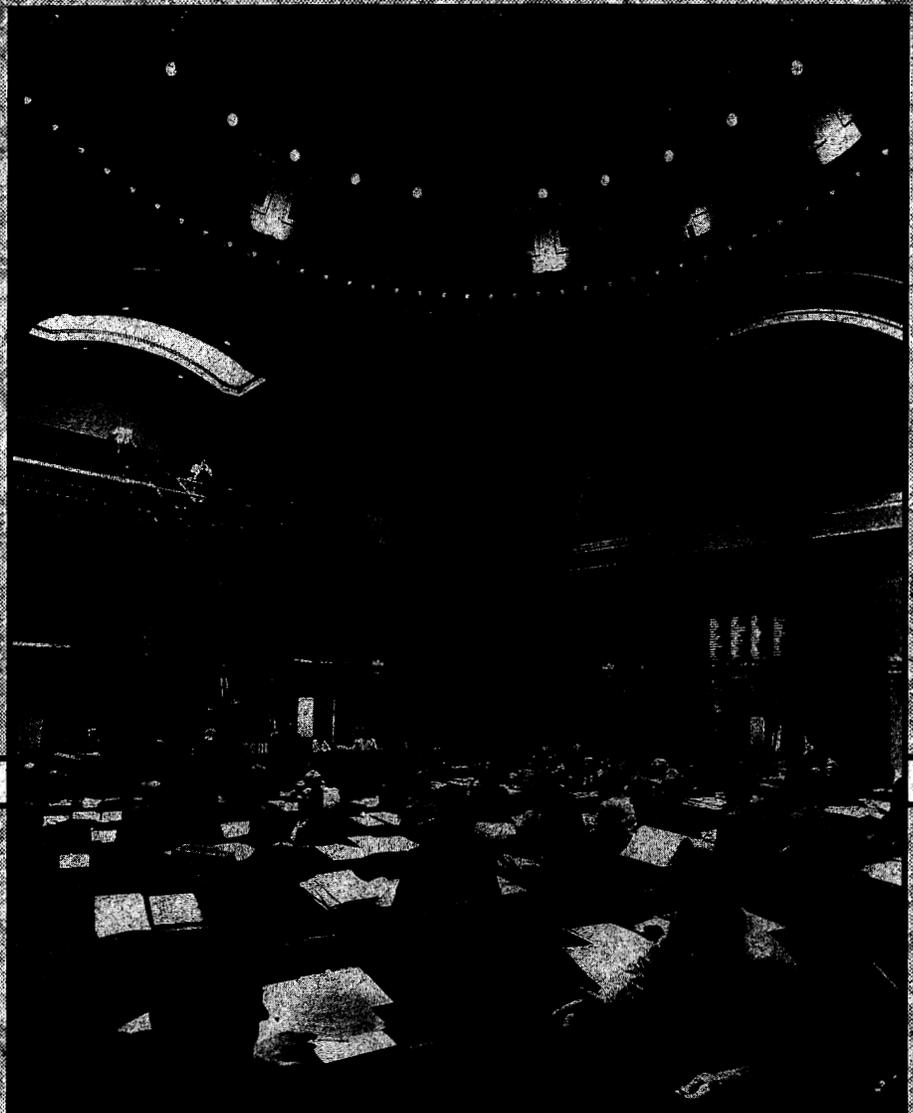


UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

# Staff Mediated Information Flows to Forest Policy Committees in State Legislatures

An Assessment and Evaluation

Bernard J. Lewis  
Paul V. Ellefson



Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station  
Station Bulletin 601-1993

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**St. Paul, Minnesota**

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# Staff Mediated Information Flows to Forest Policy Committees in State Legislatures

## An Assessment and Evaluation

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Paul V. Ellefson*

### INTRODUCTION

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A central institution of state government, the legislature has an active role mediating interests of citizens in the status and management of forest lands within state boundaries. Legislatures provide direction, resources and oversight for the management of state administered forests. They also regulate and furnish incentives for the management of forest lands owned by corporations and private individuals.

Legislative committees are the primary organizational units in which public policy pertaining to status and management of state forest resources is determined. Substantive policy committees with jurisdiction over natural resources and related matters are key sources of forestry related legislation. They are also vehicles through which the oversight of public land management is maintained. Appropriations and finance committees determine the levels of outlays for public forest management and other government programs affecting different segments of the private sector — from wood based industries and individual forest landowners to consumers of forest based products and recreational opportunities.

In some states, natural resource committees comprised of members from both legislative chambers address various forestry and resource related problems and opportunities. Also of importance are central legislative service organizations that provide lawmakers with research and information relevant

to committee activities. Out of all these efforts emerge laws, direction and resources for public forest management, and mechanisms for promoting investment in and use of privately owned forest resources.

Legislators serving on the above kinds of committees have important roles with respect to forestry in the states. However, of special concern within the legislative committee structure are policy committees responsible for legislation establishing and modifying substantive public policy.

Given the necessity for division of labor within a legislature, members of natural resource policy committees — within which matters related to forestry and forest lands are usually considered — may be regarded as specialists with respect to forestry related matters. Legislators on these committees in turn rely on a wide range of information, from numerous sources, in their decision making.

Recent research further reveals that, when working in their areas of expertise, these legislators appear more inclined to rely on support provided by legislative staff than they do when acting as nonspecialists with respect to other policy areas (Sabatier and Whiteman 1985). Moreover, with respect to the U.S. Congress, studies of information flows have indicated that staff has emerged as the most important source of information for such specialist legislators (Maisel 1981; Zwier 1979).

For forestry and related matters, committee staff members in state legislatures are particularly well situated to understand and respond to substantive information needs of specialist legislators. They provide the critical linkage between a governor's office, administrative agencies, interest groups, and other information sources within a legislature on the one hand; and committee members engaged in key forestry matters on the other. Perplexing, however, is how little is known of staff-mediated information flows within a forestry perspective.

What do committee staff members believe to be the most significant forestry related information needs of legislators on natural resource policy committees in state legislatures? How well are staff able to provide such information? Who or what are the principal sources upon whom staff rely in obtaining information for committee members? Of what quality is the information supplied by these sources, relative to different decision making situations

faced by committee legislators? What changes in either the substantive content of information or the way it is identified and obtained would lead to improved decision making capabilities on the part of legislators on forestry related committees?

Answers to questions such as these would enhance existing knowledge of the complex process of forest policy making in the states. It would also help identify opportunities for improving such processes for the benefit of citizens, with their diverse interests in the status and management of state forest lands.

It is worthwhile, therefore, to focus on legislative staff as key sources of knowledge. This is true for both the substantive content of forestry information considered important by legislators on policy committees, and the processes through which such information becomes available to them for use in legislative decision making.

## **STATE LEGISLATURES AND COMMITTEE SYSTEMS**

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State legislatures display a wide variety of organizational features. In all states except Nebraska, the legislature is divided into two chambers: a House (or Assembly) and Senate. In 1981, the sizes of state legislatures ranged from 424 members in New Hampshire (400 House, 24 Senate) to 60 in Nevada (40 House, 20 Senate). With a range of exceptions, state Houses or Assemblies have about three times as many members as state Senates.

### **COMMITTEE ORGANIZATION AND ACTIVITIES**

Committees are the basic working groups of state legislatures. Their numbers and jurisdictions within the legislature are the principal mechanism through which the division of labor among legislators is allocated across the wide range of subjects that enter the legislative process. In 1989, the number of standing committees in state legislatures ranged from 12 in Rhode Island to 86 in Missouri. There was an average of 19 House and 15 Senate committees (Council of State Governments 1990).

Within the framework of committee activities, policies are explored, bills reviewed, testimony of concerned groups recorded, budgets examined, funds appropriated, and public programs and agency performances assessed. States vary in the strength of committees and in their organizational patterns.

While standing committees are often major power centers within legislatures, in a few states they are rather weak. The overall trend, however, has been toward strengthening them as centers of legislative activity. Given the larger numbers of members in state Houses, committees generally serve a critical organizing function. Although they are a major loci of power in state Senates as well, the smaller numbers of state senators implies less specialization and more direct contact with fellow members on other committees.

In a few states (e.g., Maine, Massachusetts) the legislature is made up of joint committees comprised of members from both chambers, as opposed to standing committees in each. Also, with the frequent exception of appropriations committees, few committees within state legislatures are formally organized into subcommittees.

Committee memberships tend to reflect party ratios on the floor. Individual legislator preferences, background and experience, and seniority are all key factors in committee assignments. Loyalty to party leadership is also critical, given the frequently political basis of committee appointments.

Committees are also regarded differentially in terms of status by legislative members. In many legislatures it is more prestigious to be a member of the appropriations or finance committee than to be chairperson of many other standing committees.

On an overall basis, most members of both parties receive committee assignments they consider desirable (Francis 1985).

Committees in state legislatures generally have a range of discretion regarding the activities they undertake. Committees vary in their degree of screening proposed legislation. In some states, virtually all bills submitted to committee are pushed through to the full chamber floor, while in others less than half make it through. As a general rule, anywhere from two- to three-fifths of bills entering the committee receive favorable approval (Rosenthal 1981).

The committee chairperson is a central figure in the legislative committee system, generally deciding when the committee will meet and what bills will (and frequently as important, will not) be on the agenda. The chair also decides whether to hold public hearings and who to invite to testify.

Substantive matters related to state forest policy are generally considered in both chambers within committees related to Natural Resources, Agriculture and Forestry. With respect to forestry related matters, the major function of policy committees is screening legislation and studying problems. The former activity takes up most of the time during the legislative session. Bills referred to committee are reviewed, at times amended, and either temporarily shelved or reported out to the full chamber with favorable/unfavorable recommendation for passage.

Studying problems is a principal concern of policy committees between sessions. It is then that current and potential issues impacting forestry are analyzed, new policies and programs considered, and oversight of public agencies and programs generally conducted.

House appropriations and Senate finance committees in state legislatures are responsible for review and approval of budget requests for state forestry agencies, and as part of their general funding responsibilities, for the funding of any other programs related to the state's forestry sector which may not be directly linked to public forest management.

### **STAFF ASSIGNMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

There are many different kinds of staffs in state legislatures. Chamber staff perform basic administrative and housekeeping tasks, while caucus staff serve majority and minority parties in each chamber. Legislative leaders invariably have their own

staffs to assist them in activities associated with their offices, and in most states each legislator has personal staff to assist in casework for constituents, matters related to legislation, public relations, etc. Committee staffs assist in analyzing legislative proposals, drafting legislation, reviewing budgets, conducting studies and gathering information relative to the concerns of committee members. And finally, special staffs are employed by central legislative service organizations responsible for activities such as bill drafting, law revision, financial analysis and auditing, and in-depth research on special topics.

One of the most significant developments in state legislatures over the past two decades has been the increase in numbers and importance of legislative staffs. As of 1989, the numbers of full-time professional staff in state legislatures ranged from 20 in Wyoming to 3,600 in New York (Weberg and Bazar 1988). During the preceding nine years, the total number of full-time legislative staff increased by 26 percent, to approximately 34,000 (Table 1). Many states also hire additional part-time staff to assist during legislative sessions.

In 1960, few if any state legislatures provided staffs for their standing committees. Twenty years later almost two-thirds staffed all their committees. Legislatures in the other states staffed only major committees or those that dealt with money matters. These latter committees — appropriations, finance, revenue, ways and means — are generally the best staffed in all state legislatures.

Though the processes through which staff are assigned to standing committees vary among the states, they generally fall within one or more of five patterns (Table 2). The most prevalent pattern has a bipartisan central service agency assigning professional staff to individual committees, with operational direction for staff members provided by the committee chairperson. Other patterns for staff assignment reflect increasing levels of partisan influence. Virtually all state legislatures also have one or more special staffs or staff agencies.

Rosenthal (1981) identifies eight basic activities of committee staff during legislative sessions.<sup>1</sup> In conjunction with legislative service agencies, staff may assist in drafting legislation, although such assistance is generally rather limited.

Staff also are involved in scheduling committee activities. This includes arranging meetings, formulating agendas, contacting witnesses, and keeping

<sup>1</sup> About half of the state legislatures spend between 100 and 200 days in regular and special session during a biennium; one-fifth spend more than 200 days. In some states, the legislature is in session year-round (e.g., Massachusetts).

Table 1. Full-time staff employed by state legislatures in 1988, by state and number of staff.

Number of Staff	First Quartile	Second Quartile	Third Quartile	Fourth Quartile
0 to 100	Wyoming	Delaware New Mexico North Dakota Vermont	Idaho South Dakota	Utah
101 to 200	Kansas Mississippi Nevada New Hampshire North Carolina	Maine Montana West Virginia	Hawaii Indiana Iowa Oklahoma Rhode Island Tennessee	Colorado Nebraska Virginia
201 to 300	Kentucky	Arkansas	Alaska South Carolina	Oregon
301 to 400	Arizona	Alabama	Louisiana Missouri	Connecticut
401 to 500		Maryland	Georgia	
501 to 600	Ohio		Wisconsin	Washington
601 to 700	Minnesota			
701 to 800				New Jersey Massachusetts
1001 to 1100			Illinois	
1201 to 1300				Michigan
1401 to 1500			Texas	
1501 to 1600				Florida
1901 to 2000				Pennsylvania
2801 to 2900			California	
3501 to 3600				New York

Source: Weberg and Bazar 1988.

committee members posted on the progress of legislation.

Summarizing legislative proposals (i.e., bill introductions) in terms of their relationship to existing law, scope of impact, comparison with similar legislation in other states, and so on, is an important staff function. Invariably this includes assembling the positions of various groups (including the executive administration) on the merits or shortcomings of proposed legislation. Staff also spend time briefing the committee chair prior to meetings in terms of the nature of agenda items, possible amendments to be offered, scheduled witnesses, etc. Preparing issue memoranda for all committee members prior to hearings is a related function.

During meetings and hearings, staff compile information on testimony of witnesses and/or views of

committee members. This aids in their reporting member votes, amendments adopted, proponents and opponents, summary of arguments, etc., on bills which are forwarded out of committee. Although committee work (relative to a specific bill) is largely complete by this time, staff generally continue to track legislation reported out during the enacting phase in the larger legislative chambers.

Finally, throughout the session committee staff provide a variety of services for committee members including correspondence, constituent requests, press releases, assembling materials for speeches, representing members at meetings, etc. Given the hectic pace of legislative sessions and the endless details which must inevitably be worked out, it is not surprising that committee staff often have little or no time for in-depth policy research and information gathering while the legislature is in session.

The exception to this is information gathering demanded by deadlocks or other difficulties which crop up during the processing of legislation.

Interims between sessions provide committee staff with opportunities for becoming more familiar with the nature and dimensions of substantive policy matters, thus enabling them to generate more in-depth policy information for legislators. Staff have more time to actively investigate current and potential problems and opportunities that legislators, constituents, or they themselves regard as warranting attention by the legislative branch.

This latter function is what gives staff the potential to actively shape the nature of the analyses they undertake, as opposed to merely responding to requests of others. Some staff analysts, particularly those of fiscal committees, may even spend time with the agencies whose budgets they review.

It is also during the interim periods that standing and special committees are increasingly conducting oversight hearings of particular agencies and programs. Sometimes these are conducted in the field as well as or in lieu of being held at the capitol.

Ironically, with the exception of such oversight activities, it may be more difficult for staff to maintain legislators' attention during the interims. Many legislators welcome these interims for the opportunity to focus on their own private businesses, visit

with constituents, and campaign for reelection (in the case of House members, every other year). Beyond committee members with special interests in particular problems or projects, the committee chair is the person most likely to maintain a consistently high level of interest across all activities conducted by staff during the interim.

**STAFF INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS**

What information do committee legislators want, from staff or elsewhere, to aid them in making decisions? Hammond (1985) notes that research has yet to provide a consistent definition of legislative information needs. Others suggest broad categories can be identified.

Rosenthal (1981) suggests that during the legislative session, staff provide primarily procedural information to committee members, with more detailed and in-depth information about problems and opportunities being developed by staff during session interims. Bradley (1980) suggests that staff focus on the scientific and technical information needs of legislators. Sabatier and Whiteman (1985) distinguish between staff-provided policy and political information (e.g., views of advocates and opponents with differential political power).

Committee members also characterize information

**Table 2. Patterns of committee staffing of state legislatures, by type and example states.**

<b>Staffing Pattern</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Example States</b>
<b>Chair Control</b>	<b>Recruitment and retention under control of committee chair. Relatively uncommon.</b>	<b>Louisiana, New York (senate)</b>
<b>Leader-Chair</b>	<b>Legislative leaders hire, assign and replace staff. Done in consultation with committee chairs who provide operational control over staff. Limited pattern.</b>	<b>Florida</b>
<b>Party Caucus</b>	<b>Staff drawn from legislative research agencies serving majority and minority parties. Staff assigned to committee chair or minority committee members.</b>	<b>Hawaii, Illinois, Michigan, Pennsylvania</b>
<b>Multi-agency</b>	<b>Staff assigned from several agencies, including chair's personal staff, caucuses, or legislative research bureau.</b>	<b>Minnesota</b>
<b>Central Agency</b>	<b>Staff assigned to committees by bipartisan central service agencies. Assignments made by central agency director with operational direction provided by committee chair. Dominant legislative staffing pattern.</b>	<b>Arkansas, Colorado, Indiana, Kentucky, Montana, N. Carolina, Oklahoma, Wyoming</b>

Source: Compiled from Rosenthal (1981).

they use or desire according to attributes associated with its communicative features, not its substantive content. Rosenthal (1981:219-220) says:

*"The attitude of legislators toward information is schizophrenic. They say they want information that is accessible, convenient to use, understandable, reliable, and that identifies both benefits and costs of proposals. They bemoan their lack of information. . . . It would seem that legislators are constantly searching for information, for systems that produce information, and for staff that can process all of this and bring it to bear in legislative decision making. . . . Although legislators do talk about their information needs, and on some topics their needs may be intense, rarely do they seek very elaborate policy information. When they get it unsolicited from staff, they do not know what to do with it. . . . Too much information may in fact discourage members from attending committee meetings: they cannot absorb the information, they do not want to appear unprepared, and so they just do not come. . . . An overload of information would simply make everything incomprehensible and unmanageable."*

It seems apparent that legislative information may be described and categorized according to its form as well as its content. It is also evident that evaluations by legislators (or staff) of the quality or adequacy of information from various sources may frequently be influenced by its formal attributes. Content defines the terrain while form dictates potential utility. This leads Rosenthal (1981:219-220) to conclude:

*"Although not negligible in its effect, information still has limited utility. If it reinforces legislator predispositions, if it deals with technical issues, and if it buttresses relatively simple recommendations or alternative courses of action, it is more likely to be used. Most legislators want information that is congenial to them and helpful in deciding 'yes' or 'no' or possibly choosing among options A, B, and C."*

A summation suggests that legislators want clear and concise information, in a simple format amenable to decision making about frequently complex and technical issues. Such information may not be ideal for education, but it is translatable into action

in accordance with whatever purposes legislators have in mind.

Four propositions can be set forth:

- Committee legislators desire and utilize different kinds of information in making decisions; they do so in different decision making contexts.
- Committee staff are key providers of information to legislators, and staff in turn tap a variety of sources in acquiring such information.
- Information obtained by staff (or legislators themselves) from these sources varies both in nature and quality.
- Committee staff play an active role in selecting and shaping the information they ultimately provide to legislators.

