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Working Together For Rural America



United States
Department of
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BACKGROUND ON FOREST SERVICE'S
CURRENT RURAL COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE EFFORT

6/89 **Secretary Yeutter releases USDA report**

"A Hard Look at USDA's Rural Development Programs"--The Report of the Rural Revitalization Task Force to the Secretary of Agriculture (Tony Dorrell represented FS on task force)

Recommendations:

- clarify USDA's commitment to rural development
- strengthen coordination of rural programs
- enhance USDA's capacity for strategic action
- improve USDA's ability to implement rural programs

1/90 **President Bush releases Initiative report**

"Rural Economic Development for the 90's: A Presidential Initiative"--The Findings and Recommendations of the Economic Policy Council Working Group on Rural Development (Yeutter, chair)

Recommendations for change:

- improve coordination of federal, state and local government rural development efforts
- improve support and training of local community leaders
- improve education and job skills of rural people
- assist rural communities in...expanding local business enterprises as well as attracting new economic activity

Plan of action:

- form President's Council on Rural America
- set up a coordinated series of regional rural development demonstration projects
- establish national and state-level structure to coordinate government rural development efforts: Cabinet-level Working Group on Rural Development, and State Rural Development Councils
- target and redirect federal rural development efforts
- create a rural development technical assistance center (Rural Information Center)

6/90 **FS completes national strategy**

"A Strategic Plan for the 90's: Working Together for Rural America" (includes policy and goals)

Policy:

"The FS will provide leadership in working with rural people and communities on developing natural resource-based opportunities and enterprises that contribute to the economic and social vitality of rural communities. The FS can make lasting improvements in rural America by helping people solve their local problems in ways that enhance the quality of the environment in accordance with our existing authorities."

Goals:

- communicate rural development is part of FS mission
- consider rural development in resource decisions
- actively participate in community rural development efforts
- understand and incorporate the needs of diverse communities
- strengthen participation in cooperative USDA efforts
- provide timely and current research and resource information

11/90 **1990 Farm Bill contains Rural Development Title (Title XXIII)**

Created new Rural Development Administration and provided new authority in several program areas, including authority for the FS in Subtitle G (Rural Revitalization through Forestry), Chapter 2 (National Forest-Dependent Rural Communities Economic Diversification Act of 1990) having following purposes:

- provide assistance to rural communities
- aid in diversifying communities' economic bases
- improve economic, social, and environmental well-being of rural America.

12/90 **National Commission on Agriculture and Rural Development Policy releases rural development report (required by 1985 Farm Bill)**

"Future Directions in Rural Development Policy"--Findings and Recommendations of the National Commission

Recommendations--Federal government should:

- review all of its policies to determine their effects on rural areas
- improve information about rural conditions and development strategies
- adopt a comprehensive approach to rural development
- adopt a strategic approach to rural development
- foster better cooperation among rural development participants
- incorporate flexibility in its policies relating to rural areas
- promote innovation and experimentation
- make education a major component of its rural development policies

8/91 **USDA releases annual strategy report (required by law)**

"Putting the Pieces Together"--Annual Rural Development Strategy Report (highlights status and strategy for accomplishing President's Initiative, presenting principles guiding government-wide effort)

Principles:

- private sector has a central role
- benefits of development must be shared
- new partnerships are needed
- strategic approach is required

Note: reports that FS has issued its strategy, received new authority in the 1990 Farm Bill, and is participating in expansion of the Rural Information Center

8/92

President's Council on Rural America completes its report to the President (Winthrop Rockefeller, chair; Kay Orr, vice-chair)

"Revitalizing Rural America through Collaboration: A Report to the President"--includes principles for action and recommendations

Principles for Action:

- the central role of the community
- creating a more responsive government

General Recommendations

- o Federal government:
 - appoint permanent Senior White House Advisor
 - continue White House Policy Coordinating Council Working Group
 - establish permanent President's Advisory Council on Rural America (private sector)
- o State governments--Governors:
 - establish Advisors on Rural Community Development
 - establish State Government Working Groups on Rural Community Development
 - create Advisory Councils on Rural Community Development (private sector)
- o Intergovernmental system:
 - continue support for State Rural Development Councils
 - redouble efforts to gather data and provide information, technical assistance, and assist with long-term strategic planning activities

