



# **Roots and Remedies of Ginseng Poaching in Central Appalachia**

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# Wild American Ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*)



# Three Major threats to ginseng According to Stakeholders



**Poachers**

# Research Questions

- **What do stakeholders believe causes one to poach?**
- **How do stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of current interventions?**



# Significance of the Study

- Viability of wild populations
- Continuation of ginseng commerce in Appalachia
- Lack of previous studies on plant poaching



# Methodology

- **Historical Analysis**
- **Interviews**
- **Q Methodology**
- **Rate the top 3 most and least significant reasons to poach and discuss effectiveness of interventions**

# Stakeholders

- Ginseng growers and gatherers
- Law officers
- Public land managers
- Ginseng dealers (herb buyers)
- Researchers and Non-profit groups
- Legal community (lawyers)

# Participant Information

- **33 Total Participants**
- **26 Interviews**
- **23 Q Sorts**
- **States represented-12 OH, 9 WV, 5 KY, 3 VA, 2 NC, 1 NY, 1 PA**
- **7 PLM, 4 Law enforcement, 2 Legal, 7 Gatherers/growers, 5 buyers, 8 Other**
- **9 Women**
- **Ages-24 to 84**



# Results

- **Four perspectives on the causes of poaching**
- **Typology of ginseng poaching**
- **Opinions about methods of Intervention**
- **Recommendations**



# Four Perspectives on Poaching

- **Historical/traditional view (Factor A)**
- **Poachers are criminals view (Factor B)**
- **Failure of legal repercussions view (Factor C)**
- **Poverty and drug use view (Factor D)**

# Historical Traditional View

## Factor A

**“Generations of local people in West Virginia have become accustomed to treating the land as a commons, roaming over boundaries and property lines without little attention being paid to the true owners. They think what they find in the woods is in fact theirs regardless of who owns the title or deed to that land.”**

# Poachers are Criminals View

## Factor B

**“Poaching is taking wildlife or ginseng illegally and it is theft whether it was theft from private property or stealing from the people of the State of Ohio. It’s a violation of wildlife laws which we have authority on. The 2006 price paid for wild ginseng in Ohio was about \$450 a pound, making it worth much more than poaching a deer.”**

# Lack of Legal Repercussions View

## Factor C

“Often they [the poachers] just get it for trespassing and then it’s reported in the newspaper. The grower is penalized because others will poach him too. Judges don’t take it seriously. There are no real teeth in the regulations, even when it involves theft of plants out of season or on public lands or between states.”

# Poverty View

## Factor D

**“When it comes to absentee landowners like coal and timber companies, poor people are being colonized much like the people of Africa. People are dirt poor and can’t get enough to eat and the riches of the land aren’t being shared. If the absentee landowner isn’t interested in it [ginseng], why can’t others have access to it?”**

## Categories of Reasons to Poach

<b>Commercial gain</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>No legal repercussions</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Need money for family</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Lack of respect for private property</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Traditional right of use of land</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Access to land</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Easy to do</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Accidental</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Way of life</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Ignorance</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Sport</b>	<b>2</b>

# Typologies

## Muth and Bowe Literature Review

**Commercial gain\***

**Household consumption\***

**Traditional right of use \***

**Trophy poaching**

**Thrill killing**

**Protection of self and property**

**Recreational \***

**Accidental \***

**Disagreement with specific regulations**

**Gamesmanship**

## Ginseng Community Interviews

**Commercial Gain \***

**Need money for family\***

**Traditional right of use\***

**Access to land**

**Way of life**

**Lack of belief in private property**

**Recreation/Sport \***

**Accidental \***

**No legal repercussions**

**Ignorance**

**Easy to do**

**\* Given for both Typologies**



# Interventions

- Restrictive Methods
- Incentive Methods
- Education
- Other



# Key Findings

- **Two paradigms of thought about the causes of poaching (A and D) and (B and C)**
- **Different perspectives chose different methods of interventions**
- **No apparent correlation between states or stakeholder groups for perspectives**
- **More than one theory can be used to frame ginseng poaching (Neutralization, Differential association, Focal concern, and Folk crime)**

# Future Research and Recommendations

- **Inclusion of ALL stakeholders**
- **Creation of a task force**
- **Education of ginseng community**
- **Increase use of signage/fences**
- **Make cultivated ginseng a recognizable crop with certification and insurance**

# **Additional Recommendations**

- **Formation of National organization and state chapters**
- **Revisit the definition of what is and isn't “poaching”**

# Thanks to the Ginseng community!

