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State Foresters Say America's Forests are Sustainable — For Now

Washington, DC, June 29, 2011 – In response to the release of the *2010 National Report on Sustainable Forests* by the USDA Forest Service, the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) calls for practical and realistic actions to ensure the future sustainability of the nation's forests. Central among its recommendations are implementing the strategies and programs in every state and territory's [Forest Action Plan](#), which are proactive, reflect public input and offer experts' best thinking.

The *2010 National Report on Sustainable Forests* (<http://www.fs.fed.us/research/sustain/>) report builds on the findings of the previous report from 2003, and includes a number of key findings:

- The area of our nation's forests (751 million acres) has been stable over the past 30 years.
- There has been substantial decline in the health of the nation's forests.
- Net growth in timber stocks currently exceeds harvest by a considerable extent in all regions of the U.S., yet demand remains constant, with the difference filled by imports.
- Currently 91 percent of the nation's wood output is produced on private lands.
- Forest products industry employment has fallen 15% since 1997 to 1.3 million employees.

"State Foresters believe there are several practical and realistic objectives to achieve sustainable forests across America," said NASF President and Colorado State Forester Jeff Jahnke. "Priorities in the Forest Action Plans focus on keeping the nation's forest lands forested; maintaining the health of our nation's forests; and enhancing the economic benefits provided by our forests."

Key to NASF's vision of sustainability is that, across large areas, forests must be able to deliver a full and integrated set of economic, environmental and social values. Forests which generate economic value are better able to provide environmental and social benefits. This is true on both public and private ownerships. At the same time, if a forest's environmental values are not protected then we are jeopardizing the basic soil, water and biological elements that underpin economic value.

Coinciding with the release of the report, the Roundtable on Sustainable Forests, a coalition of organizations and individuals committed to better decision-making for America's forests, convened in Washington, DC, today to build agreement and commitment on priority action strategies to sustain our nation's forests. NASF is a founding member of the Roundtable for Sustainable Forests, and currently serves as one of its non-federal co-chairs.

"Forests are under threat and need protection," said NASF Vice President and Arkansas State Forester John Shannon. "Threats from insects and disease, wildfire, and development can be reversed with more active forest management by both public and private landowners. Forest Action Plans are the right kind of solution and target resources efficiently, especially in these tough economic times."

The National Association of State Foresters is comprised of the directors of state and territorial forestry agencies and the District of Columbia. NASF seeks to advance sustainable forestry, conservation, and protection of forest lands and their associated resources. <http://www.stateforesters.org>

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