Socio-Economic Indicators for Forest Restoration Projects: A Delphi Study

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ABSTRACT

A Delphi process was used to develop a model for assessing the socio-economic dimensions of projects funded by the Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP). Using a form of purposive sampling, eleven experts with backgrounds in the social, economic, and business aspects of forest restoration were identified and agreed to participate in the process. Four iterations of the Delphi process resulted in a practical, robust model capable of evaluating the social and economic effects and outcomes of a wide range of CFRP-funded and other restoration projects. Among the most highly rated indicators in the model were those related to job creation, community stability, and collaborative participation in restoration processes. Importantly, the relative importance of indicators was estimated and specific metrics were developed for each indicator in the model. Upon completion of the Delphi process, the model was discussed with a group of on-the-ground CFRP monitoring professionals, who offered their perspectives from practitioners' points-of-view. Results have implications not only for CFRP-funded projects, but also for any forest restoration efforts with an interest in a project's social and economic outcomes. The model may be easily modified for non-forest restoration efforts.