

FOREST LEGACY

Keeping important forests for future generations

August 31, 2000

No. 14



Program Implementation On Track

Program Review Undertaken

Durham, NH—

The first Forest Legacy Program (FLP) review conducted by the Forest Service Headquarters examined the implementation of the FLP by the Northeastern Area (NA). The FLP essentially began in the NA, and with 12 active States, it has the most FLP activity of any Forest Service unit. On June 26, 2000, the Forest Legacy Review team met with the Northeastern Area delegation to kick-off a whirlwind, weeklong tour of Massachusetts, Vermont, and Maine.

Program Flexibility Elevates

Importance of Assessment of Need—The flexible nature of the program required that a number of States be visited. Each State may have a different goal for their program, which is defined in their Assessment of Need (AON). This goal is defined by honing the Legacy law purposes of “ascertaining and protecting environmentally important forest areas that are threatened by conversion to nonforest uses ...” to fit local situations. Each State does this by defining “environmentally important” and “threat.” This is in accordance with the law that requires the Secretary of Agriculture to “identify the environmental values to be protected by entry of lands into the program,” which he does by approving a State’s AON.

FLP Review Process—Aside from looking at AON implementation, the review team met with the three State Foresters and, where possible, members of their Stewardship Committees to understand how they prioritize the FLP applications. The FLP guidelines identify

the Stewardship Committee as recommending the priority of projects to the State Forester. Finally, the acquisition and appraisal procedures were reviewed.

Outcome of the Review—The review team found no departures from the law during the review. Moreover, it made a number of commendations and had some recommendations for improving the Forest Legacy Program at both the Area and national levels.

Currier Honored Upon Retirement

John Currier, in Federal Service for 31 years and a leader in the Forest Legacy Program, retired on June 30, 2000. Up to his last day on the job, Currier’s concern and passion for the Forest Legacy Program was evident. In fact, even though his duties spanned many State and Private programs, Currier spent his last work week on a Forest Legacy Program Review. On this review, at Pierce Pond, Maine, John was presented with tokens of appreciation from his partners and associates, as well as recognition from the Forest Service Headquarters for his leadership in the program.

“John took the Legacy program when it appeared as if the Forest Service didn’t want it,” said Charles Johnson, Vermont FLP retiree.

“I liked John’s thoughtful approach to the Forest Legacy Program,” said Phil Bryce, New Hampshire State Forester.

John says one of his greatest achievements for the Forest Legacy Program was working to get the State



John Currier accepts a memento from his FLP partners and friends (photo by Paul Ensminger).

Grant Option established, when, after 3 years of program implementation, it was obvious something had to change.

Not one to rest on his laurels, Currier closed this chapter of his life and promptly moved to New Mexico. There he may take up teaching or work in a legislator’s office.

Land Protected to Date

(Includes donations and State purchases)

State	Acres	Value	Federal Payment
CT	352	\$ 390,000	\$ 390,000
IL	83	344,000	252,000
MA	1,285	6,279,000	3,462,000
MD	668	775,000	0
ME	31,398	7,293,000	5,793,000
NH	12,797	5,112,000	1,804,000
NJ	1,645	11,712,000	962,000
NY	708	403,000	403,000
RI	432	920,000	920,000
UT	18,657	22,075,000	3,070,000
VT	47,940	7,556,000	6,457,000
WA	<u>2,690</u>	<u>11,233,000</u>	<u>6,203,000</u>
TOTAL:	118,655	\$74,092,000	\$29,716,000

First Illinois Forest Legacy Easement Acquired

Godfrey, IL—

On May 25, 2000, the State of Illinois acquired a conservation easement on a 60-acre tract of land along the Mississippi River from the Oblates Missionary. It is the first acquisition under the Forest Legacy Program in Illinois. The State also acquired an easement on an adjacent 23-acre tract owned by the mission which served as the match for the Federal funds.

Dave Gillespie, the Illinois Forest Legacy Coordinator, and Annie Hoagland of the Great Rivers Land Trust were instrumental in the effort to conserve these two tracts. The tracts contain unique riverfront habitat where the Mississippi River stretches from east to west, instead of north to south. These bluff lands are also under growing development pressure because of a new bridge from Alton, Illinois, to St. Louis, Missouri.

Wildland in New Jersey Protected

Rockaway Township, NJ—

Another milestone in the long-term goal of protecting the New Jersey Highlands was reached on June 22, 2000, when New Jersey paid \$7 million for the 295-acre



Public use of a hawkwatch on the Meridan Tract, New Jersey (photo by Michael McCann)

unbroken upland hardwood forest tract known as the Meridan Tract. The project succeeded as a result of a partnership between the State of New Jersey, the Trust for Public Land, Morris County, Rockaway Township, and the Federal Government, all of whom contributed funds to the project. Federal money provided by the Forest Legacy Program amounted to \$350,000.

