There is an urgent need to identify environmental governance processes that simultaneously conserve forests and forest-reliant communities.

In the US there has been a shift toward collaborative processes in natural resource management over the past 20 years.

The diversity of approaches to collaborative forest management creates a dilemma for analyzing the factors influencing their initiation and implementation, as well as their outcomes.

Stewardship contracting is a defined population of collaborative processes set out to achieve forest and community sustainability.
What is Stewardship Contracting?

- Introduced as a pilot program from 1999-2002; Semi-permanent status began in 2003 and set to expire in 2013

- Legislation allows the USFS “to perform services to achieve land management goals for the national forests and the public lands that meet local and rural community needs” (P.L.108-7, section 323)

- A “soft” policy tool - Provides non-regulatory options to achieve management objectives through:
  - goods for services
  - designation by description or prescription
  - multiyear contracting
  - retention of receipts
  - less than full and open competition
  - supervision of marking and harvesting timber sales
  - best value contracting
  - multiparty monitoring.

- USFS Handbook stipulates “collaboration must be a part of stewardship contracting project planning and continue throughout the life of the project”
What do we know about it?

- Research has focused on challenges, individual case outcomes, and community involvement

- Sources:
  - The Pinchot Institute for Conservation Programmatic Level Monitoring
    - Annual phone survey - Descriptive statistics
    - Regional meetings – Annual summaries of key themes
  - Case Studies
    - Individual – i.e. USFS, collaborative monitoring groups (WMSC),
    - Comparative – i.e. Ecosystem Workforce Program
  - U.S. General Accounting Office
    - Stewardship contract data and strategy improvements (2008)
What Do We Not Know?

- Spatial and temporal distribution of:
  - Stewardship contracts
  - Associated acres
  - Levels of collaboration and associated indicators
  - Outcomes associated with stewardship contracting
  - Outcomes associated with community involvement
- Is Stewardship Contracting meeting its policy intentions?
- What does collaboration have to do with it?
- What influences the use of collaboration?
Methods

Attended 4 of the 5 Pinchot Institute for Conservation Regional Stewardship Contract Meetings, Fall 2011

Data obtained from:

US Forest Service
• data on stewardship contracts awarded by National Forest and USFS Region (1999 – 2010)

Pinchot Institute for Conservation
• survey data on public involvement in stewardship contracting (2007 – 2010)

Statistical tests:

Number of contracts and acres: Analysis of variance
Collaboration data: Analysis of Variance and Pearson’s Chi-square
Number of Contracts by Region and Time Period, 1999-2010

No significant difference between Regions ($p = .061$)
Significant increase from 1999 - 2010 ($p < .001$)
Stewardship Contract ACRES by Region and Time Period, 1999-2010

No significant difference across Regions ($p = .083$)
Significant increase from 1999 - 2010 ($p < .001$)
Results: Degree of Collaboration

- Significant differences across regions ($p < .001$)
- No significant differences across years (2007-2010; $p = .495$)
- No significant differences across interviewees (agency, community, contractor; $p = .589$)
Organization Initiating Contract (%)

Significant differences across Regions ($p < .001$)
Significant differences between years (2007-2010; $p = .003$)
Process was more likely to be considered collaborative when jointly initiated (93%, $p < .001$)
Significant differences across Regions ($p<.001$)

No differences across years (2007-2010; $p = .764$)

Process was more likely to be considered collaborative when 7 to 9 interests (93%; $p<.001$)
Significant differences across Regions ($p<.001$)
No differences across years (2007-2010; $p = .056$)
Process was more likely to be considered collaborative with 7-9 roles (96%; $p<.001$)
“... the role of the local community?”

- **NEPA analysis**
  - No significant differences across Regions (23% used overall)
  - Did not vary from 2007 to 2010
  - The process is not considered more or less collaborative when incorporated

- **Planning and Design**
  - Significant difference across Regions: Region 8, 75%/ Region 9, 32%
  - Did not vary from 2007 to 2010
  - 94% consider process more collaborative when incorporated

- **Implementation**
  - Significant difference across Regions: Region 3, 73% / Region 9, 30%
  - Use increased significantly from 2007 to 2010, from 31% to 52%
  - 92% consider process more collaborative when incorporated

- **Monitoring**
  - Significant difference across Regions: Region 6, 59%/ Region 9, 13%
  - Use did not vary from 2007 to 2010
  - 94% consider process more collaborative when incorporated

- **Other roles**: alternative development, comments/recommendations, public outreach, provide technical information, become informed, representation and funding.
Significant differences across Regions ($p<.001$)
No differences across years (2007-2010; $p = .068$)
The level of collaboration rose with number of outreach methods used ($p<.001$)
“What outreach efforts have been used?”

- **Personal Contact**
  - No significant differences across Regions: 67-77%
  - Did not vary from 2007 to 2010
  - 89% consider process more collaborative when incorporated

- **Collaborative process**
  - Significant difference across Regions: Region 6, 71% / Region 9, 29%
  - Did not vary from 2007 to 2010
  - 95% consider process more collaborative when incorporated

- **Field Tours**
  - Significant difference across Regions: Region 6, 82% / Region 9, 34%
  - Did not vary from 2007 to 2010
  - 90% consider process more collaborative when incorporated

- **Other outreach methods:**
  - traditional processes, direct mail, email, media, and presentations to community groups
“Please rate the local benefits of the stewardship contracting project ...”

