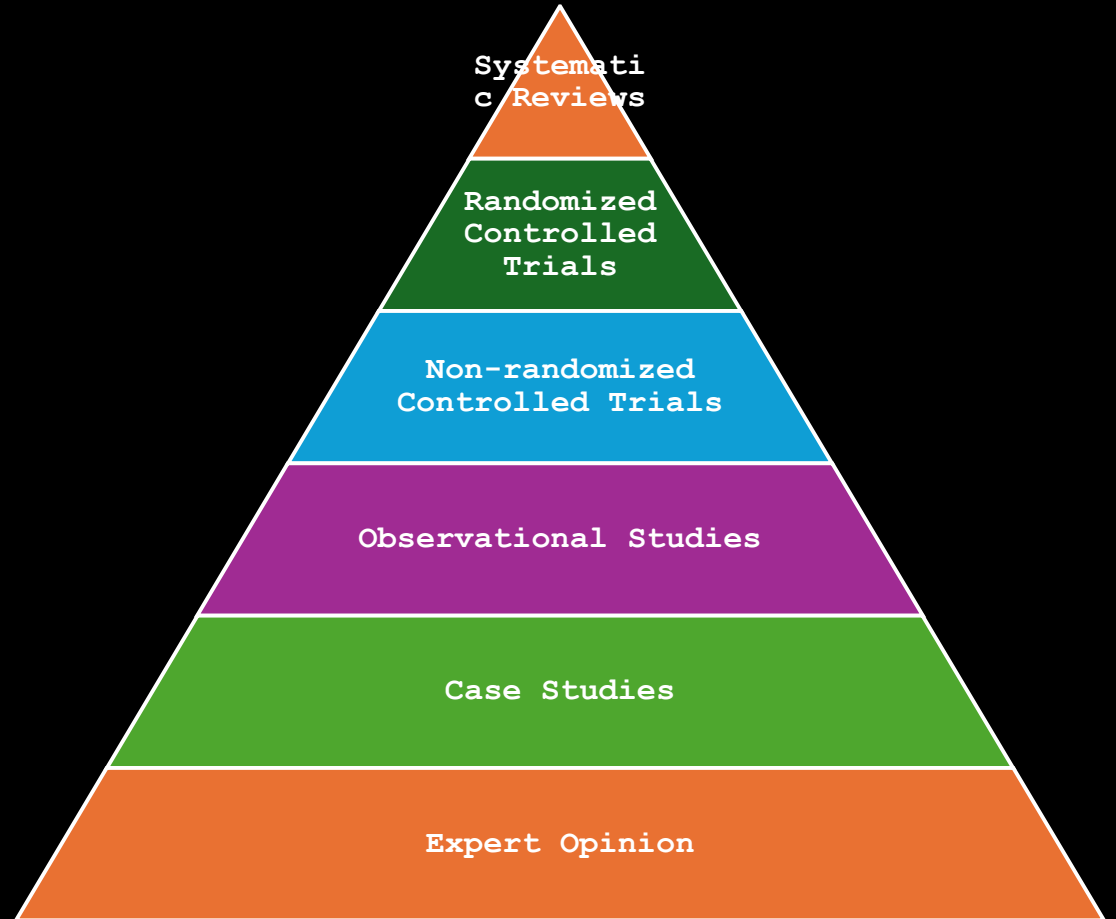
