



Eco-Link

Linking Social, Economic, and Ecological Issues

Volume 14, Number 3

Re-United Finger-Jointing Consumers & Producers

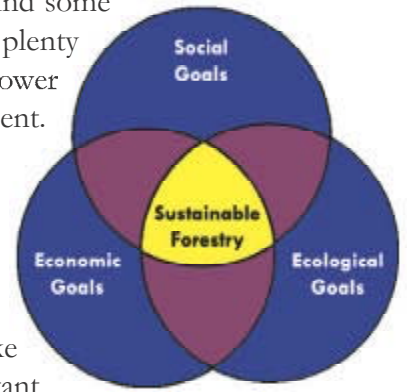


“We are all consumers and we all live in the natural and built environments simultaneously.”

There was a time when most people lived on the land and the connection between consumption and production was obvious and well understood. People knew where things came from and how they were produced. However, our society is now 85% urban. Many people actually do believe fish and lumber originate in a store, and therefore nothing needs to be harvested and processed into a useful product! Can we reunite these urban consumers and rural producers and reestablish the interdependent (symbiotic) relationship? Well, as Peaches and Herb said in their 1979 classic *Reunited*, *“it feels so good...’cause we understood.”* When consumers and producers get together to discuss natural resource issues and options great things happen. The forest products industry builds trust through on the ground performance, and by getting recognition for that performance. There is a lot of good news to share.

Trust stems from **performance** and **recognition**.

In the United States, over 300 million acres of forest were cleared just to grow crops and raise livestock. We used billions of board feet of wood for buildings, fences, railroad ties, and fuel. And some bad things did happen with the unsustainable forestry practices of the past. There are plenty of images to prove it. Unfortunately the “conflict industry” has done everything in its power to perpetuate the perception that we are still in this *pioneering* phase of our development. Old images are replayed constantly to raise money and create public mistrust. North American forestry is often compared to unsustainable forestry practices in the tropics, creating further confusion. The solution is education. Urban consumers can get out in the woods and mills to see for themselves what modern **sustainable forestry** is all about. It’s all about forestry that is socially acceptable, economically viable, and ecologically sound. It demands some predictability in the future, so that people are willing to make long-term investments. That’s why educating urban consumers and voters is so important.



The Solution is Education.

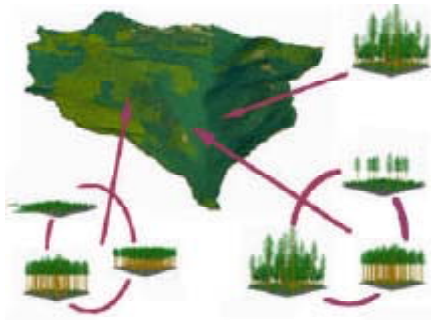
There are no simple solutions...

Only intelligent choices.

Temperate Forest Foundation Teachers’ Tour Graduates are empowered with scientifically-credible information. Teachers experience sustainable forest management first-hand. These consumers are put directly in touch with producers and given the opportunity to ask questions. **Clockwise from top left:** Teachers saw large trees growing out of steps in a forest in the Adirondacks that was once a thriving mining community; teachers tour pulping machines, learning about how paper is produced; teachers visit a lumber mill and watch logs get debarked; teachers visit a recently burned stand; teachers visit a forest that reclaimed a former golf course; teachers watch veneer being produced for doors and windows; teachers visit a seedling nursery; and teachers get up close to a single-grip processor used for mechanical harvesting.

...one of the great revelations is how *dynamic* forests are.

To many consumers, the forest is something frozen in time, a snapshot to be preserved. Some even believe it could or should all be in the “old growth” stage. Of course this mentality has contributed to some disastrous policies on our overstocked, overstressed, and vulnerable public lands. When urban consumers get out into the forest, one of the great revelations is how dynamic forests are. In Maine, teachers saw stonewalls in forests that were once cleared for agriculture; in the Adirondack Mountains of New York, they saw large trees growing out of steps where villages once existed, and diverse forests that have even reclaimed golf courses. From Yellowstone and Mount St. Helens, to the beautiful stands in the Tillamook State Forest of Oregon, teachers can see forests that were once burned to the ground, in renewal. They also see where a little assistance from planting, pruning, thinning, and fertilizing pays big dividends. Everything changes once a person understands that forests are constantly changing and that people have always been a part of that change. Disturbance and recovery is the norm. However, with our burgeoning population and sprawl we do not have the luxury of letting catastrophic events like wildfires cause the change. This is one of the most important key concepts to master. Although we cannot freeze forests in space and time, foresters understand the dynamics and can manage for the “reoccurrence of desirable outcomes.” They can conserve the resource, provide amenities, and they can even ensure that old growth is always a component in the forest.



