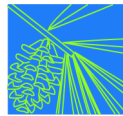


Sharing Stewardship of the Harvest:
Building capacity among low-income
Non-Timber Forest Product harvesters



Katie Bagby, Beverly Brown, Susan Chapp,
and Jesse Hunter

August 2003



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SHARING STEWARDSHIP OF THE HARVEST:
Building capacity among low-income Non-Timber Forest Product harvesters

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Pacific West Community Forestry Center (PWCFC) participates in two Non-Timber Forest Product Multi-Party Monitoring projects in and around National Forests in the Cascade Range: the matsutake mushroom harvests of Crescent Lake, Oregon and Cave Junction, Oregon.

These projects aim to maximize participation by low-income harvesters in multi-party monitoring of social and environmental impacts of non-timber forest product harvesting and related land management issues. The projects build a process by which people who are excluded—or exclude themselves—due to culture, language, low-income and/or legal status, low-literacy, distrust of public processes, and other issues—become directly involved as willing and pivotal partners in public land stewardship. Other stakeholders who participate are the US Forest Service, local community residents, law enforcement, and non-profit partners who provide financial and logistical support to the projects. The PWCFC has provided fiscal oversight for the projects, as well as coordination and field staffing for the Crescent Lake project.

The goals of the multi-party monitoring efforts are to:

- Integrate harvesters' knowledge, experience, and concerns into grassroots and institutional decision-making processes, toward the goal of protecting harvesters' livelihood and the natural resource base upon which they depend
- Develop processes that foster harvester leadership, participatory research, and peer-based approaches to stewardship problem-solving
- Encourage dialogue and collaboration between the grassroots and institutional levels

The projects strive to achieve these aims through specific actions. Monitors (veteran harvesters) walk the woods listening to harvesters' concerns, sharing information, and providing peer education on sustainable harvesting practices. Monitors and other partners document observations on regulatory impacts, ecosystem concerns, social/cultural concerns, and any other issues related to the harvest. Campground meetings provide a public forum for harvesters and other stakeholders to identify and address concerns. Project participants continually discuss and analyze emergent issues with the goal of adaptive responses.

The multi-party monitoring efforts have increased communication and cooperation, reduced conflict, promoted sustainability and collaboration, and improved relations with law enforcement. The projects have worked to establish a creative and cost-effective means to approach monitoring on federal and mixed-ownership lands, across several regional landscapes, and with multiple governmental and non-governmental partners. Significant outcomes during the 2001-2002 harvest seasons include:

- Education and discussion among harvesters on the implications of legislation on non-timber forest products, such as Section 339 of the Code of Federal Regulations
- Opportunity to share harvester concerns regarding Section 339 to congressional staffers during the community forestry Week in Washington
- Expansion of the Cave Junction monitoring project to include the Brookings, OR harvest
- Mutual education and dialogue among the Crescent Lake Ranger District, harvesters, and other stakeholders regarding the effects of slated timber sales and silvicultural prescriptions on matsutake mushroom habitat, and by extension, harvesters' livelihoods and well-being
- Written agreement from the Crescent Lake Ranger District to drop timber sales in important matsutake growth areas, and a commitment to consult with harvesters on all future plans relevant to the harvest
- New avenues of collecting public comment that increased mobile harvester participation in an Environmental Assessment and roads analysis on the Crescent Lake Ranger District
- Participation by harvesters in the public comment process regarding proposed use of herbicide to control spotted knapweed in the Siskiyou National Forest.

Project partners and previous funders

The Pacific West Community Forestry Center coordinates the Crescent Lake Mushroom Monitoring Project and partners with the Cave Junction Mushroom Monitoring Project. The PWCFC helps underserved rural communities and forest workers use and build local knowledge, assets, and resources to investigate issues they identify as important. We do this by:

- working with rural and forest worker communities to gather and produce information so that they can participate in decisions that affect their forests, livelihoods, and well-being
- building relationships to share knowledge among forest communities, scientists, and other stakeholders in the forest
- building capacity with underserved communities to develop their own strategies for investigating and addressing important human and ecosystem issues

The Cave Junction and Crescent Lake Mushroom Monitoring Projects have succeeded with the past financial support of the National Forest Foundation, the Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters, Surdna Foundation, and James Irvine Foundation, Deschutes National Forest Cost Share, USFS State and Private Forestry, and the Pacific West Community Forestry Center. This fiscal support, in conjunction with the collaborative efforts of partners such as local community residents, the Pacific West Community Forestry Center, the Jefferson Center, the Forestry Action Committee, the Institute for Culture and Ecology, and the Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters has helped to build the capacity of low-income communities to participate in stewardship in the forests of southern Oregon and in the decisions that affect their livelihoods and well-being.

