

Family Forest Owners: Insights into Land-Related Stewardship, Values, and Intentions

**Report on focus group findings prepared for
The Sustaining Family Forests Initiative**

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Highlights

- The landowner segmentation emerging from the survey analysis is useful in understanding types of owners. Woodland Retreat and Working the Land Owners share motivations and feelings, suggesting that an approach can be used to reach both. Supplemental Income and Uninvolved Owners seem to be the hardest to communicate with.
- Model Owners stand out as especially passionate about and dedicated to good land management, eager to help others; some are role models whose information and advice are listened to by the less knowledgeable owners. Prime Prospects are open to learning more about improving the land; the Potential Defectors are to some extent as well, while Write-Offs do not seem receptive. Owners in the last three segments often think their current behavior in caring for their land is sufficient, unaware that more is needed or that their actions are sometimes harmful.
- Deep feelings motivate a number of owners, especially the Woodland Retreat and Working the Land Owners: love of the land; enjoyment of its beauty; peacefulness and wildlife; desire for privacy and freedom; belief in owning land as a value in itself ("they're not making any more of it"); concern with legacy from the past and to next generations/the future; appreciation of childhood experiences (their own, their children's, grandchildren's); valuing the country as a place to live and raise a family.
- Trees are viewed as one part of the land's total beauty, also as income for some.
- Language landowners use includes: treed areas are "woods" or "woodlands," not "forests"; "conservation," "conserving" or "preserving" describe taking care of the land; "forest health," while not as colloquial, is understood and positive. Language not used: "preservation" is a purist approach that bars owners from making desired changes; "stewardship" and "sustainable management" are either not understood or considered buzzwords; "management" implies an outside control. Few landowners see themselves as a "forest owner" or a "family forest owner."

Foresters are viewed as professionals but, whether independent or government employees, are not necessarily trusted to do what is best for owners. Loggers, who buy and harvest owners' trees, evoke sharply divided feelings.

- Most landowners believe in some form of active management of their land and trees, especially select cutting. Clear-cutting is considered acceptable if trees are replanted. Few owners have a management plan or have consulted with a forester. Other than Model Owners, they see no reason to get help or spend the money, and don't know ways to find a reliable forester beyond word of mouth.

- Word of mouth is the main source of land/forest information for most owners. Model Owners use a broader range of resources.
- Threats to ownership include: tempting offers to buy; inter-generational land transfer issues, especially the lack of interest some younger people have in taking over the land/house; resented restrictions on owner control; older owners' difficulties living in the country; large developments.
- Elements in the concept statements that received the most favorable responses are: emotional descriptions of owners' love of the land; preserving what they love for future generations (heirs or the future in general); owner responsibility; preventing unnecessary clear-cutting and massive development. Elements rejected or with limited appeal are: a preachy tone; bigger picture benefits to society; emphasis only on financial benefits; a management plan.
- General sources of information/advice mentioned by landowners include a wide range: farm and land media; farm agencies; farm animal organizations; outdoor/forestry publications; local newspapers; local television news; Public Broadcasting and National Public Radio home/regional and other magazines; Internet search engines.
- Groups and organizations landowners are involved in include some concerned with land, animal or water conservation, both on the national and local levels; animal organizations/groups (farm/other); farm organizations; community and civic organizations (e.g., planning boards); church groups; fraternal organizations; a variety of social groups.

Background and Objectives

Background

The Sustaining Family Forests Initiative is a collaboration of government, industry, NGOs, certification systems, landowners and academics, organized to gain knowledge about family forest owners in the United States. SFFI goals are to serve as a wide-ranging information resource; to provide direction for enhanced outreach to landowners; and to aid a broad spectrum of organizations to be more strategic in meeting education and service goals with limited resources.

The first phase of research was a special analysis of the USDA Forest Service National Woodland Owner Survey conducted by the Forest Service, the Yale Program on Private Forests and Roper Public Affairs. The report, *Family Forest Owners: An In-depth Profile*, provided two key analyses:

- Multivariate, hierarchical cluster analysis of landowners based on ownership objectives, concerns and future intentions. Four segments emerged: Woodland Retreat Owners, Supplemental Income Owners, Working the Land Owners, Ready to Sell Owners.
- Prime prospect analysis, based on attitudes toward stewardship and engagement in land management: Model Owners, Prime Prospects, Potential Defectors and Write-Offs.

Research Objectives

The qualitative research builds on the quantitative analysis, focusing on these issues:

- Understanding family forest owners – validating the segmentation; learning more about landowners’ motivations, needs, conservation knowledge and behavior.
- Messages – exploring reactions to concepts for enhanced outreach to owners.

Method

Sample

A series of nine focus groups was conducted with landowners in five regions, drawing from property tax lists. Screening requirements for respondents were:

- Own 10-999 acres that are wooded/covered by trees in the state where the focus groups were held; most own fewer than 100 acres. Respondents all had property in the local area; several own land in other areas, sometimes far away.
- Own their land privately through individual/joint ownership or through a family partnership/trust/estate.
- Make decisions concerning their land alone or share decisions about equally with someone else.
- A mix of the landowner segments; screening was based on respondents' choice of one out of four statements that best describe their "feelings about their land," a shortened version of the battery that served as a basis for the quantitative analysis. For the last two focus groups, respondents were also recruited to be a mix of prime prospects owners.
- A mix of gender, age (21+ years old), length of ownership.

Two focus groups each were conducted in Greenfield, Massachusetts; Wausau, Wisconsin; Columbia, South Carolina; Salem, Oregon. One focus group and one in-depth interview were conducted in Longview, Texas because of recruiting problems.

Discussion areas

- Owner objectives/motivations.
- Language association – thoughts/feelings a list of words/phrases bring to mind (written, then discussed).
- Feelings about their land/forests, perceived threats, likelihood of selling/ converting.
- Perceptions of the importance of conservation, actions taken.
- Sources of information about taking care of their land.
- General information sources, group/organization involvement (written only)

- Concept statements – ranking of top three in terms of stimulating interest in gaining further information, any negatives (written, then discussed).

Interviewing dates

The focus groups were conducted between August 21st and November 1st, 2007.

Caveat

It is important to emphasize that this study is qualitative in nature and that the hypotheses discussed in this report should be viewed as tentative.

Reading Notes

Respondent verbatims from the focus groups have been edited for clarity and conciseness.

Summary and Implications

Landowner Segments

The landowners interviewed in the focus groups largely fit the prior segmentation. (Some of the differences may be attributable to the fact that the qualitative screening was based, in most sessions, on just one question rather than the extensive battery of items used in the analysis of the survey.)

Owners across segments share some emotions, along with fierce independence and a desire to control their land. Those owning multiple parcels often feel differently about different pieces of land.

- Woodland Retreat Owners – motivated by their enjoyment of the land's beauty, wildlife, and the privacy it affords them.
- Working the Land Owners – own for both financial reasons and enjoyment, with many of the same feelings of Woodland Retreat Owners.
- Supplemental Income Owners – own for financial reasons only, are generally unemotional about their land.
- Uninvolved Owners – emotionally detached from their land, often absentee owners. (The label "Ready to Sell" does not necessarily describe them.)

Motivations of Ownership

- Love of the land – mentioned most often and cutting across segments. This is a deep attachment or, at very least, enjoyment of the land's beauty, peacefulness/tranquility and wildlife (the "critters"). Owning land is a value in itself: "they're not making any more of it" and "you never really own it," in the sense of it belonging to posterity, are beliefs passed down in many families. The first statement is particularly powerful.
- Privacy – not seeing or being seen/heard by neighbors, having freedom to do what owners and their families want to. Some value being secluded yet close to a community. This privacy, however, is threatened for some landowners by new houses within sight or obnoxious neighbors.
- Legacy – from the past and down through the future. Childhood experiences living on the land or visiting relatives there forged a connection for a number of owners. Most hope to pass the land onto the next generation. Those who inherited land from their family often feel a strong sense of responsibility to carry on tradition.

- Country life – a better place to live and raise children (more solid values, safer, etc.). Owners hope the next generation will have wonderful childhood memories to look back on, just as they do.
- Fun/recreation – hunting, fishing, four-wheeling/biking, hiking/walking and so on. Owners believe these activities promote family closeness.
- Investment – making money on a possible sale or, less tangibly, owing the land for its future value.
- Income – to live on or as a supplement, sometimes just to pay off taxes.

Owners' Language

- Descriptions of the land. When they talk about the part of their land with trees, owners refer to them as “woods,” a term that evokes warmly positive associations, and, less often or emotionally, as “woodlands.” “Forests” are seen as large areas of trees like the national parks in another region, not what these landowners have; they understand such larger forests need “protection,” but they do not think of their own land as having such importance. “Family forests” drew mixed reactions in terms of owner identification. “Woodlot” is seen as referring just to small patch of wooded land, often used for firewood.
- Taking care of the land. “Conservation” received especially favorable reactions. It has the same meaning as “preservation” for some landowners and both terms are accepted as verbs. To a number, “conservation” connotes action to maintain or improve the land (including select cutting), while “preservation” can mean a purist approach and government regulation barring owners from making changes they desire. “Stewardship” suggests owners’ “responsibility” to care for the land in a pro-active way, a concept Model Owners in particular embrace, but the term is unfamiliar to or disliked by others. “Sustainable management” is not understood or is considered a “buzzword” by a number; “management” implies outside control, which most owners reject. “Forest health” is accepted as means (thinning woods) and end results (disease-free trees). “Forestry” is the study/science of and responsible care of trees/land, including cutting.

Few landowners talked at all about the larger societal or environmental impact of their care of trees. Those who mentioned clear air and water sometimes seemed to be concerned with their own land, not beyond.

- Types of people. Some landowners see themselves as “forest owners” but others think the term refers to those with more acreage or even to corporations. A “forester” is understood to be a professional involved in forestry, the person who directs loggers on which trees to harvest. Opinions of foresters are very divided in terms of helpfulness and trustworthiness. Their university education was sometimes mentioned negatively. Where the forestry department is part of a natural resources agency that has a regulatory role, such as Wisconsin, landowners tend to be especially wary.

A “logger” buys and harvests landowners’ trees. Views of this profession are even more mixed; some owners trust loggers, especially ones they know personally, but others consider them very untrustworthy. Owners sometimes confused the terms “forester” and “logger” or were unaware that a difference exists.

Harvesting/cutting

- Taking action. Landowners believe in some form of active management, whether or not they use that term.
- Select and clear-cutting. Select cutting seems to be a common practice that most owners support. Clear-cutting is considered harmful by some owners but others think it is fine if trees are replanted.
- Reasons for cutting. These include: financial, as income, to pay toward the purchase price and/or taxes, to increase the land’s future value; to improve the health of woods, allowing smaller/newer trees to grow, stopping erosion; more food and shade for wildlife; beautification, to have a better view, to control the types of trees; for better recreation; to have wood to use.

Use of Foresters

- Consultations. Few of the landowners interviewed have a management plan or have consulted with a forester. Model Owners see this professional help as beneficial on issues like harvesting, getting more money on sales, dealing with problems. Some less knowledgeable owners had paid loggers to take trees, unaware that they could earn money instead. To find a good forester, owners turn to friends, other word-of-mouth recommendations, or people who have approached them; this does not always work out well for them, though.
- Obstacles to using a forester. Distrust and concern about expense has led some landowners to reject the idea. Others never thought about it because they lack awareness of the assistance foresters might provide. Some long-term owners (Write-Offs) stubbornly insist they have nothing to learn.

Model Owners

- A special type of owner. Model Owners stood out in the focus groups as the most highly committed and engaged. They passionately believe in fulfilling their “responsibility” to be “stewards” of the land. Active citizens, they belong to or are leaders of organizations that work to improve the community, the land and wildlife. A mix of professional and blue collar men with different levels of education, they are knowledgeable about land issues.

In contrast, some other owners in the Potential Defector and Write-Off segments (prime prospect segmentation) are unconcerned or unaware of what they should

do and of resources available; this includes but is not limited to the Supplemental Income Owners and Uninvolved Owners. Prime Prospects, although similar to Model Owners in their feelings about the land, think – often mistakenly – that what they are doing, if they are doing anything at all, is sufficient for good care. While they are not well-informed, they seem receptive to learning.

Dynamics in the focus groups suggest that some Model Owners are role models and opinion leaders for other owners. Eager to show the way, they offer helpful information and advice to the less knowledgeable owners. They speak in a down-to-earth way that gets attention and respect. The problem is that in real life, unless they are friends or neighbors, these segments may not have many opportunities to interact on the subject of caring for the land. Less knowledgeable landowners do not seek out information about land management but may be reachable through other community groups and media (below).

Conservation Plans

- Use of the plans. A few respondents have signed up or are considering enrolling in a conservation restriction plan for the tax advantages or to save the land. The restrictions on owners, however, put others off as threatening their personal control.

Sources of Land/Forest Information

- Individuals. People owners know personally are the main source – neighbors, other fellow owners, or friends/acquaintances professionally involved in conservation, forestry or logging.
- Other sources. Some Model Owners use and recommend these resources: government conservation offices/programs, landowner/wildlife organizations, local city council and planning commissions, free courses at local universities.

Threats to Ownership

- Offers to buy – pressure from offers to buy the land can be tempting to owners who are financially struggling and/or getting older.
- Legacy/inter-generational land transfer. The next generation may prefer to sell the property because they have their own homes, often far away, or find the tax bills and maintenance expenses burdensome. Dividing up the land among a large number of relatives is complex.
- Owner control. Conservation restrictions, utility companies and eminent domain often provoke strong resentment and discourage owners.
- Aging. Some older owners find it increasingly difficult to manage and live on their land, especially those who have lost their spouse.

- Developers. Encroaching homes within view, huge housing developments and malls are seen as a threat to private ownership and woodlands generally. Their clear-cutting can also rob animals of food and shelter.

Reactions to Concept Statements

- Overview. Response to the statements was quite consistent across regions. The statements receiving especially positive reactions were:

You get a lot of satisfaction from your woodlands. They are beautiful, relaxing, colorful, full of wildlife. Preserve that satisfaction for future generations.

It's wonderful to own such beautiful, peaceful, and valuable woodlands. But ownership comes with responsibility. Help prevent unnecessary clear-cutting or over development of forest lands.

- Tone. This played a major role in respondents' reactions to the concepts. Owners rejected statements they felt lecture/scold/talk down to them, tell them what to do, or have "an agenda." Again, they reject anything they feel infringes on their right to control their land.
- Love of the land. Descriptions of what owners care about hit home across most of the segments, in particular mention of the land's beauty. This brought to mind the "dead silence" of woods without wildlife, which would destroy the peaceful feeling owners value.
- Owner responsibility to take care of the land. Model Owners and Prime Prospects already believe they do have such a responsibility or agree when the point is made. The word "stewardship," however, is not clear to some.
- Legacy/future generations. This matters a great deal to a number of landowners, either in terms of their direct descendants or the broad impact on the next generations. The word "legacy" evoked highly divided response, resonating with some owners but putting off others as "self-centered."
- "Prevent unnecessary clear-cutting and over/massive development." These statements drew mixed response, since some clear-cutting and development are considered acceptable. The adjectives communicate that not all cutting and development is opposed (implying the "preservation" several owners reject).
- Financial benefits. "Managing" the land in a way that will "pay off forever" was chosen by some Supplemental Income Owners but lacked appeal to others. "Forever," liked by some owners, was also criticized as over-promise.
- "Managing/management plan." A "forest management" or "sustainability plan" received support from some, especially Model Owners. They understand that this refers to proper (and profitable) harvesting, and that the owner retains

management control. Most owners did not know what the terms mean, assumed a plan would restrict them or that this planning/management is for larger landowners. "Sustainability" is not understood by some.

Ideas Suggested by the Research

This qualitative research suggests several ideas that can be tested in future research:

- The Sustaining Family Forests Initiative name, which was not discussed in the focus groups, uses language that landowners other than Model Owners do not relate to. Alternative names might be studied, possibly with "preserving" or "conservation" instead of sustaining, and "woodlands" instead of "forests."
- Appeals that strike an emotional chord with the segments most open to such a program (Woodland Retreat Owners, Working the Land Owners, Model Owners, Prime Prospects) should be used: love of the land; enjoyment of its beauty, privacy and wildlife; owner responsibility to care for the land, to "leave it better than you found it" for the future; desire to hand down the land to the next generations; valuing the land (and its trees) as precious ("they're not making any more of it").
- Communication with owners who love their land but do little to care for it (prime prospect segments other than the Model Owners) needs to break through their apathy, passivity and/or lack of knowledge: admiring/loving the land isn't enough; more action is needed to maintain/improve it for yourself, the next generations, the future; it is relatively easy/inexpensive to do this; helpful resources are available to find out the best ways; what you do really does matter.
- Talk about the financial benefits of being a smart landowner: do harvesting so you make money (get paid, don't pay, don't be ripped off) *and* take care of the land properly. Your land is your "investment" in the future. Find out which trees you should and shouldn't cut.
- The tone of communications should show respect for landowners – their independence, hard work, sense of tradition, etc.; don't lecture, scold or tell them what they should do; do not make "big picture" societal and environmental issues (global warming, etc.) the main appeal.
- The legacy concept is clearly strong among owners (although the next generation may not want the land). Passing down the land is a way to be remembered and, in some sense, to live on – an appeal which, we believe needs to be hinted at rather than stressed in too overt a way. Whether or not the word "legacy" should be used needs further study.
- Show children loving their life/visits to the woods – having fun, bonding with their families. This will remind owners of their own childhood, their experiences with their children/grandchildren, and their hopes for the next generations.

