

## Management opportunities and constraints: State and Federal land management perspectives

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**MR. FREED:** I'd like to address some of the issues small communities are facing through community and economic development, as well as some of the questions bothering local people, who may not even know where nontimber products go. Hopefully my comments will dovetail with what John Davis is going to say.

Because of my background, a lot of my efforts have been in marketing. I look at access to land and to markets. Most recently, I've started working with individuals and communities on value-added products.

I've been working in the special forest products arena since 1974. A lot of these products go through Mason County, south of the Olympics in Washington. Pickers and people here are typical for the industry. Until 1989, very few people cared about special forest products, and people harvesting plant resources for these products often didn't even need permission from landowners.

These plant species were pretty much considered weeds. And we at research institutions worked on getting rid of weeds. There is much more information on killing than on managing these particular species.

In about 1989, there was a change in the way forests were managed. That changed how these raw materials were viewed by the pickers, by the local value-added industries, by local economic development organizations, by public decisionmakers, and by the land managers themselves. Something once called a weed is now something very valuable.

That change happened literally overnight. It turned a lot of people on the edge of society into criminals, because where they had harvested the product for years and years, they now needed permits. Salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), a product that's used for floral greenery, is an example. People used to just come and get rid of plants like salal, evergreen huckleberry (*Vaccinium ovatum*), and sword fern (*Polystichum munitum*). A typical lease was 25 cents

an acre. I worked with people who leased 26 sections and could take whatever they wanted for a year. Suddenly there were rules and regulations and competition. Now they needed permits. They were sharing their sites with other people.

So for the harvester, the new practices of the land managers and the industry led to some real conflicts. The harvesters also started looking at where their products were going. There were quality concerns because of worldwide competition, not just from other local producers, but from the rest of the Pacific Northwest, the United States, and the world. Market fluctuations became a concern. Why did one mushroom species go from 80 cents a pound to \$18 a pound this year? Or why did another species go the other way, from \$200 to 75 cents a pound? Things happening in Polish or Chinese forests now affected prices here, but the harvesters didn't know that. Before, they didn't care—now they had to be aware of world markets.



*Salal harvester*

What we're looking at, economically, is community development more than economic development. When I work with economic development people, they talk about putting in big buildings and finding businesses to hire 100 displaced timber workers or maybe displaced shellfish and seafood people on the Olympic Peninsula. How can we put 500 timber workers into the special forest products industry?



*Bales of sword fern*

We can't. It's very large, but this is a cottage industry. It is a \$178 million industry in Washington and Oregon, on a wholesale level. However, it is made up of many, many individuals who operate home-based businesses. Many of these people have tried to avoid society for years, and I think they are pretty typical of the forestry industry.

Most foresters didn't take the job because they wanted to talk to people. They took it because they could talk to trees, and trees don't talk back. But now these foresters have to deal with 15,000 people wanting mushroom permits. That's a whole different world.

Well, the same thing is true for the harvesters. These people picked to supplement their income. They didn't make \$100 a day, and it was all cash based. If I asked them to, a typical company would write a check to "Number 10" instead of to me, Jim Freed. I'd take it down to Bob's Bar and Grill and get my check cashed at the same time I bought my chicken and joes. All I had to do was write "Number 10" on the back, Bob charged me



two bucks, life was good, and I went on. That's how the system was, very community-based, very self-supportive and trusting. Everybody knew each other. Everybody looked the same, all European heritage.

That also changed in 1989. All of a sudden land managers saw the potential for world markets and wanted more money. New United States citizens started seeing this as a chance because of the low capital investment. It doesn't take a lot of money to get into this business—a car with the backseat out and the trunk lid off, a box knife or a ring knife, a good supply of rubber bands and they were ready to make \$50 a day.

People of every nationality were now in the woods. That put a lot of pressure on traditional harvesters. The people who had worked three and four generations harvesting on Weyerhaeuser, Simpson, Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), or U.S. Forest Service land were now being pushed out because they weren't aggressive about getting permits. Their traditional harvesting sites were not traditional anymore. They were run out because they didn't have the money to pay the cash up front.

*Flowering beargrass*

So change occurred on that level, but also the harvesters changed from timber industry people supplementing their income to people from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds using this as their entire income.

