



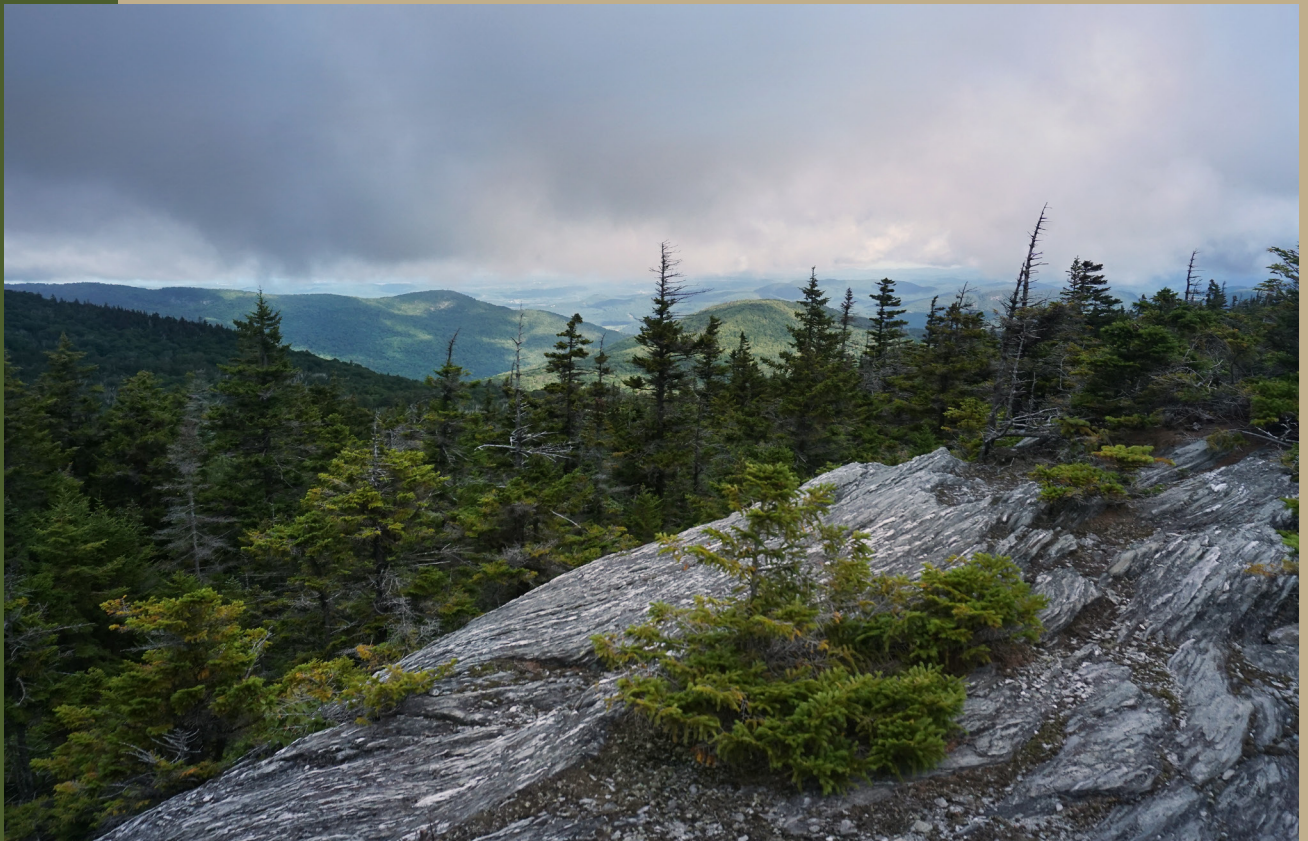
Future Forests Reimagined

Workshop Series

Building Resilience for Ecological Recovery and Community Wellbeing

in the Northern Appalachian–Acadian–Wabanaki Bioregion

October 2022



Green Mountains in Vermont. Photo: Brothers Welch/Adobe Stock

Workshop Series Co-Sponsors: Wildlands Network and Two Countries, One Forest

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Table of Contents

Land Acknowledgement and Gratitude 3

Executive Summary 4

Introduction 5

Bioregion 5-6

Workshop Series 6-7

Insights and Key Outcomes 7-9

Moving Forward 9-11

Appendices

 A. Workshop Agenda and Speakers **12-15**

 B. Implementation Strategies and Draft Action Items **16-18**



Forest in Vermont. Photo: Nblxlr/Adobe Stock

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we live and work on the traditional and unceded territory of the Wabanaki Confederacy and other Indigenous peoples, who have been caretakers and stewards of this land since time immemorial. These Indigenous nations and peoples include the Abenaki, Massachusett, Mi'gmaq/Mi'kmaq, Pennacook, Penobscot (Penawapskewi), Peskotomuhkati, Wampanoag and Wolastoqiyik peoples. This territory is governed by the Treaties of Peace and Friendship which were signed with the British Crown in the 1700s, and the rights of Indigenous peoples described in the Jay Treaty of 1794 between the U.S. and Great Britain. These treaties did not deal with the surrender of lands and resources, but in fact recognized Indigenous title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations.

Recognition and respect are essential elements of establishing healthy, reciprocal relations. These relationships are key to reconciliation, to which we all need to be committed, as we are all Treaty peoples. In conserving these lands and waters, we need to embrace the essential leadership of Indigenous stewards who continue to care for them, including Elders, Knowledge Holders and communities. Working together on shared responsibilities to the lands and waters, and to each other, is a key part of our ongoing Treaty relationships and collective kinships with nature.

