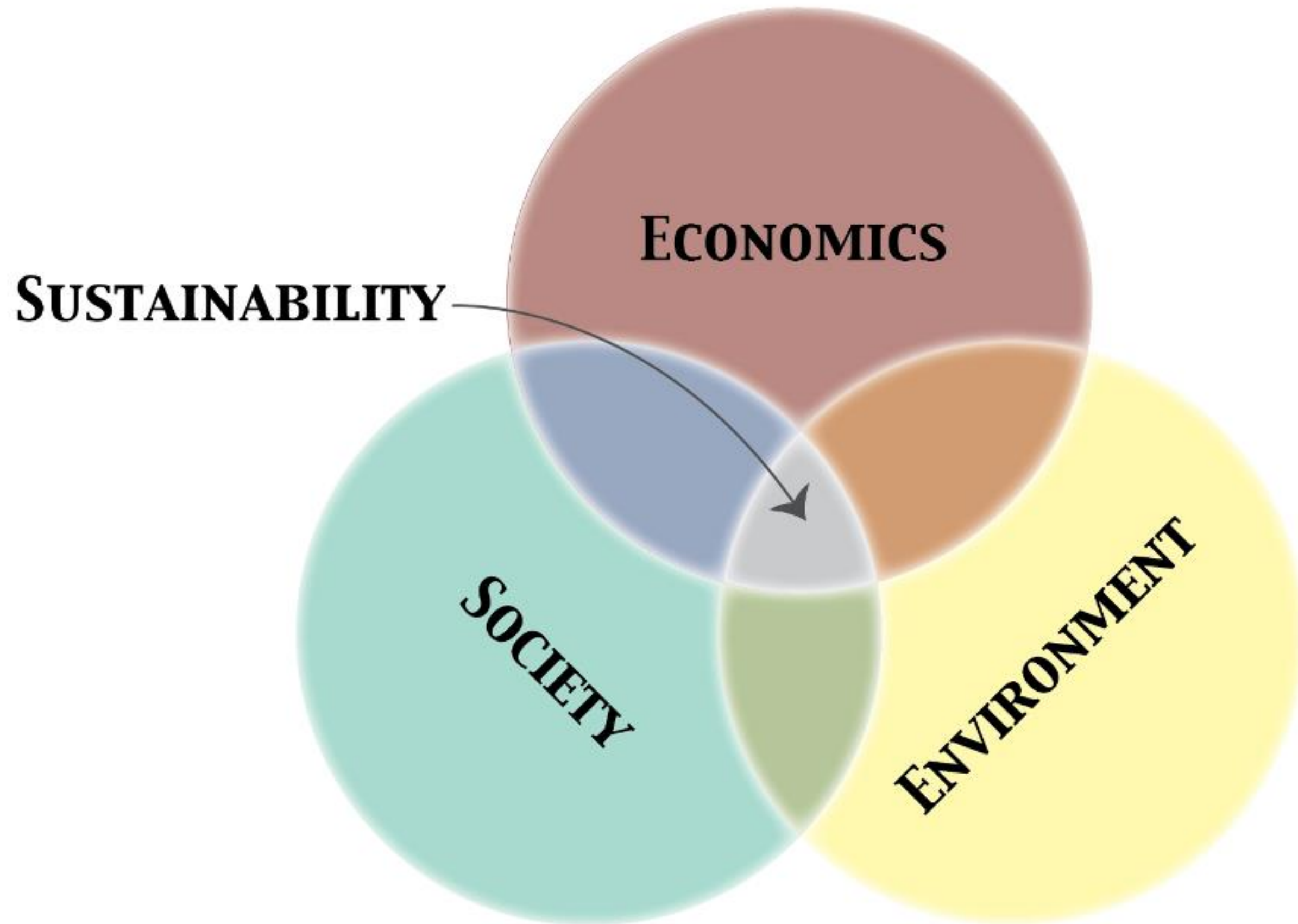


THE PEOPLE SIDE OF FOREST PRODUCTS INNOVATION FOR ADVANCING SUSTAINABILITY

May 2025



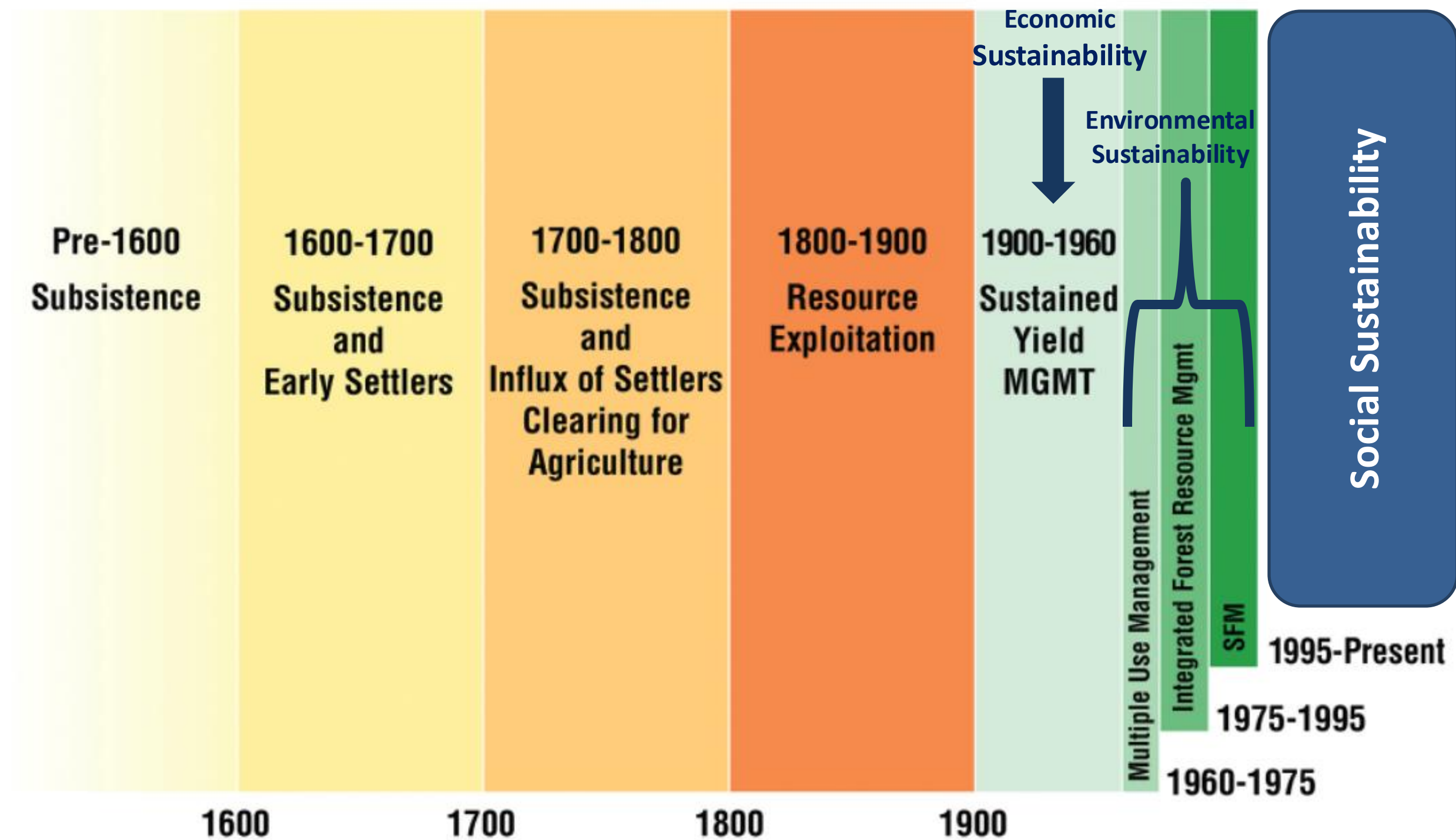
Kathryn Fernholz
President



Source: : https://cdn.serc.carleton.edu/images/integrate/sustainability_venn_diagram.webp

FOREST MANAGEMENT PARADIGMS

Pre-1600 to Present





FOREST SECTOR WORKFORCE

**“Peak 65” began in 2024,
more than 12,000 people in the U.S. turn
65 each day, totaling over 4 million per
year. This rate will continue through 2027.**

Source: Retirement Income Institute at the Alliance for Lifetime Income

WORKFORCE CHANGES AND CHALLENGES:

Employment in the forest sector has been declining for more than a decade due to mill closures, economic conditions, changes in technology and automation

** Women make up 47% of the total US workforce but only 17% of wood products manufacturing jobs*

** Potential annual employment need for the forest and wood products sector is projected to be >50k people annually over the next five years*



** median age in the forests and wood products sector is up to 19% higher than the average in the total US workforce*

** Near-term and future growth opportunities in the sector (innovation and product development): **mass timber, biochar, bioenergy, and ecosystem services markets***

Recruitment Issues

Specific to FRNR Professions and Degree Programs

1

There is a general lack of awareness of FRNR careers and professions; this is true across society, including high school students, parents, teachers, and counselors, as well as among college advisors and currently enrolled college students.