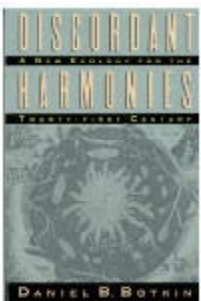
Foresters can manage for the reoccurrence of desirable outcomes.

Forests are dynamic assemblages of species across landscapes; they grow (through various processes) and change (in structure) over time. “Old Growth,” also referred to as the complex, late-successional structure, is highly valued by humans for its aesthetic qualities. But even in the “Old Growth” stage forests continue to evolve. And even if forests were static we wouldn’t want to keep them all in the “Old Growth” structure because different species depend on different structures to provide certain, necessary life requirements. In order to provide habitat for every species, it’s important to maintain a diverse mosaic of stand structures across the landscape.



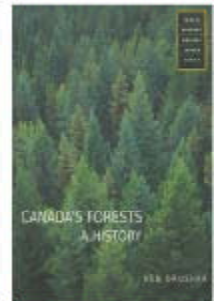
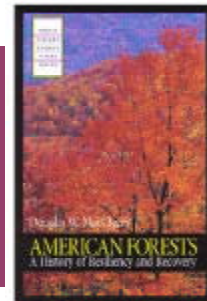
Teachers observe the stark contrast between Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument and the lush surrounding forests that Weyerhaeuser established within the blast zone.

Temperate Forest Foundation, Northwest Teachers’ Tour



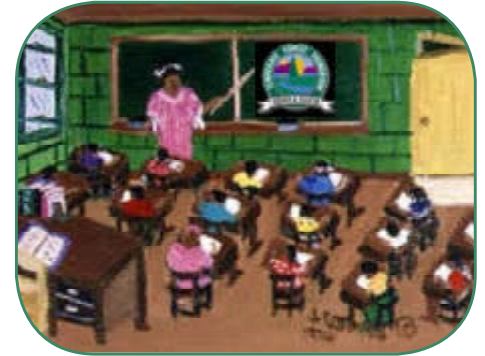
Recommended Reading

- Discordant Harmonies by Daniel Botkin
- Forest Stand Dynamics by Oliver & Larson
- American Forests by Douglas MacCleery
- Canada’s Forests: A History by Ken Drushka



Everything changes once a person understands that forests are constantly changing and that people have always been a part of that change.

People are part of nature, not separate from it. This is often lost on urban consumers. Many think that we (the people) are the enemy and should be kept out of the forest, and in spite of good intent, the Wilderness Act of 1964 only reinforced this notion. If we the consumers are separate from nature, then why not abdicate our responsibility for living in harmony *with* nature? The most important person to understand this concept is an urban teacher. After all, we have about three million grade K-12 teachers educating 60-million students in Canada and the United States. If the teachers get it wrong, then we will have a never-ending fountain of uninformed consumers and voters.



Teachers have a special responsibility.

"The historic image has been the brawny lumberjack. Now I see women, computer scientists, and many highly educated and well-informed people involved in the process."
Greg Cossette, 2004 Intermountain Teachers' Tour graduate
from Post Falls High School in Post Falls, ID



Teachers enjoy tall tales visiting
Paul and Babe in Bemidji, MN.
Temperate Forest Foundation,
Lake States Teachers' Tour



What an epiphany when folks actually get out in the woods and mills...

and processing. It's high-tech. Successful loggers understand sustainable forestry, electronics, diesel mechanics, hydraulics, computers, and much more. Roy Lawson of Deary, Idaho, typifies the evolution to a well-educated and astute entrepreneur. Harvesting is part of the cycle. Today it can be done safely, with very low environmental impact and benefits to forest health. We can enjoy the stories about Paul and Babe, and also rest assured that we have evolved from pioneering and "mining" the forest, to sustainable forestry.

