



Northern Forest Lands Council

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PRESS RELEASE

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NORTHERN FOREST LANDS COUNCIL MEETS TO ADOPT WORKPLAN

BANGOR, ME--The Northern Forest Lands Council met yesterday at the University of Maine at Bangor to conduct its regular bi-monthly meeting and to receive public comment on agenda items and on other Northern Forest Lands issues.

The Council adopted a work program for the coming year to address five major issues affecting the future of the Northern Forest area:

1. The impact of rapidly rising property taxes on forest land ownership and on the life of rural communities.
2. The impact of Federal and State tax policies on forest ownership and land conservation.
3. The need for contingency plans to respond to the potential sale of large forest holdings for non-forest management purposes.
4. Concerns for encouraging the processing of wood products within the Northern Forest region as an important element of reviving economies and the feasibility of continued private ownership of forest land.
5. The need to gather information on the Northern Forest area to assist the Council and local and state decision making.

(over...)

The Council also discussed public involvement in their operation and agreed to request that the Governors of the four Council States of Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont appoint an additional member to the Council from each State who resides within the Northern Forest area and who represents local interests. Council members requested staff to prepare a formal public participation strategy, including the structure for advisory committees, within the next three weeks.

Other business included discussion of guidelines for the Council's inventory of natural and economic resource information, an update on legislation, and comments from the public on matters relevant to the Council.

Commenting on the adoption of the work program, Charles Levesque, Council Executive Director, said, "The adoption of the Council's work program is the first formal explanation of what the Council will actually be doing. I believe the emphasis on tax policy and the instability of large forest holdings reflects a sensitivity to the critical problems of the Northern Forest Lands region. This is an issue which affects a diversity of interests. By sharing ideas and experiences among the States and developing new strategies for addressing tax issues and the lack of stability of these lands, the Council can make a real and practical contribution. I also believe the work program reveals that the Council is intent on supporting, not changing, traditional land uses in the Northern Forest area."

(more...)

The Council agreed to hold its next meeting in Vermont in early December. Meetings following are tentatively scheduled for February, 1992 in New Hampshire and somewhere in the 4-state region in April, 1992. The Council can be reached at (603) 224-6590 for more information.

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Note to Editors: The Northern Forest Lands Council is a 13-member advisory non-profit organization with three Governor-appointed representatives from each of the States of Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont and a thirteenth member from the U.S. Forest Service. It follows the work of the Governors' Task Force on Northern Forest Lands and the Northern Forest Lands Study, commissioned by the Congress in 1988. The Council's existence results from the agreement by the Governors of the four States to participate in this process and the authorization from the Congress within the 1990 Farm Bill Forestry Title (Sec. 1244). The Congress has funded the Council and its related work through the 1991 and 1992 Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Bills.

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long?*

