

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

Reserve

a 521

.A83B4

FOREST POLICIES FOR THE 1980's

Forestry, range, and agriculture. They are inseparably tied together. Let me say right now that we in the Department of Agriculture are strengthening these ties.

I am delighted to address you professional foresters. The links between the Department of Agriculture and the Society of American Foresters go back to 1900 when Gifford Pinchot, head of USDA's Division of Forestry, helped create this society.

Just-retired John McGuire typifies the dedication and quiet competence of the forestry professional. Max Peterson, his successor, will continue the tradition of competent, experienced professionals in the Forest Service. We are proud that the society selected John Barber and the American Forestry Association selected Rex Resler for key positions. This reinforces my conviction regarding the competence in this agency.

Today, we need the advice not only of professionals in our department, but also from organizations such as yours. Our country is facing challenges that threaten our standard of living, our leadership role, and our survival.

I am pleased to be here in New England. I've been told that the trees and plants here, if converted into energy, would provide as much energy-- 3 billion barrels of oil--as there is in all of Oman--and it is renewable.

Remarks prepared for delivery by Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland, before the Society of American Foresters, Boston, Massachusetts, October 17, 1979

We--you and I--face the challenge to find ways to economically convert wood into energy. I think it can be done--

- o if we use pilot projects,
- o if we carefully develop ways to use our forests as renewable resources,
- o if we enlist landowners to act in their interests and their regions,
- o if we develop the labor force, the equipment, and the delivery systems that can do that job, and
- o if we move with all deliberate speed.

We can make each step--no matter how small--a step toward energy independence.

Here we are in Boston, where our political independence was born. I say to you we can secure our energy independence. The quest will not be easy--we will suffer some losses in battle--but just as our ingenuity 200 years ago prevailed, we as a people will succeed!

Many in our nation have been shocked into realizing how dependent we are on our natural resources. We have taken for granted our land, water, energy, forest, range, and agriculture. We have thought these resources would always be there when we needed them.

Now we face critical scarcities and rapidly rising prices.

We lose more than 4 billion tons of topsoil every year.

We shifted 7.4 million acres of prime farmland to urban and water uses between 1967 and 1975.

We are short of water in many regions.

We are painfully aware of current shortages in energy supplies. Even more, we now know we depend on others for energy.

We face major demands on our timber. Timber consumption in the United States may double in the next 50 years.

Our forest land produces half the wood it can grow naturally--perhaps only a third of its potential under intensive management.

Our imports of wood are increasing, yet we have the most productive forest land base in the world. We could grow more wood for a growing population, for energy, and even for export of products. As a nation could be wood self-sufficient.

Foresters can point the finger--government at a industry, industry at government, and both at the small woodlot owner. The uncomfortable fact is that none of us, and I include the USDA, are doing as good a job as can be done. You know it, and I know it.

As you know, President Carter issued a directive to Secretary Andrus and me to increase timber supplies on federal land by temporarily departing from our policy of nondeclining even flow.

We will accelerate the completion of management plans for national forests which have the greatest environmentally safe and economically sound opportunities to harvest more wood.

Chief Peterson expects to finish the first new plan in 1980. We are going to develop these plans within the framework of the new regulations under the 1976 National Forest Management Act.

We will develop fully the multiple use opportunities on our public forests and range lands.

The American people expect the national forests to provide wood, water, wilderness, recreation, wildlife and fish, forage, and energy. We will protect rare and endangered species and historic sites, not because they are there, but because they are part of our heritage.

It is a challenging responsibility to try to reconcile the multiple demands for the products and services of the national forests. I say to you, however, that we are dedicated to do our best for this and succeeding generations.

We have nearly completed the 1980 update of the assessment required by the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act--the RPA.

The information will be submitted to the President in combination with the appraisal of soil and water resources as required by the Soil and Water Conservation Act, or RCA. Early next year, the President will send to Congress his statement of policy on the various issues.

The President's statement will propose federal policy for forest, range, and soil resources for the next 5 years and will set program directions for the next 50. The Department of Agriculture has taken the lead in developing these policies, working closely with the President's Domestic Policy Staff.

The President has made his recommendations for wilderness based on the second Roadless Area Review and Evaluation. We think these balance various concerns. It is time to expand the wilderness system, and it is time to move toward effective management of the other lands in the study.

Last June, the department, along with the Council on Environmental Quality and other federal agencies, began a study of the loss of agricultural lands to nonagricultural uses. We seek to avoid the loss to urban sprawl each year of a million acres of the best agricultural and forestry land. Many federal agencies, including some at the Department of Agriculture, have been guilty of conducting programs which encourage agricultural land conversion. Public workshops to gather information have been scheduled in all regions of the country. This issue is important to the future of forestry, as well as to farming. I ask the society to participate.

