What is Forestland Parcelization? The conversion of larger ownership blocks to smaller ownership units.

Why Do We Care? Parcelization is associated with loss of wildlife habitat and timber availability, diminished water quality, and greater restrictions on recreational access. It may also be a forerunner to forest fragmentation and development.

Field-based natural resource professionals have an-on the-ground understanding of the condition of the forest in their area, yet have largely been overlooked as a source of information on parcelization activity, drivers, and impacts.

Further, while forestland parcelization is largely viewed as a private forestland issue, we suggest it has significant implications for public forest lands.

The purpose of the study was to develop an in-depth characterization of how field-based public natural resource professionals in the Lake States view various aspects of forest parcelization.

Figure 1: Illustration of Forestland Parcelization
Forest block on the left is in single ownership. Forest block on the right split into multiple ownerships. (e.g., parcelization)

An online questionnaire was developed and sent to field-based public natural resource professionals in federal, state and county agencies in MN, MI and WI. (Forest Service, NRCS, FWS, DNR, county land departments, Soil and Water Conservation Districts).

Categories of Survey Questions: respondents' familiarity with and perceptions of private forestland parcelization in their work area, perspectives on important drivers of parcelization, potential outcomes associated with a parcelized landscape, strategies for preventing or slowing parcelization activities and/or impacts, information needs, and respondent background information.

37% usable response rate (283 out of 773 surveys sent).

Our study documented linkages between private forest land parcelization and public land management in areas such as increased conflict on, decreased access to, and increased recreation demand on public land. Decreased timber supply and loss of recreational access on private forest land may also impact the demand for these services on public forest land.

Respondents indicated that current tools, policies, and incentives aimed at preventing or managing the impacts of parcelization have limited effect.

One strategy for public land managers may be to develop assistance, education, and incentive programs targeted at small parcel holdings to help these owners understand the important, collective role their forests play in providing ecosystem services and recreational opportunities. Such efforts could also help these landowners understand the benefits of cross-boundary cooperation with private landowners and public land management agencies.