

Considering the Human Dimension when Restoring Forest Landscapes

Much has been written about forest landscape restoration (FLR) from a silvicultural or ecological perspective: techniques, approaches, methods, case studies, have all tended to focus on the practical and technical tools to implement forest restoration. However, relatively little attention has been given to human dimensions.

In fact, there is limited guidance on how to go about restoring forest landscapes when it comes to integrating both ecological and human dimensions of FLR. The need for this integration was the main motivation for the newly published book entitled ***Forest Landscape Restoration: Integrated Approaches to Support Effective Implementation***, which was edited by Stephanie Mansourian (Consultant, member of IUFRO Task Force Forest Adaptation and Restoration under Global Change, and Research Associate, University of Geneva, Switzerland), and John Parrotta (US Forest Service and IUFRO Vice-President).

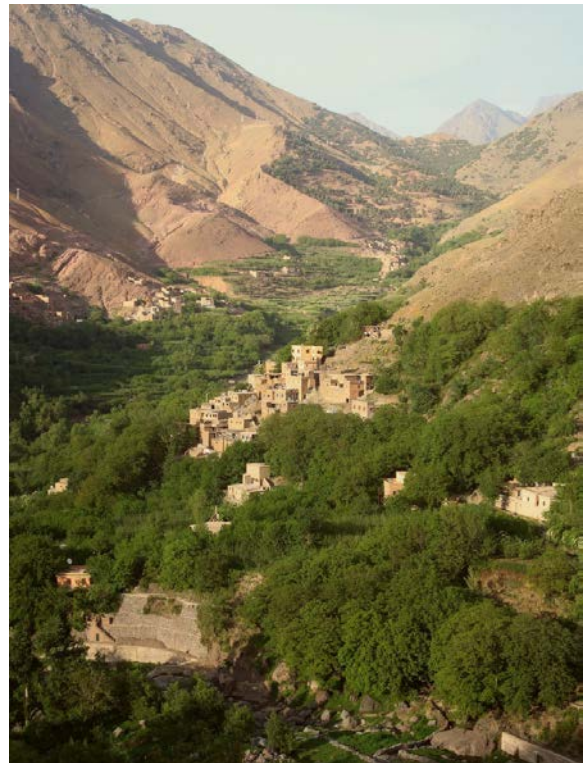
“When scaling up to a landscape – as is the case with FLR – issues become more complicated and the roles of people and institutions become all the more central,” says co-editor Stephanie Mansourian.

The success of FLR necessarily relies on many people. Quite often progress is hampered by a lack of common understanding among the diverse stakeholders, who may disagree about the reality and the implications of forest landscape degradation in the first place.

These divergent views are shaped by the different economic, social, cultural and ecological impacts that forest landscape degradation has on different stakeholder groups.

They also derive from the fact that FLR necessarily straddles sectors, which would offer a natural opportunity for integration, but we often see narrow, sector-based approaches. However, silo-mentality tends to emphasize only one benefit of restoration, e.g. carbon sequestration, while neglecting many others such as food provision, soil stabilization and biodiversity conservation.

“We need profound institutional reforms based on new forms of understanding and governance arrangements that enable the inclusion of broader societal goals. Such polycentric approaches would bring together public, private and civil society actors and



Integration of Western and Traditional knowledge in FLR planning and implementation can result in more comprehensive, locally grounded, and socially and culturally acceptable restoration projects. This scene from the Ilmil Valley in the Atlas Mountains (Morocco) depicts a mosaic of agricultural and forest management practices used by farmers to support their livelihoods and food security while conserving forest biodiversity. Photo: John Parrotta

replace top-down rules, policies and legislation with more flexible forms of governance”, explains Dr. Mansourian.

“And, there is a need to broaden the knowledge base,” adds Dr. Parrotta, “Restoration projects in recent decades have emphasized Western science at the expense of indigenous and local knowledge, often resulting in misdiagnoses of forest/land degradation problems. Yet, the integration of both forms of knowledge can result in more comprehensive, locally grounded, and socially and culturally acceptable restoration projects.”

One example, from northern California, is the Western Klamath Restoration Partnership (WKRPP) that has, over the past 20 years, served to successfully bring together tribal, federal and non-governmental stakeholders to define priority restoration actions for different parts of the landscape using multiple cultural values associated with the landscape and its use. This effort, involving a land area of 486,000 ha, seeks to restore these traditional forest management practices in a modern context, enhanced by Western science, in order to restore and maintain these critical ecosystem processes, including wildland fire, to achieve multiple resource objectives.

There may still be many obstacles to successful forest landscape restoration, including issues of tenure and property rights, for example, or tensions between planning at the landscape level and implementing actions at the local level.

However, the overall situation for forest landscape restoration is quite favorable. Its importance is now widely acknowledged and, as a result of this, financial opportunities have increased significantly.

Major global commitments to restore millions of hectares, e.g. under the Bonn Challenge, the New York Declaration on Forests, the AFR 100 (African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative), the Latin America Initiative 20x20 etc., have generated a global movement on FLR. This book seeks to support the implementation of the vast areas committed to restoration by politicians.

Forest Landscape Restoration: Integrated Approaches to Support Effective Implementation (2018)

Stephanie Mansourian and John Parrotta (editors)

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Recent publications on FLR arising from IUFRO work:

<https://www.iufro.org/science/divisions/division-1/10000/10600/publications/>

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