

XXXVII. NWOS Topic Guide: Caribbean Islands

IN THE HALLWAY, A SIGN THAT SAYS:

- Landowner Focus Groups [and room name or directions]

ON FLIP CHART IN THE ROOM:

- Welcome to the woodland owner focus group. Moderator: <MODERATOR'S NAME>.

AT EACH SEAT:

- Focus group guidelines sheet

AT MODERATOR'S SEAT:

- Clock
- Highlighters – yellow and pink
- Handouts
- Coffee

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE TABLE:

- Audio recorders
- Napkins

AS THEY SIT DOWN, ASK THEM TO:

- Fill out the name tents, front and back. Just your first name – whatever you want to be called.
- Read and sign the disclosure statement and return it to <ASSISTANT>.

A. OVERVIEW

WELCOME

Good [morning/afternoon/evening]. My name is <MODERATOR> and I will be the moderator for today's discussion. The one thing you all have in common is that you are landowners in [PR/USVI]. And over the next two hours, that is what we will be talking about – your land and more precisely, the part of your land that is covered by trees.

AGENDA

During this time, you will be doing several things:

- Participating in group discussion; and
- Reviewing some materials.

This should be a free-flowing conversation. There are no wrong answers; we want to hear your opinions.

MODERATOR INTRODUCTION

I am a researcher from the USDA Forest Service. I am here to facilitate the discussion and listen to your answers.

I will apologize upfront that at times you may get frustrated with me. During our discussion, you can ask me any questions that you want, but it is highly unlikely that I will answer them. But after the group discussion is over, I will be happy to answer any questions that I can.

I have a series of questions that I need to cover, so at times I may need to ask someone to wrap-up their thoughts and we'll have to move on.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to say thank you for coming. We really appreciate you taking time out of your schedules to be with us today.

DISCLOSURES

You will notice that there are two audio recorders on the table. I am sure there will be many interesting things said here today and we want to make sure we can capture all of it. These recordings are strictly for research purposes, they will not go beyond the research team. Individual statements will never be attributed to specific individuals, but we may say that landowners in [PR/USVI] said x.

INTRODUCE BACK TABLE

At the back table is/are <ASSISTANTS/OBSERVERS>. S/he/they will be observing today's discussion. If you need anything to make you more comfortable, please let one of us know.

PERMISSIONS

The bathrooms are [give directions] and there is food on the back table. At any time, please feel free to use the facilities and to grab some food or drink.

SAFETY

For your safety, please note that the exits are located [give locations]. In case of a [identify potential emergencies and related instructions].

GUIDELINES

To help facilitate today's discussion, here are a few guidelines:

HAVE THE FOLLOWING AS A PRINT OUT AT EACH PARTICIPANT'S SEAT

- Talk one at a time
- Talk in a loud, clear voice
- Avoid side conversations
- Work for "equal air time" so no one talks too much or too little
- When someone else says something, I would like to know who else agrees with it and who has something different to add
- Say what you believe, whether or not anyone else agrees with you
- Only one person up or out of the room at a time
- Remember, there are no wrong answers, we want **your** opinion
- And finally, if you have a cell phone, please turn it off or set it to vibrate

B. PARTICIPANT INTRODUCTIONS

1. To start, I would like to go around the room and have each of you tell us:

WRITE THE FOLLOWING ON A FLIP CHART AND HAND ONE SHEET AROUND

- Your name
- Your occupation
- Describe the land that you own
 - Where it is located (location)
 - How big it is (# of acres)
 - What percentage is covered by trees (% trees)
 - How long you have owned it (tenure)
 - If you own it alone or with anyone else (spouse/siblings/children/business partner(s)/etc.)
 - Who lives on it, if anyone

C. LAND VALUES

2. What do you like best about your land – essentially, why do you own it or why is it special to you?

[Can you tell me more about that?]

[What do you mean by _____?]

[What else?]

3. What is/are the most frustrating/least rewarding thing(s) about the land you own?

[Can you tell me more about that?]

[What do you mean by _____?]

[What else?]

4. What other concerns might you have about your forest?

[Possible specific concerns to ask about: air pollution, climate change, damage from animals, development of nearby lands, drought, damage or noise from off-road vehicles, government regulation, high property taxes, invasive plants, keeping land intact for future generations, misuse of forested land, such as vandalism or dumping, trespassing or poaching, unwanted insects or diseases, water pollution, wildfire, hurricanes or tropical storms, any other?]

5. Do you like having tree-covered land or forest?

Why? Or Why not?

[Can you tell me more about that?]

[What do you mean by _____?]

[What else?]

6. How do you use your tree-covered land or forest, if at all?

[Can you tell me more about that?]

[What do you mean by _____?]

[What else?]

[Possible uses to ask about specifically: recreation, nontimber forest products, agroforestry]

D. LAND COVER AND USE

7. Is there anyone here whose land has undergone **natural regeneration/regrowth of trees** on their land in the past 5 years?
- On what percentage/how many acres did this occur?
 - Do you like this natural change to your land? Please explain.
8. Does anyone here plan to allow their land to undergo **natural regeneration/regrowth of trees or forest** in the next 5 years?
- Why?
 - Is there any information or assistance that you would like related to this decision?
9. Is there anyone here who has **converted tree-covered land to another land use**, such as farm field or house lot, in the past 5 years?
- What motivated you to do it?
 - Was there any specific information that influenced your decisions? If yes, what was it? Where did you get it from?
 - Is there any other information that you wished you would have had at the time?
10. Does anyone here plan to **convert tree-covered land to another land use** in the *next* 5 years?
- Why?
 - Is there anything that might change your mind or influence your decision?
 - Is there any information or assistance that you would like related to this decision?
11. Is there anyone here who has **converted another land use to tree-covered land** in the past 5 years?
- What motivated you to do it?
 - Was there any specific information that influenced your decisions? If yes, what was it? Where did you get it from?
 - Is there any other information that you wished you would have had at the time?