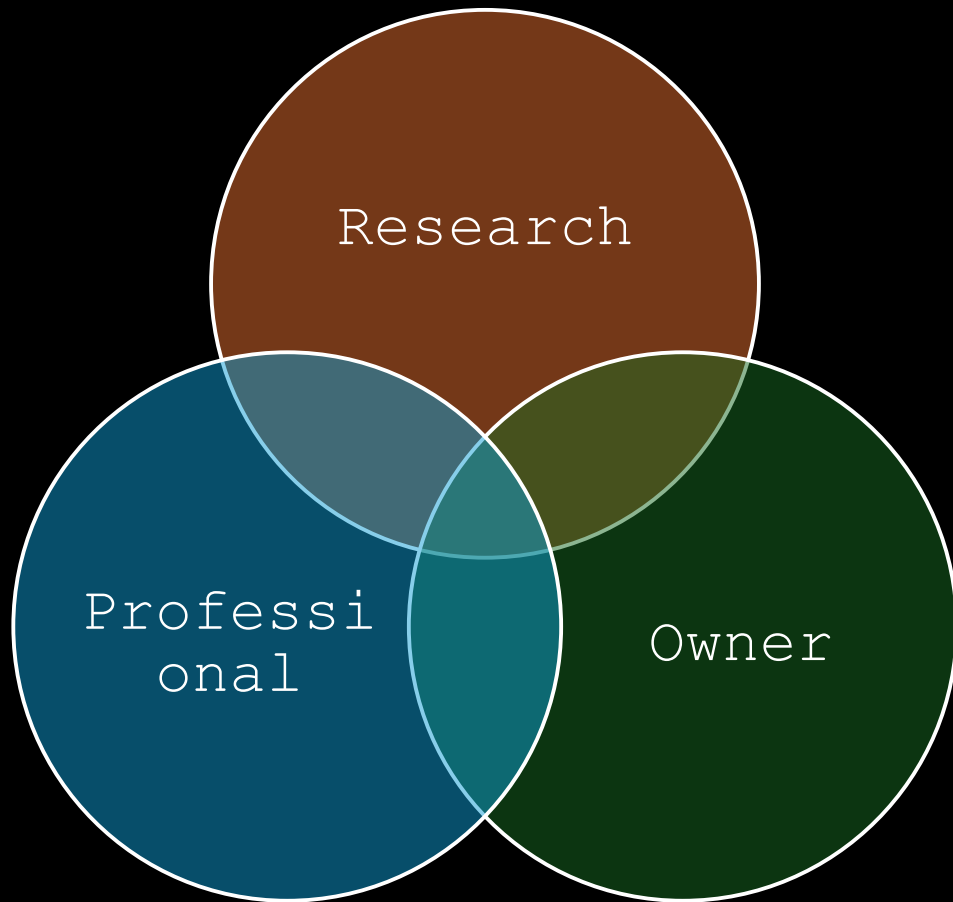