This acquisition is significant in that it helps maintain clean water in the Beaver Brook watershed, a subwatershed of the Rockaway River, by eliminating the threat of development. This site was identified as one of the largest, most developable tracts in the area by the township's Open Space Master Plan, which ranked it the number one priority for protection.

Forest Legacy Helps New York Protect the City's Watershed

Lexington, NY—

For 10 years, the State of New York had been working to conserve the 70-acre Greene Frog parcel. Just as the deal was being finalized, the State ran out of acquisition money. On August 17, 2000, the Forest Legacy Program stepped in to protect the Greene Frog Tract from development through a full fee purchase. The Frog Pond

Corporation was paid \$66,400 for the forestland, which is a key piece in rounding out State ownership of the high-ridge forests in the Catskill Forest Preserve (New York City's watershed). The President of the Frog Pond Corporation, George Mason, lives in the area and was concerned about good management of high elevation forests. He decided to sell to the State, because his travel schedule prevented him from managing it himself.

Utah—Two Closings, One Day

*By Ann Price
Salt Lake City, Utah*

Governor Michael Leavitt helped commemorate July 5, 2000, as a memorable day for Utah's Forest Legacy Program. Two projects protecting critical land were finalized. First, Phase 2 of the Peaceful Valley Ranch project protected an additional 5,510 acres, completing the 7,300-acre historic ranch project. This 2 1/2 year project, which had been previously highlighted in Forest Legacy Update No. 11, involves a substantial landowner donation of over \$4 million. The project epitomizes the State's public-private partnership that raised \$2.6 million to purchase the easements. The partnership included several Utah foundations, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, plus Utah's newly formed Quality Growth Commission. Leavitt stated, "We get one chance at this. If this generation does not step up, future generations will judge us harshly, and they should."

Utah's second closing brings 695 acres of Boyden Farms under easement in the first phase of another two-phase project. The property is adjacent to the Peaceful Valley Ranch, which brings the total acreage in our focus area of East Canyon to nearly 8,000 acres. This project protects the canyon watershed and critical winter wildlife habitat.



Aspen stand on the Peaceful Valley Ranch, Utah (photo by Kevin Wells)

Catching Up with Forest Legacy

By Ted Beauvais
Washington, DC

Program Guidelines—The timelines have been extended to allow for additional discussions on the draft revised guidelines between the Forest Service and its principal Forest Legacy State partner, the National Association of State Foresters. A final draft version will be released this fall, with the goal of having a final version in place by the end of the year. Most changes will clarify the existing guidelines or include

new information. The guidelines of August 15, 1996, remain in effect until the new guidelines are completed.

New States and Amendments—Assessment of Need planning is actively underway in Pennsylvania, Virginia, and New Mexico, and amendments to the programs in Massachusetts and California have been drafted. Once the reviews are completed and the documents finalized, they will be submitted to the Forest Service for final review and then approval by the Secretary of Agriculture. We hope to welcome several new States, as well as new parts of existing States, into the Forest Legacy Program this fall.

Budget for FY 2001—After returning from recess, Congress will take up the Forest Legacy budget as part of the larger effort to appropriate funds for a number of Federal agencies and programs. Next, a September 7th House and Senate conference committee will reconcile differences between the two appropriations bills (of which the Forest Service budget is a part). The Senate approved funding for Forest Legacy at \$30 million, the House for \$10 million. The final amount of funding will likely be decided following the House/Senate conference in negotiations between Congress and the Administration in the final days of this congressional session.

USDA Committee Wraps up Listening Sessions on Federal Land Protection Programs

By Gail Michaels
Durham, New Hampshire

The USDA Policy Advisory Committee on Farm and Forest Land Protection has completed a series of listening forums around the country. The committee sought local perspectives on working with Federal programs designed to maintain farm and forest land in rapidly growing areas. USDA Under Secretary Jim Lyons led off most of the sessions, stressing the importance of the Forest Legacy and Farmland Protection Programs. He also called attention to the proposed Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA), which would include funding for land protection.

John Nordin, Forest Resource Planner for the USDA Forest Service in Washington, DC, gave his perspective on the session held in Seattle on July 31, 2000. According to Nordin, panelists favored expanding the two programs. "They stressed the need for

increased conservation education to help urban residents understand the value of working lands," he said. "Several speakers mentioned the broader issues of zero growth and carbon sequestration," he added.