SHARING STEWARDSHIP OF THE HARVEST:

Building capacity among low-income Non-Timber Forest Product harvesters

The Pacific West Community Forestry Center (PWCFC) helps facilitate two Non-Timber Forest Product Multi-Party Monitoring projects in and around National Forests in the Cascade Range: the matsutake mushroom harvests of Crescent Lake, Oregon and Cave Junction, Oregon. The projects build the capacity of low-income harvesters and other stakeholders to participate in stewardship of the resource base upon which they depend. The PWCFC has provided fiscal oversight for the projects, as well as coordination and field staffing for the Crescent Lake project. The outcomes of each project are reported below, followed by description of the evaluation methods, lessons learned, sharing of project results, and upcoming publications.

Crescent Lake Mushroom Monitoring Project⁵

Background

The Crescent Lake Mushroom Monitoring Project includes and benefits stakeholders in the Crescent Lake matsutake mushroom “pick” in south central Oregon. The project is built on the knowledge of mushroom harvesters, who are primarily mobile and low-income, and represent six different language groups: Hmong, Lao, Cambodian, Mien, Spanish and English. Other stakeholders who participate are the US Forest Service, local community residents, law enforcement and non-profit partners who provide financial and logistical support to the project. The PWCFC provides field staffing, coordination, and fiscal oversight for the project.

The Crescent Lake area is the site of the largest Matsutake mushroom harvest in the United States, feeding into a lucrative Japanese market. The harvest has drawn up to 2,500 to 3,500 harvesters in peak years. In 2002, 1,873 permits were issued, and the Forest Service estimates that there were 1,200 harvesters in the area at season’s peak. The mushroom picking area covers four national forests in Oregon: Deschutes, Fremont-Winema, Umpqua, and Willamette.

The project is built on the knowledge of mushroom harvesters, who are primarily mobile and low-income, and represent six different language groups: Hmong, Lao, Cambodian, Mien, Spanish, and English.

In the mid-1990s, a rapid rise in world Matsutake mushroom prices led to a dramatic increase in the number of Crescent Lake harvesters. After consultation with the public, though lacking harvester input, the Forest Service developed the Matsutake Mushroom Management Plan of 1994 and a subsequent Environmental Assessment (EA). Next, the agency established a regulatory system of permits, law enforcement and camping requirements.

⁵ Information presented is adapted from the 2001 (by Beverly Brown) and 2002 Crescent Lake Mushroom Monitoring Project Reports (by Jesse Hunter and Katie Bagby) to be published by the Pacific West Community Forestry Center (forthcoming).

The combination of large numbers of people, the need for quick-response logistics for which they lacked the budget, plus a lack of capacity to work across disparate cultures, languages, incomes and levels of education, led to top-down management approaches by the Forest Service. The result was frustration on the part of harvesters over regulations that are, at times, contrary to those in other Forest Service regions and not in sync with mushroom ecosystems.

In the past most harvesters had few outlets through which to express their concerns or to access public information. Without forums for open communication, rumors ran rampant among various stakeholder factions. Tensions between groups were exacerbated by differences in language and culture. Many of the harvesters have emigrated from countries in political and economic unrest, and have been both afraid and unaware of how to engage in public processes in the United States, limiting their voice in resource management decision-making.

At the request of several harvesters who had participated in an all-party monitoring project coordinated by the Forestry Action Committee in Cave Junction, Oregon, the Jefferson Center began building partnerships for the Crescent Lake Mushroom Monitoring Project (CLMMP). The project was initiated in 2000 to respond to harvester concerns about lack of information and communication in the woods and with the US Forest Service, impacts of the Forest Service system of regulating the harvest, unsustainable harvesting practices and environmental degradation, and tensions and safety issues in the woods.

Project Goals

The project aims to maximize participation by low-income harvesters in multi-party monitoring of social and environmental impacts of non-timber forest product harvesting and related land management. The goals of the CLMMP are to:

- Integrate harvesters' knowledge, experience, and concerns into grassroots and institutional decision-making processes, toward the goal of protecting harvesters' livelihood and well-being and the natural resource base upon which they depend
- Develop processes that foster harvester leadership, participatory research, and peer-based approaches to problem-solving
- Encourage dialogue and collaboration between the grassroots and institutional levels

Project actions and issues identified

The project strives to achieve these aims through specific actions. Monitors (veteran harvesters) walk the woods listening to and documenting harvesters' concerns, sharing information, and providing peer education on sustainable harvesting practices and safety. Monitors and other partners collect and document observations on regulatory impacts, ecosystem concerns, social/cultural concerns, and any other issues related to the harvest season. Campground meetings provide a public forum for harvesters and other stakeholders to identify and address concerns. Project participants continually discuss and analyze emergent issues with the goal of adaptive responses.

