Using the Arts to Articulate a Balance between “Wood” and “Woods”

Prepared by:

National Community Forestry Center, Northern Forest Region

A program of:

Yellow Wood Associates
228 North Main Street
St. Albans, VT 05478
802-524-6141
www.yellowwood.org
yellowwood@yellowwood.org

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About the National Community Forestry Center...

The National Community Forestry Center (NCFC) is a decentralized network with four regional centers and a national coordinator. The four regional centers are located in the Southwest, the Appalachians, the Pacific Northwest, and the Northeast. The Northern Forest Regional Center of the NCFC is administered by Yellow Wood Associates, Inc. of St. Albans, Vermont. The Northern Forest Region, our primary area of service, comprises the states of Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont.

The core purpose of the Northern Forest Regional Center is to help rural people conduct and use research to inform decision-making about forest resources. Our goal is to add value to the work of communities, organizations, and institutions in our region who share a vision of healthy communities and healthy forests, now and for future generations.

The work of the Center includes:
- developing partnerships with existing organizations who share our vision
- assisting rural communities in defining research agendas and engaging scientists in participatory research
- conducting targeted research to address region-wide issues and opportunities
- responding to requests by rural people for information and technical assistance related to community forestry
- establishing mechanisms such as listservs, web page, newsletter, and conferences to facilitate information sharing and networking
- publishing fact sheets, reports, and other materials on forest-related topics
- working intensively with up to three communities per year based on priorities established by the Bioregional Advisory Council.

We look forward to engaging you in this unique opportunity to support rural people in creating healthy communities and healthy forests. We would be happy to respond to your inquiries about the Center’s services, or about specific forest topics, and are prepared to assist you in locating forest-related information and resources.

The National Community Forestry Center is a program of the National Network of Forest Practitioners. Network members share an interest in rural community development based upon sustainable forestry, and, even more importantly, a conviction that healthy communities and healthy ecosystems are interdependent.
In our society, there has been an ongoing debate regarding environmental protection between those promoting greater public oversight and protections on environmental issues and those who support private property rights and free-market systems. In Maine, this debate has grown acrimonious over the past decade, with proposals to create publicly protected land. In particular, there were and continue to be many people who derive their income from forestry-related work who felt that these initiatives threatened their livelihoods.

It was within this context that a mill owner in Dover-Foxcroft, Maine offered space to a local artist in a local storefront to display a number of sketches that explored the numerous connections we each have to the forested environment. The subject of the sketches included the history of the region’s forests, examples of forestry practices, and the potential impacts that our consumer choices have on the forested environment. Over the next few months, growing public interest in the ideas and questions presented in this initial exhibit drew together a diverse group of people who suggested that the material should be brought to other audiences, such as schools and libraries. This group was the beginning of the Middle Ground Collaborative.

The Middle Ground Collaborative
The original group searching for a middle ground included the mill owner who initially offered the space for the exhibit, local community members, the artist responsible for the exhibit (Bruce Towl), members of environmental and community organizations, a representative from a library association and an educational institution, forestry association members and others. In its initial meetings in 2001, the collaborative clarified its goal of using the exhibit to encourage an open, honest and respectful exchange regarding the future of forests.

Participatory Research
Through the exhibit, the collaborative sought to not only increase public understanding about the many issues facing the Maine Woods, but also to gather opinions, comments, and suggestions from viewers on the balancing act between the consumption of forest products for material goods (“wood”) and the health and supply of the forest resource itself (“woods”). Using interactive displays, the
Finding Middle Ground - Participatory Research Results

Background and Introduction

The National Community Forestry Center, Northern Forest Region
A program of Yellow Wood Associates, Inc.

exhibit offers a number of opportunities for participants to articulate what they think this balance should look like. In order to develop these components and help guide the group effectively in making progress toward its goals, the group sought the assistance of the National Community Forestry Center, Northern Forest Region (NCFC) in late 2001. The core purpose of the NCFC is to help rural people conduct and use research to inform decision-making about forest resources.

Using Art to Bridge Conflicts

The arts let us perceive things from a different perspective and help us to imagine things that are difficult to put into words. The combination of imagery, music, narrative, poetry, and pre-recorded sound found in this exhibit encourages people to step away from a debate plagued by entrenched viewpoints and polarizing language and experience a personal connection to the underlying issues – in this case, one’s own connection to forests. The arts become a link, illustrating the concerns and aspirations of each side and offering the possibility of yet unimagined resolution. The Finding Middle Ground exhibit helps visitors to stop, think, and reflect on one’s own individual role in this debate, and encourages all of us to find our own “inner middle ground” with respect to consumption and conservation.

