



PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE FOREST TRADE OF LESSER KNOWN TIMBER SPECIES

GOOD WOOD AND FOREST CONSERVATION

Many will find it strange that WWF, the global conservation organization, would promote timber and logging -- particularly in tropical forests. But the fact is that WWF does support forest industries in all parts of the world *provided that they practice socially and environmentally responsible forest management*. While WWF continues work to protect the most ecologically valuable forests in reserves, we see responsible forestry as a key component of sustainable development that can and should go hand in hand with forest conservation.

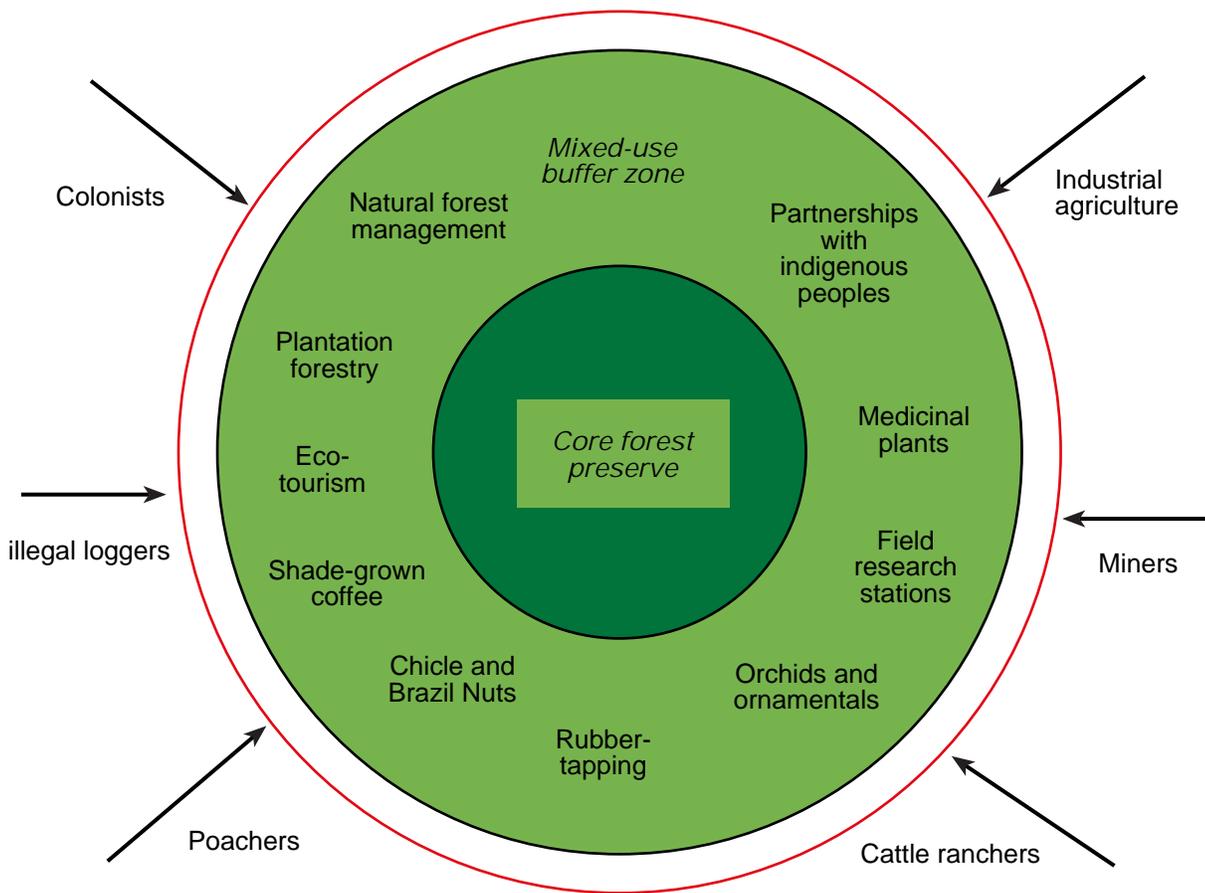
THE FOREST THAT PAYS IS THE FOREST THAT STAYS

The link between responsible forestry and forest conservation is a vital one in the developing world, where pressures on forests are great. If forests are to be preserved in regions where poverty and population growth are challenges and the need for development is acute, local people must perceive them as having economic value, or they risk being converted to farms, cattle pasture, and other uses.

Forests can generate income for people in the developing world in a variety of sustainable ways: ecotourism, non-timber forest products such as rubber, shade-grown coffee and medicinal plants, and research activities, among others. All of these can all help incentivize local people to maintain the forest as forest. But timber is the primary forest product, and in many places, responsible forestry can play a central role in conservation-based development.



