THE STATUS OF TIMBER RESOURCES IN THE NORTH CENTRAL UNITED STATES

Neal H. Sullivan and Stephen R. Shifley[1]

ABSTRACT.—Between 1953 and 1997 the volume of standing timber in the region (growing stock) more than doubled from 37 to 83 billion cubic feet. Forests in the North Central Region grow 2.3 billion cubic feet of new wood on growing-stock trees each year. Annual removals are about half that amount. The pattern is the same in each of the seven included states (Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri). At the same time, at 73 cubic feet per person, the 46 million people who live in the region consume about 3.4 billion cubic feet of timber products annually. In the North Central Region: we have 14 percent of the nation's timberland, we annually grow 10 percent of the nation's new wood (growing stock), we annually harvest 7 percent of the nation's wood (growing stock), and the people who live in the region annually consume 17 percent of the nation's wood. A failure to balance growth and harvest with consumption of forest resources in one region shifts the impacts of harvesting and production to other regions of the U.S. or other countries. It also exports the environmental and social consequences associated with the timber harvest (both the positive and the negative consequences). What are the implications for local, regional, national, and global sustainability of forests? There are many ways to alter the current balance among growth, harvest, and consumption of timber: consumers, resource managers/owners, manufacturers, and elected officials can affect the balance between forest production and forest product consumption. It is not realistic to think that in the North Central Region we could be self-sufficient in the many different kinds of forest products that we consume, but it is reasonable to consider what proportion of the total volume of wood that we consume could or should be produced within the region. In our discussions of sustainability we could begin to consider the implications of various levels of regional forest growth and harvest relative to timberland area, consumption of wood products, and forest sustainability (Shifley and Sullivan 2002).

LITERATURE CITED

Shifley, S.R.; Sullivan, N.H. 2002. The status of timber resources in the North Central United States. Gen. Tech. Rep. NC-228. St. Paul, MN: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, North Central Research Station. 48 p.

[1]Post-Doctoral Research Fellow (NHS), Forestry Department, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211-7270 and Research Forester (SRS), USDA Forest Service, North Central Research Station, Columbia, MO 65211-7260. NHS and SRS are corresponding authors: to contact, call (573) 875-5341 or e-mail at nsullivan@fs.fed.us or sshifley@fs.fed.us

Citation for proceedings: Van Sambeek, J.W.; Dawson, J.O.; Ponder, F., Jr.; Loewenstein, E.F.; Fralish, J.S., eds. 2003. Proceedings, 13th Central Hardwood Forest conference; 2002 April 1-3; Urbana, IL. Gen. Tech. Rep. NC-234. St. Paul, MN: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, North Central Research Station. 565 p. [Abstract from poster presentation].