



12-2003

Understanding the experience of non-participant private forest landowners : a phenomenological investigation

Miriam L.E. Steiner

Follow this and additional works at: https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_gradthes

Recommended Citation

Steiner, Miriam L.E., "Understanding the experience of non-participant private forest landowners : a phenomenological investigation. " Master's Thesis, University of Tennessee, 2003.
https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_gradthes/6514

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at TRACE: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses by an authorized administrator of TRACE: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. For more information, please contact trace@utk.edu.

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Miriam L.E. Steiner entitled "Understanding the experience of non-participant private forest landowners : a phenomenological investigation." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Forestry.

J. Mark Fly, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

David Ostermeier, John Peters

Accepted for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

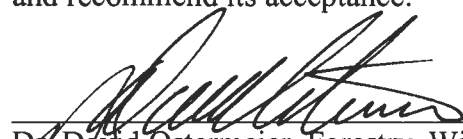
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Miriam L. E. Steiner entitled "Understanding the Experience of Non-participant Private Forest Landowners: A Phenomenological Investigation." I have examined the final paper copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Forestry.



Dr. J. Mark Fly, Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:




Dr. David Ostermeier, Forestry, Wildlife,
and Fisheries



Dr. John Peters, Educational Psychology

Accepted for the Council:



Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

**Understanding the Experience of
Non-participant Private Forest Landowners:
A Phenomenological Investigation**

A Thesis Presented for the
Master of Science Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Miriam L. E. Steiner
December 2003

AG-VET-MED.

Thesis
2003
.579

Copyright © 2003 by Miriam L. E. Steiner

All rights reserved.

Acknowledgements

Although academically this work is the sole creative effort of the author, as in postmodernism this author is not the sole creator of this academic work. Accordingly, there are numerous others to thank, and that thanks extends into a boundless space of collegial and social interactions all serving to bring me and my research to this point. These individuals help shape my thinking and frame my questions. With them I process my evolving thoughts, form new ones, question those, and begin again. Without them this work would have been flat and boring for me and the reader, and of far less value than I believe it is to the greater research community, the praxis of natural resource management, and the greater community of private forest landowners.

Thanks are due to the Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems for providing funding for the Sustaining Private Forests in Tennessee project of which this research is a part. I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. J. Mark Fly, for allowing me tremendous freedom in my research pursuits, and for supporting and defending my various wanderings. Admittedly, at times I felt a bit lost, but I would not trade that for a dictated research and thought process for anything. For me, that freedom put no bounds on my learning and formulating of thoughts and questions, allowing me to learn and experience more than I had ever imagined I might. For the research, it allowed me to pursue my questions with what I felt were the best and most well suited methods regardless of where they came from or how new they may have been to our field.

Dr. David Ostermeier provided continual personal, professional, and academic mentoring throughout the process. Without his steady guidance and his solid and boundless confidence in my abilities I would have faltered and floundered far more often than I did. Dr. John Peters willingly took on my project, welcomed me into a collegial atmosphere of learners in which I thrived, and shepherded me along with constant encouragement and confidence.

The University of Tennessee Center for Applied Phenomenological Research was invaluable. Dr. Howard Pollio introduced me to the study and application of phenomenology, an introduction that continues and has been personally and professionally transforming. For his countless hours working with me on this project without any direct responsibility or requirement to do so I am tremendously thankful. I am also grateful to Dr. Sandra Thomas for key pointers on phenomenological research methods, and to the many members of the UT Nursing College's Phenomenology Research Group for their commitment to my project and their assistance in the interpretation of the data and results. Interpretation also could not have occurred without Simon Walls to whom I am very grateful.

My office mates, research partners, and friends Allyson Muth, Jamey Pavey, and Leslie Horner are an invaluable asset and resource to me in many many ways. I am extremely thankful for their friendship, support, and camaraderie and for their assistance in various aspects of my research process, especially in simply listening and providing feedback as I process my thoughts. Allyson also deserves special recognition for last minute assistance helping me to identify the themes.

Richard Davis deserves the heroes' award for his countless acts of humanitarian kindness and academic aid during this process. He makes the difficult times better, and the good times great. His support both personally and professionally is boundless, constant, and assured. Thank you.

I feel blessed and grateful to work with such a fabulous set of colleagues and friends. Above all, their collective sense of humor, and our ability to laugh together has been a tremendous joy. And lastly, I want to extend a heartfelt and sincere thank you to the private forest landowners who welcomed me into their homes and shared their stories with me. These men and women entrusted me with tremendous confidence, and I can only hope that in this work I have done them the full justice they deserve.

Abstract

Private forest land accounts for approximately 90% of southern forestland and approximately 58% of forested land nation wide (Best and Wayburn 2001, Egan and Jones 1993). Due to several inter-related and compounding reasons ranging from increased interest from the forest products industry to increased societal value placed on non-commodity forest resources, the social and biological landscape of private forests is changing rapidly and experiencing increased, diverse, and novel pressures.

The majority of past private forest landowner (PFL) studies have used quantitative survey techniques to characterize landowners and ownership patterns, ascertain landowners' management objectives, and prioritize forest values. Available qualitative studies also focus on landowners' management motivations and interests. Findings from these studies indicate that the majority of private forestland is not actively managed and, when comparing numbers of individuals owning forestland to PFL participation rates in education and assistance programs, the majority of PFL's can be classified as non-participant private forest landowners.

Consequently, some authors contend that natural resource professionals (NRP's) do not adequately understand PFL's, and have called for new approaches and new perspectives in research and program development. Phenomenology, a combined philosophy and research discipline, is an appropriate methodological choice to address these needs. Phenomenology emphasizes the first person perspective and attempts to describe how individuals experience phenomena and the meaning of those experiences.

It is particularly useful in any field in which a “professional consultant seeks to discover the wishes and needs of a client” (Pollio, Henley, and Thompson 1997).

The purpose of this phenomenological investigation is to describe how non-participant PFL’s experience their forestland in order to inform the practice of NRP’s working with private forest landowners. Seven study participants were asked to describe experiences on their forestland that stand out to them. A thematic description of the experience was developed to address the meaning of the experience. Six intricately related themes descriptive of non-participant PFL’s experience of their land were revealed: Connection, Continuity, Power and Awe, Peacefulness and Trouble, Values, and Freedom/Control/Constraint. Additional findings indicate that although non-participant PFL’s may be more involved in land management activities, such as removing diseased trees and changing drainage patterns, than previously thought, they do not identify as land managers nor find traditionally defined management related terms and concepts to be meaningful aspects of their experiences of their land. Furthermore, similarities between the thematic descriptions of how non-participant private forest landowners experience their land and the internal management motivations identified by Bliss and Martin (1988, 1989) for very active landowners indicate that categorizing PFL’s based on activity levels and participation rates may be less directly related to motivations and interests than previously realized.

Table of Contents

Chapter	Page
1. Background and Introduction	1
I. Background	1
II. Introduction	4
III. Topic Statement, Objectives, and Summary of Proposed Research	6
IV. Research Purpose	7
2. Literature Review	8
I. Introduction	8
II. Research on Private Forest Landowners	9
III. Private Forest Landowner ↔ Natural Resource Professional Interaction	16
IV. Perspectives on the Human Experience and Meaning of Land	19
3. Methodology	27
I. Introduction	27
II. Qualitative Research	27
III. Phenomenology	30
Introduction and Overview	30
Philosophical Aspects of Phenomenology	32
Phenomenological Research Methods	37
IV. Research Methods	45
Study Site	45
Study Participants	47
Bracketing Interview	49
Data Collection	51
Data Analysis	52
Assessing Validity	52
4. Findings	54
I. Introduction	54
II. Characteristics of Study Participants	56
III. Thematic Analysis	59
Theme One: Connection	59
Theme Two: Continuity	66
Theme Three: Power and Awe	69
Theme Four: Peacefulness and Frustration	70
Theme Five: Value	72
Theme Six: Freedom and Constraint/Control	74
IV. Other Findings	75

5. Discussion	78
I. Introduction	78
II. Discussion	79
Thematic Analysis	79
Inter-relationship of Themes	85
Characteristics of Study Participants	87
Language/Activities	87
III. Implications of Study Findings for Practice and Research	89
Benefits of Phenomenology	90
Inclusion of Non-participant Private Forest Landowners	92
Landowner Categorization	93
Comments on Natural Resource Professional Practice Relative to PFL's	97
Literature Cited	102
Appendices	107
Appendix 1 - Telephone Screening Survey to Identify Non-participant Private Forest Landowners	108
Appendix 2 – IRB Form A	123
Appendix 3 - Categorization of Non-participant PFL's via Phone Survey Variables	128
Appendix 4 – IRB Form B	130
Vita	145

Chapter 1: Background and Introduction

I. Background

Private forestland and the landowners that control it are important to the sustainability of forestland in the United States. Many attempts have been made to quantify and qualify the interests and values of a group of forest landowners commonly known as non-industrial private forest landowners (NIPF). Definitions of non-industrial private forestland and landowners vary, but basically agree that the land is privately owned (this may include incorporated bodies such as family partnerships), and excludes forest industry ownerships and leases. Non-industrial private forest landowners are also considered individuals owning forested land, but not owning, or operating on the forestland property any wood processing facilities (Best and Wayburn 2001; Finley and Jacobson 2001; Schweitzer 2000). Following Finley et. al. (2001), in the present study, these landowners are referred to as private forest landowners (PFL's) except where specific studies using other terms are referenced.

Private forest lands account for a significant proportion of forested land regionally and nationally. Egan and Jones (1993) report that 58% of the forestland nationwide is controlled by 16 million PFL's (see also Best and Wayburn 2001). With 130 million acres, southern U.S. forests are the most extensive. Close to 90% of southern forestland is privately owned, predominantly by private forest landowners (Best and Wayburn 2001). In Tennessee, the Agricultural Extension Service reports 400,000 PFL's owning over 82% of the state's 10.5 million forested acres (University of Tennessee 2003).

For a variety of inter-related reasons ranging from increased interest from the forest products industry to increased societal value placed on non-commodity forest resources, the role of private forestland and private forest landowners in sustaining forest resources is now more important than ever (Argow 1996; Best and Wayburn 2001; Cordell and Tarrant 2002; Finley and Jacobson 2001; Holmes 2002; Wear and Gries 2003). As the region with the second greatest proportion of forestland to total land (59.7%) in the US, these trends are especially pronounced in the Southeast (Best and Wayburn 2001). First, timber harvested from private (non-industrial) forestland provides approximately 47 – 60% of the timber supply in the US (Best and Wayburn 2001). Second, the forest products industry is increasingly divesting from areas such as the Pacific Northwest, and increasingly looking towards the South for forest product and market opportunities (Henry and Bliss 1994). In recent years, public policies decreasing the amount of timber that can be harvested on public land (found primarily in the West), and new technologies increasing the size range and types of trees profitable for use in timber products have continued this trend (Wear and Gries 2003). Third, there is a well-documented increase in recognition and concern for non-commodity forest values such as recreation, open space, aesthetics, environmental services, and others (for example Argow 1996; Bliss and Martin 1989; Brunson et al. 1996; Campbell and Kittredge 1996; Cordell et al. 1998; Egan and Jones 1993). Fourth, over the past few decades there has been an increasing nationwide trend in forest parcelization, the concomitant increase in the number of PFL's and decrease in the average size of ownership parcels (Cordell et al. 1998; Mehmood and Zhang 2001).

Given these complex issues, many attempts have been made to quantify and qualify the interests and values of PFL's. Most prior research has focused on collecting descriptive statistics concerning landowners and ownership patterns, ascertaining management objectives based on proscriptive choices, and prioritizing the values placed on various commercial and non-commercial forest commodities via mail and telephone surveys (Bliss and Martin 1989; Finley et al. 2001; Graham Jr. 1999; Kuhns, Brunson, and Roberts 1998; Snyder and Broderick 1992). Some research has employed qualitative techniques such as interviews and focus groups to examine management motivations. These techniques have provided new information as well as context and perspective to data previously gathered (Bliss and Martin 1988; Bliss and Martin 1989; Kingsley, Brock, and DeBald 1988; Mater 2001). Data from these studies yield almost universal reports that non-commodity forest values such as view-sheds, family connections, recreation, and forest protection are among PFL's primary interests. The data also reveal that most private forestland is not under active management as traditionally defined, and the vast majority of PFL's are not generally aware of sustainable land management practices and the availability of assistance programs (educational and monetary) pertaining to these practices (Argow 1996; English et al. 1997; Finley and Jacobson 2001). These results suggest a need for new perspectives and new approaches concerning how natural resource professionals (NRP's) reach out to and interact with PFL's, and how researchers approach and study private forest landowners and issues.

Kathy J. Parker (1992) is one scientist who has been thinking about these needs, and new perspectives, and how to bring them about. Quoting Bertrand Russell, Parker (1992) calls for natural resource professionals around the world to reflect on the human

dimensions of natural resource management by “hanging question marks on our professions” in terms of examining “the things you have long taken for granted.” She suggests we expand our concept of who constitutes the world’s natural resource managers to include farmers, fishers, and herders. She notes that these people are not always making the best resource management decisions, but they are daily making such decisions, and natural resource professionals must understand their biophysical, socio-economic, and cultural realities before they can respond to today’s challenges (Parker 1992).

Insight into how our beliefs have shaped our thinking and action in the past can help us identify the obstacles we face in changing the ideas that no longer work and how existing ideas that do work might be the base on which to build new understanding and new modes of action (Parker 1992).

She points out the complexity of forestry today noting while forests are biophysical entities, forestry is a human endeavor replete with social meaning. To view forests and forestry this way, and to more fully incorporate the human dimensions of natural resource management into our work, is to recognize that new questions need to be asked, and most importantly that how we ask them affects what we will learn.

II. Introduction

This study, focusing on private forestland and landowners, attempts to address the concerns and issues expressed by Parker (1992) and others, employ new approaches, and come to new understandings concerning the human dimensions of natural resource management. In the summer of 2001 two seemingly unrelated events came together to provide a way forward toward these goals. First, the Forestry and Natural Resource

Departments at the University of Tennessee, the University of Missouri, and Purdue University were awarded a multi-year interdisciplinary grant to study the sustainability of private forestlands in the Central Hardwoods region through the Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems (IFAFS). The Human Dimensions and Collaborative, Planning, and Policy (HDCPP) target areas of this study had a strong desire to use a “trickle up” approach which, unlike most previous research efforts, would assume virtually nothing about private forest landowners and their interests, motivations, objectives, desires, etc. and focus first and foremost on listening and forming relationships with landowners for co-education, co-research, and co-participation. The goal was to gather information that may not have been gathered in previous efforts using traditional approaches, and to learn new ways of working with forest landowners based on what forest landowners had to say about their experiences with their land. Second, Allyson Muth, a student working on the IFAFS project via her doctoral work in the Department of Educational Psychology’s Collaborative Learning program, became familiar with multiple research methodologies used in the Adult Education and Collaborative Learning fields and which seemed well suited to the goals of the project. Specifically, she learned about the three main modes of collaborative learning, dialogue, cycles of action and reflection within research, and phenomenology. By bringing these ideas to the project, the methodologies to be used by the HDCPP target areas emerged.

University of Tennessee project team members then decided to focus the initial Human Dimensions target area work specifically on non-participant private forest landowners. Non-participant private forest landowners are generally defined as landowners who are under-involved in forest management as well as under-represented in

landowner assistance and education programs (see Research Methods for a more specific definition). Based on PFL participation rates in education and assistance programs, compared to numbers of individuals owning forestland, and anecdotal evidence from field professionals, it has long been known that these landowners represent the majority of PFL's, rather than those taking part in field days, forest stewardship programs, and related efforts. Forestry professionals have been frustrated in their attempts to reach this group, understand their interests, and engage them in sustainable forestry activities. Furthermore, forestry professionals have long known landowner objectives should guide management decisions and suggestions, and have long sought to understand them. This suggests a need for foresters to understand the first person perspective of their clients. Existential phenomenological thought and research methods are among the best approaches for achieving this needed perspective (Thomas and Pollio 2002).

III. Topic Statement, Objectives, and Summary of Proposed Research

This paper summarizes a qualitative research effort approached from a constructionist epistemological stance using the phenomenological tradition of inquiry to address the meaning of non-participant private forest landowners' experience of their forestland. Non-participant private forest landowners are generally defined as landowners who are under-involved in forest management as well as under-represented in landowner assistance and education programs (see Research Methods for a more specific definition). The research objective is to describe how non-participant private forest landowners experience their forestland. A thematic description of the experience is developed and used to address the meaning of the experience for the study participants.

Results of the study will be used to address the following two research questions: 1) What can we learn from a phenomenological approach to the study of non-participant private forest landowners?, and 2) How can the practice of natural resource professionals relative to “non-participant” private forest landowners be informed and improved through an understanding of how non-participant private forest landowners experience their land? The relevant literature is summarized, and the methodology, specific research methods, and findings are described. An evaluation of the results relative to related literature, benefits of the phenomenological approach in private forestland studies, and implications of the findings for the practice of natural resource professionals are discussed. The study area comprises two adjacent Morgan County communities in the Emory-Obed watershed of East Tennessee.

IV. Research Purpose

The purpose of this research is to describe how “non-participant” private forest landowners experience their forestland in order to inform the praxis of natural resource professionals with private forest landowners regarding the management and stewardship of their forestland.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

I. Introduction

Published research on private forest landowners (PFL's) is substantial and covers a wide variety of topics ranging from the importance of PFL's to the U.S. timber supply, to their management objectives and interests in owning forestland, to their potential role in forest conservation and ecosystem management efforts (for example Argow 1996; Best and Wayburn 2001; Bliss and Martin 1989; Brunson et al. 1996; Campbell and Kittredge 1996; Egan 1997; Kuhns, Brunson, and Roberts 1998; Stevens et al. 1999). The vast majority of this research has been conducted via quantitative surveys and/or has focused on active land managers with the definitions of "active" and "managers/management" based on generally accepted professional forestry standards. Bliss and Martin (1988) note that approximately 200 PFL surveys were conducted in the last two decades alone. Only one study has focused specifically on "non-joiner" PFL's (Mater 2001). "Non-joiner" PFL's are similar to this study's non-participant private forest landowners in that they do not participate in organizations concerned with private forest land. Although significantly less substantial in quantity, notable qualitative research on PFL's has also been completed.

Given this study's focus on the human experience of land and the human interpretation of the meaning of land, literature from these subject areas has also been reviewed. As with private forestland and landowner issues, the human experience of land and the human interpretation of the meaning of land have been examined from multiple

angles. Literature on these subjects comes from fields as diverse as psychology, geography, education, anthropology, rural sociology, environmental studies, and leisure studies among others. Accordingly, each of these fields lends its own perspective to the collective understanding of the human experience of land and the meanings people find in that experience. An overview of the relevant literature in each of these areas is provided below.

II. Research on Private Forest Landowners

Quantitative research studies on private forest landowners vary by analysis scale (state, region, nation), and reported results (Bliss and Martin 1989; Finley and Jacobson 2001; Graham Jr. 1999; Kuhns, Brunson, and Roberts 1998; Snyder and Broderick 1992). Most focus on descriptive statistics concerning landowners and ownership patterns. Measurements have typically been limited to ascertaining motivation(s) and/or ownership objectives via multiple-choice questions on reasons for owning forestland, or for harvesting, or not harvesting, timber. Kluender and Walkingstick (2000) and Kurtz and Lewis (1981), expanded on traditional survey techniques by attempting to establish landowner typologies based on owners' management dispositions. However, owners' management dispositions were still limited to characterizations made via responses to multiple-choice questions containing pre-set answers regarding management motivations and objectives.

Data from these studies indicate PFL's are becoming increasingly diverse and numerous, increasingly own smaller and smaller parcels of land, and show an increasing diversity in their ownership objectives and management priorities (Argow 1996; Bliss

and Martin 1989; Brunson et al. 1996; Campbell and Kittredge 1996; Cordell et al. 1998; DeCoster 1998; Egan and Jones 1993; Graham Jr. 1999; Mehmood and Zhang 2001). Such changes in the population create challenges for natural resource professionals in understanding PFL's and engaging them in greater stewardship of their forests (Best and Wayburn 2001). Jones, Luloff and Finley (1995) highlight the difficulty natural resource professionals face in keeping up with these changes in stating that evidence from recent surveys suggests NRP's' characterizations of PFL's as "rural-dwelling and land-connected, anti-environmentalist, timber-oriented, and intensely in favor of private property rights" may in fact be more myth than reality. Haymond, in Jones, Luloff and Finley (1995), describes the situation more bluntly stating that "a major barrier to promoting forest stewardship is 'foresters' ignorance of our customers." These sentiments are also found in Best and Wayburn's (2001) summary of the "rudimentary" state of our knowledge concerning PFL's. They find previous studies have been limited to issues such as timber stocking and harvest, and relatively small samples of predominantly active landowners. They conclude by stating that there are a lot of myths concerning PFL's and we do not know "who they are, what motivates them, and how to reach them" (Best and Wayburn 2001). Bliss and Martin (1989) indicate that the lack of new insights regarding NIPF's may be the result of stagnating research methods. They note that although more and more sophisticated data analysis methods are used with survey data, the NIPF questionnaires have not been significantly updated in twenty years.

As mentioned above, past studies also reveal that most PFL's are not currently engaged in forest stewardship activities and/or are unaware of their importance, of the educational and monetary assistance available for them, and how to get information about

them if they were interested. Birch (1995), in Argow (1996), finds that only 20% of PFL's take advantage of a professional forester when selling timber, and less than 5% have a written management plan for their forested land. Fewer than 20% of PFL's in Pennsylvania have a stewardship management plan (Finley and Jacobson 2001). English, Bells, Wells et. al. (1997) cite the U.S.D.A. 1990 Tennessee State Stewardship Plan as stating that many Tennessee forest landowners are unaware that assistance in managing their land exists. They also cite Esseks and Kraft (1988) as stating that one year after the launch of the Conservation Reserve Program large portions of potential clientele remained uninformed or misinformed about conditions critical to their decisions on participation (English et al. 1997).

The resulting perception of most natural resource professionals is that the vast majority of landowners are under-served. However, while the concept of under-served landowners (the term "under-served" can be equated to "non-participant" for the purposes of this study) may be an appropriate conclusion, natural resource professionals must be careful not to make deductive leaps concluding that landowners not enrolled in assistance programs, who do not have written Stewardship Management Plans, or who do not participate in local forestry associations, are not interested in or knowledgeable about private forest lands stewardship (Clatterbuck 2002). For example, Bliss and Martin (1989) note that such measurements "are constrained by the intrinsic limitations of survey research", and stem primarily from measuring the numbers of PFL's in a given area enrolled in an assistance program (such as the governmental Conservation Reserve Program), who have written Stewardship Management Plans, and/or who are members of a local forestry or landowner association. Kingsley, Brock, and DeBald (1988) also

caution against concluding that PFL's are not interested in their forestland based on their answers to mail questionnaires concerning reasons for owning forestland alone. The results of their West Virginia focus group study indicate that such conclusions may be mistaken. For example, approximately one third of WV landowners gave "vague" responses in mail surveys reporting that they owned their forestland because it was part of their residence or farm. The authors note that based on the statistical evidence alone, these landowners appear to have little direct and/or articulated interest in their forestland. However, their focus group interviews among a subset of the same landowner population revealed that retired landowners "hold land for a mixture of psychic and economic benefits", that few could discern one dominant reason for owning their forestland, and non-commodity values were at least as important to landowners as potential economic returns (Kingsley, Brock, and DeBald 1988).

Qualitative research on private forest landowners provides the exception to the rule in terms of research methodology employed. Alone, or in combination with quantitative efforts, it is also the methodology used in the only two studies uncovered that directly address "non-joiner" PFL's (Mater 2001) and "non-managing" PFL's (Bliss 1992). Among the primary sources of qualitative PFL research are a series of related studies examining management motivations of PFL's primarily via unstructured interviews conducted by Bliss (1992) and Bliss and Martin (1988; 1989), and a focus group study examining the motivations and interests of retired NIPF landowners in West Virginia by Kingsley, Brock, and DeBald (1988). Both sets of authors discuss the utility of qualitative methods for the study of private forest landowners and issues. Findings from such studies provide enhancing context for understanding the types of quantitative

results already presented, can be used to inform survey creation, and provide information previously undetected by survey research alone (Bliss and Martin 1989; Elmendorf and Luloff 2001; Kingsley, Brock, and DeBald 1988). Bliss and Martin (1989) include a useful non-biased comparison of the strengths and weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative approaches concluding that,

both survey and qualitative methods can make contributions to our knowledge of the NIPF sector, each method addressing the types of questions to which it is better suited. Surveys efficiently quantify population parameters, while qualitative methods are more effective for discovering the relationships between beliefs, attitudes, and behavior, and for identifying parameters of importance. The methods complement, rather than conflict with each other.

