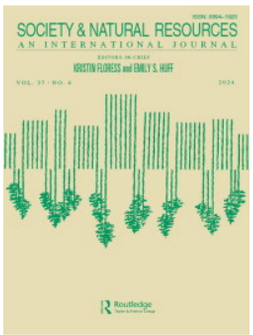

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COMMENT

"Community Forests" in the United States – How Do we Know One When we See One?

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ABSTRACT

Community forests (CFs) involve communities in decision-making about, management of and access to forests, and have potential to benefit both communities and forests. However, they lack a single definition, clear distinction from related topics, or method for identification. This perspectives article explores historical and current literature on CFs and proposes a conceptual framework for understanding CFs and related concepts in the U.S. context. Through that exploration, we propose a conceptual framework for understanding their meaning and relationship. We propose three potential pathways for identifying CFs in the U.S., each with advantages and disadvantages. CFs can be identified by using a criteria and indicators approach; by participation in programs or networks designated for CFs; or by their own self-identification as a CF. We suggest that using a hybrid of these approaches will produce the most robust process for knowing a community forest when we see one.

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Collaborative forestry; community forestry; community-based forest management; town forests; tribal forests

Introduction

Community forests (CFs) involve communities as central actors in decision-making about, management of, access to, and benefits from forests (Charnley and Poe 2007). CFs have received significant attention in the literature, primarily in low and middle income countries. Depending on the country and region, community governance of forest resources can be associated with customary communal rights structures going back millennia, with formal communal landownership structures dating back centuries, or with more recent post-colonial legal devolution from national governments to local institutions. Worldwide, research is still catching up with practice, but CFs have the potential to provide environmental and income-related benefits, while improving forest

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access and rights; however, CFs frequently miss one or more social, economic, or environmental targets (Hajjar et al. 2021). Thus, well-designed research on CF mechanisms and outcomes is still needed (Bowler et al. 2012).

CFs also are found in high income countries, but account for a limited portion of the CF literature. A diversity of CF types have been documented in places including Europe (Lawrence et al. 2021) and Canada (Teitelbaum, Beckley, and Nadeau 2006). In addition, relatively small but vibrant network of forestry initiatives associated with the concept of CFs has evolved in the United States (U.S.) (Hajjar et al. 2024), the subject of this perspective piece. These initiatives hold promise to enhance rural prosperity and ecosystem conservation (Glasmeier and Farrigan 2005). However, there exists no unified tenure type, legal framework, or definition for communal or joint ownership and governance of a forest by a community in the U.S.

We, the authors, have been engaged in a project to explore the potential contributions of CFs in the U.S. to rural prosperity and conservation. We rapidly found that forest lands labeled as CFs in the U.S. include forests owned and managed by a broad diversity of entities (McGinley et al. 2022). The term may be closely associated with, perceived as a synonym of, or considered distinct from terms such as community-based forest management (CBFM), collaborative forest management, or even urban forestry.

In this context, it is not surprising that CFs are challenging to define and identify; indeed, the component terms "community" and "forest" also mean different things to different people. Such symbols often resonate and can be powerful motivators, enabling collective action (Kertzer 1988). Nevertheless, understanding what might and might not be considered a CF is essential for communicating about the topic among stakeholders, and is needed for research, policy, and practice. In research, to test hypotheses that are potentially generalizable to an entire group or population, it is essential to know what that population includes. For policy, to fund or otherwise support CFs, managers need to know what is included in a program's scope. For practice, managers of CFs can network and learn from peers if they can identify who they are. Thus, the purpose of this manuscript is to draw some conceptual boundaries around the term "community forest" based on perceptions of researchers, policy-makers, and practitioners, while at the same time allowing for the diversity that comes from "community forest" initiatives and places where the term resonates.

