

YELLOW WOOD NOTES

An Occasional Publication
for the Benefit of
Our Clients, Colleagues, and Friends

Winter 2003

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We Welcome Your Comments

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Update On Our Work

NY/PA Region To Consider Potential for Shared-Use Commercial Kitchen

YWA is working with the Southern Tier East Regional Planning Development Board (NY), Tioga County (NY), and other partners in New York and Pennsylvania to determine the feasibility of developing a shared-use commercial kitchen in a eleven-county area that spans these two states. Shared-use commercial kitchens are commercially licensed food processing facilities that are used by local food entrepreneurs to start or expand their food-related businesses. In addition to providing the space and equipment to produce value-added food products, these facilities often provide valuable training in food safety, marketing and small business development. Other benefits include the creation of local jobs and the development of a vibrant and diverse food sector.

Since August, we have been working with the project partners to develop goals for the proposed facility, researching best practices using published reports and interviews with existing facilities, and conducting a survey of potential users. In early November, YWA sent out over 600 surveys to potential users in the study region, including farmers' market vendors, farm markets, roadside stands, and individuals identified by the project partners. To date, we have received completed surveys for only a

small portion of this original mailing. However, throughout the survey process, we continue to learn about the constraints and opportunities facing small scale-food processors, such as concerns about licensing and the existence of small, under-utilized kitchen facilities that already exist in the area. We hope to build on these insights from our second mailing of surveys sent out in early January. The final report for this project will be available in late March.

OPJ VNMQRT

New on the YWA Website

For those of you that are not familiar with Yellow Wood's website, grab a cup of coffee or tea and direct you browser to www.yellowwood.org. We have recently added a Google® search bar, enabling users to search both YWA's site and the World Wide Web from our homepage. All of YWA's web pages use the same format. On the left hand side is a column of hyperlinks enabling you to click back and forth amongst our various project areas. Hyperlinks have also been added directly below the header graphic for each page. Theses links allow you jump directly to specific project types and brief summaries of our projects.

Update On Our Work

Helping Cooperative Forestry Measure Progress toward Goals

Cooperative Forestry, a unit of State and Private Forestry of the U.S. Forest Service, contracted with Yellow Wood Associates for assistance in learning how to measure progress toward goals shared by three different program areas.

In October, Shanna Ratner and Debra Mason conducted a three-day session of *You Get What You Measure® In Use* for regional and national Cooperative Forestry staff and state representatives. Participants clarified goals for Cooperative Forestry as a whole, identified indicators of progress toward the goals that made sense for each of three program areas, discovered key leverage indicators by using a systems analysis, and began the

process of defining measures of change in key indicators.

The process has continued through a series of conference calls with measurement teams experimenting with sets of tiered measures that move from outputs to outcomes. (For example: percent of eligible population engaged in programs; percent of engaged population that implement activities; percent of implementing population meeting high standards.) The result will be an elegant set of simple measures that focus attention on outcomes while reducing the reporting burden for Cooperative Forestry staff and their state partners. For more information on *You Get What You Measure® In Use*, please contact us or visit our website.

About Yellow Wood Associates & Yellow Wood Notes . . .

Yellow Wood Notes is a twice yearly publication of Yellow Wood Associates, Inc. Our purpose in publishing this newsletter is to maintain contact and share ideas with friends, colleagues, and clients. We appreciate your feedback and suggestions.

Yellow Wood Associates, Inc. is a private, for-profit firm specializing in rural economic research and training for community capacity building. We provide clients with customized analyses and models of successful intervention in rural areas around the U.S. and abroad. Our clients include small towns; non-profit organizations; federal, state, and county governments; foundations; and the private sector.

Yellow Wood Associates are Shanna Ratner, Principal; Mary Nieman, Office Manager; Jesse McLean, Research Intern; John Hoover, Associate; and Debra Mason, Senior Associate.



Update On Our Work

a Green Community Technology

Our Green Community Technology project, first described in the Summer 2002 issue of *Yellow Wood Notes*, is well underway. The Town of Richmond has completed an inventory of their municipal infrastructure with assistance from YWA and an intern from Johnson State College.

We met with the Richmond Planning Commission and Selectboard to discuss which areas would be the focus of potential alternative technology based upon the inventory. The six areas selected were 1) alternative methods of sewage processing, 2) stormwater source reduction, 3) pumps and motors for the renovated sewage treatment plant, 4) energy audit for the historic Town Center building, 5) alternative fuels for town vehicles, and 6) repair of underground water lines.

Together with Jeff Forward, our technology consultant, we will be investigating these areas over the next few months, hoping to have recommendations for Richmond by April or May.

