

2013 Program Report Card UPDATE: State Forest Lands Management in Connecticut, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

(February, 2013)

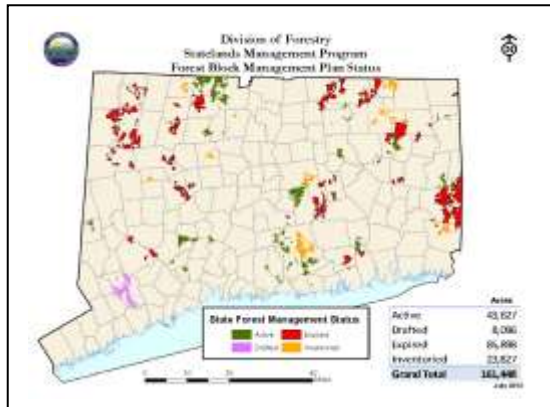
Quality of Life Result: As the largest single landowner and forest manager in the State of Connecticut, State Lands Management ensures State owned forestlands remain viable and productive forest ecosystems providing clean air, water, carbon storage, outdoor recreation, and forest products to all Connecticut residents while enhancing and protecting unique, fragile, and threatened fish and wildlife habitats. Forestry, when viewed as a land-use type, contributes significantly to human quality of life. All state forestlands flourish for the health and enjoyment of Connecticut residents.

Contribution to Result: State Lands Management is charged with the stewardship of 170, 000 acres of forestland held in public trust. Approximately three million board feet of high value, locally grown forest products are sold annually to small business owners who either directly or through resale to primary and secondary wood manufacturing facilities turn raw forest commodities into value added forest products such as flooring, furniture, and other building materials. Science based, resource driven stewardship decisions create resilient forest conditions able to respond to forest insect, disease outbreaks and catastrophic weather events. This ensures public forestlands provide the greatest good to the greatest many Connecticut residents who enjoy a wide variety of outdoor recreation such as; hiking, camping, hunting, fishing, nature viewing, and harvesting locally grown domestic renewable energy (firewood) for home heating purposes. State forests serve as a real life demonstration of excellent forest management for 100,000 residents who own the remaining 1.3 million acres of Connecticut forest land.

Partners: Municipalities, neighbors to the forest, Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, Connecticut Forest and Park Association, UCONN Extension Service, Connecticut College, Audubon, Nature Conservancy, Drinking Water Utilities, Department of Agriculture, Connecticut Farm Bureau, Tree Wardens, Connecticut Urban Forestry Council, and Connecticut forest products industry.

How Much Did We Do?

Performance Measure 1: State Forests with current forest management plans



Story behind the baseline: Currently, there are 32 State Forests totaling about 170,000 acres in the [Connecticut State Forest system](#). These are lands owned by the State of Connecticut and managed by DEEP's Division of Forestry and are distributed throughout the state. Approximately One –third of these forests have current 10 year forest management plans, 86,000 acres have expired forest management plans, and the

remaining 20,000 acres have no recent professional evaluation or planning. The current forest age, health, tree species composition/distribution, and wildlife habitat importance is not documented on these remaining acres. Constraints limiting increased number of managed acres include staffing levels and use of technology. Per CGS CH 449 Sec 23-32a, the [October 2008 Yale University study](#) of annual sustainable yield from Connecticut's State Forest system concluded current timber harvests are less than one-third sustainable. In other words the forest resource has the ability to provide three times the current forest products, three times the current revenue to State, and three times the number of private sector green jobs without compromising the other natural resource attributes enjoyed by Connecticut residents and visitors.

Trend: ▲ Yes

How Well Did We Do It?

A DEEP results based project team continues to implement forest management planning process improvements using electronic data recorders,

creating a centralized data base, and utilizing updated geographic information systems. Full implementation will reduce forest management plan development time by 49% at current staff levels. This will enable DEEP to double the number of State Forest acres with management plans in 10 years. For FY 12, harvested acres decreased by 580 acres for a total of 646 acres and 1.8 million board feet of timber. Offsetting this reduction is 25,000 acres of new forest management plans now available for future harvests and 2,437 new acres classified as forestland per PA 490, Connecticut's current use assessment. Seventeen of 37 parcels identified by the Office of Policy and Management are now appropriately assessed significantly improving PILOT equity to municipalities reflective of actual community costs. Additionally with the July 2012 discovery of Emerald Ash borer in New Haven County DEEP Forestry all-hands response has redirected staff time and will continue to do so in FY 13.