KEY THEMES DRIVING FOREST SERVICE'S
RURAL COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE EFFORT

- o Focus on community-led, -based, or -oriented efforts in rural America (whole community, not just its business sector)
- o Be part of a more comprehensive approach, and work cooperatively
- o Take strategic action addressing local needs (needs driven, not program driven)
- o Act for the long-term, not a quick fix approach
- o Need flexibility to address diverse problems, conditions and situations
- o Accomplished through partnerships
- o Agency niche is to help communities capitalize on their natural resource-based potential and assets
- o Strengthen communities through economic diversification
- o Efforts can be sustainable if balance is found between economic development and environmental preservation
- o Broad-based planning is an important prerequisite to implementation

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United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service

Cooperative Forestry

Washington, DC

Forest Resource Strategies for Rural Development



OPPORTUNITIES FOR FOREST-BASED PROJECTS

Rural development is influenced by all forest-related activities associated with available commodity and amenity resources. By wisely using timber, minerals, wildlife, fishing, recreation, and other forest-based resources, rural economies can be diversified and strengthened. The following strategies provide the basis for developing joint projects involving the Forest Service and other public and private entities concerned about sustainable development through resource conservation and management. The strategies were identified in research conducted by the U.S. Department of Commerce as being key to "recoupling" natural resource assets with economic development efforts. Examples of projects are provided to demonstrate the possibilities.

STRATEGY: HELP COMMUNITIES ORGANIZE FOR RESOURCE-BASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION

Projects: (1) Bring together landowners and producers to work with local/regional economic development specialists to develop common visions about the future and study feasibility of diversification based upon wise use of various forest resources (2) Help form cooperative ventures to produce and/or market available products and services

STRATEGY: TARGET VALUE-ADDED PROCESSING

Projects: (1) Convert existing facilities, including "old growth" mills, into secondary processing plants (2) Develop forest industry parks to vertically integrate small primary and secondary manufacturing facilities at the same location

STRATEGY: PROMOTE ALTERNATIVE GOODS AND SERVICES FROM FOREST RESOURCES

Projects: (1) Promote development of small businesses based upon special forest products (e.g., mushrooms, wreaths, pine straw) and services (e.g., game farms, recreation fees, interpretation) (2) Promote development based upon use and interpretation of cultural, historical, and amenity resources

STRATEGY: ENHANCE PRODUCTIVITY

Projects: (1) Develop businesses based upon use of trim ends and other mill waste (2) Use computer-aided methods for increasing efficiency in secondary processing

STRATEGY: STRENGTHEN MARKETING

Projects: (1) Work with States/regions to promote communities and attractions along designated scenic highways and byways using signs, interpretive programs and other means of providing public information (2) Work with timber, minerals, and other resource-based industries to collectively market products of small-scale producers

STRATEGY: PROMOTE TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

Projects: (1) Focus on recycling to help solve municipal solid waste problems associated with wood/forest waste, and create small businesses to handle and recycle the waste (2) Work with States and local communities to promote fabrication and installation of modern timber bridges

STRATEGY: IMPROVE LOCAL HUMAN CAPITAL

Projects: (1) Work with employers to help train employees on use of new machines and technologies (2) Work with high schools and community colleges on vocational training programs which expose students to other resource areas and new technologies

FOREST SERVICE RURAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS: LINKING RESOURCES AND STRATEGIES

Introduction

The Forest Service rural development strategy, in the document Working Together for Rural America, presents a policy for working with rural people and communities. Rural development accomplishments are achieved through both internal and external partnerships. As stated by Chief Robertson, the Forest Service is "so interwoven with local communities and economies that we need to share part of the responsibility for the well being of those communities."

Interaction and Assistance

The Forest Service, through rural development efforts, helps strengthen rural communities and diversify and expand local economies, especially in communities where the economy is tied directly to natural resources. Effective participation in community-based activities involves **interaction** with and **assistance** to rural communities to achieve mutually-desired sustainable rural development goals.

- **Interaction** with rural communities includes dynamic, continuous involvement through community service and community leadership activities. Interaction nurtures goodwill, trust and understanding within the community and creates more effective working relationships.
- **Assistance** refers to the actions needed to address specific issues and problems of mutual interest to the Forest Service and community. Assistance activities include sharing personnel and ideas, providing planning and financial expertise, and furnishing research and analytical help to lead to sustainable improvements that are measurable over time.

