

NatureServe offers a diversified set of conservation services for land managers at local, regional, and national scales. One of our services highlight is NatureServe Vista, a decision-support tool for conservation assessment, management and monitoring. Vista is designed to help planners, conservation groups, and local communities to more effectively integrate biodiversity information into land use and conservation planning processes. By using GIS mapping technology and offering the flexibility to incorporate economic, social, and ecological concerns, NatureServe Vista can integrate complex information, establish conservation goals, identify potential conflicts, and create alternative plans and solutions for future land use.

CASE STUDY: POTLACH CORPORATION, ARKANSAS

Potlatch Corporation is a mid-size forest products company with 1.5 million acres of timberland in Idaho, Arkansas, and Minnesota. It has achieved certification of its forest management practices under the standards of both the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI) and the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC).

THE PLACE

Potlatch manages an extensive area of timberlands in south-central Arkansas. An important center for pine production, the area also contains many species rarely found within the state, including the red-cockaded woodpecker, a federally endangered species that nests exclusively in pine forests.

THE CHALLENGE

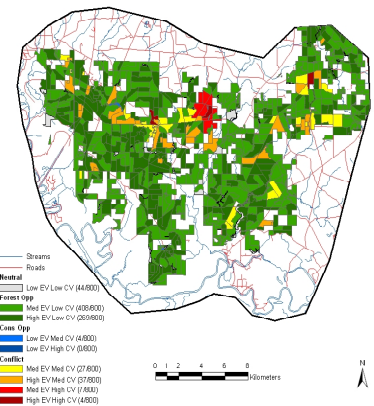
Potlatch forest managers strive to manage their timberlands in producing quality forest products and jobs while also restoring the area's natural environment. Conflict arises when individual forest stands have the potential to provide both high economic and conservation benefits. How do resource managers develop a forest management plan that balances timber production and conservation values of their timberlands? Potlatch needed a quick and accurate way to identify and compare each stand's conservation value to timber values.

THE SOLUTION

By using NatureServe Vista the team identified species and ecological systems present within the project area. They calculated the total conservation value of each forest stand under different scenarios, and at each scenario weighted individual species and ecological system occurrences in different ways. They also ranked forest stands by their conservation value, and compared the timber production and conservation values of each forest stand to identify appropriate forest stands for timber production, forest stands that should be conserved, and areas where additional analysis is needed to develop appropriate management plans.

BENEFITS

- Allowed forest managers to focus their resources on areas with the most need for in-depth analysis.
- Provided an opportunity for forest managers to evaluate "what if" scenarios by comparing results from a series of different conservation value scenarios.
- Documented the benefits that would be achieved through the conservation of specific forest parcels.
- Enhanced the repeatability and efficiency of ongoing analysis and updates through NatureServe Vista's standardized decision-making framework.



Potential Conflict Zones: Yellow, orange, and red areas represent forest stands that require additional analysis prior to developing forest management plans.

To learn more, please contact:

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