

Community Forestry Panel: "Who's Included; Who's Excluded?"

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CREATING SPACE FOR
MOBILE WILD MUSHROOM HARVESTERS IN
COMMUNITY-BASED FORESTRY IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

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Introduction

"Successful approaches to ecosystem management are increasingly community-based, initiated by local people, and motivated by a 'love of place'. In such cases, ecosystem management is in the local interest and is a means to achieve the beneficial use of its 'natural capital' (Ecological Stewardship Workshop 1995: 10).

Although created to serve national interests, the U.S. national forest reserves retained a strong local community-orientation during the early decades of the 20th century, and a variety of formal and informal mechanisms developed for ensuring local input into forest management decisions (Drielsma et al. 1990; Sarvis 1993). Over the decades, however, U.S. national forest management became increasingly dominated by individuals and organizations distant from national forests and the communities tied to their resources (Kemmis 1990; Gale and Miller 1985; Peluso et al. 1994). Since 1990, as approaches espousing the importance of local participation in natural resource decision-making (e.g. ecosystem management, landscape management, and sustainable development) have gained political ascendancy, local communities have shifted once more into the forest management foreground.

A variety of arguments have been set forth for increasing local community influence or control over national forests. One set of politically vocal actors, county supremacists, argues that local communities have the right to a greater voice than others on the grounds that traditional customs and cultures legally take precedence over new resource use configurations (Erm 1994). Other supporters of 'community-based' resource management approaches maintain that forest community members deserve an important voice in resource management decisions because they often have a strong dedication to the well-being of their local ecology (linked to their "love-of-place"), as well as intimate knowledge of its socio-ecological particularities (Stankey and Shindler 1996; Pinkerton 1989). Still others argue that because local people must live with the negative consequences of resource

management decisions, they have economic incentives to be good stewards (Kemmis 1990; Bray 1991; Western and Wright 1994). As mainstream forestry begins to acknowledge the potential merits of some of these arguments, forest proximate communities are beginning to play more prominent roles in national forest management (Shindler et al. 1995). These new roles are reflected in both top-down and bottom-up efforts to provide 'local' forest communities a greater voice in how national forests are managed -- e.g. public-private partnerships, bioregional councils, Adaptive Management Areas, and watershed management councils.

The Problematic Nature of the Concept of Community

Where influence and control over forest resources shift toward 'local communities', how 'community' is defined becomes consequential for determining who will share in this power, and thus who will benefit from forest management and resource allocation decisions. In the Western United States, forest dependent communities not only argue that they exercise relatively little power with respect to land management agencies, but also maintain that they are subject to the desires or needs of geographically distant interests (e.g. urban environmentalists, recreationists, stockholders, industrial timber companies). This complex dynamic has served as a catalyst for some community-based forestry proponents to distinguish between 'communities of place' and 'communities of interest' (Jungwirth 1996; Kusel et al. 1995), and to assert that the needs and concerns of 'communities of place' should be on a more equal footing with (if not take precedence over) 'outside interests'. However, defining the bounds of 'communities of place' and thus, by implication, who constitute 'insiders' and 'outsiders', remains problematic.

Terms such as 'local community' or 'community of place' are often used to imply that a community is a discrete social entity whose members reside within a bounded geographic space, and have land

management motivations and interests that are distinct from people residing outside that space. However, as Painter (1993) points out in an article critiquing village-based land management efforts in the African Sahel, Sahelian communities may be more usefully thought of in terms of shared and overlapping action-spaces, where sites of productive action are multiple and often spatially discrete. Communities conceptualized as "action spaces" can be thought of as fuzzy networks where social interactions take place between people and resources within a bounded space as well as the 'outside' linkages that may be a fundamental part of the cultural production of the 'bounded' community. However, while many social scientists do examine these 'outside' linkages, or situate the study of specific places within a larger context, they often do not perceive the linkages as part of the community. Thus, people who may frequent, or live in a 'bounded community of place' part-time (e.g. seasonal apple pickers, pastoralists, gypsies) and who often develop a deep "love of place", continue to be defined as outsiders rather than insiders. When thinking of implementing community-based forestry strategies, we thus need to ask the following questions: In drawing the bounds of community on the basis of residential proximity (or traditional use of forest resources), whose access to that forest's resources is diminished? What are the consequences for forest environments, including the people who operate within in them, in drawing the boundaries in this particular way?

