



FOREST PARCELIZATION IN THE UNITED STATES: A PERSPECTIVE FROM THE ECONOMICS OF PROPERTY RIGHTS

A McIntire - Stennis Supported Project

Forestland in the United States has become more fragmented or parceled in recent years as the number of nonindustrial private forest landowners has continued to increase. Meanwhile, the economics of forest property rights has received limited attention. In particular, given the more frequent forest land transaction, the increasing adoption of conservation easements and division and sharing of property rights, there is a critical need to examine the pattern and determinants of forest parcelization from an economic perspective.

In this project, we use the principles of property rights to analyze forest parcelization in the United States. This approach is necessary because fragmented property rights involves more people in forestland management decisions, often creating conflicts on land use and management goals. Specifically, the fragmented forest property rights will be assessed by examining forest ownership duration and the adoption of conservation easements. The frequency of changes in Mississippi forestland ownership and the determinants of ownership duration will be analyzed. A comparison among 50 individual states about conservation easement adoption over time will be conducted. Several socio-economic and biophysical determinants will be analyzed to explain the current trends of conservation easement growth.



COLLABORATION

In addition to Mississippi State, this project includes researchers from the University of Georgia.

ABOUT MCINTIRE-STENNIS

The McIntire-Stennis program, a unique federal-state partnership, cultivates and delivers forestry and natural resource innovations for a better future. By advancing research and education that increases the understanding of emerging challenges and fosters the development of relevant solutions, the McIntire-Stennis program has ensured healthy resilient forests and communities and an exceptional natural resources workforce since 1962.



IMPACTS



There are about **four million nonindustrial private forest landowners** or tree farmers in the United States.



As of 2019, **158,000 conservation easements** were implemented to protect **27 million acres of land** in the United States.



This project aims to examine the **legal and economic consequences** of sharing property rights on rural land through conservation easements.