Two of the Bliss and Martin articles are based on case studies of only “active” private forestland “managers.” Sixteen PFL’s (plus 10 associated family members) participated. Both the definitions of “management” and “active” were defined from the perspective of the professional forestry community and mainstream professional forestry standards. A third study examining the influence of ethnicity on PFL management styles included four case studies of “non-managers.” For point of reference when describing the methodology and findings of the present study, it is useful to elaborate on these definitions at this point. In the Bliss and Martin (1988; 1989) studies, “Active management includes such practices as tree planting, timber harvesting, timber stand improvement, wildlife habitat improvement, and other practices implemented to increase the quality and quantity of forest related products and amenities.” All “active managers” had received recognition as Outstanding Tree Farmers. Non-managers were identified by local foresters due to their practices of “over-cutting, destructive cattle grazing, or neglect” (Bliss 1992).

These studies found two primary factors, external and internal, influencing and/or motivating PFL's forest management decisions. External incentives include production opportunities, incentive programs, technical assistance, and forest tax programs. Internal motivations include values related to the ethical use of forest resources and motivations related to the manager's ethnic, family, personal, and social identity. "Forest ownership and management" were found to "nurture family cohesiveness." The forest itself was found to be a "source of intergenerational continuity" and a "symbol of the family which endures beyond the lifespan of a single generation" (Bliss and Martin 1988). Participants also reported enjoying the activities, setting, escape from routine, and exercise involved in managing their forestland. Associating with other forestland managers provided a means of social identity, and forestland management was seen as a welcome, pleasant, and positive challenge. The researchers also found owners' perception of resource control was enhanced through management activities. Through these activities managers leave a living legacy of themselves in the land, thus the land essentially becomes an extension of themselves and their identity. Evaluating these findings from a policy standpoint, the authors suggest that programs and policies reflecting the internal forest management motivating factors related to manager identity may prove more effective in motivating NIPF involvement in forestland management than programs and policies relying on external motivators such as financial incentives alone (Bliss and Martin 1988).

The findings of the focus group study are similar. Retired West Virginia landowners, who primarily report themselves as not actively managing their forestland, see their land as their heritage, themselves as the stewards of the land, and thus see themselves as the stewards of the heritage as well. Having had land passed on from

preceding generations to them was of value, and they wanted to pass the land on to their own heirs. For these landowners, financial aspects may play second fiddle to activities that would maintain the non-monetary values they see in the land. However, the authors note that such attitudes regarding secondary financial gain do not run counter to traditional forestry practices and goals, as these landowners may be more willing to undertake particular management activities than purely financially driven managers and owners (Kingsley, Brock, and DeBald 1988). Other findings include the fact that few landowners interviewed could distinguish a single dominant reason for owning their forestland, and that “a sense of well-being is at least as important as economic gain derived from the land” (Kingsley, Brock, and DeBald 1988).

No studies specifically related to the group of under-involved and under-represented PFL’s here referred to as “non-participant” private forest landowners (fully defined in Chapter 3: Methodology and outlined in Appendix 3) were uncovered during this review. Nevertheless, two studies examining “non-joiners” (Mater 2001) and “non-managers” (Bliss 1992) respectively were identified. Only the non-joiner PFL’s share any similarity with the non-participant PFL’s examined here.

The “non-joiner” study investigates non-joiner NIPF’s decision drivers for fragmenting or converting forestland (Mater 2001). Non-joiners were defined as PFL’s not belonging to forest industry associations and not belonging to woodlot owner associations. These PFL’s “only periodically rely on technical assistance advisory services” and “manage their own forestlands” (Mater 2001). In-depth interviews were conducted with approximately 100 non-joiner NIPF's in eight eastern states. Data on non-joiners’ desire to keep their forestland in the family, desire to sell or develop

forestland, and the degree to which decisions had been discussed with heirs was also collected. Additionally, traditional PFL survey data concerning landowner and ownership characteristics was also collected including data on harvest experience, reasons for owning forestland, and percent owners with written management plans (57%). Major findings include disconnects between NIPF's and "impact groups" such as "foresters, state agency NIPF coordinators, and smart growth organizations" concerning the major factors driving conversion and/or fragmentation. Impact groups emphasized "taxes and real estate pressures", while NIPF's emphasized "unforeseen needs and lack of offspring interest" (Mater 2001). Results also show that many NIPF's feel "nothing" would drive them to fragment or convert their forestland, and that drivers vary geographically. Follow up studies are planned to address reaching those NIPF's who feel "nothing" would drive them to convert or fragment, developing linkages between non-joiner NIPF's and natural resource professionals, reaching non-joiner NIPF offspring, and determining where strategic partnerships can be created. The researcher concludes with a "10 point guide to reaching non-joiner NIPF's in Eastern states" including items such as, "understand perception is as much a fact, as a fact itself . . . shift the outreach messages . . . understand differences between 'most valued characteristics' and 'reasons for ownership' . . . work through state forestry divisions," and "connect with creative funding options" among others.

III. Private Forest Landowner ↔ Natural Resource Professional Interaction

A major component of literature concerning private forestland and landowners is the discussion and analysis of natural resource professional ↔ PFL interaction. The

dominant form of interaction between NRP's and PFL's is some form of expert-client relationship in which information deemed relevant to the private forest landowner by the professional is conveyed to the PFL. Furthermore, natural resource professionals have traditionally approached the issues and concerns of private forestry as problems to be solved through expert description, research, and prescribed solutions deduced as necessary (Cortner and Moote 1999). Such traditional problem solving approaches lend a negative connotation to the situation or experience by approaching it as a "problem", emphasize the traditional professional roles of expert advisor and "owner" of knowledge, and can be described as ones in which "we strive to ascertain cause and with cause in place, gain rationale for action" (Dukes 1996; McNamee and Gergen 1999).

There are two dominant paradigms in use for conveying information to landowners. The first, and predominant one, based on (Rogers 1995). Diffusion of Innovation model, is knowledge dissemination through agencies and Cooperative Extension specialists. The second is a combination of volunteerism, peer based systems, forest landowner associations and other similar ventures (Finley and Jacobson 2001). The two are often employed in concert with agency and Cooperative Extension staff partnering with private volunteers and citizen forestry associations to promote sound forest stewardship on private lands (Best and Wayburn 2001; Egan and Jones 1993; Snyder and Broderick 1992). The typical information conveyance modes used by these types of institutions are person to person, person to group, printed literature, meetings, and experiential learning through field and demonstration days. More recently, and via a national review of the Extension Service's methods and business plan, recommendations have been made that extension develop a national information technology network (*The*

e-extension initiative 2003). The internet has greatly expanded the ability to share information and the audience with whom to share it (Jackson, Hopper, and Clatterbuck 2003). Many state, regional, and national efforts are underway to incorporate new information technologies into landowner education including both satellite transmitted short courses for landowners as well as web-based resources. As web-based technology is both more reliable and more convenient for the participant than satellite technology, it is likely to overtake satellite technology as an outreach tool (Clatterbuck 2003).

As evident from the results of survey research previously described, there appears to be a disconnect between PFL's and natural resource professionals in terms of what kinds of information are most relevant and what are the best ways to make that information available and useful. Miscommunication and interaction problems between these two groups were among the major findings of a pilot study conducted in the study area in the summer of 2001 (Muth et al. 2001). PFL's involved in a variety of land management activities and/or who had a relationship with a natural resource professional(s), and natural resource professionals with responsibilities in the area were interviewed in the phenomenological style about their experiences with forestland. These interviews revealed that many times there is a mismatch between the land management plans drafted, or the recommendations made by NRP's for landowners, and landowners' real objectives. Such mis-matches result in management plans and recommendations that are ultimately abandoned in favor of objectives not articulated to the natural resource professional at the time their assistance was sought (Muth et al. 2001). According to many natural resource professionals one cause is landowners' lack of clarity regarding their objectives. Some natural resource professionals indicated that many landowners

simply do not know what they want, or have not thought about their resources and objectives. However, landowners' interviews indicate strong ties to the land, strong feelings regarding view-sheds, forest health, forest protection, forest recreation, family connection, economics, and other issues. The obvious disconnects between NRP's, who reported strong service oriented professionalism and a sincere desire to help PFL's, and PFL's have resulted in frustration on both sides (Muth et al. 2001). Focus group results involving the same individuals, also conducted in the study area, support these findings as well (Pavey 2003).

IV. Perspectives on the Human Experience and Meaning of Land

It is extremely difficult to find, choose, or create one agreed upon description of the human experience and meaning of land. The difficulty of this task and the nebulosity of such a definition themselves have been a major component of discussion in at least one publication (Driver et al. 1996). Perspectives contributing to the evolving understanding of the human experience and meaning of land include perspectives on the human experience of the environment including the built environment (Tuan 1977; Seamon and Mugerauer 2000), the human experience of place (Peacher 1995; Tuan 1977), the human experience of nature (Kaplan and Kaplan 1989; Driver et al. 1996; Pollio et al. 2003;), the human experience of the geographical landscape (Tuan 1977) and the social, cultural, and policy implications of these experiences (Cheng, Kruger, and Daniels 2003; Forbes 2001; Stokowski 2002; Williams and Stewart 1998). Consequently, a discussion of the human experience and meaning of land must rely on the interaction and contribution of multiple perspectives rather than a single

conclusionary stance. Some of the major ways in which these perspectives relate to this study, and in which the human experience of land has been theorized and studied, include the related concepts of space, place, and sense of place. These concepts are constantly at play in, and critically important to, an understanding of the human experience and meaning interpretation of land.

Even without awareness of specific definitions, these terms alone imply rich and powerful emotional sentiments corresponding to how people perceive, experience, and value the environment. Defined, they come more fully, and usefully for our purposes, into focus. Space refers to the undifferentiated geographic world, from the global to the personal scale, that is devoid of personal attachment and historical familiarity from the perspective of any one, or group of, perceivers (Tuan 1977). Space is unknown and unfamiliar to the perceiver. Place on the other hand, is space that has “become the location of cultural meaning” (List and Brown 1996). Places are “distinctive, memorable, affect generating, and psychologically owned” (Greene 1996). This happens as space is transformed by people forming meaning attachments to it through experiences, memories and feelings located there (Greene 1996; Roberts 1996; Tuan 1977). Although undifferentiated, and without personal attachment, history, or memory, space is not devoid of meaning. A tremendous reciprocity exists between the concepts of space and place. It is precisely the undifferentiated “freedom” of space that allows such a thing as “place” to develop. Tuan (1977) perhaps relates the two best submitting that “Place is security, space is freedom: we are attached to one, and long for the other.” As such, it is experiences of place that allow us both internally and externally to orient ourselves within our environments, to make sense out of the world of space, and to find

order and meaning in the world (Cheng, Kruger, and Daniels 2003; Roberts 1996).

External orientations to place tell one where one is, internal orientations tell one how it is to be there. Given such orienting experiences, these concepts extend from the fundamentally physical to the level of psychic well-being and cultural symbology. Knowing how one is, and where one is, are critical to the identification and development of personal identity and character (Roberts 1996).

“Sense of place,” and “place attachment” are terms closely related to “space.” Discussions of “place” generally follow those of “space” in any discussion of the human experience of land. Sense of place typically refers “to an individual’s ability to develop feelings of attachment to particular settings based on combinations of use, attentiveness, and emotion” (Stokowski 2002). Place attachment is the result of strong “place-related experiences” which build up within the memory, residing there and taking on special meaning over time (Greene 1996). The role of memory as the locus of the connection between place and meaning is key.

These concepts are of particular importance for natural resource professionals attempting to engage people with strong place attachments in any kind of action which may impact place, and for anyone wishing to understand a place from another’s perspective. Sense of place, and place attachment, are both likely to be taken for granted or not articulated in seemingly related discussion by an insider fully embedded in that place (Seamon and Mugerauer 1995; Williams and Patterson 1996). Thus researchers and others wishing to gain access to these attachments must find a way to elicit conversations of meaning in addition to conversations of fact. Williams and Patterson (1996) contend that discussions of sense of place can open dialogue between natural

resource professionals and the public thus increasing opportunities, and effectiveness of opportunities gained, for the implementation of ecosystem management.

Recently, researchers have begun to look not just at the developmental and functional aspects of sense of place and place attachment, but also at their greater social and political implications. Stokowski (2002) proposes that beyond meaningful geographic locations, places are “fluid, changeable, dynamic contexts of social interaction and memory, and they contain overt and covert social practices that embed in place-making behaviors notions of ideology, power, control, conflict, dominance, and distribution of social and physical resources.” Cheng, Kruger, and Daniels (2003) note the influence of sense of place, and place meanings, on natural resource politics in the sense that various groups contest various interpretations of place meaning, and sense of place regarding the same physical space. Given the prominent role of place in politics, the positive view they proffer is that “sense of place” can be an integrating concept in natural resource politics, and that “place-based inquiry has the potential to foster more equitable, democratic participation by including a broader range of voices and values centering around places rather than policy positions” (Cheng, Kruger, and Daniels 2003).

Two particular studies employing these concepts bear elaboration as their methodology and findings relate directly to the present study. First is a study of two rural Virginia communities concerning cultural attachment to land (Wagner 2002). Second, is a phenomenological study of the experience of place (Peacher 1995).

At the request of the residents of two rural Virginia communities, and as a supplement to an environmental impact assessment in which cultural attachment to land played a large role, members of the Radford University Cultural Heritage Research Team

used ethnographic methods of cultural anthropology to investigate the existence and nature of residents' cultural attachment to land. The ethnographic methods used included interview, field notes, document analysis, and observation via community events such as church services. Land and culture were found to be inseparable in these counties. Residents referred to their land as their heritage and legacy. Nine generations were traced to particular properties in some parts of the county. Residents frequently and consistently commented on how long their land, including indicating the boundaries of that specific piece of land, had belonged to their family and the importance of that historical presence to them. Researchers concluded that residents' land attachments are based on the cultural continuity provided by their knowledge of the past, life in the present, and vision of the future on the land, and by "the link between their culture and the nature that surrounds and penetrates that culture" (Wagner 2002). In such a "genealogical landscape" the land is a "historical anchor that reaches several generations into the past" (Hicks 1976 in Wagner 2002). Wagner (2002) cites folklorist Lynwood Montell's description of the importance of living in the genealogical landscape as being that "you know when you look around that you're seeing the same things they [ancestors] saw."

Researchers also found these residents to have a complex middle ground relationship with the land between land as a utilitarian commodity to be developed and used, and land as a defining aspect of personal identity, material culture, and economic life. Neither aspect of the meaning of the land dominated the other; both existed in a complex and delicate balance shaped by years of using land to meet one's needs, and years of giving meaning to the land based on the human and social activities that had

happened on it. Residents' relationship to nature is also complex and intense. "Nature is used, nurtured, admired, feared, and kept at bay" (Wagner 2002). Residents simultaneously sought to control nature, especially and particularly around their home places, and revered it. In the valleys, where members of these communities lived, culture in the form of clearing, fencing, stocking, leveling etc. keeps nature at bay.

Simultaneously they view God as having shaped the mountains, and feel they live as close to heaven as they can get. These findings, in particular the nuances and complexities revealed regarding residents' relationships to land and nature, are useful in demonstrating sense of place as it exists for real people in real places, and as it pertains to real policy issues, as well as demonstrating the utility of qualitative methodologies, ethnographic techniques, in this case in exploring the human experience and meaning of land.

A second relevant study is Peacher's 1995 doctoral dissertation "The Experience of Place." This is the only phenomenological study, other than the pilot study (Muth et al. 2001) mentioned previously, to be uncovered examining issues of the human experience of land, here more broadly referred to as place. In Peacher's study, ten younger adults and ten older adults were interviewed using the phenomenological methods described in Chapter 3 to gather a description of the lived experience of special places. Each participant was asked, "Could you tell me about a place that is special to you, in as much detail as you can?". Results were analyzed according to these methods as well. An additional analysis step included examining the results in terms of the types of places participants chose to discuss. The types of places most frequently mentioned in order from most to least frequent were: 1) a home or residence, especially a childhood

home, 2) a natural setting such as a park, beach, lake, or cabin in the woods (cross categorized with home), 3) a school setting, 4) a large city, 5) miscellaneous settings including a church, a particular person's home, a graveyard, the mall, and the theater. The researcher notes that in discussing these places, the emotions connected to the time when they were experienced were re-lived by the participants. Descriptions of place were inextricably tied to descriptions of the people and events experienced in those places such that the experience of place allowed participants to remain close to loved ones, and to transcend space and time (Peacher 1995).

In addition to types of places, five themes descriptive of one's experience of place were identified including Identity, Connection, Security, Possibilities, and Beauty/Awe. Participants' comments on place led the researcher to conclude that "a special place helps one answer the question 'who am I?' and serves to influence and limit who one can become" (Peacher 1995). A person is shaped within the context of a particular place, and that place influences the degree to which, and nature in which, values, traditions, possibilities, and limitations are accepted (Peacher 1995).

Places connect people to others and to times experienced in them. In Peacher's (1995) study participants reported feeling the most intense presence of a loved one when in, or remembering, a special place. These places also connected participants with something larger than themselves whether that was a group, a family, a team, or a city, or the entire planet/world. Special places also allowed participants to feel safe, secure, and free from constraints. Types of Security experienced in special places included permanence and tradition, familiarity and safety, relaxation and tranquility, solitude, and escape" (Peacher 1995). The theme of Possibilities arises out of the experience of special

places as places that do not impede one's desires. Within these places one is allowed the freedom to think, dream, aspire, experiment, explore, discover, etc. These aspects of the theme of Possibilities speak to the stimulation, learning, and challenge found in a special place. The Beauty/Awe theme "addresses the ability of a place to communicate a divine or supernatural influence, to inspire one to transcend his or her own boundaries in identifying with a oneness of the universe, and to recognize the natural beauty and majesty of a place" (Peacher 1995). Speaking of their special places, some participants were inspired to speak quite romantically of issues of spirituality, mystery, and awe. Participants found difficulty in explaining rationally their feelings regarding this aspect of their experience of a special place (Peacher 1995). From the perspective of place, sense of place, place attachment, and specifically here "special places", this study exemplifies the use and perspective of phenomenology in adding to the collective description of the human experience and meaning of land.

Chapter 3: Methodology

I. Introduction

A qualitative research study using the phenomenological tradition to determine what forestland, and owning forestland, means to “non-participant” PFL’s can address important gaps in NRP’s’ understanding of “non-participant” private forest landowners. Such an improved understanding would be extremely useful in informing and improving their praxis relative to “non-participant” PFL’s. Indeed, Colaizzi (1973) in Valle, King, and Halling (1989) states, “without thereby first disclosing the foundations of a phenomenon, no progress whatsoever can be made concerning it, not even a first faltering step towards it, by science or by any other kind of cognition.” For readers unfamiliar with these methods, or as a refresher, the basic applicability, assumptions, and characteristics of the qualitative approach are discussed. The phenomenological tradition of inquiry is summarized, its benefits discussed, and its philosophical and methodological components addressed.

II. Qualitative Research

Although there are many different ideas about what constitutes qualitative research, there is also significant agreement on its characteristics and the nature of its inquiry (Creswell 1998; Lincoln and Denzin 2000). I prefer the explanation given by Lincoln and Denzin (2000) and the definition provided by Creswell (1998). These

authors have done a superior job of condensing the range of thought into a manageable and understandable whole. I rely on them heavily in this summary.

- The word qualitative implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured (if measured at all) in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency (Lincoln and Denzin 2000).
- Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complete, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting (Creswell 1998).

The qualitative paradigm is best suited to problems that are exploratory in nature, investigating how or what, not why. Exploratory implies that little information exists on the topic, and/or that the available theory may be incorrect, incomplete, or inapplicable to a particular population, and/or that the phenomenon (or research subject) needs further and/or deeper description. The variables or categories to examine about the problem may be unknown or unclear, and the context of the phenomenon is an explicit focus of the study (Creswell 1994, 1998, 2003).

In describing the general assumptions of qualitative research it is often helpful to oppose them to those of quantitative research, especially for individuals more familiar with the quantitative paradigm (Creswell 1994, 1998). A basic summary of the quantitative approach is that it “is an inquiry into a social or human problem, based on testing a theory composed of variables, measured with numbers, and analyzed with statistical procedures, in order to determine whether the predictive generalizations of the theory hold true” (Creswell 1994).

In the qualitative research paradigm, reality is subjective, not objective, and is seen as socially constructed by the individuals involved in the research situation including the researcher. Minimal distance between the researcher and researched is sought, versus the independent and distant stance of the quantitative researcher. The qualitative researcher is the instrument of inquiry and the primary instrument of analysis. The situational constraints, or contexts, that shape the inquiry are emphasized. Inquiry methods range from observation of the researched entity to actual collaboration regarding the research program. Rather than striving for an “objective” stance untainted by personal interests, motivations, or desires, the researcher’s values are specifically identified and admitted to prior to the research effort, continually rechecked and reflected upon during the research process, and may be included in the final research report in terms of how they affected the study. An inductive rather than deductive logic process is employed meaning that variables and categories pertinent to the study emerge during the process rather than having been pre-identified at the outset. This is known as “emergent design.” Theories are developed for understanding rather than generalization and prediction. Qualitative research is primarily interested in process rather than product, in how social experiences are given meaning, and in how individuals make meaning of their lives and experiences (Creswell 1994; Lincoln and Denzin 2000).

There are three primary modes of qualitative research; observation, interview, and document collection and analysis (Wright 2002). This study employs the interview mode, specifically, the phenomenological tradition, as it is best suited to the goals of the research project.

III. Phenomenology

Introduction and Overview

Phenomenology can be varyingly defined and understood depending upon how one traces its development through the thoughts of Kierkegaard, Husserl, Kant, Merleau-Ponty and others, how one emphasizes the relative contributions of these philosophers, or which particular version of phenomenology one subscribes to, and one's aim. All can agree however that phenomenology has components of both philosophy and experimental science (Creswell 1994; Ihde 1986; Pollio, Henley, and Thompson 1997; Thomas and Pollio 2002; Valle, King, and Halling 1989). I like Thomas and Pollio's (2002) definition, "Existential phenomenology blends the philosophy of existentialism with the methods of phenomenology to produce rigorous and richly nuanced descriptions of human life." Therefore, while it is not necessary that every reader of a phenomenological study, or even every researcher, have a completely thorough understanding of this complex discipline in order to fully appreciate its value, it is necessary that both have at least a familiarity and a rudimentary understanding of the philosophical and methodological components. An overview of characteristics, purposes, and goals of phenomenological studies, followed by a summary of phenomenology's philosophical and methodological components is therefore provided.

Simply put, existential phenomenology is the study of experience. Attending to experience rather than behavior signifies not viewing a person as an object and clearly places phenomenology within the qualitative paradigm (Bugental 1989). Philosophically, phenomenology has its roots in existentialism, a tradition focused on the nature of existence and the freedom and responsibility one faces in shaping their existence for

themselves (Levey, Greenhall, and staff 1983; Thomas and Pollio 2002). When applied to phenomenology, existentialism focuses on “lived experience” or the experiences of people as conscious human beings. Phenomenology as a method to address those existential questions developed initially with the thoughts and writings of the twentieth century philosopher Edmund Husserl. Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and others followed adding various dimensions to the discipline. The tradition’s methodological aspect involves the collection and analysis of rigorous and richly nuanced descriptions of participants’ experiences to develop patterns and relationships of meaning (Creswell 1994; Polkinghorne 1989; Pollio, Henley, and Thompson 1997; Thomas and Pollio 2002; Valle, King, and Halling 1989). It has been used across diverse disciplines including sociology, psychology, education, health sciences, nursing, and now natural resources. The goals of phenomenology are to determine what an experience means for the persons who have had it, and to reduce those experiences to a central meaning, or the “essence” of the experience, that can be used in practice with those experiencing the phenomena (Creswell 1994; Polkinghorne 1989; Pollio, Henley, and Thompson 1997; Thomas and Pollio 2002; Valle, King, and Halling 1989).

