WOODLAND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT—OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOODS WORK

Center for Private Forests at Penn State

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An Overview

- Getting perspective
  - Discussions, decisions, and findings

- Examples

- Planning for the future

- Resources for Entrepreneurs
Hardwoods in the Keystone State

- Forest products industry: $11.5 billion per year
  - Furniture, cabinetry, millwork
- Markets hard to predict
- Industry has been focusing on overseas market
- Low-value wood
  - By-products
  - Privately owned woods
    - Currently not a robust market
Hardwoods in the Keystone State

Millions of Board Feet: 1955-2014
(Standing Saw Timber Only)

Source: Hardwoods Development Council
PA Green Ribbon Task Force

- October 2016
  - [www.dcnr.pa.gov](http://www.dcnr.pa.gov)
- Workforce issues
- Initiatives:
  - Supporting loggers in recruitment and upgrades
  - Incubating new opps for makers and manufacturers
  - What’s good for the woods is good for new opportunities
Opportunities for a shift

- What’s good for the woods...
- Invasive plants
- Regeneration
- Stand improvement
Landowner Needs

“What do I do first?”

Finding money to do work

Finding time to do work

Maintaining healthy forest

Barriers to successful regeneration

Restoring degraded woods

Negotiating a timber sale

“How will my woodland be cared for in the future?”

“What do I do first?”

Finding people to do the work

Barriers to successful regeneration

Competing vegetation

Controlling deer impact

Restoring degraded woods

Negotiating a timber sale

“How will my woodland be cared for in the future?”

“What do I do first?”
How Do We Adapt?

- Newly emerging market
- Discovering and growing niche markets

- Adding value to wood
- Providing services
Adding Value by Forest Farming

- Modifying forest canopy in order to cultivate a “crop”
- Utilizing materials removed in process of forest stand improvement

Photo: Leslie Horner
Forest Farming

- Food—fruits, nuts, mushrooms, syrups, seasonings
- Medicinal—mushrooms, roots, teas, tinctures
Adding Value to “Other” Woods

- Forest improvement
- Decoration—flowers and dried berries
- Crafts—wreaths, baskets
  - Makerspaces
- Biomass
- Charcoal/biochar
6-inch diameter or smaller...

- Local foods niche
- Biochar for garden and farm
- Varying models
- Home use or business
- Value-added product has greater value than firewood
Integration Acres
Route 9 Chestnut Cooperative
Providing Woodland Services

- Indigenous Landscapes—Cincinnati, Ohio
- Woods of Plenty—Murrysville, PA
  - Invasives removal, plantings, food for wildlife/people
Providing Woodland Services

Low-impact
Assembling smaller acreages
Logger Rich Douglas
What About Scale?

- Cooperatives
- “...a community of like-minded forest landowners participating and enjoying the benefits of...conservation, education, professional forest management, marketing, financial planning, value addition, group purchasing of supplies, co-owning equipment and more.” —Harry Groot

- How they help...
  - Improve bargaining power
  - Reduce costs
  - Obtain market access
  - Improve quality of service or product
  - Reduce costs/increase income
Examples

- Ohio Forestry Cooperative (OH)
- Blue Ridge Sustainable Forest Cooperative (VA)
- Massachusetts Woodland Cooperative (MA)
- Living Forest Cooperative (WI)
- Ozark Quality Hardwoods Cooperative (MO)
- Oregon Woodlands Cooperative (OR)
Here in Pennsylvania?

- Penn State 2002 Study
  - McDill et al.
- Interest in cooperatives and certification?
- Survey and focus groups
- 9% ~ 30 individuals
- Potential, especially around stand improvement
Lessons Learned from Others

- Develop a vision and mission
- Focus on local conditions (forests, markets)
- Encourage leadership
- Focus on developing successful business
- Find out what is important—what and how to market
- Plan a manageable variety
- “It’s all about the marketing.”
Nurturing Woods Work

- Pennsylvania will be nurturing:
  - Apprenticeships
  - Makerspaces
  - Expanding broadband access
  - Certification
    - LEED

- Entrepreneurship!
Before Making the Plunge...

- Research and verify your intuition and observations!
- Product/service is needed in proposed market area
- ...is different from others
- ...is solving a problem/meeting a need
- ...has enough potential customers (How many?)
A Few Resources

- Forest Landowner’s Guide to Evaluating and Choosing a Natural Resource-Based Enterprise
  - http://nac.unl.edu/tools/ntfp.htm
- USDA Rural Development
- USDA Rural Development—Business and Cooperative Programs
  - www.business.pa.gov
    - Turn Your Idea Into a Business in Pennsylvania
    - PA Business One-Stop Shop
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