1st European Conference on Small Forest Holdings: State of Knowledge and Research in the Sector

Brett J. Butler
US Forest Service



Evidenced Based (Forestry) Practice & How do we know what we know?

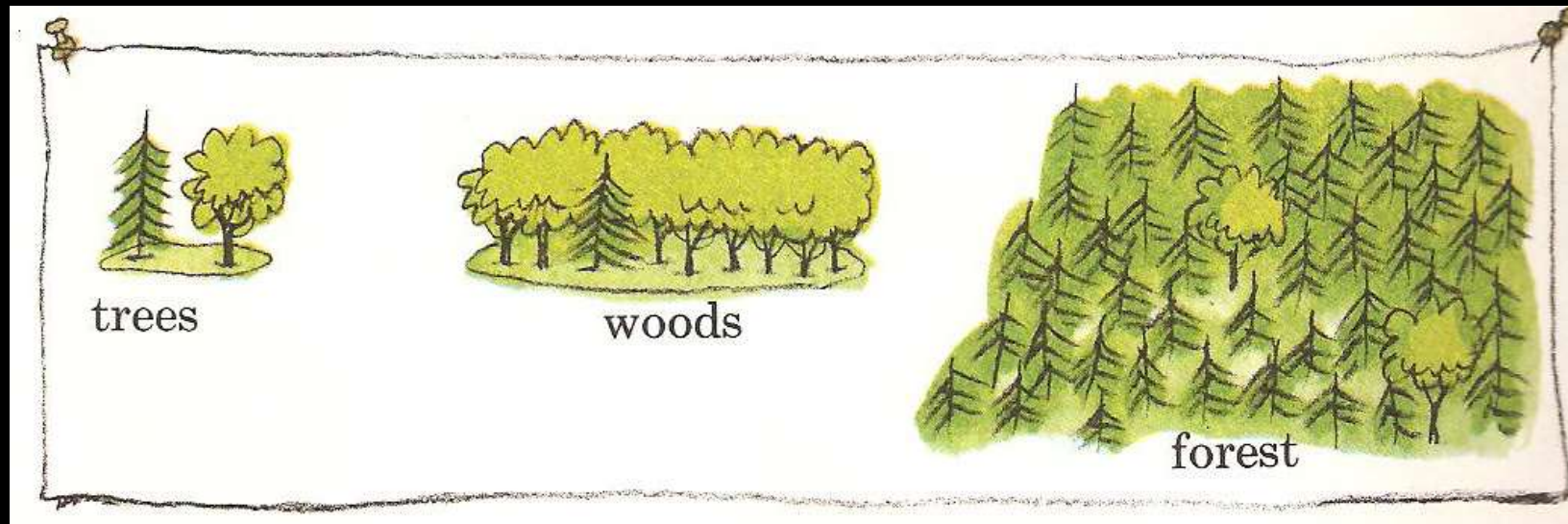


What are the questions?

- What is the current and future state of the forest?
 - What factors influence these states?
 - Biophysical
 - Socioeconomic
- Who owns the forests?
 - And who *will* own the forests?
- What are owners doing with their forests?
 - What factors influence these actions and non-actions?