Gratitude

Our profound thanks to all our guides on this journey, especially:

- Elder Albert Marshall, Moose Clan of the Mi'kmaw Nation; lives in Eskasoni in Unama'ki
- Elder Gordon Labillois, Mi'gmaw, Eel River Bar First Nation / Ugpi'ganjig
- Elder George Paul, Mi'gmaw, Metepenagiag, New Brunswick
- shalan joudry, Mi'kmaw writer, storyteller, and ecologist, Mi'kma'ki
- Dr. Karen Beazley, Professor, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia
- Each of our workshop speakers, Northern Appalachian-Acadian-Wabanaki ecoregion, and beyond

Executive Summary

The world is in a crisis of climate change impacts and biodiversity loss, threatening ecological resiliency and human wellbeing. Deforestation continues across the planet even though it is widely recognized that retaining forests and improving forest management using ecological forestry practices are natural and practical solutions to carbon storage.

Future Forests Reimagined is a transboundary initiative to protect and restore old forests of the present, and to plan for future old forests and ecologically-managed forests in the Northern Appalachian-Acadian-Wabanaki (NAPAW) bioregion of Canada and the United States.

This bioregion encompasses the most intact broad-leaved temperate forest in the world. These forests are essential habitats for biodiversity, supporting cultural practices, enhancing long-term carbon capture and storage, protecting watersheds, and offering other co-benefits, especially when managed with ecological silvicultural practices. **Future Forests Reimagined** is fostering a stakeholder “community of communities” across sovereign boundaries of Canada, United States and the Wabanaki Confederacy as well as other First Nations and Tribes in the bioregion. This community is articulating coordinated approaches to move the needle at a large scale towards expanding the use of ecological forest management and old forest protection through action-oriented partnerships. Together we are developing a shared plan for accelerating the protection and stewardship of resilient forested landscapes in the bioregion.

Future Forests Reimagined has three complementary implementation strategies that will help uphold Indigenous governance and Traditional Ecological Knowledge systems and protect biodiversity while enhancing long-term carbon capture and storage, watershed protection, and other co-benefits. They are:

- 1) Identify and Protect Remaining Old Forests
- 2) Accelerate the Restoration of Wildland Forests
- 3) Increase the amount of Actively Managed Resilient Forests

Climate change is and will continue to be a significant stressor, presenting challenges for forest species with limited capacity to migrate or adapt to change. By building respectful relationships, we are identifying principles and practices in order to be good neighbors across borders and inspire communal action towards

resilient forests. We promote the principles reflected in the Treaties of Peace and Friendship and seek to understand the perspectives of Indigenous peoples about our right relationship, our kinship to land and water, wildlife and plants.

In Phase One, with guidance from indigenous leaders, a transboundary planning team worked for two years, designing a series of five transboundary workshops. From January-March 2022, these workshops gathered 248 participants, 157 from the United States and 89 from Canada, among whom are 24 Indigenous leaders. Participants shared a wide range of perspectives, discussed complex topics, and identified shared goals about the forested landscape. Together we workshopped specific measures to advance management and protection, drawing on a wide range of cultural and professional perspectives. We shared and learned so much over the course of this series. Participants and speakers offered their insights and world views about our one shared forest and bioregion. These lively conversations have been thoughtful, well-researched, respectful and are driving us towards solving challenges using all our collective ways of knowing. Twenty-five volunteers launched a participator advisory group (settler and Indigenous members), to discuss inclusive ways to organize and achieve next steps, aligning with the three strategies, through “project-based” collaborations.



