplemental income that enables local residents to retain ownership of their land or perhaps to stay in the community rather than looking for work elsewhere. In so doing, these microenterprises serve to secure other sorts of benefits that are not reflected in simple measures of profit and loss.

As yet, nearly all CBF restoration projects remain relatively small-scale; none have transformed entire landscapes. Even so, CBF projects have found tangible, hands-on ways to demonstrate the viability of alternative approaches to assuring ecological sustainability, especially for ecosystems that must find ways to thrive in close proximity to human communities. Moreover, these alternatives often draw upon and integrate community traditions and local knowledge in ways that energize individuals and groups to become more involved in long-term, patient stewardship of the land.

CBF has not yet succeeded at reviving entire local or regional economies, but it is making a significant difference at the margins. And it is accruing other types of benefits that are not reflected in simple measures of profit and loss.

At times CBF practitioners have fallen short of their goal of reaching out to include and involve *all* potential stakeholders in the community, at least in the early stages of their work. Often it has seemed more expedient just to get started with whomever was ready and willing to join at the time. In many instances, this has provided the early success necessary to show all community members that there are tangible benefits to their engagement with the project. Even so, many communities are managing to become *more* inclusive of diverse constituencies and even to integrate some members of traditionally underrepresented groups into positions of leadership. From there, they often are able to widen the circle of participation to include more and more individuals and groups.

CBF appears to work best where it serves as just one element within a larger, even more comprehensive approach to community development.

One challenge in reporting upon CBF's accomplishments across all three of its interrelated core components—the social, economic, and ecological dimensions—is that there is still much to learn about how best to monitor and evaluate CBF projects. Often it is not clear precisely what the most meaningful measures of progress ought to be. Governments, for example, often give more emphasis to economic measures, taking stock of how many new jobs have been created or how many new businesses have started up. Such indicators are attractive in many ways, not the least being that they are relatively easy to quantify.

It can be far more challenging to assess other sorts of outcomes—such as the number of home mortgage payments that were met through supplemental income, or the intrinsic value of a healthy, thriving ecosystem. Although less tangible, these types of outcomes make essential contributions to a community's overall quality of life. As this report has emphasized, developing and implementing meaningful ways to monitor and evaluate project outcomes, including exploring new approaches to participatory research, are an emerging priority for many communities.

Whatever its inherent strengths and weaknesses, its successes and limitations, it is important to remember that CBF by itself is not a magic bullet for *all* the possible challenges that confront the nation's forest-dependent communities. Indeed, CBF appears to work best where it serves as just one element within a larger, even more comprehensive approach to community development. As some of the Demonstration Program sites began to build this well-rounded approach, their CBF project outcomes also began to suggest intimations of something larger, perhaps the first stirrings of a forthcoming paradigm shift in the way that communities and their strategic partners approach forest ecosystem management.

Supporting CBF over the long term

Throughout the Demonstration Program, well-managed, resourceful CBOs offered high-quality leadership and targeted technical assistance to their community partners. In so doing, these CBOs often required targeted assistance *themselves*, especially to facilitate the organizational development

needed to undergird and enhance their own capacity to play multiple, overlapping roles. They further benefited when they were able to network with their peers, exchanging ideas and information, as well as engaging in peer critiques about their ongoing activities.

The larger question, then, is, over the long term, where will the money come from to support these and other CBOs as they continue to shoulder the enduring task of helping their communities to devise and implement CBF initiatives? And beyond that, where will the money come from to pay for the actual work in the woods, whether labor-intensive forest restoration projects or value-adding new businesses?

These are, in fact, extremely important questions, especially at a time when public budgets are shrinking and philanthropic subsidies all too often are short-lived. Early on in the Demonstration Program, some had hoped that federal funds for restoration and fuels reduction would become more readily available, but that money proved to be limited. Communities discovered that their access to the woods, particularly for restoration contracts on public lands, increasingly was becoming contingent on their ability to subsidize at least some portion of the work themselves. They also found that sustained, multiyear funding like that provided by the Ford Foundation more often is the exception rather than the rule.

Resilient CBOs seek to counter these daunting financial challenges in various ways. Some are incubating value-adding enterprises that they hope will earn returns that help defray the costs of restoration forestry. Others are becoming far more sophisticated at understanding the workings of the federal forest bureaucracy. As a result, they are developing important innovations—for example, strengthening the capacity of the

community itself to do the work of government, such as the preparation needed for NEPA clearance and fire planning. They also are developing the means for communities and agencies to work together in ways that recognize and value the wider scope of benefits, beyond purely economic returns, provided by the forest.

Where will the money come from to support CBOs as they continue to shoulder the enduring task of helping their communities to devise and implement CBF initiatives?

Still other community-based groups are organizing regional coalitions to influence national policy and attract greater federal investment. The Rural Voices for Conservation, which represents 24 organizations from six western states, is an emerging coalition among rural leaders, forest workers, rural business people, and environmental activists. In 2004, its members traveled to Washington, D.C., to unveil their proposed Community-Based Restoration Funding Package. This proposed budget amendment would allocate substantially more federal dollars to help rural communities restore western forests and create rural jobs. Its recommendations focus on programs that foster public-private cooperation through the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Interior, and suggest how scarce public dollars can be leveraged to achieve the interdependent goals of forest restoration and rural economic development.

Most often these and other rural voices are heard in Washington through the annual community-based forestry Week in

Washington, organized by American Forests, the Pinchot Institute for Conservation, the Communities Committee of the Seventh American Forest Congress, and the National Network of Forest Practitioners (NNFP). This event provides an opportunity for delegates from forest-dependent communities to meet key policymakers and interest groups, learn how the federal government works, and bring home the tools they need to get involved.

CBF increasingly is taking on the challenge of going to scale. Little will be accomplished, though, if CBF operates in isolation from other ongoing social movements that seek to foster sustainable ecosystems and sustainable communities.

Through such efforts, CBF increasingly is taking on the challenge of going to scale. Little will be accomplished, though, if CBF, however appealing in its own right, operates in isolation from other ongoing social movements that seek to foster sustainable ecosystems and sustainable communities. In the days ahead, CBF advocates will do well to identify and find common cause with those groups. In the closing chapter of their recent book, *Community Forestry in the United States: Learning from the Past, Crafting the Future*, Baker and Kusel eloquently sum up the challenge, noting the following observations:

- For many workers, communities, and landowners, community forestry is one of a variety of risk-reducing strategies that people engage with to maintain their economic viability in a context of dynamic change.
- As the position of a single contingent worker is vulnerable given the strength of the forces that work against him or her, so also is community forestry vulnerable if it is conceived of as an isolated movement.
- However, when the community forestry practitioners and supporters use networks of common interest to scan the broader political and social landscape in which they are positioned, an astonishing array of risk-reducing and success-enhancing opportunities come into focus.
- The network nodes, in addition to the CBF movement, include the environmental justice movement; other community-based movements that embrace community-scale processes, such as civic environmentalism and the sustainable communities movement; community-based economic development; organizations advancing participatory research and civic science; conservation organizations; labor unions; and organizations working to advance the interests of contingent workers. When viewed from this perspective, the objectives of the CBF movement are seen for what they are: nested calls for social change that resonate with other transformative processes across the country.