The other area that has changed at the community level is the community's interest in starting these businesses—actually supporting and helping people get into the business. We've seen a lot of success in using cooperatives. Individuals alone have very little power to access big markets or to encourage buyers to come into the area.

In the Pacific Northwest, one problem is that buyers are located typically near Shelton, near the big processing facilities in the Shelton and Olympia area. They can't afford to put these expensive plants all over the place and have them empty 9 months of the year, so the pickers have to travel all over to bring the raw material back.

What I'm doing with communities now is looking at how they can develop a raw material supply that the Shelton people will pick up or that they can send up. Is there something as simple as a container? For \$1,500 you can buy a used refrigeration truck that will easily store \$2,000 worth of product. Fill that container, and Continental Cascade or Mill Crest or Mill Creek Ironwood will come pick it up and pay a premium. So we've been suggesting that these communities should look at smaller structures people can all chip in to, instead of building big facilities. Some of our land managers are even looking at converting old Christmas tree or tree stock refrigeration storage into this.

So we are looking at the local communities and saying, "How can we help a lot of small businesses get the skills to harvest sustainably?" That's the critical issue, because there's a valid concern by people who watch the forest that we could overharvest these products.

One of my education projects is teaching people not just how to make and market a wreath or a basket, but how to identify the plants. One problem is that there are no schools in the United States that teach how to manage, market, or manufacture these products. Even identifying the 170-some plants that can be used for herbal and edible and medicinal uses would be a start. I was trained to be a forester, and we spent 2 whole days on other things besides timber. That supposedly gave us all the background we needed to deal with multiple use.

Yet when we talk about products, sometimes we don't even know the relationships between the various plants in the communities they grow in. Where do they grow? What kind of volume can they produce? How intensively should they be managed?

What should we do? We can begin training forest land managers. We can also train harvesters, teaching them how to harvest sustainably and helping them find the markets. However, some of the greatest entrepreneurs in the world are the pickers we work with.

The most important thing I can say is that these communities are beginning to see special forest products as being valuable. The research institutions are starting to look at forest products as important. Our wildlife people, the land managers, everybody is starting to say these are important products. They're important to communities, because they help absorb some of the shock caused by changes in the timber industry.

We know the products and where they can be marketed. People can manufacture them in home-based businesses and access markets individually or through cooperatives. Local people can offer land managers new skills in stewardship activities.

This is not a new industry. The first company formally selling Pacific Northwest products started in 1938. All of these products had been managed by Native Americans, and the first European settlers used many of the same products. So we're building on history. However, most land managers and community development people see this as starting within the last 4 or 5 years.

The industry is entrepreneurial. It's small companies and individual people who need to learn to manage these products successfully. For a lot of people, if they can earn enough to sustain their life-styles and live in Forks, Washington, instead of moving to the city to be computer key punch operators, they're happy, even if it isn't what some people consider "a living." We need to remember that when we deal with the harvesters. We cannot superimpose our ideas of what they need to make.

I deal with a lot of things, everything from teaching people how to manage the land to plant identification, marketing, and working with small groups. The farm and forestry associations and a lot of governmental groups are only beginning to realize that the economic development side really shows itself as community development.

In Washington and Oregon we're extremely lucky—it's a real strength of communities—that Native American people are included, because the First People's issues are going to be critical. There is an enormous market for Native American products. When I bring people here from Taiwan, Japan, China, Korea, Germany, France, and England, they want to see how the Native Americans used these products. But accompanying a tremendous market potential are some important Native American issues.

Community development at the local level involves individuals and usually families, often family-owned businesses. I realize it's a very broad scope.

**AUDIENCE:** Mason County on the Olympic Peninsula has a long history connected with the special forest products industry. Does that hold true in other parts of the region? Are there hot spots of industry and cold spots where there's not much going on?

**MR. FREED:** The answer is yes, in both Washington and Oregon. Two weeks ago I spent a whole week on the eastside from Newport, Washington, and the Okanogan Forest down to Wenatchee. They didn't think they had any special forest products because they didn't have floral greenery, which is the main driving force. But they told me what they had, and I started explaining different markets to them.

There are cold spots because people haven't thought of the plants on the forest floor, or even on the range, as having value. And yet some of our best medicinal plants may come from these areas.

