

## **Environmental Soundness of Forest Policy and Practice in the Lake States**

**October 15, 1997**

### **DEFINITIONS**

For purposes of this position paper, sustainable development is defined as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" which recognizes the importance of social/economic stability and environmental protection, not one over the other (footnote 1). Under that umbrella, sustainable forestry is a component of importance to this group.

For purposes of this position paper, sustainable forestry means to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs by practicing a land stewardship ethic which integrates forest regeneration, nurturing management, growth and harvest for a variety of products and services and the conservation of soil, air, and water quality, wildlife and fish habitat, and aesthetics.

### **ASSUMPTIONS**

The following assumptions are critical to the understanding and dialogue involving sustainable development and sustainable forestry.

- ◆ Population: Global, national and regional population will grow.
- ◆ Rural Migration: Population will continue to migrate to rural areas of states.
- ◆ Forest Area and Growth: Lake States forests are increasing in area and timber volume. Forest growth considerably exceeds harvest in most parts of the Lake States.
- ◆ Demand for Forest Products: Consumption of forest products exceeds harvests. The Lake States are major net importers of forest products. The demand for forest products will continue to increase in the Lake States.
- ◆ Plant and Animal Diversity: For a wide variety of animal and plant species, the forest community provides specific habitat needs.
- ◆ Technology: Technological improvements in harvesting methods and equipment will continue to stimulate increased efficiency and productivity, which can reduce the environmental impact on other values and uses of the forest.
- ◆ Resiliency: The forests of the Lake States are resilient.
- ◆ Forest Productivity: Improvements in silvicultural systems and tree genetics have the potential to enhance forest productivity.
- ◆ Water Resources: Forest cover affects the quantity, quality, and timing of water flow for human uses and habitat for aquatic species.

- ◆ Environmental Values: People value environmental protection.
- ◆ Aesthetic Values: People value the aesthetic quality or appeal the forest resource offers.
- ◆ Recreational Values: People value the variety of recreational uses the forest offers.
- ◆ Forest Tourism: The trend of travel for short vacations to nearby rural forested areas for outdoor recreation will continue or increase.
- ◆ Unique Areas: Forests contain a variety of cultural and historical areas that have special significance (e.g. biologically, geologically, culturally, historically).
- ◆ Collaborative Learning: People can learn from each other and collaborative learning is ideally suited for communities struggling to find common ground around issues of sustainability.

## **PRINCIPLES**

We believe in the following principles to achieve the goals of sustainable forestry.

- ◆ Renewable: Forest resources are renewable providing an opportunity to meet resource goals on a continuous basis.
- ◆ Sound Science: A commitment to research to improve the understanding of ecological, economic and social processes is essential.
- ◆ Constructive Dialogue: Individuals, organizations and governments should engage in constructive and meaningful dialogue concerning sustainable forestry issues.
- ◆ Natural Process: Recognize natural ecological processes and the ecological capability of the land are important to forest health and sustainability and should be considered in forest management plans.
- ◆ Multiple Objectives: A forest landowner can manage for a variety of objectives including biodiversity, recreation, water, wildlife and wood.
- ◆ Intensive Management: To meet the consumptive needs of society it is understood that some areas will need to be managed intensively; not all benefits can or should be provided on every acre of forest land.
- ◆ Evaluate and Monitor: Evaluation and monitoring of forest resource management practices and policy over broad landscapes and temporal perspectives is critical.

## **IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES**

The sustainable forestry principles must be translated into implementation to be successful. Therefore we believe the following implementation guidelines will put the sustainable forestry principles into action.

- ◆ Awareness: Improve the understanding of the public and practitioners of the biological, ecological, economic and social constraints and realities of sustainable forestry.
- ◆ Participation: Involve individuals, organizations and governments that are sincerely concerned about making sustainable forestry a reality through the collaborative learning process.
- ◆ Adaptive Management: As better information, based on sound science, becomes available, apply that knowledge through changes in forest management activities, where appropriate, to continue to improve environmental integrity.
- ◆ Efficient Resource Use: Encourage and promote more efficient use of wood fiber through continual advances in harvesting systems and utilization, improvements in the recycling of post consumer wood fiber, and advances in extending the life of wood products.
- ◆ Land Use Policies: Promote and encourage having sufficient forest lands to provide for the needs of present and future generations.
- ◆ Forest Inventories: Encourage and promote timely forest inventories across the Lake States to provide accurate and current information for evaluation and management decisions.

Footnote 1. The World Commission on Environmental Development (The Bruntland Commission), *Our Common Future*, Oxford University Press, 1987