Increasing Practice of Sustainable Forestry Among Minority and Limited-Resource Forest Landowners in Georgia

Final report for LS17-281

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Project Information

Abstract:

Many African American forest landowners in southern states face problems associated with heirs' property. These problems are rooted in structural patterns of discrimination against African American forest landowners but continue due to several factors: (1) the complexity of resolving longstanding heirs' property issues, (2) a tendency not to view or manage family forestland as a productive asset, (3) lack of market access, and (4) lack of awareness of and access to technical and financial assistance. These problems have received limited research attention in several southern states, but we still lack even basic data for problem definition and strategy development in Georgia. Sustainable management of forestlands owned by African American landowners requires clear title to land, families working as a unit to develop objectives for their land, knowledge of existing land use potential, participation in technical and financial assistance programs, and supportive relationships with other landowners and natural resource professionals.

Our project has provided critical, yet missing, information on African American landowners in Georgia and helped in developing a more subtle understanding of historical circumstances and current situations faced by African American forest landowners relative to heirs' property issues and sustainable forest management. This project has resulted in direct benefits for African American forest landowners by developing pathways for transitions to sustainable land ownership and management, promoting landowner engagement with professional assistance, and building a new network of organizations and key individuals interested in working with African American landowners in Georgia. These activities enabled landowners to obtain assistance in clearing land titles, planning for inter-generational land transfer, clarifying their land management objectives, and understanding opportunities for receiving regular income through production of timber and non-timber forest products.
Project Objectives:

1. To document broad characteristics of African American forest landowners and their landholdings in Georgia.
2. To document details about the land management constraints faced by African American landowners in Georgia and record nuanced information about the history, knowledge, cultural importance, and emotional value of land to landowners.
3. To conduct economic modeling to determine any differences in profits between sustainable forest management practices and current forest management schemes based on suitable forest sampling and modeling.
4. To collaboratively produce and widely disseminate extension literature resulting from our research results to relevant stakeholder groups using workshops and social media.
5. To build a network of institutions interested in collaboratively developing a long-term program to address heirs' property and capacity building of African American family forest landowners in Georgia.
6. To build capacity of six undergraduate students, one doctoral student, and one Postdoctoral Research Associate.

Cooperators

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Materials and methods:

Questionnaire administration: The principal reason that there are no comprehensive data on African American landowners in Georgia and other states is that there are no reliable and complete lists of African American landowners from which to sample. For Georgia, we believe that Landowners Initiative for Forestry Education (LIFE) database is sufficient to gather representative, statewide data. Assembled by the FVSU Extension program over multiple years with the aim of including all known minority and limited resource landowners in Georgia, the LIFE goes well beyond active extension participants yet is still associated with a trusted extension program. The LIFE database is the most comprehensive compilation of African American family forest landowners in Georgia, and possibly, in the country. We updated the LIFE database and found that only 472 households had valid contacts. While updating our database, we also worked with our participating landowners to develop a questionnaire. Based on their final feedback, we finalized our questionnaire. After that, we obtained necessary clearance from the University of Georgia Institutional Review Board to undertake the survey. On September 28th, 2017 we sent a postcard to all 472 addresses in the database that comprised our sampling frame. On October 12th, we sent the survey. After the initial survey was sent, we received only 60 responses – not a surprise, as the average response rate is only about 10% for this demographic group across published studies. On April 20th, we sent a second copy of the survey to the non-respondents. In addition, the mail surveys were supplemented by face-to-face surveys. These surveys were conducted by Fort Valley State University extension agents. Only individuals in the initial sampling frame were included in these face-to-face interviews. Overall, 75 were used for our analysis.