Another issue close to forestry is that of farm structure. This fall we will hold 10 public meetings to examine the consequences of the drop in the number of farms, changes in farm ownership, and trends toward increased farm size. We need to find out what these changes mean to agriculture and forestry.

The completion of the 1980 assessment planning effort will bring major issues to a head.

We are moving to bring our forestry and other natural resource programs into readiness for the 1980's.

We are moving to stimulate better forestry on private lands.

We are encouraging each state to develop comprehensive forest resource plans.

We are providing technical assistance for water, wildlife, recreation, and forage.

We are working to improve the marketing of woodlot timber.

Our integrated pest management policy gives high priority to research and development.

I have requested Assistant Secretary Cutler to establish Forest Service research and action units to give centralized expertise to management of brush, or pest vegetation, with chemical herbicides and alternatives to chemicals. We will develop the same high level of technology and program direction in this area that we previously developed for forest insect and disease control.

Dr. Cutler has the Forest Service developing sensible criteria for the use of 2,4-D. I want all applications of chemicals limited to the most essential uses and applied in ways that provide human and environmental protection.

We have initiated a new policy on fire management. There has been some concern about this. We will review our past experience and make any needed changes. I have told the Chief Peterson to make changes only when and where demonstrated need exists. The basic policy is sound.

We plan to use both the scientific resources and the delivery skills in USDA to develop forestry sources for energy. We plan to almost double the scope of our biomass research. It will include research on residue harvest and delivery systems, fuel plantations, and chemicals from biomass.

Each year we plan to initiate 20 to 50 new projects for the application of wood energy. I envision eventually increasing wood's share of the nation's energy supply. One of our goals is to help the forest products industry become energy self-sufficient by 1990.

I am completely sold on the need to use wood for producing energy--so much so that I recently bought a wood stove to install in my home fireplace.

However, as you well know, we must be careful. Fuel-wood harvests, if improperly done, can bring about nutrient depletion and soil erosion. We must make sure that our efforts to produce energy do not result in long-term losses of forest productivity.

As part of our effort to meet the growing need for fuelwood without sacrificing forest productivity, I have decided to expand the Department's pilot fuelwood project here in New England from 12 counties in four states to 50 counties in all six states.

By footing the entire bill for technical assistance on preparing forest management plans, and covering 75 percent of the costs of building access roads, this project will help private woodlot owners guard against overcutting on their woodlots. At the same time, the project will help to meet increased demand for fuelwood in this area.

And with home heating oil going for at least 90 cents a gallon, it's no wonder that New England households--especially those with low incomes--are clamoring for fuelwood. For a home which would use \$700.00 of heating oil this winter, the use of wood results in a savings of \$266.00. The savings are even greater where fuel costs \$1.00 a gallon.

We must meet future needs for wood by not only increasing timber production, but also by lessening the demand for raw logs. One of the promising ways to do this is to get more wood products from one tree.

I have set a USDA goal of strongly encouraging improved utilization of wood--in the forests, at the processing plants, by consumers, and through recycling. This means better harvesting methods, construction designs, performance specifications, and grading. It means extending the life of wood in use. It means recognizing wood fiber can have at least two, if not nine, lives after harvest.

This country's current standard of living came from a firm foundation of technology with a commitment to research. This commitment has not been strong enough in forestry. We need to make a concerted effort on the forestry research needs of the nation.

Regional and national committees, representing land owners, industry, and government, have met to help shape this research future. Many of you assisted in those efforts, for which I thank you.

We will vigorously implement the new national forest regulations and produce new land use plans on all national forests.

We will raise the level of their management.

I am using this occasion, here and now, to report what I told Max Peterson when he became Chief. I told him that multiple use means all uses, each in its proper role. Sustained yield means just what it implies. I expect cooperation within USDA on research and programs to assist forest and rangeland owners.

Clearly we are at a forest and rangeland turning point. Either all of us working together will turn it to our nation's advantage--or events will turn on us.

I ask for your help--as dedicated resource managers and even more as citizens. We in renewable resource conservation and management have the legacy and the policy machinery that will work for America. I know we can rise to meet the challenge.

Let's, together, roll up our sleeves and get on with the job.

Thank you.

#####

PROCUREMENT SECTION
CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

4023

OCT 9 1980

USDA 2418-79

RECEIVED
NAT'L AGRIC. LIBRARY
U.S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE