General concepts of compatible management
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Volunteer Oral Presentation

Many plant and fungi species found in forests are of economic, social and/or cultural significance beyond conventional uses such as timber. When harvested, these species are often referred to as non-timber forest products (NTFPs). They are integral components of forest ecosystems, and are affected by natural disturbance, silvicultural treatments and timber harvesting. Compatible forest management approaches can be developed that simultaneously increase the value of both timber and NTFPs. These approaches exist along a continuum, from inactive management (the application of existing forest management tools), to coincident management (timber management happens to benefit NTFP values, or visa-versa), to active management (explicit management for both timber and NTFP values). Inactive management includes using existing forest management tools that can be easily applied to the NTFP sector, especially maps (topographic, forest cover, ecosystems), aerial photos and road networks. Coincident management includes many forest management and silvicultural activities, including felling practices, prescribed fire, fertilization, thinning, and pruning. Active management approaches include those where there are explicit management objectives that benefit both timber and non-timber values, such as multiple-value inventory and modelling, species planting, pruning and delayed harvesting. This framework for thinking about compatible management options was developed after reviewing current practices in North America. Compatible management examples can be found for virtually every stage of stand development, from stand-ending events (fires, disease, harvesting), through stand establishment, tending and through to harvesting again. Application of knowledge of forest ecology can play a central role in improving NTFP values. Examples will be presented to show how this knowledge can be applied to increasing amounts and values of NTFPs through creating inventories of NTFP species, increasing accessibility and productivity. The compatible management framework and examples given will establish a background for the rest of the talks in this session that present findings from specific case studies.