Intelligent Consumption

Understanding one’s impact, as a consumer, on the forested environment is an integral theme in the Finding Middle Ground exhibit. The Intelligent Consumption Project, a collaboration between the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters, and the United States Forest Service Forest Products Laboratory, is focused on this very theme. In a 2001 report, the project explored how informed consumer choices can play a role in shaping conservation policy and practice, and ultimately, in shaping the landscape. The authors put forth a five-pronged strategy to encourage intelligent consumption. One of the components of this strategy highlighted the need for public educational initiatives in support of responsible consumption, specifically in the development of “educational materials related to the production, use, and consumption of forest products and other materials; promoting exploration of the environmental consequences of consumption at all educational levels.” Such statements affirm the important role that the work of the Middle Ground Collaborative is playing in increasing public awareness of the impacts of consumption and, ultimately, in affecting forest policy.

Progress

From 2001 to 2004, the Finding Middle Ground exhibit has been displayed at over seven venues in Maine. In selecting venue locations, the Collaborative has sought locations that represent a diverse array of settings and types of events to maximize exposure of the exhibit to visitors from all backgrounds. Some examples of the exhibit venues have included a forestry fair, a business exposition sponsored by the Southern Piscataquis Chamber of Commerce, a historical society museum, and a store front display.

A Collective Vision

One of the goals set by the Collaborative is to compile the research results from these venues, in the form of opinions, stories and suggestions, in order to produce a collective vision of the public’s connection to the forests of Maine, which then will be shared with decision-makers in forest policy. This report is a first attempt at compiling some of these results in order to shed light on both the overall vision for Maine’s woods and commonalities and differences between venue locations.
The major components of the exhibit include:

- **Images of a Changing Landscape** – Drawings, diagrams and photographs that reflect our role in changing the forested landscape over the past 400 years.

- **Blanchard Pine Cookie** – A 48” diameter cross-section of a 300+ year-old eastern white pine. Viewers can learn how trees grow by viewing with their own eyes the concentric growth rings which are used to age the tree. The “cookie” has been outfitted with a timeline that dates significant occurrences in both Maine and other areas of the world, providing perspective on human and forested landscape interaction.

- **A Glance Back** – A collection of drawings that illustrates the early colonists’ and Native Americans’ interactions with the forest.

- **A Place for Opinions** – Viewers can collect their thoughts, consider the exhibit’s themes and implications, and share their suggestions and opinions on the balancing act between wood and woods. This is the main participatory research component which will be the focus of this report.

- **Consumption Sculpture** – A sculpture made from common consumer products that come from wood. This piece is meant to encourage people to consider the range of wood products used every day, which make our lives easier, more efficient, and more enjoyable.

- **Electronic Message Display** – An electronic, scrolling display of words that are intended to complement the various themes of the exhibit.

- **Audio Recording** – A pre-recorded tape that contains the different sounds of the forest – from wildlife sounds to the sound of axes and chainsaws.

- **Consumption Considered** – A display of commonly used household items that are made from forest products. This piece is displayed as a poster and is also available to take home as a handout.
The focus of this report is to present the results of the participatory research components from the various venues. At some venues, however, there was no data from the participatory research components because either (1) these components were not yet developed (i.e. the initial display), (2) there was insufficient space at the exhibit, (3) only a small portion of the exhibit was displayed so there was not enough material at the exhibit to provide visitors with sufficient background to ask for opinions, or (4) the exhibit was presented for demonstration purposes only.

The map below illustrates the different locations to which the exhibit traveled between 2000 and 2004. Locations at which results were gathered are indicated by circles, while venues for which there were no results collected are indicated by squares. A list of venues for each location is also included below.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Location</th>
<th>Venue</th>
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<td>Guilford, ME</td>
<td>Penquis Valley Exposition (2001 &amp; 2002)</td>
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<td>Sangerville, ME</td>
<td>Small Woodland Owners' Association of Maine, Central Highlands Chapter Annual Meeting (2001)</td>
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<td>Augusta, ME</td>
<td>Small Woodland Owners' Association of Maine Statewide Forestry Fair (2001)</td>
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<td>Thomas Point Beach, ME</td>
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<td>Monson, ME</td>
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A Place for Opinions
This piece was one of the main ways through which visitors could express their opinions on the balancing act between “wood” and “woods.” It consists of a scroll of paper three to five feet in length that is spread out horizontally on a table in front of a display, which reads “In a society of consumers who want both wood & woods, but have yet to agree on how much of each; we encourage visitors to use an orange dot showing where you think the balance should be.”

