

Beyond The Northwest Forest Plan

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Amerika Serikat telah menjadi pemeran utama dalam industri kayu. Kondisi tersebut telah menjadi beban bagi pemerintah Amerika Serikat oleh karena meningkatnya tekanan dari para ahli di bidang lingkungan, yang lebih mendukung dilaksanakannya reboisasi dibandingkan deboisasi. Pergeseran peran dari pengeksport kayu utama menjadi pengimpor kayu, telah menyebabkan pasar nasional Amerika Serikat mengalami kerugian, seperti meningkatnya harga produk kayu. Konflik antara Amerika Serikat dengan Kanada berkaitan dengan produk kayu telah menarik banyak perhatian dari para stakeholder, dan telah membuat Pemerintahan Bush meresmikan suatu kebijakan perikanan yang di dalamnya diatur mengenai pembukaan hutan kembali dan program hutan sehat. Artikel ini mencoba membahas mengenai situasi seputar kebijakan Amerika Serikat mengenai produksi kayu.

Introduction

The Northwest Forest Plan (NFP) is a result of the ongoing war between environmentalists and the timber industry¹. In fact the war itself has been reflected in the National Forest Management Act

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¹ This plan was drawn up in 1994 at the Northwest Forest Conference – a conference convened by the Clinton administration in Portland, Oregon.

(NFMA), which was enacted in 1976². This plan has been seen as a U.S. forest policy that has been driven by such factors as the scarcity of timber and has also been reflected in various government actions, for example, as a subsidy for reforestation, the creation of national forests, and the protection of forests from fires³.

The world consumption of wood-based products, however, is constantly increasing the demand for timber, even though national policy is against the heavy exploitation of the forests. This increased demand has supported the expansion of "fiber farms" in the southern hemisphere. Many North American wood products corporations have shifted their investment in timber to that hemisphere. The primary reasons for this shift are the relatively simple procedures in forest plantation and the cheap production costs⁴.

Globalization has made it possible for the North American timber industry to take advantage of fiber farms in the southern hemisphere, which farms are located in mainly subtropical regions such as New Zealand, Australia and Chile. These farms have

² The promulgation of NFMA was driven by the Monongahela Case of 1975, which was formed as the ultimate compromise in the Congress of both environmentalists and the timber industry. This act combines both procedural standards and substantive law. The State of the Law, "The National Forest Management Act: Law of the Forest in the Year 2000", *Journal of Land, Resources, and Environmental Law*, vol.21, 2001, 156.

³ Jerry F. Franklin and K. Norman Johnson, "Forest Face New Threat: Global Market Changes", *Issues in Science and Technology*, Summer 2004, 41.

⁴ This phenomenon has, however, caused the loss of national timber production which eventually has resulted in some problems. These include the following:

- 1) many private forests have been sold and changed into housing or other property sites;
- 2) the loss of financial resources to help restore the structure and functions of forestry caused by human activities.

Ibid. at 41-42.

demonstrated high levels of wood fiber production – high enough to compete in terms of high quality with those farms in North America. The investment in these southern hemisphere farms has caused the forest land divestment in the U.S.

Trade Not Anticipated

1. Introduces Different Values

The U.S. forest policy has indeed created a gap between harvest and consumption. This gap has been filled in by wood products from other countries, for example, Canada. The U.S. producers then are facing problems in competing with imported wood products on production costs.

The movement of forest investment out of North America will eventually affect the role of the U.S. as a main player in the fiber production of common wood-based products (lumber, pulp, paper). A sound response to that situation will be to help maintain forest cover in private forests and restore desired conditions and sustain essential stewardship in public forests⁵.

⁵ Some tools that can be used to address these issues are as follows:

1. Reducing the costs of managing private forests, that will include:
 - a. The maintenance of forests across the landscape;
 - b. Changing the regulation on increasing future timber supplies;
 - c. The regulatory environment should be stabilized. The structure of the Clean Air Act, the Endangered Species Act and any other federal and state regulations should achieve a stable policy environment for investment as a long term goal (Adoption of the Northwest forest Plan for instance has been argued as creating a more stable regulatory environment for managers of private and stable trust land where the federal government is required to take the major responsibility for forest species conservation in the Pacific Northwest).
2. Creating market for important forest goods and service:
 - a. economic recognition of other values could provide incentives from forest stewardship;
 - b. watershed protection is the most important service;
 - c. treating water as a fully tradable commodity to using market incentives to increase the efficiency of water use and allocation;