**AUDIENCE:** You said there are three or four generations of people interested in special forest products in some communities. Is that true for most places?

**MR. DAVIS:** It's a regional thing across the country. You find folk crafts—making wooden cradles, weaving baskets, a wide variety of things. It's been going on for centuries, but it's not well recognized.



*Beargrass harvest*

**MR. FREED:** There are two sides to the question of special forest products. One is the commercial—manufacturing, selling it to somebody in Hong Kong or to an ethnic clientele in Portland. The other side is the recreational or personal use. More people harvest forest products for personal use than commercially. There is a long history of personal use and barter of these products. People have lived off these products as long as anyone has lived in these areas including Native Americans, who have lived on the Olympic Peninsula for 12,000 years, and the early European settlers. There is a long tradition of very local, small, almost farmer-type markets: roadside markets, direct marketing for products like huckleberries. Direct marketing has been all over the Pacific Northwest—there isn't a community where someone hasn't harvested something and sold it locally.

What's different now is that the whole world is interested in products from these places. The Olympic Peninsula, because of its wholesale markets, has been there for years. Our problem in the Olympic Peninsula is the wholesale mentality. It's like selling round logs to Japan. The mindset says to sell—get big in the wholesale business. Some of the consultants just want to see more wholesale.

But people can make more money by picking mushrooms and selling them directly to restaurants or by setting up a stand at a farmers' market than by getting \$1.50 or \$2 a pound from a buyer for chanterelles (*Cantharellus* spp.). I go to little markets alongside the road and pay \$4 for a pound of mushrooms. To them it's "Wow, I just tripled what I would have been paid."

I train people to look at those small markets, because every community can access a Fred Meyer. One of the best places is Wal-Mart, if you're making crafts, baskets, wooden birdhouses, whatever. If you have a Wal-Mart in your community, you have the world as a market. Local managers get a commission for finding products, especially if they're American-made. If they're traditional, that's even better.

But there are also the small markets. The Olympic Peninsula has a good wholesale market, but the retail market can be worldwide. Take jams and jellies. There isn't a community in Washington or Oregon I've been in that isn't a hot retail market.

**MR. DAVIS:** Yes, and then there's the restaurant market throughout the Northwest. If you can set up delivery, you can sell forest edibles to up-scale gourmet restaurants.

**MR. FREED:** At the community level, people can find a local retail market. When I came to Mason County, 17,000 people were there in the summer. Now, the summer population is 142,000 people, and the resident population is 46 - 49,000, depending on who they count. Most of those new people don't even know what grows in the forest, but they have the disposable income to buy fresh mushrooms. You can buy organic lettuce at the farmers market, but you can't buy wild chanterelles. (I'm working with people to set up door-to-door sales—you know, the Schwan Ice Cream delivery mind set.) If you want people to make a lot of money without pressuring forest resources, try retail sales—it takes 16 to 25 times as much product at the wholesale level as it does selling retail to bring in the same money.

You put more work in, but you get more money in return, whether it's mushrooms or making baskets. I have people making wooden bowls that sell for \$600 a piece. Native American baskets can be \$1,800 to \$3,000 if they're made by a Native American using beargrass and natural dyes or cedar bark. Even something as simple as walking sticks, made from an alder waste product the company got a permit to harvest and sold 1,800 for \$50 apiece this year.

**AUDIENCE:** And I sell them for 10 cents each as aluminum puddling sticks.

**MR. FREED:** Yes, the tourism market is the other side for value added—the local thing is the tourism market. Everybody forgets that one. There is a tremendous potential for value added in the crafts market. I have birch bark

that's been carved in the form of roses, spruce cones, and a pine fungus. They were really excited to get \$2.50 apiece for these products. I asked how many they could make—they can be sold at the Saturday Market for who knows what? So we're helping people understand the local retail market versus the world market and some of the ethnic markets.

**MR. DAVIS:** I deal with the land management end. When you go in to get a permit or try to harvest something, I'm the person you deal with.

Let me tell you a couple of things first, because if I don't, you'll probably take things the wrong way. I have some very strong biases about this subject. I am, by training and inclination, a "timber beast." I'm also a silviculturist, and I approach the issues from a silviculture standpoint.

