



Forest Service

United States Department of Agriculture

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WITH COMMUNITY FORESTS UNDER DIFFERENT OWNERSHIP MODELS IN THE U.S.

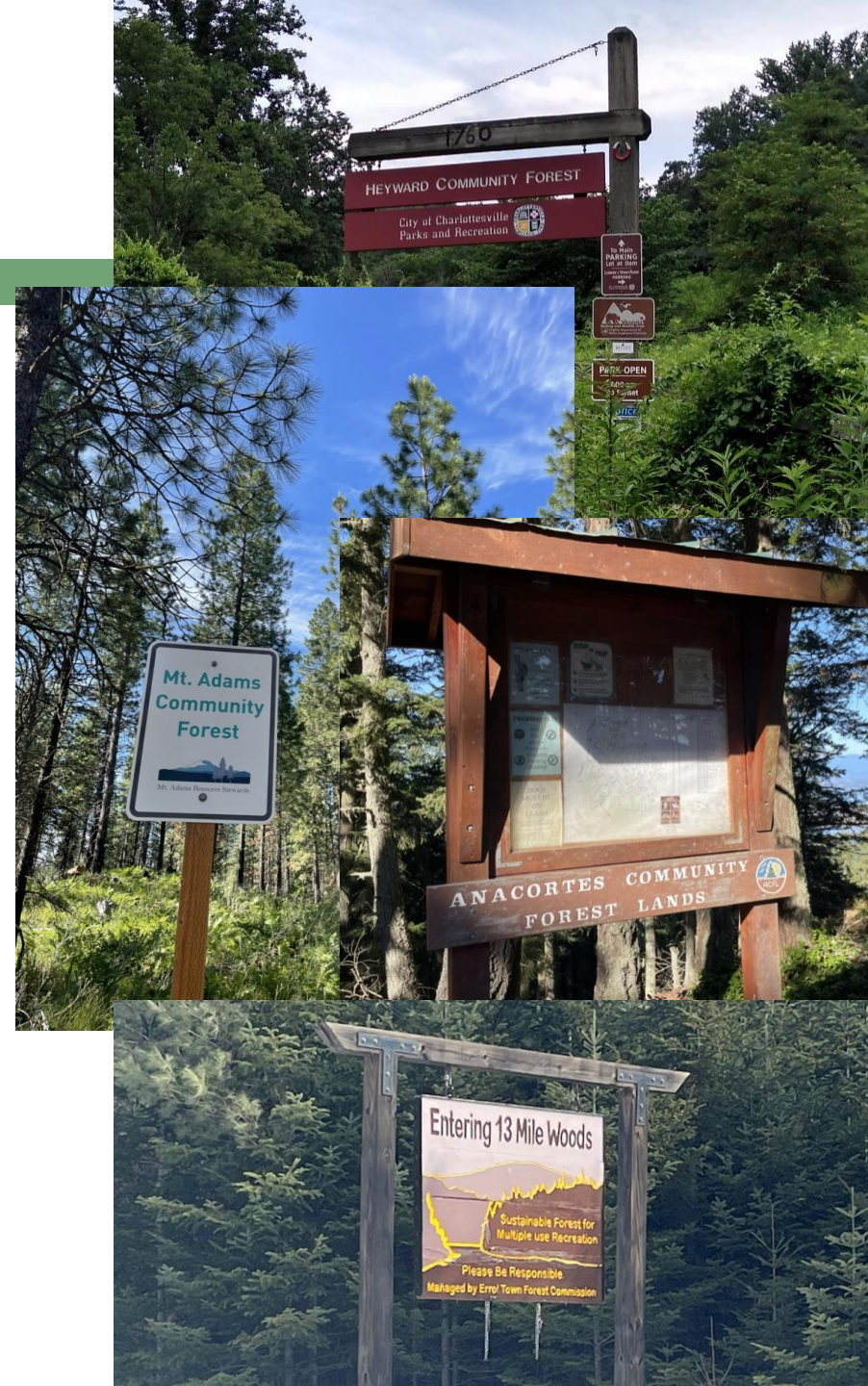
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# Background

- Community Forests (CF) have long been established, and more recently are expanding, in many parts of the US
- Range of ownership models, tenure regimes, governance approaches, aims, and activities
- Incomplete understanding of range in CF characteristics; how different CF models shape community rights, roles, and responsibilities, and outcomes in forest conservation and rural prosperity