During the 2001 and 2002 harvest seasons, monitors and the field coordinator documented a number of harvesters' concerns that had significant impacts for ecological sustainability and environmental justice impacts on the well-being of low-income communities. These included the Forest Service regulatory system related to campground issues, season-length, and permit price; the closure of Late Successional Reserves to harvesting; logging in matsutake habitat areas; digging and raking (considered by many to be unsustainable harvesting practices); and litter/environmental degradation. Of particular importance during 2001 were proposed changes in Non-Timber Forest Product regulations (Section 339) and season-length. During 2002 significant issues were logging in matsutake areas and harvesting practices.

Non-Timber Forest Product Regulations: Section 339

Section 339 of the Code of Federal Regulations, addresses the collection of money for the harvest of "forest botanicals" or non-timber forest products (NTFPs) on Forest Service lands. The law requires that "fair market value" be charged for the right to harvest. Secondly, all the costs of managing a harvest program, including any environmental analyses, must come from whatever money is collected. Finally, the law states that harvest in excess of sustainable levels will not be permitted.

The text of Section 339 was distributed at mushroom campground meetings in four languages: Lao, Cambodian, English, and Spanish. Discussions were held at smaller campfire meetings. In addition to discussions at Crescent Lake, follow-up meetings were conducted in conjunction with the Cave Junction harvest season, during which information on the code was shared and harvester comments were documented.⁶ Harvester comments were shared with national policy makers at the Community Forestry Week in Washington, and printed in the newsletter of the Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters.

Wherever intermediaries exist, low-income harvesters often will not participate in public dialogues for fear of having their access cut off by the intermediary. This has serious implications for the livelihoods, health, and safety of low-income harvesters.

If implemented, Section 339 has the potential to encourage the US Forest Service to let out more contracts for large scale NTFP permits on public lands. The companies or people who have these large contracts will rely on others to do the harvesting. At smaller campfire meetings, several harvesters expressed a strong dislike of lease/bid systems for allocating NTFPs. There was uniform agreement among all the harvesters and buyers that people did not want wild mushrooms allocated by a "lease" system. People believe that lease systems exclude many people.

Although it is not clear that Section 339 will result in more lease/bid contracts for NTFPs on public land, there was concern among harvesters that this might be a way that the Forest Service

⁶ See 2001 Cave Junction/Brookings Wild Mushroom Monitoring Report for more detail.

would try to save money on administration of individual permits and oversight, while bringing in more money through competitive bids on the NTFP lease/bids. Overall, people were not clear what the implications of Section 339 would be in the wild mushroom season.

It is the independence afforded by the individual permit system that has encouraged public participation by harvesters in the multi-party monitoring projects. This is in dramatic contrast to situations the Pacific West Community Forestry Center has encountered in public or private systems of large-scale commercial permits (typically known as “leases”) for NTFPs in Washington State. Wherever intermediaries exist, low-income harvesters often will not participate in public dialogues for fear of having their access cut off by the intermediary. This has serious implications for the livelihoods, health, and safety of low-income harvesters. If Section 339 encourages commercial bidding for permits on Forest Service land, the contrasting experience of the multi-party monitoring projects should be evaluated in light of the potential to encourage or extinguish public participation of the low-income public associated with NTFP systems.

In addition, as in all NTFP harvesting, hunting, and other individual-locus, human-powered forest activities, peer pressure and peer perspectives on right and wrong are proving to be essential for good environmental practices and sustainability. Creating spaces for public dialogue, as in the multi-party monitoring process, may be important for promoting sustainable harvesting practices. These are important aspects of NTFP operations to consider in any regulatory action on Section 339.

Harvest Season-Length

The official matsutake season in Crescent Lake is 8 weeks long. A full and productive season throughout the full 8 weeks is critical to the annual incomes of many harvesters and their families. The 2001 season started out slow, but was going strong by the time that the official season was to end on November 4. September 2001 was dry following an unusually dry year. Almost no matsutakes were gathered until more than three weeks into the season. Some rain and cooler weather brought on a modest fruiting in late September. Mild, wet weather continued in October. Good quality matsutakes were gathered in respectable numbers. Mild weather was forecast through mid-November, promising continued mushroom production.

Ecosystem seasons and administrative seasons do not necessarily coincide, with significant financial implications for harvesters who must buy their permits on an administrative schedule.

By mid-September many harvesters and buyers expressed interest in an extension of the season. Through the strong participation of harvesters in campground meetings, and through consideration of environmental impacts, campground expenses, and harvester interest, the Forest Service agreed to extend the harvest season by one week.

Unfortunately, by the time the decision was made, many harvesters had already left: the extension was not announced until four days prior to the end of the official season.

Nevertheless, the extension allowed the harvesters that remained to earn considerably more than they otherwise would have. From information supplied by a lead mushroom buyer, it is estimated that over \$100,000 was paid out to harvesters during the extension. Among very low-income harvesters, these earnings are important contributions to their annual incomes.

