



Council Members

MAINE

Jerry A. Bley
Natural Resource Consultant
Edward I. Johnston
Maine Forest Products Council
Janice McAllister
Local Elected Official
C. Edwin Meadows
Maine Department of Conservation

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Paul O. Bofinger
*Society for the Protection
of New Hampshire Forests*
John D. Harrigan
Landowner
Beaton Marsh
Local Interest
John E. Sargent
N.H. Division of Forests & Lands

NEW YORK

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Environmental Conservation*
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International Paper
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Local Elected Official
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Adirondack Mountain Club

VERMONT

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*VT Department of Forests,
Parks and Recreation*
Brendan J. Whittaker
*Vermont Natural Resources
Council*

USDA FOREST SERVICE

Michael T. Rains

Staff

Charles A. Levesque
Executive Director
Esther L. Cowles
Resource Specialist
Mary Beth Hybsch
Administrative Assistant

STATE COORDINATORS

Maine

Donald Mansius
(207) 289-4906

New Hampshire
Susan Francher
(603) 271-2214

New York
Karyn Richards
(518) 457-7431

Vermont
Charles Johnson
(802) 244-8714

Northern Forest Lands Council

54 Portsmouth Street, Concord, N.H. 03301

603-224-6590 603-224-6603 FAX

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For more information:

Charles A. Levesque (603) 224-6590

NFLC To Release Draft Recommendations March 3

CONCORD, NH - The Northern Forest Lands Council announced today it will release its draft recommendations on Thursday, March 3, 1994. The Council is a 17 member advisory group to the Congress and governors of Maine, New Hampshire, New York and Vermont. It has been studying ways to conserve 26 million acres of forest land across these four states.

"Last week, the Council outlined a draft set of recommendations on ways to manage, protect and enhance public and private lands in the Northern Forest. It took us a little over a month to hammer out the framework, and it will take us another month or so to write the detailed language," commented Council chair Robert L. Bendick, Jr., Deputy Director for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Once written and printed, the draft recommendations will be released across the four state region on March 3. This will signal the start of a public comment period ending Monday, May 16. During this time, the Council will reach out to people in and outside the region to hear their feedback on the draft recommendations, through meetings, open houses, listening sessions, letters and

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phone calls. The timing for these activities will be announced in the coming month. Feedback gathered in these forums will be considered by the Council as it finalizes its recommendations, which will go to the Congress, governors and state legislative leaders sometime next summer.

"The March 3 release is a few weeks later than first anticipated. The Council needs the extra time to make sure the draft recommendations are detailed and complete, while also being easy to read and understand," added Council Executive Director Charles Levesque.

In the interim, the Council will release a *Technical Appendix* of all its research. It will contain all the reports which are the basis for the Council's findings and recommendations. It will be available from the Council, for a nominal charge received in advance, in mid to late January by calling at (603) 224-6590 or writing the NFLC at 54 Portsmouth Street, Concord, NH 03301, or through libraries around the region.

The Council is a temporary, advisory body of 17 governor-appointed members representing landowner, environmental, local and state government interests for the states of Maine, New Hampshire, New York and Vermont. It was authorized in 1990 by the Congress and governors to develop recommendations which seek to conserve and enhance the public and private values of the 26 million acre Northern Forest stretching across the four states. The Council is guided by its mission to reinforce the traditional patterns of land ownership and use of these large forest areas, while sustaining the forest resource and communities of the region. The Council will disband by September 30, 1994.