To understand CFs and similar concepts, we explored definitions in the literature from the U.S., drawing from scholars and organizations that support CF initiatives. Our goal is not to create a typology, but rather, to understand better where the concept of CF and its manifestations on the ground end and others begin. The manuscript is organized as follows: In the second section, which immediately follows this introduction, we briefly highlight the conceptual origins and historical uses of CF. In the third section, we review definitions of CF and closely related terms as they are currently used in the U.S. to identify key concepts and criteria. These were based on recent literature since 2000, which we reviewed and inductively coded; codes and sources are provided in Supplemental Online Appendix 1. In the fourth section, we summarize some other related concepts within the broader landscape of public, tribal, and private forest management. In the fifth section, we present our perspective on different frameworks to identify CFs in the U.S., followed by conclusions. Supplemental Online Appendix 2 provides examples of governmental programs and non-governmental organizations that provide support specifically for CFs.

Origins of Community Forests in the U.S

Recent literature on U.S. CFs suggests they only took shape "in a formal sense" in the 1990s, following patterns of devolution in low and middle income countries (Glasmeier and Farrigan 2005). However, this view neglects numerous references to CFs in the U.S. that predate the 1990s, and risks overlooking historical communal land management models. The earliest uses of the term "community forest" referring to the practice in the U.S., of which we are aware, are as a synonym for "town forest," "municipal forest," and "communal forest" (Everitt 1921; Flint 1919, 52). A substantial literature subsequently developed in the 1930s and 1940s, focused primarily on Anglo-American town and municipal forests with comparisons to Europe (Brown 1938). Despite that focus in the early literature, communal forest lands have existed in numerous forms and cultures in what is now the U.S., including among Indigenous Tribes and Mexican-American communities (see Baker and Kusel 2003). Indeed, it is generally understood that Indigenous Peoples in the Americas governed forest lands as commons prior to European colonization; further, while Europeans did introduce private ownership of land, they also reserved areas as commons (Greer 2012).

In the late 1930s and 1940s, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USFS) defined CFs as "properties owned and operated at least in part for forestry purposes by a village, city, town, school district, township, county, or other political subdivisions of the State. They may be operated for special community or group enterprises, such as schools, hospitals, and churches" (Brown 1941). Notably, this definition only includes local government ownership. Such local government-owned CFs in the U.S. are said to have originated with the establishment in 1710 of the Newington Town Forest in New Hampshire (Short 2018). These CFs had numerous potential goals: to protect soil and water resources, to generate income for the local government and offset taxes, to educate about forest management, or to provide areas for recreation (Brown 1941; Trenk 1952). In the 1940s, the USFS documented over 2,200 local governments that owned 2.9 million acres (1.2 million hectares) of such forests (Brown et al. 1944). More recently, the State of New Hampshire has documented more than 200 towns with town or CFs totaling over 180,000 acres (73,000 hectares) (Gunn 2019). No such national inventory of town forests or CFs currently exists, although Oswalt et al. (2019) estimates about 1.8% (13.6 million acres [5.5 million hectares]) of forests are county- or municipally-owned.

This historical definition of local government-owned forests has persisted today as a type of "community-owned forest." Since then, the term "community forest" has expanded to include other types of forest ownership and initiative types in the U.S. At the same time, the term has come to have a more specific meaning and connotation (as discussed below) about forms of governance, management, access and benefits, and protection, which may exclude some of the above-mentioned local-government-owned forests.

Definition of "Community Forest" and Similar Terms

Numerous terms have been used in the U.S. CF literature for forms of collective and local forest management. Some authors use them interchangeably and broadly,

while others use them purposively to refer to distinct concepts. We reviewed the uses of these terms in literature of practice and science, with sources, codes, and sample excerpts in Supplemental Online Appendix 1, and summary and discussion here.

Figure 1 represents our interpretation of the relationship between these terms. The boundaries between terms are fluid. "Community-owned forest" is used most narrowly and "community-based forest management" more broadly. In this sense, community-owned forests are a type of CF, and community forestry is a type of CBFM, but not all CFs may be community-owned, and not all CBFM may be considered community forestry. Notably, the two inner terms (community-owned forests and CFs) refer to "forests" indicating a place or location, whereas the outer two (community forestry and CBFM) refer to "forestry" or "forest management" indicating an activity or approach. This may seem incongruous, but simply reflects the literature in the U.S., in which the distinctions are not always clear.

