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## Southern Forest Resource Assessment

### For Immediate Release

Sample Press 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.

Compiled by more than 25 scientists from the Forest Service, Environmental Protection Agency, Tennessee Valley Authority, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and several universities, the Assessment provides a comprehensive basis for informed public policy and decisionmaking.

"For the first time we have a study that presents an accurate, objective picture of the status of southern forests," said co-leader John Greis of the Forest

Service. "This is a science-based assessment, and we've attempted to employ the best data and information available."

Despite these trends, opportunities exist to develop strategies to address the challenges they pose, Greis said. Effective strategies, however, need to start with the five million private landowners who oversee nearly 90 percent of the South's forests.

"Continued sustainability of southern forest resources will largely rest with the decisions of private landowners," Wear said. "This Assessment provides the necessary information in an understandable form so that landowners and public policy-makers can better understand southern forests, their condition, and how management decisions can affect them

Citizens may obtain electronic copies of the draft report and summary by accessing the Assessment's official Web site at [www.srs.fs.fed.us/sustain](http://www.srs.fs.fed.us/sustain). The summary is available in hard copy, and the entire report is available on CD-ROM. Telephone 828-257-4200 to obtain copies.

Meeting dates and times and other activities will also be available on the site.

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**Sample Press Release**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Friday, July 21, 2000

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**CALFED RELEASES FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION FOR BAY-DELTA IMPROVEMENTS**

SACRAMENTO - The CALFED Bay-Delta Program today released its Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for restoring ecological health in the Bay-Delta, providing a reliable water supply, improving water quality, and fixing the levee system in the Delta.

"The final document is the result of five years of unprecedented collaboration among State and Federal agencies and stakeholders, and it offers improvements for water suppliers, agriculture, business and the environment," stated CALFED acting Executive Director Steve Ritchie. CALFED expects the document to be certified by State and Federal lead agencies after a 30 day waiting period.

On June 9, Governor Gray Davis and Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt released an outline of actions to solve the most pressing aspects of California's water supply, reliability, and environmental problems in an historic plan entitled, "California's Water Future - A Framework for Action." The final EIS/EIR details this long-term plan and identifies a strategy for implementing it. State and Federal representatives continue to meet with members of the public to discuss how the plan will be implemented.

Once certification has taken place and the Record of Decision signed, implementation and subsequent environmental review for site-specific projects will begin. The first stage of implementation is scheduled over the next seven years and will build the foundation for long-term actions.

**CALFED Agencies**

- California**
- The Resources Agency
  - Department of Fish and Game
  - Department of Water Resources
  - The Reclamation Board
  - California Environmental Protection Agency
  - State Water Resources Control Board
  - Department of Food and Agriculture
  - Delta Protection Commission

- Federal**
- Environmental Protection Agency
  - Department of the Interior
  - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
  - U.S. Army of Reclamation
  - U.S. Geological Survey
  - U.S. Forest Service
  - U.S. Bureau of Land Management
  - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

- Department of Agriculture
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- Department of Commerce
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- Western Area Power Administration

- more -

**CALFED RELEASES FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION FOR  
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The document proposes strategies for improvements in four inter-related areas consisting of ecosystem health, water quality, levee system integrity, and water supply reliability.

Copies of the final EIS/EIR and appendices are posted on the CALFED web site at <http://calfed.ca.gov>. It is also available on CD-ROM and as a print version. The document's availability was also announced in the Federal Register today.

The CALFED Program began work on developing a long-term plan for fixing the Bay-Delta in May 1995 in cooperation with environmental, urban, and agricultural interests. Several thousand comments were received on the alternative solutions contained in the draft programmatic EIS/EIR that helped shape the final document released today.

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