Moose. Photo: Paul/Adobe Stock

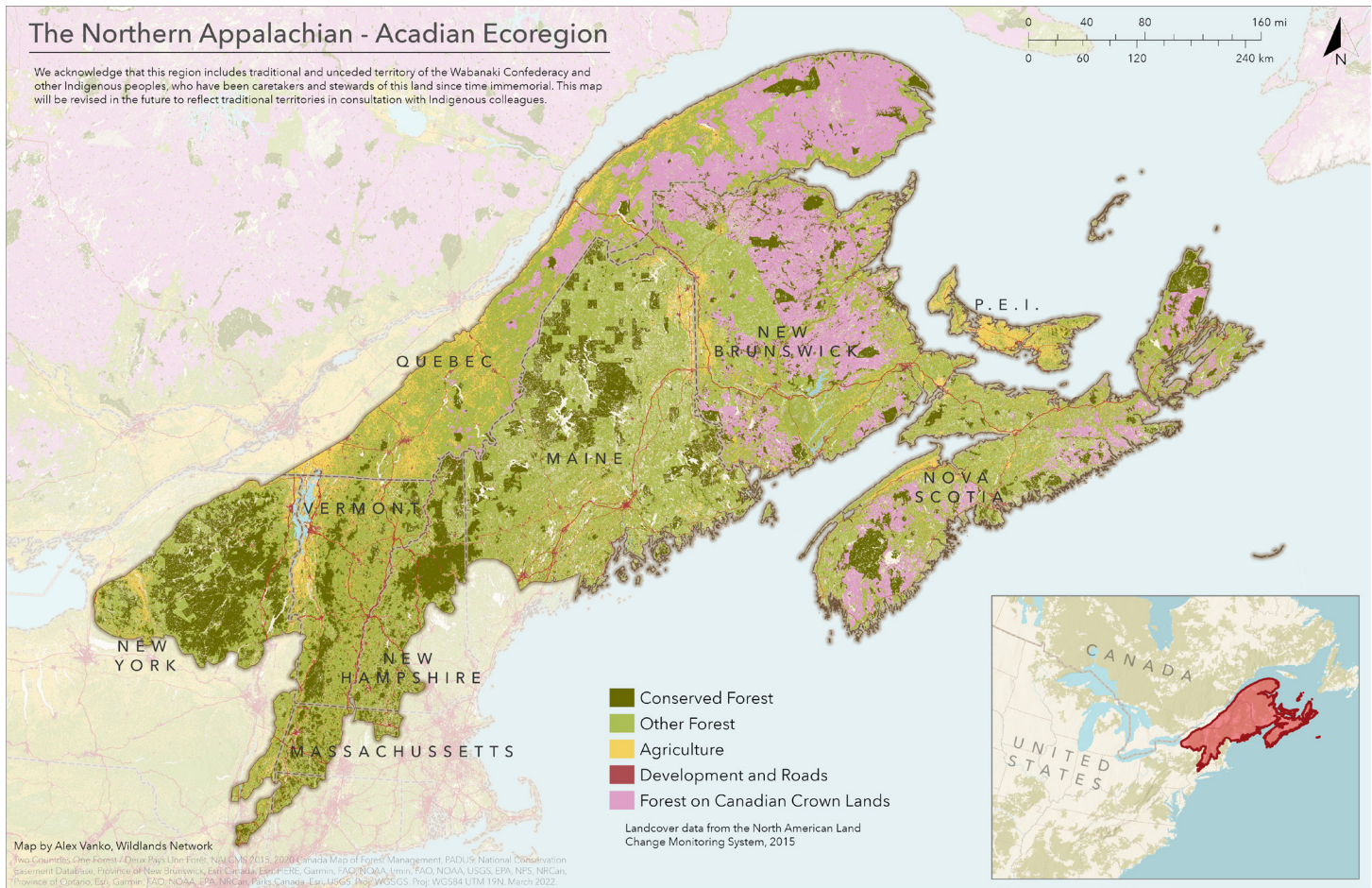


Figure 1. Map of the Bioregion (Wildlands Network)

Introduction

The authors share the belief that human connectivity can produce social movements which shift power from the status quo and foster authentic change. That belief inspires this practical, bioregional response to the rallying cry to implement solutions and change at the bioregional scale, as presented by the **United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration**. Bioregionalism is premised on fundamental kinship and interdependence with Earth's systems, and enables reconciliation with place and a new era of living in community with each other and all the other species sharing our one planet. Bioregionalism promotes investment and work across boundaries, disciplines, and domains. Every issue that undermines a connected, resilient landscape, from economic decline, biodiversity loss, water and air pollution and climate change, requires a higher degree of coordination in our current social, political and operational systems. Exciting advances in the science and practice of forest management and protection over the last decade, together with traditional Indigenous systems and knowledge, offer the potential to accelerate the ecological conservation of forests across the NAPAW region. Coupled with the emergence of new sources of financing, we can achieve the greatest efficiencies and impact by coordinating efforts across sectors and regions.

This Report summarizes the first phase of the Future Forests Reimagined initiative conducted in early 2022, when we gathered for five transboundary workshops that successfully convened key stakeholders from Canada, the United States, and rights holders from Indigenous groups in the bioregion. These sessions were the first step in building relationships with a goal of implementing a shared plan for accelerating the protection and stewardship of a resilient forested landscape across the NAPAW ecoregion. Phase two involved a survey of all workshop participants for additional feedback about five bioregional dimensions identified in phase one (partnerships, economics, policy, human wellbeing, knowledge-local, indigenous, and research), for growing a network of working groups who will take action towards the long-term goals of the initiative. The survey also successfully recruited volunteers to lead advisory and future working groups. Phase three recently launched with the first meetings of the transboundary advisory group and the mapping working group.

Bioregion

The NAPAW bioregion (**Figure 1**) encompasses the largest intact broad-leaved temperate forest in the world.

The 330,000-km² (nearly 82 million-acre) region includes Wabanaki Confederacy lands, five U.S. states and four Canadian provinces. It is home to over five million people and thousands of species of plants and animals. Currently, less than 10% of this bioregion is strictly protected.

These forests are vital to the region, providing culturally and economically important natural resources and livelihoods, landscape connectivity, clean water and air, and recreational spaces. Thanks to networks of healthy forests, wetlands, and rivers, the region is home to Canada lynx, black bear, moose, American marten and other mammals. The value of healthy lands and waterways cannot be overstated in the face of climate change.

Workshop Series

A bioregional framework provides a foundation for transboundary collaboration, and will serve to catalyze our collaborative social movements toward large landscape restoration and resilience. This “**Future Forests Reimagined Workshops**” series provided space and time for nearly 250 extraordinary people to learn and share creative ideas through various lenses of indigenous experience, science, policy and community. See the full agenda with speakers in [Appendix A](#).

Renowned speakers and busy participants from many nations (U.S., Canada, Wabanaki and other indigenous communities) committed time and expertise to dive deeply and examine ways to **implement three complementary strategies** detailed below. Our conversations inspired long lists of specific measures to advance management and protection across the region, drawing on a wide range of perspectives. Our plan is to implement and adapt the action items through communities partnering across working boundaries.

1. Identify and protect remaining old forests

Old forests meet the following criteria. They contain: trees of more than 50% of the maximum age of the dominant tree species; a variety of age classes of the dominant tree species; new individuals establish through gap-phase dynamics (small canopy gaps); presence of large snags and coarse woody material; and little to no evidence of human activity. Although they make up a small part of the landscape, any such areas should be strictly protected, with no industrial or large-scale commercial extraction.

2. Accelerate the restoration of wildland forests

Wildland forests are protected forests in which natural processes predominate with minimal human disturbance, and no industrial or large-scale commercial extraction. Such forests may not currently meet the definition of old forests, but they would be allowed to grow intact to their ecological potential (rewilding).

3. Increase the amount of resilient forest through ecological management

People who manage and steward forests have successfully implemented ecological forestry for decades—for timber products, carbon management, ecosystem function, and human health and well-being. Ecological forestry can protect threatened and rare species, sustain biological diversity, provide habitat for all wildlife, ensure landscape connectivity, and enhance ecosystem resilience, all while providing timber/non-timber products and understory species of cultural and economic value. Ecological Forestry is a framework based on the following components.