Semi-structured interviews: Semi-structured interviews and forest visits allowed for in-depth engagement with landowners. Researchers from the USDA-FS and UGA conducted 40 in-depth interviews to learn more about silvicultural practices and household systems of African American forest landowners; document family ties, land ownership, land use histories, and desired future conditions; and to discuss future goals and options for land and forest management. We selected a purposive sample from the survey participants (the questionnaire asked if they were willing to participate in a future in-depth interview). We coordinated with outreach, extension, and forestry personnel to identify and schedule interviews with forest landowners. Each semi-structured interview collected information on family ties, land ownership, and land use histories. Interviews included open-ended questions related to heirs' property, land history, memories and values of the land, and intergenerational ownership and transfer of land. We asked about past or present involvement in forest management, and participation in technical and financial assistance programs. We discussed future goals and objectives for the land, asking landowners...
to compare different land use options (e.g., agriculture, forestry, development) to learn where forestry fits in their priorities. We discussed ways that sustainable forest management could provide monetary and non-monetary benefits to families and provide incentives for and ease the processes of intergenerational land transfer, and record interests and opinions. We asked landowners whether they believe they have the appropriate understanding of market operations, land management, and social networks to actively and successfully participate in a given market. We examined landowners’ responses to various forms of collaboration in marketing, including cooperatives, which may make particular markets for individual landowners more accessible. We also assessed landowners' abilities or interests in accessing emerging markets such as bioenergy or agroforestry. We also investigated market options that could facilitate sustainability transitions by interviewing industry (bioenergy, paper, lumber, pine straw) representatives and consulting foresters, with the goal of identifying new ways for landowners to work together with local industries. We also explored sociocultural and land management values to better understand how these may influence the extent to which landowners show interest in maximizing economic returns from the land relative to other reasons for holding land such as wildlife, aesthetics, or family heritage. In examining the values that provide the context for landowner decision making, we provided little specificity on the types of values we planned to explore other than that they are related to land management or latent sociocultural mores or worldviews. We left the term “value” largely undefined because of the myriad definitions that might apply in this exploration. Rather than rigidly specifying values, we employed a “grounded” approach to this inquiry that allowed discussions and descriptions of values to emerge from the data. Interviews were transcribed in real time and then coded and analyzed using NVivo qualitative analysis software, which is designed for qualitative data analysis. NVivo software allowed us to explore nuances in the key research themes established in our interview guides, as well as to identify emergent themes that would not otherwise have been captured had we relied exclusively on structured interviews or surveys.

To clearly specify values and objectives, we have integrated cultural domain analysis techniques into our interviews, including free listing, pile-sort, and paired comparison exercises analyzed with Anthropac software. The results from in-depth semi-structured interviewing and cultural domain analysis have allowed us to gain subtle understandings not only of the range of ways that people think and feel about forest ownership and management and intergenerational transfer of family land; it also provided nuance into our understanding of how the multiplicity of values and valuation systems, structures of institutional and informal governance, and dynamics of power and inequality affect perceptions of and participation in sustainable forest management programs. We used this data to identify opportunities to create synergistic advancement toward economic and environmental sustainability. Q-Method was used to complement the semi-structured interviews. Q is an exploratory technique that uses pile sorting in conjunction with open-ended interviews that identifies the different key perspectives on an issue among a population. It is not meant to represent a population proportionally, simply to identify the perspectives present. The advantage of this technique is that it is designed to remove the influence of the researcher on the participants’ views, and that it forces participants to prioritize responses. We used Q-Method to explore two themes of Forest Management Priorities and the meaning of Forest Legacy. For the theme of Forest Management, we surveyed 34 landowners. This theme explored the ways in which cultural, ecological, and economic values shape forest management strategies. The theme of Forest Management revealed four different viewpoints, ranging from multiple use managers who emphasized cultural
values, to landowners with purely economic interests. For the theme of Forest Legacy, we surveyed 49 landowners, 23 Black and 26 white. This theme explored the way that ties to the past, present, and future influence forest management. The survey revealed three distinct viewpoints for each race, and also allowed for analysis of the similarities and differences between the two races. In all cases the data was analyzed using PQMethod software available from Kent State University.