Franklin and Johnson argued that there should be a reformulation of forest policy in the U.S., to avoid further negative consequences of current forest management and policy. Forest stewardship now has to face the issue of globalization of the wood product industry⁶. Technology has supported this global corporate forestry by inducing at least two developments⁷:

1. The recognition of the extraordinary production potential of some exotic tree species;

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- d. forest help combating the global warming by reducing the CO₂ (carbon dioxide); and
 - e. promoting wildlife recreation.
3. Purchasing land and creating conservation easements using the public funds:
- a. purchasing land in order to become national forest;
 - b. creating conservation easements to ensure that critical forest values are maintained;
 - c. acquisition and management of private forest by non profit organizations.
4. Using zoning regulations to control land use;
5. Creating or maintaining a viable domestic forest industry:
- a. Funding niches in the global market place.
 - b. Focusing on special high quality wood products.
6. Increasing local community involvement in the stewardship of public lands (the City of Seattle for instance has formulated a plan for its Cedar River Watershed).

Ibid at 45-48.

⁶ The primary sites for developing forestry's fiber farms are mainly located in temperate and subtropical regions because of several factors. These include the extraordinary productivity and relatively prepared sites in terms of mitigating environmental impacts, and the typically low labor and other production costs. This development has caused loss to the Northern hemisphere. It is important to note that this issue does not involve the destruction of tropical forests since many fiber farms are using abandoned agricultural or grazing lands and not the wild tropical forests.

⁷ Jerry F. Franklin, "Challenges to Temperate Forest Stewardship-Focusing on the Future", David B. Lindenmayer and Jerry F. Franklin, *Towards Forest Sustainability*, 2, 2003.

2. The increasing potential for enhanced production using bio-engineered trees.

Most of the stakeholders in the forestry will argue that this movement has led to an expected direction of good management, but there are actually crucial impacts that should be addressed carefully. These include the following⁸:

- a. "Land ownership and use in environment with the decreased potential for economic return from those lands;
- b. Stewardship of public forest lands, including the provision of the financial resources needed to monitor, protect, and appropriately manage these lands;
- c. The health of the rural communities that are located within forested regions."

In his argument, Franklin believed that a solution which lets the fiber farm to supply the wood products in order to preserve the native forest is now facing various challenges. Among other things is the alteration in the physical and biological context for temperate forests. These include the following⁹:

- a. Altered fire and other disturbance regimes;
- b. Altered regional and global environment regimes, including climatic and chemical changes, such as those associated with acid rain;
- c. Introduction of exotic organisms, including virulent insect and disease pests, and other fauna and flora that damage, destroy and compete with the native biota;
- d. Fragmented landscape in which both the amount and spatial patterns of specific forests conditions have been drastically altered.

⁸ *Ibid* at 4.

⁹ *Ibid* at 5.

2. Sponsor Pests and Pathogens

The movement of live wood plants, unprocessed wood products (logs and wood chips), or untreated wood products (green lumber) between continents has increased the introduction of foreign pests and pathogens into the native forests. This situation has to be altered accordingly since sometimes the native pests and pathogens fail to compete with the new comers and are replaced rapidly by the new pests and pathogens¹⁰.

The use of agri-business chemicals (herbicides and pesticides) has increased the negative impact upon the environment. Sanitary/phyto-sanitary regulations (SPS) have often been used to control the acceptable level of pesticides used in agriculture, inspect goods for disease, assess the treatment of livestock, and prevent the spread of invasive species. Hence the "genetically engineered tree" is argued to be "unsafe" for the global forest ecosystem¹¹.

3. A Dilemma: NAFTA Case

The U.S. has benefited from timber for more than four hundred years. The U.S.'s national economy has been fueled by timber sales and made the U.S. the second largest lumber producer in the world after Russia in the 1970s. In the 1980s, Canada began competing with the U.S. and even exceeded U.S. because of Canada's vast supply of natural resources. During this time, the Canadian timber began filling in the need of the American market¹².

The "timber war"¹³ in the U.S. inevitably impacted timber production in that country by decreasing the production and

¹⁰ *Ibid* at 6.

¹¹ Jason Ford, "The Perfect Neoliberal Tree", *Council for Responsible Genetics*, Vol. 14 no.3, May 2001. See. <http://www.genewatch.org/genewatch/articles/14-3neoliberal.html>

¹² See <http://www.midtermpapers.com/20996.htm>

¹³ Timber war between the environmentalists and timber industries particularly in Western States, such as Oregon and Washington State.

increasing the price of timber. As a result of this, Canadian timber sales filled in the gap¹⁴.