2

Among those who are aware of FRNR professions, there is a common perception that the jobs are relatively low paying and/or not prestigious or stable.

3

There are relatively few female and minority role models in some FRNR disciplines and professions; this is particularly true in forestry and forest industry-related disciplines.

4

FRNR professionals and undergraduate students often cite a love or passion for the outdoors as a vocational motivator, but historically marginalized groups have generally had fewer opportunities to be engaged in the outdoor environment and FRNR issues. They may see wildlife-related careers on TV or social media, but this is not true for forestry and forest industry-related professions.

General

5

College affordability is a critical issue, particularly for students from groups that are historically underrepresented in FRNR careers.

6

College accessibility is critical, particularly for first-generation students and their families navigating unfamiliar processes for college admission as well as for federal, state, and university financial assistance.

New research findings provide a sector-specific strategy for workforce recruitment success.

Enhancing Diversity in Undergraduate Degree Programs in Forestry and Related Natural Resources: a Brief Review of Critical Issues and Promising Actions

Steven H Bullard ✉, T J Walker, Leslie Burger

Journal of Forestry, Volume 122, Issue 2, March 2024, Pages 107–122,

<https://doi.org/10.1093/jofore/fvad043>

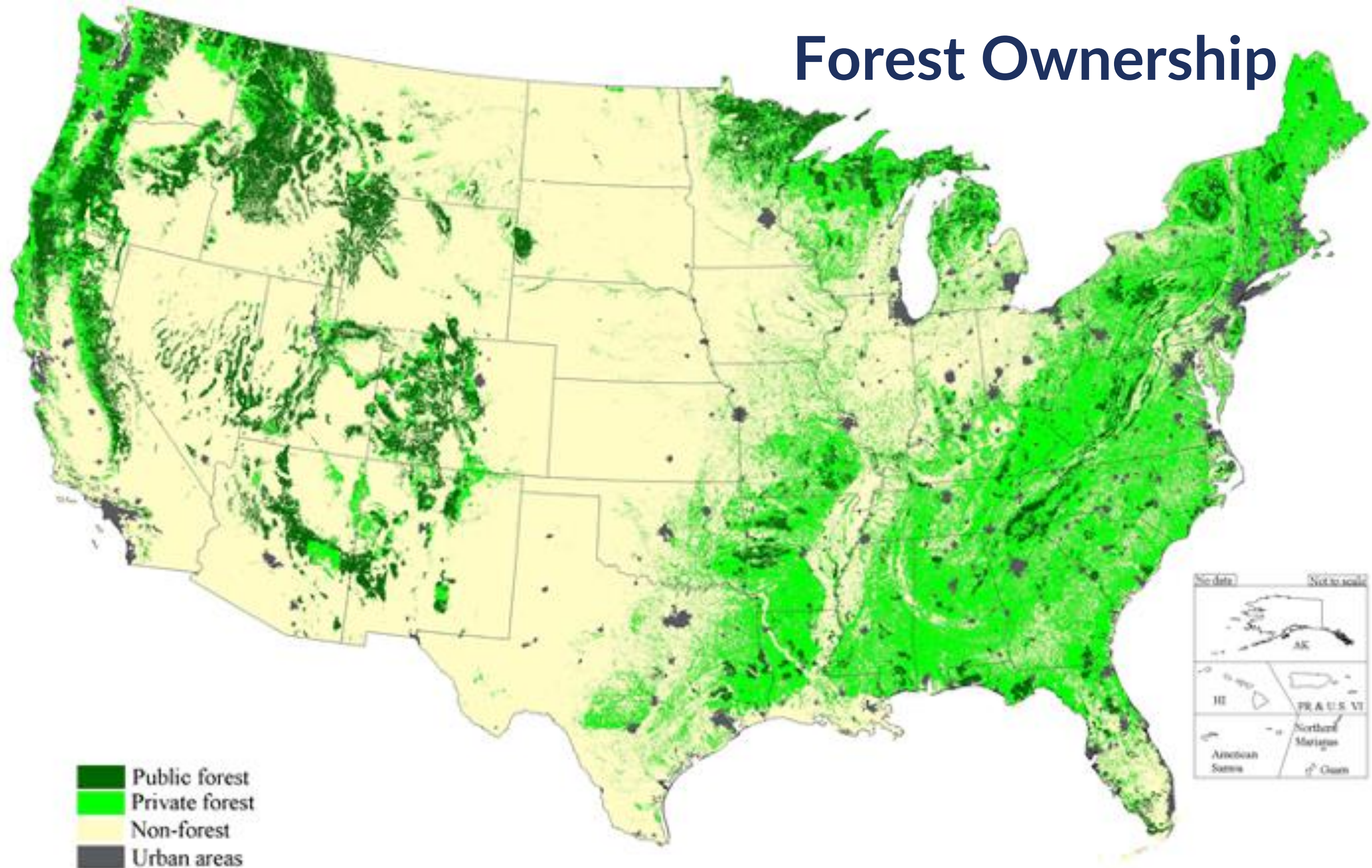
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FOREST LANDOWNERS