12. Does anyone plan to **convert another land use to tree-covered land** in the *next* 5 years?
- Why?
 - Is there anything that might change your mind or influence your decision?
 - Is there any information or assistance that you would like related to this decision?
13. Who here has sold or subdivided land in the past 5 years?
- What motivated you to do it?
 - What is tree-covered land?
 - Was there any specific information that influenced your decisions? If yes, what was it?
Where did you get it from?
 - Is there any other information that you wished you would have had at the time?
14. Does anyone here plan to **sell or subdivide land** in the *next* 5 years?
- Why?
 - Is there anything that might change your mind or influence your decision?
 - Is there any information or assistance that you would like related to this decision?
 - If you are likely to sell or subdivide your land in the next 5 years, who will likely receive it?

E. LAND MANAGEMENT

15. Has anyone here **planted trees**, excluding yard trees, on their land in the past 5 years? [These may have already been addressed in the afforestation question above.]
- What motivated you to do it?
 - Was there any specific information that influenced your decisions? If yes, what was it?
Where did you get it from?
 - Is there any other information that you wished you would have had at the time?
16. Does anyone plan to **plant trees** on their land in the next 5 years?
- Why?
 - Is there anything that might change your mind or influence your decision?
 - Is there any information or assistance that you would like related to this decision?

17. Has anyone here **cut down or harvested trees** in the past 5 years?
- a. Why? For what purpose? (personal/commercial)
 - b. What motivated you to do it?
 - c. Was there any specific information that influenced your decisions? If yes, what was it? Where did you get it from?
 - d. Is there any other information that you wished you would have had at that time?
18. Does anyone here plan to **cut down or harvest trees** in the next 5 years?
- a. Why? For what purpose? (personal/commercial)
 - b. Is there any information or assistance that you would like related to this decision?
19. Has anyone here **collected nontimber forest products**, such as artisan/craft materials, medicinals, and ornamentals in the past 5 years?
- a. Why? For what purpose? (personal/commercial)
 - b. What motivated you to do it?
 - c. Was there any specific information that influenced your decisions? If yes, what was it? Where did you get it from?
 - d. Is there any other information that you wished you would have had at that time?
20. Does anyone here plan to **collect nontimber forest products**, such as artisan/craft materials, medicinals, or ornamentals in the next 5 years?
- a. Why? For what purpose? (personal/commercial)
 - b. Is there any information or assistance that you would like related to this decision?

21. Has anyone here **reduced fire hazards** on their land in the past 5 years?
- What motivated you to do it?
 - Was there any specific information that influenced your decisions? If yes, what was it? Where did you get it from?
 - Is there any other information that you wished you would have had at the time?
22. Does anyone plan to do something to **reduce fire hazards** on their land in the *next* 5 years?
- Why?
 - Is there anything that might change your mind or influence your decision?
 - Is there any information or assistance that you would like related to this decision?

F. MANAGEMENT PLANS

23. A written forest management plan is a detailed, written document prepared by a natural resource professional to help a landowner reach his or her objectives while improving the management of all of the resources on his or her wooded land.
- Who is familiar with written forest management plans?
 - Does anyone here have a written forest management plan for your wooded land?
 - How long have you had it?
 - Have you taken actions to implement it?
 - Why did you get it?
 - Who wrote it?
 - Were any of the expenses cost-shared? If yes, by who?
 - Have you found it useful? Why/how?
24. For those who have a management plan, how has this influenced your decisions?
- What about decisions to sell or transfer your land?
 - Has having a plan or receiving technical assistance caused you to do something you otherwise would not have done?
 - How, if at all, do you think this will impact your future decisions?
25. For those who do not have a management plan, would you be interested in having one for your tree-covered land?
- Why/why not?

G. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

26. Has anyone here received technical assistance in the past 5 years? This may have been a visit from a state or county forester, a conversation with a state or county forester, or help doing a specific activity, such as planting trees or improving wildlife habitat.

- a. What specifically was it? When did it occur?
- b. Why did you get it?
- c. Whom did you get it from?
- d. Were any of the expenses cost-shared?
- e. Did you find it useful? Why/how?

27. For those who have received technical assistance, how has this influenced your decisions?

- a. What about decisions to sell or transfer your land?
- b. Has having a plan or receiving technical assistance caused you to do something you otherwise would not have done?
- c. How, if at all, do you think this will impact your future decisions?

28. For those who not received technical assistance, would you be interested in receiving technical assistance for your tree-covered land?

- a. Why/why not?

H. TOPICS AND ACTIVITIES

29. I am now passing out a sheet of paper with a list of potential topics that you may be interested in. Please indicate the 3 that would be of most interest to you.

[Distribute topic sheet]

- a. What did you pick? Why?
- b. Is there something not listed that you would find valuable? What is it?

30. I am now passing out a sheet of paper with a list of potential ways that you might receive that information or learn about that topic. Please indicate the 3 that would be the best for you.

[Distribute activities sheet]

- a. What did you pick? Why?
- b. Is there something not listed that you would find valuable? What is it?

I. IF THERE IS EXTRA TIME

31. This pen in front of you is now a magic wand. If there were one or two things that you could magically have happen that would help you enjoy your tree covered land or forest more, what would it be?

J. CLOSING

32. [People at the back table], do you have any questions you want to ask?

That is it. Thank you all very much for coming today. Please see [name] on the way out. S/he has an envelope for each of you.