The war between the U.S. and Canadian lumber has been going for years¹⁵ beginning in the early 1980s. But the "big hit" happened in 2002. In that year, the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) found that subsidized Canadian lumber had threatened injury to the American softwood lumber industry. As a result of this, the ITC authorized the U.S. Department of Commerce to put a 27% duty on Canadian lumber because of a petition filed by the US Coalition for Fair Lumber Imports (US CFLI).

The Canadian lumber industry then appealed to a NAFTA Panel and to WTO panels. In September 2003, the NAFTA panel requested the ITC to re-examine the findings, and in December 2003, the ITC reconfirmed its earlier finding that the U.S. industry was threatened with material injury caused by the subsidized Canadian lumber sold in the US at less than fair value. There was a big "tug of war"¹⁶ between the ITC and the NAFTA panel as stated

¹⁴ These dynamics in the timber industry was actually among the major reasons the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was establishment back in 1994.

¹⁵ The Lumber War between Canada and the US has gone for more than 20 years. The first war (Lumber I) happened back in 1987, when the US lumber industry complained that the Canadian lumber industry's low stumpage fees amounted to a subsidy. The second war (Lumber II) happened in 1986 when the Department of Commerce recommended a 15% countervailing duty on Canadian lumber. This war created a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") in 1986 that was revoked in 1991. In 1992, however, the third war came over (Lumber III) when the Canadian bans on the export of raw logs had indirectly subsidized the Canadian softwood lumber exporters. Then both countries signed another MOU, known as the Softwood Lumber Agreement (1996-2001). But the war then continued with the fourth war (Lumber IV) beginning in April 2001 and culminated when US imposed anti-dumping and countervailing duties on Canadian lumber in May 2002. Michelle Swenarchuk, "The Impact of the Softwood Lumber Agreement on Canadian Forest", Canadian Environmental Law Association. See <http://www.glu.org/english/projects/biodiversity-habitat/forests-issues/glfc-2000-softwood-lumber.html> and see also <http://www.freetrade.org/pubs/FTBs/FTB-020.html>

by the ITC as follows: "...we continue to view that Panel's decision throughout this proceeding as overstepping its authority, violating NAFTA, seriously departing from fundamental rules of procedure and committing legal error".¹⁷

In its ruling on August 13, 2003, the NAFTA panel found that the Canadian lumber industry had been subsidized and had dumped U.S. lumber, but the duty that had been imposed by the U.S. had to be reduced. On the other hand, both the ITC and the WTO had found that the U.S. had the right to impose a duty on Canadian lumber because it caused a threat of material injury to U.S. products. The NAFTA Panel decision of August 31, 2004, however, held that there was no sufficient record to support a threat of injury as argued by the U.S. ITC. The U.S. then requested an Extraordinary Challenge Committee to review the final decision of the NAFTA panel on injury¹⁸ (November 24, 2004).

On August 11, 2005, the NAFTA Extraordinary Challenge Committee (ECC) had ruled that the U.S. had no basis of threatened injury experienced by the U.S. lumber industry. The panel "legally required the U.S. to revoke the countervailing duty and anti-dumping duty orders, to refund, with interest, deposits collected and to stop all ongoing administration reviews".¹⁹

On November 22, 2005, the Bush Administration eventually acknowledged that the Canadian softwood lumber industry had not received a subsidy from the Canadian government²⁰. The U.S. Department of Commerce then reduced the combined anti-subsidy

¹⁶ Rich Donnel, "Opening Faces: Tug of War". *Timber Processing*. October 2004. See <http://www.timberprocessing.com/vserver/hb/display.cfm?MagazineKey=5&IssueKey=371&SectionKey=276&ArticleKey=4381>

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/het/softwood/NAFTA.htm>

¹⁹ <http://www.ens-newswire.com/ens/nov2005/2005-11-23-04.asp>

²⁰ The Commerce Department recalculated the subsidy received by the Canadian Lumber industry as low as 0.80 % from previously 18.8 in 2002. See *Ibid.*, and <http://www.ens-newswire.com/ens/nov2005/2005-11-23-04.asp>

and anti-dumping duty on Canadian softwood lumber to 10.81% in December 2005²¹. This step has been taken by the Commerce Department pending its administrative reviews of the NAFTA panel decision.

