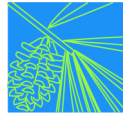


Sharing Stewardship  
of the Harvest:  
Report on the 2003 Crescent Lake  
Mushroom Monitoring Project



Katie Bagby

June 2004



The Pacific West Community Forestry Center is one of four regional field stations of the National Network of Forest Practitioners' National Community Forestry Center. This work is supported by the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture under Agreement No. 9936200-8704. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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2003 Crescent Lake Mushroom Monitoring Project

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**Pacific West Community Forestry Center**  
**at**  
**Forest Community Research**

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<sup>1</sup> This report builds on reports from the 2000 – 2002 seasons, written by Ajit Krishnaswamy, Beverly Brown, Jesse Hunter, and Katie Bagby. Certain background passages are borrowed and adapted from these earlier project reports. The author thanks these authors for their contributions.

## **SHARING STEWARDSHIP OF THE HARVEST: Report on the 2003 Crescent Lake Mushroom Monitoring Project**

### **Executive Summary**

The Pacific West Community Forestry Center (PWCFC) coordinates a Non-Timber Forest Product Multi-Party Monitoring project in and around four national forests in southern Oregon. The monitoring project builds the capacity of diverse, low-income harvesters of Non-timber forest products to participate in stewardship of the national forests. The Crescent Lake Mushroom Monitoring Project includes and benefits stakeholders in the Crescent Lake matsutake mushroom “pick.”

### ***Participatory research need***

The Crescent Lake area is the site of the largest matsutake mushroom harvest in the United States, feeding into a lucrative Japanese market. The harvest covers four national forests: Deschutes, Fremont-Winema, Umpqua, and Willamette. In peak years, the two-month harvest has drawn up to 2,500 to 3,500 harvesters. The mushroom harvesters are primarily mobile and low-income, and represent six different language groups: Hmong, Lao, Cambodian, Mien, Spanish, and English.

In the early-1990s, a rapid rise in world matsutake mushroom prices led to a dramatic increase in the number of Crescent Lake harvesters. The combination of large numbers of people, the need for quick-response logistics for which they lacked the budget, plus the challenge of working across disparate cultures, languages, incomes and levels of education, led to top-down management approaches by the Forest Service, and a regulatory system of permits, law enforcement, and camping requirements. The result was frustration on the part of harvesters over regulations that are, at times, contrary to those in other Forest Service regions and not synchronized with mushroom life cycles.

In the past most harvesters had few outlets through which to express their concerns or to access public information. Without forums for open communication, rumors ran rampant among various stakeholder factions. Tensions between groups were exacerbated by differences in language and culture. Many of the harvesters have emigrated from countries in political and economic unrest, and have been both afraid and unaware of how to engage in public processes, limiting their voice in resource management decision-making.

The Crescent Lake Mushroom Monitoring Project was initiated in 2000 to respond to harvester concerns about tension and lack of information in the woods, lack of communication with the US Forest Service, impacts of the Forest Service system of regulating the harvest, unsustainable harvesting practices, environmental degradation, and safety. The project collaborates with and builds on the success of an innovative mushroom monitoring project created in 1999 by the Forestry Action Committee in Cave Junction, OR.

The Crescent Lake Multi-party Monitoring Project (CLMMP) facilitates participatory monitoring of the social and ecological impacts of the harvest and promotes information sharing

and collaboration among harvesters, community members, the Forest Service, and other stakeholders. The participatory research project addresses two primary questions:

1. What are the social and ecological concerns of stakeholders in the harvest?
2. In what ways does multi-party monitoring build the capacity of diverse, low-income harvesters to access information, share in stewardship of the harvest, and participate in Forest Service decision-making?

### ***Participatory methods***

The multi-party monitoring projects develop a process by which people who are excluded—or exclude themselves—due to culture, language, low-income status, legal status, low-literacy, distrust of public processes, and other issues—become directly involved as willing and pivotal partners in public land stewardship. These projects aim to maximize participation by harvesters in monitoring the social, cultural, and environmental dimensions of non-timber forest product harvesting and related land management issues. Monitoring is built on the knowledge of mushroom harvesters, who are primarily mobile and low-income, and represent six different language groups: Hmong, Lao, Cambodian, Mien, Spanish and English. Other stakeholders who participate are the relevant US Forest Service ranger districts, local community residents, law enforcement, and non-profit partners who provide financial and logistical support to the projects. Support from the US Forest Service Office of Civil Rights and responsive district rangers have been critical to the project's success.

The primary goal of the multi-party monitoring effort is to integrate harvesters' knowledge, experience, and concerns into grassroots and institutional decision-making processes, toward the goal of protecting harvesters' livelihoods and the natural resource base upon which they depend.

The projects advance these aims by supporting monitors (veteran harvesters) to walk the woods and listen to harvesters' concerns, share information, and provide peer education on sustainable harvesting practices. Monitors and other partners document observations on regulatory impacts, ecosystem concerns, social/cultural concerns, and any other issues related to the harvest. Campground meetings provide a public forum for harvesters and other stakeholders to identify and address concerns. Project participants continually discuss and analyze emerging issues with the goal of adaptive responses.

### ***Outcomes***

The multi-party monitoring efforts have increased communication and collaboration among community-based stakeholders and the Forest Service, reduced conflict, promoted sustainability, and improved relations with law enforcement. The projects are establishing a creative and cost-effective means to involve underserved communities in stewardship decision-making on federal lands. Significant outcomes during the 2000-2003 harvest seasons include:

- Education and discussion among harvesters on the implications of legislation on non-timber forest products, such as Section 339 of the Code of Federal Regulations, and sharing these issues with congressional staffers and agency officials

- Mutual education and dialogue among the Crescent Ranger District (Deschutes NF), harvesters, and other stakeholders regarding slated timber sales and silvicultural prescriptions and important mushroom habitat areas. Through field trips, maps, and meetings, the Crescent Ranger District shared specific information about proposed prescriptions, including ecosystem management concerns. Harvesters shared their concerns about the effects on matsutake mushroom habitat, and by extension, harvesters' livelihoods and well-being.
- Written agreement from the Crescent Ranger District to drop several timber sales in important matsutake growth areas, and a commitment to consult with harvesters on all future plans relevant to the harvest
- New avenues of collecting public comment that increased mobile harvester participation in an Environmental Assessment and roads analysis on the Crescent Ranger District
- Participation by harvesters in the public comment process regarding proposed use of herbicides to control invasive plants on the Siskiyou National Forest.
- Ongoing discussions between harvesters and the Crescent Ranger District about a proposed vegetation management project
- Federal agencies developing new means and practices for consulting with harvesters as key stakeholders

The collaborative, multi-party monitoring projects have proven critical to building the capacity of low-income communities to participate in stewardship in the forests of southern Oregon and in decisions that affect their livelihoods and well-being.

## **SHARING STEWARDSHIP OF THE HARVEST: Report on the 2003 Crescent Lake Mushroom Monitoring Project**

### **Introduction**

The Pacific West Community Forestry Center (PWCFC) coordinates a non-timber forest product multi-party monitoring project in and around four national forests in southern Oregon. The monitoring project builds the capacity of low-income harvesters of non-timber forest products (NTFP) to participate in stewardship of the national forests. The Crescent Lake Mushroom Monitoring Project includes and benefits stakeholders in the Crescent Lake matsutake mushroom “pick.”

