

The Sourcebook offers:

- ✧ A working definition of sustainable forestry
- ✧ A set of base indicators to assess forest sustainability across the region
- ✧ Information on developing and using forest sustainability criteria and indicators
- ✧ Advice on linking State-sponsored or other criteria and indicator projects to regional and national efforts
- ✧ Lessons learned during the development, use, and implementation of criteria and indicators
- ✧ Sources of additional information

## For More Information

Copies of the Sustainability Assessment Highlights and the Sourcebook are available on the NA sustainability Web site at [www.na.fs.fed.us/sustainability](http://www.na.fs.fed.us/sustainability), as well as from your State Forester.



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March 2003

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# Forest Sustainability in the Northern United States— *New Reports*

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**H**ow do social, political, and environmental policies favor or discourage wise use of our forest resources? Are current forest practices sustainable?



To help answer these questions, the Northeastern Area Association of State Foresters (NAASF) and the Northeastern Area of the USDA Forest Service (NA) joined forces to produce two reports:

- ✧ *Sustainability Assessment Highlights of the Northern United States*—a summary of an environmental, social, and economic review of the region's forest resources
- ✧ *Sourcebook on Criteria and Indicators of Forest Sustainability in the Northeastern Area*—an introduction to how to use criteria and indicators to measure forest sustainability

## Sustainability Assessment Highlights of the Northern United States

This report summarizes the *Sustainability Assessment for the Northern United States*, a comprehensive evaluation of forest sustainability. The report uses criteria and indicators developed by a broad-based group of foresters, environmentalists, and scientists from 12 countries, including the United States, who met in Montreal, Canada, in 1995. The group agreed on 7 criteria and 67 indicators of forest sustainability for temperate and boreal forests that cover a wide range of environmental, social, and economic conditions that affect forest sustainability.

This assessment is the country's first regional report to be based on the Montreal accord. It provides an important regional baseline using available data from Federal, State, and private sources, including inventory and monitoring programs, technical reports, journals, publications, and public programs.

Applications for this Sustainability Assessment include:

- ✧ Using it as a credible source of regional forest-related information
- ✧ Identifying emerging issues and opportunities
- ✧ Letting the public know that forest resource professionals are monitoring the health, productivity, and sustainability of the region's forest resources
- ✧ Demonstrating the importance of forests to the environmental, social, and economic health of the region
- ✧ Illustrating the need for better resource information and research
- ✧ Selecting information to help landowners understand how their property contributes to the environmental, social, and economic health of the region

## Future Sustainability Assessments

NAASF and NA have found it valuable to monitor sustainability using criteria and indicators. The Northeastern Forest Resource Planners Association, whose members are State planners from the 20 Northeastern and Midwestern States, will help to develop measurement protocols for 18 base indicators that will be used to produce regional reports approximately every 5 years. They hope this work will inspire new regional, statewide, and local assessments. Several States have already begun their own assessments.

The criteria and base indicators selected for future sustainability assessments are shown in Table 1.

## Sourcebook on Criteria and Indicators of Forest Sustainability in the Northeastern Area

This publication was developed by the Northeastern Forest Resource Planners Association and NA at the request of NAASF. It is intended as a starting point for States and other organizations to help guide their efforts to use criteria and indicators for assessing sustainability.

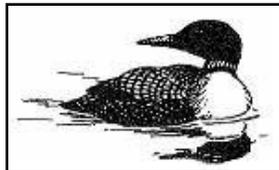


Table 1. The criteria and base indicators selected for future sustainability assessments

### Criterion 1: Conservation of Biological Diversity

1. Area of forest and nonforest land, timberland, and reserved land
2. Area of forest type and size class, age class, and successional stage
3. Degree of forest land conversion, fragmentation, and parcelization
4. Status of forest-associated species and communities of concern

### Criterion 2: Maintenance of Productive Capacity of Forest Ecosystems

5. Area of timberland
6. Annual removal of wood products compared to net growth

### Criterion 3: Maintenance of Forest Ecosystem Health and Vitality

7. Area and percent of forest affected by damaging agents such as insects, disease, exotic/native species, fire, storm, land clearance, and domestic animals

### Criterion 4: Conservation and Maintenance of Soil and Water Resources

8. Area and percent of forest land with significantly diminished soil organic matter, erosion, compaction, and/or changes in other soil chemical or physical properties
9. Area and percent of forest land adjacent to surface water and area of forested land by watershed
10. The condition and vulnerability of aquatic systems by watershed

### Criterion 5: Maintenance of Forest Contribution to Global Carbon Cycles

11. Total forest ecosystem biomass and carbon storage, and contribution of forest ecosystems to the global carbon budget

### Criterion 6: Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-term Multiple Socio-economic Benefits to Meet the Needs of Societies

12. Value and volume of wood and wood products production, consumption, imports, and exports
13. Outdoor recreation activities and use; recreational facilities and use
14. Public and private investments in forest health, management, processing, manufacturing, and research
15. Public, private, and industrial ownership and land use, including acres of specially designated land
16. Trends in forest-related earnings and employment for sectors such as wood products, recreation, and forest management

### Criterion 7: Legal, Institutional, and Economic Framework for Forest Conservation and Sustainable Management

17. Existence, type, and monitoring of voluntary or mandatory best management practices
18. Existence, type, and frequency of forest-related planning assessment, and policy review, including cross-sector planning and coordination