The U.S. CFLI challenged the NAFTA system on September 13, 2005. The decision of the NAFTA panel has been seen by the U.S. lumber industry as "the latest example of a Chapter 19²² dispute settlement panel under NAFTA wrongfully and unconstitutionally trumping US law." The U.S. lumber industry believes that "the NAFTA panel in this case has improperly directed a decision that runs counter to the facts and US law".²³ The U.S. CFLI then emphasized that NAFTA Chapter 19 of NAFTA needs to be reformed to protect U.S. sovereignty and the rights of U.S. citizens.

In addition to the U.S. challenging NAFTA, Canada and the Canadian Lumber Trade Alliance (CLTA) has also challenged NAFTA and has filed an action in the U.S. Court of International Trade (CIT) against the United States' position that their November 2004 "Section 129" implementation of the ITC injury decision moots out Canada's win at the ECC, Canada and the CLTA also filed an action at the CIT²⁴ challenging the U.S. Department of Commerce's proposed refusal to refund deposits once the Order is revoked. Both cases were filed in spring 2005, and are moving forward after the final decision of ECC was released. Yet the cases are still counting a long way to achieve final results, even though the current position still in favour of Canada²⁵.

²¹<http://www.timberprocessing.com/vserver/hb/display.cfm?MagazineKey=5&IssueKey=430&SectionKey=1952&ArticleKey=5457> See also http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/softwood_lumber/

²² Chapter on Review and Dispute Settlement in Antidumping and Countervailing Duty Matters.

²³ <http://www.ens-newswire.com/ens/nov2005/2005-11-23-04.asp>

²⁴ See <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/het/softwood/NAFTA.htm>

²⁵ *Ibid.* See also <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/het/softwood/CIT.htm>

This ongoing lumber war has been a concern for many stakeholders in both countries. The non-governmental organization (NGO) has launched The Citizens' Forest Trade Alternative²⁶ that recommends "a bilateral forest agreement to govern ecologically and economically sustainable trade in timber products between the U.S. and Canada." This recommendation is expected to lessen the tension between these two neighbouring countries on these lumber issues.

4. Illegal Logging

Unfortunately, another side effect of the effort to fulfill the U.S. market need for wood products from foreign timber industries has caused another problem. That is a worldwide problem of illegal logging. The U.S. is suspected of becoming a market for illegal wood-based products, mostly from China²⁷. The Bush administration has launched the President's Initiative against Illegal Logging. Its main objective is to assist developing countries in combating illegal logging²⁸.

This Initiative also tries to address the issue of the sale and export of illegally harvested timber and corruption in the forest sector. It focuses on four strategic keys: good governance, community based actions, technology transfer, and harnessing market forces. The targeted regions are the Congo basin, the Amazon basin, Central America, and South-Southeast Asia.

²⁶ An alliance between the Northwest Ecosystem Alliance of Bellingham (Washington D.C.), the Natural Resource Defense Council of New York City, and Defenders of Wildlife (Washington D.C.).

²⁷<http://www.globaltimber.org.uk/ChinaIllegalImpExp.htm> China is actually suspected as the major importer of illegal timber from many developing countries, including Indonesia. These timbers will be processed in China to be exported to other countries, but many to the U.S. See http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/GB26Ae06.html. The Old Growth Campaign at Rainforest Action Network has encouraged the US forest product industry to join the movement started by the European Union in combating illegal logging, see http://www.ewire.com/display.cfm/Wire_ID/2491

²⁸See http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/presidential_initiative/logging.html

Many developing countries, as major exporters of timber, have been facing the problems of illegal logging for a longer time. These problems include deforestation, lost revenue, corruption, and law breaking. G8 (the group of developed nations) has launched the Action Program on Forest of 1998-2002 to combat the practice of illegal logging in international trade²⁹. Some timber exporting countries such as Malaysia, India, Vietnam and Indonesia actually have also been trying to combat this activity, *inter alia*, by imposing a raw wood export ban, which has also aimed at reducing the deforestation of tropical forests³⁰.

The Bush Administration Policy on The Forest

1. The President's Healthy Forest Initiative

The Bush Healthy Forests Initiative (HFI) was launched in August 2002 when the nation was suffering from severe forest fires. The major goal of the HFI is to reduce the risk of catastrophic fire by thinning dense undergrowth and brush in priority locations on a collaborative basis with selected Federal, state, tribal, and local officials and communities. The initiative also provides the means to timely respond to disease and insect infestations that threaten to devastate forests³¹.