This report describes a participatory research project conducted by diverse, low-income mushroom harvesters and local community residents in partnership with the Pacific West Community Forestry Center and other non-profit and community-based organizations.<sup>2</sup> We describe the need the project addresses for diverse communities, what methods were used, some preliminary results and outcomes, next steps, and some of the lessons learned through the process of conducting the research. The report describes the project’s progress as of April 2004; the project is ongoing.

The project aims to maximize participation by harvesters in multi-party monitoring of social, cultural, and environmental dimensions of non-timber forest product harvesting and related land management issues. The project builds a process by which people who are excluded—or exclude themselves—due to culture, language, low-income and/or legal status, low-literacy, distrust of public processes, and other issues—become directly involved as willing and pivotal partners in public land stewardship. Other stakeholders who participate are the relevant US Forest Service ranger districts, local community residents, law enforcement, and non-profit partners who provide financial and logistical support to the projects. The PWCFC provides fiscal oversight, coordination, and field staffing for the Crescent Lake project. Support from the US Forest Service Office of Civil Rights and responsive district rangers have been critical to the projects’ success.

The primary goal of the multi-party monitoring effort is to integrate harvesters’ knowledge, experience, and concerns into grassroots and institutional decision-making processes, toward the goal of protecting harvesters’ livelihood and the natural resource base upon which they depend.

### **Participatory research need**

The Crescent Lake, Oregon area is the site of the largest matsutake mushroom harvest in the United States, feeding into a lucrative Japanese market. The harvest covers four national forests: Deschutes, Fremont-Winema, Umpqua, and Willamette. The US Forest Service manages a joint mushroom regulation and permitting system for the four forests, primarily administered out of the Crescent Ranger District on the Deschutes National Forest and the Chemult Ranger District on the Fremont-Winema National Forest. In peak years, the two-month harvest has drawn up to

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<sup>2</sup> This report builds on reports from the 2000 – 2002 seasons, written by Ajit Krishnaswamy, Beverly Brown, Jesse Hunter, and Katie Bagby. Certain background passages are borrowed and adapted from these earlier reports.

2,500 to 3,500 harvesters. In recent years, the harvest has been smaller. In 2003 approximately 1,400 permits were sold. The mushroom harvesters are primarily mobile and low-income, and represent six different language groups: Hmong, Lao, Cambodian, Mien, Spanish, and English.

Many commercial harvesters follow a circuit of mushroom and other non-timber forest product harvests, including morels in the inland Northwest in the summer, matsutakes in Crescent Lake in the fall, matsutakes in Cave Junction, Oregon in the late fall and early winter, and winter mushrooms on the Oregon coast near Brookings. Other non-timber forest product harvests include bear grass and salal for the floral greens industry.

In the mid-1990s, a rapid rise in world Matsutake mushroom prices led to a dramatic increase in the number of Crescent Lake harvesters. The combination of large numbers of people, the need for quick-response logistics for which they lacked the budget, and a lack of capacity to work across disparate cultures, languages, incomes and levels of education, led to top-down management approaches by the Forest Service, and a regulatory system of permits, law enforcement, and camping requirements. The result was frustration on the part of harvesters over regulations that are, at times, different from those in other Forest Service regions and not in always synchronized with mushroom life cycles.

In the early years of the harvest most harvesters had few outlets through which to express their concerns. Few knew how to access public information. Without forums for open communication, rumors ran rampant among various stakeholder factions. Tensions between groups were exacerbated by differences in language and culture. Many of the harvesters have emigrated from countries in political and economic unrest, and have been both afraid and unaware of how to engage in public processes, limiting their voice in resource management decision-making.

The Crescent Lake Mushroom Monitoring Project was initiated in 2000 to respond to harvester concerns about tension and lack of information in the woods, lack of communication with the US Forest Service, impacts of the Forest Service system of regulating the harvest, unsustainable harvesting practices, environmental degradation, and safety. The project was built on the foundation of years of grassroots network building by the Jefferson Center for Education and Research (Wolf Creek, OR), and the success of an innovative multi-party monitoring project in Cave Junction, Oregon, facilitated by the Forestry Action Committee (FAC). Harvester-Monitors Vern Oden and Kao Saechao are leaders in both projects.

The Crescent Lake Mushroom Monitoring Project (CLMMP) facilitates participatory monitoring of the social impacts of the matsutake harvest, including ecological concerns, and promotes information sharing and collaboration among harvesters, community members, the Forest Service, and other stakeholders. The participatory research project addresses two questions:

3. What are the social and ecological concerns of stakeholders in the harvest?
4. In what ways does multi-party monitoring build the capacity of diverse, low-income harvesters to access information, share in stewardship of the harvest, and participate in Forest Service decision-making?

## **Participatory research methods and partners**

### ***A grassroots methodology emerges***

The Crescent Lake Mushroom Monitoring Project aims to maximize participation by under-represented and low-income groups in multi-party monitoring of social and environmental impacts of non-timber forest product (NTFP) and land management issues. All-party or multi-party monitoring are processes in which all stakeholder groups in a resource management area can participate in identifying what is important to monitor and how, collecting and analyzing data, and making recommendations for management actions (Baker and Kusel 2003). The goal of multi-party monitoring is to build trust and communication among various stakeholders, resource managers, and scientists, to provide community feedback into resource management practice, and, ideally, to provide assurances that stakeholder concerns are considered in management decisions toward better ecosystem and community health (Baker and Kusel 2003; Kusel et al. 2000).

The inspiration for the mushroom monitoring projects emerged from participatory dialogues with diverse harvester communities convened by Beverly Brown of the Jefferson Center in the late 1990s. At one particular meeting hosted by the Asian Pacific Self-development and Residential Association (APSARA) in Stockton, CA, participants were discussing concerns about unsustainable harvesting of the matsutake mushroom and tensions among harvester groups. Susan Chapp, chair of the Forestry Action Committee (FAC), a citizen group in southern Oregon, suggested that an Asian harvester and an Anglo harvester walk the woods together to talk about harvester concerns and good harvesting practices. From this grassroots inspiration, a unique “multi-party monitoring” process was conceived to respond to concerns about the sustainability of a culturally prized and economically important resource – the matsutake mushroom – and their forests habitat. In 1999, the Forestry Action Committee pioneered a multi-party grassroots mushroom monitoring project during the Cave Junction season, built on the format of harvester/monitors and regular mushroom harvester meetings. Monitor Vern Oden has been a leader since that first season, and recruited Kao Saechao. The two lead a solid team in both Cave Junction/Brookings and Crescent Lake.

The following year, Mr. Oden, Mr. Saechao, and other harvesters who had participated in the Cave Junction project, wished to build a similar project for the Crescent Lake pick. Beverly Brown, of the Jefferson Center for Education and Research (Wolf Creek, OR) took a lead in deepening the networks they had been building among the local residential community, the mobile harvester communities, non-profits that could provide logistical support, and key individuals in the relevant national forests and the US Forest Service Office of Civil Rights. In fall of 2000, the Crescent Lake Mushroom Monitoring Project was initiated, building on the foundation of these networks and the successful format of the Cave Junction mushroom project. The Institute for Culture and Ecology (IFCAE), a research group based Portland, OR coordinated the project that first season. In subsequent seasons, the Pacific West Community Forestry Center has taken a lead in coordinating the project<sup>3</sup>, with support and active participation of harvester-monitors, local community residents, the Forestry Action Committee, IFCAE, the Jefferson

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<sup>3</sup> In 2001, due to staffing shortages, the PWCFC contracted with Beverly Brown of the Jefferson Center to coordinate the project. Brown is a member of the PWCFC Advisory Council.

Center, the Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters (Willow Creek, CA), and key Forest Service personnel.