CF land ownership is discussed in depth in McGinley et al. (2022); we highlight here that the terms span different ownership types (Figure 1). The terms "collaborative" and "cooperative" forest management may include a wider variety of initiatives. Collaborative is more closely associated with public land management, and cooperative with private. Although both terms are often used to indicate forest management that involves communities, they may be seen as distinct from community forestry or CBFM.

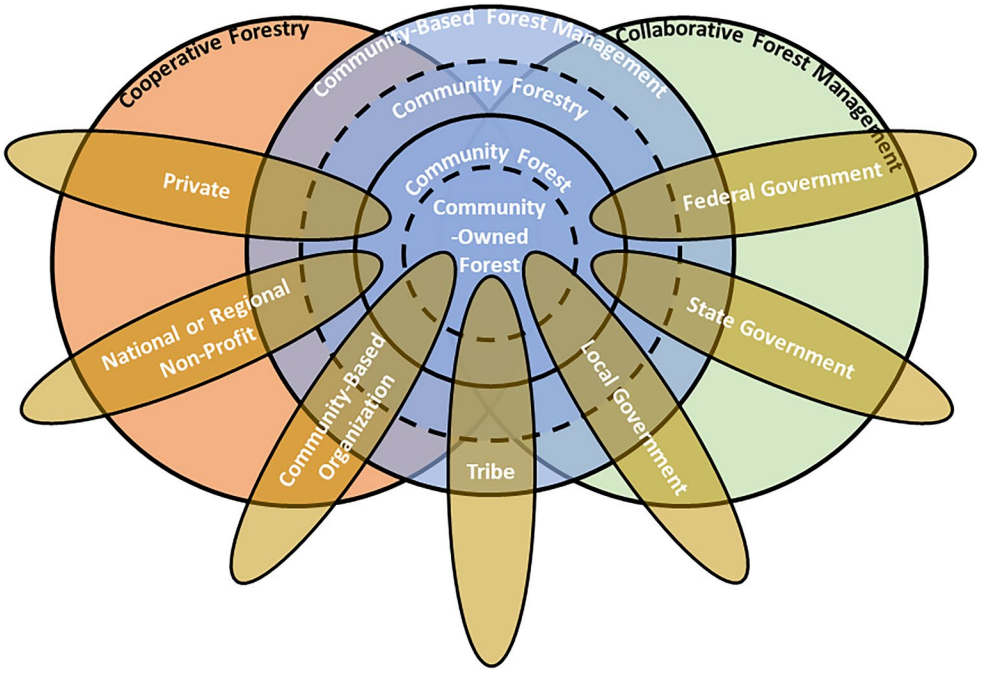

Figure 1. Venn diagram representing the relationship between key terms in the CF literature, as interpreted by the authors. Terms in internal concentric circles range from the narrowest to the most inclusive concepts. Dashed lines indicate that the distinction between terms is not always clear. Ovals represent possible ownership categories. The two large circles represent related concepts that include a wide variety of initiatives engaging local communities in forest management.

What is the "Community" in "Community Forest"?

The concept of "community" is a debated topic in its own right, with two major, non-mutually-exclusive themes emerging – shared geography or place, and shared relationship or interest (McMillan and Chavis 1986). There is no consensus as to what type of community is appropriate for a CF. Each CF may be connected to one or more communities by social, cultural, and/or economic ties (Charnley and Poe 2007). In the U.S., CFs are frequently associated with communities of place and sometimes also communities of interest and practice, or some combination (McGinley et al. 2022). Communities of place could be a single town, or multiple towns and populated areas within a broader region. A community also may be based on a shared history, culture, or ancestry, such as a Tribe or a minority or underserved population in a particular area.

"Community-Owned Forest"

The term "community-owned forest" is used relatively infrequently. Usually, it has been used as a synonym for "community forest," but some authors distinguish a community-owned forest as one in which a community organization owns the land – e.g., a local or Tribal government, or community-based nonprofit organization such as a local land trust. By contrast, a CF could be owned by regional or national entities like non-local land trusts, or state or federal governments.

