

## What is the Sustainable Forests Roundtable?

The Sustainable Forests Roundtable is an open and inclusive process committed to the goal of sustainable forest management 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 purpose of the Roundtable is to serve as a forum to share information and perspectives that will enable better decision making in the United States regarding sustainable forests. The Roundtable serves to promote shared leadership and responsibility in contributing toward achievement of sustainable forests on public and private lands throughout the United States. This purpose is actualized through efforts to:

- Provide a forum for dialogue about sustainable forest issues, including national and sub-national criteria and indicator efforts;
- Broaden and deepen public understanding and adoption of sustainable forest management practices;
- Facilitate the coordinated assessment and reporting of the sustainability of the Nation's forest resources;
- Communicate and coordinate data and programs within the sustainable forest community;
- Serve as a venue for connecting domestic and global forest issues; and
- Demonstrate on-the-ground benefits of sustainable forest management through the efforts of local and regional champions.

The fundamental approach of the Roundtable in carrying out its purpose is based on the belief that **better data** will lead to **better dialogue** about the sustainability of the nation's forest resources, which will in turn lead to more informed, **better decisions** by stakeholders.

Since its inception in 1998, the Roundtable's primary focus has been the domestic implementation of an internationally agreed upon set of criteria and indicators (C&I) contained in the Santiago Declaration of the Montreal Process for the purpose of developing a shared understanding of current forest conditions and a baseline against which to mark future progress toward sustainability and was instrumental in the development and release of the *National Report on Sustainable Forests* in 2003 and 2010. Roundtable efforts since completion of these reports have focused on stimulating stakeholder dialogue on the meaning of the reports, actively engaging local and regional champions in their implementation of C&I at sub-national scales, and preparing for the next national report in 2015.

The ownership and management characteristics of the nation's forest resources present uniquely difficult challenges in adopting and reporting on sustainable forest management in the United States. Because there is no national program or policy for sustainable forests on all lands, the Roundtable fulfills a critical role by providing a venue for all stakeholders to share perspectives and develop implementation ideas in order to broaden and deepen the application of sustainable forest management on the ground.

The Roundtable is not a decision-making body, but rather an open forum comprised of voluntary participants to share information and perspectives about the sustainable management of the nation's forests. The overall goal is to engage federal, state, private, and non-profit organization leadership in committing to collaborative capacity building that will improve the forest sector's ability to promote sustainable forest management. This work includes making linkages to international sustainable forest issues and other roundtables, forums, and processes focused on other natural resources.

For more information, please visit the Roundtable website at <http://www.sustainableforests.net>.

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