Definitions

- Forests, Ownerships, Owners



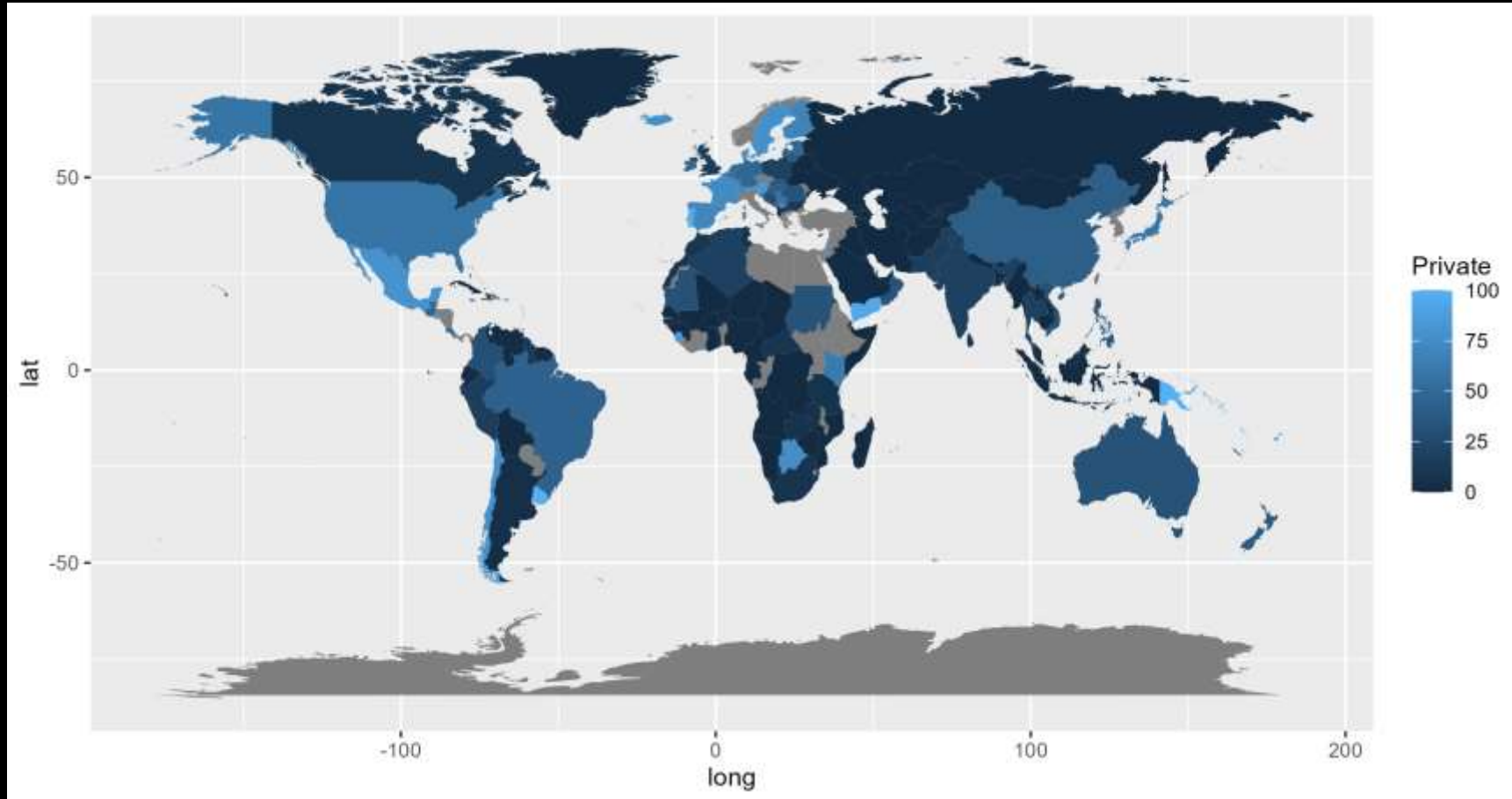
Scarry 1966