As a research method, phenomenology offers several benefits to the study of non-participant private forest landowners. First, given its focus on collecting clear and complete descriptions of someone else’s experience of an aspect of their existence, it is well suited for any situation in which a “professional consultant seeks to discover the wishes and needs of a client” (Pollio, Henley, and Thompson 1997). Second, it allows us to study aspects of non-participant private forest landowners’ (NP PFL’s) experiences that cannot be measured, such as the meaning of their forest land to them, by

questionnaires, attendance rates, and enrollment in government programs. Third, as questionnaires can only measure what they ask, they may fail to adequately address those aspects of the experience of forestland that are most salient to NP PFL's such as, the particular beauty of the land, or peacefulness, quietness, and privacy. These most salient aspects may be the very aspects upon which NRP's can motivate NP PFL's and leverage their expertise towards improved forest stewardship. Phenomenology also provides a different format for sharing experience, a very human and relational format. For a population that may have been systematically missed by other approaches, or turned off by them, this is a key point. And lastly, phenomenology is the only research method that sheds light on the meaning of experiences to individuals. It is assumed that understanding this aspect of NP PFL's existence would be key to engaging them more fully in sustainable forest stewardship practices and to initiating and/or improving their relationships with NRP's (Thomas and Pollio 2002).

Philosophical Aspects of Phenomenology

Phenomenology, as it is used here, is a combination of existentialism, phenomenology, and psychology. Each of these aspects brings something slightly different to the discipline, and has evolved to contain its own multiple facets and nuances. The contributions of each leave a footprint on the phenomenological methods employed here consisting of three major, related, and underlying philosophical tenets.

Existentialism, a philosophy Thomas and Pollio (2002) describe as concerned with "who we are and how we come to live an authentic life", is generally considered to have been founded by the Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard (1813 – 1855). Kierkegaard was most concerned with individual existence and how the fundamental

themes with which humans inevitably struggle could be elucidated (Valle, King, and Halling 1989).

Phenomenology's "founder" and chief proponent is considered Edmund Husserl (1859 – 1938). Martin Heidegger followed with important elucidations to Husserl's work (Thomas and Pollio 2002; Valle, King, and Halling 1989). For Husserl, phenomenology was "the rigorous and unbiased study of things as they appear so that one might come to an essential understanding of human consciousness and experience" (Valle, King, and Halling 1989). Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) puts it this way, "It tries to give a direct description of our experience as it is, without taking account of its psychological origin and the causal explanations which the scientist, the historian or the sociologist may be able to provide." As such, one of phenomenology's chief contributions was providing the means whereby the existentialists could carry out their inquiries (Thomas and Pollio 2002; Valle, King, and Halling 1989). When applied to psychology, especially by Merleau-Ponty, phenomenology becomes a discipline that "seeks to explicate the essence, structure, or form of both human experience and human behavior as revealed through essentially descriptive techniques including disciplined reflection" (Valle, King, and Halling 1989). The terms "essence," "structure," and "form" of human experience and behavior equate to the concept of themes found throughout the research methods aspects of phenomenology.

To understand and employ phenomenology as a research method, one must be at least familiar with three main and inter-related philosophical tenets underlying phenomenology. To be sure, there are other important, contextualizing philosophical assumptions and tenets of philosophy, but these will suffice to relate methods to

philosophy. The first of these can be summed up by the phrase “to the things themselves” attributed to Husserl (Merleau-Ponty 1945/1962). This phrase describes the phenomenological rebuffing of theoretical analysis and cognitive explanations of experience and behavior in favor of first person descriptions of lived experience. Or in other words, as Pollio, Henley, and Thompson (1997) state “for existential phenomenology the world is to be lived not explained.” This notion emphasizes the view that the most authentic representations of the world are those with the least distance between the world itself and the representation of the world given by a researcher or author to his or her audience. For phenomenologists the way to minimize this distance is to present the world as straightforwardly as it is perceived and described by another with as little interpretive interference by the phenomenologist (or researcher, or author) as possible. In other words, in phenomenology the world is as it is experienced to be. As you can see, phenomenology’s manner of viewing reality fits well within the qualitative paradigm which views reality as subjective and socially constructed. Merleau-Ponty provides a better and more poetic rendering of this concept. “To return to things themselves is to return to that world which precedes knowledge, of which knowledge always *speaks*, and in relation to which every scientific schematization is an abstract and derivative sign-language, as is geography in relation to the country-side in which we have learnt beforehand what a forest, a prairie or a river is” (Merleau-Ponty 1945/1962).

A related concept is that of “being-in-the-world” (Heidegger 1962 in Valle, King and Halling 1989). This concept implies the complete and total inter-dependence and inter-relatedness of the human individual and the world. In the phenomenological view, all being, all existence, is always being-in-the-world; or, as Valle, King, and Halling

(1989) put it, “people and the world are always in dialogue with each other.” Furthermore, they are said to “co-constitute” each other (Valle, King, and Halling 1989). In other words, each is meaningless without the other. People do exist in the world, so to speak of them as separate from all that they bear upon it and it bears upon them is not to speak of them fully. The same is true for the world. A world without people is meaningless because it is people who wrest meaning from the world. Valle, King and Halling (1989) do more justice to this concept than I: “It is through the world that the very *meaning* of the person’s existence emerges both for himself or herself and for others. The converse is equally true. It is each individual’s existence that gives his or her world its meaning.” Polkinghorne (1989) gives a concrete example that brings this concept into focus: “. . . as I experience two objects, one appears nearer to me than the other. The seeing of the one thing as nearer than the other requires both that the object exists in the world and that a person exists who is the locus of the experience.” If one thinks about the standard dictates of positivism, or traditional western naturalistic science, one can see how different this view of “being” is. In this case, there is no separation between mind and body, or person and world, they are inter-dependent for their existence upon each other. As Polkinghorne (1989) states, “‘experience’ phenomenologically occurs at the meeting of person and world.”

The postulate of intentionality is a key concept in phenomenology. Closely related to the concept of the interdependence of people and the world in determining the meaning or relevance of each, this postulate holds that consciousness exists in the world, and in direct relationship to it. This is a strong counterpoint to naturalistic or positivistic traditional western science largely based on the Cartesian postulate, “I think therefore I

am.” Descartes’ concept of existence separates thinking (an experience) from the person doing the thinking. For phenomenologists, as exemplified by Merleau-Ponty (1962) “. . . there is no inner man, man is in the world, and only in the world does he know himself.” (Merleau-Ponty 1945/1962; Pollio, Henley, and Thompson 1997). It should be noted, prior to further explanation, that the term “intentionality” as used by phenomenology is distinct from its standard dictionary and common language definition as having to do with a plan of action, or a conviction to carry out such a plan. Intentionality for phenomenologists addresses the “directional nature of human experience, including perception” (Thomas and Pollio 2002). The directional nature of human experience refers to the fact that I am always conscious of something. My consciousness is always directed towards the world. Conversely, there is always someone for whom an object, an aspect of the world, is present, or is ‘being consciousness’ (Ihde 1986; Thomas and Pollio 2002). In practice, this comes to “what I am aware of reveals what is meaningful to me” (Thomas and Pollio 2002). From a behavioral stance, and one whose applicability can be seen in this study, “what we do reveals both who we are and what is important to us. This is the case even if we, as actors, are not able to describe the meaning of our actions” (Thomas and Pollio 2002).

As mentioned initially, all three of these concepts, “to the things themselves,” “being in the world,” and the postulate of intentionality are inter-related each building off of, and providing some explanation for, the other. However, it is easy to become confused. The terms “experience” and “consciousness” are used somewhat interchangeably because they both refer to essentially the same thing, a certain awareness or “lived experience” with the world. For example, Pollio, Henley, and Thompson

(1997) note that phenomenology “does not view experience (or consciousness, in more technical terms) as a consequence of some internal set of events as mind or brain but as a relationship between people and their world” Later they provide an excellent statement relating all three of these ideas. “Intentionality . . . is a basic structure of human existence that captures the fact that human beings are fundamentally related to the contexts in which they live or, more philosophically, that all being is to be understood as ‘being in the world’.”

Phenomenological Research Methods

As with any research method, there is some variation in reported phenomenological procedures. While touching briefly on some of the more germane variation, I provide an overview of phenomenological research methods most closely patterned after those developed and used by the Center for Applied Phenomenological Research (CAPR) at the University of Tennessee (UT). These methods are followed in the present study and are detailed in two extremely helpful works; 1) “The Phenomenology of Everyday Life” by Howard R. Pollio (UT Department of Psychology and CAPR), Tracy Henley (University of Mississippi), and Craig B. Thompson (University of Wisconsin) (1997), and 2) “Listening to Patients: A Phenomenological Approach to Nursing Research and Practice” by Sandra P. Thomas (Professor and Director of the PhD Program in Nursing at UT) and Howard R. Pollio. See Figure 1 for a pictorial representation of the phenomenological research methods followed here and detailed in these works.

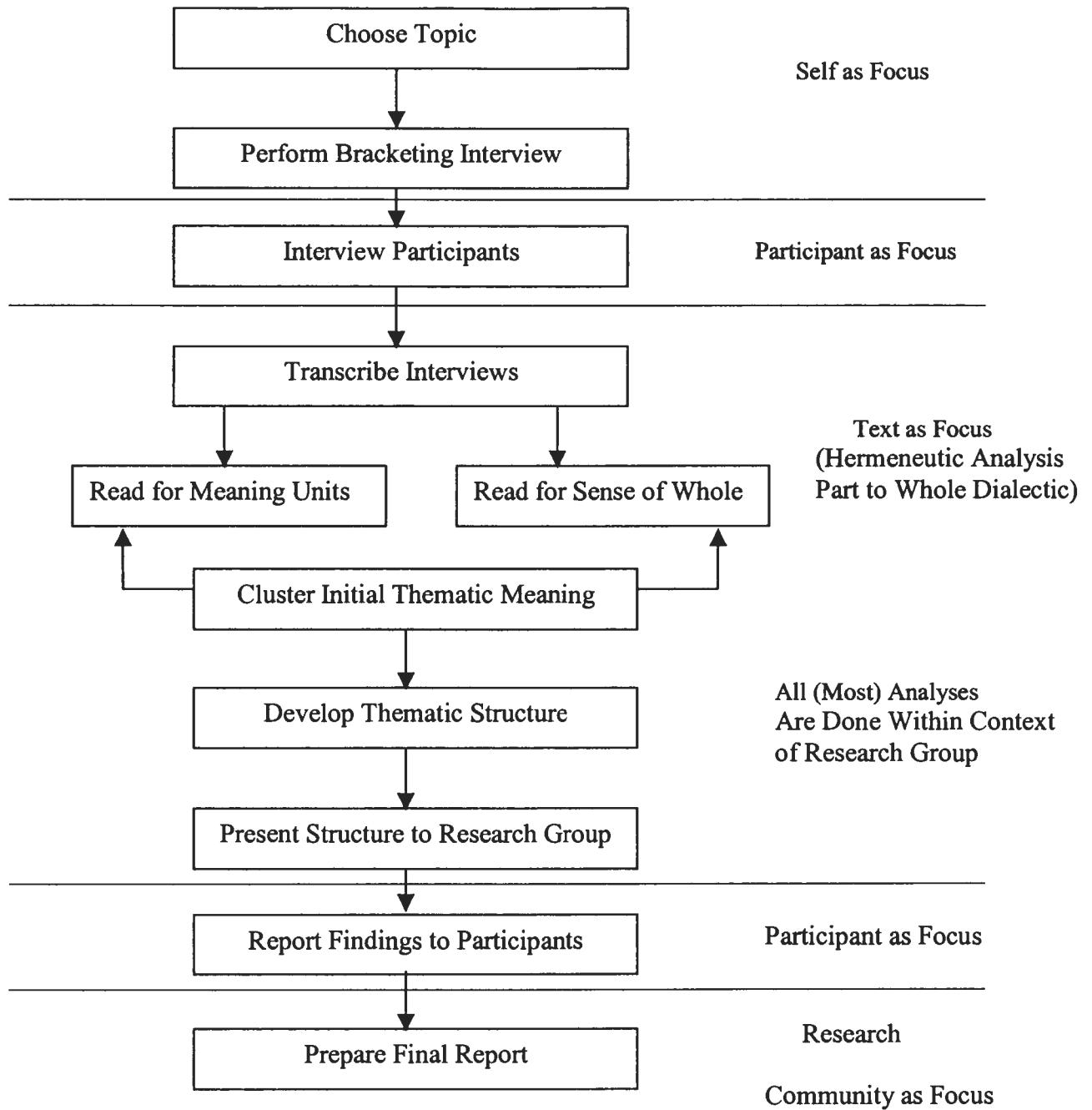


FIGURE 1: PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHODS FLOW CHART

Adapted from Pollio, H. R., Henley, T., & Thompson, C. B. (1997). *The Phenomenology of Everyday Life*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

As with subject selection logic of studies employing statistical sampling theory designed to make inferences about groups from randomly selected individuals, the subject selection logic of a phenomenological study relates directly to the purposes and goals of the methodology. The purpose of phenomenological research is to describe the essence of an experience. The focus is on the nature of the experience itself, not on the characteristics of the group who have had the experience. As no inferences and statistical generalizations are made, strictly random samples from the population to which the study refers are not necessary (Polkinghorne 1989). Therefore, participant selection in a phenomenological study is purposeful. Participants must have experienced the phenomenon of interest, and must be willing to talk about their experience (Polkinghorne 1989; Thomas and Pollio 2002). Furthermore, participants must be selected so as to generate as wide an array as possible of specific experiences relative to the phenomenological topic explored. For example, in a study on the experience of the body, older and younger individuals, male and female individuals, athletes, dancers, disabled people, pregnant people, etc. might be sought as participants. Errors in participant selection occur when participants represent only a narrow range of possible descriptions. (Polkinghorne 1989). Appropriate sample sizes are considered six to twelve individuals, and the reported range is 3 – 325 individuals (Polkinghorne 1989; Morse 1994 and Ray 1994 in Thomas and Pollio 2002).

Data collection takes place via an interview. The raw data is an audiotape of the interview and a transcription of that tape. During interviewing, the researcher maintains a respectful stance towards participants presuming no superior expertise regarding the phenomenon and positions him or herself as a learner. The participant is positioned as

the expert in their own experience and as providing necessary information such that an interested other could come away with an understanding of what that experience is like for them. Interview questions have a descriptive and facilitative purpose rather than one of assessing a pre-existing opinion, attitude, or level of knowledge (Pollio, Henley and Thompson 1997). “What” questions are used to facilitate description rather than analysis (“why” questions), such as “What stands out to you about x phenomenon?”, or “What was it like for you when . . . ?” (Center for Applied Phenomenological Research 2003; Thomas and Pollio 2002). The interview is unstructured and conversational with an initial question to prompt description of the experience such as “Can you think of some specific instances when you were aware of . . . ?”. Further questions follow on the comments of the participant (Center for Applied Phenomenological Research 2003; Polkinghorne 1989).

Interview success is largely dependent upon the skill and sensitivity of the interviewer (Thomas and Pollio 2002). Their job is to draw out descriptions of experience including specifics, nuances, and details. They must be sensitive to the unfolding story and catch the critical elements from the stream of its entirety. The interviewer does not ask questions about a participant’s experience in order to satisfy their own curiosity. Un-mentioned aspects of the participant’s experience are assumed to not be figural to the participant’s experience, and/or to be too personal/sensitive for them to discuss. A researcher can make the non-figural seem figural by overly directing the conversation. For example, when interviewing a participant about their land, the interviewer would not ask about the importance of the beauty of the land to the participant unless the participant had mentioned something about aesthetics, or beauty in

their descriptions (Thomas and Pollio 2002). “An implicit assumption is that central or personally relevant issues will emerge repeatedly throughout the dialogue” (Pollio, Henley and Thompson 1997).

All study interviews are tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. Identifying characteristics (names, geographic places, names of work places, etc.) are removed. Representative study transcripts are then read aloud in a phenomenological research group with frequent stops to note specific parts that stand out as significant to the experience and to assess the meaning of the experience related in each section. All interpretations must be supported by the text in the participant’s own words. This helps reduce interpreter bias and ensures that the essence of the experience is being captured by the group. Throughout the analytic process, researchers continually relate parts of the text back to the whole and vice versa as part of the hermeneutic circle of analysis and validation. This refers to the fact that an accurate understanding can not be reached via an isolated piece of text, nor can the whole be understood without noting the supporting details (Pollio, Henley, and Thompson 1997; Thomas and Pollio 2002; Valle, King, and Halling 1989). As Thomas and Pollio (2002) state, “. . . all passages are always understood in terms of their relationship to the larger whole.” As analysis of each transcript ends, themes, or patterns of description that recur as figural to the participant’s experience, are identified and summarized (Thomas and Pollio 2002). Eventually, commonalities in experiential significance are identified across transcripts resulting in themes representative of the experience for the study as a whole. Text supporting these themes is sought from the transcripts to validate and verify the thematic analysis. A thematic structure, or a pictorial representation of the themes, is sometimes developed to

show the inter-relationships between themes. The researcher analyzes subsequent study transcripts outside the group setting following the process just described. Findings from the researcher's independent work are continually brought back to the group for feedback and validation. At this point group members are familiar with the study, the researcher, and the researcher's particular weaknesses or biases via the interpretation of their bracketing interview (an explanation follows), making them an excellent source for feedback and revision.

Although phenomenologists do not run statistical tests to verify their work, there are a number of standards for maintaining research quality and for verifying results. As with other studies, phenomenological ones employ a systematic method of data collection, practice disciplined interpretive analysis, and produce results open to peer review, general comment, and criticism (Thomas and Pollio 2002). One way phenomenologists attempt to avoid clouding the interpretation or coming up with skewed results is to continually remain true to the phenomenon "as it is given" (Thomas and Pollio 2002). This means letting our participants, or our data via the transcripts, tell us what the results are by letting the participants have their own voices, and letting their experiences speak to us as they are, for themselves, without projecting our experiences, our expectations, or our desires onto their stories. In a sense, this is what "objectivity" becomes in a phenomenological study (Thomas and Pollio 2002).

Another way phenomenologists try to avoid bias is through bracketing. Bracketing involves an attempt "to suspend or put in abeyance one's preconceptions and presuppositions (i.e., one's biases)" (Valle, King, and Halling 1989). Because complete bracketing is not possible, Pollio, Henley, and Thompson (1997) describe it as more of an

attempt to identify and correct interpretations of the data which may be unduly influenced by incompatible suggestions coming from the researcher as to the participant's meaning in any given instance. For them, the purpose of bracketing becomes an attempt to maintain consistency between an interpretation of a participant's experience, and the participant's experience as it exists and was relayed by them to the researcher rather than an attempt to completely remove pre-conceived notions, beliefs, and world-view positions from the interpretation.

Various authors offer various means by which researcher's can approach bracketing (Creswell 1994; Polkinghorne 1989; Pollio, Henley, and Thompson 1997; Riemen 1998; Thomas and Pollio 2002; Valle, King, and Halling 1989). The most common of these takes the form of a bracketing interview. A bracketing interview is a fairly formal bracketing process in which the researcher becomes the first person interviewed regarding the research topic. This allows the researcher to experience themselves as a participant, and to reflect on and elaborate on their present understanding of the topic (Pollio, Henley, and Thompson 1997). The purpose is not for the researcher to become objective, but to increase their awareness as to their assumptions and preconceptions regarding the nature and meaning of the phenomenon investigated. Such increased awareness aids the researcher in all further aspects of the research process including their interactive role with participants.

Another method consists of purposeful reflection on the part of the researcher in terms of his/her own specific interests in the research, assumptions about the findings, and experiences relative to the topic. Phenomenologists posit that the researcher is better able to bracket their assumptions and preconceptions regarding a particular phenomenon

by first making such assumptions and preconceptions explicit to one's self (Valle, King, and Halling 1989). Other methods include an emphasis on interpretation in terms of the language used by participants, and the use of a research group during data analysis as previously described (Pollio, Henley, and Thompson 1997; Thomas and Pollio 2002; Valle, King, and Halling 1989).

Analytic rigor has largely to do with the hermeneutic process pattern of going over the data continually, relating pieces to each other, parts to whole, whole to parts, over and over, until a clear picture regarding the essence of the experience emerges. Not all phenomenologists employ a research group such as that used here at UT to assist with analysis, but those who do find the clear perspectives of others critical to their work. Research partners can provide enlightening insights concerning the meaning of text not evident to the researcher, challenge textual interpretations for plausibility and repetitiveness, help in verifying the meaningfulness or importance of various aspects of the experience to a participant, and contribute greatly to the hermeneutic process. Also, via their ongoing relationship with the researcher, the researcher's findings, the researcher's interpretative style, and the researcher's assumptions, values, and presuppositions relative to the topic via their analysis of the researcher's bracketing interview, the research group serves essentially as a jury of one's peers, albeit with more collegial joviality than court room drama.

Other criteria used to judge the reliability and validity of phenomenological studies include examining the relationship quality between participant and interviewer, the rigor of the analysis, and asking the question, "Does this make sense?", "Is it well supported by the data?", "Does this help me to understand something about this topic

better than I did before?”, “Do I feel these results are plausible given what I know of the phenomenon?”. The relationship between the interviewer and the participant should be mutual, after all the quality of the data depends on the quality of this relationship, but it should not be influential. This can be assessed by an experienced group of phenomenological researchers via examination of the interviewers questions in response to the participant’s comments.

Lastly, validity is assessed by answering the questions posed above to the personal satisfaction of the reader, and via the Eureka Factor. The Eureka Factor refers to taking the thematic findings back to the participants for verification. If the themes developed are valid and accurate, participants should be able to locate their experience within them, and say “Yes! Yes, that’s exactly what it’s like!” (Thomas and Pollio 2002).

IV. Research Methods

Study Site

The Emory-Obed watershed on the Cumberland Plateau of East Tennessee exemplifies many of the current issues facing private forestland and private forest landowners. The area is extensively forested primarily in upland hardwood with some pine plantations. Most of the land is held by private landowners, but there are several public holdings including a Wild and Scenic River administered by the National Park Service, a state park, two state forests, a state-managed Wildlife Management Area, and several correctional facilities. Lingering negative feelings and distrust of government amongst residents in the area date back to the government take of private land and the

perceived under valued sales of private lands to the government when these public land areas were created. Subsequently, residents are resistant to further public land designations in the area. Lack of property taxes contributed by this land to communities in Morgan County, and the very concept of “public” land which community members have historically had free access to and now must use following public rules, have also been sources of contention. These issues among others have contributed to a history of distrust of outsiders, “experts”, and especially the government.

The fact that the area is experiencing a great degree of social change amidst this context makes it of particular interest. As the economic feasibility of resource extraction in traditionally resource dependent communities declines, development pressure increases with home developers and retirees moving to the area due to the low cost of living and the many natural amenities it offers. Local politicians, business people, and some residents would also like to see some industry return to the area and actively try to recruit companies to settle there, while others fear the loss of their community integrity, scenic beauty, and environmental health. In a series of Key Informant interviews (N = 18) with local officials, agency representatives, organization heads, and community leaders conducted by members of the UT IFAFS Human Dimensions and Collaborative Planning and Policy (HDCPP) research target areas in the summer of 2002, two small rural communities of Morgan County were identified as exhibiting the forestland, ownership, and community characteristics necessary for the UT IFAFS HDCPP target area projects of which this study is a part.

Study Participants

Private forest landowners within the two study communities were identified via analysis of County Platt maps and property tax records. All PFL's identified and owning greater than 10 acres of "woodland" according to property tax land type categorizations were identified for inclusion in a small telephone screening survey designed to identify non-participant PFL's based on their responses to a series of 14 questions regarding their land management activities and participation levels in landowner educational opportunities and groups. The Human Dimensions Research Lab of the University of Tennessee conducted the survey during August 2002 (Appendix 1). Telephone survey respondents were informed of the voluntary and confidential nature of the survey, and all who responded gave verbal agreement based on Institutional Review Board Human Subjects Research guidelines for telephone survey research (Appendix 2). Survey questions included such things as whether respondents had sold timber in the past or planned to sell timber in the future, whether they had a written management plan for their property, and/or whether they had ever sought the advice or assistance of a professional regarding their forestland or belonged to a landowner organization. One-hundred fifteen PFL's owning at least one parcel greater than or equal to 10 woodland acres were identified in the first community. Of these, 89 had identifiable phone numbers, and 52 completed the telephone survey for a 58% response rate. Ninety-nine PFL's owning at least one parcel greater than or equal to 10 woodland acres were identified in the second community. Of these, 84 had identifiable phone numbers, and 39 completed the telephone survey for a 46% response rate.