The spectrum is defined by the placards below (see also photo above), with the first on the far left, the second in the middle, and the third on the far right of the scroll. Following the placards is a digital image of a scroll that was used at one of the exhibits.

I favor saving all . . .
Or at least much of the wood lands,
even if it means I pay more for or do without some forest products I’m accustomed to.

I’d like both . . .
understanding that to make both possible, I may have to use less, re-cycle more or find alternatives.

I lean toward a continued availability of the wide-range of goods the woods have supplied . . .
. . . believing the impact of our consumption patterns on the environment is not as harmful as some would have us believe.
Visitors’ Comments
Visitors to the exhibit were also asked to provide feedback on the exhibit itself, including ideas for improvements that could be made, other components to include, and different questions to ask. In addition, viewers were asked to write down specific ways in which they see achieving a balance between our desire for wood and woods.

Compiling and Presenting the Data

The paper scrolls on which visitors placed their dots illustrate, on their own, the range of viewers’ responses on the balancing act between wood and woods. A scaled digital reproduction of each paper scroll has been included for each venue. In addition to these images, we have compiled data from each scroll to show cumulative distributions of responses along the spectrum. This was done by counting the number of sticky dots that were found vertically within a given interval and repeated this process until we had a graphical representation of the scroll. We began by using a small interval in order to closely replicate the distribution found on the original scroll (see example below). After a graphical distribution for each scroll was plotted, we added a heavy line to indicate the approximate centerline.

Next, we divided the scroll into three intervals (see illustration on page 9) in order to generalize about the number of responses that fell within three categories (based on the placard descriptions on page 7): those who favor 1) saving woodlands and reducing consumption, 2) both saving some woodlands and continuing to have a wide range of goods available, or 3) continued availability of a wide range of goods.
For two venues, the grouping of data in the three categories shown above was not possible. In these cases (Bethel and Monson), an additional placard was presented in addition to the three described above, which made it appropriate to divide the responses into four categories, instead of three.

In addition to the Place for Opinions, results were compiled for other exhibit components; however, data from these components was not consistently measured and only provided a window of insight into other aspects of visitors’ opinions or behaviors. These results were included where available.

At some venues, visitor comments were captured by observers who volunteered at the exhibit. These comments are interspersed throughout the report (they appear as double-bordered text boxes).

The results are presented in three sections below: (1) 2001 Results, (2) 2002 Results, and (3) Summary.
Event: Penquis Valley Exposition 2001  
Location: Guilford, Maine  
Date: April 4 & 5, 2001

Venue and Event Description
Guilford is a small mill town in the central Maine interior. The Penquis Valley Region Exposition is an annual event sponsored by the Penquis Valley Chamber of Commerce that promotes local businesses and educates the public about local history. The trade show is a chance for neighbors recovering from five months of cabin fever to get out and mingle, eat concessionaire’s foods, and pick up the free promotional gifts at various display booths. A $2-$4 entrance fee was charged.

Exhibit Components
- Images of a Changing Landscape
- Tree Cookie (on loan from the local Soil and Water Conservation District)
- A Place for Opinions

‘A Place for Opinions’ Research Results: There were a total of 47 responses recorded at this venue. As is evident from the images and graphs below, there appeared to be a fairly equal distribution of dots across the entire spectrum. At most venues, including this one, the highest proportion of response fell within the middle third of the spectrum (43%). In comparison to other venues, however, there was a greater percentage (36%) of responses in the category three (continued availability of a wide range of goods) than category one (saving woodlands and reducing consumption).
Feedback on Exhibit: As this event was one of the first major debuts for the exhibit, the Collaborative decided to include a place for visitors to give feedback on whether or not the exhibit was well-balanced in its presentation of the importance of “wood” and “woods”. As is evident from the photos to the right, all those who responded felt that the exhibit portrayed a “fair-telling” of each. This feedback gave the Collaborative affirmation that they had done a good job and gave them the “green light” to continue their work.

