

Linking Communities to the Montreal Process Criteria and Indicators

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Introduction

- “Linking Communities” is a three-year project to strengthen understanding of the connections between local, regional, and national efforts to develop criteria and indicators for sustainable forests.

Project Partners

- American Forests
- Sustainable Measures
- The Communities Committee of the Seventh American Forest Congress
- The USDA Forest Service

Project Goals

- Engage communities in national-level discussions about the MP C&I
- Advance understanding of how to connect local, regional, and national C&I efforts through pilot projects
- Prepare information on the use of sustainability indicators by communities for the 2003 National Report on Sustainable Forests

Project Design

- Create a national Technical Committee
- Prepare a Tool Kit for communities on the use of sustainability indicators
- Conduct pilot projects in three communities
 - Gogebic County, MI
 - Wallowa County, OR
 - Baltimore County, MD

Accomplishments

- Participated in Roundtable on Sustainable Forests meetings, briefings, and workshops (e.g., Congress, community indicators)
- Provided information on community indicators for the 2003 National Report on Sustainable Forests
 - “3. Develop a national strategy for monitoring human community and economic indicators relating to the social, economic, and cultural impacts of forests and forest management on regions and communities.”

Accomplishments

- Prepared and refined a toolkit to assist communities
 - <http://www.communitiescommittee.org/>
- Assisted pilot communities in convening workshops and developing local sustainability initiatives using C&I

Pilot Projects-Gogebic County, MI

- Previously involved with local and regional sustainability initiatives
- Engaged to define “sustainable forestry”
- Convened workshops in Nov 2001
- FACT agreed on definition, April 2002
- County seeking funding for data collection and analysis

Pilot Projects-Wallowa County, OR

- LUCID brought agencies together, Nov 2001
- Formed NEOCAW to design social and economic indicators for two counties
- Engaged to expand indicators and to third county
- May 2002 workshops - public and technical
- NEOCAW and NRAC carried process forward
 - identify community values and county-level C&I
- Process constrained by resource issues - wildfire

Pilot Projects-Baltimore County, MD

- No existing process; county agency (DEPRM) expressed interest and took lead
- Engaged in August 2002 for public awareness and to incorporate indicators into county management
- Convened workshop in June 2003 to identify and select county-level forest sustainability indicators
- Formed diverse county steering committee to develop strategy and move process forward

Lessons

- MP C&I provided a useful framework to:
 - Engage communities at the county level (e.g., integration and outcomes)
 - Encourage public awareness about sustainability concepts, issues, and tools
 - Develop a process for identifying indicators of sustainability meaningful at a local level
 - “process as useful as content”

Remaining Challenges

- Heighten awareness of the important roles of communities in assessing sustainable forests
- Identify compelling reasons for communities to develop sustainability initiatives

Remaining Challenges

- Build community capacity to develop sustainability initiatives
- Build local leadership and organizational capacity

Remaining Challenges

- Present and use the MP C&I as a “common language” through which communities can engage in broader forest policy discussions
- Develop better social and economic indicators of sustainable forests

Remaining Challenges

- Develop “integrated indicators” to help address the three pillars of sustainable management at the same time (ecological, social, and economic considerations).
- Develop a set of “core indicators” applicable to all communities.

Remaining Challenges

- Develop processes to feed community-level data into larger-scale processes.