



**Stakeholder Survey Results and Next Steps for  
AMERICA'S FORESTS WITH CHUCK LEAVELL**

A television series to inform, inspire and involve people in the most important and entertaining topics about America's Forests



**“I never mind explaining to those that have misunderstandings about forestry practices that the U.S. is a great example of sustainable forestry,” —*Chuck Leavell***



# INTRODUCTION

*America's Forests with Chuck Leavell* is a television series to inform, inspire and involve people in the most important topics about America's forests.

No one fits the role of forestry spokesman as well as **Chuck Leavell... easily the world's most recognized tree farmer**. When not promoting sustainable forestry, Chuck tickles the ivories with The Rolling Stones where he has been touring, recording and singing backup since 1982.

Chuck's passion for forests began when his wife, Rose Lane, inherited land in Georgia from her grandmother. Today, their tree plantation and hunting preserve occupies 2,900 acres and they are staunch supporters of sustainable forestry, conservation and environmental protection.

A few of his accomplishments include he and his wife being named National Outstanding Tree Farmers in 1999 by the American Tree Farm System, recognized by the Georgia Conservancy and the National Arbor Day Foundation, and named Honorary Forest Ranger by the U.S. Forest Service.

Chuck has written books on woodland management, served on the boards of The American Forest Foundation, The United States Endowment for Forestry and Communities and other influential non-profits, makes frequent trips to Washington, D.C. to discuss forestry and environmental policy matters with lawmakers on both sides of the aisle, and is co-founder of The Mother Nature Network, an environmental website with more than 10 million sessions per month from 200+ countries.

The idea of creating a TV series about America's forests began in 2012 when Chuck met Bruce Ward. Bruce is the founder and President of Choose Outdoors, a nonprofit organization focused on connecting all Americans to our public lands through outdoor recreation and promoting healthy forests for this purpose. He has consulted with numerous companies to facilitate relationships with land management agencies. Prior to this, he and his wife, Paula, founded the Continental Divide Trail Alliance, a well-respected national non-profit focused on public/private partnerships, volunteerism and innovative collaboration to build a congressionally designated National Scenic Trail, and was the first President of the Washington, DC based American Hiking Society. Bruce is an advisor on the Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Council and served as a White House Champion of Change for Rural America.

Chuck and Bruce agree overall **forest health is declining** and making a significant impact on their shared interests and passions. They envisioned an entertaining and informative television series depicting a cross section of timely issues, benefits, opportunities and innovations on America's forests, both public and private. They understood people connect with stories, and together they wanted to **tackle some of the most serious issues on our forests in a relatable, entertaining and unbiased way**. To help tell these stories, they hired director and producer Kate Raisz, owner of 42 Degrees North. Kate is an award-winning filmmaker with decades of experience making television programs for PBS and other broadcast channels.

The first episode came to fruition in 2016 at a meeting in Washington, D.C. when Bruce presented the concept to the US Forest Service, the primary supporter of the Oregon episode. The success of that episode created enthusiasm across the country for a 13-part series.

# FEEDBACK

A stakeholder survey was conducted summer 2018. Forty individuals representing the country's leaders in conservation, forest industries, recreation, media and federal and state land management agencies responded to provide guidance for future episodes. Here are the results.

## Most Urgent Forest Issues

### **63% Forest Health & Management**

Concerns for forest health and management were identified as the most urgent issues on our forests, with wildfires and climate change most frequently mentioned. Other issues included disease, overcrowding, dying trees, lack of access, poor health, lack of treatment, fire suppression, lack of funding, restoration, beetle kill and encroachment of urbanization.



### **26% Public Awareness**

Many believed the public, and policy makers, lacked an in depth understanding of the benefits and value of forests, wildlife and watersheds, collaborative efforts leading to positive changes in the forest industry, carbon sequestration and funding required to meet forest needs.

### **6% Lack of industry and opportunity for wood**

Some responded there is a lack of industry for wood and low-grade wood markets.

### **5% Recreation impacts and resources**

Recreational use is increasing on our forests and some believe there are not enough resources and it is impacting the existing infrastructure.

Percentage of Input: 37% of the answers from Forest Industry, 31% of answers from Conservation and Recreation community, 22% of answers from Land Managers, 8% of answers from Media, 2% unknown.