Observers’ Comments on the Exhibit
Observers at the exhibit noted that, for the first exhibit, people were hesitant to put down opinions at either the Place for Opinions or as written comments. One observer suggested that the reason for this hesitancy was that the exhibit was not a private space for many to feel comfortable recording their opinions.

“I’m looking at the [continuum] – I’m putting my dot at the private end because it’s my land. I should be able to do what I want.” After a pause, “You know, I am probably way down by the ‘private’ [end] as a reaction to the other end.”

-- Exhibit visitor at Penquis Expo 2001

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1) Favor saving woodlands and reducing consumption, even if it means I pay more for or do without some forest products I’m accustomed too.
2) Favor both saving some woodlands and continuing to have a wide range of goods available, even if it means I may have to use less, re-cycle more or find alternatives.
3) Favor continued availability of a wide range of goods, believing that the impact of our consumption patterns on the environment is not as harmful as some would have us believe.
Event: Small Woodland Owners’ Association of Maine (SWOAM), Central Highlands Chapter Annual Meeting
Location: Sangerville, Maine
Date: April 27, 2001

Venue and Event Description
Sangerville is a small, rural agricultural community of dairy farms, woodlots and seed potato farms located in the rolling foothills of southern Piscataquis County, Maine. The SWOAM meeting was held at the East Sangerville Grange, and was an opportunity for chapter members to socialize, elect officers and hear speakers address topics of concern for small woodlot owners in the region. The Middle Ground Exhibit was requested by a SWOAM member as a silent interactive presence.

Exhibit Components
- Images of a Changing Landscape
- A Glance Back
- Consumption Sculpture
- A Place for Opinions

‘A Place for Opinions’ Research Results: There were a total of 17 responses recorded at this venue. As is evident from the images and graphs below, there was a higher proportion of responses on the left side of the spectrum than the right. This was the only venue for which there were no responses recorded in category three (see page 13).
1) Favor saving woodlands and reducing consumption, even if it means I pay more for or do without some forest products I’m accustomed too.
2) Favor both saving some woodlands and continuing to have a wide range of goods available, even if it means I may have to use less, re-cycle more or find alternatives.
3) Favor continued availability of a wide range of goods, believing that the impact of our consumption patterns on the environment is not as harmful as some would have us believe.
Event: Small Woodland Owners’ Association of Maine Statewide Forestry Fair
Location: Augusta, Maine
Date: September 8, 2001

Venue and Event Description
In 2001, SWOAM’s annual forestry festival was held in Augusta’s arboretum and featured festival tents in an outdoor setting. The Finding Middle Ground exhibit was housed in the arboretum library. Built along both banks of the Kennebec River, Augusta is the capitol of Maine and is home to legislators, lobbyists and lawyers. The Pine State Arboretum provides the public access to a range of native trees, shrubs and flowering plants, conducts educational tours and classes, and houses SWOAM state offices and Project Learning Tree.

Exhibit Components
- Blanchard Pine Cookie
- A Place for Opinions
- A guide to the Finding Middle Ground Exhibit
- Images of a Changing Landscape

‘A Place for Opinions’ Research Results: There were a total of 29 responses recorded at this venue. Out of these responses, there was significant clustering in the middle of the spectrum, as can be seen in all three images.
1) Favor saving woodlands and reducing consumption, even if it means I pay more for or do without some forest products I'm accustomed too.

2) Favor both saving some woodlands and continuing to have a wide range of goods available, even if it means I may have to use less, re-cycle more or find alternatives.

3) Favor continued availability of a wide range of goods, believing that the impact of our consumption patterns on the environment is not as harmful as some would have us believe.
Event: Penquis Valley Exposition 2002  
Location: Guilford, Maine  
Date: April 4 & 5, 2002

Venue and Event Description
This was the exhibit’s second appearance at the Penquis Valley Exposition (see 2001 Results for a venue and event description). Observers at the exhibit noted that visitors consisted of mostly older couples. In addition, there were a number of families with young children, a few teenagers, and several single adults. A $2-$4 entrance fee was charged.

Exhibit Components
- Electronic message display (3)
- Blanchard Pine Cookie
- Images of a Changing Landscape
- A Place for Opinions  
  Where do you live, work, and recreate?

Participatory Research Component
Research Results - Where do you live, work, and recreate?: Viewers were encouraged to indicate with a sticky dot where they live, work and recreate. The photos and graphs below summarize their responses. This exhibit component was not included in future exhibits because of space limitations.