Economic modeling and analysis: We conducted benefit-cost analysis for four African American family forest landowners to determine their potential profits resulting from active forest management relative to their current forest management practices. These four forest landowners were a subset of the 40 forest landowners interviewed through ethnographic methods. Also of interest was the role of best use versus fair use tax assessment on the profitability of active forest management and business as usual. Tax assessment is a particularly good proxy for heirs’ property issues, which are believed to have a negative effect on profitability. This analysis included one case where we assessed the impact of agroforestry practices on the overall profitability. First, we created a baseline of profitability based on current management practices and forest conditions. We used evidence from interviews, site visits, and secondary data such as remote sensing data (available from LandSat, http://landsat.usgs.gov/) for estimating the current conditions of selected African American forestlands. Then, we determined the possible profit a landowner can earn if the same land is managed by following standard silvicultural guidelines, including applying fertilizer and timely thinning. We used appropriate longleaf and loblolly pine growth and yield to demonstrate differences in profits to landowners between baselines forest management and sustainable forest management regimes.

Collaborative analysis and dissemination of results: Research team members from UGA, FVSU, and USDA-FS collaboratively analyzed the data. After performing appropriate statistical and qualitative analyses, we jointly interpreted and discussed the findings and our interpretations with the aim of developing new synergistic approaches to assisting forest landowners that are suited to their present conditions, resources, and objectives. This was accomplished by integration among: (1) qualitative and quantitative results; (2) social, economic, and ecosystems service findings; and (3) the perspectives of researchers, extension personnel, and landowners. The results were then written up in two forms. First, we have published several articles in the following peer-reviewed journals: Small Scale Forestry; Forest Policy and Economics; Trees, Forests, and People; Human Ecology; Journal of Forestry; and Landscape and Urban Planning. In addition, we have one under review in Journal of Extension, and one submitted to Trees, Forests, and Livelihoods. Second, we have developed policy briefs, factsheets, and webinars that can be used to make our findings readily available and easily accessed by extension personnel, natural resource professionals, and non-profit organizations that work with landowners.

Network building: We used the findings and publications to engage other organizations with similar interests in addressing heirs’ property and promoting sustainable forest management among African American forest landowners, in the process developing a long-term program to address the needs of African American landowners in Georgia. We held several in-person workshops, several webinars, and one well-attended virtual conference (see details below in the Participation section). Additionally, we have coordinated with other organizations (such as Georgia Forestry Commission and McIntosh Seed) who are also working on similar issues across Georgia to extend their existing networks to reach more landowners.
Capacity development at undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral levels: Our project has helped to train future researchers and practitioners to work on African American forest landowner issues, and it has also strengthened institutional networks within Georgia. Noah Goyke has completed his doctorate at the University of Georgia Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources and is now an instructor at Northland College. We recruited six undergraduate students at the Fort Valley State University who helped us undertake face-to-face interviews with landowners who did not respond to mail surveys. Dr. Sarah Hitchner is an Assistant Research Scientist who contributed to this project by analyzing the connection of minority landowners with their lands at a deeper level.

Research results and discussion:

