



**MINUTES OF THE PARK POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING  
March 14, 2013**

Committee members in attendance included Agency Chairwoman Leilani Ulrich, William Thomas, Richard Booth, Designee Patrick Hooker, Department of Economic Development and Committee Chair Sherman Craig. Member Valentino was absent from the meeting. Members Frank Mezzano, Arthur Lussi, and Designees Dierdre Scozzafava Department of State and Robert Stegemann Department of Environmental Conservation joined the Committee. Also participating in the meeting was Executive Director Fred Monroe of the Local Government Review Board. Staff included Executive Director Terry Martino, Counsel James Townsend, and Planning Director, James Connolly.

The Committee meeting convened at approximately 10:45 a.m.

**Sustained Yield Management and Forest Certification on Forest Industry Lands in the Adirondacks** (Rene' H. Germain, Ph.D., SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry)

Dr. Germain reviewed the ownership of New York's 15.4 million acres of timberlands, the timberland species cover type by area, the standing volume as well as annual removals and log production. He noted the growth to cut ratio is 2.5:1 and that the annual cut could be doubled for New York State and a positive growth to cut ratio would still be realized.

Dr. Germain then gave a brief history of forestry activities within the Adirondack Park since the early 1800s.

Dr. Germain then reviewed the Forest Products Industry in the Adirondacks noting that it is not the economic engine of yester year. He noted that the future of pulpwood mills is bleak. There are currently two active pulpwood mills in the Adirondack Park - International Paper and Finch Paper LLC (owned by Atlas LLC & Blue Wolf Capital Management). He noted that there are only two significant sawmills currently in the Park - Tupper Lake Hardwoods and Ward Lumber Company.

Dr. Germain reviewed the wood procurement for the Park noting that the quality of logs is decreasing as well as the log size, and woodsheds are expanding.

Maps were then presented that reflected the competition for hardwood and softwood saw logs. Dr. Germain reviewed the health of the forest industry today which reflects narrow margins impacted by logging costs including customer leverage, and lumber and log sorts.

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Fred Monroe asked about the export of quality Adirondack hardwood; Dr. Germain responded that the demand is there if the quality hardwood can be found.

Dr. Germain noted that there are several studies underway which include the impact of local logging/harvesting ordinances on forest management, cost of implementing BMPs (best management practices) across various harvest systems, and identifying best practices in high performing logging companies.

Dr. Germain presented a case study he had undertaken - The Thwaits Wood Lot 1973-2004 - a 251 acre woodlot along the AuSable River in the Adirondack Park. In the initial case study 1973-1993, 1.4 million board feet were left, beginning with an initial inventory of 1.4 million board feet, and 1.2 million board feet harvested over the 20 year period. Dr. Germain then reviewed the 1998 harvest and the 2002-2003 harvest. The inventory taken in 2004 yielded 1.8 million board feet of standing timber. This case study reflects sustainable management in an uneven growth hardwood stand.

Dr. Germain continued to illustrate sustained yield management at the forest level. He also reviewed rotation age methodology used by forest management companies.

Local Government Review Board Executive Director Fred Monroe noted that factors such as insect infestations, weather, etc. can impact yield figures. Agency Chair Ulrich asked if forest certifications run with the land; Dr. Germain responded negatively. Forest certifications are specific to the current property owner and forest manager, and do not run with the land. New York State Conservation Easements do run with the land, and all current and future landowners are obligated to abide by the terms of the easement.

Dr. Germain emphasized that well managed woodlots not only provide timber, but also other forest values such as water and soil conservation, wildlife habitat, recreation, open space, carbon sequestration, and visual qualities. He added that most foresters practice good forest management.

Dr. Germain referred to an article published in the Journal of Foresters (Germain et al. 2002. EMS Assessing their level of use on industrial forestlands. JOF 100(4): 12-18) which summarizes the use of environmental management systems and impacts on the environment. He noted that the larger companies have environmental management systems (EMS) in place, however, smaller organizations tend to lack formal management systems due to lack of infrastructure, management expertise and economies of scale. He added that although the smaller companies may not have a formal EMS, most implement appropriate management techniques.

Dr. Germain noted that an EMS is designed to help an organization: manage, measure and improve environmental aspects of its operations;

improve efficiency in meeting regulatory requirements; change company culture by incorporating environmental management into overall business operations and planning; and ultimately results in improved occupational health and safety for the organization. He added there are two different types of environmental management systems - process based and performance based. A process-based EMS uses generic guidelines and standards (ISO 14001) while the performance-based EMS uses criteria, performance measures and indicators to monitor performance over time (on-the-ground) and is prescriptive. It is important to note there are two certification processes.

Dr. Germain explained that the purpose of an ISO certification - International Organization for Standardization - is to facilitate international trade through the development of worldwide standards; mitigate conflicting regional standards, such as those associated with screw thread types, radio broadcasting, and measurement systems. There are 162 national standards organizations from over 100 countries included. The standards are then categorized under the 9,000 or the 14,000 ISO series.

Dr. Germain defined forest certification as the process by which a forest owner voluntarily requests an inspection of a forest to determine if predefined management standards are being met, to assess if a forest is managed sustainably, and to communicate environmental information about forests to consumers. He defined sustainable forestry as a balance between environmental, social, and economic factors to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Certification is a means of promoting sustainable forestry.