Despite difficulties and delays in coming to this agreement, the efforts of the project highlighted that (1) ecosystem seasons and administrative seasons do not necessarily coincide, with significant financial implications for harvesters who must buy their permits on an administrative schedule, and (2) the multi-party process is building the capacity of harvesters to express their concerns and to dialogue with the Forest Service. The campground meetings provided a space for harvesters to participate with the Forest Service to come to a mutually beneficial management decision.

Logging in Harvest Areas

A third issue highlighted the importance of including all stakeholders in decisions that affect the forests and its products. Where efforts are not made to include the participation of underserved communities in ways that are accessible for them, environmental justice concerns can result.

During the 2001 season, harvester-monitors identified a series of logging projects in prime matsutake harvest areas. While there is little “formal” knowledge about the matsutake, there is general agreement that the ground disturbance caused by logging destroys the habitat of the mushroom for decades. Harvesters expressed concern that the use of heavy equipment, which creates soil disturbance and removes host trees, could destroy their livelihood. Mycelium, the fibrous substance that fosters Matsutake, maintains a symbiotic relationship with host trees (such as ponderosa pine). According to the Forest Service’s own estimates, if host trees are destroyed or if there is significant soil disturbance, mycorrhizal fungi (mycelium) will only begin to reappear in abundance after twenty years.⁷ Based upon their practitioner knowledge, many veteran harvesters believe that, in reality, it takes several decades for Matsutake mushroom beds to recover from logging or significant ground disturbance.

There is general agreement that the ground disturbance caused by logging destroys the habitat of the mushroom for decades. Harvesters expressed concern that the use of heavy equipment, which creates soil disturbance and removes host trees, could destroy their livelihood.

Of particular concern for CLMMP partners was the apparent lack of effort on the part of the Forest Service to notify harvesters and include them in the public decision-making process (NEPA). While the Forest Service made some efforts to contact “affected parties” through its mailing lists, these notices were monolingual (English) and were apparently not sent to any harvesters. Many harvesters expressed frustration that the Forest Service did not consult with

⁷ Molina, Randy, et. al. “Biology, Ecology, and Social Aspects of Wild Edible Mushrooms in the Forests of the Pacific Northwest: A Preface to Managing Commercial Harvest.” USDA, USFS, General Technical Report PNW-GTR 309, 1993. p. 4.

them during the harvest season when they were most easily accessible. Along with the closure of Late Successional Reserves to mushroom harvesting, the mushroom community expressed clearly that these were not only major economic blows, but that they gave harvesters the impression that the Forest Service was trying to “push them out of the area.”

Monitors and other project partners worked together between the 2001 and 2002 seasons to gather information for harvesters on what timber sales were slated and what the NEPA process had been. CLMMP obtained and distributed maps and other relevant information to more than a dozen harvester community leaders in three states. Forest Service personnel within the Civil Rights networks of the Forest Service were very helpful in assisting the CLMMP partners to understand the Forest Service system.

The project facilitated a meeting between the Forest Service, harvesters, monitors, and project partners and allies to discuss the logging that had taken place and was planned in prime Matsutake areas. Monitors shared information from their logbooks and disclosed the general location of some of the most important harvest areas. The Crescent Ranger District overlaid this informal mapping by harvesters with GIS maps of planned logging units. The composite map revealed considerable overlap of timber sales and logging in Matsutake harvest areas. Through these deliberations, the Forest Service withdrew three and a half-units of critical Matsutake habitat that were scheduled for logging. This outcome is an example of how participatory monitoring and mapping can make land management more ecologically and socially responsive. In planning the timber sales, Forest Service personnel were not aware that these areas were significant habitat areas for the matsutake, and by extension, important to the livelihoods of harvesters.

Through a series of conference calls and a field trip with harvesters, local community residents, and other partners, harvesters agreed to send a letter of petition to the Deschutes National Forest asking for reevaluation of the timber sales based on lack of harvester participation in the NEPA process, cumulative impacts on harvesters, and environmental justice concerns (see Appendix A). The letter asked for a cumulative effects analysis on the combined effects of various Forest Service policies such as logging in picking areas, permit fees, and closed areas, on the livelihoods of low-income harvesters. The letter was signed by 43 harvesters from six geographical areas and including Mien, Lao, Cambodian, Hmong, Latino, and low-income Anglo communities. Also signing were 19 local Crescent Lake residents including the principal businesses.

