

Allegheny Forest Alliance

Fall 2003 Newsletter

Inside this issue:

- Planning Regression? Standards that affect the industry.
- CALL TO ACTION: "The world is run by those who show up."
- Harvest unreaped
- Putting it all together: Health, economies, property rights, wilderness, recreation

Participation Needed for Forest Plan

The ANF Planning Team has announced the next round of hearings for the 2006 Forest Plan. The "**Notice of Intent**" (NOI) has been published, and it does not look good. It is critical for you and other members of your organization to **attend at least one of these meetings** and for you to **be vocal and responsive**.

The time, dates and places for these meetings are as follows:

Holiday Inn on Ludlow Street in Warren
October 27, 2003
5:30 – 9:30 PM

Quality Inn & Suites, I-90 & SR 97, Erie
October 28, 2003
5:30 – 9:30 PM

Toftrees Resort in State College
November 5, 2003
1:00 – 5:00 PM

PLEASE ARRANGE TO ATTEND! BE HEARD!

ACTION ALERT: Push for Forest Health

The *Healthy Forests Restoration Act* is being intentionally delayed in the US Senate at the detriment of forest health, water and air quality, and the safety of millions. **Something must be done!**

Contact your Senators today and demand their support for this vital bill. The House has done its job and it is time for the Senate to do likewise before this year's session ends.

This legislation would empower our land managers with the tools to implement scientifically supported management practices to combat overstocked, diseased, and insect infested forests. This would

promote ecosystem health and improve water and air quality as well as wildlife habitat.

Senator Arlen Specter
Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
(202) 224-4254

Senator Rick Santorum
Dirksen Building B-40, Suite 2
Washington, D.C. 20510
(202) 224-6324

Or call [toll free](tel:8006483516) at [\(800\) 648-3516](tel:8006483516), ask for the Senator's office and ask for the person who handles the *Healthy Forests Restoration Act*. **PUT YOUR SENATORS ON THE SPOT!**

Forest Planning Gone Astray

By **Jack Hedlund**, AFA Executive Director

For reasons unknown, the ANF Planning Team, charged with the responsibility of constructing the new forest plan, has selected the 2000 Regulations (Clinton/Gore Regulations) to structure the planning process rather than the 1982 Regulation, which was their choice. This subtle but profound decision will severely hamper forest industries in the region because it de-emphasizes timber production. It puts trees on a relative plain of importance with mushrooms, wild herbs, bats, salamanders, scenery, heritage areas, corridors, etc., etc., etc. for the next two decades. I wonder how Gifford Pinchot, father of our national forests would react.

Comparing the mission statements of the two planning processes sheds light on the issue. The mission of the current plan, which used the 1982 Regulations states, "...to have a healthy, vigorous forest providing wood products, watershed protection, a variety of wildlife habitats, and recreational opportunities for everyone," clearly a *multiple-use* focus.

The mission born out of the 2000 Regulations states, "...to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the nation's forests, and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations." Substituting productivity for wood products speaks volumes in and of itself, but the focus shift to *ecosystem sustainability* is crucial. While that may be a noble endeavor, most authorities deem it impossible to achieve and in fact have written

extensively about this impossible mission. (See Larry Larsen Report, 4/01)

Let me explain further. An *ecosystem* is defined as “A conceptual unit comprised of organisms interacting with each other and their environment having the major attributes of structure, function, complexity, interaction and interdependency, temporal change, and no inherent definition of special dimension.” The condition described is so amorphous that achieving it in any given time would be impossible as the Larsen memorandum states. Multiple-use, on the contrary, could continue to be achievable and would be far more beneficial to the region.

That begs the question, WHY? Why has the ANF Planning Team chosen to follow the 2000 Regulations rather than the 1982 Regulations as advised? One can conclude that leadership at the Warren office is committed to a philosophy born out of the Clinton/Gore Administration, the same administration whose decisions have virtually crippled domestic natural resource industries and ruined forested economies. The leadership team in Warren seems committed to do likewise on the ANF.

The Gift That Keeps On Giving

We are truly blessed to live in a national forest that offers so much to so many. There are opportunities to recreate in any number of ways from leisurely rides to hunting and fishing, from camping and swimming to observing critters, and many others. Perhaps most important, the forest has become a source of livelihood for many local residents directly and indirectly. It would be a shame for this relationship to come to a screeching halt with the new forest plan in 2006.

If the radical preservationists rule the day, there will be no more resource extraction of any kind done legally on the ANF. I say legally given what has happened on several forests and parks in other parts of the US where marijuana is being grown illegally at a rate too rapid to address. I guess you could say that once there is little commitment to active management by the Forest Service, others have found lucrative ways to pick up the slack.