- Small-scale forestry, family forestry, ... (Harrison et al. 2002)

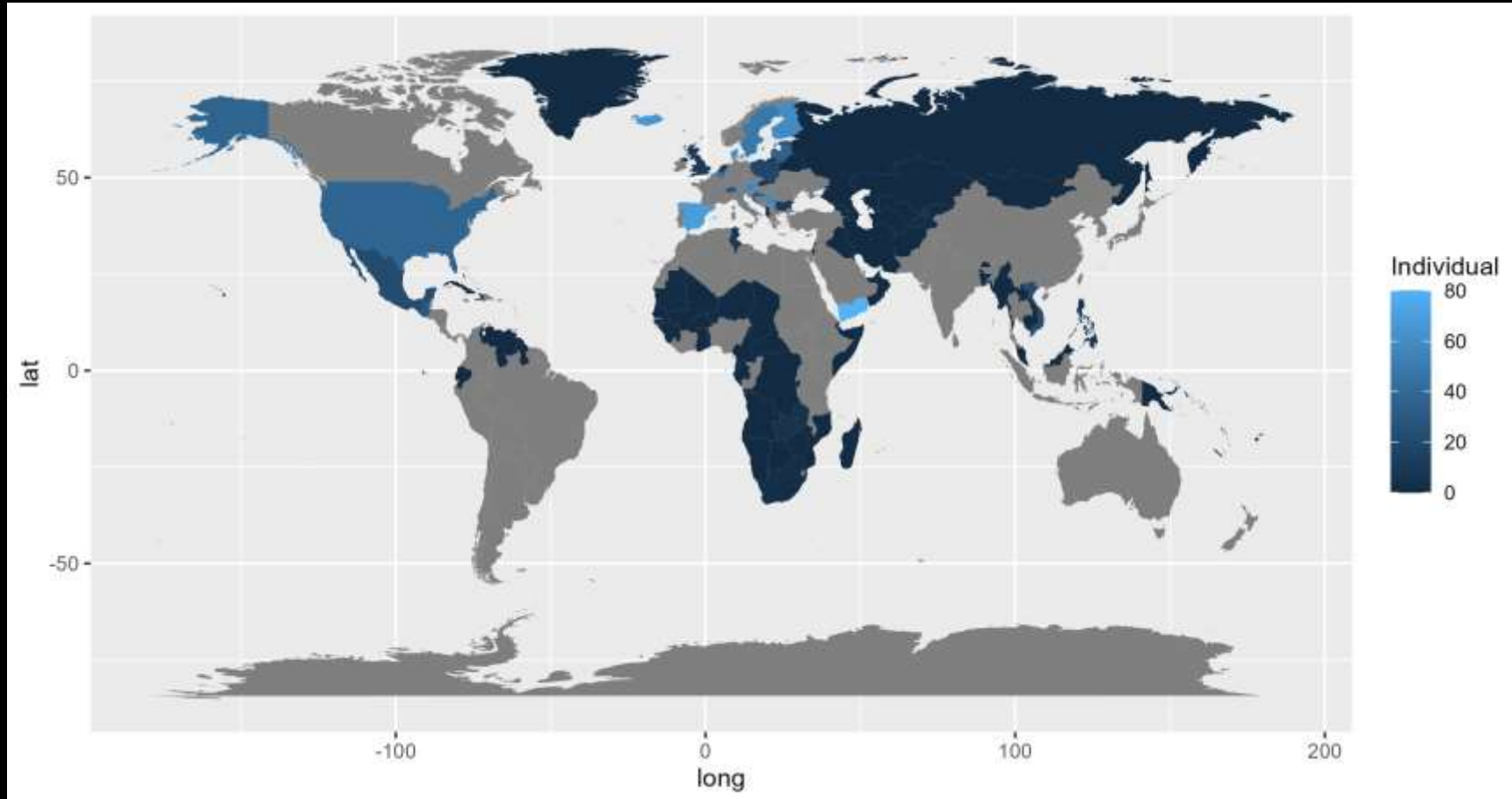
What do we know?

