Intergenerational Equity and Logging: Is there an appropriate Discount rate?

General concepts: Discounting or intergenerational equity, logging and the timber industry, and the economic as well as ecological, philosophical, and ethical implications. Who is saying what, what are the costs and/or benefits—a general analysis of the various arguments with a critical perspective.

Puzzle: How do people actually look at sustainable logging? About future generations? What are the ethical issues associated with logging? Costs and benefits? What does an economist argue regarding discounting?

Solutions? Economic standpoint for discounting applied to logging. Non-economic: environmental, ethical, philosophical, perhaps psychological point of view for addressing the issue of non-sustainable logging. Though the resource is renewable, it is not being “renewed” at an appropriate rate; according to some sources. How would economists argue or support this?

Logging is a major industry that is often considered problematic, from both an efficiency standpoint (is there a less costly way to approach logging, what is the efficient amount of logging and at what discount level is appropriate?), as well as an ethical view (will logging now harm future generations? Who considers future generations? What is said about the need to make logging techniques more sustainable?). Basically what do economists and other disciplines
I also plan to look at alternative techniques of logging: reduced impact logging, for example, as well as other suggestions made by both economists and non-economists. After acknowledging the different suggestions from various points of view it is necessary to critically analyze the given recommendations for intergenerational equity, or discounting.

I also will ask and answer: are there externalities that need to be addressed when considering the optimal level of discounting for logging from society’s point of view and how these may or may not be considered ethically—for both the future as well as current generations. What are political implications of discounting for the timber industry?

Research:

Read already:

To be Read:


“Intergenerational Equity in Natural Resource Extraction: Rhetoric or Rationality?”. Tim Kowal. Philosophy Dept, UCI, JD candidate.

Gillis and Depetto. Deforestation and Government Policy 1988; and Public Policy and the Misuse of Forest resources.