

Seeing the forest through the trees: Results of 2009 NCF member survey

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In late 2009, the Northwest Natural Resource Group conducted a survey of 95 of our Northwest Certified Forestry members. What we found gave us a richer view of our members, their interests, and future goals for their forest lands.

First, a little about who we are.

NCF members fall into three different groups. The largest group by far is private landowners (78.9%). Next are non-profits, such as land trusts or conservation organizations (13.7%) and finally, public agencies (7.4%). See Figure 1.

NCF members are knowledgeable, and interested in learning more.

When asked to rate their level of knowledge in forest management practices, almost three in four NCF members rated their knowledge as either very good or adequate (Fig. 2). Considering how complex forest management has become with new sustainable forestry techniques and growing opportunities for non-traditional income opportunities, these seem like impressive numbers.

When asked how NCF members access information on forest management practices, it was gratifying to have 91.4% of the survey respondents list NNRG as their primary source of forest management information. We are dedicated to supplying our members with current information on forest management and forest-based business opportunities through our frequent seminars, workshops, the NCF Newsletter, and the NNRG web site. The other most popular information sources used by our members included public agencies, reading reports, books and newsletters, and the Internet.

A look 50 years into the future.

One of the really interesting questions in the survey asked NCF members to look 50 years into the future and picture how they wanted their forest property to look. Most answers were “Headed for Old Growth” or “Mature Working Forest” with an approximately equal number of responses in each category. Interpreting answers to open-ended questions presents a real challenge, but this equal division reflects what we have seen in our members: some are interested in building a sustainable, commercial lumber harvesting business, while an almost equal number focus primarily on forest protection. There is not a right answer to this question, and NCF remains dedicated to meeting the diverse goals of our members.

NCF member plans for the next three years.

To some extent, this split is evident in what members reported as their plans for their forest land in the coming three years - 58% said they would be harvesting timber and 54.8% expressing interest in selling carbon offsets. Significant interest in a new program - carbon sales- came as no surprise. It reflects the great interest and excitement we have seen in NNRG’s new carbon offset program, NW Neutral. Fortunately, NCF members don’t have to choose between timber harvesting and selling carbon offsets. Our talented field staff can help you determine which combination of carbon sales and timber harvesting is right for you.

Learning more, doing more.

Finally, we asked members if they were interested in learning about a number of activities. While

almost every idea sparked significant interest, the activities with the greatest interest were:

Improve wildlife habitat	85.6%
Carbon offset sales	82.2%
Effective pruning/thinning	74.4%
Sustainable timber harvesting	72.2%
Forest inventory	72.2%
Building roads and trails	68.9%
Govt. cost sharing programs	68.9%

Based on these responses, NCF has already begun to develop new programs to meet the needs of our members.

Conclusion

In the end, the picture that emerges of NCF members is one of deeply committed, knowledgeable, and hard working forest land owners. NNRG would like to thank those members that participated in the survey, and we look forward to using these results to better address your diverse interests and goals.