Non-participant private forest landowners were identified as those who indicated that they, 1) had never sought advice or assistance concerning their forestland, participated in a landowner educational event, planted trees, used chemicals, pesticides, or fertilizers, planted food plots of vegetation to encourage wildlife, had a timber sale, or removed unwanted vegetation or animals from their forestland, and 2) did not have a management plan, plan to sell timber, or conduct activities to maintain the natural beauty of their forestland. Appendix 3 details the categorization of non-participant PFL's with respect to survey variables. A total of 18 non-participant PFL's willing to be contacted again for further aspects of the study were identified. Eight of these individuals were recruited to participate in the study. Three other individuals were recruited via the snowball method through a community gatekeeper identified during a community visit. These individuals were screened in person via a paper equivalent of the telephone survey. Of these 11 individuals, seven became study participants. Five of the final study participants are male, and two are female. Five (4 male; 1 female) are resident landowners, and two (1 male; 1 female) are absentee landowners. For the purposes of this study, a resident landowner is a landowner who lives within one hour's drive from their forestland property. Two of the men (both residents) are retired from their original careers but remain active either keeping up their homes and property, or with small jobs that keep them busy and keep money coming in, or both. Three (two resident, one absentee) of the men are still working fulltime. Both women are widows, one a retired school teacher, and the other's employment history is unknown although she does not now work outside her home. The results of the interview analysis for these seven non-participant private forest landowners constitute the findings reported here.

Bracketing Interview

My bracketing interview was conducted by a fellow member of the UT Nursing College's Phenomenology Research Group on October 10, 2002 approximately one month prior to the beginning of data collection. The interview was analyzed during three sessions of the UT Nursing College's Phenomenology Research Group following the same analysis protocol described below for analysis of study participants' interviews. Many of the same research group participants were present during analysis of my bracketing interview as were present during analysis of study participants' interviews. As the purpose of the analysis is to make the researcher aware of biases, assumptions, expectations, pre-conceptions etc., unlike during analysis of study participants' interviews, the participant, in this case the researcher, is present to listen to how the group interprets their interview. However, the researcher does not take part in the interpretation. Their role is to observe and listen noting areas and issues which may need to be bracketed during the research process.

JoAnne began by asking me to describe how I became interested in landowners and their experiences of owning land. Following what I said, the conversation led to a description of the research project, my understanding of the issues of private forestland and landowners, my values regarding forestland, my hopes and fears regarding how the project would turn out, my concerns about interviewing rural landowners, my assumptions about what non-participant private forest landowners really think, and other related topics.

Research group members noted how hard I was trying to bracket myself even during my own bracketing interview. Being so aware that I had preconceptions,

assumptions, and fears and hopes regarding the topic and the research process, as well as aware of what some of those issues were, I tried to keep them out of the bracketing interview. This resulted in a great deal of descriptive and explanatory text regarding the project which eventually gave way to, or revealed within, my more personal feelings. Although I was aware, and concerned that I had chosen to stay fairly cerebral during the bracketing interview and had not relayed my most personal stories concerning connections to land, the research group found much that revealed my values, attachments, hopes, fears, assumptions etc. The following are aspects of what I was bringing with me into the research process, and what I attempted to control for during the research:

- A strong desire to have landowners express substantive feelings and opinions concerning their land, and a discomfort with the potential ambivalence landowners may express. I needed to be open to conflicted, ambivalent, and or weak connections to land on the part of the landowner and watch that I did not push them until they told me what I wanted to hear. I found myself reflecting on this during the research process especially as it related to conducting interviews.
- A cognitive hesitancy and discomfort with stereotypes, yet an awareness of the impossibility of removing them completely. I expressed a strong desire to not be swayed by stereotypes, to disown them, yet a natural tendency to fall victim to my own fears concerning them. In other words, despite my hesitancy to follow stereotypes, they inevitably tainted my thinking, hopes, fears, and assumptions. I was cautioned to watch for stereotyping and to realize that landowners will not fall out into the neat categories that I was hoping for and/or expecting.
- Strong personal values related to land conservation and non-commodity values. Idealism and morality expressed concerning the relationship of people to the land.
- A distancing of self from my own ideas of what constituted forestry and the nature, and behavior, of natural resource professionals. In other words, while discussing the dangers and damage of the us/them paradigm between landowners and natural resource professionals, I had created my own between myself and what I thought of as the traditional model for a natural resource professional.

- A willingness and desire, almost to force myself, to approach the work as openly as possible while knowing my own prejudices.
- Angst concerning an ongoing internal process simultaneous to the research process involving existential evaluation and change concerning my place and role in the field, and thus in the research, and within myself.
- A belief that change in the extant relationship patterns between landowners and natural resource professionals was necessary, and a belief that that change would come through dialogue, participatory action/research/education, and collaboration.
- An expectation that non-participant private forest landowner's attachments to their land and values would not differ from those of other landowners.

My bracketing interview revealed that a great deal of analytical thought had already gone on in terms of the research, and that my thinking patterns tended towards cause and effect, linearity, and literalism. I was reminded that I needed to do the work before I could answer the questions, to “start where they are”, and to be open to all the ways the work might go. This analytical work also indicated that I had done a good amount of bracketing myself already, but of course the bracketing interview process revealed many things I was less aware of, or unaware of. At times during the research process I did see bracketing issues coming into play. I did my best to keep them at bay, relied on the research group for help in that regard, and worked my way through the process with my eye on maintaining integrity to the process and the participants who shared their experiences with me.

Data Collection

Descriptions of study participants' experiences with their forestland were gathered using the methods described in the Methodology section above. The study researcher, Miriam Steiner, conducted all interviews. All interviews were conducted in

locations and settings agreeable to the study participants; five were conducted in their homes, and two were conducted at their places of business. Interviews lasted from 35 minutes to 120 minutes. All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim. Human Subjects Research and the Institutional Review Board guidelines of the University of Tennessee were followed (Appendix 4). Study participants were informed of the audio taping, of the voluntary nature of the interview, and were asked to sign a consent form prior to beginning the interview. The researcher, members of the Phenomenology Research Group, UT IFAFS Human Dimensions Collaborative Planning and Policy research group members, and the hired transcriptionist all signed confidentiality forms prior to, or during, their involvement with the study. The specific interview question posed was, “Can you think of two or three, or however many you like, experiences that stand out to you of a time when you were on your land and describe them?”.

Data Analysis

Interviews were analyzed according to the research methods outlined in the Methodology section above. Three interviews were analyzed within the Phenomenology Research Group at UT’s College of Nursing, and four were analyzed with another phenomenology graduate student in the College of Business at UT. Themes were summarized with supporting text and verified with Research Group members.

Assessing Validity

Every attempt was made to ensure that analytic rigor was maintained throughout the research process. A bracketing interview was conducted and analyzed prior to data collection in order to inform the researcher of potential areas in which

personal values, assumptions, beliefs, and expectations might unduly influence the research process. This bracketing interview was reviewed within the UT Nursing College Phenomenology Research Group. Several members of the group were present both at the bracketing interview analysis, as well as during the analysis of study participants' interviews. Via this continuity of research peers throughout the study, the researcher receives consistent feedback concerning interpretation, interviewing style, and comments on bracketing issues. Research group participants not only analyze the study participant's interview looking for the meaning of their experience, but they also examine the researcher's interview technique, provide feedback, and carefully monitor the interpretive process maintaining their awareness of bracketing issues previously discussed. The UT College of Nursing's Phenomenology Research Group exhibits diversity in age, race, and gender, as well as a wide variety of disciplines including nursing, psychology, foreign languages, education, natural resources, and others. Such diversity contributes significantly to improved analysis.

None of the data collected were analyzed solely by the researcher. All transcripts were either brought to the research group for assistance with interpretation, or analyzed with other phenomenological research colleagues. Both aspects serve to provide consistency in analysis, and require that interpretations both "make sense" to others familiar with the research project and are supported by the study participant's words. Thematic findings are currently being reviewed with study participants in order to ensure that each participant can see their experience within the complete thematic description, to provide them with the opportunity to comment on the analysis, and to determine whether the Eureka! Factor has been reached.

Chapter 4: Findings

I. Introduction

Findings from this study can be broken into two major components; findings related to the characteristics of study participants, and findings related to how non-participant private forest landowners experience their land. Findings speak both to the diversity in the NP PFL population and to the similarities and variations in how they experience their land. Six of the seven non-participant private forest landowners interviewed relayed experiences with the land that were fairly similar and basically harmonious. The seventh participant's experience included many notable differences worthy of further examination.

Six major themes describe the ways in which non-participant PFL's experience their land: 1) Connection, 2) Continuity, 3) Power and Awe, 4) Peacefulness and Frustration, 5) Value, 6) Freedom and Control/Constraint. These themes are intricately related cohering in a gestalt, or patterned event, that gives meaning to the experience. More than one theme is represented in many of the participant's supporting statements. However, one theme is generally more figural than the others. At any one time the non-figural themes form the ground against which the figural theme stands out. Figure 2 depicts the thematic relationships that emerged during analysis. Connection was the central and dominant theme for most participants. No differences in the prevalence or prominence of the other themes were noted. It is the relationship amongst themes, rather

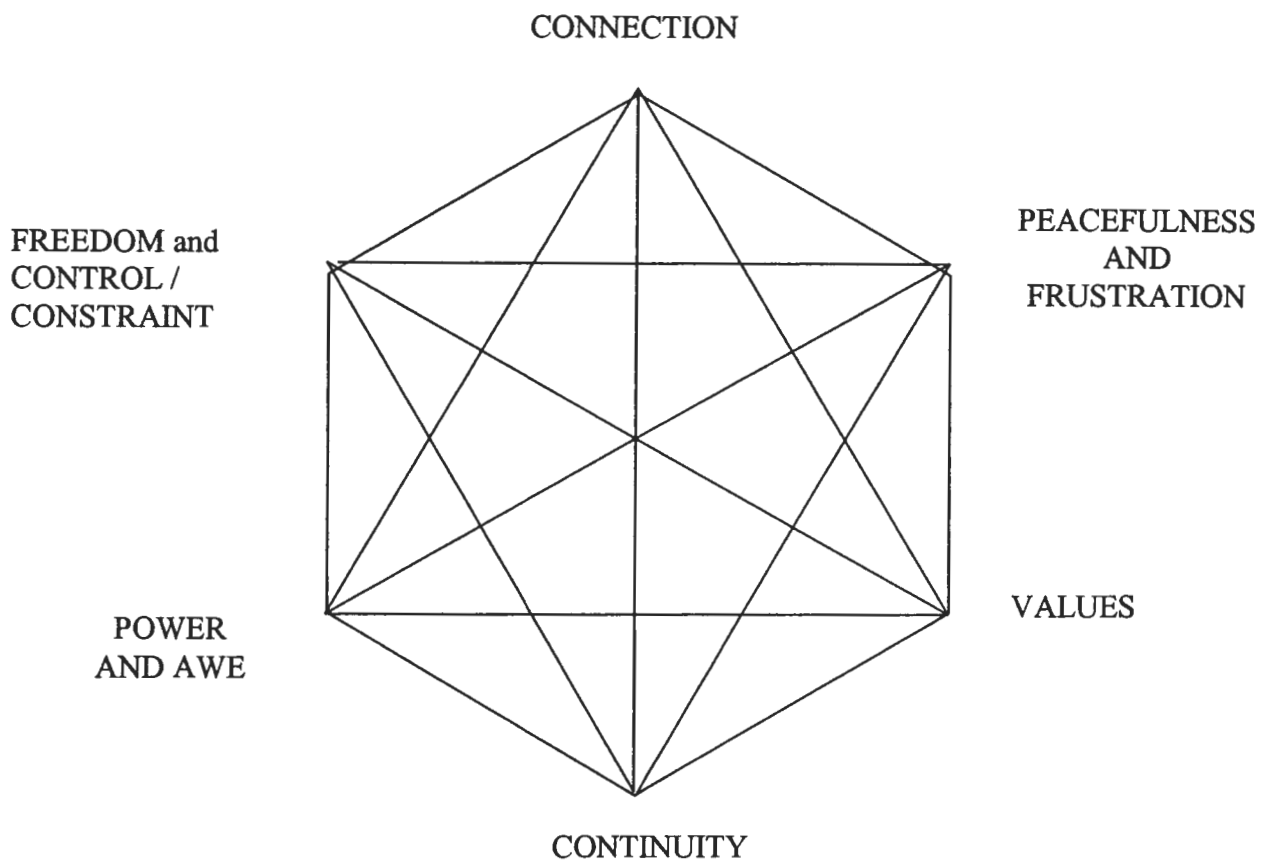


FIGURE 2 – THEMATIC STRUCTURE:
HOW LANDOWNERS EXPERIENCE THEIR LAND

than the themes themselves, that captures the experience of land for these non-participant private forest landowners.

Other notable findings include identifying the language used by non-participant PFL's when describing their lived experience relative to their forestland. Lastly, the phenomenological approach revealed that the activities non-participant private forest landowners undertake on their land may in some cases be more similar to natural resource professionals' traditional definition of management related activities than we, or they, may have thought.

Characteristics of study participants are summarized below. A thematic analysis with participant's supporting statements follows. Other notable findings conclude this section. It is sometimes helpful to include conversation between the interviewer and the landowner. In cases where conversational elements are supplied to illustrate thematic concepts, participant's words start with the first initial of their name. M stands for Miriam, the interviewer.

II. Characteristics of Study Participants

John is retired from a sales position requiring a great deal of traveling and many moves. He is a native of the region, but not the immediate area. He bought the land he now lives on after retirement and enjoys putting around maintaining and improving the property and the proximity to nature and wildlife.

Leland is also retired, and a native of the region but not the immediate area. He spent several decades in the mid-Atlantic before returning to Tennessee. He had wanted

to return for a long time. He keeps busy with a part time job and raises cattle on the property.

Lloyd grew up on the property he owns. His family has a lengthy history there dating back to the Civil War. He now lives in a nearby small city. He owns and runs a manufacturing company in an adjacent county and is very attached to his family land. He looks forward to passing on the land to his heirs.

Ruth had been widowed only a few months before we spoke. It was clear that she missed her husband and mourned the times they had spent together in the woods on their property. She is a native of the immediate area, and a retired school teacher. She shared many reminiscences of growing up on family land, playing and working in the woods, and literally beamed when she spoke of her experiences in the forest.

Davey is another part-time retiree who grew up in the area, sought to return, and has bought land and re-settled there. He described barely being able to stay indoors and of his love for being out in the woods alone.

Bill lives approximately an hour and a half away from his property. He grew up in the immediate area, bought land there in the last few years as an investment, but finds he gets more pleasure out of it than return on his investment and that's just fine with him. He is looking forward to passing on the land to his son.

Hope shares some similarities with the other participants, but she also presented several differences both in terms of her characteristics as a landowner and in terms of the meaning she gives to her experience of her land. Hope lives approximately an hour and a half away from the property she now owns. She inherited the land upon her husband's

death approximately seven years ago. The land had been in his mother's family for many generations and contains the ruins of his family's home place.

Hope's interview was dominated by ambivalence regarding what to do with the land. She frequently contradicted herself. She described her land almost entirely as a business asset, but also stated that she does not need the money. Hope was the only landowner to ask me questions about her land and what I thought she should do about it. She repeatedly asked me if I knew about one particular aspect or another although I consistently declined to provide any sort of definitive answer out of lack of knowledge and respect for the integrity of the research process. Her questioning stance and her statements made it clear that she was looking for advice and assistance in making her decisions, but found it difficult and even threatening to have to go out and seek this advice from others. Her demeanor was one of wariness. She was extremely reluctant to be interviewed and frequently spoke of her inability to trust others. It was unclear whether she was completely aware or unaware of her resource's economic value. It was unclear whether she was aware that an outsider was wooing her by being friendly, interested, and occasionally helpful in hopes that she might leave him the land. She remarked that this was a possibility, but also that he didn't always know what he was doing. Sometimes she expressed a certain savyness, and sometimes she seemed completely bewildered. One can assume that there are other non-participant private forest landowners out there like Hope. Further research to that effect would be an extremely worthwhile pursuit.

Hope's experience represents the opposite pole of several theme's meanings than that described by other participants. For example, Hope is connected to the land through

her loyalty to her late husband, she finds value in the land as a commodity and as a source of active interest in her life by others, she experiences Freedom in her role as owner, and exerts Control. However, she is the only participant representing the Lack of Connection to Family, Lack of Connection to Nature, and Lack of Connection to Place poles of the Connection theme and sub-themes. She is also the only participant to describe Continuity in terms of a break in continuity as she discusses having no heirs to whom to leave the land. The Power and Awe meaning she experiences in the land is framed entirely negatively in terms of nature, for example in the form of a white pine, being “monstrous”, “tremendous”, and “dwarfing” her world. And she finds only Frustration in the Peacefulness and Frustration theme. All the other non-participants made specific reference to the peaceful aspect of this theme using words such as, “relaxing/relaxation”, “solitude”, “peaceful”, and “stillness.” Hope made no reference to this aspect of Peacefulness and Frustration at all. In relation to this theme, the land does not mean peace and quiet for Hope, but rather headaches and having to make difficult decisions.

III. Thematic Analysis

Theme One: Connection

Connection is the central theme in non-participant private forest landowners’ experience of their land, forming the core and starting point of their experiences. Private forestland facilitates connections. For NP PFL’s their land is a physical embodiment of psychological ties, much as a memento, or a special object, embodies a person, place, or time. In this case, land has the ability to bring people, memories, times, activities, shared

moments, etc. to the fore. Land provides a psychological nexus through which these are made figural to the landowner, and the land is made figural for the landowner through these connections. The theme of Connection includes loss of connection or lack of connection as well. Several sub-themes emerge including Connection to Family/Others, Connection to Place, and Connection to Nature/Communion.

Connection Sub-theme One: Connection to Family/Others

Connection to Family/Others is summarized well by Lloyd's statement, ". . . we go back there and share that together." You are connected to others through the land, and you are connected to the land through others. The land is a vehicle or tool that facilitates these relationships. The connections thus formed can be quite powerful. The following quotes from Lloyd and Hope respectively help to support this theme.

- Well, there was family and neighbors and whatever and they came and visited. In fact, I saw one of those, one of the guys about two weeks ago at the funeral home that I hadn't seen in probably 30 years and he was tellin' about comin' to our house and he said, "I can 'member wrestlin' with you and your mother a fixin' those dinners at that farm house, you know and all those things." And uh, there is just uh, it, it was kinda like open house to tell you the truth, to visitors, to people, neighbors, all that come to see us. (Lloyd)
- H - Well, it's that it belonged to my husband uh and his family. You know you, I really have uh_I don't really_I'm not using it and I don't really need it but uh it belonged to him uh and uh I'd like to keep it but, of course, nobody wants it nobody wants it but me. I don't have any children to leave it to so uh.
M - And what would keeping it, what would that__ ?
H - It's well. I don't really know. Uh, he wouldn't want me to sell, so uh, but sooner or later, uh I guess I will have to because the person I leave it to will sell it, won't they? (laughs) (Hope)

Connection to family/others manifests itself in several ways; in activities that they do together, both recreational and work related, in epical events they gather for and mark on the land, by connecting people to others who are gone, sometimes as a desire for

privacy, sometimes in a negative manner, sometimes a lack of connection is noted. The following statements from participants illustrate these variations.

- We, we raised gardens and stuff on that property, and uh, and uh actually farmed some corn and that kinda thing and and uh, raised uh cattle and we all participated in it. (Lloyd)
- We've had three family reunions here . . . And my, this last one my son, my middle son, had just gotten married uh, so they had their, we had a preacher come out and they had uh redid the wedding out here by this little pond and it was pretty wedding. (Leland)
- My husband and I used to uhm, before Christmas would go out and gather hemlock and holly and, and these little_ [pineys] . . . And Jack and I took our lunch that day, ate in the woods, and just you know walked up the streams and, and, and got the hemlock, and the holly and, and we, we were gone all day_ . . . and just, it was just, it was great. (Ruth)
- One bad experience, well I'm, I'm still havin' it, is with the Federal Government. . . . we'll probably be in a lawsuit over a parcel of land. I tried to contact 'em. They bought some land off another individual, and that individual ain't got a tag-clear title for it. I tried to talk to 'em about this problem, and I called the lady in . . . Atlanta, the one that was over this, . . . And I called her 4 to 6 times and talked to her about it. And finally she told me she said, ah, there's ah, well, what I told 'em I said, "Hey" I said, 'There'll probably, if it goes the way it's goin there'll probably be a lawsuit over it" and I say, I said ah, "The Federal government's gonna lose most likely in the long run." She finally has said, "Well, we don't care one way or the other" said uh "our insurance will cover it." . . . she was over purchasin' in the southeastern United States when this_ This is a scenic river. . . . Well, they had no consideration of uh_, they come through and cut the lines across me, and didn't inform me or nothin' of it. So, uh, about 6 months later I just went out where my line goes, where the deed calls for, I just strung a fence and I went all the way into the [inaudible] here. Uh, the guy called me back, and uh, made the statements they ah, said uh, it'd be, been a courtesy of uh, courtesy of you if you would've informed us of this before you done it. That didn't_ I don't know how far you think courtesy should go. . . . I said you went and tacked a line all way across me and not only that; I was good enough to tell your surveyors how to get in and out. They went across my fields to get in and out. And I said well I wasn't informed of nothin' what they was doin'. And that was about the end of that conversation. . . . It's [the situation] still pendin', still hangin' there, still pendin'. But uh what got me, it, it ain't that they, about the situation thing, it's just that the Federal Government wouldn't listen. They never sent no one to talk to me. And uh, you know, I think

that's, that's pretty fair, uh situation of what the government does anyway. . . . I mean that they have very little_ I don't think they have a consideration for individuals. . . . what gets me is that, Hey, I'm a taxpayer_ and here they are, ah wind up in a lawsuit suin' me and using my tax money for payin' for insurance. . . . And that they would you know_, they, they didn't even offer to sit down and discuss it . . . (Davey)

- D - I like my privacy. . . . I like to hunt and fish. Yeah, well I don't fish as much anymore as I did, used to did but I still hunt quite a bit on it, ah. . . . And so does everybody else. (Laughs). . . . I guess, I guess everybody in the neighborhood does. I mean ah most of the time you know who's in there. . . .

M – So what do you like about the hunting and the privacy?

D – Just a bein' out, bein' alone. . . . Privacy I mean. Just bein' alone. (Davey)

- Actually, I think it's safe. I think the people are_ they're not like we are but I think_ I do not think they are dangerous, . . . (Hope)
- You know, it is, because of some of the things that that you know you're not gonna go back through but you'd love to go back through 'em. You know, people take their life for granted ever' day. We're gonna do this tomorrow, we're gonna do that and when you go through this, you, you say, "Hey, I can't go back through that anymore." And that's that is sad, it's emotional when you think about it, you know. You'd love to be able to do it with the same people, but they're gone, you know, so it's just not possible to do that so pick up and do the best you can with whatcha got left. . . . But uh, it's, it's not easy sometimes. (Lloyd)

Connection Sub-theme Two: Connection to Nature/Communion

Connection to Nature/Communion is best represented by John's statement, "The closer I get the better, the better I like it." For non-participant PFL's, to experience their land is to experience an intimacy with nature leading, at times, to a sense of communion. Hope was the only participant to describe a Lack of Connection with nature, but for the others, this connection was universally positive and satisfying as described below.

- J - Well I, I always enjoy it. . . . if I'm driving the Blazer, of course the deer'll take off, but the deer's getting' to where they don't run anymore, they, they see me I guess down there every day, and hear the, either the quad or the Blazer every day and ah, a lot of times they may go a little, a

few feet off in, in behind trees but they don't take off or anything and ah, ah, those ah, . . . I haven't seen it recently but there was a coon down there at the pond, and I could go out and sit down on the dam and ah it just come right up to the, you know right in front of me, and ah, at the water's edge and just stuff like that.

M – What's it like for you when you are so close to, so close to [inaudible]?

J – Oh, I just sit, sit real still and watch it until they go on. [clears throat] But I like, I like that kind of stuff.

M – And what do you like about it?

J - Yeah, ah I like, ah, I mean it'd be fine with me if I could get close enough to pet 'em you know. The closer I get the better, the better I like it. And then we've got some people around here that are hunters so, [pause] I've actually been letting a deer live right down in here in this area, this [points out window and down hill], that way ----- , ahhhh, --- right now there's ah two grown ones and three small ones living pretty much right, right off the hill here. They eat a tree every once, one of my trees every once in a while but ah, a, a shrub, but ah, really don't have that much trouble with them. (John)

- Well you know I used to_ When I lived in Maryland, I used to love to deer hunt, but since I've been here I can't hardly kill'em. Too pretty [chuckling a little] you know_, I, I don't, I don't hunt much any more, you know. I just hate to kill a deer anymore. (Leland)
- . . . I think being close to the river makes it special . . . (Bill)
- . . . we all got seed ticks and chiggers . . . we weren't really out there that long and it was hot (Hope)

Connection Sub-theme Three: Connection to Place

Connection to Place is well represented by Leland's statement, "I'm more satisfied here than any place I've ever been. . . . best thing to bein' in heaven . . . "

Non-participant PFL's locate themselves in the world in relation to their experiences on/with the land especially if they have grown up there, or raised a family there. The land itself becomes a nexus for their memories and serves as a physical representation of ties to ancestors and future generations. Being in this place enables landowners to be

with people, and experience times, that are gone. It has the power to bring these people and experiences back or to bring the landowner to them again. This theme also develops land as a place of genesis and return. The land is an anchoring force that can tell you who you are and where you belong.

