A Community on Ecosystem Services

Conference

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American Indian Lands:

Sustainable Ecosystem Services are an Inherent By-product of Tribal Forest Stewardship Practices
Tribes are Sovereigns

Indian Lands are not Public Lands

Lands Held in Trust by Fed for Indian Beneficiaries

~ 55 Million Surface Acres Of Indian Trust Lands

> 100 M Acres - Tribal Rights to Manage/Utilize
Thousands of Years of Ecosystem Management

“All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth.”

Attributed to Chief Seattle
The National Indian Forest Resources Management Act of 1990 (NIFRMA)

Celebrating America’s First Stewards
Sustainability in the Law

“...the development, maintenance, and enhancement of Indian forest land in a perpetually productive state...”

“...the regulation of Indian forest lands that will ensure... a sustained yield basis, continuous productivity and a perpetual forest business...”

National Indian Forest Resources Management Act of 1990 (NIFRMA)
Economic Development in the Law

“...the development of Indian forest lands and associated value-added industries by Indians and Indian tribes to promote self-sustaining communities, so that Indians may receive from their Indian forest land not only stumpage value, but also the benefit of all the labor and profit that such Indian forest land is capable of yielding ...”
“...the development and implementation, with the full and active consultation and participation of the appropriate Indian tribe, of forest management plans which are supported by written tribal objectives and forest marketing programs ...”
Ecosystem Services in the Law

“...the retention of Indian forest land in its natural state when an Indian tribe determines that the recreational, cultural, aesthetic, or traditional values of the Indian forest land represents the highest and best use of the land...”

“...the management and protection of forest resources to retain the beneficial effects to Indian forest lands of regulating water run-off and minimizing soil erosion...”

“...the maintenance and improvement of timber productivity, grazing, wildlife, fisheries, recreation, aesthetic, cultural and other traditional values...”
Independent Assessments in the Law

- Indian Forest Management Assessment Team (IFMAT)
  - Decadal - published 1994 and 2004

“Nonetheless, Indian forests have the potential to be models of integrated resource management and forest sustainability.”

“At the end of the day, Indians live closer to the consequences of their forest management decisions than other members of American society and depend heavily on their forests to sustain tribal values, employment, and income.”

IFMAT Report 2004
How does this active forest management on Indian lands translate to ecosystem services?
“In the long term, a sustainable forest management strategy aimed at maintaining or increasing forest carbon stocks, while producing an annual sustained yield of timber, fiber, or energy from the forest, will generate the largest sustained mitigation benefit.”

- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
Ecosystem Service
Significant Reduction in Catastrophic Fire Risk

Lincoln National Forest

Mescalero Indian Reservation
Biodiversity: flora, fauna, structures, and habitats.
Tribal Stewardship provides ecosystem services

- Clean Air & Water
- Species Habitats
- Carbon Storage
- And more...

- *A Sense of Who We Are*

Yakama Nation, WA
Is my story all good news?
Falling Behind
Example Forestry

- In 2003 Tribal forests received \( \frac{1}{3} \)rd the per acre funding provided to USFS
- Since 2004
  - Tribal forestry budget has increased <4%, inflation >14%
  - USFS Forestry Budget >25%
  - BLM Forestry Budget >26%
We’ve Been Left Fighting Over Peanuts
Figure 27-1. Total payments from Federal and State agencies and non-government organizations and individuals in constant 2005 dollars ($1000s).
Indian Nations are dedicated but underappreciated practitioners of SUSTAINABILITY. Broader recognition and support could provide many public benefits.
In Conclusion

*If...*

- Ecosystem service payments seek to promote sustainability of managed environments...

*And...*

- Indian forestry programs provide unique and enduring stewardship for sustainability...
Then...

It would follow that...

In order to receive high sustainability returns on investment, Government and NGO environmental service payments should underwrite Native management costs and land purchases.