

USDA Forest Service Sponsored:

Outlook Forest Research Dialog

Stakeholder **Working Group Report** **April 28, 2007**

Based on a March 28, 2007 meeting held in Washington, DC

Outlook Project Leader: Chris Bernabo, NCSE
Project Staff: Lindsey Ehrler, NCSE
Consultant: Michelle Harvey, Mauthe-Harvey Consulting

This project is conducted for the USDA Forest Service, Research and Development by the National Council for Science and the Environment (NCSE) a non-profit, non-advocacy organization with the mission of linking science to the priority needs of decision makers.



National Council for Science and the Environment
Improving the scientific basis for environmental decisionmaking

Table of Contents

Summary	3
Outlook Working Group Participants	4
I. Working Group Results	5
A. Stakeholder Engagement Process	6
B. “Science Responses” Vision Areas	6
1. Key Message Areas to Pursue	6
2. Addressing the “Science Response” Areas Collaboratively	7
II. Options for Next Round of Outlook	9
III. Next Step	10
APPENDIX A: Outlook Dialog Overview	11

Summary

The *Outlook Stakeholder Working Group Meeting* was held on March 28, 2007, in Washington, DC. This was the third meeting of the USDA Forest Service (USFS) Outlook Forest Research Dialog to engage the broad forest community in building a basis for increased collaboration in research on U.S. forests and forestry.

The working group was formed, based on the recommendation of a previous workshop, that a small set of leaders from diverse backgrounds convene to: 1) review the “science responses” from the Outlook first round of dialog and identify key areas to pursue; and, 2) develop recommended goals and topics for next round of an ongoing national-level dialog on research.

The working group strongly supported the need for an ongoing national dialog on forest research and emphasized the importance of developing and communicating “messages” to promote better public recognition of the value of forests and research to the health and livability of the Nation.

The working group discussed many areas but produced four substantial results:

- ◆ A message statement was developed for the Outlook’s process: “Applying forest research to provide benefits for America’s long term and short term future”.
- ◆ Five key theme areas were identified to lead to better communication: Climate Change, Energy, Wildlife, Water, and Human Health.
- ◆ Six steps were proposed for identifying the stakeholder universe and engagement to promote stakeholder communication: 1) define the research portfolio; 2) address problems amongst themes; 3) develop message teams; 4) engage marketing professionals; 5) educate society; and, 6) deliver key messages to congress.
- ◆ Eight options were identified for the next round in the Outlook Dialog: 1) Symposium style meeting approach; 2) annual review meeting; 3) annual messages summit for Congress; 4) working subgroups to identify opportunities and address research questions by theme areas; 5) working subgroups to process the 170 “science responses”; 6) a Board on Forest Research; 7) a National Forum; and/or, 8) Outlook participants attend other groups meetings and networking to spread a common vision.

Workshop participants included leading scientists and science managers from federal and state government agencies, the forest products industry, non-governmental organizations, and academic institutions.

This report of the Stakeholders’ Working Group Meeting will be circulated to previous Outlook participants and others, and used by USFS R&D to plan the next round of the ongoing dialog.

(For an overview of the first round of the Outlook Dialog see Appendix A on page 11).

Outlook Working Group Participants

March 28, 2007 Meeting

USFS

Fred Norbury

Associate Deputy Chief for National Forest System, USDA Forest Service

Thomas L. Schmidt

Station Assistant Director, Northern Research Station, USDA Forest Service

Jim Sedell

Director, Pacific Southwest Research Station, USDA Forest Service

Lynne M. Westphal

Project Leader & Research Social Scientist, Natural Environments for Urban Populations
Northern Research Station, USDA Forest Service

Academic

Steven B. Daley-Laursen

Dean and Professor, College of Natural Resources, University of Idaho

William G. Hubbard

Southern Regional Extension Forester, University of Georgia

Kathleen L. Wolf

Research Social Scientist, College of Forest Resources, University of Washington

Industry

Al Lucier

Senior Vice President, National Council for Air and Stream Improvement

Lori A. Perine

Executive Director, Policy Analysis & Research and Agenda 2020 Technology Alliance
American Forest & Paper Association

State

Ross S. Whaley

Chairman, Adirondack Park Agency

NGO

Sandra Brown

Senior Scientist, Ecosystem Services Unit, Winrock International

John Wiens

Lead Scientist, The Nature Conservancy

Host

Ann M. Bartuska

Deputy Chief for Research and Development, USDA FS R&D

Staff

Chris Bernabo

Facilitator, Outlook Project Leader, NCSE

Lindsey Ehrler

Recorder, Program Coordinator, NCSE

Michelle Harvey

Recorder, Mauthe-Harvey Consulting

I. Working Group Results

The National Council for Science and the Environment (NCSE) held an Outlook Stakeholders' Working Group Meeting on March 28, 2007 in Washington, DC for the USDA Forest Service.

