A STUDY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN FOREST LANDOWNERS IN SOUTH CAROLINA: IMPLICATIONS FOR LAND ETHIC AND FOREST STEWARDSHIP

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A STUDY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN FOREST LANDOWNERS IN SOUTH CAROLINA: IMPLICATIONS FOR LAND ETHIC AND FOREST STEWARDSHIP

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctorate of Philosophy
Wildlife and Fisheries Biology

by
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Accepted by:

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ABSTRACT

African Americans account for a significant proportion of South Carolina’s population but reportedly own a disproportionally smaller amount of land. Research indicates that landowners who hold significant sources of sustainable wealth and power can dramatically increase their quality of life and ultimately that of their communities. Current land loss trends for African Americans are increasing at an alarming rate, which may have larger social implications for this traditionally underserved population. The remaining African American landowners are a rapidly declining group, due to an assortment of factors (e.g., age, heirs property). Understanding the experiences of the residual African American forest landowners may yield insights of their land ethic. For this research, “land ethic” is understood as an individual’s moral philosophy (the concept of correct behavior) in regards to his or her land, including the individual and collective elements (soil, water, flora, and fauna). The purpose was to investigate a smaller portion of a larger land ethic held by African Americans forest landowners, not to define the land ethic of all African Americans. This investigation of land ethic was accomplished through the framework of understanding personal and collective experiences of forest landowners.

Understanding landowners’ land ethic can inform strategies for conservation programs, such as the Forest Stewardship Program. African American forest landowners were the focal point of this study because forests are the primary resource of South Carolina landowners. Through qualitative inquiry, both phenomenological and phenomographical, the results indicated that experiences unique to African Americans’
history and contemporary demographics were associated with forest landowners’ land ethic. African Americans participating in this study retained their land because of the cultural/historical significance it represented for themselves, their families, and the African American community. Previous experiences with the government and private industries had a significant bearing on their trust. Also, the type of landowner, be it an absentee/resident, farmer/non-farmer, or a natural resource connection had a significant bearing on their land ethic as well. These qualitative findings informed the qualitative portion of this study.

The purpose of the quantitative study was to begin the development a land ethic scale, based on the qualitative results, to investigate how well the land ethic constructs factored. After the land ethic scale factored, demographic variables were tested to examine if the demographic characteristics had any bearing on land ethic scores. Results indicated different demographic variables influenced the land ethic constructs. The results from this study should inform academicians, managers, and policy makers that landowner experience has an impact on land ethic. Conservation programs should be tailored to take this phenomenon into consideration.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Uncle Johnny Jones and Barbara Gloria Cartwright, two participants who passed away during this research process. Their deaths were a reminder of the fragility of land legacy, land tenure, and cultural heritage. Thank you both for sharing your time, our conversations will always have a place in the understanding of a black land ethic. I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to my family, friends, and community that has been supportive for the entirety of my collegiate career. Many people have come and gone, but you’ve outlasted the good and the bad. Thank you!
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I would not be here if it was not for Dr. Travis Perry, my undergraduate advisor at Furman University. Nine years ago, you saw a rough-edged student with potential and took a personal interest in me as an individual and as a scholar. You went above and beyond your responsibilities; I could never fully articulate my gratitude in writing. Thank you for your patience, for your support, and for aiding me in securing natural resource internships (which sparked my interest in this field). I hope that you see the return in your investment; I am thankful to have a friend like you. Speaking of advisors, my upmost gratitude is to Dr. Drew Lanham, my dissertation advisor. Thank you for giving me a chance despite me being a marginal student according to the GRE standards. I appreciate the time you invested in me during my M.S. degree, it enabled me to obtain my PhD. But most of all, thanks for all of the long conversations and memorable hunting trips. I would have not have finished this research if it was not for Dr. Betty Baldwin. Thank you for training me in qualitative research, for taking a personal interest in my
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My upmost gratitude and love goes to the Robinson family, the Sanderson family, the Davis family, the Mudders, and the Courters. You were my community during my tenure at Clemson, and by far the most important friends that I’ve had in the past five years, arguably in my life. I couldn’t have finished without you; you are great friends and I hope that one day we will be near each other again.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TITLE PAGE</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. CHAPTER LITERATURE REVIEW AND OBJECTIVES</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Need</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Cited</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. MANUSCRIPT #1 A PHENOMENOLOGY OF SOUTH CAROLINA AFRICAN AMERICAN LANDOWNERSHIP</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice of Methodology</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results and Discussion</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion and Implications for Forest Management</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Cited</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. MANUSCRIPT #2 THE PHENOMENOGRAPHY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN FOREST LANDOWNERSHIP</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table of Contents (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Results and Discussion</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>MANUSCRIPT # 3 DEVELOPING A LAND ETHIC SCALE FROM PARTICIPANTS OF</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOUTH CAROLINA’S FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Results and Discussion</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>CONCLUSIONS AND MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Future Research</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>APPENDICES</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A: Questions for Land Ethic Interview</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B: Land Ethic Scale Survey</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C: Land Ethic Scale Cover Letter</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Land Ethic Framework</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Table 2.1’s Overview of participants</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Table 3.1’s Overview of participants</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Table 3.1’s Different themes emerging between absentee and resident forest landowners</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Different themes emerging between farmer and forest landowners</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Means Cronbach’s Alphas, Factor Loadings, and Variance Explained for Factors</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Structure of Sub-scale Item Correlations</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Variable Statistics for Sense of Place factor 1</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Variable Statistics for Sense of Place factor 2</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Variable Statistics for Sense of Place factor 3</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Variable Statistics for perceiving land as a Home</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Variable Statistics for viewing land as family heritage/history</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>Variable Statistics for “Money”</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>Variable Statistics for “Communal”</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Land Ethic Framework</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Research outline for the African American Land Ethic Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Schematic of the essential invariant structure Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Analysis process of phenomenology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Detailed outline of research process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Four themes and topics developed from phenomenology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Schematic illustrating the aim of phenomenography, to understand different experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Phenomenographical results of South Carolina Forest Landowners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE

LITERATURE REVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

African Americans account for 28.5 percent of the population in South Carolina, but they only make up about two percent of the forest landowner class (US Census 2000, National Woodland Owner Survey (NWOS). Landowners hold significant sources of sustainable wealth and power that can dramatically increase their quality of life and ultimately the quality of their communities (Gilbert et al. 2001). Historically, African Americans in the rural South have had a close relationship to land and the natural resources that the land provides (Marks 1991, Jones 2005, USDA 2006, Glave and Stoll 2006, Giltner 2006, Smith 2007, Glave 2010). Unfortunately, however, many African American landowners have sold, lost, or been deprived of their land (Gilbert et al. 2001). As rural residency, farm ownership, and land stewardship relationships decline, a significant portion of the Southeastern populace—including many African Americans—also stand to lose the economic, cultural, and ecological benefits tied to natural resources. Furthermore, Gilbert et al. (2001) stresses, “Black land loss is a loss not only of potential income, but even more of a loss of wealth, with deep consequences for social inequality and political power.”

Project Need

Currently, little is known about the evolving relationships between African American landowners and the value they place on their land despite the fact that African Americans have a rich history of natural resource use (Marks 1991, Jones 2005, USDA
2006, Glave and Stoll 2006). These landowners’ current connections, values, and attitudes toward both forests and cultivated lands have been shaped by their cultural, social, and historical views (Glave and Stoll 2006, Smith 2007, Glave 2010). This study will use an interdisciplinary approach by considering a variety of views to understand rural, black South Carolina landowner connections to forested natural resources.

The total acreage of rural land owned by African Americans is unknown in the US. This lack of knowledge has occurred because unused land and/or forested land is not incorporated in the US Census of Agriculture (Gilbert et al. 2001). After the 1997 US Census of Agriculture, the federal government sent out a follow-up survey to explore economic issues with the 1999 Agricultural Economics and Land Ownership Survey (AELOS) (USDA 1997). AELOS primarily focused on farm or ranch operators/landowners, but the results also provided insight into the potential inaccuracies of the 1997 US Census of Agriculture. For instance, the 1997 Census of Agriculture reported 16,560 black owner-operators, while the AELOS reported 29,241 black owner-operators. Furthermore, AELOS reported that African Americans made up only two percent of the land owners in the US. It was reported that these African American farm and ranch owners owned only 1,244,000 acres of woodlands.

Issues such as the ongoing black farmers’ lawsuit against the USDA, Pigford v. Glickman, indicate that the disparities between majority (white) and African American landowners’ access to federal programs/aid have not been resolved (Pigford v. Glickman 2000). Moreover, there are many claims by African Americans of being cheated, tricked, or intimidated off of their land. Trust between African American landowners and the
federal government is a major barrier that must be crossed for governmental programs to be effective. In Florida Soil Conservation Service’s effort to reach blacks in a non-traditional way, Dishongh and Worthen (1991) found that African American trust increased with personal visits by local agents. It is clear that efforts to assess, educate, and mitigate are desperately needed (McGee and Boone 1977, Reid 2003, Lewan and Barclay 2001, and Hinson 2008).

The aforementioned issues may have influenced African American forest landowners’ experiences, which, in turn, have the potential to shape African American perceptions and attitudes towards landownership. To date, there is not a comprehensive study that investigates African American forest landowners and the impact of the currently unreliable record system used by the US Census and AELOS.

Considering the changing demographics of the US population, the current trend of conservation is encouraging the inclusion and understanding of all groups. A portion of this initiative can be accomplished by first exploring historical connections to an African American land ethic, and second by understanding the experiences of these landowners, and finally by further investigating the connection between them and their land.

**Literature review**

*Land Ethic*

“Land Ethic” was a term coined by Aldo Leopold in his 1949 book *A Sand County Almanac*. Though a land ethic was not specifically defined by Leopold, it is commonly expressed as: 1) man [human] is a citizen of the community, not the conqueror, 2) there must be an ecological conscience, 3) if the land is regarded solely in...
economic terms, there will be impacts due to human nature, and 4) the land is interconnected: from soil, to plants/animals, and to humans (Leopold 1966). Leopold summed his land ethic by expressing:

Examine each question in terms of what is ethically and esthetically right, as well as what is economically expedient. A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise (Leopold 1966).

While Leopold’s Land Ethic has been widely cited and elevated to almost biblical status in the conservation arena, it has not been popular amongst many modern environmental philosophers (Callicott 1989). The latter incorporated a psychological paradigm rather than Leopold’s ecological framework. Though Leopold’s position may have merit in regards to ethics, it does not address the issue of personal experiences and collective memory and how that may change how an individual interacts with his/her land. Regarding land ethic, the field of conservation has focused on the conservation writers and environmental philosophers, not on the landowners’ personal experiences.

Though nature figures such as Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, Gifford Pinchot, and Theodore Roosevelt have had an impact on the American conservation philosophy, it is unclear if their works and personal experiences have had a direct impact on a land ethic of African Americans. While the conventional philosophies may have made contributions to conservation, there have been other historical figures that have indirectly made contributions to a land ethic, particularly for African Americans. The author would assert that Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois both made large contributions to African American ideas about land and the human relationship to it during their discourse of how African Americans should incorporate themselves into American society. During the
Post-Civil War era, southern society heavily relied upon the agricultural system. African Americans needed to economically assimilate into society, be it through agriculture or other means. Washington felt that the landlessness of African Americans led to directionless wandering, which had a negative impact on the black community (Bullock 1967). He also felt that classical education left “the Negro in a weak position” where they were losing touch with working class skills and gaining an entitlement of not having to perform such belittling tasks as agriculture (Washington 1903). For example, Washington said:

For nearly twenty years after the war, except in a few instances, the value of the industrial training given by the plantations was overlooked. Negro men and women were educated in literature, in mathematics and in the sciences, with little thought of what had been taking place during the preceding two hundred and fifty years, except, perhaps, as something to be escaped, to be got as far away from as possible. As a generation began to pass, those who had been trained as mechanics in slavery began to disappear by death, and gradually it began to be realized that there were few to take their places. There were young men educated in foreign tongues, but few in carpentry or in mechanical or architectural drawing. Many were trained in Latin, but few as engineers and blacksmiths.-I plead for industrial education and development for the Negro not because I want to cramp him, but because I want to free him (Washington 1903).

Washington believed that African Americans could make a transition from slavery to independence by industrial education, specifically agricultural education. His leadership at the Tuskegee Institute, and his philosophy of “self-help” led to the education of more than 1,000,000 black farmers. The education of so many farmers, who had a direct connection to the land, could have had a major impact on their land ethic. Washington’s outreach efforts focused on assisting landowners with practical and survival/subsistence land management practices (i.e. growing peanuts for food) (Jones 1975). Washington believed that “the great body of the Negro population must live in the
future as they have done in the past, by the cultivation of the soil, and the most helpful service now to be done is to enable the race to follow agriculture with intelligence and diligence” (Simkins 1968, as cited by Jones 1975). Washington’s land ethic framework of self-help, hard work, and subsistence may have persisted with many of the African American farmers past his death in 1915. This view of land may have had an impact on how an individual viewed the land and their landownership experience. Though Washington felt that African Americans should stay close to the land, Dubois expressed a different view of African American’s and their relationship to the land.

In *Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois stated that: “The poor land groans,” “How full of untold story (land), of tragedy and laughter; shadowed with a tragic past,” “sad trees and writhing creepers,” and “black silent stream.” Du Bois made it very clear that he remembers the “suffering” that occurred with blacks and land. For example, Du Bios recalled about one tract of land that: “This land was a little hell” (Du Bois 1903). Du Bois also asks “How curious a land is this,—how full of untold story, of tragedy and laughter, and the rich legacy of human life; shadowed with a tragic past, and big with future promise!” Hick (2006) summarized Du Bois’ view that “the environment directs humans in their construction of necessity and longing” which was contrary to Washington, who believed that “humans shape their environment to their needs and desires.” Du Bois’ negative view of land in regard to slavery and sharecropping may have assisted with continuing a negative perception of land within the African American community. But Du Bois anthropomorphizes land in many of his writings and almost implies that land is human (Hicks 2006). Du Bois shows a respect for land in his book *Souls of Black Folks,*
while showing a negative view of the African American land relationship. He demonstrates that a negative view of the land may not imply a withdrawn land ethic, though it may create an aversion with land. Both Washington and Dubois’ writings may have influenced the way African Americans perceived land, but the personal experiences of African American landowners may have also impacted their land ethic.

African American Connection to Forested Land

Leatherberry (2006) felt that African Americans’ experiences with forestlands have changed from intimacy to disassociation. Reasons for this relational change range from social structural explanations to primarily cultural arguments (Johnson and Bowker, 2004, Leatherberry 2000). For slaves, forests were places of sustenance, worship, spirituality, and escape. In regards to sustenance, the forest provided hunting and fishing opportunities that provided extra nutrients to their meager diets (Giltner 2006, Glave 2010). Additionally, many of the slaves’ religious practices, such as dancing or drum playing, were condemned by slave owners, so they were performed in nearby forests (Harding, 1981). In addition to providing religious freedom, forests were also safe spaces for many escaped slaves. For example, the Florida forests were a common haven for escaped slaves prior to the establishment of the buffer colony in Georgia (Leatherberry 2000).

During the post-Civil War era, organizations that opposed black freedom (e.g. Ku Klux Klan) had damaging effects on African Americans’ forest experiences. These organizations used the same forest cover that African Americans used during slavery. Because of lynching and other racially motivated offenses, the forest changed from a
refuge to a place of fear, instituting a disconnect between the forest and African Americans (Leatherberry 2000).

The terror of the forest was still not enough to completely dissuade some African Americans from working there. When farming was no longer as profitable, African Americans turned to the forest. In 1910, 195 timber companies were black owned, and African Americans comprised 25 percent of all employees in the forest industry (Jones 2005). In addition, turpentine was the third largest industry for the South, and African Americans comprised 80 percent of this work force (Jones 2005). According to Outland (2005), “Multiple generations of families toiled in remote frontier areas of the South as turpentine workers. The black culture learned to associate the wilderness with the worst kind of tyranny.” These negative land experiences contributed to a change in the image of turpentine workers; they were stereotyped as the most rough and ignorant amongst African Americans. As Eldridge Cleaver said, “In terms of seeking status in America, blacks principally the black bourgeoisie (middle class), have come to measure their own value according to the number of degrees they are away from the soil” (Cleaver 1967, USDA 2006). Those African Americans working hazardous, arduous, and tedious jobs had a lower standard of living than blacks in other occupations (Hickman 1986).

Because of economic deficiencies, agricultural structure, segregation, racism and the change in immigration policies, many African Americans took part in the “Great Migration” from 1910 to 1960, leaving the rural South for urban, northern and western areas (Tolnay 2003, Mandle 1978). As a result of this migration, African American life changed. By 1930, 25 percent of southern African Americans had moved north, and 90
percent of the northern African Americans lived in cities (Leatherberry 2000). This “Great Migration” furthered disassociation between African Americans and the land.

_Historically Black Colleges and Universities_

The growing disassociation between African Americans and the land can also be traced to the American educational system. African Americans were denied admission to southern land-grant colleges (a denial that led to the eventual establishment of black land-grant institutions, 1890 schools) (Mayberry 1990). This denial may have created resentment among interested African American students for natural resource disciplines. The idea of “People’s Universities” was propelled by the Morrill Act of 1862, created by US Representative Justin Smith Morrill of Vermont. This act provided land based on the number of representatives, and also provided money to the states from dividend and profits of land sales (Neyland 1990). Only four black land-grant institutions were formed under the first Morrill Act of 1862: Alcorn State, Claflin, Hampton, and Kentucky State. When the funds were distributed, they were not adequately allocated among black and white colleges; only a few black institutions received nominal funding. Slavery was not abolished until 1865 by the Thirteenth Amendment, which freed blacks and gave them the opportunity to obtain an education. It took 38 years for the second Morrill Act to pass in 1890, which called for equality of funding for black and white land-grant institutions (funded 17 more schools). When the Second Morrill Act was passed, only 43 percent of blacks were literate (Jones 1975). Of the 1,689,000 blacks that owned land at this time, 121,000 engaged in agriculture on their land, and the remainder worked on other people’s farms (Jones 1975).
The curriculum at the black colleges was focused towards assisting African Americans with the transition from slavery to independence. For example, at South Carolina State University (SCSU), the course of study included geology, horticulture, stock feeding, animal husbandry, agricultural engineering, butter-making, dairy work, and entomology. Students also took mathematics, English, history, physical geography, chemistry, botany, and attended many demonstrations on the farm (Potts 1978).

In 1917, State legislature passed the Smith-Hughes Vocation Act, which required the college to train teachers in agriculture and the trades industry (Potts 1978). The focus of the educational program was for students as well as the local and statewide community members (Sanford 1965). Because very few blacks were able to attend the scarcely distributed schools, SCSU primarily trained teachers for the purpose of increasing a workforce of educators. SCSU originally provided kindergarten through high school education and did not have a four-year degree program until 1924.

The high school was eventually phased out in 1933 (Potts 1978). After this transition, the focus of SCSU evolved to empower African Americans with an education to thrive in the South and also instructed landowners on subsistence farming. There was not a focus on having a “land ethic” per se. Being a good steward of the soil, so that a farmer could continually farm, was a philosophy that secondarily developed into a land ethic. But again, the focus was on survival. This was apparent with the approach of the extension agents.

According to Smith (1995) black extension agents at black land grants focused their efforts on subsistence farming and the development of economic independence,
while white agricultural extension agents focused their energy on promoting cash crops and commercial farming. After Brown v. Board of Education in 1954, SCSU believed that the need for extension centers for teachers had diminished. Clemson University assumed all responsibilities for them (Potts 1978). Today SCSU’s extension program’s purpose is to: 1) develop research competence in faculty, staff, and students, 2) seek solutions to major problems of limited-resource families, and 3) add to the storehouse of knowledge (Potts 1978). This suggests that the focus is geared toward serving and empowering the people—not instilling a conservation-framed land ethic. This philosophy parallels the original service of the school, which empowered African Americans who were recovering from slavery.

