

Forests Through Time and Space W05

Workshop: Managing and Sustaining Ecosystems

As humans, we influence or directly impact all the ecosystems on Earth. The purpose of this workshop is to clarify some of the important considerations and decisions that we must make in the coming decades as we take scientific knowledge and research and apply it to management of forest ecosystems.

Workshop instructions

In groups of four or five, discuss and answer the following questions.

Research has shown that when people first consider a question on their own and outline their thoughts before engaging in a group discussion, participation in the discussion is enhanced. We have noticed that some students tend to dominate conversations. By asking you to each think and write about the questions before your discussion, we are hoping to encourage equal participation by all students.

Begin by individually reading each question and individually jotting down some notes of your responses. Your group may choose to take time at the beginning to do this for all the questions or to take a little time before addressing each question. Discuss your individual thoughts and collectively agree on an answer.

Appoint one person in the group to record the group answers. You will turn these in at the end of the workshop time. We will discuss these answers as class at the close of the workshop. Students will be randomly selected to lead the discussion on each question.

These questions are the type you could spend an entire quarter researching and discussing. However, today you will spend about an hour answering these with your group and we'll spend the remainder of the workshop time discussing your answers as a class. Appoint someone to keep track of the time and make sure that you get through all of the questions.

Questions

1. List all the services that we (the collective we) receive from forests.
2. For each service listed above, outline the costs (or categories of costs) associated with providing the particular service. Be sure to include opportunity costs (the idea that providing one type of service would eliminate the possibility of providing another).
3. Do we need to manage forest ecosystems? Why or why not?
4. Are there forest ecosystems that we shouldn't manage? If so, identify their characteristics and locations (in general).
5. Define sustainable forestry.
6. How do we know if a forest is being managed sustainably?
7. Attached is a matrix that compares a number of different forest certification programs.
 - a. Look at the criteria and decide which ones are the most important to your group.
 - b. Which certification program appears to be the best one? Outline your reasoning

Additional assignment

For additional details on forest certification and to prepare for our field trips to forest sites, read the three articles (On the Ground, A comparison of FSC & SFI, and Fletcher et al) on the program web site.