Jim's right. There's almost no forestry school in the country that teaches what I'm going to talk about. What I learned 20 years ago in silviculture, though, holds true whether I'm growing white pine (*Pinus monticola*), Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), or prince's-pine (*Chimaphila umbellata*). The principles are basically the same. A good basic ecology background will get you a long way in this area we call special or specialty forest products. So keep those things in mind.

I'm not an expert, but I've been doing this for about 10 years now. Jim is more knowledgeable than I am about certain aspects, but on some things I'm more knowledgeable than he is. And there are harvesters who know more than I do.

Until about 1986 or '87, the way special forest products were handled on the Zigzag Ranger District on the Mt. Hood National Forest was that you walked in, you requested to collect something, and boom, you went to get it. No permit, no oversight. Nothing.

Most landowners really didn't care. There was no demand for these products. There was no value ascribed to them. But if you look at the historical perspective not only the Native Americans but the early loggers and fishermen people often augmented their income or their larder by harvesting what we now call special forest products.

For purposes of this discussion, we are talking about products that are not delivered to a saw mill, a pulp mill, or a plywood plant. They include things like berry posts. Berry farmers want cedar posts, which are long lasting, and hop farmers want hop poles. Those are specialty products.

Pepsi is a high-value product. Pepsi has a flavoring from a plant called prince's-pine, which has commercial value. We still don't know what is paid for it, where it's going, who's harvesting it, or how much is being harvested.

In my native State of Minnesota, wild rice can only be harvested by Native Americans. They are trying to grow it in an agricultural setting, but it's restricted. You and I can't harvest it, but a Native American could. We have to buy it for \$16 a pound.

This raises some interesting conundrums from a management standpoint. Historically, we've been interested in timber because that's what people wanted. They wanted houses. They wanted shelter. We didn't worry about the other things.

Most of you have harvested huckleberries and mushrooms, cut firewood, picked wildflowers, and cut Christmas trees and boughs. Guess what, folks. You've been harvesting special forest products and you probably never got a permit. If you talk to long-term people in this business, particularly the "shroomers," the people who harvest mushrooms, you'll find that harvesting special products is often done secretly, illicitly, and flat-out illegally. It is still being done that way because in the past nobody really cared. Well, in the last 8 or 10 years, we have begun to really care.

Coupled with the increasing demand for products and concern by managers, there has been an explosion in people harvesting. Now I work in the Mt. Hood National Forest, 45 miles from Portland. There are a million and a half people within an hour's drive, and I think I see every one of them.

Those people must be calling their relatives across the world and telling them, "Come on over and pick." We see Japanese people who don't speak a word of English harvesting matsutake mushrooms (*Tricholoma magnivelare*). We see Germans, French, Italians, Estonians, Czechs, Slovaks, Ukrainians, Russians, Latvians, Finns, Lithuanians, Cambodians, Hmongs, Ming, Vietnamese, and Thai. You name the country or ethnic group, I've seen them all, and they are all looking for the same thing.

However, they don't all come with the same skills. Often nobody explains what the regulations are, or what is expected of them. They don't have the level of knowledge you or I might have. In fact, most of you probably do not know what we commonly ask on a permit.

Incidentally, how many are mushroomers in here? Did you get permits? The State of Oregon now requires written landowner permission for all forest products going down a highway, and that includes anything more than a gallon of mushrooms.

**AUDIENCE:** A gallon or less. For florals it's 12 cubic feet and wood products like firewood, 27 cubic feet—which is a pickup.

**AUDIENCE:** And the State police will stop you. That's why so many people are getting permits this year.

**MR. DAVIS:** You need documentation—written permission with the landowner's name and address on it. For most products, that hasn't been required before.

**AUDIENCE:** But what if I own the land?

**MR. DAVIS:** You have to prove to the State police that it's your land.

**MR. FREED:** Legally, you can write yourself a permit, but only if you are the landowner or you have permission from the landowner.

**AUDIENCE:** The added emphasis on requiring documentation affects mushroom sales because buyers won't buy the product from the picker without it.

**MR. DAVIS:** That's a significant change from 8 years ago. We used to require Christmas tree permits, Christmas tree tags, and firewood tags and that was pretty much it.

