

FOREST LEGACY

Keeping important forests for future generations

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Forest Legacy Budget Increase Foretells Change

Appropriation Increases Fourfold Over Last Year

Compromise reigned as the final Forest Legacy appropriation was set. The final number fell between the President's proposal and the House and Senate numbers. The Forest Legacy appropriation for fiscal year 2000 is \$30 million, four times greater than last year's \$7 million.

The Program funds are used to protect private forestland from conversion to nonforest uses through the purchase of interests in lands. The appropriation language includes a statement encouraging the targeting of Forest Legacy funds to projects that "enhance Federal lands, Federal investments, or complement past Federal assistance efforts."

The Forest Service and active states have identified over 30 projects in 18 states to be funded this fiscal year. These projects are going through higher level approvals before being revealed. Three specific projects were earmarked for funding by the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations—the Pond of Safety tract in Randolph and Jefferson, New Hampshire; the Nicatous Lake project in Maine; and the Panguitch Lake project in Utah. The Committees have reserved \$5 million for additional projects they will specify. In most cases, Forest Legacy funds are granted to states to transact the acquisition of interests in lands with title vested to the state.

Forest Legacy Guidelines to be Revised

A National Forest Legacy Meeting was held in Denver, Colorado, last October. The audience consisted of Forest Service and State Forest Legacy Coordinators. At the meeting, the group reviewed the Forest Legacy Guidelines (August 15, 1996) and determined there were enough concerns to warrant a revision. The target date for completion of the revision is July 1, 2000. A team consisting of the Program Leader, three Forest Service representatives, and three State representatives will tackle the issues that arise during the public comment period.

The Forest Legacy Program coordinators invite public comments on the current program guidelines. Please structure your comments as follows: (1) positive aspects of current guidelines, (2) negative aspects, (3) concerns, (4) information missing from current guidelines, (5) the need for clarification in any section of current guidelines, (6) suggestions as to how to implement the congressional direction contained in the Conference Report on HR 3194, House of Representatives, November 17, 1999, which states, "The Forest Service and the States should develop forest legacy selection criteria that emphasize projects which enhance federal lands, federal investments, or past federal assistance efforts," and (7) any additional items you would like to address regarding the current guidelines. *Comments must be received*

in writing on or before February 15, 2000 to the Director, Cooperative Forestry Staff, USDA Forest Service, P.O. Box 96090, Washington, DC 20090.

National Association of State Foresters Creates a Working Lands Group

The National Association of State Foresters has created a Working Lands group to work on issues associated with the Forest Legacy Program and the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The members of the group are Tom Dupree (RI, Chair), Conrad Motyka (VT), Jim Garner (VA), Ken Arney (TN), Art DuFault (UT), and Randy Acker (WA). A Forest Service liaison will be a part of the group. Tom Dupree will chair the Working Lands group. He expressed that one of his aims will be to clarify the Forest Legacy vision.

Land Protected to Date

(Includes donations and state purchases)

State	Acres	Value	Federal Payment
CT	352	\$ 390,000	\$ 390,000
MA	1,185	6,179,000	3,362,000
MD	668	775,000	0
ME	11,130	2,793,000	2,793,000
NH	12,797	5,112,000	1,804,000
NJ	1,345	4,712,000	612,000
NY	638	337,000	337,000
RI	433	923,000	920,000
UT	10,680	9,500,000	900,000
VT	48,587	7,550,000	5,336,000
WA	2,272	11,233,000	6,203,000
TOTAL:	90,087	\$49,504,000	\$22,657,000

Interactive Video Conference for North Carolina's Forest Legacy Program

By Elizabeth Crane
Atlanta, Georgia

Every state wishing to join the Forest Legacy Program engages in a public participation process during the development of their state Assessment of Need (AON). North Carolina involved the public in this planning process through two formats: meetings and an interactive video conference. Meetings were held the week of July 12-16, 1999, and the video conference was held on August 12.