The working group's purpose was to hold a thoughtful discussion to identify an overall message for the Outlook process; address key theme areas in relation to forests and forestry; determine steps for identifying stakeholder universe and engagement; and to propose options for the next round of the Outlook Dialogue.

At the start of the Working Group Meeting each participant reflected upon and shared a personal stakeholder experience. During the course of the day, the group referred back to the following stakeholder experiences to determine if their proposed processes of engagement were addressing these identified stakeholders' needs:

- Stakeholders aren't always aware that they are stakeholders
- Stakeholders of the future should be addressed not just current stakeholders
- Times have changed, it used to be hard to get people engaged, now there are many stakeholders who are too busy to sit down and focus
- Team up with outside groups that have mutual interests instead of approaching potential stakeholders from the side of "you owe us" – show our value to them
- It is important to be explicit, separate policy from scientific topics, frame questions relevant to the problem to solve, and know what the deliverables will be

The meeting deviated from the proposed agenda and much of the morning was spent discussing the best way to make the meeting most productive. A brainstorming session resulted in which ideas were bounced off one another in relation to stakeholder engagement.

Marketing and communication issues frequently were emphasized as key challenges to be met. There was a shared sense of urgency in getting out clear messages about the value of forests and forestry to the public and decision makers. This resulted from concerns that forest research was not well understood or valued by society. The theme of creating a "Marketing Brain Trust" resulted with ideas that included:

- Broadening Outlook process outreach by communicating messages to a wide range of decision makers at the policy, management and practitioner levels.
- Focusing terminology: i.e. use *Forest Resources* rather than *Forestry* or *Natural Resources*.
- Defining a national priority or messages to promote.
- Defining themes of "What", "So What", "Now What"

The agenda for the afternoon that developed was for the group to:

1. Identify key message areas to pursue for the Outlook Dialog.
2. Develop approaches for addressing the "science response" areas collaboratively.
3. Develop a range of options for a next round of the Outlook Dialog.

A. Stakeholder Engagement Process

Afternoon's dialogue led to framing six steps in identifying the potential universe of relevant stakeholders and how to engage them effectively. These steps are listed below and the contexts surrounding their origin are addressed in the *key message areas* and *approaches* sections under the heading: "*Science Responses*" *Vision Areas*. Steps include:

1. Define what we have done useful lately in a research portfolio including recent accomplishments of national significance.
2. Identify what problems we are going to solve next, and define a limited number of nationally important themes i.e. climate, energy, wildlife, water, human health.
3. Develop teams to compile work into message packages.
4. Engage marketing and communication professionals to fine tune these messages and link the messages to outcomes in Outlook while addressing key themes.
5. Increase societal understanding by getting messages out to wide audiences.
6. Present our messages to Congress as a group. It is important that the messages are common and have core content. It's also vital to include options for Congress by providing them with information on proposed plans surrounding the issue and tell them what the specific deliverables will be

Step four of increasing interaction with society is extremely important because this gets people engaged and makes them more willing to stand behind the issues and messages following implementation. The challenge here is taking the initial step. It was recommended that this be carried out by land grant universities, NGO's and the USDA Forest Service.

B. "Science Responses" Vision Areas

The seven elements of the Attainable Future envisioned by decision makers' at the first Outlook workshop were clustered into three sets and reviewed by small groups prior to the full group discussion to; (1) identify key message areas to pursue; and, (2) develop approaches for addressing the "science response" areas collaboratively.

1. Key Message Areas to Pursue

Visions: I. Sustainability & II. Healthy Working Forests

1. Highlight that forests are national interests. USFS needs to produce statements about the value of jobs, economic competitiveness, and national security in relation to forests.

