

## Time for Action to Conserve the Nation's Forests

America's forests need help. There has been a substantial decline in the health of the nation's forests over the past 10 years. This has been compounded by an increase in conversion of forests to non-forest uses and an increasing dependence on private lands and foreign imports for U.S. forest products consumption. These disturbing trends, as well as others, were identified when data from the 2003 and 2010 *National Report on Sustainable Forests* are compared.

To counter these trends, the Roundtable on Sustainable Forests (RSF) has recently developed a nine-point action strategy it believes can be accomplished in the next two years. The RSF is an open and inclusive alliance committed to sustainable forest management on public and private lands in the United States.

The RSF Action Strategy states, "America's forests, which occupy one-third of the nation, are as diverse in character and management as the communities that own, occupy, and steward them. For too long forest battle lines have been drawn and debated on issues that are not helping our forests achieve their strategic potential. Now is the time for proactive and practical steps to be taken. One size certainly does not fit all, yet we all have a collective reliance on our forested lands as well as a collective responsibility for their well-being. An enhanced collaborative approach that engages the American people and stakeholders is needed. A special emphasis for privately-owned forests, which represent two third of the nation's forests and supply over 90% percent of our timber, is needed."

The Roundtable believes its recommended actions can be achieved in the next two years, are relatively inexpensive and can leverage existing programs. These nine integrated actions will also build a foundation for future work:

- Protect and Manage the Nation's Most Valuable Forested Watersheds.
- Support National Data Gathering and Reporting.
- Enact Dedicated Funding Sources for Wildland Fire Suppression.
- Heighten Awareness of Forests Benefits.
- Develop and Support Pilot Landscape Level Sustainable Forests Projects.
- Encourage Local Governments to Consider Forest Resources.
- Analyze the Impact of Tax Policies, Incentives, and Barriers to Sustainable Management of Private Forests.
- Maintain and Diversify Markets that Facilitate Forest Conservation and Sustainable Forest Management.
- Integrate Urban Forestry in Federal Initiatives Aimed at Sustainable Communities and Green Infrastructure.

For a copy of *Sustainable Forests Action Strategy* go to:

<http://www.sustainableforests.net/docs/SFAS.Final.mgb.1.pdf>

For copies of the U.S. Forest Service 2003 and 2010 *National Reports*, go to: [www.fs.fed.us/research/sustain](http://www.fs.fed.us/research/sustain).

For further information on the Roundtable on Sustainable Forests visit: [www.sustainableforests.net](http://www.sustainableforests.net).

To get involved with implementing the actions, contact Sarah Walen, Meridian Institute at [INFO@SUSTAINABLEFORESTS.NET](mailto:INFO@SUSTAINABLEFORESTS.NET).