Comparative studies of the forestry information needs of the staff of state legislatures are virtually nonexistent. This could be considered ironic, given the important role that state legislatures play in developing and implementing statewide forest resource policies.

The only known study occurred in 1985 when the Council of State Governments focused on the information needs of forestry-related committees in southern states (Council of State Governments 1985). Information requested by policy committees in the context of forestry agency budgets included magnitude and value of timber production and employment within the industry, extent of reforestation activities, and status of landowner assistance programs. Asked if four types of economic information would be considered helpful to committee activities (i.e., benefits/costs of forestry programs/activities; existing or potential jobs generated; recreation; and the contribution of forestry to state and economic development), most staff agreed that such information would be of use.

Appropriations committees requested a wider range of information, especially standardized fiscal data (e.g., current forestry agency expenditures and workloads). A few committees requested information about the fiscal impacts of pending forestry-related legislation. Three-fourths of the fiscal committees indicated that three of the four categories of economic information cited above would be helpful, with recreation identified as being slightly less important than the others.

## OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

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The principal focus of this study was on the nature and sources of information for decision making by

members of policy committees in state legislatures whose jurisdiction includes forestry and related

matters; and on the role of committee staff in identifying and providing such information to legislators. Specific study objectives were:

- Describe the structure and scope of attention of policy committees whose jurisdiction includes forestry.
- Identify forestry matters to which policy committees and their staff devoted attention during 1988 through 1990.
- Examine the role of staff in providing information on forestry matters to legislators serving on policy committees, and specifically obtain staff member perspectives on:
  - a) staff and legislator familiarity with different aspects of forestry;
  - b) kinds and adequacy of information provided legislators;
  - c) patterns of communication with groups and organizations with different interests in forests;
  - d) sources of forestry information and the ability of various organizations to provide such information.
- Identify opportunities to improve the flow of forestry information to policy committees.

Scope of the study was limited by the following:

- Concern was with the 36 states with extensive forest lands. (Responses received from 35.)

- Attention focused on policy committees; appropriations (House) or finance (Senate) committees were not considered.
- In states in which legislatures are organized into joint committees comprised of members from both legislative chambers, attention focused on the joint committee whose jurisdiction included forestry matters.
- In state legislatures having staff in a central legislative research bureau, the staff member handling forestry and forest lands was included in the study.

Limiting study of information flows to the policy committees of state legislatures has advantages as well as disadvantages. On the positive side, it is in policy committees where substantive problems and opportunities with respect to forestry matters are often crystallized, with their suitability for and amenability to legislative attention explicitly addressed. Moreover, through their role in authorizing (and re-authorizing) public programs, policy committees maintain significant responsibility for oversight of ongoing forestry programs.

On the negative side, the attention of policy committees may be directed toward subjects that are not fundamentally of a forestry nature (e.g., groundwater contamination, wetlands preservation). In any given year, a committee's forestry agenda may be severely restricted.

## PROCEDURES AND METHODS

Accomplishing the study's objectives required developing information around three key concepts: the forest policy domain within which legislative staff operate; the substantive content of forestry information required by policy committees; and the communication process through which staff mediate flows of information to and from committee members. These elements provided structure for a survey instrument sent to policy committee staff.

### POLICY DOMAIN OF COMMITTEE STAFF

In providing support for members of forest policy committees in state legislatures, staff professionals interact with numerous organizations and individuals that comprise a state's forest policy domain. This is defined as the set of organizations and individuals concerned with formulating, advocating and selecting important policy and program op-

tions concerning the status and management of forest lands within a state's boundaries.

Included within a policy domain are both government and private actors that have particular interest in state forest resources and express such interest via political action. For this study, a state's policy domain was divided into three major categories: legislative environment, interbranch environment, public-intergovernmental environment (Table 3).

### CONTENT OF INFORMATION

Legislators require information that provides a dynamic picture of the nature and condition of forest resources within their state. For this study, three broad areas of information were identified: status of forest resources within a state, activities of organizations and individuals who own or administer state forest lands, and impacts on the nature and

condition of state forest lands that result from economic and social processes in a state.

The status of forest resources within a state refers to the extent and condition of state forest lands, with respect to trees and other vegetation, and also in terms of the range of natural resources associated with these lands (wildlife, water, minerals and recreational opportunities).

Activities of organizations and individuals who own or administer state forest lands include the range of management practices through which a variety of forest based outputs are made available to society; the nature, quantity and quality of goods and services produced; and the effects of such practices on the extent and viability of the forest resource.

Impacts on the nature and condition of state forest lands that result from economic and social processes within (and, in some cases, external to) a particular state refers to the general structure providing the scaffolding within which a more specific set of categories is situated (Table 4). These categories define the substantive content of forestry information of potential relevance to legislators.

## COMMUNICATING AND MEDIATING INFORMATION FLOWS

Committee staff can be pictured as involved in the transmission of information via two principal channels of communication: those linking staff with the committee, and those with the groups that comprise a state's forest policy domain. Information can be transmitted in both directions, but the focus of this study was on the role of staff in flows of information from policy domain actors to committee legislators (not the reverse).

The centrality of committee staff in such information flows is captured by their mediating role. They do not merely function as transparent conduits. They actively influence the form and content of the information they receive and convey. They do so in the way they perceive information from (committee and) policy domain sources; how they relate it to their current understanding of both the existing information base on forestry and related matters and conditions in the state forest policy domain; and in their actions to refine, synthesize or add to information they receive prior to conveying it in a form they deem appropriate for use by committee legislators.

In short, a committee staff's mediating role is an active role. Any effort to understand the quality of information on forestry matters for committee decisions must be undertaken within a framework that allows the mediating actions of committee staff to come into play.

With its active nature in mind, a model of the communication process was developed, reflecting how staff members mediate flows of information on forestry matters to and from legislators on forest policy committees (Figure 1).

In this model of active mediation, a staff member perceives certain stimuli from either committee legislators, or policy domain participants, as being in the form of information on forestry matters either furnished to staff or requested from them. The individual interprets this input in light of previous knowledge of information in the area and other factors. These other factors include the context in which the communication is received (e.g., debate of a particular forestry proposal, investigation of a specific issue); the source (e.g., a committee member, a public agency, an interest group); and the particular form of the communication (e.g., a request for information, a directive, a statement of a policy position).

Based on the staff member's interpretation of information needs (or supplied information), one or

**Table 3. State forest policy domain, by major sectors and participants.**

### Legislative Environment

1. Personal staff of committee members
2. Appropriations and Finance committee staff
3. Other committee staffs (same chamber)
4. Counterpart committee staff (other chamber)
5. Legislative analyst (budget and finance)
6. House and Senate office of research
7. Leadership and caucus staff
8. Non-committee legislators and personal staff

### Interbranch Environment

9. Governor's office staff
10. State budget office and department
11. State forestry agency
12. Other state natural resource agencies and departments
13. State forestry boards and commissions

### Public-Intergovernmental Environment

14. Federal forestry and natural resource agencies
15. County-local forestry and natural resource agencies
16. University/college forestry/natural resources departments
17. Professional forestry societies
18. Wood products corporations and trade associations
19. Environmental groups
20. Recreation advocates (user groups)
21. Tourism business interests
22. Mineral and energy interests
23. Real estate interests
24. Press and media
25. Contacts in other states

more courses of action may be pursued by that individual. If the communication is a request for information, and if such information is available, the staff member may immediately convey the information to the committee member or policy domain actor requesting it.

Staff might alternatively evaluate information in the context of resources generally available on the subject. Evaluation might involve judgements about the quality of the information or about the quality of the source of the information (e.g., timing, frequency, reliability). Evaluation might result in a decision by staff to clarify the information request, or, should the staff member be unable to respond, to search for additional information. This would involve initiating communications with groups or organizations in the state's forest policy domain, who in turn might respond with information that would be perceived, interpreted, evaluated and perhaps conveyed to committee members.

This model of staff communication provided a basic framework from which the study objectives were systematically addressed. It also established a conceptual basis for deriving a survey instrument.

**SURVEY DESIGN AND LOGISTICS**

Information designed to accomplish the study's objectives was obtained via a mail questionnaire consisting primarily of objective questions to committee staff. The questionnaire was sent to staff members of forest policy committees in each chamber (i.e., Senate and House or Assembly) of legislatures in 36 states in which forest resources

**Table 4. Information pertaining to forests and forestry in states, by major categories.**

State Forest Resource: All Ownerships

1. Nature, extent and condition of forest lands in state

Public Forest Land Management

2. Forest land ownership and jurisdictional matters (e.g., acquisition, sale, transfer, access)
3. Forest protection activities (fire, insects and disease): methods and impacts
4. Timber management: outputs and impacts
5. Wildlife and ecological land management: outputs and impacts
6. Forest-based recreation management: outputs and impacts
7. Tradeoffs in public forest land uses

State Wood Products Industry

8. Structure and potential for economic development
9. Economic impacts: employment and income
10. Products, markets and technology
11. Regulatory mechanisms: forest practices, wood processing

Nonindustrial Private Forestry

12. Ownership patterns, outputs and management practices

Intergovernmental Forestry

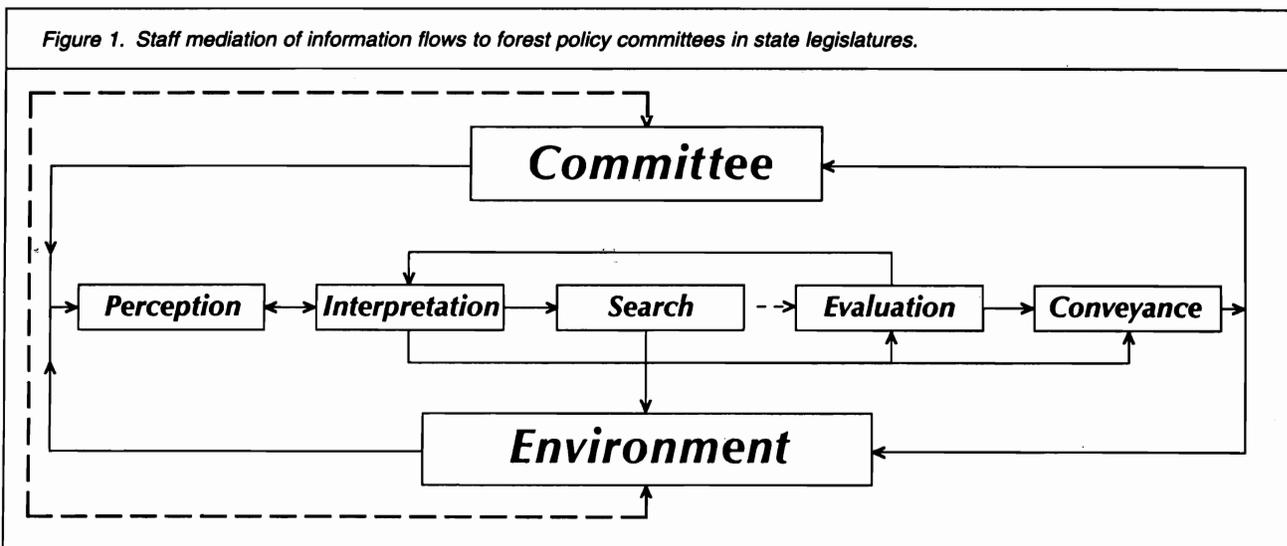
13. State-federal cooperative needs and opportunities
14. State, county and local cooperative needs and opportunities

Forestry Research and Education

15. Forestry research: program content and priorities
16. Forestry education and training: programs and needs

State and Regional Economic Development: Impacts on Forestry

17. Forest land conversion: pattern and extent
18. Impacts of development on forest resource condition (e.g., pollution)
19. Regional ecological issues (e.g., acid rain): impacts on forest resource base



are significant, either in terms of total area or as a percentage of total state land area (Table 5).

The states of Alabama and Texas were not included either because the relevant committees had no staff or because staff positions were vacant at the time. In eight of the 36 states, one staff person

assigned by a central legislative research bureau worked on forestry matters for committees in both chambers; and that individual was asked to respond to the survey on the basis of experiences with both committees.

Of the 57 staff persons who were sent the survey, 47 returned it (83 percent) (Table 6). Of the 36 states surveyed, only Pennsylvania is not represented by at least one staff respondent. And, because staff reported virtually no forestry activities being addressed by their committees, Ohio may be regarded in this status as well.

Issues of substantive policy with respect to forestry and related matters vary greatly from state to state. Their frequency and pattern of occurrence may vary as well. In some states (e.g., Alaska, California) forestry matters are almost a permanent fixture on the political agenda. In other states (e.g., Ohio, Louisiana) forestry matters come and go unpredictably. For this latter reason, staff respondents were asked to identify their experiences with policy committee(s) during the period from 1988 to 1990. However, even with this time frame, a number of committee staff in different states report that very few matters related to forestry had been addressed by their committee(s). For this reason, the number of respondents varies with particular survey items and is generally less than 47 (the total number who returned the questionnaire).

**Table 5. Staff respondents to survey, by number, state, region and chamber represented.**

<b>Northeast</b>	
6 states	Maine (J)
7 respondents	Maryland (S & H)
	Massachusetts (J)
	New Hampshire (S & H)
	New York (A)
[no response .....	Pennsylvania (S & H)]
<b>Southeast</b>	
11 states	Arkansas (J)
16 respondents	Florida (S & H)
	Georgia (S & H)
	Kentucky (H-S)
	Louisiana (H)
	Mississippi (S)
	North Carolina (S & H)
	South Carolina (S & H)
	Tennessee (S & H)
	Virginia (H-S)
	West Virginia (J)
<b>Midwest</b>	
8 states	Illinois (S)
10 respondents	Indiana (J)
	Michigan (S)
	Minnesota (S & H)
	Missouri (H)
	Ohio (S)
	Oklahoma (S & H)
	Wisconsin (H-S)
<b>Mountain</b>	
7 states	Arizona (H)
7 respondents	Colorado (H-S)
	Idaho (H-S)
	Montana (H-S)
	New Mexico (S)
	Utah (H-S)
	Wyoming (H-S)
<b>West Coast</b>	
4 states	Alaska (S & H)
7 respondents	California (S & H)
	Oregon (S)
	Washington (S & H)

S = Senate, H = House, A = Assembly, J = Joint Committee, S & H = one staff person assigned to each House or each Senate committee (not one person serving both committees), H-S = one staff person serves committees in both House and Senate.

**Table 6. Staff respondents to survey, by number of states and legislative committee structure.**

Source of Staff Response	States	Respondents
<b>Committees in both House (Assembly) and Senate</b> .....	12	24
<b>Joint committee</b> .....	5	5
<b>Committees in which one staff person is assigned to committees in both House (Assembly) and Senate</b> .....	8	8
<b>Committee in House (Assembly) only</b> .....	4	4
<b>Committee in Senate only</b> .....	6	6
<b>Neither House nor Senate</b> .....	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b> .....	<b>36</b>	<b>47</b>

Fifty-five committees are represented by the survey.

## ADMINISTRATIVE AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

### COMMITTEE JURISDICTION AND STRUCTURE

In virtually all state legislatures, policy committees with forestry responsibility also address a number of additional subjects. The scope of this jurisdictional responsibility is reflected by the titles of the 55 committees involved in this study (Table 7).

**Table 7. Titles of state legislative assembly/house/senate policy committees with forestry responsibilities.**

<b>Committee Title</b> .....	<b>Number of Committees</b>
Forestry .....	1
Forestry and other .....	3
Agriculture and other .....	9
Natural Resources and other .....	13
Agriculture and Natural Resources and other .....	11
Environment and/or Conservation and other .....	10
Agriculture and Environment/Conservation and other .....	1
Natural Resources and Environment/Conservation and other .....	6
Other .....	1

Only Mississippi's senate has a committee whose jurisdiction is defined exclusively in terms of forestry, although the senates in Michigan and South Carolina, and the North Carolina House, also designate forestry as part of the official committee title. In 21 legislative bodies, forestry matters are considered by agriculture committees, while in another 24 they fall within the purview of natural resource committees. Another 15 committees consider forestry matters a part of a range of subjects associated with the environment and conservation.

The size of committees in state legislatures varies considerably from state to state, and this is equally true for committees whose jurisdiction includes forestry matters. The size of House or Assembly committees identified by this study ranged from 29 members in Georgia to seven in North Carolina. An "average" committee had 18 members.

Senate committees ranged in size from 18 in South

Carolina to five in Michigan and Wyoming, with an average size of ten. Sixteen of the 55 committees represented here were staffed by an individual who performed the same role for the counterpart committee in the other chamber. This pattern was especially prevalent in legislatures of the Mountain states, where five of seven state legislatures were staffed in this manner (Table 5).

### STAFF CHARACTERISTICS

Ages of the 47 staff members participating in this study ranged from 23 to 54 years old, with an average age of 35. Almost three-fifths of the responding staff were between 30 and 39 years of age. Thirty-four respondents (72 percent) were male.

Three-fourths of the respondents had an advanced degree beyond the bachelor's level. Approximately half had master's degrees, one had Ph.D., ten had law degrees (JD or LLB). About one-quarter of all staff had undergraduate degrees in political science, although only two had continued on to advanced degrees in that subject area. Three staff members had undergraduate degrees in forestry, and six had master's degrees in either ecology or natural resources management.

Almost half of the responding staff members had been in their present position between four and ten years. Another 17 (37 percent) had served in their current post between one and three years.

The prior occupation most frequently cited (by about one-fifth of the respondents) was with the executive branch of state government. Six respondents (13 percent) had previously worked in a different capacity within the state legislature. About one-fifth of staff had previously been employed in either private business or in the area of education.

### FORESTRY POLITICAL CLIMATE

Committee staff impressions of a state's political climate can influence how they position themselves to perform their forestry tasks for the committee. Especially important in this respect are impressions about the presence (or absence) of problems or issues involving forest lands and their management. On an overall basis, slightly more than half of staff respondents indicated that issues or problems involving forestry and related matters accounted for

at least a moderate proportion of all debates on natural resources that had occurred in their state from 1988 through 1990 (Table 8). About 30 percent of respondents reported that forestry matters were somewhat or very prominent among policy debates during this period.

The attention accorded to matters involving forestry and related subjects varied noticeably by region. Forestry matters were clearly most prominent in the Western states, and moderately so in the Northeast and Southeast regions. Other natural resource matters dominated public discussions in the Central and Mountain states from 1988 through 1990.

In the Western states, all but one staff respondent indicated that forestry issues occupied a significant proportion of debates involving natural resources in their states. The second highest level of forestry prominence was in the Northeast, where five of seven staff respondents reported moderate to high levels of issue prominence. Slightly over half of committee staff in the Southeast indicated this to

be the case as well. The pattern in the Southeastern states is also that which most closely reflects the national average, although the latter is obviously affected by the fact that one-third of the 47 staff respondents in the survey are from states in this region.

A state's political climate with respect to forestry and forest lands is reflected not only in the visibility of debates on forestry matters, but also in the degree to which views of participants in debates on forestry and forest policy are becoming more homogeneous, or conversely, growing further apart.