2. Demonstrate that America's forests are crucial to the national interests by targeting messages and using fear as an angle. For example, present common themes or categories of services to use across various sectors:
 - a. **Climate Change:** 20% of carbon is in growing trees and forests
 - b. **Energy:** 30% of America's energy needs can be provided by sustainable biomass energy in forests
 - c. **Wildlife:** The majority of threatened and endangered species live in forests
 - d. **Water:** 66% of nation's drinking water come from forested areas
 - e. **Human Health:** Forests contribute to healthy urban environments and human populations.
3. Establish the comparative value of forest research that addresses national interests, thus refining this initial list of research agenda items.

The working group discussed how to talk about the ongoing Outlook Dialog, what should be communicated about this process, and where to go with the message once it is created. It was determined that the three above messages can be combined into a single statement:

“Applying forest research to provide benefits for America's long term and short term future”

The group felt this is the message that the Outlook Dialog should moving forward with for the goal of enhancing forest research support and stakeholder collaboration.

Visions: III. Competitiveness & IV. Biofuels and Bio-Products

Competitiveness will follow once the “other” areas of vision are addressed. For example, by 2025, markets will be different given biofuels and bio-products etc. The danger is that management is driven just by economic efficiency. There needs to be a way to cast competitiveness/forest products segment in the context of other values of forest systems (water, wildlife, etc.). The key message here is that “the role of research is to develop a full and complete accounting system for forest benefits and costs”.

Visions: V. Public Engagement, VI. Collaboration & VII. Leadership

The small group determined that we need these three visions; however the visions themselves are social processes rather than messages about forests in and of themselves. Upon examining the visions more in depth, the interdependency between forests and human health was noted as the key message. “Healthy Forests = Healthy People”. This refers to the “quality of life” as a significant value and that society can reap the benefits of healthy forests. Recent studies show that not only the physical but also mental health of people, and particularly children, are gaining public visibility in raising the importance of the forest-human health link (for example, the best selling book “Last Child in the Woods” by Richard Louv.)

2. Addressing the “Science Response” Areas Collaboratively

Visions: I. Sustainability & II. Healthy Working Forests

To address forests as national interests, it is important to craft the message in ways that can be accessed and understood by the American public. To do this, research needs to be carried out to

determine the external audiences along with the stakeholders who will have the largest influence on national interests.

A few approaches that were recommended by the working group include:

- Pointing out that forests enable the continuation of rural America by providing jobs.
- Identifying needs and benefits based on place, rather than on the natural resource, to effectively engage diverse publics.
- Researching pertinent questions recognizing and offering solutions for long and short term tradeoffs.

It was also recommended that an annual summit of forest stakeholders be held prior to Appropriation Committee hearings in Congress to develop unified messages and to clarify relevant messages, interests, and needs in order to promote and generate support for actionable science responses.

Visions: III. Competitiveness & IV. Biofuels and Bio-Products

To develop an honest accounting system for benefits and costs, viable economic solutions are necessary. The following is a list of suggestions that should be taken into consideration when developing an honest accounting system of forest benefits to society:

1. Determine how to ensure economic competitiveness while balancing other forest interests.
2. Look comprehensively, understand, and articulate the full array of forest benefits, including those with and without market value.
3. Decide how to optimize among multiple values so the forest products business is sustained as a viable forest user, but balances with other forest benefits.
4. Address the issue of competitiveness vs. complementarity.
5. Need to realize that a piece of the value chain remains in the rural community and that all values of forests require stewardship.
6. Address the values from highly managed lands, for example, one can get much more from trees than from corn per acre for biofuel feed stocks.
7. Need social process questions answered, however they are not the message about forest in and of themselves.
8. Determine how to sustain trees in an urban environment for both marketable products and intangible economic benefits.

Visions: V. Public Engagement, VI. Collaboration & VII. Leadership

To address the message of Healthy Forests = Healthy People, one must take into consideration quality of life and education methods. We need to create ways for accounting various values that are a part of the quality of life in sustainability. Recreation is one aspect, but is only one of the dimension of forest contributions to public health. Development of youth was also recommended, however passed over due to time constraints and informational resources.