The North Carolina Division of Forest Resources (NCDFR) partnered with the NC Cooperative Extension Service, the NC Research and Education Network, and the University of North Carolina College System to conduct a 3-hour program via the interactive video conference medium. This format allowed attendees to actively participate with speakers and other participants from across the state. Host sites included Appalachian State University, Elizabeth City State University, East Carolina University, Mountain Horticultural Crops Research and Extension Center, NC State University, UNC-Charlotte, and UNC-Wilmington.

An overview of the Forest Legacy Program, the status of the NC AON, and the Geographic Information System

maps were presented from different locations. All participants were able to simultaneously view maps, presentations, and documents, allowing for immediate feedback to the NC Forest Legacy Steering Committee to address specific questions. Having maps visible at all sites at the same time was particularly helpful in clarifying questions about specific Forest Legacy Area boundaries.

To view the North Carolina Forest Legacy AON, go to <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/nreos/forest/legacy/index.html>

Program Contacts:

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National Forest Legacy Web Site
<http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/flp.htm>

This Forest Legacy Periodic Update can be found at:
<http://willow.ncfes.umn.edu/whatnew.htm>

Rhode Island Acquires CE "Mount Tom Trail" Tract

By Paul Ricard
North Scituate, Rhode Island

A 145-acre property abutting the Arcadia Management Area to the north, as well as to the east along the Mount Tom Trail, was protected from development with a conservation easement on December 28, 1999. The conservation easement (CE) was purchased primarily to prevent future development of the property. The CE will also protect the property's forest products resources, and the water quality of a small stream. Also secured through the CE will be an aesthetic view for trail users, as well as for people traveling along Route 165.



Owners Robert and Barbara Bates were paid \$270,000 for the interests acquired that will assure all of the above. The CE managing entity will be the Rhode Island Division of Forest Environment. The Nature Conservancy was involved in the transaction by paying for the survey.

The Bates have owned the property since 1960 and have managed it for their personal fuel wood needs, removing the dead and undesirable species through a selective harvesting process. Under the terms of their conservation easement, they will continue to do so following the recommendations of a written forest resource management plan, improving future timber resource should they or subsequent owners decide to harvest commercially.

Greater Need Than Ever for a Forest Legacy Program

By Ted Beauvais
Washington, DC

In the midst of all the good news regarding the current year's appropriation (\$30 million), the pending addition of five new states (MN, MT, NC, SC, TN), and a successful meeting of the Forest Legacy Program managers last fall, important information regarding land use in the United States was released by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. The 1997 National Resources Inventory (NRI) is the most authoritative and comprehensive source of information on trends regarding the use of America's lands.

In reading through the 84-page Summary Report, I focused on Tables 5-8, which display the changes in land cover/use between 1982 and 1997, with information for each of the 5-year time segments within those 15 years. On the face of it, it appears that forest land is doing pretty well, with a slight gain in non-Federal forest land from 1992 to 1997 for a total of almost 400 million acres. However, these numbers mask some important land use conversion trends. During this same time, 6,376,500 acres of forest land became developed land and a much smaller 1,700 acres moved from

developed land back into the forest land category (I guess there aren't a whole lot of Wal-Marts and parking lots converting back into forests). The net change was a loss of 6,374,800 acres of forest to development during these 5 years. This represents an average of 3,493 acres per day or 145 acres per hour of non-Federal forest land converted to development.

The net loss to development of all types of working land—crop, pasture, range, forest, and other rural land cover/use categories in the NRI—from 1992 to 1997 was an average of about 8,733 acres per day or 364 acres per hour during this same time period. The rate of working land conversion to development more than doubled from 1992-1997 compared to 1987-1992. The average for the 5 years from 1987 to 1992 was about 4,041 acres per day or 168 acres per hour.