Efforts to implement community-based forestry in Africa and Asia suggest that equating "local community" and "community of place" with residential proximity to natural resources can undermine well-meant efforts to support sustainable resource management (Painter 1993, Sivaramakrishnan 1996; Turner n.d.). As community-based forestry efforts gain strength in the United States, a similar trend toward equating community of place with residential proximity risks to emerge. We believe that it is important for community-based forestry supporters begin with a broader definition of community -- a definition that allows for community-based management of forest resources where "localized" decision

making or preferential access leaves space for incorporating non-resident stakeholders whose livelihoods are significantly affected by decisions about forest use in that place. Though we recognize that communities-of-place have valuable roles to play in managing the forests around them, we wish to show that people who do not reside permanently in those communities may, nonetheless, be vital components of those communities and should not be automatically excluded from forest decision-making processes.

Mobility and Communities of Place: The Case of Wild Mushrooms

To illustrate the dangers of relying on a too-narrow conception of community-of-place, we weave together non-equilibrium management theories emerging from Sahelian rangeland ecology and North American fisheries with examples drawn from wild mushroom harvesting and management in the Pacific Northwest. Mobility strategies play a central role in these three resource arenas, all of which share non-equilibrium system characteristics of high variability and unpredictability in productivity. The wild mushroom examples used to support our argument are drawn from exploratory studies conducted by the authors in the Olympic Peninsula, the Oregon Coast Range, and the Washington and Oregon Cascade Range during 1995. Our analysis also draws from one of the authors' experiences as a commercial wild mushroom picker and buyer during the past decade.

The Emergence of the Wild Mushroom Industry in the Pacific Northwest

In the last fifteen years, a rapidly expanding commercial wild mushroom industry¹ (which overlaps a longer tradition of non-commercial harvesting) has become an economic buffer for many individuals in rural and urban communities in the Pacific Northwest. As wild mushrooms in particular, and special forest products in general,² become visible in Pacific Northwest forest economies, a wide range of stakeholders, including harvesters, buyers, community development organizations,

environmental groups, public land management agencies, private landholders, and amateur and professional scientists, are scrambling to understand the biological, social, and economic implications of further commercial expansion of these products.

Among the hundreds of species of special forest products, wild mushrooms have been most consistently the focus of strident and sustained public debate since the mid-1980s. During that time, the temperate forests of the Pacific Northwest have become important sources of supply for a variety of wild mushroom species marketed globally, including more widely recognized species, such as chanterelle, morel, matsutake, and bolete, and less well-known species, such as hedgehog, lobster, and cauliflower. In Oregon, Washington, and Northern California, some rural communities hard-hit by recent declines in timber production are exploring avenues for capturing a larger share of the economic value associated with special forest products (Goldberg 1996; Mater Engineering 1992; Rice 1997; Walls et al. 1991). Some of these community-based initiatives to expand local capacity to harvest and process special forest products, including wild mushrooms, have emerged independently of government intervention; others, such as the Cispus Adaptive Management Area's special forest products program, are federally initiated attempts to encourage economic diversification in forest dependent communities. Whether top-down or bottom-up initiatives, both more general community-based forest management and community-based special forest products management efforts need to pay attention to where mobile harvesters fit into forest management.

Managing Resources Characterized by Spatial and Temporal Variability

Assumptions that "fixed-in-place" communities are the most appropriate units for managing or allocating resources may be economically and ecologically counterproductive for non-equilibrium resource systems (Turner n.d.; Behnke and Scoones 1992). In non-equilibrium resource systems, the

