

**Position:** FWIT urges Congress and federal land managers to support and promote sustainable active management of public and private forestlands as a way to protect forest resources and produce critical economic and environmental benefits. It is in the public interest to support sustainable management activities on all forest ownerships.

**Background:** Clean air, clean water, climate mitigation, healthy wildlife habitat, and recreation all find their roots in healthy forests. Healthy sustainable forests provide wood products, renewable energy, productive watersheds, open space, and other ecosystem services.

Everyone in forest dependent communities, directly or indirectly, needs a viable forest products industry, as do the markets and governments of the larger society. All benefit from sustainable forest management.

Sustainable forest management naturally benefits the environment by providing carbon sequestration and helping to prevent catastrophic wildfires which emit huge amounts of carbon dioxide. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), through 2050, 12 to 15 percent of projected fossil fuel emissions could be offset by healthy growing forests.

**Rationale:** Support for sustainable forestry is important on a number of levels.

❖ **Local Community Benefits:**

- ***Create public works jobs*** to perform fire-prevention brush and tree thinning, post-wildfire salvage harvest, reforestation, and watershed restoration on public forest lands.
- ***Thin existing forests*** on public and private lands to reduce risk of catastrophic wildfires. The largest recent California wildfires emitted more carbon dioxide than a year's worth of Los Angeles traffic. Dealing with climate change means preventing catastrophic wildfires. Prevention has proven to be a much more effective use of taxpayer dollars than suppression. Cost share funding that allows treatment of private lands will augment fuel treatment on public lands and result in safer communities.
- ***Salvage Logging of Diseased or Fire-Damaged Timber*** – Expedite salvage logging of fire-killed timber on both public and private lands. There is only one season post-fire, when timber can be harvested and retain value for numerous commercial products. Delay brings huge greenhouse gas emissions from decaying burnt forests, and renders the timber unmarketable. Provide Congressionally backed tools that aid in the flexibility to steward land management. When we salvage burned or insect and disease infested timber on public lands, we support forest products communities via employment opportunities.
- ***Support for Workers and Members of Distressed Natural Resource Communities.*** Forest communities are becoming more economically distressed with

each mill closing and round of layoffs at natural resource firms. With layoffs and firm closures, workers need:

*\*enhanced unemployment insurance;*

*\*food stamps*

*\*opportunities for job retraining;*

*\*health insurance subsidies*

*\*income tax cuts or rebates*

#### ❖ Private Ownership Incentives

- ***Encourage continued management of forestlands as forestlands.*** Increasing regulation, risk, and costs force landowners to consider conversion of private family forestland to subdivision. Within the United States, forest practices are regulated mainly by the States. Yet Federal programs such as the Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act and others directly affect a private landowner's ability to manage forests. Landowners pay for species monitoring and water and air quality protection measures and are limited as to when they can harvest and even enter their forestlands.
- ***Regulate forests through performance-based standards rather than prescriptive rules. Performance based standards are more economically manageable and generally more environmentally effective.*** The majority of family forestland owners cannot afford to manage their forests in California (McAdams, 2004). Compliance costs of HCPs (habitat conservation plans) for industrial forest resource firms are too costly in the current economic crisis.

#### ❖ Federal Policies

- ***Fully fund the Energy Title's new Community Wood Energy Program; and the Forest Biomass for Energy Program.***
- ***Make the current 15%/10% long-term capital gains tax rate permanent.*** Growing trees is a long term investment with only periodic income streams. These income streams are usually treated as capital gains. Forestland ownership needs to be competitive with other potential land uses to protect our private forestlands.
- ***Minimize the Estate Tax (Death Tax) to encourage intergenerational transfer of family forestland and allow future generations to own and manage these lands as working forest.***
- ***Incentivize forest carbon credit sellers in cap-and-trade markets by minimizing reserve acreage requirements; avoiding expensive-to-administer forest carbon offset calculation formulas; making carbon sequestration baselines competitive with those used internationally; omitting/publicly funding annual monitoring of sequestered trees; providing public support of set-up costs for conservation easements for sequestration; & omitting/publicly funding conservation easement monitoring on sequestered lands.***

**Conclusion:** Sustainable forest management comes at a real and direct cost to the landowner. It is reasonable to expect support from local, state, and federal governments, to achieve society's increasing need for forest products and benefits while protecting forest dependent communities and ensuring forest survival and environmental protection.