- Show pictures of the land with and without trees – this really can happen. Show the woods with “little critters” vs. the dead silence without them or hungry ones searching for food.
- Provide information resources on how landowners can find a good/trustworthy forester who will help them achieve their goals; whatever they may be (income, beautification, recreation, etc.). It’s more than worth the small investment.
- Avoid language owners consider high-flown and unclear, especially “sustainability.” Instead of a “management plan,” talk about an “owner’s conservation plan,” where owners are in control.
- Enlist Model Owner role models for outreach programs, especially the more down-to-earth blue collar ones; bring them together with other landowners at local groups, informal meetings, social events that are not specifically billed as conservation events; topics of meetings should address landowners’ immediate concerns, convey short-term and direct benefits (e.g., making more money, increasing the land’s beauty).
- A number of sources might reach more landowners – beyond forestry ones, several other closely related sources mentioned by several owners are farm and land media, farm agencies, farm animal organizations, outdoor/forestry publications. Other media several use include local newspapers, local television news, Public Broadcasting and National Public Radio (which tend to have a more educated audience), home and regional magazines (more female readers), Internet search engines.
- Groups and organizations that might be good ways to reach landowners include some whose mission is land, animal or water conservation, both on the national and local levels; animal organizations/groups (farm/other), farm organizations. In addition, community and civic organizations (e.g., planning boards), church groups, fraternal organizations may provide good ways of reaching landowners who do not normally attend owner or conservation meetings.

1. How Owners Feel About Their Land

General Observations

Ownership histories of the people interviewed ranged from decades, up to 50 years, to recent acquisitions in the last five years. A number of owners interviewed inherited or bought land that had been in the family for one or several generations. Their ownership stories are often complicated with a series of sales, gifts and subdivisions among family members. Use of the land changed over the years for some owners as ventures to grow certain crops or cultivate certain types of animals either ended or failed.

Some regional differences emerged, although most of the themes are consistent across the geographic areas studied.

- The Massachusetts owners interviewed are more socially liberal. For instance, one said his property was originally a hippie commune; land trusts are more accepted and low-income housing was mentioned favorably. Education levels are higher here. More than other areas, Greenfield respondents like being close to town.
- A number of the Wisconsin owners are farmers or have been in the past.
- Hunting is popular with a number of owners in Wisconsin and Texas, sometimes creating problems with their neighbors.
- Oregon owners are a mix of political liberal, some transplants from “back East” or California, while others are more conservative. Education levels are higher here as well.
- Controversial propositions and laws concerning land use were top of mind in Massachusetts, Wisconsin and Oregon, affecting the discussion of management issues.

Most of the landowners interviewed have relatively small areas of land, even when multiple parcels are added together. They think of themselves as small landowners, both individually and collectively, unaware that together they own more than the U.S. government.

The Landowner Segments

To a large extent, the landowners interviewed in the focus groups fit the prior segmentation conducted by SFFI and Roper Public Affairs. Some of the differences were, we believe, due to the fact that the qualitative screening was based in most sessions on one question rather than the extensive battery of items used in the

analysis of the survey. While strict quotas were not used in the recruiting, the majority of respondents seemed to belong to the Woodland Retreat and Working the Land Owner segments, which are the largest according to the survey.

The qualitative research also suggests that motivations and feelings can be complex. Owners in the segments sometimes share emotions with a difference in emphasis. Further, in the case of owners with multiple parcels, the same person can be far more involved with some pieces – especially, of course, the one they live on – than with those they own just as a financial investment or visit only occasionally.

The fierce independence and desire for control of family owners stand out as a common theme across segments. “Self-determination” and “self-sufficiency” are central values.

- Woodland Retreat Owners – motivated by their enjoyment of the land’s beauty, wildlife, and the privacy it affords them.
- Working the Land Owners – own for both financial reasons and enjoyment. This segment shares many of the feelings of the Woodland Retreat Owners. The income they earn from the land is the primary support for some owners, while it is secondary to others. In either case, the money is not their sole or even main reason to own. “I just love land,” a Texas man declared, after talking about the financial side of his tree farm and his grandchildren’s enjoyment of playing there.

[The tree farm has] been very, very good for me. That was just a sideline. I worked in banking for most of my life. The trees, that's what I do. My son says, “All you think about is the trees and what they're worth.” But I like to come and just fish and just look at the trees because I raise them for the market and the pine tree market's been really good. I've been retired 10 years and when I get bored I just go out there and just drive through the woods. (Texas)

- Supplemental Income Owners – own for financial reasons. These owners were the most pragmatic, least emotional of the landowners.
- Uninvolved Owners – emotionally detached from their land. Most are absentee owners who visit occasionally, if at all. While not engaged with their land, some do enjoy recreation there with their families. Some view the land as really belonging to or being more important to another family member (the one who inherited, a sibling who cares more about it, etc.). This research suggests that the label “Ready to Sell” does not describe this group well since several are not considering sale, while some respondents in other segments are.

I haven't really been involved with anything. My brother's been doing what needs to be done. When I got the land 25 years ago it was mostly brush. I am going to keep it. (Wisconsin)

Motivations of Ownership

These motivations are often intertwined, of course. The more emotional ones (the first four) are especially strong for Woodland Retreat and Working the Land Owners.

- Love of the land – a deep emotional, even spiritual attachment or, at very least, enjoyment of the beauty. Being on the land evokes a feeling of peace and tranquility, is “my great escape.” Trees are specifically mentioned by a few as a very meaningful part of the scenery. “To have my own forest is amazing to me,” an Oregon woman declared.

A key part of a number of owners’ love is their feeling about the wildlife, a living element. They love to see the “critters” scamper around, to have “visits” in their yard, to listen to the sounds. “I feel like we live in deer country and it’s their land,” a South Carolina woman said. Hunters also talked about caring for the animals, not just as targets for their sport.

Owning land is a value in itself, several respondents emphasized. Two lines were repeated in a number of focus groups: “they’re not making any more of it,” referring to its preciousness; “you never really own it,” meaning that ownership goes beyond simple possession to a “bigger” or sacred trust. These beliefs are passed down in many families. (The second statement, however, is used sometimes to refer to outside intrusion on owners’ control.)

I have moose in the backyard, I have bears in the backyard. Fox. A lot of coyotes. And you know, it's fine. (Massachusetts)

My dad always kind of taught me “you want to get land, land, land. That's the good thing to do. Do that. You'll have something then. They're not making any more of it.” Which I'm sure everyone has heard. (Wisconsin)

Not a whole lot of people that are real tolerant of 100 head of cattle in your backyard in town. And the horses. Had them all my life. To be without them is kind of like walking around without your clothes on. It's just unheard of. (South Carolina)

We kind of got started with a misunderstanding. I had suggested [to my husband] that that we buy our own calf and raise it up to about six or eight months old, sell it, buy a different one, have it slaughtered and fill our freezer. He made a deal with a guy about getting one and the next thing I knew there was a heifer calf came with it. I raised them on bottle. Growing up on a farm, I'd done that several times. He never did want to sell them. He got too attached to them. We did sell them just before he died because I couldn't take care of them and him, too. (Texas)

Peace and tranquility. It's a naturally wonderful setting. It's nice living out in the woods where you have the deer coming up and coyotes. (Oregon)

Intimate with nature, being part of nature – because we are nature. (Oregon)

It's like you get to enjoy God's creation at a really close range without having to pay for it. In the summer when it's warm and I have my windows open for that fresh mountain air

and I lay down and go to sleep and I listen and I can hear the deer chewing on my lawn having a snack. It's a delightful sound to me. I had a mountain lion go through my front hill one morning. [I was] fascinated by it. Instead of getting my camera I was thinking of getting my bow and arrow because I felt a little threatened. But it was a beautiful creature and I have pelts on my walls to make it feel like a lodge. I grew up on westerns so to me it's like having some of that romance. (Oregon)

Really can anybody ever own it? You can never own it. That's something that you can never grasp. It's bigger than you. (Oregon)

We don't even own the land. We just manage it for a while or caretakers for it. (Oregon)

- **Privacy** – being away from other people. Repeatedly respondents talked about the importance of not seeing or being seen/heard by neighbors. They cherish the freedom to do pretty much what they, their children or pets want to do; past experiences with annoying neighbors were related by several respondents. The desire for “seclusion” is strong for some “loners” who “don't like people.”

While some owners want to be way out in the country, others like a balance – a rural home that is close to town for work, shopping, community involvement and social interaction.

When I go outside at night, I can see the stars and the moon without any kind of other illumination. That's fantastic. My dog can run without worrying about if he's in the neighbor's yard and I can have chickens if I want to. We've raised our own sheep and pigs and beef on occasion. (Massachusetts)

We've kept our big area for ourselves and it's nicely protected – you can't see a house from any one of the houses that we built. It's so conveniently located. Right off [Route] 91, so you're kind of remote and out in the woods, which we wanted to be, but you're still close by to civilization and all the stores and so forth. (Massachusetts)

I think most people want privacy more than anything else – for us anyway. I always wanted to have a place where I could not see my neighbor. Play my music as loud as I wanted and not worry about anything. (Massachusetts)

I went from being on the family farm to being pretty young and cocky and there's other places to go where you can do better. I ended up in a house that was on a half lot. And every night when I'd want to cook out or do whatever I had neighbors over there yapping at me and I didn't always want to talk. It didn't take me long to get out of there. That's why I went back to the farm, although we weren't farming anymore at that point. I decided to build a house right in the middle of the property and I got a lot of room. Stretch out a little bit. And I have a lot of extra toys, you know, too, that – I like to do things. I have trails in my woods. I'm out there with tractors and four-wheelers or whatever. (Wisconsin)

I would be in trouble if I drove my three-wheeler through the neighborhood and cut trees down. I was out killing trees today [for] firewood. If I did that in town, I'd probably get arrested. That's why I like being out in the country. (Wisconsin)

To me, cities and towns are suffocating. I feel suffocated. I don't even like to go into town. My closest neighbors are a quarter of a mile away in all directions. I love it. Quiet, peaceful and nobody can bother me. (Texas)

It's the freedom to do what you want to do when you want to do it. (Oregon)

The privacy owners value is being threatened in some cases. Several respondents bemoaned encroaching houses within their sight or obnoxious neighbors (who enjoy their own freedom too much).

We are threatened by the things that happen around us that impinge on [what we enjoy]. Like a house was built at the end of the driveway that we see out of our bedroom window. We were there for 25 years and never saw a light at night around us close. And now they have day and night lights shining in our bedroom window, which we've talked to them about but we haven't quite gotten it fixed yet. (Oregon)

One of my neighbors leases his land to an organization called War Paint. They've had as many as 400 people there on a weekend shooting and shouting. I visited a friend out in eastern Salem on a Saturday morning and it turns out they have a rifle range abutting their property. You don't know what the neighbors are going to do. (Oregon)

How about an alcoholic drunk that at 1:00 in the morning likes to shoot AK 47s off and the police say, "Honey, this is America. He has every right to do that." (Oregon)

- Legacy – from the past and down through the future. Childhood experiences played a major role in forging a connection for a number of owners. Some grew up on the land; others said visits to family members made them decide to move to the country as adults.

Passing the land onto the next generations is something most owners hope to do. Those who inherited land owned by one or several generations often feel a strong sense of responsibility about carrying on the family tradition. If they do sell, it should be to a relative in order to "keep it in the family." Sentimental ties were mentioned by some to other people who owned or loved the land, such as a daughter who "died young" and a former employer who willed the land to her friend. Owners who don't have children sometimes talked about other family members, such as nephews and nieces. This is a way of being remembered and, in the case of people with little money, sometimes the only thing they can give their heirs.

I kept my 20 acres mostly for sentimental reasons. If [my sister's family is] hunting they use the 20 acres in between. I've kept it because they used it. I have never intended to sell it, although people have asked me. The value for tax purposes was like \$5000 – last year it went up to \$20,000. My son does not hunt. He's not interested but my daughter got married and her husband is. I plan on keeping it for him and for them. (Wisconsin)

This land was handed to me. It's old family land for generations and generations. They say, "Why don't you sell it?" But that's all that we got. They said, "Will you keep it?" I said, "Yes, I'll keep the land." (Texas)

My mother-in-law, she wanted me to have all of her land but I didn't want it. I still have a piece of her land. I always call it hers but I'm going to keep it so my son will have it. My daughter always wanted me to keep the land. She died at an early age, so I think when I keep it it kind of reminds me of her. (South Carolina)

I started out with a small tract of land and had cattle on it. I raised cattle and bought some more land. Over the years we accumulated several tracts. As I was getting older I knew I couldn't run after cows and travel and have a good time so I started selling cattle, I sold the land, pastureland. We bought a tree farm – 265 acres of trees – all pine trees that were set out in 1981. This past spring I reset it and as luck would have it, got plenty of rain so they're living. I'm real proud of that. Somebody said, "Why are you setting out trees at your age?" I said, "What do you mean? They'll be ready to harvest when I'm 98 and I'm planning on being here." It's for the kids and grandkids and all that stuff. (Texas)

- Country life – a better place to live and raise children. The country is more wholesome, less materialistic, safer and has a better education system than city/town life, several respondents insisted. In a sense, it is seen as a more nurturing environment. The desire to instill solid values and a love of nature in children motivated several owners to move to the country. They hope the next generation will have wonderful childhood memories to look back on, just as they do.

When my daughter started school there were four kindergarten classes that were full in Western elementary so I said we're going to get out of here. We moved out there and bought land and built the house. I didn't feel the kids were getting the right attention and stuff in that atmosphere so I took them back to the country. That's where I grew up. I'm just happier out there [with] less neighbors close by. When I first bought my place I bought five acres. Then a guy bought three acres and built just down the road from me so then I bought the other ten between us. Didn't want any neighbors getting any closer than that. Little solitude was good for me. (Wisconsin)

Where we were living at [in the city], there's so many crack addicts and drug addicts stealing all your stuff. We said we'll get back in the country and put a gate up and no one can bother us back there. We just wanted the security of just living in nature, living back in the woods without anyone looking at you and bothering you. We wanted to be able to keep the nature there for the animals and for our daughter to grow up seeing the deer and the raccoons. (South Carolina)

I wanted to raise my kids not in town but out of town. Then, too, I love the land so we built back in '56 on that 30 acres of land. We tried to get across, the wife and I, to the kids you don't have to keep up with the Joneses. And we did pretty good at that. (Texas)

I was born and raised in rural Montana where there is not miles per square people but square miles to people. Started driving when I was six years old. Just the freedom. My first gun I had when I was five. It taught our children the principles of life. We had to restore the land. It was basically just logged off, so we had to go reforest it and then keep the blackberries and poison oak from taking over. It's a lot of work but it teaches you so many lessons. The children learned that your work doesn't come from "Oh yeah, I'm worth so much an hour." It's "what can you do?" (Oregon)

- Fun/recreation – hunting, fishing, four-wheeling/biking, hiking/walking and so on. Several owners purchased their land in order to have a place for these activities, which they believe promote family closeness. Enjoying the sports is also important to some absentee Uninvolved owners. (On the other side, some owners are unhappy with neighbors and strangers hunting on their land. A Wisconsin woman who posted her land said this bothered her neighbors.)

My family, my father grew up in northern Minnesota in a rural area. It was pretty impoverished back in the '30s so he moved to the cities. But we always used to recreate up on the old home place. We really enjoyed that as a family. I've got two older brothers, younger sister and we're all hunters and fisher people and active that way. We always wanted to purchase land up there but it was too expensive. You could go hunt on anybody's land back in the '60s and '70s. That all began to change and I thought if I want to do what I enjoy – hunting and getting out and recreating in the outdoors – I'd have to purchase some land. So my wife and I did that. (Wisconsin)

[Hunters] don't know where they're at and they don't care where they're shooting. At least we are safe and secure. Coming to the country, it was like a free for all. You want to be neighborly and you let everybody hunt on your land. Once we came, it was like a major battle. That first hunting season everybody was pounding on our door – “this is the way it's been for 20 years. Everybody's been allowed to hunt.” Not anymore. We were the first neighbors in the neighborhood to post our land. They didn't like it initially. But then the other neighbors who have been generational families there [did it too]. “Oh, if it's okay for you to do – you mean I can really do that?” Yeah, you could have done it years ago but they didn't have the backbone to tell the other neighbors to stay out with their big groups. It gets dangerous. You see masses of orange. You see all the city people infiltrating in. Anything that moves, they shoot, whether it's their property or not. Now the deer population right where we are is down to nothing because of all the violating that has happened. (Wisconsin)

We don't live on it; it's adjacent to a deer lease we have. It's close to some new things going in and we just probably will build out there eventually. [We bought it because of] its location. We go out there and we shoot skeet and ride the four-wheelers and dirt bikes and we just have fun. There's a little pond on the deer lease that they stock with fish. They built a little cabin and they play cards and stuff, my husband and his friends and the kids. We cook out there. It's our vacation, I guess. That's where we go. (Texas)

- Investment – making money on a possible sale or, less tangibly, owing the land for its future value. Interestingly, a number of respondents who talked about “investment” said they have no intentions of selling but, instead, they think about the land's worth to their heirs years from now.