From a national perspective, almost half of the respondents indicated that forestry views of different groups in their states were converging, although only one respondent reported that such a trend was strong. Slightly more than a quarter of respondents reported that views of policy domain participants were becoming more polarized. A quarter of committee staff detected no noticeable trend in either direction. For 70 percent of respondents,

**Table 8. Staff Interpretation of the prominence of forestry issues within their state and the status of debates focused on such issues, by region. 1988-1990.**

<b>A. Prominence of Forestry Issues</b>						
Region	Forestry Prominence <sup>a</sup>	Staff Indicating Debate on Forestry Issues as being:				
		Very Low	Somewhat Low	Moderate	Somewhat High	Very High
----- Percent -----						
Northeast	3.1	0	29	43	14	14
Southeast	2.8	13	31	31	19	6
Central	2.1	30	40	20	10	0
Mountain	2.0	43	29	14	14	0
West Coast	4.0	0	0	14	72	14
National	2.7	17	28	26	23	6

<b>B. Convergence or Divergence of Views of Participants in Forestry Issues</b>						
Region	View Pattern <sup>a</sup>	Staff Indicating Participants in Forest Policy Issues as:				
		Strongly Converging	Somewhat Converging	Neither	Somewhat Diverging	Strongly Diverging
----- Percent -----						
Northeast	3.0	0	43	14	43	0
Southeast	3.7	6	69	19	0	6
Central	3.2	0	40	40	20	0
Mountain	2.7	0	14	57	14	14
West Coast	1.8	0	17	0	33	50
National	3.1	2	44	26	17	11

<sup>a</sup> Average rating assigned by staff, where 1 = very low to 5 = very high, or 1 = strongly converging to 5 = strongly diverging.

opinions of policy participants were either somewhat converging or remaining relatively stable.

On an overall basis, therefore, it appears that about three in ten committee staff viewed the political climate in their state, from 1988 through 1990, as

one in which matters involving state forestry and forest lands were a significant part of all debates on natural resources. A similar percentage of staff believed that the views of policy domain participants were growing further apart on matters related to forestry and forest lands in their states.

## **STAFF-COMMITTEE: COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION FLOWS**

### **COMMITTEE ATTENTION TO FORESTRY SUBJECTS**

Committee attention to forestry matters always occurs within broader contexts of problems, issues and programs that constitute the overall agenda of a policy committee. Almost three-fourths of staff respondents indicated that their committees devoted 10 percent or less of their total time to forestry and related matters from 1988 through 1990. Two-thirds of responding staff indicated they spent between 5 and 10 percent of their time on forestry. For only about 15 percent of staff respondents did forestry matters occupy more than one-fifth of their committee's attention during those years.

Most committees spent a few hours or less on forestry topics during the period 1988 through 1990 (Table 9). While every subject was the focus of at least one committee's attention for a few weeks, on only four kinds of subjects did more than 10 percent (i.e., 5 or 6) of staff respondents report that their committees spent this long an amount of time. These subjects were conservation or preservation of forest lands; mitigating impacts of economic development on forests; wildlife and ecological land management issues on public forest lands; and matters related to forest land ownership or jurisdiction.

Four committees also spent a few weeks on issues related to timber management on public forests and timber harvest regulation on private lands. Ten subjects were the focus of a few days or more of attention by at least one-quarter of the committees. In addition to the six subjects noted above, these were nonindustrial private forestry, public forestry protection activities, regional ecological issues, and tradeoffs in forest land uses. Except for two subject areas (forest land conservation and preservation, and wildlife and ecological land management), more than 70 percent of the responding staff reported that their committees spent a few hours or less on forestry subjects.

From a regional perspective, committees in the

Northeast and West Coast states tended to devote a higher level of attention to specific forestry matters than did those from other regions. Committees from the Mountain states were the least active in this regard.

In the Northeast, committees devoted the greatest amount of attention to the impacts of state and regional economic development on state forestry and forest lands, forest land ownership and jurisdictional matters, wildlife and ecological land management, and tradeoffs in forest land uses.

Forest policy committees in West Coast states focused most heavily on issues related to forest land conservation and preservation, timber harvesting regulation, public timber and wildlife management, nonindustrial private forestry, and forest land use tradeoffs. Committees in the West also tended to devote greater attention to all aspects of a state's wood-based industry than did those from other regions.

In the Central states, issues involving forest land conservation, public timber and wildlife management, and timber harvesting regulation were most prominent on committee agendas.

Committees in the Southern region accorded their greatest attention to forest protection issues, forest land ownership and jurisdictional matters, and wildlife and ecological land management.

Committees in the Mountain states placed the most emphasis from 1988 through 1990 on matters related to forest land conservation and preservation, mitigating the impacts of development on state forest lands, and wildlife and ecological land management.

Several distinct sets of forestry subjects emerge when committee attention is viewed from a national perspective (Table 10). Issues related to forest land conservation and preservation, and to wildlife and ecological land management on public forest lands were clearly important concerns for many

**Table 9. Policy committee time devoted to forestry matters during legislative sessions. 1988–1990.**

Forestry Subject Area	Proportion of Staff Indicating:				
	None	A Few Hours	A Few Days	A Few Weeks	Priority Time <sup>a</sup>
	----- Percent -----				
<b>Public Forest Land Management</b>					
Forest land and resource inventories	23	62	11	4	3
Forest protection activities (fire, insects, disease)	30	43	23	4	24
Forest land ownership and jurisdictional matters (e.g., acquisition, sale, transfer, access)	28	47	15	10	19
Timber management	28	47	17	8	19
Wildlife and ecological land management	19	40	28	13	24
Forest-based recreation management	32	55	11	2	5
Tradeoffs in public forest land uses	30	45	23	2	14
<b>State Wood Products Industry</b>					
Incentives for economic and technological development	53	31	11	5	8
Timber supply issues	41	37	15	7	16
Regulation of timber harvesting	30	44	17	9	22
Regulation of wood processing	63	33	2	2	0
<b>Nonindustrial Private Forestry</b>					
Management incentives and forest practices regulation	23	47	26	4	32
<b>Intergovernmental Forestry</b>					
State-federal cooperative needs and opportunities	49	38	9	4	11
State, county and local cooperative needs and opportunities	43	50	5	2	0
<b>Forestry Research and Education</b>					
Forestry research	45	38	15	2	5
Forestry education and training	51	36	9	4	5
<b>State and Regional Economic Development</b>					
Forest land conservation and preservation	15	42	32	11	38
Mitigation of development impacts on forests	30	40	19	11	22
Regional ecological issues (e.g., acid rain)	28	47	19	6	16

<sup>a</sup> Proportion of staff identifying forestry subject area as among the top three priorities for committee(s) attention during 1990.

forest policy committees in state legislatures during the period from 1988 through 1990. More than two-fifths of all committees devoted a few days or more to these matters.

**FORESTRY TASKS PERFORMED FOR COMMITTEE BY STAFF**

The nature and scope of the roles that staff members envision themselves as performing for their committees is important to their role in mediating

the flow of information on forestry matters to and from committee members. Staff respondents frequently defined their basic tasks in terms of information. To “obtain requested information,” to “provide information” to legislators, and to “present information to the committee” were all mentioned by staff when asked to summarize the key aspects of their jobs.

Other activities noted by staff with some regularity were basic organizational tasks facilitating information flows to the committee. These were activities such as “putting together seminars, hearings, and

**Table 10. Ranking of policy committee attention devoted to forestry during legislative sessions, by subject matter. 1988-1990.**

Rank	Forestry Subject Area	Score <sup>a</sup>
1	Forest land conservation and preservation	43
2	Public forestry: Wildlife and ecological land management	41
3	Nonindustrial private forestry: Management incentives and forest practices regulation	30
3	Mitigation of development impacts on forests	30
5	Public forestry: Forest protection activities (fire, insects, disease)	27
6	Wood products industry: Regulation of timber harvesting	26
7	Public forestry: Forest land ownership and jurisdictional matters (e.g., acquisition, sale, transfer, access)	25
7	Public forestry: Timber management	25
7	Regional ecological issues (e.g., acid rain)	25
7	Tradeoffs in public forest land uses	25
11	Wood products industry: Timber supply issues	22
12	Forestry research	17
13	Wood products industry: Incentives for economic and technological development	16
14	Public forestry: Forest land and resource inventories	15
15	State-federal cooperative needs and opportunities	13
15	Forestry education and training	13
15	Public forestry: Forest-based recreation management	13
18	State, county and local cooperative needs and opportunities	7
19	Wood products industry: Regulation of wood processing	4

<sup>a</sup> Percent of staff indicating a committee(s) devoted a few days or a few weeks to a particular forestry subject area.

**Table 11. Staff time devoted to policy committee activities on behalf of forestry. 1988-1990.**

Staff Activity on Behalf of Forestry	Proportion of Staff Indicating:			
	Very Little	Some, Not Extensive	A Fair Amount	A Great Deal
	----- Percent -----			
With legislators in committee hearings concerning forestry	20	24	36	20
Drafting, reading and analyzing forestry and related bills	18	27	31	24
Writing background reports and issue summaries on forestry matters	36	24	31	9
Working with other committees on forestry matters	47	33	18	2
Conducting oversight (routine or otherwise) on state forestry programs	44	33	18	5
With lobbyists and special interest groups concerned about forestry and related subjects	24	38	29	9
Responding to forestry information requests	44	27	27	2
Representing committee at meetings with governor or state forestry agency on forestry legislation matters	62	29	9	0

site visits," "scheduling witnesses," and "inviting speakers." Most committee staff apparently envisioned themselves as directly and intimately involved with information flows, providing information to the committee and responding to particular requests or wishes from committee legislators.

More than half of all staff respondents indicated that they spent a fair amount or a great deal of time assisting legislators at committee hearings (Table 11). Given the critical function of hearings as forums for the debate of particular forestry issues and programs, it is not surprising that staff would be

available to testify at hearings in order to respond to any questions committee members might have regarding information provided to them by either staff or others presenting testimony.

More than half the staff respondents indicated a fair or great deal of their time was devoted to drafting and analyzing legislation pertaining to forestry matters. A typical scenario might be that reported by a staff member of a House agriculture committee in a southeastern state.

*"We have three forestry related bills for the 1990 session. I am responsible for doing a staff analysis of each bill and updating that analysis after the bill passes out of the committee. I then track the legislation."*

In another instance, the primary role of a staff respondent from a House natural resources committee in a West Coast state was described as "tracking issues, proposals, amendments and commentary" on several forestry related bills involving mitigating spruce bark beetle infestations, tightening restrictions on streamside logging, a proposed buy-out of timber inholdings in a state park, and increased funding for reforestation projects on state forest lands.

Staff roles may also include analyzing proposals and bills pertaining to forestry in terms of their potential impacts on government policy, legal ramifications, costs and fiscal impacts, and other implications. Some staff become involved in negotiating provisions in bills.

Committee staff may conduct a variety of research activities in which they provide synopses or explanations of forestry related matters for the benefit of committee legislators. Two-fifths of staff respondents reported that preparing issue summaries and background reports on particular subjects was a significant part of their forestry activities. In some cases their research tasks also involved providing background information about ongoing state and local projects (for example, land conservation programs), frequently in response to requests from committee members wanting to remain abreast of how programs initiated by previous legislative efforts are performing. For one-fifth of staff respondents, the above kinds of activities also involved working on forestry matters with other committees — particularly the counterpart natural resources policy committee in the other chamber.

Nearly a quarter of committee staff respondents reported spending a significant amount of time on the oversight of state forestry agency programs. Several individuals indicated that such activities were quite comprehensive in nature, but more

frequently they were identified as being focused on particular agency policies, rules or regulations that were being considered for adoption, modification or elimination. Such programs and rules dealt with a variety of topics ranging across fire protection, timber harvesting on private forest lands, requirements for registration, continuing education for foresters, etc.

For some committee staff, oversight activities comprised a sometimes small part of their more general role as liaison between their committees and the state forestry agency, and perhaps federal forestry or natural resource organizations as well. Tasks associated with this role included monitoring meetings and facilitating the preparation of legislative proposals that the state forestry agency wished to file for possible action by the committee. Very seldom, however, did staff formally represent the committee at meetings with state agencies or the governor's office regarding forestry matters. Their roles were presumed to involve frequent contact with each of these groups in compiling information relevant to committee decisions on the effectiveness of existing rules or the desirability of proposed legislation.

About two-fifths of committee staff spent a significant amount of time with lobbyists or special interest groups on matters related to forestry. Their primary concern in these interactions was gathering information on various interests such groups might have with respect to proposals on new or existing legislation, and on conveying these views to the committee.

About 30 percent of committee staff also reported devoting a fair amount of time to disseminating information to various groups in response to requests for descriptions or updates on the status of legislative proposals related to forestry. A related task involved acknowledging the receipt of information or position statements submitted by these groups for consideration by the committee.

### **STAFF FORESTRY COMMUNICATION WITH COMMITTEE**

Not surprisingly, staff communicated more frequently with their committee chairs and members during the session than in the interim periods (Table 12). During the session, 43 percent of staff respondents interacted with the committee chair regularly, on a daily, or at least weekly basis. One-third of the respondents also did so with committee members. That roughly a third of staff respondents communicated with both the chair and committee members on a very infrequent basis during both

session and interim likely reflects the limited occurrence of matters related to forestry on the agendas of policy committees in a number of states during 1988 through 1990.

During the interim periods, one-quarter of staff respondents kept in touch with the committee chair on at least a weekly basis, while only 9 percent of staff did so with committee members. More than half of staff respondents communicated only every two to three months with the committee chair during the interim, and nearly three-fourths displayed this pattern of communication with committee members. On an overall basis, such results tend to support a Rosenthal (1981) observation that (particularly during the interim period between sessions) staff tend to maintain frequent communications more often with the committee chair than with other committee legislators.

**COMMITTEE FAMILIARITY WITH FORESTRY SUBJECTS**

Overall, most staff respondents appeared to believe that their committees were either slightly or fairly familiar with virtually all aspects of forestry and forest lands in their state (Tables 13 and 14). At least two-thirds of staff considered this to be the case for each of 19 forestry subject areas considered. For only three aspects of forestry, however, did more staff in this group consider their committees to be "fairly" rather than only "slightly" familiar.

At the same time, there were no aspects of forestry or related matters with which even a quarter of staff believed their committees to be "very" familiar. In fact, for only three subjects did more than 15 percent of staff consider this to be the case. Conversely, only with respect to forestry education and research matters did more than 15 percent of staff consider their committees to be "not at all" familiar. About a quarter of staff indicated this to be the case regarding these matters (Table 14). More than three-fourths of the committees were regarded by responding staff as being well informed about the basic characteristics and condition of the forest lands in their states.

Between half and two-thirds of staff respondents considered their committees to be fairly or very familiar with public forest land management topics such as wildlife and ecology, forest based recreation, forestry protection activities, and land ownership and jurisdictional matters. About half of the committees were also viewed as being relatively familiar with two large-scale issues involving forest lands in their states, namely impacts of economic

**Table 12. Staff communication with policy committee chair and members on forestry matters, during session and interim. 1988-1990.**

	Proportion of Staff Indicating:			
	Daily	Weekly or more	Monthly or more	Every 2-3 months
	----- Percent -----			
<b>A. During Session</b>				
Committee chair	16	27	27	30
Committee members	5	27	34	34
<b>B. During Interim <sup>a</sup></b>				
Committee chair	0	25	21	54
Committee members	0	9	21	70

<sup>a</sup> Staff respondents whose committees were in session year-round are deleted.

development on the forest resource, and regional ecological issues.

Fewer than two-fifths of staff respondents considered their committees to be fairly or very familiar with the characteristics and management practices of their state's nonindustrial private forestry sector. Thus, despite the relatively consistent prominence of matters of this type on the agendas of a number of committees, many committees were viewed as only slightly familiar with the multifaceted characteristics of nonindustrial private lands.

A similar lack of familiarity occurred with respect to the loss of forest lands via their conversion to other uses, a phenomenon that is closely linked to issues involving the conservation and preservation of state forest lands. These are matters which received the greatest overall amount of committee attention among all forestry related subjects during the survey period (Table 9).

The above cases may both be contrasted to that of public wildlife and ecological land management. Being the focus of a high level of committee attention relative to other forestry related matters, this was identified by almost two-thirds of staff as an area with which their policy committees were relatively well acquainted.

Forest policy committees were considered by staff to be least familiar with matters related to forestry research and education, and with the needs and opportunities for cooperation with federal agencies relative to forestry and related areas. Only between 20 and 30 percent of staff respondents believed their committees to be fairly or well acquainted with matters in these areas.

**Table 13. Staff Interpretation of policy committee familiarity with forestry matters. 1988-1990.**

Forestry Subject Area	Proportion of Staff Indicating:				
	Not at All Familiar	Slightly Familiar	Fairly Familiar	Very Familiar	Don't Know
	----- Percent -----				
<b>State Forest Resource: All Ownerships</b>					
Nature, extent and condition of forest lands in state	2	20	63	15	0
<b>Public Forest Land Management</b>					
Forest land ownership and jurisdictional matters (e.g., acquisition, sale, transfer, access)	2	37	33	24	4
Forest protection activities (fire, insects, disease): methods and impacts	7	37	35	17	4
Timber management: outputs and impacts	9	54	24	11	2
Wildlife and ecological land management: outputs and impacts	2	35	48	15	0
Forest-based recreation management: outputs and impacts	4	40	40	16	0
Tradeoffs in public forest land uses	7	47	35	9	2
<b>State Wood Products Industry</b>					
Structure and potential for economic development	9	48	32	9	2
Economic impacts: employment and income	4	37	42	15	2
Products, markets and technology	4	52	33	7	4
Regulatory mechanisms: forest practices and wood processing	13	46	33	6	2
<b>Nonindustrial Private Forestry</b>					
Ownership patterns, outputs and management practices	13	48	35	4	0
<b>Intergovernmental Forestry</b>					
State-federal cooperative needs and opportunities	15	53	24	4	4
State, county and local cooperative needs and opportunities	11	46	35	4	4
<b>Forestry Research and Education</b>					
Forestry research: program content and priorities	26	50	18	4	2
Forestry education and training: programs and needs	24	50	22	2	2
<b>State and Regional Economic Development</b>					
Forest land conversion: pattern and extent	15	44	24	13	4
Impacts of development on forest resource condition (e.g., pollution)	9	39	39	13	0
Regional ecological issues (e.g., acid rain): impacts on forest resource base	13	37	35	15	0

**STAFF PERCEPTION OF COMMITTEE INFORMATION REQUESTS**

Legislators are not always very specific about what information they want on forestry matters, although they do like information formulated in terms of

possible options for action (Table 15). Three-fifths of staff respondents reported that committee members frequently asked for "any information at all" on forestry matters that may have surfaced at a particular time. One in three committee staff reported that such a mode of requesting information occur-

**Table 14. Ranking of policy committee familiarity with forestry matters. 1988-1990.**

Rank	Forestry Subject Area	Score <sup>a</sup>
1	Forest resource: Nature, extent and condition	78
2	Public forestry: Wildlife and ecological land management	63
3	Forest land ownership and jurisdictional matters (e.g., acquisition, sale, transfer, access)	59
4	Wood products industry: employment and income impacts	58
5	Public forestry: Forest-based recreation management	56
6	Public forestry: Forest protection activities (fire, insects and disease)	55
7	Impacts of development on forest resource condition (e.g., pollution)	52
8	Regional ecological issues (e.g., acid rain)	50
9	Public forestry: Tradeoffs in forest land uses	46
10	Wood products industry: Structure and potential for economic development	42
11	Wood products industry: Products, markets and technology	41
12	State, county and local cooperative needs and opportunities	40
12	Wood products industry: Regulation of forest practices and wood processing	40
14	Nonindustrial private forests: Ownership patterns, outputs and management practices	39
14	Forest land conversion: pattern and extent	39
16	Public forestry: Timber management	36
17	State-federal cooperative needs and opportunities	30
18	Forestry education and training	24
19	Forestry research	22

<sup>a</sup> Percent of staff indicating a committee(s) was fairly familiar or very familiar with a particular forestry subject area.