Mail Survey: One set of research data were the returned survey results from a survey sent to a list of 472 African American forest landowners. The survey included questions related to the landowner, the forestland, decision making, management activities, interactions with professionals and professional advice, heirs’ property issues, goals, and obstacles. Seventy-five returned surveys were valid for analysis. We hypothesized 1) that African American forest landowners in Georgia would be similar to those in other states 2) that socioeconomic and demographic characteristics are good predictors of forest management activities, and 3) that heirs’ property would have a significant negative effect on management activities. We did not find that African American forest landowners in Georgia were like those in other states. Specifically, we found less gender diversity, lower education levels, smaller property sizes, and less engagement with forest professionals. However, a closer look at our sample reveled why that may have been the case. Our sampling frame was a list of landowners created by Fort Valley State University Extension. As such, there were more farmers and retired farmers in our respondents than in previous studies. When the non-farmers were isolated and only their characteristics were considered, they were a very close match for the results from other states. For future consideration, we found that farmers had significantly lower rates of heirs’ property issues than non-farmers, although if that is a result of being a farmer, or being a farmer is predicated on clear title is unclear. The socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of African American forest landowners were overall fairly poor predictors of both management planning and management activities. Broken down by title status and residential status, forest landowners with clear title, heirs’ property issues, absentee, and residential landowners all had management plans at roughly the same rate. In our model only receiving external advice had a significant effect on planning, and the relationship between the two is still unclear; whether those who already wish to plan seek advice, or if getting advice inspire forestland owners to create a management plan. Demographic characteristics did have significant, though indirect, relationship to management activities. Older and male landowners were significantly more likely to have legacy goals for their land, intentions to transfer land to the next generation in the family, and legacy goals were a significant predictor of management activities, even though management goals were not. This finding suggests that African American forest landowners are motivated less by the traditional goals of forestland ownership, for example, income from timber, and more motivated by the cultural and familial significance of forest landownership. Despite substantial literature on the subject, we did not find a significant relationship between heirs’ property ownership and forest management, including the negative relationship we expected to find based on the literature. We have a strong idea about why, based on the above result. Title and residence status lack substantial effect on forest management activities. Instead, legacy goals are the more important variable. Heirs’ property owners (as we found in other parts of
this project) have a complicated relationship with legacy. For some families, heirs’ property is an important piece of the family heritage and may even have been created intentionally as a way to preserve the property and keep the family tied to it. For other families, heirs’ property is a burden and something to be resolved and done with. Given that each family is so different, it seems impossible to draw any conclusion about the role of heirs’ property, at least for African American forest landowners in Georgia.

Qualitative Analysis:

Landowner Characteristics and Forestry Activities: Nearly all the interviewees were over age 50, and about one-third of them were over age 70, which conforms to the older age that is typical for forest landowners. About one-third of the interviews included a female owner, either alone or as a part of a couple. In terms of education, interviewees were nearly evenly split between those with a four-year college degree and those without; among those without a four-year degree, about half had some college, often a technical degree. More than three-quarters of the interviewees held more than 20 acres, with slightly less than two-thirds having greater than 50 acres. While the majority had title to their land, more than half had inherited land, and about one-third had heirs’ property. However, only 10% of the interviewees turned a profit from their land, with about 40% breaking even and another 40% paying more in taxes than they earned from the land. Involvement in forestry was modest, with about one-third of the interviewees having engaged in prescribed burning, and the same proportion having planted trees. More than half had sold timber through a thinning or other harvests in the past, and about half of the interviewees had used some sort of cost-share program.