As grassroots communities join forces to lobby on behalf of policy changes, however, they are discovering how important it is that they carefully define and painstakingly position their business-oriented, economic development strategies, such as value-adding processing, within the larger framework of core values that CBF embraces. At nearly every turn, the possibility exists that the terms and concepts used to describe authentic, holistically integrated CBF will be coopted, whether intentionally by its adversaries or by default among those whose training or background predisposes them

to see the world differently. To counter such tendencies, CBF advocates can cultivate patience and persistence in describing both what CBF seeks to achieve and how it strives to do so. Moreover, it will be helpful to share stories grounded in their own experiences about what already has been accomplished.

Anticipating a paradigm shift

At its outset, this report set forth the argument that the remarkable innovations documented across the five-year implementation phase of the Demonstration Program represent an emerging paradigm shift away from previously dominant practices of forest management. A paradigm shift, in this sense, implies a reframed way of looking at the future.

While it would be premature to say that a new paradigm anchored at least in part by CBF is now firmly rooted across the contemporary landscape, it is safe to say that over the past five years, the nature of the conversation about natural resource management has changed significantly at virtually all levels of that discussion, whether among forest landowners, between rural stakeholders who are concerned about the sustainable management of public lands, or within state and federal public agencies.

“ The worst danger may be that a movement will lose its language, either to its own confusion about meaning and practice, or to preemption by its enemies.”

—Wendell Berry

In *Distrust of Movements*

Before CBF came along, the challenge for many communities, as they perceived it, was to balance creating jobs and taking care of the environment. Over time, seeking that sort of balance proved not to be a workable solution. CBF, however, provided the means to *integrate* jobs and the environment in ways that recognize that they are co-dependent.

This reframing of the discussion, so often evident during the Demonstration Program, represents a tremendous step forward. Taken together with the obvious successes and constructive lessons that emerged over the past five years, it is obvious there are many reasons to feel encouraged. The stage clearly has been set for continued experimentation, renewed reflection, and further creative adaptation. Even so, it behooves all who would welcome a widespread, popular shift in favor of CBF to cultivate patience and persistence. Formidable challenges remain to be resolved. Along the way, however, forest-dependent communities likely will find much to celebrate, even when the path is arduous and the victories are modest.



APPENDIX

A

Participating Sites



The Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters

Mission—The Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters is a multicultural organization promoting social, environmental, and economic justice. It exists to share and provide information and education; encourage participation in decision-making processes that affect workers' and harvesters' lives; be mutually supportive and respectful of forest workers' and harvesters' cultures, communities, and individuals; foster communication among all its members; and promote the understanding of its constituents' struggles and issues throughout the Pacific West.

Organizational capacity—First organized in 1996, AFWH is a multicultural nonprofit membership organization with a staff of seven people working full-time or part-time, an active board of directors, and a rapidly growing membership. It is a networking and implementing organization, and it also influences policy.

Location—The Pacific West, with particular emphasis upon northern California and southern Oregon. AFWH is headquartered in Willow Creek, California.

Background—Forest workers and harvesters perform physically demanding, hands-on work in the woods—for example, restoration work including planting trees, thinning and piling, burning, weeding out invasive species, and gathering non-timber forest products such as mushrooms, medicinal herbs, and floral greens. Without their labor, long-term restoration of forest ecosystems would not be possible. Even so, many workers and harvesters are exploited for the gain of others and stripped of their voice so thoroughly that even when they speak they are not heard. The path to their full empowerment involves far more than sharing

in economic benefits and having healthy forests; it requires a fundamental change in how those in positions of power view, respect, and interact with them.

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AFWH stands in solidarity with workers and harvesters, supporting their collective efforts to change the status quo. It works with communities of interest, in communities of place, between communities, and with agencies. AFWH strives to be open and transparent in all its activities and to advocate workers' and harvesters' rights above all others. This requires shifting and sharing power within the organization, developing genuine partnerships, sharing financial reports, and engaging the board of directors in day-to-day management. It also means representing workers' and harvesters' issues in the broader CBF arena, with potential partners and collaborators, as well as in policy venues.

Challenge at the outset of the

Demonstration Program—Forest managers typically failed to appreciate either the cultural or economic value of NTFPs, often spraying them with pesticides or heedlessly thinning them from alongside timber roads. Few attempts were made to inventory or monitor

them scientifically. Moreover, forest lease systems typically favored large businesses and excluded independent harvesters and small businesses. There also were significant barriers to engaging and organizing workers and harvesters, especially those from minority groups, including scheduling difficulties, differences in communication styles, and inhibitions about speaking up at meetings resulting from a long history of being disempowered. Little understanding (by non-forest workers) of how forest work is accessed and the systems affecting forest workers also has been a huge challenge. Forest work is different than farm labor; for the most part, it is seasonal and mobile.

Highlights from the Demonstration

Program—AFWH outreach workers conducted hundreds of interviews in order to fully understand what workers and harvesters want and need. AFWH staff then organized individual groups to address some of the identified issues and pursue projects. For three years now, AFWH has partnered with University of

Oregon's Ecosystem Workforce Program (EWP) to conduct workforce assessments of low-wage forest contract laborers. The organization also implemented a small grants program called CBOPs, or Community-Based Organizing Projects, to provide opportunities for forest workers and harvesters to work on issues/trainings/monitoring that they (the communities) identified. Finally, AFWH implemented six primary economic development strategies: 1) networking workers with employment possibilities; 2) building connections among members; 3) providing hands-on learning opportunities; 4) experimenting with NTFP marketing strategies; 5) providing workers with information on their rights; and 6) with partners, developing skill-building and training programs—the most current being the Community-Based Alliance for Training and Sustainable Stewardship, which is in partnership with Lomakatsi, the Collaborative Learning Circle, Redwood Community Action Agency, and EWP.

D.C. Greenworks

Mission—To bring ideas, experience, and tools to empower urban communities to improve their natural and built environment. D.C. Greenworks works in partnership with community groups, public agencies, businesses, and nonprofits to develop community-based environmental programs that address the environmental, social, and economic issues facing urban Washington.

Organizational capacity—D.C. Greenworks is the Washington, D.C., subsidiary of Community Resources Chesapeake, a regional, urban, environmental nonprofit founded in 1994. In late 2003, Community Resources closed its offices in Baltimore and Philadelphia in order to consolidate its resources in Washington, D.C. Emerging from this transition as a stronger, more entrepreneurial organization, D.C. Greenworks today has a board of directors whose members live and work in Washington. It also has four full-time and one part-time staff members. D.C. Greenworks leverages partnerships with government agencies, community institutions, business enterprises, and local residents to expand its capacity to provide pragmatic solutions for increasing environmental knowledge and income opportunities in D.C.'s inner-city neighborhoods.

