

ROUNDTABLE ON SUSTAINABLE FORESTS

Chronology of Major Events from 1999—2005

(Updated September 6, 2006)

BACKGROUND

The Roundtable on Sustainable Forests (Roundtable) is an open and inclusive process committed to the goal of sustainable forest management (SFM) on public and private lands in the United States. Roundtable participants include public and private organizations and individuals committed to better decision-making through shared learning and increased understanding.

The Roundtable's primary activity to date has been the implementation of the Montreal Process Criteria and Indicators (C&I) for the purpose of developing a shared understanding of current forest conditions and a baseline against which to mark future progress toward sustainability. The Roundtable focused much of its attention on identifying and evaluating the quality of data that can be used to assess the state of the nation's forests and providing input on the production of the *National Report on Sustainable Forests—2003*.

In 2005, the Roundtable focused on continuing to build broad stakeholder awareness and support for sustainable forests. Specific activities included a workshop of the Integration and Synthesis Group (ISG), the Multiple Perspectives Project, stakeholder input on the Proposals for Action of the United Nations Forum on Forests, and how these various efforts help to inform the U.S. contribution to the international process of improving and revising the Montreal Process C&I.

The 2006-2010 Work Plan of the Roundtable on Sustainable Forests focuses on the following four themes:

1. Reporting and Monitoring on Progress Towards Sustainable Forests
2. Coordinating with Related National Data and Indicator Efforts
3. Fostering Sustainable Forest Management through the Application of the C&I
4. Engaging the Broader Community of Forest Stakeholders at Multiple Scales.

The Roundtable has utilized multi-stakeholder dialogue as the primary vehicle for inquiry, input, and feedback. Thus far, the Roundtable has fostered dialogue largely through meetings and workshops. Meetings focus on information exchange and the workshops are generally designed for a specific output and purpose. The Roundtable also utilizes a listserv and website for additional outreach and education as well as on-line consultation for specified stakeholder input.

A list of key milestones in the Roundtable process is presented below.

1999

ROUNDTABLE FORMED - Roundtable participants began meeting in 1998 and finalized its charter in 1999. The Roundtable organized its activities through a Technical Work Group (TWG) and a Communication and Outreach Work Group (COWG). The TWG's mission was to consider a number of technical issues that must be addressed in order to implement the C&I. The TWG was instrumental in organizing the C&I Technical Workshops in 2000, and fostering discussion on key technical issues including the controversial aspects of the definition of forests and rangelands. The COWG's mission was to develop and implement a communication plan to address both the internal and external communication and outreach needs of the Roundtable. The COWG was responsible for developing the Roundtable website, and for developing and

sponsoring a series of outreach and education programs related to the Roundtable and sustainable forest management.

ROUNDTABLE MEETINGS - Two national Roundtable Meetings were held in Washington, DC.

2000

FEDERAL MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) ON SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT DATA (UNITED STATES) - Initially signed by nine Federal agencies in U.S. on October 16, 2000; included twelve by September 2001. Provides: 1) A common interagency forum for Federal coordination to resolve issues integral to collecting, monitoring, analyzing, reporting, and making data available on an ongoing basis related to the Montreal Process Criteria and Indicators; and 2) A process for helping the Federal agencies develop a national report by 2003 for the Montreal Process on the state of the nation's forests and progress towards sustainable forest management in the United States.

C&I TECHNICAL WORKSHOPS - The Roundtable sponsored three workshops in Spring 2000 to assess the state of knowledge and availability of data for assessing the status of forests in the U.S. under the Montreal Process C&I. Leading experts from across the nation formed Criteria Technical Committees and focused on each of the 67 indicators under the seven Montreal Process Criteria. The first workshop focused on the five biophysical criteria (Criteria 1-5), and the second workshop on the social, economic, legal and institutional criteria (Criteria 6-7).

ROUNDTABLE MEETINGS - Two national Roundtable Meetings were held in Washington, DC.

2001

ROUNDTABLE MEETINGS - Three national Roundtable Meetings were held in Washington, DC.

NATIONAL REPORT MEETINGS AND WORKSHOP - During the year Roundtable participants attended initial meetings with Chapter Managers and Criterion Leads to develop outlines, identify data sources and needs, and help otherwise to develop the plan to produce the 2003 report. Stakeholder input continued to be gathered by various means following cancellation of a workshop planned for September 2001 by the Roundtable in collaboration with the Society of American Foresters. The Chief of the Forest Service announced the plan to produce the report at an Executive Leadership Meeting of the Roundtable on November 14, 2001.

2002

SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT: COMPLEMENTING AND ADVANCING CONGRESSIONAL PRIORITIES – In January 2002, Northeast-Midwest Senate and Congressional Coalitions, Northeast-Midwest Institute, and Yale University Global Institute for Sustainable Forestry sponsored a Congressional Briefing on how efforts to manage forests for environmental, economic, and societal results can complement and advance Congressional priorities such as: protecting watersheds and habitat; conserving significant lands; providing forest products for American consumers and world markets; promoting community-based forestry; and preventing wildfires.