Northwest Area Foundation Tackles Poverty (with a little help from us)

The Regional Center Initiative of the Northwest Area Foundation is providing generous financial support for four regional communities to develop visions for their future and strategic plans with a focus on reducing poverty. The Foundation, to its credit, is encouraging each regional community to develop its own definition of poverty.

Representatives of the four communities—Pocatello/Idaho Falls, Idaho; Waterloo/Cedar Falls, Iowa; Great Falls, Montana; and Minot, North Dakota—met in St. Paul, Minnesota last fall to share and learn from one another and receive food for thought from selected consultants. Shanna Ratner was invited to work with the group on what it means to think strategically.

Shanna led participants in an activity called “Everyday Strategic Thinking” and debriefed using an analogy between strategic thinking and the game of chess – at which some are more naturally adept than others! Follow up work is scheduled through March, 2003.

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Update On Former YWA Clients

Starksboro, VT Wins Award

The Town of Starksboro, Vermont received the Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Council's annual Community Forest Stewardship award. The Council recognized Starksboro's diverse and long-term efforts in community forestry. Starksboro's accomplishments include co-hosting See the Forestsm with YWA. See the Forestsm workshops led to the formation of a municipal forest board and collaboration with their local elementary school. The community has also created a set of indicators to monitor forest health with support from the National Community Forestry Center, Northern Forest Region.

Island Pond Wood Workers Land Big Contract

Island Pond Wood Workers, Inc., the new company formed by former Ethan Allen employees, has recently been awarded a \$509,000 contract to make furnishings for Middlebury College's new library. All the wood for the project will be Vermont sugar maple and beech, milled and kiln-dried in Vermont. The Island Pond Wood Workers currently employ a dozen people, and the new project will allow them to hire another three to seven workers. Yellow Wood Associates led a team that included Jon Zeltsman and Harry Kokkinis on the pre-feasibility study for this company.



Guidelines for Rural Community Decision-Makers

The Vermont Forum on Sprawl has released *Community Investments in Smart Growth, A Decision-Maker's Guide*. The guide provides a brief introduction to community infrastructure including public facilities and buildings, downtowns, conservation and open space, mobility, and water and wastewater facilities. Each section begins with questions to stimulate thought and discussion and examples from rural communities. Yellow Wood Associates provided the research and drafted the text for this publication which is available from the Vermont Forum on Sprawl, 802-864-6310 or info@vtsprawl.org.

Answers To Puzzler

- 1) computer (PUM cter)
- 2) white lie (light Y)
- 3) save the whales (wave the sails)
- 4) marquee (car me)
- 5) Sam and Dave (dam and save)
- 6) game show (shame go)
- 7) black shoes (shaq blues)
- 8) police (low piece)
- 9) big fan (fig ban)
- 10) whitfish (fright wish)

A Day In The Life

As office manager for YWA, I thought that I would take this time to let you know a little bit about what it is that I do. Since I do not get directly involved with the projects themselves, unless asked to do something particular, I basically maintain the office and the staff. Sometimes I don't know which is harder to maintain.

To begin, I open the office. I then take out the recyclables, make the coffee, turn on the copier, check the answering machine, write messages and then distribute. Then I start the daily back up of our computer system, turn on my computer, and then check heat or air conditioner settings. All this and it is not even 8:00 AM yet!

I know where the staff will be, have been, or are thinking about being better than they do. I do the research, price comparisons and finalization that gets them where they have to be on time. I order all supplies and look for special request items. Then it is time to order lunch.

I do staff time sheets, I bill our clients, and I prepare the accounts payable and track the accounts receivable. I am the one that will send reminder notices for payments unpaid and send receipts for payments received when needed. What time did you say it was?



*Mary Nieman, YWA Office Manager,
and daughter, Alyssa*

Finally, I water and fertilize the plants, take out the trash, and prepare any mail that has to go out. Then I verify who will be where the following day, shut down my computer, say "Goodnight" and "See you in the morning", and go home to my daughter.

YWA Trademarks Product

YWA recently received an official U.S. Government trademark for ***You Get What You Measure7***. This allows us to protect our investment in intellectual property, including workshop materials and processes.

You Get What You Measure7 is an alternative to traditional planning that can be used by businesses, organizations, government agencies, and even individuals. We developed the processes and materials over the course of eight years, working with clients to clarify their goals and develop effective strategies. We offer ***You Get What You Measure7*** in four different packages ranging from a three-hour process overview to a training for measurement guides.

