



The Wildlife Society Forestry & Wildlife Working Group
Survey Report

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In an effort to define and improve communication with the membership of the TWS Forestry and Wildlife Working Group (FWWG) and provide direction for future goal and objective setting, the Board of FWWG surveyed WG members in the spring of 2017. The 10-question survey was open from 28 March until 15 May 2017. Fifty-five members responded to the survey, representing approximately 33% of the membership. Data gathered included information about the members (e.g., employment status and education), the activities members are largely engaged in, their perspective(s) on forest management in their geographic area, as well as their thoughts on the FWWG, why they joined, and how they believe the FWWG Board should prioritize future activities.

The results of the survey are summarized below.

Member demographics

The vast majority of members who responded to the survey were active professionals (87%). Very few were students or retired professionals (Table 1). None of the respondents were volunteers. Respondents largely came from academia (20%), followed closely by private industry (18%), federal agencies (16%), and state agencies (16%; Table 2). All respondents had degrees beyond a high school diploma, with 41% of respondents having a Ph.D. and 35% with a master's degree (Table 3). The majority (87%) of members selected wildlife biology as a major field of study; however, members commonly listed more than one major field, with an average of 3.5 fields selected per respondent (max was 10; Table 4). Forestry (55%), Ecology (55%), and Natural Resource Management (42%) were the next most selected major fields.

Employment Status	Number	Percent
Active professional	48	87%
Student	3	6%
Retired	3	6%
Volunteer	0	0%

Table 1. Employment status of survey respondents.

Primary Employer	Number	Percent
Academia	11	20%
Private industry, not self-employed	10	18%
Federal agency	9	16%
State agency	9	16%
Self-employed	6	11%
Non-governmental organization (non-profit or other)	6	11%
None (retired or unemployed)	2	4%
Consultant (publicly owned company)	2	4%

Table 2. Primary employer of survey respondents.

Highest Degree Earned	Number	Percent
Doctorate	22	41%
Master's degree	19	35%
Undergraduate degree	12	22%
Associate degree	1	2%
High school diploma	0	0%

Table 3. Highest level of education achieved by survey respondents.

Major Field(s) of Study	Number	Percent
Wildlife Biology	48	87%
Forestry or Forest Science	30	55%
Ecology	30	55%
Natural Resource Management	23	42%
Zoology	13	24%
General Biology	11	20%
Sustainability	8	15%
Environmental Policy	7	13%
Environmental Science	6	11%
Environmental Studies	6	11%
Fire Science	6	11%
Environmental Communication	5	9%
Fisheries Science	4	7%
Human Dimensions of Natural Resources	4	7%
Soil Science	2	4%
Environmental Education/Interpretation	1	2%

Table 4. Major fields of study across educational experiences of survey respondents.

Work-related activity engagement

Over half of respondents (56%) indicated that they participated in research, teaching/outreach, and inventory/monitoring activities as a part of their work duties (Table 5). Forty-four percent of respondents were involved in designing silvicultural prescriptions, and only 20% were involved in preparing or administering timber sales. Thirty-three percent selected the “Other” option, some of which are summarized in Table 5; out of these added options, 11% listed activities related to implementing wildlife projects and policy or regulatory review.

When asked about the types of work activities to which members allocated >25% of their time, top activities included research and inventory/monitoring (45% and 42%, respectively; Table 6). A quarter of respondents indicated that over 25% of

their time was devoted to teaching/public outreach and designing silvicultural prescriptions. Again, fewer (15%) listed timber sale preparation and administration as a major activity.

Recurring Work-related Activities	Number	Percent
Research and publishing peer-reviewed literature	31	56%
Teaching or public outreach	31	56%
Inventory/monitoring	31	56%
Designing or planning silvicultural prescriptions or related forest restoration treatments	24	44%
Timber sale preparation and administration	11	20%
Implementing wildlife projects/wildlife management*	6	11%
Policy/regulatory review*	6	11%
Conservation planning*	4	7%
Permitting*	1	2%
Forest certification*	1	2%
Retired*	1	2%
Industry outreach*	1	2%
Facilitate research*	1	2%
Grant funding and Stewardship Partnerships	1	2%

*Listed within the “Other” option.

Table 5. Work-related activities participated in on a reoccurring basis in a given year.

Work-related activities comprising >25% of time	Number	Percent
Research and publishing peer-reviewed literature	25	45%
Inventory/monitoring	23	42%
Teaching or public outreach	14	25%
Designing or planning silvicultural prescriptions or related forest restoration treatments	14	25%
Timber sale preparation and administration	8	15%
Policy/regulatory review*	5	9%
Implementing wildlife projects/wildlife management*	4	7%
Conservation/management planning*	3	5%
Retired*	1	2%
Grant funding and Stewardship Partnerships*	1	2%
Data Analysis and reporting*	1	2%
Training*	1	2%

*Listed within the “Other” option.

Table 6. Work-related activities that are allocated >25% of the members’ time in a given year.

Perspectives on forest management

Members were asked about their viewpoint on forest management, whether they had a desire for more active forest management, less active forest management, different approaches to forest management, or other perspectives. Two respondents skipped this question; however, the majority of respondents (75%) said they desired there to be different approaches to active forest management in their geographic area (Table 7), however, with this question alone it can not be determined what specific practices members view to be “different” from the norm. A high proportion (40%) desired there to be more active forest management in their area. Ten respondents (19%) selected the “Other” option, and their responses included:

1. “There is an abundance of potential for forest management actions that benefit a variety of wildlife species in early-seral and mid-seral conifer forests. But only a fraction of this work is being done.”
2. “Engaging private landowners in forest and wildlife habitat management.”
3. “Monitoring of forest management effects on wildlife and effectiveness of forest management in sustaining wildlife populations.”
4. “More emphasis on maintaining early successional stages of the forest.”