**MR. FREED:** Five Christmas trees. If you have five Christmas trees on board, you better have something in writing.

**MR. DAVIS:** Quite frankly, my interest is not in the legalities of permitting. My interest is the actual management of these products. We as land managers have made very little attempt to manage these resources. We've managed Christmas trees and a few other things. We've even put some of them into an agricultural or horticultural setting.

Most of what we're harvesting today is being harvested because of something someone did in the past. They burned a unit, they clear-cut it, whatever. We are living off the interest of that activity. But for most of these products, we're not only living off the interest, we're living off the principal. We have not made serious attempts to build the principal back up.

That is where my focus on special products is going, because I'm encouraging people to follow a simple rule. "Allemans rätten" is Swedish for "every man's right." In Scandinavia, particularly in Sweden and Finland, they have this concept of "every man's right." You are allowed as an individual to enter private property. You can camp on it, you can pick mushrooms, you can pick berries, as long as you do not damage the property.

This is an ethic. One of the things some of us in land management are trying to encourage is developing an ethic—developing not only the resource but good resource ethics in people.

I'll give you an example. I have an area of about 3,000 to 4,000 acres, and it's very popular for matsutake mushrooms. The matsutake are highly prized by the Japanese in this country and in Japan. On this particular piece of ground, the Portland Japanese community has been harvesting matsutake for about 80 years.

It is such a tight little community and such a heritage that these individuals literally pass it on from generation to generation. I have talked to people who have harvested the same little plot of ground for three and four generations. They are very protective of it. They're so protective they don't always pass it on to the succeeding generation because they don't feel the family is worthy of the honor of picking in the father's or grandfather's spot.

Well, when other folks found out matsutake were selling for \$100 to \$250 a pound, everybody got excited. And on this 3,000- to 4,000-acre area, we were seeing a thousand people every day. We saw that for 4 weeks straight.

**AUDIENCE:** Now that the industry is growing bigger than the traditional family business, what are the ecological implications?

**MR. DAVIS:** That was one of our concerns. The perception is that this is a unified industry. Actually, this is a whole bunch of little mom-and-pops taking advantage of opportunities. It doesn't make any difference whether it's beargrass or mushrooms or teepee poles or cedar. You're not talking about Fred Meyer or Safeway or Seven-Eleven businesses.

You're talking about a family unit—say a Southeast Asian community group. It might be Hmong or Ming or Vietnamese or Laotian parents, kids, grandparents, aunts and uncles, maybe 8 or 10 people. Some of the European groups do the same thing, not necessarily for commercial purposes. A lot of the people don't speak English. The different ethnic groups do not necessarily talk to each other.

It wasn't so much that there were a thousand people out there, but this particular area is a designated Wild and Scenic River. It's a geologic special interest area. It has a unique assemblage of plants, because it's a 200-year-old mud flow. We were selling ground moss off of it. We were issuing and selling personal and commercial-use mushroom permits. We were selling permits for medicinal plants and a variety of other things.

Some of these new mushroom harvesters were just pulling the moss away. The Japanese community went ballistic, and quite rightly so. There were a thousand people a day with no regard for proper harvesting techniques.

There are individuals out there who don't know what they're doing and nobody has told them what to do. We weren't taught about these things in school. Few people can explain the proper way to harvest a product. We in the government have the tendency to overregulate, to write more rules, and that doesn't work.

**AUDIENCE:** Is there any sort of monitoring going on?

**AUDIENCE:** Very little. For example, cascara is a laxative, a Northwest product from the bark of the buckthorn tree (*Rhamnus purshiana*), that's been harvested for many years. BLM managers may write specifications on permits such as minimum tree diameter. They specify a particular area, and they go out with the permittee. So in that instance, there is some control over who is harvesting and how they harvest. But there is no formal monitoring of harvest consequences.

**MR. DAVIS:** That's in all permits, generally speaking. A contract is a little easier to deal with if it goes to court.

**AUDIENCE:** When you deal with large amounts of product and large acreage, it makes more sense to use a contract. For small amounts and small land sizes, perhaps a permit is more useful.

**AUDIENCE:** From a harvester's point of view, one of the more important things about a contract is exclusive rights.

**MR. DAVIS:** That is a big issue. In the Forest Service, we will not put a timber sale on top of another timber sale, or even on the same road.

