

Differing strategies of forest management

Mervi Kasanen

University of Oulu, Oulu, Finland, mervi.kasanen@mail.suomi.net

The study focuses on decision making concerning different forest management strategies, especially even-aged management and traditional selective logging methods – continuous cover forestry. According to my interviews in Northern Ostrobothnia, Finland, similar goals, e.g. economic efficiency and biodiversity, were found from different forest management strategies, but the premises were different and the reasoning lead to different management outcome. The proponents of different management strategies were not conscious of each others premises. Thus, there are knowledge differences especially between experts and non-professionals in forestry, which leads to a poor communication between expert and local levels. In addition, the power differences sustain mutual distrust, and conflicts and debates tend to go on unresolved. The missing agent seems to be the interpreter between knowledge systems. The study aims at improving the flexibility and applicability of expert management systems and increasing the forest owners' commitment to the efforts of forestry management. By analysing the knowledge differences, and the way these differences affect the rules of forest management, the study will support collaborative planning and socioculturally sustainable forest management. Effective resource management becomes possible by making the reasoning transparent. This will be done by participating on-site silvicultural practices, which will help to understand the context bound, real world decision making. The theoretical background utilises the approach of political ecology, which means considering the local adaptation as an interplay between sub- and supra-local influences. The methodology consists of further interviews and participatory action research (PAR). Interviewees will represent different forest management strategies and different private and community forest owner groups according to age, gender and professional status from Northern Ostrobothnia. In addition, other relevant land uses, e.g. tourism or reindeer herding will be studied. Finally, local reasoning will be compared to the reasoning of foresters (official forestry paradigms) in an effort to enhance mutual understanding.