Wood In Transportation

USDA Forest Service
Northeastern Area
State and Private Forestry
Bringing forestry to the people through collaborative stewardship

Description: Approximately 28 percent of the Nation's 592,000 highway bridges need to be repaired or replaced. Modern wood technology offers an opportunity to rebuild this crumbling infrastructure by using wood, a renewable, readily available resource, for bridges and related transportation structures. Using wood will improve local transportation networks while providing a source of income for forest landowners and jobs for rural residents, helping to revitalize local economies. Congress funded the Wood In Transportation Program (WIT), formerly known as the National Timber Bridge Initiative, beginning in fiscal year 1989.

Key Issues:

- Expand the range of markets for wood products.
- Commercialize modern timber bridge technology.
- Improve America's forests through stewardship.

Accomplishments:

- Researched how to 1) use more low-value timber for transportation structures, 2) improve preservative treatment, 3) design better structures, and 4) monitor timber bridge performance.
- Developed a comprehensive library of WIT technology and established a customer service center at the National WIT Information Center, Morgantown, West Virginia.
- Implemented a cost-share grants program to encourage commercialization of promising wood-in-transportation technology developed during the last 5 years.
- Provided service for more than 400 National WIT Information Center customers with technical and promotional information about timber bridges and related structures.

Budget History:

Wood in Transportation *($ Thousands)*				
	FY 2001	**FY 2002**	**FY 2003**	**FY 2004**
Total	$1,422	$2,400	$993	$903

Future Direction:

- The program is scheduled to end in September 2004. After September 2004, no additional projects that would demonstrate the effective use of wood in transportation applications will be funded.
- Current staff will 1) continue to commercialize technology developed and proven since the beginning of the program, 2) continue research to refine the performance and cost competitiveness of transportation structures using local timber resources.
- Information and education efforts will provide 1) technology transfer through the National WIT Information Center, 2) an increased amount of technical information available through the Internet, 3) timber bridge technology for other transportation-related uses and various applications for outdoor recreation and tourism, 4) increased program emphasis on engineered wood composites.

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