Historically in the Forest Service, interaction activities have been strongly encouraged and integral to nurturing ties to local communities. With the Forest Service's strategy, specific authorities and appropriations, formal assistance can be provided to rural communities. The matrix highlights just a few ideas of how the Forest Service can use its various resources -- human, natural, technical, and financial -- to provide assistance in rural development. Forest Service people and programs can play a significant role in strengthening local economies and supporting community development, especially because of the Forest Service's interest in natural resources.

Linking Resources and Strategies

To assist rural communities with their rural development plans, the Forest Service is emphasizing the seven "recoupling" strategies identified by the Department of Commerce. "Recoupling" suggests that the natural resource base can be an asset when rural communities recognize and build upon their strengths. Together, the community and Forest Service can target resources to meet all the strategies. The seven strategies are:

- Organize for resource-based economic development and conservation
- Target value-added processing
- Target alternative goods and services from the forest resource
- Enhance productivity
- Strengthen marketing
- Promote technology transfer
- Improve local human capital

Some resources may not be applicable to all strategies, while other resources still need to be defined.

**FOREST SERVICE RURAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS:
LINKING RESOURCES AND STRATEGIES
(cont.)**

Forest Service Resources

In the Strategic Plan Working Together for Rural America, the Forest Service identified four resources available to help rural communities achieve their development goals-- human, natural, technical and financial. Please note that even though the Forest Service manages a natural resource base, the agency is interested in broad development strategies which encompass "non-traditional" resource uses. The matrix is not exhaustive; it suggests and should trigger ideas. **Human resources** are people from all areas and levels of the organization who collectively provide a wide range of skills and knowledge. Forest Service employees can provide an interpersonal link between communities and rural development programs. **Natural resources** such as rivers, wildlife, timber, scenery and range are marketable, and associated Forest Service sites and facilities may be available for community use. **Technical resources** include diverse areas of expertise, computer capabilities, feasibility studies and planning processes. Though limited, **financial resources** of the Forest Service consist of grants, cooperative agreements and cost-share partnerships.

FOREST SERVICE RURAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS: LINKING RESOURCES AND STRATEGIES

S T R A T E G I E S

Forest Service Resources	Organize for resource-based development	Target value-added processing	Target alternative goods and services	Enhance productivity	Strengthen marketing	Promote technology transfer	Improve human capital
HUMAN	Technical and resources specialist; International development specialists; Planners; Program Managers and Coordinators; Volunteers	Utilization and marketing personnel; Forest Products Conservation & Recycling specialists; Researchers	Specialist in: Cultural Recreation, Forest Products, Fisheries and Wildlife, and Researchers	Utilization and marketing personnel; Technical & resource personnel; Researchers	Coop. Forestry personnel, Timber Marketing specialist; International Forest personnel; Minerals	Researchers; Engineers, Technical & Resource personnel; U&M specialist	HRP specialist; Volunteers; Employees at all levels
NATURAL	Any available natural resources have potential for marketing as amenities or commodities	Timber: Special forest products; Minerals; Range	FS lands are available for multiple use; Wildlife; Historical sites, Special forest products	Timber; Wildlife; Special forest products; Recreation; Water	Timber; Minerals; Wildlife; Water bodies	All amenity and commodity resources; Sites and associated infrastructure	Associated sites and facilities
TECHNICAL	Expertise in group dynamics and Organizational development; Interpersonal and Computer networking	Manufacturing expertise; Experiment design and analysis; Feasibility studies; Business plans; Vertical integration	Knowledge of specific products and services	Silvics, Recycling expertise, Computer modeling; Efficiency & processing study; Habitat enhancement	Marketing skills; International links; Communications & Media Market	Technical speciality depends on resource/project; e.g., recycling timber bridges harvesting	Existing training programs; Coop programs in vocal education
FINANCIAL	S&PF - appropriated funds e.g., Econ. Recovery; Other agency dollars, e.g., RC&D program	Funding to convert facilities; Funding for forest industry development	Economic diversification study grants; Technology transfer initiatives & dollars	FPC&R Recycling funds	RD challenge cost-share partnership funds as available	Demonstration projects: RC&D or RD \$'s	Job Corps; Older Americans, and other HRP programs

ECONOMIC ACTION PROGRAMS

Goal Help America invest its forest-based resources to support sustainable community development goals

Program Description

The "Economic Action Programs" framework includes a set of programs aimed at investing in America's future by focusing on the needs of the overall community as well as its business sector. Help is provided by channeling technical and financial assistance to local communities, organizations, and businesses directly or through partner organizations.