Location—The Washington, D.C., metro area. D.C. Greenworks works closely with two urban neighborhoods, Shaw and Anacostia. It has provided both neighborhoods with free “street tree” plantings and stewardship education. D.C. Greenworks also provides the entire Washington metro area with competitive greenroof and rain garden installation services, as well as helping residents build parks and restore riparian areas, forests, stream banks, and wetlands. Wherever feasible,

across all of these activities, D.C. Greenworks offers urban youth hands-on job skills training and/or entry-level employment.

Background—Many urban dwellers are unfamiliar with the impact healthy trees can have on their urban landscape. D.C. Greenworks initially found ways to make it easy for neighborhood associations to plant and maintain these trees. Then its staff identified emerging job opportunities in the green industries and developed training for inner-city youth to have a chance at skilled employment in that field. This training was designed to provide hands-on learning and to deliver a product to the community in terms of pruned trees, clean parks, and storm water management. As D.C. Greenworks surveyed the graduates of its trainings and assessed the emerging Low Impact Development (LID) marketplace, it saw a niche in designing and building greenroofs and rain gardens.

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Challenge at the outset of the

Demonstration Program—D.C. Greenworks was in the early stages of becoming a fully entrepreneurial organization. It wanted to learn how better to respond to market

opportunities, nurture market demand for LID technologies, and manage its financials so that projects cover costs plus contribute to training expenses. Another key challenge was to ensure that its job-training graduates could find employment in green industries or related fields.

Highlights from the Demonstration

Program—D.C. Greenworks and its local partners collaborated with youth at Shaw EcoVillage to design and construct a greenroof on a utility shed, design a rain garden for city permitting, and design, build, and maintain a half-acre organic food garden and

orchard. D.C. Greenworks also helped young entrepreneurs at Shaw set up a business to make and sell rain barrels, and train local residents and students to disconnect their gutters from the combined sewer system. Last year, D.C. Greenworks built the first greenroof in downtown D.C., hiring graduates of its Green Collar Training Program. Today D.C. Greenworks is leveraging its role as one of three qualified greenroof contractors in the D.C. area and developing a steady flow of contracts. With these projects in hand, D.C. Greenworks has been able to offer full-time seasonal work to graduates of its training programs.

The Federation of Southern Cooperatives/ Land Assistance Fund

Mission—To assure that African-American and other historically underserved individuals and families of the Southern Black Belt have every opportunity and option to own land, resources, and businesses, and henceforth, to live prosperously and honorably. It also assists in the development of cooperatives and credit unions as a collective strategy to create economic self-sufficiency.

Organizational capacity—The Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund is a nonprofit, membership organization that, since 1967, has sustained a grassroots cooperative economic development movement among 25,000 traditionally disadvantaged families in over 100 communities throughout the southern United States. Overall, the Federation has a staff of 38.

Location—The southern United States. The Federation operates its programs from offices in Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Alabama. Its Rural Training and Research Center, which is headquarters for its Black Belt Legacy Forestry Program, is located in Epes, Alabama.

Background—The three major themes of the Federation’s mission and its work are to:

- 1) develop cooperatives and credit unions as a means for people to enhance the quality of their lives and improve their communities;
- 2) save, protect, and expand the landholdings of black family farmers across the South; and
- 3) develop, advocate, and support public policies to benefit Federation members, who are black and other family farmers, and low-income rural communities.

Challenge at the outset of the

Demonstration Program—In 1920, nearly one in seven farms was African-American owned. Blacks owned at least 15 million acres, nearly all of which was in the South, largely Mississippi, Alabama, and the Carolinas. Today, African Americans own only 1.1 million of the country’s more than 1 billion acres of arable land. They are part owners of another 1.07 million acres. While the number of white farmers also has declined over the last century—as economic trends have concentrated land in fewer, often corporate, hands—black ownership has declined three times faster than white ownership.

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This oppressive dynamic also can be seen in government programs intended to provide support for private forestland owners. In Mississippi, black farmers own more than 33 percent of all of the forestland, yet they receive less than two percent of the services through the Mississippi Forestry Commission or USDA to help implement management plans or best practices.

Highlights from the Demonstration

Program—The three components of the Federation’s Black Belt Legacy Forestry Program have been to: 1) conduct forestry information, education, and training programs and both on-site and field-based demonstrations; 2) provide outreach, technical assistance, and information to limited-resource landowners and farmers about silvopasture, forest management planning, and government programs and resources; and 3) help identify meat goat markets through cooperative development and/or other means.

In collaboration with partner organizations, the Federation implemented agroforestry demonstrations of silvopasturing with goats; developed cooperatives centered on agroforestry opportunities; provided forestry education and training focused on forestry and forest-related issues related to goat production; and offered technical assistance to landowners and farmers to develop forest management plans and identify and access government programs and funds.

Grant County Jobs and Biodiversity Coalition

Mission—To restore ecological processes in [the local] community’s public and private forested lands, while creating and supporting sustainable, local livelihoods in Grant County.

Organizational capacity—The Grant County Jobs and Biodiversity Coalition is a partnership-based coalition with no formal organization. That this diverse set of partners—including governmental, environmental, and industry representatives—chose to collaborate was a significant accomplishment, given their contentious history. JBC had a single full-time staff member for 14 months to work on community development.

Location—Grant County, located in the southwest corner of New Mexico. The county includes both the Gila National Forest and the semi-arid Chihuahuan desert. The Gila National Forest, encompassing 3.5 million acres of mountains and forest, is home to diverse wildlife and forest cover, including ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, spruce, oak, and cottonwood trees.

Background—The Jobs and Biodiversity Coalition grew out of the recognition that a collaboratively developed and implemented forest restoration and thinning prescription could help restore the Gila National Forest’s ecosystem, which had been subjected to years of neglect. In addition to a healthier forest, the JBC project also created opportunities for jobs and small businesses using the restoration byproducts. Such opportunities are particularly critical in the context of economic challenges in Grant County, New Mexico, where the unemployment rate, exacerbated by a significant loss of jobs in mining, recently has risen to more than 14 percent. Even though many of the mining jobs have now been restored, JBC feels they must continue to diversify the economy through such opportunities.

Challenge at the outset of the

Demonstration Program—As a result of logging, fire suppression, and overgrazing, forest conditions posed a high danger of unnatural, stand-replacing fires and a lack of resiliency to other natural disturbances. Concern for the preservation and restoration of high desert and alpine ecosystems, however, had led to conflicts between environmentally conscious citizens, local small producers, and larger nationally based users. Conflicts over grazing and timber removal further had divided the region’s forest-dependent communities. Some residents recognized, however, that there was an opening for new cooperation among local small producers, the environmental community, and area universities.

