



forest



WISDOM

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Community Forestry in Perspective

In this issue of Forest Wisdom we explore Community Forestry, its many meanings and forms, what it looks like on the ground, and what it means to the Guild as an organization.

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Tending the Commons - Landscape, Folklife and Ginseng in Southern West Virginia

Editor's Note: Forest Wisdom stories are most often written by foresters. Our lead story this month is by sociologist and folklorist Mary Hufford, who offers a people-centered perspective on forests and forest communities. This story was excerpted from her previously published essays.

The Mother Forest

From the air today, as you fly westward across West Virginia, the mountains appear to crest in long, undulating waves, giving way beyond the Allegheny Front to the deeply crenelated mass of the coal-bearing Allegheny plateaus. The sandstone ridges of Cherry Pond, Kayford, Guyandotte, and Coal River mountains where the headwaters of southern West Virginia's Big Coal River rise are the spectacular effect of millions of years of erosion. Here, water cutting a downward path through shale etched thousands of winding hollows and deep valleys into the unglaciated tablelands of the plateaus. Archeologists have recovered evidence of human activity in the mountains only from the past 12,000 years, a tiny period in the region's ecological development.

Over the eons it took to transform an ancient tableland into today's mountains and valleys, a highly differentiated forest evolved. On this forest, considered the world's oldest and biologically richest temperate zone hardwood system, the pioneering ecologist E. Lucy Braun conferred the name "mixed mesophytic." (See map on back cover.) Studying the virgin forest in 1916, Braun theorized that these coves are the likely ancestral source of most temperate-zone forest species in the eastern United States. Ecologists have sometimes called it the "mother forest."





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Joe Williams digging a ginseng root with a "seng" hoe. The root must be dug carefully so that the complete root is intact when lifted from the ground.

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Whereas most forest types are dominated by a small number of species, the mixed mesophytic harbors as many as eighty woody species in its canopy and understory. Among them are beech, yellow poplar, basswood, sugar maple, chestnut, sweet buckeye, red oak, white oak, yellow locust, birch, black cherry, cucumber tree, white ash, red maple, sour gum, black walnut, and various kinds of hickory. Yet the coherence of this forest region remains one of America's better kept secrets.

The Culture of the Commons

As practice and concept, the role of communal lands or "commons" is ancient, predating the idea of private property. Throughout the world, rural populations with uncertain employment typically rely on gardening, hunting, and gathering on communal lands for getting through hard times. In Appalachia, processes of gentrification, preservation, and intensified extraction of timber and minerals are eliminating access to land (often owned by coal companies or other large absentee owners) that for generations have been used as commons in which communities have exercised fructuary (hunting and gathering) rights.

Ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) provides a case in point. Dollar for pound, ginseng is probably the most valuable renewable resource on the central Appalachian plateaus. A linchpin in the seasonal round of foraging, ginsenging has been essential to a forest-based way of life. "I'd rather ginseng than eat," said Dennis Dickens, eighty-five, of Peach Tree Creek. "Every spare minute I had was spent a-ginsenging."

"If you can't go ginsenging," said Carla Pettry, thirty, of Horse Creek, "it totally drives you crazy."

The ancient, humus-laden soils in the mixed mesophytic forests of Tennessee, Kentucky, and southern West Virginia are ginseng's ideal medium. "The most prolific spreads of wild

ginseng," writes Val Hardacre in his book *Woodland Nuggets of Gold*, "were found in the region touched by the Allegheny Plateau and the secluded coves of the Cumberland Plateau." Through centuries of interaction with this valuable and elusive plant, residents of the plateaus have created a rich and elaborate culture, a culture of the commons.



Ehrhard Frost

Ginseng (Panax quinquefolius) is one of the most valuable renewable resources on the central Appalachian plateaus.

The history of human interaction with ginseng lurks in the language of the land. Look at a detailed map of almost any portion of the region and ginseng is registered somewhere, often in association with the deeper, moister places: Seng Branch (Fayette County), Sang Camp Creek (Logan County), Ginseng (Wyoming County), Seng Creek (Boone County), Three-Prong Holler (Raleigh).

"You just go in the darker coves," said Wesley Scarbrough, twenty-five, who grew up on Clear Fork, "where it just shadows the ground so it'll be rich for ginseng."

"My granddad and all them used to go and lay out for weeks, ginsenging," said Kenny Pettry. "A rock they stayed at, they called it the Crane

Tending the Commons, continued on page 10

FULFILLING OUR MISSION

Community Forestry and the Forest Guild

at the Guild's 2006 annual meeting in Wisconsin, the breakout session on community forestry engaged participants in a hearty discussion of the meaning of the words themselves. Community forestry isn't a new concept. Yet, consensus within the forestry community on what it means remains elusive, because it is such a broad term with many geographic permutations.

The Forest Guild views community forestry as the management of forests with the express intent of benefiting neighboring communities. These efforts - some of which are profiled in this publication - include initiatives in landowner collaboration, forestry cooperatives, and public and private forests managed for community benefit. Whether or not we all agree on a definition, the Guild recognizes the following characteristics of community forestry:

- Community forestry begins with protecting and restoring the forest.
- Residents have access to the land and its resources and participate in land management decisions.
- Resource managers engage the knowledge of those living closest to the land in developing relationships with the forest.
- Forestry is used as a tool to benefit and strengthen communities.
- Cultural values, historic use, resource health, and community economic development needs are considered in management decisions.
- Decision making in communities, and for lands that are tied to communities, is open, transparent, and inclusive.