# Collaborative Research on CFs in the US

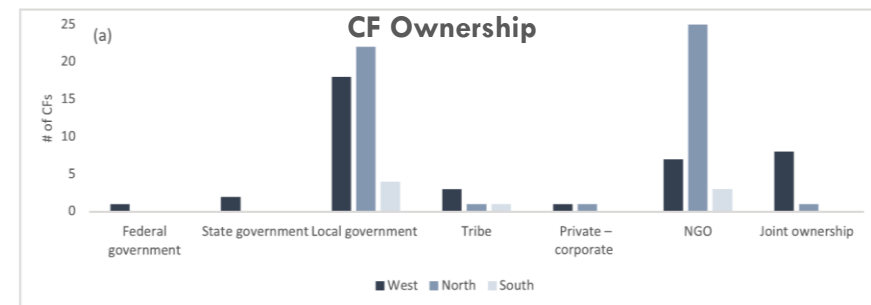
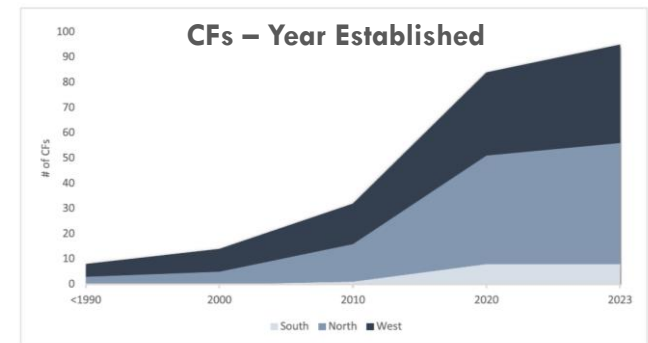
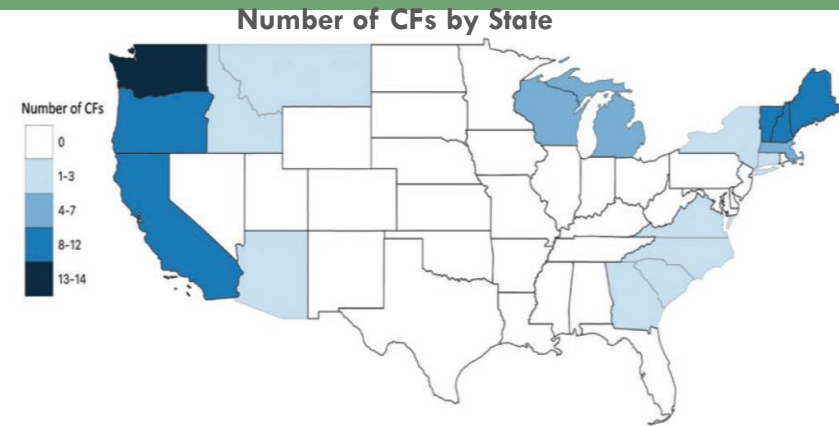
- FS/NCSU/OSU Collaborative Research on ‘Community Forests as an Innovative Approach to Promoting Rural Prosperity in the US’
  - Co-PIs: Susan Charnley (USFS PNW), Frederick W. Cabbage (NCSU), Gregory E. Frey (USFS SRS) (PI), Reem Hajjar (OSU), Kathleen McGinley (USFS IITF)
  - Affiliate Researcher: John Schelhas (USFS SRS ret.)
  - RAs/Students: Meredith Hovis (UNC-W), Kailey Kornhouser (OSU), Lauren McCaskill (OSU), Emma Sloan (OSU), Nathan Tarr (NCSU)
- Aim: Advance knowledge on CFs in the US and provide policy and practical insights for their establishment and support as an innovative approach to maximize forest conservation and rural prosperity
- Methods: survey research, case studies, in-depth social-economic analyses

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# Characterizing CFs in the US (Hajjar et al. 2024)

- Survey of 98 CFs in the US
- Earliest est. in 1930s, most est. since 2010
- Total area: 436,411 ac; 63% < 1,000 ac; 13% > 5,000 ac
- Ownership: primarily local govt and NGO owned; fewer tribe-, state-, fed- owned CFs
- Decision making authority – generally corresponds to ownership type; most utilize various means for soliciting input, engaging cmtty, and sharing decision-making authority