The modern forest products industry is high-tech, but many people think Paul and Babe are running the show. Of course, to the resource providers there is a lot of romance to Paul and his blue ox. However, many consumers visualize somebody roaming the woods with a couple of chainsaws, maybe a six-pack, and very little education. They see cut and run and a lot of waste. What an epiphany when folks actually get out in the woods and mills, to see modern day harvesting



Teachers enjoy meeting a real logger (Roy Lawson) on University of Idaho's Experimental Forest, where modern thinning operations are done with sophisticated harvesters and processors.

Temperate Forest Foundation, Intermountain Teachers' Tour

Consumers believe that they have to choose between the economy and the environment. Special interest groups polarize every issue to raise money. Fortunately, we do not live in a black and white world. For every issue, there are numerous options, each with strengths, weaknesses, risks, and trade-offs. The idea is to use the best science, study the options carefully, and then make an informed choice. What a breath of fresh air this approach is to urban teachers. Managing a forest is a long-term affair that involves strategic planning. Foresters have to manage for economic, social, and ecological benefits. Foresters have to meet the needs of different landowners who have different management objectives. They might be managing for saw timber, veneer logs, fiber, wildlife habitat, fish habitat, aesthetics, recreation, wilderness, or any combination. It is an absolute pleasure to take urban educators into the woods, mills, and labs to discuss issues and options with no “spin.” Teachers have a special responsibility. What they say to a student may last a lifetime and be passed on to future generations. That’s an awesome responsibility and the consequences are profound.

Options→ ↓Values	A.	B.	C.
Local Biodiversity	+	++	-
Global Environment	+·	++	--
Low Public Costs	++	+·	-
Employment	+	++	-

The Matrix Approach

Each management option will impact each issue, value, or objective in its own way. Developing a matrix can help decision makers weigh issues and options in order to make the most informed choice possible based on the best available science.

A Sustainable Society

- ✓ Conserves ecological life-support systems and biodiversity
- ✓ Ensures that uses of renewable resources are sustainable
- ✓ Minimizes the depletion of non-renewable resources
- ✓ Keeps within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems



The expanding world population demands more and more production, but production must be kept in balance with production capacity.

*For every issue, there are numerous options.
...Make informed choices.*

A Whole New World

I can show you the world
Shining, shimmering, splendid
Tell me, princess, now when did
You last let your heart decide?

I can open your eyes
Take you wonder by wonder
Over, sideways and under
On a magic carpet ride

A whole new world
A new fantastic point of view
No one to tell us no
Or where to go
Or say we're only dreaming

A whole new world
A dazzling place I never knew
But when I'm way up here
It's crystal clear

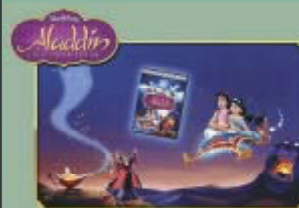
That now I'm in a whole new world with you
Now I'm in a whole new world with you

Unbelievable sights
Indescribable feeling
Soaring, tumbling, freewheeling
Through an endless diamond sky

A whole new world
Don't you dare close your eyes
A hundred thousand things to see
Hold your breath - it gets better
I'm like a shooting star
I've come so far
I can't go back to where I used to be

A whole new world
Every turn a surprise
With new horizons to pursue
Every moment red-letter
I'll chase them anywhere
There's time to spare
Let me share this whole new world with you

A whole new world
That's where we'll be
A thrilling chase
A wondrous place
For you and me



Lyrics from Disney's Aladdin

A straight forward explanation helps them appreciate the nuances.

Informed educators are able to discern and appreciate different management objectives from different land owners. They do not expect a major corporation reporting to stockholders to operate in exactly the same manner as the US Forest Service. For example, the Forest Service has the freedom to allow wildfires to burn in some instances and only harvests a small fraction of what many foresters would call “allowable” under sustainable forestry guidelines. Educators can easily understand that a forest products company is in business to grow a lot of wood fiber and to make a profit. Educators expect forest products companies to manage intensively and to be concerned with genetics, to use herbicides as needed, to fight fire aggressively, and to harvest trees and plant more to maximize the yield per acre. Of course, they expect the private companies to practice sustainable forestry and perhaps hold them to even higher standards than government (public) agencies. They also understand that different owners with different objectives actually create diversity across a landscape.



