

Status and Need for More Privately-Held Land to be Certified



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Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine



GAA Environmental Workshop – June 17-19, 2008

SWOAM

- Established in 1975 - *501(c)(3) non-profit*
- 3000 members
- 500,000 acres
- 39 states
- Thousands of hours of volunteer time/year
- Mission: To Promote Sound Forest Management and Strengthen Long-term Woodland Stewardship



My Experience with Certification

- State Forester when Maine Certification Initiative was rolled out
- Initially charged with implementation of Governor Baldacci's Certification Initiative
- Participant in certification of large and small woodland ownerships
- Serve on the Maine Certification Implementation Committee



SWOAM's Experience with Certification

- The first 3rd Party Certified Group of small woodland owners using American Tree Farm System 2004-2008 AFF Standard in the Country
- We operate the largest pool of 3rd party certified small woodland owners in Maine
- All properties owned by SWOAM are 3rd party certified
- Three staff members involved in certification
- Board resolution supporting certification



Why do woodland owners own land?

- Wildlife viewing or management
- Place of retreat/privacy
- Recreation
- Family legacy
- Nature protection
- Timber production (8th-10th in importance)



The Challenge

- Small woodland owners (10 - 5,000 acres) own 35 to 40% of the woodland in Maine
- These owners harvest irregularly- 15 to 20 years between harvest is not uncommon
- Turn over rate of land means many of these current owners won't be the owners at the time of the next harvest



Age Structure of Small Woodland Owners in Maine

Age	Acres (%)	
	USFS	SWOAM
<35	2	1
35-44	6	9
45-54	26	24
55-64	25	28
65+	41	38



Certification is not the most pressing issue for small woodland owners

The most pressing issue for small woodland owners is- holding onto their land and keeping it as forestland



Pressures on Small Woodland Ownerships

- Age
- Taxes
- Regulations
- Competing uses
- Uncertainty
- Annoyance factor



Current certification products and market demands for certification don't match up well for many small woodland owners



Current Situation

- A number of markets, especially paper markets want certified fiber
- Except in a few instances, markets are not willing to pay more for certified fiber
- Or stated another way, landowners need to bear the additional cost of certification
- Apparently consumers aren't willing to pay more for certified products



Current Situation

(Continued)

- Market access, particularly the pulp wood market, has limited value to small woodland owners
- Pulp wood markets represent small returns for woodland owners and there are alternatives: biomass, landscape mulch, firewood, wood pellets, ethanol?
- Solid wood markets represent the greatest potential return for small woodland owners



Certification has been a hard sell for small woodland owners because they have been:

- Urged to get certified
- Expected to absorb extra costs
- Told not to expect any extra money for their wood



Don't take small woodland owners
reluctance to certify their lands as meaning
they don't care about sustainable practices

Our experience is that a high percentage of
small woodland owners are very willing to
meet reasonable sustainability standards



There is **no shortage** of land (land owners) that meet real environmental management standards

There is a **shortage** of efficient, flexible ways of recognizing this



What Should Be Done

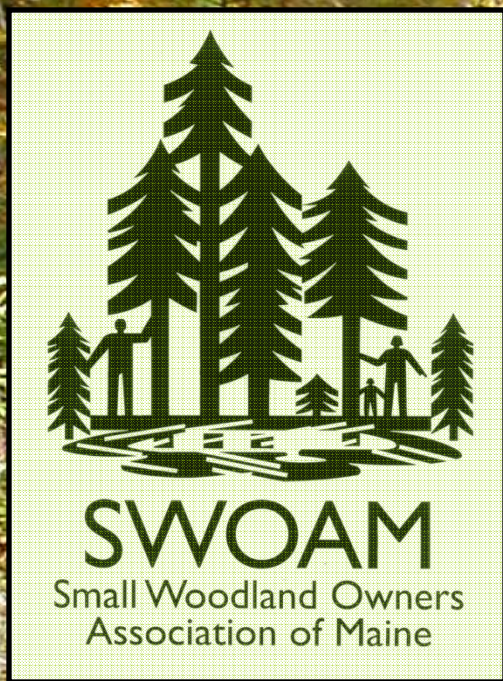
- Existing approaches are not meeting, and are not going to meet, all parties needs
- Said another way, if we are going to meet targets we need new/additional approaches



What Should Be Done

- Recognize and support multiple certification approaches
- Greater recognition and acceptance by markets that existing laws, regulations, monitoring and rules that affect woodland management contribute significantly toward “certification”
- Procurement programs hold promise and should be revisited
- Greater market flexibility regarding what is considered certified (recognize the real challenges landowners face)
- Simplify





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