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Highlights from the Demonstration

Program—The four components of the Jobs and Biodiversity CBF project were to: 1) form collaborative relationships among U.S. Forest Service, environmental groups, and local forestry businesses to extract small-diameter wood and restore the forest ecosystem; 2) utilize the small-diameter wood from the demonstration site to create wood products to be marketed and sold in Grant County;

3) use the restoration and wood products initiatives to generate employment among a broad range of people in Grant County; and 4) raise awareness and provide education throughout Grant County about forest restoration and related economic benefits.

For various reasons, including the early departure of one of its founding partners,

JBC chose to focus on forest restoration and to limit project involvement to people with a direct stake and interest in restoration. The results of the forest restoration project have included bridging divided relationships among environmental, business, and governmental constituencies; the demonstration of successful collaboration and effective forest restoration; and some job and business creation.

Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities Partnership

Mission—To build market awareness and demand for regionally and responsibly produced wood products and enhance rural capacity to serve those markets to the benefit of both entrepreneurs and forest ecosystems.

Organizational capacity—The Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities Partnership is a nonprofit, membership-driven network of locally owned businesses in the Pacific Northwest that manufacture and market quality wood products originating from certified, reclaimed, and forest restoration project sources. It is headquartered in Portland, Oregon.

HFHC is a regional project of Sustainable Northwest (SNW), a nonprofit organization dedicated to environmentally sound economic development across the Pacific Northwest. A 10-person board of directors governs SNW. It also has a 10-person full-time staff, one of whom is program director for the HFHC Partnership. In-house SNW staff, other HFHC partners, and outside contractors provide the expertise needed to support the HFHC partnership.

Location—Pacific Northwest, characterized by thousands of acres of private and public forestlands suitable for CBF management. Adjacent communities have experienced high rates of poverty and unemployment due to lost jobs in the woods and forest products sector.

Background—Organized in 1999, HFHC connects rural wood products manufacturers with raw material suppliers, other like-minded businesses, and urban markets. The network members' products include sustainably harvested and manufactured flooring and paneling, furniture, building materials, gifts, and logs. The

HFHC brand identity—including its marketing label as well as the story behind the products and their manufacturers—depicts a commitment to both environment and community, empowering consumers to make a choice that makes a difference.

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Challenge at the outset of the

Demonstration Program—Many people were becoming aware that human actions and behaviors had been eroding both social and natural systems. Symptoms of this erosion included a growing schism between rural and urban communities, divisive battles among interest groups, and declines in the quality of many natural resources. Failure to recognize the interdependence of a healthy environment and a healthy economy threatened both the natural environment and long-term economic prospects for Northwest communities.

Highlights from the Demonstration

Program—HFHC worked simultaneously in the marketplace and in communities. Its dual strategy has been to: 1) identify and access urban markets for the byproducts of ecosystem management and forest restoration including small-diameter wood and

under-utilized species; and 2) build rural community capacity for sustainable natural resource-based jobs through ecosystem management and the manufacturing of marketable, value-added products of wood from verifiable sound forest management.

HFHC's capacity-building services to its partners have included technical workshops and peer-to-peer exchanges. Through the

organization's Small Grants Program, partners were awarded funding to implement projects that further business development and forest restoration, as well as outreach and education. HFHC's marketing activities helped build partner knowledge of market opportunity and expand entry to those markets. In response to partner requests for help in seeking sustainably harvested wood, HFHC is creating a log and lumber purchasing network.

Makah Tribal Forestry

Mission—To create and implement forest management practices that serve to restore and conserve forest, wildlife, fish, and cultural resources.

Organizational capacity—The five-member Makah Tribal Council, whose constitution and charter date back to the mid-1930s, governs the Makah Indian Tribal Reservation. Its members are elected from among the Makah General Council, comprising about 2,300 enrolled tribal members. Makah Forestry Enterprises is a commercial forest products company chartered by the Makah Tribal Council in 1984.

Location—The Makah Native American Reservation comprises about 48 square miles of land. Located on the Olympic Peninsula in Washington State, it includes the fishing village of Neah Bay. The reservation consists of Tribal Trust Land and Allotment Trust Land where the allotment land may have multiple ownership due to heirship. Ninety percent is forested, with a high percentage located in the hills on moderate to steep slopes. More than 25,000 acres are managed forestlands; 1,213 acres are set aside for wilderness area. As a result of an oil tanker spill, 284 acres at Educket Habitat and 290 acres for Anderson Point also have been set aside. The forest itself is dominated by western hemlock, along with mixed Sitka spruce, western red cedar, and red alder.

Background—As they have for centuries, the Makah Tribe depends both upon commercial fishing and trading in timber, value-added timber products, and non-timber forest products. Industrial clear-cut logging began on the reservation in 1924. In the mid-1980s, the tribe took over forestry operations, moderated

harvesting operations, and began the long, slow process of rejuvenating the forest. Today, about 7 to 10 percent of the tribe's annual income is derived from timber. The primary value-added timber products consist of items made of western red cedar, including totems, canoes, masks, wall carvings, and many other items. In terms of value-added, commercially traded NTFPs, the most prevalent are baskets, although tribal members also have sought to market floral greens and edible mushrooms. Other NTFPs harvested on the reservation have important, non-commercial subsistence and cultural uses.

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Challenge at the outset of the

Demonstration Program—In recent years, forestry revenues, once a mainstay of support for the Makah, have declined as a percentage of the Makah Tribal Council's budget. This has been due both to low stumpage fees and an overall increase in tribal expenses. Employment opportunities in forestry based on the reservation are both seasonal and limited. Significantly, the Makah's fishing revenues also had been declining. Taken together,

these shrinkages had led to decreases in both household and per capita income. In 2001, 49 percent of the Makah living on the reservation had incomes below the national poverty level.

Highlights from the Demonstration

Program—The Makah’s CBF initiative initially included plans to design and implement 1) outreach and education to community members, as well as their input on the project, NTFPs, and forest management policies;

2) value-adding enterprises; and 3) development of inventory and GIS tools for the integration of NTFPs and understory ecological dynamics into forest management decisions. The most significant progress was made on the last component, with the results from both timber stand and NTFP inventories making it possible for the tribe to address the reservation’s forest management needs more holistically.

North Quabbin Woods (New England Forestry Foundation)

Mission—To revitalize the North Quabbin economy based on the sustainable use of local forest resources.

Organizational capacity—North Quabbin Woods is a project of the New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF). Even so, NQW's offices in downtown Orange, Massachusetts, are physically separated from NEFF's headquarters in Littleton, Massachusetts. NEFF is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the conservation and sustainable management of the private and municipal forestlands of New England. Although NEFF has 50 years experience in forestry issues, building community capacity and economic development are relatively new territory.

