

NASF Resolution No. 2006-4

ORIGIN OF RESOLUTION: NASF Sustainable Forestry Implementation Committee

ISSUE OF CONCERN: National Policy to Ensure Sustainable Forests in the United States

BACKGROUND: Our nation's forests are being threatened. The values at risk are not trivial – clean and abundant water, habitat for plants and animals, rural community stability, energy self-sufficiency, and access for recreation and spiritual renewal. These benefits are too important to have their future left to chance. While the U.S. can be proud of past achievements in the stewardship of our forests, this is a critical time for a new and unifying national effort to ensure healthy and sustainable forests.

In 1997, this body approved a formal resolution that the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) and the USDA Forest Service (USFS) jointly articulate a policy of sustainable forest management (SFM) to guide the stewardship of all the nation's forests. While the United States has been a world leader in encouraging other countries to develop programs that support SFM, there has not been a similar emphasis within our country. In early 2006, the leadership of the Society of American Foresters (SAF) and NASF agreed to establish a task force of members for the purpose of evaluating the implications of a national policy/legislation for SFM. Both organizations recognized that there is no formal national policy in support of sustainable forests.

The task force met in Utah in June 06 and reached a consensus that it was time for the forestry community to step up to this leadership opportunity. The task force is currently documenting the need for a national policy on forests by identifying relevant themes of national interest, identifying potential collaborators, developing a public outreach strategy, and crafting a legislative and program strategy.

RESOLUTION: The National Association of State Foresters supports the joint NASF/SAF task force in its work to develop a national policy on sustainable forests. A national policy for sustainable forests should:

- clarify and enhance the roles of federal, state, and local governments, promoting regional collaboration and joint planning;
- respect the critical role of private forest ownership while striving to conserve, in a fair and equitable manner, the public benefits that private forests provide;
- promote new and creative ways to provide education, research and technical assistance to address trends in forest ownership, management and investment;
- lead to a revision of forest and tax legislation, ensuring keeping forests as forests is both economically competitive with selling land for development, and forest landowners are compensated for the clean water, wildlife habitat and other public values they provide; and
- recognize the global influences that impact US forests.

Copies of this resolution will be sent to the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior, Administrator for Environmental Protection Agency, Chief of the Forest Service, Deputies for Research, State and Private, and International Forestry, President, Vice-President and Executive Vice-President of the Society of American Foresters, and participants of the Roundtable on Sustainable Forests.

NASF ACTION:

(X) Approved

DATE OF ACTION:
September 20, 2006