The Crescent District Ranger took an active role, engaging in dialogue with project partners and harvesters. The CLMMP worked with the Deschutes National Forest to conduct educational fieldtrips with harvesters and community collaborators to look at current and potential silvicultural treatment/logging sites and their impacts upon habitat and the Matsutake mushroom harvest. Through campground meetings, sharing maps, and smaller meetings, harvesters and the Ranger District shared their interests and reached a formal agreement to drop several logging units in critical Matsutake habitat areas, to consider less invasive silvicultural treatments, and to

consult with harvesters on all future actions relevant to the harvest (see Appendix B). This was considered by harvesters to be a significant but limited success, as several prime harvesting areas had already been logged. However, in terms of process, it set a precedent for the Forest Service to consider how to include the low-income harvester community as an important stakeholder group to be consulted on management decisions on public lands

Harvesting Practices

Monitors documented increasing harvester concern and conflict over raking and digging, a harvesting practice many harvesters and agency personnel consider to be unsustainable. Discussions were initiated with harvesters on both “sides” of the digging and raking issue and Forest Service staff to engage in participatory monitoring of the effects of the practice on mushroom production in 2003. One of the monitors has begun informal mapping of digging and raking sites as well as logging sites to monitor Matsutake production over time.

Project Partners

The primary harvester communities are from Southeast Asian background, with a significant number of Anglos and growing numbers of Latino harvesters. The majority of people involved in this harvest are mobile, picking full-time along a NTFP circuit to support themselves and their families. Most pursue other short-term full-time tasks to fill out their year’s livelihoods. The mushroom harvest is a major element of their yearly household income.

In addition to harvesters, local community residents are key stakeholders and partners in the CLMMP. Gloria and Bill Gibbs are 35-year residents of Crescent Lake, and are Emergency Medical Technicians. The Gibbs serve as community anchors and assist in on-going contact with harvesters, law enforcement, the Forest Service, other community interests. Non-profit partners include the Pacific West Community Forestry Center, The Jefferson Center, the Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters, and the Institute for Culture and Ecology (IFCAE). For the 2000 season, IFCAE provided fiscal oversight and project coordination with significant help from the Jefferson Center. For the 2001 and 2002 seasons, the Pacific West Community Forestry Center (PWCFC) provided fiscal oversight, coordination, and field staffing for the project. In 2001, due to a staffing shortage at PWCFC, Jefferson Center staff was contracted through the PWCFC for project coordination. Partners work closely with the Crescent and Chemult Ranger Districts.

The Crescent Lake Mushroom Monitoring Projects has succeeded with the past financial support of the National Forest Foundation, the Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters, Surdna Foundation, and James Irvine Foundation, Deschutes National Forest Cost Share, USFS State and Private Forestry, and the Pacific West Community Forestry Center. The CLMMP collaborates with other community organizations on topics of interest, such as NTFP regulations and logging in harvest areas. These include the Illinois Basin Interest Group Forestry Action Committee and the Quincy Library Group.

Project Outcomes

The project has seen success on a variety of fronts, but it is still in the formative stages. Major categories of success include:

- Information is available through far more reliable routes of communication, including the weekly public meetings where information can be cross-checked for accuracy. Rumor-driven dynamics continue, but have been dampened.
- The participation of harvesters has vastly increased. This is true in the woods, where people can speak in a confidential manner with trusted harvester/monitors in the language of their choice, in field trips, conference calls, project discussions, and in the public meetings (where translation also takes place).
- The participation of harvesters has attracted more and more diverse participants from the local area, expanding the “multi-party” aspect of the project.
- The systematic collection of social and environmental impact information among the many parties has resulted in bringing clarity to questions that have been muddled for years.
- Critical harvester concerns were articulated and documented, with particular interest in timber sales in matsutake areas and sustainable harvesting practices.
- Harvesters participated in public processes through a formal letter of petition to the Deschutes National Forest to reconsider timber sales that affected prime matsutake harvest areas. The letter had broad representation, including 43 signatures from harvesters and 19 from local residents.
- Information sharing between harvesters and the Forest Service increased. A composite map showing the overlap of prime harvest areas and Forest Service prescription plans was created. Through field trips, maps, and meetings, the Forest Service, with CLMMP facilitation, shared specific information about proposed prescriptions in harvest areas.
- Timber sales were halted in several units of the Baja 58, and the Deschutes National Forest made a formal commitment to consult harvesters on future proposed actions.
- The participation of harvesters is resulting in a reevaluation of Forest Service procedures. The Deschutes NF began to treat harvesters as a constituency to be consulted, and began to engage in new and alternative forms of gathering comment for public participation. For example, Environmental Assessment staff walked the woods with monitors to gather comment from harvesters to inform an analysis of potential road closures that may impact harvester access. At a Region 6 Diversity Forum, the District Ranger presented lessons they are learning about serving diverse populations through their work this year with harvesters.
- Harvesters are beginning to be seen among some Forest Service personnel as having valuable practitioner knowledge in managing the matsutake. A Forest Service District Ranger expressed an interest in finding ways to incorporate the harvester community expertise and/or monitoring with formal scientific monitoring and in various planning and design processes for management of the forest areas where the matsutake is especially important.