5. "Balanced levels of forest management."
6. "We need to increase young forest, but also manage for old forest conditions, and prevent high-grading."
7. "Interaction with wildlife."
8. "Forest Service harvest."
9. "I do not have preferences about these issues. My professional role is to develop science."
10. "Engaging people with multiple, different perspectives in constructive discussions about forest management."

Desire for:	Number	Percent
Different approaches to active forest management	40	75%
More active forest management	21	40%
Other	10	19%
Less active forest management	1	2%

Table 7. Member perspectives on forest management in their geographic area (Note: 2 respondents skipped this question).

Thoughts on the FWWG

Lastly, members were asked their opinion about the FWWG activities. When asked about their motivation for joining the FWWG, the vast majority (91%) indicated that they wished to stay informed on current issues in forestry and wildlife (Table 8). Following that, many also indicated that they had joined to network with other members interested in forestry and wildlife (75%), and that they wanted to contribute their expertise on forestry and wildlife (60%). Approximately one-third of respondents indicated that they had joined to learn about specific topics, and when asked to specify the topics they were interested in, responses were variable (see below).

Members were also asked to rank the FWWG priorities. This original list of priorities was generated by the FWWG Executive Board in 2016. Scores associated with each item in this survey were generated by Survey Monkey and related to how many respondents had highly ranked that item. The item ranked the highest was to facilitate information exchange among members, and 69% of respondents had this item in their top 3 ranking. This seems to be consistent with members' motivation for joining the group in the first place, which for the majority of respondents was to stay informed on current issues. The next highest ranked activities were sponsoring symposia, meetings, scholarships, and/or chapter activities, followed by hosting workshops and field trips. These activities are again associated with networking and the exchange of information among members.

Motivation for Membership	Number	Percent
To stay informed on current issues in forestry and wildlife	50	91%
To network with other TWS members interested in forestry and wildlife	41	75%
To contribute expertise on forestry and wildlife	33	60%
To learn more about the synergy between forestry and wildlife	26	47%
To learn more about specific topics related to forestry and wildlife*	18	33%

Table 8. Motivation for membership to the FWWG.

*Specific topics:

- How sustainable forestry practices can be adapted for a changing world to benefit both humans and wildlife
- Interactions between forest fuels management practices and wildlife habitat improvement
- To bring human dimensions research and considerations to forestry and wildlife habitat management
- Topics related to the use of forest management in sustaining wildlife populations
- Species-habitat relationships
- To impact change and facilitate integration with contemporary understanding of forest ecology
- Conservation in expanding metropolitan regions; climate impacts

Item	% that ranked item in the top 3	Score*
Facilitate information exchange among members	69%	7.17
Sponsor symposia, meetings, scholarships, and/or chapter activities	49%	6.55
Host workshops or field trips	49%	5.96
Develop BMPs for forest wildlife	29%	5.38
Develop BMPs for forest ecosystems	29%	5.21
Partner with state chapters or other groups	22%	4.83
Develop materials such as posters, fact sheets, or brochures on topics relevant to forestry and wildlife	16%	4.35
Compare, evaluate, and refine third party forestry certification	13%	3.75
Give awards for professional recognition	5%	2.87

*Score generated by Survey Monkey.

Table 9. Ranking of FWWG priorities.

Additional comments, thoughts, suggestions for the FWWG:

- “Given the broad geographic range of membership, I see the working group as a place to share information and facilitate conversations – not a place to develop specific BMPs or management recommendations.”
- “As a scientific organization, I think keeping FWWG reliant in science is key.”
- “Conduct meetings online and ensure that all members are notified at least two months in advance and meetings should center around a topic and include a brief seminar, led by an expert, on the topic.”
- “Wildlife is underrepresented. “

Summary

In summary, those members who responded to this survey were highly educated, many holding advanced degrees. Respondents came from academia, private industry, as well as from public land management agencies and were relatively evenly distributed across these sources of employment. The vast majority had received formal education in the field of wildlife biology. Many are engaged in research, inventory/monitoring, and outreach, though a lower proportion participate in writing silvicultural prescriptions or administering timber sales. The majority of participants had a desire for different approaches to forest management taking place in their geographic location. Overall, there was a high level of consistency in the motivations of respondents for joining the FWWG, namely to stay informed on current issues in forestry and wildlife management. Given that this was their motivation in joining, many viewed facilitating information exchange among members as a high priority for the FWWG.

For the questions regarding work-related activities, many respondents selected “other” and recorded an activity not provided in the original list. For this reason, the frequencies of these “other” options (indicated by asterisks in Tables 5 and 6) do not necessarily correspond to the actual number of people who engage in these activities; only those who felt compelled to write in these additional activities when taking the survey. If questions regarding work-related activities are asked in future surveys, additional options, such as those provided in Tables 5 and 6 should be included.

For future surveys, the board may also choose to include a question regarding the performance of the FWWG and the executive board (e.g., Does the membership see FWWG pursuing actions and activities they view as high priority) to better gauge these perceptions of the members. Additionally, follow-up questions (regarding Table 7) may be needed to determine what types of “different approaches to active forest management” are preferred by the membership for their geographic region.