

Good quotes in the release = good quotes in the press...

Southern Forest Assessment

For Immediate Release

November 23, 2001

Feds Unveil Report that Answers Questions about Sustainability of Southern Forests

ATLANTA -Forests of the South are sustainable, a newly released report says. But a number of factors may affect their future.

Four Federal agencies, alongside southern state forestry agencies, released the findings today of the Southern Forest Resources Assessment, a two-year study launched in April 1999. While it appears that southern forests are sustainable-which means they will remain diverse and productive, while providing economic and social benefits-the Assessment does point to a number of trends that require attention.

The sprawl of urban areas tops the list as the most significant and permanent force affecting forest ecosystems.

"We studied the pressures being placed on southern forests and forecast what we expect to occur in the future," said co-leader Dr. David Wear, of the USDA Forest Service, which led the Assessment. "We examined all major forces of change, from timber and land markets to socio-economic factors, insects and diseases, climatic changes, and other potential threats. It appears that population growth and urbanization are the most significant challenges we face in sustaining forests."

Between 1992 and 2020, about 6 percent of the South's forests could be lost to urban uses, with largest losses concentrated in the Piedmont and Coastal Plains, he said. The effects of urban and suburban areas extend far beyond city limits, resulting in wildlife habitat fragmentation, a scarcity of forest benefits such as recreation opportunities, and limitations on management options necessary to keep forests healthy.

Knoxville News-Sentinel

(Knoxville, TN)

November 27, 2001

A long-awaited federal study ranks population growth and urban sprawl as the greatest threats facing Southern forests over the next 40 years...

"We studied the pressures being placed on Southern forests and forecast what we expect to occur in the future," said David Wear, who led the study for the U.S. Forest Service.

The Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

November 27, 2001

The Southern Forest Resource Assessment, a two-year study looking at forestland in 13 states, predicts that 6 percent -- 12 million acres -- of Southern forests could be lost to sprawl by 2020.

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