We bought it as a good investment for our kids. We have two teenage boys. I guess to leave to them. They could do what they want to with it. Because we'll probably be broke and at least that might be worth something. (Texas)

It is an investment. As much as you love the scenery and the trees and hugging them and everything it's still an investment. [That you can sell?] Yeah, definitely. (Oregon)

- Income – either as a major or secondary source of income; sometimes money that helps to pay off taxes. Sources mentioned most are working farms with various types of crops and animals, and sales of timber. Others include renting/leasing out portions of the land for people to live or hunt on, a commercial gravel bank and, more recent types like carbon offsets and cell phone towers.

I timber, I farm. I lease it out. I have hunting land. The farmland, I let somebody farm it because that pays the taxes, number one, and it keeps it clear. They just stripped the whole thing and then they replant the pines and whatever you want. (South Carolina)

The mixture of motivations and feelings comes through in these comments:

Privacy and seclusion were important to us but at the same time we certainly wanted to be part of local community life. We became active in town affairs and so on. Love of nature was a very important drive. You're in the woods, you're surrounded by nature. It's important for my health, it's important for my spiritual development, my sense of well-being. Aesthetically, I find nature a source of beauty. Quiet is certainly important. Contact with wildlife. All of those things. (Massachusetts)

The main reason why we bought the land we live on from my mother-in-law was my husband's dad built the house in the year he was born so it had a lot of sentimental value to him. Because he was important to me it became important to me also. We're about two minutes from here but it's completely like you can't see, hear. We have no neighbors immediately next to us. We see the deer and the turkeys were flying over my head. I feel like I live out in the woods but I'm two minutes down the street. I always lived in a tight space and the neighbors weren't always the nicest neighbors. It's just nice that my kids can run around and be as loud as they want. They can explore, they can do all those kind of things. (Massachusetts)

We harvest some of the hardwood off of [the land] when the trees were getting too big. Otherwise it's mainly kept for enjoyment and it's going to go to my five nephews. I enjoy not having any neighbor – or used to enjoy not having a neighbor closer than a mile away. Now they're about an eighth-mile away. There's a family moving in so that'll be different. We hunt on the land and we can go fishing if we want to. All five of the young great nephews actually love going out in the woods and taking the dogs out. That's good place for them to run. (Wisconsin)

I have a family farm that I refer to as my great escape. I enjoy the land, I love to hunt, I love to hunt both turkey and dinner. I feed a lot more than I harvest. The property is approximately 800 acres. It used to belong to my great-great-grandfather and through a couple of inheritances was split up. Fortunately, about five years ago I was able to buy my cousin's interest out and put the old farm back together again, which was a wonderful accomplishment for me in my eyes. It will never be sold. (South Carolina)

My husband, it was his idea to move because he was born in that area and he was brought up in the country. We was living in town. We've got twin girls and they were about seven years old and he just thought it would be nice to bring them up in the country. Just good for your mind and soul to be in the country, he thinks. Plus it's a good investment out there, too. The land's going up –it's top dollar out there. (South Carolina)

We've had [the property] for almost 50 years. It's a good investment and we wanted lake property. It was very reasonable at the time so that's why we bought two pieces. One we bought primarily for deer hunting. And you can grow timber so it's a twofold thing. [The other] property was strictly for investment because they're on the lake. One piece of that I own with my son since my husband passed. We've had it for about ten years so we're just holding onto it for the time being. (South Carolina)

You can't buy land again. My mother always told us that. Always have some place to put your rear end of your own. So that's why we bought the three acres and built the house on [it]. And I don't care about living in the city too much. I don't like people living on top of my head. I have to endure everything they endure. Our children were grown when we bought this house out here but I have grandchildren that can enjoy it. (South Carolina)

I was raised up on a farm [and] that was a pretty hard life. I was raised there with my grandfather tending his property. As a young person I could see where if he didn't own the land it was awful hard to pick cotton or do anything so I became a barber. After that I kind of looked for a place. I also felt that was a good investment. I am in business with my two kids, daughter and son. I'm a haircutter. Both of them love to hunt and fish so that's another reason I hang onto it. And I do hang onto it for their benefit for later, too. (South Carolina)

I grew up in the city. [My husband] said, "We need to invest and buy some land." My land is in the very front of the quarry which has been closed for 25 years now. I know – I hope anyway – I'll never have neighbors behind me. Me and my husband have four children, four grandchildren. Our children love to come from the city out to the country so that they can just enjoy country life. I go back to my parents and I'm a nervous wreck before I can get back to the country. Because it's just so calm, cool and collected out there. I feel like we live in deer country and it's their land because I can sit anywhere between six and eight o'clock at night and watch anywhere between nine to 15 deer daily eat the corn that we put out every night for them. I don't like it whenever my stepsons come out there to hunt because I feel like they're killing my pets that I feed year after year after year. We have to wait sometimes at the top of our driveway to be able to let the deer go by so we can get down our driveway. It's a blessing to be able to be out there. I wouldn't ever want to sell it. If anything, I want to buy more land. (South Carolina)

I've always wanted to live out in the country. I was raised in Dallas. I'm a city boy. My wife was kind of surprised when she found out. But I just thoroughly enjoyed visiting my grandparents and my uncles as a child. I think it's a fool's errand to run the cattle like I do but you can sell the cows, where you've got to wait a good 20 years for the trees. Your neighbors aren't so close. You just do your own thing. You feel like doing some target practice with your pistols or rifles, you go out and do it. My daughter rides her horses and I ride horses, pester the cows with the horses. It's just a real nice life. I never made any money on it but it's not too bad. (Texas)

It has a sense of privacy. We can't see any of our neighbors. It's not secluded because we're this close to town. It is all wooded terrain and my focus is riding horses so we've made a million trails to the place. It offers me and my husband just to ride out the back door or go hiking or walking. It's like heaven. (Oregon)

I'm a sculptor basically. I wanted to be inspired by nature and live reclusively and just be. Go for walks. When I was done with my sculpture I could go out to the forest and rejuvenate, get different ideas. Raised pretty much domestic animals. Just all timbered. I live there by myself with two kitties. Been a real inspiration to me. Being able to give back and plant trees. Makes a difference here [head], makes a difference here [heart], makes a difference here [pocket]. (Oregon)

We wanted to live in a beautiful setting and have a little simpler life, coming from Southern California, the suburbs. My husband was a policeman and he wanted a more family-oriented department. My favorite experience as a child was buying a Christmas tree for my dad. Now to me it's heavenly – to have my own forest is amazing to me. I'm a writer and I need privacy to write, and get inspired with the beauty around me. I'm a very visual person. The wonder of it to me is that you have a crop you can harvest occasionally. I've used my home as a shelter for needy people. It's a large country home and I've taken in foster children and I have care home for elderly widows. It's idyllic for them. (Oregon)

2. How Owners Talk About Their Land

Unaided

When asked to describe their land in their introductions, landowners often just talked about “land.” The parts with trees were most frequently referred to as “woods,” “wooded areas,” “timber” or, simply, said they have “trees.” Often respondents did not mention these areas, however, unless they were probed to provide more description of their land. The word “woodlot” was used by a few to describe small areas of trees for specific purposes like firewood. Wooded areas were contrasted with areas described as “fields,” “pasture,” “swamp” and “marshland.”

Terminology List

Given a list of words and phrases, respondents were asked to “write down what comes to mind for you” for each, and then to discuss their reactions. In most of the focus groups, terms were probed in related sets.

Descriptions of the land

- **“Forests”** – typically thought of as “large areas” with “lots of trees,” such as the national parks owned by the government. Most respondents did not think of forests as the trees on their property. Except in Oregon, forests are seen as located in another region – out West or, to South Carolinians, the North. Landowners seem to believe that the national forests need to be “protected,” but they do not think of their own land as having such importance.

Other associations in the written comments include the environment (fresh air, natural area, plants), beautiful scenery, wildlife, uncut woods (“woodland life left alone to develop at its own pace”), select cutting/harvesting, quiet/peacefulness, recreation (hunting, hiking). Strongly positive feelings came through in a few written comments: “love them and understand the economic value – good word! neat, adventure, natural.”

We call our land “woods.” When I think of “forest” I think of like Yellowstone and national forests and things that people planted or never touched. (Wisconsin)

[The word] conjures up visions of Disneyland with the little creatures running around, Bambi. (South Carolina)

“Forest” isn’t too clear a word that too many people in the South use. Where we are it’s “over there in the woods.” (South Carolina)

I don’t have quite enough land to have a forest. “Forest” is, I think, more of a regional description. (Texas)

- **“Family forests”** – land that is privately owned “by the family as opposed to timber companies,” usually smaller acreage. The land is “managed primarily to

meet family needs including sentimental 'well-being' type needs," one owner wrote.

Owners' personal identification with the term was mixed. Some respondents thought it applies to them ("what our family accomplished," "myself," "I love mine and will manage it well"). Others did not relate to the term because of the word "forests."

The term evoked warm feelings for some owners ("belonging, history, relationship with land," "nice to own," "sharing with loved ones," "great place to live and grow up"). The importance of preserving this type of land was emphasized by some owners ("should be protected"). A few wrote about inheritance and financial problems ("some children don't want forest lands," "you do not make a living by selling forests in most instances," "taxes may drive people to sell").

Privately-held land seems to be thought of as a minority of the total U.S. land. Family owners, especially those with fewer than 100 acres, see themselves as very small, not realizing that as a group they own more land than the government.

A lot of these people [in the focus group] come from farms that have been in their families for years and I just think that's kind of nice that they keep passing that down.
(Wisconsin)

- **"Woods"** – usually "the woods," meaning the more heavily "wooded" part of owners' land or, more generally, untouched natural areas. Written descriptions include "natural growth," "diverse and older forests" "old growth, quiet, not harvested but manageable," "timberland with dense tree growth," "land that is without development." Living creatures were mentioned by several owners ("life for animals and forest," "trees, plants, moss, soil, animals, birds, insects, life," "wild, public, trails, animals, alive, recreation"). Some owners pictured the woods as vast areas ("same as forest," "large acreage of land," "forest or, as they say in Canada, the bush," "land with large trees"), although one respondent thought of a "smaller plot of land." The woods can be places for recreation, such as hiking, hunting, even golf. More broadly, one respondent said this is the "generic term encompassing forest, woodland and woodlot."

"Woods" evoked warmly positive feelings: "peaceful," "a resource that is not appreciated enough!," "beauty, wildlife, 'home,' renewable resource," "hiking, communing with nature," "place to experience peace and learn to observe," "place to have fun," "love walking and hunting in them," "place for trails for walking and enjoyment," "romantic setting."

In the written comments, only one respondent related the word to land owned ("hardwood is what I have"), while another wrote "don't have."

- **"Woodland"** – trees planted as timber to be harvested, usually not associated with owners' land. Woodland does not grow wild or as naturally as the "woods"

do ("land with wooded trees, plants, streams, animals, swamps," "a place where timber is grown and for wildlife and nature," "mixed use of harvestable and preserved timber," "land suitable for growing trees," "land covered with trees," "rolling forests," "acres of forest," "managed timberland"). One respondent specifically thought about "land after being logged."

The term did not evoke emotional associations for the most part. One owner wrote "mixed trees – enjoyment" and another thought about outdoors recreation ("to hunt, fish").

The woodlands would be like you've got trees and plants and animals and you've got streams and maybe a swamp. Snakes and turtles. (South Carolina)

In the woodland you've got your shade and your privacy from other people. (South Carolina)

- **"Woodlot"** – "a smaller patch" of wooded land, often for firewood owners use or sell. Typical descriptions include: "place where wood is stored," "specific area for wood or wooded lot," "less than five acres," "wood for fireplace or heater," "sellable, "lumber," "piece of land with nothing but wood," "land from which trees are routinely harvested," "firewood for the family," "small lot for firewood," "five to ten to twenty acres partitioned," "trees grown and managed for timber – usually one kind," "where trees are brought after being cut." "Forest" is a word several respondents used to describe a woodlot ("small forest," "small forest area for woodcutting, firewood use," "parcel that is forested"). One respondent wasn't sure of the meaning, writing simply, "wooded lot?" The financial side was mentioned by several owners ("economics, seeing woods as money/income," "to make money using land resources," "sustainable income," "commercial planning," "tree farm").

Most descriptions were impersonal, not indicating respondents' feelings. A few mentioned "home," "house spots."

Comparing the terms, some owners said they're pretty much the same, while others saw differences:

I always consider "woodland" to be an adjective – woodland animals, woodland birds. "Woodlot" is something small. "Woods" the generic description for "we left the four-wheeler in the woods because we ran out of gas." "Forest" is much bigger than woods and typically I would equate dollars with that, meaning "that forest of pines over there on the other side." (Texas)

"Forest" is a lot of land and it might be owned by a large company. "Woods" is just a lot of trees out there – pine trees, oak trees, every kind of tree – and wildlife is there. We refer to "woodlot" as where you accumulate the wood to be used for whatever purpose it was put there for, for lumber or pulp wood for paper, whatever. (Texas)

The "woods" is a mixture of all the trees and undergrowth different varieties. Whereas "forest" would be basically fir trees or a certain type. (Oregon)

Taking Care of the Land

"Conservation" and "preservation" have the same meaning to some landowners and are used interchangeably by some. However, the meanings of the words are different in important respects to other owners, especially when they are used as nouns.

- "Conservation" – action to "take care" of the land and keep it in good shape, which may include harvesting/cutting ("natural resources," "environment," "for the future," "preserve and restore nature not for \$ but value").

The importance of conservation and owner's responsibility for it were emphasized by several respondents: "essential," "freedom," "great," "importance of balance, global warming," "I'm for it!," "maintaining and improving for the betterment of the land and inhabitants," "making your land better," "preserving land for improvement (natural)," "preserving, protecting, being good stewards to make things last for future," "proper land management," "protecting land, necessary because profits for development often override," "respect for nature, need for balance," "responsibility of the owner, like owning a pet," "there is care and upkeep to keep it healthy and beautiful," "saving the land – all landowners should keep this in mind," "wise use of land so it remains healthy and provides for you perpetually." One owner wrote pessimistically that conservation is "a lost cause in this culture."

Associations with regulations also came up, some of them neutral, others clearly critical: "land use restriction, DNR," "easement," "needed but don't over-regulate," "work with landowners to preserve," "regulatory framework," "restriction," "this I feel is necessary but not to the degree of losing control of private ownership," "widely varying interpretations of existing laws!"

Having spent a few sessions on the conservation commission at Amherst, when I think of the word "conservation," I think of all the regulations there are. (Massachusetts)

If you're working land it can get to the point where you really don't know whether to turn around or not. God help you if anybody found a spotted turtle somewhere because it would wipe out half your farm. As a matter fact, it's been jokingly mentioned that if you wanted to stop a development somewhere, if you could find a turtle and move it in you could stop that development entirely. (Massachusetts)

That's a word from grade school. To me it means taking care of all our natural resources for our future. (Wisconsin)

On your conservation you can get help from the federal government because that's to preserve the land, not let it wash away. Improve upon it, build a pond on it to keep the land from washing away. (Texas)

- **“Preservation”** – “saving” the trees/woodland through maintenance. The term arouses polarized feelings, although when used as a verb, “preserving” the land seems to be well accepted.

Some descriptions of the term do imply action: “taking care of,” “keeping,” “protecting” and “managing” the land (“protection of forests from development,” “keeping the natural environment,” “maintaining health and current condition of property or things,” “keeping things in good shape,” “keep the land the way you want it”). Going further, a few owners mentioned “protecting by buying rights” and “land trusts.”

Support for the idea of preservation came through in several written comments: “badly needed,” “wonderful,” “needed!,” “important to keep for enjoyment,” “freedom,” “what we need more of,” “security,” “stewardship,” “appreciation for nature, long-term respect,” guardian of environment “broad minded/scoped/big picture.” Some owners were thinking of government-owned land rather than their own (“old growth on public land should be protected,” “Yellowstone, natural forests”). Legacy connotations are strong for some: “saving for future generations,” “respect for the past,” “holding in trust future generations,” “give it to your kids better than your profit.”

“Preservation” is controversial because some owners think it refers to “more of a hands-off approach of conservation.” The “purist” view that owners should keep their land as is drew criticism (“a question because what if your woods started as meadow, so would cutting it down be preserving its original form?,” “folly?”). Ideas on preventing forest fires has been reversed, some noted (Smokey notwithstanding).

