

# Conservation

## Classroom Resources

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Winter 2013 (Vol 13 No 4)

“ We are used to trade agreements that maximize the reach of the market economy, as if nothing else mattered in the world. But here is one that is at least as concerned about justice and combating dispossession and poverty. ”



## Logging by Number

By Fred Pearce

A technology borrowed from supermarket checkouts is poised to revolutionize rainforest conservation from Africa and Indonesia to Latin America.

### SUMMARY QUESTIONS

[worksheet available online](#)

#### What's Inside:

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1. What is the purpose of barcoding trees for logging? (answer: To be able to trace a tree back to a legal logging operation.)
2. What problems in logging do barcoding trees address the best? What problems do barcoding fall short of addressing? (answer: Barcodes do well at tracking timber but don't necessarily require that local communities are involved in decision-making or receive compensation.)
3. Explain the two ways that logging companies in Liberia are bypassing the requirement to consult with and receive permission to log from local communities? (answer: 1. Obtaining Private Use Permits to cut even when land ownership is unclear, and 2. Companies purchase barcodes but never report back on what



### BUILD YOUR OWN GLOSSARY

- ▶ forest certification system

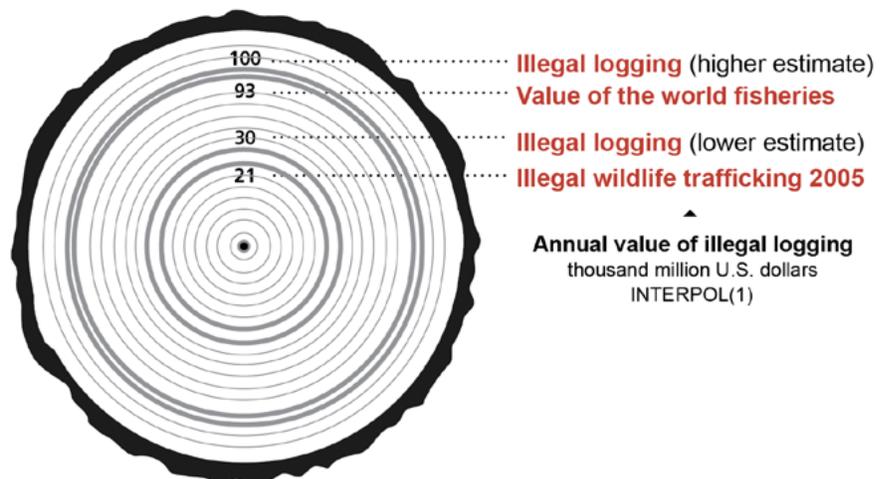
trees they are attached to and what happens to them. They may also bury trees to hide them from inspectors.)

4. How specifically do the EU VPAs “incorporate forest governance reform and level the playing field between big international logging operations and local forest dwellers”? (answer: They require logging companies applying for permits to reach agreements with communities that recognize their land rights.)

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

[worksheet available online](#)

1. Why did timber harvest increase during Charles Taylor’s period of power in Liberia? What else might cause environmental degradation during civil unrest? (*Hint: breakdown in transportation resulting in local take of resources, lack of regulation on taking of resources, fires, etc.*) Discuss how civil unrest tracks with natural resource use.
2. Refer to the “Annual Value of Illegal Logging” figure below. Why do you think that illegal logging receives less attention than fisheries collapse or illegal wildlife tracking? Consider emotional impact, monitoring ability, market forces, etc.



3. What was the “tree graveyard” witnessed by the author? Why did the logging company create the tree graveyard, and what required action were they failing to carry out? How does this affect the validity of the barcoding system?
4. Who is responsible for making sure illegal activities such as those that produce the tree graveyard do not occur? Discuss the need for policing and who should

“ Despite the plunder of the war years, Liberia still has nearly two-thirds of West Africa’s remaining rainforests, which cover one-third of the country. ”

be responsible for enforcement. Give other examples of environmental policies that require governmental enforcement or monitoring.

5. What is your reaction to the author’s final statements, “We are used to seeing trade agreements predicated on concern to maximize the reach of the market economy, as if nothing else mattered in the world. But here is one form of trade agreement that is at least as concerned about justice and combating dispossession and poverty. It offers a tantalizing glimpse of a better world.”

### ADVANCED ACTIVITIES

- 1. Civil Unrest and Natural Resource Use:** Find another country that has faced civil unrest in their past and see if there is a pattern between war and natural resource use. Discuss the specific drivers of change in resource use, e.g. harvest for funding arms, breakdown in transportation of goods, unregulated local consumption, physical disruption caused by fire/bombing etc.
- 2. Forest Certification Systems:** Explore the company SGS mentioned in the article. Where else do they work? Are all certification systems the same? How do they work? Are there other companies that have certification systems that operate differently? Are the different systems designed to address different problems?
- 3. Research the Policy Implementation:** The article states that in March 2013, “All importers of timber will have to demonstrate that each shipment has been legally produced.” Find out what companies will have to do to meet these requirements. (*hints: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/forests/timber\\_regulation.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/forests/timber_regulation.htm) and <https://ic.fsc.org/timber-regulation.46.htm>*)
- 4. Buyer Beware:** Follow the “Tropical Timber Markets” link in the article to find out more about where the demand comes from in this market. Are there sustainable alternatives for the products mentioned? Is it possible for consumers to find out whether wood was sustainably harvested? Brainstorm ideas and designs for informing consumers about the sustainability of product sources. (*hint: Find out how Taylor guitars sources tonal wood.*)
- 5. Small Communities, Big Business:** There are several examples given in the article about monetary compensation to local communities failing to reach their destination and about confusion in the community of how to interact with large companies and large sums of money. This issue is echoed in many small, rural communities where large government programs designed to provide economic incentive for environmental protection fail to reach local individuals (e.g. Mexico’s Forest Conservation program where local people protect the forest rather than cut trees to create pasture). Brainstorm ideas for a campaign to remedy this problem (e.g. public education, government-appointed liaisons, third

party policing, different requirements for business that confirm payment). How would you ensure your campaign was sustained?

- 6. Enforcing the Rules:** In this article, there is a government agency responsible for policing logging activity and enforcing the barcode system. Is this a sustainable model for enforcement? Find examples of successful government monitoring and/or enforcement of environmental policies. Can you find (or develop) an example of a creative alternative to government enforcement? (*hint: Read about Ofir Drori's work- <http://www.conservationmagazine.org/2010/12/confronting-corruption/>*)