Another question addressed at the annual meeting concerned what actions the Guild can take to make a difference in community forestry. Overwhelmingly, members recommended the reinvigoration of the Guild's Community Forestry Working Group. An active Community Forestry Working Group is needed to help support the Guild's efforts to create strong, ecologically-adapted communities empowered to make and participate in land management decisions. Guild members, by participating in the working group, will collaborate with each other to take coordinated action to address community forestry-related issues at local and national levels.

In the coming months, the Guild will convene a core team of members to guide the development and function of the Community Forestry Working Group. Immediate actions of the working group will include developing a paper articulating the Guild's position on community forestry; developing white papers and educational materials that foster an understanding of community forestry; and identifying and collaborating with the existing network of community forestry efforts.

As this issue of Forest Wisdom illustrates, community forestry takes many forms and is an essential part of the Forest Guild's mission. The Community Forestry Working Group will tap into our collective experience to further that mission and the ability of communities to engage in the management of their local forest resources.



MISSION

The Forest Guild promotes ecologically, economically, and socially responsible forestry as a means of sustaining the integrity of forest ecosystems and the welfare of human communities dependent upon them. The Guild provides training, policy analysis, and research to foster excellence in stewardship, to support practicing foresters and allied professionals, and to engage a broader community in the challenges of forest conservation and management.

JOIN TODAY

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COMMUNITY FORESTRY

Vermont Town Forest Project: Empowering Communities for Vermont's Forest Future

By Jad Daley

Jad Daley

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“*More than half of Vermont towns already have a town forest, where any member of the community is welcome and neighbors come together to enjoy wildlife, pursue recreation like hunting, hiking, and skiing, and manage the land.*”

Vermonters all agree that even in the age of the cell phone and the Internet, the Vermont way of life is still about close relationships with our neighbors and the land. This means warming our homes with locally harvested wood, sweetening breakfast from a neighbor's sugarhouse, making a living in the woods from timber harvest and forest products manufacturing, hunting and fishing our favorite spots, or just enjoying being outside with our families and friends. These traditions enrich Vermonters with a deep sense of connectedness to our families, our communities, our heritage, and the unique landscapes that shape us.

As in many other parts of the country, rapid suburbanization of both our culture and our landscape is putting this way of life at risk. Vermont clearly stands at an important crossroads, between the faceless suburban landscape and mass-produced culture of “Anywhere America,” and a rich future that embraces our past. We face the equally urgent and intertwined needs to reaffirm our forest-based culture and way of life (especially with young people) and to conserve our woodlands, including getting more landowners involved in active management that will benefit the land and our local economies.

That's why more than thirty of Vermont's leading public and private non-profit organizations have come together over the last two years to establish the Vermont Town Forest Project. More than half of Vermont towns already have a town forest, where any member of the community is welcome and neighbors come together to enjoy wildlife, pursue recreation like hunting, hiking, and skiing, and manage the land by clearing invasive species,

caring for trails, and other stewardship activities. Many towns also offer timber for sale to local foresters or lease out a promising sugarbush on their town forest, helping support the local economy and diversify town revenues. These forests are also important demonstration sites for outstanding forest management and forest-



Bald Top - Across the Blood Brook Valley, near West Fairlee, Vermont. Bald Top and surrounding forest are the location of a proposed Community Forest being developed by the Town of West Fairlee with support from the Trust for Public Lands.

based education for young people. The Vermont Town Forest Project aims to help communities fully capitalize on the potential of town forests to rally communities together, reconnect Vermonters to our land and culture, and pass on our traditions to the next generation.

Among our partners is the Vermont Chapter of the Forest Guild. The foresters and resource professionals of the Guild live and work in many Vermont towns and are a valuable on-the-ground resource for the Vermont Town

Forest Project. The Guild helped us secure a grant from the National Forest Foundation to expand our pilot forest projects. Alan Calfee, Leo Laferriere, and Bob Perschel all contributed to our pilot projects in Dorset and Warren. In addition, Robert Turner, Carl Powden, Jeff Smith and others have offered important guidance to the overall program and specific projects.

The Vermont Town Forest Project provides a toolbox of resources and library of best practices and technical expertise that Vermont communities can use to enhance public use and enjoyment of their town forests. Resources include training events for communities, networking to promote peer to peer training among community leaders, publications and manuals, small grants for local events and projects, and catalytic capacity in the form of staff time from Vermont Town Forest Project partner groups.

Our accomplishments from 2005 and 2006 have included:

- Town forest celebrations and discovery days held in Stowe, St. Johnsbury, Warren, and other communities.
- Youth-elder forest interviews in Stowe and Warren.
- Regional training workshops in Jericho, the Mad River Valley, and other locations.
- Two highly successful statewide Vermont Town Forest Summits to promote networking.
- New or enhanced town forest management plans in Brattleboro and other communities.
- A nearly completed Vermont Town Forest Stewardship Guide – a community user’s manual for town forests.
- A traveling photographic exhibit of Vermonters enjoying town forests that has been seen in town halls across the state.