With special products, there are a multitude of products that can be harvested from a piece of ground. If I issue someone a permit for a particular product, they have the exclusive rights to that product, but not to the other products in that area. I tell a harvester, “I’m issuing you a permit for this area for these products to this quantity, and I will not put another permit of that product on top of yours, but I may allow somebody to come and harvest a different product.”

The tendency in the past was to take everything from a given quarter of an acre, with no management. Now, I can issue a multiple-product contract.

In ecosystem management, which is where I see special products having a strong push because of the need to keep track of more ecosystem components, these vast areas with all products harvested are going to be out.

I want to spread the opportunity to as many people as possible, because if one person has exclusive rights, 20 other people can’t harvest there. That doesn’t help community development.

**MR. FREED:** I just want to support the last thing John said. To manage sustainable communities and sustainable ecosystems, land managers and the timber industry have to learn how this fits in. It’s not an either/or situation. Timber managers, as well as forestry schools, often regarded this as an either/or; either they raise special forest products on the site, or they raise timber.

What we’re seeing is that products change through the stages of a timber cycle. Land managers are starting to ask: What can be harvested between clearcutting and year 15? How can we enhance those products? If we extend that time from year 15 to year 40 by pruning, thinning, and fertilization, what effect will that have on the timber? We’re beginning to see a sustainable alternative to the clearcut option.

**MR. DAVIS:** One of the things we’re talking about is dealing with huckleberries on a landscape basis by having smaller permanent fields that are always there, and also having a whole series of transitory fields that move over the landscape.

The Northwest Forest Plan talks a lot about late successional reserves—stands 80 years [old] and older. This raises some real concerns because a lot of these products, such as huckleberries, are highly dependent upon early to mid-seral stands. That doesn’t mean we don’t have them in late seral, but they are far less abundant. Now, the tendency over the last 30 years has been to carve the landscape into various land allocations: wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, and so on. So, instead of being able to do this on a landscape area, we’re actually dealing with very, very small pieces of ground. It makes this kind of management very difficult.

**MR. FREED:** These buyers, these harvesters, watch a site. When quality drops to a certain level, they move away. They’ll harvest somewhere else. Land managers call me and say, “Nobody came to pick beargrass (*Xerophyllum tenax*) this year. What was going on?” Harvesters look at the whole region,

not just one ranger district. They look at what's happening in Northern California, Washington, Oregon, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and they harvest all over.

**MR. DAVIS:** Or the price drops or goes up. They're very price-conscious. What we're talking about is basically transitional development. You may harvest out of a clearcut here for 15 years, but down the road I put a clearcut over there so the harvest moves.

**AUDIENCE:** Are assessments associated with these sales? And are they put out to public bid?

**MR. FREED:** Yes. Public and private land managers, ecologists, and community associations help us. For example, the wildlife people know what the wildlife harvest is, and grazing studies—for example, exclusionary studies—can show what happens under certain conditions.

Special forest product harvesting has to meet the same criteria as timber sales including Environmental Assessments. The biggest difference is that we're not talking about mechanized harvest. It can be virtually invisible. I could harvest the floral products from your front yard and you wouldn't know I'd been there.

**AUDIENCE:** One of the ironies is that most of our biological knowledge of these species comes from studying how to get rid of them; salal, beargrass, vine maple (*Acer circinatum*). The interest in their biology was in finding ways to get them out of the way of the single timber species of commercial importance. I say "irony" because once we attach economic value to something, and particularly as the value goes up, we finally start worrying about conservation. Ginseng is a good example. The value of ginseng goes up as it becomes more scarce, which drives people to look for it more—perhaps to the edge of extinction.

**MR. FREED:** I'm an outsider. It's fun to work with the Forest Service and with BLM and WDNR and the parks people. We don't always think about State parks, but those people are asking the same questions they have things that can be harvested on a recreational basis. It doesn't sound like much, but each person can take a gallon of mushrooms. If 15,000 people get personal use permits from one ranger district, that's quite an impact.

**MR. DAVIS:** Actually, from what the land managers in the Forest Service hear from harvesters, we probably could harvest at higher levels. Harvesters would argue that we put too many restrictions in terms of quantity.

There are a couple of interesting questions in terms of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Willamette and Siuslaw National Forests have prepared Environmental Assessments on special forest products. At Mt. Hood National Forest, we have special forest products recognized in our forest plan, and I do a categorical exclusion every year for the program, so we do have input.