My work is primarily ...

- adding value to what comes from the woods. 3%
- providing supporting services. 48%
- with the growth, harvesting or management of different woodland resources 2%
‘A Place for Opinions’ Research Results: There were a total of 84 responses recorded at this venue. In comparison to other venues, many of the responses were clustered in distinct groups: to the far left, on either side of the middle, and on the far right. Of note was the cluster of 20 responses on the far right. At most other venues, the number of responses on the far right was less than the number on the far left; however, here the trend was reversed.

“It’s by Restore…”
(on seeing image of the tree-hugger at left end of the spectrum)
--- elderly woman

“No, wait … It’s more balanced than that.”
--- elderly woman’s companion

Note: For the 2002 exhibits, detailed venue reports were prepared by volunteers. As a result, there are more comments and descriptions of each venue as compared to the 2001 reports.
1) Favor saving woodlands and reducing consumption, even if it means I pay more for or do without some forest products I’m accustomed too.

2) Favor both saving some woodlands and continuing to have a wide range of goods available, even if it means I may have to use less, re-cycle more or find alternatives.

3) Favor continued availability of a wide range of goods, believing that the impact of our consumption patterns on the environment is not as harmful as some would have us believe.
Event: The Maine Festival
Location: Thomas Point Beach, Maine
Date: August 2, 2002

Venue and Event Description
The Maine Festival is Maine’s celebration of the arts. The festival features a variety of different forms of art, including performing art and mixed-media. Thomas Point Beach is a recreational, multi-use area near Brunswick, Maine that attracts visitors for a variety of functions, primarily throughout the summer, including music festivals, car shows, and a number of arts events. The exhibit was housed in a tent near the festival entrance, which provided good access for visitors. A $12.00 entrance fee was charged.

Observations
Festival-goers were described as “a tanned, tee shirt and short-wearing crowd” for the most part. There was a range of ages present, from grandparents to toddlers. It was observed that adults or people pointing things out to children seemed to pay the most attention to the exhibit. Although the images received considerable study, the tree cookie and the place for opinions were the most popular aspects. Most visitor’s comments were quite brief, in contrast to other venues such as the Penquis Expo. It is presumed that this was because the people at this festival were not as closely connected to wood and woods (fewer people whose economic well-being depends directly on the forest).

(Viewing the enlarged consumption considered display)
“This is a reminder of what we use…and become accustomed to…”
--- woman

Exhibit Components Displayed
- Blanchard Pine Cookie
- Consumption Sculpture
- Consumption Considered Display
- Images of a Changing Landscape
- Electronic message display
- A Place for Opinions

“I worked yarding logs one winter in New Hampshire. [The guy I was working for] cut down a pine more than six feet in diameter and had a picture taken of him holding a measuring stick against it. It was too big to load on the sled, so it was left. Don’t know why they cut it.

--- former logger (75-80 years old)

‘A Place for Opinions’ Research Results: There were a total of 111 responses recorded at this venue. Interestingly, the total number of responses in the first category (the left third) outnumbered responses in both other categories. At previous venues, the middle third has had significantly more responses than either of the other two categories. Out of the 111 responses, only 16 were in category three.
Some opinions are hard on the heart…
One respondent chose to tear their dot in half and place it in two different areas of the spectrum.

4) Favor saving woodlands and reducing consumption, even if it means I pay more for or do without some forest products I’m accustomed too.
5) Favor both saving some woodlands and continuing to have a wide range of goods available, even if it means I may have to use less, re-cycle more or find alternatives.
6) Favor continued availability of a wide range of goods, believing that the impact of our consumption patterns on the environment is not as harmful as some would have us believe.
**Event: The National Folk Festival**  
**Location: Bangor, Maine**  
**Date: August 24 & 25, 2002**

**Venue and Event Description**  
First presented in 1934, the National Folk Festival is the oldest multi-cultural, traditional arts celebration in the nation. This traveling festival has been held in 27 communities around the country. Musicians and craftspeople from every state in the nation and most U.S. territories have participated in this "moveable feast of deeply traditional folk arts" which is now attracting the largest audiences in its history. Despite not being included in the program because of a last minute invitation, the Middle Ground Collaborative was anxious to bring the exhibit to this venue because it offered a unique opportunity to collect opinions in an urban setting. The festival was held in Riverside Park Bangor, next to the Penobscot River, and is a downtown urban setting within walking distance for many residents. This event was free.