For 2007, we have another wave of events and partnership projects with local communities lined up in all of these areas.

We have also worked to help Vermont communities purchase new town forests with a special emphasis on those communities, like West Fairlee, that do not have one. Led by our project partner the Trust for Public Land, the Vermont Town Forest Project has helped West Fairlee identify an 1,800-acre town forest that will be purchased from willing sellers. We have also helped raise funding for this \$2 million dollar project, including advocacy in support of a pending request for \$1.5 million to the federal Forest Legacy Program.

To better help communities like West Fairlee acquire town forests in the future, we have helped introduce new federal legislation to establish a Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program as part of the 2007 Farm Bill. We hope that this new program will complement Forest Legacy by more effectively focusing in on the needs of communities to conserve locally significant parcels in fast growing areas that would otherwise be lost to development.

While Vermont has many forests, the Vermont Town Forest Project believes that our town forests are special places that bring Vermonters together to reinforce and celebrate the traditions and closeness that define our communities. As Vermont stands at this momentous crossroads between suburbanization and maintaining our forest heritage, we can look to our town forests to educate young people, provide an accessible patch of woods close to home for every Vermonter, and enable loggers and sugarmakers to maintain our tradition of working woodlands. ■

More information on the Vermont Town Forest project is available at:
www.northernforestalliance.org/townforest.htm



Town forests provide a local network of recreational opportunities, helping ease user-pressure on other public lands.

“Our town forests are special places that bring Vermonters together to reinforce and celebrate the traditions and closeness that define our communities.”

Santa Clara Pueblo Forestry
*(right) crew loading seedlings
 for helicopter transport
 to plant remote areas.
 (below) Planting
 Rio Grande Cottonwood
 poles in the Bosque.*



Bruce Bauer



800 YEAR TRADITION OF LAND STEWARDSHIP

A Look at Community Forestry at Santa Clara Pueblo

By Marcia Summers

Marcia Summers

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few areas compare with the majestic beauty of the homelands of Santa Clara Pueblo in northern New Mexico, which Forest Guild members visited on a field trip during the 2005 annual Guild meeting in Santa Fe. The pueblo lands (totaling 55,000 acres, 42,000 of which are forested) stretch from the banks of the Rio Grande River west into the heart of the Jemez Mountains. Ranging in elevation from 5,000 to over 11,000 feet, the ecosystems vary widely from Bosque¹ to grasslands, mixed piñon-juniper woodlands, ponderosa pine, mixed conifers (including Douglas-fir, white fir, and aspen), and at the highest elevations spruce-fir (primarily Engelmann spruce and corkbark fir) and aspen.

The Santa Clara People have been stewards of their land for more than 800 years and today the concept of community forestry continues to be an innate part of the culture. This value was especially validated when more than 8,000 acres of mostly virgin forest were destroyed in two catastrophic wildfires (Oso in 1998 and Cerro Grande in the summer of 2000). “The

¹Derived from the Spanish word for woodlands, Bosque refers to areas of riparian forest found along the flood plains of stream and river banks in the southwestern United States. Used colloquially, Bosque also refers to those adjacent rivers and ponds.

community saw their whole life in front of them going up in flames,” described Santa Clara Governor J. Michael Chavarria in an interview with the *Santa Fe New Mexican*.

The Pueblo created a forestry department while the Cerro Grande fire was still ablaze. A 40-member forestry crew was trained in tree felling, post-fire restoration techniques, wildland firefighting and hazardous fuels reduction treatments. According to Santa Clara Pueblo foresters and Guild members Rachel Wood and Bruce Bauer, since then the Pueblo has planted more than 1.3 million trees (mainly Ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir) on over 3,500 acres in the burned areas. In one area between the Garcia and Sawyer drainages there is more than 90% survival with Ponderosa seedlings. About two inches in height when they were planted four years ago, today they are six feet tall. Crews also installed 3,000 (one rock high) mini-dams to reduce sedimentation, erosion and flooding; and contour tree felling was used to stabilize slopes.

When the attention shifted to unburned areas at risk of fire, the forestry department and crew began hazardous fuels reduction projects in prioritized areas of densely stocked trees. Small

Santa Clara Pueblo Forestry, continued on page 12

COMMUNITY FOREST PLANNING

Breaking Nearly Two Decades of Gridlock in the Corvallis Watershed

By Scott Ferguson



Scott Ferguson

Guild Member, forester and co-owner of Trout Mountain Forestry, Corvallis, Oregon.



Two foresters strolling in the Corvallis watershed.

the City of Corvallis owns 2,352 acres of forest located on the lower slopes of Mary's Peak in the Coast Range of western Oregon. Although often called the "Corvallis Watershed" or the "Rock Creek Watershed," the Corvallis Forest is primarily below the municipal water intakes and is dominated by an older Douglas-fir forest. The bulk of the Corvallis municipal water collection area lies in the Siuslaw National Forest and is managed by the USDA Forest Service as late successional reserve.

