

Key themes that emerged during the Forest Ecosystems and Management Session

1. Need improved communication strategies to get research into the hands of land managers and decision makers
 - a. The symposium showed us that we have lots of lots of great scientific information that can be put to use managing forests but it is not always clearly communicated to the public. Need emphasis beyond journal articles. The symposium helped with this!
 - b. How do we manage for and communicate the complexity of climate change forecasts? Ex: increasing precipitation but also an increasing likelihood of drought. These are challenging topics but more conversations with scientists and how to interpret forecasts can help.
 - c. How should scientists approach communication? Should they incorporate personal values or focus on scientific information only?
2. Funding sources not matching the needs of forest managers
 - a. Need greater emphasis on research that improves sustainable management outcomes
 - b. Need clear communication plans for getting that information to managers
3. How to approach conservation of managed vs. unmanaged forest stands?
 - a. What are the different approaches to be used and the value of each approach?
 - i. Managed stands allow for silviculture to encourage ecosystems towards specific outcomes.
 - ii. Unmanaged stands are excellent baselines and teach us about resilience in natural systems. But what if we see the unmanaged stands heading towards an undesirable condition?
 - b. How do we balance economic and ecological benefits when making conservation decisions? Can better scientific information help us make those decisions?
 - c. Managers are forced to make decisions with limited information all the time. Scientific information on sustainable management doesn't need to have all the answers. For example, focusing on managing for resilient forests (diverse composition and structure) is a good strategy that provides benefits at many levels.
 - d. Managers appreciate hearing that their efforts are well guided and they are working. This often encourages them to keep trying and build a strong relationship with the land they steward.