- L - See I, I was raised in Tennessee over in Lakeville on a small farm over there 'bout about 50, 60, 70 acres. And then when I was 18 years old, I left and went to uh, Baltimore - and got a job at the Electric Company, stayed there for 30 years. Well I stayed, I worked for them for 30 years. I retired and I stayed up there for six more years. And I moved back. I always wanted to come back you know to farm somewhere but I didn't think I could ever afford one. But uh, I'd bought a place up there with a house and one acre, of uh land. Got ready to move down here, I had told my brother-in-law that lives down in Hankton, I, I told him about three or four years before that, you know that, to kinda keep his, his eye open for me a place down here. I was wantin' about 10 to 15 acres, is what I wanted. He called me one day and says, "Man, I found you a place" and I said, "Yeah? What kind of place?" He said, "It's a farm." I said, "How big?" He said, "130 acres." (Laughs) I couldn't _ I said, "I don't need *that* much land." "I'll tell you what" he said, "you oughta, you oughta see it, you oughta hear the price of it first." And he told me the price and I couldn't believe what, what the price was you know. I don't need that much he said, we could put cattle on it, says I'd go, I'd help ya, we could go in 50/50 on the cattle, raisin' cattle. I said "OK, I'll come down and look at it." So I came down and this old house was just, dilapidated, I didn't think my wife would, would go for it. I thought maybe if we did buy it I'd just tear it down and uh build a new one. We bought it. (both laugh) And uhm I just love to, love it out here you know it's _ I'm more satisfied here than any place I've ever been. You know anybody that's ah, been raised in the country I guess you know, really likes it. I mean they don't, they don't know what they're missing until they get back. But it's just uh, sorta like being on vacation all the time to me. Ah, it's a lot of work, you know, it keeps me busy. Of course, I gotta, I've got that little ah school bus driving job too down in_ It don't take all my time away from the farm. See I make my run of the mornin' and, still got all day just about to fool around here and work. And uh as far as being on the property is concerned, best thing to bein' in heaven, bein' in heaven. (Laughs)

M - Really?

L - You know just livin' here. I, I love it here. Uh, people, had a lotta people say "how can you stand it back here?" you know. I said it's bein'

on vacation, you know a lot of people go, to uh leave the city to, to find solitude and everything well we've got it right here.

M – You said it's satisfying_

L – Yes, it's very satisfying.

M – _what's satisfying about it?

L – Just bein' back here, you know, enjoyin' the, the view, the fresh air, get out and walk around with animals, and . . . go huntin' any time I want to. I've got - four ponds. They're all got fish in 'em and I go fishin' any time I want to. And it's just, you know it's, it's right here, anything I want to do is right here just about. Uh, of course, the stores are all kinda far away but that don't bother me that much. (Leland)

- . . . and I can 'member my dad carryin' me around on that property. . . . You know, and I can 'member me and his was standin' _ I have a picture of it today, of us standin' in uh, in uh a field where he had raised oats and uh they were up so high and I can just barely see my head but uh me and my dad standin' there. . . . And it's _ there's just a whole lot of good memories. (Lloyd)

Again, Hope illustrates the opposite end of the spectrum for us; Lack of Connection to place. For Hope “. . . we were here, and that was there” She elucidates her lack of connection further in the following two quotes.

- “I have not been there very much; in fact, I've only been there twice in the last uh thirteen years, fourteen years, so I don't really have an awful lots of experiences. . . . Well, part of it is because if I go I have to go by myself and I don't – it's rural definitely – uh you know Morgan County and uh I don't _ really am comfortable with going by myself but uh uh mostly when you go, (chuckle) you get chiggers (chuckles) and ticks . . . “
- Well, I really don't have any great experiences uh on the land. There is nothin' there really. There is uh no buildins' and uh actually Morgan County really doesn't have even restrooms and uh places to eat.

Theme Two: Continuity - “. . . the family members all kept comin’ back there.” and

“. . . there’s always something living in those dirt piles . . . “

Non-participant private forest landowners find continuity in their land in two ways; personal and natural. Continuity in Nature captures the way non-participant private forest landowners experience their land as an entity that lives and dies and is reborn again. To experience their land is to be integrated with the cycles of life and death in nature. These two experiences of continuity through the land are frequently inter-related.

Continuity Sub-theme One: Personal Continuity

Several landowners discussed passing on their land to their children and/or grandchildren. The meaning of passing on the land was far more than physical. The land is a conduit through which they pass on their own experience of it. For example, Lloyd talked about repeating an adventure with his own grandson that he had had with his father. In relaying the story, he recalls it’s presence throughout his own life as well.

- There’s a uh, uh_ in the very back of the property, not on our property, but it’s on the edge of our property, there is a uh, uh a rock house, what we call a rock house back there that, that my great great grandfather kept horses in during the Civil War. . . . And my dad_ I can ‘member my dad carryin’ me, takin’ me there one Sunday afternoon. I’d heard_ they’d told me about it and I said I wanted to see this so he took me there one Sunday afternoon and I just told my youngest grandson the other day that I was gonna carry him out there and uh show him that uh rock uh and he got so excited about it. You know, I still haven’t done it but he really got excited about it. . . . But it’s_ I’ve heard the story ever since I was real small.

Ruth has also been able to pass on her experience of the land to her grandchildren. Not only has Ruth been able to pass on her literal experience of the land to her

granddaughter in terms of digging up plants, but she has been able to pass on her love of that activity.

- I have dug up uh ferns and, and brought to the house to set out and now I have a granddaughter that does the same thing. She, she doesn't live here, she lives in Idaho but she, she al_, they also live in a, uh on a big farm and woods and so she goes out and does pretty much what, what I've done. And loves it.

Bill found a sense of internal continuity in his experience of the land when he remarked that rafting on the river bordering his property was "Like bein' a kid again."

So the land is actually able to alter the very experience of time for an individual.

Ironically, Lloyd also commented that he wanted to stop time, to hold it still, and preserve his experience of land as a moment in time even while recognizing that that was not possible, the desire to do so was very strong.

- Yes, it ties back to generations before me. We would like to be able to keep it as close to that same state it was back years ago. Of course, a lot of things have changed but uh, uh we still like the surroundings to be as much as it could like it used to be. I mean it was rural farm land you know and it was really a home, homey place and uh, uh, I uh guess, 'member my mother and dad when I was young and how they farmed the land and uh raised gardens that uh kind of thing; uh I would just like to be able to go out there and see that land in the same state it was then. Of course, it won't always be that way and it's not always that way but uh as much as it could possibly be.

Although she did discuss continuity, Hope was the only participant to discuss discontinuity.

- H - Well, it's that it belonged to my husband uh and his family. You know you, I really have uh_ I don't really_ I'm not using it and I don't really need it but uh it belonged to him uh and uh I'd like to keep it but, of course, nobody wants it nobody wants it but me. I don't have any children to leave it to so uh.
M - And what would keeping it, what would that__ ?

H – It's well. I don't really know. Uh, he wouldn't want me to sell, so uh, but sooner or later, uh I guess I will have to because the person I leave it to will sell it, won't they? (laughs)

Continuity Sub-theme Two: Natural Continuity

In relaying experiences of natural continuity in their land, landowners almost always start with stories of the death, or chaos, or disorder they have experienced on their land via nature. However, they all recognize that the meaning of death in nature is new life. They find that their land is already healing itself as Hope said, or that "it'll grow up" in the future as John described. They also note, as John did in this sub-theme's representative quote, that life and death are not just cyclical, but integrated, sometimes existing simultaneously as "there's always something living in those dirt piles." The following statements provide further support for the sub-theme of natural continuity.

- . . . it had pretty much healed itself by the time we went back up there. You know the grass comes out, and uh still see the skeleton of dead tress uh, . . . (Hope)
- Now we have to go down the road and in because all of this is [points out window] cut off with trees that's down that I haven't cut. Ah, the storm, when they got the tornado down in Mableton, we got some pretty high winds here too, it blowed a lot of the dead pines down and stuff, and I haven't, worked on that part of it yet but, ah, we, we enjoy it. And ah like I say when the new growth gets up, especially, there's a lot of white pines down there, 6 and 8 foot tall, stuff like that, one of these days, probably not in my time but in my son's time, why it'll, it'll grow up. (John)

The following statements support the over-arching experience of Continuity, and show how personal and natural continuity are integrated in NP PFL's experience of their land.

- There is some forest on there. . . . But it's almost been destroyed with, with the beetles. It's about took care of all the timber. . . . It's sad, it really is sad. It's really__ To go back there and and see it even before you get there and the other land around it is the same way, it's just__

They've taken tractors, and, or graders and just graded the timber down and dozed it down to keep it off the power lines and roads and what not so it's really a sad lookin' situation and even the ones that standin'. We had timber that went, or had white pines that was in front of the old home place and all those I had to cut because they were just__ They just died and started fallin' and it was just__ Of course, that really changed part of the looks of the place and my dad__ I 'member my dad settin' those pines out. . . . But they were huge, you know, and they were really a front for it but they're they're all gone now. . . . [It was] Terrible. . . . It was just the memory of of again my dad__ I lost him four years ago and uh And I can remember him settin' those trees out there, you know, and we always looked at 'em as his and that was one of the real terrible things. (Lloyd)

- . . . I hope_ I want to pass some property on down to my uh, my son and I don't know what it'll be worth at some point. But I think ultimately property of any kind anywhere, uh I mean it's not a lot of land in a way, but uh still it's, it's beautiful; flows nicely down to the river uh, and the uh trees that are on there_it's been_the pines have been devastated by the pine beetle but the hardwoods are in great shape. And it's best_I hope_ the trees had been harvested when I purchased the property but it so they gradually have come back and I think in another 10 to 20 years it should uh, it'd really be beautiful and be a lot of nice trees on it. (Bill)

Theme Three: Power and Awe - "The woods'll make you feel small."

For non-participant private forest landowners their land possesses the power of nature. Landowners are both humbled and awed by this power that is revealed to them through their land. Non-participant private forest landowners describe power and awe as follows:

- And then the next thing I guess was the winter of '93. Came a big snowstorm, I don't think there was a road in Morgan County that wasn't blocked off . . . electricity was off for a week; 6 days really. And uh, we was sittin' back here and I, I had asthma at that time real bad, and I couldn't hardly do anything. I couldn't get out and start up the driveway and I guess there was a dozen or more trees across the driveway. Got one out and that was as far as I could go 'the snow was that deep anyway. [coughs] The fire hall finally had to come in after about 3 or 4 days they finally came in and cut the driveway out for me. (Leland)

- . . . and of course my husband was, before he died, he, he wanted to do_ he wanted to cut some of the trees that had been infested with the beetles, and uh so I would go watch him and the guy that was helping you know cut the trees and it's, it's not_ we didn't wanta really cut'em. It was just you know either cut them or let them just die. And uhm, that, you know that too it, it was a sad feeling and yet it was_ it was uhm, an awesome feeling to see those big trees fall . . . (Ruth)
- The woods'll make you feel small. . . . (Laughs) You just think how long the trees and everythin's been round, how long you been round_ . . . How much space you take up, how much space they take up_ . . . ah, hey, most individuals will never make a mark in this world. This earth, never make a mark on it. And you get to the place where you look out, where you see miles and miles, and not see houses, or roads, or anything_ . . . There's places in behind where I live that you see I guess for a mile or two, you don't see nothin' but houses, Harrison River_ . . . (Davey)
- . . . one time uh this was a long, long time ago when we lived in Hankton, uh I wanted some Dogwood trees and uh, well there's not a nursery in Hankton so I uh said, "Well, we'll just go the farm and get some." Well, we couldn't find any worth diggin' up, but we did find a White pine and we brought it back, so uh_. We did that, and uh, uh, oh it was a monstrous big tree. I imagine they cut it back down by now. . . . the last time I was in Hankton it had uh_, it was uh, dwarfed the house totally and it's a lot bigger than any of these white pines around here, but I, I uh_, it, it had a tremendous trunk uh so I'm sure they cut it down because uh, but I haven't been back, been back to Hankton in a long time either. (Hope)

Theme Four: Peacefulness and Frustration - ". . . dead trees all over the place. Can't hardly get through the woods anymore." vs. ". . . it just brings a peacefulness . . ."

Another common theme describing what their land means to non-participant private forest landowners is that of Peace and Frustration. Being a landowner means having to deal with the "headaches" of responsibility, negotiation, and decision making as Hope describes. Ownership of land can also create friction with others as Davey discovered in his boundary dispute with the government (See Theme One: Connection to Family/Others). At other times the land throws annoying obstacles in your way, and

brings down your hard work and fences. The land can also lay waste to well made plans.

Participants describe the Frustration aspect of this theme below.

- Well, sometimes I think it wouldn't be any of these headaches. (Laughs) You know, uh it's under contract for minerals – minerals, oil, and gas but there's just_ so uh that's a problem. The, the man is not uh working properly uh. He's uh not working to make it, well, produce and if someone wants to buy it it gets real involved. (Hope)
- There was some good stands of timber and stuff on it but the pine beetles there's nothin' left now. (Laughs). . . . Well I, I was, I was planin' on usin' part of it for my retirement [laughs], but it just didn't work. (Laughs) We lost all the paper and pulp wood. We got about ah half of the big mature trees, ah when I'm talking, when I am talking mature I'm talking about a large white pine. We got about half to two-thirds of it, of it out. . . . Well, we probably got it, most of it out, but we did not ah, we did not get market value for it because of the situation they's in. Yeah, we probably recovered, we were, probably recovered a fourth of it, a fourth to a half of it. We lost the other, we probably lost, probably \$100,000 worth. . . . Well I hate to see_ I hate that's the way it is_ . . . I mean you saw dead trees, I mean (laughs) it's just a big log pile, log pile, I mean everthin' just fell down crossways. I had about two mile of fence and all of it's down. That's on account of the pine beetles. And, it's gonna be another 40 years before it grows back up. . . . The trees grow back to the size they were. (Davey)
- Trees are falling on the fences. And we had that, those beetles came through and killed all the pine trees - so I've got dead pines all over . . . Just those trees really, you know, dead trees all over the place. Can't hardly get through the woods anymore. Used to we could go through you know pretty good but now it's, it's all trees everywhere down back in there. . . . But it's a mess back there now so many trees down. (Leland)

While dealing with the land can be frustrating for non-participant PFL's, it also brings great peace, comfort, and pleasure. To be on the land is to experience relaxation, and a "sense of stillness" as Lloyd describes. The land itself is described as peaceful, or as being able to bring peace to the landowner. As Leland says, "it's the best thing to bein' in heaven." The following quotes further illustrate the peaceful aspect of this theme.

- . . . it's relaxing . . . (John)
- But it's just uh, sorta like being on vacation all the time to me. . . . And uh as far as being on the property is concerned, best thing to bein' in heaven, bein' in heaven. (Laughs) . . . You know just livin' here. I, I love it here. Uh, people, had a lotta people say "how can you stand it back here?" you know. I said it's bein' on vacation, you know a lot of people go, to uh leave the city to, to find solitude and everything well we've got it right here. (Leland)
- . . . oh when you have a bad day, you can walk those those woods and, you know, those fields and whatever and it just seems to clear your mind of a lot of things. . . . I can 'member I used to do some farmin' there of a night even after I got married and I can 'member farmin' there and bein' on a tractor of a night and seein' deer in the field while I was, while I was a plowin' you know and there's just uh, there's just a sense of, of stillness about that. (Lloyd)
- it, it brings just, it just brings uh uh a peacefulness, a joy, uh. It's relaxin'. (Ruth)
- . . . but it's peaceful, peaceful and quiet. (Davey)
- . . . It's just very quiet, peaceful, trees, grass, birds, squirrels. It's very nice. . . . Just simple pleasure. (Bill)

Theme Five: Value - " . . . we had different things that we did for pastime and that property served a lot of those . . . "

To be a non-participant landowner means to experience your land as of value, to get something out of it. That something is diverse, but the value laden and intense nature of it is common. Values described ranged from purely utilitarian expressions of value regarding ways in which landowners use the land, to statements that their sense of enjoyment from the land was worth far more than any monetary value of it. Landowners described using and valuing their land for farming, for retirement income, for investment purposes, for recreating, for gathering with friends and family, for the enjoyment of

puttering around outside and keeping busy, for the pleasure of being on the land, for relaxation, for refreshment, for wildlife viewing, etc. This theme is supported as follows.

- We, we raised gardens and stuff on that property, and uh, and uh actually farmed some corn and that kinda thing and and uh, raised uh cattle and we all participated in it. (Lloyd)
- . . . actually I just purchased land to uh, to hold. I don't have really, have any intent at least at this point in time to do anything development wise . . . (Bill)
- I've been cuttin' timber off of it off and on – swag cuttin' I guess you would call it. Uh for the last 20 years. . . . Well, it's just ah, it's just another income. Another in_, well it's ano_, it well, it's another income. It's somethin' to do. And I like to be outside, like to be doin' things. (Davey)
- we would go down to the river, they would carry this tub of clothes down to the river and he would fish, and she would fry potatoes, and, and open a can of pork and beans, and uh then, then she would she would wash and the daughter and I uh rinse, uh help rinse the clothes and then we swam, and, and uh played around, and fished a little bit. So that's one; that's a good memory. Uh, we had a lot of fun. It, it doesn't sound like fun but, maybe, but it *was*. . . . It was just a, a sweet, um lovin' time. (Ruth)
- D - No, just payin' taxes. (P and wife laugh). . . . This county has got some high taxes too. (Laugh) . . . I think they're about the, probably about the highest in the state (laughs) . . . I think they are . . . school base. Schools is supported by land tax_ property tax.
M – Does the tax being so high, does that affect your ahm, does that impact your owning the land at all in any way?
D – No, I don't, I don't think it does. Not as long as I get that much joy out of it so (Laughs) (Davey)
- Extreme joy. A lot of fun and pleasure. . . . Just from being there. (Bill)
- Well, uh some of this is diversification of investment. Uh I do have uh various other investments in things. I would say that the land honestly probably gives me more pleasure than the others just uh and I'm not sure why but uh just the_got stocks and bonds and those go up and down in value uh. It's just something about uh_you know, I don't know; it's emotional. It's not appreciated in some cases as much as_it has to be appreciated, but it's, it's not, I don't know. It's an esoteric thing owning it. The fact that it's in Morgan County is nice and uh because I really

think that's a gorgeous part of the world and it's a really pretty piece of property. It's very nice in there so uh but really it's more the uh just the value just knowing that it's there, I don't know. . . . Really far beyond any kind of monetary worth, I guess. (Bill)

Theme Six: Freedom and Constraint/Control - "... it's just like a bird loose when you get there, . . . you're just free to do . . . " vs. "... checking fences . . . "

Freedom, Constraint, and Control are entwined for NP PFL's. To be a non-participant private forest landowner means to be free to do, or not do, as you please, and/or to decide, or not decide and let be, as you please. Ironically, to decide freely is to be in control; two seemingly juxtaposed qualities. Furthermore, it is only within the constraint of socially prescribed boundaries or borders that NP PFL's can experience such freedom. Within these borders they describe strong desires to control what happens, including the desire to keep nature from getting out of control. Many of the landowners in this study frequently mentioned fence lines, boundaries, and borders. Maintaining one's line in the sand between freedom (inside your property) and the absence of freedom (outside your property) occupies much time and thought for non-participant private forest landowners. Freedom, Constraint, and Control can be seen in non-participants descriptions of their experiences.

- Yes, it ties back to generations before me. We would like to be able to keep it as close to that same state it was back years ago. Of course, a lot of things have changed but uh, uh we still like the surroundings to be as much as it could like it used to be. I mean it was rural farm land you know and it was really a home, homey place and uh, uh, I uh guess, 'member my mother and dad when I was young and how they farmed the land and uh raised gardens that uh kind of thing; uh I would just like to be able to go out there and see that land in the same state it was then. Of course, it won't always be that way and it's not always that way but uh as much as it could possibly be. (Lloyd)

- Well, it's uhm, ah on this one piece of property, we have uh, we had a pasture, uh I mean we had, well we had it sowed down for hay and we, we took hay up off of that. And uhm the, there was vehicles, 4-wheelers, or whatever, would just drive out and all in the field and uh sometimes they may have been poachin' deers uh, but anyway whatever the reason, they were just makin' makin' roads in the fields. And uh I couldn't understand that because you know why, why does anyone want to mess up someone's hay field? And uh, I don't know. The, the least I think one can do if they want to get on someone's property is at least ask permission. They just don't have to go and, and be destructive. . . . It was_ It made me angry uh because I thought what right have you to come in here and, and mess our hay field up. You know there's other places to drive around or to do your 4-wheeling, or whatever you want to do without getting in our hay field. (Ruth)
- Anyway it was my turtle. . . . The one I threw the rock at. (Hope)
- And, like I say, you know there's no, no pressure, no nothin', just, just whatever comes up. And that's one of the reasons that I retired was to be able to have that type situation because I was, I was on the road when I worked. In fact I was hardly, if I got to be home one day a week that was quite a bit so, . . . And, and during the time that I worked, I worked with a heavy equipment manufacturer and ah we moved quite a few times, different places, someplace, sometimes we's move back to the same place and so forth, but ah. And that, [sighs] I worked to be able to do that so to retire, and be able to stay at home. (John)
- . . . and that openness. Like I said, you could go and just walk and, you know, I think, I think that is just great to be able to do that, you know. . . . Where most people have to go to a park to do that and share it with somebody, we didn't even have to do that, you know. We was fortunate enough to be able to do it on our own and go where we need to and uh you know, and do things that we really like to do without even, without any interference at all . . . (Lloyd)
- I don't have to do anything one way or the other. (Hope)

IV. Other Findings

The phenomenological approach, with its emphasis on using study participants' own words to describe the phenomenon of interest in "richly nuanced" detail, revealed

the fact that although non-participant PFL's do engage in activities that could be considered management related, they do not speak with the same terminology that members of the natural resources professions might use to describe these activities (Pollio, Henley, and Thompson 1997). For example several study participants described situations involving cutting down trees, most frequently due to pine beetle damage, but Hope, the most business/money oriented study participant, was the only NP PFL to use the words "manage" or "management" during her interviews. She did so in only reference to how others had managed, or could manage, the financial and business aspects of her property and not in reference to any sort of forest management as a natural resource professional might define and/or understand it. Furthermore, six out of seven study participants responded during the screening survey that, in their own opinion, they did not manage their forestland. What study participants did do was refer to cleaning up and maintaining their property to the extent that vegetation around homes does not grow up and paths and roads remain clear. They also expressed a desire to deal effectively with pine beetle damage and other sick or dying trees such that their living trees do not become infected. John described making decisions about what kind of wood he will and will not use for firewood. He preferred to use only dead wood that was already down and lying on the ground. This wood was "in the way" anyway. He did not want to cut living trees because he figured if they had lived that long and made it through all the storms and all the years then he might as well let them keep on living there. John also talked about "improving" his property in terms of how ditches drain and how it looks in terms of debris and brush. He also expressed a desire to have a "quality type" of forest meaning he wanted to have many different species of trees growing representing all the diversity

(my word, not his) of the region although he had no clear plan to do that, or as to how to do that, it was more of just an idea. Again, these types of decisive actions on the land could be considered management decisions although even by our definition of management in screening study participants these activities would not have been considered management.

Chapter 5: Discussion

I. Introduction

Private forest landowners have been studied in many ways; primarily in terms of their land ownership characteristics and management motivations. Findings from these studies reveal that most private forestland is not in active management, and that most PFL's are not aware of the education, information, and assistance programs that have been designed for them. Recognizing the importance of PFL's as the social and biological landscape of forestland changes, foresters have turned greater attention to understanding these owners of the majority of U.S. forestland. Non-participant PFL's are of particular concern because they represent the majority of private forest landowners, have historically been least understood by natural resource professionals, and have been the least represented in previous studies and findings.

Using an existential phenomenological approach this study describes how non-participant private forest landowners' experience their forestland and how they make meaning from these experiences. Seven study participants provided thick descriptions capturing the intimate, personal, and profound nature of their experiences. Six major and inter-related experiential themes were identified including 1) Connection, 2) Continuity, 3) Power and Awe, 4) Peacefulness and Frustration, 5) Value, 6) Freedom and Control/Constraint. The study also revealed interesting differences among study participants' characteristics as non-participant private forest landowners, the language these NP PFL's use to describe their life world relative to their experience of their

forestland, and an understanding of the types of activities that non-participant private forest landowners do engage in on their land. These findings both support and challenge those found in the literature. A discussion of these findings, their relationship to those found in the literature, and an elaboration of their implications for practice and research follow.

II. Discussion

Thematic Analysis

Non-participant private forest landowners in this study primarily experienced their land as providing, sustaining, stabilizing, and solidifying connections. In addition to the central theme of Connection, non-participant private forest landowners' experience of their land included experiences of Peacefulness, Power and Awe, Continuity, Freedom, and a range of Values. The land can also Constrain landowners and cause Frustration, while simultaneously allowing them to exert Control over their environment.

Experiencing their land provides access to an entity capable of providing answers to questions such as "who am I?" and "where do I belong?". Non-participant private forest landowners locate themselves in the world in relation to their experiences on or with their land, especially if they have grown up there, or raised a family there. The land is a nexus for their memories and serves as a physical representation of the ties to their ancestors and their future generations. Being on the land, or even just thinking about it and describing experiences they have had there, can take them back to times and people who are gone. As described in the Human Experience and Meaning of Land literature,

non-participant PFL's experience their land as place not space. It has "become the location of cultural meaning" (List and Brown 1996).

Land and culture were also found to be inseparable in Wagner's (2002) ethnographic study of two rural Virginia communities' cultural attachment to land. In that study, researchers concluded that residents' land attachments are based on the cultural continuity provided by their knowledge of the past, life in the present, and vision of the future on the land, and by the link between their culture and the nature that surrounds it (Wagner 2002). These findings are reflected in the present study's themes of Continuity and Connection to Nature. The interaction between the Values theme and the Connection to Nature theme, in that non-participant private forest landowners find many different values in their land ranging from the economic to the transcendent/communal, is reflected in the middle ground relationship between land as an utilitarian commodity and land as a defining aspect of personal identity described in the cultural attachments study (Wagner 2002).

Non-participant private forest landowners also experience their land as a Special Place (Peacher 1995). In the special places study, participants' comments also led the researcher to conclude that "a special place helps one answer the question 'who am I?'" (Peacher 1995). Other similarities include the findings that places connect people to others and to times experienced in them, as well as to something larger than oneself. In the Special Places study that something was represented by a group, a family, a team, a city, or the entire planet/world. In the present study, participants reported a sense of communion with nature. They also experienced nature as being larger than themselves, and at times were frustrated, as well as humbled by its power and awesomeness. In

reaction, and within their own domain, they seemed to attempt to exert some control over nature. Special Places also allowed participants to feel Secure. Security was experienced as relaxation, tranquility, solitude, and escape from routine. In the present study, these experiences were considered part of the Power and Awe, Peacefulness and Frustration, and Values themes. Lastly, the theme described here as Freedom was seen in the Special Places study as one of Possibilities in the sense that special places do not impede one's desires. Given these similarities, it is not surprising that the most frequently mentioned special places in the Special Places study were first, a "natural setting", and second a "home or residence" (Peacher 1995).

The delicate balance amongst the themes described here is also addressed in other literature. Budd (1996) states,

"Ownership is important. Whether by fee title or spiritual bond, ownership is critical to stewardship. But with ownership must come respect and responsibility. . . . The test of ownership lies in loving the land as much when it is covered in ice and snow, or blown desolate with drought, as when meadows are capped by waves of wildflowers. . . . Most of us rarely admit such, but the land may own us more than we own the land."

Residents of two rural Virginia counties also experienced this delicate balance. For those residents, "Nature is used, nurtured, admired, feared, and kept at bay" (Wagner 2002).

This is similar to the present study participants' simultaneously polarized experiences of communion with nature, but control of nature, freedom in ownership, but the constraint of required maintenance, and nature as powerful in both positive and negative ways.

Recall Ruth's comment on her experience of watching large, old, diseased pine trees being felled, ". . . it was a sad feeling and yet it was_ it was uhm, an awesome feeling to see those big trees fall"

The findings of traditional quantitative PFL survey research and the thematic findings reported in this study have little in common. The main similarity is that they both reveal the importance of non-commodity forest resources to non-participant private forest landowners. Relating the thematic findings reported here to those reported in previous qualitative PFL studies reveals both interesting similarities and differences. The themes identified here bear striking resemblance to Bliss and Martin's (1988; 1989) internal motivations category for forest management activities, but appear to cover what is possibly a wider range of experiences. Similarities are less striking between current findings and those arising from a pilot phenomenological study of active landowners in the Emory/Obed watershed with differences focused around variations in how the active and non-participant PFL's experience their land (Muth et al. 2001). Sentiments expressed by retired West Virginia landowners representing a range of management activity and participation levels are also analogous to those heard from the study participants here (Kingsley, Brock, and DeBald 1988). Each of these comparisons is further discussed below.

Although the term "management" was not at all prevalent in the present study, either on the part of the researcher or the study participants, and although the present study focused on non-participant PFL's rather than actively managing PFL's, the internally motivating factors identified by Bliss and Martin (1988; 1989) are quite similar to the non-participant PFL's descriptions of how they experience their forestland. These motivations include values related to the ethical use of forest resources and the manager's ethnic, family, personal, and social identity (Bliss and Martin 1988; 1989). Forest ownership was found to "nurture family cohesiveness" and to provide a "source of

intergenerational continuity.” Management was also described as a pleasant recreational pursuit providing exercise, enjoyment of the outdoors, and escape from routine as well as a welcome, pleasant, and positive challenge. The researchers also found that owners’ perception of their ability to control resources was enhanced through management activities (Bliss and Martin 1988; 1989).

It is both intriguing and interesting to note these similarities given their two different and seemingly distinct populations. For example, Bliss and Martin (1988; 1989) report that the forest is a “symbol of the family which endures beyond the lifespan of a single generation.” In this study, non-participant PFL’s experience both personal and natural Continuity in their forestland. Recall Lloyd’s story of a special place on his property and how that story, and visiting that place, ran from generations before him to those after him.

There’s a _ in the very back of the property, not on our property, but it’s on the edge of our property, there is a uh, uh a rock house, what we call a rock house back there that, that my great great grandfather kept horses in during the Civil War. . . . And my dad_ I can ‘member my dad carryin’ me, takin’ me there one Sunday afternoon. I’d heard_ they’d told me about it and I said I wanted to see this so he took me there one Sunday afternoon and I just told my youngest grandson the other day that I was gonna carry him out there and uh show him that uh rock uh and he got so excited about it. You know, I still haven’t done it but he really got excited about it. . . . But it’s_ I’ve heard the story ever since I was real small.

Another internal management motivation was the view of management as recreation (Bliss and Martin 1988; 1989). The non-participant PFL’s here describe enjoying being outside and the way working the land can be fun and satisfying. Ruth describes her experience when she says, “There is just uh a relaxin’ feelin’, uhm something I, I can’t seem to describe with working the land,” Furthermore, they frequently relate

experiences which mix fun and work such as when Ruth described washing the clothes in the river, and swimming, and fishing, and frying potatoes. She says, “. . . it doesn’t sound like fun but, maybe, but it *was*” Leland also experiences this cohesion of work and play,

“But it’s just uh, sorta like being on vacation all the time to me. Ah, it’s a lot of work, you know, it keeps me busy. Of course, I gotta, I’ve got that little ah school bus driving job too down in_ It don’t take all my time away from the farm. See I make my run of the mornin’ and, still got all day just about to fool around here and work.”

Through the Freedom/Control/Constraint theme they also reveal that within the boundaries of their own properties they desire and attempt to control nature. This is evident in the many references made to dealing with downed trees and debris, maintaining fences and pastures, and trying to keep paths, trails, and roads open.

Although there are many striking similarities between these two studies, there are also some interesting differences possibly related to the management motivations focus of one, and the other’s focus on the phenomenological description of how non-participant PFL’s experience their land. For example, the broader themes such as Power and Awe and Peacefulness and Frustration having more to do with nature and less to do with forest management as revealed in the present study are absent from the active PFL management motivation study. The range of Values found in the land described by the NP PFL’s, from economic investments to “just knowing it’s there” also were not reported in the active PFL management motivation study.

Noteworthy similarities between the preliminary findings of Muth et. al.’s (2001) pilot study of actively managing private forest landowners in the Emory/Obed watershed refer to landowners’ experience of the land in a spiritual context, related to the present

study's Peaceful theme, and their emotional attachments to the land. The Emory/Obed active landowners stressed the importance of "taking care of the land" more than the non-participant landowners participating in this study, and were more likely to experience a utilitarian aspect to their land (Muth et al. 2001).

Similarities between the present study's findings and Kingsley, Brock, and DeBald's (1988) focus group study of retired WV forest landowners are evident as well. Here, the Values theme is reflected in the fact that the retired WV landowners "hold land for a mixture of psychic and economic benefits" and report that "a sense of well-being is at least as important as economic gain derived from the land." The Continuity theme is also found in the retired WV forest landowners descriptions of valuing the fact that their land had been passed down from preceding generations, and would be passed on by them. They saw themselves as stewards of their land-heritage.

Inter-relationship of Themes

The majority of previous work concerning private forestland issues has separated behavior from experience. Based on their behavior, or the activities they have engaged in or plan to engage in, landowners are asked to prioritize aspects of their experience. However, the results in this study support a much more integrated landowner experience. The emergent themes from non-participant private forest landowners' phenomenological interviews are intricately related. Thematic roles shift around in a constant dance relating figure to ground. As each theme takes on a figural role in describing an aspect of the experience, the others provide the ground against which the figural theme stands out. Ultimately six themes cohere in a gestalt of patterned meaning with Connection forming the core of non-participant landowner's descriptions of their experiences and the other

themes providing equal descriptive support. As Peacher (1995) comments in her special places phenomenological study, although themes and participants' supporting statements are provided separately, "even a casual reading of the various quotes indicates that all five themes are interconnected."

The retired WV forest landowners who participated in focus groups regarding their interests and motivations in owning forestland also found that they could not distinguish a single dominant reason for owning their forestland (Kingsley, Brock, and DeBald 1988). Bliss and Martin (1989) found that the motivations they identified for managing forestland "do not lend themselves to quantification." They also found that management motivations interact in ways such that the resultant management activities may be influenced by multiple motivations at once. "Each informant expressed a unique blend of the motivations discussed." Furthermore, without using the phenomenological language of figure/ground thematic relationship, they did find that "a given motivation may be very influential in one situation and less so in another situation, or at a different time."

These interactions, the inability of landowners to prioritize reasons for owning forestland, and the gestalt and figure/ground nature of the themes described here, and reflected in the Bliss and Martin (1988; 1989) studies may make it difficult for landowners to categorize and prioritize their experiences to fit survey responses. Such difficulties may lead to inaccurate results, missing data, or non-representative samples returning surveys.

Characteristics of Study Participants

The majority of non-participant landowners included in this study were able to provide fairly clear descriptions of how they experience their forestland. They relayed primarily positive and harmonious experiences strongly supportive of the study's thematic findings. One study participant, while supporting the thematic findings, did so by frequently, and individually, representing the opposite pole, or negating expression, of a theme as compared to other study participants. She also described a much more ambivalent relationship to her land. These differences indicate there may be notable variation within non-participant private forest landowners' experiences of their land worthy of further study.

Language/Activities

Previous traditional NIPF studies, including qualitative studies, have examined private forestland primarily from the perspective of ascertaining landowners' management objectives using the terminology of natural resource professionals. This phenomenological analysis of how non-participant private forest landowners experience their land reveals that the primary ways in which they make meaning out of their experiences are unrelated to management; they do not consider themselves to be managers, and they do not use the terminology of natural resource professionals. For example, none of the study participants mentioned "land management" per se, nor did they as a group mention "management objectives." Although one landowner, John, did discuss wanting to have a "quality type" forest, his personal definition of a quality type forest, and the typical definition offered by a natural resource professional probably differ. John explained he wanted to have as many different types of trees could be grown

in Tennessee growing on his property. Similarly, the findings clearly indicate NP PFL's do have what natural resource professionals have referred to as "reasons" for owning land. However, these reasons, Connection, Continuity, Freedom etc., differ from those traditionally offered to PFL's as choices in standard NIPF studies or ascribed to them through these choices. Potential differences between PFL's reasons for owning land and values associated with land ownership were identified in the non-joiner PFL study as well (Mater 2001). One of the final recommendations from that study, included in the 10 point guide for reaching non-joiner landowners in Eastern states, is that natural resource professionals work on understanding the differences between a landowner's "most valued characteristics" and "reasons for ownership" (Mater 2001). Furthermore, although all study participants met the screening survey criteria for definition as a non-participant private forest landowner, in a more dialogic and conversational setting most described activities which, depending on how management is defined, may be more similar to traditionally defined management activities than we, or they, may have thought. For example, study participants described cutting down trees, mowing or maintaining paths and trails on their property, letting certain areas remain undisturbed, etc. These findings highlight potential discrepancies between landowner and natural resource professional definitions of land management and the activities that constitute land management.

Dialogue with landowners also reveals that they frequently associate different meanings with the same activities. For example, in this study the act of cutting down a tree was associated with among other meanings, sadness, awe, frustration, control, freedom, connection, and continuity. Elmendorf and Luloff (2001) report similar findings regarding the possible multiple meanings of the term "stewardship."

Landowners participating in a series of focus groups attributed “a bequest motive, reasonable use, and Christianity” to this term. Study participants also expressed a certain sense of ineffability in attempting to describe their experiences with their land. For example, Ruth finds she can’t describe her experience in words, “There is just a relaxin’ feelin’, uhm something I, I can’t seem to describe with working the land” Bill also struggles to relay his experience, “It’s just something about uh_ you know, I don’t know; it’s emotional.” Taken together, these findings indicate that the language of land management and forestry practices is complex and potentially not currently directly matched to the most salient aspects of landowners’ experiences of their land and the meaning they make from those experiences.

III. Implications of Study Findings for Practice and Research

The findings presented here shed new light on our understanding of non-participant private forest landowners. The challenge to natural resource professionals is to incorporate such findings, and the methods that elucidate them, into our praxis in order to inform and improve our work relative to NP PFL’s and PFL’s in general. Several implications for theory, research, and practice relative to natural resource professionals’ attempts to understand and work with these landowners are elaborated below. These include the benefits of phenomenological research methods, of an increased focus on landowners currently categorized as non-participant private forest landowners, and of further investigations into categorization of landowners as active/non-active, non-joiner, and non-participant, as well as some suggestions for working with private forest

landowners, including possible ways to increase the involvement of non-participant private forest landowners in sustainable forest management.

Benefits of Phenomenology

Several authors have discussed the benefits of qualitative research relative to private forestland issues, their additive quality relative to existing and perhaps more familiar methods such as quantitative survey approaches, and have demonstrated their utility through specific private forest landowner studies (Bliss and Martin 1988; Bliss and Martin 1989; Elmendorf and Luloff 2001). While it is not necessary to revisit these discussions here, it may be beneficial to elaborate on the benefits of phenomenology relative to this study and to private forest landowner studies in general, as well as to discuss the benefits of an increased focus on groups of landowners, such as non-participants, which have traditionally been excluded from such studies.

Phenomenology has several philosophical premises and methodological emphases which lend a unique and beneficial match to some of the needs of private forest landowner research. Philosophically, person and world are inseparable, and all being is “being in the world.” This matches the lived experience of landowners. Landowners do not separate themselves as conscious beings from the world in which they live out that consciousness. In other words, their actual lived experiences in the world, a blend of perception and behavior located within a specific setting of interest, their land, is what is of most interest to natural resource professionals. Other modes of research concerning private forest landowners emphasize only the behavior pole of the experience – behavior continuum. Phenomenology also holds that what people are aware of reveals what is meaningful to them. This allows a researcher to open to the broadest possibilities of

interest, categories, and variables relative to the phenomenon of interest, and to be assured that they are capturing something beyond their own pre-conceived notions of what is relevant in a given situation. Furthermore, through bracketing prior to conducting phenomenological interviews, the researcher actively examines these pre-conceived notions regarding the phenomenon. This serves to increase their awareness of their role, and allows them to analyze the data with a clearer and more careful mind.

Methodologically phenomenology emphasizes natural conversation, and the participant's voice. This methodology may be more comfortable for some participants. It acknowledges the researcher's role in the research, and authenticates the work by grounding it in the participant's world by allowing them to define what is most meaningful to them about that world.

Relative to this study, the phenomenological approach revealed findings not previously noted via more traditional approaches such as thematic descriptions of how non-participant private forest landowners experience their land, the language they use to describe these experiences, the high level of interconnection amongst these experiences, and the subtle, but important, differences in their experiences. Had we only surveyed these landowners, we may have missed what this study reveals as the most salient aspects of the experience of land for non-participant private forest landowners including the experiences of Connection, Continuity, Power and Awe, a wide range of Values, and the simultaneous experiences of Peace and Frustration, and Freedom, Constraint, and Control. In allowing non-participant private forest landowners to use their own words, the language they use to describe these most salient aspects of their experience is revealed. From this we learned that non-participant private forest landowners and natural

resource professionals use different terminology to describe experiences of land, and may reach differing conclusions concerning similar actions taken on the land. The phenomenological approach also revealed the extreme inter-connection of the most meaningful aspects of the experience of land to landowners (themes). The resulting conclusion is that it is the relationship of these themes with, and to, each other that reveals the full picture of how non-participant PFL's experience their land, such that emphasizing any one aspect over another creates the false assumption that aspects of the experience can be easily categorized and prioritized. Hence the difficulty NP PFL's have in prioritizing aspects of their experience, let alone describing the more ineffable aspects of those experiences. The phenomenological approach of the present study also revealed detailed and nuanced differences among the study participants even though all had been categorized as non-participant PFL's. For example, most of the study participants were able to give clear descriptions of their experiences, emphasizing positive connections and a range of attention to commodity and non-commodity values. However, one study participant's descriptions were characterized by ambivalence, negativity, disconnection, and the business aspects of owning land. Based on these results, phenomenology seems to offer several benefits to the study of private forest landowners, especially non-participant private forest landowners, that may yield improvements in the practice of natural resource professionals relative to private forest landowners.

Inclusion of Non-participant Private Forest Landowners

The group of PFL's categorized here as non-participant PFL's have traditionally been the least understood, and least studied, group of private forest landowners. As these

are the majority of PFL's owning forestland, there are several reasons for greater inclusion of them in research efforts. Elmendorf and Luloff (2001) note that outsiders or non-traditional participants fall into many social groups including women, members of various racial and ethnic groups, religious groups, the young and elderly, the ill, blind, deaf or otherwise disabled, foreign-born people, the illiterate, prisoners, and the mentally ill. These are not the only groups who have traditionally been excluded, others are simply those outside the "mainstream", who resist inclusion, or are hard to locate and/or identify. They state that whether these groups have been excluded from information gathering and planning efforts by design or lack of effort, on purpose or by accident, such exclusions lead to poor and incomplete information and planning, as well as to a lack of trust in the system, apathy, and acquiescence. They go on to note that successfully facing the challenges recognized by natural resource professionals requires that we "make the effort to identify and listen to, the 'deep knowledge' of people who have been traditionally ignored, and use new methods to interest those traditionally involved" (Elmendorf and Luloff 2001). Such efforts are necessary to ensure that communication and program development efforts are appropriate to the needs of these outsider non-participant private forest landowners.

Landowner Categorization

Study participants were categorized as non-participant private forest landowners based on their responses to a series of screening questions regarding activities they undertake on their land, and their level of participation in landowner associations, educational programs, and outreach opportunities. The definition of non-participant landowner used here is fairly conservative including only those landowners who had not

planted trees, used chemicals, fertilizers, or pesticides, planted food plots for wildlife, developed a management plan, sold timber, sought advice or assistance from a professional, participated in a landowner educational event, or participated in a landowner organization. These landowners also reported no future plans to sell timber. These criteria were purposefully set up to yield a narrow and specifically defined landowner population for the study sample.

Analysis of results revealed that six out of seven of these landowners do not consider themselves to be managing their land, that none of them use traditional “management” or forestry terminology in their descriptions of their experiences on/with their land, and that land management is not a figural aspect of their experiences. Nevertheless, many of the findings from this study bear striking similarities to those of studies with PFL populations specifically defined as active and/or representing a range of land management activity levels. As discussed earlier, the themes developed here as representative of how non-participant PFL’s experience their land are quite similar to many of the internal motivations for management identified in active private forest landowner-managers (Bliss and Martin 1988; 1989). Sentiments expressed by study participants were also similar to those expressed by retired West Virginia private forest landowners (Kingsley, Brock, and DeBald 1988). Fewer similarities are found between this study’s findings, and the preliminary findings of a pilot study following the same methodology, but examining active landowners (Muth et al. 2001). Areas of difference in findings include the fact that seemingly similar categories such as the importance of land to identity, the importance of passing land from generation to generation, etc. seem to motivate one group of landowners to actively manage their land, including active

participation in landowner programs and organizations, but for non-participant PFL's these issues seem to be simply meaningful aspects of their experience. There was also a greater utilitarian emphasis in the experience of land for the active pilot study landowners than was expressed by the non-participant private forest landowners. Furthermore, while sharing many similarities in terms of internal management motivations or thematic aspects of the experience of land, non-participant PFL's reveal what can perhaps be considered experiences broader in scope, including a range of Values, and experiences of the Power and Awe, and Peaceful and Frustrating aspects of nature, than those of the more active PFL's. It is also possible however, that many of these differences, especially those which seem to indicate broader experiences on the part of non-participant PFL's, reflect differences in methodology rather than differences in landowner populations, their related management motivations, and/or their related experiences of their land.

These similarities and differences indicate that PFL categorizations based on levels of management participation and activity may be unrelated to how some landowners experience their land, and/or unrelated to the meaningful aspects of land for various landowners. For example, when the thematic findings of the present study are compared to the internal management motivations of active managers identified by Bliss and Martin (1988; 1989) simple categorizations based on activity level yield surprisingly similar results. The basis behind creating such categories and criteria may need to be revisited, as well as their relationship to the realities of landowners lived experiences on/with their land. One possibility is that PFL's reside on two related continua, one related to land management activity and participation, and one describing how they

experience their land, the meanings they make from those experiences, their land attachments, sense of place etc. Or, it is possible that the two topics are not substantially related.

Given the various levels and ways in which PFL's expressing such similar connections to their land relate to, conceive of, participate in, and describe land management, these findings indicate the concept of management may be more variegated than previously thought. Management may mean different things to different people and impact them and their actions in different ways. For example, study participants all met the criteria for non-participant PFL's, yet almost all described activities such as cutting trees, especially diseased trees, clearing paths and trails, "maintaining" the property by keeping it cut back and mowed down (primarily around home sites), letting wildlife live undisturbed on certain parts of their properties, etc. This opens the question as to what exactly management is, especially at what scale? Surveys traditionally ask about "harvesting timber" a traditional aspect of a management definition, yet non-participant PFL's may only think of cutting down a tree or a small stand of trees for a particular purpose other than "harvesting." Natural resource professionals and the forestry profession in particular have long allowed that "doing nothing" is a decision, some may even say a management decision, or at least a passive action, or non-action. Is there a level of management between the most active managers such as those studied by Bliss and Martin (1988; 1989) and the most inactive and non-participating landowners such as those partaking in this study? Questions for follow up include, what is it that motivates one group of landowners to be active in land management as compared to non-participant landowners expressing similar connections to and personal meaning interpretations of

land? Given the types of activities non-participant PFL's talked about being involved with on their land, yet their disassociation from a land manager identity, what do non-participant private forest landowners consider management to be? Do natural resource professionals have an expectation that landowners will express different attachments to land relative to their levels of activity and participation with land management, and if so, what are the implications of such an expectation? These and other questions are the basis of ongoing and developing research efforts.

Comments on Natural Resource Professional Practice Relative to PFL's

For non-participant PFL's, land is a special place imbued with cultural meaning and strong place attachments (List and Brown 1996; Peacher 1995). It serves to orient them in both the physical and social world. It conveys experiences of the Power and Awe of nature, a mix of Freedom, Constraint, and Control, provides Peace and tempers that with Frustration caused by nature and the responsibilities of ownership, allows the expression and enjoyment of a range of Values, provides a sense of personal and natural Continuity through time, and powerfully Connects them to others forming a mnemonic anchor, and a site of personal genesis and return. These are the meaningful aspects of living on, and with, forestland for non-participant PFL's. These themes, and other noteworthy findings from this study, have the potential to inform natural resource professional (NRP) practice relative to PFL's in several ways. These results indicate possible new ways to speak with and approach NP PFL's, and to interest them in greater adoption of sustainable forestland management activities.