spatial and temporal distribution of resource productivity varies unpredictably within recognizable limits (Wilson et al 1990; Behnke and Scoones 1992). To cope with the uncertainty of resource productivity in non-equilibrium systems, many prehistoric and contemporary human groups ranging from hunter-gatherers, pastoralists, fishers, and agriculturalists, have adopted transhumance strategies. Transhumance strategies rely on a combination of physical mobility, diversity of economic strategies, reciprocity in access to resources, and flexible tenure institutions to ensure that group members have access to key resources in sufficient quantities throughout each year and from year to year. Ensuring access to key fallback zones in areas of consistently high productivity is particularly crucial for periods when areas on the extensive margin fail to produce sufficient resources (Behnke and Scoones 1992). Recent studies of range conditions and transhumant pastoralist systems in Zimbabwe and the West African Sahel indicate that the movement toward community-based management, in which sedentary agricultural villages serve as the model for "community" and where land uses are increasingly "fixed-in-place" by zoning, may accelerate rangeland degradation, leading to social and economic hardship for mobile groups and less powerful members of sedentary groups (Turner n.d.; Behnke and Scoones 1992).

Many commercially harvested wild mushrooms in the Pacific Northwest appear to exhibit characteristics of non-equilibrium resources, and thus it is reasonable to posit that mobile strategies may be a critical aspect of commercial viability. Unpredictability over time and space is an important aspect of the mystique that has historically surrounded wild mushroom gathering in European and Euro-american cultures. Extreme temporal and spatial variability in species productivity currently hinders attempts by ecologists and mycologists in the Pacific Northwest to develop reliable inventory techniques for wild mushrooms on national forests and to compare the effects of different harvesting techniques on patch productivity (USMAB 1996; PNW Matsutake Team 1995). Biological

productivity variability is matched by variability in prices for fresh mushrooms over a season and across seasons (PNW Matsutake Team 1995), as wild mushroom markets respond to rapid shifts in supply and demand at regional and global levels. As a result, although a large variety and quantity of commercial wild mushrooms may appear within the boundaries of a given 'community-of-place', the complex interactions of a host of factors, such as rainfall, frosts, shifts in global demand, regulatory changes, etc. cause the economic value to vary unpredictably throughout a season and from year to year. The following examples illustrate the management dilemmas that highly variable resources pose for 'fixed-in-place' community management strategies that fail to recognize the importance of encouraging mobility strategies as a management option.

EXAMPLE 1: GIFFORD PINCIHOT NATIONAL FOREST, WASHINGTON

Although small groups of mobile harvesters from the Willamette Valley, Portland, Tacoma, and Seattle have harvested matsutake mushrooms commercially in the Gifford Pinchot national forest since at least the early 1980s, local residents first became aware of the presence of commercial quantities of matsutake in the surrounding forest when a large influx of commercial pickers entered the area in 1991. This influx appears to have been spurred by shortages in other normally productive matsutake areas to the north and south, coupled with a particularly productive season in the Gifford Pinchot forest. During the following years the harvest remained economically viable, attracting residents, who had previously not been engaged in commercial mushroom harvesting, into the mushroom economy.

In the summer of 1995, discussions on how to support a community-based special forest products program (including matsutake) were initiated as part of the Cispus Adaptive Management Area planning process. The initial optimism about establishing a community-based wild mushroom management program, however, was quickly dispelled that fall when an early warm cycle brought a high rate of worm infestations, significantly decreasing the economic value of locally harvested matsutake. By the first week in October, the high point of the season in previous years, all but a few buyers had packed up and moved to areas with more commercial quality mushrooms. Residents who had anticipated making some money from the harvest were unable to. Furthermore, the local economy did not benefit from the influx of mobile harvesters, many of whom shifted their picking activities to Crescent Lake, the 'hottest place' on the circuit at the time.

EXAMPLE 2: OLYMPIC PENINSULA, WASHINGTON

Another situation in a town on the Olympic Peninsula of Washington illustrates how regulatory changes distort mobile patterns, with potential negative effects on mobile and sedentary harvesters alike. During much of the 1980s, the area around the town experienced relatively high yields of chanterelles and matsutakes, and had become a regular option for transhumant harvesters. Mushroom buying evolved into an important part of the town's economy. However, in recent years, private, state and federal land managers have begun regulating access to wild mushrooms located in Peninsula forests. As a result of the increasing complexity of regulatory hoops, many mobile harvesters have omitted this area (and the Olympic Peninsula in general) from their circuits. At the same time, buyers have complained that there are insufficient pickers for the available harvest, noting that local harvesters are unable to pick up the slack. Interviews with pickers whose harvesting activities are restricted to the immediate area around the town, suggest that by itself, the area does not produce enough commercial wild mushrooms on a regular basis to make wild mushroom harvesting attractive as a dependable income generating activity for many local residents.