Location—The North Quabbin area, located in north-central Massachusetts, includes nine small towns. Hills, ponds, lakes, streams, and rivers are common features in the landscape. Over 80 percent of the region is blanketed with forests. Private landowners—including individuals, nonprofits, and businesses—own 59 percent of North Quabbin land. Public entities own 38 percent, while municipalities and the federal government own 3 percent. Private parcels average about 40 acres in size, creating a checkerboard of ownerships. Two-thirds of private landowners (67 percent) live in the region, so they are more accessible to outreach efforts.

Background—As a brand-new program, working in a community where it had never worked before, in a field in which it had no previous experience, with a small (two-person) energetic staff relatively new to the profession, NQW had to start out right at the beginning—building community around forest management

and resource-based economic development. In so doing, it laid a strong foundation for moving ahead with its economic development efforts.

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Challenge at the outset of the

Demonstration Program—Many landowners were relatively affluent and did not need to earn significant income from their forested landholdings. Many also were recent transplants from urban areas who wanted simply to live in their forests, not cut them down. As such, the area was not facing any perceived ecological disaster, making it difficult to mobilize local residents for change. There was a desire within the local community for a vibrant economy, but, at least initially, there was no strong community leadership for that agenda.

Highlights from the Demonstration

Program—The three components of this project were to: 1) increase community awareness and pride in local forests as assets, and increase participation in community decision making around natural resource issues; 2) contribute to a vibrant forest-based economy by developing ecotourism, including

providing ecotourism guide training and promoting recreational enterprises, expanding value-adding wood enterprises, and building and promoting a local brand; and 3) foster sustainable forest management through landowner outreach, education, and FSC-certification.

The community has used an inclusive process for charting and implementing its ecotourism

efforts and building its NQW brand; markets have been identified; new relationships have been built or strengthened between new and existing organizations; access to resources and outside funds has increased; consumers/architects have been educated; and state-level actors have been influenced to enable practical solutions. Much of the community is aware and proud of its forest resources and sees their potential as economic assets.

The Penn Center

Mission—To promote and preserve the Sea Island’s history and culture.

Organizational capacity—Penn Center is a community-based nonprofit organization governed by a board of trustees. It promotes a vision of self-sufficiency and empowerment through education and action. Its 11 full-time and six part-time professional staff members are supplemented by dozens of community volunteers. Staff expertise is grounded in community organizing and action, while paralleling Penn’s four programmatic areas: the History and Culture Program, the Land Use and Environmental Education Program, the Program for Academic and Cultural Enrichment, and, in partnership with the University of South Carolina-Beaufort, the Early Childhood At Risk Initiative.

Location—Beaufort County, South Carolina. Slightly more than half of Beaufort County’s nearly half-million acres are tidal wetlands, estuaries, and open water. Nine percent is developed; 7 percent is forested wetlands. Forest management and production is the major agricultural activity. Beaufort County is the fastest growing county in the state, with much of the new development gated communities, resorts, and golf courses occurring on Hilton Head Island.

Background—Since its founding in 1862 as a school for newly freed African-American slaves, Penn has provided comprehensive education, technical training, and community development services for the inhabitants of the South Carolina Lowcountry. By the early 1980s, the school became Penn Center, supporting community self-reliance through organizing cooperatives and providing assistance to farmers and landowners. As new

development escalated, displacing entire African-American communities, Penn also has emphasized land retention and planning programs.

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Challenge at the outset of the

Demonstration Program—In addition to increased land values, higher property taxes, and a rising cost-of-living, longtime Sea Islanders were facing limited access to the water and natural resources needed to pursue traditional occupations. Although Penn has prevented hundreds of parcels of African-American-owned land from being lost, Gullah communities were still at risk. Moreover, continuing development threatened further environmental damage to the ecosystems of these fragile barrier islands.

Highlights from the Demonstration

Program—Penn’s community-based forestry initiative sought to: 1) empower rural families and communities to develop long-term economic revitalization based on the sustainable management and development of their forest assets; 2) support the development of the forest products sector through product, market, and enterprise development; and 3) identify

and promote sectoral networks to enhance and sustain community conservation and forest-based product, market, and enterprise development efforts.

Penn conducted research and staged demonstration projects around potential non-timber forest products. Its ongoing efforts were a

catalyst for the formation of the Lowcountry Landowners Association, which has been a major success. Penn also worked with its technical resource partners to help them incorporate traditional knowledge into their consultations with Gullah landowners. It further has promoted education and awareness about sustainability.

Public Lands Partnership

Mission—To influence the management of public lands in ways that enhance and help maintain diverse, healthy, and viable economies, environments, and communities in west central Colorado.

Organizational capacity—The Public Lands Partnership formed in 1992 as an informal forum to address public lands issues. Early on, PLP decided not to become a formal nonprofit organization, fearing that it would become too bureaucratic, formal, inflexible, and unresponsive to opportunities and interests in the community. Consequently, leadership and day-to-day management of PLP activities have come from a seven-person executive committee, and from numerous steering groups. To receive funds, PLP established Unc/Com Inc. as its nonprofit fiscal management agent. In fact, Unc/Com has evolved into an innovative way to pool and leverage resources, bringing over \$1 million of new money annually into the local economy.

Location—West central Colorado. The region's overall rugged terrain is exemplified by the Uncompahgre Plateau, a high domed upland rising from the Colorado River, peaking near 10,000 feet in elevation, and running approximately 90 miles southeast to the base of the San Juan Mountains. The Plateau is bisected by steep walled canyons and surrounded by the Uncompahgre, Gunnison, San Miguel, Dolores, and Colorado Rivers. It features several life zones, scattered across prairie, riparian, foothills, canyons, and mountain regions.

PLP has played a vitally important role in the ongoing Uncompahgre Project (UP), a major collaboration among four organizations—the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Colorado Division of

Wildlife, and PLP—plus a host of other partners. The project's goal is to restore habitat in the Uncompahgre forest—an area involving 1.5 million acres on both public and private lands—for the benefit of wildlife, people, and local communities.

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Background—One of the first partnerships of its kind in the western United States, PLP started out as a loosely confederated organization of citizens, businesses, local governments, and land management agencies. From the beginning, the group has sought to test new models for managing conflict and promoting collaboration. PLP has sought to create civic discussion and catalyze local action on natural resource issues that affect the region's economy, ecology, and sense of place. It specifically has worked to demonstrate different ecologically and economically sustainable approaches that contribute to the health and biodiversity of public lands in the area.

Challenge at the outset of the

Demonstration Program—Early on, PLP realized that in order to defuse conflict and promote genuine collaboration, the various partners would need to develop a shared

framework for understanding a number of elements, including expectations, objectives, responsibilities, communications, authority, and resource allocations. Developing this framework required the establishment of new institutional arrangements at the outset of this project.