# Greatest Opportunities for our Forests

## **35% Public Awareness**

The need to increase the public's awareness of forest benefits, including carbon sequestration, climate improvements, clean water and air, ecosystem services, economic contributions, wood as a renewable resource and the healthy lifestyle it provides, were the greatest opportunities. Respondents also believed demonstrating the positive evolution and importance of the forest industry was needed.

## **31% Active Management**

Supporting active management of our forests was a close second to increasing public awareness. Respondents believed active management created more resiliency and created forests that provided more value to people, urban resources, wildlife, nature and the world overall. It was noted at present time, we have a significant history of forest practices we can learn from to plan for and implement sustainable and beneficial forest management in the next fifty years.

## **15% Recreation**

Respondents believed our forests were a valuable resource for recreation. While the demand for recreation continues to increase, lack of funding and resources are not keeping pace with the demand. Some believed knowledge and support of our forests could be improved through volunteerism and recreation.

## **7% Wood Utilization**

Utilizing wood as an alternative to nonrenewable resources was listed as an opportunity that provides environmental and economic benefits.

## **6% Private Sector Partnerships**

Strengthening private sector partnerships is a good solution to support forest management and education.

## **6% Forest Products Industry Collaboration**

Promoting and fortifying the forest products industry were viewed as positive ways to help the land management agencies get their job done. The need to "right size" the forest industry to match up with by-products during forest restoration was noted by several respondents.

Percentage of Input: 38% of the answers from Conservation and Recreation community, 31% of answers from Forest Industry, 22% of answers from Land Managers, 7% of answers from Media, 2% unknown.



# **Biggest Public Misconceptions**

## **52% Need for and Role of Forest Management**

Many believe the public has very little knowledge of how or who manages our forests, whether they need management and what a healthy forest should look like. Some mentioned a greater awareness of production on private vs. public lands as important.

## **35% Cutting Trees is Bad**

Respondents believe overall the public thinks there is too much deforestation and cutting/harvesting trees and using wood is harmful to the forest and the environment.

## **19% Role of Fires in Forests**

Respondents were mixed on what they thought the public believed about fires in our forests. Some stated the public felt all fires were bad and others felt the public thought fires were nature's way and should be allowed to burn.

## **17% Forests Do Not Affect Their Lives**

Some commented too many in our public are foreign to forests or nature overall and therefore have no connection to them and have no understanding of how they affect the quality of their lives.

## **8% Timber Industry is Evil**

Some said the public believes the timber industry is evil, not trustworthy, not innovative or responsible stewards and conservation and timber markets cannot exist together.

## **4% Regulation Is Best Management Tool**

Some noted the public thought regulation is the best way to address preservation, carbon, ecosystem services, water quality enhancements, wildlife, etc.

Percentage of Input: 46% of the answers from Conservation and Recreation community, 31% of answers from Forest Industry, 21% of answers from Land Managers, 0% of answers from Media, 2% unknown.





## OUR PURPOSE

To inform, inspire and involve people in the most important and entertaining topics about America's forests.

## NEXT STEPS

- Identify story content and locations for remaining episodes to complete the first series. (2019)
- Secure full funding and partners to complete production of the first series. (2020)
- Develop schedule for remaining episodes in the first series and complete production. (2019—2021)
- Market episodes for airing on Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) through our presenting station, Rocky Mountain PBS, and the National Educational Television Association (NETA) and other established relationships and partnerships, social media and special events. (2019-2021)
- Coordinate special events to launch new episodes and to continue to promote the series. (2019-2021)
- Begin development of series two. (2021)

# UPCOMING EPISODES PLANNED

Our focus is to produce meaningful episodes to inform, inspire and involve people in the most important and timely forest topics in an unbiased and entertaining way. These topics encompass forest values, usage, innovations, benefits, management and challenges. Here are some top story concepts.