- Small-scale forest owners are important
- There is a lot of diversity, but also a lot of commonalities
- External environments (e.g., biophysical, economic, and political) can vary substantially

Forest Ownership: Percent Private



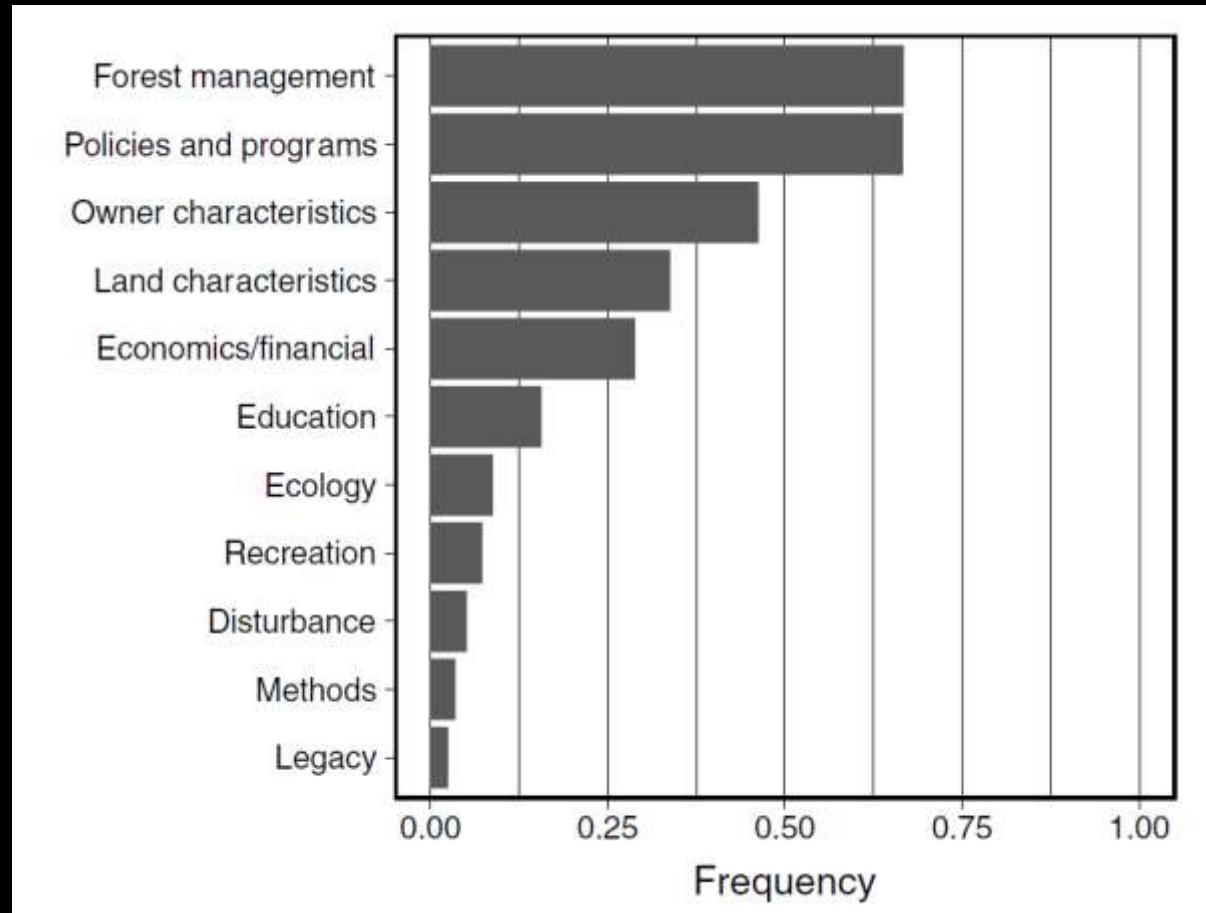
Forest Ownership: Percent Individual



What do we *not* know?

- Factors impacting landowner decisions
 - Existing models are weak
- Factors impacting trends
 - Lack of longitudinal data and studies
- Efficacy of forest policies
 - Little to no high-level evidence supporting or refuting impacts

