Diversifying the Portfolio: Intentional Communities in Southern Indiana

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“...a group of people who have chosen to live together with a common purpose, working cooperatively to create a lifestyle that reflects their shared core values”

Questenberry (1996)

This broad definition bring together a much wider array of land ownership possibilities than just the stereotypical 1960’s commune

Although intentional communities have never been a dominant form of social organization in the US, they have always existed in various forms

The notion of intentional community is important to the current discussion because these communities have organized the bundle of rights that compose land ownership in a variety of ways
The five communities are located in Morgan, Monroe, Brown and Lawrence Counties.

Information on the communities was collected as part of the International Forest Resources and Institutions (IFRI) program.

Each of the communities have permanent residents and forest owned by the community.

Pseudonyms have been used to maintain the anonymity of community members.
## Community Goals and Origins

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Oak Community

- Established in 1971
- 449 total acres
- 7 households
- Land ownership is a mix of private individual ownership and land owned by a non-profit religious organization
Established in 1976

304 total acres

66% community owned forest

10 households

Structured as a shareholding corporation
Box Elder Community

- Established in 1983
- 109 total acres
- 83% community owned forest
- 4 households
- Legal ownership is by a non-profit educational organization
Established in 1970

140 total acres

57% community owned forest

3 households

Ownership is mix of private and tenants in common
Established in 1970

1100 total acres

12% community owned forest

280 households

Land is owned by individuals and the landowners association
Intentional communities are clearly not the only way to manage forest land but they are important as successful examples of alternative arrangements and expand the list of possibilities. The communities differ greatly in area, population and core values but each has found a unique way of balancing individual and community ownership of forest land.

The relatively long life span of each of these communities is due, at least in part, to their ability to change in the face of inevitable challenges.

With a few exceptions, use rights are much more restricted on forest land owned by the community versus land owned by individuals.

Intentional communities are clearly not the only way to manage forest land but they are important as successful examples of alternative arrangements and expand the list of possibilities.
Our paper, *Intentional Communities in Indiana*, is available and comments and questions are welcome during the break or via email (sdonnell@indiana.edu)

Thank You