**Table 15. Staff perception of form of communication from policy committee members regarding forestry matters. 1988-1990.**

Form of Communication from Committee Member	Proportion of Staff Indicating:			
	Very Seldom	Fairly Seldom	Fairly Often	Very Often
	----- Percent -----			
"See what scientific or technical summaries you can find that describe the nature of this situation or problem"	48	25	27	0
"Who stands where on this issue or initiative?"	36	22	20	22
"Get me anything you can on this problem or initiative"	13	27	27	33
"Can you give me an information to help in opposing this proposal?"	42	27	29	2
"What do you think about this problem?"	20	27	33	20
"Put together some possible options on this problem"	18	22	44	16
"Can you get me some solid commitments from groups to push for this approach to the problem?"	16	15	9	7
"See if you can get any information that will support this position on the problem or initiative"	24	42	29	5

red very often. Similarly, three-fifths of staff members indicated that legislators requested information in terms of options outlining potential courses of action for addressing given forestry problems.

In responding to these requests, committee staff

are expected to use both their experience on the job and their networks of information sources as a basis for acquiring information relevant to the decisions of committee legislators. Among these sources are those who may provide scientific and technical information regarding the nature or underlying

causes of particular forestry problems or issues. Although staff are undoubtedly expected to avail themselves of these sources, only about one quarter of committee requests were phrased in a way suggesting that legislators themselves be provided with such scientific or technical summaries of these matters.

Given the workloads of committee members and their other responsibilities within and outside the legislature, most would appear to not be able to spend the time required to peruse much scientific or technical information related to the forestry matters they are considering. Instead, the task is left to committee staff to condense and organize such information into a form that both summarizes the nature of problems and provides some possible courses of action for addressing them. Slightly more than half of committee staff also reported that legislators asked for their opinions on various forestry matters, and about one-fifth indicated that committee members did so very often.

About two of five staff respondents indicated that legislators on their committees frequently asked them to obtain descriptive political information on the positions of various groups and organizations with respect to particular forestry related matters. For more than a fifth of committee staff, this was a very frequent request. On the other hand, relatively few staff members (16 percent) reported that committee legislators asked them to act politically in the sense of soliciting support from groups or organizations for particular approaches or courses of action regarding forestry related matters.

Also of interest is whether legislators request information after they have made up their minds about what position they are going to take regarding particular forestry related problems or issues. About one-third of committee staff reported this to be the case, although very few indicated that it occurred very often. In these instances, staff were asked to gather information that would aid a legislator (or group of legislators) in either bolstering a position on a particular forestry related matter or opposing a proposal that was not favored.

In sum, at least half of staff respondents reported that when a problem or issue related to forestry arose, legislators asked them to obtain any information they could on the matter, provide some possible options for action, or offer some general thoughts on how they viewed the problem. For two-fifths of committee staff, legislators requested information on the positions of various groups (pro and con) on the issue at hand. About one-third of committee staff were asked to provide information to bolster legislators' pre-existing views on how they were going to approach the problem. Only

about a quarter of staff reported that committee members requested scientific or technical summaries of forestry problems or issues, and only a few staff were asked by legislators to solicit the support of groups for specific approaches to forestry issues.

## **STAFF EVALUATION OF INFORMATION ADEQUACY**

Based on their experience on the job, committee staff become familiar with the existing information base for forestry matters in their state. Staff may evaluate such information according to a variety of criteria, including its breadth and scope, level of detail, accuracy, and whether it is updated to reflect the current situation. Underlying all of these diverse criteria, however, is one key dimension — namely, the usefulness of such information for decisions of committee legislators.

With the “usefulness of information for decisions” in mind, committee staff were asked to evaluate the current information base on forestry and related matters in their state — as described in the list of information categories presented in Table 4 — in terms of how adequate they believed existing information on each forestry topic to be for decision making by committee legislators. The results are presented in Tables 16 and 17.

## **GENERAL PATTERNS**

The majority of staff respondents believed that information on most aspects of forestry in their states was either fairly or very adequate for decision making by their committees (Table 16). For each of the 19 kinds of forestry information evaluated by staff, at least 44 percent of respondents indicated that the current information base was fairly or very adequate for use by committee legislators.

The “fairly adequate” rating was clearly predominant in most cases. More than two-thirds of staff respondents believed this to be the case for information on the nature and condition of the forest resource in their state; public programs for forest protection and wildlife/ecological land management; and economic impacts of a state's wood-based industry. For another nine kinds of information, between one-half and two-thirds of committee staff indicated that information in these areas was fairly or very adequate for committee use.

At the same time, between 40 and 50 percent of staff respondents indicated that each of the three kinds of information related to the impacts of state and regional economic development on forests

and forestry in their states, as well as information pertaining to tradeoffs in public forest land uses, was either marginally adequate or simply inadequate for decisions by committee legislators. From one-third to two-fifths of committee staff believed

this to be the case for seven additional kinds of forestry related information.

When considering those forestry subjects to which improved information would most benefit commit-

**Table 16. Staff assessment of the adequacy of forestry information for policy committee decision making, 1988-1990.**

Forestry Subject Area	Proportion of Staff Indicating:				
	Not Adequate	Slightly Adequate	Fairly Adequate	Very Adequate	Don't Know <sup>a</sup>
	----- Percent -----				
<b>State Forest Resource: All Ownerships</b>					
Nature, extent and condition of forest lands in state	7	13	38	36	7
<b>Public Forest Land Management</b>					
Forest land ownership and jurisdictional matters (e.g., acquisition, sale, transfer, access)	2	18	43	27	9
Forest protection activities (fire, insects, disease): methods and impacts	2	7	56	22	13
Timber management: outputs and impacts	2	31	36	20	11
Wildlife and ecological land management: outputs and impacts	7	22	38	31	2
Forest-based recreation management: outputs and impacts	7	27	33	29	4
Tradeoffs in public forest land uses	11	29	33	11	16
<b>State Wood Products Industry</b>					
Structure and potential for economic development	5	34	30	18	14
Economic impacts: employment and income	11	11	52	21	5
Products, markets and technology	14	16	41	21	9
Regulatory mechanisms: forest practices and wood processing	11	23	36	23	7
<b>Nonindustrial Private Forestry</b>					
Ownership patterns, outputs and management practices	7	27	43	14	9
<b>Intergovernmental Forestry</b>					
State-federal cooperative needs and opportunities	9	24	38	11	18
State, county and local cooperative needs and opportunities	7	31	36	9	18
<b>Forestry Research and Education</b>					
Forestry research: program content and priorities	7	24	33	18	18
Forestry education and training: programs and needs	7	22	38	16	18
<b>State and Regional Economic Development</b>					
Forest land conversion: pattern and extent	22	24	31	13	9
Impacts of development on forest resource condition (e.g., pollution)	13	27	36	16	9
Regional ecological issues (e.g., acid rain): impacts on forest resource base	9	36	24	20	11

<sup>a</sup> Or do not obtain.

**Table 17. Ranking of staff priorities for improvements in forestry information required for policy committee decision making. 1988-1990.**

Rank	Forestry Subject Area	Score <sup>a</sup>
1	Impacts of development on forest resource condition (e.g., pollution)	63
2	Forest resource: Nature, extent and condition	52
3	Public forestry: Wildlife and ecological land management	41
4	Public forestry: Timber management	39
5	Forest land conversion: pattern and extent	35
5	Regional ecological issues (e.g., acid rain)	35
5	Wood products industry: Products, markets and technology	35
8	Wood products industry: employment and income impacts	29
9	Wood products industry: Structure and potential for economic development	28
10	State-federal cooperative needs and opportunities	26
11	Public forestry: Tradeoffs in forest land uses	25
12	Nonindustrial private forests: Ownership patterns, outputs and management practices	24
13	Public forestry: Forest land ownership and jurisdictional matters (e.g., acquisition, sale, transfer, access)	21
14	Public forestry: Forest protection activities (fire, insects, disease)	20
14	Forestry research	20
16	Public forestry: Forest-based recreation management	15
17	Wood products industry: Regulation of forest practices and wood processing	13
18	State, county and local cooperative needs and opportunities	12
19	Forestry education and training	9

<sup>a</sup> Total points assigned by staff to their top five forestry information areas needing improvement (number 1 priority = 5 points, through number 5 priority = 1 point).

tee decisions, staff respondents assigned highest priorities to two particular areas. These were information on the impacts of development on the condition of the state forest resource, and on the nature, extent and condition of the existing resource base (Table 17).

Somewhat lower on the scale of staff priorities was information related to public timber and wildlife management programs; patterns of forest land conversion; regional ecological issues; and products, markets and technologies of a state's wood-based industry. Matters involving public forest recreation management, regulation of a state's wood-based industry, state and local cooperative needs involving forestry, and forestry education and training were accorded the least emphasis in terms of improved information.

**STATE FOREST RESOURCE: ALL OWNERSHIPS**

Three-fourths of committee staff indicated that the existing information base on the characteristics of the forest resource in their state was generally satisfactory for decision making by their committees (Tables 16 and 17). This was the only category of

information rated "very adequate" by more than one-third of staff respondents. At the same time, among the one-fifth of staff members who did not indicate this to be the case, several from West Coast states commented that basic resource information was one of their most pressing needs. This again highlights how the adequacy of information on any forestry topic can be problematic in any particular state, even if it is regarded as generally satisfactory in most others.

It is also noteworthy that staff respondents identified information on the state forest resource base as the second highest priority for improved information on an overall basis. This was also the item cited most frequently as the number one priority in this regard. Such a pattern indicates the central importance of such information to the activities of forest policy committees in state legislatures. It also demonstrates that there is no necessary connection between the perceived adequacy (or inadequacy) of a particular kind of information and its identification as a high priority need.

While some kinds of information may be regarded as generally inadequate for committee decisions, should the committee infrequently deal with mat-

ters in that area, such information may not be identified as a high priority concern. Conversely, even if information on a particular aspect of forestry – such as the state forest resource base – is viewed by most committee staff as relatively adequate for their uses, the centrality of this subject to the basic tasks of the committee may dictate that continuing improvements in the quality of such information is a high priority for staff members.

## PUBLIC FOREST LAND MANAGEMENT

This class of information encompasses the principal policies, programs and activities of agencies involved in the management of state owned and administered forest lands (Tables 16 and 17). In this regard, most committee staff regarded information on land ownership and jurisdiction to be fairly or very adequate for committee uses. However, respondents from several states in the West and Northeast identified some key information needs in this area.

With respect to various agency activities and programs, most of the respondents offered favorable assessments of the quality of information related to forest protection problems and operations. Staff members exhibited the lowest level of dissatisfaction with this information among all of the 19 types they evaluated. Neither information pertaining to forest protection nor that related to forest land ownership and jurisdiction were identified as particularly high priorities for improvement on an overall basis by committee staff.

With respect to three basic resource management activities of public forestry agencies (those focused on timber, wildlife and ecology, and forest based recreation) committee staff were most satisfied with information on wildlife and ecological land management. Almost 70 percent of respondents regarded information in this area as fairly or very adequate for committee decision making. This level of approval drops to 62 percent for information on forest based recreation and 56 percent for timber management.

Fewer than half of committee staff indicated they were somewhat or very satisfied with the adequacy of information related to tradeoffs in forest land uses, while two-fifths were of the opposite opinion. In part, this may reflect the more abstract nature of information of this kind, as well as the difficulty in carrying out analyses that lead to the production of such information.

A consequence of the difficulty of developing the above noted “more abstract” information is its relative scarcity in contrast to other kinds of infor-

mation on public forest management. This is also suggested by the relatively high percentage of staff who either didn’t obtain or weren’t able to assess the adequacy of this kind of information.

All of the above may also have contributed to staff assigning only a moderate priority for improved information on land use tradeoffs, well below that accorded to more concrete information on public timber and wildlife management programs.

## STATE WOOD BASED INDUSTRY

Key informational aspects of a state’s wood based industry relate to industry structure and its potential for development; specific economic impacts; products, markets and technology; and regulatory mechanisms for industrial activities. Among these, staff regarded information depicting the economic impacts of a state’s wood based industry, in terms of employment and income, as that most adequate for committee uses. This likely reflects the relative availability of statistical and other information depicting the contributions of wood based and other economic sectors to the overall performance of a state’s economy. In many states such information is maintained and updated by government and academic organizations, and may be more consistent and accessible than other kinds of information pertaining to the state forest industry.

About three-fifths of committee staff considered information on products, markets and technologies for their state’s wood-based industry to be fairly or very adequate for committee decisions. For those who were not satisfied with the adequacy of such information, about half perceived this lack to be substantial.

The desire of many respondents to keep abreast of trends in wood products development, consumer tastes, and advances in technology was reflected in the relatively high priority assigned by staff to improved information in these areas. They were, in fact, the highest among the four categories of information related to a state’s wood based industry.

Staff views on the adequacy of information on regulatory mechanisms for industry activities (including forest practices and the processing of wood products) tended to parallel those for products, markets and technology. At the same time, however, and despite the fact that more than one-fifth of staff respondents indicated that timber harvesting regulation was among the top forestry related priorities for attention by their committees (Table 9), most committee staff did not designate improved information in this area as a high priority relative to other forestry matters.

The adequacy of information on the structure of a state's wood based industry and its potential contribution to economic development was more problematic for many committee staff than was the status of other kinds of industry related information. Fewer than half of staff respondents regarded such information as fairly or very adequate in nature. One-third indicated that, while some such information was available, it was only marginally adequate for decisions of committee legislators. And 14 percent of staff either did not obtain such information or didn't know how adequate existing information in this area was for committee use. The high degree of uncertainty associated with any future oriented information probably contributed to the less than satisfactory status of this information for a number of staff respondents.

#### **NONINDUSTRIAL PRIVATE FORESTRY**

With respect to their state's nonindustrial private forestry sector, committee staff tended to evaluate the existing information base as somewhere between the extremes of adequacy for committee purposes (Tables 16 and 17). Seventy percent of respondents rated such information as either fairly or marginally adequate for use in legislator decision making. Most states have seen a gradual but steady improvement in the information base for this ownership class, leading to the current situation in which information is generally often neither highly detailed nor totally inadequate, but still not as useful as it might be for decisions of committee legislators.

Despite this only intermediate adequacy, overall committee staff assigned only a moderate priority to improved information on the nonindustrial private forestry sectors in their states. Given that one-third of staff respondents identified this subject as among the top three forestry related priorities for the attention of their committees in 1990, and that three-fifths of staff believed their committees were "slightly familiar" or less with these matters (Table 13), it may be that some committee staff believe that further improvements in the quality of existing information in this area — although desirable — may come in smaller increments than those witnessed in the past. Hence other aspects of their state's forestry situation were accorded a higher priority in terms of improved information for committee decision making.

#### **INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORESTRY**

Committee staff again tended toward moderate, as opposed to extreme, assessments when considering the adequacy of information needed for co-

operation between state and federal and local levels of government (Tables 16 and 17). Slightly fewer than half of staff respondents indicated that existing information in these areas was generally satisfactory. One-third or more considered it to be marginally adequate or inadequate. Eighteen percent of staff members reported either that they did not obtain such information or were unaware of what did exist.

As noted earlier, in almost half of states included in the study, very few substantive or jurisdictional matters with intergovernmental dimensions surfaced with respect to forestry and forest lands from 1988 through 1990. Most staff reported that they believed their committees to be at least slightly familiar with such matters, given their generally infrequent occurrence (Table 13). A number of respondents indicated that while channels for communication were generally open between levels of government, the adequacy of information on cooperative opportunities really depended on the nature of the particular forestry related matter involved, which invariably pertained to one or another substantive aspect of forestry.

With respect to state-federal cooperation on forestry matters, the responses of staff members from six states in which such concerns had recently been or were presently the focus of committee attention, as well as those of a number of other staff on committees where such issues had been significant in the past, contributed to a moderate rating for information in this area in terms of priority for information improvement (Table 17). In contrast, few staff identified information on state-county cooperative opportunities involving forestry as among their top priorities in this regard.

#### **FORESTRY RESEARCH AND EDUCATION**

With respect to information about ongoing research and educational programs, slightly more than half of committee staff members said they were somewhat or very satisfied with the adequacy of information in these areas. About one-third of staff respondents were of the opposite opinion. This was consistent with the responses of almost half of staff respondents, saying their committees spent no time on matters involving forestry research or education during the period covered by the survey (Table 9).

Almost one-fifth of committee staff reported that they either did not know how adequate the existing information was in the areas of ongoing research and educational programs, or did not obtain such information. Many in this latter group reported that, while they occasionally sought out the results of

forestry research, neither the overall structure of existing forestry research efforts nor the content and availability of educational programs in forestry were usually considered within the scope of committee matters related to forestry.

With respect to forestry research, matters that became the focus of committee attention appear to relate not so much to content of ongoing research programs, but rather to questions involving the need for and focus of specific research studies. Such activities are likely to arise on a periodic, not regular, basis. And since they may well be publicly funded, these matters would likely be reviewed by legislative policy and fiscal committees.

It seems likely that forest policy committees in state legislatures are not so much concerned with the specific content of ongoing educational programs in forestry, as they are with the establishment or expansion of educational facilities and programs supported at least in part by public funding.

A few states – mostly in the Northeast – did devote some attention to matters involving the training and certification of professional foresters. Information in this area is likely to be of ongoing interest to legislators on forest policy committees.

#### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: IMPACTS ON FORESTRY**

From the perspective of committee staff, information concerning the impacts on forestry and forest lands of large scale processes, such as those associated with state and regional economic development and industrial activity, was least satisfactory for decision making by committee legislators (Tables 16 and 17). For two of the three kinds of information listed in this area, the proportion of staff respondents who viewed such information as only marginally adequate or simply inadequate exceeded that of staff who judged it to be satisfactory to varying degrees.

The availability and quality of information depicting the causes and consequences of the loss of state forest lands to other uses (e.g., agriculture, residential development) was particularly problematic for almost half of staff respondents. More than one-fifth of staff regarded such information as inadequate for committee decision making. Several respondents cited the diversity of causes that contribute in various ways to the phenomenon of forest conversion as making this information more difficult to obtain relative to other types of forestry information.

Two of five committee staff members were dissatis-

fied with the adequacy of information on the impacts of economic development and industrial activity insofar as they contribute to the pollution or degradation of existing forest resources. Two-thirds of this group, however, did consider the existing information base for this area to be at least marginally adequate for committee uses. As might be expected, responses varied depending on the particular patterns of development and problems of environmental pollution that were prominent in different states.

A general feature of staff judgements regarding this information (even for the one-half of respondents who considered it to be fairly or very adequate for committee purposes) was a feeling of uncertainty as to whether the existing information base was in fact capturing all of the detrimental effects of these broad patterns of economic development on the forest resources of their state.

From the perspective of committee staff, it was not simply a question of improving the quality of information on the effects of a fully documented set of pollutants or other adverse consequences that may result from economic development. There was also a concern for whether such documentation as currently exists adequately encompasses all of the kinds and causes of pollution that are, in fact, affecting forest lands and other natural resources in their states. This uncertainty was also evident in staff identifying improved information in this area as having by far the highest priority for improvement relative to all other types of forestry information identified.

With respect to the impacts on state forest resources of environmental phenomena originating for the most part beyond state boundaries, such as regional, national and global problems involving acid rain and global warming, committee staff were again split evenly in their judgements of its adequacy for legislator decision making. A slightly higher percentage of staff viewed information on regional ecological issues as marginally adequate (or less) when compared with those who offered more favorable assessments.