Spoonerisms

Named after poor Mr. Spooner, a Spoonerism is the accidental switching of sounds in one or more words to create either new words or just plain nonsense! Usually, a Spoonerism would involve switching the first consonants of a pair of words, such as turning “prancing reindeer” into “rancing preindeer”. Sometimes, the Spoonerism may stretch across several words, such as turning “came to the castle” into “cass to the camel”. Each of the following clues contains a Spoonerism and is also a clue to the answer. Don’t let the punctuation fool you!

EXAMPLE Clue: “The man who hadn’t bathed for weeks went to Pisa, Italy to shake a tower”
Answer: Take a Shower (Spoonerism of “shake a tower”)

- 1) "Very old headline: Caveman create Personal User Machine (PUM) . . . says PUM cuter than abacus"
- 2) "Dishonest George told the painter, 'Paint the dark M and the light Y, please'"
- 3) "Wave the sails at that nasty-looking fishing boat"
- 4) "The Bijou theater advertised its new movie, 'You Car, Me Jane'"
- 5) "'Forget the dam and save the trout,' cried the 60s rock fan."
- 6) "What a shame! Go try for 'Beat the Buzzer!'"
- 7) "That footwear sure helps Shaq blues sound great."
- 8) "The cop wore a low piece as he toured his turf."
- 9) "The government passes a fig ban. Lovers of Newtons rioted!"
- 10) "The boxer got his fight wish but would rather eat seafood."

Answers are on Page 5.

Yellow Wood Notes Reader Wins Fabulous Prize

Congratulations to Eddie Gale of Johnson, Vermont who successfully solved the puzzler in our last issue and emailed us with the answer. You too are eligible for prizes, but you have to enter to win.



What We're Reading

Passing On by Penelope Lively is a novel about the loss of one not-so-perfect parent and the ways in which two siblings come to terms. It’s written in the British style of understatement with loving attention to details of place. Highly recommended by Shanna.

A couple books I picked up in an airport bookstore remind, or reveal, just how extremely and how rapidly change has swept a part of the world that remains a dim mystery to most. *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* by T.E. Lawrence is a classic that details how scattered Arab tribes succeeded in shaking hundreds of years of Ottoman rule, with a little help from the British. *The Saudis: Inside the Desert Kingdom* by Sandra Mackey provides a fast forward update, describing modernization and its impacts after the 1970 oil boom.
~ Debra



NNFP National Community Forestry Center Northern Forest Region

Yellow Wood Associates is currently completing our third year as administrator for the National Community Forestry Center, Northern Forest Region, a project of the National Network of Forest Practitioners. In recent years, approximately fifty percent of our overall staff time has been devoted to activities in support of community forestry and participatory research throughout the region that includes the states of Maine, Vermont, New York, and New Hampshire. With just over a year to go, we've begun to take stock of what we have learned, and consider ways to move forward with the valuable lessons and products that we have had the opportunity to develop. A sample of our work over the past few months is described on the following pages.

Applying Systems Thinking in the Northern Forest

What are the relationships among changes in forestland ownership, the health and diversity of the forest, the forest-based economy, and recreational access for residents and tourists?

This question is central to the concerns of many who live and work in the Northern Forest region of New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont, and northern New York. The Wilderness Society, in collaboration with The National Community Forestry Center, Northern Forest Region and The Sustainability Institute is assisting a group of Maine citizens in exploring this question using the technique of "systems thinking."

Systems thinking explores the interrelationships that are responsible for creating patterns of behaviors and events over time. Using this technique, participants from Maine began to explore the relationship between forest fragmentation (formerly continuous forest that has been broken up into smaller pieces) and recreational access to forest lands in their region.

Participants at the first of two workshops held in Dover-Foxcroft, Maine in the fall of 2002 identified a number of variables that influenced this

relationship, including types of forest landowners, key features of forest health and diversity, the impact of the forest economy, and the degree of recreational access for residents and tourists. The group explored the factors that influence the behavior of each type of landowner when making decisions about harvesting forest products or providing recreational access. The group's insights and the data that they gather will be used to create a computer model that illustrates these relationships.

The second workshop, to be held in late winter, 2003, will be an opportunity for a broader group of community members to use the computer model to explore these types of forest-community interactions and to discuss the implications for their communities.

Learn more about this project at <http://www.sover.net/~twsvt/formodel> or contact Ann Ingerson, The Wilderness Society, at 802-895-2882.

The core purpose of the National Community Forestry Center, Northern Forest Region: ***to help rural people conduct and use research to make informed decisions about forest resources.***



Workshops Offered Throughout the Region

Shanna Ratner, John Hoover, and Jesse McLean traveled to Farmington, Maine in September to host a participatory research workshop sponsored by the National Community Forestry Center in cooperation with the Franklin County Soil & Water Conservation District. During the workshop, participants shared their experiences regarding community involvement in research projects. Many gained insight into the difference between community members participating in the research process (e.g. filling out surveys) and a more participatory model that engages individuals in defining the research questions, gathering the data, and interpreting the results.