We also have to deal with Native Americans. There's a possibility that treaty rights may overshadow personal use and commercial use. If push comes to shove, treaty rights supercede other rights to harvest on ceded lands or on traditional and customary use lands.

Now, at Mt. Hood, the whole eastside is ceded and the westside is traditional customary use. If somebody from Warm Springs Reservation says, "I want all the huckleberries on the Mt. Hood National Forest for cultural use," my forest supervisor has the legal responsibility to say, "There will be no harvest of huckleberries on the Mt. Hood National Forest until the Warm Springs people are satisfied."

**MR. FREED:** The same thing holds true on the Olympic Peninsula.

**MR. DAVIS:** It depends on the Indian tribe and on the treaty. That's an issue that hasn't raised its head yet. We hope it won't get to the level the salmon got to. We're working with the tribes to address their needs and still accommodate everybody else.

**AUDIENCE:** What level of contention do you expect on special forest products, and when might it peak?

**MR. DAVIS:** I don't think it's ever going to peak, because as long as you have people competing for resources, there will be contention.

**AUDIENCE:** You don't think public land managers can set up a system that will satisfy people?

**MR. DAVIS:** The only situation I know that is evidently working is on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest in the Mt. Adams Ranger District. Since about 1983 there's been a handshake agreement between the Mt. Adams Ranger District and the Yakama Nation for a set-aside for the harvest of huckleberries by the Yakamas. There are no legal documents—it's totally on a handshake. Because it's got 60 years of use behind it, it would probably be upheld in the court. I would hope so.

Warm Springs has a huckleberry festival every year that's very important to them. They look for huckleberries in the summer, and when they get ripe ones, they have the festival. They have requested for many years that we either designate an area on the Mt. Hood where only they can harvest, or we say there will be no huckleberry harvest until after the festival. Now, that's a decision that I can't make because we're talking about a government-to-government relationship.

When the matsutake prices went through the roof, the Japanese complained about the commercial harvesters and the Southeast Asians. Everybody was kicking over everybody else's mushrooms because they didn't know what they were. I don't want to see that kind of contention. I want to see cooperation and ethics so that everybody has an opportunity.

**AUDIENCE:** You noted the large number of transient harvesters going to hot spots, yet you're working on community development and establishing local businesses. How do you think managers can balance the two?

**MR. FREED:** As land managers, universities, and others start looking at managing these products, we are going to see better management. I have already seen it on the nonindustrial private forest lands. People managing small forest projects see developing their sites for mushrooms as an exciting possibility. I see a lot of small-forest landowners having specialty contracts with the retail side.

I'm working with companies that want to develop small specialty mushroom sites for tourism, where they can lead guided tours that charge people outrageous amounts of money—it matches what's happening in Japan. We don't have any big mushroom festivals in the United States that I know of, and yet Japan has many of them.

Sites are going to be fragmented. I see this already on the public side, where you have recreational, wholesale, and local retail. So you have a big commercial concern or you can issue a long-term contract.

**AUDIENCE:** You're talking about dividing up different pieces of land for different purposes?

**MR. FREED:** The big commercial companies are getting into stewardship and long-term agreements, because they have something the small company doesn't have—the capital to get the permits.

**MR. DAVIS:** In some situations you do not want a small commercial company, or you don't want the transitory or personal workers. At a ski area, a permittee has the right to use the area as a ski area. However, the runs aren't used 6 to 9 months of the year. Historically, at least through the Forest Service, the pattern has been to throw grass on it—nonnative grass, I might add.

A lot of these sites are at elevations that could grow mushrooms or huckleberries, for example. Why not landscape the area and put in hiking trails that would also allow access to mushrooms? One of the issues on the Mt. Hood is rehabilitating the blister rust infected whitebark pine (*Pinus albicaulis*), which has been the source of pine nuts, an important tribal food. All of these things are opportunities, but I wouldn't necessarily put mom and pop out there to do these things.

**MR. FREED:** Another area where we'll be seeing agreements is with cooperatives or larger companies where you don't want many people. Then land managers know who's out there, and they can ask anyone else to leave. However, policing is a major issue. How do you know who's who? In some areas you can lock up roads. Where the infrastructure is set up to handle people, those sites can be set aside for recreational use and high numbers of people.