In regards to forestry, there is only one historically black college or university (HBCU) that has an accredited forestry program, Alabama A&M University. Alabama A&M offers degree programs in forest management with a possible minor in wildlife biology or fisheries biology. The courses that are instructed for the forestry degree are traditional forestry courses that are taught at comparable institutions (mensuration, silviculture, wood products, agribusiness etc.) (Alabama A&M 2010). On average, Alabama A&M graduates roughly ten foresters per year; and they typically join the federal government (Personal Communication). Alabama A&M’s forestry program was accredited in 2002. The impact of Alabama A&M’s forestry program on South Carolina forest landowners in unknown.
African American Farmers

African American forest landowners are still concentrated in the South. Many of these landowners are or were at one time farmers. As indicated, the current number of black landowners is unknown. However, if Wood and Gilbert’s (2000) estimate of roughly one million black farmers in the 1920s and 18,000 in 2000 is accurate, this change represents a loss of 982,000 African American farmers or a decline of 98 percent in an 80-year period. This decline is due to a variety of factors, including public policy, economic pressure, and racial oppression (Wood and Gilbert 2000). In 1997, one-thousand African American farmers responded to unfair treatment by the government, by filing a class action lawsuit (*Pickford v. Glickman*) against the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). After the settlement, 22,000 African American farmers received some type of compensation. The majority received a $50,000 settlement and debt forgiveness (averaging $75,000 to $100,000) (New York Times 1999).

As of 2004, the amount paid was $675 million dollars to 13,151 claimants (New York Times 2004), 93 percent of whom were black farmers in the southern states (Wood and Gilbert 2000). This situation has created a scenario where attention is drawn to unfair treatment of black farmers by the USDA. Not much attention has been given to the treatment of African American forest landowners by the government. For instance, how might experiences of discrimination, a slave legacy, remnants of West African spirituality or philosophy, economics, or mainstream environmentalism have influenced a contemporary land ethic among South Carolina rural, black landowners?
African American Forested Landownership

The majority of the literature on black landownership focuses on black farmers rather than forestland owners or rural landowners generally (Fisher 1973, Fisher 1978, Browne 1973, Brown and Larson 1979, Darling, M.J. 1982. McLean-Meyinsse and Brown 1994, and Brown et al. 1994). In many of these studies, no distinction is made between “farmer” and “landowner.” Many studies on nonindustrial private forest (NIPF) landowners in the US have been performed, but information on minority NIPF landowners is limited (Birch 1996, Birch et al. 1982, Gan and Kolison 1999). Gaining this understanding of their attitudes and perceptions could provide meaningful insights and could assist in the collection of data on the overall populace of African American landowners in the Southeast. Gan and Kolison (1999) argue that a better understanding of minority landowners can contribute to more effective economic development strategies for rural southern communities.

In a study performed by Gan and Kolison (1999) in Macon and Bullock counties of southeastern Alabama, the majority of the landowners were 50 years and above (roughly two-thirds). This is not surprising considering that land is a limited resource and is generally passed down to others through inheritance. Thus, demographic factors may play a role in land loss and should be explored. In particular, this study will explore any differences between landowner characteristics, such as “forestry knowledge,” perceptions of the land, and attitudes toward the environment.

The literature suggests that the majority of the African American landowners have smaller tracts of land. In a study in two counties in the Alabama Black Belt, the mean
acreage was 113 and the median was 70, and one-third of these landowners held less than 50 acres of forestland (Gan and Kolison 1999). Further, in this study, the majority of the forested land was mixed pine and hardwood forest stands (53 percent), and the majority of the forests were relatively young with 32 percent of the total forestland being less than 10 years old and 21 percent being between 10 and 19 years old. According to Gan and Kolison (1999), 48 percent of the minority landowners’ objectives had to do with using the land for timber production and/or wildlife (hunting). Timber harvesting was regarded as the main objective, but the landowners did not feel they managed their forest as an alternative investment. For example, using their forest resources was primarily considered for supplemental income and emergency funds (Gan and Kolison 1999).

Gan and Kolison’s study (1999) suggests that many African American landowners would fall into the category of a “limited-resource landowner.” As defined by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Fact Sheet (2005), a limited-resource farmer or rancher is “(a) person with direct or indirect gross farm sales of not more than $100,000 in each of the previous two years (to be increased beginning in fiscal year 2004 to adjust for inflation using Prices Paid by Farmer Index as compiled by NASS), and (b) has a total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of four, of less than 50 percent of county median household income in each of the previous two years (to be determined annually using US Department of Commerce Data).”

In Gan et al. (2003), similar characteristics were found for black landowners in Alabama. For example, they found that 80 percent of African American forest landowners in Alabama’s Black Belt (geographic area in with dark soil) were over the
age of 50 and more than 38 percent were over the age of 65. Land loss will be a concern as the age of the landowners increase. Because a death of a landowner will inevitably occur, and the distribution of African American-owned land after their death is a key issue.

In particular, Thomas et al. (2004) found that 80 percent of black rural landowners do not have a family estate plan. The majority of the landowners in Thomas et al. (2004) held a bachelor’s degree (65 percent). According to the 2000 census, fewer than nine percent of the population in the study’s surveyed counties had a college degree or higher. The median household income of African American forest landowners ($30,000 to $49,999) was also higher than that of the population in the study’s surveyed counties. In addition, Gan et al. (2003) found that four percent of their participants said that revenues from forestry operations contributed just 25 percent to their annual household income. One interesting finding from this study was how long landowners retained their land: 45 percent of African American landowners held their land for over 25 years, compared to 31 percent of other NIPF owners in Alabama. Many of the lands have been passed down through generations with some even dating back to the abolishment of slavery (Molnar et al. 2001, Gan et al. 2003).

Gan et al. (2003) found 22 percent of African American landowners were aware of best management practices, and two-thirds of those implemented at least one. More than half planted trees, 26 percent used prescribed burning, roughly 20 percent hunted, and 22 percent acknowledged wildlife management as their first priority. More than two thirds of the African Americans harvested timber. Since minorities in the study make less
income than majority NIPF owners, they may be more likely to harvest timber. The likelihood of timber harvesting is negatively correlated with income (Alig et al. 1990, Gan et al. 2003).

**Governmental Assistance and Programs**

Research pertaining to blacks’ utilization and perspective towards the government and governmental programs is lacking. To date, there has been limited research focusing on minority and small landowners’ participation in conservation incentive programs. In order to enhance the participation of small and minority landowners in conservation incentive programs, more research is required on program participants’ behavior (Gan et al. 2005).

Federal and State conservation incentive programs promote natural resource conservation on private lands and attempt to provide long-term economic success for farmers (Gan et al. 2005). Currently, there is evidence that suggests there are constraints and/or lower participation rates for limited-resource landowners in governmental cost-share or conservation programs (Demise 1989 McLean-Meyinssee et al. 1994, Dismukes et al. 1997, Molnar et al. 2000 Onianwa 2004, Gan et al. 2003, and Gan et al. 2005). The lack of literature on African American forest landowners encumbers the process of forming and executing landowner assistance programs directed at African American landowners (Gan et al. 2003). For example, many African American forestland owners in Alabama’s blackbelt feel they are underserved or underrepresented landowners who are neglected by public programs and private services (USDA Forest Service 2000, Gan et al. 2003). Differences in black and white conservation program behavior have also been
documented. Gan et al. (2005), for instance, found that whites in Alabama participated in the CRP longer and enrolled more acres than minorities. They also discovered that the mean acreage enrolled in the Forest Incentive Programs (FIP) by whites was also significantly larger than that by minorities. A possible explanation for lower participation in conservation incentive programs may be African Americans’ dissatisfaction with such programs. This dissatisfaction may be due to differences in ways blacks and whites prefer to receive information. Minorities generally favor personal contact and in-field demonstrations more than whites. This type of preference suggests that we should conduct qualitative interviews rather than mail surveys for this study.

Gan et al. (2003) also cited that technical assistance programs may be failing because written forms of technical assistance programs may not be appropriate due to black landowner information dissemination preferences and that these programs do not factor in financial constraints. For example, “Many of these landowners face more difficult financial constraints than the average NIFP owner in the region and cannot afford consulting services or even cost sharing” (Gan et al. 2003). Therefore, further investigation is needed to modify current programs to increase efficiency and enrollment in this regard.

**Heirs Property**

Heirs’ property refers to land that is collectively held by family members after the initial landowner dies without a will. Heirs’ property is common because collective ownership by the family is a land ethic among many African American communities (Twining and Baird, 1991). For instance, there have been records of over 200
descendants claiming ownership of a tract of land (Brabec and Richardson 2007).

Furthermore, Pollitzer (1999) noted that land in some African American communities is not sold but passed down through unwritten contracts. Having many landowners for one tract of land makes it difficult to initiate any type of natural resource management. A contract with all of the landowners’ signatures would be required as well as proof of ownership. Any type of timber, wildlife, or open habitat management would be very complicated because of this constraint. This collective ownership would also make it difficult to use the land as an asset. A tract of land with many landowners will not qualify for governmental programs that improves habitat because of familial ownership. These barriers may increase the probability of land loss.

African Americans have a land ethic of familial/common ownership that is very similar to a land ethic in Western Africa (Twining and Baird 1991). This common ownership by the family is a land ethic among the Gullah community in South Carolina, which is radically different from the adjacent white community. Twining and Baird (1991) draw the relationship between this family owned land ethic and the one of their African ancestors. Considering the current natural resource management system, familial landownership may hinder blacks and forest stewardship because there may be multiple decisions makers for one tract of land.

*Wildlife and Hunting*

The first African Americans had a great understanding of wildlife and hunting. For instance, one of the most famous African American hunters, Holt Collier, was described by President Theodore Roosevelt as “a bear-hunter, having killed or assisted in
killing over three thousand bears” (Glave and Stoll 2006). In fact, Collier was the guide for the legendary hunt on which the term “Teddy Bear” was coined. While Holt may be the most famous black hunter, there were many other great hunters that preceded him. Many slaves hunted for rebellion, food, money, recreation, and education as well as to reassert themselves as the role of providers (Giltner 2006).

White southern elites used hunting and fishing to set themselves apart from slaves and freedmen. Hunting helped these elites continue their cultural dominance of African Americans (Giltner 2006). Thus, by hunting, slaves defied many masters. Some masters allowed hunting but did not allow the use of firearms because of an obvious conflict of interest. Because many slaves were not able to use firearms, they had to rely on other means to hunt, such as dogs, snares, traps, and “bird blinding” (a night technique of hunting that used firelight to paralyze birds) (Giltner 2006).

In the coastal plains of Georgia and South Carolina, slaves procured half of their meat sources from wild game (Stewart, 2006). Hunting was especially important because working in such harsh conditions required high amounts of protein and other nutrients. Typically rations portioned by slave masters were not sufficient for such a strenuous workday. Slaves would also sell their harvest to receive revenue. Furthermore, hunting provided a type of recreation for slaves. According to Steward (2006), the “wilderness was not a place where African Americans went to find themselves, but a place of potential deliverance as well as a site where family and community values could be affirmed.” In addition, hunting and fishing was a form of education. For instance, a slave by the name of Allensworth was described by Charles Alexander as someone who would
go off to fish and educate himself at the same time. Allensworth would teach himself lessons between bites (Radwick, 1972, Giltner 2006). This relationship would slowly change after the abolishment of slavery.

After slavery was abolished and the Jim Crow era began, African Americans’ rich tradition of hunting and interaction with nature started to dwindle. African American men who worked in nature began to perceive the woods not as a place of leisure and comfort but as a place from which they hoped to escape and leave their debasing work (Glave and Stoll 2006). Hunting and fishing continued to be important to former slaves, but events such as the “Great Migration” as well as continual negative associations toward and interactions with nature caused blacks’ art and skill to dwindle. This relationship between hunters and the wildlife resource may have implications for a larger land ethic.

NIPF in the southern US are increasingly being leased for hunting rights. This practice is advantageous to both landowners and hunters because of the economic and social benefits to be gained by both parties. Roughly 70 percent of the forested land in the southern US is owned by NIPF landowners (Zhang et al. 2006; Morrill, 1987; Noonan and Zagata, 1982). Zhang et al. (2006) categorized five factors that influence NIPF landowners’ hunting lease decisions: 1) concern for personal safety and property damage, 2) liability considerations, 3) economic considerations, 4) landowners’ experience with leasing and hunters’ behavior, and 5) landowner characteristics. Investigating these categories quantitatively and qualitatively in respect to the African American perspective may provide further insights into lease decisions. For example, Van Veslor and Nilon (2000) used a qualitative approach to investigate urban African American and Latino
urban adolescent experiences with wildlife. They identified four processes in participants’ experiences with wildlife: 1) connecting with wildlife, 2) selective engagement with wildlife, 3) tolerating wildlife, and 4) wildlife disconnect. Forested landowners’ experiences may follow a similar process that research can potentially quantify.

Objectives

This study addressed the following questions:

1. How do African American forest landowners perceive their landowner experiences?

2. Are there phenomenographical (ways of experiencing) differences among African American forest landowners?

3. Can land ethic be quantified for forest landowners using a traditional scale?

Hypothesis

H₀: There are no statistically significant differences among different landowner groups of forest landowners in regards to land ethic.

The entire research process is outlined in figure 1.1. Chapter two will address objective one, chapter three will address objective two, chapter four will address objective three, and chapter five will give conclusions and management recommendations considering the entire process.

Considering the contributions of Leopold’s land ethic, Washington and Du Bois’ impact on rural African Americans, and the historical and other experiences of African Americans, this research project will use the term “land ethic” as an individual’s moral
philosophy (concept of correct behavior) in regards to his or her land, including the individual and collective elements (soil, water, flora, and fauna) (Table 1.1). Aldo Leopold’s land ethic focuses on an ecological understanding and concerns about the spatial impacts. Booker T. Washington’s land ethic pertained to politics of African Americans and to subsistence. W.E.B. Dubois’ land ethic addressed becoming free of bondage and assimilating into society through classical education. The “land ethic” of this research will focus on individual experiences, and how has impacted the way African American view their land and not land in general.

Again, the purpose is not to make a generalization of a “Black Land Ethic,” but to understand a land ethic of African American forest landowners in South Carolina, specifically how their experiences influence their perceptions of landownership. This data has the potential to be transferable on other settings and offers a new framework for the concept of “land ethic” that may provide insight for land managers and agencies that impact landowners.

*Role of the Researcher*

In traditional studies the researcher makes an attempt to minimize his/her involvement with the data. This is not the case for qualitative research, where the researcher is an instrument of the research. For this study, the researcher will make all of the contacts, perform all of the interviews, and complete the analysis. The researcher will provide direct observations during the interviews, clarify any confusion/concerns, observe the quality of individual responses, and ascertain if an interview is of quality.
The researcher will also invest time prior to the interview to develop rapport with the participants and will not pursue an interview if a landowner does not seem interested.

Furthermore, the researcher is an African American, which provides an advantage for gaining access and trust. Trust is a barrier for access to participants due to African American landowner’s historical distrust of outside entities. The researcher can overcome a trust barrier by having the same ethnicity as the landowners. Also, the researcher has an oral history in his family of being divested of forested land on the South Carolina coast. Therefore, the researcher has an understanding of the collective memory of negative forest perceptions and having the experience of having land “taken.”
Figure 1.1. Research outline for the African American Land Ethic Study.

- Personal Experience and Interest
- Literature

Development of Research Question

(Verification strategy I)

Pilot N=2

Literature Review

Refine Research Question

Interviews N=12

(Verification strategy II)

Data Analysis

Phase I: Phenomenology
- Shared meaning and experience
- Essential invariant structure

Phase II: Phenomenography
- Diversity of meaning and groups
- Understanding the breadth of identity of AA forest landowners

Interpretation of Analysis (Development of Themes)

Survey of Forest Landowners
- Constructs from Qualitative Results

Member Checking

Triangulation

(Verification strategy III)

(Verification strategy IV)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Ethic</th>
<th>Motivating Framework</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aldo Leopold</td>
<td>Ecological Understanding/Spatial</td>
<td>&quot;A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Booker T. Washington</td>
<td>Political/Farming</td>
<td>&quot;I plead for industrial education and development for the Negro not because I want to cramp him, but because I want to free him&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. E. B. Du Bois</td>
<td>Educational/Classic</td>
<td>“How curious a land is this,—how full of untold story, of tragedy and laughter, and the rich legacy of human life; shadowed with a tragic past, and big with future promise!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina Forest Landowners</td>
<td>Personal Experience</td>
<td>“essential invariant structure” and “differences in conception”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Literature Cited


Molnar, J., A. Bitto, and G. Brant. 2001. Core conservation practices: Adoption barriers perceived by small and limited resource farmers. Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin 646. Auburn University, AL.


CHAPTER TWO

A PHENOMENOLOGY OF SOUTH CAROLINA AFRICAN AMERICAN LANDOWNERSHIP

Abstract

African Americans account for 28.5 percent of the population in South Carolina but only make up about two percent of the forest landowner class (US Census 2000, NWOS). Historically, African Americans in the rural South have held a close relationship to the land and the natural resources (e.g., farming, timber, wildlife) therein (Marks 1991, Jones 2005, USDA 2006, Glave and Stoll 2006, Giltner 2006, Smith 2007, Glave 2010). Unfortunately, many African American landowners have sold, lost, or otherwise been divested of the inherent empowerment that natural resource management offers (Gilbert et al. 2001). Studies of NIPF landowners in the US have been performed, but information regarding minority NIPF landowners is limited. Therefore, for this study, 14 NIPF forest landowners were interviewed in South Carolina to qualify their experiences, values, and perceptions of the forest. Qualitative methods were employed to understand the essence and nature of their experiences. This study includes formal and informal interviews with African American forest landowners as well as with regional natural resource management professionals. The findings suggest that land is strongly associated with historical/cultural legacy and collective ownership. Furthermore, the landowners felt that they did not receive an adequate amount of technical, informational, or financial resources related to their land use. The landowners also had distrust for the local and federal government and the private forest industry as well. Investigating African
American NIPF landowners’ experiences is critical in understanding their forest stewardship. Understanding perceptions of these NIPF landowners can provide insights that can yield improved management and extension.

**Keywords:** Nonindustrial Private Forest, African American, Qualitative Methods, Land Legacy, and Forest Stewardship

**Introduction**

African Americans make up 28.5 percent of the population in South Carolina, but reportedly comprise only two percent of the forest landowner class (US Census, 2000 and NWOS). Little is known about African American NIPF landowners; therefore, obtaining a database of landowners is extremely difficult (Gan et al., 2003, Gan and Kolison 1999). There is a dearth of literature investigating the issue of African American forestland ownership; however, research shows that many landowners (potentially NIPF) hold significant sources of sustainable wealth and power that can dramatically increase their quality of life and ultimately that of their communities (Gan et al. 2003, Gan and Kolison 1999, Gilbert et al. 2001, and Wood and Gilbert 2000). Unfortunately, many African American landowners have sold, lost, or otherwise been divested of the empowerment that natural resource management offers (Gilbert, et al. 2001). As this landowner-forested land relationship continues to decline, a significant proportion of the southeastern populace also stands to lose the economic, cultural, and ecological benefits tied to forest management. In particular, “Black land loss is a loss not only of potential income, but even more of a loss of wealth, with deep consequences for social inequality and political power, especially in the rural South” (Gilbert et al., 2001).
Few studies have investigated the issue of African American forestland ownership. Therefore little is known about rural African American landowners’ forestland ownership. Moreover, few studies have examined the historical relationship between African Americans’ experiences and memories of land ownership, and of the land itself. It is likely that these experiences and memories shaped current African Americans’ attitudes toward and perceptions of the land (Johnson and Bowker 2004). In addition, the African American landownership experience may be different than that of non-African American landowners due to obvious historical events (e.g., slavery, racism, intimidation, Jim Crow, etc.).

Land ethic is a concept that was introduced in 1949 by Aldo Leopold. It describes the human relationship to “soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land” (Leopold 1966). Leopold argues that an ethic is a mode of guidance that is influenced by human behavior. For this research, a land ethic is understood as an individual’s moral philosophy (concept of correct behavior) in regards to his or her land, including the individual and collective elements (soil, water, flora, and fauna). Land ethic can be influenced by the collective memory (Johnson and Bowker 2004) and/or cultural memory (Baldwin and Judd 2010) of previous events, as well as a range of other structural factors (e.g., class, rural/urban residence, education). Assmann and Czaplicka (1995) believe that fixed events (i.e. slavery, civil rights, etc.) may define behaviors that are repeated through generations. Johnson and Bowker (2004) used collective memory to investigate African American perceptions and interactions with wildland. Understanding history, personal
experience, and the cultural and collective memories of African American forest landowners can yield an interpretation of a “Black Land Ethic.”

