Abstract: The Upper Parana Atlantic Forest (BAPPA) Paraguay is one of the most endangered tropical forests in the world. The uninterrupted advance of large mechanize agricultural farming has left less than 10% of its original cover intact. Despite the fact that rates of deforestation have decreased over the last years the concern still remains. In order to halt the disappearance of the forest, the Paraguayan government put in place several strategies and monitoring programs. One of the most encouraging initiatives is the "Valuation and Retribution of Ecosystem Service Law 3001/2006" (PES). While the concept of ecosystem services has been widely implemented by policy makers, it is not perceived strongly by the direct users of the forest. Therefore, this study provides a comprehensive understanding how landowners in the BAPPA perceive and use the ecosystem services derived from the forest and what is their influence on forest conservation. The results were obtained from an extensive socio-economic household survey conducted at the BAPPA region in January 2016. Landowners are classified into three groups: small-, medium- and large-scale farmers. General outcomes demonstrate that respondent's perceptions and uses of the forest appear to be related to farm size. A strong dependency on forest-related products was observed for small and medium landowners whereas large farmers considered forests main value to be recreational and cultural. Common to all is the understanding of the high ecological value of the forest and the impact of its disappearance. PES appears to be a well-accepted by forest owners, however a higher promotion must be given, in particular among large-scale farmers group. Overall, interviewees supported the current environmental laws but remarked the crescent corruption among environmental authorities. Understanding the social value given to ecosystem services is a valuable contribution towards to the development of measures aimed at conserving natural resources.

BAAPA, PES, perception, household-survey