The last timber harvest on the Corvallis Forest occurred in 1986. Controversy focused on the Northern Spotted Owl, an Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed species that was present in the older forest of Mary's Peak. A year earlier, Eric Forsman, a wildlife biologist who pioneered efforts to save Northern Spotted Owl habitat in the Northwest, identified an owl nest in an area of the Corvallis Forest that was planned for clearcutting. The forest stand was clearcut as scheduled, but deep community concern over this issue resulted in a decision by the City Council to place a moratorium on future harvests. In 1993, the City hired a forestry consulting firm to craft a timber management plan.

However, amid continuing concerns over the management approach and environmental impacts, that plan, developed without public input or significant public support, was rejected by the City Council.

Nearly a decade later, in 2004 Corvallis endorsed a policy to use sustainable practices in all aspects of the city's operations. The major objective – to plan and manage all City resources in a responsible manner – led in 2005 to reconvening the Watershed Management Advisory Commission (WMAC) to undertake a year-long process of public meetings which resulted in a Vision Statement and set of guiding principles for the forest. The Vision Statement adopted in 2005 reads:

"The City-owned portion of the Rock Creek Municipal Watershed is a professionally managed, healthy ecosystem with diverse forest and productive habitat for all species native to the watershed."

The City hired our company, Trout Mountain Forestry, in 2006 to assess the current resource conditions and help create a stewardship plan for the property. Trout Mountain Forestry is experienced in community forest planning, and we anticipated a contentious process based on the property's history. The focus of our effort was to develop a management policy framework that would reflect citizen values and guide future management decisions. Stewardship recommendations were made with a "go slow," risk-averse approach that prioritized restoration of streams, wildlife habitat, and native plant communities. Timber harvest was identified as desirable in some forest stands to restore health and promote wildlife habitat.

A Historical Perspective

"Up until the year 1700, financial returns from communal forestry in Northern Europe, mainly from sales of timber, were used to support the organization of the village community, especially to assist the poor and to provide for health care, education, road construction and maintenance, water supply and emergency funds. Thanks to the wealth generated by forestry in the Middle Ages various communities rose to the status of rural republics which were fully independent from feudal lords and the cities."

- Maurizio Merlo, professor of forest policy and economics, University of Padua, Italy

Corvallis Watershed, continued on page 13



Guild Members
left to right, Mark Jacobs, forest ecologist Jerry Franklin, and Beth Jacquain in the field during an Ecological Forestry training session in Aitkin county

INNOVATIVE FORESTRY

Public Lands Support Local Communities - Profiling Aitkin County, Minnesota

Questions and Answers with Aitkin County Land Commissioner Mark Jacobs

“After 10-years we have achieved all of our major objectives (for Forest Stewardship Council certification) to varying degrees, but it didn’t just fall into our lap...we had to work for it!”

Located in north central Minnesota, not far from the “edge of the prairie,” where the extensive Northwoods of the Lake States meet the wheat fields of the Great Plains, and with a forest characterized by an extensive history of logging and fires, where aspen acres exceed northern hardwoods by almost 2 to 1, Aitkin County, Minnesota has become a quiet leader in developing and applying sustainable forestry in the Lake States.

In , Aitkin County Land Department Lands (together with Minnesota Department of Natural Resource lands in Aitkin County) became among the first public forest resources to receive Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification in the United States. Since then Aitkin County has continued to expand its role as a leader in forest sustainability. In addition to continually refining a management process for integrating ecosystem-based objectives into the day-to-day business of running a county forest system, Aitkin County (total population 15,000) has also leveraged its forest and FSC certification in a number of ways to more directly benefit its local communities.

Responsibility for much of this success belongs to Guild members Mark Jacobs and Beth Jacquain, who direct 4 foresters and a support

staff managing 224,000 acres – about 20% of all land in the county. We talked recently to Aitkin County Land Commissioner Mark Jacobs.

Q. What was the impetus for Aitkin becoming FSC Certified? How were you hoping the county would benefit from certification?

A. In the mid 1990’s, past Land Commissioner Roger Howard and I were looking into the concept of forest certification sensing that it could be the “wave of the future.” We had several discussions with our citizen Forestry Advisory Committee and they directed us to pursue it further. We identified three primary objectives for pursuing certification:

- Measuring our program against recognized standards to improve our performance and acknowledge the good work of our staff.
- Enhancing public confidence in our forest management via an independent, credible audit process.
- Marketing certified forest products to enhance our local, value-added forest products industry and strengthen our local communities.

I think we made a good choice. After 10-years we have achieved all of these objectives to varying degrees. But it didn't just fall into our lap...we had to work for it! The networking and ultimate partnerships we have realized in our decade of certification has been the most surprising and beneficial aspect of our FSC certification experience.

Q. How did certification change the way you do business on the ground in the county forests? What new opportunities did it provide?

A. I don't think that it fundamentally changed our on-the-ground silviculture, but it made us more thoughtful in our approach to the on-the-ground activities, using nature as a guide. Since we have a public trust obligation, we jokingly refer to our approach as "eco-traditional" forestry. We have slightly "tweaked" our silviculture, but we put a lot of emphasis on how it is applied over time and across the landscape. The development and application of our Ecological Classification System is a direct result of the increased networking and partnering opportunities that FSC certification has provided to us. Coupling that with better documentation and monitoring of our activities has made us better land managers. Perhaps most importantly, however, certification has significantly raised our program's credibility and awareness of the importance of our forests among county residents who we ultimately serve.