Forest managers in the Clearwater National Forest of Idaho are trying to reintroduce fire to the landscape after 60 years of intense fire suppression; their three-pronged strategy involves a mix of logging in roaded areas, managing lightning ignited fires for beneficial uses, and some prescribed landscape burning in the back country. Private companies and those who live and work in the area strive to suppress fires; the Clearwater-Potlatch Timber Protective Association (CPTPA) is an initial attack organization that can quickly and efficiently suppress fires on private land while they are still small.

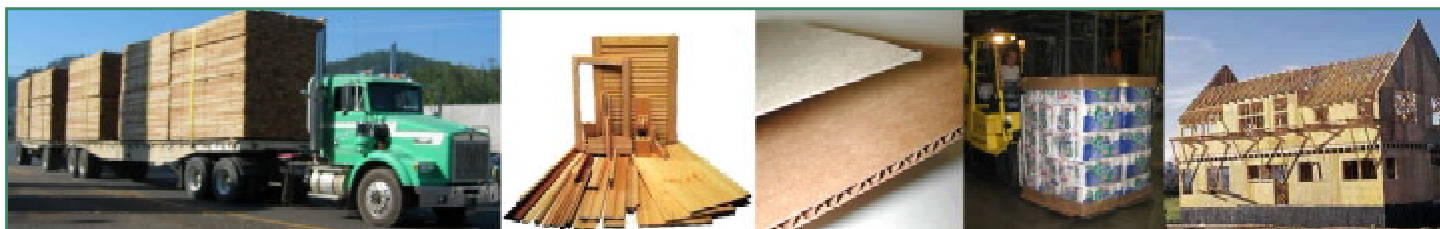
One of the most pleasant surprises to urban educators (consumers) is the complete utilization of trees when they are harvested and processed into useful wood products. Many people assume that there is tremendous damage and waste involved in the process when the exact opposite is true. After spending some time in the woods and processing plants they come away saying “the industry utilizes everything but the shade from a tree.” It starts in the forest where modern equipment can harvest and process trees with minimal damage to the residual stand and the logs, which are sorted to maximize value. In general, everything is processed for the highest and best use. Trees that were once considered too small, too defective, or otherwise undesirable, can now be used to create superior Engineered Wood Products (EWPs). The best logs may go for veneer and sawn wood. Trees, logs, and wood chips, go to various plants to be converted into lumber, veneer, EWPs, posts and poles, paper, paperboard, and thousands of bi-products. Turpentine from pine trees is used to create alpha and beta pinenes, the building blocks for flavors and fragrances. Logs and lumber are scanned optically and with lasers to ensure maximum yield and value. In fact, the harvesting and processing of wood products is as high-tech as it gets. This really resonates well with urban educators, especially those who appreciate the science and technology involved. In nature, there is no waste, and this is the path the modern forest products industry is on. The most efficient operators will also reap rewards in the marketplace.



“I was impressed with the efficiency of the entire process. The land is well-used, and the harvested timber is not wasted. I feel like our natural resources are managed for maximum production with minimal environmental impact.”

Kathey Farley, 2004 South-Central Teachers’ Tour graduate from Mabelvale Magnet Middle School in Little Rock, AR

Consumers create the demand. Once people come to see themselves as the end-users of wood products, the entire discussion is immediately reframed. Urban educators see toilet paper coming down the line in a Consumer Products Plant and there is no doubt in their minds that they are in fact the “end-users.” They see lumber, panels, furniture, and realize that thousands of things they use everyday come from the forest. At that point it is no longer a question of whether they use, need, or desire wood products. The discussion turns to values and being guilt-free. They want reassurance that there is complete utilization of the resource including the use of recycled products. They want to know that they can enjoy wood products knowing that somebody is looking out for the air, water, soil, fish, wildlife reserves, special places, and aesthetics. They want to be responsible consumers and once they understand the issues they realize that responsible consumption involves the use of renewable, recyclable, biodegradable, and super energy efficient products. They come to understand how “mother nature” recycles trees with disease, insects, and fire. Utilizing wood products versus non-renewable building materials (steel, concrete, plastic) begins to look very good. It’s all about understanding the issues and options and making informed choices.



