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## **CONCLUSION**

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This booklet offers a glimpse of a world with many aspects—diverse ecosystems, diverse human systems, and the places where they intersect. Many more stories of non-timber forest workers are necessary to fully understand the social and environmental implications of how forestry is conducted in the Pacific West of the United States. This booklet is only one piece of what the Jefferson Center hopes will be a growing effort to address environmental justice in natural resources.

The Jefferson Center embraces the relationship among poor people, people from a variety of heritages, and the natural resource world as a matter of environmental justice. As the interviews in this booklet demonstrate, the ways in which forest management is conducted affect many cultural groups: rich and poor; U.S.-born, Native, and immigrant; urban and rural. People from all cultural heritages have a right to expect justice in the process of natural resource management, including how people are treated at work, while enjoying the out-of-doors, or taking action to protect clean air, water, and non-human species. All of us have a right to feel as if we are welcome, and stakeholders, in our public forests.

The Jefferson Center is a popular education organization, supporting peer learning and analysis among low-income people who share common problems. People's own experiences as adults are the basis of peer learning. We believe that asking questions is the core of understanding complex issues, and that the quality of the questions determines the quality of results. The interviews in this booklet raise many questions. We hope communities, policy makers, and agencies will ask more questions, such as the following, as they integrate environmental justice into resource activities and decisions:

- What assumptions are any of us making when we encounter someone from a cultural background different than our own in the forest (or on farms, or fishing, or at a tourist destination)? Who “belongs” in the woods, and in environmental decisions?
- Do we respect people from diverse backgrounds as being embedded in a whole cultural world with its own tra-

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ditions, history, internal requirements for respect, challenges, and internal divisions? For instance, is it possible to understand the problems of the brush harvest without going into the Spanish-speaking world, which is as large and complicated as the English-speaking world?

- In working across cultural worlds, who are the liaisons? Who will make connections? Who are considered to be the “experts?” Why? How? When are bicultural people necessary?

- When diverse groups of people participate in a natural resource activity, are people being perceived the same across ethnicities? (For example, are Caucasian mushroom harvesters “just the locals” while Southeast Asian harvesters are “outsiders threatening the woods?” Are less-educated, low-income rural white people—often dismissively referred to as “rednecks”—discounted as part of the solution in cross-cultural issues?)

- If low-income people working in the woods must move around to work in several other occupations during the year (tourism, seafood and agricultural canneries, farmwork, landscaping, fishing), how can these workers participate in solutions to natural resource issues? What incentives would they have to get involved? How can we be creative about inclusion?

- What recourse do low-income people have if they suffer retaliation by employers for participating in natural resource dialogues? If they do not have effective recourse, how will this affect participation? How can these situations be creatively addressed?

- How does any group of people make decisions based on the “internal culture” of their occupation—the norms of their everyday working or “business” culture—whether they are harvesters, community leaders, agency staff, policy makers? What are the decision-making pressures that come to bear on people who work within different occupations? How can all the groups be included?

- How much credit and credibility are we giving to workers, who usually have a deep knowledge of specific environmental niches and social realities because of their

long experience working and living?

- How do any of us overcome our desire to “teach” other cultural groups, or people from a different class, how to “do it right” (about any activity) before even inquiring what we might need to learn from them?

- What kind of occupational “ladder” do different cultural groups of forest workers have to better jobs? Are ladders available to some and not others?

- Since species of mushrooms, herbs, and florals are part of an international market, prices drop in the U.S. because people in other countries will harvest for less money. Should we be concerned? What are the conditions under which people in other countries are working? How can we use our creativity and a commitment to environmental justice to shape our thinking and actions on these issues, which cross many borders?

- What are the pressures on immigrants, and on U.S.-born workers? How do we creatively move forward on these issues in a world where money and goods can freely flow across borders, but people must face life-threatening barriers? Since people are not going to stop coming, with or without documents, how do we embrace this situation with social and environmental justice?

The Jefferson Center is committed to a world in which economic democracy is as important as political democracy. As many social justice leaders have noted, you can’t have a truly democratic system in which there is political democracy but no economic democracy. We would also add that if people do not have what might be called “environmental democracy,” in which people have the right to speak out and act upon environmental issues that affect communities and ecosystems, we will also be unable to achieve a fair and just society.

Non-timber forest workers and harvesters are an integral part of the forest management system that covers a third of the continental land mass of the United States. We hope this booklet will be useful as a tool to improve working conditions, community relations, policy making, and environmental health.

## GLOSSARY & ACRONYMS

**Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters** [“Alliance” or “AFWH”]—A multicultural issue and advocacy organizing association of non-timber forest workers and harvesters from Washington, Oregon, and northern California. AFWH, POB 564, Portland OR 97207

**Beargrass**—Narrow, grass-like leaves of the lily-family plant, *Xerophyllum tenax*. Used traditionally for baskets, fresh or dried in floral arrangements, and shipped in volume to international floral markets.

**Best value**—Method of Forest Service contracting that replaces or co-exists with “low-bid” method. “Best value” bid on Forest Service contracts are designed to be evaluated on the overall quality of the job and competence of the contractor.

**BLM**—Bureau of Land Management (Department of the Interior).

**Boletes**—Edible members of the *Boletaceae*, mushrooms which have pores instead of gills hanging below the fleshy cap.

**Brush**—Everyday term used for aspects of the wild floral greens industry, especially for salal, ferns, and huckleberry in the Pacific West. Uses of the term are broad: brush harvester, brush trade, brush shed, brush companies, working “in the brush.”