II. Options for Next Round of Outlook

Outlook is an organic process that should evolve over time to fit the needs of stakeholders as they emerge and issues mature. The group recommended the follow possible options for next round of the Outlook Dialog:

1. Symposium style meeting approach.
 - Select a small group from forest research community to convene for a creative networking time
 - Hold in an isolated place conducive for reflection: blackberry free zone
 - Offer time for people to brainstorm and allow new ideas to flow
 - However, to insure useful work is accomplished, set benchmark expectations
2. Annual Review Meeting with a defined group to:
 - Document what is being done now in forest research
 - Highlight notable accomplishments from the previous year
 - Suggest adjustments in plans for the upcoming year
 - Address new challenges as they are identified
 - Prepare report highlighting key accomplishments
3. Annual “Messages” Summit to prepare for Congress prior to their convening.
 - Identify unifying messages for the forest research community to deliver
 - Develop a process to define relevant messages, interests, and needs
 - Convene a group of professional communication and marketing specialists together to help develop compelling messages
4. Working Subgroups of about five individuals per theme on: climate change, energy, wildlife, water, and human health to:
 - Identify collaborative opportunities and address the larger research questions
 - Apply the Outlook process by focusing on the functions of research, synthesis, tools, and communication
5. Working Subgroups to process the recommended 170 “science responses”
 - Cross-walk 170 items and develop clusters of the most important ones to pursue with collaboration among stakeholders
 - Determine which items seem to be already well addressed by research and which ones are new items that require new research efforts
 - Prioritize the responses or clusters, based on national needs

6. Board on Forest Research: Create a new body that can serve as the ongoing place to discuss and develop plans for forest-related research and provide a credible source of communication about research results and needs. They could also develop new approaches for research that enhance relevancy and build support.
7. National Forum: Plan an annual event that includes
 - Annual briefing with congressional staff
 - Assess research projects
 - Address social problems
 - Communication/Marketing Session
 - NOAA does a successful National Forum on its area
8. Outlook participants pursue networking and attend other groups annual meetings
 - Spread common vision by getting the word out
 - Communicate with and within respective professional entities

Most of these options envision an ongoing, at least annual event that brings forest researchers and stakeholders together and provide a forum for communicating to the broader public about what's happening in forest research and why it is important to the Nation's well being.

III. Next Step

The first round of the Outlook Dialog produced a rich source of ideas to serve as a basis for identifying new and expanded opportunities for the stakeholders to increase their coordination, collaboration, and partnerships in future research. The Working Group has developed specific ideas for capitalizing on those initial results and suggested various options to consider for conducting the next round of the Outlook process.

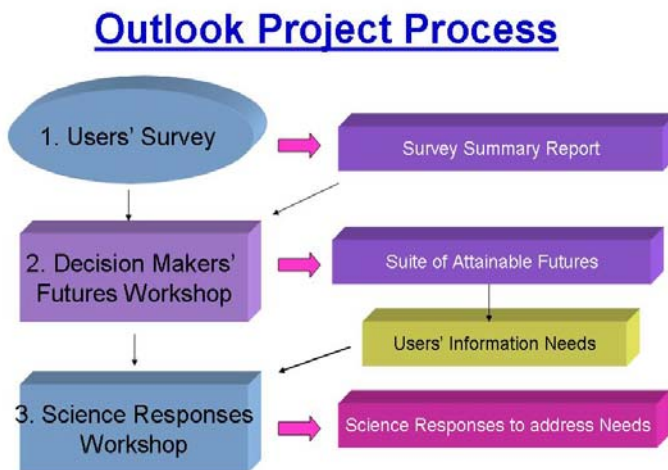
The next step is to share this report on Working Group's ideas and follow-up options with the USFS R&D management and the diverse array of previous Outlook participants and then begin planning the second round of activities for the ongoing dialogue effort with stakeholders. The next round in the Outlook Dialog hopefully will get underway in the fall of 2007.

APPENDIX A: Outlook Dialog Overview

The goal of the Outlook Dialog is to build a basis for enhancing research coordination, collaboration, and partnership within the forestry community. The project has engaged a range of members of the broad forestry community in both framing decision makers' future needs and identifying the science responses required to serve those needs. The process is participatory both to ensure stakeholders' input and to build a shared vision of decision makers needs for research results and the relevant science responses to meet the challenges of managing for a sustainable future.

Given the growing demands and tightening of forestry research funding, the Outlook Dialog has initially focused on how to get the best return on research and development investments in terms of providing useful information for decision makers – including policy makers, managers, and practitioners. Ultimately, for science to assist decision makers' effectively, a broad and robust research enterprise is required. The Outlook process engages the decision maker “clients” of science to collaborate with researchers in addressing their future needs, and thereby helps increase these important clients' support for the broader science enterprise.