The land use changes revealed by the NRI are significant but do not account for another factor affecting forest land—the fragmentation of ownership. This occurs when a large tract of forest, say 1,000 acres, is subdivided into fifty 20-acre lots. The ownership goals and objectives of the 50 new owners will very likely be quite different from those of the previous one owner. Houses or cabins may be built on the land. Habitat will be fragmented and the availability of the forest for

management and timber harvesting, and the feasibility of carrying out those practices will be greatly reduced.

A USDA Forest Service study by Tom Birch, *Private Forest-land Owners of the United States, 1994 (1996)* showed a large increase in the number of forest land owners from 7.8 million to 9.9 million from 1978 to 1994. Sampson and DeCoster in *Public Programs for Private Forestry (1997)*, project that by 2010 there could be over 12 million owners of forest land. The overall trend is for a larger number of owners holding increasingly smaller parcels.

I encourage you to look at the NRI data, track the trends for your state or region, and compare this information to other data such as the U.S. census. The NRI website is located at:

<http://www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/NRI/>.

The summary report results are located at: http://www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/NRI/1997/national_results.html. The Birch study of private forest owners is available as an overall summary for the United States (NE-134), as well as three additional volumes covering the North, West, and South (NE-136, NE-137, NE-138). Copies are available by calling Art Francis at (740) 368-0127. Limited copies of the Sampson and DeCoster publication are available from my office at (202) 205-1190.

Important Forest Legacy Dates

February 15, 2000:	Guideline revision comments due to Washington, DC
April 3, 2000:	States submit FY2001 Forest Legacy projects to Forest Service
September 15, 2000:	Assessment of Need due in Washington, DC through your regional coordinator to be eligible for fiscal year 2001 funding

Certified Working Forest Easements: A Market-Based Tool for Conservation

*By Justin Ward
Senior Policy Specialist
Natural Resources Defense Council*

The recent wave of interest in “green certification” merits serious attention from owners of working forestlands under conservation easements. For example, lands enrolled in the Forest Legacy Program which are already committed to good forestry could help meet growing market demand for wood originating from certified, well-managed forests.

To address growing public concern about the degradation of the world’s forests and to identify products



Collins Pine, a certified forest in California.

from well-managed forests, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) was founded in 1993 as an accreditation body operating as a “certifier of certifiers.” Certifiers evaluate

forests to see they are managed in ways that are environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable. The FSC program has developed a broad base of support, including leading environmental organizations from around the world.

The United States has one of the leading initiatives for promotion of FSC certification. (For more information, contact Forest Stewardship Council at: www.fscus.org). More than 55 forests have been certified nationwide, totaling more than 5 million acres and ranging individually in size from 20 to 2.2 million acres. One prominent example can be found in the Pingree family lands located in northern and western Maine, managed by the Seven Islands Land Company and certified according to FSC standards. Illustrating the easy fit between conservation easements and green certification, the nonprofit New England Forestry Foundation accepted a 2-year option to purchase a conservation easement on more than 750,000 acres of the Pingree certified forestlands. The foundation needs to raise \$30 million by December 31, 2000, to complete the transaction, which would create the largest conservation easement in the country.

A growing number of wood-purchasing companies are showing preference for certified wood. The Certified Forest Products Council (CFPC) was launched in 1997 as a nonprofit initiative dedicated to increasing the market for certified forest products in North America. Some of the CFPC’s corporate partners are Colonial Craft, Habitat for Humanity, Modulus Guitars, Ecotimber International, and The Home Depot.

In addition to expanded market access for their products, certified forest owners often benefit from enhanced public image and professional reputation. Linking certified forest management with working forest conservation easements has great potential to increase the availability of certified forest products in the marketplace and to achieve enduring forest stewardship benefits, regardless of land ownership changes over time.



Forest Legacy is a program established in the 1990 Farm Bill. State and Federal Partners work together to implement the program. Information sharing occurs many ways including this periodic update. If you would like a copy, please send information to: Forest Legacy, USDA Forest Service, 271 Mast Road, P.O. Box 640, Durham, NH 03824-0640.

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