Q. Aitkin's approach to forest management and planning has been recognized for its leadership in integrating ecological and social considerations. Have other counties or communities been influenced by the work done here?

A. It is heartening to get recognition for doing what we feel is the "right thing." Since our 224,000 acres were FSC certified in 1997, nearly 11 million acres of public forestland have been FSC certified in the Lake States region alone. This includes state forest systems in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan and many county-managed forests. I don't know how much of this increase can be attributed to our actions, but we certainly had some influence.

Q. Following your own certification, Aitkin County supported development of the Upper Mississippi Certified Forest Products Group (UMCFPG)? What benefits does this group provide for the community?

A. We realized early on that just having our county lands producing certified wood was no guarantee that certified wood businesses would develop around us. UMCFPG is a group of small, local businesses that utilize and market FSC certified products. The group includes loggers, truckers, primary and secondary wood products manufacturers, and even a small printing company. These businesses operate under an FSC group chain-of-custody certificate held by Aitkin County. This group concept has enabled these businesses to enter certification at a lower cost and benefit from a coordinated marketing effort. We've also benefited from generous grants from the Blandin and McKnight Foundations to help jump-start this effort.

Q. In what ways do "average citizens" in Aitkin County benefit from Aitkin County Forests?

A. We try to help citizens and community leaders recognize the high quality of life that we have in Aitkin County and how much our forests contribute to that quality. Our local citizens benefit economically from our regional forest industry. Revenue we receive from timber sales is shared. Over 66% of the county is forested, the majority of the forest is in public ownership, and there is a healthy local environment with clean air and clean water. There is also a lot of open space in Aitkin County providing a wide range of recreational activities for local citizens and visitors. We have room to grow, and if we do it intelligently and with an eye toward the future, we can maintain our quality of life. I'm thinking that a lot of folks would like to be able to say that. ■

“There is a lot of open space in Aitkin County providing recreational activities for local citizens and visitors. We have room to grow and if we do it intelligently and with an eye toward the future we can maintain our quality of life. I'm thinking that a lot of people would like to be able to say that.”

The Aitkin County Land Department will be celebrating the 10-year anniversary of its Forest Stewardship Council certification in August 2007 with events planned in the Aitkin area.

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Rock, and they stayed back in under that. They'd be gone for weeks ginsenging."

The harvesting of ginseng (as well as other wild plants) flourished within a system of corn-woodland-pastureland farming. Crucial to this system was recourse to a vast, forested commons rising away from the settled hollows. Though nineteenth-century patriarchs like "Mountain Perry" Jarrell homesteaded portions of it, the mostly unsettled higher-elevation ridges and slopes supplied the community with essential materials and staples: wood for fires, barns, fences, homes, and tools; coal for fuel; rich soil for growing corn, beans, and orchards; nuts, herbs, mushrooms, berries, and game; an open

of cash income on Coal River. "The whole economy was built up around ginseng," said Quentin Barrett, of Beckley. "They had a few eggs and chickens, but most of it was the whole crew would go out and hunt ginseng in the fall."

"That's all my grandma used to do, years ago, she'd ginseng," recalled Shelby Estep, who now ginsengs with her daughter and granddaughter on Coal River Mountain. "That's the way she bought the kids clothes. She had twelve."

Fortunes and political careers were built on ginseng in the nineteenth century. Daniel Boone on a bad day lost two tons of the root when the

barge carrying it sank in the Ohio River. Ginseng money helped build the fortune of John Jacob Astor.

In the coal boom of the 1990s, when the coal industry no longer depended much on a resident population, many roads leading into the commons were gated off. Ginseng nonetheless still contributes a vital piece to an economic patchwork that includes recurrent out-

migration to find temporary employment, odd jobs, fishing, flea-market work, and raising produce.

According to Joe Williams, "I'd say most of the people that ginseng are people that works. They just love to ginseng. I miss work to go ginsenging." When asked what he liked about it that he'd miss work for it he replied, "Well, it's really something to find a big old stalk of seng. That's what you're looking for. Five prongs. If you'd ever get into it, you'd like it."

Randy Halstead said experienced dealers can tell which county a root came from because of differences in soil conditions. "Now in this area we have dark, richer, loose soil, and the ginseng grows longer, like a carrot. But you get into some of the neighboring counties with clay

"The whole economy was built up around ginseng. They had a few eggs and chickens, but most of it was the whole crew would go out and hunt ginseng in the fall."



Lyntha Scott Eiler

Aerial view of some Coal River communities with several "knobs" and the Left and Right hand Forks of Rock Creek.

range for hogs and cattle; and spaces for anonymous stills. Because of the abundant supply of tree fodder (wild nuts and fruit), the central Appalachian plateau in the nineteenth century furnished some of the best pastureland in the country. A seasonal round of plying the commons is registered in many of the names for swags and coves: Walnut Hollow, Paw-Paw Hollow, Beech Hollow, Red Root Hollow, Sugar Camp Hollow, and so forth. During the turbulent early decades of industry, the suppressed civic commons survived in lofty thickets where miners met in secret to organize the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA).

