



PAUL R. PORTNEY

A Thousand Flowers Blooming

Each issue of *Resources* contains a rich sampling of the research that is ongoing at RFF, distilled and edited for a general but discerning audience.

While our magazine spotlights much of the policy-oriented work that we believe affects the dynamics of decisionmaking in Washington and around the nation, it cannot capture in any detail the myriad activities and events that take place here every week.

Behind the scenes, researchers regularly convene technical workshops to consult with their counterparts in academia, government, and the business and NGO communities about research findings and policy developments. The exchanges that occur in these gatherings play an important part in maintaining RFF's reputation as a neutral broker of sound information.

Throughout our history, RFF has opened its doors to the general public through regular seminars on a huge range of issues, presented both by our own researchers and by invited outside speakers and often held in collaboration with other institutions.

Here are but a few examples of recent events:

A seminar on shade-grown coffee was the culmination of a project carried out over several years by RFF researchers in Mexico. The session brought together foreign aid workers, diplomats, World Bank officials, corporate executives, and congressional staff to learn about the environmental and economic benefits of coffee grown in shaded forest areas. Fortunately, this event and others are available online in full video and audio on the RFF website, and I invite you to log on and give a listen to a stimulating and topical discussion.

Another seminar was on "split estates," a source of conflict in the American West, pitting farmers and ranchers, who own the surface rights to their properties, against energy and mining companies eager to tap underground oil, gas, and minerals owned by them or the federal government. You can read a summary of the session on page 7, and you can also watch the proceedings via online video at our website.

In a special seminar held last fall in conjunction with New York University's Stern School of Business, I was privileged to share with a diverse group of academics, businesspeople, journalists, and students my ideas about corporate social responsibility and how private business can contribute expertise and manpower to improve the lives of those in their communities. Once again, the entire proceeding is available online at www.rff.org.

These sessions, plus hundreds of brown-bag and informal meetings throughout the year, provide the sharing of knowledge and exchange of views that are essential to making RFF a robust and productive policy shop. While all that goes on can't be conveyed in these pages, we invite you to attend any of our public meetings when you are in the Washington area, and to follow our conversations online. ■

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