**AUDIENCE:** It sounds like you're saying managers are moving away from general permits toward accountability in harvesting an area.

**MR. DAVIS:** The Northwest Forest Plan lays out certain expectations on various land allocations. There are certain products that are specific and unique to riparian reserves. I'm not likely to let a transitory crew in there without a very stringent permit or a contract.

**AUDIENCE:** I hope you'll at least set aside some areas for personal use.

**MR. DAVIS:** On the Zigzag Ranger District, we have designated our Old Maid Flats area as a personal use mushroom harvest area—no commercial harvesting. As other products develop, we may set aside similar areas for them.

**MR. FREED:** Biological societies, the native plants societies—they're all interested in the forest being managed for the public, in making sure we have recreational uses. The State park system in Washington had cleared all the brush out. Now they're allowing brush to grow back for the berries because they realize the people want them.

**MR. DAVIS:** You have to realize, though, that different places do different things. Different ranger stations, different forests have different policies. A lot depends on their staff's knowledge, time, interest, and especially, funds.

If you've got somebody who really gets into this, they'll separate the different groups and work with each group so everybody understands the rules of the game. People less interested, or with less support, are not going to do that. That's a real problem.

**MR. FREED:** You own these public lands. If you harvest or manage, make sure your voice is heard. Right now there are a lot of questions about how these lands will be managed for special forest products.

As an outsider with the Forest Service, I'm working on where the monies generated by special forest products go. Currently, they go back to the general fund in Washington, DC. We're trying to turn some of that money toward research, improvements, and local monitoring. It is not impossible, but it's going to take a little work.

Become involved. Public land managers either say they have thousands of people interested, or they don't think they have anything of value. There isn't a ranger district in Oregon or Washington, or a BLM district or a State or Federal park, where special forest products aren't harvested. Even though there may not be permits, it's happening.

So make sure your voices are heard at all levels. Offer to do some monitoring. Find out what's out there, because that's critical. There's no money for plant surveys. If you're looking for a student internship, or if you're a harvester looking for access to a piece of property, do some monitoring.

**MR. DAVIS:** I have the Mycological Society doing mushroom surveys—they learn and I get information.

Most professionals in the Forest Service don't have a clue about who I deal with on a daily basis. They have no concept of what backgrounds these folks come from, because they're used to dealing with the large recreational groups, the timber companies, the more traditional publics.

The decisionmakers rarely see the little mom-and-pop mushroom harvester or beargrass harvester who walks in the door. Most of the recreating public picking mushrooms or huckleberries never talk to the people who make the monetary and management decisions.

I tell both my personal and commercial harvesters, “You guys are being shut out of the woods because people making decisions don’t have the information they need. They don’t know who you are. They don’t have a quarter of the information they need to keep you in the woods.” I don’t mention this to scare people, but access to public and private lands is a major issue.

Landowners and managers are increasingly closing lands because of garbage, theft, liability, and other issues.

Harvesters of special products, whether they harvest for personal or commercial use, have a responsibility to make themselves known to the landowners and managers and to make their concerns and interests heard. My experience suggests that with good planning, special products development, management, and harvest are not necessarily at odds with other resource objectives.

**To conclude this discussion, I leave you with the following four points:**

1. To establish and maintain a supply of a variety of special products for all potential users and also to address American Indian treaty rights will take planning, foresight, and change in thinking by land managers, harvesters, buyers, and the general public. All must change their ideas, attitudes, and perceptions.
2. Harvesters and buyers will need to establish high standards and ethics regarding the harvest, sale, and even management of special products. They will need to become more open in passing on their knowledge and expertise to land managers and other harvesters and buyers to help ensure not only sustainability of resources but also access to those resources.
3. The development, management, and sustainability of many products will require active forest management, integrated with the broader forest management plan, that will probably include a full array of silvicultural treatments to develop and maintain suitable site conditions.
4. Finally, developing special products and management strategies takes time. Although we may have enough of these products today, are we doing enough to maintain or increase quantity and quality for the future? For many products, it can take one to two decades for the plant or organism to produce fruit, grow large enough to meet size requirements, or to create the ecological conditions necessary for establishment and growth. This is a long-term process requiring a long-term commitment from land managers, harvesters, and everyone else interested in these resources.