

Allegheny Forest Alliance

Summer 2005 Newsletter

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ANF Supervisor Appointed

Randy Moore, Region 9 Supervisor, announced on June 23rd the appointment of Kathleen S. Morse as the new supervisor for the Allegheny National Forest. This will be her first shot as a supervisor although she has held a variety of positions over her 17 years in a number of national forests, mainly in western U.S.

Most recently, Morse served as the district ranger in Mammoth Lakes, Calif. She was instrumental in crafting the revision for the Sierra Nevada Framework that directs management strategy for 11 national forests in California. In addition, she served as the economist in the Alaska Region for 10 years. Such experience will be of great value to the planning effort currently underway on the ANF. More about that effort can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

Responses from a variety of sources indicate Morse is quite capable of handling the job. She is quoted as having said she is "looking forward to meeting and getting to know the many individuals and groups that care so much about the forest and its future." Undoubtedly, there will be many who wish to gain her attention.

Kathleen Morse will be replacing Geoff Chandler, the interim supervisor who is scheduled to return to Wisconsin, sometime in mid-August. The Allegheny Forest Alliance looks forward to a cooperative working relationship with the new supervisor.

Forest Plan Update Issued

The long and grueling process of rewriting the forest plan for the Allegheny is steadily underway. It began way back in May of 2003 and is not scheduled for completion until sometime late next year.

The process began with open forums in DuBois and Bradford designed to identify issues, concerns and opportunities relative to forest management. The information gathered at the many workshops formed the backbone of the "Analysis of Management Situations" (AMS) in early summer of 2004. That document and subsequent comments formed the framework for the draft alternatives published this past June.

As could have been expected, the alternatives covered the entire circle from no action to aggressive management to moderate management and on to little or no management. Quite frankly, a hybrid between Alternatives A and B would be most favorable to our constituents and that message has been conveyed to Forest Service authorities.

Several factors make Alternatives B, C and D unacceptable including increasing emphasis on old growth, corridors and wilderness while decreasing availability for dispersed, motorized recreation. Most disturbing among the alternatives is the willingness on the part of the Forest Service to ignore forest health and sustainability across the entire forest, their primary management function. By systematically reducing the active management acreage, current and future problems become irrelevant.



Let's hope the public understands the importance of active forest-wide management along with resisting the temptation to turn a productive forest into a park through a variety of preservationist tactics.

Planning Alternatives Review

Geoff Chandler, acting supervisor for ANF, emphasized recently that the June planning sessions regarding draft alternatives for the new forest plan required no comment. But, the planning team was hoping to receive potential variations on the ranges set forth in the draft. In light of that discussion, the following proposals deserve consideration before the DEIS is developed. Before beginning, however, it is important to recognize baseline information that frames the conditions under which alternatives must be developed.

First and foremost, forest health must be the focal point of any projected alternative because sustainability remains the primary responsibility of the Forest Service. All new planning decisions need to pass through the forest health filter.

Second, reforestation and recreational activities must be compatible to meet the legal requirement. Maximizing either at the expense of the other does not comply with the intent of the "**Multiple-Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960.**" Although the law compounds the management issue by adding recreation and habitat to the equation, a sustainable yield still must be achieved in perpetuity. In addition, **MUSYA of 1960** requires planners to consider the relative values of various resources in any particular area. The ANF is unsurpassed in timber value among national forests nationwide. Therefore, recreation must be made to fit within the greater goal.

And last, man must not be excluded from the planning equation. Humans are an integral part of the environment and planning decisions affect their lives no less than any other living thing on the forest. The "compact" that evolved out of the formation of national forests ensured a "good neighbor" relationship between the agency and local communities. That policy must be integrated into any solution.

With that baseline in mind, the following "ranges" must be considered when revising the draft alternatives.

- There must be no less than 435,000 acres maintained in the manageable land base in order to adequately address present and future forest health issues across the ANF, which includes numerous private inholdings.



- The allowable sale quantity (ASQ) must be no less than 80mmbf per annum reflecting a reasonable compromise between rate of growth (108mmbf per annum) and the 53.5mmbf figure reported in the "*Timber Harvest Program Capability*" (THPC) study in 1995. THPC appears to have significantly influenced the current alternatives, unjustifiably so since the data included in the document is 20 or more years old.
- Early successional habitat (0-20 yrs) must encompass no less than 100,000 acres (20%) across the forest landscape at any one time for two reasons. First, early successional habitat is preferred by the majority of forest dwelling animals (DeGraaf *et al.*, 1992). Second, it reflects a reasonable balance for maintaining sustainability. Currently, less than 40,000 acres (7%) of early successional habitat exists on the forest in any given year.
- Oak areas must remain open to various forms of forest management to ensure continued viability. It is recognized as a critical food source in addition to its wood value. Oak is found mainly on the western half and southern portion of the forest along the Allegheny River and Clarion River watersheds. These areas are either included or are currently being considered for inclusion into restricted management zones.
- No less than 120,000 acres for intensive recreation use must be reflected in at least one alternative. Opportunities for motorized recreation must be enhanced rather than reduced as most of the current alternatives project. Overwhelming evidence shows there are much more motorized activities taking place on the ANF than primitive, non-motorized activities (**"End Year Review, ANF 2004"**). In addition, IUA and EUA activities by and large are mutually compatible with nearly all management activities.
- There is no legitimate reason to add more wilderness whether it is designated or contrived for four important reasons. First, the current 9,100 acres is proportional to the number of recreationalists actually visiting those areas annually (1%). Second, from a practical perspective, densely populated Eastern United States is not conducive to such land designation compared to the sparsely populated West. Third, most of the forest has been cut over at least twice and is not ancient old growth. And last, 93% of the subsurface rights on the ANF are privately owned and must be respected.
- Landscape corridors need not be part of this plan. The effect of corridors is unproven in the Northeastern United States and more importantly they create large areas devoid of comprehensive management. Riparian corridors along with their steep slope buffers essentially achieve the same objective.