Topics Commonly Studied

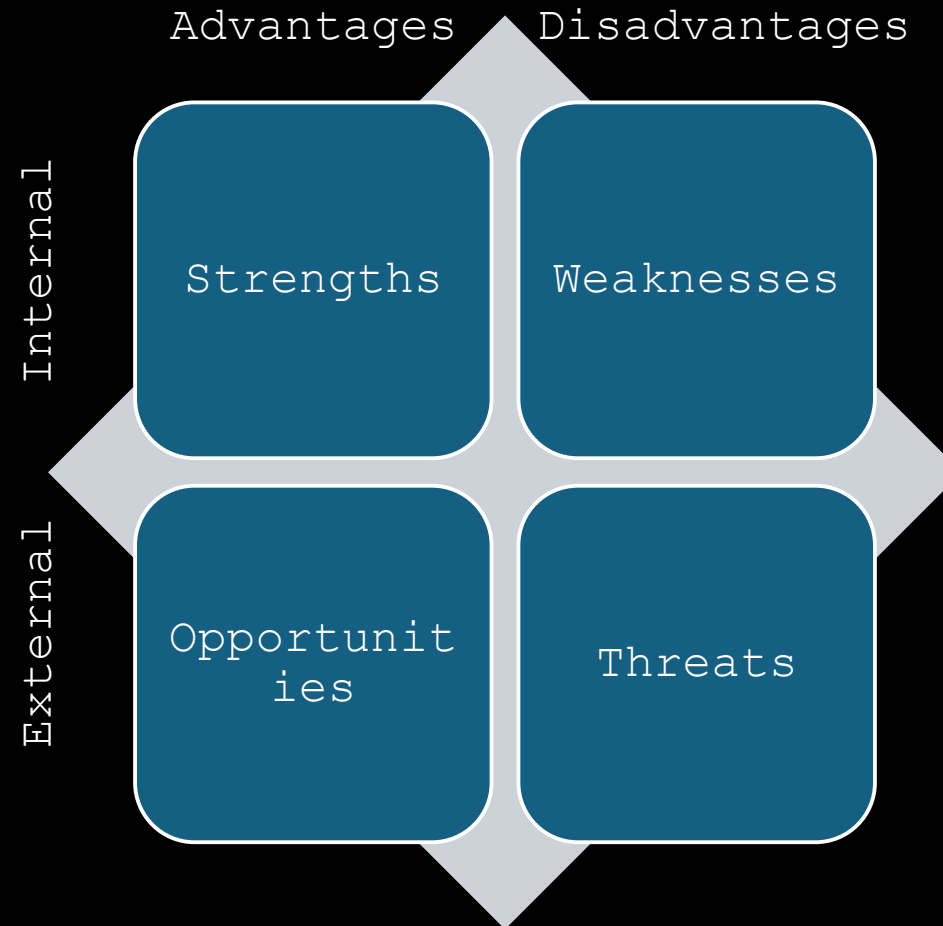


Factors Impacting Small-scale Forest Owners Timber Harvesting Decisions

Variable	No. of citations	Influence	Evidence ratings (no. of citations and direction of influence)
Parcel size/forested acres	16	+	High (6), medium (5), low (5)
Income	8	+/-	High (1 positive; 2 negative), medium (2 negative), low (2 positive, 1 negative)
Harvest price per acre	7	+	High (7)
Absentee owner/distance from residence	6	-	High (1), medium (3), low (2)
Farmer	6	+/-	High (1 negative), medium (2 positive, 2 negative), low (1 negative)
Years of formal education	5	+	High (3), medium (2)
Age	5	-	High (2), medium (2), low (1)
Contact with a forester/technical assistance	4	+	High (1), medium (2), low (1)
Years the land has been in the family/inheritor/years owned	4	+	High (1), medium (2), low (1)
White collar occupation	3	+	High (3)
Management plan	3	+	High (1), medium (1), low (1)
Nontimber ownership objectives/amenity objectives	3	-	Medium (1), low (2)
Timber production ownership objective	3	+	Highest (1), medium (1), low (1)
Extension activity attendance/cooperation with Forest Service	2	+	Highest (1), high (1)
Timber stock	2	+	High (2)
Site value tax/site quality	2	+	High (1), medium (1)
Proportion of household income from forest	2	+	Medium (2)
Membership or contact with a wood owners association	2	+	Medium (1), low (1)
Debt-to-income ratio	2	+	High (1), medium (1)

Variables are in order of most to least citations.

SWOT



Family Forest Owner SWOT

- Strengths
 - Numbers
 - Diversity of objectives
 - Long history
- Opportunities
 - More management/timber
 - More program information/participation
 - More fairy and schnauzer habitat!



Family Forest Owner SWOT

- Weaknesses
 - Numbers
 - Diversity of objectives
 - Limited awareness of all options
 - Limited information on how to access options
- Threats
 - Keeping forests as forests
 - Intergenerational transfer
 - Insects and diseases
 - Management and access to resources



Current/Future Directions

Topics

- Parcellation
- Program participation
- Policy effectiveness
- Land transfer
- New owners/gender

Methods

- Harmonization
 - Biophysical and socioeconomic
- Static → Dynamics
- Mixed methods
- Stronger theory
- Evidenced based forestry

Conclusions



- Small-scale/family forest owners rule!
- Size of holdings matters (and it doesn't)
- Beauty, wildlife, nature, legacy, privacy
- To manage or not to manage?
- A bunch of older men (and women)
- Knowledge is power



References

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- Silver, E. J., Leahy, J. E., Weiskittel, A. R., Noblet, C. L., & Kittredge, D. B. (2015). An evidence-based review of timber harvesting behavior among private woodland owners. *Journal of Forestry*, 113(5), 490–499. <https://doi.org/10.5849/jof.14-089>