- Maintaining forest continuity in structure, function, and species from pre-harvest to post-harvest.
- Maintaining and creating forest complexity and biological diversity at varying scales, age classes, size classes, retention, and composition across a landscape.
- Timing harvests and other treatments to mimic natural disturbance patterns/systems.
- Performing all treatments and interventions in the context of landscape scale planning.
- Humility: maintaining multiple options to address and adapt to the novel and future forest.

Throughout the workshop series, our days began with intentions, prayers and poetry led by Indigenous Elders and younger generation leaders from throughout the region. Each workshop was rich with stimulating presentations, conversations and small group discussions and ranged across many topics.



Mixed Wood Forest Management. Photo: Anthony D'Amato.

Please visit our [temporary website](#) for the Workshop Series details. Speakers and discussion groups alike were very energized to discuss and identify a vast array of important topics and questions, along with an inspired list of actions, social changes, knowledge gaps and shared values ([Appendix B](#)).

Insights and Key Outcomes

Participants engaged in vigorous, open and respectful discussions during each of the five workshops, resulting in the identification of numerous opportunities and challenges. While those inspiring conversations are not fully captured here, this section summarizes some of the key insights for the purposes of this report.

Insight #1: Elevate First Nations and Tribal rights, histories, understandings and knowledge, and co-create a leadership structure and culture centered on these.

Fundamental to this work is listening to and learning from Indigenous leaders; using conscious language to reflect our intrinsic unity with nature; including the Wabanaki name when referring to the bioregion; supporting traditional ecological knowledge and cultural uses of the forest; engaging with elders when appropriate; promoting interns and next generation participation and leadership; working to secure financial resource support for Indigenous partners; and affirming treaty rights. There is a

crucial need to elevate human well-being and kin relationship to the land, through authentic relationship building and broad partnerships across cultures.

Initial Key Outcome: Inspired by participation in the workshop series, a representative of the Lincoln Land Institute awarded a summer research stipend and scholarship to a member of the Mohawk nation and a McGill University Anthropology PhD candidate, for the [ALPINE Summer Institute](#), a large landscape conservation course held in Maine.

Insight #2: Create a transparent and inclusive leadership structure that affords the space and accountability needed to move forward collectively.

Creating community across boundaries is foundational to this initiative. The Advisory Group is creating a framework that will remove historic barriers, build relations and facilitate generational knowledge sharing. Participant groups must continue to meet and focus on project-level work and to share bioregional and cross-boundary work in ways that are inclusive and effective. This will include gatherings in person, webinars and extensive outreach in

rural communities. Partners will collaboratively identify priorities and solutions applying both western and traditional knowledge. A document will be shared across the region to provide an underpinning for this community building.

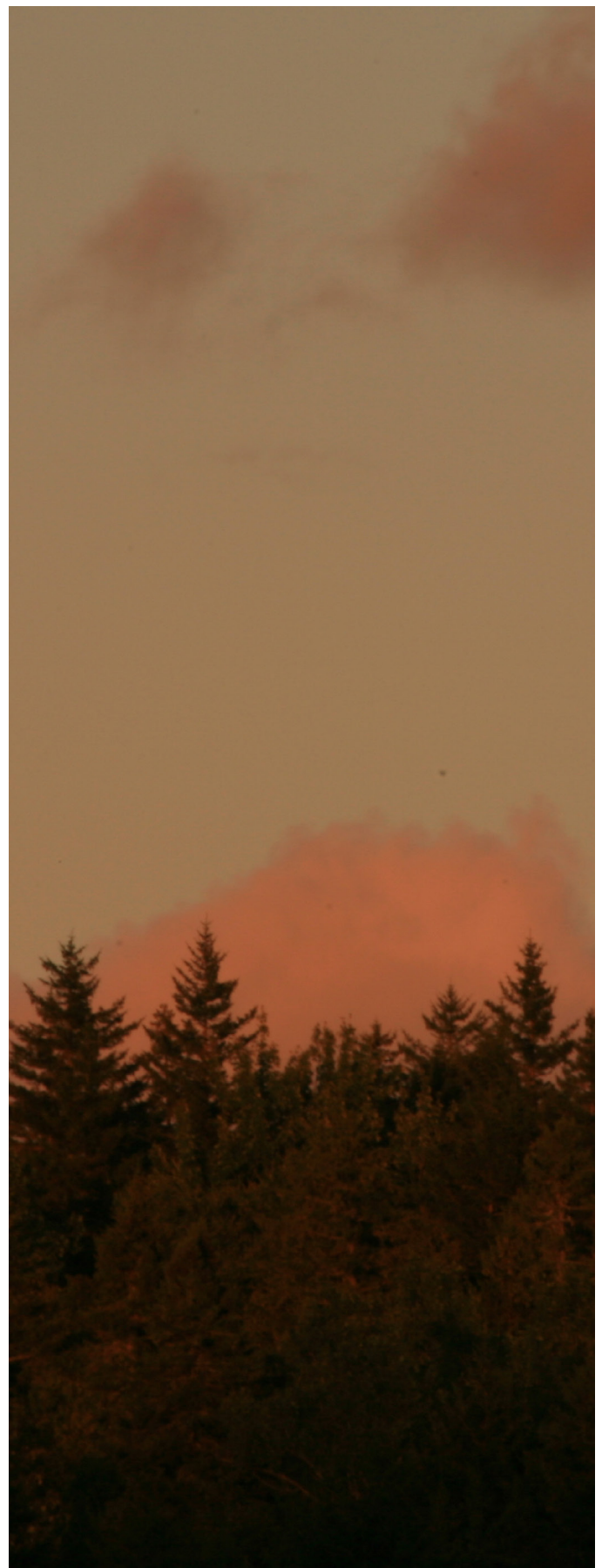
Initial Key Outcomes:

- Advisory Group meetings underway with multinational representation.
- Compilation of Action Items from the five workshops ([Appendix B](#)).

