

Timber Payment Method Study: Social Assessment

Research Question

How does the timber sale payment method influence logger decision making and practices?

Some Key Terms

- Consumer scale – buyer only pays for timber that is harvested
- SOAV– sold on appraised volume; buyer pays a lump sum based on estimated timber volume

Methods

- Interviewed 20 loggers operating in Cass and St. Louis counties in Minnesota
- Facilitated 4 focus groups with loggers and natural resource managers
- Analyzed qualitative data for converging and diverging themes around payment practices



Results

- Conservation ethics, business norms and public perceptions all influence logging practices.
- Payment method preferences vary, but profitability plays the primary role in decision making. Concerns include changing input/labor costs, environmental conditions, wood supply and markets.
- Payment methods may add additional risk management associated with time and costs:
 - ⇒ SOAV: Additional time cruising tracts before sales; financial losses in sales that under-run; best choice for biomass harvesting; uncertainty associated with forester
 - ⇒ Consumer scale: Additional time and hauling costs associated with ticketing oversight

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