Land Ownership Issues: Many African American landowners face complicated ownership situations as a legacy of discrimination and poverty, and heirs’ property has received considerable attention as a significant obstacle to forestry and conservation assistance programs. However, while heirs’ property was mentioned in our interviews, landowners talked more about the challenge of getting multiple owners from different family branches to agree on how to use and manage the land together regardless of whether the land was in heirs’ property or co-owned. Among heirs’ property owners, distrust within a family often impedes progress even when one family member is trying to bring the land into more active management. The seeds of distrust are often sown when heirs have different levels of presence on the land, with those physically closest to the land feeling they have more rights than others (even though they legally have equal shares). In other cases, one heir might illegally harvest timber on their own, neither obtaining consent from all heirs nor sharing the proceeds. When this occurs, it can create disharmony in the family that is very difficult to overcome. Outside assistance from forestry professionals is sometimes helpful in overcoming distrust. Regardless of ownership status, the fact that tracts of land have been in a family for several generations is often a significant factor in fostering a long-term perspective appropriate for forestry. Land ownership across generations makes land more important to people, inspiring them to hold on to land and to manage it together for the benefit of future generations. Many of these families were able to come together in various ways to manage their land as a family. Forestry fits in well with other long-term land management objectives, whether the land is being farmed or is primarily a family amenity. Family land often continues to be meaningful even when most of the family members have professional jobs. Forestry serves employed and absentee landowners well by providing income and savings over time while requiring a level of attention compatible with employment off the land. It also provides a place for family gatherings, opportunities for recreation, and a sense of stewardship.
Forestry Engagement: Most studies of African American forestry evaluate landowners’ engagement based on current technical forestry practices in the U.S. South that typically follow a set sequence: clearing land; using the proceeds from the harvest to plant pine trees from seedlings in single-species, even-aged stands; controlling competing vegetation with prescribed fire and/or herbicides; selectively thinning; doing a final harvest; and preparing the site to begin the process anew. These systems produce the highest volume of timber and economic returns per acre, although with considerable upfront investment. The history of African American forestry is quite different, in part because they were excluded from many aspects of technical forestry as it developed. It has historically been very common for African American landowners to allow land to regenerate naturally after a harvest. While this differs from technical forestry recommendations, it can be seen as a low-risk traditional forestry system that provides returns while minimizing investment costs. Landowners have also developed ways of working with naturally regenerated pine trees, sometimes including less intensive planting methods, to manage forests and improve yields over time. These traditional forest management methods have worked for some landowners, but often depended on the historical presence of small-scale logging operations owned by African Americans. If assistance is available, some landowners choose to transition to more technical forestry practices. Participation in conservation assistance programs varied considerably. Many farmers were already involved with farm service agencies and conservation programs, and forests played a role in their overall land management and economic strategies. Other farmers were switching to or adding forestry to their land use as a way of phasing out farming. Farmers often have a utilitarian perspective, are accustomed to active management, and are familiar with conservation assistance programs and the agencies that provide them. Owners who are retired or employed off the land but actively managing their land may be attracted to forestry but may need more guidance. Additionally, the interviews highlight the importance of opportunities to gain experience and trusted contacts to improving confidence in forest management. Landowners that engage in forestry often have experiences that they have learned from, such as timber sales, enrollment in conservation programs, and tree planting. This knowledge has often been learned from family members or through neighbors and other personal contacts who worked in forestry or were more experienced in forestry. Landowners who have a contact with expertise and experience in forestry, whether that is a consulting forester, extension agent, or neighbor, are much more likely to manage their forestland with confidence. The landowners we interviewed were often geographically dispersed, and very few belonged to any forestry or landowner organizations that could provide information about and support for forestry. Some landowners with limited experience have the ability and persistence to seek out, vet, and select public and private foresters to work with as they become engaged in forestry. This approach is more effective for those with large landholdings because higher timber value and more extensive holdings enable them to attract assistance and give them more opportunities to learn. Several people spoke about the importance of learning more about forestry through the process of actively engaging in it. Some landowners see many risks in forestry based on experience and stories of failures and lack of knowledge. We also found that individual landowners could have wildly divergent views on forestry, with some seeing significant risk and others seeing a safe investment. Several specifically mentioned risks associated with insects, lowered timber prices, and unscrupulous and greedy loggers who want to take everything at once. Other landowners, generally those more experienced with farming and forestry, saw trees and forests as a long-term investment. Landowners new to forestry may require time, experience, and social contacts to overcome negative experiences or stories they have heard.
Q Method: Two sets of data were collected when we conducted two similar surveys with forest landowners using Q methodology. Q methodology is exploratory, and so we did not generate any hypothesis, except for those implicit in the make up of the survey instrument. Instead, Q Method explores the diversity of viewpoints on a topic, in this case forest land ownership. We considered this especially important with African American forest landowners, as they are often treated as monolithic in the forest landowner literature. The first survey explored viewpoints on forest management, and the second explored viewpoints on forestland bequests. We identified five forest management viewpoints: Sustainable Harvester, Back 40er, Land Use Pragmatist, Recreationist, and Undecided. The first three make up a spectrum emphasizing cultural and economic values, with the Sustainable Harvester seeking a balance, the Back 40er emphasizing economic potential, and the Land Use Pragmatist focusing purely on economic objectives. The Recreationist and Undecided landowners are opposites in the model; the Recreationist is primarily interested in personal enjoyment over what we call cultural or economic goals. The Undecided also has neither cultural nor economic goals. However, unlike the Recreationist, they do not have personal goals, and are instead seeking the best way to management their land. These land owners may be open to, or even seeking, professional advice, and we expect they would be classified as Sustainable Harvesters, Back 40ers, or Land Use Pragmatists in the future. The immediate value of these results is demonstrating to forest professionals the diversity of goals of African American forest landowners, and explicating what those goals are, and showing that there is an opportunity to guide a large group of landowners who are still attempting to understand what it means to be a forest landowner. We identified three forest bequest viewpoints: Manager, Investor, and Steward. Managers emphasized the role that family, and even racial, struggle to acquire and retain forestland has had on their desire to manage their land well for the future. Investors were openly skeptical of the idea of land transfer to the next generation, seeing a stark generational divide, and were primarily interested in using their land as an investment for the future. Stewards actively rejected the idea that forestry could be profitable for them and their family, and instead emphasized the need to keep land in the family as a bridge between the future and the past. We believe that these three very distinct outlooks all emphasize the important role that intergenerational communication has in the future of family forest ownership, and that that communication is something that forest professionals must be cognizant of and even facilitate, if family forestry is to become truly sustainable. In addition to surveying African American forestland owners about forest bequests, we also surveyed white landowners, and found the following viewpoints: Managers, Investors, and Skeptics. Overall, there were more similarities than differences among the two races, especially between the Managers and Investors. In the former case the only substantial difference was that African Americans were motivated to retain and pass on land by the historical struggle of other African Americans, even if their family was never previously landowners. On the other hand, for white forest landowners the drivers to keep land in the family was exclusively about personal experiences, especially experiences inheriting land of their own. Among Investors, white forest landowners made the point that forestry is not a particularly good investment option, but that it was one they preferred over other types of investments, because of the enjoyment it provided to them. Where white forest landowners really differed from African American forest landowners, was among the skeptics, who viewed forest ownership as a burden, one they didn’t want to pass on to their children. The key takeaway for us here, was that the skeptics technically had what we consider family land, but that they did not consider it as such, because it was land that had belonged to (a deceased) spouse. A follow up research question generated from this result is whether the absence of skeptics is a direct result of the
degree to which African American forest landowners consider landownership at the racial level when thinking about legacy, or if the dynamics among African American families more quickly blur the line between whose family the land belongs to. We believe these results add nuance to our understanding of the differences between forest management by white and African American forest landowners that have not previously been captured in studies that only examine socioeconomic and demographic characteristics.