**General Observations**  
Visitors included elders, families, couples, young adults and groups of teenagers. Observers noted that, judging only by appearances, visitors seemed to represent a range of educational backgrounds, income levels, and interests. The most popular components of the exhibit were the tree cookie and the place for opinions.

**‘A Place for Opinions’ Research Results:** There were a total of 640 responses recorded over two days at this venue. In general, there was a relatively even distribution of dots on the left side of the spectrum, while on the right side, dots were concentrated near the middle, with fewer dots at the extreme end. Responses from both Saturday and Sunday were combined to generate the graphs on the next page.

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**Message written on a dot using a pencil**

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**“Growing up in an urban environment, there is no connection to where things come from..”**  
--- male, late 50’s

**“Should use the corridor along I-95 as a demonstration woodlot to let people see different management and harvesting practices. Rest areas can have explanations and maps…”**  
--- a suggestion from a sawmill owner who visited exhibit

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*A mother and daughter at the “Place for Opinions”*
1) Favor saving woodlands and reducing consumption, even if it means I pay more for or do without some forest products I’m accustomed too.

2) Favor both saving some woodlands and continuing to have a wide range of goods available, even if it means I may have to use less, re-cycle more or find alternatives.

3) Favor continued availability of a wide range of goods, believing that the impact of our consumption patterns on the environment is not as harmful as some would have us believe.
Event: The Bethel Historical Society  
Location: Bethel, Maine  
Date: July 1, 2003 - May 29, 2004

Venue and Event Description
The Bethel Historical Society's museum and library collections include a wide range of materials documenting the heritage of northern New England, with major concentrations devoted to the history of western Maine and the White Mountains. The Finding Middle Ground exhibit expanded the range of materials displayed to include in-depth considerations of the ‘full cost’ associated with our consumption of forest products and the forest as a recreational destination.

General Observations
There was a wide range of visitors to the exhibit on account of its extended presence at the Historical Society. Visitors included elders, families, couples, and young adults. In addition, the exhibit served as a context for workshops, classes, and discussions about the role of the forest environment, including a three-session course entitled “Wood and Woods: Lumbering and the Landscape in Northern New Hampshire and Western Maine.” This course explored the logging heritage of the region, featured presentations by forest professionals, and concluded with a panel discussion with representatives of RESTORE the North Woods, the Northern Forest Center, a forester working for privately owned small woodlot owners, and a landowner.

Two facilitated tours were also arranged for the Annual Gathering of the National Wildlife Federation. Exhibit materials were used as reference for classes on Contemporary Forest Issues. At the request of the Northern Forest Center the exhibit remained open to accommodate attendees at the 2nd Promise of Place Convention hosted by the NFC & Shelburne Historical Museum of Shelburne, Vermont. The exhibit at this venue was essentially a self-guiding experience for the majority of visitors, with the exception of the tours and classes previously mentioned.

‘A Place for Opinions’ Research Results: There were a total of 169 responses recorded during the exhibit’s tenure at the Historical Society. At this venue, an additional placard was placed along the spectrum, producing the following range of opinions. These four categories correspond to clusters of responses that were collected during the exhibit.

“The discussion must continue – with consideration of both economics & heritage, more images & words (since ‘we’ are a visual species requiring repetition & almost constant reminding). Education is the Key.”

-- A comment from the logbook in Bethel Historical Society
I favor saving all . . .
Or at least much of
the woodlands,
even if it means
I pay more for or
do without some
forest products I’m
accustomed to.

I’m prepared to pay
more for the wood
goods I consume,
provided the increase
fairly compensates
those involved in the
growth, processing and
sales of quality forest
products.

I’d like both . . .
understanding that to
make both possible,
I may have to use less,
recycle more or
find alternatives.