*Understanding African American landowner farms, forests, and their experiences thereof*

Since 1920, the number of African American farmers has declined by 98 percent. In 2000, there were roughly 18,000 black US farmers, far from the high of one million black farmers in the 1920s. This decline is due to various factors but was primarily caused by public policy, economic pressure, and racial oppression (Wood and Gilbert, 2000). In 1997, one-thousand African American farmers responded to this discrimination by filing a class action lawsuit against the USDA. After the settlement, 22,000 African American farmers came forward to receive various settlements, which implied that there were many more unreported cases (New York Times 2004). Approximately 93 percent of these black farmers are in the southern states (Wood and Gilbert 2000), and many of them were also NIPF landowners—even though this distinction is rarely made. The status of the majority of these farmers’ forests is unknown, as farmers continually leave their landholdings. Also, the USDA’s treatment of African American NIPF landowners who are not farmers is unknown.

However, the majority of the literature fixates on black farmers, while landownership is used as a sub-focal point. In many of these studies, scholars do not differentiate between the titles of “farmer” and “landowner.” These two classes of landowners may have some significant differences in landownership experience. However, based on an evaluation of US Census agriculture data and current trends in landownership patterns, it appears that further declines are expected in landownership
statistics as high-end developments and disparities in health, education, and economic status further alienate many African Americans from the rural land base and the benefits associated with natural resource management. Studies of NIPF landowners in the US have been performed, but information on minority NIPF landowners is limited (Birch 1996, Birch et al. 1982, Gan and Kolison 1999). Gan and Kolison (1999) feel that a better understanding of minority landowners has the potential to develop effective economic development strategies for rural southern communities.

Change has occurred in African Americans’ experience with forested land from intimacy to disassociation (Glave and Stoll 2006). Theories range from “inequitable distribution of recreation resources; social structure barriers of costs and inadequate information; and collective memories of the old Jim Crow days” (USDA 2006). For the earliest African Americans (i.e., slaves), a forest provided a place of sustenance, worship, spirituality and escape. In addition to providing religious freedom, forests were also safe spaces for many escaped slaves. For example, the Florida forests were a common haven for escaped slaves prior to the establishment of the buffer colony in Georgia (Leatherberry 2000).

After the Civil War, organizations that opposed black freedom, such as the Klu Klux Klan, had damaging effects on African Americans’ forest experiences. These organizations used, to their advantage, the same forest cover that African Americans used during slavery. Because of lynchings and other racially motivated offenses, the forest changed from a refuge to a place of fear, instituting a disconnect between the forest and African Americans (Leatherberry 2000).
The negative connotation of the forest was still not enough to completely dissuade some African Americans from working there. When farming was no longer as profitable, African Americans turned to the forest. In 1910, 195 timber companies were black owned, and African Americans made up 25 percent of all employees in the forest industry (Jones 2005). In addition, turpentine was the third largest industry for the South, and African Americans comprised 80 percent of this work force. In fact, “Multiple generations of families toiled in remote frontier areas of the South as turpentine workers. The black culture learned to associate the wilderness with the worst kind of tyranny” (Outland 2005). However, turpentine workers—in addition to other land workers—were stereotyped as rough and ignorant amongst African Americans. As Eldridge Cleaver said, “In terms of seeking status in America, blacks—principally the black bourgeoisie (middle class)—have come to measure their own value according to the number of degrees they are away from the soil” (USDA 2006). Those African Americans working hazardous, arduous, and tedious jobs had a lower standard of living than blacks in other occupations (Hickman 1986). Because of racism and lower wages, many African Americans took part in the “Great Migration” from 1910 to 1940, leaving the rural South for urban northern and western areas. As a result of this migration, African American life changed. By 1930, 25 percent of southern African Americans had moved north, and 90 percent of the northern African Americans lived in cities (Leatherberry 2000). This “Great Migration” caused many landowners to abandon their forest, but some African Americans did not leave.
There is not a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of the African American forest landowners that stayed in the rural south and how these experiences may have impacted their forest management. The collective/cultural memory of the landowner’s experiences may impact their land ethic, therefore impacting how they manage their forest. The purpose of this research was to understand the experiences of African American forest landowners in South Carolina, and specifically, their motivations for land retention and for forest management.

**Choice of Methodology**

Historically, a survey approach has been the preference for NIPF researchers, but surveying African Americans can be an arduous task, considering the lower response rates and lack of landowner databases for African Americans landowners (Gan and Kolison 1999, Gan et al 2003, Gan et al. 2005). Bliss and Martin (1989) felt that NIPF surveys were constrained by the limitations of survey research and that the use of qualitative methods could be implemented to further assist in understanding complex landownership issues. Due to the shortage of previous research pertaining to African American forest landowners’ experiences, it was determined best to use an inductive qualitative interview approach rather than the traditional deductive, *a priori* approach. The intention for this inductive interview approach is to inform a future survey and to investigate a phenomenon with a flexible research approach. A research hypothesis and/or assumptions were not created prior to this study in an attempt to minimize any type of researcher bias.
In an effort to determine potential factors as catalysts for land loss and promotion of forest stewardship, this study will understand experiences on an individual scale in order to build a knowledge of the essence of South Carolinian African American NIPF landowner lived experience. A qualitative research method, phenomenology, was employed to understand the essence of their experiences or the “essential invariant structure” (Moustakas 1994) (Creswell 1998) (Figure 2.1). Significant statements are grouped into meaning units (topics), and the meaning units are then developed into meaning clusters (themes) (Figure 2.2). The phenomenon is African American forest landownership, considering that land loss is prevalent in rural black communities (Gilbert et al. 2001). The unit of analysis is the lived experiences and the perceptions of the participants. This method is appropriate for understanding a land ethic because phenomenology addresses meanings and perspectives of participants. To perform a phenomenological study, Polkinghorne (1989) recommends a sample size from five to 25 individuals.
Figure 2.1. Schematic of the essential invariant structure of phenomenography.

Figure 2.2. Analysis process of phenomenology.
Methods

Study Site

South Carolina, was selected as a study site because of the proximity to the research institution, the high population of rural African Americans (US Census 2000), diverse landscape (SCDNR 2005), and the history of slavery, Jim Crow, and of African American landownership (Edgar 1998). Slavery had a major impact on the South Carolina Antebellum Era economy (Joyner 1974), and later, the issue of slavery was entwined into the start of the Civil War (South Carolina was the first to secede) (Edgar 1998). After emancipation, many ex-slaves were entrapped in the practice of sharecropping while some were able to obtain land to become landowners (Ried 1973, Tolnay 1999). Many descendants of the first African American landowners are currently living in South Carolina communities (Twining and Baird 1991, Pollitzer 1999). It is likely that the cultural/collective memory of Jim Crow and slavery likely still persist among current African American landowners in these communities.

The majority of the participants reside in counties in the coastal plains of South Carolina, where a large proportion of slave descendants reside. Landowners from the Piedmont and Upstate were selected as well to obtain coverage of the state. Land legacy ranged from familial land that dated to the emancipation to land purchased just ten years ago.

Data Collection

There is currently no database for limited-resource forest landowners in South Carolina because the South Carolina Forestry Commission (SCFC) does not compile
such data. The National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has a limited-resource farmer database, but does not track the amount of current forested land present on each farm. As such, snowball sampling, where participants are asked to name other individuals, was the most appropriate method to acquire the participants for this study (Goodman 1961). Similarly, Gan et al. (2003) used snowball sampling because probability sampling is impossible when a population list is not assembled. We contacted NRCS agents, Clemson University Extension agents, South Carolina State University Extension agents, and African American landowner advocacy groups to assist us with contacting interested participants.

The accepted participant fulfilled this criterion: an African American landowner with at least ten acres of forested land. This broad classification was used to increase eligibility with the aim of attaining a sample with maximum variation of participants. Maximum variation sampling is used in order to document “unique variations that have emerged in adapting to different conditions” (Lincoln and Guba 1985). In theory, this type of sample will provide an expansive scale of information, and the themes that emerge from this variation will have strength (Patton 2002). If a participant qualified, we requested an interview at a location of the participant’s choice (generally their homes) after initial contact was facilitated by the aforementioned agents. A modified Seidman (1998) three-phase interview structure was used where participants were asked about life history, land management details, and land experience reflection. To obtain more participants, we asked the participants to recommend other landowners that would be appropriate for this study at the conclusion of the interviews.
We initiated the research process with a pilot study of two African American forest landowners to inform and revise our semi-structured interview template. A semi-structured interview provides consistency among participants as well as provides the capacity to probe for meaningful responses. We interviewed 14 landowners using the revised semi-structured interview to discuss the following topics: land memories/experience, values, land use/management, land legacy, and African American land loss (Table 2.1). We used one interviewer to prevent inconsistency, and the same semi-structured interview was used for the entire set of participants. The interviewer asked questions from a script but also asked follow-up questions when a landowner responded with an interesting or vague answer. The interviews ranged from 25 minutes to one hour. Each interview opened with the question, “What memories do you have about your land?” in an effort to get the participant comfortable and focused on their land. The interviews were audio taped and transcribed verbatim. We then transferred the interviews into a software data analysis program, NVivo 8, for further analysis and data organization (QSR International 2008). All landowners chose or were assigned pseudonyms to protect their identities.

Analysis

Analysis occurred after all data collection was completed in an attempt to prevent any interviewer bias. If analysis occurred concurrently with interviews, the interviewer may have focused on specific topics of interest. Data were analyzed according to the methods of Moustakas (1994). First, potential biases were acknowledged (bracketing) in an attempt to analyze the data without preconceived notions about the phenomenon at
hand. Next, each transcript was read three times for overall understanding, and significant statements were identified that were applicable to landownership experience. This process yielded a total of 426 significant statements about landowner experiences. Overlapping significant statements were reduced and eliminated by finding invariant constituents. The resulting meaning units (topics) emerged and were clustered into themes. For inter-rater reliability, the results were not shared among co-authors after the first analysis was completed. The entire research process is outlined in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3. Detailed outline of the research process.
After the data analysis, we shared our results and then interviewed extension agents and advocacy group directors for their opinions about the consistency of our results. This was done to perform triangulation (Patton 1990). For member checking, we shared our results with our research participants to determine if they agreed with our results. This paper will discuss fourth themes and their sup-topics that best describe the shared experiences of African American forest landowners (Figure 2.4). The other themes will be discussed in chapter three. For quotations, all landowners chose or were given a pseudonym to protect their identities.

Results and Discussion

Table 2.1. Overview of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Forest Landowner Type</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Absentee</td>
<td>60-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>60-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>60-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Absentee</td>
<td>60-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Absentee</td>
<td>80-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>20-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>20-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Absentee</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Resident</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Absentee</td>
<td>40-60</td>
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</tbody>
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Figure 2.4. Four themes and seven topics developed from phenomenology.

**Theme 1: Historical and/or cultural legacy is the primary motivating factor for land retention among African American forestland owners**

Though the interviews were about forested land, participants often combined both land that is and is not forested in their notions of landownership. Interestingly, participants’ motivation for landownership was something far greater than potential revenue from forest management; rather, African American forest landowners of this study retained land because it is interwoven into their personal identities/familial histories. Some landowners talked about their land as if it was a part of the family. For instance Russell stated, “My grandfather, he died, but he bought a lot of real estate, he owned 700 acres…..so that (land) run in my blood. You know what I’m saying.” In
addition, Chief expressed how the historical aspect of his land had a deeper meaning to him:

*What I like to emphasize, is when you sell your land, (you get) the monetary value you have, but you don’t have land anymore. You don’t have that luxury of riding down the street and say that was my father’s and my grandmother’s and my father’s father’s father…When I talk about land value, to me that land value is the roots of who I am…That’s what land does, that’s what owning land does. It doesn’t put money in your pocket; it puts value in your soul.*

Similarly, Barack shared,

*So when I say asset, value, I am talking value from the standpoint of heritage, heritage from the standpoint of tradition from the standpoint of the family. So it means more to me than—if someone came today and said hey we’ll give you $25-$30,000 an acre, I would say no to that because at this stage in my life, money is not the important thing. But the traditions and family, you know that my father and my grandfather worked hard over the years to gain access to that property. I had to work even harder to pay for it… When I say heritage, I am talking about even before my mom, my dad, and my granddad. During slavery when black folks could not have an opportunity to own something, when they worked on the plantations with their masters. They didn’t have an opportunity to own anything other than work in the cotton fields and work for their master and was paid very low money. So what I am saying is why would I give up that heritage of coming out of my family, coming out of slavery, why would I give up that for a few dollars?*

On the other hand, Denver was worried about the next generation losing the legacy of the family, stating, “*The youth, need to get more involved in retaining their family name. (In) a lot of cases, land goes with the family name.*” Some landowners even felt as if they owed it to previous generations to keep their land. For instance, Melanie said, “*It’s just a matter of the fact that I inherited that land so I wanna be a good steward of my dad’s property, and basically we are leasing my dad’s property.*” Similarly, Russell shared how he would keep the familial land: “*If they (brothers) want to sell their part, I’m going to have to buy the deed and keep it in the family, I want it all to stay in the family.*”
Further, when Russell was asked if the African Americans in his community were keeping their land, he replied, “Yea keep that, they ain’t going to sell that. Those what got it (land) ain’t going to sell it. A lot of my friends have land that their mom and dad leave them, and they keeping it.”

In the following dialogue, Jenny also showed her commitment to keeping her land because of the familial ties:

Jenny: I just want to keep it in the family

Interviewer: Why So?

Jenny: Because it’s family property, goes back generation after generation. Pass it on that’s how I see it, just keep it in the family.

Interviewer: Would you ever sell your land?

Jenny: No! Not going to happen as long as I’m living.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that way?

Jenny: No! Because it was passed on to my mom, and it was passed on to me, and I want to pass it on to my kids so I would not sell it.

During this conversation Jenny shared the importance of keeping land because her perception was that African Americans did not own much and that land was one of the few possessions that African Americans had. Jenny explained:

*People have made sure they paid their property tax and made sure they upkeep the land because that is what they got from their parents. Their parents got it probably from their grandparents, you know something that has been passed on traditionally and you know that’s I guess blacks were rich in land at one point and that is all they had to give their children was ok. I may not can give you the nicer things in life but I can give you this property. You know you have something...Blacks were land rich, but cash poor.*
Furthermore, for many of the participants, land has a direct history of their family’s legacy, a legacy in which slavery still resonates. For instance, Deuce disclosed that

*This piece of property was part of a rice plantation back in the 1800s. I think my ancestors came off of the same plantation. I have evidence of rice dikes in that hardwood bottom that I pointed out to you. And to me...it’s kind of neat to think that they built that dike.*

Other landowners do not have the privilege of having a family history that dates back into their ancestors’ arrival. Many felt that “Blacks don’t know where they come from.” Some landowners’ family legacy started with the memory of land acquisition. To the participants, this was a very personal subject, and many landowners discussed their family history “off the record” and discussed land acquisition during the Post-Antebellum era. For example, Furman believes that “*a lot African Americans need to look back at history and see just how important land is and was to us being here today.*” This notion of land as a family anchor or a “sense of home” resonated throughout all of the interviews. The forested lands as well as the dwellings on it were talked about as a constant in participants’ family history. Interestingly, many times, old homes were kept erect just for the sentimental value.

**Topic 1.1 A Struggle to Get Land**

Most landowners thought that it was a struggle for their family and African Americans in general to obtain land during the Antebellum, Post-Antebellum, and Jim Crow times. Land retention was important to participants because of the perceived struggle for land acquisition that they believed their ancestors and communities went through. For instance Deuce felt that “*It’s sad that this generation has lost land that must*
have been incredibly hard for the folks in the late 1800s to have acquired it, not only because of discrimination but also because of financial resources.” Along the same lines, Melanie revealed the following:

What helped [motivated me to keep the land] me with my dad’s land was his story. My dad inherited some land. The land we lived on we purchased. He talked about the struggles, how hard he had to work. He almost lost his land back then [during his early land tenure] they were doing balloon payments. If they could struggle to hold on to the land, the least we could do is hold on to it.

Denver also recounted struggles related to retaining his land:

There are two of us born in the 30s, my youngest brother. All the rest of my sisters and brothers were born the 20s. And that is how we came up. We had to do without. We had a depression during the 30s. We really had to do without a lot of things. We had to get out there and live off the fat of the land. Everybody did back then. We didn’t have no other source.

Theme 2: A paradigm of collective landownership exists for African American forestland owners

Forested land and land in general was perceived to be under collective landownership for African Americans. First landholdings were owned within sibling groups, then as an extended family, and finally as a community. Regardless of whether the land was heirs’ property or not, family generally consulted each other before making decisions, and most landowners had negative perceptions when family members made “rogue” decisions.

Furthermore, land that has been subdivided for siblings is still viewed as one piece of land. Chief demonstrated that his land and the adjacent tracts of land owned by his family members were essentially considered “one.” They made decisions together, not as individuals:
We are hanging on to it because of the value, not the dollar, but the value it gave us, the independence to doing what we are doing now. And all of our careers have ventured out in different directions, but it all can tie back to working the land...they is 11 of us, 1 is deceased and the 10 of us that is remaining, we still feel a need to continue to position ourselves where we can pass this land on to our children in hopes that they would have the same value for the land as we do...by keeping our land, we are committed as a family to do whatever we can to maintain that value that my dad and mom passed on to us.

Barack had a similar familial view of his land. Though he owns the majority of the property, he still insists that it is his family’s land:

We have approximately 75, well about 80 acres of land in South Carolina. That has been in the family for over many years. It was handed down to my father from his father...We view that land as an asset to the family, and it is an asset from a standpoint of dollars because the land is valuable, the property is valuable, the timber—as when it’s cut—is valuable. So it’s an asset to the family.

Similarly, Denver showed a familial ownership when he stated, “When my granddad died, he had over 700 acres of land, and we no longer have any of that land.”

The next level of collective landownership among our research participants was with the communities in which they lived. If land was lost in the local African American community, it was perceived to have an impact on the entire community. Generally speaking, most landowners discussed the sense of community they felt with adjacent landowners; they believed that the surrounding land was “their” community. For instance, Russell did not like the idea of “outsiders” coming in, as is evidenced in the following statement: “People coming from out of state buying up all our land down here cheap and running the price up on it and all that kind of stuff.”

Along these same lines, research participants were asked “What would you want to happen to your land if your children could not inherit your land?” Most responded that they would like an extended family member or a person in the community to obtain it.
Mays took this idea further, saying that “I would want somebody black to have it.” This idea of land staying in the black community also emerged up when Melanie shared that “He [her father] wanted to keep the land. He felt like the land should stay with the blacks verses us all giving it up to somebody else.”

In addition, all of the research participants were asked about their opinions of hunting leases for their forested land, and all responded that they would prefer a family member or person in their community hunt on their land. Most landowners did not charge to let friends/family hunt. Interestingly, some participants did not perceive a person in their community hunting on their property without permission as trespassing because they “knew” that person or their relatives. In some cases, it was almost as if their land was community property in regards to hunting. For example, Russell stated, “And we black people like to hunt rabbits, and they hunt my land, I don’t say nothing. I get ready to hunt rabbit, I hunt their land. They don’t say nothing.”

What we found to be even more interesting was the concept of collective landownership among African Americans in the South that developed throughout the research. African American land loss was viewed as “our” problem by many of the landowners. Every landowner felt that land loss was “sad” and/or “disappointing.” They all shared their opinions as to why they thought land loss was a problem, and they generally felt connected to this phenomenon in some way. They all knew of somebody who lost, sold, or had been divested of their land in some other way. Because of similar histories and landowner experiences, some landowners felt connected to black-owned land that was not even theirs. When they discussed land loss in the South Carolina Sea
Islands, participants spoke of it as if the land was taken from a family member.

Throughout the interviews, participants told many stories about land loss, and it appears as if there is a “collective memory” among the research participants even though they are located in different regions. Johnson (1998) discussed this “collective memory” as potentially having an impact on individuals’ view of wildlands. The “collective memory” of our study participants point to a theme of collective landownership; this theme of collective landownership emerges not only in this section but throughout this article’s quotations. For example, consider the following excerpts from our interviews:

*Furman:* It is important to hold on to land just to know where we come from. Our culture a lot of times as African American, we don’t know where we come from, so you know it’s important for us to hold on to what little we do have left.

*Melanie:* I think it’s sad [land loss]. I think when we [blacks] hear that stuff [land loss], we have to hear it more than one time ’cause it’s hard trying to make the right decisions.

*Bear:* I guess us blacks were rich in land at one point and that is all we had to give their children.