Case Studies: One set of data were collected through a combination of interviews, site visits, and secondary data, which together were turned into four case studies that explored the economic potential of African American forestland. It is clear from the literature that African Americans have lost enormous amounts of land since the turn of the 20th century, including through voluntary sales and heirs’ property issues. The premise is also clear in the literature, that profitability through forestry should be a path to increased land retention. With our case studies we sought to answer the questions 1) Can we quantify the way in which heirs’ property issues lead to low profitability and the potential for land loss and 2) Can tax program enrollment explain the difference between profits and net loss for heirs’ property owners (in Georgia, forest landowners pay a reduced fair use tax rate, but clear title is essentially a prerequisite for enrollment in the program). Each case study yielded two scenarios, business as usual (no management) and active forest management. Each scenario was considered with two iterations, with best use and fair use taxes. Throughout the four case studies we found that active forest management is profitable, regardless of title status, although the clear title scenario was dramatically more profitable. Business as usual was never profitable for heirs’ property owners. For landowners with clear title, profitability varied depending on factors like forest size, forest cover, and hunting lease opportunity. Our study made several important contributions to the literature. First, in real world scenarios, it highlighted that property taxes may be an important factor in land retention and loss. In addition to this finding, was demonstrated in our case studies that current estimates of property tax rates for family forest landowners are often serious underestimates. Finally, much of the heirs’ property literature has highlighted the difficulty heirs’ property owners have in enrolling in cost share and similar programs, and propose it is a serious barrier to profitability, all the while ignoring tax programs. However, other literature indicates enrollment in cost share among African Americans is low regardless of title status, and so we believe that taxes offer a strong alternative explanation. Second, we believe this study made an important methodological contribution for how we assess the economic outlook of private forestland. By including the taxes on non-timberland our scenarios more accurately reflect the situations of real landowners, who may depend on income from timber to cover the taxes for their entire property, not just the forested portion. For forest professionals, these case studies offer compelling evidence that even without clearing title, heirs’ property owners can make forestry profitable, if they are able to overcome the challenges that heirs’ property presents to any type of land management.