I lean toward a
continued availability of
the wide range of goods
the woods have supplied
. . . believing the impact
of our consumption
patterns on the
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1) Favor saving woodlands and reducing consumption, even if it means I pay more for or do
   without some forest products I’m accustomed to.
2) Favor both saving some woodlands and continuing to have a wide range of goods available,
   even if it means I may have to use less, re-cycle more or find alternatives.
3) Favor continued availability of a wide range of goods, believing that the impact of our
   consumption patterns on the environment is not as harmful as some would have us believe.
Event: Monson Store Window  
Location: Monson, Maine  
Date: September 27 – November 8, 2003

Venue and Event Description
In Monson, a limited version of the exhibit was placed in a storefront display. The display included a poster, some drawings, and, due to limited space, a simplified “Place for Opinions.” Monson, Maine is a very small village, formerly world famous for its slate quarries and now home to a hardwood furniture company employing 250 people, dependent on a continued supply of quality maple. The village is on the way from Maine’s coastal attractions to the tourist destination of Moosehead Lake. Efforts are underway to help Monson become a cultural stopping point and a regional arts center. The opening of the exhibit was planned to coincide with the Monson Annual Fall Festival, Harvest Days.

General Observations
In collaboration with the Monson Recreational Committee, a children’s workshop was held that explored young peoples’ connection to the surrounding woodlands. Visitors who expressed interest in the exhibit were sent a photograph and information on the main exhibit in Bethel.

“People around here aren’t used to having their opinions asked.”
-- a Monson sawmill owner
‘A Place for Opinions’ Research Results: Due to limited space, pencil and paper forms were used to obtain viewers’ opinions on the balance between consumption and conservation. Visitors were asked to select one of four statements which most closely represent their opinions.

Similar to the dots that were placed on the scroll, some respondents chose to indicate their opinions by selecting a position that fell between two letters. The following graph summarizes the responses.

![Graph showing responses between letters A, B, C, and D]
Graphical Distribution of Results (Combined)
Once all of the results from the individual venues were plotted, we were able to then combine data from venues into a single graph that illustrates the individual contribution of each venue to the total number of responses for the “Place for Opinions.” However, due to differences in the length of the scrolls from 2001 and 2002 venues, the totals from each year had to be reported separately. In addition, results from the Bethel exhibit were reported separately because the length of the scroll was not consistent with the other 2002 results.

**2001 Results**

![2001 Results Graph]

**2002 Results**

![2002 Results Graph]
Categorical Distribution of Results (Cumulative)

The charts for individual venues which illustrate the distribution of responses in categories could be combined for all venues from 2001 and 2002, except two, because the divisions of the scroll were proportionally equivalent to one another (each scroll was divided into thirds). The results from the Bethel and Monson venues are included in a separate chart, because four display placards were used, which made it appropriate to divide the responses into four categories, instead of three. The cumulative results are shown in the charts below.
Conclusion
The responses collected from the seven exhibits included in this report illustrate the range of views from exhibit visitors on the appropriate balance between “wood” and “woods.” The purpose of this report is to present and compile these responses in various ways to better understand the collective vision for the Maine woods. It may be tempting to analyze this data using mathematical formulas or by drawing conclusions about the type of venue and the range of responses; however, analysis of this type is beyond the scope of this report. In general, it is important to exercise caution when doing such analyses, because gross generalizations can obfuscate the nuances of the raw data and can even misrepresent the findings. For example, if one were to average all of the responses for all venues, the result would be a single value most probably near the midpoint. Using this number, however, would tell you nothing about the relative distribution of the individual responses across the entire spectrum.

With these issues in mind, we believe it is possible to glean some insights that are evident from representing the data in the different ways contained in this report. For these purposes, the 2001-2002 categorical distribution of results (page 28) is one of the most useful charts in this report because it includes all but two venues. From this data, the following preliminary conclusions can be drawn:

1) Exactly half of all respondents (50%) favor saving some woodlands and continuing to have a wide range of goods available even though they may have to use less, recycle more or find alternatives.

2) By almost a two-to-one margin (33% to 17%), the remaining respondents are more in favor of saving much of the woodlands, even if means paying more for or doing without some forest products to which they are accustomed.
Understandably, if the data from the Bethel and Monson exhibits could be combined with the above data, these figures would change slightly; however, at first glance, it seems that the trends described above are applicable here, too.

We hope that these conclusions and the different representations of the raw data in this report will serve the greater purpose of the Collaborative as it seeks to elicit and help articulate the public’s connection to the Maine woods. Certainly, the data collected so far represents a significant stride in this direction.

“If collecting and compiling viewer responses from a wide and diverse audience, the results will give voice to how Mainers see their forests, which then can be brought before those deliberating forestry issues to offer a broad civic background for public policy decision."

-- from Finding Middle Ground exhibit materials

If you are interested in more information or would like to consider hosting this exhibit, please contact Bruce Towl at 207-564-7516 or by email at tchand@copper.net