



Briefing Paper on

United Nations International Year of Forests 2011



Date: 11 Jan 2011

Topic: International Year of Forests - 2011

Issue:

The United Nations (UN) General Assembly has declared 2011 as the International Year of Forests (IYOF) to bolster efforts to promote sustainable management, conservation, and development of forests worldwide. In 2011, the USDA Forest Service – in partnership with other organizations – will host/coordinate many activities to celebrate the International Year of Forests and to foster the exchange of knowledge on practical strategies to promote sustainable forest management.

Background:

USDA Forest Service activities will involve a host of national activities and events that embrace Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack's vision for restoring and conserving America's natural environment. The Secretary's vision focuses on protecting and maintaining all American forests – an "all-lands approach."

Forest Service priorities:

- Using science-based management practices to restore and sustain forest landscapes for future generations to enjoy and treasure.
- Protecting and enhancing water resources and watershed health.
- Working to make landscapes more resilient to climate change.
- Creating jobs and volunteer opportunities related to conservation and outdoor recreation for sustainable communities.
- Reconnecting Americans, especially children, with nature through outdoor recreation and conservation education programs and activities.

Key Points:

- IYOF activities will support the President's Great Outdoors Initiative - a 21st century conservation agenda to conserve outdoor spaces and to reconnect Americans with the natural environment.
- Activities will highlight the importance of working across ownership boundaries to restore and conserve both private and public lands in a way that recognizes that conservation and economic vitality are inextricably linked.
- Forest Service events throughout the year will focus on highlighting the important contributions that forests of all types make to providing clean water, mitigating the effects of climate change, and sustaining and creating healthy communities -- both economically and ecologically.

Information Links:

- UN IYOF Web site - <http://www.un.org/en/events/iyof2011/>
- FS and IYOF Web sites - <http://www.fs.fed.us/>
- Great Outdoors Initiative - (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-americas-great-outdoors-conference>)