



COUNCIL OF FOREST RESOURCE ORGANIZATIONS

*Landowners, Forest Products Industry, and Professional Foresters
Working Together to Improve New York's Forest Resources*

The Healthy Forests Agenda

A four-point program to maintain the size, health and productivity of New York's forests.

New York's 18.5 million acres of forest land are in crisis, their future imperiled by economic and ecological threats. Traditional markets are changing; subdivision and development threaten wildlife, watersheds, clean air, recreational values and economic productivity; invasive pests endanger valuable species. These difficulties threaten our forests' ability to respond to modern needs for new energy sources and relief from the effects of climate change. They also are damaging the economic sustainability and health of many rural communities. Therefore, the Council of Forest Resource Organizations urges the following prompt executive and legislative actions:

I. Expand State efforts to combat destructive invasive species by allocating more resources for research on, and assistance to, private forest lands.

- Recognize the importance of forest-related invasive species in naming representatives to the new NYS Invasive Species Advisory Committee that will "provide information, advice and guidance to the NYS Invasive Species Council.
- Fully fund DEC's new Office of Invasive Species and its efforts to craft an integrated map that pinpoints invasives in and near New York, create an information clearinghouse for invasives and work with the federal government.
- Accelerate Asian Long-Horned Beetle survey and eradication efforts in quarantine areas of New York City and Long Island; containment of this pest is vital to the survival of the many industries, ranging from maple syrup to furniture, that depend on New York's vast and valuable maple woodlands.
- Reinforce efforts to contain the spread of known invasives, such as the Emerald Ash Borer, which threatens another of the state's most valuable and famous hardwood species.
- Request that federal agency partners increase monitoring and inspections for invasives at New York's ports and borders.

II. Ease the economic strain of increasing, burdensome taxes on forest owners. Such taxes encourage early harvests and subdivision, thus preventing sustainable management of forest resources and often disrupting wildlife and important non-timber plant species.

- Create a new refundable income tax credit to offset property taxes on forest ownership.
- Eliminate the so-called "Tree Tax" which is applied by local assessors under the guidance of the State Office of Real Property Tax Services.
- Expand the reimbursement to towns for revenues "lost" through RPTL 480A.

III. Reinvigorate the role of managed forest lands in the economy, especially in rural areas. Traditional harvesting and manufacturing of wood and wood products have declined.

- The Empire State Development Corp. must help strengthen current markets for forest products.
- The NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets should recognize forest products as agricultural crops and devote resources to developing new markets for them at a level at least equal to the resources devoted by other Eastern hardwood producing states.
- NYSERDA and other agencies need to expand and fund research and cost share programs to develop and utilize woody cellulosic ethanol and other bio-products, and improve technologies for safe and efficient uses of wood as an energy source for commercial and residential heating and other purposes.
- Limit proposed restrictions on existing or new outdoor wood boilers that provide affordable heat and hot water for rural families.
- The Attorney General and DEC must vigorously enforce laws governing timber theft.
- Provide incentives to forest owners to participate in forest certification programs such as the Tree Farm System, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). (A872/S1120).

IV. Recognize the role of managed forests in combating the effects of climate change.

- The Governor should therefore encourage DEC's Office of Climate Change and other State offices to advocate for the inclusion of forestry and forest management as an offset strategy in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. Well-managed forests play an important role in carbon management.

A F F I L I A T E D O R G A N I Z A T I O N S

Adirondack Landowners Association • Catskill Forest Association • Catskill Landowners Association • Empire State Forest Products Association • NY Forest Owners Association • NY Society of American Foresters • NYS Farm Bureau • NYS Maple Producers Association • NYS Timber Producers • NYS Tree Farm • Tug Hill Resources Investment for Tomorrow (THRIFT)