# CF Ownership, Rights, and Responsibilities

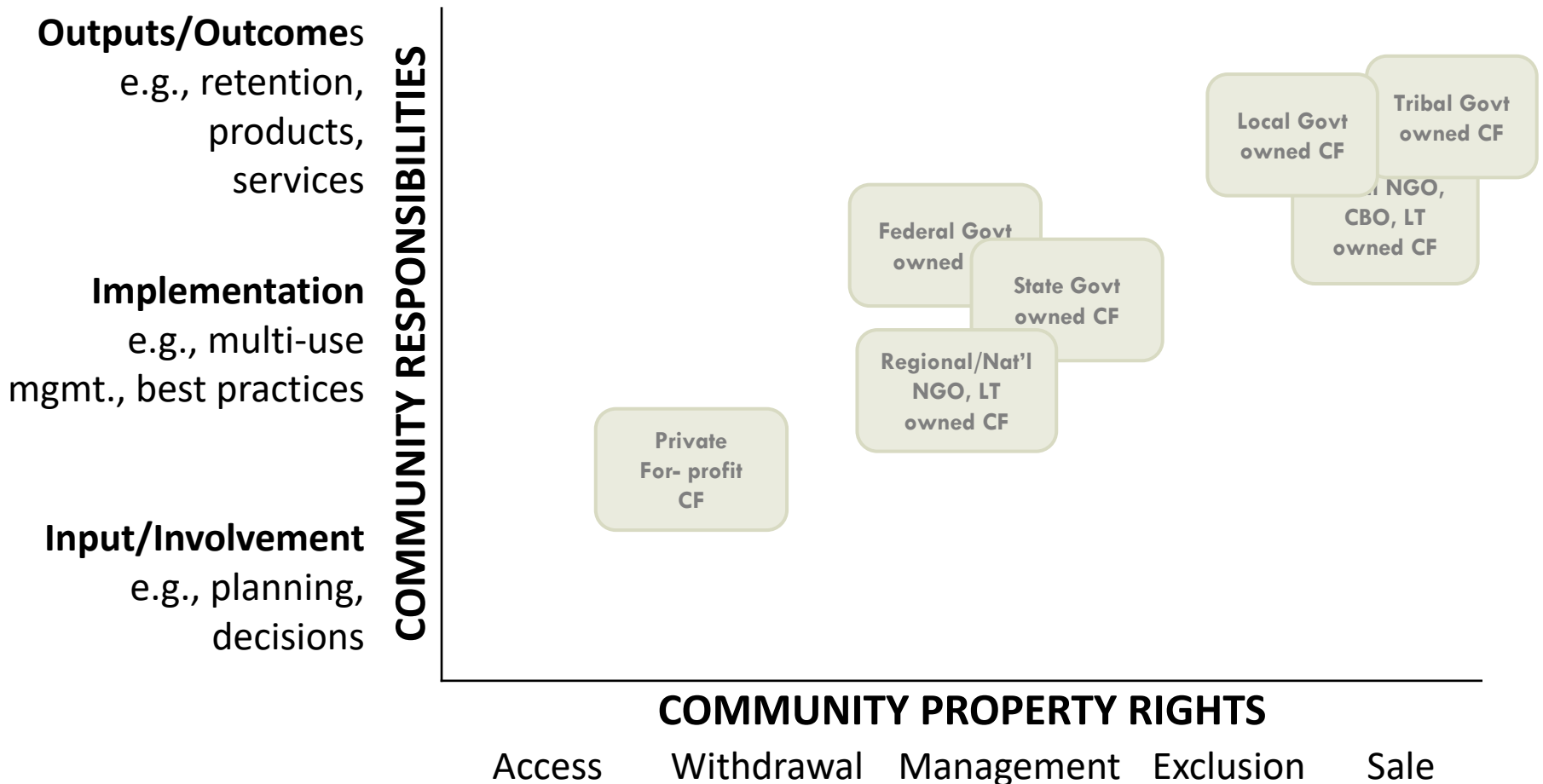
- Common pool resources, property rights theories: Incentives to sustain and protect land and resources can differ according to the combination of rights and responsibilities possessed
- How do CF different ownership models and associated bundles of community rights shape community engagement in and responsibilities for forest governance, mgmt., and outcomes

Level of Rights/Title	Owner	Proprietor	Claimant	Authorized user	Entrant/Viewer
Access: right to enter a defined physical area and enjoy non-subtractive benefits	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Withdrawal: right to obtain resource units or products	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Management: right to regulate internal use patterns and transform the resource	✓	✓	✓		
Exclusion: right to determine who has access and how it may be transferred	✓	✓			
Alienation/Sale: right to sell or lease rights of exclusion, management, withdrawal	✓				