Insight #3: Old Forests must be adequately mapped across jurisdictions and land tenure patterns to provide sufficient data for planning and action.

One of the first and most crucial issues identified during the workshops is to address the state of knowledge about old forests locations, and to develop models for desired connectivity across boundaries and ownership patterns. A Mapping Working Group is needed to research and identify the most effective ways to achieve a comprehensive old forest inventory for the bioregion, monitor forest resilience trends, carbon sequestration, and support collaboration in smaller groups with an eye to larger bioregional visions. There are significant technical needs and partnership challenges to reducing barriers to information across jurisdictions. This group will assess current status of methodical protocol, predictive models and other methodologies, and will provide vetted bioregional versions and planning tools for collective work, across political boundaries.

Initial Key Outcomes: The Mapping working group is underway, developing initial predictive models to identify previously unmapped old forests. Members of this group include leading researchers, agency and NGO experts from across state jurisdictions, and is coordinated by the Wildlands Network GIS specialist. Partners will also ground truth and adjust models as needed. Combined with existing old forest data, this information will be used to identify priority old forest habitats in need of protection measures, and to predict the best areas where future old forests are most likely to succeed, with appropriate ecological management, planning and protection measures.



Evening Glow. Photo: Two Countries, One Forest.

Insight #4: A bioregional identity that includes linking a healthy environment with community well-being must be shaped and communicated so that the story of place and the role of all participants (current and potential) is understood and celebrated. This will fuel societal changes that will sustain the work.

This collective voice for change will co-create impactful stories that “translate” large-scale regional conservation designs for outreach with local communities and forest landowners to inspire action that results in local old forest protection and planning. The collective will identify ways to scale-up to achieve regional goals and benchmarks. We will co-create stories in a variety of ways, e.g. storytelling circles, webinars, website, platforms for action groups. A variety of communication tools will reach into and across communities, e.g. multilanguage posters in tribal community centers, media pieces, newsletters, podcasts, in-person meetings, webinars for agency partners, etc. Working or Action Groups will collaborate on innovative projects relevant to the goals, or to replicate success stories, and will have shared access to resources, sharing model projects, and project ideas with wider group. Furthermore, we will analyze whether there are governance models that have been put in place or could be put in place (i.e. a “radical bioregionalism”) to strengthen the collective voice and allow bioregional planning and governance on treaty rights, old growth management and policy support for protections.

Initial Key Outcomes:

- Communications systems developed so far include a listserve, a website providing access to resources and workshop archives. Workshop video editing is also underway.
- Poster to be presented at 2022 [Planetary Health Hybrid Annual Meeting](#), “Future Forest reimagined, building resilience for ecological recovery and community wellbeing, Northern Appalachian-Acadian-Wabanaki (NAPAW) bioregion of Canada and the United States.”

Insight #5: Different management frameworks and planning protection strategies must be discussed, applied, tested and implemented as we confront resistance to, and implement changes to status quo.

This includes widely understood and consistently applied ecological forestry standards (academic and industry engagement); traditional ecological knowledge and indigenous forms of management; generational change and values shifts, including asset transfer; climate change adaptation tools; balancing current focus on short-term financial returns with a larger focus on long term returns, including carbon sequestration and ecosystem service benefits, consistent with new economic models based on carbon offsets, enhanced carbon sequestration and carbon dioxide reduction; multi-party, multi-national collaboration. This will involve many perspectives on ecological management—from Indigenous, through provincial Crown lands managed for multi-aged forests, to the need to deal with multiple values and use good social science principles to encourage adoption of new ideas including ecological forestry. Alongside expanding the use of ecological forestry, we must collaborate to implement old forest protection strategies which include converting absentee ownership to local, regional or indigenous community ownership or co-management, establishing forever wild easements, working lands easements when appropriate, establishing and codifying community forests and even certain large industry approaches to conservation. There are also differing needs and approaches of large versus small landowners.

Initial Key Outcomes:

- A pilot project grant proposal submitted to the Indigenous Knowledge Fund of Northeastern States Research Cooperative, titled “Connecting Nature, Culture, and Generations: Reciprocity through black ash trees and ash basketry.” The proposal was not funded this year, but partners will pursue other funding sources.
- Publication and distribution of Workshop Report for participants.

Moving forward

The Workshop series resulted in enthusiastic groundwork and commitment to the vision of this ambitious, long-term initiative. Now, we are building on this collaboration in order to advance ecological forestry, old forest protection and restoration beyond artificial political and cultural boundaries. While leaders in the Advisory and Mapping work groups will shepherd many of the moving parts of this initiative, it is evident that a regional coordinator is needed to support relationship building, communications and new projects as we progress.

As mentioned above, the Mapping work group is already conducting old forest mapping (in Vermont), with



Canada Lynx (*Lynx canadensis*). Photo: Teresa.

ground-truthing and model refinements to follow. Members are also coordinating with similar efforts in New York, along with other work in the region to predict best locations for future old forests.

The Advisory Group is also considering how to formulate a “transboundary” framework that provides ethical, non-judgmental spaces (for gatherings both virtual and in-person) so settlers and indigenous participants alike will want to show up and talk about how to work on FFR projects together. For example, talking circles can build trust and allow actions and ideas to be discussed, allowing all participants a voice in decision-making and to offer how they want to be involved. This results in commitments and working partnerships to lead the efforts on dozens of project-based, action items under the three strategies identified. There is shared agreement that we must engage next generations in indigenous nations to collaborate with youth in settler communities so that they see their paradigm is one of being equals. Creating shared goals, sharing resources, exploring strategies and taking actions together requires time, conscious and correct use of inclusive language (e.g., indigenous language in this region tends to be more verb-based than English or Canadian French). Often mentioned during the workshops by our Indigenous colleagues is that trust is best grown by meeting each other on the land and in the water.