The Outlook Dialog uses a futures approach to identify research and development activities that can anticipate the future needs of society. This futures approach is particularly important when considering the increasing rate of change and uncertainty and the long lead times often required to produce useful research results. The project first identified the future needs of decision makers and then defined the science responses required to address those practical needs. This phased approach is important because decision makers and researchers view and value information differently. The information most needed for application by decision makers often is not the same as the priority of information researchers seek to advance the frontiers of science.



Users' Survey and Decision Makers' Future Needs Workshop: The first step in the Outlook Dialog was a users survey of 50 key decision makers and science leaders to assess their views on the future of US forests and forestry up to 2025 AD. The results of the survey were summarized in a report and then shared in the second step of the Outlook process at the *Decision Makers' Future Needs Workshop* in September, 2005. The workshop participants included leading individuals who use scientific information in making forestry-related

decisions, from federal, state, and local government agencies, the business community, non-governmental organizations, and academic institutions. This diverse set of decision makers and scientists worked together to develop an “attainable future” with elements they envisioned for US forests and forestry. The attainable future then served as the basis for participants to identify the types of scientific information and tools they thought might be required to reach that future. The detailed results of this workshop are in a report available at www.ncseonline/outlook.

Science Responses Workshop: The third step in the first round of the Outlook Dialog was the *Science Responses Workshop* (March 7-9, 2006). This workshop engaged researchers and

managers in framing science responses to address user-defined needs from the first two steps in the Outlook effort. The diverse group of leaders participating in the workshop first considered the future needs developed by decision makers. They then developed numerous science responses to address these anticipated needs.

The framework developed in the first round of the Outlook Dialog is intended to help foster collaborative work across all sectors, leading to partnerships and synergies in conducting the nationwide research and development enterprise. Outlook has intentionally not attempted to develop a single prioritized research agenda for all to follow - but rather has framed a set of possible research options serving as a catalyst to facilitate increased understanding, coordination, collaboration and partnerships among individuals and organizations.

Outlook Dialog First Round Timeline

<i>May to July 2005</i>	<i>Survey:</i> Future of US Forests and Forestry
<i>August 2005</i>	<i>Report:</i> Summary of Outlook Survey Findings
<i>Sept. 27-29, 2005</i>	<i>Workshop:</i> Decision Makers' Future Needs
<i>November 2005</i>	<i>Report:</i> Decision Makers' Workshop Results
<i>Jan. 4-6, 2006</i>	National Association of University Forest Resources Programs (NAUFRP, formerly NAPFSC) Summit, "Forest Research for the 21 st Century"
<i>March 7-9, 2006</i>	<i>Workshop:</i> Science Responses to Decision Makers' Future Needs
<i>May 16, 2006</i>	<i>Summary Report:</i> Science Responses Workshop Results
<i>March 28, 2007</i>	<i>Workshop:</i> Stakeholder Working Group
<i>April 27, 2007</i>	<i>Report:</i> Stakeholder Working Group Meeting Results

APPENDIX B: Initial Working Group Meeting Agenda

8:30 AM	Continental Breakfast and Introductory Conversations
9:00 (15 min)	Welcoming and FS R&D's Goals (Ann Bartuska)
9:15 (15 min)	Self Introductions and Comments on Stakeholder Experiences
9:30 (30 min)	Outlook Dialog Results and Meeting Goals (Chris Bernabo)
10:00 (15 min)	Discussion on Meeting Objectives, Agenda and Outcomes
10:15 (15 min)	BREAK
10:30 (60 min)	Possible Goals for Stakeholder Dialogs and Desired Results
11:30 (30 min)	Highest Priority Issues or Topics for Future Dialogs
12:00 PM	WORKING LUNCH - Reviewing Outlook "Science Responses" In Table 1 of Summary Report
1:00 (45 min)	Identifying Most Appropriate "Science Responses" to Pursue
1:45 (30 min)	Stakeholder Groups to Engage in Next Round of Dialog
2:15 (15 min)	BREAK
2:30 (45 min)	Defining Approaches for Next Round of Stakeholder Engagement
3:15 (45 min)	Summary of Challenges and Opportunities for Future Dialogs
4:00 (30 min)	Next Steps and Wrap Up of Meeting Results
4:30 PM	ADJOURN