Cave Junction/Brookings Wild Mushroom Monitoring Project⁸

The Forestry Action Committee (FAC) of the Illinois Basin Interest Group (IBIG) is a citizen group established in the early 1990s to improve the health of the Illinois Basin watershed. With the large influx of traveling mushroom pickers into the Valley since the mid-nineties, social tensions and environmental concerns have emerged. In 1999 FAC initiated a grassroots effort aimed at reducing those tensions and improving harvest practices—the Cave Junction Wild Mushroom Monitoring Project. The project expanded to Brookings, CA in 2001.

The mushroom monitoring project focuses on creating forums of communication and problem solving that have a strong emphasis on harvester and community participation. Some of the methods used to foster participation include:

- Sponsoring two experienced harvesters who do not have any formal authority – one Asian-American and one European-American – to walk in the woods five days a week during the harvest season to informally monitor harvest practices, educate harvesters about good harvest practices, and listen to their concerns.
- Organizing weekly meetings during the season with harvesters, community people, agency representatives and other interested people.
- Using networks, personal contacts, organizational partners and individual intervention to address concerns voiced in the meetings or in the woods.

Groups and individuals participating in the 2001 Cave Junction/Brookings Mushroom Project included: Illinois Basin Interest Group – Forestry Action Committee; Siskiyou National Forest (Illinois Valley Ranger District); Medford District BLM (Grants Pass Resource Area); Forest Community Research; Surdna Foundation; Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters; USFS State and Private Forestry; Pacific West Community Forestry Center; National Forest Foundation; Bill Otani, USDA Forest Service Asian Community Liaison; the Jefferson Center for Education and Research; Cave Junction Methodist Church; Phong and Limai Phonpaseuth; the Country Hills Resort; and various local and traveling citizens and harvesters.

Results, Outcomes and Accomplishments

During 2001, the project resulted in the following outcomes:

- Communication to the Forest Service of concerns expressed by harvesters about proposed logging in Crescent Lake, which resulted in several logging units that overlapped prime mushroom areas being dropped from consideration.⁹
- Distribution of final mushroom report in English, Laotian and Cambodian to harvesters.

⁸ Included here is an executive summary of the Cave Junction Wild Mushroom Monitoring Project report (Susan Chapp, Forestry Action Committee). The full project report is available online at www.pwfc.org/publications/.

⁹ The Cave Junction harvest season immediately follows the Crescent Lake season. There is significant overlap of issues, harvesters, and monitors across the two harvests. The two sister projects support each other's efforts.

- Distribution of Section 339, the new law governing special forest products on Forest Service lands in English, Laotian and Cambodian, and an accompanying explanation page in English, Laotian, Cambodian and Spanish.
- Together with partners, the gathering of harvester and community input about Section 339, and communication of this input to appropriate government and organizational entities, with the intention of influencing future policy and legislation.
- Expansion of the mushroom project to the Brookings area on the coast of California.
- Initiation of discussion with Crescent Ranger District regarding utilization of the project's informational network to develop harvester monitoring of the impact on matsutake production of historic, present and future management activities.
- Continued request by harvesters in Cave Junction and Brookings for on-the-ground enforcement of permit regulations and sustainable harvesting practices.

The 2002 monitoring season was slow, due to a poor matsutake harvest. However, the project strategically built on the successes made in Forest Service-harvester communications during the Crescent Lake season. The project worked to help Forest Service staff in Cave Junction and Brookings begin to think of harvesters as an interest group to be included in decision-making. At a campground meeting in Cave Junction, Forest Service staff brought maps and explained proposed forest treatments and related actions to gather comment from harvesters. Due to 2002 fires in the area, a very large Morel mushroom harvest was anticipated, but did not come to pass.

Proposed herbicide use

In Spring of 2002, the Siskiyou National Forest proposed to use the herbicide picloram to eradicate a spotted knapweed population. Harvesters were not notified of the plan or the comment process, despite the campground meeting where the Forest Service shared proposed plans with harvesters. While the herbicide would not be used directly in harvest areas, Picloram is a highly mobile and persistent herbicide, making harvesters particularly vulnerable to exposure. As in the case of timber sales in Crescent Lake, project partners worked with others in the region, such as the Collaborative Learning Circle, on strategies to broaden and increase community participation in Forest Service decision-making and advance more collaborative civic science processes. At the request of the Forestry Action Committee and harvesters, the PWCFCA assisted harvesters in the preparation of a petition to request (1) that all harvesters who purchase permits in the Forest be notified in writing of the plan and (2) that the decision not be made until harvesters could participate in informational field-trips and face to face consultation. Despite the fact that the comment period fell between harvest seasons, 150 mobile harvesters from four geographic communities signed the petition within a week. This response from harvesters is a significant indicator that (1) harvesters are becoming more confident that they can insert their voices into public processes, and (2) their capacity for doing so has increased.