Highlights from the Demonstration

Program—PLP has been effective in using community-based monitoring to diffuse conflict and enable the implementation of forestry projects on public lands. For example, the group developed a monitoring effort which enabled four million board feet of wood to

be sold to local mills, instead of rotting from bug kill. This project is called the Burn Canyon Salvage Timber Sale monitoring project. PLP has also developed an effective mechanism for involving new voices in the dialogue about the appropriate use of public lands in the region. This mechanism is called the Living History Project, and includes Native Americans and people who work and live on the land. The UP has become a highly visible project, garnering state and national acclaim. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have gone to the local labor force for treatments subcontracted as part of the UP project.

Rural Action

Mission—To promote economic, social, and environmental justice in Appalachian Ohio.

Organizational capacity—Rural Action is a membership-based nonprofit with a staff of more than two dozen full- and part-time employees, as well as about 15 Americorps VISTA volunteers. Rural Action places a priority upon encouraging and cultivating leadership by lower-income, traditionally marginalized community members. Its Sustainable Forestry Program is just one of the organization's major programs, which also include initiatives in sustainable agriculture, entrepreneurial development, watershed restoration, job skills training programs, pest control, environmental learning, rural schools, and arts and cultural heritage.

Location—Rural Appalachian Ohio, in the southeastern region of the state. One hundred years ago, nearly all of this steep, hilly terrain was wholly deforested. Today, however, the area's maturing forests rank among the most arboreally diverse temperate forests in the world. Nearly all of these woodlands are privately owned, with an average parcel size of just over 20 acres.

Background—Rural Action's roots reach back to 1982, when its predecessor, the Appalachian Ohio Public Interest Campaign (AOPIC) began working with local residents to build healthy, sustainable communities. Evolving out of that foundation, Rural Action formally was established in 1994 in Athens, Ohio. It later opened offices in several nearby small towns, however, in order to be closer to the people it seeks to serve—multigenerational, low-income landowners and families.

Challenge at the outset of the

Demonstration Program—Real estate developers had been subdividing the land into smaller and smaller pieces, increasing both land prices and the tax burdens for the region's already challenged small landowners. With over a quarter of the population in the region living below the poverty line, continued ownership of family land often depends upon the ability of landowners to pay property taxes. The fragmentation of the forestland works against the viability of commercial forestry and severely diminishes habitat for interior-dependent wildlife species. Moreover, nontimber forest products were being harvested in the wild with little regard for the long-term effect on the overall ecosystem.

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Highlights from the Demonstration

Program—The four CBF objectives of Rural Action's Sustainable Forestry Program were to: 1) help landowners and members to network, jointly undertake activities promoting sustainable forestry, gain access and participate in the decision-making and policy arenas, and provide guidance to the work of Rural Action;

2) train landowners about NTFPs, holistic forest management, and generating income; 3) help landowners to earn income from forest assets through enterprise development, marketing, and feasibility studies; and 4) promote a regionally based (Appalachian Ohio) discussion on key issues—such as forest assets and incentives—to gather support from diverse interests.

Some highlights of Rural Action’s strategies and accomplishments included its

establishment of a Forest Advisory Board to gather input from community members and other strategic partners; its early incubation and support of the Rural Appalachia Growers Association, the only herb growers association in Ohio; and its role in making planting stock available to growers at a below-market price. As more sustainable forest products become available, Rural Action will focus more heavily upon providing assistance with marketing.

Vermont Family Forests Partnership

Mission—To develop replicable models of ownership of forestland that are ecologically sound and financially inclusive, and that interact with socially responsible community-based forest product industries.

Organizational capacity—This project was a working partnership among three not-for-profit organizations: Vermont Family Forests, the National Wildlife Federation, and the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund. The partners joined together because each had a key attribute—VFF with its community base, NWF with its FSC-certification experience, and VSJF with its skills in developing business clusters—that made a CBF project viable. At the outset, however, VFF, the land-based partner, did not have a physical office, full-time staff, or a clear sense of its mission. One component of the project was to establish a nonprofit family forest conservation organization; VFF now has become a 501(c)(3) organization. By design, VFF has a part-time staff. The VFF-certified land base includes over 50 landowners in four of Vermont’s 14 counties.

Location—Chiefly, Addison County, Vermont, but also including, to some extent, other forested areas within the state. Forests cover about 78 percent of the state as whole, and about 83 percent of that forestland is non-industrial and privately owned. Vermont depends upon its forests for timber supplies, wood energy, non-timber forest products (such as maple syrup), and recreation. It also asks forests to provide high-quality water supplies, beautiful views, wildlife habitat, solitude, and spiritual renewal.

Background—National Wildlife Federation, Vermont Family Forests, and Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund had worked together

previously, collaborating on multiple workshops and funding efforts that led to providing local, certified wood for Middlebury College’s Bicentennial Hall. The partnership was attractive to the NWF’s Vermont office, because they wanted to engage in the economic side of the forest products industry to support their ecological aims. VSJF wanted to expand their

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capacity in the wood products industry. VFF wanted to link its landowners to economic opportunities based on sound forestry management.

Challenge at the outset of the

Demonstration Program—Making a living in rural Vermont has become increasingly difficult. The average wage in farming, fishing, and forestry is about 68 percent of the overall average wage in the state. Wages in the wood manufacturing industry are higher, but there are simply no manufacturing jobs in many rural communities. The ownership and stewardship of Vermont's forests also are changing. Private land rapidly is being subdivided, developed, and sold for prices that exceed its monetized productive value. Thus, many local people who depend on the land

and would prefer to keep it productive cannot afford to buy it.

Highlights from the Demonstration

Program—The project's three components were to: 1) establish a nonprofit family forest conservation organization; 2) forge market linkages for "green-certified" products; and 3) research and develop a community equity-ownership prototype.

By late 2005, VFF had become a nonprofit family forest conservation organization in Addison County. VFF, NWF, and VSJF have all participated in forging a variety of market linkages for "green-certified" wood products. VFF developed a community equity-ownership model and was working to implement it on Hogback Mountain in Addison County.

Wallowa Resources

Mission—To promote forest and watershed health and create family-wage jobs and business opportunities from natural resource stewardship.

Organizational capacity—A nonprofit organization with 6.5 full-time employees, an active board of directors, an annual budget of over \$1 million, and the infrastructure to support the organization. Community leaders have been involved with its work since the very beginning.

Location—Wallowa County, in northeastern Oregon. The landscape is diverse, including mountains, deep canyons, plateaus, prairie grasslands, and river valleys, as well as mountain lakes, forests, and meadows. The region is sparsely settled; over half the people live among four small towns in the major valleys. About 59 percent of the land is publicly owned, most of which is federally managed. Timber and grazing are the dominant uses of the land; nearly half of the total land base is forested.