"Community Forest"

The literature identifies the following defining characteristics of CFs:

- Ownership: Forest is owned by an organization on behalf of the community. Many authors state that the owner must be a local institution such as a local/Tribal government or community organization such as a local land trust, but some acknowledge the possibility of ownership by state, regional or national entities.
- Rights, benefits, and access: The community has secure, durable, and predictable access to the forest and benefits derived from it.
- Governance: The community determines the management goals and objectives of the forest based on community priorities, and exercises substantive and meaningful participation in the forest management decision-making process.
- Conservation: The forest's conservation values are permanently protected. In practical terms this means protection from conversion to other land uses (e.g., development), while allowing for timber harvest and other forms of utilization of the forest resources, consistent with ecological sustainability.

Some authors also include social, economic, and ecological outcomes as a priority objective of many CFs. However, these are described more as goals than defining characteristics.

These characteristics are relatively consistent with usage of the term "community forest" in Europe and Canada. In Europe like the U.S., CFs do not reflect a single

ownership model (Lawrence et al. 2021). Rather, they evolved out of pre-modern rural commons to ownership by for-profit, nonprofit, and government entities to allocate common ownership rights, management, and use to community members. Unlike the U.S. there often appear to be more formal rules about who is and is not a community member ("shareholder"), for instance based on property ownership within the boundaries of a particular village (Loreggian, Secco, and Pettenella 2023). In Canada, CFs similarly include substantive influence by community members and local benefit. However, in Canada CFs on provincial/federal ("Crown") land are frequent and, indeed, the norm in some parts of the country (Teitelbaum, Beckley, and Nadeau 2006), whereas this is more than exception than the rule in the U.S. – CFs are most frequently held by local government or local nonprofits such as land trusts (Hajjar et al. 2024).

"Community Forestry"

The term "community forestry" has had a variety of usages in the literature, and is ambiguous. In some instances, it has been used as a synonym for management of a CF. Elsewhere, it has been used as a synonym for CBFM, referring to community engagement with the practice of forestry, but not necessarily on a CF. Apart from this, the term has been used in association with urban forestry (see section on "Urban and Community Forestry" below).

"Community-Based Forest Management" or "Community-Based Forestry"

Generally CBFM is the broadest of the four key terms. In our interpretation, CBFM describes a range of community involvement and a range of forest ownerships, encompassing what could be considered CFs but also referring to different ways that communities engage in forest management beyond CFs:

1. Ownership: Forest ownership could be under any form (public, private, tribal), and by a wide variety of entities.
2. Rights and access: There is some form of agreement between the community and the owner that ensures long-term forest access.
3. Benefits: Forest management provides economic opportunities and ecosystem services to the community
4. Governance: Decisions are made through a participatory process that involves community members as leaders or primary stakeholders. Ultimate decision-making authority or veto power may rest elsewhere, e.g., a federal land management agency.
5. Management: Community members participate in management activities.
6. Conservation: Sustainability of forest ecosystems and values are key management goals.

Many descriptions of CBFM focus explicitly on goals, processes, and outcomes, such as social equity and inclusion, dialogue and consensus-building, respect for local and indigenous knowledge, recognition of the interdependence between humans and nature, restoration of resilient ecosystems, capacity-building, livelihoods and entrepreneurship, community well-being and resilience, and monitoring conditions and progress.

Differences between Community Forest and Community-Based Forest Management

Interestingly, the CBFM literature describes specific goals, processes and outcomes as characteristics of CBFM, whereas the CF literature mostly defers goals, processes and outcomes to whatever the community itself finds appropriate. This partly reflects the fact, referenced earlier, that a CF is a place, whereas CBFM is an approach or method.