In response to comments from harvesters and local residents, the Forest Service has suspended the proposed herbicide for one year for further consideration. The Forestry Action Committee Weed Crew, an organized group of local, low-income residents is controlling the knapweed population through handwork and monitoring. Project partners will work to facilitate harvester participation in upcoming Forest Service decisions regarding the knapweed control project.

An Emerging Vision for Cave Junction

The Cave Junction project's work with low-income harvesters and local residents is fueled by a vision of desired future condition of equity and sustainability. The vision that emerges from the harvester input of the four years of the wild mushroom monitoring project is of a diverse and sustainable national forest land whose full richness of material and spiritual values are accessible to all the people of this country. This balance is achieved through the development of long-term stewardship with unrestricted access, and by the utilization of non-timber forest product harvesters as the monitoring eyes and ears in partnership with the Forest Service and other stakeholders.

Evaluating Project Outcomes

Evaluation of the two projects has occurred through a process of constant feedback, whereby partners and staff frequently check in with harvesters, monitors, stakeholders, and other partners to ask what is working well, and what can be improved. This occurs through addressing issues and conflicts as they arose, and by consciously asking questions. It occurs in informal face-to-face meetings, individual calls, emails, and group conference calls.

In addition, the Pacific West Community Forestry Center Advisory Council has created an adaptive learning framework whereby the council can learn about a variety of projects the PWCFC engages in. PWCFC projects, including the two mushroom monitoring projects, provide written and oral reports addressing the following issues: communities that benefit; problems the project is trying to address; project goals; specific actions taken; progress or success and how evidenced; challenges to success and how evidenced; lessons learned; and what new issues, barriers, or gaps in knowledge the project identified. The Advisory Council provides constructive thinking on project improvement, looks for themes and gaps across community forestry projects, and analyzes project results in a regional context.

Lessons Learned

Project partners have learned a number of lessons through these multi-party efforts.

1. The multi-party monitoring process has been an important vehicle for identifying and documenting concern and knowledge among harvesters on a variety of stewardship issues, including timber sales, environmental degradation, and sustainable harvesting practices.
2. The monitoring framework is building the capacity of diverse, low-income harvesters to engage in dialogue with public agencies, and to participate in public decision making processes, even when they have been initially excluded from those processes. This is evidenced in harvester initiation of and participation in information sharing and public comment on issues that affect their livelihoods and well-being, such as the timber sales in Crescent Lake, and the proposed herbicide use in Cave Junction.

3. Incremental and bottom-up capacity building is critical to advancing multi-party stewardship capacity. Low-income harvesters, many of whom have histories as refugees from war-torn countries, are reluctant to participate in public processes, particularly with government agencies. While there are many stakeholders in the harvest areas, privileging harvester participation and knowledge as monitors creates space and capacity for harvesters to be involved in problem solving. Other stakeholders who are more accustomed to public participation such as local residents, the Forest Service, and law enforcement can then join in the process initiated by harvesters. This was evidenced by the Forest Service response to a letter of petition advanced by harvesters regarding timber sales in matsutake areas. Where harvesters had not known of or participated in the NEPA process for the sales, building the capacity for them to voice their concerns in a constructive way opened the door for dialogue on the issue. The ranger district responded by joining in harvester-focused processes such as campground meetings and field trips to discuss impacts on matsutake habitat as well as other stewardship considerations.
4. Success in initial partnership efforts is building capacity among partners for the public participation of harvesters in Forest Service decision-making. The timber sales issue heightened awareness and built capacity among multiple parties to explore alternatives for engaging harvesters in public processes related to other stewardship issues. While partners were engaged in the timber sales issue, the ranger district embarked on an analysis for potential roads closures. Rather than merely mail out letters, the ranger district's environmental assessment staff accepted the invitation to walk with the monitors in the woods in order to gather comment from harvesters. This was an initial success in changing "business as usual." Project partners and stakeholders will need to be vigilant to create and utilize existing spaces for harvester participation in future stewardship decision-making.
5. The multi-party monitoring process is building capacity to perhaps engage in more in-depth participatory research on particular topics identified through the project. The monitoring process has identified concern and dissent among harvesters over what harvesting practices are sustainable. There is very little documented research on the effects of various disturbances on matsutake production. The project has created physical and social spaces for dialogue on the issue. Harvesters on both "sides" of the harvesting issue have expressed interest in creating a study to monitor the effects of digging and raking, as well as logging, on matsutake sustainability. Harvesters have begun to map and photograph selected plots with the hope of monitoring disturbance effects over time. There are indications that at least some Forest Service personnel are open to participating in a multi-party study that is centered on and builds upon the practitioner knowledge of harvesters.
6. Despite these gains, harvesters' sense of empowerment remains tenuous; they express feelings that they are "not wanted" or are "being pushed out of the woods" by the Forest Service. The loss of prime harvest areas to logging, having been left out of the timber sale decision making process, and the closure of Late Successional Reserves to harvesting

reinforce these feelings. Continued effort is needed from all parties to increase equitable participation in stewardship decision-making.