- No fewer than 1,000 jobs should be directly linked to ANF activities with an annual value of employment reaching in excess of \$50M. The new forest plan must target job creation and an increase in employment value in order to address social and economic sustainability in the region. Then and only then will the role of the Forest Service as a "good neighbor" be reestablished. (Reference: "**Timber Sale Program Information Reporting System**" [TSPIRS] from 1887 through 2001 since discontinued.)

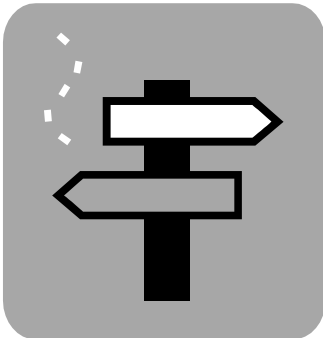
Comment letters should be sent to: **William Connolly, Planning Staff Officer**
Allegheny National Forest
222 Liberty Street
P.O. Box 847
Warren, PA 16365

Summer Board of Directors Meeting Slated

The Summer '05 Board of Directors meeting for the Allegheny Forest Alliance will be held at noon on the Aug. 10 at the Kane Country Club. A buffet luncheon will be available followed by the business meeting. All Board members are encouraged to attend.

Having It Both Ways

By Jack Hedlund, AFA Executive Director



A recent Associated Press article out of Sacramento highlighted a U.S. District Court decision that scuttled the Forest Service's fire plan for the Giant Sequoia National Monument. The underlying basis for the suit brought by the Sierra Club and other preservationists groups was that it would put the rare sequoias, two-thirds of which are found only on this national forest, at risk.

The fire plan called for thinning trees up to 30 inches equaling about 7.5mmbf. The plaintiffs argued the plan violated NEPA because an EIS had not been done. The Forest Service argued unsuccessfully that the project overlapped with other environmental impact statements already completed for the same area.

I find it quite ironic they reversed their argument on the ANF, which is home to 25% of the world's high quality black cherry, not found anywhere else in the world. The zero cut agenda promoted by the Sierra Club and their preservationist friends will signal the demise of rare and valuable black cherry in favor of Northern Hardwoods, featuring hemlock and beech. These species are hardly unique in the east, but since they have little or no commercial value, they achieve zero cut by default.

The real agenda is unmistakable. Cutting trees of any type or size is abhorrent to these zealots, regardless of how noble the purpose. Preservationists are well funded and will continue to use

NEPA, ESA, NFMA, cumulative effect or any other means to stop timber harvesting. All the rhetoric about protecting tree species is just hot air.

Truth Be Known...

The revision of the Clinton-era Roadless Initiative by the current administration has created quite a stir around the country. A recent AP article reported that the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals dismissed an attempt by the Wyoming Outdoor Council, Earthjustice and others to restore the Clinton rule because the replacement rule made their appeal "irrelevant."

Indeed, the wailing by preservationists across the country is deafening. But, one must step back and consider how one-third of the forest reserve was placed in the roadless predicament in the first place. Then and only then can you realize why courts across the country have ruled accordingly.



An article written by Monty Seehorn in late June sheds considerable light on the subject. Mr. Seehorn is a retired USFS wildlife and fisheries biologist living in Gainesville, GA. He reports accurately that the Forest Service broke two laws or acts in processing the "Roadless Initiative" as reported in February, 2000 by the House Subcommittee on Forest Health, Committee on Resources.

First, "the Forest Service violated the **Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)** by relying on advice from an uncharted advisory committee" and second "violated the **Administrative Procedure Act (APA)** prohibition on *ex parte* communications during the development of the roads policy."

As Mr. Seehorn puts it, "They worked and communicated with only one special interest group (environmentalists) in developing the Initiative, which is against the law." Groups that might oppose the policy such as the timber industry, wildlife management organizations, OHV enthusiasts, etc., were excluded while representatives of Heritage Forest Campaign, Wilderness Society, USPIRG, Earthjustice, Audubon Society and Sierra Club formed the nucleolus of the committee.

Such shenanigans have not gone unnoticed by the Bush Administration or the federal courts system and rightly so. It is now time for grass roots Americans across the land to contact their governors and let them know they stand united against the illegal creation of 58 million acres of de facto wilderness. Do your part to ensure management remains in the hands of the local forest supervisor guided by the locally developed forest plan and not some one-size-fits-all mandate conjured up by the previous administration and their preservationist friends.

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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