However, the differences between CF and CBFM are broader than that which can be ascribed simply to the difference between place and process. Table 1 presents some of the key characteristics of community-owned forests, CFs, and CBFM, as described in the literature. One of the key differences between CBFM and CF is the modality of ownership and governance: CFs have a local actor leading its governance with broad participation, whereas CBFM involves input into decisions, but decision-making authority may be held externally. Additionally, governance arrangements may be more permanent in the case of CF, with CBFM more reliant on agreements of varying formality and length. These are not always binary distinctions, instead existing on a spectrum – the more decision-making authority is localized, the more likely it can be considered a CF.

Related Concepts

Collaborative Forest Management

In parts of the U.S., particularly in the west, federal forestlands dominate the landscape around many communities. A certain level of opportunity for public participation in federal forest management is built into U.S. law, including through the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. § 4321 *et seq.*), and in the case of the USFS the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. § 1604) and 2012 Planning Rule for National Forests (36 CFR Part 219). States have analogous laws and policies. These laws generally are procedural in nature and do not require agencies to implement plans in line with the objectives of communities or other stakeholders.

Table 1. Key characteristics of community-owned forests, community forests, and community-based forest management, as described in the literature of science, policy, and practice.

	Community-owned forest	Community forest	Community-based forest management
Ownership	Owned by or on behalf of the community (by local/Tribal government or community-based org)	Owned by or on behalf of the community	Any form of ownership
Rights and access	Secure, durable, and predictable access to forest and benefits	Secure, durable, and predictable access to forest and benefits	Agreement ensures long-term access
Benefits	Determined by community	Determined by community	Determined with community input
Governance	Community leads decision-making	Community leads decision-making	Community participates in decision-making
Conservation	Permanent protection of forest's conservation values, allowing for utilization	Permanent protection of forest's conservation values, allowing for utilization	Sustainable management of the forest, based on key ecological, economic, and social aims

"Community forestry" is excluded because it is ambiguous (see section on "Community Forestry").

In this context, "collaborative forest management" has emerged contemporaneously with CBFM. Some authors use collaborative forest management and CBFM interchangeably (Conley and Moote 2003), and the two movements have similar emphases and approaches. However, collaborative forest management may also engage a larger set of stakeholders than CBFM. That is, CBFM focuses primarily on the community as the most important stakeholder, whereas collaborative forest management may engage other local, regional, or national interest groups (e.g., environmental, recreation, or industry/economic interests) (Conley and Moote 2003). Collaborative forest management may also entail less direct control over the outcomes of forest management for communities (McDermott 2009).

Cooperative Forestry

Private forests, including family, corporate, and nonprofit ownerships, are the dominant class nationwide, particularly in the eastern U.S. (Oswalt et al. 2019). Private forest owners may incorporate community engagement and values into their forest management. As noted, some private forest owners purposefully manage and classify their properties as CFs, perhaps most commonly nonprofit organizations.

"Cooperative forestry" is a nebulous concept that can relate to CBFM. In some contexts, cooperative forestry refers to assistance and cooperation (technical, financial, human resources) between organizations, government at various levels, communities, and landowners to achieve mutually desired goals. For example, this is how the term is used in the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. § 2101 *et seq.*). A related concept, "forest cooperatives," has also surfaced in the U.S. In forest cooperatives, private landowners join to share resources and access support, services, and markets that would be difficult to access individually (Hull and Ashton 2008).

Tribal Forest Management

The U.S. federal government holds approximately 56 million acres of land in trust for Tribal Nations. The federal government, via the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), generally must approve access, use, and development activities for natural resources on trust lands (US DOI n.d.). Depending on level of participation, forest management on trust lands could be considered collaborative or cooperative forestry, CBFM, or a CF.

Since passage of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 (Public Law 93-638), Tribes have had opportunities to exercise greater autonomy over various aspects of Tribal governance through self-determination contracting and self-governance compacts, including natural resource management. These contracts, compacts, and agreements are initiated by a formal request by a Tribe to the BIA. By 2019, 37% of Tribes with forested trust lands, including 81% of the 19.3 million trust forest acres, were operating under full or partial self-determination/self-governance arrangements for forest management (Gordon et al. 2023). Forests over which Tribes exert autonomy could more closely align the criteria of CF.