By highlighting the full range of values and meanings found in private forestland by the full range of owners (non-participants, non-joiners, and active managers) these and

other findings support the notion that accounting for place attachments, and considering the meaning of place, are critical to natural resource professionals' greater success in working with PFL's and increased ability to engage them in sustainable forestry practices. To ignore the power of places in land management is to ignore the people, meanings, and ideas attached to those places. These meanings and ideas are as important as the biophysical attributes of specific landscapes and ecosystems (List and Brown 1996). Williams and Patterson (1996) note that insiders of such places are unlikely to articulate place attachment as they are so fully embedded within the place so as to dampen their surface awareness of such attachments. Thus NRP's must make the effort to elicit such descriptions from these insiders in order to increase their own understanding of the place and people with whom they are trying to work, and their ability to successfully convey their relevance and the benefits of their expertise to both landowners and forestland. Discussion of sense of place can be a vehicle for opening dialogue between natural resource professionals and the public thus increasing opportunities for the implementation of ecosystem management (Williams and Patterson 1996). As sustainable private forestry is but one aspect of ecosystem management, the same should hold true for opening dialogue between NRP's and PFL's, especially non-participant PFL's who may not resonate as immediately or completely with traditional forestry language.

The ways in which NRP's speak with and listen to PFL's have significant implications for their work as well, and can also be informed by the findings presented here. For the most part, PFL's have very little familiarity with the world of natural resource professionals and/or with any one professional they may have contact with.

NRP's must recognize their role as outsiders and enter with humility and respect. We can not assume that PFL's have the same values as we do, or that if contacted by a PFL they are wanting or needing a particular thing. Such assumptions may frequently cause the mismatched management plans to landowner objectives revealed in the phenomenological pilot study conducted prior to the present study. The themes described here in terms of how non-participant PFL's experience their land are more than descriptive, they reveal the meaning of the land to these landowners. We must respect their personal meanings in our work with them, or risk alienating them. As Mater (2001) concluded in her work with non-joiner NIPF's, "perception is as much a reality as reality itself." Not surprisingly, the primacy of perception in the human lived experience of the world is the focus of phenomenological theory and practice.

NRP's need to not only identify non-participant PFL's attachments, meanings, and experiences with/of their land, but look for ways in which these aspects of landowners' experiences can be used to enhance their (NRP's) relevance to landowners. These and other findings indicate that whether active managers, non-joiners, or the more complete non-participant, forest landowners all have strong connections to the land. Non-participant PFL's emphasize a desire to pass on their land, and more to the point, to pass on their experience of the land to their heirs. I believe connections can be made between the strong reverence for nature and desire to pass land on as described by non-participant PFL's, and forest management activities that respect nature and can assist landowners in their ability to ensure their land can be passed on in a healthy state and in a socially, biologically, and economically sustainable manner. If NRP's could translate their work so that managing forestland was couched in terms of its ability to help a

landowner maintain physical and social connections, preserve continuity, maximize their power and awe experiences, enhance the range of values they experience and want to continue experiencing etc., forest management may have a much greater appeal to, and level of understanding among, non-participant PFL's and others than it currently does. For example, foresters might relate forest management activities that generate financial returns and decrease financial burdens on heirs, to landowners' desires to keep their land in their families. Helping landowners to see such relationships might increase the likelihood of them engaging in forest management activities. Forest management activities that can increase the health of the forest could be related to increased ability of landowners to continue experiencing their land as they do, and ensure that those experiences remain continuous across generations. The phenomenological data from this study supporting these suggestions for working with non-participant private forest landowners is not available for active or participant PFL's, however, it is quite possible that similar tactics may be beneficial in working with a wide range of landowners especially considering Bliss and Martin's (1988; 1989) findings concerning manager motivation and identity.

Incentive programs are another way through which NRP's may be able to inform their practice relative to these findings. The freedom that owning forestland provides is an important aspect of the way in which non-participant, and possibly other, landowners experience their land. In addition, we know that many PFL's are retired or are not using their forestland as their primary source of income. Together these realities may account for the lack of interest many PFL's express in signing up for government incentive programs. To do so would require them to give up some of the freedom they cherish to

accept money they don't need. Furthermore, Kingsley, Brock, and DeBald (1988) found that a number of retired private forest landowners felt that "an investment in timber production was not a viable option for themselves" due to their age at the time of the potential investment, their physical abilities, and/or their desire to use their funds in other ways, but they felt it was a viable option for younger owners.

These findings suggest that NRP's may be able to find better matches between the programs they currently offer to landowners, and the landowners they are offering them to. If these connections can be made, the burden is on NRP's to do so. These and other findings suggest that the relevance of NRP's and sustainable forestry practices are not clearly apparent to many PFL's. For non-participant PFL's specifically, management per se as traditionally defined and expressed by NRP's was not a significant aspect of their experience of their land. NRP's must take it upon themselves to connect forest management with the desires of non-participant landowners and the elements of meaning they find in their land. If these connections can be made, it is possible that greater numbers of non-participant private forest landowners may see forestry and management practices as relevant to the sustainability of their experience.

Literature Cited

- Argow, K. A. 1996. This land is their land: The potential diversity of non-industrial private forests. *Journal of Forestry* 94 (2):30 - 33.
- Best, C., and L. A. Wayburn. 2001. *America's private forests: Status and stewardship*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.
- Bliss, J. C. 1992. Evidence of ethnicity: Management styles of forest owners in wisconsin. *Forest & Conservation History* 36:63 - 72.
- Bliss, J. C., and A. J. Martin. 1988. Identity and private forest management. *Society & Natural Resources* 1:365 - 376.
- . 1989. Identifying nipf management motivations with qualitative methods. *Forest Science* 35 (2):601 - 622.
- Brunson, M. W., D. T. Yarrow, S. D. Roberts, D. C. Guynn, and M. R. Kuhns. 1996. Nonindustrial private forest owners and ecosystem management: Can they work together? *Journal of Forestry* 94 (6):14 - 21.
- Budd, B. 1996. Lessons from the cinnamon mare. In *Nature and the human spirit: Toward an expanded land management ethic*, edited by B. L. Driver, Daniel Dustin, Tony Baltic, Gary Elsner, and George Peterson. State College: Venture Publishing, Inc.
- Bugental, J. F. T. 1989. Foreword. In *Existential - phenomenological perspectives in psychology: Exploring the breadth of human experience*, edited by R. S. Valle and S. Halling. New York: Plenum Press.
- Campbell, S. M., and D. B. Kittredge. 1996. Ecosystem-based management on multiple nipf ownerships. *Journal of Forestry* 94 (2):24-28.
- Center for Applied Phenomenological Research. University of tennessee college of nursing research group. 2003. Knoxville, 2003.
- Cheng, A. S., L. E. Kruger, and S. E. Daniels. 2003. "Place" as an integrating concept in natural resource politics: Propositions for a social science research agenda. *Society & Natural Resources* 16:87 - 104.
- Clatterbuck, W. 2002. Personal communication. Knoxville, Tennessee, April 2002.
- . 2003. Discussion of web-based and satellite technology for landowner education and assistance. Personal communication. Knoxville, July 29, 2003.
- Cordell, K. H., J. C. Bliss, C. Y. Johnson, and J. M. Fly. 1998. Voices from Southern forests. *Transactions of the 63rd North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference*:332 - 346.
- Cordell, K. H., and M. A. Tarrant. 2002. *Southern forest resource assessment. Socio-6: Forest-based outdoor recreation*. (November 21, 2001 Edition) [website]. USDA Forest Service [cited April 23 2002]. Available from <http://www.srs.fs.fed.us/sustain/report/socio6/socio6.htm>.
- Cortner, H. J., and M. A. Moote. 1999. *The politics of ecosystem management*. Washington D.C., Covelo, CA.: Island Press.
- Creswell, J. W. 1994. *Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- . 1998. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

- . 2003. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Second ed. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- DeCoster, L. A. 1998. The boom in forest owners - a bust for forestry? *Journal of Forestry* 96 (5):25 - 28.
- Driver, B. L., D. Dustin, T. Baltic, G. Elsner, and G. Peterson, eds. 1996. *Nature and the human spirit: Toward an expanded land management ethic*. State College, PA.: Venture Publishing, Inc.
- Dukes, E. F. 1996. *Resolving public conflict: Transforming community and governance*. Edited by M. C. Bill Jones, and Michael Moran, *Political analyses*. Manchester and New York.: Manchester University Press.
- The e-extension initiative* 2003. Extension Committee on Organization and Policy [cited July 30 2003]. Available from <http://asred.msstate.edu/national/>.
- Egan, A., and S. Jones. 1993. Do landowner practices reflect beliefs? Implications of an extension - research partnership. *Journal of Forestry* 91 (10):39-45.
- Elmendorf, W. F., and A. E. Luloff. 2001. Using qualitative data collection methods when planning for community forests. *Journal Of Arboriculture* 27 (3):139 - 150.
- English, B. C., C. D. Bell, G. R. Wells, and R. K. Roberts. 1997. Stewardship incentives in forestry: Participation factors in Tennessee. *Southern Journal of Applied Forestry* 21 (1):5 - 10.
- Finley, J. C., and M. G. Jacobson. 2001. Extension in Pennsylvania: Diverse partners working together. *Journal of Forestry* 99 (3):9 - 11.
- Finley, J. C., S. B. Jones, A. S. Reed, M. G. Jacobson., and G. R. Glover. 2001. Finding a name to fit the owner. *Journal of Forestry* 99 (3):48.
- Forbes, P. 2001. *The great remembering: Further thoughts on land, soul, and society*. San Francisco: The Trust for Public Land.
- Graham Jr., G. T. 1999. An analysis of non-industrial private forest landowners in tennessee. MS, Department of Forestry, Wildlife, and Fisheries, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.
- Greene, T. 1996. Cognition and the management of place. In *Nature and the human spirit: Toward an expanded land management ethic*, edited by B. L. Driver, Daniel Dustin, Tony Baltic, Gary Elsner, and George Peterson. State College: Venture Publishing, Inc.
- Henry, W. A., and J. C. Bliss. 1994. Timber harvesting, regeneration, and best management practices among west central Alabama NIPF owners. *Southern Journal of Applied Forestry* 18 (3):116 - 121.
- Holmes, T. P. 2002. *Southern forest resource assessment. Socio-7: Forests and the quality of life*. (October 6, 2002 Edition) [website]. USDA Forest Service [cited April 23 2002]. Available from <http://www.srs.fs.fed.us/sustain/report/socio7/socio7.htm>.
- Ihde, D. 1986. *Experimental phenomenology: An introduction*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Jackson, S. W., G. W. Hopper, and W. Clatterbuck. 2003. Developing a national web-based learning center for natural resource education. [Under review] *Journal of Extension*.

- Jones, S. B., A. E. Luloff, and J. C. Finley. 1995. Another look at nipfs: Facing our "myths". *Journal of Forestry* 93 (9):41-44.
- Kingsley, N. P., S. M. Brock, and P. S. DeBald. 1988. Focus group interviewing applied to retired West Virginia nonindustrial private forest landowners. *Northern Journal of Applied Forestry* 5:198 - 200.
- Kluender, R. A., and T. L. Walkingstick. 2000. Rethinking how nonindustrial landowners view their lands. *Southern Journal of Applied Forestry* 24 (3):150 - 158.
- Kuhns, M. R., M. W. Brunson, and S. D. Roberts. 1998. Landowners' educational needs and how foresters can respond. *Journal of Forestry* 86 (8):38-43.
- Kurtz, W. B., and B. J. Lewis. 1981. Decision-making framework for nonindustrial private forest owners: An application in the missouri ozarks. *Journal of Forestry* 79 (5):285 - 288.
- Levey, J. S., A. Greenhall, and staff, eds. 1983. *The concise columbia encyclopedia*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Lincoln, Y. S., and N. K. Denzin. 2000. Chapter 1: Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In *Handbook of qualitative research*, edited by Y. S. Lincoln and N. K. Denzin. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- List, P., and P. Brown. 1996. Moving toward an expanded land management ethic. In *Nature and the human spirit: Toward an expanded land management ethic*, edited by B. L. Driver, Daniel Dustin, Tony Baltic, Gary Elsner, and George Peterson. State College: Venture Publishing, Inc.
- Mater, C. M. 2001. "Non-joiner" NIPFs: What drives their decisions to fragment and/or convert their forestland. A presentation to the pinchot institute. Presented by Catherine M. Mater, Senior Fellow - The Pinchot Institute: Funded by the Wood Education Research Center.
- McNamee, S., and K. J. Gergen, eds. 1999. *Relational responsibility: Resources for sustainable dialogue*. Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Mehmood, S. R., and D. Zhang. 2001. Forest parcelization in the united states: A study of contributing factors. *Journal of Forestry* 99 (4):30-34.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. 1945/1962. *The phenomenology of perception*. Translated by C. Smith. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. Original edition, 1945.
- Muth, A. B., J. L. Pavey, M. L. E. Steiner, D. Ostermeier, and J. M. Fly. 2001. Finding common ground: A new approach to characterize attitudes and values on private lands. Paper presented at the international symposium for society and resource management, Bloomington, Indiana, June 2 - 5, 2002.
- Parker, K. J. 1992. Hanging question marks on our professions: Addressing the human dimensions of forestry and natural resource management. *Journal of Forestry*:21 - 24.
- Pavey, J. L. 2003. Unpublished report, "Emory-Obed focus group report". Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries. University of Tennessee, Knoxville.
- Peacher, R. K. 1995. The experience of place. Doctoral Dissertation, Psychology, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.
- Polkinghorne, D. F. 1989. Chapter 3: Phenomenological research methods. In *Existential - phenomenological perspectives in psychology: Exploring the breadth of human experience*, edited by R. S. Valle and S. Halling. New York: Plenum Press.

- Pollio, H. R., T. Henley, and C. B. Thompson. 1997. *The phenomenology of everyday life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Riemen, D. J. 1998. Appendix C: The essential structure of a caring interaction - doing phenomenology. In *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*, edited by J. W. Creswell. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Roberts, E. 1996. Place and spirit in public land management. In *Nature and the human spirit: Toward an expanded land management ethic*, edited by B. L. Driver, Daniel Dustin, Tony Baltic, Gary Elsner, and George Peterson. State College: Venture Publishing, Inc.
- Rogers, E. M. 1995. *Diffusion of innovations*. Fourth ed. New York: Free Press.
- Schweitzer, C. J. 2000. TN Ag Statistics. *USFS Resource Bulletin*.
- Seamon, D., and R. Mugerauer, eds. 1995. *Dwelling, place and environment: Towards a phenomenology of person and world*. 2000 ed. Malabar: Krieger Publishing Company.
- Snyder, L. B., and S. H. Broderick. 1992. Communicating with woodland owners: Lessons from Connecticut. *Journal of Forestry* 90 (3):33-37.
- Stokowski, P. A. 2002. Languages of place and discourses of power: Constructing new senses of place. *Journal of Leisure Research* 34 (4):368 - 382.
- Thomas, S. P., and H. R. Pollio. 2002. *Listening to patients: A phenomenological approach to nursing*. New York: Springer Publishing Company, Inc.
- Tuan, Y.-F. 1977. *Space and place: The perspective of experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Valle, R. S., M. King, and S. Halling. 1989. Chapter 1: An introduction to existential-phenomenological thought in psychology. In *Existential - phenomenological perspectives in psychology: Exploring the breadth of human experience*, edited by R. S. Valle and S. Halling. New York: Plenum Press.
- Wagner, M. B. 2002. Space and place, land and legacy. In *Culture, environment, and conservation in the appalachian south*, edited by B. J. Howell. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Wear, D. N., and J. G. Gries. 2003. *Southern forest resource assessment summary report* (November 1, 2002 Edition) [website]. USDA Forest Service [cited July 25 2003]. Available from <http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/sustain/report/summry/summary.htm>.
- Williams, D. R., and M. E. Patterson. 1996. Environmental meaning and ecosystem management: Perspectives from environmental psychology and human geography. *Society & Natural Resources* 9:507 - 521.
- Williams, D. R., and S. I. Stewart. 1998. Sense of place: An elusive concept that is finding a home in ecosystem management. *Journal of Forestry* 96:18 - 23.
- Wright, H. 2002. Personal communication. Knoxville, TN, Fall Semester 2002.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Telephone Screening Survey to Identify Non-participant Private Forest Landowners

Question SQHELLO

Hello, my name is _____ and I am calling from the University of Tennessee.
May I speak with _____

We are contacting forest landowners in the Deer Lodge area of Morgan County regarding activities and concerns about their forest land. County property tax records show that you own some land in the Deer Lodge area. Are you the person who makes most of the decisions about that forest land?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Hello, this is _____ calling for the University of Tennessee. We recently called to conduct an interview with _____.

Is this a good time to complete the interview?

Who do I need to speak with? And do they live there or somewhere else?

- 1 Person lives there, able to speak with
- 2 Person lives there, not home, set callback
- 3 Person does not live there
- 4 Refuses to give you contact information

Question WHO

Who do I need to speak with? And do they live there or somewhere else?

- 1 Person lives there, able to speak with
- 2 Person lives there, not home, set callback
- 3 Person does not live there
- 4 Refuses to give you contact information

Record contact name and any information provided to you.

Question INTRO

NEW PERSON: Hello, my name is _____ and I am calling for the University of Tennessee.

We are contacting forest landowners in the Deer Lodge area of Morgan County regarding activities and concerns about their forestland. County property tax records show that you own some land in the Deer Lodge area. Are you the person who makes most of the decisions about that forest land?

ALL PERSONS: Your opinions are very important to us and we are interviewing only a select number of people. This survey will only take 5-7 minutes. Is this a good time to ask you some questions or would another time be better for you?

- 1 CORRECT PERSON - NOW IS GOOD TIME
- 2 CORRECT PERSON - CALLBACK
- 3 NO - WON'T LET YOU TALK TO CORRECT PERSON
- 4 CORRECT PERSON NOT AVAILABLE - SCHEDULE CALLBACK
- 5 CORRECT PERSON REFUSES TO DO SURVEY

Question CONFID

I want to assure you that all the information you give me will be kept strictly confidential. This interview is voluntary. If you don't want to answer any particular question, just tell me. Also my supervisor may listen to part of the interview for quality control.

Question Q4

Property tax records indicate that you own approximately acres of forest land in the Deer Lodge area of Morgan County. Is that correct?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refused

Question Q4a

Do you own any forest land in the Deer Lodge area
of Morgan County?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refused

Question Q4b

How much forest land do you own?

acres >>>

[RECORD -98 if DON'T KNOW]
[RECORD -99 if REFUSED]

Question Q5

How long have you (or the owner) owned this forest land?
Has it been

- 1 Less than five years
- 2 5 - 20 years, or
- 3 More than 20 years

- 8 Don't know
- 10 Refused

Question Q6

Is the forest land you own in the Deer Lodge area
of Morgan County the site of your permanent residence?

- 1 Yes - landowner
- 2 Yes - person managing land
- 3 No
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refused

This question wants to know if either the land owner or
the person managing the land lives on the property.

Question Q6a

Is your permanent residence in Morgan County?

- 1 Yes
 - 2 No
 - 8 Don't know
 - 9 Refused
-

Question Q6b

Is your permanent residence within an hour's drive
of the forest land you own in Morgan County?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refused

Question Q7

In your opinion, do you manage this forest land?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refused

Question Q7a

In general would you say that you manage this forest land primarily for financial returns from timber?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refused

Question Q7b

Do you manage any of this forest land for wildlife habitat?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refused

Question Q7c

Do you manage any of this forest land for interests other than wildlife and timber?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refused

Question Q8a

Please tell me if you have engaged in any of the following activities on this forest land at some time since you have owned it (since you've been the decision maker)

Tree planting

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refused

Question Q8b

[Repeat if necessary]

Please tell me if you have engaged in any of the following activities on this forest land at some time since you have owned it. (since you've been the decision maker)

Using chemicals, pesticides, or fertilizers

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refused

Question Q8c

[Repeat if necessary]

Please tell me if you have engaged in any of the following activities on this forest land at some time since you have owned it. (since you've been the decision maker)

Planting food plots or vegetation to encourage wildlife

- 1 Yes
 - 2 No
 - 8 Don't know
 - 9 Refused
-

Question Q8d

[Repeat if necessary]

Please tell me if you have engaged in any of the following activities on this forest land at some time since you have owned it.
(since you've been the decision maker)

Cutting firewood

- 1 Yes
 - 2 No
 - 8 Don't know
 - 9 Refused
-

Question Q8e

[Repeat if necessary]

Please tell me if you have engaged in any of the following activities on this forest land at some time since you have owned it.
(since you've been the decision maker)

Building hiking or walking trails

- 1 Yes
 - 2 No
 - 8 Don't know
 - 9 Refused
-

Question Q8f

[Repeat if necessary]

Please tell me if you have engaged in any of the following activities on this forest land at some time since you have owned it.

(since you've been the decision maker)

Removing trees, plants, or animals that you don't want

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refused

Question Q8g

[Repeat if necessary]

Please tell me if you have engaged in any of the following activities on this forest land at some time since you have owned it.

(since you've been the decision maker)

Activities to maintain the natural beauty of this land

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refused

Question Q9

Is there a written forestry or wildlife management plan for this forest land?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refused

Question Q9a

Did a professional assist you in preparing and/or writing this plan?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refused

Question Q10

Has there ever been a timber sale involving this forest land since you've owned it (managed it)?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refused

Question Q11

Do you plan to sell timber from this forest land in the future?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refused

Question Q12

Now I'm going to ask you some questions about your experiences with seeking assistance and advice regarding your forest land in general. This may include experiences you have had with any forest land that you have ever owned in any location.

Have you ever sought advice or assistance concerning managing or using your forest land?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refused

Question Q12a

I am going to read a list of people you may have sought assistance from regarding your forest land. Please indicate whether you have consulted any of these people for advice or assistance regarding your forest land.

Someone from the Extension Service, such as an Extension Agent

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refused

Question Q12b

[Repeat if needed]

I am going to read a list of people you may have sought assistance from regarding your forest land. Please indicate whether you have consulted any of these people for advice or assistance regarding your forest land.

A consulting forester

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refused

Question Q12c

[Repeat if needed]

I am going to read a list of people you may have sought assistance from regarding your forest land. Please indicate whether you have consulted any of these people for advice or assistance regarding your forest land.

Someone from a state or federal agency

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refused

Question Q12d

[Repeat if needed]

I am going to read a list of people you may have sought assistance from regarding your forest land. Please indicate whether you have consulted any of these people for advice or assistance regarding your forest land.

Someone from a timber company such as Bowater or the Huber Corporation

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refused

Question Q12e

Is there anyone else who you consulted for advice or assistance regarding your forest land?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refused

Question Q13

Have you ever participated in a forest or landowner related educational event such as a field day, seminar, conference or meeting?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refused

Question Q14

Since owning this forestland, have you participated in a forest landowner's organization or in any organization related to helping you manage your forest land?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refused

Question Q14a

Which organization have you participated in?

Question Q15

Now I am going to ask you some questions about all the forest land you may own, not just the land near Deer Lodge that we have been talking about so far.

How does owning forest land contribute to your overall economic situation? Is it your:

- 1 primary source of income
 - 2 secondary source of income
 - 3 a future source of income, or
 - 4 you have no plans for deriving income from this forest land?
-
- 8 Don't know
 - 9 Refused

Question Q16

Are you a farmer?
(Is farming done on the land that you manage?)

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refused

Question Q16a

How does farming fit into your overall economic situation?
Is it your:

- 1 primary source of income
- 2 secondary source of income, or
- 3 simply a hobby?

- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refused

Question Q17

To conclude the interview, we have a few background questions we would like to ask to help us understand more about private forest landowners in the Deer Lodge area of Morgan County. Again these responses are confidential and will not be associated with your name.

[WHAT IS THE GENDER OF THE RESPONDENT?]

- 0 MALE
- 1 FEMALE
- 8 DON'T KNOW

Question Q18

What is your age, please?

Age >>>

[RECORD -98 IF DON'T KNOW]
[RECORD -99 IF REFUSED]

Question Q19

What is your ethnic origin?

- 1 African-American
- 2 American Indian
- 3 Asian or Pacific Islander
- 4 Caucasian or white
- 5 Hispanic

- 6 Other
- 7 Mixed race
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refused

Question Q20

We will be doing more work on this project later this fall and winter. If we have more questions about landowners and their management of their forest land, may we contact you again?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 8 Don't know
- 9 Refused

APPENDIX 2

**IRB FROM A: Phone Survey of Private Forest Landowners
in the Emory-Obed Watershed of East Tennessee.**

FORM A

IRB # _____

Certification for Exemption from IRB Review for Research Involving Human Subjects

A. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(s) and/or CO-PI(s): (For student projects, list both the student and the advisor.)