At the extremes, only a small proportion of staff identified information on regional ecological issues as "not adequate," while about one-fifth of the respondents considered it to be very adequate for committee purposes. Most staff respondents recognized that information in this area has been gradually improving, but almost half indicated that much more needed to be learned regarding the actual impacts of such processes on state forest resources. This was also reflected in the relatively high priority assigned by staff to improved information in this area.

**CONVEYANCE OF FORESTRY INFORMATION TO COMMITTEE**

There are any number of contexts within which staff may convey information on forestry matters to a committee. These range from an immediate verbal response to a legislator's question at a committee hearing, to a written report submitted to the committee presenting the results of research documenting a particular forestry issue.

A staff member may also convey information through the manner of speech employed in communicating with committee legislators. That is to say, while staff may transmit information via simple statements of fact, they may also make recommendations, ask questions, offer opinions, and issue warnings. Committee staff were asked to estimate how often they communicated with members of their committees in a variety of ways (Table 18).

Clearly the most frequent manner in which staff conveyed information on forestry matters to their committees was in the form of factual summaries of the nature of particular problems or issues. These included the opinions of those with different interests or perspectives regarding such problems. Four out of five staff respondents reported that they provided this kind of information to their committees on a frequent — fairly or very often — basis.

At the same time, almost two-thirds of committee staff indicated that they frequently volunteered comments on ideas, proposals or alternatives advanced for addressing forestry problems or issues being considered by the committee. In addition, three-fifths of respondents reported that they provided interpretations of data, analyses, position statements and other information they were pre-

senting to the committee if they believed such information was for any reason ambiguous or incomplete.

When it came to suggesting new or different approaches for addressing problems involving forestry that were being considered by their committees, slightly more than half of staff respondents indicated that they did so on a fairly or very frequent basis.

Most staff were reluctant to use their influence to affect the status of a particular forestry problem or issue, insofar as its position on the agenda of their committees was concerned. Only a third of respondents reported frequently recommending that matters be placed on the committee agenda, and most said they seldom if ever suggested that a particular matter be deferred to a later time. For at least two-thirds of staff members, these actions were perhaps viewed as an infringement on prerogatives of committee members themselves.

Overall, it appears that committee staff varied by about a ratio of 3:2 in their opinions with respect to how active they were (or should be) in mediating the flow of information to committee legislators. About two-fifths of staff respondents described their role in information conveyance as that of transparent information conduits. As one staff member noted, "My job is to provide information in as clear and concise form as possible, not to offer any judgements as to how satisfactory different information, policy options, etc., might be for addressing particular problems related to forestry."

In contrast, about three-fifths of committee staff viewed their tasks in conveying information to their committees as also involving offering opinions on ideas and proposals; pointing out and, where possi-

**Table 18. Staff conveyance of forestry information to policy committees, by mode of conveyance. 1988-1990.**

Mode of Conveying Information	Proportion of Staff Indicating:			
	Very Seldom	Fairly Seldom	Fairly Often	Very Often
	----- Percent -----			
Summarize the facts of the matter, including views of those with opposing interests in outcomes	11	9	40	40
Provide interpretation of ambiguous information	16	24	44	16
Recommend matter be accorded agenda status	50	18	21	11
Suggest matter be deferred to a later time	66	25	7	2
Comment on ideas, proposals or alternatives	13	23	41	23
Suggest possible new angles for approaching a particular problem	11	33	6	20

ble, interpreting ambiguous aspects of the information they were presenting; and offering suggestions on new ways of looking at problems or novel alternatives for addressing them.

It is also likely that staff perspectives on their roles in information conveyance were influenced by the disposition of the committee chair – and perhaps committee members – in this regard.

## STAFF-POLICY DOMAIN: COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION FLOWS

### STAFF COMMUNICATION WITH POLICY DOMAIN ACTORS

In providing information and assistance to committee legislators, staff professionals interact with groups and organizations that have an active interest in a state's forests and forestry programs. These organizations can be grouped into three categories: intra-legislative, interbranch (state government), and public-intergovernmental. The last mentioned includes interest groups and other nongovernment political actors, and federal and county government forestry organizations. It is this institutional fabric within which committee staff establish networks of communication through which they identify and acquire information relevant to the decisions of committee legislators.

Staff communications with groups and organizations in the political environment occur in three different fashions. First, committee staff may communicate with some groups or organizations on a regular or routine basis to keep abreast of what is going on in the state with respect to forestry and related areas. These interactions may on occasion be initiated by the other group or organization as part of this ongoing pattern of communication.

In general, these *regular-routine* communications involve the exchange of facts or opinions on forestry or related matters, but not of a confidential nature. From the perspective of staff, this mode of communication serves a monitoring function through which they may identify matters of potential importance to their committee.

Committee staff may also communicate with a particular group or organization about forestry matters when a particular problem, issue or initiative arises about which either staff require information or the policy domain actor has an interest (e.g., interest group contacts staff). In these *incident-related* communications, it is again facts or opinions that are exchanged, not sensitive or confidential information. This represents a kind of needs-oriented search from the perspective of the party initiating the communication. The scope of the

desired information is for the most part defined by the forestry issue at hand.

A third pattern of communication between committee staff and groups in a state's forest policy domain arises when staff find themselves facing especially sensitive problems involving forestry matters. These are situations where judgements of others may be valuable either in deciphering underlying dimensions of a problem or in deciding between various courses of action. In such *candid-confidential* communications, staff rely on key individuals whom they trust to exchange sensitive and confidential advice about possible ways to proceed in these situations.

### FREQUENCY OF COMMUNICATION

More than half of the responding committee staff communicated fairly or very often with five sets of actors (Table 19). These were the state forestry agency, other state natural resource departments or agencies within the executive branch, personal staff of committee members, staff of the counterpart forest policy committee in the other chamber, and environmental groups.

Wood products firms and trade associations were among the five information sources with whom from 40 to 50 percent of committee staff indicated they communicated fairly or very often. The other four actors in this group are all internal to the legislature. They were the central legislative research bureau, appropriations and finance committee staffs, staffs of other committees in the respondents' same chamber, and staffs of chamber leaders and party caucuses.

A somewhat smaller proportion of committee staff (30 to 39 percent) maintained frequent communications with four other policy domain actors: the legislative analyst, the governor's office staff, forestry and natural resources departments in colleges or universities, and the press and media.

A fourth set of information sources, with whom 20

**Table 19. Staff communication with groups or organizations active in state forestry issues, by type and frequency. 1988-1990.**

Group or Organization	Communication Pattern			Communication Frequency			
	Proportion of Staff Indicating:			Proportion of Staff Indicating:			
	Regular-Routine	Incident-Related	Candid-Confidential	Very Seldom	Fairly Seldom	Fairly Often	Very Often
	----- Percent -----			----- Percent -----			
Personal staff of committee members	41	54	36	21	24	33	21
Appropriations and Finance committee staff	29	63	28	21	37	29	13
Other committee staffs (same chamber)	20	71	44	24	27	38	11
Counterpart committee staff (other chamber)	37	61	38	21	18	32	29
Legislative analyst (budget and finance)	20	73	16	27	38	32	3
House and Senate office of research	28	55	13	35	17	35	13
Leadership and caucus staff	18	60	31	27	30	27	17
Non-committee legislator and personal staff	10	80	12	37	40	17	6
Governor's office staff	22	70	19	30	33	30	6
State budget office and dept.	7	61	6	66	14	17	3
State forestry agency	46	54	44	15	13	43	30
Other state natural resource agencies and depts.	42	59	22	21	23	41	15
State forestry boards and commissions	18	50	3	46	25	25	4
Federal forestry and natural resource agencies	7	68	0	47	38	13	3
County-local forestry and natural resource agencies	8	60	0	57	32	7	4
University/college forestry/natural resources depts.	20	71	28	29	37	24	11
Professional forestry societies	13	60	0	47	37	13	3
Wood products corporations and trade associations	25	55	19	19	39	29	13
Environmental groups	40	60	32	20	27	39	15
Recreation advocates (user groups)	10	68	3	31	41	25	3
Tourism business interests	5	65	7	55	28	17	0
Mineral and energy interests	13	70	7	30	42	24	3
Real estate interests	8	60	0	54	32	14	0
Press and media	15	65	13	36	30	21	12
Contacts in other states	10	80	7	43	40	14	3

to 29 percent of staff respondents indicated they communicated frequently, also has four actors. These are the state forestry boards and commissions, two groups with interests in specific uses of forest lands (recreation advocates, and mineral and energy interests); nonspecialist legislators (and their staff) who are not members of forest policy committees; and the state budget office (or auditor) from the executive branch.

Finally, six potential information sources were identified by only 11 to 17 percent of staff respondents as those with whom they interacted on a somewhat or very frequent basis. These included two business groups with specialized interests (tourism and real estate), forestry and natural resources agencies at both federal and county-local levels of government, professional societies related to forestry, and a general group representing contacts in other states.

**REGULAR-ROUTINE COMMUNICATION**

Overall, a much higher percentage of staff respondents reported that their communications on forestry and related matters with most groups in the state forest policy domain were incident-related, as opposed to regular-routine in nature (Table 19). Given the level of attention required for matters other than forestry within the overall scope of committee responsibilities, as well as the time involved in maintaining regular patterns of interaction with a large number of groups, such results are not entirely surprising.

Only four groups emerged as those with whom more than two-fifths of staff respondents indicated they communicated on a regular basis. Most frequently mentioned among these was the state forestry agency, followed by other state natural resource agencies, personal staff of committee

members, and environmental groups. The only other group with whom more than one-third of committee staff maintained regular contact was staff of their counterpart committee in the other legislative chamber.

Regular-routine contacts identified by staff reflect interests in maintaining consistent flows of information from at least one source in each sector of the political environment. Within the legislature, regular interaction with personal staff of committee members is essential for strengthening the channel of communication linking committee staff and legislators. Staff obviously are concerned with understanding legislators' positions on forestry related matters – including constituent interests whom particular legislators may be representing, options they are likely to favor or reject, and so on.

Equally important is the need for staff to convey to committee members the information they have obtained regarding various forestry related issues, and to respond to legislator requests for information on specific topics, report on the progress of legislation, etc. In addition to direct consultation with committee members, much of this information is both received and conveyed through legislators' personal staff.

Regular contact with staff of counterpart forest policy committees in the other chamber is important for coordinating the form and procedures involved in the passage of forestry related legislation. Since any legislative initiative must ultimately be approved by both chambers, the need for staff to be aware of what is going on in the other chamber (e.g., the nature and progress of companion bills) in this regard is apparent.

Not entirely unexpected is the relatively high proportion of committee staff who would like to maintain regular communications with the state forestry agency and other state natural resource departments. This reflects their recognition of these organizations as important sources of expertise on both state forest resources and the nature of public forestry programs. It should nevertheless be noted that fewer than half of staff respondents interacted regularly with these (or any other) policy domain actors.

Outside of government, environmental groups were clearly the policy domain participants with whom the highest percentage of committee staff maintained regular-routine communications on forestry related matters. Although the range of these groups varies considerably in terms of their specific interests and capacities for providing information, the high rate of interaction with committee staff reflects staff recognition that – in spite of or in

addition to the clearly partisan interests of these groups – such groups often support their positions with useful analyses of the nature and causes of forestry related problems along with suggested options for action. Moreover staff also recognize the effectiveness of many environmental groups in influencing public opinion on various issues involving forestry and natural resource issues.

For most other groups within both the legislature and the state executive branch other than those cited above, only between 18 and 30 percent of committee staff reported maintaining regular-routine communications. Only the state budget office and non-committee legislators and their staff fall below this range.

Slightly more than one-quarter of staff respondents interacted regularly with the central legislative research bureau. Appropriations and finance committee staff served as a steady source of information on fiscal aspects of the performance of public forestry programs, as well as the spending inclinations of the legislature with respect to forestry and related matters. Legislative research organizations provided committee staff with a distinctly non-partisan view of forestry problems and options to balance the views of competing interest groups.

About one-fifth of staff respondents maintained regular-routine communications with executive branch governor's office staff. The fact that less than half as many staff respondents communicated regularly with the governor's office as did with the state forestry agency suggests that in many states the executive administration proposed neither major initiatives nor changes in current direction with respect to state forestry matters during the period of study, 1988 through 1990. In these cases, the state forestry agency carried the ball with respect to the administration's forest policy.

In the public-intergovernmental environment, the only organizations other than environmental groups with whom one-fifth or more of committee staff communicated on a regular basis were state wood products corporations or associations (25 percent) and forestry and natural resources departments of colleges and universities (20 percent). As the central economic actor with respect to timber resources in many states, the wood based industry may provide staff with important information regarding both state forest resources (e.g., timber supply) and the role of forest industry in state economic development.

In some states, however, the timber industry is not a major economic actor. This, along with the broader scope of forestry issues of concern to environmental groups (i.e., they frequently have positions

on wildlife, recreation and other issues not always of immediate relevance to wood products firms), may account for the latter having interacted on a regular-routine basis with a higher percentage of committee staff than did wood products firms.

Academic sources provide committee staff with relatively nonpartisan, objective information on state forestry and related matters. A number of staff maintained regular contacts with science and policy experts in these institutions, not only for their advice and analyses regarding specific issues, but to keep abreast of general developments in the field which may have implications for state forest policy.

For all other nongovernmental groups and organizations, as well as forestry and natural resource agencies at other levels of government, most committee staff did not maintain regular-routine communications on forestry matters during 1988-1990.

#### INCIDENT-RELATED COMMUNICATIONS

For each of the groups or organizations that have been identified as participants in a state's forest policy domain, a substantially greater proportion of committee staff reported that their communications on forestry matters occurred in connection with particular incidents or issues (Table 19). From one-half to four-fifths of staff respondents reported incident-related communications with any given policy domain actor.

In some states in which relatively few matters related to forestry were considered by forest policy committees during 1988 through 1990, incident-related communications were the only kind staff reported with any group. At the same time, for some organizations almost all communications with committee staff were on an incident-related basis. Among the latter were non-committee legislators and their staffs, the state budget office, federal and county forestry agencies, and recreation, tourism, real estate interests, as well as contacts in other states.

#### CANDID-CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATION

About three-fourths of responding staff identified groups or organizations on whom they relied for the exchange of sensitive or confidential advice involving forestry issues. Candid-confidential communication by committee staff occurred most often with various sources within the legislature, somewhat less so with state executive organizations, and only to a limited extent with groups in the public-intergovernmental environment (Table 19).

For only two groups or organizations did more than two-fifths of committee staff report they maintained candid-confidential communications. These were the state forestry agency, and staff of other committees in the same chamber.

Other groups with whom approximately one-third or more of staff respondents communicated in such a manner included personal staff of committee members, staff of counterpart committees, leadership and caucus staff, and environmental groups. Slightly more than a quarter of staff also reported this pattern of communication with staff of appropriations and finance committees and with university or college departments of forestry or natural resources.

It is likely that candid-confidential communication with various groups within the legislature serves different functions for staff members involved with forestry matters. For example, such a pattern of interaction with committee legislators' personal staff helps ensure that the channel of communication linking staff and committee members remains free of ambiguities with respect to factual and political aspects of forestry matters in which legislators are interested.

At the same time, such communication with counterpart committee staff and those of finance and appropriations committees are essential to efforts by forest policy committee staff to represent accurately both technical and fiscal aspects of legislative proposals involving forestry matters currently under consideration by their committees. Moreover, the strong reliance on input from staff of other committees in the same chamber, and to a lesser degree on those with party leadership, is important in ironing out any procedural or political problems that may arise among groups within the legislature in the processing of forestry legislation.

Regarding the interbranch environment, 44 percent of committee staff engaged in candid-confidential communication with the state forestry agency. This was the only executive organization with whom more than a quarter of staff respondents maintained such a relationship. About one-fifth of staff reported this pattern of interaction with the governor's staff and with other state natural resource agencies or departments.

Within the public-intergovernmental environment, in addition to environmental groups and college and university departments, the only other group with whom about one-fifth or more of staff respondents communicated in a candid-confidential manner was the state wood products industry. This suggests that, for those staff who did solicit candid opinions about possible approaches to forestry

problems from sources outside of government, environmental groups and, to a lesser degree, a state's wood-based industry provided the most candid perspectives on possible courses of action.

Smaller, more narrowly focused interest groups were not key sources for the particular kind of information conveyed in candid-confidential communication. At the same time, staff relied on academic contacts for less partisan advice on technical and policy implications of various legislative strategies for addressing problems or opportunities involving forestry or state forest lands.

**INFORMATION SOURCES BY TYPE OF INFORMATION**

Committee staff were asked to assess the usefulness of source for two major types of information: scientific-technical (that describing some existing state of affairs), and evaluative-prescriptive (that prescribing one or more courses of action as best and, therefore, worthy of adoption in a particular situation). Overall, there were more sources identified as either moderately or very useful for evaluative-prescriptive than for scientific-technical information (Table 20).

**Table 20. Staff assessment of usefulness of potential sources of scientific-technical and evaluative-prescriptive forestry information required for policy committee decision making, by source of information. 1988-1990.**

Potential Information Source	Scientific Technical Information				Evaluative Prescriptive Information			
	Proportion of Staff Indicating:				Proportion of Staff Indicating:			
	Not Useful	Moderately Useful	Very Useful	Rank <sup>a</sup>	Not Useful	Moderately Useful	Very Useful	Rank <sup>a</sup>
	----- Percent -----				----- Percent -----			
Personal staff of committee members	79	17	3	24	41	48	11	17
Appropriations and Finance committee staff	66	19	16	17	43	40	16	15
Other committee staffs (same chamber)	47	38	15	12	24	49	27	8
Counterpart committee staff (other chamber)	46	27	27	11	23	48	29	6
Legislative analyst (budget and finance)	50	33	17	13	55	31	14	21
House and Senate office of research	41	17	14	8	40	24	36	9
Leadership and caucus staff	70	27	3	22	43	29	29	12
Non-committee legislator and personal staff	77	23	0	25	59	38	3	23
Governor's office staff	50	44	6	15	37	50	13	14
State budget office and department	68	26	7	21	57	37	7	24
State forestry agency	0	20	80	1	6	33	61	1
Other state natural resource agencies/depts.	8	31	61	3	6	46	48	2
State forestry boards and commissions	35	35	31	9	32	32	36	7
Federal forestry/natural resource agencies	21	42	36	4	29	45	26	9
County-local forestry/natural resource agencies	54	29	18	14	46	32	21	15
University forestry/natural resources depts.	3	31	67	2	15	41	44	3
Professional forestry societies	27	39	33	5	36	45	19	13
Wood products corporations and trade assoc.	21	56	23	7	18	67	15	9
Environmental groups	24	58	18	10	16	60	24	5
Recreation advocates (user groups)	58	36	7	20	36	58	7	17
Tourism business interests	57	37	7	17	52	41	7	22
Mineral and energy interests	55	36	9	16	49	42	9	20
Real estate interests	74	23	3	23	60	37	3	25
Press and media	60	31	9	17	42	45	13	17
Contacts in other states	19	56	25	5	15	56	29	4

<sup>a</sup> Ranking of information usefulness index which was calculated as follows: First, an information usefulness score was calculated for each potential information source by weighing the responses of staff members ( 0 [percent responding "not at all useful"] + 1 [percent responding "moderately useful"] + 2 [percent responding "very useful"]). Second, a usefulness index was calculated as the ratio of the usefulness score to the highest possible score (if all respondents had answered "very useful" for that source), namely (usefulness score / 2N). And third, the potential information sources were ranked by usefulness index.