**Participation Summary**

4 Farmers participating in research

**Education**

Educational approach:
Noah Goyke finished his doctoral research at the UGA Warnell School. We trained six undergraduate students from Fort Valley State University building their capacities in undertaking social surveys. Finally, Dr. Sarah Hitchner worked as an Assistant Research Scientist developing her skills in mixed-method approaches suitably combining qualitative and quantitative research tools.

Educational & Outreach Activities

6 Journal articles

4 Webinars / talks / presentations

1 Workshop field days

PARTICIPATION SUMMARY:

130 Farmers

24 Ag professionals participated

Education/outreach description:

We published a total of seven journal articles (May 16, 2021), and two papers are in review.


We organized one full day workshop (virtual). Recording is available at https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLrD9Ul6ldhp2mj1_GNSvXiiboYNCh11gB. Fort Valley organized two workshops (in-person before March, 2020) and several webinars (after March, 2020) for landowners to raise awareness about heirs' property management, estate planning, and sustainable forestry. One of the webinar is at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RHPqvwHMlek.

Based on this project, we developed a successful program for female forest landowners in GA and beyond. Already, this program has received a funding support of about $650,000 in about a year or so.

Learning Outcomes

125 Farmers reported changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills and/or awareness as a result of their participation

Project Outcomes

10 Farmers changed or adopted a practice

5 Grants received that built upon this project

4 New working collaborations

Project outcomes:

We generated a significant level of information about African American forest landowners in Georgia. We also organized several workshops for raising awareness about heirs' property and estate planning among African American forest landowners in Georgia. In these workshops, we also emphasized the importance of sustainable forestry. We are hopeful that our research and outreach efforts will support forest management on lands owned by African American families in Georgia, thereby generating private economic benefits and ensuring public welfare due to the increased flow of forest-based ecosystem services. Finally, our project will also ensure successful intergenerational land transfer supporting the sustainable management of forestlands across generations.

Recommendations:

Based on the experience gained during the project, it will be good to develop suitable research and outreach efforts for supporting female forest landowners in the US South.

Information Products

- Exploring Diversity in Forest Management Outlooks of African American Family Forest Landowners for Ensuring Sustainability of Forestry Resources in the Southern United States (Peer-reviewed Journal Article)
• Do Ownership Structures Effect Forest Management? An analysis of African American family forest landowners (Peer-reviewed Journal Article)

• How Do African American and White Family Forest Landowners Conceptualize Forest Legacy in Georgia, United States? (Peer-reviewed Journal Article)

• Twenty-five Years of Increasing Equality Among Family Forest Landowners in the United States (Peer-reviewed Journal Article)

• Does Forestry Pay? Case studies of four African American family forestland owners in Georgia, United States (Peer-reviewed Journal Article)

• Safe havens: The intersection of family, religion, and community in black cultural landscapes of the Southeastern United States (Peer-reviewed Journal Article)

• Virtual Conference on Heirs’ Property and Sustainable Forest Management (Conference/Presentation Material)

• Ascertaining differences between farmer and non-farmer African American forest landowners in Georgia, United States (Peer-reviewed Journal Article)

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