*Furman:* There is a lot of pride in it [landownership] for the simple fact that you know African Americans don’t have much to hold on to in general…I think a lot African Americans need to look back at history and see just how important land is and was to us being here today.

*Jenny:* If land wasn’t important we wouldn’t have been crying about our 40 acres and a mule.

*Barack:* As it [landownership] is related to my people, I am talking black folks, not necessarily my people from a kinship standpoint, where black folks in my county caught hell just like they caught hell all across the South but particularly coming out of my county, just to have something, and that’s what I am talking about as it relates to heritage beyond the paternal and maternal side of my family. I am talking the total African American race from heritage standpoint if that makes sense to you.
The landowners discussed previous events, be it familial or historical, and internalized them as their own or saw the parallels in relations to their own story. The collective memory was strong with all of the research participants. This is an example of how an event can have major influence on the perspective of people, which can impact how on decisions are made for generations to come.

*Topic 2.1: A Place to Come Home*

In rural areas, many descendants migrated to larger cities for careers or college education. A majority of landowners discussed the lack of opportunities in rural South Carolina and talked about the changes occurring in their communities. Generally, they did not see this migration as a negative, but their fear was that family would never come back. The majority landowners kept land as a place that their heirs/relatives could “come back to.” Many times their expectations related to their children coming back to take care of the property when they passed on. Also, the land was viewed as a backup plan if people did not succeed outside the community. The following three statements exhibit this theme:

*Jenny: You need to have something to come back to.*

*Furman: It’s still there in my roots that I understand that at the end of the day, I could always go back...Land is going to be kept in case someone want to move home, or you know they had to come home.*

*Mattie: That when they [parents] purchased the land, they also had in mind to providing a home for their children.*

Similarly, when Roosevelt was asked “What is it about this piece of land that made you want to come back?” he said,
‘Cause it was in our farm in our name in our family so long and to walk off and leave it that would be all. Plus, I had [four], and I thought what if they get old in the city. If something happen, they won’t have no place, but if something happen they can always come home…the idea we have something we could fall back onto.”

In addition, Bear stated that his family did not sell their land during hard times because:

Just the mere fact that you never know when someone want to move home, or you know they had to come home, maybe one of other family member is sick or something like that, so we’ve held one to it.

**Theme 3: Lack of resources is a barrier for forest stewardship**

*Topic 3.1 Lack of information*

The landowners we interviewed were, overwhelmingly, lacking in knowledge about forest management and did not know how to obtain such information. The only interviewees who knew of such information were people who work or have worked in the natural resource field (forestry and a federal agency). In regards to financial opportunities, most of the landowners did not know of hunting lease rates and/or timber prices (except for the forester).

*Topic 3.2 a: Technical resources*

Many landowners told stories of family and/or community members being cheated by foresters. Most perceived that this occurred due to a lack of knowledge of the economic value of their forest resources and the deficiency of relevant information in the community. For instance, Deuce shared the following:

They [community landowners] lost 85-95 thousands of dollars by not understanding the value of the timber that was on their property and also not having knowledge of some of the resources at their disposal to help manage timber sales...Some people [African Americans] have this problem because they
are not aware that trees do have value other than just a forest, just woods, just something that’s there taking up space, not realizing the economic value of the timber.

Melanie, who retired from a government agency that provides technical assistance related to natural resources, shared the following:

When I was working, one time I had this book that told you what the going rate was [timber prices] and all that good stuff, but they discontinued that program...They [the agency] didn’t want foresters giving us [landowners] that information.

The interviewer asked Melanie why she felt that an agency would withhold such information, and she responded that it was a part of the “good ol’ boy” system. Further, Melanie—who has natural resource experience—felt, “Even I’m still not as knowledgeable on that stuff [forest management] as I need to be.”

Similarly, Furman shared a story about a family member selling their forested land in a time of hardship:

Well I ask one of the family members about selling it [forested land], what they received for it. Even though he didn’t give me a roundabout figure, he told me he didn’t believe they received fair market value, and after all the attorney fees and things of that nature, they didn’t come out you know with a total of a 100 grand, and we’re talking about maybe 100 acres you know... A lot of people don’t know the resources and the different grants and easements and different ways to get around losing their property.

**Topic 3:2b Legal Resources**

Heirs’ property, a legal issue, is thought to be a barrier to natural resource management for many landowners (Dyer 2007). There is a center in South Carolina that assists landowners with their heirs’ property issues, but this center does not have the capacity to fulfill the legal needs for all of the impacted landowners. The perception of
most landowners is that help does not exist and/or legal information is not disseminated adequately. For example, Furman stated, “I think it’s a crying shame that you know for whatever reason, African Americans have failed to have the appropriate legal advice or whatever the reason may be.” Similarly, Deuce felt that, “A lot of the people that own land were never given the opportunity to legal advice,” and Melanie added, “I think that African Americans need to be more aware of the legal advice that is out there for them.”

**Topic 3.3: Financial Resources**

The majority of landowners do have the financial resources to perform management on their land, and cost share programs may provide an avenue in which the landowners can get assistance. But cost share programs may require an investment on the landowner’s part, which may serve as a barrier for limited-resource landowners. Even if a landowner wants to start management, he/she may not have the initial investment needed to participate. Most landowners in this study did not have such resources to invest in their property. However, another notion of financial barriers emerged from the landowners in this study who have participated in cost share programs. These landowners felt that African American landowners did not have the financial knowledge about making money from their land. Take the following exchange, for example:

*Interviewer: You just stated that discrimination and heirs’ property are two factors that influence black land loss. Do you think that there are other factors that are influencing African American land loss?*

*Deuce: The other may very well be the lack of understanding how to make money off the property. They see it more as a cost instead of a revenue source...again the lack of financial resources. If you’re not very well off and somebody comes and offer you what you would think is a very large sum of money for your land, and you don’t care about the land, you sell the land to get the money.*
In addition, Furman feels that “It’s a money situation [land loss]. What can you do to make sure you are making enough money off of it, so that you can survive?

Theme 4: Lack of trust is a barrier for technical assistance

African American landowners in the South and the government have had a tumultuous past from issues related to Jim Crow times to the Pigford lawsuit. Even though in the current day and age governmental agencies have taken many steps to move forward from previous actions, negative perceptions among African Americans are still there. Most landowners in this study not only mistrusted the government, but they also had a borderline aversion to the government. Some landowners even felt that the government had the desire to take African American land and that the government was the cause for much of African American land loss.

Topic 4.1: Personal Experience

Many times landowners’ distrust stems from a personal experience with an agency. Jenny explained a situation in which she was misled by the government:

*Interviewer: Do you think it was fair what you got [from timber cut]?*

*Jenny: No, I can tell you that.*

*Interviewer: Why not?*

*Jenny: Because the man that was supposed to come back and bring the rest of the money never showed up.*

Chief feels similarly to Jenny about the government:

*I went back to the forestry commission, and we had a different agent to come out and what I had in mind was to re-clear it again with some help. And I was told*
flat out, and that’s one of those situations [referring to the good ol’ boy system]. He said no, there is not help we can give. And I know it goes on all time...I’m a business person, and I know by past experience that people will take advantage of people that they think they don’t understand the value of what they had. And I’ve had experiences where people would come out and evaluate your forest and would tell you this is what I think it is worth. And when you do your research, you’ll find out that you got a greater value than that [what the forester quoted]. I’ve had experience with that.

**Topic 4.2: Collective Memory**

Though most forest landowners may not have had a negative experience with the government or a forester directly, many have developed distrust from hearing stories from their families or members in their communities. For example, in the following dialogue, Barack indicated that he does not trust the local government to give him a fair assessment of his land value:

*Interviewer: Do you trust the government to evaluate your land?*

*Barack: Is the same value put on black property as white property? No, probably not. From the standpoint of taxes, you’re paying the same taxes that are equal value for your land value, probably not.*

The collective memory from stories of Native Americans’ land loss in the islands on the South Carolina coast has impacted Jenny. She believes that:

*Some people really truly care about the property and you’re forcing these people off the only life that they have known all their life. And I see that happen all around South Carolina: Edisto, Hilton Head...That is my thing [their problem]. They [the government] are trying to stop you from passing it down. They’re dirty. That’s how they stole the land from the Indians. That is how they are trying to steal it from the blacks.*

During this dialogue Jenny explained her distrust further:

*Interviewer: Do you trust the government?*

*Jenny: No! Nope.*
Interviewer: Why not?

Jenny: Cause government is sneaky, too. Just like how they are trying to get rid of heirs, they are trying to push heirs out, and then when it is something that benefits them, then, excuse my French, the hell with you. They gonna do what they want to do. Like for instance, they want to put a road through and that property is on that road and you don’t willing selling it to them or, you know, accept their deal, then they are going to find some type of way to push you out regardless to get what they want.

Distrust is not exclusive to the federal, state or local governments, however.

Landowners, particularly ones who just have forested tracts, do not trust the private industry either. Stories of landowners being “taken” are very common among the participants of this study. For instance, Deuce articulated a personal story:

There was a family in my community that owned approximately 80 acres of land, 70 acres was timbered with moderately old growth hardwoods. They were approached by a wood buyer to purchase that timber, and not knowing anything about timber values, they sold that timber for around $13,000. My estimate is that their timber value had to have been close to $100,000 for that tract of timber, just knowing similar tracts of timber in that vicinity. So they lost 85-95 thousands of dollars by not understanding the value of the timber that was on their property and also not having knowledge of some of the resources at their disposal to help manage timber sales.

Likewise, Furman recalls a story of dishonesty:

I have seen and heard so many different land loss stories where someone trust someone to come in and survey it or appraise it and then they appraise it for a lesser value and take it to maybe one of their buddies and sell it off, you know what I mean, or auction it off, so I don’t trust them.”

Melanie also shared the following:

Cause it’s just difficult sometimes. I’ve gone to some meetings, but it’s difficult because you don’t know people. You gotta be so careful ‘cause they steal the timber and this much, but people felt like this was a reliable group, and I knew somebody else that had used them so that’s why I did that…I just think you gotta be careful. It would be because somebody else recommended that person, somebody else that I trust. I don’t think you can just let anybody do stuff. Because
that have stole a lot of people’s timber...I think it’s [land loss] lack of knowledge, trusting the wrong people.

Inez does not trust private foresters either. She responded with high emotion to questions related to foresters.

**Interviewer:** Do you trust a private forester to evaluate your timber?

**Inez:** Ohh, Positively no!

In addition to her distrust for private foresters, Inez later shared that she did not trust the local government either:

*I thinks it’s terrible [land loss]. There are so many people...I can talk about Pawleys Island because I know about those people who have actually lost their land. They didn’t want to sell, but because the development and see once, that is what they were fighting here on our island. See once that development comes in, that land is gonna jump up. And you are not going to have a lot more tax to pay. They want to change from agriculture land to commercial land. If it’s going to change to commercial, what kind of commercially are you going to deal with, you know? And this is one of the things I believe they were, you know, used to pull a flippin, because they [developers] not going to tell them [landowners].

Distrust has developed from other sources other than the government or forest industry. In fact, for the participants, anyone who is not a local landowner can potentially be an outsider. For instance, Furman states, “A lot of developers are coming down here and they are developing this area whether it is from a partition sell or delinquent taxes they’re scooping it up at an alarming rate.

The collective memory shared among family members, communities, and Southern black landowners appeared to have many commonalities. This collective memory spans from landowner experiences to distrust. This study has documented the memories of our participants and has attempted to give them a voice. After the analysis,
these voices were shared with government officials to get their perceptions and for a process called triangulation.

Triangulation

Triangulation is a strategy for improving the validity of research and should aid in the elimination of bias (Campbell and Fiske 1959, Denzin 1978). Triangulation should allow for the “dismissal of plausible rival explanations such that a truthful proposition about some social phenomenon can be made” (Mathison 1988). Triangulation for the qualitative portion of this study occurred after the data were analyzed and results emerged. Two federal employees who currently work with landowners in South Carolina—one state extension agent and one heirs’ property liaison who works in South Carolina—were interviewed to accomplish triangulation. These key informants were asked about their knowledge of particular issues related to African American land ownership; afterward, the results of the study were shared, and they were asked to give their professional opinions about the results.

In regards to the lack of information, the heirs’ property liaison thinks that this lack of information and the lack of legal advice are evident due to the propensity of heirs’ property for African American landowners. Specifically, she stated:

Think about it, why people have heirs’ property of course is lack of knowledge. But it’s also they were denied access to the legal system. Being African American and you were, you couldn’t find a black lawyer you could go to. And I think it was Faith Rivers who has done some research on heirs’ property, and she has talked about there is a lack of African American attorneys in South Carolina. So if you look at it, there really wasn’t a lot of places for people to go if the lawyers who were white decided to discriminate and not take black ones.
The liaison also expounded upon African American landowners lack of trust, which she believes is a reason that many landowners do not seek assistance:

*I think that trust—because they have seen in instances, and I think it was the “Torn From Land Piece” written by somebody with the Associated Press, how people would either go to the court house to record their deeds, and if they did attain a lawyer and they would find out that basically their land was stolen from them. Say for example if they went to the court house to record their deeds, they would find out that the deed had been recorded in the court committee, versus there.*

The federal agents work for divisions that provide resources to forest landowners and farmers. They both perceived that African American forest landowners suffered from a lack of resources. In fact, Federal agent 1 felt this lack of technical assistance was discrimination:

*Interviewer: Do African Americans have equal access to technical information as other landowners?*

*Federal Agent 1: No blacks don’t get as much information! They [the government] lock us [blacks] out, you know how they do. The whites get the information first, they know that.*

In the following dialogue, this same federal agent further explains how he believes discrimination is the cause for this lack of resources:

*Interviewer: What do you think has been the biggest cause for black land loss?*

*Federal Agent 1: Racism. Racism, unfair credit policies, and also theft.*

*Interviewer: What is theft?*

*Federal Agent 1: It’s not many black surveyors in South Carolina, so it’s only white surveyors. And when you call one of them to get a survey, they might do one or two clicks off and they took an acre or two. See, that’s one way. Then tax sales and adverse possession; they move on it and take it. They buy somebody’s interest out, and then they force the petition sale.*
Interviewer: Overall, do you think black and white people differ in the way they value their land?

Federal Agent 1: It’s not much different. We just don’t have the opportunities that the white folks have to preserve and develop and get the economic growth out of the land that we should. So we are behind the eight ball most of the time.

The second federal agent works with both black and white forest landowners. He believes the major difference between the racial groups is the lack of information, but feels that all landowners could use more assistance. For instance, he said:

Most of my African American land owners that I dealt with, they were wanting the information. A lot of my Caucasians land owners I worked with, they had the information, but they still need implementation of the programs.

The extension agent admitted that there is a lack of trust for the government by landowners. His agency has developed a team with black and white government officials in hopes of gaining landowners’ trust. This is demonstrated in the following exchange:

Interviewer: I have noticed in my research that a lot of landowners don’t trust in government. Some perceive that there is racism. Have you experienced any of that?

Extension Agent: And there’s no doubt about it, okay it’s that. That’s why we have what we call the Integrated Resource Management Team, and that’s where we get all our aid professionals and stuff together. If you are on a table and come and show, we can address certain issues and so forth.

Conclusions and Implications for Forest Management

The essence of the African American NIPF landowner for this study is: 1) their primary motivation for land retention is the cultural/historical land legacy; 2) their “black land” is collectively owned by their family members, community, and African Americans in general; 3) lack of resources is a barrier for land retention and forest stewardship; and 4) lack of trust is a barrier for forest stewardship.
Two vital lessons emerged from this research in regards to forest management. The first lesson is that forest management is not a primary motivating factor for African American forest landowners; rather, land legacy is. Of the landowners who have kept their land, legacy is a strong motivating factor for them doing so. Keeping a legacy for future generations while maintaining a healthy forest that can produce short- and long-term revenue is a win-win situation for landowners, conservationists, and the forest industry. This concept should be explained to landowners along with the financial and ecological benefits of a managed forest. High grading or clear cutting without regeneration is of no benefit to these landowners’ primary land objective, and they need to know that. As shown in the results, persuading landowners to do so gives foresters a bad reputation, and any type of silvicultural practice in which the landowner does not benefit should be avoided.

The second lesson is that culture and history should be taken into careful consideration when any type of management or agreement is made with African American landowners. Many times, there is not a single proprietor for a piece of land. This presents problems in regards to forest management if more than one person has to make decisions. This also presents a threat of fragmentation if land is passed on to many descendants. Blacks also do not generally write wills for land transfer (Thomas et al. 2004), which has caused heirs’ property to become almost viral for African American landowners. Land in heirs’ property presents a hurdle for the forest industry and government assistance programs. Also, there is a culture of distrust for the government as well as the private forest industry among African Americans, and steps should be taken to
create pragmatic ways to approach this traditionally underserved population of forest landowners. Though these issues are multifaceted problems, and solutions will not come overnight, there are still vast opportunities for instant impacts, such as the creation of individual forest management plans, outreach and liaison positions, assistance with heirs’ property, and education of the next generation of landowners.

Though African American land loss is not directly related to forest stewardship, it also presents a problem for the forest industry. Indirectly, land loss will impact forest conservation and forest management. If land is transferred from agricultural to residential/development, then there is a threat of a permanent land-use changes. Put simply: no forest = no forest products. The long-term sustainable practices of timber production are transferred into structures that may persist for long periods of time.

In regards to racism, the validity of the accusations for discrimination should not be a topic of discussion. Rather, we feel that the perception of racism/discrimination that resides among many landowners should be the focus. Whether or not discrimination occurred, landowners felt that it has, and this perception is impacting the ability to serve landowners. This information should not be ignored and should be taken up through the proper channels, but in the meantime, we should acknowledge how landowners feel and find ways to disseminate technical and financial information to them more effectively.

Heirs’ property also has an impact on black landowners in South Carolina, but the extent of this impact in the past is unknown. This study provides the opportunity to understand how heirs’ property is currently impacting African Americans. Future research can obtain information on the impact of heirs’ property by measuring the sense
of ownership, estate planning, and land valuation. Lawmakers should consider policies that are sensitive to cultures of both white and black landowners by acknowledging that African Americans and white landowners have had different experiences historically that may impact their current land ethic. Research is needed to quantify these differences in an attempt to move forward with the creation of new policies. Also, there is a strong need for a research initiative to study limited-resources landowners in the entire Southeast. A comprehensive research program that focuses on land combining conservation, forestry, history/culture, and human ecology is desperately needed to prevent small rural landowners from succumbing to land loss.

**Research limitations**

These findings may not be exclusive to African American landowners. A group of people who have had a complex history with the land, who have been historically discriminated against, and who lives in cultural communities may share similar themes with African American landowners. African Americans may serve as a surrogate for limited-resource landowners. The purpose of this study was not to quantify how African Americans view their forested land but to qualify their experiences in hopes to inform managers and researchers who are interested in assisting this traditionally underserved population of forest landowners.

**Acknowledgments**

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Cunningham, Heather Irwin, Cassandra Johnson, Myron Floyd, and Ken Robinson. The article is dedicated to Barbara “Gloria” Fripp Cartwright.
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72


CHAPTER THREE
PHENOMENOGRAPHY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN FOREST LANDOWNERSHIP

Abstract

African Americans account for 28.5 percent of the population in South Carolina but only make up about two percent of the forest landowner class (US Census 2000, NWOS). Historically, African Americans in the rural South have held a close relationship to the land and the natural resources (e.g., farming, timber, wildlife) therein (Marks 1991, Jones 2005, Leatherberry 2000, Glave and Stoll 2006, Giltner 2006, Smith 2007, Glave 2010). Unfortunately, however, many African American landowners have sold, lost, or otherwise been divested of the inherent empowerment of the natural resource that landownership offers (Gilbert et al. 2001). Studies of NIPF landowners of the US have been performed, but information regarding minority NIPF landowners is limited. Also, studies have investigated NIPF landowners but these studies did not separate demographic factors such as farming status, residential status, and their knowledge of natural resource management. This study used phenomenography, a qualitative research method designed to understand the diversity of ways people experience and perceive. It was used to investigate NIPF landowners while considering demographic factors that potentially could have an impact on landowners’ perceptions. The findings suggest that demographic factors have a significant influence on landowner perceptions and attitudes. These findings can inform extension agencies and research entities on better practices to serve and perform outreach for this subgroup of landowners. Investigating the relationships between African Americans and the changing land base in the rural South is
critical in order to understand the links between social capital, race, and forest stewardship.

**Keywords:** African American, Forest Landowner, Phenomenography, Qualitative Methods, Land Ethic, and Forest Management.

