The Origins of Sustainable Forest Management In the USA: How Menominee Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin Have Balanced Economics, Ecology, and Community Perspectives over Time

Mike Dockry
US Forest Service, Northern Research Station
University of Minnesota
Saint Paul, MN

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Mike Dockry

US Forest Service Scientist & Adjunct Asst. Prof. UMN

Enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation

BS Forest Science  
MS Natural Resources/Ecology  
PhD Forestry

College of Menominee Nation

Environmental Planning Intern – Oneida Nation of Wisconsin

Peace Corps - Bolivia

Assistant Forest Planner – Green Mountain & Finger Lakes National Forests
Presentation Outline

1. Introduction US Forest Service
2. Indigenous Community Forestry USA
3. Research Questions
4. Methods and Data
5. Menominee Forest Management
6. Conclusions – What does this mean for SFM?
Forest Service History

- Formed in 1905
- Agency of U.S. Department of Agriculture
- Sustainable Timber & Watershed Protection
What does the Forest Service do?

Motto: “Caring for the Land and Serving People”

Mission: “To sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations”
Forest Service Organization

- National Forest System
- State and Private Forestry
- Research and Development
- International
What is Community Forestry?

The goal of community forestry is to conserve forest ecosystems while improving the well being of communities - the health of ecosystems and communities are linked.

American Indian Forestry

- 566 Federally Recognized Tribes
- 302 have significant Forestlands
- 18 million acres (7.3 million ha)
- Tribes have managed their lands to meet many goals for generations
- All tribes are different: separate nations, cultures and history
- Tribal and Federal Lands are Linked
USA – Tribal Forestry is Community Forestry

Forest Management Regulations

- Opportunities for Sustainable Communities
- Multiple benefits – Timber, traditional use, water, wildlife, jobs…

25 USC Chapter 33 Section 3104 (b) Management of Indian Forest Land
General Research Questions

• How do people in different indigenous communities perceive sustainable forest management?
• What benefits do these communities attribute to forest management?
• How has the environment/forest shaped peoples perceptions of forest management?
• Were there any important historical events that the communities perceive as important for forest management?
Research Methods

Environmental History/Qualitative Mixed Methods – Menominee

- Individual and group interviews and community perceptions of sustainability
- Community documents – management plans, meeting notes, etc…
- Historical Documents – Congressional record, eye-witness testimonies, GLO records, etc…

Historical research methods – Narrative is “the chief literary form that tries to find meaning in an overwhelmingly crowded and distorted chronological reality.”

Data: Interviews

• Menominee 2011
  – 21 interviews, 546 pages of transcripts, 58 minute average.
  – Read each three times, Nvivo to code and track interview themes.
    • Benefits, goals, and definitions of forest management
    • Factors & events affecting forest management
    • Mentions of the clear cutting controversy
    • Menominee values & Menominee sovereignty
Data: Historical Documents

Menominee 2010 – 886 pages from State Historical Society of Wisconsin in Madison, and Green Bay

- Jay P. Kinney papers (mainly 1910-1933)
- Miscellaneous items regarding territorial matters (1841);
- Menominee Tribal Council Notes (1866, 1941-1942, and 1953-1959); Menominee Tribal Enterprises’ records (1954-1976)
- National Archive’s US Office of Indian Affairs records (1910-1939)
- LexisNexis Congressional Hearings Digital Collection
- General Land Office Records 1845-1854
Menominee Environmental History and Forest Management

Forestry Fostering Community Economics, Land Tenure, and Forest Protection
Menominee Reservation is 235,000 acres and 95% forested.
Sustainable Forest Management
From the time of the 1854 treaty until today, the Menominee have cut timber from their forest.
“Start with the rising sun and work toward the setting sun, but take only the mature trees, the sick trees, and the trees that have fallen. When you reach the end of the reservation, turn and cut from the setting sun to the rising sun and the trees will last forever.”