Background—Wallowa Resources began in 1996, growing out of informal community meetings convened by community leaders with the goal of alleviating highly polarized conflicts over natural resource management and fostering sustainable land stewardship. Shortly after these meetings began, Sustainable Northwest was invited to facilitate the discussions and subsequently provided development support to the new nonprofit. Wallowa Resources immediately set out to empower local people in decision-making processes, to generate economic benefits from restoration projects, and to influence the costs and benefits of private landowner conservation.

Challenge at the outset of the

Demonstration Program—Years of declining forest health had increased risks from drought, insects, and wild fires. Local forests were overstocked with small-diameter trees, resulting in degraded habitat conditions and increased fire hazards. Degraded forest conditions (and other macroeconomic factors) led to widespread mill closings, as well as substantial losses of forest jobs, and jobs in wood processing. Moreover, extensive staffing cuts at federal agencies curtailed resource management efforts on public lands.

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Highlights from the Demonstration

Program—Wallowa Resources' four program objectives were to: 1) develop and sustain a Community Planning and Assessment Process; 2) improve local understanding and awareness of the socioeconomic benefits generated from stewardship of the natural resources base; 3) improve the condition of the forest ecosystem in Wallowa County; and 4) maintain and generate new socioeconomic benefits from the natural resource base.

The four-year planning process identified at least seven years of restoration and

stewardship work in the approximately 174,000-acre Upper Joseph Creek watershed. Wallowa Resources worked with the U.S. Forest Service and county partners to develop the 47,000-acre Spooner Vegetation and Road Project as a stewardship contract release, which will result in the production of about five million board feet of timber suitable for milling. Additional activities include aspen restoration, prescribed burning, road maintenance

and decommissioning, and non-commercial thinning. Wallowa Resources has implemented many other restoration demonstration projects through multiple partnerships. It also developed a for-profit arm, called Community Solutions Inc., which has made it possible to develop and spin off other for-profit businesses, the first being Community Smallwood Solutions, primarily a manufacturer of posts and poles.

Watershed Research and Training Center

Mission—To promote healthy communities and sustainable forests through research, education, training, and economic development.

Organizational capacity—The Watershed Research and Training Center is a community-based nonprofit organization. It has an eight-member board of directors and 10 full-time and part-time staff members. From the beginning, WRTC has worked collaboratively with the U.S. Forest Service, academic institutions, local and regional governments, community businesses, and other partners to accomplish its goals. For example, WRTC relies heavily upon the Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities Partnership to provide marketing assistance.

Location—Hayfork, California. Hayfork is located at the center of Trinity County and the Trinity National Forest in northwestern California. Trinity County is a rural county whose rugged mountains are covered with rich, mixed coniferous forests as well as some oak woodlands and grasslands. The timber and recreation industries are the core sectors of the economy, making it one of the most forest-dependent areas in the Pacific Northwest. Hayfork is typical of many small, remote, public-land communities. Between 1990 and 2000, its population dropped from 2,200 to 1,800 people.

Background—Despite the economic and social distress of the 1990s, Hayfork and Trinity County still have abundant natural resources and human resourcefulness on which to build a new sustainable economy. The Watershed Resource and Training Center, founded in 1993, has worked since 1996 to develop a small-diameter wood utilization program. For example, it understood that Hayfork

needed a business incubator to nurture the early development of value-adding manufacturing businesses that process small-diameter trees and underutilized hardwoods such as madrone and tan oak. WRTC also provides an umbrella for emerging nonprofits, committees, and teams that form to address specific community issues in Hayfork.

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Challenge at the outset of the

Demonstration Program—In 1990, a federal court placed an injunction on all public timber sales in the range of the northern spotted owl. This widespread “forest closure” on public lands affected over 30 logging families in Hayfork, and the subsequent sawmill closure in 1996 affected over 150 families. In a few short years, over 40 percent of the payroll in Hayfork, a town with only about 2,000 people, had disappeared. These changes affected not only the loggers and the sawmill workers, but also tree planters and other reforestation crews. At the same time, the Forest Service downsized its workforce, and 30 government jobs were lost. In the wake of these events, WRTC’s biggest challenge has been to carve out a sustainable option for Hayfork and other small, forest-dependent communities.

Highlights from the Demonstration

Program—Today, WRTC is helping Hayfork residents make a living from the forest. To do this, it has provided training to over 100 residents so they are equipped to do the thinning and restoration work that are permitted under the National Fire Plan. It runs an annual in-house restoration crew of 20 people. WRTC opened an incubator that currently houses a business with 30 employees, up from six employees in 2002. It also has conducted

socioeconomic research through multiparty monitoring. This process has engaged citizens in exploring sustainable ways to link healthy forests and healthy communities. It further has educated residents about options for work in sustainable forests. The statistics WRTC has gathered have been used by other county organizations to write grant proposals for everything from ambulances to cell phone towers.



APPENDIX

B

Digital Archive and Toolbox on Accompanying Compact Disk



Throughout the **Demonstration Program**, the managing partner and the sites developed support materials that document and discuss practical issues and concerns relevant to the ongoing work. Much of this digital archive is included on the compact disk (CD) that accompanies this report.

Toolbox

The toolbox section of the CD presents a compendium of helpful tools referenced in earlier chapters of this report.

1 Cost Analysis Worksheet

(Excel spreadsheet, referenced in *Chapter 4: Fostering Sustainable Economies*)

To sell its products at a fair price, a business needs to understand both its own costs and the selling prices for comparable products in the marketplace. Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities Partnership developed a pricing tool to help businesses capture their costs for each item produced. This tool allows them to compare unit costs at different levels of production, using different pieces of equipment, and in different marketing situations, whether to sell to end-users or retailers or distributors.

2 Regional Branding and Identity Guide

(PDF, referenced in *Chapter 4: Fostering Sustainable Economies*)

In order to help make local people more consciously aware of their region's forest resources and its small-wood products businesses, North Quabbin Woods developed a regional branding and identity campaign. This guide explains how businesses most effectively can use the North Quabbin Woods logo to promote their sustainable enterprises.

3 Wood Source Tracking Sheet

(Microsoft Word document, referenced in *Chapter 5: Restoring and Maintaining Forest Ecosystems*)

Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities works with its 40 member businesses to monitor the sources of the wood they use and to find buyers for wood harvested from eight different restoration sites. This tracking sheet is useful for their record-keeping.

4 Forest Management Checklist

(Microsoft Word document, referenced in *Chapter 5: Restoring and Maintaining Forest Ecosystems*)

This checklist developed by Vermont Family Forests sets forth a set of voluntary forestry practices designed for forest stewards who are interested in practicing ecological forestry.

5 Laying the Groundwork for Collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service

(Microsoft Word document, referenced in *Chapter 6: Collaborating for CBF Action*)

This diagram will be useful for communities that wish to understand why, when, and how to collaborate with the multiple departments within the U.S. Forest Service.