Responsible forest management can work hand in hand with nature reserves and preservation, giving local people an economic stake in defending the managed forest without compromising its ecological integrity and future productivity. In Bolivia, numerous indigenous and rural communities, as well as private companies and forest concessions, work under this model. In fact, Bolivia has over 5 million acres of tropical forests certified to the stringent environmental and social standards of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), more than any other country.



Managed forests can protect forest preserves by acting as buffer zones where local people can make their living and stand between parks and the forces of encroachment and deforestation.

DEVELOPING MARKETS FOR LESSER-KNOWN TIMBER SPECIES– A KEY TO RESPONSIBLE FORESTRY IN BOLIVIA

Responsible forestry and forest certification cannot succeed in the tropics without developing appropriate uses and markets for lesser-known timber species (LKTS). Consumers are accustomed to purchasing a very limited range of timber species, and are generally unaware that thousands of useful wood species exist.

Using a broader range of species conforms demand to what natural forests can produce sustainably and can reduce the chances that well-known species will be overexploited.

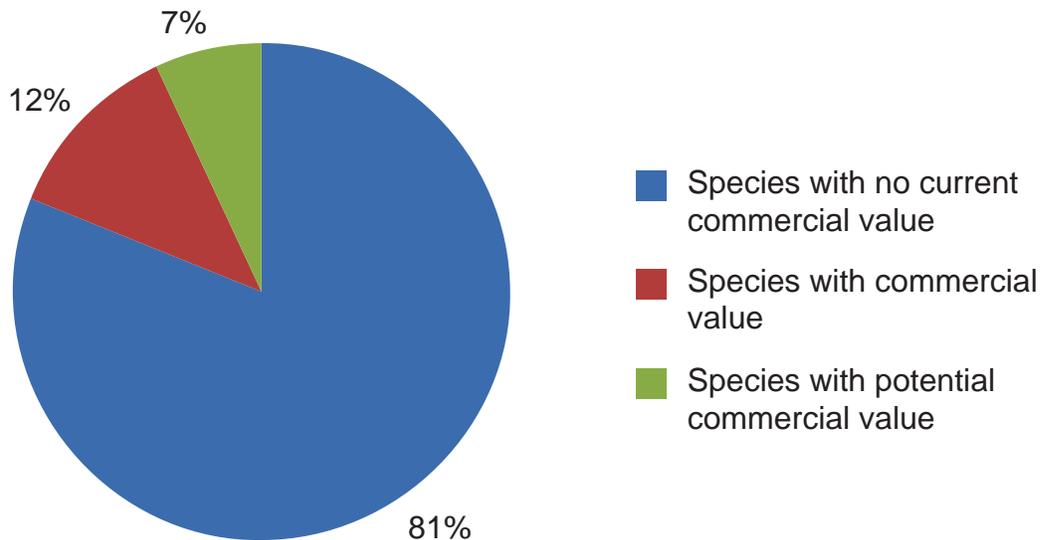
For example, of the hundreds of tree species that occur in Bolivia's forests, only a relative handful are commonly used for wood products and fewer still are recognized abroad. Well-known woods like mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*) are quickly snapped up by buyers.

In the natural forests of Bolivia, mahogany and other valuable trees tend to grow widely dispersed: it is common to find only a few harvestable trees in a given area of forest.

The problem is that the fixed costs of responsible forest management – training workers, completing forest inventories and management plans, buying necessary equipment and building access roads, obtaining FSC certification, etc. – are considerable. Well-known species are rarely available in sufficient quantity to cover all of these costs, and this means that markets must be developed for LKTS in order to make good forestry economically sustainable over the long term.

To illustrate the point, in the Chiquitano Dry Forest of eastern Bolivia, there are about 120 tree species, only about two dozens of which are useable for lumber. Of these dozens, a few are highly valuable, a few more are moderately valuable, and the remainder is currently lesser-known and low value.

Species available in the Chiquitano Dry Forest



In several acres of this type of forest, you might expect to find only 4 or 5 mature specimens of the dozen of useable species. Furthermore, in doing responsible forestry, you need to leave one tree behind for every 4 trees you remove to provide seed for future regeneration and harvests (you would expect to come back into the same area of forest every 20 or 30 years to harvest the valuable

trees that were too young and small to cut the first time around). In this type of highly selective forestry, the volumes of timber coming out of the forest at each harvest are small, and fully half of the available volume may be from LKTS. Finding markets for the latter can make the difference between a profitable venture and one that is not viable over time!