Chief Oshkosh
Menominee Oral History
GLO Land Cover Estimate (1850s)

Source: Great Lakes Ecological Assessment. Map created by US Forest Service
1914 Planning Map

Timber types represented on this map are based on the logging operations map that was compiled by Earnest J. Brigham in 1914 for the Menominee Indian Mills. The swamps are highly generalized representations of all swamps greater than 300 acres from the current MTE timber stand database (OPINV).
June 12, 1890.

CHAP. 418.—An act to authorize the sale of timber on certain lands reserved for the use of the Menomonee tribe of Indians, in the State of Wisconsin.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Secretary of the Interior is hereby empowered to authorize the agent of the Menomonee tribe of Indians in Wisconsin to employ at a reasonable compensation said Indians to cut all or any portion of the timber on the lands reserved for the use of said Indians in that State into logs and haul the same to the banks of the rivers; and said logs shall be scaled and advertised, and after due notice all or any part thereof sold to the highest bidder or bidders for cash, in such manner and at such time and place as the Secretary of the Interior may direct; no sale to be valid until approved by said Secretary. In case said logs can not be sold where landed on the river at what the Secretary of the Interior considers a reasonable price, he shall cause said logs to be run down the river to market, to be sold in the manner he deems for the best interest of the Indians, employing Indians at all times when in his opinion practicable and for the benefit of the Indians in doing such work; and the Secretary of the Interior may appoint a competent man to superintend these Indians while logging, and fixing the rate of his compensation. The Secretary shall appoint an assistant superintendent, who shall be a practical logger and shall have full charge and direction of such logging operations under the superintendent, and who shall receive such compensation as the Secretary of the Interior shall determine: Provided, That not exceeding twenty millions of feet of timber shall be logged and sold in any one year.
Menominee Indian Mills,
What does forestry mean for Menominee?

Sovereignty & Protecting The Forest

“[Forestry is] almost like a rallying point for sovereignty, I believe, for the Menominee people that we [use it to] protect our forest.”

- Jeff Grignon

“[Sovereignty is] there and you can see it… we have used forest management [to protect our forest] the forest [itself] is that evidence”

– Melissa Cook

Jobs and Income

“Good forest management to me as a Menominee means that [we] have employment at the sawmill, and that the forest is producing enough lumber or timber to keep people employed, but still not stressing the forest.”

- Dale Kakkak
What does forestry mean for Menominee?

Community Wellbeing
“There is an old saying…[the] logging operation is the backbone of the Menominee Tribe…. [It] creat[ed] jobs, which resulted in people being able to take care of their families.” —John Teller

“We had the money we were making off the forest… we provided for ourselves… we built a hospital… we paid the education of our children….” —Dave Grignon

Future Generations
“[Forestry Means] developing the forest in a way that is going to be there for future generations.” —Melissa Cook
150 Years of “Sustained Yield” = Selective Logging

“There are only two ways to get pine forests back into the forest...either through shelter-cuts... or a massive forest fire. Every pine stand on our reservation... date[s]... back to a massive forest fire” - Adrian Miller

My grandmother has told me stories.... Without... being able to use fire since the reservation was established, it’s become more and more closed” - Jeff Grignon
Clearcutting and identity

“Clearcutting was viewed as ugly from back when the pine barons came through here…”
-Gary Besaw

“[An elder tribal member] once told me right out… if you ever see clearcutting, that’s not supposed to be. That’s not Menominee way. We never do that.”
-Dave Napos Turney
"I think there's always gonna be issues about forest management because it's always important to the Menominee people. If there wasn't ever any issues or controversy or dialogue then I would worry because it's [the forest] not important to us."

-Melissa Cook
Conclusions
Menominee SFM

Interviews and Documents Support Arguments:
• Forestry fostered territorial control
• Forestry created economic resources
• Forestry fostered indigenous identity
• National Laws and community implementation critical for forestry success
Implications for Sustainable Indigenous Forest Management

- USA- SFM started with Menominee
- Community perceptions are critical because identity is tied to the land
- Recognize community goals
  - Tenure/protection, economics (wellbeing), identity
- Menominee – Ecological Change and Community perceptions
  - Education, Collaboration, Dialogue, Socio-Ecological Silviculture/TEK
Thanks!

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Questions & Discussion