### ***Project methods***

The project strives engage multiple stakeholders in monitoring and stewardship of the harvest through specific actions including field monitoring by harvesters, public campground meetings, and ongoing, focused reflection among project partners.

First, veteran harvesters who are well-respected within their individual harvester communities are contracted as monitors. Monitors walk in the woods and listen to and document harvesters' concerns as well as distribute public information regarding issues that impact harvesters' livelihood. Monitors provide peer education about low-impact and sustainable harvesting techniques. They have no law enforcement capabilities. They speak with harvesters in a variety of locations including buying stations and campground meetings with stakeholders, which they help to coordinate. They keep a daily log of their activities, as well as write weekly comments documenting concerns and problems they identify through personal experience and conversations with other harvesters. In addition to documenting social and general ecological concerns, monitors conduct photo-point monitoring of selected production areas, particularly where there is ground disturbance due to digging and raking or logging. Monitors and other project partners collect and document observations on regulatory impacts, ecosystem concerns, social/cultural concerns, and any other issues related to the harvest season.

Second, campground meetings are held to provide a public forum for harvesters and other stakeholders to identify and address concerns. During the 2003 season there were three public campground meetings held at the "noodle tent" in the Little Odell Industrial Campground. Meals were provided for all participants.

Third, project partners regularly discuss and reflect on the issues that are identified and documented through the monitoring process. The project coordinator prepares and distributes weekly written reports summarizing conversations with monitors, local community anchors, non-profit partners, and Forest Service personnel. Bi-weekly conference calls allow opportunity for partners to report and discuss emerging issues, reflect on recent progress and challenges, and to engage in "adaptive management" of participatory research and peer education activities. Outcomes from the conference calls are included in the weekly written updates.

### ***Partners in the Crescent Lake Mushroom Monitoring Project***

The Pacific West Community Forestry Center coordinates the Crescent Lake Mushroom Monitoring Project. The PWCFC, based at Forest Community Research, is a regional field station of a national pilot project – the National Community Forestry Center<sup>4</sup>. The PWCFC helps underserved rural communities and forest workers use and build local knowledge, assets, and resources to investigate issues they identify as important. We do this by:

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<sup>4</sup> The National Community Forestry Center and its regional field stations are funded by the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture. The National Community Forestry Center is a project of the National Network of Forest Practitioners.

- working with rural and forest worker communities to gather and produce information so that they can participate in decisions that affect their forests, livelihoods, and well-being
- building relationships to share knowledge among forest communities, scientists, and other stakeholders in the forest
- building capacity with underserved communities to develop their own strategies for investigating and addressing important human and ecosystem issues

With a twelve member regional Advisory Council, and as a participant in the regional collaborative Lead Partnership Group (a regional collaborative of watershed and community forestry groups), the PWCFC not only coordinates project activities, but also analyzes results across a range of multi-party projects and forest worker movements regionally and nationally.

Veteran harvesters Vern Oden (Medford, OR) and Kao Saechao (Oroville, CA), were monitors for the 2003 season. They are central founders of the project, and lead the monitoring efforts in both the Cave Junction and Crescent Lake harvests. They are members of the Anglo and Mien communities, respectively. Monitors work closely with leaders in the various harvester communities to address emerging issues.

Local community residents are key stakeholders and partners in the monitoring effort. Gloria and Bill Gibbs are 35-year residents of Crescent Lake, and are Emergency Medical Technicians. Since the inception of the project, the Gibbs' have served as volunteer local cooperators, and worked to help transition the project to a new volunteer local cooperator in 2003. Kerry Ellington, co-owner of the Crescent Creek Cottages and Campground, where about 150 harvesters stay for the season, joined the project team in 2003. Volunteer local cooperators serve as "anchors" or liaisons between the project and the local community, listening to community concerns and educating about the project's mission. They assist in on-going contact among harvesters, project partners, law enforcement, the Forest Service, and other community interests. In addition, they help facilitate the flow of information between monitors and the PWCFC coordinator by faxing, receiving, printing, and distributing written materials. The Gibbs' and Ms. Ellington are members of the Crescent Odell Lakes Volunteer Response Team (COLVRT).

Partnerships with community-based organizations and key Forest Service personnel help to support and guide the project. Members of COLVRT, the Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters, and the Forestry Action Committee are active partners in advising and advancing collaborative goals. The Jefferson Center and the Institute for Culture and Ecology, though no longer actively engaged in the project, remain important advisors on emerging issues. Since 2000, USDA Forest Service Asian Community Liaison William Otani has been a valuable resource in building relationships with harvesters in their home communities, contributing to project design, and in securing support from the US Forest Service. Support from responsive district rangers has been critical to the projects' success.

The Crescent Lake Mushroom Monitoring Project has succeeded with the past financial support of the National Forest Foundation, the Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters, Surdna Foundation, James Irvine Foundation, Deschutes National Forest, USFS Office of Civil Rights, USFS State and Private Forestry, and the NCFC Pacific West Community Forestry Center. This

support, in conjunction with the collaborative efforts of partners, has helped to build the capacity of low-income communities to participate in stewardship in the forests of southern Oregon and in the decisions that affect their livelihoods and well-being.

### **Summary of outcomes to date: 2000 - 2002**

During CLMMP's first seasons of operation, Anglo, Mien, Laotian and Cambodian harvesters have served as monitors, with the consistent leadership of Vern Oden and Kao Saechao. Monitors and other project partners sought to identify and begin to address harvesters' concerns through various project activities, including monitoring, field staff observations campground (stakeholder) meetings, small group meetings, and other efforts to open communication lines and facilitate collaboration. Project partners facilitated public "mushroom" meetings with harvesters, community members, Forest Service personnel and others in order to discuss stakeholder issues – the first public venue where harvesters could voice their concerns and questions.

During the first three harvest seasons, the project identified and documented a number of critical issues and information needs that have significant impacts for ecological sustainability and environmental justice for the well-being of low-income communities. The multi-party monitoring process documents these concerns, and helps harvesters access and share information in a variety of ways. Issues identified include (but are not limited to): logging in matsutake harvest areas, potential road closures, changes in non-timber forest product regulations (Section 339), campground and public health issues, season-length, permit price, closure of Late Successional Reserves and other areas to harvesting, loss of harvest areas to fire, unsustainable harvesting techniques, and littering.<sup>5</sup>

The multi-party efforts during the 2000 – 2002 seasons resulted in the following outcomes:

- Education and discussion among harvesters on the implications of legislation on non-timber forest products, such as Section 339 of the Code of Federal Regulations, and the opportunity to share harvester concerns regarding the legislation with congressional staffers (led by the Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters)
- Extension of the permitted 2001 season to respond to the ecological season of the matsutake
- Mutual education and dialogue among the Crescent Ranger District, harvesters, and other stakeholders regarding the effects of slated timber sales and silvicultural prescriptions on matsutake mushroom habitat, and by extension, harvesters' livelihoods
- Written commitment from the Crescent Ranger District to drop timber sales in important matsutake growth areas, and to consult with harvesters on all future plans relevant to the harvest
- New ways of collecting public comment that increased mobile harvester participation in an Environmental Assessment and roads analysis on the Crescent Ranger District

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<sup>5</sup> For background on each of these issues and related Forest Service policies, see the Crescent Lake Mushroom Monitoring Project reports for 2001 (Brown, 2002) and 2002 (Hunter and Bagby, 2004).