²⁹ See http://www.illegal-logging.info/papers/IL_logging_Brack.pdf.

³⁰ <http://www.forests.tn.nic.in/ExImPolicy.htm> and <http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/nfma/index.htm>

³¹ The President's Healthy Forests Initiative has taken steps to establish a more effective and timely process to protect communities, wildlife habitats, and municipal watersheds from catastrophic fires. Some actions taken are as follows:

- The Forest Service has implemented at least 46 high priority thinning and restoration projects using new procedures established under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Bureau of Land Management is currently implementing more than 20 projects.
- The Departments of Agriculture and the Interior have improved environmental assessments (EAs) for priority forest health projects.

One of the actions taken by the Initiative is to reduce fuel hazards and return the forest and rangelands to healthy conditions. Some action plans include the following:³²

- a. Establishing new procedures provided under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) that will enable priority fuels treatment (thinning) and forest restoration (reseeding and planting). This procedure allows the federal agency to collaborate with stakeholders and also allows simple processes in certain cases;
- b. Amending the agencies' administrative appeal rules to expedite appeals of forest health projects and encourage early and more meaningful public participation;
- c. Expediting consultation by federal agencies on the impacts that fuels treatment projects may have on endangered species;
- d. Implementing the Council of Environmental Quality guidance intended to establish an improved and focused process for conducting environmental assessment; and
- e. Fostering stewardship contracts that are to allow contractors to keep wood products in exchange for the services of thinning tress, brush and removing dead wood.

The Initiative also addressed the fact that the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan (NFP) had not fulfilled its function properly. While acknowledging the success of that plan on protecting the old growth forest and endangered species, the plan itself failed to deliver a sustainable forest economy. Most of the areas are managed more for

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- The Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management have approved stewardship contracts using the new authority requested by the President and provided by Congress. Stewardship contracting will increase as NEPA work is completed in 2004. These contracts are a tool to restore landscapes, reduce hazardous fuel loads, and restore water quality and wildlife habitat.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/healthyforests/restor-act-pg2.html>

³² <http://www.usda.gov/news/releases/2003/05/fs0165.htm>

habitat value rather than timber production. The thinning and timber salvage activities are not allowed to proceed properly. The NFP has been found, by public land countries, timber companies and labor unions as having drifted away from its initial objectives to preserving both habitat and the forest economy³³

Yet the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, Inc., Natural Resources Defense Council and the National Audubon Society argued that "increased logging in the Northwest national forests would violate the terms of NAFTA" and they could challenge that through the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation. They actually stated that the "salvage logging" provision would violate the NAFTA Environmental Agreements which requires "to effectively enforce environmental law" (Article 5) and to bring law suits against the violations of environmental law (Article 6). Indeed the NAFTA is said to be the latest weapon of the environmentalists.

2. Healthy Forest Restoration Act

The Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 was signed into law by President Bush on December 3, 2003. This Act is meant "to reduce the threat of destructive wildfires while upholding environmental standards and encouraging early public input during review and planning processes." The Act is believed to be formulated based on sound science and compatible with the President's Healthy Forests Initiative, which initiative was enacted to "reduce the risk of catastrophic fire to communities, help save the lives of firefighters and citizens, and protect threatened and endangered species." This Act has gained support both from the bipartisan Congress and environmental conservation groups. Among the major goals of The Healthy Forests Restoration Act are the following³⁴:

³³http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/healthyforest/Healthy_Forest_v2.pdf

³⁴ See <http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/healthyforests/>

- a. Strengthen public participation in developing high priority forest health projects;
- b. Reduce the complexity of environmental analysis allowing federal land agencies to use the best science available to actively manage land under their protection;
- c. Provide a more effective appeals process encouraging early public participation in project planning; and
- d. Issue clear guidance for court action against forest health projects.

Some major steps that will be carried out under the Act are the following:³⁵

- Reduce dense undergrowth that fuels catastrophic fires through thinning and prescribed burns;
- Improve the public involvement in the review process by providing opportunities for earlier participation, thus accomplishing projects in a more timely fashion;
- Select projects on a collaborative basis involving local, tribal, state, Federal and non-governmental entities;
- Focus projects on Federal lands that meet strict criteria for risk of wildfire damage to communities, water supply systems and the environment;
- Authorize the Healthy Forests Reserve Program, to protect, restore and enhance degraded forest ecosystems on private lands to promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species;
- Encourage biomass energy production through grants and assistance to local communities creating market incentives for removal of otherwise valueless forest material; and
- Develop an accelerated program on certain Federal lands to combat insect infestations.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

3. The National Forest System Land Management Planning

On January 5, 2005, The Bush Administration introduced a new rule that was opposed by many environmentalists. This rule is called the National Forest System Land Management Planning³⁶. There is a paradigm shift in the National Forest System planning and management, where the Forest Service is prioritized to monitor and, when necessary, to provide a process to change the plans based on sound science to protect clean air, clean water, and wildlife. The rationale of this rule emphasized that the requirements of the 1979 and 1982 rules, as well as 2000 planning rule, have created an inefficient and ineffective system for complying with NEPA.

