

Family Forests in Lewis County

Family-owned forests comprise some of the most productive forestland in the United States. Washington's family forest landowners own approximately 18 percent, or 3 million acres, of the state's forestland. In Lewis County, family forest landowners manage approximately 25 percent, or 180,000 acres, of the forestland. It is estimated that approximately 90 percent of currently endangered species depend on small forested landholdings for some of their habitat needs.

While family-owned forests are ecologically significant, they also have an importance to communities and ecosystems that extends far beyond their acreage alone.

In western Washington, family forestlands tend to be located at low elevations on highly productive forest sites (including many biologically important lowland riparian areas). These forest areas are often the interface between urbanizing population centers and middle and higher elevations where federal, state, and industrial forestland is found. In many cases family forests constitute the "buffer" between urban com-



munities and the large tracts of industrial forestlands, thereby minimizing the contrasts between urban sprawl and large-

scale forest management practices. Many of these forest owners represent multi-generational families within the community and are an important part of the region's culture. These families support local schools and civic organizations, and the revenue from tree farming families represents real income; *i.e.*, goods are produced from a renewable natural resource to provide a value-added commodity. These profits stay in the community, promoting long-term economic viability and community health.



Conserving Family Forestry

The Family Forest Foundation

The Family Forest Foundation was founded on the premise that family-owned forests are integral to the long-term sustainability of Washington's rural environment and economy. Established as a 501c(3) Non-profit Corporation by a group of small forest landowners in 2001, the Foundation is working to develop the necessary incentives to ensure family forestry remains economically and ecologically viable into the future.

**WA Wood
Is Good**



Family forestry has played a fundamental role in the economy of Lewis County for generations.

Projects the Foundation is engaged in:

- Developing the policy and funding necessary to support economically and ecologically sustainable forest management.
- Developing the nation's first multi-species, multi-landowner habitat conservation plan.
- Researching the role forestry cooperatives can play in improving the economic viability of family forestry.
- Broadening the consumer's perspective of the issues facing family forests.

Statement of Purpose

The Family Forest Foundation is working to promote the conservation and sustainable management of family forests.

The goals of the Foundation are to:

- Foster economically and ecologically sustainable family forests
- Provide mechanisms for State and Federal regulatory certainty
- Establish an enduring fiscal foundation for the conservation of family forests
- Enhance public awareness of the contributions family forests make to natural resource conservation

Planning for the Future

The Family Forest Habitat Conservation Plan

The first objective of the Foundation is to develop the **Family Forest Habitat Conservation Plan**, the first ever multi-species and multi-landowner habitat conservation plan (HCP) for small forest landowners. The HCP will provide regulatory certainty in the form of an **incidental take permit**, which will ensure small forest landowners will not be penalized if endangered species take up residency in habitat created on their property. The HCP will also give landowners the added incentive to develop and maintain habitat for all wildlife species in their area.

A landowner will enroll in the HCP by first developing an individualized forest management plan. This plan will be based on the management guidelines outlined in the HCP and will include site-specific prescriptions unique to the landowner's property. If the stewardship plan meets the criteria of the HCP, it will be recognized by both the federal and state governments as an alternate to the state forest practices rules.



Growing larger diameter timber provides for better wildlife habitat while creating premium quality wood products.

Currently the Family Forest Foundation is working with a steering committee comprised of a diverse stakeholder group to negotiate the terms of the HCP. When finished, the HCP will cover a wide range of both aquatic and upland species. Landowners in Lewis County will

be able to enroll in the Family Forest Habitat Conservation Plan in early 2004.

Family Forest Habitat Conservation Plan

Steering Committee

- FFF Board of Directors
- Department of Natural Resources
- WSU Cooperative Extension
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- University of Washington
- Perkins Coie LLC
- Biota Pacific
- R2 Resources