7. A tentative lesson, which requires more investigation, relates to the lack of Latino participation in the CLMMP process. Many Latino harvesters appear to operate as part of “crews” which could imply an informal employer-employee or other form of intermediary relationship. In this situation, the contracted harvester often works for less money and is subject to more control than more independent and experienced harvesters. As evidenced through other NTFP activities that often operate under a lease - bid system, such as salal or beargrass harvest, contracted harvesters are often less willing to participate in public processes due to fears of retribution from their employers. Another potential reason for the lack of Latino participation in the multi-party monitoring process may be that for many Latinos who have immigrated across the US / Mexico border, the word “monitoring” has negative connotations -- the Immigration and Naturalization Services does plenty of “monitoring,” with guns in hand. It will be important to continue outreach with Latino harvesters to learn more, and to perhaps enlist a Latino harvester as a monitor.
8. As the project sees more success, more people are attracted to it. Clarifying the roles and relationships of non-profit participants was challenging, as those who had played more distant supportive roles desired greater engagement and recognition in the project. In addition, during the 2002 season at Crescent Lake, a field coordinator was hired to live in the industrial camp. This had distinct advantages, but also contributed to a greater non-profit presence in the field. There was concern among some partners that the Anglo, non-profit presence was becoming too heavy, thereby taking up the space that had been created by and for monitor/harvester leadership. It will require thoughtful, participatory planning to prevent “overload” of non-profit partners and to ensure that there is space for harvester leadership to continue to emerge in the project.

Sharing Results

The Pacific West Community Forestry Center and its partners have worked to share the lessons being learned through the project in a variety of contexts. First, we work to stay in close communication with harvesters and other project partners. In addition, the projects work to share learning across ranger districts. The Cave Junction based Forestry Action Committee contributed to the discussions in Crescent Lake regarding logging. In turn, the Cave Junction project has been able to build closer ties with ranger districts in Cave Junction and Brookings that build on the commitments to communication and consultation made by the Forest Service in Crescent Lake.

Project results are regularly shared and analyzed by the PWCFC Advisory Group, a regional, three-state body which includes representatives from University of California Cooperative Extension, UC White Mountain Research Center, the Forest Service, Native American tribal

members, forest practitioners and community-based organizations working with underserved populations in community forestry.

Presentations have been made to a variety of groups including the Shasta-Tehama Bioregional Council, the Lead Partnership Group (a regional collaborative of community based organizations working in community forestry), and a poster session at the Ford Foundation Environment and Development Affinity Group meeting, which included Ford field officers from around the world.

The PWCFC has been part of a national pilot project funded by the USDA CSREES Fund for Rural America. Project results are regularly shared with other regional centers that are coordinated under the National Community Forestry Center, a project of the National Network of Forest Practitioners (NNFP). Results and lessons are shared in dialogue with the other centers, through triannual reports, and through PWCFC and NNFP publications, newsletters, and fact sheets. The project was presented on a panel about all-party monitoring at the annual meetings of the NNFP.

A conference paper was submitted to the XII World Forestry Congress on lessons learned about engaging in civic science partnerships with underserved communities. The paper highlights the mushroom monitoring efforts.

The Crescent Lake harvest and the monitoring project were highlighted in Associated Press articles, a television spot on Oregon Public Radio, and local radio stations.

Project partners will continue to cooperate with other communities that have expressed interest in similar all-party monitoring programs.

For more information

For more in-depth information on these two multi-party monitoring efforts, please contact:

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The Pacific West Community Forestry Center is in the process of editing the final reports for the 2001 and 2002 harvest seasons at Crescent Lake. The 2001 report (by Beverly Brown of the Jefferson Center) is of significant length and detail, and provides a touchstone for looking at the nuances of a number of cultural, socioeconomic, and institutional dynamics. The 2002 report (by Jesse Hunter and Katie Bagby) builds on this analytical foundation to provide a concise description of project activities, challenges, successes, and next steps. The report on the Cave Junction 2001 harvest season (by Susan Chapp of the Forestry Action Committee) are currently available on-line at www.pwfc.org/publications/.

For more information on the multi-party monitoring process for natural resource stewardship, please refer to *A Report on All-Party Monitoring and Lessons Learned from the Pilot Projects*, published by Forest Community Research and the Pacific West Community Forestry Center (Technical Report 101-2000). Available in printed format or online at www.pwcfc.org/publications/.

Appendices

Appendix A: Letter of petition to Deschutes National Forest (regarding timber sales)

Appendix B: Letter to harvesters from Crescent Ranger District, Deschutes National Forest