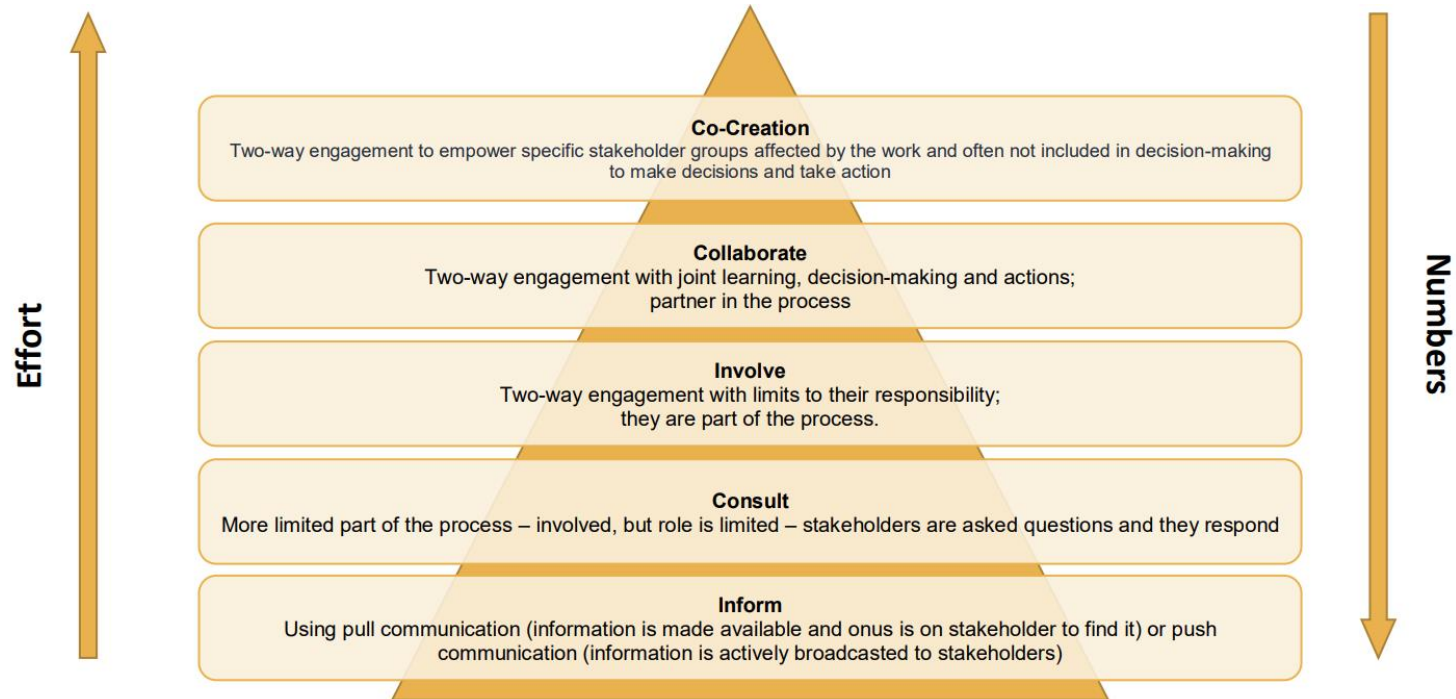
Schlager and Ostrom 1992



# Community Rights, Responsibilities, Engagement Under Different CF Ownership Models in the US



# CF – Public Participation and Engagement



Source: IAPP 2018

Diverse approaches for engaging community members and enabling their participation in decisions, their implementation, and their outcomes

Range from informing through co-creation/empowerment and with regards to the effort invested and number/portion of community members engaged/involved

# CF – Public Participation and Engagement

Level of Participation	Types of Engagement
Inform	Factsheets, Kiosks, Websites, Open Houses
Consult	Public comment, Focus groups, Surveys, Public Meetings
Involve	Workshops, Deliberate polling, Field Work, Forest Monitoring
Collaborate	Citizen Advisory Committees; Consensus-building; Participatory decision-making, Stewardship Committees, Citizen Science
Co-create/Empower	Ballots; Citizen Juries; Co-production of projects/plans; Delegating decisions and their implementation



# Closing Remarks

- CFs in US typically involve enhanced collaborative, participatory decision processes and increased rights for local community
- Ownership models often reflect balance b/w desired community rights to local forests and community capacity to assume responsibilities and authority
- CFs utilize broad range in approaches for engaging community members and facilitating their participation in decisions, their implementation, and their outcomes
- Enduring equitable community participation and engagement
  - Community capacity building
  - Community members and groups seen as partners rather than beneficiaries or obstacles
  - Creative/innovative mechanisms for stakeholders to articulate their knowledge, needs, and vision for the CF





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THANK YOU

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