State forestry and natural resource agencies and university or college departments of forestry and natural resources were clearly the most important sources of both technical and prescriptive information (Table 20). This overall pattern is even more evident when evaluated with a simple heuristic index for ranking groups and organizations according to staff assessments of their usefulness as information sources (Table 21). Again, state forestry and natural resource agencies, and university and college departments of forestry and natural resources, are clearly the most prominent sources of technical and prescriptive information.

For prescriptive information, staff displayed a slightly greater tendency to rely on agencies directly involved in forest and natural resource management (in contrast to general academic sources) with

respect to information on what should be done about current forestry problems.

Committee staff were also queried about sources of information on three broad, substantive aspects of forestry: tradeoffs among uses of public forest land, impacts of a state's forest based sector on state economic development, and general environmental impacts of statewide economic development on the stability and health of a state's forests. For each of these areas, committee staff were asked to evaluate whether a particular group or organization was "very useful," "somewhat or moderately useful," or "not at all useful" as a source of information (Table 22).

Overall, three entities were identified by two-thirds or more of staff respondents as moderately or very

**Table 21. Staff ranking of most useful sources of scientific-technical and evaluative-prescriptive forestry information, by source of information. 1988-1990.**

Rank	Potential Information Source	Index <sup>a</sup>
<b>A. Scientific-Technical Information</b>		
1	State forestry agency	.90
2	University and college departments of forestry and natural resources	.85
3	Other state natural resource agencies and departments	.76
4	Federal forestry and natural resource agencies	.58
5	Contacts in other states	.53
6	Professional forestry societies	.53
7	Wood products corporations and trade associations	.51
8	House and Senate office of research	.50
9	State forestry boards and commissions	.48
10	Environmental groups	.47
11	Counterpart committee staff (other chamber)	.41
<b>B. Evaluative-Prescriptive Information</b>		
1	State forestry agency	.78
2	Other state natural resource agencies and departments	.71
3	University and college departments of forestry and natural resources	.65
4	Contacts in other states	.57
5	Environmental groups	.54
6	Counterpart committee staff (other chamber)	.53
7	State forestry boards and commissions	.52
8	Other committee staffs (same chamber)	.51
9	Wood products corporations and trade associations	.48
10	Federal forestry and natural resource agencies	.48
11	House and Senate office of research	.48
12	Leadership and caucus staff	.43
13	Professional forestry societies	.42

<sup>a</sup> Ranking of the usefulness of a potential information source was determined as follows: First, an information usefulness score was calculated for each potential information source by weighing the responses of staff members (0 [percent responding "not at all useful"] + 1 [percent responding "moderately useful"] + 2 [percent responding "very useful"]). Second, a usefulness index was calculated as the ratio of the usefulness score to the highest possible score (if all respondents had answered "very useful" for that source), namely (usefulness score / 2N). And third, the potential information source were ranked by usefulness index. Only those sources with a usefulness index of 0.40 or higher are identified.

useful sources of information on each topical area. These were the state forestry agency, other state natural resource agencies, and university or college departments of forestry and natural resources (Table 22). Wood products corporations and trade associations also emerged as key sources of information on the contributions of a state's forest based sector to state economic development.

With respect to tradeoffs in public forest land uses, environmental groups and federal forestry and natural resource agencies were viewed as important information sources. Environmental groups emerged as a major source of information for com-

mittee staff with respect to environmental impacts of economic development on state forest lands.

The rankings shown in Table 22 are based on staff judgement as to whether a group or organization was "moderate or very useful" as a source of information on three broad aspects of forestry. The relative importance of the *most* useful sources was gauged by asking staff respondents to identify and rank the four "most useful" sources of information (Table 23). From this perspective, the overwhelming importance of the state forestry agency as the primary information source for committee staff becomes even more apparent.

**Table 22. Staff assessment of usefulness of potential sources of forestry information concerning economic development, land use tradeoffs, and environmental impacts on forests required for policy committee decision making. 1988-1990.**

Potential Information Source	Proportion of Staff Indicating Moderately or Very Useful Source of Information on: <sup>a</sup>					
	State Forest-Based Sector Impacts on Economic Development		Public Forestry Program Tradeoffs Among Land Uses		Statewide Economic Development Environmental Impacts on Forests	
	Percent	Rank	Percent	Rank	Percent	Rank
Personal staff of committee members	13	22	21	18	16	20
Appropriations and Finance committee staff	32	16	13	21	18	19
Other committee staffs (same chamber)	40	11	45	6	29	13
Counterpart committee staff (other chamber)	45	6	42	8	42	7
Legislative analyst (budget and finance)	42	9	13	21	21	18
House and Senate office of research	37	14	34	15	29	13
Leadership and caucus staff	13	22	11	23	13	22
Non-committee legislator and personal staff	13	22	11	23	13	22
Governor's office staff	40	11	40	11	37	10
State budget office and department	29	17	5	25	16	20
State forestry agency	87	1	95	1	87	1
Other state natural resource agencies and departments	66	4	76	2	76	3
State forestry boards and commissions	45	6	42	8	37	10
Federal forestry and natural resource agencies	42	9	50	5	40	8
County-local forestry and natural resource agencies	18	21	32	16	22	17
University/college forestry/natural resources departments	76	2	68	3	71	4
Professional forestry societies	45	6	42	8	45	6
Wood products corporations and trade associations	71	3	37	14	50	5
Environmental groups	53	5	65	4	84	2
Recreation advocates (user groups)	21	19	45	6	29	13
Tourism business interests	18	21	21	18	13	22
Mineral and energy interests	37	14	40	11	32	12
Real estate interests	21	19	21	18	8	25
Press and media	28	18	26	17	26	16
Contacts in other states	40	11	40	11	40	8

<sup>a</sup> Usefulness is the percentage of staff who identified a potential information source as a moderately useful or a very useful source of information on the identified subject. Rankings are based on these percentages.

**COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE OF POLICY DOMAIN ACTORS**

The various actors in a state's forest policy domain have varying abilities to formulate policies, advocate policy positions, act as a clearinghouse for

information, coordinate efforts to influence an outcome, and mobilize public opinion (Lauman and Knoke 1987). In general, staff viewed policy domain actors as most competent at advocating policy positions and formulating alternatives for actions involving forestry matters (Table 24).

**Table 23. Staff ranking of their four most important sources of forestry information concerning economic development, land use tradeoffs, and environmental impacts on forests, by source of information. 1988-1990.**

Rank	Potential Information Source	Score <sup>a</sup>
<b>A. State Forest-Based Sector Impacts on Economic Development</b>		
1	State forestry agency	100
2	University and college departments of forestry and natural resources	62
3	Wood products corporations and trade associations	29
4	Other state natural resource agencies and departments	23
5	Governor's office staff	18
6	State forestry boards and commissions	17
7	Environmental groups	15
7	Counterpart committee staff (other chamber)	15
9	Professional forestry societies	14
10	Other committee staffs (same chamber)	13
10	House and Senate office of research	13
12	Legislative analyst (budget and finance)	12
13	Federal forestry and natural resource agencies	11
14	Contacts in other states	9
<b>B. Public Forestry Program Tradeoffs Among Land Uses</b>		
1	State forestry agency	109
2	Other state natural resource agencies and departments	45
3	University/college forestry/natural resources departments	45
4	Environmental groups	29
5	Federal forestry and natural resource agencies	20
6	Governor's office staff	13
6	Wood products corporations and trade associations	13
6	House and Senate office of research	13
9	Other committee staffs (same chamber)	12
10	State forestry boards and commissions	11
10	Contacts in other states	11
<b>C. Statewide Economic Development Environmental Impacts on Forestry</b>		
1	State forestry agency	86
2	Environmental groups	53
3	University and college departments of forestry and natural resources	42
4	Other state natural resource agencies and departments	37
5	Professional forestry societies	18
6	House and Senate office of research	14
7	Wood products corporations and trade associations	10
7	Counterpart committee staff (other chamber)	10
7	Governor's office staff	10
7	Other committee staffs (same chamber)	10
11	Contacts in other states	9
11	Press and media	9
11	State forestry boards and commissions	9

<sup>a</sup> Importance ranking was calculated by assigning points to information sources whenever they were rated by staff as most important (4 points), second most important (3 points), third most important (2 points), and fourth most important sources (1 point). Sources not accumulating a score of 9 or more are excluded.

Compared to their abilities to advocate policy positions or formulate action alternatives, actors were generally seen as slightly less effective at serving as clearinghouses for information or coordinating efforts to influence outcomes, and least so at mobilizing public opinion on forestry related issues and problems. For each of these activities, staff were asked to identify from two to four groups or organizations as clearly the most competent in that area (Table 25).

**FORMULATING POLICY ALTERNATIVES**

State forestry agencies, environmental groups, wood products organizations, and governor's office staff were viewed as agents particularly adept at formulating policy alternatives (Tables 24 and 25).

There is an interesting contrast to staff respondent perceptions about the governor's office staff. It was earlier noted how they were not rated as among the most useful sources of evaluative-prescriptive information on forestry matters in general (Table 20). When it came to proposing specific courses of action that reflect the views of the executive administration, however, the governor's staff was seen as rivaling the competence of major interest groups (e.g., environmental groups and the wood based industry) in putting information together in this form. Environmental groups and the wood based industry were rated well above other groups with more specialized interests in this regard.

Other state natural resources agencies and academic forestry and natural resources departments were the other groups viewed as moderately skilled

**Table 24. Staff assessment of the ability (capacity) of groups and organizations to generate and communicate forest policy information, by group and organization. 1988-1990.**

Potential Information Source	Ability of Potential Information Source to: <sup>a</sup>				
	Formulate Policy Alternatives	Advocate Policy Position	Act as Clearing-house for Information	Coordinate Efforts to Influence Outcomes	Mobilize Public Opinion
Personal staff of committee members	1.7	1.9	1.5	1.7	1.6
Appropriations and Finance committee staff	1.8	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.2
Other committee staffs (same chamber)	2.1	1.9	2.0	1.8	1.4
Counterpart committee staff (other chamber)	1.7	1.5	1.6	1.4	1.2
Legislative analyst (budget and finance)	1.7	1.3	1.7	1.3	1.1
House and Senate office of research	1.8	1.4	2.1	1.4	1.2
Leadership and caucus staff	1.9	2.2	1.5	2.3	2.1
Non-committee legislator and personal staff	1.4	1.7	1.3	1.6	1.5
Governor's office staff	2.3	2.4	1.7	2.4	2.4
State budget office and department	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.3
State forestry agency	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.2	2.0
Other state natural resource agencies and departments	2.1	2.2	2.1	1.9	1.9
State forestry boards and commissions	2.0	2.1	1.9	1.9	1.9
Federal forestry and natural resource agencies	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.4	1.4
County-local forestry and natural resource agencies	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.6
University/college forestry/natural resources departments	2.1	1.8	2.4	1.4	1.4
Professional forestry societies	1.9	2.0	1.9	1.6	1.9
Wood products corporations and trade associations	2.4	2.6	2.0	2.4	2.6
Environmental groups	2.4	2.7	2.0	2.5	2.6
Recreation advocates (user groups)	1.7	2.2	1.6	1.9	2.0
Tourism business interests	1.7	2.1	1.6	1.8	2.0
Mineral and energy interests	1.8	2.2	1.7	2.0	2.0
Real estate interests	1.8	2.1	1.6	2.0	1.8
Press and media	1.4	1.8	1.6	1.4	2.6
Contacts in other states	1.8	1.6	2.0	1.3	1.2

<sup>a</sup> Mean rating assigned to source by staff according to following scale: 1 = limited, 2 = moderate, and 3 = extensive.

**Table 25. Staff ranking of sources of forestry information according to ability to generate and communicate forest policy information, by source of information. 1988-1990.**

Rank	Potential Information Source	Score <sup>a</sup>
<b>A. Formulate Policy Alternatives</b>		
1	State forestry agency	2.52
2	Environmental groups	2.37
3	Wood products corporations and trade associations	2.37
4	Governor's office staff	2.30
5	Other state natural resource agencies and departments	2.16
6	University and college departments of forestry and natural resources	2.09
7	Other committee staffs (same chamber)	2.07
8	State forestry boards and commissions	2.07
<b>B. Advocate a Policy Position</b>		
1	Environmental groups	2.71
2	Wood products corporations and trade associations	2.63
3	State forestry agency	2.54
4	Governor's office staff	2.39
5	Leadership and caucus staff	2.24
6	Other state natural resource agencies and departments	2.22
7	Recreation advocates (user groups)	2.21
7	Mineral and energy interests	2.21
9	Real estate interests	2.16
10	State forestry boards and commissions	2.15
11	Tourism business interests	2.14
12	Professional forestry societies	2.00
<b>C. Coordinate Efforts to Influence Outcomes</b>		
1	Environmental groups	2.47
2	Governor's office staff	2.44
3	Wood products corporations and trade associations	2.43
4	Leadership and caucus staff	2.34
5	State forestry agency	2.21
6	Real estate interests	2.04
7	Mineral and energy interests	2.00
8	Other state natural resource agencies and departments	1.93
<b>D. Act as a Clearinghouse for Information</b>		
1	State forestry agency	2.54
2	University and college departments of forestry and natural resources	2.42
3	Other state natural resource agencies and departments	2.09
4	House and Senate office of research	2.08
5	Wood products corporations and trade associations	2.03
6	Environmental groups	2.00
7	Contacts in other states	2.00
8	Other committee staffs (same chamber)	1.97
9	Federal forestry and natural resource agencies	1.93
9	Professional forestry societies	1.93
<b>E. Mobilize Public Opinion</b>		
1	Press and media	2.62
2	Environmental groups	2.59
3	Governor's office staff	2.36
4	Wood products corporations and trade associations	2.23
5	Leadership and caucus staff	2.13
6	State forestry agency	2.03
6	Recreation advocates (user groups)	2.03
8	Mineral and energy interests	1.98
9	Tourism business interests	1.96
10	Other state natural resource agencies and departments	1.90

<sup>a</sup> Rank is mean rating assigned to source by staff according to following scale: 1 = limited, 2 = moderate, and 3 = extensive.

in formulating policy alternatives. The relative position of academic actors may be contrasted with that of the governor's office staff noted above. While academic sources were clearly among the most important sources of general prescriptive information on forestry matters (Table 20), both the governor's staff and the two major forestry interest groups were viewed as somewhat more adept at molding such information into concrete policy alternatives.

Within the legislature, the groups judged by staff respondents to be most skilled at formulating policy alternatives were other committee staff from within the same chamber. Somewhat surprising was the lower rating of counterpart committee staff in the other legislative chamber in this regard. This position was consistent across all five activities (Table 24).

### CLEARINGHOUSE FOR INFORMATION

State forestry agencies and university and college departments of forestry and natural resources were identified by committee staff as most important in terms of functioning as a clearinghouse for information. These two organizations were seen as best equipped to obtain, integrate and disseminate information on forestry matters. A variety of other groups and organizations were viewed as moderately capable in this regard. Among these were other state and federal natural resource agencies, the two major forestry interest groups, contacts in other states, and professional societies.

From within the legislature, the legislative research organization emerged as a relatively important actor in terms of occupying one of the more central nodes in the network of information flows on matters involving forestry within a state.

### ADVOCATING POLICY POSITIONS

Environmental groups, and wood products corporations and trade associations, received the highest rating for ability to advocate a policy position on forestry matters (Tables 24 and 25). The expertise of these groups in engaging in policy debates on forestry matters was clearly recognized and affirmed by committee staff. At the same time, both the state forestry agency and the governor's office staff were viewed not only as skilled in formulating policy alternatives, but also as quite capable of advocating certain courses of action.

With the exception of the state budget office (which focuses more on fiscal than other aspects of forestry proposals), all the groups within the inter-

branch environment were viewed as at least moderately capable of advocating policy positions.

### COORDINATING POLITICAL INFLUENCE

Political communication skills are also manifested in a group's ability to coordinate the actions of others in ways to enhance the possibility of outcomes favorable to that group. Environmental groups and a state's wood based industry were viewed by staff respondents as particularly competent at this (Tables 24 and 25). This likely reflected staff judgements that these actors possess both the resources and the communication skills to establish and maintain networks of communication through which support for their particular policy positions can be garnered if and when need arose.

Governor's office staff and, to a slightly lesser degree, the staff of legislative leaders and caucuses were viewed as approximately equal in competence to the major interest groups with respect to political coordinating ability. This no doubt reflects the overwhelming importance of coordination tasks to these groups: whether (1) the governor's staff efforts to maintain a coherent policy on forestry matters via integrating the technical expertise of the state forestry agency, the support of key legislative committees and other legislators, as well as that of interest groups and the general public; or (2) the leadership or caucus staff facilitating consistent positions on matters within the legislature.

From the perspective of committee staff respondents, both the governor's office staff and leadership/caucus staff perform outcome-oriented coordination tasks every bit as skillfully as the major interest groups.

Staff viewed the state forestry agency as slightly less proficient, but still relatively capable in this regard. Among the more specialized interest groups, real estate and minerals and energy interests were rated highest by staff relative to others with respect to their coordination capabilities.

### MOBILIZING PUBLIC OPINION

Committee staff identified the press and media organizations as the most skilled at mobilizing public opinion (Tables 24 and 25). The media is clearly seen as a powerful communicative actor, being the principal medium (in a logistical sense) for disseminating to the general public both factual information and the views and recommendations of actors in a state's forest policy domain. Nonetheless, as was evident earlier, staff respondents did not regard the media as nearly so important a source of

**Table 26. Staff actions to maintain control of the quality of information conveyed to policy committee legislators. 1988-1990.**

Staff Actions	Proportion of Staff Indicating:			
	Very Seldom	Fairly Seldom	Fairly Often	Very Often
	----- Percent -----			
Check with sources to clear up ambiguous meanings, logics, and underlying advocacy positions	2	11	42	45
Solicit third party expertise to check or assess correctness of data or information	7	27	31	35
Check with trusted contacts on whether policy advocates have unexpressed interests or intentions	7	13	32	48
Attempt to determine from various sources whether the policy position of a group or organization is justified (i.e., legitimate basis for their view or are they merely rationalizing via rhetoric)	9	11	34	46

technical or prescriptive information on forestry matters (Table 20).

Especially noteworthy was the level of competence accorded to environmental groups in their ability to mobilize public opinion. Both via their use of the media and their own membership rolls and communication networks, environmental groups were judged by staff to rival the press in their ability to mobilize public opinion on forestry matters.

Governor's office staff was the only group whom staff respondents viewed as even approaching the media and environmental groups in ability to mobilize public opinion. However, with the exception of real estate interests, all of the other special interest groups were regarded as at least moderately skilled at influencing public opinion. Among these, wood products corporations and trade associations were rated as clearly the most capable in this regard.

**QUALITY CONTROL OVER INFORMATION**

In preparing information for conveyance to a legislative committee, staff frequently condense, summarize, and synthesize information from different sources. Their aim is to mold that information into a form useful to legislators. To facilitate communi-

cation, staff seek to determine whether information is understandable, accurate, sincerely or truthfully expressed, and appropriate or legitimate with respect to the context at hand. By viewing information in such a context, staff are in effect attempting to manage the flows of information they mediate.

