

# Allegheny Forest Alliance

## Summer 2002 Newsletter

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### Stewart Addresses Pitt Advisors



Arthur Stewart, an AFA Executive Committee member, was invited recently to address the Advisory Board of the Certificate Program in Environmental Law, Science and Policy at the University of Pittsburgh. A Pitt Law School alumnus, Mr. Stewart stressed the importance of scrutinizing programmatic and procedural decisions with true regard to the University's mission statement, which in part includes promoting the economic well being of the region.

In Mr. Stewart's opinion, certifying bodies of the University must promote a balanced educational approach, one that presents a level playing field for student learning. Such an approach must align closely with the mission of the University and must effectively round out each student's educational experience. If there is a perception that the table is tilted, a review process must be made available.

The half-hour presentation extended to one and one half-hours. It involved a lively debate about the balance between a single professor's academic freedom and Pitt's obligation to adhere to its mission. While the direction to be taken had not yet been decided, Mr. Stewart urged the University to establish a formal review process before sanctioning any program involving litigation by students or professors. Mr. Stewart also urged the University to use its other departments (biology, sociology, economics, etc.) to assist in the review process in order to ensure litigation furthers a purpose that is well

founded academically and is consistent with the Pitt's published goals.

### Roadless Revisited: IT'S BA-ACK!

For those of you who have not been monitoring events in the halls of Congress, you need to be aware of that the "Roadless Area Conservation Rule" promoted by the Clinton Administration has surfaced once again. You will recall environmental friends of President Clinton hatched this flawed piece of legislation, which calls for nearly 60 million acres of national forest to be set aside as "roadless." Add that to the 20 million acres of wilderness and we have nearly half of the national forests locked.

The AFA believes the rule is bogus for several reasons including the following:

- Much of the designated lands contain private and state in-holdings as well as man-made creations (i.e., towers, pipelines, power lines, etc.) dispelling the "pristine" notion.
- The one-size-fits-all mentality of the previous administration is completely unrealistic. All national forests maintain a forest plan to address such issues and this misguided effort only undermines the wisdom and authority of local supervisors to follow the plan.
- There is no scientific or technical evidence to support the rule relative to forest stewardship.
- Placing millions of acres of land in "de-facto" wilderness status in a time when the economy is faltering and many forests are burning makes no sense.

You are urged to contact Representatives and Senators encouraging them to oppose this effort.



## Less Money for Forest Health - Again

Remember the Furnish Memo? It was an internal document circulated throughout the USFS in the late 90's that stated no contracts were to be let when litigation was active or pending. We are all aware of its ramifications with the Mortality II situation. It was a relief when Mark Rey, Under Secretary of Agriculture rescinded that memo. But, hold on, a similar memo may have surfaced.

U.S. Forest Chief, Dale Bosworth issues a distress letter to all regional forest supervisors directing them to suspend all activities but those related to "emergency circumstances". They include:

- Obligating funds for the land acquisition and legacy projects.
- Issuing grants or agreements that obligate funds for 2002.
- **Awarding any non-emergency contracts.** (Emphasis added)
- Procuring any non-critical projects and acquisitions.
- Rescheduling travel that can be deferred.
- Engaging in cost-saving management.

This situation has arisen out of the expected shortfall in fire suppression funding for FY 2002. Expenditures are expected to double or triple that budgeted, reaching \$1 billion or more with no additional funding forthcoming. Hence, the money normally used for scheduled activities in regional and local forests will be diverted to cover fire suppression costs. Add that to the drain on man-power and the picture is amplified.

This may not resemble the Furnish Memo exactly, but the end result is the same. Forest health will continue to suffer.

## Old Growth Redefined

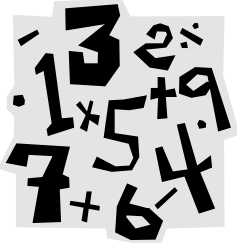
**AFA** Board member Doug Carlson, Executive Director of the Forest County Conservation District and Planning Department, has done extensive research on the history of the forest on the Allegheny Plateau. His study has been augmented by the work of Dr. Thomas M. Bonnicksen, Texas A&M, Dr. Gerald W. Williams, historical analyst for the USFS and Dr. Charles E. Kay, Utah State University. All have concluded the forest type that existed on the Plateau for thousands of years is far different than that being depicted by the wilderness zealots.

Studies indicate the Plateau was moderately populated by rather sophisticated Native Americans who managed the forest actively for a variety of purposes. The land was a mosaic of grasslands and forests of all successional types. Fire was used extensively to manage the land. Shade intolerant species, popularly associated with the current wilderness movement, were in fact only a very small part of the total forest.

So what about the wilderness concept of old growth? It is a myth, born out of a very narrow historical window from approximately the Age of Discovery to the early 1800s and having European roots. It bears no resemblance of the ancient forests that existed for several thousands of years following the Ice Age. In fact, if the ANF received the attention it deserve and the Forest Plan directs it would be remarkably similar to the ancient forests. Locking it up in designated wilderness may result in old trees, but it will not restore our ancient forest heritage.



## ANF Numbers Don't Add Up



The current Allegheny National Forest plan (March 1986) provides for eleven (11) different management areas (MA) for the 513,000 acres encompass by the forest. Various MA

designations emphasize different management prescriptions ranging from wilderness to regeneration with roads and trails, recreation, habitat, and watershed management included as well. The plan is unique to the area, developed specifically for the ANF by Forest Service personnel with sufficient public input.

The plan provides for 420,000 acres with and 93,000 acres without a timber-harvesting objective. Harvesting activity, however, occurs primarily on only 327,000 acres (63%) of the ANF affecting only a portion of the 7,000 acres (1.4%) managed annually. The plan also calls for an "Allowable Sale Quantity" (ASQ) of 94.5 million board feet (MMBF) annually. The average over the life of the plan has been less than 60 MMBF and has been far less than the average recently. Keep in mind; the annual tree growth rate on the ANF is 108 MMBF.

Since the Forest Service is fully cognizant of the number discrepancies having published the numbers in 2000, one must question why the plan is not being pursued more vigorously.

## National Forest or National Park?

All the debate over zero cut and wilderness designation causes one to question the mission of National Forests. The AFA believes it is fair to draw a comparison between the mission of the forest service and that of the park service. Included below are the statements of both for comparison.

*"The goal of the National Forests: to have a healthy, vigorous forest providing wood*

*products, watershed protection, variety of wildlife habitats, and recreational opportunities for everyone."*

*"The mission of the U.S. National Parks: to preserve the scenery, the natural and historic objects, and the wildlife of the United States, and leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."*

If the end goal is to stop commercial harvesting and create more wilderness, which mission is being pursued?

## Green Tag Effort Updated

*By Jack Hedlund, AFA Executive Director*

**K**en Kane, professional forester for Keith Horn, Inc., assured me recently that his Green Tag Certification analysis of the East Side Project is nearly complete. He expects to have a report ready for the August Board meeting. A synopsis done earlier for the Executive Committee of the AFA indicated the project indeed reflected issues on all sides of the certification continuum. Stay tuned for more news in the fall issue of the **AFA Newsletter**.

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**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!**

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