Participants with experience in this work urged us to host a series of in-person gatherings, convening with a focus on Indigenous and rural perspectives and relationship building, with support as needed, e.g., training in cross-cultural conflict resolution or professional mediation to discuss controversial issues. We will consult with those in the region who are transforming cross-cultural relations for planning those in-person meetings. Included in the list of significant, and sometimes provocative, actions generated by participants are some notable questions for this emerging community to try and answer in new ways. How do we apply traditional elder knowledge and ecological forest management to replace and counter the current exploitive, unsustainable harvesting systems? How to establish a clearinghouse of knowledge, data, etc., ideally in more than one language, available to all communities so there is a way to share knowledge, data, and information across borders and systems? Are there protocols, standards, commonly-used platforms, etc. to share environmental information to benefit the region more broadly? What sustainable incentive programs do we want for private landowners to adopt ecological forestry practices and how do we get policy makers to implement? How are the U.S., Canada, and First Nations defining 30x30 and how do we work together to meet this goal, e.g., who is coordinating and monitoring cross-boundary impacts of 30x30 planning?

In closing, the Future Forests Reimagined initiative has generated nascent collaborations that are based on goodwill, inclusion, and a keen interest in sharing and acting upon our collective visions for the health of nature and people in our region—now and for future generations. Recognizing the need to continue investing in the enormous good faith and momentum built so far, we plan to create a clearing house platform for projects, models to emulate, and sharing of resources. We are also continuing our support for the Advisory Group, and project implementation. Together we are committed to transforming a powerful vision into action, thus creating a future rich with healthy forests, biodiversity and human wellbeing.



River and forest. Photo: Nelson Cloud.

Appendix A

Agenda: Future Forests Reimagined Workshop Series Building Resilience for Ecological Recovery and Community Wellbeing in the Northern Appalachia-Acadian-Wabanaki Bioregion

DAY 1: INSPIRING ACTION, January 14 | 9am-3pm ET

Objectives: Inspire participants about the vision and scope of the series; Provide a platform for inspirational leaders to share their ideas; Discuss visionary ideas for the future; Establish common understanding and platform of resilient forest.

Opening Thoughts and Acknowledgements • Elder Gordon LaBillois, Eel River Bar First Nation / Ugpi'ganjig, Mi'kmaw • Land Acknowledgement: Melissa Bade, CDR • Land Acknowledgement: Roberta Clowater, Canadian Parks and Wilderness
Keynote Speaker: Presenting from a Bioregional Perspective • Jon Erickson, GUND Institute, University of Vermont
Visioning & Small Group Discussions
Conversation: Grasping the Big Picture • David Foster, Harvard University and Forest, Massachusetts • Karen Beazley, Dalhousie University, Nova Scotia • Steve Ginnish, Mi'gmaq, MI'GMAWE'L TPLU'TAQNN INC, New Brunswick
Case Study Model • We Rise Together: Larry McDermott, Algonquin Nation, Ontario
Small Group Discussions / Activity
Closing • Elder Gordon LaBillois, Eel River Bar First Nation / Ugpi'ganjig • Nancy Patch, Professional Forester

DAY 2: IDENTIFYING , IMPLEMENTING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES, January 21 | 9am-3pm ET

Objectives: Understand and engage with perspectives of Indigenous peoples; Articulate need for coordinated management strategies across borders; Discuss strategies and implementation at a small, medium, and large scale; Identify needs and opportunities for improvement to achieve shared goals.

Opening Thoughts and Acknowledgements • Elder George Paul, Mi'kmaw • Land Acknowledgement: Roberta Clowater, Canadian Parks and Wilderness • Land Acknowledgement: Melissa Bade, CDR
Indigenous Perspectives • <i>Etuaptmumk</i> and the Importance of Connections: • Alexandra Rivers, Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq • Troy Robichaud, Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq • Patricia Nash, Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources • Elizabeth Jessome, Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources

Appendix A

• Darren Ranco, Penobscot; Staff of Wabanaki Commission on Land and Stewardship; Chair of Native American Programs, Associate Professor of Anthropology, University of Maine, Orono • Suzanne Greenlaw, Maliseet, University of Maine, PhD candidate
Conversation: Forest Protection and Active Management: Large and Small Landowner Strategies • Old forests, land trusts, protection, and rewilding: Jon Leibowitz, Northeast Wilderness Trust, Vermont • Small holdings and family forests: Megan de Graaf, Community Forest International, New Brunswick • Ecological forestry at a large scale: Dan LaMontagne, Seven Islands Land Company, Maine
Small Group Discussions / Activity
Closing Remarks and Thoughts • Nancy Patch, Professional Forester

DAY 3: SILVICULTURE, FOREST ECONOMICS, February 9 | 9am-2pm ET

Objectives: Discuss current approaches in academia and identify opportunities to impact the university-level dynamic; Understand the practice of forest economics and conservation finance; Identify next steps to move the needle towards ecological forest management.

Opening Thoughts • shalan joudry, Mi'kmaw • Land Acknowledgement: Roberta Clowater, Canadian Parks and Wilderness • Land Acknowledgement: Melissa Bade, CDR
Conversation: Grounding Our Knowledge and Understanding • Tony D'Amato, University of Vermont • Patricia Raymond, Quebec Ministry of Forests, Wildlife and Parks • Mike Dockry, Citizen Potawatomi, University of Minnesota
Small Group Discussions / Activity
Conversation: Practical applications of forest economics and conservation finance • Joseph Pallant, Ecotrust Canada • John Daigle, Penobscot, University of Maine • Sean Ross, Lyme Timber Company
Small Group Discussions
Closing Thoughts • shalan joudry, Mi'kmaw • Christine Laporte, Wildlands Network

Appendix A

DAY 4: OLD FORESTS - SCIENCE AND CONSERVATION, February 25 | 9am-1:15pm ET

Objectives: Underscore the importance of old forest protection and restoration; Opportunity to coalesce ideas and discussions into action.