Dr. Germain then reviewed some global initiatives undertaken toward sustainability which include the Bruntland Commission (1987); UNCED (1992); Helsinki Process (1993) and the Montreal Process (1993). Major programs evolved which include the American Tree Farm System, the Forest Stewardship Council, Sustainable Forestry Initiative and the Canadian Standards Association.

Dr. Germain presented statistical data representing the estimated acres held by landowners certified via SFI or FSC in New York State. He reviewed the steps taken in an initial assessment/audit which includes a GAP Analysis. As part of the audit, the team reaches out to stakeholders involved and an assessment is given which represents overall strengths and weaknesses and any corrective action requested (CAR) to mitigate any issues. If a major corrective action request is generated, generally the assessment has discovered an inadequate management plan, annual allowable cut calculated improperly, quality of silviculture inconsistent with what is on ground, and/or area is located in a high value conservation area. When a major CAR is issued to a company, certification is withheld and the organization is given a year to take correct actions.

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Dr. Germain then reviewed certification costs based on various examples of acreages. He noted that there are direct and indirect costs associated with assessments and certification. He also noted there is no price premium for certified logs and lumber. It is all about market access and meeting expectations of society.

Dr. Germain noted that there are few FSC/SFI chain of custody sawmills in New York State and consequently a bottleneck develops as there are too few sawmills that have chain of custody certification. The sawmills have not realized a need for certification.

Dr. Germain reviewed SFI vs FSC noting that both have strengths and weaknesses, both continue to update standards, both are comparable in terms of effectiveness in promoting sustainable forest management and both have raised the level of forest management in the past 15 years. Both FSC and SFI managers agree that the cost of certification is a negative factor in maintaining sustainable forest management.

Local Government Review Board Executive Director Fred Monroe asked about the relationship to residual basal area which is part of the Agency's regulatory standard defining a clearcut. Dr. Germain responded that the 30 sq. ft. basal area confounded foresters that worked in the Park as it is not based on science. He added that in 1973, the Agency asked Ralph Nyland for his opinion which he offered but was disregarded by the Agency. The 30 sq. ft. only promoted high-grading according to Dr. Germain.

Member Craig asked if he correctly understood that the timber management organizations need to improve their stands by undertaking clearcutting, use of the seed tree methodology or establishing shelterwood areas to allow for greater regeneration. Dr. Germain noted that it is time to look at the Agency's 30 sq. ft. basal area requirement in addition to establishing ways to improve regeneration to avoid a dominant species such as Beech overtaking the stands and severely restricting pioneer species. He emphasized forest management as key to successful regeneration and continued forest sustainability.

Member Mezzano asked what Dr. Germain might consider as an appropriate figure for a basal area. Dr. Germain responded that there is not an optimum number but rather the need for regeneration is of utmost importance to good forest management and sustainability. Dr. Germain added that the 30 sq. ft. basal area number established by the Agency was more for aesthetics and to avoid a clear cut area. He emphasized that the guideline of 30 sq. ft. was not based on science but instead was based on the need for aesthetics and is not related in any way to good forest management.

Member Booth asked how long the certification process takes. Dr. Germain responded that if all factors are in place for an audit to be done, it could take less than a year; however if a company does not have the necessary elements in place for an audit to be done, it could be years before the certification process can be completed.

The Park Policy and Planning Committee reconvened at approximately 1:05 p.m. to hear the following presentation.

**The State of the Forest (Robert Davies, State Forester, NYS DEC)**

Mr. Davies gave a brief history of forest certification on State forests and management of conservation easements in the Adirondack Park. He noted that State forests are non-Forest Preserve lands managed by the Division of Lands and Forests (DEC) and are widely distributed across New York State and are located outside of the "Blue Line." He added that the Department has received dual forest certification under both the FSC and the SFI.

Mr. Davies reviewed the internal audit team charter and process developed by the Department to assess and develop inventories on State forest lands by Department staff.

Mr. Davies noted that the Department defines a healthy and productive forest in conservation easement areas as diverse forest types and conditions in a broad distribution of forest age classes over the easement property. He added that the landowner has two options - one is the DEC Forest Management Plan option in which the DEC reviews and approves all forest management activities; the second option is the Forest Certification option which is an approved certification program that monitors forest management activities and for which DEC receives copies of the annual audits. DEC also retains the right to enforce the conservation easement.

Mr. Davies then introduced Linda Weaver of Department staff who presented a GIS tool that the Department uses to track activity on the conservation easement areas in the Park. Such activity includes recreation plans, management plans, certification activity and monitoring plans.

Member Wray asked if the terms of conservation easement agreements are uniform. Mr. Davies responded that they were not since they have been developed over many years but that the Department is working towards more consistent language in any new easement agreements as well as revisions to older agreements.

Committee Chair Booth asked what the cost is to the Department to get acreage certified. Mr. Davies responded that in 2007 the cost for the dual certification was approximately \$188,000 for the contract and the initial audit for 780,000 acres. The subsequent audit that was recently conducted was approximately \$50,000. Member Booth asked why the Department applied for dual certification - Mr. Davies responded that the programs complement each other.

Member Booth asked if the Agency should request dual certification if a General Permit is adopted. Mr. Davies responded that if the Agency has a policy, it should be consistent with DEC's approaches for State Forest lands and conservation easement areas, and consider

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certification under either FSC or SFI. Both programs have various distinctions but are essentially equal.

**Old Business**

None

**New Business**

None

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:00 p.m.