

The Pinchot Letter

News from the Pinchot Institute for Conservation

Fall 2000

Institute to Facilitate Multi-party Monitoring and Evaluation of National Forest Stewardship Contracting Pilots

The Pinchot Institute will design and manage the multiparty monitoring, evaluation, and reporting process related to the established Forest Service Stewardship Contracting Pilot Program. The Pinchot Institute has had an involved history in promoting the idea of land stewardship contracts, through both policy research and demonstration projects. Based in part on the publication of an analysis on existing contracting authorities which facilitate land stewardship objectives¹ and the implementation of demonstration projects, Congress authorized the Forest Service to implement up to 28 stewardship end-results contracts within Section 347 of the FY 1999 Omnibus Appropriations Act. These pilots were specifically designed to investigate ways in which the agency could accomplish various land management objectives in more creative, efficient, and effective ways. Specifically, these pilots were authorized to test several new authorities including: awarding contracts based upon best value, multi-year and bundled contracts, exchanging goods for services, receipt retention, and designation by description.

As part of the Pilot Program, Congress established requirements for a multiparty monitoring and evaluation process to determine whether the new authorities indeed granted the freedom and efficiency needed to address evolving new land eth-

¹ Ringgold, P., *Land Stewardship Contracting in the National Forests: A Community Guide to Existing Authorities* (Washington, DC: Pinchot Institute for Conservation, 1998).

ics. As defined, multiparty monitoring is a means of encouraging and supporting collaborative learning, while building trust among diverse interests. It provides a way to address the concerns of distant stakeholders, while attending to the needs of local citizens and engaging a broad audience in the lessons derived from a project. In its truest intent, multiparty monitoring/evaluation promotes effective and meaningful public involvement, from criteria development through the implementation phase of monitoring. Such efforts are integral to the adaptive management of our natural resources.

As part of its effort in meeting the needs of the agency and of Congress, the Pinchot Institute will work closely with a number of subcontracted regional partners, which collectively will oversee the implementation of the program. The program is structured into a three-tiered system, consisting of local, regional and national multiparty monitoring, evaluation, and assessment teams.

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Leadership in Forest Conservation Thought, Policy and Action

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Each team is structured as a collaborative unit, in which all participants have equal standing and equal weight in decision making. Participation on local teams is at the discretion of each pilot, but will promote broad involvement, including agency representatives, cooperating government agencies (including tribal governments), and the diversity of all local/distant interested groups and individuals. Each team will have unique functions in the implementation of the program, specifically:

Local Team: will be responsible for the collection and analysis of data necessary for project evaluation.

Regional Team: will be responsible for the synthesis of data from the local teams and ana-

lyzing the effects of regional conditions and circumstances effecting the success and outcome on pilot efforts.

National Team: will be responsible for assessing the program from a national perspective and collecting/summarizing information on (a) the development, execution, and administration of authorized contracts, (b) specific accomplishments resulting from efforts, and (c) the role of local communities in the development of contract plans.

In addition to the facilitation and coordination of the monitoring process, the Pinchot Institute will also be responsible for the development and implementation of evaluating and for disseminating results to the agency, Congress, and the gen-

About the Pinchot Institute

The Pinchot Institute for Conservation is an independent non-profit policy research and education organization dedicated to leadership in natural resource conservation thought, policy, and action. The Pinchot Institute was dedicated in 1963 by President John F. Kennedy at Grey Towers National Historic Landmark in Milford, Pennsylvania, historic home of conservation leader Gifford Pinchot, to facilitate communication and closer cooperation among resource managers, scientists, policymakers, and the American public. The Institute continues Pinchot's legacy of conservation leadership as a center for policy development in support of sustainable forest management. Further information about the Pinchot Institute's programs and activities can be found at www.pinchot.org

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eral public. Structured interviews and workshop deliberations will lay the initial groundwork for criteria definition, implementation and reporting. Semi-annual meetings, workshops and periodic reporting will be used to share valuable lessons learned and determine the usefulness of those authorities the program was set out to test.

The contract was officially awarded in July 2000 and is expected to last a total of 5-years, dependent upon adequate federal appropriations. For more information, contact Andrea Bedell Loucks at 202-939-3455 or andreabedell@pinchot.org

Achieving a Common Voice on Watershed Restoration

Andrea Bedell Loucks

In the US, as in much of the world, obtaining adequate water supplies and maintaining water quality will become one of the defining natural resource issues of the 21st century. Though the level of consciousness is slowly rising among the general public, the importance of forest ecosystems in maintaining and protecting these valuable water resources is often overlooked or taken

for granted. In many parts of the US, forested watersheds have become degraded by excessive timber cutting, poor maintenance and erosion control procedures, and various kinds of development. As the demand for domestic, agricultural, and industrial water supplies grows, the prevention of further degradation and the restoration of well-functioning systems within forests

is set to become essential in the daily management of our land base. To bring attention to the importance of restoring these valuable forested watersheds and to address existing issues/obstacles associated with implementing large-scale restoration efforts, the Pinchot Institute recently convened and facilitated a unique event on the Clearwater National Forest.

From July 10-13, over 60 participants from across the United States gathered in the



Participants of the workshop at Clearwater National Forest last July, inspect a road obliteration.