**Introduction**

The definition of the term “landowner” has been inappropriately used as a descriptive adjective in the natural resource field. There are many types of landowners: farmers, forest landowners, farmers with forested land, residents, absentees, and more. Each of these landowners may have different experiences and live in entirely different regions of the country. Unfortunately many governmental programs have been created to serve “landowners” without considering the numerous types of landowners and the diversity of their experiences. This “shotgun approach” type of practice is understandable considering that programs must be created to accomplish an umbrella of goals and needs. However, smaller groups, such as African American forest landowners, may not receive adequate assistance when goals are broad and programs are implemented on large scales.

Recently, governmental programs have target limited-resource landowners without considering the different types of landowners (Vilsack 2009). Thus, the objective of this study is to identify the different types of forest landowners and understand how these individuals’ different experiences impact their forest landownership experiences. South Carolina African American forest landowners were
chosen as participants because extension agents (gatekeepers) have established previous relationships with this group, an avenue to obtain trust from landowners.

African American farmers have recently gained national attention due to their historical tumultuous relationship with the government (e.g., Jim Crow, Civil Rights). In 1997, one-thousand African American farmers responded to unfair treatment by the government by filing a class action lawsuit against the USDA known as the Pigford Lawsuit. After the settlement, 22,000 African American farmers came forward to receive various settlements. The vast majority of the farmers received a $50,000 dollar settlement and debt forgiveness (averaging $75,000 to $100,000) (New York Times 1999). Recently, President Barack Obama announced a $1.25 billion settlement to resolve claims by thousands of black farmers (Washington Post 2010).

Holistically, this situation has led to scientific inquiry into the lives of African American farmers and into the multiple factors that have attributed to their large decline (Dishongh and Worthen 1991, Zabawa 1991, Wood and Gilbert 2000, Gilbert et al. 2001). Approximately 93 percent of black farmers are in the southern states with the majority of black landowners residents residing in the southern states (Wood and Gilbert 2000). Many of these southern farmers migrated from their farms, and those who kept their land have left the land feral to grow into timber. Many of the farmers who stayed hold significant amounts of timber on their land. Considering the aforementioned situations, it is likely that African Americans have large portions of forested land that may be unmanaged. The NWOS reported that African Americans comprise 28.5 percent of the population in South Carolina but only make up about two percent of the forest
landowner class (US Census 2000). Generally, little is known about African American forestland owners, so obtaining a database of landowners is extremely difficult (Gan et al. 2003, Gan and Kolison 1999). Additionally, studies related to this topic have focused on the differences between African American forest landowners and other ethnic groups, specifically targeting any disparities that occur among these groups (Gan et al. 2003, Schelhas 2002). However, there is a dearth of literature investigating the issue of African American forestland ownership and the differences within African American forestland ownership.

While information on the disparity between different ethnic groups may be valuable in regards to identifying the failures of outreach efforts in regards to limited-resource landowners, such information may miss the mark in distinguishing the disparities and/or differences within the population of African American forest landowners. Understanding the different perceived experiences of African American forest landowners and how their experiences may have impacted the way they view forest landownership can potentially help extension agents classify the different types of African American landowners. Comprehending the diversity of how forest landowners perceive their forests can inform different strategies to improve outreach efforts. Furthermore, the different perceptions of forest landownership may not be exclusive to African American forest landowners and could possibly transcend across several other limited-resource landowner groups that may have comparable forest landownership experience.
The objective of this study is to use phenomenography to investigate the different ways African American forest landowners in South Carolina experience, interpret, and perceive forest landownership (Figure 3.1). The assumption of phenomenography is that people interpret the world in different ways (Marton and Booth 1997). Marton (1981) says the phenomenography method pursues description, analysis, and understanding of experiences. The objective is to understand the relationship between participants and the phenomenon (Bowden 2005). Phenomenography is performed using an interpretivist paradigm, which aims for an “empathic understanding,” not for explanation of causation or predictions (Howe 1988). Qualitative research, a relatively newer research method in the natural science field, was used to create a baseline understanding for future quantitative research.
Figure 3.1 Schematic illustrating the aim of phenomenography, to understand different experiences.

Methods

Data Collection

There is currently no database of limited-resource forest landowners in South Carolina; the SCFC does not compile such data. The NRCS has a limited-resource farmer database, but does not track the amount of current forested land present on the farm. Snowball sampling was the most appropriate method to acquire the participants for this study. Initial participants were asked to recommend other landowners that would be
appropriate for this study at the conclusion of the interviews (Goodman 1961). Gan et al. (2003) used snowball sampling because probability sampling was impossible when a population list was not assembled. NRCS agents, Clemson University Extension agents, South Carolina State University Extension agents, and African American landowner advocacy groups were contacted to assist us with contacting interested participants.

The accepted participant fulfilled this criterion: an African American landowner with at least ten acres of forested land. This broad classification was used to increase eligibility; with the hopes of generating a sample with maximum variation of participants based on age, residency, sex, careers, land acquisition, and income. Maximum variation sampling was used in order to document “unique variations that have emerged in adapting to different conditions” (Lincoln and Guba 1985). In theory, this type of sample will provide an expansive scale of information, and the themes that emerge from this variation will have strength (Patton 2002). If a participant qualified, we requested an interview at a location of the participant’s choice (generally their homes) after initial contact was facilitated by the aforementioned agents. A modified Seidman (1998) three-phase interview structure was used where participants were asked about life history, land management details, and land experience reflection.

The research process was initiated with a pilot study of two African American forest landowners to inform our semi-structured interview. A semi-structured interview provides consistency among participants as well as providing the capacity to probe for meaningful responses. A total of 14 landowners were interviewed using the newly created semi-structured interview to discuss the topics of: land memories/experience,
values, land use/management, land legacy, and African American land loss (Table 3.1). Only one interviewer was used to prevent inconsistency, and the same semi-structured interview was used for the entire set of participants. The interviewer asked questions from the script, but asked follow-up questions when a landowner responded with an interesting or vague answer. The interviews ranged from 25 minutes to one hour. The interviews were conducted at sites chosen by the participants, mostly in their homes. Each interview was opened with the question, “What memories do you have about your land?” in an effort to get the participant comfortable and focused on their land. Then the interviews were audio taped and transcribed verbatim. The interviews were then transferred into the software data analysis program NVivo 8 (QSR International 2008).

All participants either chose or were assigned a pseudonym in order to protect their identities.

Table 3.1. Overview of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Forest Landowner Type</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Absentee</td>
<td>60-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>60-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>60-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Absentee</td>
<td>60-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Absentee</td>
<td>80-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>20-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>20-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Absentee</td>
<td>20-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>80-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>40-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Absentee</td>
<td>40-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>60-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>60-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Absentee</td>
<td>40-60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysis

Analysis occurred after the data collection in an attempt to prevent any interviewer bias. Phenomenography (Marton 1986, Marton and Booth 1997) was used as the theoretical framework for the qualitative analysis. “The goal of phenomenography is to understand how people experience, interpret, understand, perceive, and conceptualize a phenomenon. Phenomenography assumes that knowledge is derived from thinking about experiences with people and objects in the world in which we live” (Bodner 2004). There is an assumption that people experience the same phenomenon differently and that these differences can be quantitatively categorized (Säljö 1997). The unit of description was the conception of the African American forest landowners (Marton and Pong 2005). For this research, the conceptions (different ways of understanding how a landowner perceives their land and their subsequent actions taken based on their conception) will be the framework for a conception.

Each interview was read three times to obtain an overall understanding of the landowner’s perspective. After which, the first stage of analysis occurred where the focus was to identify the conceptions by identifying significant statements based off of similarities and differences (n=194). From these sorted statements, six categories of descriptions (dimensions) were developed: 1) a forest landowner with a farming perception, 2) a forest landowner perception, 3) a forest landowner with a resident perception, 4) a forest landowner with an absentee perception, 5) a forest landowner who has a natural resource connection, and 6) a forest landowner who does not have a natural resource connection. Finally, the second stage occurred where the focus was placed on
identifying the structural aspect of each conception by emphasizing the explicit variation among forest landowners (Figure 3.1) (Marton and Pong 2005).

![Diagram](image)

Figure 3.2. Phenomenographical results of South Carolina Forest Landowners.

**Results and Discussion**

**Absentee landowner versus resident landowner**

The results revealed that absentee landowners and resident landowners viewed and managed their land differently (Table 3.2). Absentee landowners felt less connected to their land, viewed their land as a family or personal asset, did not check or monitor
their land frequently, and were concerned with tax and trespasser issues. On the other hand, resident landowners had a strong connection to their land, viewed land as a familial refuge, and used it for a family refuge.

Table 3.2. Different themes emerging between absentee and resident forest landowners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absentee Forest Landowner</th>
<th>Resident Forest Landowner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less of a Connection to Land</td>
<td>Strong Connection to Land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land is an Asset</td>
<td>Land is a Home/Refuge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerned about Trespassers</td>
<td>Little to no concern with Trespassers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Land “Connection”

The “connection” to the land is a landowner’s sense of place in addition to intangible values related to their land. Because absentee landowners may live in an entirely different area than their land, absentee landownership may create many problems for landownership or land retention. For example, Melanie shared a brief story that illustrates how difficult absentee landownership can be: “I know we got one situation now where someone died and didn’t leave a will, and the kids lived in another state.”

This situation alone demonstrates the complexities of absentee landownership and heirs’ property. After the initial landowner died, the out-of-state heirs of the estate then had the responsibility to travel to another state to clear the title and designate who will pay the taxes. This can lead to a series of arduous tasks. Furthermore, depending on past experiences, or connections to the property, absentee landowners may view the land as a nuisance, and therefore, as something to be discarded.
In addition to causing various legal issues, absentee landowners’ connection to the land may weaken overtime. For example, Barack, an absentee landowner shared the following:

_You know it’s tough being away from South Carolina so many years. You kind of lose touch because you don’t know what’s going on from a local standpoint...I think couple of reasons [for black land loss]. One is land have been in the family for years and years and then it handed down particularly in the South. Kids grow up on the farm; they move away; they don’t know they go West; they get old, and they sell it. I mean they don’t want to be bothered with it and that has happened in my family. I mean the descendents of the original landowners, they have no interest in it because they don’t come back. I just sits there and if there’s an opportunity to sell it, they sell it. They don’t see that value of maintaining it and that happens a lot of time in the African American family. That’s one way they lose it because the descendents of the original owners has no interest in maintaining it any more so ending up being sold...they [absentee landowners] don’t understand that heritage; they don’t understand how that families had the struggle to keep that land even to get it. That’s the first thing._

Furthermore, some absentee landowners never had a connection to the land from the beginning because they obtained land through inheritance. For example, Clavis inherited land from her deceased husband and had many issues being an absentee landowner:

_Interviewer: Have you ever sold any of your land? If so why?_

_Clavis: No, but if it was up to me, I’ll sell all of the devilish land [inherited from her husband], but not Tiger [her son]. His name is on the thing [the land], too._

_Interviewer: Why would you want to sell it?_

_Clavis: Stop the headache; I don’t have to worry about taxes._

_Interviewer: Are taxes becoming a problem for you?_

_Clavis: No, it’s not a problem, like I said. The land is in a poor county. I used to pay like $42 or $38. My taxes are much higher this year, so the land value is coming up._
Clavis almost shows a disgust with her land even though the property happens to be increasing in value. She sees the potential value of the land but would rather sell, not for the revenue, but to rid herself of a perceived burden. Clavis never had a connection with the property because she never lived there. On the contrary, however, she felt totally opposite about the land she grew up on:

*Interviewer:* Do you want Tiger to keep this land [the land on which she resides]?

*Clavis:* Yes.

*Interviewer:* You don’t want Tiger to sell this land?

*Clavis:* No, not this one. NO!

Resident landowners perceived this disconnection as well. In the following dialogue, Jenny expressed that her neighbor had a lack of appreciation (i.e., connection) to the land because he is an absentee landowner:

*Interviewer:* Do you know of any African Americans selling their land?

*Jenny:* That idiot next to our property!

*Interviewer:* Why do you think they sold it?

*Jenny:* Because he’s crazy. He doesn’t live down here; he doesn’t appreciate the beauty of this area.

*Interviewer:* Where does he live?

*Jenny:* New Jersey

Deuce, another resident landowner, expressed a similar view about absentee landowners having a lack of connection to their land.

*Interviewer:* Why do you think they sold [African Americans] their land?
Deuce: (Sigh)...It's a couple of reasons. One is folks who have sold land that have been near urban areas, land value has gotten to the point where, I guess they would rather cash out. They lost; they didn't have a sense of maybe connection with the property. They were more eager to receive the money.

Further along in the conversation with Deuce, the following conversation took place:

*Interviewer:* So besides discrimination and heirs’ property [factors Deuce mentioned], do you think there are other factors that is influencing African American land loss?

*Deuce:* Again, I think one is the loss of connection in the land. People don’t feel as close to the land and don’t see value in landownership the way maybe their parents or grandparents felt.

Another resident landowner, Chief, shared his opinion on absentee landowners as well:

*African American landowners, when they think of land, especially those who have migrated off the land, all they can think of is that there is no value to that land, all they think of is of sweat and hard work they had when they was involved with the land and very little money.*

Furthermore, this idea of absentees’ weak connections to their land was apparent when the theme of “land as an asset” emerged after the question “*How do you value your land?*” was asked. Contrarily, residential landowners responded to the same question referring to their land as “home/refuge.” Mays, an absentee landowner, moved away from his land decades ago and actually sold a portion of his acreage. Mays’ primary reason for doing so was that his land was an asset; he then mentioned the property had other values because he grew up on the land and farmed the property for a few years: “*Oh, how do I value it? A good investment, but the land had some sentimental value.*” Mays later expressed his remorse for not living in proximity to his land. The interviewer’s field notes indicated that Mays was melancholy during this portion of the interview. It was as if Mays knew the distance from his land had a negative impact on the property. For
example, Mays said, “What memories do I have of this land? Oh I wish I hadn’t sold the 40 acres I sold. And wish I lived near it.” Like Mays, after being asked “How do you value your land?” Mattie mentioned land as an asset first and then discussed its sentimental value:

Mattie: Well I look at it as an asset, for memories, and for the… I guess you would say I can’t come up with the term I want to use now, but the fact that my parents had the insight to want to own for themselves.

Interviewer: Do you have any more values?

Mattie: No, economical that’s about it. I have been able to cut timber and have things in my life I probably would not have bought. It has kept me out of debt.

Melanie conveyed that her land had monetary value, but it required a bit of an investment on her part: “If I plant trees on it, at least I can make some money off of it at some point, but if I do nothing, nothing is going to happen with it.”

Strong Connection

The resident landowners displayed a strong connection to their land when asked about their memories and land values. For instance, Deuce recalled the moment when he purchased his land:

I came out here and was walking around and I just came….It was a real (pausing to reflect) a real strong sense of peace and accomplishment, I don’t know, came over me when I realized that this was ours.

Deuce believes that directly using and enjoying one’s property will develop a strong bond with the land. He shared why he believed residential landowners are more connected their properties:

What keeps a lot of people on land or on timberland tracts or agricultural tracts is the enjoyment they get from the use of that property. And there are folks in my
community that enjoy farming, that enjoy raising livestock, and that enjoyment keeps them attached to that property. Folks that don’t enjoy hunting, that don’t enjoy working on the land, there is nothing really there to keep the attached to the property.

Chief discussed his strong connection to his land as well:

*It’s not the monetary value of the land; that’s not what I’m talking about, the ownership of the land and what it will do for you... When I talk about land value, to me that land value is the roots of who I am... That’s what land does; that’s what owning land does. It doesn’t put money in your pocket; it puts value in your soul.*

Further, Denver added his perceptions of being connected to the land: “*Well I really love outdoors, and I guess that’s one reason why I say about being out in the woods. I love to farm; it’s a peace of mind you’re connected to mother earth.*”

**Connection as “Home/Refuge”**

The resident landowners primarily expressed their strong connection to land by viewing it as a “home/refuge.” For example, Jenny communicated the following:

*Land is important; you need to have something to come back to. I don’t care if you move away or whatever. Even, my momma always told me if I was to move away I would have something to come back to.*

Similarly, Furman shared:

*Again, I must go back to the pride in it, just the fact that you have something no one can take away, the whole idea of knowing I could provide for my family off my land, which that’s the way it used to be land went hand in hand with providing for my family, you know. We have gone so far away from that, but it’s still there in my roots that. I understand that at the end of the day I could always go back and have some type of collateral, you know, to provide for my family.*

Roosevelt also saw his land as a refuge:

*It was in our farm in our name in our family so long and to walk off and leave it that would be all. Plus, I had three sisters forth sisters, and I thought what if they get old in the city. If something happen, they won’t have no place, but if*
something happen, they can always come home. So I would be at home for my family. I only thinking about family, all I was concerned about.

For many of the landowners, their land was a home or a refuge if negative situations occurred to their family members or if they had the desire to return later in life. The resident landowners had a stronger connection than many of their family member who was absentee landowners. They were essentially the “keystone” to the land. Holistically, absentee landowners had a weaker connection in comparison to resident landowner. Though weaker should be not be understood as weak, it is weaker relative to the strong connection resident landowners have.

**Trespassing**

Another difference that arose between resident and absentee landowners concerned trespassing. Naturally, many absentee landowners were unable to monitor their land regularly, be it due to logistic difficulties or a perceived danger. The following dialogue exemplifies both of the aforementioned factors regarding absentee landowners’ low visitation rates:

*Melanie: My 30 acres in the boonies, I only have a car; it’s not something I can easily drive back there. It’s not like Ima be out there checking on it all of the time. I mean, that’s just the truth; I’m concerned to a certain degree.*

*Interviewer: You say you are concerned. Do you feel safe going back to your land in the boonies as you call it?*

*Melanie: Correct answer is no. It too far for me to walk back there. Another concern, I can’t tell you know where all of the boundaries are. I don’t have a vehicle, they made a road sort of but it’s not good enough to go back there. When I grew up, I was more comfortable going there. Unless, you are in real good physical condition, it’s rough walking over all of that land. We used to walk back there a long time ago. I do try to drive past it from time to time. When it’s too wet, you can’t drive back there, and the roads grow up. I’m not getting in a bog. The
forester even got in a bog. One time my car stop, but it eventually started again. I’ll have to common sense and err on the side of safety. So I’m not going to tell you I’m not that confident about going all over that place, and I don’t have a vehicle that can do it neither...and to think you may have people growing marijuana on your land and doing different kinds of things. If you can’t even go it and check on it, how do you know what’s going on with it?

Mattie shared a similar viewpoint:

Interviewer: Do you ever just go back out and visit?

Mattie: Because of the remoteness of the property, I rarely get out there. I passed by last Wednesday going to a funeral of a relative but didn’t stop because I was afraid to.

Interviewer: Why were you afraid?

Mattie: Because it is so remote. The main road is dirt road still and unpaved, and if I get stuck or something I doubt I will be able to get a signal on my cell phone. It is just not safe, especially with people trespassing. Until my son had started managing the property, it had become a place where a lot of people would go out there and get drunk and trash the place.

The perception of land not being safe to visit was prevalent among the absentee landowners. Also, many discussed the logistic difficulties of being elderly or not having the proper vehicle to visit their remote land.

Trespassing can become a problem when land is essentially left abandoned. Absentee landowners expressed their dissatisfaction with trespassers, and the majority of them perceived trespassing as a significant issue. Take, for example, the following exchange:

Interviewer: How do you feel about trespassers on your land?

Mays: I don’t like that at all.

Interviewer: Do you have any experiences with trespassers?
Mays: Yeah, when we live down there, people used to come in there and hunt and whatnot throughout college.

Mattie shared a similar experience about trespassers:

Interviewer: How do you feel about trespassers on your land?

Mattie: Detest trespassers, especially those with the three wheelers. I wish somebody would make it logical to me why a young person would purchase a vehicle that he or she does not have a place to drive it. If I had the means by which I could keep everybody off of the land that I own that has some of those vehicles, I would keep them off. I think it is very unfair in terms of what they do in terms of erosion, destruction of plants in their pathways and all; it’s just to me a terrible, terrible thing. I do not like trespassing anyway.

Melanie made an assumption that she had hunters on her land and suggested that it may not be safe to visit:

Melanie: With those 30 acres and the guy that owns land close to it, he probably hunt on my spot too. I can’t say they don’t. I have to use common sense and think from a safety standpoint when you go out in the woods by yourself, when he goes he has a dog; I don’t have a dog.