Opening Thoughts

- shalan joudry, Mi'kmaw
- Land Acknowledgement: Roberta Clowater, Canadian Parks and Wilderness
- Land Acknowledgement: Melissa Bade, CDR

Conversation: The Science of Old Forests

- Bob Zaino, Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department
- Mark Anderson, The Nature Conservancy
- Loïc D'Orangeville, Forestry & Environmental Management, University of New Brunswick
- Valerie Hipkins, US Fish and Wildlife

Small Group Discussions / Activity

Conversation: Bill Keeton, University of Vermont

- Research and examples of [old growth forest restoration](#)
- Continental-wide [inventory](#) and [gap analysis](#) of primary forests
- How do we proceed as a region? Determining the distribution of remaining primary and old forests as well as opportunities for recovery; role in [climate resilience](#).
- What existing data sets do you know of in the region for locations of old and primary forests?
- What current or on-going initiatives are mapping old and primary forests in the region?
- What criteria are these initiatives using?

Closing Thoughts

- shalan joudry, Mi'kmaw
- Roberta Clowater, Canadian Parks and Wilderness

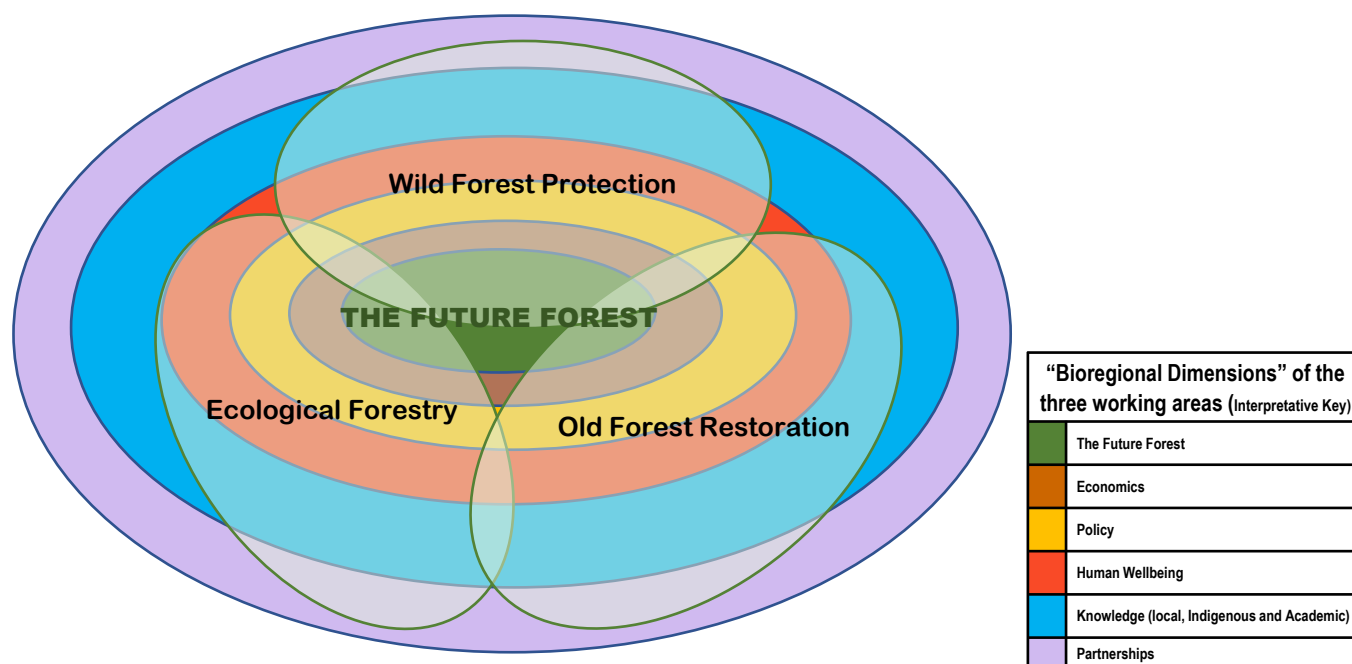
Appendix A

DAY 5: MOVING THE NEEDLE, March 31 | 9am - 1pm ET

Objectives: Focus the conversation and shift into action planning; Identify next steps for five integral pillars that hold up the topics of ecological forestry and old forests: Policy; Academics and Research; Partnerships; Economics; and Human Dimensions

This day was preceded by a survey asking participants about their capacity to be engaged in action-oriented next steps and their interest in small group discussions, using proposed topics mapping back to strategies.

Bioregional Conceptual Diagram for the Future Forest Working Areas



Opening Thoughts, Recap

- Land Acknowledgement: Roberta Clowater, Canadian Parks and Wilderness
- Land Acknowledgement: Melissa Bade, CDR
- Intentions: Elder Albert Marshall, Eskasoni First Nation, Unama'ki

Humanizing Our Efforts

- A conversation with Elder Albert Marshall, Eskasoni First Nation, Unama'ki

Workshop Series Recap and Definitions

- Ursula Georgeoglou, Gund Institute and Leadership for the Ecozoic, University of Vermont
- Nancy Patch, Professional Forester

Small Group Discussions: Strategies, Action Planning and Moving the Needle

- Wild Forest Protection
- Ecological Forestry
- Old Forest Restoration

Closing

- Elder Albert Marshall, Eskasoni First Nation, Unama'ki

Appendix B

Implementation Strategies and Draft Action Items

From breakout discussions and subsequent communications

#1 Identify and Protect Remaining Old Forests

Old forests are those that meet the following criteria: trees more than 50% of the maximum age of the dominant tree species; a variety of age classes of the dominant tree species; establishment of new individuals occurs through gap-phase dynamics (small canopy gaps); presence of large snags and coarse woody material; and little to no evidence of human activity. Although they make up a small part of the landscape, any such areas should be strictly protected, with no industrial or large-scale commercial extraction.