Environmental groups talk more about “preserving” something. They call themselves “preservationists” instead of “conservationists.” They’re more of a hands-off type people. They see a patch of forest and they don’t want to do anything to it; they want to just keep it in its natural state. That may or may not be how the land normally would have progressed because in the past you had fires which periodically burned out West and nowadays we don’t have that. When you preserve land in the strictest sense of what the preservationists talk about it’s really not a natural state. It’s not such a good idea in the case of wildfire. With what they did with Yellowstone and the fires in 1988, the land was not allowed to go through its natural fire process. Back in the 1800s they prevented fire at all costs. We’ve learned a lot more now and we’ve learned that you need fire to maintain a healthy forest. What happened is you had a build-up for 100 years in Yellowstone and when it did burn it was catastrophic. (Wisconsin)

If you want to preserve your land, you might as well take a picture. Because no matter if you manage it or if you don’t, it ain’t gonna stay the same. (Wisconsin)

Keeping it more or less as it is. Don’t go in and clear-cut it. I can’t even think about ever clear-cutting my place, our place. We preserve what we have and try to make it better for the future. And hopefully make a few dollars along the way. (Texas)

There’s a group called the Thousand Friends of Oregon that have already indirectly told me that I can’t do certain things on the property. Public lands, I believe that should be

preserved. But I don't believe my property [should be]. I think it should be managed. I don't think that I have to leave those trees there for a hundred years. I've put in like 34,000 trees. I think there has to be a balance. You can plant trees but you need to be able to harvest those trees when the time comes. (Oregon)

Comments comparing "conservation" and "preservation" include:

If you just let it keep growing up and just preserve it in that [way], it's almost useless. I don't think you're moving forward. The conservation part of it to me means I cut in my woods steady, I burn wood, I cut carefully. I remove dead stuff and I try to clear out in between trees so they've got room to grow. I also plant trees. I try to get my woods to grow out, also. I like the conservation idea better than just leaving it alone. It's ongoing. I'm always out in the woods cutting wood. I don't just pick on one area so that I end up with a big bare spot; I try to move around and clean up as much as I can. (Wisconsin)

When I thought of "preservation," I thought of national forests and something a little bit bigger. Preserving something that people aren't allowed to do much on besides recreation. ["Conservation" means] the act of taking care of it and "preservation" more not touching it, doing anything that's going to harm it. (Wisconsin)

I take "preservation" as a permanent act, as opposed to "conservation," which is enhancing what you have, taking proper, conscientious and professional care of what you have. (South Carolina)

I think they're distinctly different. "Preservation" had the concept of we must keep it exactly like it is, like for example, the preservation of Big Ben National Park, even though exactly how it is isn't how it was 200 years ago. Excessive and overgrazing and such made it what it is today. "Conservation" is more along the lines of preventing soil erosion, sustainable development. For example, you plant pine trees, you thin them, then you cut them then you plant again. The cycle goes over and over. (Texas)

When you preserve your land, you keep all the cities and towns and all from moving in and taking away all the land. All the wild animals and everything will be gone if they [do that]. "Conservation" is caring for the land – prevent anything from destroying it. (Texas)

- **"Forestry"** – the study/science of and responsible care of trees/land ("working to make better quality trees"), particularly larger areas ("tree farm," "lots of trees"). Smokey the Bear, a symbol of care, was mentioned by one owner. Cutting drew a few written comments ("remove brush, trees as necessary," "planned cutting of trees," "logging"). Financial benefits to owners or corporations came up ("can be a way to make an income," "maximizing \$\$ for big business").

On the whole, the written comments were more detached and impersonal than those for several other terms; respondents also did not bring up the word "forestry" as one they have strong feelings about in the discussions.

- **"Forest health"** – taking care of the woods, thinning them in order to have healthy, disease-free trees. Both method and end results are associated with the term ("harvest necessary timber for good future growth," "harvesting the poorer

trees or wind-damaged trees, leaving the healthier ones to grow more," "maintaining development of the forest that enhances its growth for the purpose intended by the owner"). Other positive associations include good "management" ("mindful, intelligent, conservation-based management," "managed to maintain optimal tree health/growth regeneration"), environmental health/clean air and water, and "diversity" of tree types.

The importance of forest health was emphasized by some landowners: "if you do not take care of the forests, the country eventually dies!," "public needs to be educated to wildlife realities!," "we don't do enough," "threatened by global warming." For a few respondents the term has negative connotations of "forest management, clear-cut, undesirable," and the use of "spray" by a utility company.

A woods that is pretty clean of undergrowth because you've got junk trees that come up all the time. You want to get rid of your old trees and your crippled trees, your scarred trees and stuff like that and keep your healthy ones going. (Wisconsin)

I think of the rainforest. I'm not thinking of local really here. All this stuff about the rainforest and it's going to disappear and it's a horrible thing. (Texas)

I've had to fight with the electric company because there's a power line across [our land]. They keep wanting to fly over and spray it and everything. I put a stop to them doing that. I have three creeks that merge together on the lower part of my place. They spray all that, it gets to the fish, it kills the fish. I won't allow it. (Texas)

If you let trees stay too long sometimes a disease gets in and it ruins your forest. You have to have that forest man that comes in to cut trees every so often to check the forest out to see which trees need to come down. (South Carolina)

- "Stewardship" – owners' responsibility" to care for the land in a pro-active way that typically includes some harvesting. Strong feelings some owners have about the importance of stewardship came through: "you're a conservator of the land," "keeper of God's land," "making it better for future use, next generation," "I want to be the best at this. God said!," "management of land that is sustainable and protective of environment," "taking care of land for future generations." Other positive associations include "friend of the environment," "respectful, wise custodianship of natural resources." Several Model Owners spontaneously used the word; they take personal pride in seeing themselves and being seen as good stewards of their land.

"Stewards" (meaning foresters) were criticized by a few respondents for being "greedy" in choosing trees for cutting and for damaging trees in harvesting.

Wood's a beautiful, useful material. It will take several generations to really work a forest. Someone has to go out and pick a little bit and pick a little bit here and a little bit there. Leave the best trees to grow and the dead ones and the diseased ones. I really enjoy thinking about the future of harvesting some of the trees that I leave behind. I hope that my daughter can continue to work in the woods. Although she probably won't. (Massachusetts)

I owned my 80 acres where my hunting shack was on I had a steward come in there and mark all the trees and cut out only the poor trees. But what the forestry wanted – I believe it's one tree every 12 or 20 feet – [was] to cut everything else out but I wouldn't allow it. The forestry preservation act would be great if the steward wasn't greedy because he's getting 10% of the product. If he can go and cut the woods down to nothing he's the one that's coming out ahead, not the landowners. The steward got more money out of it than what I did. (Wisconsin)

By the time the steward marks the trees and they come in with the big harvest equipment, they damaged more trees by taking out the big trees with the wind that we've had any small tree is blown over, so you have to go and cut them out in order to go and keep a healthy forest. What got me, they come in with the big equipment, then you have ruts three feet deep. They make no effort to go and level them out. (Wisconsin)

The man I bought this tree farm from came back to East Texas [a few later and] wanted to go out to the farm. And I wanted him to. We were driving through the woods and he kind of teared up. He said, "Well, Ken you've been a good steward of this place." To me that pretty well hit it. I improved it some it looked better than when he left it. He was so happy. And he's passed away now but he said, "you've been a good steward." (Texas)

You can't ignore timber here in Oregon so you have to do some stewardship in order to keep it. You have to do it. You're a conservator of the land that you're on so you have a certain stewardship that you owe for that land. (Oregon)

- **"Sustainable management"** – also refers to taking good care of the land, but with less resonance than "stewardship." Descriptions included: "ownership," "fees," "practices that can continue over very long term," "using natural products in a way that they regenerate themselves" "investment," "managing trees." Less expected, one owner wrote "lumber industry." Harvesting is part of this kind of management ("planned cutting for re-growth," "logging every 10 to 15 years"). Financial benefit was mentioned by one owner ("planned management to preserve and produce income"). Other terms on the list were sometimes used to explain this one: "a plan either brought about by a tax incentive or just good stewardship by owner," "wise use so forest can continue to produce and remain healthy," "healthy forest."

Several owners wrote positive associations: "to protect, preserve for the future," "maintain proper growth," "keeping it beautiful and productive," "for the good of the community," "is needed," "good concept to protect forests for future," "smart," "what we need – forests can't just be a hobby."

Negatively, "sustainable" and "sustainability" are considered "buzzwords/spin," vague or pretentious jargon. Several respondents said they don't know what the term means. More highly educated owners are familiar with the terms but a number find them distinctly annoying. A few Model Owners did use the words, however.

The "management" part of the phrase drew divided reactions. Model Owners were more likely to talk about "managing" their land and/or having a

"management plan." Negatively, the word triggers associations with owners *being* managed by outside forces, specifically government rules dictating what owners can and cannot do. Landowners, as mentioned, are adamantly opposed to anything they feel threatens their personal control.

To sustain the beauty that we found the land in to me is really important. Give back to it and make it more than when I got it. (Oregon)

Comments comparing the terms from the focus groups include:

"Stewardship" is like he's managing all this. "Healthy forest" is taking care of the forest that people don't burn it and drop matches. "Sustainable management" would mean a person who's on the job regularly, not just sometime doing it; to be conscientious. (South Carolina)

They're absolutely interrelated. "Sustainable management" to me equates more with "stewardship," and those two lead toward "forest health." Having a diverse amount of trees in your woods [is] a healthier forest. What does a healthy forest mean? A lot of other things can grow there and you get a lot of different kinds of wildlife. The only time you're going to find deer in the monoculture pine is when they're passing through; there's nothing for them to eat. (Texas)

["Sustainable" has] become a buzzword. I'm not sure that very many people know what it really means because it's used in so many different ways for so many different things. I mean, we're talking about organic food as being a sustainable issue. Where does that begin and end? So if you're really careful you can agree to something that you haven't a clue what was really meant by that term. I think "stewardship" was perhaps a buzzword at one time and meant the same thing. You struggle with what's stewardship and what's sustainability. (Oregon)

["Sustainable"] was more corporations, large tree-growth companies where they've got huge tracts and they might come in and log 20% at a time and go and replant that. It's an ongoing harvesting strategy. But we've got small parcels. (Oregon)

When I think of "management" I think of keeping my forest healthy by thinning it appropriately so that they're a certain distance apart so they can grow good and strong, get enough light. Making sure it's not weeded tightly around, like too much stuff stealing nourishment from the soil. To me, "conservation" and "preservation," you have to have this balance for caring for the landowner as well as the nature. If a person needs a timber crop, they should have the right to harvest it when they need it, not just because someone wants to see that forest there because it's lovely. (Oregon)

Types of People

- "Forest owner" – a mixed response in terms of owners' identification. Some associated the term to landowners generally ("anyone who owns land, trees," "person who pays the taxes") and, more directly, to people like themselves ("me," "I love being one"). A number, however, did not relate to the label, speaking impersonally about specific types of owners, such as those with "large trees," or companies rather than individual owners ("corporate, disengaged with

my values, "big outfits, maximize \$\$"). Some wondered what the term means ("property owner, investor? public ownership").

A positive image of a "responsible woodland owner" comes through to some: "people who love and protect the land," "someone who should be respected," "a special type of person – it's work that takes time but gives back." This is a "lucky individual," someone "who doesn't like the urban lifestyle."

I like "forest owner." You're the owner of it. I'm in control of it. We call our land "woods." When I think of "forest," I think of like Yellowstone and national forests and things that people planted or never touched. (Wisconsin)

I never classified [my land as] a forest. Because I've been in the Rocky Mountains – those are forests but this is just a plot of land with trees. (Wisconsin)

- **"Forester"** – a person who is professionally trained and involved in forestry ("forest management specialist, "professional forest manager," "aware, trained, forest scientist"). This can be either a state or private employee who works with/is hired by landowners advising which trees should be cut. Foresters can also recommend a good logger, directing which trees should be harvested.

Attitudes toward foresters are very mixed. On the positive side, they are seen as genuinely concerned about the forest ("noble profession," "trained professionals who develop plans to ensure the health of the forest," "caretaker of woods") and as helpful to landowners ("great person to talk to," "good person to talk to for advice," "someone to give you direction"). The university education of foresters sometimes was referred to negatively, possibly because some landowners think they come across as feeling superior.

Private/independent foresters are "ethical" and supportive; others are just interested in money for themselves or their employer ("industry flack," "promote clear-cutting"). Some are both ("care for the land but also in business and has a bottom line"). Government foresters also evoked divided reactions. Some respondents said they make sincere efforts to assist owners, while others resent their intrusion ("locally, the guy who tells you what you can or can't cut!"). Where the forestry agency has a regulatory role, such as Wisconsin, owners tend to be more suspicious.

You can have a trained forester such as the ones that graduate from the university. Those foresters, depending on their ethics, can create a managed woodlot, a managed forest where certain trees are cut, which allows other trees to grow big and then they can be cut in the future and you have sustained forestry. Or if their ethics are not so good, they can promote clear-cutting and kind of devastate the land which sometimes happens with forestry, too. It all depends on the values of the people that own the land and the professionals that might be working there. (Massachusetts)

Your average forester went to at least four years of college so they know a lot of stuff. (Wisconsin)

They would help you with the needs of your forest land. Show you what trees you should cut down and plan for your future. Most of them are pretty good. I haven't met a really bad one yet. I go to Crest Lumber Company's meeting every fall they have up there and they have a lot of foresters employed by them. If you want them to come out and work with you they don't charge you to come out. But they also would like you to sell lumber to them. They're object is to be your friend for a dollar. It doesn't cost you anything but.... (Wisconsin)

I've had no contact with these foresters at all. Only wanting to buy my land, for some timber company. (Texas)

- **"Logger"** – a person in the business of harvesting trees ("buys your timber," "harvests and transports the product to market," "cuts trees for commercial purposes"). The logger does the physical work, sometimes directed by the forester, several respondents observed. Owners sometimes confused the two terms or were unaware that a difference exists.

Attitudes toward loggers seem to be even more sharply divided than those toward foresters. Several owners trust loggers, sometimes because know these people personally ("champion of the forests," "hard-working people," "we have friends that are loggers," "we need one").

On the other side, loggers drew harsh criticism as "clear cutters" for financial reasons ("a land stripper," "crook," "outlaw," "exploiting woods for profit, "empty lands," "someone to keep a close eye on," "someone who can ruin a forest," "weirdoes, hard to get a good one," "wide variation in skills/caring, opposite of tree huggers," "only interested in what they can get out of it"). A few owners complained about loggers promising to come but failing to show up, even when they are supposedly under contract; this is both frustrating and puzzling.

We just actually had our hardwood logged just this last winter. He did actually a really good job; he did what we were looking for. We just want to kind like clear it out. There's a lot of dead stuff in there and it's very thick and we just want to have it so we can make trails and have our little guy ride his motocross bike through. We went through like four or five loggers before we got a person who would actually do it. We kept saying, "if you think it's too small, if you think it's too much hemlock." They tell us, "Oh, yeah, yeah, we're going to do it" but no one would come and do it. Finally, luckily we got somebody who did it. (Wisconsin)

A logger is a crop harvester. He's the man you want to hire when you need to get a little cash up to pay the taxes. (Oregon)

The logger is a really hard-working individual. They're usually rugged and independent. It's like a tradition in my mind of what a logger is. (Oregon)

Comments comparing foresters and loggers include:

The forester is one that helps you with your forest. We have a forester in Upster County [and] all he does is just help the landowner and gives you advice. The logger is the one that comes out and cuts it. (Texas)

A forester is a guy with a little bit more education. He's a logger that has been to school. (Texas)

[Foresters are] good for the economy. You've got to have your forester. We need him to plant the trees. Then the logger he comes through – it's just a recycling thing. (Texas)

One's to preserve the land and one to clear it. (South Carolina)

The forester – unless he's employed by the state – he or she is doing it for a commission. They don't do this just because they're good guys. And a logger is not necessarily the bad guy either. The logger is one who is paid to harvest the timber, take it to market. (South Carolina)

Opposites. For "logger," I picture the empty lot with a few little dead trees sticking up that they don't cut. We have to have lumber and we have to have the trees cut to have stuff, but I don't like to see it. It takes so long for a tree to get that big and then to see somebody cut it, it almost feels like a waste. I hate to see somebody cut a big, pretty oak tree. A forester is somebody that cares for the trees or for the land or the forest. The logger – that's his job to cut, to sell. (South Carolina)

A forester is a person that either plants or oversees and takes care of a stand of timber. A logger is a guy that comes along and cuts it down. That's his livelihood and some of them love to cut down trees. That's what they live to do. (Oregon)

Forester is the manager and the logger is the worker. (Oregon)

3. How Owners Take Care of Their Land/Trees

Model Owners and Prospect Segments

Owners interviewed ranged widely in their attitudes toward stewardship and the way care for their land, consistent with the Prime Prospect analysis conducted by SFFI and Roper.

Model Owners, the most highly committed and engaged, clearly stood out in the focus groups. They are the most passionate about the importance of taking action to keep their land in good condition or to better it, speaking eloquently of owners' "responsibility" to be "stewards of the land," to "manage" and "protect it" in order to "leave it better than I found it." "I'm pretty much a tree-hugger," an Oregon man said unabashedly.