Before the development of a wage-labor economy, ginseng was the most reliable source

"That's all my grandma used to do, years ago, she'd ginseng. That's the way she bought the kids clothes. She had twelve."

soil, it's real bulby because the ginseng can't push down into the dirt."

Pausing for breath in Tom's Hollow, Joe Williams finds a four-pronger, topped with a "pod of berries." Flailing away at its base he discovers to his chagrin that someone else has already taken the root, adhering to the local practice of replanting the stalk attached to the dog-legged rhizome pocked with stem scars. "That's called the curl," says Williams, carefully reinstating it. "I usually put maybe two joints of it back. It's a better way of keeping it going than the berries...I'll come back here some year and get another root off of that."

Other strategies for conserving ginseng include scattering seeds where ginseng is known to grow, snipping the tops off of "five-leaves" and "two-prongs" so that less scrupulous diggers won't find them until they are bigger in future years, and transplanting young plants to sites closer to home where they can be monitored.

Left to its own devices, ginseng simply sheds the seeds for gravity to deliver downslope. Consequently, one mode of tracking ginseng is to look uphill from any "five-leaves" or immature plants for the big progenitor. "I've done that many a time," said Dave Bailey. "You go up the hill, you come to a little flat area and if there's any seng growing there you always look above it for a big one."

On Coal River, ginseng plays a vital role in imagining and sustaining a culture of the commons. Among the means of keeping the commons alive is talk about ginseng: where to hunt it, its mysterious habits, the biggest specimens ever found, and the difficulties of wresting the treasure from an impossibly steep terrain shared by bears, copperheads, rattlesnakes, and yellow-jackets. The ability and authority to engage in this discourse is indeed hard won. Inhabiting the commons through practice and narrative confers social identity and makes a community of its occupants. "I work in construction," wrote Dennis Price, forty, of Arnett, on a petition to document the cultural value of the mixed mesophytic forest. "But really I consider myself a ginsenger."



Lyntha Scott Eiler

Aerial view of mountaintop removal with "Valley Fill" in foreground near Racine, West Virginia.

Linking Ecology and Economy

"Understanding the commons and its role within the larger regional culture," writes author Gary Snyder, "is one more step toward integrating ecology with economy."

Environmental policy, focused too narrowly on physical resources, loses sight of the web of social relationships and processes in which those resources are embedded and made significant. "They're taking our dignity by destroying our forest," as Vernon Williams, of Peach Tree Creek, put it.

Williams was referring to the landscapes taking shape on the plateaus during the present coal and timber boom. Since 1990 tens of thousands of acres in southern West Virginia have been permitted for mountaintop removal and reclamation. Mountaintop removal shears off the top of a mountain, allowing the efficient recovery of multiple seams of coal. When the "topped" mountains are rigorously reclaimed under the terms of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977, the rich soils essential to ginseng and hardwood cove forests are gone, buried in hundreds of feet of "valley fills," and with them the multigenerational achievement of the commons.

As vital cultural resources, ginseng, commons, and community life are inseparable, yet there are presently no means available for safeguarding that relationship. A standard recourse, declaring ginseng an endangered species, would clearly be culturally destructive, since it would make a

“Understanding the ‘commons’ and its role within the larger regional culture is one more step toward integrating ecology with economy.”



Bruce Bauer

The restored Bosque is very open and park-like with much of it covered by a healthy grass layer that did not exist prior to treatment.

diameter trees have been removed to prevent a ground fire from crowning that could lead to another catastrophic wildfire. Added Rachel Wood, “Most of our future forestry work will be managed with uneven-aged silviculture; and with the exception of salvage logging, no medium or large trees have been harvested after the fire.”

The Forestry Department’s burned area restoration experience has led them to identify other restoration projects based on concerns voiced by the tribal community. For example, comments like these in community meetings revealed a deep concern and connection to the Bosque. “When I was young it made me happy to see all the trees and now it is not pretty.” “There was an abundance of fish in the Bosque and now there’s no fish in the Bosque.” “Eagles, cranes, beavers, ducks used to be visible. What is the reason they are not here?” Governor Chavarria also noted that previous fires have devastated the ecosystem within the Rio Grande Bosque area.

The forestry department’s response was to develop a major project through the US Forest Service Collaborative Forest Restoration Program. As part of this effort, Santa Clara Pueblo is working with neighboring Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo and a wetland restoration ecologist to expand and recreate wetlands and reestablish native wetland vegetation on land within both pueblos that intermingles with the Bosque along the Rio Grande River corridor.

Human disturbances have severely impacted the Bosque area in the last 60 years. Historically, the Rio Grande river channel meandered over its entire floodplain during seasonally high periods of precipitation until 50 years ago when the US Army Corp of Engineers channelized the river. Channelizing severed the river’s access to its floodplain which had averaged in width from a little less than 100 yards near the pueblo village, to as wide as 1,000 yards along other sections of the river. One of the main effects has been the change in the covertype occupying these lands. Since the floodplain with its periodic flooding was essentially removed from the river, the Bosque dried out and wetland vegetation declined while plants more adapted to dry settings (and susceptible to wildfire) pioneered

the floodplain. The historical cottonwood Bosque has become a mixed forest type with non-native invasive species such as Siberian elm, tamarisk, and Russian olive overtaking native species. Without intervention, Wood and Bauer expect that over time the Bosque would become dominated primarily by Russian olive.