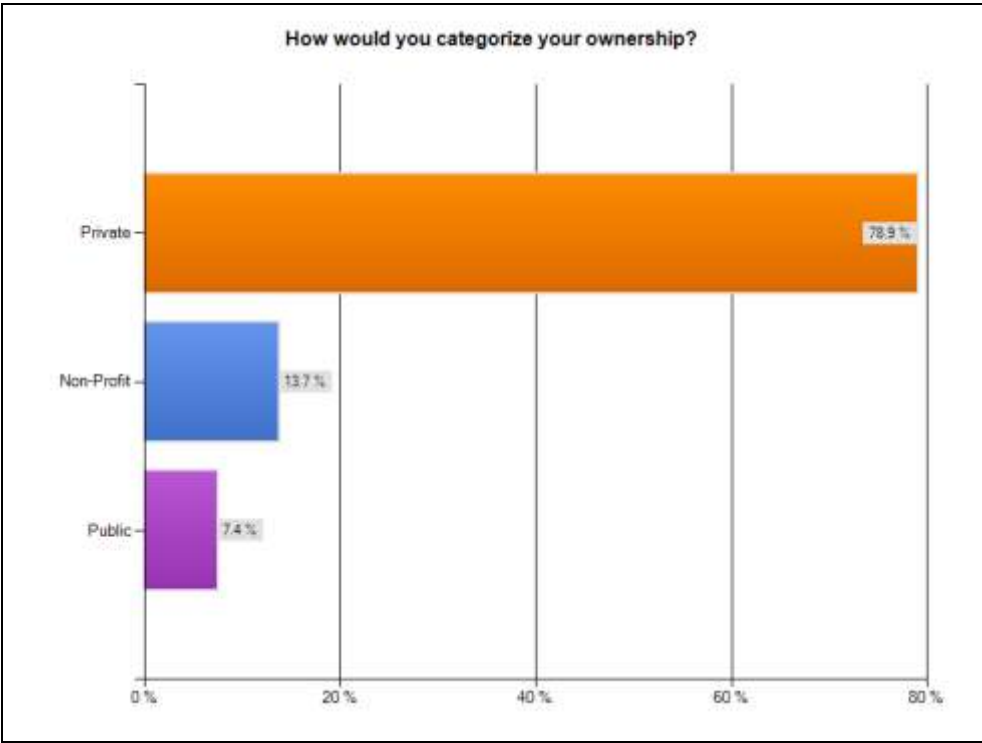


Figure 1: Categories of Forest Ownership.

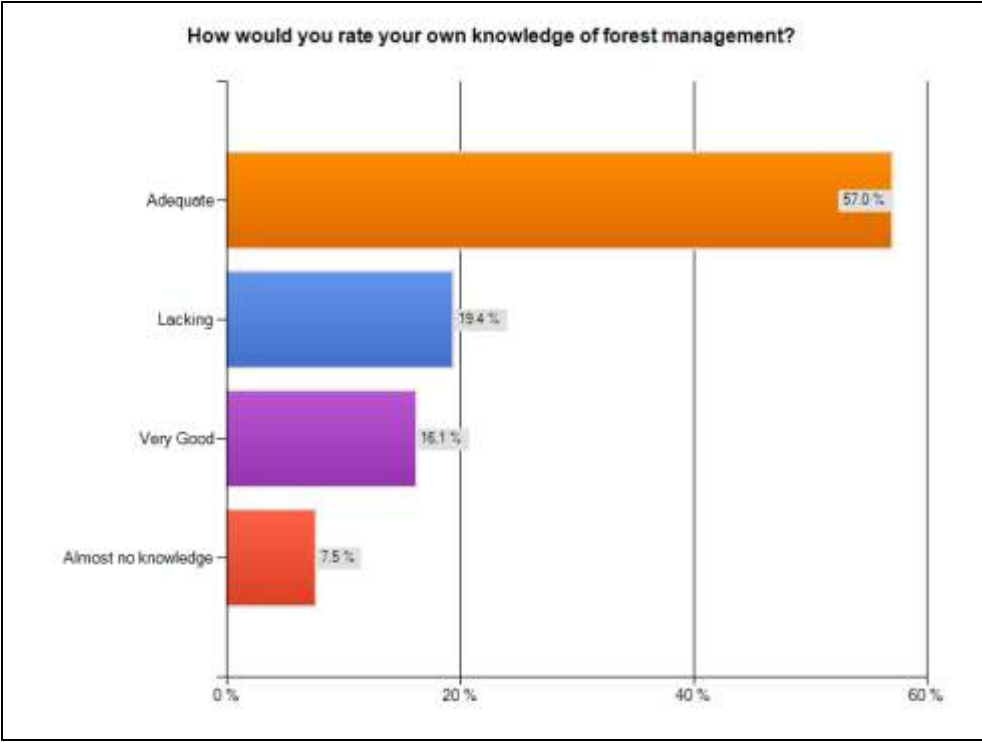


Figure 2: Knowledge of Forest Management