Shanna and Debra traveled to Epps, Alabama in October to conduct a participatory research workshop for fellows and advisors to the Ford Foundation's Community Forestry Research Fellowship Program. This was our first audience that had a conceptual, if not a working knowledge, of participatory research. They suggested advanced topics that would help practitioners actually design and carry out a participatory research project.

Community members of the Tug Hill area met in Boonville, New York to attend a workshop, "Giving the Forest a Voice in Community Planning: Creating Local Indicators of Forest Health," co-sponsored by NCFNFR and the Tug Hill

Commission. Robert Turner, a member of the Starksboro, Vermont Conservation Commission, worked with Debra Mason to plan and deliver the workshop based upon Starksboro's participatory research in developing local indicators of forest health.

NEW Online Resources!!

We have recently created two new databases intended to help folks learn about activities and decisions being made in relation to the Northern Forest Region. The databases - *Research Topics of the Northern Forest* and *Legislative Initiatives in the Northern Forest Region* - are both fully searchable and found on the Center's website, [ncfcnfr.net](http://www.ncfcnfr.net). The research topics database provides brief summaries in non-technical language and researcher contact information for a sample of publicly funded, forest-related research projects within the Region. The legislative initiatives database allows users to view forest-related bills introduced in New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine since 2000, and can be searched by key word, state, bill number, and/or bill title.

Research Topics of the Northern Forest
<http://www.ncfcnfr.net/research.html>

Legislative Initiatives in the Northern Forest
<http://www.ncfcnfr.net/legislative/index.html>



NNFP National Community Forestry Center
Northern Forest Region

Demonstration Forest Database Becomes Model for Others

As part of our work for the National Community Forestry Center, we developed an online demonstration forest database covering the Northern Forest Region. The database is currently comprised of sixty forests throughout New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine, with more being added every month. As a web site, the database is an opportunity for those demonstrating or conducting research on forest ecology and/or forest management techniques to share their work with others. It is also an opportunity for residents of the region to learn about demonstration forests in or near their home community. We believe that making what we already know about

our forests more accessible will benefit communities and the resource itself. Log on to our Demo Forest database at <http://www.nfcnfr.net/demo.html> to learn more.

The National Network of Forest Practitioners recently asked us to develop a guidebook for others who might want to make similar information available on the Internet. John and Jesse developed the guidebook, which outlines the steps for creating an online demonstration forest database using our experience and examples. The guidebook will be available through the National Network of Forest Practitioners.

Knowing How to Ask

How do we ask the right questions in order to help people get the information they need to address practical concerns?

One of the most difficult steps in research is framing a good research question. After finding this step especially challenging in our work with community-based research as part of the National Community Forestry Center initiative, we developed a workshop called "Defining a Researchable Question: What Do You Really Need to Know?"

Communities are typically looking for answers to practical problems like, "Should we close our local school and consolidate?" or "What impacts will changes in land ownership have on our community?" As stated, these are not researchable questions.

Research alone cannot tell us whether we should or shouldn't do something. Nor can research tell us what will happen in the future. Research is about understanding *what is*, and *what has been*.

Three types of question are useful to guide research:

1 *What is or What are?* What is the affect on our community of having a local school? Or, What are the social, economic, and environmental effects on our community of having a local school? This type of question provides an entry point into the research process and allows researchers to learn enough to begin forming ideas about relationships between communities and local schools.

2 *What is the relationship between or among* different phenomena? For example, what is the relationship between the development pattern of our community and the quality and location of our local school? If there is one, what is it?

3 *Why? and/or How?* Why do development patterns matter, and how do they matter? This type of question is used to prove or disprove a hypothesis. For example, if a community is developing in a sprawl pattern, one might hypothesize that the pattern of development limits the amount of contact between school children before and after school, and the use of the school facilities for community activities. Research can prove or disprove this hypothesis.

Criteria for Framing Research Questions

(developed by participants during a workshop held at the annual meeting of the National Network of Forest Practitioners in November, 2002)

- Terms must be well-defined. Often, definitional questions must be answered before more complex research questions can be posed.
- Some research questions can be answered with information that already exists.
- A researchable question suggests a path or set of steps to an answer.
- A researchable question has clear boundaries and an appropriate scope.
- A researchable question can be answered by gathering information about current conditions.
- A researchable question incorporates an awareness of assumptions made in asking the question.
- A researchable question incorporates existing knowledge explicitly. If it does not, it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to fit the answer into a larger context so that the results are meaningful to others besides the individual researcher.

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