## **Project actions and participatory research outcomes**

The 2003 harvest season ran September 12- November 15, though it essentially ended in late October due to snowfall. The matsutake season was very productive in Crescent Lake in 2003. However, prices were very low. According to Mr. K. Matsumura, CEO of a large mushroom buying company, this was due to a glut in the international market – China, Korea, and Canada also had very productive seasons. Prices for matsutakes went as low as \$1.00 for the highest quality mushrooms for much of the season. By the end of the season, many of the mushrooms had flowered out and “buttons were not as readily available. Matsutake “flowers” allow for greater sporing for future production, but do not bring the commercial value that buttons bring. Prices returned to higher rates for the last days of the season. Many harvesters left the area for part or all of the season, to wait for prices to rise. This affected participation in planned project activities. In addition, the Crescent District Ranger, who has worked very closely with the multi-party monitoring project was on detail in New Mexico for the majority of the harvest season. The project worked with an interim ranger, who was new to administration and the multi-party monitoring process.

Concern about sustainable harvesting practices and forest health is the bedrock of the mushroom monitoring projects. Over the years, monitors have documented increasing harvester concern and conflict over logging in picking areas, “raking and digging” as a method of locating and harvesting matsutakes, and the harvesting of “babies,” or immature mushrooms.

While there is little “formal” knowledge about the matsutake, there is general agreement that the ground disturbance caused by logging destroys the habitat of the mushroom for decades. Harvesters expressed concern that the use of heavy equipment, which creates soil disturbance and removes host trees, could destroy their livelihood. Mycelium, the fibrous threads that grow the mushroom fruit, maintains a symbiotic relationship with host trees (such as ponderosa pine). Mycelium serves as an extension of the tree root system, transporting water and nutrients to the roots. In return, the host tree is the “primary energy source for the fungus, providing simple sugars and vitamins produced in photosynthesis and transported to the roots and then the fungus” (Molina 1993:4). According to Forest Service estimates, if host trees are destroyed or if there is significant soil disturbance, mycorrhizal fungi (mycelium) will only begin to reappear in abundance after twenty years (ibid). Based on their own practitioner knowledge, many veteran harvesters believe that, in reality, it can take much longer for Matsutake mushroom beds to recover from logging or significant ground disturbance.

The Forest Service permit prohibits harvesting mushrooms that are less than 1.5 inches in diameter, allowing adequate maturity for mushrooms to spore and reproduce. The agency-approved method for locating matsutake involves seeing the telltale humps in the pumice soil, and gently clearing the duff and soil with their fingers or a short tool to check whether the mushroom has reached a satisfactory maturity for harvesting. The mushroom is then rocked and twisted out of the ground, the spores are shaken into the hole, and the soil and duff are gathered to cover the hole again, leaving conditions intact for the maturation of smaller mushrooms. “Digging and raking” occur when the harvester uses a long tool, such as walking stick, to rake and dig the duff to locate mushrooms.

Many harvesters, including the monitors, believe that digging and raking are unsustainable harvesting practices, and that they damage matsutake beds for future production. Another group of harvesters contends that there is no long-term effect from the practice. Still others believe that it is detrimental to matsutake habitat, but they feel pressured to try to harvest as quickly as possible in order to make ends meet. They fear that even if they don't dig, rake, or harvest "babies," the harvester who comes behind them probably will. In addition, many harvesters felt that Forest Service management policies sometimes sent mixed messages. At the same time the Forest Service prohibited harvesters from digging or raking in mushroom patches, the agency was logging in picking areas—a practice which many veteran harvesters believed could be far more ecologically devastating (see Brown 2002).

### ***Pre-season planning and monitoring***

Pre-season monitoring began September 8, 2003 to monitor impacts of logging and digging and raking on matsutake production. Photo point methods were used on areas high production areas that had been dug or raked by harvesters and logged by land managers. Monitors returned to these points mid-season and toward the end of the season to photograph and monitor production. Preliminary data showed no production during the season heavy digging and raking occurred, though for some sites there was production scattered around outside the disturbed area. Monitors plan to return to monitor and photograph these areas prior to the 2004 season. The project will work to systematize and catalogue these photo points for analysis over time.<sup>6</sup>

In early September, a pre-season planning workshop was held with harvester-monitors and local community volunteers. Team members shared why they are involved in the monitoring project:

- Harvester health and safety
- Equitable treatment of harvesters by local and federal authorities
- Business perspective – harvesters have a huge positive impact on local businesses. Want to see harvesters respected.
- Outraged at conditions at the mushroom camp – “the Forest Service needs to respect harvesters and with basic services and human dignity.”
- Help people in harvester communities – monitors can be a great asset.
- Teach others how to harvest correctly
- Teach community how to think about the future for their children – harvest sustainably.

Team members reviewed the general goals for the project, which include promoting a sustainable harvest, community health and safety, and community involvement in Forest Service decisions.

They identified priority issues for the 2003 season, including:

1. Permit cost – not equal with costs in other national forests
2. Encourage the Forest Service Office of Civil Rights to maintain the Asian Community Liaison position
3. Increase monitoring team diversity – Cambodian and Latino monitors who can also help with reliable interpretation

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<sup>6</sup> Since the end of the season, the monitors' vehicles were broken into, and their camera equipment and tapes from the 2003 season were stolen. This is a set-back for gathering long-term data.

4. Late Successional Reserves (LSRs) and other areas closed to harvesting
5. Public health and living conditions at the FS Little Odell industrial campground. This is a high priority, particularly the lack of potable water at the campground and the impact this has on harvester health and the local businesses that then feel they must give water away. There is also need to have the road watered for dust abatement before 3:00 p.m. each day.

Other issues identified included litter in the woods and having a meeting with the Forest Service to help harvesters learn about and comment on upcoming forest management decisions that have impacts on harvesters. These priority issues were shared with other project partners through written weekly reports and the team conference call.

The next day, the lead monitor and project coordinator met with staff from the Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters to share collective goals for the season and to agree on communications protocols among partners during the season. That afternoon pre-season meeting was held in the noodle tent with the Forest Service Special Forest Products staff from the Chemult and Crescent ranger districts to share partner priorities and to learn Forest Service priorities for the season. Forest Service staff added two areas that are high priority for them:

- Wilderness areas – there is increasing pressure to enforce the no picking in wilderness areas. Staff will be issuing tickets.
- Davis fire area – The Deschutes National Forest has closed the area and roads (portions of 62 and 46) to it for public safety. Harvesters will be given maps of the closed areas when they get permits.

The project team recommended clear signage with an explanation that the closures were for safety.

### ***Project responses and outcomes on priority issues***

In addition to sustainable harvesting practices and concerns over logging, the project worked to address each of the priority issues identified for the season. Two stood out as the highest priorities during the 2003 season, and the majority of project activities and information sharing were focused on these: (1) the lack of potable water in the Forest Service industrial mushroom camp, and understanding and (2) responding to Forest Service policy on harvesting in closed areas, particularly Late Successional Reserves. Post-season activities have focused primarily on harvester engagement in decision-making about emerging land management plans. Issues are presented in the order identified through the pre-season meetings.

#### Permit cost

Harvesters have identified the cost of the harvest permit as a key issue of concern, particularly because it differs significantly from permits in other national forests and for other types of mushrooms. The Crescent Lake permit costs \$200 for a two-month season, and covers only matsutakes. Permits in other forests may cost \$100 for six months and cover all mushrooms.

At the pre-season meeting with the Forest Service, project partners discussed the Crescent matsutake permit cost, which is set through an appraisal system mandated by the USFS Region 6

Office. Forest Service staff explained that variables used to set the price are based on the following defaults per harvester, per day:

- \$7/pound average value
- Oregon minimum wage as base salary
- 225 miles driving per day
- 8 hours in the woods
- 20 pounds of mushrooms gathered daily.