The programs contribute by helping communities diversify and strengthen their local economies through a whole range of forest-based resources: cultural and historic; wildlife, fishing, and recreation; timber and non-timber special forest products; minerals and geology; scenic; and human. Together, they focus on integrating economic development and environmental protection concerns; and provide a way to address a range of pressing needs including:

- Organizing diverse community interests for resource-based economic development and conservation
- Fostering high value-added processing
- Spawning innovation through special products and alternative services
- Enhancing productivity of existing manufacturing and services
- Strengthening the marketing of commodity and amenity resources
- Improving information and promoting technology transfer
- Improving local human capital.

The 3 major program components are as follows.

● Rural Community Assistance

Targeted specifically to rural areas, this program component focuses on helping the whole community capitalize on available local human and natural resources to improve the quality of life and the social and economic situation. Assistance is provided in helping communities organize, plan, and implement actions that are community based, comprehensive in approach, and accomplished through partnerships.

● Forest Products Conservation and Recycling

This component encourages and facilitates the wise, more efficient use of forest resources to enhance economic development and promote better stewardship of the forest resource. Emphasis is on stimulating public and private sector innovation. Specific opportunities include new uses for wood and other forest-based resources through recycling and value-added secondary manufacturing, and alternative goods and services.

● Market Development and Expansion

This component provides a significant opportunity to strengthen local and regional economies through the creation of domestic and international markets for renewable and non-renewable forest resources. This is done by providing technical and financial assistance targeting wood use in transportation and expanding markets for forest products.

**ECONOMIC ACTION PROGRAMS
FUNDED PROGRAMS - FISCAL YEAR 1993**

RURAL COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE

RURAL DEVELOPMENT - \$3,966,000

This broad-based program helps to strengthen the social, economic, and natural environments of rural communities. Strengthening efforts concentrate primarily on communities experiencing long-term or persistent economic problems through natural resource-based solutions. Rural Development is a grant program which provides matching funds for local projects that promise to contribute to or stimulate improvements in the economic or social well-being of rural citizens.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY - \$4,957,000

This program provides technical and financial assistance to rural communities located in or near National Forest System lands that have become economically dependent or disadvantaged because of public land management decisions (per 1990 Farm Bill - Title 23, Subtitle G, Chapter 2). Funds are targeted to assisting rural communities that have acute economic problems resulting from timber-dependent economies. The authorization calls for the Forest Service to help communities organize action teams, develop local action plans, and help implement the action plans through cost-sharing and other means.

ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION STUDIES - \$542,000

Funds are used to cost-share feasibility studies that develop alternative economic opportunities for communities or regions whose economic base is largely dependent on forest resource activities and programs. Assistance is directed to define, plan, and conduct diversification studies. Criteria used for funding are: economic dependency and diversity; economic need; practicality and feasibility; cost/benefits; and ability to share cost share funds. About 15 studies are supported each year.

OLD GROWTH DIVERSIFICATION PROJECTS (WA AND OR) - \$1,487,000

Funds are marked for grants to the Washington State Office of Trade and Economic Development and the Oregon Economic Development Department for projects to continue to diversify western Oregon and Washington timber dependent communities. Old growth diversification project grants are to be matched 50-50 by each state and are to be used to encourage value-added wood products manufacturing in their respective local communities.

RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT - \$592,000

Funding supports the forestry aspect of the Department's Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) program. The overall program is administered by USDA's Soil Conservation Service.

FOREST PRODUCTS CONSERVATION AND RECYCLING

WOOD UTILIZATION - \$654,000

Program supports and emphasizes work with State Forestry organizations, secondary wood manufacturers, special forest products, value-added products, and market development. The program has been refocused to link more closely with other major efforts, including rural community assistance, and non-timber forest products.

MARKET DEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION

TIMBER BRIDGES - \$1,785,000

Funding is used to cost-share demonstration bridges with cooperators at the State and local levels; and supports a National Timber Bridge Information Resource Center in Morgantown, West Virginia.

EXAMPLES OF CURRENT FOREST-RELATED ECONOMIC ACTION PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Rural development is not altogether a new task for the Forest Service (FS). The agency's resources--human, technical, natural, and financial--contribute significantly to rural America in a variety of ways. The FS's contribution, however, is being strengthened through more focused and coordinated efforts as called for in the agency's rural development strategy titled "Working Together for Rural America."