Most staff respondents did in fact have or take the time to manage the integrity of forestry communication channels and the information resulting therefrom (Table 26). Four-fifths or more of committee staff indicated that on a fairly or very frequent basis they checked with sources to ensure the comprehensibility of information. They also consulted trusted contacts to gauge the trustworthiness of sources in certain situations where the intentions of actors in providing information were problematic, and they attempted to verify the claims justifying information provided by various sources advocating particular policy positions.

With respect to maintaining the accuracy of information flows, about one-third of staff respondents indicated that they seldom if ever had the time to solicit third party expertise as an aid to confirming the correctness of data or information on forestry matters. For some of these respondents, it is quite likely that the perceived trustworthiness of information sources and the perceived legitimacy of their policy positions served as a "surrogate" for verifying information accuracy.

**MAJOR FINDINGS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

State legislative systems and their relationship to forests and forestry programs were of primary con-

cern in this study. Its specific objectives were to determine:

- the status of forestry information available to forest policy committees in state legislatures; and
- the degree to which different groups and organizations are useful sources of information for forest policy committees.

Five major tasks were undertaken to accomplish the study's objectives:

- I. Groups and organizations deemed to be significant actors with respect to the status and management of state forest lands were identified.
- II. Categories of information depicting substantive aspects of forestry and state forest lands were identified.
- III. A model of the process through which staff members of forest policy committees communicate with both committee legislators and actors in state forest policy domains was specified.
- IV. A survey instrument was designed and sent to staff members of forest policy committees (not appropriations committees) in each legislative chamber of 36 states in which forestry and forest resources are significant (47 individuals from 35 states returned the questionnaire).
- V. Gathered information was tabulated and evaluated.

## MAJOR FINDINGS

### STAFF AND COMMITTEE COMMUNICATION

The issues and problems involving forestry are only part of a wide range of topics addressed by forest policy committees in state legislatures. Given this diverse set of responsibilities, it should not be entirely surprising that staff reported their committees devoted only about 10 percent of their time to forestry topics over the study period. Of this 10 percent, the committees devoted the greatest amount of their attention to matters related to the conservation and preservation of state forest lands, and to wildlife and ecological management of public forest lands.

A moderate amount of time was also devoted to nonindustrial private forestry, mitigating adverse effects of economic development on state forest resources, public timber management and forest protection activities, and questions pertaining to the ownership and jurisdiction of state forest lands. Staff indicated that committee members were not experts on any of these matters, but neither were they totally unfamiliar with them.

Given the wide range of subjects addressed by these committees, most forestry subjects reside in the background in terms of legislator attention most of the time. This highlights the role of committee staff in providing legislators with information in the form of background reports and problem or issue summaries.

Committee staff were clearly aware of their role in providing information for committee legislators. A respondent from a Midwestern state succinctly summarized the views of the majority of staff respondents in this regard.

*"Legislators want the bottom line clearly articulated without jargon, and they want it to be pertinent to their constituents, or the political process. Staff generally have the legislator's ear and the potential sensitivity to help convey the message. The information is often available somewhere – somehow. The key is in the presentation."*

A common request of committee staff was for "anything at all" about a forestry issue being addressed by a committee. When specific informational requests were made by legislators, they were frequently for information about possible policy options or information about "who stood where" on a specific issue. Seldom did legislators ask for detailed scientific or technical descriptions of forestry problems or issues.

### STAFF AND POLICY DOMAIN COMMUNICATION

About half of the responding committee staff (especially from Southeast states) indicated that views of participants in forest policy debates were converging toward a mutual understanding of forestry problems and of the ways in which they might be resolved. At the same time, however, one-quarter of staff reported that views of different groups in their states were becoming more polarized over forestry issues. This was especially evident in West Coast states, but also present in the Northeast.

A large proportion of committee staff relied most heavily on four or five policy domain organizations for all types of forestry information. Staff looked first and foremost to their state forestry agencies, and to other state natural resource agencies and university or college departments of forestry or natural resources.

For technical information on forestry matters, a moderate proportion of staff also turned to sources with a similar relationship to forestry and forest management such as federal forestry agencies,

contacts in other states, and professional forestry societies. For information of a more evaluative or prescriptive nature, they turned to contacts in other states, as well as to environmental groups and counterpart committee staff.

In assessing the usefulness of policy domain actors as sources of both functional and substantive information on forestry, a number of staff respondents identified several characteristics of information toward which they wished their sources would devote more attention. Although such concerns were usually specific to a forestry situation in a particular state, several points were echoed by a number of staff respondents.

- **Broad Based Valuation Information.** Staff expressed a desire for more broad based information on non-timber forest resources and their value. Some noted that even a steadier supply of information about meetings, seminars and conferences would at least provide direction as to where to seek such information.
- **State Focused Information.** Staff expressed a desire for more information on forestry subjects specific to their state, as opposed to (or in conjunction with) information with a predominantly regional scope depicting their state only as one among many components.
- **Comparative Policy Information.** Staff emphasized the need for more comparative studies. One respondent from a West Coast state observed, "We need access to methods of forest utilization and analyses of policies where other states have tried and succeeded and where they have failed" (for example: Gray and Ellefson 1991; Henly, Ellefson and Moulton 1988; Kilgore and Ellefson 1992).
- **Predictive Information.** Staff frequently echoed a Mountain state respondent's observation that "the status of our knowledge, and our ability to make reliable predictions about environmental consequences of a given action, remains poor." In providing information to committee members, staff are concerned with the future as well as the present, and the availability of scenarios depicting the likely consequences of adopting different forest resource policies is an important informational need.

In interacting with policy domain actors about forestry matters, slightly fewer than half the respondents established regular patterns of communication with a limited number of sources. State forestry and natural resource agencies, committee members' personal staff, those of one's counterpart committee in the other chamber, and environmental groups were most frequently identified as contacts with whom staff kept in regular contact.

A similar proportion of staff confided with a limited set of actors in seeking advice or when they wanted to discuss forestry matters of a particularly sensitive nature. In addition to the state forestry agency and environmental groups, personal staff of committee members, staff of other committees, and staff of legislative leaders and caucuses were those most frequently consulted in this regard.

A problem noted by a number of staff respondents was the tendency of some groups to bypass staff and go directly to committee legislators with information or views about forestry matters. In this regard, one staff member noted that, "many interest groups do not understand the scope of staff in the legislative process and try to work directly with legislators personally. Effective lobbying and information flow are best accomplished through staff first, then with legislators."

Staff clearly recognize the position of state forestry agencies, and college and university forestry departments as central nodes in the information network of a state's forest policy domain. Staff also identified the state forestry agency, two special interest actors (i.e., environmental groups and wood products corporations), and the governor's office staff as most adept at formulating policy alternatives.

The above groups, as well as leadership and caucus staff from within the legislature, were viewed as those best able to coordinate actions of others for the purpose of achieving specific outcomes on forestry matters. From the perspective of staff, almost half of policy domain actors were at least moderately capable of presenting their case for a particular outcome or policy alternative involving forestry matters. Environmental groups were even seen to rival the press and media in their ability to mobilize public opinion on forestry issues.

Although staff considered a significant proportion of policy domain organizations to be at least fairly adept at advocating a policy position or at mobilizing public opinion, this should not be interpreted as reflecting overall satisfaction with the quality of public debate in their states on forestry matters. In fact, staff frequently complained — particularly those from Mountain and West Coast states — of the politicized nature of these debates and of the exceptionally biased perspectives from which actors presented information in support of their particular positions. This was no more apparent than in the remarks of one staff member from a West Coast state.

*"Most policy decisions affecting issues in this subject area are decided on the basis of interest group lobbying and influence of the timber*

*industry – and not on the basis of good public policy or factual information.”*

Similar concerns were expressed by staff from two of the Mountain states.

*“Forestry debates are overly polarized. There is a need for more creative problem-solving and spokespersons from both sides who are reasoned and reasonable.”*

*“The quality of debates is suspect. Most policy is left to state agencies as is research of information. Most legislative action is really based on longstanding understandings between the legislators, state agencies, and private interests.”*

Perceived problems in the quality of forestry debates frequently made many staff members suspicious about the biases in the information presented in support of specific courses of action on forestry matters. Said one staff member from a Northeast state, “I need more insight into hidden agendas to accurately judge the quality of a lot of information I receive.”

#### FORESTRY INFORMATION ADEQUACY

On an overall basis, more staff respondents considered information to be adequate (at least 44 percent for any given information category) as opposed to inadequate for committee decisions. Information considered to be relatively adequate included the following:

- nature and condition of state forest lands
- protection of public forests
- public land ownership and jurisdiction
- public timber management
- wildlife and ecological management of public lands
- forest-based recreation on public lands
- employment and income impacts of wood-based industry
- wood products technology and markets
- regulation of private forest practices and wood processing
- ownership patterns of nonindustrial private forests
- state and federal cooperative efforts
- forestry research (programs and priorities)
- forestry education and training

Committee staff also voiced dissatisfaction with information in certain key areas, especially:

- tradeoffs in public forest land uses
- wood-based industry structure and potential for economic development
- state and county cooperative efforts
- conversion of forest land to non-forest uses
- impacts of development on forest land
- regional ecological issues (biodiversity)

Three categories of information were viewed by staff both as among the least adequate, and as among the highest priority for committee decision making. These were information on the pattern and extent of conversion of forest land to other uses, information on mitigating the negative effects of economic development (e.g., air and water pollutants), and information on ecological phenomena that transcend state boundaries (e.g., atmospheric depositions such as acid rain). These areas were identified by staff as areas in which committee decision making would most benefit from improved information.

#### FUTURE RESEARCH

Insights about the flow of forestry information to policy committees of state legislatures have been provided by this study. However, in order to truly understand the type of information and communication necessary for effective development of forest resource policies and programs, additional research is necessary. Future research should consider forestry issue processing, legislator information perspectives, and the functioning of forest policy domain.

#### FORESTRY ISSUE PROCESSING

Research should be undertaken to track the progress of a particular forestry issue, or set of issues, through the legislative process in a particular year. Attention should center on attaining a better understanding of the role of staff in mediating information flows needed to address the issue selected for tracking.

In this context, research should focus on refining the model of staff communication developed for the present study with special emphasis on determining a series of aspects:

- I. Staff perspectives on the nature and significance of the forestry issue selected for tracking;
- II. The source and quality of information available to address the issue;

- III. The policy options suggested for addressing the issue and strength of justifying arguments;
- IV. The attitudes and opinions of committee members on these matters;
- V. The progress of debate (changes in option mixes or feasibility, evolving problem definitions) and communicative competence of participants;
- VI. The nature or degree of consensus reached on policy options to address the issue (i.e., the legislative outcome).

Such research might be achieved via in-depth interviews with committee staff before and after a legislative session.

#### **MULTIPLE-ISSUE PROCESSING**

New research should track the range of natural resource and forestry matters that constitute the agenda of a forest policy committee. Principal subjects of the research should be committee staff, although interaction with legislators would be useful.

Attention should focus on refining the model of staff communication, emphasizing various aspects of staff interpretations and their relationship to other model components. Particular emphasis should focus on the role of staff in mediating information flows relevant to all issues on their committee's agenda during a particular legislative session.

#### **LEGISLATOR INFORMATION PERSPECTIVES**

Research should be undertaken to obtain an original understanding of the way in which information is gathered and used by committee legislators. Faced with a policy decision, legislators may seek information from staff, from direct contact with policy domain actors, and from previous personal experience with a particular forestry issue and policy option.

Ironically, very little is directly known about how legislators process and use the information they consider important for legislative policy making. At some point in time, research needs to be focused directly on legislators – the persons on whom rests responsibility for legislative policy decisions (Ellefson and Lyons 1989).

#### **FUNCTIONING OF FOREST POLICY DOMAIN**

Research should be undertaken to attain a better understanding of a state's forest policy domain. From an information and communication perspective, emphasis should be placed on understanding interactions between legislative committees (e.g., policy, appropriations) that have an interest in forestry matters, as well as interactions among the many diverse groups and organizations that comprise a state's forest policy domain (Ellefson, Bellinger and Lewis 1990).

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# APPENDIX

**Text of survey instrument used to compile information evaluated in this report on assessing staff roles in mediating information flows to forest policy committees in state legislatures.**

Forest Management and Use in the States:  
An Assessment of Information Content and Flows  
to Policy Committees in State Legislatures

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
Very                  Somewhat          Moderate          Somewhat          Very  
Low                   Low                   High                   High

TIME TO COMPLETE:  
Part I .....20-25 minutes  
Part II .....25-30 minutes

Sponsored by:

Department of Forest Resources  
University of Minnesota  
St. Paul, MN

b) Degree to which the views of participants in forest policy debates regarding solutions to forestry problems are converging or diverging (Circle one response)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
Strongly              Somewhat          Neither              Somewhat          Strongly  
Diverging           Diverging          Converging          Converging          Converging  
nor  
Diverging

CONTENTS

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Part I: Committee Characteristics and Communications Information Adequacy .....	1-12
Part II: Information Sources .....	13-26

Note: The term **forestry-related** appears frequently in this questionnaire. To avoid ambiguity, this term may be defined as follows

**forestry-related:** pertaining to or significantly affecting the use or management of forest lands in your state.

FOREST MANAGEMENT AND USE IN THE STATES:  
AN ASSESSMENT OF INFORMATION CONTENT AND FLOWS  
TO POLICY COMMITTEES IN STATE LEGISLATURES

PART I

We would first like to learn about the prominence of matters pertaining to the use and management of forest lands in your state and the attention of the committee to different forestry-related areas.

1. How would you describe the "political climate" with respect to forest policy matters in your state over the period from 1988-90 in terms of the following characteristics?

a) Proportion of all debates, problems or issues regarding natural resources that have arisen in your state during this time that are forestry-related in nature. (Circle one response)

2. Taking into account the range of natural resource-related matters with which the committee is concerned, would you **roughly estimate:**

a) The percentage of total committee time directed towards forestry-related matters during the previous two years (1988-89)? \_\_\_\_\_ %

b) The percentage of total committee time during the current or upcoming (1990) session that you believe will be directed towards forestry-related matters? \_\_\_\_\_ %

3. Please indicate the relative amount of time devoted by the committee during the 1988-90 sessions to the following forestry-related matters or issues. Simply include estimates of committee time during the current (1990) session within your overall estimates for this three-year period.

**Scale:** Amount of Committee Time

1	2	3	4
None	A few hours	A few days	A few weeks

Note: Not all forestry issues or problems fit neatly into these categories. In many cases, however, more specific issues, (e.g., forest herbicide/pesticide use) fall under one of the broader categories on this list (e.g., forest protection). Question 3c provides space for any problems or issues not covered by this broad list.

	Committee Time (1988-1990 Sessions)			
<b>PUBLIC FOREST LAND MANAGEMENT</b>				
1. Forest land & resource inventories	1	2	3	4
2. Forest protection (fire/insects & disease): methods and impacts	1	2	3	4
3. Forest land ownership/jurisdictional matters (e.g., acquisition, sale, transfer, access, etc.)	1	2	3	4
4. Timber management: outputs & impacts	1	2	3	4
5. Wildlife and ecological land management: outputs and impacts	1	2	3	4
6. Forest-based recreation management: outputs and impacts	1	2	3	4
7. Trade-offs in public forest land uses	1	2	3	4

<b>STATE WOOD PRODUCTS INDUSTRY</b>				
8. Incentives: economic & technological development	1	2	3	4
9. Timber supply issues	1	2	3	4
10. Regulation: timber harvesting	1	2	3	4
11. Regulation: wood processing	1	2	3	4

<b>NONINDUSTRIAL PRIVATE FORESTRY</b>				
12. Management incentives and forest practice regulation	1	2	3	4

<b>INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORESTRY</b>				
13. State-federal cooperative needs/opportunities	1	2	3	4
14. State-county/local cooperative needs/ opportunities (if applicable)	1	2	3	4

<b>FORESTRY RESEARCH &amp; EDUCATION</b>				
15. Forestry research: program content & priorities	1	2	3	4
16. Forestry education and training	1	2	3	4

<b>STATE &amp; REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: IMPACTS ON FORESTRY</b>				
17. Forest land conservation/preservation issues	1	2	3	4
18. Mitigation of development impacts on forest resource condition (e.g., pollution regulation)	1	2	3	4
19. Regional ecological issues (e.g., acid rain, etc): impacts on forest resource base	1	2	3	4

b) In the above list, please circle the numbers preceding the 3 areas that in your judgement are likely to receive the greatest amount of committee attention in the upcoming (1990) session. If less than 3, simply circle relevant subject areas.

c) Are there any other forestry-related matters not on the above list toward which the committee has devoted (1988-89), or in your opinion is likely to devote (1990), a significant amount of attention? If so, please indicate year and general nature of the issue.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Given the diverse backgrounds of committee members and the broad range of natural resource matters with which they deal, it is only natural that members may be more informed or knowledgeable about some matters than others. Members' familiarity with the complexities of a particular natural resource or forestry-related problem need not require, or result from, that problem's having attained agenda status. In some cases, moreover, members may be unfamiliar with certain subjects or problems because the committee never deals with those matters.

Based on your experience, how would you assess the degree to which the committee as a whole is familiar with the broad range of forestry-related matters on the following page?

(Note: This list differs somewhat from that of the preceding question.)

**Scale: Extent of Committee Knowledge**

1	2	3	4	NA
Not at all	Slightly	Fairly	Very	Don't
Familiar	Familiar	Familiar	Familiar	Know

Committee Familiarity with  
Forestry-Related Matters

**STATE FORESTRY RESOURCE: ALL OWNERSHIPS**

1. Nature, extent & condition of forest lands in state 1 2 3 4 NA

**PUBLIC FOREST LAND MANAGEMENT**

2. Forest protection (fire/insects & disease):  
methods and impacts 1 2 3 4 NA

3. Forest land ownership/jurisdictional matters  
(e.g., acquisition, sale, transfer, access, etc.) 1 2 3 4 NA

4. Timber management: outputs & impacts 1 2 3 4 NA

5. Wildlife and ecological land management:  
outputs & impacts 1 2 3 4 NA

6. Forest-based recreation management:  
outputs and impacts 1 2 3 4 NA

7. Tradeoffs in forest land uses 1 2 3 4 NA

**STATE WOOD PRODUCTS INDUSTRY**

8. Structure and potential for economic  
development 1 2 3 4 NA

9. Economic impacts: employment and income 1 2 3 4 NA

10. Products, markets and technology 1 2 3 4 NA

11. Regulatory mechanisms:  
forest practices & wood processing 1 2 3 4 NA

**NONINDUSTRIAL PRIVATE FORESTRY**

12. Ownership patterns, outputs  
& management practices 1 2 3 4 NA

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORESTRY**

13. State-federal cooperative needs/opportunities 1 2 3 4 NA

**Staff Mediated Information Flows to Forest Policy Committees in State Legislatures**

14. State-county/local cooperative needs/opportunities 1 2 3 4 NA

**FORESTRY RESEARCH AND EDUCATION**

15. Forestry research: program content & priorities 1 2 3 4 NA  
 16. Forestry education and training: programs/needs 1 2 3 4 NA

**STATE & REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: IMPACTS ON FORESTRY**

17. Forest land conversion: pattern and extent 1 2 3 4 NA  
 18. Impacts of development on forest resource condition (e.g., pollution) 1 2 3 4 NA  
 19. Regional ecological issues (e.g., acid rain, etc): impacts on forest resource base 1 2 3 4 NA

3. Forest land ownership/jurisdictional matters (e.g., acquisition, sale, transfer, access, etc.) 1 2 3 4 NA  
 4. Timber management: outputs & impacts 1 2 3 4 NA  
 5. Wildlife and ecological land management: outputs & impacts 1 2 3 4 NA  
 6. Forest-based recreation management: outputs and impacts 1 2 3 4 NA  
 7. Tradeoffs in forest land uses 1 2 3 4 NA

**STATE WOOD PRODUCTS INDUSTRY**

8. Structure and potential for economic development 1 2 3 4 NA  
 9. Economic impacts: employment and income 1 2 3 4 NA  
 10. Products, markets and technology 1 2 3 4 NA  
 11. Regulatory mechanisms: forest practices & wood processing 1 2 3 4 NA

**NONINDUSTRIAL PRIVATE FORESTRY**

12. Ownership patterns, outputs & management practices 1 2 3 4 NA

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORESTRY**

13. State-federal cooperative needs/opportunities 1 2 3 4 NA  
 14. State-county/local cooperative needs/opportunities 1 2 3 4 NA

**FORESTRY RESEARCH AND EDUCATION**

15. Forestry research: program content & priorities 1 2 3 4 NA  
 16. Forestry education and training: programs/needs 1 2 3 4 NA

**STATE & REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: IMPACTS ON FORESTRY**

17. Forest land conversion: pattern and extent 1 2 3 4 NA  
 18. Impacts of development on forest resource condition (e.g., pollution) 1 2 3 4 NA  
 19. Regional ecological issues (e.g., acid rain, etc): impacts on forest resource base 1 2 3 4 NA

5. We now want to focus on the information related to forestry that you use in performing your tasks for the committee.

a) In your view, how adequate is the information you are able to obtain on the following forestry-related matters in helping you provide committee members with the information they require to carry out their activities? (This list is the same as that for question 4)

**Scale: Adequacy of Forestry-Related Information**

1	2	3	4	NA
Not Adequate	Marginally Adequate	Fairly Adequate	Very Adequate	Don't Know/Don't Obtain

b) From this same list, would you select and rank the 5 areas of forestry information - regardless of existing adequacy - in which you think improvements in information quality would most enhance the decision making capabilities of the committee, given the issues and problems of significance in your state.