Forest Service staff indicated that they need data on whether these defaults are accurate. For instance, if the number of pounds gathered per day was 10 rather than 20, it would drop the 5-day permit price from \$50 to \$35. It was suggested that we design some sort of survey or other data collection method for harvesters to anonymously report how many pounds they gathered each day. This data would be presented to the Region 6 office to inform their appraisal system. Initial steps were taken in this direction, but due to the unusually high production this season, project partners decided to shelve this project until a more typical season occurred.

#### Retention of USFS Asian Community Liaison

Project partners asked PWCFC to facilitate a process to send a letter to Kathryn Gause, Director of Civil Rights for the Forest Service, highlighting the importance and uniqueness of the Asian Community Liaison position. In this role, Bill Otani has helped facilitate outreach to and participation of Southeast Asian harvesters and other forest users in Forest Service processes. The letter was signed by 52 mushroom harvesters, 11 local residents, and 4 non-profits (Forestry Action Committee, Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters, Forest Community Research, and the Jefferson Center). In addition, Sovanna Koeurt, Executive Director of the Asian Pacific Self-development and Residential Association wrote a letter describing how important Bill's relationship and work has been for the Asian Pacific community in Stockton, home to many harvesters. The Forest Service has not allocated funds to retain the position, and Mr. Otani was reassigned to other duties. Nevertheless, he continues to demonstrate dedication to the communities involved and to advise and participate in project activities as he is able.

#### Increasing diversity of the monitoring team

The current monitoring team includes an Anglo monitor and a Mien harvester, who speaks Thai, Mien, and Laotian. Hiring a larger and more diverse team of monitors proved to be a challenge during the 2003 season. Monitors speculated that because mushroom production was so high, people wanted to focus their energies on picking, and perhaps felt they could make more money picking, even with low prices. In response to this challenge, Bill Otani recommended the project team initiate a guest monitoring program where a harvester could volunteer to "ride-along" for a day to learn what monitors do. This was intended to help get the word out about monitoring and to make the project more participatory by opening dialogue opportunities with other harvesters about what is important to monitor and how. Volunteer guest monitors receive a stipend of \$60/day and are encouraged to offer comments and ideas. A couple of harvesters participated as guest monitors during the 2003 season.

In January, Stephen Thao, a harvester from the Hmong community, joined the monitoring team for the mushroom project coordinated by the Forestry Action Committee in Cave Junction. Mr. Thao has expressed interest in monitoring in Crescent Lake in the fall of 2004. This holds significant promise for learning about the concerns and interests of the Hmong community, which the project has not successfully engaged on a consistent basis. Also in the post season, the monitors have initiated discussions with a Laotian woman and a Latino man who have expressed interest in joining the monitoring team for 2004.

### Closed areas

The project facilitated activities to understand and respond to Forest Service policies on areas closed to mushroom harvesting (Late Successional Reserves, wilderness, administrative closures, study areas, etc.), and areas lost to fire or logging. Late-Successional Reserves (LSRs) are designated areas closed to all commercial activity (such as mushroom harvesting), designed to protect and enhance old-growth ecosystems. Some of the major LSRs within the harvest area contain the following acreages: Davis LSR = 48,890; Crescent LSR = 604; Lower Big Marsh LSR = 1,197; and Upper Big Marsh LSR = 3,250.<sup>7</sup> Monitoring efforts during earlier season have documented that many harvesters are concerned that the closure of the LSRs actually creates counter-intuitive results by pushing harvesters on to less land, thus increasing the intensity of harvesting. Many worry that increased competition in a decreasing harvest area creates greater economic incentives for high-impact harvesting practices such as digging and raking (Brown 2002).

In pre-season planning, monitors and other partners decided to move away from the large campground meetings, and to experiment with other ways to engage the diverse communities in more focused inquiry and dialogue around specific issues. The group reasoned that although there were often many in attendance for all or part of the large campground meetings (up to 70), it wasn't clear how many were actually interested in participating, and focused discussions were sometimes challenging. The project experimented with other ways to engage broad participation from the diverse harvester communities.

The monitors invited a few leaders from different harvester communities to organize and lead a small meeting with harvesters from their communities to (1) review the maps of closed areas, and (2) to talk about their questions, concerns, and ideas about closed areas. We had hoped that each group would then select two or three people to participate in broader meetings with representatives from the other communities, project partners, and the Forest Service. This proved not to be possible during the 2003 season given the lack of continuity of people present during the harvest. This was thought to be due to the water and pricing issues. Some of the key leaders and contacts that monitors have worked with in the past were not present during much of the season. Project partners were very concerned that harvester participation in meetings was low with this new method. Partners are reflecting on these outcomes and discussing ways to blend the methods of large, inclusive campground meetings with smaller, focused workgroups. This reflects the adaptive management approach that has guided the mushroom monitoring efforts.

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<sup>7</sup> E-mail to Jesse Hunter from Beth Peer, Writer / Editor Crescent Ranger District 1/12/03.

Two focused information sharing and dialogue sessions about closed areas were held in Mr. Peng's noodle tent at the industrial mushroom camp with monitors, other harvesters, community partners, and two ranger districts. Meetings were small, with a few harvesters moving in and out of the conversation. Partners requested maps from the Forest Service showing all of the areas, and the reasons for closure. The meetings included (1) clarifying what areas are closed, and what the Forest Service goals are for each type of closure, (2) discussion on the various types of closures and the impacts/concerns for harvesters, and (3) discussion about strategies to ensure enough access to sustain the harvest, especially when there are fires or timber sales. Forest Service participants identified the need for a sustainability study of matsutake harvesting in Late Successional Reserves before these areas could be opened for mushroom harvesting. The project will continue to work with the ranger districts to encourage such a study and to help facilitate harvester participation.

As an initial step, monitors conducted a simple pilot survey to gather data on harvesters' knowledge and opinions about the effects of different harvesting techniques on sustainability and mushroom production. The questionnaire was prepared by Center staff, harvester-monitors, and a Cambodian harvester (see attachments). Nineteen harvesters participated. If project partners identify the continuation of the survey as a priority for the 2004 season, the questionnaire and sampling method will be refined. The pilot served primarily as an education piece to gather some initial thoughts of harvesters, and to spark dialogue. The project prepared a brief newsletter for harvesters and buyers highlighting what was learned at the campground meeting about the closed areas, inviting participation in the follow-up session, sharing what we knew about the prices, and introducing the survey (see attachments).

#### Living conditions at the campground

The Forest Service regulatory system prohibits dispersed camping for commercial Matsutake harvesters, and requires that harvesters who camp on FS land stay in industrial campgrounds. Forest Service personnel tie the existence of the industrial campground to the mandates of an Environmental Assessment, particularly in regard to the negative ecological effects of large-scale dispersed camping. Forest Service indicate that the primary rationale for industrial camps was to minimize adverse environmental effects, better address public and harvester safety, and move encampments away from residential areas (P. Cruz, personal communication, 6/25/04). The industrial camp has also allowed for increased administrative efficiency; reducing management costs.

The Forest Service generally contracts a camp concessionaire to provide services. In the past, camping fees included access to water. In 2003 potable water was not provided, and the camping fee was reduced from \$130.00 to \$100.00 for the season. While most harvesters can afford the camping permit price during a consistently good harvest season, the price for the harvest permit, camping, water, gas, and supplies can be prohibitive in poor seasons. The lack of potable water was a serious concern for many harvesters when they arrived to start the season – many deliberating on whether they would stay.