1. Principal Investigator or Co-Principal Investigator:

Dr. David Ostermeier
University of Tennessee
Dept. of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries
274 Ellington Hall
Knoxville, TN 37996
Phone: 865-974-8843
Email: daveo@utk.edu

Investigators:

The following faculty member from the Department of Forestry, Wildlife & Fisheries will be involved in carrying out the research project in collaboration with the Principal Investigator:

Dr. J. Mark Fly - University of Tennessee, Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries, 274 Ellington Hall, Knoxville, TN 37996 Phone: 865-974-7979 Email: markfly@utk.edu

The following masters student from the Department of Forestry, Wildlife & Fisheries will be involved in carrying out the research project in collaboration with the Principal Investigator:

Miriam Steiner – University of Tennessee, Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries, 274 Ellington Hall, Knoxville, TN 37996 Phone: 865-974-1963 Email: miriams@utk.edu

The following doctoral student from the Department of Forestry, Wildlife & Fisheries will be involved in carrying out the research project in collaboration with the Principal Investigator:

Jamey Pavey – University of Tennessee, Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries, 274 Ellington Hall, Knoxville, TN 37996 Phone: 865-974-1963 Email: jpavey@utk.edu

The following doctoral student from the Department of Educational Psychology will be involved in carrying out the research project in collaboration with the Principal Investigator:

Allyson Muth - University of Tennessee, Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries, 274 Ellington Hall, Knoxville, TN 37996 Phone: 865-974-7252 Email: amuth@utk.edu

B. DEPARTMENT: Department of Forestry, Wildlife, and Fisheries

C. COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER OF PI(s) and CO-PI(s):

See Section A.

D. TITLE OF PROJECT:

Phone Survey of Private Forest Landowners in the Emory-Obed Watershed of East Tennessee.

E. EXTERNAL FUNDING AGENCY AND ID NUMBER (if applicable): This study is a part of a larger statewide study, funded for four years, assessing social and biological concerns associated with sustainable natural resource management on private land.

1. **Funding Agency:** US Department of Agriculture
2. **Sponsor ID Number:**
3. **UT Proposal Number:**

F. GRANT SUBMISSION DEADLINE (if applicable): N.A.

G. STARTING DATE: (NO RESEARCH MAY BE INITIATED UNTIL CERTIFICATION IS GRANTED.)

Upon IRB approval.

H. ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE (Include all aspects of research and final write-up.): August, 2003

I. RESEARCH PROJECT:

1. **Objective(s) of Project (Use additional page, if needed.):**

The purpose of this study is to determine the characteristics of private forest landowners in the Emory-Obed watershed of East Tennessee, and to identify potential participants for focus groups and in depth interviews regarding their experiences owning and managing forestland.

2. **Subjects (Use additional page, if needed.):**

The selected research community includes the Deer Lodge and Frankfort areas of Morgan County. Approximately 300 private forest landowners identified through County Tax Assessor Records as owning land within the selected research community will be invited to participate in the study.

2. Methods or Procedures (Use additional page, if needed.):

Research participants will be contacted by telephone by the Human Dimensions Research Lab of the Department of Forestry, Wildlife, and Fisheries to determine their interest in participating in the study. Those who choose to participate will be asked to answer structured questions (see attached Phone Survey Script) about their current activities or lack of activities on their forestland in the Emory-Obed watershed.

Each survey interview should last no more than ten minutes. Participant responses will be entered directly into a computerized database. Interviews will not be audio taped. The computerized survey responses will be marked with a code number and a corresponding code number will be associated with each participant's name. A master list linking code numbers to subjects' identifying information will be maintained separately from the survey responses, will only be accessible to the PI and investigators listed above, and will be stored in Plant Sciences Annex B which is a secured location only enterable via a security pass code. All members of the research team and members of the Human Dimensions Research Lab performing the interview will be asked to sign a letter of confidentiality (See Appendix A).

A letter will be sent to potential participants prior to the survey notifying them of the invitation to participate, that they will be receiving a call from the researchers, and to familiarize them with the study's objectives, goals, and importance (See attached pre-letter). The risk of harm to the participants is minimal and not considered to be any greater than that ordinarily encountered in daily life. Participants will be informed that they are being asked to voluntarily participate and are free to withdraw from participation at any time. They may choose to terminate their participation in the study by notifying the phone interviewer. In this event, their interview responses will be destroyed.

"Informed consent" will be obtained by informing participants of the confidential use of their shared information, the voluntary nature of the survey, and their ability to withdraw at any time. After a fair and reasonable explanation of the research, each selected participant will be asked if they agree to be interviewed. A positive response will indicate "consent" and responses will be used as described above.

The master list of participants' contact information and code numbers will be destroyed by August 2003, if not sooner. All other survey materials will be destroyed at the end of the larger four year funded study, of which this study is a part (see Section E). Note: Survey participants who agree to be contacted regarding possible participation in further research efforts (focus groups and in-depth interviews), and who agree to participate, will be asked to sign an Informed Consent Form prior to their participation in those activities (Separate IRB Form B to be submitted).

CATEGORY(s) FOR EXEMPT RESEARCH PER 45 CFR 46 (see reverse side for categories): 2

J. CERTIFICATION: The research described herein is in compliance with 45 CFR 46.101(b) and presents subjects with no more than minimal risk as defined by applicable regulations.

Principal Investigator _____
Name Signature Date

Student Advisor _____
Name Signature Date

Dept. Review Comm. Chair _____
Name Signature Date

APPROVED:
Dept. Head _____
Name Signature Date

COPY OF THIS COMPLETED FORM MUST BE SENT TO COMPLIANCE OFFICE IMMEDIATELY UPON COMPLETION.

Rev. 01/97

APPENDIX 3

Categorization of Non-participant PFL's via Phone Survey Variables

Non-participant PFL's HAVE NOT:

(NO to phone survey variables)

- Planted trees
- Used chemicals, pesticides, or fertilizers
- Planted food plots, vegetation, etc. to encourage wildlife
- Had a timber sale (on this land)
- Sought advice or assistance from a professional
- Participated in a landowner educational event
- Participated in a landowner organization

Non-participant PFL's DO NOT:

(NO to phone survey variables)

- Have a management plan
- Plan to sell timber

APPENDIX 4

IRB Form B: Understanding the Experience of Private Forest Landowners

FORM B APPLICATION

All applicants are encouraged to read the Form B guidelines. If you have any questions as you develop your Form B, contact your Departmental Review Committee (DRC) or the Research Compliance Services Section of the Office of Research.

FORM B

IRB # _____

Date Received in OR _____

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

Application for Review of Research Involving Human Subjects

II. IDENTIFICATION OF PROJECT

1. Principal Investigator or Co-Principal Investigator:

Miriam L. E. Steiner
Graduate Research Assistant
Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries
University of Tennessee
P.O. Box 1071
Knoxville, TN 37901
Phone: 865-974-1963
Email: miriams@utk.edu

Faculty Advisors:

Mark Fly
Associate Professor
Dept. of FWF
University of Tennessee
275 Ellington Hall
Knoxville, TN 37996
Phone: 865-974-7979
Email: markfly@utk.edu

David Ostermeier
Professor
Dept. of FWF
University of Tennessee
308 Ellington Hall
Knoxville, TN 37996
Phone: 865-974-8843
Email: daveo@utk.edu

Investigators:

The following doctoral student from the Department of Educational Psychology will be involved in carrying out the research project in collaboration with the Principal Investigator:

Allyson B. Muth, Graduate Research Assistant, Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries, 274 Ellington Hall, Knoxville, TN 37996

The following doctoral student from the Department of Forestry, Wildlife & Fisheries will be involved in carrying out the research project in collaboration with the Principal Investigator:

Jamey Pavey, Graduate Research Assistant, Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries, 274 Ellington Hall, Knoxville, TN 37996

The following master's student from the Department of Forestry, Wildlife & Fisheries will be involved in carrying out the research project in collaboration with the Principal Investigator:

Leslie Horner, Graduate Research Assistant, Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries, 274 Ellington Hall, Knoxville, TN 37996

Department: Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries

2. **Project Classification:** Thesis Research Project
3. **Title of Project:** How Do I Know What I Think Before I Hear What I Say?: Experience and Reflection with Non-participant Private Forest Landowners (Tentative)
4. **Starting Date:** Upon IRB Approval
5. **Estimated Completion Date:** August 2003
6. **External Funding:** This study is a part of a larger statewide study, funded for four years, assessing social and biological concerns associated with sustainable natural resource management on private land.
 1. **Grant/Contract Submission Deadline:**
 2. **Funding Agency:**
 3. **Sponsor ID Number:**
 4. **UT Proposal Number:**

III. **PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of this study is to explore the experience of non-participant forest landowners in the Emory/Obed watershed of East Tennessee relative to their experiences owning and managing forest land, as well as to mutually explore their reflections on the process of sharing their stories with someone in the role of a natural resource professional (the principal investigator).

The Sustaining Private Forests' Human Dimensions and Collaborative Planning and Policy (HDCP) study areas of which this thesis research project is a part, have agreed to work together conducting participatory research addressing the following objectives: 1) Provide better information and improve decision-making tools and processes, 2) Improve forest policies, 3) Develop collaborative relationships. Towards these ends, partnerships with private forest landowners will be facilitated whereby we, 1) work from the values, interest, and visions of the landowners and stakeholders, 2) work and learn collaboratively to identify and address issues, and 3) seek to better understand landowners and their relationships with natural resource professionals, looking for ways to improve these relationships.

In an effort to address these goals, a series of facilitated one-on-one reflective conversations between the researcher as a natural resource professional, and "non-participant" private forest landowners, will be conducted to examine both the content of the landowners' experiences, and the process of sharing and reflecting on those experiences, with a natural resource professional (the researcher). Material developed through these dialogic conversations addresses objectives one and three above, and aspects one, two, and three of the facilitating partnerships goal.

With these ideas in mind, this study has the following two main research questions:

1. What can we learn from non-participant private forest landowners regarding the experience of owning private forest land via facilitated reflection on the experience? (content)
2. What is it like for landowners and natural resource professionals to engage in facilitated reflective conversations about the experience of owning forest land? (process)

Non-participant private forest landowners are those who have taken a non-active role in terms of managing their land and educating themselves about land management, and/or who have had little to no experience with land management and various forms of assistance available through natural resource professionals. Previous studies have shown that the vast majority of private forest landowners in Tennessee are "non-participant" land owners. Furthermore, both literature and natural resource management praxis are increasingly calling for the traditional role of natural resource professionals to be expanded from that of educators to one of facilitators, public relations experts, guides, etc. in order to facilitate greater incorporation of sustainable land management practices within the land management practices of private forest landowners. Gaining a better and more thorough understanding of these forest landowners is crucial to the development of a more effective praxis for the natural resources and to the development of sustainable forestry practices that will work effectively for and with private forest landowners.

The approach taken to learn about landowners' experiences will be a series of two facilitated reflective conversations (or phenomenological interviews) based on the existential phenomenological format. Existential phenomenology allows one to study consciousness and to produce clear and accurate descriptions of particular aspects of human experience and its underlying meaning.

IV. DESCRIPTION AND SOURCE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Research participants will be selected from among those participants in a previous phone survey effort (IRB Form # _____) of approximately 300 private forest landowners identified through County Tax Assessor Records as owning land within the Deer Lodge and Frankfort areas of Morgan County, Tennessee. whom 1) agreed to be contacted concerning further participation in related ongoing research, and 2) possess the characteristics of "non-participant" private forest landowners. Determination of possession of these characteristics will be based on phone survey responses concerning relative levels of involvement in forest land management, and relative levels of experience with natural resource education and assistance programs.

Private forest landowners selected for participation will be contacted by the principal investigator and invited to participate in this research effort. A group of approximately 9 – 15 participants is required for this work. No incentive will be offered to participants relative to their participation in this research effort.

V. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

In the first stage of research, research participants will be asked to partake in two audio-taped one-on-one interviews with the principal investigator. Each interview is expected to last from one to two hours.

In the first interview research participants will be asked to think about two or three significant experiences that stand out to them regarding a time when they were on their forest land, and to describe the most significant or memorable of these experiences. Interviews will proceed in an open-ended facilitated conversational style. The principal investigator will ask follow up questions, and make comments, as needed to keep the interview going, to express interest, and to draw out more elaborate responses or descriptions. Interviews will finish at a natural breaking point when the participant feels they have exhausted their description of the experience and when further probing by the researcher does not elicit any new information. The researcher will then ask the participant to spend some time between the first interview and their second interview reflecting on what stood out to them in the first interview.

In the second interview participants will be asked to share their reflections on the first interview experience. Again, interviews will proceed in an open-ended facilitated conversational style. Specifically, participants will

be asked what stood out to them about the experience. Follow up questions may include questions such as, what seems significant in reflection, what was it like for you to share your stories, what have you thought about since we last met, etc. in an attempt to generate reflection on the experience.

In the second stage of research, audio-taped interviews will be transcribed by a hired transcriptionist. The transcriptionist will be asked to sign a letter of confidentiality (Appendix B). Once the audio-taped interviews have been transcribed, the tapes will be destroyed. All names will be removed and replaced with fictitious names during the transcription process, and prior to copies being distributed to other members of the study. All members of the research team will be asked to sign a letter of confidentiality (Appendix A).

This research study is conducted with a qualitative phenomenological design. This design was chosen because it allows the examination and exploration of the lived experience of non-participant forest landowners in ways previously unstudied as reported in the literature. Researchers using a phenomenological approach are attempting to enter the life-world of the participants by inviting participants to fully and richly describe their life experiences relative to the study in their own words, giving and revealing their own meaning and interpretation to the significance of the related events of their lives. The information gathered will be analyzed by the principal investigator and others on the research team utilizing Dr. Howard Pollio's (UT Psychology Department) analytic procedure for existential phenomenological research. Some of the descriptions and responses to questions will be read aloud in the group and words, phrases, and sentences will be analyzed and thematized. General themes will be clustered from all of the interviews and conclusions will be drawn regarding underlying, essential structures that unite the invariant elements of the experience.

VI. SPECIFIC RISKS AND PROTECTION MEASURES

The risk of harm to the participants is minimal and not considered to be any greater than that ordinarily encountered in daily life. Participants will be informed that they are free to withdraw from participation at any time and that they may choose to terminate their participation in the study by notifying the principal investigator. In this event, their interview responses would be destroyed.

Special considerations will be given to the confidentiality of the subjects. All participants will be aware that the principal investigator and others on the research team will be aware of their participation, but their interviews will not have any distinguishing marks to identify the transcription as belonging to one particular individual. Only the principal investigator will have access to original transcripts bearing participant identifications, and these will be kept in a locked cabinet in Morgan Hall Room 7A. Once the research project is complete, all identifiers will be removed from these transcripts. Permission will be obtained to use participants' comments

and responses in a confidential manner in reports of this project (See Appendix D). Upon study completion all materials associated with this study will be maintained in a locked file in the Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries, Ellington Plant Sciences Building for a minimum of three years. All investigators working to analyze the data will sign a confidentiality agreement (See Appendix C).

VII. BENEFITS

The benefits of participation in this study are potentially considerable while the risks are minimal. Participation is voluntary and the informed consent is regarded as a statement that the individual would welcome the opportunity to share their experiences. Through participation landowners and researchers will learn how natural resource managers can better serve private landowners and the community, and how both can work towards greater sustainability of private forest lands.

VIII. METHODS FOR OBTAINING "INFORMED CONSENT" FROM PARTICIPANTS

The consent form (see Appendix D) will be shared with potential participants in the initial contact prior to beginning the first interview. The consent form will contain a description of the research study, name, address, and phone number of the principal investigator and the faculty advisors. Each selected participant will read and sign the consent form prior to agreeing to participate in the first interview affirming their understanding and permission to consent to participate in the study. A copy of the consent form will be given to the participant at that time. At the scheduling of the second interview, and again, prior to beginning that interview, participants will be reminded of their prior consent, and the researcher will confirm that they still wish to participate. If necessary, a second copy of the signed original will be provided to the participant at that time. The signed consent forms will be stored in the locked cabinet in Morgan Hall Room 7A for the duration of the study, and then in a locked file with the other study materials in the Forestry, Wildlife, and Fisheries Department in Ellington Hall for a minimum of three years.

IX. QUALIFICATIONS OF THE INVESTIGATOR(S) TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Miriam L. E. Steiner is currently a Master's degree student in the Human Dimensions of Natural Resource Management in the department of Forestry, Wildlife, and Fisheries. Simultaneously, she is pursuing a minor in Educational Psychology, in the Individual and Collaborative Learning program. She has participated in one prior phenomenological study, is currently enrolled in an Existential Phenomenological Psychology seminar, a Qualitative Research Methods course, and is a member of one of the UT Phenomenology Research Groups which meets weekly to analyze phenomenological studies and develop the skills of researchers.

Allyson B. Muth is currently a student in the Ed.D. in Education Program, concentration in Educational Psychology, with a specialization in Collaborative Learning. She has studied the phenomenological discipline, has been a researcher on other phenomenological studies, other private forest landowner studies, and is familiar with the pursuit of knowledge through research.

Jamey L. Pavey is currently a Ph.D. student in Natural Resource Management in the Department of Forestry, Wildlife, and Fisheries. Current research pursuits include the use of focus groups in collaborative natural resource planning, and collaborative planning and policy in the natural resources. Since beginning coursework at UT in the fall of 2001 she has been involved in a number of research and learning opportunities around issues of communities, and individual learning experiences, related to the management of natural resources including one previous phenomenological investigation of private forest landowners in Tennessee.

Leslie Horner is currently a Master's degree student in the Department of Forestry, Wildlife, and Fisheries. She brings to this study a wealth of professional practice experiences from a variety of fields including community development and its relationship with environmental efforts. Leslie joins the above research team in a collaborative approach to research, analysis, and reporting.

X. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT TO BE USED IN THE RESEARCH

The Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries is a part of the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources in the University of Tennessee system. The campus, located in Knoxville, offers graduate and undergraduate programs leading to degrees, majors, and concentrations in Forest Resource Management, Wildland Recreation, and Wildlife and Fisheries Science. Degree programs currently include Bachelors of Science, and Masters of Science, and Doctor of Philosophy in Natural Resource Management. The resources of the Department will be utilized as appropriate for this study.

As a student minoring in the Individual and Collaborative Learning Program of the Department of Educational Psychology of the College of Education, resources from this Department may be utilized as appropriate for this study. The Department of Educational Psychology is a part of the College of Education in the University of Tennessee system. The campus, located in Knoxville, offers graduate programs leading to degrees, majors, and concentrations in Adult Education, Educational Psychology, Collaborative Learning, and School Psychology. Degree programs include Master of Science, Educational Specialist, Doctor of Education, and Doctor of Philosophy.

XI. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PRINCIPAL/CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(S)

By compliance with the policies established by the Institutional Review Board of The University of Tennessee the principal investigator subscribes to the principles stated in "The Belmont Report" and standards of professional ethics in all research, development, and related activities involving human subjects under the auspices of The University of Tennessee. The principal investigator further agrees that:

1. Approval will be obtained from the Institutional Review Board prior to instituting any change in this research project.
2. Development of any unexpected risks will be immediately reported to the Research Compliance Services Section.
3. An annual review and progress report (Form R) will be completed and submitted when requested by the Institutional Review Board.
4. Signed informed consent documents will be kept for the duration of the project and for a least three years thereafter at a location approved by the Institutional Review Board.

XII. SIGNATURES

Principal Investigator:

Miriam L. E. Steiner

Signature _____
Date _____

Faculty Advisors:

David Ostermeier

Signature _____
Date _____

Mark Fly

Signature _____
Date _____

Investigators:

Allyson Muth

Signature _____
Date _____

Jamey Pavey

Signature_____

Date_____

Leslie Horner

Signature_____

Date_____

XIII. DEPARTMENT REVIEW AND APPROVAL

The application described above has been reviewed by the IRB departmental review committee and has been approved. The DRC further recommends that this application be reviewed as:

[] Expedited Review – Category(ies):_____

OR

[] Full IRB Review

Chair, DRC_____

Signature_____ **Date**_____

Department Head_____

Signature_____ **Date**_____

Protocol sent to Research Compliance Services Section for final approval on
Date_____

Approved:
Research Compliances Services Section
Office of Research
404 Andy Holt Tower

Signature_____

Date_____



Appendix A: Confidentiality Agreement for Project Research Team Members

As a member of the research team studying the experience of non-participant private forest landowners relating to the sustainability of private forest lands in the state of Tennessee, under the direction of Miriam Steiner, Mark Fly and David Ostermeier of the Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries at the University of Tennessee, I agree to guarantee confidentiality to participants who are a part of this study. I will not publicly divulge information that I learn about the participants.

Signature

Date

Appendix B: Confidentiality Agreement for Hired Transcriber

As a transcriber of the tape-recorded interviews of the experiences and reflections of non-participant private forest landowners relating to the sustainability of private forest lands in the state of Tennessee, under the direction of Miriam Steiner, Mark Fly and David Ostermeier of the Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries at the University of Tennessee, I agree to guarantee confidentiality to participants who are a part of this study. I will not publicly divulge information I learn about the participants.

Signature

Date

Appendix C: Confidentiality Agreement for Members of the Applied Phenomenology Group

As a member of the Applied Phenomenology Group, under the direction of Howard Pollio in the Department of Psychology at The University of Tennessee, I agree to guarantee confidentiality to participants who are a part of this study. I will not publicly divulge information that I learn about the participants.

Signature

Date

Appendix D: Consent Form

Experiences and Reflections of Private Forest Landowners

You are invited to participate in a research project. The purpose of this study is to explore the experience of being a private forest landowner in the Emory/Obed watershed of East Tennessee, and the process of sharing that experience with the researcher/interviewer. As a private forest landowner, you are asked to share a description of your experience with the interviewer (first interview), and to share your reflections of what stands out to you about sharing your experiences with the interviewer (interview two).

You are being asked to engage in the following activities:

Interview one:

1. Think of two or three experiences that stand out for you regarding your ownership of forestland.
2. Describe the experience that most stands out for you relating to the forest land.

Interview two:

1. Describe what stood out to you about participating in the first interview and thinking about your forestland. Think of two or three specific things that stand out to you, and describe them.

The interviews will be tape –recorded and are not anticipated to take any more than two hours.

After the interview, your descriptions will be transcribed, and your name replaced with a fictitious name in the transcripts. Any other identifying remarks or comments will also be removed or changed in order to preserve confidentiality. After transcription the original audio-tapes will be destroyed. Copies of the transcripts will be printed for the research team for analysis. Research team members, and the transcriptionist, will all sign a letter of confidentiality agreeing not to disclose anything they learn. A portion of your description will also be shared with an Applied Phenomenology Group at the University of Tennessee for verification purposes as part of the analysis process developed at the University. Participants in that group will be asked to sign a letter of confidentiality.

Transcripts of your descriptions and your signed consent form will be retained for three years after completion of the study and then will be destroyed. No incentives are offered to you for your time and effort in participating; however, you may personally benefit by thinking, talking, and reflecting about your forests, how you experience them, and what they mean to you.

The nature and direction of your descriptions will be determined by you in response to questions asked by the interviewer. If you feel uncomfortable during the interview, you may discontinue your participation and your audiotape will be destroyed. You are free to choose not to participate in this study, or you can withdraw from this study at any time by notifying Miriam Steiner (contact

information below). Your transcripts will be destroyed upon your request to withdraw from the study.

Any and all information you provide will be kept in confidence. Neither your name nor any identifying information will be used in any reports, although your words may be used to support the interpretation and analysis. At no time will your words be linked or traceable to you.

You may affirm your agreement to participate in this research study by signing below.

Signature_____

Date_____

Questions or comments regarding this invitation may be directed to:

Miriam L. E. Steiner
Graduate Research Assistant
Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries
University of Tennessee

P.O. Box 1071
Knoxville, TN 37901
Phone: 865-974-1963
Email: miriams@utk.edu

Vita

Miriam Steiner was born in Poughkeepsie, New York on June 13, 1971. She attended elementary school in New York before moving to La Crosse, Wisconsin where she completed middle and high school. Miriam left Wisconsin in 1989 to attend Occidental College in Los Angeles, California graduating in 1993 with a BS in Biology and an emphasis in Environmental and Conservation Biology. After college Miriam moved to Boston, Massachusetts where she lived and worked for several years. Miriam's professional positions included working at Harvard University's Museum of Comparative Zoology and with the Zoology Program of The Nature Conservancy, the Association for Biodiversity Information, and NatureServe. After traveling for the summer in the U.S., Canada, and Australia, Miriam moved to Knoxville, Tennessee in the fall of 2001 to begin her Master of Science degree in forestry.

Miriam will begin her PhD work at the University of Tennessee in Natural Resources this fall, and is engaged to be married in October.

3872 2089 58
04/14/04 MRB 