

## **Understanding Farmers' Motivations for Woodlot Management and Their Perceptions of Forest Management Plans**

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In this study, farmers' motivations, attitudes and values for owning and managing woodlots were indentified in the rural village of Los Planes in El Salvador. To understand this I asked farmers: what are their motivations for owning woodlots, what are the constraints (disadvantages) and benefits (advantages) of the forest management, and what have farmers learned through the forest management planning process. An open-ended questionnaire was developed to conduct informal, unstructured interviews with farmers over the period of a year.

Field surveys were conducted to describe the woodlots. The interviews revealed that timber harvesting, inheritance, resale value, diversification, and ecotourism are reasons that farmers own and manage their woodlots. Woodlot owners identified government incentives, improved silvicultural practices, and sustainable timber harvesting as advantages associated with the required forest management plans. Owners felt that harassment by the environmental police, labor-intensive requirements of the plans, and the distribution of poor quality seedlings by PRODERT were problems associated with woodlot management. Woodlot managers have learned to apply silvicultural techniques that improve stand quality and protect their forest resources. Additionally, woodlot owners have developed a broad sense of ecological stewardship over the years.