Harvesters and local community members initiated meetings with the Forest Service to try to address the issue. They explored a variety of responses. Forest Service personnel explained that it

is very difficult for the concessionaire to succeed financially, since water quality standards have increased and testing is required frequently. The isolation of the area makes bringing in water and having it tested very expensive. One harvester explained that not very many harvesters stay in the camp in comparison to early years, so it is difficult to bring in enough money to keep the permit price down. He suggested lowering the harvesting permit price and the campground permit price by \$50 each so that more harvesters could afford to come.

During the 2002 season, harvesters suggested a well be dug in the camp. The Forest Service budget for the mushroom program comes out of its timber budget. The law does not allow capital investment projects with the current budget. Other suggestions for funding a well included (1) a pilot project with grant funds from outside of the agency, (2) retaining receipts through Section 339 regulations, or (3) using Knudson-Vanderberg funds based on receipts from timber sales near the camp (this turned out not to fit the funds requirements). The Forest Service had already researched a well site, and estimated costs to be \$20,000.

A third suggestion from one Forest Service staff member was “goods for services.” He indicated that a new law had been passed allowing the Forest Service to try this “stewardship thinking” for the next ten years. For example, if people camped in clusters, one person would provide toilet and water for a certain number of people, and then receive a free harvesting permit.

Local community residents and monitors were very active in addressing the issue of not having access to potable water at the industrial mushroom camp. Volunteer local cooperator Kerry Ellington, the local fire chief, and the director of the Crescent-Odell Lakes Volunteer Response Team met with Crescent District Ranger Phil Cruz to brainstorm potential responses to the issue. Based on these meetings, the Forest Service agreed to open four federal campgrounds in the area (one at Crescent Creek and three at Crescent Lake) to offer free water for harvesters until the temperatures reached freezing. The group also agreed to explore options for a special permit for COLVRT to dig a well at the campground. Monitor Vern Oden arranged and facilitated a meeting with the district ranger so that harvesters from the camp could talk with him about the water and campground issues.

The Crescent-Odell Lakes Volunteer Response Team (COLVRT) began raising funds to drill a well at the camp, which would then be turned over to the Forest Service to manage. COLVRT drafted fundraising letters to local residents, mushroom companies, and others. They set up can recycling bins to help harvesters and community residents to contribute to fundraising. COLVRT members reason that a well at the campground site would address health and financial concerns of harvesters (who have been buying water, filling up in town when allowed, or drinking out of unsafe water sources), as well as make the camp area a staging area for local fire fighting and other needs.

#### Emerging forest management plans

In November, the Crescent Ranger District (Deschutes National Forest) sent out a scoping letter for a proposed vegetation management project that has potentially significant implications for matsutake habitat. The monitoring project is working with partners to help harvesters access information on the project and its implications, and to help facilitate harvester participation in the

decision-making process. This includes helping to inform harvesters of the proposed project through a newsletter, scoping meetings in home communities, and encouraging the district to hold off on major decisions until harvesters can be present and participate in field trips and meetings.

In February, monitors and project partners participated in two meetings that aimed to bring together harvesters and Forest Service personnel to build relationships, debrief the 2003 season, and learn about the proposed BLT vegetation management project on the Crescent Ranger District. The Asian Pacific Self-development and Residential Association (APSARA), with support from the Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters, hosted a successful meeting in the Park Village Apartment Complex in Stockton, CA that brought together Cambodian harvesters from the area, mushroom monitors, non-profit partners, and Forest Service staff from the Crescent Ranger District, Chemult Ranger District, and the USFS Office of Civil Rights. This provided follow-up and continuity to a pre-season meeting that APSARA, in collaboration with the Alliance, had hosted with the same community in August. APSARA provided a Cambodian meal for participants to share following the meeting.

Forest Service staff requested that the monitoring project try to arrange a second meeting with another community in the area. Expectations were to meet and begin to build rapport with a few harvesters. The Pacific West Community Forestry Center worked with the monitors and the Forestry Action Committee to bring together Hmong harvesters and Forest Service staff in Sacramento. The Sacramento meeting was hosted by the family of Stephen and Mee Thao and included a home-cooked meal. Stephen is a Hmong man who joined the monitoring team through the efforts of Kao Saechao, Vern Oden, and the Forestry Action Committee during the Cave Junction season, which follows the Crescent Lake season. While the Sacramento meeting was very small, it provided an opportunity for Mr. Thao and his family and the Crescent Lake partners to meet one another, and provided time for informal strategizing for both projects.

These meetings build on the long-term outreach and trust-building efforts of the USFS Asian Community Liaison, Bill Otani, and the Jefferson Center, which began bringing together grassroots community groups to talk about harvesting issues in the late 1990's. As noted above, it was at one of those meetings at the Park Village Apartments in Stockton that Susan Chapp of the Forestry Action Committee introduced a vision for the mushroom monitoring projects.

Recent communication with the District Ranger indicates that decisions on the proposed BLT Vegetation Management Project will not be made until the 2004 harvest season, giving time to engage harvesters in the process. Project partners will work with community leaders and the Forest Service to hold more scoping meetings, field trips, and build a working group of harvesters from the various communities. Project partners plan to collaborate with harvesters, perhaps with an ecologist, to co-develop a management plan with the Forest Service for the matsutake within the project area.

#### Local community engagement

Local community participation is expanding beyond the "local anchor" role. COLVRT is taking an active role in moving the well project ahead. They have expressed interest in being the

concessionaire for the campground. They plan to work with the project and local businesses to hold a welcome-back dinner for harvesters at the beginning of the 2004 season. Finally, COLVRT and PWCFC submitted a joint grant proposal to advance monitoring activities and local community engagement. COLVRT will be the fiscal sponsor if the funds are granted.

### Evaluating other successes

Following the season, the project held a conference call to debrief and evaluate the season. In addition to the activities and outcomes presented above, partners highlighted the following successes:

- **Signs for the campground:** The Forest Service placed signs on Highway 58, 1/4 mile before the campground turnoff in both directions. This is a direct success from raising this as a safety issue at campground meetings for the last few years. Signs are still needed directly at the turnoff. Monitor Vern Oden contributed to harvester safety by placing reflectors at the turnoff.
- **Watering roads:** Monitors reported that the Forest Service did a good job of keeping the roads watered to keep dust down this year until the very end of the season.
- **Communication:** Regular meetings, conference calls, and written updates were a success this year to improve communications and relationships among partners. Project partners commented that everyone had a chance to participate and to offer their opinions and ideas. We talked about the possibility of alternating facilitation to build the capacity of all participants. It was requested that PWCFC continue with conference call notification, agenda creation, and updates for consistency.
- **Community anchor participation:** Kerry Ellington played a key role in helping monitors send and receive information, and was a valuable link between harvesters and local residents/businesses. Partners suggested that perhaps the local anchor role could be shared among a couple of others so that there is always local participation in meetings and conference calls.

### ***Priorities for the 2004 season***

The project goals remain improving communication and participation among diverse stakeholder groups and integrating harvesters' knowledge, experience, and concerns into land management decision-making processes. In addition project partners have identified the following specific priorities for the 2004 season:

Participation in USFS vegetation management project decisions: Project partners will work with harvester community leaders and the Forest Service to engage harvesters in the decision-making and refinement processes for the proposed BLT Vegetation Management Project.