Criteria

Old Forest Restoration: Passive or active ecological management, aligned with the goals of many Indigenous peoples, for the production of timber and non-timber forest products or for strict protection. Managed for old growth characteristics. Diverse recreation opportunities available.

Goal

Although they make up a small part of the landscape, any such areas should be strictly protected, with no extraction of natural resources.

Strategies suggested

- Create a workshop summary/pitch deck (about 20 slides) and coherent message to share across the region of these workshops
- Create a survey at the end of this workshop to identify agreed upon definitions, messaging, guiding principles, and language
- Develop ways to understand the movement of flora and fauna due to climate change
- Bring forth a guidebook of traditional knowledge and science
- Public education using a multi-pronged approach that works in parallel with other actions and next steps
- Identifying and capitalizing on built networks to support work
- Identify best practices when working with private landowners in old growth forest
- Create shared definitions (including Indigenous definitions)
- Collect and share success stories and tools from others to replicate; shared learning opportunities
- Create documentation in multiple languages
- Create opportunities for young people to get paid to do this work or through coursework
- Using social marketing to reduce demand of old forest; changing virtues that are signaled
- Increase academic knowledge with Indigenous knowledge to develop referencing sets
- A convening of this magnitude annually or in some frequency
- A shared statement of principles to show the government we have strong support and commitment
- Finding incentives for owners to maintain forest stands, instead of investing in prescription practices; create targeted incentives
- Inventory of landowners and developing their understanding of where “my” forest is in the context of the larger scale
- Transnational declaration: changes in public and private funds are used for incentives regarding policy
- Recruit people outside this network

Appendix B

#2 Accelerate the Restoration of Wildland Forests

Wildland forests are protected forests in which natural processes predominate with minimal human disturbance, and no industrial or large-scale commercial extraction. Such forests may not currently meet the definition of old forests, but they would be allowed to grow intact to their ecological potential (rewilding).

Criteria

Wild Forest Protection: Primary forest protection that also allows for protection of young forest to become old forest passively. No extraction allowed. Minimal recreation use.

Goal

Rewilding

Strategies suggested

- Collaboration across geographies and spheres of influence, working through different avenues (grass roots, policy change)
- Find ways to help wild forests grow into old forests; "How do we get more forests to become old?"
- Inventory of where wild forests exist on federal, state and privately-owned land
- Shared definitions on "Wild Forest" versus "Old Forest," coordinated efforts, and common approaches
- Identifying areas of agreement on specific models for priority connectivity areas and linkages
- Coordinate with municipalities so they can include in their planning efforts to areas to allow wild forests to regrow and get older and become old forests; having first "right of refusal" around areas of existing development
- Locate critical patches, where corridors can be restored
- Work closely with Indigenous communities and increase the capacity for collaboration
- Need systematic standards for mapping to ensure scalable conservation
- States with successful systems and policies can help model for each other
- Institute protections against logging in state parks
- Provide a "why" for how municipalities and towns should protect their forests to become old forests – understanding incentives and messaging
- Efforts that are state by state or province by province – BUT there could be overarching concepts that are adhered to: ecological representation
- Identify win-wins between habitat connectivity and forest restoration (e.g. Nova Scotia moose recovery planning team)
- Conservation through reconciliation – bringing things together – e.g. overlaying maps to understand
- Locating where the old growth forests can be located, rather than where they are now
- Private landowners must be engaged and incentivized to engage in conservations and restoration processes
- Identifying rulemaking efforts that shift how these forests are protected (the age of 80 for a "mature" or older forest ecosystem that we want to emphasize allowing to continue on that path)
- Wild areas vs. managed areas: Where are the best places to be "wild" places, recognizing there needs to be places that are managed?
- Dealing with pushback from industry
- Funding for capacity building so that all important partners can be at the table
- Messaging is key: old growth and linkages are important but other areas outside of those key areas shouldn't be written off

Appendix B

#3 Increase the Amount of Actively Managed Resilient Forest

People who manage and steward forests have successfully implemented ecological forestry for decades - for timber products, carbon management, ecosystem function, and human health and well-being. Ecological forestry can protect threatened and rare species, sustain biological diversity, provide habitat for all wildlife, and ensure landscape connectivity enhancing ecosystem resilience, all while providing timber/non-timber products and understory species of cultural and economic value. Ecological Forestry is a framework based on the following components.

Criteria

Ecological Forestry: Landscape-level management based on natural stand dynamics for increased biodiversity, structural diversity (including very old trees), and resilience to climate change. Defined by what is left behind, not what is cut. To replace simple even-aged short rotation forestry. Diverse recreation opportunities.

Goal

Protection as well as income

Strategies suggested

- Consider ways to improve Forest Steward Certification (FSC) process to inspire positive change
- Build up on NE Forestry Foundation Work ("Build it With Wood" "Exemplary Forestry")
- Forest Extension improvements and working directly with landowner
- Develop relationships and build trust across the communities
- Consider legislative opportunities to incentivize new ways to work
- Establish set of case studies to exemplify ecological forestry (ex. NESAF)
- Develop strategies for this effort to plug in to 30x30 work
- Discuss opportunities and mechanisms for balancing recreation and forestry
- Consider community forestry opportunities
- Develop strategy for using carbon markets as mechanism for potential profit
- Establish coordinated approach to messaging and strategic communications plan for engaging a variety of audiences
- Create platform or clearing house for data sharing across the region
- Strategize climate change messaging and implications for practitioners



Powwow. Photo: Nelson M. Cloud.



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