Nearly 100 spectators and participants attended the August 7, 2000, gathering in Atlanta. Panel presentations focused on the effects of development and rapid population growth in the South. Elizabeth Crane, Forest Legacy Coordinator for the Forest Service's Southern Region, said, "In general, all speakers recognized the effects of urban sprawl and its impacts on quality of life." She added that testimonies from the area's last cattle rancher and a chicken farmer who is now surrounded by housing developments show the fast pace of change in land use. Speakers mentioned Georgia's new legislation that requires counties to consider how open space can help mitigate development impacts such as sedimentation, pollution, and heat islands.

Almost 100 people attended the August 9, 2000, forum in Morristown, New Jersey. Panelists generally

supported Forest Legacy and Farmland Protection, calling for additional financial and technical assistance. Marcus Phelps of the Forest Service's Northeastern Area said topics ranged from cost of community services to the need for program coordination, and research and information. Speakers covered "the economic viability of farming and changing lifestyles," said Phelps. Farmer Charles Fay of Harmony, New Jersey, commented on the need to "preserve the farmer" to preserve the farmland.

According to Rita Schoeneman, the Forest Service liaison for this project, transcripts of the Listening Sessions were used in a report scheduled to be released September 27, with recommendations for the United States Department of Agriculture to improve services to farm and forest landowners.

National Forest Legacy Web Site
<http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/flp.htm>

This Forest Legacy Periodic Update
can be found at:
<http://willow.ncfes.umn.edu/whatnew.htm>

Computer Help for Private Landowners

By Roger Monthey
Durham, New Hampshire

As a Forest Stewardship coordinator, I am enthusiastic about the family of NED (Northeast Decision) software. This collection of products, developed by the USDA Forest Service's Northeastern Research Station, applies to landowners and land trusts. NED software should be of special interest to organizations who help landowners manage small forest properties. Special efforts have been taken to ensure that the software is user friendly. My experience in NED workshops shows that people are generally pleased with these products.

Two programs of the NED family of software—the Forest Stewardship Planning Guide and NEWILD (see below)—help landowners who want to manage their forests improve their basic understanding of forest components. The Planning Guide also provides information on management activities as well as their effect on the forest. NEWILD provides basic information on wildlife habitats and develops lists for wildlife species' occurrence in forests. NED-1, a new software program, allows those with vegetative plot data to summarize, interpret, and display these data in user-friendly ways. NED-1 also helps the forest landowner develop management goals and much more. NED-1 works best with smaller land holdings rather than industrial holdings, because of the data storage requirements.

NED software can be downloaded free of charge from the Internet at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/ne/burlington/index.htm>

With NED software, you can:

1. Help a forest landowner determine his or her goals and provide information on potential management activities for the property (product: *Forest Stewardship Planning Guide*)
2. Help a landowner understand wildlife habitats and make more informed decisions about manipulating the habitats (product: *NEWILD*)

3. Collect, summarize, and analyze ecological inventory data such as trees, shrubs, ground cover, and dead and downed woody debris for different forest objectives including aesthetics, ecology, forest health, timber, water, and wildlife (product: *NED-1*)

A more detailed description of some of the NED products is provided below.

The *Forest Stewardship Planning Guide* explains a wide range of forestry practices used to produce a variety of benefits from forests. The program gives users extensive background information on forests in general, then elicits the landowner's goals and helps the user select forest stewardship goals. This program makes limited recommendations on managing a forest for specific goals and describes the conditions that must be created or enhanced to accomplish them.

NEWILD, a computer program published in 1998, provides access to and evaluation of information on species-habitat relationships for 338 terrestrial vertebrate species in New England. This program describes the habitat conditions used or preferred by these birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. A user can provide *NEWILD* with a habitat description and determine what species might be likely to use that habitat.

NED-1 analyzes forest inventory data from the perspectives of various forest resources such as visual quality, ecology, forest health, timber, water, and wildlife. The primary function of *NED-1* is to evaluate to what degree individual stands, or the management unit as a whole, provide the conditions required to accomplish specific goals. An extensive help system provides the user with information about the resource goals, the desired conditions that support achieving those goals, and the related data used to analyze the actual condition of the forest.

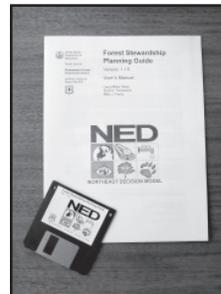


Photo by Ken Dudzik



The Forest Legacy Program was established in the 1990 Farm Bill. State and Federal partners implement the program together. Information sharing occurs many ways including this periodic update. If you would like to subscribe, please send information to: Forest Legacy, USDA Forest Service, 271 Mast Road, P.O. Box 640, Durham, NH 03824-0640.
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