**Crescent Lake Junction**—Site of the largest concentration of matsutake mushroom buyers in the United States, with a season between September 1 and October 31. Forest Service-leased “industrial camps” near Crescent Lake may accommodate up to 2500 harvesters at one time.

**GATT**—General Agreement on Trades and Tariffs.

**GED**—General Equivalency Diploma. An certification of mid-level educational attainment, usually instead of a high school diploma.

**GPS**—Global Positioning System. An electronic position-locating device using satellite transmissions to calculate geographical locations.

**Guestworkers/Guestworker program**—Informal name of the United States Department of Labor H2-A and H2-B temporary foreign worker programs. H2 programs allow employers (typically large labor contractors) to allege that there are insufficient workers in a region to accomplish labor-based tasks, then bring in non-U.S. workers on temporary visas. Widespread abuses of the guestworker program, including the manipulation of data to show a lack of U.S.-resident workers when there may be a surplus, plus the lack of realistic recourse for workers when they experience abuses, have led to widespread criticisms of this program.

**Floral Greens/Florals**—Wild-harvested and greenhouse or field-cultivated greenery used in floral arrangements or craft markets. Floral greens are part of a major international industry, in many ways parallel to edible fresh produce markets.

**Huckleberry, floral greens**—The branches of evergreen huckleberry (*Vaccinium ovatum*), part of the “brush” industry that supplies the international floral greens market.

**Huckleberry, edible fruit**—The small, round, dark blue fruit of wild huckleberry (*Vaccinium ssp.*), similar to blueberries. The small berries require intensive effort to harvest in quantity.

**INS**—Immigration and Naturalization Service

**JITW**—Jobs in the Woods, a temporary worker-retraining program for new ecosystems restoration jobs, funded through the Northwest Economic Adjustment Initiative (commonly referred to as the Northwest Forest Plan), following the reduction of timber harvests on public forests.

**“Lease”/“leaseholders”**—Common usage term for the right, purchased from private or public landowners, for a contracting company or an entrepreneurial individual to have exclusive rights to harvest non-timber forest products on a large (typically one-to-many sections) of forest land. Although the companies and the public land agencies call this right a “permit,” common usage refers to it as a “lease.” “True copies” (literally copies) of the “lease” are carried by harvesters as a form of what is referred to in common usage as an individual “permit.” In many areas, harvesters may also purchase individual permits from public land agen-

cies for individual harvest rights (along with all other permit holders) on common-access public lands.

**Low-bid**—A method of awarding Forest Service contracts in which—as long as the basic requirements of the job are met—the lowest bidder wins the contract.

**Matsutake**—A mushroom highly prized in Japan, where it is valued during the Japanese holiday seasons as a culinary and aromatic addition to foods, and also for its role in cultural traditions, including gift-giving. Matsutake (*Tricholoma caligatum*) literally means “pine” (matsu) “mushroom” (take). Matsutakes are shipped to Japan from many nations.

**Morel**—Spring-harvested, choice edible mushrooms with a characteristic cone-shaped “honeycomb” or “sponge-like” cap (*Morchella ssp.*, especially *Morchella esculenta*).

**Murrelet, marbled**—Small bird on the Endangered Species List that nests inland on the large, moss-covered branches of large, old coastal-mountain trees in shaded forests.

**NAFTA**—North American Free Trade Agreement. Controversial trade agreement among Canada, Mexico, and the United States, in which barriers to the flow of money and goods were lowered, but environmental and labor issues were poorly protected.

**NTFP**—Non-timber forest products. Any of numerous non-wood and small-diameter woody products that are found in the forest and utilized for traditional cultural practices, subsistence household use, or for commercial trade. Includes mushrooms and other edibles, medicinal plants, floral greens, and others. “Non-timber” or “Non-wood” are the preferred international terms, but NTFPs are known also in the U.S. as “special forest products.”

**Northwest Forest Plan**—The Northwest Forest Plan is the forest management directive for federal forest managers produced in 1993 at the direction of President Clinton. The plan dealt primarily with the management of Pacific Northwest forests and the management of endangered species, the most well known of which is the northern spotted owl. The plan directs activities on the ground in the forest. Worker retraining and other economic issues were addressed in the Northwest Economic Adjustment Initiative [NWEAI].

**Salal**—Also known as “leather leaf” or “lemon leaf,” salal (*Gaultheria shallon*) is a low evergreen shrub with attractive oblong leaves that is harvested widely in the Pacific West coastal forests for the international floral greens trade.

**Section 339**—Section 339 was a “rider” on the Year 2000 Interior Appropriations Bill (H.R.2466). A “rider” is language attached to a larger piece of legislation, “riding” in without review or debate, but becoming the law of the land. Section 339 requires the Forest Service to collect fees on non-timber forest products collection “to recover all costs to the Department of Agriculture associated with the...harvest of the forest botanical products, including the costs of any environmental or other analysis.” The Code of Federal Regulations that will detail how this law will be implemented is pending, expected in 2001.

**Seventh American Forest Congress (1995)**—Forest Congresses have been convened at irregular intervals during the last 100 years, usually around the times of major philosophical and regulatory realignments.

**SFP**—“Special Forest Products:” another name for non-timber forest products. This term is used only in the United States, and only by certain groups in the U.S., including the Forest Service.

**Silviculture**—The managed establishment, composition, and growing of forests. Also the study of the cultivation of trees.

**“Standards and Guidelines”**—Standards are the mandatory requirements, and guidelines are the recommended procedures used to implement a forest management document. Standards and Guidelines are the rules and limitations on what is actually expected in on-the-ground forest management, including highly-detailed environmental conditions.

**USFS**—United States Forest Service (Department of Agriculture).