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Involving Forest Communities in Identifying and Constructing Ecosystem Services: Millennium Assessment and Place Specificity

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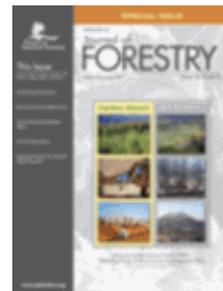
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Abstract:

The ecosystem services (ES) approach entails integrating people into public forest management and managing to meet their needs and wants. Managers must find ways to understand what these needs are and how they are met. In this study, we used small group discussions, in a case study of the Deschutes National Forest, to involve community members and forest staff in determining what and how people benefit from forests. We compare results with the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) classification. Results show that people identified benefits in many of the same ways and categories as in the MA. Small group discussants also merged or expanded existing MA categories in novel ways. They identified new benefits not found in the MA classification scheme but identified only four of eight subcategories of regulating services and no supporting services. These findings imply that involving people in the place-specific management of public forests using the ES approach gives managers a clearer understanding of the benefits people recognize and value, as well as those they either are not aware of or do not value. Such information is useful in forest management and in public outreach.

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