Trend Going in Right Direction? ▲ Yes; ▼ No; ◀▶ Flat/ No Trend

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Actual SFY 12 Total Program Exp.: \$485,000 *State Funding:* \$485,000 *Federal Funding:* \$0 *Other Funding:* \$0 *Income:* \$339,650
Est. SFY 13 Total Program Exp.: \$485,000 *State Funding:* \$485,000 *Federal Funding:* \$0 *Other Funding:* \$0 *Income:* \$500,000

October 2012 superstorm Sandy delivered a heavy blow to Centennial State Forest in Fairfield County. DEEP foresters working with Aquarion Water Company and the Nature Conservancy are salvaging approximately one-million board feet of downed and damaged white pine plantation timber.

Trend: ▲ Yes

Is Anyone Better Off?

Performance Measure 2: Potential Revenue from sustainably harvested timber annually from State Forests.



Story behind the baseline: Increasing the number of State Forest acres with current management plans from 50,000 acres to 100,000 acres in 10 years should proportionally increase the number

of acres harvested. The data in chart (above) includes actual revenue from harvested timber from 2004 through 2012 then projected 8 years at a constant 10 percent incremental increase. The 2005 dip in harvested board feet is attributed to substantial revisions to standard operating procedures. Note immediate return to normal harvest levels thereafter. On average three million board feet of timber is harvested annually from State Forests. The Yale sustainability study calculated over nine million board feet could be harvested annually without depleting the forest resource. (And, DEEP believes that significant improvements in biodiversity through proper harvesting of these forest resources can be achieved). State forests currently contain approximately 640 million board feet of accessible timber. If nine million board feet were harvested annually, at the calculated sustainable rate, at the end of 50 years State Forests would contain approximately 640 million board feet. No net change. The sustainable yield calculation includes tree replacement through natural regeneration and increased annual volume appreciation through improved annual tree growth. Timber salvage from Centennial State Forest coupled with 25,000 acres of new forest management plans should significantly increase harvest volumes in FY 13. With the advent [DEEP: CT Grown Forest Products](#), over 50% of Connecticut primary timber processing businesses are now certified to sell sustainably harvested forest products that carry the popular CT Grown label.

Trend: ▲ Yes

Proposed actions to turn the curve:

Significant forest planning efficiencies realized through modernized data collection, storage, and management means more acres of State Forests having current management plans designed to increase individual tree growth, improve essential wildlife habitat, and spur economic activity through the harvest and creation of green jobs producing value added forest products. DEEP will have sufficient information to make informed decisions required to increase harvest rates reaching Yale's calculated sustainable volumes. DEEP will need to increase monitoring forestry staff to ensure competitively bid timber harvest contracts are executed in an environmentally sensitive manner. Increased staff costs will be offset by increased revenues generated through sale of forest products. Two 2 year durational positions funded by the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) will end Spring 2013. While these individuals will be missed, their contribution to modernizing processes and hard work is recognized and should bode them well in future career endeavors. It is hoped DEEP will be able to continue this early professional development program should additional RGGI funding become available.

Trend Going in Right Direction? ▲ Yes; ▼ No; ◀▶ Flat/ No Trend

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Est. SFY 13 Total Program Exp.: **\$485,000** *State Funding:* **\$485,000** *Federal Funding:* **\$0** *Other Funding:* **\$0** *Income:* **\$500,000**

Performance Measure 3: Enhanced ecosystem services derived from third party certified State Forests



Story behind the baseline: Per CGS Ch. 447 Sec. 23-20. The Commissioner of DEEP shall apply to have State forests or the forest products sold third-party certified under one or more acknowledged sustainable forest certification systems by January 10, 2010, provided the Commissioner uses private funds for the cost of all such applications. Current levels of forest management on State forest continue disqualify the Commissioner from applying for third party certification.

Proposed actions to turn the curve Over time the Commissioner will be able to pursue this certification. Third party certifiers will accept graduated plans to increase sustainable forest management. With certification in place, additional opportunities and acknowledgements will follow such as carbon trading, and possibly ecosystem service credits. State forests will become more diverse, imperiled wildlife habitat

saved, and Connecticut grown forest products and green jobs created.

Trend: ▲ Yes

Trend Going in Right Direction? ▲ Yes; ▼ No; ◀▶ Flat/ No Trend

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