The above examples illustrate that communities have to be cautious in the approaches that they take to developing economies based on the commercialization of resources with a high degree of spatial and temporal variability. This is not to say that communities should not exploit new economic possibilities, but that they should recognize that mobility strategies may be a crucial aspect in creating stable economic opportunities around certain special forest products, such as wild mushrooms. The second example further illustrates the interdependence between mobile and resident harvesters, and suggests that deliberate or inadvertent shutting out of mobile harvesters can potentially undermine income opportunities for resident harvesters as well.

Contributions of transhumants to resource stewardship/sustainable management

A key element of many definitions of sustainable resource management is the notion of using resources in ways that maintain ecological processes and functions, leaving options open for future generations (Salwasser et al 1993; Franklin 1993). Sustainability is often linked to the concept of

stewardship, that is the notion of leaving something in as good, or better condition than when taking on its care, and in managing something for more than personal gain. Many community-based resource management efforts attempt to foster stewardship behavior through the development of formal arrangements such as individual and community stewardship contracts, end results contracts, land management services contracts, forest trusts, and conservation easements. As formal stewardship arrangements become more common, we are concerned about the possible implications of assertions that we have heard during our fieldwork that resource users who do not live in an area are less likely than 'local' residents to engage in stewardship behavior toward forest resources. Exactly what constitutes "stewardship" for wild mushrooms remains ambiguous. However, our research suggests that many mobile, as well as resident, harvesters are actively searching for and testing practices aimed at improving and maintaining wild mushroom habitat.

Our conversations with harvesters indicate that there tends to be a dialectic between commercial picking of a variable resource and engaging in informal experimentation aimed at increasing the potential for economic return over the long-term. The following quote from Love and Jones' (1996) work on chanterelle gathering in the Olympic National Forest illustrates how this dialectic plays out in a range of stewardship elements and practices utilized by mobile (and resident) harvesters:

Newly emerging mushrooms are often left to mature into larger mushrooms for which two rationales are given: 'It is usually not economically worthwhile to harvest small mushrooms,' and there is a relationship between the size (or form in some cases) of the mushroom and the time needed to disperse spores for reproduction. Though harvesters could get more weight (and thus more money) by pulling mushrooms, most chanterelle harvesters insist that cutting does less damage to the mycelium and claim that chanterelles will sometimes regenerate from a cut stalk. Some harvesters will go as far as to leave patches lie fallow under the assumption that this will result in a greater productivity in the future. It isn't uncommon for harvesters to stress the importance of leaving mushrooms for other elements of the ecosystem (e.g. wildlife, insects, possible floral interdependencies).³ Other experiments at increasing productivity that we have observed include stomping rotten mushrooms in the patch and returning trimmings and other mushroom wastes back to the forest to encourage spore dispersal and nutrient recycling, and some harvesters have tried to inoculate

forests with spores.

In matsutake mushroom circles, some pickers will deliberately sacrifice the opportunity to pick only "buttons" (the more valuable, immature matsutake) in order to remove visible "flowers" (less valuable, mature matsutake) as a means for protecting patches for future years:

And today I pounded the brush in one area and got all of these "flowers" out of there because people are starting to get into this area that I was hoping these old people would pick. Instead of getting ten pounds of flowers there's an area I know for a fact I could have gotten thirty pounds of buttons. Instead of making ten bucks, I could have made 300 bucks in the same time but I chose not to because it's something that needed to be done for next year.

Harvesters develop a sense for stewardship not only through experimentation within the habitat, but also through social interactions within the commercial mushroom arena. People outside this arena often equate the strong sense of individuality characteristic of many harvesters as meaning there are few settings where socio-cultural norms and ethics would develop regarding harvesting practices. However, what we see is that there are many settings and processes -- buying stations, campsites, encounters in the woods, apprenticeships with 'oldtimers' - where mushroom people educate each other about what they think is right and wrong about harvesting techniques and woods ethics.