- **Local jobs**
  - Did not vary across Regions, 74% saw this as a benefit
  - Significant increase from 2007 to 2010, from 63% to 83%
  - 77% more likely if process was collaborative

- **More on-the-ground work accomplished**
  - Did not vary across Regions, 83% saw this as a benefit
  - Did not vary from 2007 to 2010
  - 86% more likely when process was collaborative

- **Greater opportunity to use local contractors**
  - Did not vary across Regions, 84% saw this as a benefit
  - Did not vary from 2007 to 2010
  - 87% more likely when process was collaborative
“Please rate the local benefits of the stewardship contracting project ...”

- Increased collaboration
  - Significant difference across Regions: Region 8, 94% / Region 1, 62%
  - Did not vary from 2007 to 2010
  - 92% more likely when process was collaborative

- Improved efficiency and effectiveness
  - Did not vary across Regions, 69% saw this as a benefit
  - Did not vary from 2007 to 2010
  - 74% more likely when process was collaborative
“Please rate the local benefits of the stewardship contracting project ...”

- **Improved public trust**
  - Did not vary across Regions, 84% saw this as a benefit
  - Did not vary from 2007 to 2010
  - 89% more likely when process was collaborative

- **Specific project outcomes**
  - Did not vary across Regions, 97% saw this as a benefit
  - Did not vary from 2007 to 2010
  - 99% more likely when process was collaborative
  - Top 3 outcomes:
    - Habitat improvement (33%)
    - Fuels reduction (22%)
    - Thinning (22%)
“Please rate the local benefits of community involvement ...”

• Broader understanding and consideration of diverse interests
  – Significant difference across Regions: Region 3, 96% /Region 5, 71%
  – Significant increase from 2007 to 2010, from 76% to 89%
  – 91% more likely when process was collaborative

• Improved trust
  – Did not vary across Regions, 83% saw this as a benefit
  – Significant increase from 2007 to 2010, from 76% to 90%
  – 90% more likely if process was collaborative

• Increased opportunity for public input
  – Did not vary across Regions, 85% saw this as a benefit
  – Significant increase from 2007 to 2010, from 77% to 94%
  – 91% more likely if process was collaborative
“Please rate the local benefits of community involvement ...”

• **Improved sense of project ownership**
  • Significant difference across Regions: Region 3, 96% / Region 9, 68%
  • Did not vary from 2007 to 2010
  • 90% more likely if process was collaborative

• **Increased support for the agency**
  • Did not vary across Regions,
    • 83% saw this as a benefit
  • Did not vary from 2007 to 2010
  • 89% more likely if process was collaborative
Summary of Findings

- Dramatic increase in the number of stewardship contracts over time

- Levels of collaboration varied by region but not over time

- Indicators of collaboration verified levels of collaboration
  - Who initiated project
  - # of interests
  - # of community roles
    - Planning/Design, Implementation, and Monitoring
  - # of outreach mechanisms
    - Collaborative processes, Personal contact, and Field tours
Summary of Findings

- Benefits of Stewardship Contracts were high across all USFS Regions
  - More local jobs (74%)
  - More on-the-ground work accomplished (83%)
  - Greater opportunity to use local contractors (84%)
  - Improved efficiency and effectiveness (69%)
  - Improved public trust (84%)
  - Meeting specific project outcomes (97%)
Benefits of community involvement were high across all USFS Regions
- Broader understanding and consideration of diverse interests (84%)
- Improved trust (77%)
- Increased opportunity for public input (76%)
- Improved sense of project ownership (69%)
- Increased support for the agency (99%)
Summary of Findings – 2011 Regional Monitoring Meetings

- Strong overall support and approval of stewardship contracting; request permanent authorization
  - Provides an opportunity to accomplish work the agencies would not otherwise be able to achieve
  - Flexibility and broad policy language allows stewardship contracting to be tailored to specific situations and local needs

- Challenges:
  - Administrative complexity
  - Widely varying interpretations of how to implement
  - Changes in leadership
What does it Mean?

- Stewardship contracting is becoming a more familiar and well-liked tool.

- The use of collaboration in stewardship contracting plays an important role in meeting policy intentions.

- Different biophysical, social, economic, and institutional contexts likely influence the use and/or related outcomes of stewardship contracting – one approach does not fit all situations.

- Further research is needed to better understand the differences across regions and over time.
Policy Recommendations

- Extend the authorizing legislation for stewardship contracting past 2013, maintaining broad policy language to allow for situation specific implementation.

- Allow and/or fund meeting of PIC sc coordinators to coordinate across regions before and after monitoring.

- Provide the opportunity for PIC and agency leaders to meet and discuss recommendations for improving the stewardship contracting process.

- Improve national guidelines & training on stewardship contracting and collaboration for agency line officers and field staff. This presents an opportunity for more consistent interpretations of the broad policy legislation and administrative guidelines to be developed.
Future Research

- Develop basic guidelines for project level monitoring of ecological and socioeconomic outcomes of stewardship contracts and agreements. This will provide opportunities for effective adaptive management and the development of supporting policies.

- Recommend continued monitoring of stewardship contracts and similar collaborative efforts

- Case study analysis to:
  - Determine context influencing the use of collaboration
  - Understand key components of collaboration
  - Better identify influence of collaboration on stewardship contract outcomes
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Questions?

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