Try to imagine a day without wood!



Very few students consider the forest products industry as a place where they can have a meaningful career and make a real difference.

In fact, many perceive it as a sunset industry that damages the environment in pursuit of short term profit. They get this from their teachers and parents. This is a dangerous misperception. The industry cannot be competitive in a global economy without attracting the best and brightest. Colleges with Wood Science and Technology programs are unable to attract enough students, yet graduates can get great jobs. The solution starts with the teachers, who educate the students, who in turn, educate their parents. Once teachers get out in the woods and mills, they are blown away by the career opportunities they see.

Whatever their students want to do, they can do somewhere in the modern forest products industry which employs: foresters, forest engineers, wood scientists and technologists, chemical engineers, mechanical engineers, environmental engineers,

information technologists, finance and accounting specialists, sales and marketing specialists, just to name a few. Teachers are impressed when they see how people work together in the pursuit of better products, a cleaner environment, and profitability. Most importantly, they are impressed with the enthusiasm of the professionals that work in the natural resource arena. They can’t wait to share this with their students.

“I was amazed at the machines and computers involved in the forestry industry. ...Forestry is a viable career that I was unaware of.”

Joyce Cornett, 2004 South-Central Teachers’ Tour graduate from E.A. Harold Elementary in Millington, TN



Al Green's hypnotic single, **Let's Stay Together**, rose to #1 on the charts in early 1972, selling more than three million copies. The eight time grammy winner continues making hits today--his latest album, "I Can't Stop," was released in November of 2003.

*"Let's...Let's stay together,
Loving you whether, whether,
Times are good or bad,
Happy or sad..."*

It's just like Al Green said in his famous 1972 hit song *Let's Stay Together*. Consumers create the demand and producers meet it. It is what foresters would call a **sympiotic** relationship. Neither can exist without the other. Both need to be responsible and make informed choices. Once the special interest groups and the conflict industry are sidelined, the consumers and producers can talk. Then they are "Reunited" and it's like a whole new world. It feels so good! Consumers and producers, let's stay together!



In 1979, the dynamic duo Peaches and Herb released the platinum selling single **Reunited**, which quickly became a #1 song around the world. **Peaches and Herb** made history by becoming the first African American performers in China when Bob Hope invited them to attend a special he was taping there.

*"Reunited and it feels so good, reunited 'cause we understood...
There's one perfect fit; And, sugar this one is it...
We both are so excited, 'cause we're reunited, hey, hey..."*

Terms

Sustainable Forestry - Forest management that is socially acceptable, economically viable, and ecologically sound, as well as politically practical and legally defensible.

Sustainable Development - "Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Ecosystem - A natural system which functions as a unit. It can be anything from a rotting log to the entire planet. It is an assemblage of living organisms together with their non-living environment in a particular area.

Symbiosis - The living together in close association of two or more dissimilar organisms: includes parasitism, mutualism, and neutralism.

Resources

- Clearwater National Forest 3-Pronged Management Strategy: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/clearwater/>
- CPTPA Website: <http://www.cptpa.com/>
- Energy Information Administration: <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/consumption/>
- Forest Learn Website: <http://www.forestlearn.org/consumer/consume1.htm>
- Forest Products Laboratory Research Paper: <http://www.fpl.fs.fed.us/documnts/fplrp/fplrp595.pdf>
- Population Pyramids: <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/idbpyr.html>
- The Population Reference Bureau: <http://www.prb.org/>
- USGS Energy Statistics: http://energy.cr.usgs.gov/energy/stats_ctry/Stat1.html
- World Resources Institute: <http://powerpoints.wri.org/trends/>
- Famous Quotes: <http://home.att.net/~quotations/>
- Glossary of Terms: <http://www.forestinfo.org/Discover/glossary.htm>
- Recommended Reading: www.forestinfo.org/Products/books.htm and www.barnesandnoble.com/
- Listen to "Reunited": http://www.vh1.com/artists/az/peaches_herb/324157/album.jhtml
- Listen to "Let's Stay Together": <http://www.mp3.com/albums/7031/summary.html>
- Lyrics and music to "A Whole New World": <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/kids/lyrics/aladdinworld.htm>

*"There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle, or the mirror that reflects it."
~Edith Wharton (1862-1937)*



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