One mobile harvester's story of how he reacted to the influx of new pickers into the Coast Range during the early 1990s illustrates how "stewardship" education occurs in one such forest setting:

When more people started coming into it I kinda could see things were gonna change. I cut way back on ground, the first time I ever seen ground tore up -- it was just like my heart gave up: "What!?" Who did this? Why?" Why would they just strip all the moss off this hillside?" Visually, it's just striking. 'Cause you got all this pretty beautiful pristine stuff, I mean kinnickinnick, manzanita, huckleberry and the blonde of the sand and it's gorgeous. You rip it all up and it looks like somebody took black paint and threw it on a piece of artwork.

I actually approached the people who were out there tearing it up and told them: "This is what you need to do". I already knew the ground. I knew where the beds were at. So I gave them a little idea of where they're at and really stressed that

"you'll get a lot more mushrooms if you take care of it." And it's worked...That's how I adjusted, I just confronted the people who were out there and then just tried to work with as many people that were slipping into these areas and try and steer them in the right direction. In my opinion, the more ground that was taken care of, the less the undesirable people were going to come into it.

Although economics are clearly important to mobile harvesters, it is important to recognize that their stewardship practices and ethics are not motivated solely by economics. For every harvester, mobile or resident, there are many factors -- values, ethics, economic gain, knowledge, love of place -- that shape mushroom harvesting behavior. The key to sustainable resource management may lie in developing better understandings of the mix of economic and non-economic motivations that underlie efforts by different kinds of harvesters to identify and utilize stewardship practices, as well as how these motivations are affected by and work in tandem with resource management policies.

What Makes Someone An Insider?

Within the wild commercial mushroom sector, mobile harvesting and buying strategies often take the form of seasonal rounds, characterized by repeated visits to the same regions year after year.⁴ Often the time spent by harvesters and buyers in areas distant from their homes results not only in a keen awareness and sense of stewardship of the habitats they work in, but also engenders a sense of identity with the particular forests and towns ('communities-of-place') that they operate from. The following example illustrate some of the ways in which mobile harvesters and buyers begin to develop a sense of tradition and feeling of belonging to the places they frequent in their seasonal and yearly rounds. At issue is what makes someone a member of a community of place, i.e an insider, rather than an outsider.

Beginning in the early 1980s, Jerry, a circuit picker based in the Willamette Valley of Oregon, set up a temporary home in Chemult every year for several months while he harvested boletes and

matsutakes. When not picking and cleaning mushrooms, he spent money in local stores and gas stations, washed his laundry at the local laundromat, and made friends with other mushroom pickers and townspeople he encountered. Over time, he even began to feel protective about the forest against new 'outsiders':

"It was like they protect their communities against outsiders; I found myself doing that too. You're there for like 3 months every year. If you have a problem, something breaks down they'll weld it for you...If you have any problems you know who to talk to.

Jerry further contends that because he has established a tradition of interaction and love for the place that he is a part of the community and has rights to the mushrooms as much as any resident of the area.

Perhaps even more than pickers, mobile mushroom buyers develop knowledge about and connections with the places they stay in along their seasonal and annual circuits. Where pickers may or may not need formal economic and social links to a 'community, buyers who stay any length of time inevitably use a range of town services (e.g. motels or camping facilities, fuel, communication services, etc.) that involve social negotiations. Indeed, Jerry's subsequent shift into the buying end of the wild mushroom business in the late 1980s illustrates how a buyer's need for connections can potentially lead to the desire for more secure "insider" status:

Before the "Bode" situation [the influx of Southeast Asian pickers into the Crescent Lake area in 1989] we were looking at a piece of property, kind of a summer place so we could move down there for three months. Really we have the same kind of situation in the [harvest zone] area now. In the fall and spring ... It's still the same old people, same kind of community it used to be in the spring. We're looking for half an acre there, it might make things politically easier for us."