The forestry department began treating extremely high fire risk stands of cottonwood Bosque along areas of the Rio Grande that are part of the Wildland Urban Interface for the city of Española and Santa Clara Pueblo land. Bruce Bauer described the pre-restoration Bosque as being “overrun with non-native invasive tree species. These areas were so thick that it was impossible to walk through them without being scratched and cut.” Treatment has consisted of thinning out the invasive species and planting native trees, such as Rio Grande cottonwood and Coyote willow. Woody



Bruce Bauer

Treated Bosque restored to its open cottonwood gallery structure.

invasive species, however, have proven challenging to eradicate. Once cut, they typically re-sprouted unless adequately treated with herbicide. Three or four follow-up maintenance treatments of Garlon 4 herbicide have been required to stop re-establishment of invasive species and allow native vegetation to regain dominance. Since restoration, Bauer describes the Bosque as “very open and park-like. Grass and forbs have had a tremendous response in restored areas and much of it is covered by a healthy grass layer that did not exist prior to treatment.”

“As Santa Clara people, our use of the natural resources are a very intricate part of our lifestyle. Creating opportunities that will ultimately provide a benefit for our future generations is essential to the longevity of our existence.”

- J. Michael Chavarria,
Santa Clara Pueblo Governor

Restoring the Bosque and wetlands has reduced the risk of wildfire, improved recreational opportunities, and increased open water wetlands and wetland vegetation which in turn is beginning to restore the once abundant wildlife and waterfowl such as turtles, frogs, beaver, cranes, roadrunners, ducks, and other aquatic species. Many of these wildlife species (such as those used in Pueblo dances) are culturally important to the Santa Clara people.

In addition to the Bosque/wetlands restoration project, the Pueblo is involved in a variety of

other important community forestry projects including a Wood Biomass Heating Project, a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, and an Integrated Resource Management Plan. All are a continuing part of the pueblo's centuries old tradition as stewards of their lands. Governor Chavarria so compellingly summarizes, "As Santa Clara people, our use of the natural resources is a very intricate part of our lifestyle. Creating opportunities that will ultimately provide a benefit for our future generations is essential to the longevity of our existence." ■

Corvallis Watershed, continued from page 7

Given the history and lack of public trust towards City management, we felt it was important for our planning to feature the many restoration opportunities on the property. These included fish ladder construction, culvert improvements, snag and down wood creation, and thinning dense Douglas-fir plantations and second growth stands to promote older trees and to reduce fire hazard. Trial thinning of some older 110-to-200 year old Douglas-fir stands was proposed to reduce fire danger and protect 300-to-500 year old trees that were



A forester examines an old fire scar at the base of a Douglas-fir in the Corvallis watershed.

being crowded by younger trees. The silviculture proposed in our draft plans emphasized increasing diversity using both uneven-aged and even-aged techniques, with patch openings limited to 5 acres. We also proposed significant reserve areas to protect sensitive or unique locales.

WMAC met monthly in 2006 and offered additional public input meetings and a guided forest tour. Our team was expecting some resistance from Corvallis residents to the notion of

"commercial harvest," but we were surprised at the depth and persistence of the longstanding belief that the City was primarily only interested in income generation from its forests.

On the other side, our draft stewardship plan also received a skeptical reception from some members of the professional forestry community. Although those individuals had generally not been involved in the public participation process, they submitted critiques (which challenged our emphasis on selective thinning and generally smaller patch sizes in our harvesting plan) at the final public hearing prior to a scheduled vote on the plan.

In the end, the nine-member Corvallis City Council was not sympathetic to either the "no trust, no harvest" approach or the last minute input from more traditional foresters. Each councilor in turn expressed their wholehearted appreciation for the efforts of the WMAC, plan reviewers and involved members of the public. On December 18th, 2006 the Corvallis Forest Stewardship Plan was adopted by the City of Corvallis without dissent!

This planning process was successful in overcoming a nearly two decade management moratorium because it addressed the full range of resource values, emphasized a go-slow restoration-based approach, and engaged the public in a transparent process. It marks the beginning of a sustained resolve by Corvallis leaders and residents to restore and improve an essential community resource. ■

For more information on the forestry work of Santa Clara Pueblo contact

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MEMBERSHIP

Professional Membership

in the Forest Guild is open to all forest professionals whose work is directly related to the stewardship and protection of forests, whether that work occurs through on-the-ground management, policy, advocacy, or research.

Other individuals who share a concern for forests and forestry are invited to participate as **Supporting or Sustaining Members.**

Students are also encouraged to join and become involved.

JOIN TODAY

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GREEN HOMES FOR RURAL MINNESOTA

Guild Members Collaborate on Innovative Housing Project

by Allison Lindberg

Rural communities are often searching for economic development opportunities. One opportunity in Northern Minnesota involves building green homes in rural areas. Dovetail Partners' Eco-Affordable Housing Program aims to connect locally produced wood products with local rural housing needs and tap into the growing green building movement.