Tribes also may acquire fee-simple (private) lands. Under such title, the Tribe has complete control and could decide to manage it as a CF. At the time of writing, at

least two Tribes had acquired fee-simple lands designated as CFs utilizing funds from the USFS's Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program (CFP) (see Supplemental Online Appendix 2).

Urban and Community Forestry

One common use of the term community forest/forestry in the U.S. is in the phrase "urban and community forestry" (Lefland, Huff, and Donahue 2018). Urban and community forestry refers to management of the tree canopy along streets and on a mosaic of ownerships (including many small-scale residential and commercial ownerships, plus larger tracts like parks) within an area of human settlement (e.g., village, town, or city) (Johnson, Baker, and Johnson 1990). In this context, "community forestry" may simply mean the equivalent of urban forestry for neighborhoods, communities of interest, or less densely populated areas that would not be considered "urban" (Johnson, Baker, and Johnson 1990). On the other hand, it can also refer to engaging community members and institutions in the management and stewardship of these forests (Campbell et al. 2022), similar to CBFM.

Identifying Community Forests in the United States

For researchers, policy-makers, practitioners, and community advocates, it may be important to study CFs and their outcomes. But, given the diversity of terms and concepts described above, how do we know a CF when we see one in the U.S.? Here, we put forward different approaches that researchers and practitioners could take to answer this question.

Criteria and Indicators Approach

In many countries (e.g., Mexico, Nepal, Tanzania), CFs are a legally-defined tenure status with a prescribed process of preparation, delineation, planning, and formal approval, often culminating with publication in an official gazette or register. In the U.S. no such legal definition or formal process exists. Barring this, it would seem natural to identify CFs in the U.S. based on whether or not their characteristics meet the definition of a CF. For example, some (but not all) town forests would qualify as CFs under reasonable definitions. Anecdotally, many land trusts and owners of forests called "preserves," "parks," and other titles believe they meet the criteria for a CF (personal communication, C. Roe, Southern Conservation Partners, Sept. 9, 2021). Such an approach would evaluate each candidate forest against a predefined list of attributes linked to the definitions above.

Unfortunately, no database exists in the U.S. that provides information on many of the potential attributes of interest. Nor are there accepted thresholds for the different attributes that must be met for a forest to qualify as a CF (for example, how much localized governance is enough to count?). Further, no single comprehensive list exists of forest properties in the U.S., of which CFs might be a subset. Therefore, identifying all potential CFs via this method is intractable.

Program Participation Approach

Several governmental and non-governmental programs, networks, and initiatives support CFs. Supplemental Online Appendix 2 lists some of the most prominent current and past programs. These generally fall into two categories: financial support and research/technical assistance. Each program has criteria for participation (whether strict or loose), which help identify and validate a forest as a CF. Thus, an approach to identifying CFs could be to locate those that have passed through such programs.

Self-Identification Approach

A third approach to identifying CFs is to let the owning organization have its say. In this approach, a forest is considered a CF if an organization calls its property a CF by name, or otherwise states that the property is a CF in public-facing documentation (websites, etc.). Self-identification is a widely used method of allowing individuals or organizations to categorize themselves, or aspects of themselves (Albert and Whetten 1985; Schlenker 1986).

This approach has been used to identify CFs in Europe (Lawrence et al. 2021), but is perhaps the least satisfying, or at a minimum creates the most fluidity and the least focus as to the types of things that are and are not considered a CF. As with individuals, organizational self-identity may not necessarily reflect a concrete set of characteristics, but rather a desire to project oneself a certain way for certain audiences (Schlenker 1986). For CFs, this could be to access certain funding sources, or to project a certain image within and beyond the community. Thus, self-identified CFs might not meet the criteria of a CF characterized above. Conversely, it is possible other forest properties meet those criteria do not specifically self-identify as CFs.

Examples of Forests Identified as Community Forests

Here we present three examples of forests we have identified as CFs. In doing so, we have used a hybrid of the three approaches above: first identifying candidates through program participation and self-identification approaches, screening these with criteria and indicators to include only those that exhibit the ownership, rights-benefits-access, governance, and conservation characteristics described in the definition of "community forest" above.