Leadership development: Partners reiterated the importance of continuing to look for opportunities and partnerships to identify and build leadership capacity among Southeast Asian harvesters for the direction of the project. Ideas included engaging some of the elders that come for the season, but aren't out harvesting all day or at buying stations at night. They are respected in their communities, and perhaps would be more able to participate in meetings with the Forest

Service. Katie Bagby and Bill Otani will also explore collaboration with the Asian Pacific Environmental Network, a San Francisco Bay area organization that recognizes and builds leadership among diverse Asian communities to address environmental justice issues.

Community building: Partners would like to open the season with a welcome back dinner with harvesters, local residents, and Forest Service staff.

Harvester participation: Partners will continue exploring the best ways to support broad participation among the different harvester communities. Harvesters did not participate in meetings as much during the 2003 season as they had in previous years, perhaps in part due to the experimental format with smaller meetings. It is important to ask them why they didn't participate and what types of processes and events they would like to participate in.

Peer exchange with Native American monitoring: The lead monitor expressed interest in a peer learning exchange with the Karuk tribal monitoring efforts (see below). Partners also suggested a dialogue session among some of the commercial harvesters and traditional harvesters from a few tribal communities (See also Bagby, Kusel, and Community Partners, 2003).

## **Lessons learned**

### Relationship building and trust

Relationship building over time is vital for building the trust needed to monitor and manage the ecological relationships of the harvest. Monitors and harvesters are very protective of key harvesting areas, and when the projects began, did not want to share knowledge about their locations. Emerging land management actions have highlighted the need to engage harvester participation and knowledge in refining plans to accommodate matsutake habitat. During the 2001 and 2002 seasons, harvesters sharing selected knowledge stopped timber sales in critical matsutake harvest areas (see Hunter and Bagby 2004). After four years of working in the multi-party monitoring process, they have gained confidence and trust in the Crescent District Ranger, and recognize that they cannot help fine-tune land management plans for the matsutake without sharing some of key information. This is a significant shift, and will serve to advance knowledge and improve management of the resource. There is also recognition that this type of trust and understanding of how to engage low-income stakeholders needs to grow within the agency, so that the capacity to share information and co-investigate does not depend primarily on the relationship with one district ranger.<sup>8</sup>

In addition, the multi-party process is building interest and capacity among monitors and other harvesters to engage with biological scientists on understanding and managing the matsutake. Early in the project, there was not the trust and rapport needed for collaboration among harvesters, community-based partners, and biological scientists. Over time there is growing interest in shared learning. This has coincided with a growing interest among the monitors in more systematized monitoring of the resource. They have begun to experiment with user-friendly ways to do this, such as photo-point monitoring. What is key is that these processes are being

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<sup>8</sup> Personal communication, Susan Chapp, Cave Junction Mushroom Monitoring Project.

initiated by harvesters, rather than being imposed by “science” or “experts.”<sup>9</sup> This is opening the door for community-based collaboration with scientists to refine methods and learn more about ecosystem management.

The multi-party monitoring process is increasing the investment of the participating Forest Service staff in involving harvesters in decision-making processes. This was evidenced by staff from the two main ranger districts, including a District Ranger, traveling from Oregon to California to meet with harvesters in their home communities and share maps of management plans. Forest Service staff have expressed interest in participating in similar meetings in other communities, and in hosting a field trip(s) with representatives from the various harvester communities to discuss a proposed vegetation management project. Harvesters and project partners appreciated the dedication shown by the Crescent District Ranger, who made the trip to Stockton and Sacramento despite time constraints and personal health difficulties. Participants signed a framed certificate honoring his dedication. This highlights two things about the relationships: that the effort of Forest Service staff to get to know and engage harvesters is important. Secondly, that harvesters, who perhaps years ago would not have signed their names to such a document, now feel safe enough to do so.

#### Synergies among projects

While they are distinct projects in different geographical locations, the synergy between the Crescent Lake and Cave Junction mushroom monitoring projects is critical in advancing our learning about key processes and in improving information sharing and participation in decisions with land management agencies. The lead monitors for the two projects are the same, and lessons learned and advances made during one harvest are carried into the harvest at the other site. Concerns about managing for a sustainable harvest and management actions such as timber sales and the proposed BLT vegetation management plan on the Deschutes NF (Crescent Lake) and control of noxious weeds on the Siskiyou National Forest (Cave Junction), highlight the need for more in-depth engagement among harvesters, scientists, and land managers. The projects work together to advance these relationships and learn from each other’s experiences on land management issues. For example, in early 2003, the project helped harvesters from the Crescent Lake harvest join local efforts in Cave Junction to send a letter of petition documenting their concerns about the proposed use of herbicides on the Siskiyou National Forest. In 2004, the Deschutes National Forest (in the Crescent Lake area) is beginning its scoping process for how to manage its invasive plant populations. Because (1) harvesters’ concerns about herbicide use on the Siskiyou National Forest were documented in 2003, and (2) harvesters and the Deschutes National Forest worked together to address timber sales in matsutake harvest areas in 2002, the project is able to build on these advances to participate in shaping the management plan for noxious weeds on the Deschutes National Forest. The Deschutes NF lead botanist, the Crescent District Ranger, and the Crescent Ranger District botanist have agreed to work with the monitoring project to hold scoping meetings and field trips with harvesters during the 2004 season.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

In another example, members from the Cave Junction monitoring project participated in meetings with harvesters in California to discuss the land management issues in the Crescent Lake area (Mr. Thao and his family hosted one of the meetings). Because the monitoring team was able to build relationships with a new monitor from the Hmong community during the Cave Junction season, this will help inform and shape activities with the Hmong and other harvester communities at the Crescent Lake harvest.

These synergies and the experiences of the Cave Junction and Crescent Lake projects can now be exchanged with a new mushroom monitoring project initiated by the Karuk tribe and supported by the Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters. The Karuk project is unique and distinct from the other two projects, stemming from the place-based interests of traditional tribal harvesters, to educate commercial harvesters about traditional family gathering areas and to protect these areas for sustainable use by future generations.

#### Partnerships and seed-planting

Partnerships and relationship building over several years have been critical for collaboration and creative solutions to emerge, both within the project and across the region. Different non-profit partners and key community members have played essential roles in helping to build networks of trust and lay the foundation for collaborative responses to concerns and challenges. As described previously, in the late 1990s the Jefferson Center for Education and Research began building relationships and holding meetings among diverse harvester communities, both in the harvesting fields and in home communities. This created a context from which the Forestry Action Committee's pioneering project with mushroom monitoring emerged, building on the activities they were already doing in their community of place. These meetings also helped lay a foundation of relationship building among what is now the Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters, APSARA and other harvester communities.

At the same time, the Lead Partnership Group, a regional network in northern California and southern Oregon convened by Forest Community Research, was pioneering the idea of multi-party monitoring as a community-based response to ecosystem management, which has helped to inform and garner funds to launch the mushroom monitoring projects. IFCAE's growing body of knowledge on a wide variety of non-timber forest product regimes helps to understand this harvest in a national context of harvester activities and some of the economic and institutional forces common to diverse harvests on the ground. Dialogues with traditional Native American harvesters through such forums as the Pacific West Community Forestry Center and the Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters have highlighted the need for dialogue and collaborative solutions among traditional and commercial harvesters for management of the harvest for cultural, ecological, and economic sustainability (see Bagby, Kusel, and Community Partners, 2003).

#### Building capacity for public participation and institutional change

Over the last four seasons, the multi-party monitoring process has been an important vehicle for identifying and documenting concern and knowledge among harvesters on stewardship issues, and for creating spaces for them to participate in stewardship problem-solving. The process has created space where harvesters have shared their concerns and influenced US Forest Service

decisions regarding length of the permitted harvest season (2001), timber sales (2002), and potential road closures (2002).