Dovetail's first demonstration home for this unique program is being built in Aitkin, Minnesota. The home demonstrates green building principles and makes use of local, FSC certified wood products. As Dovetail's staff is fond of pointing out, the Eco-affordable Housing Program isn't just about the house. The objectives are to create environmental awareness, demonstrate the use of housing as an economic development tool for rural communities, and facilitate the process of obtaining and constructing eco-affordable housing so that it can be replicated easily.

Building sustainably and locally requires coordination, and partnerships which may be outside the normal commodity wood supply stream. The team making this happen are all

Forest Guild members, including Don Arnosti, Director of the Community Forestry Resource Center, Mark Jacobs, Land Commissioner of Aitkin County, Katie Fernholz, Executive Director of Dovetail Partners, and Greg Nolan, owner and operator of Snowy Pines Reforestation.

Builders used local bur oak, birch, black ash and maple for flooring. There is also maple millwork, a birch staircase, birch cabinets, a basswood ceiling, and white pine exterior siding. Nearly all of the wood materials are FSC certified and harvested from lands in Aitkin County or nearby Todd County, Minnesota. The white pine siding was harvested, milled, and installed by Forest Guild member, Greg Nolan and his family business, Snowy Pines Reforestation.

"The mission of our business is to create meaningful, rewarding work for our family and friends that improves the natural environment," says Nolan.

The project was made possible with the support of the McKnight Foundation, Weyerhaeuser Family Foundation, and Surdna Foundation. Project financing is through Bremer Bank. ■

Allison Lindberg is the Director of the Eco-affordable Housing Program at Dovetail Partners. More information is available at Dovetail's website: www.dovetailinc.org



The Dovetail Partners Eco-affordable Housing Program, demonstration home in Aitkin, MN.

Tending the Commons, continued from page 11

vital cultural practice illegal. Wild ginseng in fact would seem to merit federal protection not because it is endangered but because within its limited range it is integral to the venerable social institution of the commons.

Ginseng may be a powerful resource for resolving some very thorny dilemmas. A touchstone for economic, cultural, and environmental interests, this small plant provides a tangible link between ecology and economy. Given ginseng's predilection for native hardwood forest and rich soils, national recognition of its cultural

value would be a way to begin safeguarding both a globally significant hardwood forest and the cultural landscape, the communities, to which it belongs. ■

Mary Hufford is the Director of the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Folklore and ethnography, www.sas.upenn.edu/folklore/. Her essays are collected in *Tending the Commons: Folklife and Landscape in Southern West Virginia*, a project of the Library of Congress, American Memory Project. The essays, photos, and audio recordings can be found at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/tending/>



Cracking walnuts. Herman Williams, with his grandson, Nicholas, Clear Fork, WV.



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 Ecological Forestry on the
 Ground and in the Woods**
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 the Forest Guild

*Friday
 June 15
 2007*

**Dartmouth College Grant,
 North of Errol, NH**
 Kevin Evans, Guild member and
 Dartmouth College forester, will be
 our host. View various timber
 harvesting practices.

*Saturday
 June 30
 2007*

**Grafton County Farm and
 Woodland, North Haverhill, NH**
 Join Northam Parr, Grafton County
 Extension forester and Guild member,
 on a tour of 426 publicly owned
 forested acres that have been inten-
 sively managed since 1982 by UNH
 cooperative extension foresters.

*Friday
 July 27
 2007*

Sheldon Springs & Bakersfield, VT
 Forest Guild member Nancy Patch,
 a private consulting forester and
 principal of North Woods Forestry,
 will host this tour of two managed
 woodlands. View and discuss single
 tree and group selection and small
 patch cuts made over the last 3 years.

*Saturday
 July 28
 2007*

**Brunswick Gardens Forest Land
 and Essex Timber**
 Two tours in one! In the morning,
 tour the Whittaker family forest
 with Guild member Brendan
 Whittaker Sr. and his son Brendan.
 Discuss their approach to spruce/fir
 management over the last 50 years.
 View Forest Stand Improvement
 work and low impact harvesting
 techniques. After lunch, your host
 will be Guild member Jim Wood of
 North Country Environment and
 Forestry. The tour will be of Essex
 Timberland and will provide an
 opportunity to discuss TIMO owner-
 ship objectives.

All tours meet at the designated
 site at 9 AM sharp. Contact Ehrhard
 Frost, NH and VT State Forest Guild
 Coordinator at 802-785-4749 for
 information on all workshops, or go
 to our website: www.forestguild.org

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P.O. Box 519
Santa Fe, NM
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Approximate boundary of the Mixed Mesophytic Forest (see cover story), adapted from the original hand drawn maps of ecologist E. Lucy Braun (1950) and A.W. Kucher (1966). Although no longer used in most current ecological classifications, the Mixed Mesophytic Forest region defined by Braun is roughly congruous with the US EPA (Omernik) Ecoregions of The Western Alleghany Plateau and the Southwestern and Central Appalachians. www.epa.gov/wed/pages/ecoregions.htm