A plan to dramatically reduce reforestation efforts during a time when by all accounts the rotational schedule is way out of balance is cause for alarm. Forest inventory specialists say a well-balanced forest should maintain a successional pattern where 1/3 is seedling/sapling, 1/3 is pole timber and 1/3 is

mature sawtimber. The same specialists report a statewide successional pattern of 11%, 22% and 57% of which the ANF is a microcosm. It is a formula for disaster and can be considered irresponsible management if not addressed in the new forest plan.

What is perhaps most disturbing is the fact that the forest keeps on giving. When it is cut, it grows back to maturity in as little as sixty years. If done rotationally with wise planning there would be a never ending supply of wood. It is truly “a gift that keeps on giving” if managed proactively. We must all insist the Forest Service obliges through proper planning.

Train Wreck Waiting To Happen

Did you know there was a huge discrepancy between the amount of forest stock growing annually compared to the amount extracted? The figures are quite amazing. On the Allegheny National Forest, the annual growth rate is 108 mmbf (million board feet) while the Forest Service has only managed a harvest rate of 24 mmbf for the last five years.

The state forest situation is very similar. The Bureau of Forestry report that 368 mmbf is grown annually while they are attempting to raise the level of harvesting to 83 mmbf.

One factor influencing this situation is the amount of forested land open for harvesting. The ANF forest plan calls for 80% of the land to have some form of harvesting objective, but typically only does harvesting on 63% of the entire 513,000 acres. The state on the other hand has a management prescription calling for timber harvesting only on 48% of its 2.1 million acres.

One can only wonder how this growth harvest ratio affects the overall health of the entire public woodland of the Commonwealth. This is particularly interesting given the fact that 58% of the states forested lands are considered late successional and only 11% early successional and 31% mid successional. All things considered, this seems to have the makings of train wreck waiting to happen.

ALLEGHENY FOREST ALLIANCE:

Phone: 814-837-9249

Email: afa@penn.com

Web: www.renewableforests.com

Has Your Membership Lapsed?

Allegheny Forest Alliance membership is annual and entitles you to attendance to our annual meeting every January as well a quarterly newsletter. The fiscal year runs concurrently with the calendar. If you haven't renewed your membership for 2003, your membership will be suspended until your dues payment is received or until your 2004 remittance is received. We will no longer send newsletters to inactive members.

The structure for dues payments at a minimum is as follows:

- Single membership ----- \$25.00
- Government membership ----- \$50.00
- Professional membership ----- \$100.00
- Corporate sponsor ----- \$250.00

Issues Worth Consideration

The Allegheny National Forest is undergoing the development of a new forest plan, one that will establish a management road map for the next 10-15 years. The process is authorized by the **National Forests Management Act of 1976 (NFMA)** and requires every national forest to undergo periodic planning.

The current plan was completed in 1986 and set high standards for timber harvesting relative to **NFMA** mandate to provide for a "non-declining flow of timber volume from one decade to the next." During the interim, much has changed and that mandate has failed miserably.

The standard set by the **1986 Plan** called for an annual yield (ASQ) of 94.5 mmbf. The Forest Service issued a capacity study in 1995 that amended the volume to 53.2 mmbf with the potential of raising it to 77.1 mmbf provided regeneration problems could be addressed successfully. These figures were to carry through 2005, but they too have been severely compromised in recent years to a point where production has fallen to 25% of the original target.

The reasons cited are many from diverse regeneration problems to invasive species. The bottom line, however, can be more accurately traced to a management philosophy that shifts emphasis from an obligation under the law to provide wood to issues more aligned to national parks such as scenery, trails, aesthetics, wild lands, etc.

Serious questions need to be addressed before the new plan decision is recorded. They include, but are not limited to the following.

- What makes the ANF substantially different from a national park and what actions will be taken to ensure that difference?
- Should not the decisions made be cost/benefit analyzed in order to fulfill the requirements of the law that all national forests benefit the public economically?
- Should not all decisions be focused primarily on forest health first?
- Should not the new plan reflect the commitment Congress made to rural communities when national forests were carved out of the land?
- Should the new plan respect and protect the private rights and property?
- Is it fundamentally possible to achieve or wise to seek "ecosystem sustainability" as preliminary plans suggest?
- Should the plan recognize the Forest Service's role in the future success of the area's value added wood products industries?
- How will an emphasis on new management techniques affect the sustainable wood production mandate (i.e., adaptive management, landscape management approach, management by watersheds, etc.)?
- How will new special area designations including old growth and wilderness address forest health issues?
- Should the plan account for impact of scientific and technological advances when considering areas unsuitable for harvesting?
- How will the new plan address the imbalance among the three successions of forest considered by forestry experts as critical?

Reminder: Keep your membership current. Payment helps to ensure that your voice is represented in advocating multiple use of the Allegheny National Forest and other public lands. Thank you!

**Allegheny Forest Alliance
22 Greeves Street
Kane, PA 16735**