## Forest Management Practices

Changing perspectives on how to best manage forests, how lack of forest management along with drought created perfect storm for pine beetle, using drones for management, logging/harvesting techniques, collaboration like recreation community working with timber industry on forest resiliency and projects, how private forests successfully manage their lands, forest fuels management efforts with private land owners interfacing public lands, prescribed burns usefulness, forest certification, tribal management practices, “forest to family room” story describing process of acquiring and utilizing wood resulting in products and benefits to the forests, research and work at universities, private labs and nurseries (i.e. Clemson and Auburn), disease and insects, chestnut tree revival, mill technology, challenges and opportunities timber harvesters face as the vital link between tree growers and consuming mills, stewardship contracts, reliance on imported wood, governmental regulations and forest policies

## Fires & Natural Disasters

Prevention, consequences, perceptions, health issues, efforts to prevent, environmental issues, impacts on wildlife, behavior in treated vs. untreated forests, seed banks, smoke jumpers, weather events

## Forest Recreation

Uses, needs, impacts, funding, tourism, collaboration, conflicts

## Health Benefits

Positive relationship between forests/trees & human health and well-being, returning military veteran programs

## Family Owned Forests

Challenges and successes, celebrity forest owners, Christmas tree farmers

## Special Designations

Rationale, benefits, impacts on lands i.e. wildlife refuges, Wilderness, roadless

## Forest Products

Building construction, nanotechnology, pulp and paper making, paper products from wood chips, particle board and wood pellets from sawdust and shavings, biomass power from the bark and forest residue, cross laminated timber; fine furniture making; musical instruments that use wood such as guitars, drums and pianos, wood energy projects; reuse and repurposing wood, fuel from wood

## Urban Forestry

Famous parks in cities, insect and disease control and impacts, hazardous fuels

## Private Sector Engagement

Corporate, nonprofit and volunteer organizations supporting forest needs

## Forest and Wood History

Forest History Society, first forest, Cradle of Forestry in America, Washington DC cherry trees from Japan; restoration of American chestnut, wood use during early settlement such as railroads, telephone poles and homes

## Environmental Benefits

Air and water purification, temperature control, soil stabilization and improvements, overall climate improvements

## Economic Benefits

Jobs dependent on forests, tourism, forest products and energy

## Forest Diversity

Exploring different tree species, forest types and their usage, ancient forests in US, difference in growth and recovery

## Land Management Agencies

Who are they? what do they do? distinctions? challenges of bringing in next generation

## Wildlife

Habitat management, conservation aspects of hunting







Photo credits: Doug Johnson

# SUMMARY

**There has never been a better time to launch a television series focused on America's forests.** Our forests are making headlines... catastrophic wildfires, drought, massive insect infestations, climatic changes, user conflicts, environmental impacts and more. Unfortunately the public doesn't understand how these events affect the quality of all our lives, from outdoor recreation, to wood products, to our water supply, to air quality issues. What happens on our forests is everyone's business.

*America's Forests with Chuck Leavell* focuses on the most important and timely forest issues. With our passionate and knowledgeable host, our dedicated and experienced team we are set to create a series to inform, inspire and involve all Americans about the significance of our forests.

Our goal is to complete a thirteen-part series that will be aired on PBS stations across the country. We will utilize the best story ideas to truly engage an audience in working toward healthy, sustainable future forests that will benefit generations to come.



## Accomplishments

Filmed and aired first episode in Oregon in 2016

Premiered Oregon episode at Mass Timber Conf in Portland, OR where Chuck Leavell was keynote speaker to 800+ attendees

Partnered with National Educational Television Association for nationwide distribution to PBS stations and schools

Filmed and aired second episode in Colorado in 2017

Hosted VIP reception, screening and "fireside chat" at Denver Museum of Nature and Science for the Colorado episode

Filmed third episode in South Carolina in 2018

America's Forests with Chuck Leavell episodes have aired on nearly 100 stations across the country

Hosted special "fireside chat" event in Durango, CO to showcase the Colorado episode.



## Supporters to Date

Center for Heirs Property

Colorado State Forest Service

Denver Museum of Nature and Science

Denver Water

El Pomar Foundation

Forest Business Network

Fort Lewis College

Healthy Forests Healthy Communities

Intermountain Forest Association

Mountain Studies Institute

National Educational Television Association

Neiman Enterprises

Oregon Forest Resources Institute

Oregon Public Television

Rocky Mountain Public Broadcasting System, Presenting Station

The Nature Conservancy

Sierra Pacific Industries

Softwood Lumber Board

Stihl

U.S.D.A Forest Products Laboratory

U.S.D.A. Natural Resources and Conservation Service

U.S.D.A. Forest Service

U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities

Vaagen Timbers

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