

## **New Hampshire Eastern Forests Focus Groups Summary of Results**

Research Conducted by Belden, Russonello & Stewart for the Biodiversity Project  
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In November, 2001, the Biodiversity Project commissioned two focus groups on eastern forests, which were held in Manchester, New Hampshire. The discussions explored general attitudes about forests, terms and phrases related to forest preservation, support for solutions to forest threats and various messages for and against forest protection. The participants consisted of adult male and female voters, who were screened to exclude people with strong pro- or anti-environmental leanings.

The main findings of the focus group included:

- Participants expressed a strong connection to forests and were open to a variety of proposals to protect them, including designating more land as wilderness, providing tax breaks to forest owners to protect their forest lands, and placing stronger regulations on development.
- Participants saw development as the main threat to forests and their quality of life.
- A lack of awareness among the participants about the threats facing forests suggests a barrier to saliency on forest communications.
- The term "eastern forest" was not meaningful to these audiences; participants think locally, not regionally, when they think about forests.

The focus groups were conducted by Kate Stewart, of the opinion research firm, Belden Russonello & Stewart.