On the other hand, residents on the other hand, did not perceived trespassing as an issue, and some even had the view that it is perfectly fine for community members to come on their land without permission. For many resident landowners, having “guests” was a part of landownership, and it happened from time to time. Roosevelt expressed this lack of concern for trespassers in the following statement:

Umm, it didn’t really bother me that much [trespassers], when they was hunting. Now what I don’t like is people trespassing and stealing stuff. I had someone steal my battery charger. But out there, hunting that doesn’t bother me much.

Deuce told a story about trespassers and shows his lack of concern by finding humor in the situation.

Interviewer: How do you feel about trespassers on your land?
Deuce: Yes, the one situation I’ve had was after the timber was harvested. I had people who came on my property cutting firewood without my permission, and I just went and talked to them and told them that they were trespassing. They were riding along the side of the road, and they decided to help themselves; they thought it was just free (laughing). The other time I had an issue with a guy that somehow assumed that he could deer hunt on the piece of the property. And I told him that I owned the land, and it wasn’t owned by Westvaco; he didn’t have permission to be on the property.

Interviewer: So how did that make you feel [the trespassing events]?

Deuce: Being that I’m in the timber business, I don’t have any particular feelings at all, other than that I need to stop them from trespassing. It doesn’t make me angry or upset. I know that those things happen from time to time.

Russell also showed a lack of concern about trespassers. In fact, he asked his nephew to deal with trespassing situations:

Interviewer: Have you ever had any trespassers on you land?

Russell: Yea I don’t get into any of that. I tell my nephew you handle that, and I will back you up. Whenever that comes up, people say “Russell, I see you got some trespassers on your land.” I say “yeah, talk to my nephew about that. He will inform you what’s going on.”

Though absentee and resident landowners expressed unique differences in their attitudes towards their land and in their perception of trespassing, they did have commonalities in regards to the next generation of landowners. They all felt that the current generation had a disinterest in land and expressed concern about land legacy. Chief felt this happened because the younger generation did not have a time investment in the land: “But they don’t view it [the land] like do. You know why? They didn’t burp it. It’s hard to develop a sense of value in something that you didn’t work hard for.”

Barack had similar thoughts and specifically cited his children as having a lack of interest:
I mean my father and my grandfather worked hard over the years to gain access to that property. I had to work even harder to pay for it, so it’s been there, and it will probably be there. Now as to whether or not my kids will take that same opinion or same approach I don’t know...I think that we live in a different world, different society now, and I think that kids now really don’t understand what the true value [is], the true meaning of heritage, and as to how the property came into being. My daughter could care less about that damn property to be honest.

Mattie felt that money and the lifestyle were contributing factors for the younger generation’s differing viewpoints:

*Interviewer: Do you think the younger generation nowadays values their land as much as you do?*

*Mattie: No I don’t.*

*Interviewer: Why?*

*Mattie: They are quick to sell.*

*Interviewer: Why do you think they are quick to sell?*

*Mattie: It is a combination of reasons. I suppose one is the instant money; the other is not having an appreciation. The average person would laugh at the kind of life I had as a youngster and probably could not understand why I found it enjoyable.*

**Farmers and Forest Landowners**

**Land as a source of subsistence/independence**

As previously mentioned, absentee forest landowners viewed their land as an asset. This may be attributed to their residential status as well as their land use (timber). Conversely, farmers viewed their land as a source of subsistence and independence (Table 3.3). Chief shared this view of subsistence when he stated the following:

*If you put something into the land, that land will give you something back. We not only grew our own food, but to have the monetary value to send my sisters and*
brothers to college. All those monetary things that we were able to do came from the farm.

Chief perceived his land as a source of food and revenue that assisted with costs that are associated with life. Denver expressed a similar view about using the land as a source of income:

Interviewer: Do you have a connection to this land?

Denver: Yeah, this part where I am know, my two sons, we raising a few cattle to have a little extra income because me and my wife are retired, and we have a fixed income and according to the year way thing are now, every penny that will help.

According to Denver, his connection to his land was his subsistence use that aided him during retirement. Similarly, Roosevelt had admiration for his land because of his land use:

It [his land] means everything to me. Now you know I have it I could use it just like I want to. I can grow cows on it; I don’t have to spend all of it farming. I can grow cows, hogs; I grew a lot of walnut two years ago. I can do the little things I want to do. Plus, I can lend it out you know, so it’s good a thing for me.

The subsistence from their land helped farmers feel independent. There was almost a sense of pride that farmers had because of their independence. For example, Roosevelt shared the following:

Roosevelt: I value this land. Like I said, I was born on a farm; I value because this is the one thing I know how to do pretty well and this is a honest living, and I’m my own boss...I think that is a good choice [landownership].

Interviewer: Why so?

Roosevelt: Like I said while ago you can be your own boss, you can work as long as you want or as short as you want, I think that makes a difference.
This source of independence and subsistence was important for farmers because they saw the need to have a distance from the government.

Table 3.3. Different themes emerging between farmer and forest landowners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farmer with Forest</th>
<th>Exclusively a Forest Landowner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subsistence</td>
<td>Asset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distrust Government</td>
<td>Distrust Private Industry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Government distrust vs. private distrust*

Farmers had a strong distrust for the government due to previous relationships and experiences. Forest landowners had a strong distrust for the private industry, and many cited personal stories and stories from within their communities related to this distrust.

Chief, a farmer, shared a story to illustrate his perception of how the government works:

*Chief: I went back to the forestry commission [after a previous visit], and we had a different agent to come out, and what I had in mind was to re-clear it again with some help. And I was told flat out, and that’s one of those situations [referring to the good ol’ boy system]. He said no, there is not help we can give. And I know it goes on all time.*

*Interviewer: Do you trust the government to evaluate your land?*

*Chief: NO.*

In the following dialogue, Denver shared a similar view about the government giving truthful answers:

*Interviewer: Let’s talk about government programs; do you trust the government to evaluate your land?*

*Denver: Somewhat*

*Interviewer: Somewhat?*
Denver: Yeah.

Interviewer: Why do you say that?

Denver: Well if you go back into anything the way the government handles things the way they want to do it; that’s why I say somewhat.

Interviewer: What do you mean by the way they handle things?

Denver: Sometimes they don’t give you the true answer.

Bear did not like the government to get involved in his personal and financial business. When asked “Who would you prefer a government or a nongovernment person to evaluate your land?” Bear indicated a private company and explained, “You know something. I don’t like the government people to get their toes into my darn business.”

Every farmer had a story in which they felt the government was dishonest or racist. From these experiences, a lack of trust and in some cases detestation grew. These stories are omitted because of potential identification risks and potential future litigation against the government.

Lack of Trust

Many of the forest landowners had limited experience with the local government, mostly due to their lack of knowledge about government assistance. Many of these landowners had dealt with the private forest industry, and the majority of these experiences were negative. Melanie illustrated that she was cautious because she heard stories of landowners getting taken advantage of:

Interviewer: Do you trust a private forester to evaluate your land?

Melanie: Well my brother had somebody to come out and that guy, I think he was full of bull. I think you just gotta be careful...It would be because somebody else
recommended that person, somebody else that I trust. I don’t think you can just let anybody do stuff. Because that have stole a lot of people’s timber.

Furman, a landowner who worked with an advocacy group illustrated the power of negative experiences. He trusted the government, but did not trust the private industry:

*Interviewer:* Do you trust a private forester or realtor to evaluate your land?

*Furman:* No, not at all.

*Interviewer:* Why not?

*Furman:* I have seen and heard so many different land loss stories where someone trust someone to come in and survey it or appraise it, and then they appraise it for a lesser value and take it to maybe one of their buddies and sell it off, you know what I mean, or auction it off, so I don’t trust them.

*Interviewer:* So would you trust the government to evaluate your land and use recommendations for management?

*Furman:* Oh yea, definitely.

Deuce shared a story and drew some larger conclusions from his experiences working in the forest industry.

*Deuce:* There was a family in my community that owned approximately 80 acres of land, 70 acres was timber with moderately old growth hardwoods. They were approached by a wood buyer to purchase that timber, and not knowing anything about timber values, they sold that timber for around $13,000 dollars. My estimate is that their timber value had to have been close to $100,000 for that tract of timber, just knowing similar tracts of timber in that vicinity. So they lost $85-95 thousand by not understanding the value of the timber that was on their property and also not having knowledge of some of the resources at their disposal to help manage timber sales. To help them market their timber products.

*Interviewer:* Do you think that happens often?

*Deuce:* I think it does, especially in the African American community.

Some landowners just heard stories, while others had personal experiences with being misled by the government and the private industry. These stories and experiences
shaped the views of the forest landowners. For instance, Jenny shared her personal story about being taken advantage of:

Interviewer: Have you ever cut any trees off your land?
Jenny: Yes, one time.

Interviewer: What year, do you remember?
Jenny: Back in the 80s.

Interviewer: Did you get enough revenue from that cut?
Jenny: It done pretty good.

Interviewer: Do you think it was fair what you got?
Jenny: No, I can tell you that.

Interviewer: Why not?
Jenny: Because the man that was supposed to come back and bring the rest of the money never showed up.

When asked if they trusted a private forester to evaluate their land, most of the forest landowners responded that they did not. Some were more adamant about their response than others, as is clear through Clavis’ enthusiastic “No!”

Interviewer: Do you trust a private forester to evaluate your land?
Clavis. Oh, Positively No!

Having a natural resource connection

Forest landowners with natural resource connections—namely, a landowner who works or has a relative who works in the natural resource field—had a higher knowledge of forest and natural resource management. Landowners who did not have natural
resource connections had very limited knowledge of forest management and typically had unmanaged forest.

Deuce, a forest landowner with a natural resource connection, showed his knowledge of forest management and land value:

One memory was, when I bought this property, I bought it with a provision that it be thinned to 50 trees per acre...And it[his land] has financial value. I’ve owned this property for 12 years now, and I’ve already been able to conduct one timber harvest on it, and I was able to generate thousands of dollars worth of timber revenue off of this land.

Mays had a relative who works in the natural resource industry, and he has extensively managed his forest as a result:

Interviewer: How many times have you harvested timber?

Mays: Oh, the whole time, I guess five, six, or seven.

Mattie, another person with a relative in the natural resource field, demonstrated her knowledge about forest management as well as about accessing government assistance, when she was asked how many times she has harvested trees on her property:

Mattie: I don’t think it has been done but twice since 1965; it has been done three times at its maximum.

Interviewer: Have you performed any management on the land?

Mattie: Yes, the Forestry Commission, when I was going to have the timber thinned in the 80s. I had them go in and mark the trees that should be cut. At one time, we did some reseeding about two acres in pine seeds.

The landowners who had these natural resource connections exhibited their knowledge of land management or accessing assistance throughout the interviews. Furthermore, the landowners who had this connection had either managed forests or recently gained revenue from timber harvests. However, the landowners who did not
have natural resource connections did not have managed forests and only sparsely harvested their timber.

_No natural resource connection_

Typically, landowners with no natural resource connections had unmanaged forests with infrequent timber harvests. The following responses exhibit this phenomenon:

_Interviewer: Have you ever cut any trees off your land?_

_Denver: Yes once, it was early on/ I had a family come in and do some logging, something about five acres._

_Interviewer: Was that hardwood or pines or both?”_

_Denver: Both._

_Interviewer: Besides cutting trees have you ever done any management on your land?_

_Denver: No, that’s about it._

***

_Interviewer: Have you ever cut any trees off your land?_

_Furman: About eight years back, we uh let them come in there and clear out the straight pines._

_Interviewer: Ok, so besides that have you preformed any type of management on your land?_

_Furman: No sir._

_Interviewer: So what have you used the land for essentially?_

_Furman: Essentially, we just used it for, besides letting them come in and take those trees out, hunting; we let a friend of a family hunt deer on it, but other than that, it is just sitting there._
Barack: The last time the timber was cut was in the 90s, and I think last time we cut that timber and re-seeded it.

Interviewer: Have you performed any other type of management besides timber harvesting?

Barack: No.

Interviewer: And what are you using your land for now?

Barack: Nothing.

The previous responses indicate that landowners without natural resource connections have infrequent land management and have feral land. This type of land management has a large potential for income revenue as well as for increased forest stewardship. There is an obvious qualitative disparity between landowners with and without natural resource connections.

**Conclusions**

The findings suggest that landowners perceived their landownership experiences differently depending on their different demographic factors. Considering this phenomenon, natural resource agencies, specifically those serving landowners, should consider different approaches other than the current system that aggregates these different types of landowners into the broad category of “landowner.”

Forest landowners reported having distrust for agencies/entities that could potentially provide assistance. Although different types of landowners may distrust different entities based on previous experiences or collective memory, the primary focus should not investigate why this is the case but should place emphasis on how to improve
relationships and gain trust. Obtaining trust from key individuals is important, but the effort should focus efforts on gaining trust from families and entire communities.

Results from this study also indicate that forest landowners and farmers with forested land also differ in their land use. Programs can be tailored to fit these landowners’ particular management objectives; farmers should receive instant income, while forest landowners should be provided with management strategies that would improve their “asset.” For example, a farmer with forested land could benefit from a short rotation management regime that yields revenue frequently. Contrarily, a forest landowner may have more interest in a forest rotation that yields larger sums of money and favors wildlife to increase the potential of hunting leases, which would bring in annual income to pay the property taxes. Many of the forest landowners encountered in this study, namely those who were not farmers, were absentee landowners whose land was seen as a financial tax burden. Even though their land was perceived as a financial burden, they still viewed their property as an asset.

Absentee forest landowners and resident forest landowners also exhibited different perceptions about their forests. Absentee landowners appeared to be more susceptible to land loss and lack of management due to their weaker connections with and distance from their land. On the other hand, resident forest landowners exhibited more interest in their land and had stronger connections, which makes them great candidates for outreach and extension. Nevertheless, this approach may exacerbate landowners’ lack of forest management because there may be more absentee landowners than resident landowners. People who are not connected with their land and do not interact with their
land should be targeted for forest stewardship. However, approaching these landowners can be problematic because outsiders inquiring about their land may be perceived as trespassing behavior, which is a concern for absentee landowners. Be that as it may, efforts to reach these absentee forest landowners must be attempted to increase forest stewardship in the rural South. Having interactions with trusted individuals who are informed about natural resource management is likely to provide landowners with better forest stewardship opportunities.

Forest landowners who had a connection with an individual who worked in the natural resource field, be it a family member or an associate, frequently had managed forests. The basic model of forest landowners associating with people who are knowledgeable about natural resource management qualitatively appears to be successful in frequent forest management. Making more of these forest landowner/informed person connections, especially with landowners who are not managing their forests, may yield an increase in forest stewardship. Furthermore, increasing forest stewardship on land that has not traditionally been managed creates a win-win situation for landowners, natural resource agencies, and the forests. Understanding how different types of landowners perceive their forests can increase forest landowners’ participation in forest management programs and activities and can create trust communities. Forest landowners’ perceptions of their forested land are their reality; natural resource managers can assist landowners more efficiently by embracing this notion. Future research should investigate further differences amongst forest landowners.
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CHAPTER FOUR
DEVELOPING A LAND ETHIC SCALE FROM PARTICIPANTS OF SOUTH CAROLINA’S FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Abstract

Research indicates that land ethic differs among types of landowners (Adams et al. 2010). The study was conducted to determine if forest landowners had different land ethics based upon their demographic characteristics. This study distributed a land ethic scale via a survey to South Carolina forest landowners enrolled in the South Carolina Forest Stewardship Program. The land ethic scale factored out seven constructs: place identity, place attachment, place dependence, family history, family home, communal property, and land use for money. A multiple regression revealed significant relationships in land ethic constructs among landowners of different demographics characteristics (residency, age, sex, work history, acreage, and farming status). Findings suggest that demographic variables have a significant impact on a forest landowners land ethic. Further research is needed to investigate how and to what effect that the differences have on a forest landowners land ethic.

Keywords: Forest Stewardship, Land Ethic, Sense of Place, Forest Landowners, and Non-Industrial Private Forest (NIPF).

Introduction

There is currently no database of forest landowners in South Carolina. The SCFC, or any other agency, for that matter does not compile such information. Farmers are potential forest landowners, but the USDA farmer database does not document the
percentage or amount of a farm’s forested land. Obtaining addresses for systematic sampling without an inherit bias is nearly impossible. Landowner addresses can be drawn from local tax assessor records, but many of these records are outdated and have incorrect addresses (Personal Observations). Also, it cannot be deciphered from these lists if a landowner has forestland or not. Contacting forest landowners for outreach and extension efforts is vital for southern states, such as South Carolina.

South Carolina is heavily forested, approximately two-thirds of the state (12.3 million acres) and 74 percent of the land is NIPF (SCFC 2010). NIPF landowners are an integral component of South Carolina’s “Cash Crop.” Gaining an understanding of NIPF landowners and their attitudes towards their land and forest is important for sustaining the South Carolina economy and for forest stewardship. The attitude toward land, or land ethic, can be obtained via interviews or through surveys. However, surveying South Carolina forest landowners can be arduous and expensive because of high “undeliverable” returns, low response rates, and a lack of a forest landowner database. However, understating the land ethic of forest landowners is important to further develop stewardship programs, and attempts to quantify a land ethic should persist, despite the methodological barriers.

“Land Ethic” is a notion that was introduced by Aldo Leopold in 1949 that has a conservation theme (Leopold 1977), though Leopold’s land ethic was not grounded by psychological or philosophical studies, but more so in the evolutionary and ecological sciences (Callicott 1989). Subsequently, Leopold’s land ethic has been ignored by many modern environmental philosophers because of its conceptual (or lack thereof)
framework. For this study, “land ethic” is not entirely defined, but more so the author are interested in the smaller segment of landowners’ larger “land ethic” in relation to how they perceive their land (derived from sense of place and our previous research). The smaller understanding of a larger land ethic could add to the discussion of “what is a land ethic?”

Previous studies of South Carolina NIPF landowners addressed the issues of management plans and attitudes towards forest stewardship, but did not address the holistic issue of land ethic (Melfi et al. 1997, Thrift et al. 1997). A current trend of land loss is increasing for southern landowners, particularly for African Americans, 29.5% of South Carolina’s population (Gilbert et al. 2001, US Census 2000). Long-term forest management plans are very important for forest stewardship, but are not valuable if land is consistently being transferred. Understanding a landowners’ land ethic may provide insights to develop forest management plans that will provide an avenue for land retention while maintaining forest stewardship. Straka (1993) illustrated the different types of multiple-use forest management plans. Such plans that are sensitive to the diversity of landowner types can be integral to sustaining South Carolina forests.

Previous findings from a qualitative study of African American NIPF landowners indicated that many forest landowners’ primary motivation for land retention was not forest management. These forest landowners were willing to manage their forest as long as the management was aligned with their overall land tenure objectives (Adams et al. 2010). Forest landowners displayed a familial/communal sense of ownership. This type of ownership was rooted in their culture and the history of their land and surrounding
communities. The study also revealed that demographic variables, such as being a resident/absentee, farming, and natural resource work history have a bearing on landowner experience. Resident landowners displayed a stronger connection to their land than absentee landowners. The farmers view land for subsistence/independence in contrast to the forest landowners that viewed their land as an asset. Landowners who had a natural resource connection had access to resources that enabled them to have a managed forest. The study also indicated that landowners’ experiences and demographics may influence their perception and attitudes, therefore having an impact on their land ethic. The seminal point from the study is that forest landowners’ experiences have an impact on their land ethic, and many of these experiences are attributed to differences in demographic factors. Though some of the differences may be attributed to race/culture, many of the themes that emerged could transcend race and may hold true to forest landowners in general. For example, Holley et al. (2008) reported that the majority of Native American NIPF landowners (59%) owned land for “personal reasons” not forest management, similar to Adams (2010) results.

Sense of place (SOP) is an example of a phenomenon that transcends culture. SOP is a concept that defines the relationship and meanings between people and spatial settings that may be a center of human emotions or relationship towards their land. SOP can be divided into three categories: place identity (emotional attachment), place attachment (emotional/temporal attachment), and place dependence (functional attachment) (Jorgensen and Stedman 2001, Tuan, 1979 Bonnes and Secchiaroli 1995). Low and Altman (1992) suggested that feelings, emotions, and affect at the root of the
SOP. Kyle et al. (2005) felt that “place attachment involves an interplay of affect and emotions, knowledge and beliefs, and behaviors and actions. This conceptualization stresses the interaction between humans and places.” In Adams et al. (2010) findings, African American forest landowners had a strong SOP due to the cultural and historical nature of their properties. This SOP may have an influence on forest landowner actions and or willingness to be a forest steward. Understanding the relationship among demographic factors, forest stewardship, land use SOP, and familial history may provide further insights into understanding a land ethic-forest stewardship relationship.