6 Organizational Assessment Tool

(referenced in *Chapter 8: Designing and Supporting CBF Programs*)

Some community-based organizations in the Demonstration Program found it beneficial to conduct an organizational self-assessment as a way to identify a capacity-building plan and opportunities for assistance from the managing partner. Conducted annually, this assessment also served as a monitoring tool. By involving all of the staff and some board members, the self-assessment captured a range of perceptions at different times.

Eleven useful websites

There are a number of useful websites and other online resources for CBF practitioners. Those listed below are just a few!

1 Capaciteria

Capaciteria is a comprehensive, searchable database directory of capacity-building resources for nonprofits. It promotes peer review, because members can comment on and rate individual resource links, as well as add useful new links. Capaciteria was developed by Jonathan Peizer, chief technology officer of the Open Society Institute. **www.capaciteria.org**

2 Collaborative Learning Circle (CLC)

CLC is a network of groups, individuals, and tribes engaged in community-based forestry, watershed restoration, forest work, natural resource management, harvesting, and value-added product development, primarily in Southern Oregon and Northern California. CLC members have been meeting since 1994 for peer learning, collective innovation, and increased community capacity. The website includes a calendar of events; searchable directory of participants and network resources; a library of maps, documents, and resources; and a newsletter with all past editions available. **www.communityforestry.net** or **www.clcircle.org**

3 Collaborative Forest Restoration Program of the U.S. Forest Service

The website of the U.S. Forest Service includes a number of very useful resources. The multiparty monitoring handbooks listed below describe much of the knowledge and expertise needed to guide communities as they monitor

collaborative forest restoration projects. There are six handbooks in this series:

- **Handbook 1**—What is multiparty monitoring?
- **Handbook 2**—Developing a multiparty monitoring plan
- **Handbook 3**—Budgeting for monitoring projects
- **Handbook 4**—Monitoring ecological effects
- **Handbook 5**—Monitoring social and economic effects of forest restoration
- **Handbook 6**—Analyzing and interpreting monitoring data

Each guide may be downloaded—free-of-charge in a .pdf format—at the following Internet address: **www.fs.fed.us/r3/spf/cfrp/monitoring/**

4 Communities Committee of the Seventh American Forest Congress

The purpose of the Communities Committee is to focus attention on the interdependence of America's forests and the vitality of our rural and urban communities. The site includes information on publications, conferences, and other resources. **www.communitiescommittee.org**

5 Community Forestry Research Fellowships (CFRF)

The CFRF program provides fellowships to graduate students to support their field work in communities in the United States. The fellowship program is open to all students enrolled in degree-granting programs in the social sciences or related natural resource sciences at any institution of higher learning. In addition to application information, this site includes bibliographies on Participatory Action Research and Community Forestry. It also has links to other internship and fellowship programs, as well as to advice on writing

research proposals. www.cnr.berkeley.edu/community_forestry/

6 The Forest Policy Center of American Forests

The Forest Policy Center advocates for the restoration and maintenance of healthy forest ecosystems, serving as a voice of moderation on forest policy issues, and encouraging civil dialogue, open inclusive process, and collaborative action. Center staff help local partners throughout the country build capacity to participate in policy decision making and implement innovative projects on the land. This site includes information on urban forestry, ways to take action, and a host of publications and resources on community forestry and ecosystem management. www.americanforests.org

7 National Forest Foundation (NFF)

The National Forest Foundation brings people together to protect our national forests and grasslands. As the nonprofit partner of the U.S. Forest Service, it engages America in community-based and national programs that promote the health and public enjoyment of the National Forest System. NFF believes that communities should play a leading role in determining the future of the 192 million acres that make up our national forests and grasslands. This website includes grant application guidelines, useful resources, and information on the national forests. www.natlforests.org

8 National Network of Forest Practitioners (NNFP)

NNFP is an alliance of rural people working on the ground to build a forest economy that is ecologically sound and socially just. The organization acts as a clearinghouse for information and technical assistance, and as a place for people to meet, learn, and make their voices heard. NNFP also helps people solve

problems, experiment with new approaches, work with unconventional partners, and compete in the marketplace. Moreover, NNFP is also the U.S. liaison to the Global Caucus on Community-Based Forestry. Many of the resources on this site are also available in Spanish. www.nnfp.org

9 The Partnership Resource Center

The Partnership Resource Center provides online resources for building vibrant partnerships and effective collaboration on the nation's forests, grasslands, and other special places. www.partnershipresourcecenter.org

10 Pinchot Institute for Conservation

The community-based forest stewardship program of the Pinchot Institute works collaboratively with policymakers, federal and state land management agencies, and local practitioners to identify, address, and develop strategies on specific initiatives that sustain and improve the stewardship of multiple-objective ecosystems, and to enable them to serve as a basis for stable employment and generate income in rural communities. The program offers technical assistance programs and training sessions. The site includes several resources and useful links. www.pinchot.org

11 Sand County Foundation

Sand County Foundation programs seek to learn from, encourage, and where appropriate, assist community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) projects that incorporate multiple landowners, a commitment to ethics and incentives, monitoring, independent review, and a willingness to share the social, economic, and environmental outcomes with others. Programs include: The Community Based Conservation Network®, Landholder Leaders, and Grant Making, among others. The website includes a downloadable copy of

the recent publication, *Natural Resources as Community Assets*, including detailed case studies of CBNRM programs in both North America and Africa. www.sandcounty.net

Demonstration Program publications

- The **Demonstration Program brochure and other materials** that provide general information about the Demonstration Program, its various partners, and a mid-program assessment of lessons learned.
- **Planting Seeds**, a periodic update to the broader CBF field, providing summaries about current trends useful to practitioners and the general public.
- **Occasional Report series**, offering in-depth case studies and meeting proceedings that offer more in-depth analysis that will be useful to practitioners of both CBF and, more broadly, rural economic development.
- **Branding and Marketing Strategies: Becoming a David to Compete with the Goliaths in the Marketplace**, which offers practical ideas for developing a brand to small businesses that are rooted in the community and committed to sustainability.
- **Legal Structure Issues in the Development of Business Ventures**, which addresses questions about the tax, corporate and other considerations in the legal structuring of business ventures. His paper is a general overview and is not intended as legal advice.
- **Branding and Marketing Toolkit**, which provides an online step-by-step guide to identifying potential forest products, conducting market research, and building a brand.
- **Branding and Marketing Community Forestry Products**, a CD-ROM that presents highlights of an October 2002 Community-Based Forestry Demonstration Program learning cluster meeting in Addison County, Vermont. Designed to promote peer-to-peer and business-to-business learning, the CD captures the collected wisdom of practitioners and experimenters in the field of community-based forestry.
- **Staying Power: Using Technical Assistance and Peer Learning to Enhance Donor Investments**, which offers donors more in-depth learning on the use and effectiveness of having a managing partner and the roles it can undertake.



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