Model owners are typically active citizens. They belong to or are leaders of local and other organizations that work to improve the community, the land and wildlife. A mix of professional and blue collar men with different education levels, they are highly knowledgeable about land issues.

You're always looking with an eye to the future. You want to maintain it so that it continues to produce perpetually. (Wisconsin)

We have three children and we're hoping that they'll divide of the land and they'll stay around there, too. There are so many reasons why we want to stay on the land. In our case, a lot of it was family tradition. I never had the chance to grow up on a farm, which I would like to have done. I felt that it was my turn to take care of the land and what a wonderful gift this is to be able to have a piece of land. I wanted to protect the land on my watch. Ever since I was a little kid I've wanted to come back to that land and finally in my old age I was able to do that. I felt it was really important to preserve land, especially small farm land because so many farms are disappearing. That's the natural environment for human beings to have this land. When I'm on the farm it's like on a cellular level this is where I'm supposed to be. The house is full of my family's history and my ghosts are all around me. I don't remember much about my kindergarten days but I do remember we had two trips up to the farm and what a joyous occasion that was. If you watch a bunch of kids come and visit your farm, how joyous they are. They suddenly explode of happiness. (Massachusetts)

It's just something that we were raised to love the land. I was always trying to say I'm going to leave it in better shape than I found it. I just think it's very important to improve the land. I'm not bragging or anything but I was voted outstanding conservationist in [my] county a couple years ago and that meant a lot to me. The fact that they recognized that I had taken care of the land by continuing to plant trees, fire lanes – and just everything you to do. (Texas)

The land needs help. You can destroy it very easy. You need to be watching the land. Rain come in and wash it away very fast. Doesn't take much to destroy the land. [It's] just a simple matter of going through checking and making sure you've got vegetation there. If you don't have no vegetation, the land's not going to be with you for long. (Texas)

I was really the only one [in my family] – it's kind of corny to say – who had a love for the land. Every time I sold a parcel it was either clear cut or paved or whatever. As I love the enjoyment of nature, seeing these critters, I was displacing them, for a very handsome profit, needless to say. I never wanted to acquire additional real estate but the thought of having the opportunity to buy my cousin's farm which adjoined me and preserve it for the enjoyment of my children and grandchildren and hopefully great grandchildren became a very strong goal of mine. Fortunately, I was able to put that particular farm back together and in some ways repair what I'd been doing with more commercial property. That just gives me to this day a wonderful enjoyment in knowing that it could be a huge impact in the area. It's a large enough piece of property to implement a game management program and provide food sources for any number – quail, wild turkey, deer, raccoons, you name it. You've got hardwoods which produce acorns; deer and turkey love acorns, so do most ducks. I plant food strips religiously every year and I feed a lot more animals than I put in the freezer. I'm not going to make any money doing it. But that's okay. That's not my goal. The farm has been in the family for over 100 years. And hopefully it'll make it another, one, two, three or four. (South Carolina)

Model Owners also realize that many other landowners are ignorant about their own woodland, even of the basics.

I know a lot of people own woods and don't know much about wood at all, even species of trees and what they have there that might be worth something and what ain't. (Wisconsin)

In contrast, a number of landowners seemed unconcerned or unaware, not understanding the concept of management. Significantly, they seem to believe that whatever they are doing to care for their land is sufficient. Beyond clearing away some brush or cutting down some trees (for reasons discussed below), it hasn't occurred to some that anything needs to be done to maintain or improve the land. If they have problems, they haven't considered that assistance may be available to them. Unlike the Model Owners, most do not go to landowner or wildlife organizations that could be useful sources of information.

Keeping in mind that respondents were not screened using the prime prospect analysis, the focus groups do provide some insights into the segments.

- Prime Prospects – described in the previous analysis as “not currently practicing good land stewardship but indicate they would like to and share certain predictive demographic and attitudinal variables with Loyals.” The qualitative research suggests these owners feel as strongly about their land as the Model Owners. The key difference is their attitude toward managing the land: they feel they are already doing the right thing to care for it (which is sometimes nothing) or do not know what the right thing is. They have no idea that they can in fact do a better job.
- Potential Defectors – “currently performing some of the desired behaviors but indicate they are losing interest in it or otherwise face obstacles, and share certain predictive demographic and attitudinal variables with Write-offs.” This

segment was difficult to discern in the focus groups, although a few owners who declared they already know all they need to know may fall into the segment.

- Write-Offs – “persons not performing the desired behaviors and who have no interest or intention of doing so.” On the opposite end of the spectrum from the Model Owners, these owners also stood out in the focus groups. Some are Supplemental Income Owners who focus on the financial side, doing what earns them money and doesn't cost them much. Long-term owners in particular sometimes came across as stubbornly entrenched in habits, resisting the idea of doing things differently.

Some Uninvolved Owners seem largely indifferent, not wanting to spend time, energy or money to fix up their land. Some seem to be fairly passive people who are not information-seekers in general. On the positive side, there may be some potential to persuade these owners to take action that will increase the value of their land for future sale or for their heirs.

Harvesting/Cutting

The idea of active management seems to be taken as a given by landowners. A number spoke of cutting they have done without in any way being defensive; none of the other landowners raised any questions about whether or not this is right to do.

Select and Clear-Cutting

“Select/selective cutting” seems to be a common practice, mentioned by respondents across the segments. Model Owners interviewed believe that “thinning” is necessary at times for forest health. Clear-cutting is considered harmful by some owners but others think it is fine if followed by replanting.

A number of owners think they are maintaining their land properly but cut the wrong trees or too many trees. For example, several talked about removing older/mature trees and hemlocks.

If they go in there and do it right, it makes a big difference. You get somebody just quick as he can get in there and get going and tearing your land up and getting machines in there. If you get somebody that goes in there and spreads that out, that's some of the best fertilizer you can get for the land when you spread it out. But so many people now, they're just in for a quick dollar; they just throw it out there and you get the snakes and everything in there. It'll pay for itself when it's done right. (Texas)

If you clear-cut it and do it the wrong way, you lose the top soil. You lose the top soil you've lost everything. That'll take many, many generations to replace. Any time you bring a skidder in it's going to make a mess but there are various ways to do [selective cutting] and various foresters that you can contract with that can do a real good job in avoiding collateral damage. (Texas)

Even the foresters disagree on the right way to manage the land, one owner said.

[I'm] always wondering about the debates that are going on about the foresters within the forest, the real forest [and] now our woodlots as to what the right management is. Some have let them go up in forest fires and some let them go up in disease and so on because of the debate of what are we managing this forest for. (Oregon)

Reasons for Cutting

- Financial – one or the only motivation for owners selling their “timber.” The money is used as income, to pay toward the purchase price and/or taxes. Long term, the cutting can be an investment that increases the land’s future value, some said.

If you want to give your land to the next generation, with the property taxes going up, people are going to have to start managing their woods better so they can keep it in the family. Take your low quality trees so your good quality trees can get a nice saw log out of it. If you got a little woodlot, it's going to be your little goldmine down the road because trees will go up in value. They're importing a lot from China and Japan. Someday there will be a shortage of wood. (Wisconsin)

- Forest health – improving the chances of smaller/newer trees to grow, removing “messy” underbrush, etc. Taking out unhealthy or mature trees, for example, increases the shade others get, some owners say. Stopping erosion received a few mentions. Again, some misinformation exists about the best way to pursue forest health.
- For the animals – more food and “shade for little critters.”

If you don't log it at all, pretty soon you've got a canopy and you haven't got a bush or a blade of grass anywhere for the bunny rabbits. If there's no bunny rabbits, the coyotes don't have anything to eat so they come out to where there are lambs. (Massachusetts)

- Beautification – for a better view, prettier scenery, a nicer driveway, etc.

- Control the types of trees – get rid of certain ones, “encourage” others.

My own woodlot [is] really not a very nice piece of land. I wanted to get rid of some of the hemlock and some of the fir and to encourage the aspen, the maple and a few of the birch that I've got. I just want a little more variety than what I've got there now. So I went in there and I did a small clear-cut where the aspen were and I cut poplar down. Now I've got thousands of poplar root suckers. The 30% opening up above where those are, so I can hopefully get some regeneration coming in. By taking out the fir and the hemlock, then I can encourage the maple and birch. (Wisconsin)

I will [take a] tract and let them selectively cut the pine off it because I didn't want pine. Because these properties had better residential potential and nobody wants a pine tree when you can have a hardwood. (South Carolina)

- Recreation – clearing paths for various activities.

We just want to kind of like clear it out. There's a lot of dead stuff in there and it's very thick and we just want to have it so we can make trails and have our little guy ride his motocross bike through and all that stuff. (Wisconsin)

- Use of the wood – cording, firewood, to build the house, make furniture.

A mixture of motivations comes through in these comments:

We do timber harvesting, partly because we needed the income but also partly because we wanted to do something positive for the land. For example, part of our land is right close to a major reservoir and part of our land kind of slopes down to some really beautiful streams that they flow into the reservoir. For years there's been a major erosion problem because the forest was so overgrown and there was no undergrowth to the forest. Just a big hemlock forest basically. So we've done logging that basically cleared out most of the hemlocks and we harvested those. Also left a lot of the debris on the ground so it would protect the soil from the run-off [and] keep ATV drivers out of there. This was kind of our way of making a little money, but also kind of protecting the land, protecting the water and making a contribution in that way. (Massachusetts)

The first place I purchased was back in the '60s. It had four-inch round trees on it and in '95 I did sell them. I cut them all down. They had grown up to what they call sheltered trees, which means that they're so tall that they cut out the lower vegetation. A lot of people don't realize that that piece of property was feeding very few animals because they couldn't reach the top of them trees. I'm sure that they have probably increased several times over since '95 since I done that. I take intervals on it and I cut some of the timber, and then a few later I'll do [more]. I don't go cut it all down at one time. It needed to be done that way. Usually it does fare better to do that – animal-wise, my pocketbook-wise for taxes and everything. (South Carolina)

Use of Foresters

Consulting with a Forester

Few of the landowners interviewed have a management plan or have ever consulted with a forester. Model Owners, of course, are more likely to seek out professional advice on which trees to cut; some Prime Prospects and Potential Defectors do as well. Out of ignorance, a few respondents said they had paid loggers to take trees, unaware that they could earn money instead.

A consultation can help landowners who are interested in selling timber, are having problems or are considering selling, Model Owners stated. Owners will make more money on their timber, which is well worth the relatively small expense. Foresters were also praised for being “really nice.”

Foresters these owners used are a mix of government workers and commercial ones. To find a forester, owners turn to friends, word-of-mouth recommendations or foresters who have approached them.

I've been to some timber stand improvement courses. Had a forester come in and mark firewood for me once. Went through the woods with him and explained to me what he was doing. I try to use his practices as I cut now. You start with the diseased and the deformed trees and cut them first. (Massachusetts)

We had a friend that was a forester. My sister, the forester and myself actually walked through the woods and marked every tree we wanted out. At that point if they [the loggers] took anything beyond those trees they either had to, number one, get our permission to take that tree or they had to pay us back double for taking a tree they weren't supposed to. (Wisconsin)

Early on when I got my property situated I sat down with a forester here at the DNR [Department of Natural Resources] office and we just went over what I had there. He laid out a plan for me and told me what I need to do and told me what kind of trees I had. He told me what to plant, to try to keep planting and bring in. I'm never going to see them as a big forest. That's going to be after me. But it's still part of the sustainable management and stewardship and forest health. I didn't want the land to sit there dormant. I got the cropland back into cropland after sitting. The land that isn't in cropland, I wanted something to happen with it. Well, I got trees happening in it now. (Wisconsin)

My husband went through and marked [trees to cut]. Then he had a friend of his with the forestry commission that he went through with him [who] was able to tell him, “This one, because it looks like this is because it's diseased and you might want to cut it out.” (Wisconsin)

I worked with [a paper company] and some of the foresters [there] were able to come out and walk along with us and pick out the trees that we needed to move out and which ones we thought we could keep in there. The last time the particular woods had been logged off was 20 years ago and there were some trees that really needed to come out. My dad

and my uncle were both loggers so I kind of had an idea but I didn't know enough about which ones I should keep and which ones I shouldn't. (Wisconsin)

We're in managed forest. You have to have a plan and everything but you can delay a cut that they recommend. You don't have to do the cuts. You can delay it if you feel you want to. They ask you exactly what you want. What do you want to get out of your plan? We told them what we wanted – wildlife and things like that. So the plan that they set up is to get what we wanted out of the land. (Wisconsin)

A close friend, he had orange trees. He left the county agent or you have a federal agency that you can get help from. He would get the information from them as to when to prune them, cut limbs off so that they'll grow larger. He didn't know that much about it but he depended upon [them]. Some people are in the business just to save the land. He planted all those trees because he was having trouble with erosion. Also the government paid for half of it for conservation, to keep the land here and make it better. (Texas)

Timber is a commodity. Before you ever go to sell it you can actually even check with the state and they will give you a version so that you almost know pretty much how it's going to be. Then you get a forester and go out and count the trees and he'll tell you how many you have that fits that category. A real good timber company or timber person, he knows which one to sell it to. A freeze that come through really took our treetops out down there bad. I didn't know whether to sell it, cut it off or what. So I did call one and he went through and he advised me what to do. I followed him out and did that. I decided not to sell it because they weren't paying you then what it was worth. (South Carolina)

I get solicitations every so often for foresters/wood procurers. I took one person up on the offer and when they told me what their fee or commission was going to be, I said I think I can do that myself. So I went to a purchaser who at the time was buying both pulp and saw timber and I said who is the most efficient, the cleanest operator you have? They gave me two names and I checked around, did some background checking on one person. The guy came in, his crew did a magnificent job, as clean a site as I could find. He gave me a real good indication of what he could get per cord of pulp and soft timber. He even named three or four different buyers and said, "This one's paying X more per cord for soft timber than these other two are." He was willing to haul it to that particular purchaser. I ended up going back to him on several different occasions after he'd done a real good job. (South Carolina)

[Foresters are] informative. Really help educate you with what you have. When we first bought the land we were from the suburbs, we knew very little about managing woodlands. We had the forestry ranger come out and tell us what the land was good for, how to keep our forest to grow healthy and have it the right spacing and everything. (Oregon)

The Extension Service would come out to your place, they'd walk it with you, they'd talk to you about gardening, talk to you about water, talk to you about bugs. Really nice. Real personable. (Oregon)

Choosing a logger based on friendship is not always the best approach, as one owner discovered. After giving his friend "first choice," he found that another logger would pay him more without charging him to look at the land.

I used one one time because I had a friend that I knew pretty good. So I gave him first choice of a piece of 48 acres. He first told me what he would pay was like \$45,000. I said let me think it over. He called me back [and said] I'll give you \$48,000. I [called another] and said, "I got a tract. What you charge me to look at it?" He said, "I won't charge you anything to go look at it. I'll be glad to look at it and tell you something." He very quickly told me, "If you'll let me sell this tract of land for you, if I don't get you \$60,000 out of it on just the timber, you won't owe me a dime. But if I get 60 or more for you, then you owe me 7%." When it was all over with he got me \$80,000. (South Carolina)

One owner reported a negative experience with a state forester.

We had problems with a state forester who was supposedly watching over a particular project. When we complained about the condition the roads were being left [in], he said it met regulations and he wouldn't do anything about it. But some of the private foresters that go in and work with you on a particular thing will do a good job. (Massachusetts)

Obstacles to Using a Forester

- Distrust – some owners do not believe foresters will give them honest, objective advice. This view reflects the confusion between professionals with and without a commercial interest in cutting trees, as well as wariness about dealing with the government. Asked if she has considered using a forester, a landowner in Wisconsin said, "I don't know, after all the problems we have with the loggers."
- Financial – consultations are assumed to be expensive. Some owners think they cannot afford the help or see no reason to spend the money. Related to this, some are concerned about their liability if a logger gets hurt working on their land.
- Lack of awareness – not knowing the options. Newer owners in particular don't know what is available to them.

A lot of our decisions on this stuff started off for really dumb reasons. We have the land because we want a pretty view. Okay, it's me. I want the cool driveway. I want all that cool stuff for my place to look nice. It's like if we start cutting down the trees to like do trails in our wood we would be like 80 years old before we actually have these trails done. Then someone said, "why don't someone to do logging?" And we're like, "you mean someone will pay us to make our trails? Awesome!" We didn't know any of that. (Wisconsin)

I've never consulted the forestry commission before. Now that I think about it, we were talking about getting some trees cut down around. We've had loggers come in and I'm just really leery [about] what they're going to do. Tear everything up. (South Carolina)

- Nothing to learn – some landowners say they have no reason to turn to an expert. They stubbornly insist they know enough, even if they consulted with a professional decades ago or never did so.