Forest Ownership



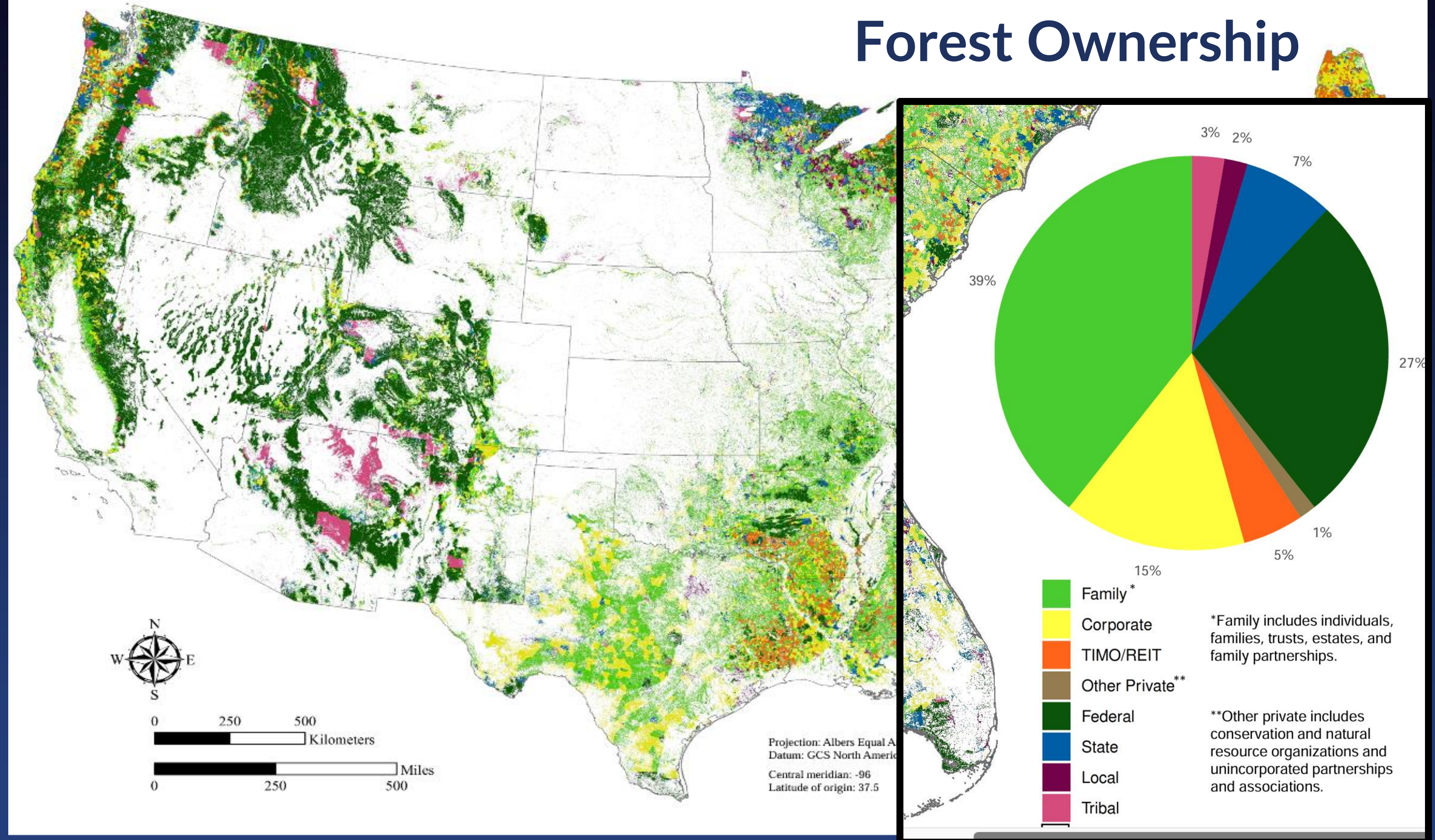
USDA Forest Service, State and Private Forestry,
Cooperative Forestry Staff, Washington Office.