Three reasons to buy lesser-known timber species

- LKTS can often substitute for better-known species in terms of performance and aesthetics in most applications, but they are generally more cost effective because they are abundant and underutilized.
- The many LKTS available with rich, truly exotic colors and textures provide new design opportunities for homeowners as well as architects and designers.
- The use of LKTS can alleviate pressure on well-known timber species and increase the economic viability of sustainable forest management

CONNECTING TO CONSCIOUS CONSUMERS IN THE DEVELOPED WORLD

For better or worse, ecological awareness, “green” demand, and disposable income are all much higher in North America and Europe than they are in Bolivia and other parts of

Latin America. The best near-term opportunity to build support for LKTS from responsibly managed forests in Bolivia is to promote high-quality finished products made from them – products such as wood flooring, decking, and doors that can be manufactured cost-effectively in Bolivia and exported to satisfy green demand in the developed world.

WWF is proud to announce that a number of forward-thinking U.S. importers have chosen to participate in this important initiative. You can help support responsible forestry and the conservation of Bolivia’s forests by purchasing wood products from the following companies:

- **Flooring**
- **Decking**
- **Doors**



WWF AND THE FORESTS OF BOLIVIA

Bolivia has over 100 million acres of forest of which 16% is currently devoted to sustainable use. The resources of Bolivia's natural forests are a traditional source of subsistence for rural and indigenous people in the lowlands.

The timber growing in Bolivia's forests is also the foundation for a growing forest products industry industry, generating employment and income for the state as well as local governments (around 60,000 jobs and US\$ 300,000 of national income). In addition, these tropical forests provide a variety of critical environmental services such as biodiversity preservation, carbon sequestration, regulation of regional climate and rainfall, and production of clean air and water.

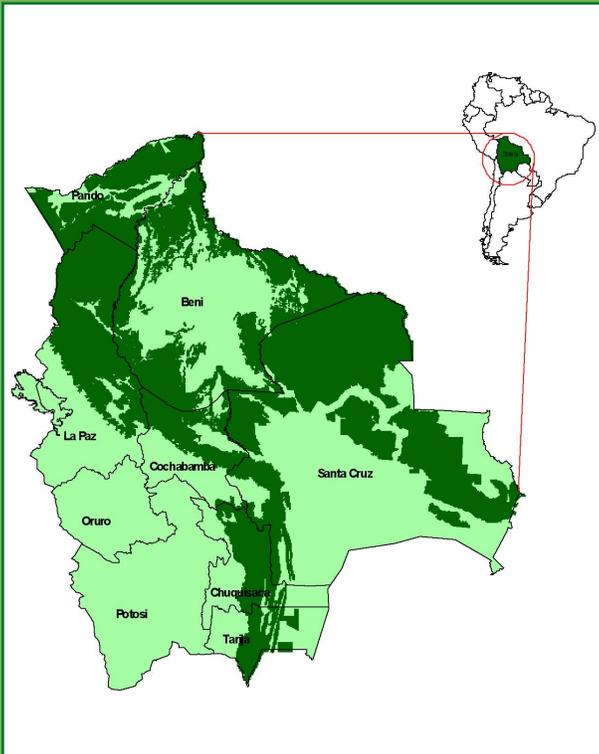
In spite of their great value, Bolivia's forests are threatened by illegal logging and in many

places are being converted to other uses, including agricultural and cattle ranching, even though their soils are not fit for such activities.

WWF Bolivia's forestry work

WWF has been working on forestry issues in Bolivia since 1993, when it began training communities in forest management in the Amazon watershed. Between 2001 and 2004, WWF Bolivia launched the regional community forest project whose aim was to provide training in sustainable forest management to selected community forestry operations, using as a guide the principles and criteria of FSC certification (Forest Stewardship Council).

Geographically, WWF's work regarding forest management is concentrated in the Amazon and Dry Chiquitano Forest with the goal of preserving their biodiversity and productivity for current and future generations.



Currently WWF Bolivia has a Forestry Program that supports indigenous communities in practicing responsible forestry and helps connect them with national and international markets. An important part of this work is building demand for legally-harvested wood coming from well-managed forests, including abundant LKTS.



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FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL (FSC) CERTIFICATION

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) (www.fsc.org) is a non-profit organization whose internationally recognized Principles and Criteria provide a consistent and credible framework for independent forest certification worldwide. FSC certification is a voluntary process that ensures consumers that the wood products they buy were grown and harvested in a way that protects forests for the long term. Certifiers assess the on-the-ground forest practices of a given operation against a stringent set of environmental, social and economic criteria. Operations that meet those standards may identify their products as originating from an FSC-certified well-managed source.

Among many other things, in order to be FSC certified, a forest owner or manager must:

- Meet all applicable laws
- Have legally established rights to harvest

- Respect indigenous rights
- Maintain community well-being
- Conserve economic resources
- Protect biological diversity
- Have a written management plan
- Engage in regular monitoring
- Maintain high conservation value forests
- Manage plantations to alleviate pressures on – NOT replace - natural forests.

FSC enjoys the support of WWF and many other conservation organizations.



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