His current desire to acquire more obvious "insider" status is linked closely to the relationships that many buyers have with public land management agencies. As a non-resident working in the eastern Cascades, Jerry believes that his suggestions currently carry less weight with the U.S. Forest Service,

the agency that manages most of the land from which his supply of mushrooms comes, than would a resident. One way to acquire recognition as an 'insider' he feels, is to buy property: "I'd have more leverage as a property owner, I'd get their attention a little bit".

For many people using mobile economic strategies, 'attachment to place' is closely linked to the natural resources being exploited. However, in the course of their work, they develop social ties with other workers⁵ and other people they encounter as part of the "every day" process of work. Johnson and Orbach's (1990) studies of the shrimping industry in the Carolinas lends support to our contention that mobile harvesters can develop attachments to place. Every year, North Carolina shrimpers travel down to South Carolina to shrimp the inshore waters. This migratory pattern is in part economically motivated, but over time the shrimpers have developed a sense of being part of the bay community in which they fish. Their feeling of connection to the South Carolina communities was rendered visible by the support they provided to the harbor town in which they rafted up after Hurricane Hugo devastated the area in 1989 (Johnson 1996, Personal communication). Working in distant places together also allows the shrimpers to strengthen bonds amongst themselves -- many of the shrimpers assert that their primary motivation for travelling south each year is to have a 'working vacation' with their buddies. An analagous phenomenon is apparent in some of the larger mushroom "picks" in the Pacific Northwest. For example, a number of southeast Asian mushroom pickers consider their annual participation in the matsutake harvest in the Oregon Cascades to be simultaneously a family vacation and a way to make some additional income.

Conclusion: Creating Space for Mobile Harvesters

Though the future directions of public forest management in the Western United States are uncertain, rural communities are clearly attempting to take on more prominent roles. Community movements in

the Western U.S. take many forms, and their proponents espouse a variety, and often very different agendas. These agendas range from devolving national forest ownership and management authorities to counties and states; according preferential access over public forests to individuals, groups, or communities; and developing co-management strategies that redistribute power amongst stakeholders. A commonality of these diverse movements is that all seek to capture a greater share of the power over forest resources for 'local communities'. In these struggles, with residential proximity to forest resources has been advanced as one of the main criteria for bounding the 'local'.⁶ However, our examples from wild mushrooming show how defining 'local community' by residential proximity to forests may be socially, ecologically, and ethically unsound.

First, narrowly conceptualized fixed-in-place communities are not the most logical entity for developing the economic potential of forest resources characterized by high variability and unpredictability, where mobility may be necessary for economic viability. Second, the notion that community residents have greater incentives to practice resource stewardship than 'outsiders' does not hold true for situations where 'outsiders' are using transhumance strategies, visiting the same forests, and more importantly, working with the same patches throughout a season, and often from year to year. Third, failure to see transhumants as an integral part of communities-of-place denies the validity of the attachments that mobile harvesters develop to the forests in which they work, and also diminishes the importance of the social connections they form with each other and residents of the places in which they work.

We offer a few suggestions as to how communities with wild mushroom resources could foster an environment conducive to transhumance harvesting lifeways. Mobile harvesters frequently note the lack of basic infrastructure needed for mobile strategies -- inexpensive camping facilities, showers,

potable water, garbage disposal sites, public telephones, convenient accessibility to permit issuers, well-marked boundaries, and posting of regulations in spots frequented by harvesters and written in languages understood by harvesting populations. Moreover, mushroom harvesters are often cast in a negative light by government agents, law enforcement personnel, and the media. Fixed-in-place community members could help alter these impediments to mobile harvesters by supporting the development of suitable infrastructure and by making the kind of space that enriches the image of mobile harvesting as a lifeway and acknowledges it as a meaningful part of community identity at local events (e.g. county fairs, festivals, community picnics, sporting events).

A critical point to keep in mind in the encouragement of mobile mushroom harvesting strategies is that resource tenure security is equally important to mobile harvesters as it is to sedentary harvesters. Mobile and sedentary harvesters face increasing competition from each other, as well as a progressive, and marked decline in the areas suitable or available to harvesting. Incentives to practice stewardship can be undermined if competition escalates to the point where a harvester decides to 'clearcut my patch so the next guy won't get them.' Increased competition for mushroom patches is due in part to more people perceiving mushroom harvesting as a viable economic opportunity; it also is a consequence of the overall decrease in mushroom habitat availability caused by gating, other forms of land closures, regulatory barriers, and temporary or permanent habitat destruction as a result of residential development and clearcutting. Incentives for conservative picking are eroded when harvesters do not know from one year to the next whether their patches will be off-limits or disrupted by silvicultural operations, such as spraying, roadbuilding, fire control, thinning, or logging.