Montesano Community Forest is an example of a 'community-owned forest,' located in Gray's Harbor, Washington. The City of Montesano owns the 5,500-acre (2226-hectare) forest and actively manages it for timber production. The city identifies the property as a CF and manages it to provide local benefits. Profits from managing the timber primarily go toward the city's water fund, which is used to maintain water infrastructure and lower residents' water bills. The forest is managed by a forest manager hired by the city, whose work is overseen by a forestry sub-committee that is part of City Council. City Council is the ultimate decision-making authority. The forestry sub-committee brings the concerns of citizens to the city council, and council meetings are open to the public. The community also has free access to a network of recreational trails, and non-timber forest products.

The **Cooley-Jericho Community Forest** (CJCF) was established in 2013 and extends across 843 acres (341 hectares) in Easton, New Hampshire. CJCF is highly valued and

managed for the protection of soil and water resources, wildlife, and scenic beauty, connections to neighboring conservation lands, numerous recreation and education opportunities, and future timber supplies and sales. CJCF self-identifies as a CF, received funding from the USFS Community Forest and Open Space Program for acquisition, and exhibits the characteristics of a CF. CJCF is owned by the Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust (ACT) on behalf of four local communities: Towns of Easton, Franconia, Landaff, and Sugar Hill. They were central players in its creation and are actively engaged in its ongoing stewardship. Forest decisions and activities are guided by the CJCF Stewardship Team, comprised of representatives from each of the four towns, various local user groups (e.g., hiking, mountain biking, education) and ACT. Community members also participate in forest decisions and their implementation through engagement from consultation to co-production. The designation of the CJCF was designed to protect the forest from changes in land use, engage the local community in its governance, and ensure community access to its many goods and services in perpetuity.

The **Teanaway Community Forest** (TCF), established in 2013, covers 50,241 acres (20,332 ha) in Kittitas County, Washington, on the eastern slopes of the Cascade Range. A major impetus for acquisition was to protect the headwaters of the Yakima River Basin, critical to water supply and threatened salmonids in the watershed. Unlike most CFs in the U.S., TCF is state-owned. As noted above, there is no consensus as to whether state-owned CF can be considered a true CF, since the ultimate decision-making authority lies with the State and not the local community. We include TCF because it self-identifies as a CF, it was acquired under the auspices of Washington State's Community Forest Trust Program (see Supplemental Online Appendix 2), and exhibits characteristics of a CF: ownership by the state on behalf of the community; secure, durable, and predictable access to local benefits including recreational opportunities, grazing leases, watershed protection, and future timber harvests; an advisory committee of diverse community stakeholders guides management by the state agencies; and the CF is permanently protected from development.

Conclusions

CFs are owned and governed by or on behalf of a community, have secure benefits and rights for the community, and are conserved through protection from conversion to other land uses. They have potential to benefit both communities and forests, but in the U.S. there is a need for a more standardized understanding of their various forms and identities for research, policy, program, and communication purposes. While there is some general agreement in the literature on characteristics, the challenge of identifying CFs in the U.S. is formidable. Here we provide three potential pathways for identifying CFs, each with advantages and disadvantages. CFs can be identified by a set of criteria and indicators, participation in programs designed to support CFs, or self-identification. To avoid the pitfalls inherent in any one of these pathways and for purposes of our ongoing research into CFs, we used a hybrid of the program participation and self-identification approaches described above as a starting point for identifying potential CFs. We have then added the criteria and indicators approach as a screen to narrow down that list to CFs that exhibit the ownership, rights-benefits-access, governance, and conservation characteristics described above. We suggest that

this combination of approaches will produce the most robust, satisfying, and feasible way of knowing a community forest when we see one. There are undoubtedly innumerable perspectives about community forests in the U.S. and future research can include exploring the perspectives of practitioners, community members, partners, and other stakeholders about the meaning and implications of the concept.

Disclaimer

The findings and conclusions in this publication are those of the authors and should not be construed to represent any official USDA or U.S. Government determination or policy.

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