We had a lumber company years ago and my dad logged up [there] and knew the area. I was along doing stuff years ago with them, so I don't figure I have to have forest crop or a forester. I think I know enough about the trees and that that I can do it on my own. I'm 70 right now and this was [when I was] 16 already. (Wisconsin)

Role of Model Owners

Model Owners sometimes spontaneously offered advice to less knowledgeable owners. The dynamics of these interactions are useful to observe. Usually, the Model Owners were responding to others' concerns about taking care of their land, being "ripped off" by loggers, dealing with family ownership entanglements, and so on. Even with their fervor, most of the Model Owners spoke in an informative, non-lecturing way about issues like local rules, taxes, forestry resources. Their suggestions included getting multiple bids on timber sales, don't sell unless it feels right to you, pay for a consultant, use the tax rules to solidify ownership. Other owners seemed receptive to the advice, especially when it came from the more down-to-earth blue collar men. (Whether or not they actually followed up is not known.)

Some examples illustrate the dynamics. In a Massachusetts focus group, the first landowner talks about logging. The Model Owner recommends use of a "trained forester" and a way to find a good one.

My husband has rejected all of the calls that have come in and people that have come to the house to log off any parts of the land. I said why? He said because it's not worth what they leave behind. What we try to do is go in and do it ourselves. We're certainly not professionals at it. Both of us recognize that you need to do something but the alternatives are worse than what we have. [We want] to keep it more viable, to make sure that your forest keeps growing so that the big trees are able to continue to expand and get rid of the underbrush, yet still allow for the little critters that are there so that they've got places to be. I we've talked about doing a little bit more and making it cleaner. Cleaner forest, cleaner woods. Going into the fields and really working them up and getting the dead stumps out of the way, pulling out some of the rocks so that more than just the native little quadripods can walk around on it.

Have you ever talked to a forester? I used to own 120 acres that I sold and I had the land logged. I got this great forester. He would go in afterwards. There are rules and regulations on logging that you have to follow. I probably didn't get as much money as I could have gotten for it but it was logged very nicely. There's organizations like the New England Forestry Foundation and they can refer you to trained foresters. If you ask around, Charlie or I could recommend a forester who knows that a landowner like you doesn't want a big mess in the woods and maybe can recommend a logger. The forester works with the logger. I know a forester who'll say, "I would never get that logger, but this logger is okay because he's more careful." I'd strongly recommend a forester. They more than make up for whatever their fee is. They do the paperwork, they know who the reliable loggers are. In our case, the forester put out our property to bid and got several bids and got actually more money for our timber than we even imagined we would possibly get. We've had some people approach us with all kinds of deals where they were eager to harvest our wood. We got good advice to go up to the forester first and we're

glad we did because we got a good idea of what the wood was worth and got a really good price for it. We harvested the wood for sustainability. We didn't harvest everything, we left some good trees that next time. It worked out really well.

In a Wisconsin focus group, a Model Owner talked about planting trees in hopes of encouraging the same behavior among his neighbors, then suggested use of “a private consultant” to avoid rip-offs.

The land was in the family for over 100 years and I just love the farm. It's deep in my roots. Now I'm into the trees. Not like my other ancestors – they just kind of logged it off and now I'm putting back the trees. I wanted to keep the land because there was a couple of mega-farmers by me and they like to play hog and take all the land. I like to see the small farmers keep the land in the family, not all these mega-farms get it. Because when our ancestors came to this country, they wanted a little piece of land to put their house on, not one man owned it all. So I'm planting trees. I got a pond and I'm raising frogs and fish and stuff, little berries. If can show the other neighbors what I can do on my property, maybe they'll get that bug in their head to do the same thing.

Like [another respondent] here, he got ripped off on his woods, he said. I want to give some advice. When you decide to log your woods, if you don't live on your land, I would get a private consultant. You have to pay him, of course, but he would work for you and he will make sure you won't get ripped off. When you go to a mill get three bids and take the highest one. If you still don't feel comfortable, don't sell. Especially now – the market's slow. But when the time does come it goes up, get three bids and then take the highest bid.

When other respondents complained about loggers cutting more trees than they were supposed to, clear-cutting the woods, that Model Owner went on to stress the importance of a “third-party forester” who is not from a logging company. (Note: the verbatims below combine comments at different points in the focus group.)

They're slotting your woods off. So that woods ain't gonna do any good for the next 100 years that you could log it again. If you go in there and log the right way, take out the most valuable trees but leave your quality trees for a seed source, you can go back in there 10, 15 years and log again. There's still a few crook loggers you've got to watch out for. That's why it's good to talk to other landowners or feel them out and stuff.

I just want to encourage people to get a third-party forester, not somebody from the logging company. They've got their own foresters and they're going to have a little bit of bias because they're in it for the buck, what they can get out of it. Hire your own person and then your forester will work with their forester and they'll come to agreements. Industrial foresters get paid through the mill and the mill, they worry about getting wood. As a private landowner, I would definitely go with a private consultant because I'm paying him, he's got to listen to me.

Getting three bids, that's just a wise thing to do. Very wise. Loggers will come to your front door and they're going to tell you a price that's going to sound attracting but down the road you're going to find out you got the low end of the stick. Make sure you have everything in writing, absolutely everything, and that forester has to have insurance. Work with your consultant forester, DNR forester, let him know what you want because

you're the boss, you're paying this. If you don't feel comfortable, you don't have to sign it until you feel comfortable.

In a South Carolina focus group when one woman said she and her husband are considering selling their land because of financial issues, a former banker offered to help her afterwards. Invited to do so during the session, he explained that "if you have various owners of a property you can force the sale" to "clear the slate."

We're considering [selling] because the grandchildren don't live here and we have to remind them to pay the tax. We're afraid that [the land is] going to be lost to everybody.

If you'll give me about five minutes after this meeting I can describe a process to you to solve that problem. If you have various owners of a property you can force the sale. Now there are some risks inherent with that. You have to start the process, get the approval and a sale date will be established. Basically it's almost like a foreclosure. Anyone can bid on that property. You already have a beneficial interest in it. But you can force the sale of the property. It has to be advertised for a certain period of time and it is literally open for sale at the courthouse steps. The risk I mentioned [is] you've got to have in your mind what you're willing to pay for it. Unlike any of the other bidders who do not have an ownership in it, you don't have to provide an official check or cashier's check for a portion of whatever the winning bid is because you have equity in that property. It's just like an auction. Top bidder gets it, providing they can come up with the cash. They have X number of days to complete the sale and there is a period of time, I think two weeks, that would allow for that bid to be overturned. I think the overturning bid has to be at least 10% more. If it's not contested then he ends up having to buy. That will buy out all of those who haven't paid their taxes plus those who have paid their taxes. It clears the slate.

Conservation Plans

A few landowners interviewed have either signed up or are considering enrolling in a conservation restriction plan, sometimes reluctantly. This strictly limits what they can do with their land but has tax advantages. The goal of group ownership described by a Massachusetts Model Owner is to prevent over-development that would reduce forest land, rather than to benefit individual owners.

I purchased a piece of landlocked land adjacent that's also entirely wooded with a brook running through it. [It] has a conservation restriction placed on it owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. And a group of eight neighbors chipped into purchase an additional 25 acres of land across from our land that we intend to protect from development in some way. (Massachusetts)

We're thinking of [a conservancy]. My family is still trying to make decisions about that because you give up more ownership of the land. You sell building rights basically to either the town or a group of people and they give you money for it, which is wonderful, but then you no longer have those building rights. (Massachusetts)

For the most part, I think our land trusts like to see land remain in private ownership. One of our goals is to raise money – whether from foundations or donors – so that we can essentially purchase the development rights that you're talking about. That way a

family who feels they want to get some income from their land can get the income but then the land has to remain as either forest or farms. I think that has a social value for the community. (Massachusetts)

I just put my woods under managed forest land. The taxes were getting too high. When I first was given the land my taxes were \$200 on the 40 and that same 40 was up right now \$1400. I used to peel poplar and sell it to the mill to pay my taxes, now you'd be up to three semis to lay the same taxes. I really hate to get involved with the government but so far I've been quite pleased with them. (Wisconsin)

I applied for and I did get land management. For 20 years I'm locked into it. Basically I can't do much to it. (Wisconsin)

I'm at the present time considering a conservation easement. My children are co-owners and they agree with me. But it's rather lengthy. And it's not an inexpensive process to go through a conservation easement. But I don't want it developed. I don't want to see a bunch of mobile homes or houses or whatever on that property. (South Carolina)

Sources of Land Information

- **Individuals** – people owners know personally are a main source. Neighbors and other fellow owners are presumed to be both knowledgeable and honest. Some landowners also turn to friends and acquaintances involved in conservation, forestry or logging.

I work in the trucking industry and I deal with loggers every day. We're always talking about paper mills and who's taking logs and where are they getting wood from. In my group of friends, we all have woodland of some sort that we're cutting on or planting trees. (Wisconsin)

Talking to other farmers about their land, their mistakes helped me out a lot. (Oregon)

- **Government conservation offices/programs** – recommended by several Model Owners. Wisconsin owners tended to be negative to these programs, reflecting their intense dislike of the regulatory situation.

You could speak to the state conservation officers. I know quite a few of them. Matter of fact, I play golf with them. They know who leaves a mess and who doesn't leave a mess. Most of them are pretty sharp. They're college graduates, they've been around, they're good people. You ask them, they'll tell you which are the good foresters. (Massachusetts)

The Forest Stewardship program is very good. There's grant money there to help you get things started, to have people come in and look over your property and kind of give you an idea of what there is available on, say, a selective woodlot. What type of marketable timber you might have, what type of wood you might have available for just woodcutting. The program can give you an awful lot of assistance. (Massachusetts)

The Massachusetts Department of Fisheries and Wildlife has a fairly new program because they've noticed that a lot of certain species don't have the habitat, the open fields and maybe shrubberies. They've actually been paying people to mow certain areas and

maintain shrubbery to prevent land from going into full-fledged forest. Because we have plenty of forest but we don't have the amount of other types of land that they'd like to see. (Massachusetts)

The Forest Stewardship program, they actually paid for my Chapter 61 application and that's very helpful. (Massachusetts)

- Other organizations/programs – specifically for landowners, on wildlife; city council and planning commissions. A few Model Owners said they use and recommend these resources.

The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission that has a lot of programs for landowners, a lot of educational events. (Massachusetts)

The Wisconsin Woodland Owner's Association, they went after crooked loggers and stuff. I became a lifetime member. I read about them in the country paper. [Later] You guys probably think I'm gung-ho on the woods. Well, yeah, I am. I don't expect you to be like me but if you are I would join WAA. That's \$45 a year. It costs a little money but I think it's worth it because I have a lot of fun and you get a lot of information. If you wanted to make your woods prettier and if you wanted to attract more wildlife. It's not all about trees, it's about other stuff, like tax benefits, chainsaw safety. It helps you on your property, if that's what you're into. If you're a hunter, you might want to try to get more turkeys or birds or something. (Wisconsin)

- Free courses.

Clemson University extension – they've helped me before as far as knowing what to do with my soil for the garden and stuff. All their information is free. They also tested our water to know that it was real healthy and stuff. They have a place on the radio every day. (South Carolina)

Agricultural Extension Agency, Texas A&M. Answer your questions and don't cost you anything. And usually they have the right answer. (Texas)

[Oregon State University] has a lot of good programs. I went through one. I'm a master watershed steward. (Oregon)

4. Threats to Ownership

A number of owners face situations that may result in their land being given or sold to individuals or corporations uninterested in maintaining the forest land. Owners do not always think about what will happen after they sell. The issue of relinquishing control provoked a heated discussion in an Oregon session. When one woman considering selling her land talked about “the responsibility of owning a piece of the country out here,” another attacked her for not caring about the consequences.

You're in fantasyland. You're talking out of both sides of your mouth. You keep making statements that you love your quiet and your serenity. Then on the other hand you want to go sell and subdivide your property. You have no control [if you do that].

- **Offers to buy** – pressure from offers to buy the land. For owners who are financially struggling and/or getting older, these are very tempting.

If you have a piece of land, there are lots and lots of pressures on you to do something with it. To either sell it. There are so many people that want it – the state, the corporations, developers. Giant corporations are buying up land like crazy, putting farmers out of business so they can grow their corn for ethanol. Pieces of land that are private ownership are becoming scarcer and scarcer because [of the] pressures. (Massachusetts)

- **Legacy issues** – inter-generational land transfer is a major concern. As much as owners may wish to pass their land down, the next generation may not want the house or property. With today’s far-flung families, children often live at a distance and own their own homes; some don’t want the land as a primary or second home. Tax bills and maintenance expenses are financial deterrents to taking over the land. Family disagreements about selling also create problems, especially when a large number of relatives are involved. Anticipating that his children will sell his land, one man said he plans to sell “a block” himself.

My husband has property that’s his property. Not too long ago we wanted to sell some. [The family] all wanted to know their share. It’s very difficult because we’re not rich. Me, I’m working and I’m 85 years old. The tax is not that much but still every year the tax goes up. That can become expensive so I told him I think he should get rid of it and give them their share now and then he won’t have to do that again. I don’t think you have anybody else in your family that’s going to do what he’s doing and it’s going to be lost and go back to the state. It took us two years to track all the [heirs]. Someone wouldn’t sign it, they’d think we want to make money on them. It’s very difficult when it’s the heirs problem. (South Carolina)

We were contemplating selling 55 acres because it belongs to 11 different people and it’s a small amount when you consider [it]. We don’t know what these children are going to do. They’re not like we are. They’re pushing to pay the tax and you’re afraid that it’ll go like that. (South Carolina)

I have a block of like 45 acres that I’d like to sell, just to get rid of it. I have three kids and they have a lot of things and I’d like to give most of it to them. But you just keep

holding onto stuff and before they put you in the grave the kids are going to sell it anyway. (South Carolina)

One [son] already has five acres of his own and a nicer house than mine so he's not going to want [mine]. The other son, I don't know if he'd want it. They have their own life. They have their own places. He does live in the country. He wants to bring up his kids the same way that we brought them up. But he won't want my house. (Oregon)

I always felt my kids would want to inherit my house and the land just because I loved it so. But the oldest one got her own 17 acres with her own house that she likes. People's lifestyles change and the culture changes. (Oregon)

- **Financial pressures** – the cost of maintaining the land and paying rising taxes. As mentioned above, owners worry about their heirs being able to pay big tax bills.
- **Aging** – some older owners find it increasingly difficult to manage and live on their land. The seclusion they enjoyed before now means it is hard to drive (to shop, etc.), especially in winter. Losing a spouse and living alone, some think about selling or are pressured to do so for their own good.

I have several trying to pressure me into selling and move in to town. Mainly because of my age and my eyesight is getting bad. But I don't want to sell it. We worked too hard to get it. It's completely paid for. Now it's in a living trust fund where it can't be touched and it will go to my grandchildren. I have no idea what they might do [with it]. (Texas)

We came to Oregon in 1960, bought land, the place where we now have. At my age, though, now I'm looking forward to maybe getting rid of some of the land. I don't know as we want a thousand acres. I don't want the responsibility that I now have at my age. I have two son-in-laws but both of them are highly allergic to poison oak. (Oregon)

I don't foresee [selling]. Maybe 10 years. I'm 62. Seventy-two, [if] something happens to my husband, you know, I've got a big house there and stuff and everything. I can't say I'm going to stay there forever. I don't know what my life might be. (Oregon)

- **Owner control** – conservation restrictions, utility companies and eminent domain often provoke strong resentment. Government rules “dictating” to owners make some wonder if it’s worth the bother to keep their land. On the other side, a Massachusetts owner observed that the state program can be protection against “an inappropriate housing project.”

I think what the politicians need to do is educate the public. The state forest is owned by the state, and that means that every citizen of the commonwealth owns that. We need to have more pressure on the politicians just so that that pilot program really works and the towns are getting their fair revenue. Then the fact that the state owns the land isn't so bad, because the state isn't going to put in an inappropriate housing project. (Massachusetts)

We have the river going through our land and in the springtime it floods. You've got to conserve it and preserve that particular river bottom or it's gone, it washed down the river. You can't take any trees off of there unless you can pull them out of the flood plane.

You have to be real careful what you conserve and what you preserve. You can't let the land wash away by disturbing the roots. You can only move it when it's dry enough to take the whole tree over the river and out of the way. Otherwise the DNR's on you. (Wisconsin)

I got a letter from a Natural Gas Authority saying that they were planning on putting in a new transmission line. The initial shot was over a mile straight through the heart of my farm. I thought somebody had put a dagger in my heart. That was just the absolute worst possible thing that could happen. They called me and they said, "We're bringing a survey crew out there this coming week." I said, "No, you're not. Bear in mind we're hunting on this property with high-powered rifles. I don't think your surveyor's going to want to be here." We got a phone call from the surveyor and he said, "I'll wait until deer season's over with. Are you aware that we have the legal right to come on to your property to conduct a survey?" My lawyer said you can decline but they will immediately seek an order which will be granted and the sheriff will escort the survey crew to my property to make sure I don't interfere with what they're doing. I learned the hard way. (South Carolina)

- Developers – seen as a threat to private ownership and woodlands. Beyond what happens to their own land, several owners talked about the importance of preserving open space, preventing housing developments and shopping malls from taking over. Some Massachusetts respondents stated they are not "yuppies" who oppose all development, but support "industrial" low-income housing using old factories.