Incremental and bottom-up capacity building is critical to advancing multi-party stewardship capacity. Many low-income harvesters have been reluctant to participate in public processes. The monitoring project is creating space and capacity for harvesters to be involved in problem solving on issues of concern. These efforts are also building capacity among partners to advance public participation of harvesters in Forest Service decision-making. Responding to the threat of timber sales in prime matsutake harvest areas during the 2001 and 2002 seasons heightened awareness and built capacity among multiple parties, including mushroom monitors and the relevant Forest Service ranger districts, to look for ways to involve harvesters in public processes on other stewardship issues. For example, during the 2003-2004 off-season, partners and the district ranger have been planning ways to involve harvesters on the proposed BLT vegetation management project on the Deschutes National Forest. This includes scoping visits to home communities, upcoming field trips, and developing a working group to fine-tune the project to respond to matsutake habitat concerns. The Deschutes National Forest is also beginning the scoping process for how to manage invasive plants. The botany team and the District Ranger have agreed to engage in field trips and campfire meetings during the 2004 season as an alternative way to gather public comment from a community that is challenged by time, language, and English literacy.

These initial successes in changing “business as usual” have depended significantly on the openness and responsiveness of key Forest Service leaders, the Crescent District Ranger in particular, with support from his Forest Supervisor on the Deschutes. This personal responsiveness has been a critical element in opening up processes for harvester participation. This highlights the need to build these successes into regular practices that don’t go away with changes in who serves as district ranger or manager of Special Forest Products. This is important not only on the Crescent and Chemult Ranger Districts with respect to this particular mushroom harvest, but can serve as a model for institutional change in the agency for engaging diverse, low-income constituents in public decision-making processes in a variety of non-timber forest product arenas on national forests, whether it is matsutakes in Oregon, bear grass in Montana, or galax in Appalachia.

### **For more information**

For more information on multi-party monitoring efforts, please contact:

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C/o Forest Community Research  
P.O. Box 11  
Taylorsville, CA 95983  
Phone: 530.284.1022  
Email: [infopwfc@fcresearch.org](mailto:infopwfc@fcresearch.org)  
Website: [www.pwfc.org](http://www.pwfc.org)

## **Attachments**

Mushroom News  
Harvester Survey

## **References**

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# Mushroom News

Crescent Lake, Oregon

October 17, 2003

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## Prices

People have different ideas about why the prices have been low this year. Mr. K. Matsumora explains that there was a “bumper crop” of matsutakes all over the world – too many mushrooms on the international market for the demand. The cool weather is very good for mushrooms worldwide (and it keeps the worms down). It’s not so good for other important crops like rice!

## Emergency!

If you have a medical emergency, please call 911. In the mushroom camp, mushroom monitors Vern Oden and Kao K. Saechao, have cell phones and can help (Camp spot # 131). Karen and Roger Sutton, the camp hosts also have a cell phone.

## Closed areas: Questions, answers, and ideas

The Crescent Lake matsutake harvest is world-class. Yet many harvesters feel that there are fewer and fewer places to harvest matsutakes due to logging, fires, Late Successional Reserves (LSRs), and other closures.

On October 6<sup>th</sup>, a few harvesters and community partners met with Forest Service staff at Peng’s noodle tent to talk about areas that are closed to matsutake harvesting. The goal was to understand what areas are closed, the reasons they are closed, and what we can do together to make sure there are enough open areas for a good harvest for many years to come.

Crescent Ranger District staff Shane Jeffries and Pete Peterson showed a map of closed areas and explained the Forest Service’s management goals for closing each area. (If you would like to see the map, see mushroom monitor Vern Oden.).

### MEETING ABOUT CLOSED AREAS

**October 22**

**4:00 to 6:00 p.m.**

**Peng’s noodle tent** at the Mushroom Camp (off Highway 58, between mile markers 74 & 75)

Please come and share your ideas!  
We’ll share dinner!

We talked a lot about Late Successional Reserves. Late Successional Reserves (LSRs) are set aside as important areas for mature forests and the animals and plants that depend on them. Right now, harvesting matsutakes in LSRs is not allowed in the Crescent Lake area. The Forest Service explains that the law (the Northwest Forest Plan) says that *commercial* harvesting has to have a *neutral* or *beneficial effect* on the health of the forest.

These are some of the questions people asked:

1. Why is the sno-park closed to harvesting? Can it be re-opened?
2. The Forest Service plans to burn some areas for habitat for the black-backed woodpecker. Since we’ve had big burns with the Davis and B&B Complex fires, are these other burns needed? (Can these areas be saved for matsutakes instead?)
3. Why can we harvest matsutakes in LSRs in other forests but not here?
4. Why is logging allowed in LSRs but matsutake harvesting is not?

5. What process does the Forest Service use to make a decision about what can be harvested in LSRs?
6. Do we have the studies and information we need to make a decision about whether matsutake harvesting would have a negative, neutral, or beneficial effect on LSRs?

On October 22<sup>nd</sup>, we'll have another meeting with the Forest Service to try to answer these questions. The Forest Service will bring information about the sno-park, the areas they plan to burn, and the process for deciding about harvesting in LSRs. We're asking experts who know about the matsutake – harvesters and scientists – what effects they think harvesting has and how to keep the forest healthy.

**What do you know?**

Harvesters know a lot about the matsutake mushroom and harvesting. Based on your experience and knowledge, please answer the questions on the next page.

Please tear off and give your completed questionnaire to mushroom monitors Vern Oden or Kao K. Saechao. Or you can drop it off at the store at Crescent Creek Cottages or the box in Peng's noodle tent at the mushroom camp. Thank you!

*Your participation makes a difference!*

When harvesters participate, results happen. For the last four years, the Crescent Lake Mushroom Monitoring Project has held campground meetings where harvesters and community residents share their concerns and questions. We invite the Forest Service to listen to and respond to harvesters' concerns.

Sometimes progress is slow, but we've had some important successes:

- Harvesters said they were worried about safety on the highway trying to find the turnoff for the mushroom camp at night. Monitors put out reflectors to help. This year, the Forest Service put out two signs on Highway 58 for the mushroom camp.
- In 2001, harvesters said that the season needed to run later, since the mushrooms came on late. Harvesters kept saying it at campground meetings, and the Forest Service extended the season by one week.
- In 2002, many harvesters signed a petition, went to field trips, and came to meetings at Peng's about logging in matsutake picking areas. District Ranger Phil Cruz committed to drop logging plans in some important matsutake areas (Windego Pass) and to include harvesters in decisions about future plans that would affect the harvest.

This year we're working together on important issues like getting water at the mushroom camp and finding out about closed areas.

To everyone who has signed a petition, shared your ideas at a campground meeting, talked to monitors about your concerns, or gotten important information out to your community - **THANK YOU! Together we can make changes!**

## Harvester Survey 2003

Harvesters know a lot about the matsutake mushroom and harvesting. Based on your experience and knowledge, please answer the questions below.

1. How many years have you been picking matsutake mushrooms here?

\_\_\_\_\_Years

2. After harvesting, how long do you think it will be before the matsutake mushroom comes back?

3. After digging and raking, how long do you think it will be before the matsutake mushroom comes back?



### Questions or concerns?

Contact Kao K. Saechao or Vern Oden at the mushroom camp (campsite #131) or on Vern's cell phone at (541) 821-7285. Or you can call Katie Bagby at (530) 284-1022.

This survey is through the Crescent Lake Mushroom Monitoring Project, a partnership of harvesters, local community residents, and non-profit organizations.