

Letter From the Chief

National Report on Sustainable Forests—2010



I am pleased to release the *National Report on Sustainable Forests—2010*. The report provides a comprehensive picture of current conditions and trends in our Nation's forests, its forest industries, and its forest communities. The Forest Service is committed to the sustainable management of forests through collaboration and foresight

based on the firm foundation of good data. This report is designed to meet this end in the belief that better data lead to better dialogue and, thereby, better decisions.

One of the report's key findings is the fact that the United States is richly endowed with forests, 751 million acres to be exact. That area has remained remarkably stable over the last 50 years, and the amount of wood in these forests is increasing. At the same time, however, forests in the United States face a number of threats, ranging from fragmentation and loss of forest integrity due to development to an alarming increase in the area and severity of forest disturbances. The report finds, for example, that the incidence of insect-induced tree mortality has increased three-fold in the last decade. In the coming years, climate change could substantially increase the damages and uncertainties associated with these threats. Not coincidentally,

forests have a major role to play in helping to mitigate climate change, a fact that is well documented in the report.

The economic and social environment surrounding forests is also changing rapidly. The data presented in the report indicate ongoing shifts in where and how we produce our wood products and the emergence of new markets for ecosystem services. The data also provide information on the broad array of tangible products and uses through which Americans obtain value from forests on a daily basis. These changes bring with them new opportunities for economic development in rural areas but also challenges for individuals and communities in areas facing job losses and production cutbacks. Realizing these opportunities and facing these challenges constitute an important part of sustainability.

In order to ensure the sustainability of America's forests in the long term, land managers need to work across jurisdictions and land-use types, viewing forested landscapes as an integrated whole, both ecologically and socially. This is the essence of an all-lands approach to resource management. The data and analysis found in this report are designed to contribute to this effort.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas Tidwell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Thomas Tidwell