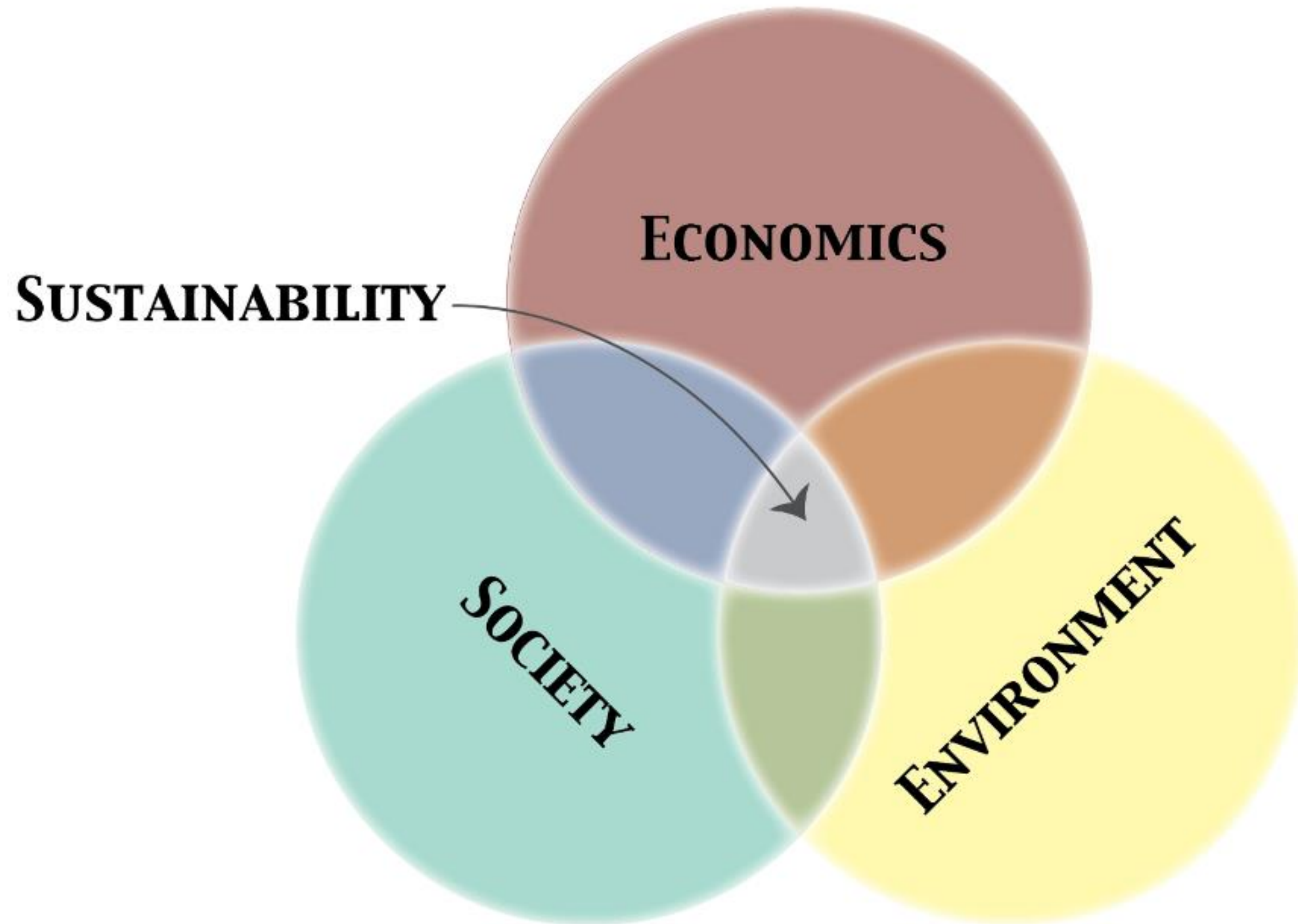


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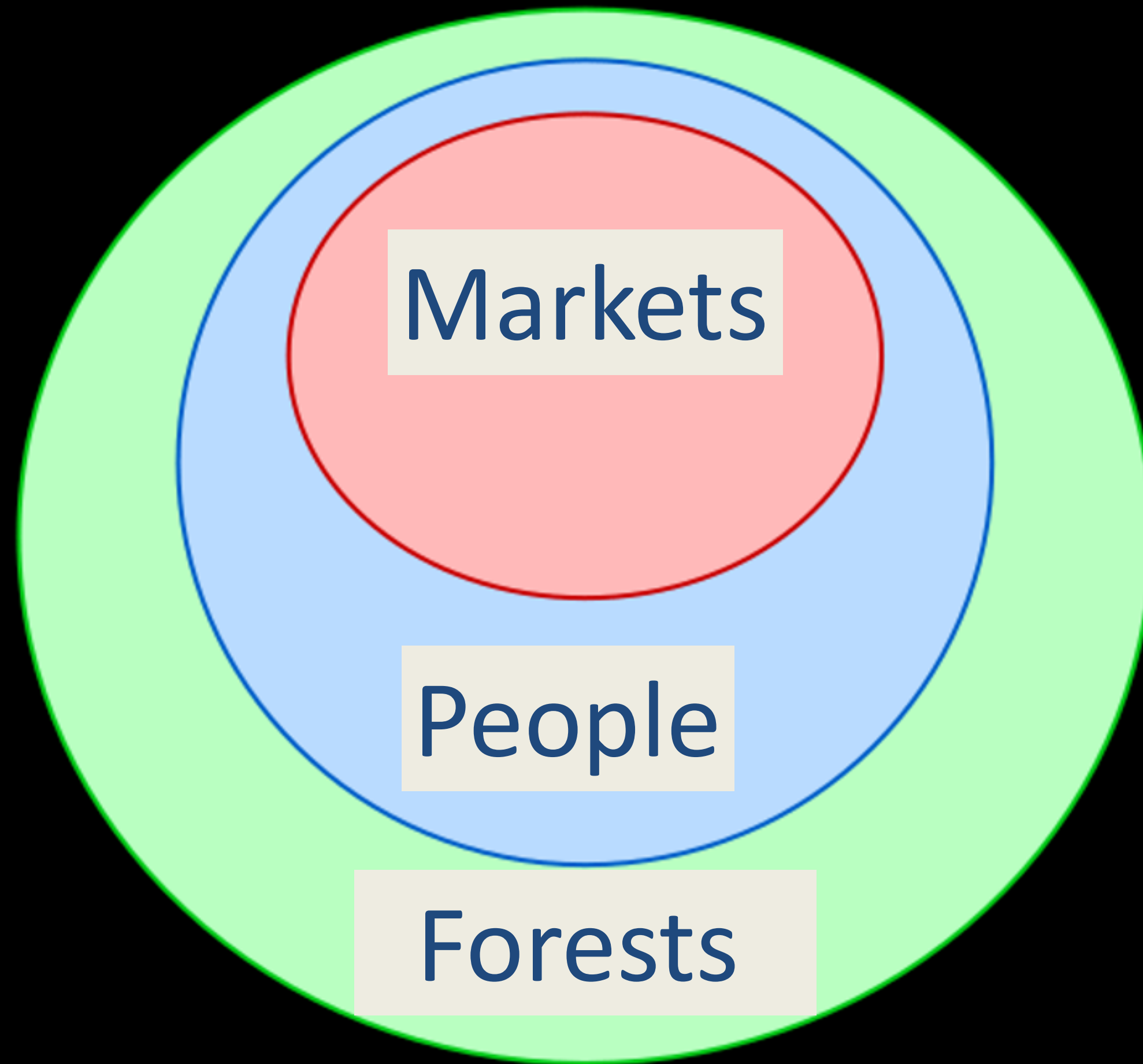
Data sources:
Forest: NLCD (1992)
Ownership: PAD (2001)
States: ESRI Data & Maps 2002
Urban areas: DCW (1998)

Forest Ownership





Source: : https://cdn.serc.carleton.edu/images/integrate/sustainability_venn_diagram.webp



THANK YOU!

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