This study used a database from forest landowners enrolled in the SCFC Forest Stewardship Program. Forest landowners enrolled in this program receive technical assistance, such as forest management plans and wildlife habitat improvement recommendations, from the SCFC as well as the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR). The purpose of this study was to assess the viability of a land ethic scale which is derived from Jorgensen and Stedman’s (2001) SOP study and from Adams et al. (2010) qualitative land ethic study. If a land ethic scale is considered valid, then this study will test the null hypothesis: $H_0$: There are no significant differences in scale constructs between demographic factors.

Methods

Survey Implementation and Response

Addresses of participants in the South Carolina Forest Stewardship Program were obtained from the SCFC. One-thousand landowners were randomly selected from the 1,173 participants enrolled in the Forest Stewardship Program. The survey consisted of a
one-page self-administered mailed questionnaire, which was designed to collect
demographic data and to measure six factors from a 22-question scale (three to four
questions per factor). The questionnaire was approved by the Clemson University

A Tailored Design Method developed by Dillman (2007) was used as the
framework for the survey design and mailing procedures, but a two mailing method was
used because of limited funding (Heberlein and Baumgartner 1978). The initial mailing
was sent in mid-April, followed by a post card reminder one week later. Each mailing
contained a cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey, importance of the response,
confidentiality, and a contact number for questions regarding the survey. Each envelope
was addressed to the individual landowner, along with an identifying number. Mailings
included a postage-paid business reply envelope in order to expedite returns. The return
envelope had the corresponding identification number to prevent a second mailing to an
initial respondent. Two weeks after the initial mailing, a second cover letter and
questionnaire was sent to non-respondents.

Scale Development

Questions for the scale were created from Jorgensen and Stedman’s (2001) SOP
scale and from the qualitative results of the Adams et al. (2010) study. The purpose of the
items was to measure a smaller portion of the landowner’s larger land ethic (sense of
place, monetary land use, and familial connection). A land ethic scale was developed to
measure six factors: Place Identity (SOP1), Place Attachment (SOP2), Place Dependency
(SOP3), Family History (Family History), Land Use for Money (Money), and Communal
Property (Communal). The purpose of this scale is not to measure the entire land ethic of a participant, but rather to measure a portion of their land ethic that is directly related to sense of place, familial and communal land ownership, as well as land use for money. These categories were selected because these themes emerged from Adams et al. (2010) previous qualitative study (sense of place, family history, money, and communal property). These themes have not been tested on NIPF forest landowners, and the intentions were to pilot how these themes tested in a scale. The scale should be evaluated as subscales and not as a single scale score because Jorgensen and Stedman’s (2001) indicated that SOP could be categorically divided into three subcategories (identity, attachment, and dependence). Furthermore, the relationship among the six constructs is unknown, and the purpose of this study is exploratory in nature. Combining the constructs would make this assumption that the constructs of Jorgensen’s and Stedman’s (2001) study and Adams et al (2010) study are independent of each other. Finally, the scale is not designed to be a complete land ethic scale, but rather is measure a portion of a collective land ethic. The categorical makeup of “land ethic” has not been defined and/or tested, therefore testing a single scale that does not encompass every construct of land ethic would be inappropriate.

As mentioned before, the Adams et al. (2010) qualitative study indicated that demographic variables had a strong bearing on a landowner’s perceptions and attitudes of his or her land, specifically the categories of absentee landowner, resident landowner, farmer, and having natural resource work experience. The author chose to use the demographic categories from Adams et al.’s (2010) study as independent variable to
measure the SOP of landowners enrolled in the South Carolina Forest Stewardship Program. Traditional landowner study independent variables were used: gender, age, geographic location, education, income, race, total land acres, total forest acreage, and heirs’ property. The operational definitions for the independent variables were the following: Land residency=(Live on Land), Farmer=(Farm), working in natural resources=(Work in Nat Res), gender=(Male), age=(Age), education=(Education), income=(Income), race=(Race), total acreage=(Acres), and timbered acres=(Timbered Acres).

An item pool was reviewed by three professors at separate universities and was analyzed independently for clarity and coverage. The items were written on a ninth-grade reading level, some landowners encountered during qualitative inquiry did not have more than a ninth-grade education (Personal Observations). After the reviews, the pool of 36 items was reduced to 22 items. Respondents were asked to respond using a five-point Likert scale with the following response format: 1= “strongly disagree”; 2= “disagree”; 3= “neutral”; 4= “agree”; and 5 = “strongly agree.” The scaled questions were randomly ordered, ten undergraduate and ten graduate students were given the scale and were asked to name and figure out how many factors were within the scale. Eighty percent of the students were able to closely name the factors and identified five to seven factors. A pilot test for the scale did not occur because local forest landowners were not readily available to respond. The scale was then mailed to the one-thousand randomly selected forest landowners enrolled in the South Carolina Forest Stewardship Program.
Results and Discussion

Response Rates

The initial mailing had a 40% response rate (n=372), and 70 of the surveys were undeliverable. For the second mailing, additional landowners (n=250) were randomly selected from the pool of the non-respondents (n=558). The response rate for the second mailing was 46%, (n=106); 20 surveys were undeliverable. The overall response rate for the study was (41.6%) (n=478 of the 1,160 deliverable surveys). These response rates are higher than previous NIPF studies that range from 28%-34% (Measells, et al. 2005).

Also, the demographic characteristics (age, sex, and education) of the landowners enrolled in South Carolina’s Forest Stewardship Program were similar to Melfi et al.’s (1997) study. Even though response rates and demographics are similar to previous studies there still is potential for non-response bias (about 60%) and coverage bias. The non-respondents could potential be landowners who are landowners with a different land ethic and/or SOP. We decided to move forward with the survey because the demography was similar to Melfi et al.’s (2007) study, which had a 97% response rate from a stratified random sample of 100 participants. There is coverage bias because only landowners who are enrolled in the Forest Stewardship Program were surveyed. These landowners may have a different land ethic than landowners who are not enrolled in the Forest Stewardship Program. Results should only pertain to landowners enrolled in the Forest Stewardship Program, not for the population of forest landowners of South Carolina.

Data were entered in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Error rates were calculated by taking every 20th (n=23) survey from the hard copy set to compare to the computerized
data set. A total of 3 errors were found among the 680 questions, resulting in an error rate of 0.44%. Data were then inputted into JMP 8 and data were tested for normality (JMP 2007).

Demographic Characteristics

The majority of our respondents were men (80.5% vs. 19.5% women). Of respondents that reported race, there were overwhelmingly more white respondents (98.9%, n=431) than African American respondents (1.1%, n=5). African American responses were excluded due to low response (n=5). The mean and median age for landowners was 61 years. Most landowners were college graduates, the mean and median of educational years was 16 (n=438). Of the 411 landowners who responded to income, the mean was between $70,000 and $79,000; the median income was between $90,000 and $99,000. The mean landowner owned 290 acres (n=432), the median acreage was 156.5 acres (n=432). The mean percentage of timbered land was 70 % (n=412), while the median was slightly higher at 77% (n=412). Most landowners farmed more than 1 acre of their land (64.1%, n=277). Slightly over half of the landowners did not live on their land (56.2%, n=245) and they lived a mean of 45 miles (n=189) and a median of 30 miles (n=189) away from their land. Most of the landowners (85.4%, n=438) have not or currently do not work in the field of natural resources.

Missing Data Analysis

The missing data pattern for JMP 8 was used to detect missing data for the land ethic scale items. Four of the 440 participants failed to complete more than half of the
land ethic scale items and were subsequently removed from the analyses. There were 18 participants that missed more than one item and three students that missed three or less items. The cases of missing data appeared to be random and across all of the variables.

**Univariate Normality**

Statistical tests (skewness, kurtosis, and univariate normality) were used to measure the normality of scale items. Place identity, place attachment, place dependence items, and family history were negatively skewed (-0.62 to -1.30). The money scale items had two positively (1.29 to 14.74) and two negatively (-.55 to -1.30) skewed items. The communal scale items had two positively (0.80 to 2.25) and two negatively (-1.41 to -1.45) skewed items. The distributions of seven of the 22 items had a normal kurtosis. This occurrence of non-normality in social science data is common (Micceri, 1989).

**Exploratory Factor Analysis**

A factor analysis (exploratory with varimax rotation) reduced the scale to seven factors labeled (Table 4.1): Place Identity (SOP1; Cronbach’s alpha=.64), Place Attachment (SOP2; Cronbach’s alpha=.61), Place Dependence (SOP3; Cronbach’s alpha=.62), Family Heritage (Cronbach’s alpha=.72), Money (Cronbach’s alpha=.73), Family Home (Cronbach’s alpha=.65), and Communal (Cronbach’s alpha=.76). The initial factor of Family History was divided into two separate categories, Family History and Family Home. Factor scores were calculated as the mean of individual items loading on the factor. To determine which demographic characteristics were most related to the seven underlying factors, a multiple regression model was constructed using stepwise
model building techniques. After which, a multiple regression was used to test for relationships among continuous and categorical data in regards to a factored construct (Table 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, and 4.8).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>Factor Loadings</th>
<th>Variance Explained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place Identity</td>
<td>Everything about my land is a reflection of me</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>0.5238</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I feel that I can really be myself on my land</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.5190</td>
<td>6.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My land reflects the type of person I am</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.5653</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place Attachment</td>
<td>My land is my favorite place to be</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>0.7838</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I really miss my land when I’m away from it too long</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.8588</td>
<td>32.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I feel happiest when I’m on my land</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>0.7586</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place Dependence</td>
<td>For doing the things that I enjoy most no other place can</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.8619</td>
<td>21.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>compare to my land</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As far as I’m concerned, there are no better places to be</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>0.8302</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>than my land</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Heritage</td>
<td>My land is a part of my family history</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.7846</td>
<td>11.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My land is a part of my heritage</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.8130</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Home</td>
<td>I feel my land belongs to my family</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>5.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My land is a home for my family</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communal</td>
<td>People I trust can use my land without asking</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.4515</td>
<td>4.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I allow people I trust to use my land</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.3917</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>My land should be used to make money</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>5.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Getting a little extra money from my land is a bonus</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Likert Scale ranged from 1=“Strongly Disagree” to 5=“Strongly Agree”
Correlation Analysis

Table 4.2 Structure of Sub-scale Item Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SOP1</th>
<th>SOP 2</th>
<th>SOP 3</th>
<th>Family Heritage</th>
<th>Money</th>
<th>Family Home</th>
<th>Communal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOP 1</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>0.7239*</td>
<td>0.6034*</td>
<td>0.1243*</td>
<td>0.0713</td>
<td>0.3897*</td>
<td>0.0074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOP 2</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>0.7989*</td>
<td>0.1683*</td>
<td>0.0802</td>
<td>0.4709*</td>
<td>0.0408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOP 3</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>0.2468*</td>
<td>0.0587</td>
<td>0.4684*</td>
<td>-0.0090</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Family Heritage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>------</th>
<th>0.2492*</th>
<th>0.5077*</th>
<th>0.0338</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Money

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>------</th>
<th>0.1323*</th>
<th>0.1056*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Family Home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>------</th>
<th>0.0145</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Communal

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>------</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Factor Results

Table 4.3. Ordinary Least Square Regression of Sense of Place (factor 1, “Place Identity”) on Demographic variables (N=394).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Adj Power</th>
<th>p-Value *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Live on Land</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>&lt;0.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males*Live on Land</td>
<td>-0.23</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>&lt;0.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>&lt;0.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work in Nat Res</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>&lt;0.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Acres</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.03*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.04*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-Statistic</td>
<td>11.99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a * indicate statistical significance at the 95% levels, respectively.

A multiple regression revealed that the total number of acres (Acres), resident landowners (Live on Land), people who have worked in the natural resource field (Work in Nat Res) and males (Male), had a positive and statistically significant relationship with
“place identity” (SOP1). As the age (Age) of the respondents increased, a negative relationship occurred with “place identity.” The difference between SOP1 of males who lived on their land (resident) and males who did not live on their (absentee) land had statistically significantly less difference than the SOP1 difference between females who lived on the land (resident) and who did not live on their land (absentee).

Table 4.4. Ordinary Least Square Regression of Sense of Place (factor 2 “Place Attachment”) on Demographic Variables (N=372).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Std Beta</th>
<th>Adj Power</th>
<th>p-Value *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Live on Land</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>&lt;0.01*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>&lt;0.01*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work in Nat Res</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>&lt;0.01*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timbered Acres</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.03*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.03*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live on Land*Age</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.03*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-Statistic</td>
<td>13.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* indicate statistical significance at the 95% levels, respectively.

A multiple regression expressed that Place Attachment (SOP2) decreased as landowners increased in age (Age). The same trend occurred in level of education (Education), though the decrease was not statically significant at an alpha of 0.05 ($p=0.053$). Because Education was close to statistical significance, it remained in the model. There is a positive and statistically significant relationship with Place Attachment and landowners who reside on their land (Live on Land). Place Attachment had a statistically significant increase as the age increased of landowners who lived on their land (Age x
Live on land). A history of working in natural resources (Work in Nat Res) had a statistically significant positive relationship with Place Attachment. Males (Male) had a statistically significant stronger association with Place Attachment than females.

Table 4.5. Ordinary Least Square Regression of Sense of Place (factor 3, “Place Dependence”) on Demographic Variables (N=387).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Std Beta</th>
<th>Adj Power</th>
<th>p-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Live on Land</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>&lt;0.01*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>&lt;0.01*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timbered Acres</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.02*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work in Nat Res</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.03*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-Statistic</td>
<td>19.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Indicate statistical significance at the 95% levels, respectively.

The multiple regression revealed that an increase in educational attainment (Education) had a statistically significant negative relationship with Place Dependence (SOP3). Landowners who live on their land (Live on Land) had a statistically significant higher Place Dependence (SOP3) than absentee landowners. Place dependence (SOP3) had a statistically significant increase as the amount of timbered acres increased (Timbered Acres). Landowners who have worked in the natural resource field (Work in Nat Res) had a statistically significant higher Place Dependence than landowners who did not.
Table 4.6. Ordinary Least Square Regression for perceiving land as a Home, “Family Home” on Demographic Variables (N=407).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Std Beta</th>
<th>Adj Power</th>
<th>p-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Live on Land</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>&lt;0.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>&lt;0.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F-Statistic</td>
<td></td>
<td>19.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* indicate statistical significance at the 95% levels, respectively.

The multiple regression indicated that an increase in educational attainment (Education) had a statistically significant negative relationship with Place Dependence (SOP3). Resident landowners who viewed their land as a home for their family (Family Home) were statistically significantly higher than absentee landowners.

Table 4.7. Ordinary Least Square Regression for viewing land as family heritage/history, “Family Heritage” on Demographic Variables (N=409).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Std Beta</th>
<th>Adj Power</th>
<th>p-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>&lt;0.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Farm</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>&lt;0.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F-Statistic</td>
<td>8.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* indicate statistical significance at the 95% levels, respectively.

A multiple regression revealed that males (Male) who viewed their land as a part of their family heritage/history was statistically significantly less than females who viewed land as a part of their family heritage/history. Landowners who farmed more than one acre of their land viewed their land as a part of their family heritage/history.
statistically significantly more than people who did not farm more than one acre of their land.

Table 4.8. Ordinary Least Square Regression of land use for “Money” on Demographic Variables (N=405).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Std Beta</th>
<th>Adj Power</th>
<th>p-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>&lt;0.01*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work in Nat Res</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>&lt;0.01*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-Statistic</td>
<td>6.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* indicate statistical significance at the 95% levels, respectively.

A multiple regression indicated that landowner’s motivation to make money from their land (Money) statistically significantly increased as the amount of acreage increased (Acres). This statistically significantly positive relationship occurred for people who have worked in the natural resource field (Work in Nat Res).

Table 4.9. Ordinary Least Square Regression for “Communal” factor on Demographic Variables (N=405).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Std Beta</th>
<th>Adj Power</th>
<th>p-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>&lt;0.01*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
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<tr>
<td>F-Statistic</td>
<td>6.69</td>
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</table>

* indicate statistical significance at the 95% levels, respectively.

A multiple regression revealed that males (Male) were more willing to allow people to use their land than females.
Conclusions

Demographic factors, such as sex, age, education, land resident status, total and timbered acreage, farming status, and work history had an impact on at least one of the land ethic constructs. These results are in accord with the Adams et al. (2010) qualitative findings of work history, resident status, and farming status having a relationship to land ethic. A common theme emerged from the data for SOP: resident landowners, males, and people who have worked in the natural resource have a stronger SOP than their counterparts. In regards to resident landowners having a strong SOP, similar results were found in a Creighton et al.’s (2002) NIPF landowner study. The results unexpectedly displayed that as landowners increased in age, their SOP decreased. Unfortunately, there is limited literature that addresses the issue of NIPF demographics and SOP. Further research is needed to investigate how demographic characteristics impact NIPF SOP.

Also the developed constructs derived from the Adams et al. (2010) study (History, Communal, with an addition of Home) factored out in the land ethic scale. Different demographic factors impacted NIPF landowners’ land ethic as in the Jarrett et al. (2008) study, where male and female NIPF landowners had differences in wildland fire prevention action and information acquisition. Different experiences may yield a different land ethic, which may have an impact on forest landowners’ forest stewardship. Further research is needed to see how demographic factors have an impact on particular constructs of forest stewardship.

The Jarret et al. (2008) study also found differences in wildfire program awareness among whites and non-whites. Race may also have an impact on land ethic,
and further research using a land ethic scale is needed to investigate if there are any differences in land ethic scale constructs, particularly familial history/heritage and communal property. The next step to this study should investigate any possible differences between whites and nonwhites on the land ethic scale. For example, Adams et al. (2010) noted a high sense of communal property, home, and family history among black forest landowners. Results should be used for a future comparative study, not for a larger generalization of land ethic. These landowners are enrolled in a forest stewardship program and therefore may have a conservation bias. The results of landowner demographics and/or scale means should only apply to landowners enrolled in the South Carolina Forest Stewardship Program. The study results should not be used as predictors, due to low R-square values in the multiple regression models. There are statistically significant differences in land ethic construct scores between demographic groups, but there are obviously other influences that are impacting scores. If this scale was to be reused, other questions should be added to the constructs that factored with only two or less questions, and more demographic characteristics should be asked. Demographic characteristics such as land tenure, land acquisition, land use history, and management goals should be added to the questionnaire.

Findings suggest that academicians, government agencies, and researchers should reevaluate how the term “landowner” is broadly used. Land governmental assistance programs, such as the Forest Stewardship Program, should take different types of landowners and their unique land ethics into consideration. This approach may yield more participation for traditionally underserved populations of landowner (i.e. limited-
resource landowners). Research is needed to further understand the differences among landowners and how those differences may impact their land ethic.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank the following: South Carolina Forestry Commission, Dr. Rob Bixler for his technical assistance and advice, Dr. Billy Bridges for his assistance with statistical analysis, Nicole Adams for assisting with data entry and mailing preparation, and Allison Anderson for her assistance with survey mailings.
Literature Cited


CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Research Limitations

A number of limitations of this research should be acknowledged. One of the major limitations to this study is the fact that research participants are not static; they are dynamic individuals who are influenced by their constantly changing experiences. A person or group of people can change their perspective in an instant, creating a limitation for research. In particular, people’s perceptions and attitudes towards forest stewardship may be flexible depending on their current life situation. Also social desirability and religion/culture could create possible biased opinions.

In order to address these limitations, the researcher employed member checking with half of participants. Member checking (respondent validation) is a process in which the researcher has participants to review the interpretations, descriptions, evaluations, and findings to assess accuracy. According to the members who were contacted, the results were in accord with their perceptions. In addition, inter-rater reliability was used because there was the possibility of more researcher bias. Inter-rater reliability is a process in which two or more researchers analyze the data and compare results. The researchers discuss the similarities and differences in the results with the goal of identifying any possible biases or misinterpretations. Inter-rater reliability of another qualitative researcher is valuable in regards to the reliability of results. Therefore, two other qualitative researchers were contacted and asked to review the results. The results of the outside researchers and the results of author were in concurrence.
The biggest perceived limitation of this research, from a positivistic-quantitative perspective, is the absence of a “control” group. However, this idea implies that there is such a thing as a “control” group and that this “control” group would have “normal” forest land experiences. Because this research project uses qualitative inquiry, it would not be appropriate to compare land ethics between different ethnic groups, as such a comparison would only be appropriate for quantitative measures. African American forest land experiences were not approached from a quantitative approach because of the lack of a systematic sample of black forest landowners and traditional response rates from African Americans.