Many examples of FS involvement are provided in the appendix of the strategy document. The strategy emphasizes a total FS effort in which the agency carries out its rural development responsibilities through existing programs such as cooperative forestry, research, recreation, wildlife and fishing, timber, minerals, land management planning, technology transfer and others. The following examples demonstrate the breadth of current FS efforts to foster rural development through the wise use of all forest resources.

CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES: Using rural development funding available in FY 1990, Region 10 (Alaska) supported a project in Klawock to replace an aging totem pole and demonstrate totem carving to students. The totem served as the basis for renewed efforts by the community to develop a local totem park and museum complex as an additional attraction for tourism. The celebration and blessing of the totem pole were completed in June 1991 with about 1000 people in attendance.

HUMAN RESOURCES: In Idaho, the FS is working with several State and local agencies, a State college, and community organizations in the Clearwater Valley on attracting retirees for tourism development and relocation purposes. A workshop has been held, and workbook will be available for use by others. A Rural Development seminar was held for citizens of counties in West Virginia and Ohio. Topics included business planning, recreation and tourism opportunities, and secondary manufacturing of forest products.

TIMBER RESOURCES: A variety of efforts are underway to make better use of timber resources for various rural development purposes. Since FY 1989, the FS has been implementing a Timber Bridge Initiative through which modern design and construction techniques are being demonstrated. Demonstration bridges (primarily highway) are being cost-shared and installed nationwide, and workshops are being held to build understanding among bridge designers, transportation planners, and economic development specialists--to name a few. Also, twelve counties in Ohio which comprise the Crossroads Resource Conservation and Development Area have launched a marketing campaign to promote better utilization of low-grade hardwoods. A brochure will be distributed which will list woodcrafters and vendors who utilize hardwoods in their businesses.

WILDLIFE, FISHING AND RECREATION: The FS is collaborating with the Bureau of Land Management and the Sport Fishing Institute on a study of how rural communities or areas can diversify their local economies nationwide based upon wildlife, fishing and related outdoor recreation. Case studies of communities in five states are included in the project. In addition, a project is underway in Montana (Region 1) to work with State and local interests around the Choteau area to identify options and foster economic diversification based upon these resources.

MINERALS AND GEOLOGY: Efforts are being made to foster rural development through minerals and geology resources in a sustainable and environmentally sound manner. A national workshop was held in October 1991 to foster better understanding of the potential within the building stone industry and to integrate building stone operations with other activities such as recreation, mineral showcasing, and interpretation. It is hoped that efforts underway in Minnesota on the Superior National Forest will serve as an example to other areas of the country.

ALTERNATIVE FOREST RESOURCES: The FS is currently developing a guidebook on the rural development opportunities associated with a whole range of special forest products such as mushrooms, berries, and floral and landscape products. Region 6 also helped organize a Special Forest Products Conference to develop understanding about the opportunities in the Pacific Northwest.

SCENIC RESOURCES: Through efforts related to the designation of scenic highways, the FS is working with a variety of public and private entities. In Colorado and Utah, special efforts are being made to integrate scenic highways with the economic development needs of local communities and the State.

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United States
Department of
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Forest Service

June 1990



A Strategic Plan for the 90's:

Working Together for Rural America



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Working Together for Rural America

Report of the National Rural Development Workshop

September 1991

"I want everyone to understand that rural development has a high priority in the Forest Service and is a highly relevant part of our mission."

—F. Dale Robertson, Chief,
1990 Letter to Regional Foresters,
Station Directors, Area Director, and
Washington Office Staff

A Time To Learn, a Time To Share— The National Workshop

"Let this be a time to learn, to share, to prepare, to work together with communities, to achieve their desired future condition." With these words, Dick Ferraro, Deputy Regional Forester for Administration in the Pacific Northwest Region of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service, welcomed over 300 participants to the National Rural Development Workshop in Spokane, WA. The essence of the conference, held March 26-28, 1991, was a call to action—a call for employees throughout the organization to move forward with resourcefulness, leadership, and cooperative spirit to implement the Forest Service's "Strategic Plan for the 90's: Working Together for Rural America."

During the next few days of the workshop, attendees listened to rural development specialists from the Forest Service and partners from State and local governments, tribal governments, private industry, and universities. Opportunities to learn and share continued in question-and-answer sessions, informal networking, and review of numerous exhibits displaying rural development information and successes.

Finally, participants worked together to address the six goals of the Forest Service's National Rural Development Strategy. Collectively, they determined what success would look like to them after 1 year of implementing the strategy and what alliances and partnerships were necessary to make rural development "happen." ■

In This Issue...

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