NATIONAL REPORT REVIEW WORKSHOPS - In the spring of 2002, the Roundtable organized two workshops to gather input on the proposed content, format, and approaches for the first draft of the National Report on Sustainable Forests. The first workshop was held in Washington, DC and the second in

Portland, OR. A final review workshop was organized in November 2002 to provide an opportunity for Roundtable participants to review the final draft of the Report.

2003

REGIONAL WORKSHOPS – Two regional workshops were held in 2003.

- The first in a series of regional workshops was the **Southern Forests Sustainability Workshop, November 18-19, Charleston, South Carolina** – The focus of the workshop was: using the C&I as a framework, the indicator identification process, comparison on forest certification systems, and landowner incentives.
- The second was **Sustainable Forest Management in Indian Country, December 9, Portland, Oregon**. The focus of this workshop was on case studies of SFM on tribal lands.

ROUNDTABLE MEETINGS – Three national Roundtable meetings were held—two in Washington, DC and one in Denver, CO. In addition meetings of a newly organized Core Group of participants began to be held.

COMMUNITY INDICATORS WORKSHOP – Roundtable co-sponsored a workshop on community indicators in Denver, CO as part of the overall ongoing National Report process.

2004

ROUNDTABLE MEETINGS – Two national Roundtable meetings were held—one in Alexandria, VA and the second in Denver, CO.

WORKSHOP ON THE INTEGRATION AND SYNTHESIS GROUP'S CONCEPTUAL MODEL – Workshop on the Integration and Synthesis Group's conceptual model was held on November 16, in Alexandria, VA.

REGIONAL WORKSHOPS – Two regional workshops were held.

- The next regional workshop in the sequence was: the **Upper Mississippi Regional Forest Roundtable, March 23-24, LaCrosse, WI**.
- The final regional workshop was **Western Regional Workshop on Sustainable Forests, February 3-4, 2004, Phoenix, AZ**. The focus of the Western regional workshop was on scales of applying criteria and indicators and case studies.

REGIONAL TRIBAL EFFORTS - The Roundtable and the USDA Forest Service encouraged and followed the progress on three regional Tribal projects in the Northeast, Southeast, and West to evaluate in some way the applicability/adaptability of the C&I as a tool for forest management. (ongoing into 2006)

NATIONAL TRIBAL EFFORT – USDA Forest Service supported the Intertribal Timber Council (ITC) and the Bureau of Indian Affairs designed and implemented an effort, in collaboration with the Roundtable, to further define forest sustainability in Indian Country by evaluating the possibility of adapting the Montreal Process Criteria and Indicators to tribal forests and forestry. (completed in 2005)

2005

STAKEHOLDERS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS - Earlier in 2005 the Roundtable on Sustainable Forests was the subject of a research project conducted by a student at

Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government on behalf of the Council on Environmental Quality. The goals of the project were to identify a set of best practices and lessons learned that could improve stakeholder involvement and to assess the degree to which current national indicator initiatives contribute to the development of a robust set of national environmental indicators.

PERSPECTIVES ON AMERICA'S FORESTS: DECEMBER 13-14, 2005 – Roundtable held an event entitled "Perspectives on our Nation's Forests" on December 13-14, 2005, in Washington, DC. The December event focused on the Multiple Perspectives Project and the Roundtable's 2006 Work Plan. Authors of papers commissioned for the Multiple Perspectives Project, as well as a stakeholder response panel, engaged in thoughtful and stimulating discussion with meeting participants.

C&I REFINEMENT WORKSHOPS - Three technical workshops on the refinement of the indicators in the Montreal Process C&I were held in April of 2005. The primary purpose of the workshops was to obtain input from technical experts on potential indicator refinements to inform the U.S. delegations attending the Montreal Process Technical Advisory Committee meeting in October 2005 and the Montreal Process Working Group meeting in February 2006. In preparation for the workshops, the Roundtable initiated an on-line consultation process to solicit stakeholder feedback on potential refinements to the Montreal C&I. Nearly 100 people provided valuable input on the need for additional indicators, ways to eliminate some indicators, and approaches to indicator measurement. The feedback gathered through the consultation was a major input to three technical workshops on C&I refinements that were held in April. The workshops took place in different regions of the country. A fourth C&I refinement workshop was held in Washington, DC to continue the work on refinements proposed for the indicators in Criteria 6 & 7.

NATIONAL MEETING / WORKSHOP – A national meeting / workshop was held in Denver, CO on May 11-13 to obtain input on the results of the C&I indicator refinement process and to plan the 2006 work plan for the Roundtable.

NEW REPORT ON COMMUNITY INDICATORS – Report developed through the Roundtable as part of the C&I Review process dedicated to the review and refinement of the Montreal Process C&I. Project involved groups of social scientists gathering to discuss the social component of sustainability and the associated C&I of the Montreal Process. Two refinements to the Montreal Process C&I were offered: to create an index of community livability and to create an index of community resilience. To inform these refinements, a project was launched to survey community indicator projects and to compare their efforts to those of the Montreal Process. The report presents the project's findings and concludes with a presentation of lessons gleaned from the project and recommendations for next steps in the Roundtable's discussion of social sustainability.