

FCWG 2018-19 Learning Exchange Series: Todd Ontl, NIACS Q+A:

Question: Have the menus been applied in private ownership decisions as well?

Todd: The menus have been used by many different private forest owners in the Midwest and Northeast regions, from rural family forest owners to a private suburban Homeowners Association. You can learn more by going to www.forestadaptation.org/demonstration-projects and selecting "Private" under Landowner Type in the sorting function.

Question: Harvesting wood to produce long-lived wood products, then regenerating and rapidly growing a new stand would seem to have a greater long-term carbon benefit than storage on the stump. Can you discuss why storage is favored over harvesting and use from a carbon perspective?

Todd: Storage of wood in long-lived wood products is an important consideration in when thinking about overall carbon turnover and ultimately the sequestration of atmospheric carbon. However, the Forest Carbon Management menu only considers management actions that increase ecosystem carbon storage, and does not consider the complexities of markets or the half-life of carbon in various wood products that might be included in a life-cycle analysis. For that reason, the carbon menu does not advocate for storage in living wood tree biomass as opposed to harvesting and regenerating a stand. In fact, no single actions are favored but instead the broad suite of actions that can have carbon benefits identified as potential actions, including both storage on the stump as well as silvicultural actions that regenerate future-adapted species.

Question: As a segue to the geographies and offsets question: could the menu align to win-win-wins for climate impacts and offsets with livelihoods intersections for smallholder farmers in Africa, for example in an agroforestry context (i.e., when massively scaling natural regeneration in the Sahel?)

Todd: In general, ecosystem types outside of the US were not included during the development of the Forest Carbon Management menu. The menu was developed primarily from an extensive literature review of climate and management impacts to forest carbon stocks in boreal and temperate North American forests. While many of these strategies and approaches would be broadly applicable across many different forest types, there may be potential actions relevant for forests in Africa not represented here. The African continent has an incredibly large diversity of forest types, from tropical wet and deciduous dry types to varying types of savannas. These represent different climates with potentially unique climate stressors that were not considered in the development of the menu. That said, the menu presents several broad concepts for maintaining and enhancing carbon at the level of strategy, many of which would align with the livelihoods of smallholder farmers. Because the menus are designed for users to identify on-the-

ground tactics, I think the menu could be useful for helping identify actions with carbon benefits in regions outside of the US.