Developers' clear-cutting can cause problems for the wildlife. While some landowners benefit by having the displaced animals "visit" them, they also feel "sad" about the changes. These owners expressed more concern about the impact on the animals than about loss of the trees per se. (One woman hadn't thought about the cause of the visits until another respondent pointed this out.)

People can develop forests instead of just letting them grow on their own. It's not for everybody because as you get older sometimes you're not able to physically. Just like to see more stewardship programs in place. It brings more scenic property, something pleasing to the eye. I hate to see housing going in. It develops more forest and keeps out housing developments. (Massachusetts)

For those of us who are bleeding heart liberals, on the one hand, an important value is the ecology, conserving the land, conserving the nature. On the other hand, you feel for all of the housing part, that all of these poor people can't afford a house anymore. I mean, there's such a shortage of low-income housing. I wish there were more flexible ways to deal with this. I would hate to have like a traditional development on my land, but I would love to have maybe even an apartment building that would be unobtrusive and offer low-income housing. Offer the opportunity for low-income families to have this land available to them. They wouldn't have to have necessarily a bunch of cookie-cutter houses but they would have a comfortable place to live be surrounded by acres of land. (Massachusetts)

There's so many realtors just taking over by cutting down all the timber and buying all the property up. It just makes me sad. Every day there's another patch of woods that are

gone. I wish there was just something that I could say or do to tell the realtors stop. But then I tell my little girl, well, all the animals are going to be coming to our house soon. That's important to me. (South Carolina)

This year I have had deer in my back yard. That's the first time. I enjoyed watching them. I used to deer hunt but I couldn't hunt those. I have raccoons and three foxes that just bedded underneath my patio. Babies. The mama moved them there. You're right, it's just too much cutting down of the timber and the trees and the animals have no place to go.

- Carbon offsets – mentioned by a Wisconsin Model Owner. A potential source of income, this might attract buyers “from the East Coast” who would take money out of the local economy.

These factories that put all the carbon dioxide up in the air, you're going to have to buy carbon credit from forest owners. I was hearing something like \$15 an acre you could get. If you got grass, then you might get like two and a half dollars an acre. With this biomass where they're going to use trees to balance fuel – it's coming, it's real close. If people are going to be selling bio-fuel out of their trees, that's going to be a new product for us. Is people from the East Coast going to come and buy our land because they think we're making money now? If they do buy our land are they going to keep the money in our community or are they going to take that money back to the East Coast? That's another thing that we should be thinking about. (Wisconsin)

5. Reactions to the Concept Statements

“Draft messages” shown were explained to respondents as “intended to encourage landowners to have sustainable forests, that is, to take care of their land so it maintains its ecological, emotional and economic value for the long term.” Respondents were asked to rank the top three in terms of “motivating you to follow up for more information about how to take care of your woodlands,” and to cross out any statements that are negative to them. Based on feedback, some statements were modified in terms of tone or for greater clarity, and a few were added.

The Statements

Original version

1. It's wonderful to own such a beautiful, peaceful, and valuable forest. But ownership comes with responsibility. Only you can prevent clear-cutting and/or over-development.
2. Your woodlands mean a lot to you. Take a moment and think about how much it means to your family and to your community. Did you know you could preserve or even increase the value of your woodlands through a sustainability plan?
3. Your forest land is your legacy. Preserve your legacy by preserving your woodlands.
4. Managed properly, your woodlands will pay off forever rather than just once.
5. You hold a key to preserving open space in the U.S. by preventing clear-cutting and massive development.
6. You are a responsible person. The responsible thing to do as a woodlands owner is to have a forest management plan. That way, everybody wins.
7. You get a lot of satisfaction from your woodlands. They are beautiful, relaxing, colorful, full of life. Preserve that satisfaction for future generations.
8. Leave your heirs more than your woodlands – leave them a legacy.
9. To younger generations: Help your family preserve the woodlands you love for your children and grandchildren.
10. What you love about your woodlands is priceless. Find out how you can keep it that way.
11. Taking care of your woodlands will pay off forever.
12. Forest management has its benefits – tax benefits. Find out more.
13. A plan for your woodlands is a plan for the future and your legacy.

Final version

1. It's wonderful to own such beautiful, peaceful, and valuable woodlands. But ownership comes with responsibility. Help prevent unnecessary clear-cutting or over development of forest lands.
2. Your woodlands mean a lot to you, to your family and to your community. Do you know you can preserve or even increase the value of your woodlands through a sustainability plan?
3. Your forest land is your legacy. Preserve your legacy by preserving your woodlands.
4. Managed properly, your woodlands will pay off forever rather than just once.
5. You hold a key to conserving America's woodlands by helping to prevent unnecessary clear-cutting and massive development.
6. The responsible thing to do as a woodlands owner is to have a forest management plan. That way, everybody wins.
7. You get a lot of satisfaction from your woodlands. They are beautiful, relaxing, colorful, full of wildlife. Preserve that satisfaction for future generations.
8. Leave your heirs a legacy – your woodlands.
9. (To younger generations) Help your family preserve the woodlands you love for your children and grandchildren.
10. What you love about your woodlands is priceless. Find out how you can keep it that way.
11. Taking care of your woodlands will pay off forever.
12. Forest management has its benefits – tax benefits. Find out more.
13. Having a plan for your woodlands is having a plan for the future and your legacy.
14. You love your land for its beauty, wildlife, and serenity. Learn more about how taking care of it can preserve it for future generations.
15. They aren't making any more of it – your woodlands require your stewardship for future generations.
16. Wildlife help make your woodlands wonderful. Protect both with a plan to preserve your land.

Respondent Reactions

Response to the statements was quite consistent across regions. Some statements drew positive reactions, while others were ignored, rejected, or appealed only to a distinct and narrow segment of owners.

Two statements received especially positive reactions:

#7: You get a lot of satisfaction from your woodlands. They are beautiful, relaxing, colorful, full of wildlife. Preserve that satisfaction for future generations.

It just resonates with me the way I feel about our woodlands and I feel about the way we use them and the way we want our children to be able to enjoy them. (Massachusetts)

I like to spend time out there enjoying the “full of life” part of the woods. Bull hunting's my favorite season because the weather's perfect and you get to see a lot of wildlife out there. When it said “preserve that satisfaction for future generations” – yeah, I want somebody else to do that, too because I thought that was kind of cool. (Wisconsin)

I do enjoy my land and to know that I have something that I can leave for my children and my grandchildren. As a grandmother, when I see my grandkids come out there and they seem to enjoy the land and watching the deer and enjoy the creek like I do, it just makes me feel like, yeah, I've got to take care of this so I do have something to leave them. I don't have as much land as either one of the gentlemen [in the focus group] do, but at the same time I try to take good care of it. (South Carolina)

“You get a lot of satisfaction from your woodlands.” I do. I enjoy it. I enjoy going out there and hunting. “Preserve the satisfaction for future generations.” I'm with that. I think it should be preserved for future generations. Like my son – he loves to hunt. So he can go out there and hunt and do the things that he wants to do. (South Carolina)

Just the beautiful and the peacefulness out at our place. I don't believe in total clear-cutting. It has to be reforested. That does mean a lot to me. [Clear-cutting is] rape it and leave it. (Oregon)

That's why I bought the woodland, knowing that I've got 142 and park right in the middle. Just me and my animals. There's nothing more beautiful. The road's going through and you've got the canopy of trees and you hear this ruckus. And you're walking down there and all of a sudden – here's a grouse. The hen's coming down and the old cock is right after her. The deers are up there, seven or eight deer. They're right on my tomato plants and all the tomatoes are through already. I was wondering why I wasn't getting small ones. (Oregon)

#1: It's wonderful to own such beautiful, peaceful, and valuable woodlands. But ownership comes with responsibility. Help prevent unnecessary clear-cutting or over development of forest lands. (Revised from *Only you can prevent clear-cutting and/or over-development.*)

It just says that's it's beautiful and peaceful and it's valuable. Not necessary monetary valuable but it's valuable to what it means to me. If you've going to have something, you're responsible for it. (Texas)

You want to sustain the land and incumbent with that comes responsibility. If you do something, you know, you're supposed to take care of it. [Clear-cutting is] just like giving somebody something that's dilapidated. You want them to have the best. That's why I think it's necessary to sustain the land. The way of giving them something good is preserving it for them. (Texas)

Other high-ranking statements were:

#4: Managed properly, your woodlands will pay off forever rather than just once.

#5: You hold a key to conserving America's woodlands by helping to prevent unnecessary clear-cutting and massive development.

Since the concepts overlapped to some extent, it is useful to look at the various elements. When the respondent referred to a specific concept, the number is indicated in the verbatim.

- Tone – this played a major role in respondents' reactions to the concepts. Statements that owners felt lecture them, tell them what to do, have "an agenda" or are "condescending" were off-putting. Concept revisions considerably improved reactions, although some respondents criticized certain parts of later versions as well.

I put Xs by a lot of [the statements] because I felt that it was like telling [you] "do this." It's like setting you up. "Oh, the land is wonderful – you should do this with the land." For example, I dislike #2, even though I like the basic message. It says "your woodlands mean a lot to you. Take a moment to think." That's kind of insulting. Why would they assume that I don't think about my woodland? They think they're talking to a moron? I think about my land all the time. Why would they assume that? (Massachusetts)

[1] *Just hitting you over the head. "Your land is so beautiful. Only you can prevent" – it's obnoxious. (Massachusetts)*

[6] *I thought it was really condescending. It's sort of like the way you would approach the kid in a DARE program. "You're a good little boy and good little boys don't do drugs" kind of thing. (Massachusetts)*

Number 6 sounded too bossy to me, like it's telling me what you're supposed to be doing. Number 1 kind of put in a nice tone. Being responsible but being nice about it instead of telling you "if you don't do it you're not responsible." (Massachusetts)

[5] *I found it very pushy. They're coming to you with an agenda for "clear-cutting and massive development." If that's one of your goals for your property, why do they care? You can use it any way you want. (Wisconsin)*

Number 1 was my #1 choice. The one that talked about responsibility, #6, sounded too bossy to me, like it's telling me what you're supposed to be doing. Number 1 [is about] being responsible but like being nice about it instead of telling you, "If you don't do it

you're not responsible." Maybe because I just sort of agree with the reasons why you like your woodland. It had the beautiful part, it had the valuable part, then talking about ownership and preventing the destruction of those lands or whatever. (Wisconsin)

[5] seemed more emphatic and preaching "do this and do that." (Texas)

"You can leave your land better than when you got it." It's just the tone in that sentence. I thought "don't tell me what I'm going to do." (South Carolina)

Where it says "find out how you can keep it that way," I just kind of bristled. Couple of them did that. "You hold the key to preserving America's woodlots by helping prevent unnecessary clear-cutting and massive development." Those aren't the only two threats. It sounds to me like it's A Thousand Friends and they're going to take this and run with it to oppose some management plan. I'm suspicious. (Oregon)

Owners should be "educated rather than told," with "gentle approach to a landowner's use of the property," including "careful cutting," Massachusetts respondents suggested.

I think a landowner doesn't want to feel pushed around but I think a landowner needs to be awakened to the possibility that their land could be destroyed in the future and that they can take measures to protect and preserve it.

I think a lot of people are afraid to cut woods because there's a sense that they're destroying something. That there's wood around the ground, that there are branches down. It's ugly and it is hard to walk through the woods. A careful cutting, even if it does leave some slash on the ground, in a few years that slash rots and the forest grows better and faster than it did before.

I would offer it up educationally. For instance, I don't think a lot of people know about acid rain. I went out through my woods today and I looked at some trees and I'm really wondering if it's acid rain that's causing them to die. Maybe if I knew more about acid rain I could even call up somebody and [ask]. Help the landowners take better care of his property.

- Love of the land – "feel-good" descriptions hit home with a number of owners, especially those in the Woodland Retreat and Working the Land segments. They do have deep attachment to their land and derive "a lot of satisfaction" from it. Statements with strong appeal include: "it's wonderful to own such a beautiful, peaceful and valuable forest," the woodlands "are beautiful, relaxing, colorful, full of life," the "beauty, wildlife and serenity." An element in all of these is "beauty." The "dead silence" of woods without wildlife would destroy the peaceful feeling owners value so much, a South Carolina woman said.

[Being in the woods] just clears your head, clears your mind. I'm a part-time pastor and I write some sermons out there. It has a lot of meaning to me. (Wisconsin)

[If you take] a walk in the woods you hear the birds chirping, you hear the crickets, you hear the fish splashing in the little creek. You hear all the sounds of nature. Do you know what that walk would be like if you walked in there and didn't hear anything because all

of it was gone? That peaceful walk in the woods that you always took at least two or three times a week just to clear your head or get by yourself— you look forward to all the sounds of the animals. Once you take that walk in the woods and there is no sound, you don't want to walk anymore because it takes away from your peaceful time. (South Carolina)

Animals were put on the land. They were not put here by man but they were given to us by God's own hand. And we need to preserve a place for them. (South Carolina)

[2] *"Your woodlands mean a lot to you, your family and your community." When you have land you always have an investment in that land. You have to have an investment, whether it's emotional or – it also has to be a financial investment because you don't know when you're going to have to depend on that land to support you. Either by cutting trees, selling them or selling [the land]. You might have to sell it. You might have to go in a nursing home. (Oregon)*

- **Owner responsibility** – to take care of the land, "stewardship." Model Owners, of course, already believe they have such a responsibility; Prime Prospects do as well or agree when this is pointed out to them. However, the word "stewardship" would not be clear to the "average person," one woman stated.

[17] *I can't tell you how many times I've heard that saying ["they aren't making any more of" the woodlands]. Very powerful statement. Then what follows it ["your stewardship for future generations"] kind of makes you like, well, "that's true, too." Because without you and your management and guidance it could go into the wrong hands or be developed or what you don't want with it. (South Carolina)*

I still don't know if we have a clear meaning of "stewardship." I would be concerned that the average person that might have land might not know what stewardship's about. I [wrote] "I'd put another word there." "Preservation," "conservation" or something that everybody can understand. I think some of these ads go above my head and then I don't listen and then I get mad. (South Carolina)

- **Legacy/future generations** – caring for the land so it will be passed on in good condition is meaningful to a number of owners across segments. (Even some of the Uninvolved Owners want the land they inherited to go to their children.) Some responded to mentions of their direct descendants, hoping they will be remembered and not be a financial burden when they die. Others thought about the broad impact on future generations. On the other side, the idea is not meaningful to owners whose next generation merely wants to "cash in" by selling the land.

The word "legacy" evoked highly divided response. It resonated with some owners but others were put off by its "self-centered" feeling.

"Legacy" and all those other things – it was like, oh yeah, I want to put a big memorial up there for myself. I mean, that's not what I want. (Massachusetts)

[3, 13] *I like the fact that they did talk in terms of the legacy and the future. They weren't specific about you can save taxes or make money or whatever, but they expressed the importance of the fact that this was a long-term commitment. (Massachusetts)*

[9] *For my kids and grandkids. They're probably going to end up with my land. I have no intention of ever letting it get out of the family. [I think of them] going out there and hunting, enjoying the woods as a family. (Wisconsin)*

You're doing it for the future generations. Sooner or later we have to go and gotta keep it going for the next crowd. You plant that tree and somebody's going to say, "Hey, so-and-so planted that tree for us." (Wisconsin)

[3, 8] *I didn't like the legacy thing. It just bothered me. I'm not doing anything to prove anything with my property; it's just doing my part while I'm here. I teach [my children] what I do and why we do what we do. But I don't think of it as a legacy, I guess. (Wisconsin)*

"Legacy" says generation to generation, you're handing that land down. [I] feel like I'd be defaulting on my promise if I didn't leave it to them. (Texas)

[9] *"Preserve the woodlands you love for your children and grandchildren." I've got a bunch. Everything I do now I think about my children, my children, my great grandchildren. That's kind of what I'm working for right now. (Texas)*

My children and grandchildren and great grandchildren are my legacy. (Texas)

Legacy to me has more of how they remember you. Four generations hence you're just going to be an old dusty picture on the wall. (Texas)

Something about the word "legacy" is a little bit negative to me. Because the young people, they may think they're hurting you if they don't do what [your] desires are. (South Carolina)

[9] *It's a personal experience for me because the land that I have was passed to me through generations and I want to keep the legacy up. Keep the land up, the forest. They told me how hard my ancestors worked sunup to sundown. [Note: this respondent does not have children.] (South Carolina)*

[3] *"Your forest land is your legacy. Preserve your legacy by preserving your woodlands." I like that because normally people don't have much to leave for their kids or for their family members. If you've got property, wooded land or whatever, and you leave that for your family, that's something to look forward to. I don't have a whole lot of insurance. They could sell the timber off it. If they run into a little problem putting me in the ground, you got help. (South Carolina)*

[8] *I'm going to leave that to my children so they can have their children – just pass it on down. I want to keep it in the family. (South Carolina)*

There has to be someone to take care of this when the rest of us aren't here and that's going to be a future generation. I have two great grandchildren – one's a boy, one's a

girl, 3 and 1. I look at him and maybe he'll be a future generation on timber and woodlots. (Oregon)

We all love the property, it's just gorgeous. Then my step-daughter-in-law says, "All I can see is money." (Oregon)

I want to make sure that the property, that my kids can enjoy it, my grandkids can enjoy it. I want to make sure to take care of it right for them. It's the most important thing. I'm doing what God wants me to do with my land so my kids can enjoy it later. (Oregon)

I'm not as hooked into the legacy. I guess maybe it's a little different connotation – brings to mind for me having a building named after you or something. (Oregon)

It is worth quoting at length several comments from a South Carolina focus group about the importance of legacy and trust in the owners who follow.