How can tenure security for mobile harvesters be maintained and promoted within a community-based forestry framework? Tenure security for mobile harvesters picking in national forests is closely tied

to regulatory content and enforcement, which in turn are affected by whose voices are heard and listened to in forest policy making processes. Few mobile harvesters ever participate in the formation of formal rules that they must operate under, even though many rules interfere with their harvesting patterns and conservation strategies. Mushroom harvesters who traditionally picked commercially along the Cascade crest now must contend with a variety of regulatory inconsistencies (e.g. differences in permit types, permit costs, quantity allotments, species restrictions, and camping restrictions) across their harvesting range. Harvesters are now routinely asked to provide information about the locations in which they are planning to pick, information which is often publicly posted on maps or passed on by land management agency staff to other pickers. Although the question "Where will you be picking?" may appear innocuous to forest managers, for harvesters this question represents an attempt to appropriate their intellectual property, an appropriation that jeopardizes the security of their patches and potentially their economic edge. Community-based approaches need to recognize how rules, behaviors, and communication protocols that make sense to forest managers or even fixed-in-place harvesters can negatively affect informal mushroom tenure regimes that exist or might otherwise develop among mobile harvesters.

An important step to take toward developing more appropriate policies, regulations, and attitudes is the creation of suitable forums that make it easy for mobile mushroom harvesters, as individuals and groups, to influence and help create the rules that govern their livelihoods. Mobile harvester-friendly forums would need to take into account where harvesters are, when they are available, the types of atmospheres they would feel comfortable participating in, the languages they speak, the costs of travelling to take part in meetings, and income lost as a result of taking the time to attend meetings. Unless community forums actively help mobile harvesters share in power, community-based strategies risk merely reproducing the oppressions they are currently struggling to eliminate.

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ENDNOTES

1. Exploratory studies (Schlosser et al 1991; Schlosser and Blatner 1995) indicate that wild mushroom harvesting in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho is a multi-million dollar industry.

2. Special forest products is a catch-all term that refers to a wide variety of diverse products (e.g. mushrooms, berries, leaves, barks, boughs, etc.). Synonymous terms used in the international literature are "non-timber forest products" and "non-wood forest products".

3. The following quote from a mobile matsutake harvester provides an example of the concern that some pickers have about the effects of their activities on other species:

"As far as I'm concerned the deer need something to eat too. I know where there's mushrooms and I don't get them. It's better for me. Rather than crawl back in the hole, I know the deer will get them. And I can cover this little strip and keep this main area cleaned out. 'Cause if I *don't* then people are going to find them there and then *they're* going to crawl back in the brush. So like I'm always trying to compromise everything. Just clear it just enough so that no one will get in".

4. Mobile harvesting/buying strategies take multiple forms in Pacific Northwest mushroom regions. Hansis (1995) identified three types of mobile harvesters present in the Crescent Lake, Oregon area in late September 1995: circuit pickers (travel to multiple picking sites over the course of a season, often without returning to residence for many weeks), "commuter" pickers (travel to sites for one to three day periods -- often on weekends -- and return home for the rest of the week), and "vacation" pickers (travel to one picking site, where they remain for several weeks). On-going ethnographic research by Love and Jones in the Olympic Peninsula, and by McLain and Siegel in Central Oregon, aims to further explore the complexities of mobility strategies, as well as relationships between policy changes and the viability of different forms of mobile strategies.

5. These ties among workers can lead to the development of what are termed "occupational communities". See Miller and Johnson (1981) for a discussion of occupational community dynamics among Bristol Bay fishermen, and Carroll (1990) for a discussion of loggers as an occupational community.

6. Traditional use, or 'custom and culture', is another common criteria proposed, often (though not always) in conjunction with residential proximity.