While the African American forestland experience may be unique, it is not necessarily completely exclusive. As such, the most relevant question pertaining to this research is “Is the African American forestland experience exclusive to African Americans?” Forestland experiences are not the result of the pigmentation of a person’s skin; rather they are due to collective experiences of a group of people. The black forestland experience can be attributed to socio-economic class, institutional racism, culture, religion, region, and historical experiences. However, it is possible that a non-black landowner may share a similar land ethic if he/she has had similar life experiences as African American landowners. It is quite possible that an African American land ethic could be a surrogate forestland experience for people who are/were oppressed, impoverished, of African descent, or small landowners. Nevertheless, there is no other group of people that has been brought to the southern states from Africa that were enslaved, oppressed, and institutionally discriminated against. Because African
Americans have a unique experience with the land, investigating a forestland experience on the premise of ethnicity is appropriate.

To address another issue of research validity, the author used triangulation. Triangulation is a strategy for improving the validity of research and should aid in the elimination of bias (Campbell and Fiske 1959, Denzin 1978). Triangulation should allow for the “dismissal of plausible rival explanations such that a truthful proposition about some social phenomenon can be made” (Mathison 1988). Triangulation for the qualitative portion of this study occurred after the data were analyzed and the results emerged. Two USDA civil rights employees who currently work with landowners in South Carolina, one extension agent who works for the State of South Carolina, and one heirs’ property liaison who works in South Carolina were interviewed for triangulation purposes. These key informants were asked about their knowledge of particular issues. Then, the results of the study were shared, and they were asked to give their professional opinions on the results.

**African American Forest Landowner of SC Contributions to a Black Land Ethic**

The overall results of this study cannot define a “black land ethic,” but rather the results can contribute the larger discussion about diverse relationships with land and motivating frameworks that lead to “land ethic.” Specifically, this study uses black forest landowners of South Carolina to address this understanding. Literature has shown a significant decline of black landowners and farmers (98 percent), therefore making any conjectures of a “black land ethic” based upon sub-set of landowners from one southern state extracted from a two percent sample of remaining African American has to be
understood with this limitation (Wood and Gilbert 2000, Gilbert et al. 2001). But, the results can inform an understanding of the outliers, the roughly two percent of African American forest landowners who have remained and persisted through an epic land loss. Understanding a portion of their land ethic through the lens of phenomenology and phenomenography has led to the following conclusion (Table 5.1). There is a familial and communal sense of landownership among the participants of this study. This type of land ethic is contrary to the current landownership system of individual proprietorship.

Leopold’s land ethic was discussed from this ecological understanding and proprietorship perspective, not from a familial or collective perspective.

Future “black land ethic” research should investigate 1) a black land ethic from an environmental psychosocial perspective, 2) investigate the anthropological connections of communal landownership between African Americans and from the countries in which many slaves were taken from, 3) how history and historical figures have contributed to a black land ethic, and 4) further add to the database of interviews of black landowner experiences.
Table 5.1 People who influenced a land ethic and their land ethic framework.

<table>
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<th>Land Ethic by Person</th>
<th>Motivating Framework</th>
<th>Example</th>
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<td>Aldo Leopold</td>
<td>Ecological Understanding/Spatial</td>
<td>&quot;A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Booker T. Washington</td>
<td>Political/Farming</td>
<td>&quot;I plead for industrial education and development for the Negro not because I want to cramp him, but because I want to free him.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. E. B. Dubois</td>
<td>Educational/Classic</td>
<td>&quot;How curious a land is this,—how full of untold story, of tragedy and laughter, and the rich legacy of human life; shadowed with a tragic past, and big with future promise!&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina Forest Landowners</td>
<td>Cultural/Historical/Temporal</td>
<td>&quot;So when I say asset, value, I am talking value from the standpoint of heritage, heritage from the standpoint of tradition from the standpoint of the family.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
History culture

Forest stewardship was not an integral factor for land retention among the African American landowners in this study; the primary factor for retaining land was cultural and historical legacy. Many forest landowners’ land has ties to their forefathers and their beginnings as Americans, albeit through slavery. The land is a constant in their family that transcends time from the 1800s to present day. Many of the African American landowners perceived that blacks do not have much in regards to land, especially considering the high rates of land loss in African American communities. This notion may not be a fallacy but actually have truth to it. Heirs’ property, tax issues, and the current economy threaten many of the landowners’ dreams of keeping their land in the family to preserve their familial culture and history. Forest stewardship can be an avenue through which these landowners can retain their land.

For a forest landowner, it is easily attainable to keep a cultural/historical legacy while being a good steward of their forest. Unfortunately this idea is rarely relayed to landowners. The current trend in forest stewardship is to take an initiative from executive management of agencies, create programs that adhere to the principles of that initiative, and then find landowners who are willing to “sacrifice” certain rights or practices on their property to meet these principles. This deductive method is serving people who are already conservation minded; however, landowners who are not informed or are underserved do not benefit from this method. An inductive approach is necessary to serve landowners who are not or have not been exposed to forest stewardship, for these are the forests that need attention.
African American forest landowners are considered an underserved population, and increasing forest stewardship with these landowners will benefit both the forest and landowners. However, culture and history should be taken into careful consideration when any type of management or agreement is made with African American landowners. Landowners can generate revenue both in the short term and long term while keeping a legacy for future generations by adopting forest stewardship principles. This concept should be explained to landowners along with the financial and ecological benefits of managing their forests. High grading or clear cutting without regeneration—two forestry services that are often prescribed to such landowners—is not beneficial to these landowners primary land objectives. As shown in the results, doing such gives foresters a bad reputation; thus, any type of silvicultural practice where the landowner does not benefit should be avoided.

Land loss is prevalent in the African American rural community and poses a risk of net timber production loss, conservation loss, and threats to rural communities’ social and economic structures. Though this issue is a multifaceted problem and solutions will not arise instantaneously, there are still vast opportunities for immediate impacts, such as the creation of individual forest management plans, outreach and liaison positions, assistance with heirs’ property, and educating the next generation of landowners.

**Collective ownership**

For many familial landowners, their land never had a single proprietor for landownership. This presents problems in regards to forest management if more than one person has to make decisions regarding land usage. Forest stewardship representatives
should take the sensitivity of collective landownership into consideration and should approach the collective owners about forest stewardship rather than merely one individual. In addition, collective landownership presents a threat of fragmentation if land is passed on to many descendants. Also, there is a high prevalence for heirs’ property due to this perception of land. Land in heirs’ property presents a hurdle for forest stewardship and other related government assistance programs. Though the issues of heirs’ property reaches beyond the realm and responsibilities of agencies that administer forest stewardship, these agencies can still actively assist landowners with forest stewardship and direct them to the proper channels to receive aid for heirs’ property issues.

Additionally, collective ownership presents problems for initiating management activities on land and may be viewed as a hindrance. A more sustainable type of forest management could be implemented if policies and programs were developed to consider this type of collective ownership. In many cases, one individual caused poor management of a tract of land because of a financial crisis. This type of scenario can be avoided if multiple stakeholders come together to make a decision. Current policymakers should take this notion into consideration, as a decision that arises from the consensus among several stakeholders has less of a chance of being uninformed as one made by one person.

Lack of Resources

Gan et al. (2005) suggest that minority landowners are more likely to have marginal land. From personal observations in the field, there is a need for more extension agents from the same ethnicity of limited-resource landowners. Many landowners expressed that they would like more personal visits, better explanations of available
programs, and assistance with filling out applications and forms. Thus, to increase the overall involvement of limited-resource landowners in conservation programs, agencies should 1) increase the number of extension agents, 2) increase the involvement of minorities in conservation programs, 3) create a new information/education curriculum for conservation incentive programs, and 4) increase the funding specifically available for limited-resource landowners.

There is also a need to increase the current number of NRCS extension agents. Observations from this study revealed the existence of many overworked extension agents who, at times, cover many counties. Many forest landowners who were contacted during the research project expressed that they would prefer more personal one-on-one visits with the extension agents. Thus, extension agents should serve as liaisons between the government and landowners and should not solely be seen as government officials.

Additionally, it was recorded that some landowners dropped out of school before completing middle school, so many of the conservation programs are written on reading levels that are higher than some of the landowners are capable of fully understanding. Therefore, providing landowners with extension agents who can act as interpreters in explaining the various cost share programs would be beneficial. In addition, pamphlets/brochures explaining the entire program should also be provided considering that many landowners may not have internet access, the location for most of the information pertaining to conservation incentive programs. Also, a few landowners expressed some negative/racist experiences with white extension agents in the past and have remarked that they would prefer black extension agents. Thus, this should be taken
into consideration when possible. Furthermore, Onianwa et al. (2005) indicated that the race of the agent may have an impact of participation in conservation incentive programs.

Many agents have not been trained on pedagogical methods, and personal observations in this study revealed outdated and poor information dissemination methods. Also, some agents articulated ideas and programs that were above the comprehension levels of many landowners. Considering these two issues, a curriculum needs to be developed that extension agents can follow to aid landowners. Such a curriculum will allow for all of landowners to have the same opportunities to become informed about conservation incentive programs without placing responsibility on the extension agent’s teaching capabilities. The curriculum should take into consideration differences in landowners’ reading and comprehension levels.

In South Carolina, there is 90 percent cost share available for limited-resource and beginning farmers through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program, which typically provides 50 percent for larger farms. This same system gives 90 percent cost share for limited-resource landowners. Programs should provide an economic incentive to occur within five to ten years. For instance, a reforestation program may take 30-40 years to reap the full benefits. Thus, a 70-year-old landowner will not have the incentive to enroll in such a program because the likelihood of the landowner passing away increases with age. Many limited-resource landowners are elderly people (60 and above). Programs should be created that will benefit landowners (both young and old) as well as the environment in a timely manner considering the increasing of age of landowners.
New extension/stewardship programs should be implemented with an adaptive management approach and should be assessed annually after the various recommendations have occurred. Funding should be allocated that will investigate the new additions’ effectiveness, and a clear and decisive goal should be created for the total enrollment of limited-resource landowners.

Distrust

There is an obvious distrust for government agencies and the private forest industry among the participants interviewed. Though the why is important, attention should focus on how to resolve these issues. Because of distrust, landowners exhibited a preference for face-to-face contact with agents, not for attending meetings or mailing in information (Dishongh and Worthern 1991). Much of this distrust has been perceived as discrimination. The validity of these discrimination accusations should not be the topic of discussion; rather, the perception of racism/discrimination that resides among many landowners should be the focus. Whether or not discrimination occurred, landowners felt that it has, and this perception is impacting the governmental agencies’ ability to serve landowners. These cries should not be ignored and should be addressed through the proper channels. In the interim of fielding these claims of discrimination, there should be an acknowledgement of how landowners feel, and avenues to better disseminate technical and financial information should be explored.

The barrier of trust must be overcome in order to increase forest stewardship and land ethic. Developing rapport and relationships with landowners is vital to starting the process of cultivating healthy relationships between landowners and outside entities.
Though this process may take time, the possibility of having trustful relationships with landowners is well worth the investment. In fact, having trustful relationships with an informed natural resource agent have shown to be advantageous in regards to forest stewardship. Landowners in this study who had natural resource connections, be it through a family member/friend or a community associate, have healthier forests (as determined through personal observations) and more managed forests. This natural resource connection/landowner relationship can serve as a model for the benefits of having trustful relationships.

**Variety of Landowners**

Results indicated that different types of landowners perceive their land in diverse ways. For example, absentee landowners have weaker connections (or SOP) than resident landowners. Further, absentee forest landowners perceive their land to be an asset, while resident farmers view their land as a “home.” The forest landowners’ leading concern was the private forest industry, while the farmers were more concerned about the government. This information should be used in two courses of action. First, extension services, outreach agencies, and researchers should consider revising the current conventional notion that landowners should be aggregated into one group. Though there were some similarities among landowners (lack of resources, collective ownership, and historical/cultural legacy), the landowners in this study showed obvious differences in regards to their management objectives. Second, agencies should use this information to obtain a more informed understanding of these landowners and should perform services that consider the landowners’ various paradigms. The current efforts to assist limited-
resource landowners should be applauded, but other programs should be initiated that aid landowners in forest stewardship and complete agency objectives. More specifically, programs should be created inductively, not deductively.

**Future Research**

There is a strong need for research initiatives that study limited-resources landowners in the entire Southeast. A comprehensive research project that focuses on land from conservation, forestry, historical/cultural, and human ecology perspectives is desperately needed to prevent small rural landowners from succumbing to land loss. Future research should focus on the following objectives: 1) create a database of minority landowners in the Southeast, 2) research the next generation of minority landowners (landowners less than 50 years of age), and 3) create outreach and education programs for socially disadvantage landowners.

**Objective 1**

Current research indicated that the primary reason for agents’ lack of communication with African American landowners is the lack of an organized database. Many state agencies do not keep records of the demographics for the landowners who they serve. There are limited databases (Minority Landowner Magazine, Federation of Southern Co-Ops, Black Family Land Trust, Center for Heirs’ Property Preservation, USDA limited-resource landowner database, North Carolina Black Landowner Association, and local and state farmer co-ops). Personal observations revealed that the gatekeepers of these databases are reluctant to share information because of lack of trust.
and privacy issues. Creating an accessible database will remove communication barriers with minority landowners in the future. This database can serve as a tool that will create enhanced relationships between the government and minority landowners. Better communication will potentially lead to better participation in government programs by minority groups.

**Objective 2**

Research indicated that landowners perceive the primary threat of land loss to be the lack of interest in familial estates among younger generations. Understanding the next generation’s perceptions of land is vital in order to achieve land retention. Researching the next generation of minority landowners (i.e., a person who is 50 years of age or below that owns land or is an heir of a landowner) is vital. The views, perceptions, and attitudes towards landownership and conservation by this target group are pertinent information, as having an understanding of this information will inform future policy and communication methods with this target group. The minority landowners are growing older, and there will be an increase in land transition in the near future. Preparing the next generation of landholders for this shift will increase forest stewardship and will slow the current land loss and total conservation loss rates.

**Objective 3**

Creating an outreach and education program for minority landowners is an integral step in increasing forest stewardship and slowing the current land loss trend. Landowners should be educated on potential ways to create revenue other than through
farming. This education should include teaching forest landowners about the importance of conservation, the current status of African American landowners, sustainable forestry practices, heirs’ property issues, soil/water conservation, and wildlife conservation. Many of these landowners are living at the poverty level and have never considered using their land as a means to generate revenue. Increasing their revenue may assist them with moving out of poverty, which has many unforeseeable positive impacts for them and their community. Thus, programs should focus on win-win scenarios in which both landowners and the forest benefit.

The study revealed that African Americans have a unique land ethic in regards to their culture and historical experience with the South and the government. Though this land ethic may not be exclusive to blacks, (an individual of another ethnicity may have a similar experience) collectively no other Americans have had historical relationship to the land and the government that blacks have. This study has created a baseline understanding of a black land ethic, in which further research can expound upon and add to the results. Furthermore, this study provides enough information to rethink the current methods that are used for outreach and extension of limited-resource landowners. Creating programs that are sensitive to the findings (communal, trust, historical etc.) may increase participation and further conservation of the land. First we must understand how landowners perceive “harmony” with their land and then find the intersection between sustainable practices and landowner’s objectives. Then Leopold’s “state of harmony between men and land” will be attainable.
Literature Cited


APPENDICES
Appendix A

Questions for Land Ethic Interview

Questions for interviews

Name________________

TOPIC LAND AND MEMORIES
How did you acquire your land?
What memories of this land do you have?
What are the different values you have for the land?
If you could put a dollar value on your land what would that number be?

LAND MANAGEMENT
Have you ever cut any trees off your land?
Have you ever performed any type of management on your land?
What have you used your land for?
How do you feel about leasing your land out for hunting?
How do you feel about a friend/family member hunting your land?
How do you feel about an outsider paying you to hunt your land?
If you were to charge, how much would you charge for the rights to hunt your land?
How do you feel about trespassers on your land?

AFRICAN AMERICAN LAND LOSS
Have you ever sold any of your land? If so why?
Do you know of any blacks selling their land?
Do you feel they received proper payment for it?
Why do you think they sold their land?
Do you regret selling?
How do you feel about African-American land loss?

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS
Do you trust the government to evaluate your land?
Do you trust the government with any recommendations they would give for your land?
Do you trust a private forester to evaluate your land?
Describe your landowner experiences as an African-American.
How do you view wildlife?
What are your experiences with wildlife?
Do you feel safe going back to your land?
How do you think the younger generation views the land?
What are you experiences with land being passed down to a family member?
Do you want your land to get passed down? If so, to whom?
Have you ever heard of any of the SC wildlife fire prevention programs?
Have you ever had any wildfires?
Appendix B

Land Ethic Scale Survey

*In the following questions, please tell us about yourself. The information you provide will remain strictly confidential and you will not be identified with your answers.*

1. **Do you own land in South Carolina?**
   1. YES (How many acres ________?)
   2. NO – (If NO, please return survey so we can take you off of our survey list).

2. **Is this land heirs property?** 1. YES 2. NO

3. **What is your age? ________________________ YEARS**

4. **Are you?**
   1. MALE
   2. FEMALE

5. **In what county do you reside? ________________________ COUNTY**

6. **What is your highest completed level of education? (Please circle only one answer)**

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7. **What is your approximate annual household income before taxes?**

8. **What is your race?**

   1. WHITE OR ANGLO
   2. BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN
   3. NATIVE AMERICAN OR ALASKAN NATIVE
   4. ASIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER
   5. OTHER (Please specify: ________________________ )

9. **Do you farm more than 1 acre of your land?** 1. YES 2. NO

10. **Do you live on your land?** 1 YES 2. NO (If not, how many miles do you live away from your land?)

11. **Is your land in timber?** 1 YES (If so how many acres_____?) 2. NO

12. **Have you ever worked in the area of natural resources?** 1 YES 2. NO
13. Learning about your thought about your land is important so we can understand to better help landowners. Please show to what extent you agree or disagree with the following attitude statements regarding your land.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>Everything about my land is a reflection of me</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>I feel that I can really be myself on my land</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>My land reflects the type of person I am</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d)</td>
<td>I feel happiest when I’m on my land</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e)</td>
<td>My land is my favorite place to be</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f)</td>
<td>I really miss my land when I’m away from it too long</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g)</td>
<td>My land is the best place for doing the things that I enjoy the most</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h)</td>
<td>For doing the things that I enjoy most, no other place can compare to my land</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i)</td>
<td>As far as I’m concerned, there are no better places to be than my land</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j)</td>
<td>My land is NOT a good place to do the things I like to do</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k)</td>
<td>My land is a part of my family history</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l)</td>
<td>I want the land to stay in my family because it took hard work to get the land</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m)</td>
<td>My land is a home for my family</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n)</td>
<td>My land is a part of my heritage</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o)</td>
<td>I use my land to make as much money as possible</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p)</td>
<td>My land should be used to make money</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q)</td>
<td>Getting a little extra money from my land is a bonus</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r)</td>
<td>I use my land for activities OTHER than making money</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s)</td>
<td>I feel my land belongs to my family</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t)</td>
<td>People MUST get my permission to use my land</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u)</td>
<td>I allow people I trust to use my land</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v)</td>
<td>People I trust can use my land without asking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C
Land Ethic Scale Survey Cover Letter

Information Concerning Participation in a Research Study
Clemson University

Land attachment and use of South Carolina Landowners.

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Dr. Drew Lanham and Keenan Adams. The purpose of this research is to understand landowner’s land attachment in South Carolina. Your participation will involve you being asked questions about your land. The amount of time required for your participation will be 5 to 15 minutes.

There is minimal risk of identification. Because of demographic data question asked on the survey. We will not attempt to identify the participant on the survey. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. The survey data will be stored on the computer of the research assistant. This research may help us to understand South Carolina landowner’s land attachment.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You will not be penalized in any way should you decide not to participate or to withdraw from this study.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, please contact Dr. Drew Lanham at Clemson University at 864.656.7294. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance at 864.656.6460.