Leaving something behind for your children. They'll look and say, "My daddy done this" or "my granddaddy was here and he was doing this at one time."

We're in the South and I think the South is about legacy. We hold on to areas, we hold on to legacy, we hold on to lineage, we hold on to land.

Sentimentality means more to Southerners than anybody else.

It's more "this person entrusted me enough to give me this. Now who am I going to entrust enough to hand it down to whenever I'm gone?"

There is nothing more greater than a pride that a Southerner carries. Because it was pushed down to them from their ancestors, from the ancestors before them, and it goes on and on and on.

Anything that you're responsible for, if you cannot be proud of it you ain't got no business with it. That's the bottom line.

With that pride comes trust. Who can I trust with what was handed down that's going to carry on.

You don't want to hand it somebody who's going to get their hands on it and once they've had their hands on it 60 days and it's legally theirs after 60 days, they're going to turn around and sell it to the first person who comes along. You don't want that.

You want to know whoever you pass whatever you have down to; you want to know that they have the same heart that you do. That they're going to hold on to it for the same reasons that you did.

- "Prevent unnecessary clear-cutting and over/massive development" – mixed response. Some owners are, as discussed, very opposed to huge housing developments and malls taking over woodlands, especially those near their own homes. And they disapprove of clear-cutting that leaves the land "empty." The addition of the word "unnecessary" resulted in more favorable reactions.

On the other side, some owners feel that clear-cutting is fine, for example, to create a wildlife preserve or when there is replanting. The “agenda” suspected behind the statement bothered one Massachusetts respondent.

[5] *The land trust can take care of that land the way that you want it to. I know a situation in my community where a widow decided to sell this land for a very significant housing project which I know that her late husband would not be happy about. If [he] had done certain things with that land while he was alive she could have been taken care of financially and would not be able to develop the land. I do think that taking advantage of organizations that provide for protecting land is a good thing.* (Massachusetts)

[1 and 5] *sounded too anti-development. It would give a wrong message to some people that everything should be saved and there's no room left to put a house anywhere. It was almost like just being anti-development period.* (Massachusetts)

[5] *Why should they tell me not to do those things? They're asking me to sign on a specific agenda of theirs and not necessarily my agenda. There may be times when clear-cutting is appropriate. If you want to create a meadow out of a block of forest to create a more diverse habitat for wildlife, then clear-cutting might be very appropriate for a particular piece of the property.* (Massachusetts)

[1] *I liked [it] just because it talked about “unnecessary clear-cutting” [and] overdevelopment of the forest lands. We're far enough in the country but you can see it coming. The way they wrote that it just softens it, saying like “clear-cutting,” not like “clear-cutting!” They're not saying every clear-cutting in the world.* (Wisconsin)

[5] *Now they're putting housing developments everywhere. What I picture when they say massive development are shopping centers.* (South Carolina)

[5] *When I came to Oregon it was sort of backwoods in the early '70s. In the last 30 years it's gone downhill in hurry. It's just nothing but overdevelopment and too many people. Too much of all the junk I was trying to get away from. It all came after me.* (Oregon)

[5] *When we moved out to where we presently live it was nothing but large farms. Used to be this paradise. [Now there] are hundreds and hundreds of extremely expensive, poorly built houses, cheek to jowl. We're seriously talking about, you know, do we have a next move left in us because it's very heartbreaking for me and my husband to see every hillside be paved over and covered with these houses.* (Oregon)

[1] *My emphasis is not “clear-cutting,” but it's “unnecessary.” If they do the whole hillside, the whole thing slides and you can't rebuild it with forest anymore.* (Oregon)

- **Financial benefits** – a small segment of Supplemental Income Owners related to statements that talked about “managing” the land in a way that will “pay off forever.” Some have made mistakes on past logging contracts and would welcome help. Most respondents, however, were unmoved by a strictly economic appeal (“I don’t think that money should be the reason”).

The word “forever” also drew scattered comments. It appealed to some owners (“a beautiful idea”) but was viewed as over-promise by others.

[4] *I think of it as sort of utility type thing, sort of paying for itself as it goes along. I like the idea of this continual harvest and that the land is productive as well as beautiful.* (Massachusetts)

[4] *“Managed properly your woodlands will pay off forever rather than just once.” I found that out when I didn't have my contract worded right that they almost clear-cut my woods. I found out too late.* (Wisconsin)

[11] *turned me off. I'm not sure who can look into the future forever and that seems a little unrealistic.* (Massachusetts)

[12] *It just sounded like the only reason you would do anything to manage your forest is to get a tax rebate.* (Massachusetts)

[4, 11] *I didn't like the word “forever.” That seemed cheesy to me. I think about my kid but I'm like, “yeah, yeah, forever. I'm not going to be around forever.” It just seemed like the word was weird.* (Wisconsin)

I think you can hit more people if you're adding all the different aspects instead of just a certain thing. Like the one that talks about taxes [12]. Don't get me wrong – it's not like I love paying taxes or anything – but it's not something that like is that meaningful to me at this point. I read that and it's like “That's for somebody who wants a tax benefit.” They're you're just hitting one segment. (Wisconsin)

“Forever” could be forever until you die or forever like for your heirs. Or till the end of time. (Texas)

[11] *Because if you manage your woods right you can do that. The last five years I probably planted 200,000 trees where I work. I'm not planting for myself. And the people that are having them planted aren't planting for themselves, it's for future generations. That's what it's all about.* (Oregon)

- **“Managing/management plan”** – references to a “plan” or a “forest management” or “sustainability plan” received support from a limited segment of owners. On the positive side, some Model Owners and others who have signed up for a plan believe that this can help owners now and in the future. They understand that the “plan” refers to harvesting and that the owner retains management control. Here too, Model Owners played a role here, explaining to other respondents what a plan is and how it can benefit them financially. The sight of the disastrous results of clear-cutting in another country, Haiti, convinced one owner that “managing your forestry” is important.

Owners who rejected this idea did not necessarily understand what such a plan would be. The term “management plan” implies limitations on what owners can do, which they strongly resent and resist. Some thought such plans are not meant for small landowners like themselves, but for ones with larger acreage or

large families. Another interpretation is that one individual is “held accountable” for managing the land.

“Sustainability” bothered some, who suggested it be replaced by a word owners will all understand.

It sounds like somebody else is going to tell us what we we’ve got to do with our land. (Massachusetts)

[2] We’re in the process of getting involved in a sustainability program and we also are thinking of our next generation down and what they are going to do with the property, so the choices I made are all basically on sustainability and maintaining. They’re interested in [the land] but at this stage of the game I’m not sure whether they’re going to be in a financial position to be able to maintain it or not. (Massachusetts)

I go to Haiti quite a bit. That had the most beautiful mahogany trees over the whole country. It was clear-cut by the French 150 years, 200 years ago and still it’s a barren island. It could be lush and beautiful. The reason is that nobody has taken the time to manage it. Even if the government manages I don’t really have a lot of problems with that because you can ruin a country by not managing your forestry. (Massachusetts)

[6] It almost sounded like you were supposed to have a managed forest plan. That’s an agenda of somebody else’s. If I don’t want a forest managed plan, I’m going to leave my woods stand there and look like crap. (Wisconsin)

One thing that the foresters really stress is having a plan. That’s pretty important. Your forester can help you with that and also some of the larger [companies] like Georgia Pacific can help you with a plan. You just write it down as to what you should do. All the way through from the setting out the trees to the harvesting. There’s three different categories. The first harvest would be pulp wood. The next harvest would be what we call chip-and-saw; that’s a little larger than pulp. Pulp would bring \$9 a ton and chip-and-saw will bring you \$30 a ton. And then the logs. Your goal is to grow a tree to grow the saw logs; that’s \$40 to \$50 a ton. [The plan says] what time a year to plant, what to do – like preparing the land for planting and spraying to keep down the underbrush. (Texas)

A “management plan” would be great if I owned a bunch of land. I would definitely check into that. But just owning ten acres I can manage. (Texas)

I think when you have a lot of land like some of these people [in the focus group] you should have a management plan. [If you have smaller acreage] you really should because especially if you have a big family. You need to sit down with each other and see what’s good. (South Carolina)

To me, a “management plan” is, first, having a trained professional, such as a wildlife biologist, do an analysis of what’s there to begin with. I can walk around and tell a red oak from a white oak. But the proper balance of those trees, what certain wildlife or what nurtures them – if I did a management program I think I would be doing myself a disservice. I think you need someone with a professional background to do [the] analysis. Then the next step would be how to enhance it or to improve it and how to continue that, be it forest growth, pasture land, wildlife plots. It’s a very complex group of issues. (South Carolina)

It's more of a harvest guide than it is actual management. There are people who do management programs for a living. They have to have some very, very specific professional backgrounds in order to have credibility. And they're not inexpensive. You're talking three to five thousand dollars for many of the studies. (South Carolina)

Whenever you're the owner of land and you have no idea how to manage it, how to keep it up, all you're really doing is killing that land because you don't know what to do to preserve it. If you have a management plan, not only do you have the knowledge to preserve your land and to keep it like it's supposed to be but you'll know when to cut the timber on it, you can find out how much money you can make by cutting the timber, how much money it'll cost to re-seed to bring the timber back on it. To keep it preserved and to keep it up. (South Carolina)

The management plan that I think of is mainly someone who can teach me how to take care of it so that it can continue to prosper, whether we cut the timber out of it or not. Someone who can be there that knows how to re-seed everything, replenish everything so that it can keep on replenishing itself and prospering for me as well as its own self. (South Carolina)

"Sustainability," that may be another one that you could use a different word. I know that it means to sustain, being able to sustain, but it's so much like the stewardship word. You really can't think fast enough. (South Carolina)

[4] *"Managing your property – it will pay off forever rather than just once." That means you keep it cultivated and everything else and managed right then you should be able to live there. If you farm it you should reap some benefit from the farming. (South Carolina)*

[6] *It's because of the mistakes that I've made. I've been there almost all my life and I made some goofs in the beginning and now I'm kind of patching them up and make it go the way I want. It's kind of like if you have a child and everybody wants a child. It's that warm, fuzzy glow until you get it – and then you'd better have a plan. (Oregon)*

Comments referring to several points respondents liked:

I've always said that you may own the rights to your property for your life but somebody is going to get that property after you leave. How you take care of it is important to them. You own [the land] and you have a responsibility and you have a future responsibility. You can use it and use it wisely but when you abuse it you're abusing future generations. (Massachusetts)

[7, 10] *We're there because we love being in the woods so we want to find out how to keep it that way, [to] be able to afford it. As a young family, we're struggling with that. It's hard to pay the taxes and upkeep and thinking about hiring a forester and those things when you're trying to buy formula and diapers. I would love to be able to not sell of a parcel but in reality that may come down to what we have to do to survive on the other two. (Massachusetts)*

6. General Information Sources

Respondents were asked to write down the “sources you use, trust in general for information, ideas and/or news, not specifically about forest issues,” with the exception of the first Massachusetts focus group. Some sources written down were just general references to the medium and a few respondents listed sources related to forestry, the topic of the focus groups. Sources listed here received one comment each unless multiple ones are indicated.

- Newspapers – mostly local papers, especially The State in South Carolina; a few mentions of national papers (The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times); the conservative Washington Times and Human Events. Several respondents read two or three newspapers.
- Television – local stations (no specific programs mentioned), local news programs; national channels – several mentions of CNN, MSNBC, Fox News, CNBC, “the majors” (CNN, ABC, CBS, NBC); specific news/information programs (Primetime, Good Morning America, Frontline, Bill Moyer’s Journal, Oprah, Nova); a few mentions of PBS (“a lot of interesting information”), including the programs just listed; cable channels (History, Discover, Disney); Discovery This Week.
- Other people – friends; family members, some with professional expertise (“first my son, a tax lawyer”); neighbors; co-workers, “support group”; financial advisor.
- Magazines – a few mentions each for Mother Jones, Mother Earth News, National Geographic, news weeklies (Time, Newsweek, US News & World Report), regional magazines (Southern Living, Ruralite), AARP magazines; one mention each of Good Housekeeping, Harper’s, “Home and Garden,” Prevention, Reader’s Digest, RFD (gay country lifestyle), Self, Smithsonian, The Nation, Vanity Fair.
- The Internet – search engines (Yahoo!, Google), FTC (may be a site on environmental sustainability), local TV and radio station websites, state information, Drudge Report, Dogpile, BBC News, Watchingamerica.com.
- Outdoor/forestry publications – Gazette Wildlife, Forestry, Field & Stream, Birds & Blooms, Wisconsin Outdoor News (a few mentions), Woodland Management, Tree Farm, Countryside.
- Farm/land media – Wisconsin State Farmer Magazine (several mentions), radio farm news, Farmland Preservation from the University of Wisconsin Madison, Farmer’s Almanac, agricultural websites, Lincoln County Beef Producers (Wisconsin), landscaping books, Farmland Preservation magazine (UW-Madison), Country Today newspaper, grassfarmer.com, Western Farm Service.

- Government/community agencies – Department of Health and Environmental Control (South Carolina), Highway Department, fire department, county agent, federal agent, county park department, Farm Credit Services (Wisconsin), Oregon State Council (including its website), Clackamas County Resources
- Forestry agencies/organizations/professionals – Texas foresters, Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association, Northwester Management Woodlands, intranet news on woods producers, “Department for Forestry” (Oregon), land use consultant.
- Groups/organizations – church and church groups, community meetings, Chamber of Commerce.
- Radio – various local stations; several mentions of NPR; “talk radio”; Democracy Now!; WWDM (adult urban) newsletter.
- Conservation organizations – Sierra Club, NRCD, Water Watch.
- Education – local, state colleges, extension (several mentions); logging seminars.

7. Groups and Organizations

Respondents were asked to list the names of “any groups, organizations, clubs, etc. you belong to/attend locally.” As would be expected, a wide range of groups were named. A few respondents wrote “none.”

- Land/animal/water conservation – Audubon Society, Ducks Unlimited, Coastal Conservation, Sierra Club, Wild Turkey Federation, CCA Texas (marine fisheries conservation), Whitetails Unlimited, Winyah Indigo Society, National Arbor Day, Kettle Creek Conservation Authority (South Carolina), Willamette River Task Force, 1000 Friends of Oregon, Oregon Natural Resource Council, UNITE Conservation Group, American Public Health Association, American Whitewater, Trust for Public Land, Mohawk Trail Association, Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, National Resources Defense Council, Friends of Green River.
- Animal organizations/groups (farm and other) – American Angus, Zoo Walkers, Zoo Society, Humane Society, Lincoln County Beef Producers, horse associations (Horsemasters, American Miniature Horse Association, Appaloosa Horse Club, American Quarter Horse Association), American Animal Hospital Association, dog organizations (Oregon Boxer Club, Kennel Club, AKC), American Livestock Breeds Conservancy, American Livestock Breeds Conservancy.
- Forestry/landowner – East Texas Landowners Association, Wisconsin Woodland Owner Association, Walnut Council, “forestry meetings,” loggers conference, Town Land Committee.
- Farm – Future Farmers of America/FFA Alumni, Farm Bureau (several mentions), 4-H, Wisconsin Ginseng Growers Association, Northeast Organic Farming Association.
- Civic/community/volunteer – community planning organization/board (several mentions), city council, school council, city meetings, fire department, local Board of Health, town finance committee, local library, local history project, Chamber of Commerce, Good Neighbors (surplus food distribution group), Aspires Volunteer Organization, Clackamas Cultural Coalition.
- Religious – several mentioned churches; also church groups, women’s group at church, church dinners.
- Health/medical – Alzheimer’s, autism, cancer/breast cancer, diabetes, MS, Medical Reserve Corps, hospital volunteer.
- Social/hobby – Cub Scouts, Red Hat, State Genealogical Society, Harley Owners, Hand Weavers, senior club, military reunions, high school reunions, men’s club, square dance club, Mensa, radio club, restaurant meals, running group.

- Fraternal – Knights of Columbus, Elks, Moose, VFW/veteran group, Lions.
- Gun/hunting – National Rifle Association (several mentions), North American Hunting/Fishing Club.
- Political/other – Civic Democratic meetings, county Democrats, moveon.org, American Family Association, Taxpayers United, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, American Civil Liberties Union.

Professional and work-related organizations were mentioned by a few respondents; early intervention came up once.