Priority Rank	Information Category Number
1	_____
2	_____
3	_____
4	_____
5	_____

6. Would you please provide the following information pertaining to the committee. (Note: If your assignment includes committees that deal with forestry-related matters in both chambers, please identify each committee.)

Name and Chamber of Committee:	Number of Members:		
	Democrats	Republican	Independents
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

**Forestry-Related Information Information Adequacy**

**STATE FORESTRY RESOURCE: ALL OWNERSHIPS**

1. Nature, extent & condition of forest lands in state 1 2 3 4 NA

**PUBLIC FOREST LAND MANAGEMENT**

2. Forest protection (fire/insects & disease): methods and impacts 1 2 3 4 NA

7. In general, how would you briefly describe your tasks for the committee insofar as they would pertain to forestry-related matters?

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

8. Considering your time spent on forestry-related matters during the 1988-90 sessions, approximately how much time have you spent on each of the following activities?

**Scale: Relative Amount of Time Allocated**

1	2	3	4
Very Little	Some But Not Extensive	A Fair Amount	A Great Deal

<i>Of total time spent on forestry-related matters:</i>	<i>Relative Amount of Time Allocated</i>
a) With legislators in committee hearings	1 2 3 4
b) Drafting and reading and analyzing forestry-related bills	1 2 3 4
c) Writing background reports, issue summaries on forestry matters	1 2 3 4
d) Working with other committees on forestry related matters	1 2 3 4
e) On oversight matters—routine or otherwise—related to state forestry agency programs	1 2 3 4
f) With lobbyists and special interest groups concerned about forestry problems and issues	1 2 3 4
g) Responding to requests for information or opinion mail on forestry-related matters	1 2 3 4
h) Representing the committee at meetings with governor's office or state forestry agency on forestry legislation	1 2 3 4
i) Other _____	1 2 3 4

9. Let us turn to your communications with committee members regarding forestry-related matters. Again, consider the overall pattern for the period from 1988-90.

a) How often do you talk either in person or via telephone about forestry related matters to the committee chair and individual committee members during the session and interim periods? Check one response for each row.

**Frequency of Communication**

Weekly Monthly Every 2-3  
Daily or more or more Months or so

DURING THE SESSION:

Committee Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Members \_\_\_\_\_

DURING THE INTERIM:

Committee Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Members \_\_\_\_\_

b) If the total time you spend interacting (verbally) with the committee on forestry-related matters were viewed as 100% how would you roughly apportion it up during both the session and the interim?

	Session	Interim
Committee Chair	_____ %	_____ %
Entire Committee as a Group	_____ %	_____ %
Individual Committee Member (excluding chair)	_____ %	_____ %
	100%	100%

10. When you do receive requests or directives from committee members concerning forestry-related matters how often are they phrased in the following (or roughly equivalent) ways?

**Frequency Scale**

1	2	3	4
Very Seldom	Fairly Seldom	Fairly Often	Very Often

- |  |         |
|--|---------|
| 1) 'See what scientific or technical summaries you can find that describe the nature of this situation or process' | 1 2 3 4 |
| 2) 'Who stands where on this issue or initiative?'   | 1 2 3 4 |
| 3) 'Get me anything you can on this problem/initiative.'   | 1 2 3 4 |
| 4) 'Can you give me any information to help in opposing this proposal?'  | 1 2 3 4 |
| 5) 'What do you think about this problem?'   | 1 2 3 4 |
| 6) 'Put together some possible options on this problem.'   | 1 2 3 4 |
| 7) 'Can you get some solid commitments from group(s) to push for this approach to the problem?'                    | 1 2 3 4 |
| 8) 'See if you can get any information that will support this position on the problem/initiative.'                 | 1 2 3 4 |

**11. When you provide information to the committee regarding some forestry-related matter, how frequently would you estimate you do of the following?**

1 Very Seldom	2 Fairly Seldom	3 Fairly Often	4 Very Often
---------------------	-----------------------	----------------------	--------------------

	<u>Frequency</u>			
Summarize the facts of the matter, including views of those with opposing interests in outcomes	1	2	3	4
Provide interpretations of ambiguous information	1	2	3	4
Recommend matter be accorded agenda status	1	2	3	4
Suggest matter be deferred to later time	1	2	3	4
Comment on ideas, proposals or alternatives	1	2	3	4
Suggest possible new angles for approaching a particular problem	1	2	3	4

**PART II**

(Note: The relevant time period for all questions in Part II is 1988-90.)

**12. We would now like to learn about the various ways in which you interact with groups or organizations both within and outside the legislature. To do so we shall describe several contexts in which you might communicate with or be contacted by a representative of a group or organization with respect to the status or management of forest lands within your state. We are interested here in oral (i.e. face-to-face or telephone) communication. Two such contexts for communication might be:**

**Regular-Routine:** In this case you interact with a particular group or organization on a fairly regular or routine basis as part of your or the other actor's efforts to keep abreast of 'what is going on' in the state with respect to forestry-related matters. You may exchange facts or opinions, but not of a confidential nature. There may or may not be a forestry-related issue or initiative of special importance to the actor with whom you communicate (or who contacts you) at a particular time.

**Incident-Related:** As opposed to the above, you generally contact or hear from the given group or organization regarding forestry matters only when a particular problem, issue, or initiative arises in which they or you have a particular interest. Again, information of a factual or opinionative, but not confidential, nature is exchanged.

a) Regular-Routine or Incident-Related Communication:  
Please place a check mark under the appropriate column

(A or B) on the following page indicating whether a regular-routine or incident-related pattern best reflects your communications regarding forestry matters with the groups or organizations on the following list. (Leave the item blank if neither pattern of communication applies). This would not involve the exchange of sensitive or confidential information. You may do this now.

	<b>A. Regular- Routine</b>	<b>B. Incident- Related</b>	<b>Frequency</b>			
1. Personal Staff or Committee Members	___	___	1	2	3	4
2. Appropriations/Finance Committee Staff	___	___	1	2	3	4
3. Other Committee Staffs: Same Chamber	___	___	1	2	3	4
4. Counterpart Committee Staff: Other Chamber (if applicable)	___	___	1	2	3	4
5. Legislative Analyst (Budget/Finance)	___	___	1	2	3	4
6. House/Senate Office of Research	___	___	1	2	3	4
7. Leadership/Caucus Staff	___	___	1	2	3	4
8. Non-Committee Legislators/Personal Staff	___	___	1	2	3	4
9. Governor's Office Staff	___	___	1	2	3	4
10. State Budget Office/Department	___	___	1	2	3	4
11. State Forestry Agency	___	___	1	2	3	4
12. Other State Natural Resource Agencies /Departments	___	___	1	2	3	4
13. State Forestry Boards/Commissions	___	___	1	2	3	4
14. Federal Forestry/Natural Res. Agencies	___	___	1	2	3	4
15. County-Local Forestry /Nat. Res. Agencies	___	___	1	2	3	4
16. University/College Departments: Forestry /Natural Resources	___	___	1	2	3	4
17. Professional Societies /Journals: Forestry	___	___	1	2	3	4
18. Wood Products Corporations/Trade Associations	___	___	1	2	3	4
19. Environmental Groups	___	___	1	2	3	4
20. Recreation Advocates: User groups	___	___	1	2	3	4
21. Tourism Business Interests	___	___	1	2	3	4
22. Mineral/Energy Interests	___	___	1	2	3	4
23. Real Estate Interests	___	___	1	2	3	4
24. Press/Media	___	___	1	2	3	4
25. Contacts in Other States	___	___	1	2	3	4

b) Frequency of Communication

How often do you communicate with each group or organization on the list, (given the pattern of interaction indicated from item a).

**Frequency Scale**

1 Very Seldom	2 Fairly Seldom	3 Fairly Often	4 Very Often
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Utilizing the scale below, please rate each of the following potential information sources according to how useful they are in providing the two kinds of information described above. First consider all sources with respect to scientific-technical information; then do so for evaluative-prescriptive information.

1 Not at All Useful	2 Moderately Useful	3 Very Useful
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c) Candid-Confidential Communication

From time to time, in the course of your work, you may face especially sensitive problems related to forest policy matters, where the judgements of others are valuable in deciphering underlying dimensions of a problem or in deciding among various courses of action. You may often rely upon key individuals or cohorts whom you trust to exchange sensitive and confidential advice about possible ways to proceed in these situations.

Using the above list of organizations, please circle the numbers preceding those within which you have such special sources involving the trusted exchange of sensitive and confidential advice.

**13. We would now like to focus on the degree to which you rely upon different groups or organizations as sources of two kinds of information relevant to forestry matters or issues.**

- a) **Scientific, technical or factual information:** Objective, factual information describing the nature of the forestry-related problem or process of concern  
Examples: timber harvesting techniques; statewide timber production; forest-based recreational demand; forest-sector employment; effects of air pollution on forest growth; etc
- b) **Evaluative or prescriptive information:** Information incorporating judgements regarding the adequacy of current approaches to forestry-related issues or problems (e.g., laws, programs), and/or identification and justification of alternative courses of action  
Examples: Assessments of effectiveness/efficiency/equity aspects of forestry programs and laws; forest lands use preferences; recommendations for legislative action on forestry-related matters

	Scientific- Technical Information			Evaluative- Prescriptive Information		
1. Personal Staff of Committee Members	1	2	3	1	2	3
2. Appropriations/Finance Committee Staff	1	2	3	1	2	3
3. Other Committee Staffs: Same Chamber	1	2	3	1	2	3
4. Counterpart Committee Staff: Other Chamber	1	2	3	1	2	3
5. Legislative Analyst (Budget/Finance)	1	2	3	1	2	3
6. House/Senate Office of Research	1	2	3	1	2	3
7. Leadership/Caucus Staff	1	2	3	1	2	3
8. Non-Committee Legislators /Personal Staff	1	2	3	1	2	3
9. Governor's Office Staff	1	2	3	1	2	3
10. State Budget Office/Department	1	2	3	1	2	3
11. State Forestry Agency	1	2	3	1	2	3
12. Other State Natural Resource Agencies/Departments	1	2	3	1	2	3
13. State Forestry Boards/Commissions	1	2	3	1	2	3
14. Federal Forestry/ Natural Res. Agencies	1	2	3	1	2	3
15. County-Local Forestry/Nat. Res. Agencies	1	2	3	1	2	3
16. University/College Departments: Forestry/Natural Resources	1	2	3	1	2	3
17. Professional Societies/Journals: Forestry	1	2	3	1	2	3
18. Wood-Products Corporations/Trade Associations	1	2	3	1	2	3
19. Environmental Groups	1	2	3	1	2	3
20. Recreation Advocates: User groups	1	2	3	1	2	3
21. Tourism Business Interests	1	2	3	1	2	3
22. Mineral/Energy Interests	1	2	3	1	2	3
23. Real Estate Interests	1	2	3	1	2	3
24. Press/Media	1	2	3	1	2	3
25. Contacts in Other States	1	2	3	1	2	3

**Staff Mediated Information Flows to Forest Policy Committees in State Legislatures**

14. Please review the list of groups and organizations on the following page and indicate those that are **somewhat** or **very** useful sources of information with respect to 3 broad dimensions of forestry in your state. Simply check the appropriate blank if a given group or organization is a somewhat or very useful information source for a particular forestry-related dimension.

Would you also rank the 4 most useful information sources for each class of information (i.e., column) by placing the appropriate number of the source in the blanks below each column.

For this question, it is recommended that you consider the potential utility of all groups or organizations for each broad area of information (i.e., again, work down columns).

POTENTIAL INFORMATION SOURCES	State Forest-Based Sector: Impacts on Economic Development	Public Forestry Programs: Tradeoffs Among Land Uses	Statewide Economic Development: Environmental Impacts on Forests
1. Personal Staff of Committee Members	_____	_____	_____
2. Appropriations/Finance Committee Staff	_____	_____	_____
3. Other Committee Staffs: Same Chamber	_____	_____	_____
4. Counterpart Committee Staff: Other Chamber	_____	_____	_____
5. Legislative Analyst (Budget/Finance)	_____	_____	_____
6. House/Senate Office of Research	_____	_____	_____
7. Leadership/Caucus Staff	_____	_____	_____
8. Non-Committee Legislators/Personal Staff	_____	_____	_____
9. Governor's Office Staff	_____	_____	_____
10. State Budget Office/Department	_____	_____	_____
11. State Forestry Agency	_____	_____	_____
12. Other State Natural Resource Agencies/Departments	_____	_____	_____
13. State Forestry Boards/Commissions	_____	_____	_____
14. Federal Forestry/Natural Resource Agencies	_____	_____	_____
15. County-Local Forestry/Natural Resource Agencies	_____	_____	_____
16. University/College Departments: Forestry/Natural Resources	_____	_____	_____
17. Professional Societies/Journals: Forestry	_____	_____	_____
18. Wood Products Corporations/Trade Associations	_____	_____	_____
19. Environmental Groups	_____	_____	_____
20. Recreation Advocates: User groups	_____	_____	_____
21. Tourism Business Interests	_____	_____	_____
22. Mineral/Energy Interests	_____	_____	_____
23. Real Estate Interests	_____	_____	_____
24. Press/Media	_____	_____	_____
25. Contacts in Other States	_____	_____	_____

____ 1st	____ 1st	____ 1st
____ 2nd	____ 2nd	____ 2nd
____ 3rd	____ 3rd	____ 3rd
____ 4th	____ 4th	____ 4th

15. Based on your experience, how would you characterize the ability/capacity of the groups or organizations listed below to engage in the following activities with respect to forestry matters within your state? Try and rate each group on all characteristics utilizing the scale on the following page. Should you have no idea of how a group fares on a particular characteristic, leave the individual item for that group blank.

(For this item it is easiest to consider each group with respect to all potential actions (i.e., work across rows)).

1	2	3
Limited	Moderate	Extensive

**Ability/Capacity to:**

	<i>Formulate Policy Alternatives</i>	<i>Advocate a Policy Position</i>	<i>Act as a Clearinghouse for Information</i>	<i>Coordinate Various Efforts to Influence Outcomes</i>	<i>Mobilize Public Opinion</i>
1. Personal Staff of Committee Members	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
2. Appropriations/Finance Committee Staff	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
3. Counterpart Committee Staff: Other Chamber	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
4. Other Committee Staffs	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
5. Legislative Analyst (Budget/Finance)	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
6. House/Senate Office of Research	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
7. Leadership/Caucus Staff	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
8. Non-Committee Legislators/Personal Staff	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
9. Governor's Office Staff	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
10. State Budget Office/Department	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
11. State Forestry Agency	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
12. Other State Natural Resource Agencies/Departments	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
13. State Forestry Boards/Commissions	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
14. Federal Forestry/Natural Resource Agencies	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
15. County-Local Forestry/Natural Resource Agencies	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
16. University/College Departments: Forestry/Natural Resources	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
17. Professional Societies/Journals: Forestry	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
18. Forest Products Corporations/Trade Associations	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
19. Environmental Groups: National (or Local Chapters)	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
20. Recreation Advocates: User groups	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
21. Tourism Business Interests	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
22. Mineral/Energy Interests	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
23. Real Estate Interests	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
24. Press/Media	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
25. Contacts in Other States	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3

16. When summarizing or synthesizing information on a particular forestry-related matter or problem, how often are you able (i.e., do you have the time or opportunity) to do the following things?

1 Very Seldom	2 Fairly Seldom	3 Fairly Often	4 Very Often
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	Frequency			
a) Check with sources to clear up ambiguous meanings, logics underlying advocacy positions, etc.	1	2	3	4
b) Solicit third party expertise to check or assess correctness of data or information	1	2	3	4
c) Check with trusted contacts on whether policy advocates have unexpressed interests or intentions	1	2	3	4
d) Attempt to determine from various sources whether the policy position of a given group or organization is justified (i.e., is there a legitimate basis for their view or are they merely rationalizing via rhetoric?)	1	2	3	4

17. Given your role in providing information to the committee that is both relevant and useful in their decision making situations, what kinds of improvements in either the existing information base, the flows of information, or the use of information by those with an interest in state forest policy matters, do you think would be the most beneficial in helping you perform your tasks for the committee? Consider:

- Quality of information: e.g., form, accuracy, reliability, etc.
- Dynamics of information flows: e.g., timeliness, availability
- Quality of debates regarding management and use of forest lands: e.g., use of information as evidence, coherence of arguments, etc.

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18. Would you please provide the following information about yourself and your current position:

- a) Age: \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Education:
- |                                       |              |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some College | Major: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BA/BS        | Major: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MA/MS        | Major: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> JD or LLB    | Major: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PhD          | Major: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other        |              |
- c) Time in Present Position:
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 year | <input type="checkbox"/> 11-20 Years        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 Years        | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 20 Years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4-10 Years       |   |
- d) Prior Occupation:
- Executive Branch (State Government)
  - Other Legislature-Related Position (State Government)
  - Federal Executive- or Legislature-Related Position
  - Law (Private or Public Sector Practice)
  - Journalism
  - Education: Teaching/Administration
  - Political campaign
  - Private Business
  - Lobbyist
  - Other

Please return the survey in the stamped, self-addressed envelope by **February 28, 1990**.

If you have any questions, please contact:

Bernard J. Lewis or Paul V. Ellefson at:

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 University of Minnesota  
 1530 North Cleveland Avenue  
 St. Paul, MN 55108  
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Thank You for Your Cooperation!