The rule permits more flexibility in implementing projects in response to evolving scientific doctrines and changing conditions on the ground, for example, unforeseen natural disasters. The plan should be focused on the social, economic, and ecological sustainability of the management, and involve public participation throughout the entire plan process and its implementation.

Environmentalists have criticized the rule as “a large step backward in wildlife conservation, environmental protection, and public involvement in national forests.” They argue that this rule exempts forest management plans from review and public input as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Under this rule the adoption of the forest plan does not require public review or an analysis of the environmental impacts. The U.S. Forest Service is empowered to undertake the forest plan with unlimited discretion³⁷.

4. The 2001 Roadless Area Conservations Rule (A 2001 Clinton Rule) Reversed

The Bush Administration announced in May 2005 that it would reopen 60 million acres of federal forests to logging and

³⁶ See <http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/nfma/includes/rule%20.pdf> See also <http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/nfma/index.htm>

³⁷ See <http://www.bark-out.org/content/article.php?section=news&id=228> and <http://www.wilderness.org/NewsRoom/Release/20041222.cfm>

road building under the new U.S. Forest Service regulations, new regulations that exempt states from federal restrictions on road construction in environmentally sensitive areas unless it is prevented by the governor. This policy has overturned the 2001 policy made under the Clinton Administration which policy kept the forest under federal control. The environmentalists argue that the forest areas are no longer protected from logging, mining and drilling industries³⁸.

The new rule requires a state governor to submit their petition within 18 months on any forest land they want to protect. Even though it also should be acknowledged that a 2001 Clinton rule has been challenged by many lawsuits, particularly in the area where the forests are located (mostly in Western States).

5. RREA Strategic Plan

A collaboration of U.S. natural resources professionals has developed "a 5 year plan" for the Renewable Resources Extension Act (RREA) Program, Sustaining the Nation's Forest and Rangeland Resources for Future Generations. This plan is an answer to the remand of the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES)³⁹.

The program, which is called "Sustaining the Nation's Forest and Rangeland Resources for Future Generations, Strategic Plan for the State-Federal Partnership, 2005-2009" is compatible with the USDA strategic plan (a strategic plan is to protect and enhance the nation's natural resources base and environment), and consists of the following two main objectives:

- a. Implement the President's Healthy Forest Initiative and other Actions to Improve the Management of public lands;
- b. Improve Management of private lands.

³⁸ Christopher Doering, "Environmental Groups Blast New Bush Forest Rule" <http://www.truthout.org/cgi-bin/artman/exec/view.cgi/34/10924>

³⁹ CSREES is an agency within the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), part of the Executive Branch of the Federal Government, created by the Congress through the 1994 Department Reorganization Act.

Conclusion

The increasing demand of wood products has driven the U.S. to be heavily involved in the international trade of timber. The position however has been overturned that US now more has been acting as importing countries instead of exporting countries and that is due to the US national policy to protect and conserve old growth forest and endangered species.

The impact upon the timber trade that should be seriously addressed is the divestment in the forest sector due to the investment of the U.S. timber industry in Southern Hemisphere. The introduction of pathogens and pests from importing woods is another issue that has caused negative impacts on native forests and should be addressed seriously. Trade wars, such as the US-Canada Lumber Case and illegal logging, are all adding to the list of problems caused by the international trade of wood products. As such, these issues also must be addressed.

The Bush Administration has tried to address these problems, inter alia, by establishing the National Forest System Land Management Planning, reopening the forest for logging, formulating the RREA Strategic Plan, launching the Healthy Forest Initiative, and enacting the Healthy Forest Restoration Act. All these mechanisms, however, are not free from critics -- mostly from environmentalist and conservationist. These critics argue that the above policies tend to benefit the timber industry instead of the protection of a natural heritage. Hence, this dilemma has to be solved in order to achieve the balance among the interests of all related stakeholders of the national forests.

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