

2011 Program Report Card UPDATE: State Forest Lands Management in Connecticut, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

(December, 2011)

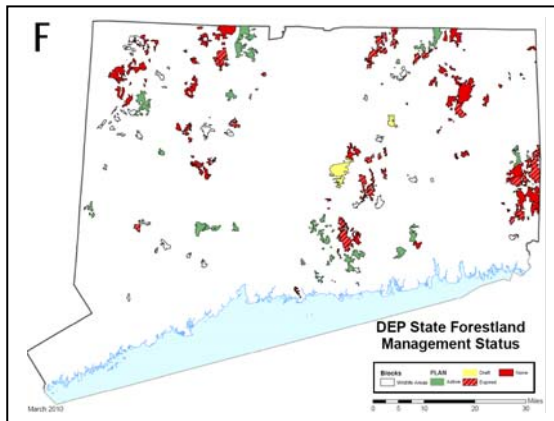
Quality of Life Result: As the largest single landowner and forest manager in the State of Connecticut, State Lands Management ensures State owned forestlands remain viable and productive forest ecosystems providing clean air, water, carbon storage, outdoor recreation, and forest products to all Connecticut 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?

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. One-third of these forests have current 10 year forest management plans, 20,000 acres have expired forest management plans, and the remaining

100,000 acres have no recent professional evaluation or planning. The current forest age, health, tree species composition/distribution, and wildlife habitat importance is not documented and for the most part unknown on these remaining acres. Constraints limiting increased number of managed acres include manpower 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.

How Well Did We Do It?

Proposed actions to turn the curve: 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 11, harvested acres increased by 272 for a total of 1,226 acres and 3.8 million board feet of timber. In addition, the Office of Policy and Management identified 37 parcels totaling over 7,300 acres in State Forests lacking current-use assessments. The SLM program submitted seven applications for 852 acres reducing assessments by \$9.4 million for annual PILOT payments. This effort substantially redirected staff time and will continue to do so in FY 12.

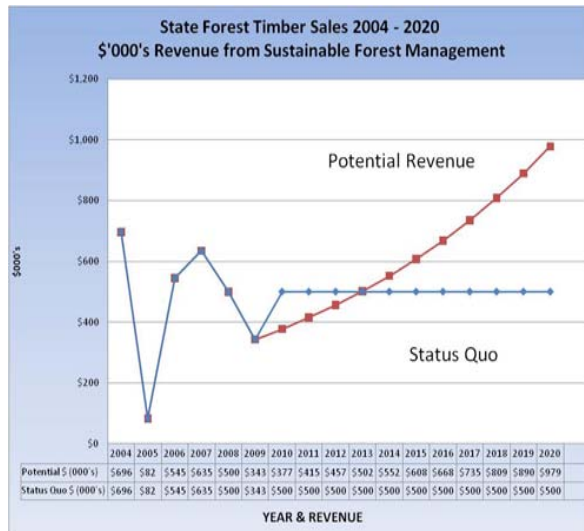
Is Anyone Better Off?

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

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Actual SFY 11 Total Program Exp.: \$485,000 State Funding: \$485,000 Federal Funding: \$0 Other Funding: \$0 Income: \$535,000
Est. SFY 12 Total Program Exp.: \$485,000 State Funding: \$485,000 Federal Funding: \$0 Other Funding: \$0 Income: \$551,000



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 2009 then projected 10 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. For FY 11 harvests exceeded the average by 0.8 million board feet.

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. DEEP increased state land management staff by adding two 2 year durational positions with funding provided by the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative in SFY 11/12. In addition, the Legislature passed and the Governor signed into law Public Act 11-192 which established a non-lapsing timber harvesting revolving account. for the purpose of developing forest management plans to guide the harvest of timber from state forests and state wildlife management areas and for all reasonable direct expenses relating to the administration and operation of such plans in such state forests and wildlife management areas.

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

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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 new timber harvest revolving fund will enable the Commissioner 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.

