Northwest Forest Practices Regulation and Forest Management Certification

By STEVERSON O. MOFFAT AND FREDERICK W. CUBBAGE

In the United States, sustainable forestry certification programs and sustainable forestry proof-of-performance programs have now enrolled nearly 36 percent of the nation's timberlands. However, only the American Tree Farm System and the National Woodland Owners Association's Green Tag Forestry program are targeted specifically for small woodland owners. We were interested in finding out how easy it would be for small woodland owners to meet the requirements not only of these two programs, but also of the American Forest and Paper Association's Sustainable Forestry Initiative, the Rainforest Alliance's SmartWood program and Scientific Certification System's (SCS) Forest Conservation Program. To do this, we needed to compare management practices typical of landowners in different regions of the United States.

However, no single management regime can be termed typical for any one state, let alone region. Management intensity differs among landowners, as do the primary management objectives, types of species grown, rotation age, intermediate treatments (if any), harvest methods and a host of other considerations (climate, rainfall and site quality, for example). We chose to focus on management constraints. These constraints come in two forms: (1) what forest landowners are required to do by state law, and (2) what forest landowners are required to do when they participate in forestry assistance programs.

There are regional differences between state regulatory programs. In general, there are fewer forestry regulations of any kind in the South. States in the Intermountain West employ a mix of permit-based compliance systems and specific practices acts, while the Lake States augment their permit-based compliance systems with tax relief programs. In the Northeast, many states utilize permit-based approaches, and a few states have comprehensive forest practices laws. Finally, states in the Pacific Northwest demonstrate the most extensive use of comprehensive forest practices laws. All other things being equal, these regulatory programs set the minimum standard for forestry practices in the jurisdictions where they apply and mandate the practices forest landowners must utilize. As such, they will be used to represent "mandated" forest management in this article.

CANT YOU TELL THAT THIS PROPERTY HAS BEEN LOGGED?

Yes! Modern logging practices have changed in recent years, partly due to environmental issues and because private landowners are more aware of the practical and aesthetic issues involved with land management. At Washington Timberland Management, Inc., we concentrate on the private landowner's goals for their property. Are you clearing for development in the future or managing your lands for timber production for profit? Are you aware of all the state requirements for environmental wildlife trees, greenbelts and buffer zones?

WTM can help you make your goals come true. We know the state and federal regulations governing land management. We can produce a forestry management plan, contract the work and have an end result that will meet your goals. If your intent is personal economic growth, for your and future generations, combined with environmental and aesthetic concerns, call us today.

Washington Timberland Management, Inc.
FORESTRY CONSULTANTS

Kelly C. Niemi
Richard C. Niemi, ACF
Management-Appraisal Consulting

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 239
Kelso, WA 98626
Street Address: 1600 S. 13th
Phone: (360) 578-3817
FAX: (360) 578-3818

28 . NORTHWEST WOODLANDS . SPRING 2001
Regulations alone do not encompass the full breadth of state forestry guidelines, however. In a broad sense, voluntary and regulatory Best Management Practices (BMPs), combined with Stewardship guidelines, represent state-sponsored efforts for sustainable forestry. While not every landowner practices forestry to the standards set forth by state programs, it is reasonable to assume that a landowner interested in certification would meet the conditions stipulated by BMPs as well as be enrolled in a state’s Stewardship Program. All other things being equal, BMPs and Stewardship guidelines together offer a high, but attainable, standard for forest management in each state, and will represent “combined” management practices for the purposes of this paper.

We divided the United States into five regions: Northeast, South, Lake States, Intermountain West and Pacific Northwest. We selected one state to serve as a proxy for each region based on the importance of forestry to its region, the distribution of small woodland owners in the state, and how representative the state is to the overall regulatory characteristics of its region. Using these criteria, we selected Pennsylvania, Georgia, Wisconsin, Montana and Oregon to represent their respective regions. However, for the purposes of this article, we will only look at Montana and Oregon.

State Regulatory Programs, Voluntary BMP Programs and Stewardship Programs

Seventeen regulatory, quasi-regulatory and voluntary elements were identified through analysis of the five states’ programs. These included management plans; harvest plans; road, skid trail, harvesting methods, and streamside regulations and guidelines; and clearcutting, endangered species habitat, burning, herbicide, reforestation, and aesthetic regulations and guidelines.

Under the mandated scenario, Oregon’s comprehensive forest law addressed 16 of the 17 elements, and Montana met 9 of 17. When voluntary BMP guidelines were included with the mandatory elements, Oregon still met the most with 16 of the 17, and Montana met 13 of the 17. Including Stewardship Incentive Program elements, the combined scenario added 3 new elements while augmenting the 17 regulatory/BMP elements described above. Stewardship elements address timber, soil, water, wildlife and fisheries management; recreational uses, aesthetic attributes, forest health and endangered species. Under the “combined” sce-

--- CONTINUED ON PAGE 30 ---

Thinking about Certification?

--- we’ve got the facts.  

please contact:

FSC US
1155 30th Street NW
Suite 300
Washington, DC 20007

Tel 202.342.0413
Fax 202.342.6589
Web www.fscus.org

NORTHWEST WOODLANDS . SPRING 2001 . 29
Unified and Combined Management & Standards and Certification Programs

Table 1 illustrates the number of program elements and how many were met by selected state approaches. Two comparisons are made: (1) between mandated management—what forest landowners are required to do—and (2) between combined management—what forest landowners are also encouraged to do by voluntary BMPs and Stewardship Programs.

### Mandated Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Requirements and Type of Program Element</th>
<th>Number Met</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>Oregon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Operational Attributes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Timber Management</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Environmental Impacts</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Community and Efficiency</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chain-of-Custody</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Combined Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Requirements and Type of Program Element</th>
<th>Number Met</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>Oregon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Operational Attributes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Timber Management</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Environmental Impacts</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Community and Efficiency</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chain-of-Custody</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Findings**

Under mandated management, landowners in Oregon (and by proxy other landowners in the Pacific Northwest) have the fewest gaps between what they are required to do to meet state regulations and what the sustainable forestry standards and certification groups require, and most likely, lower costs if they want to meet the requirements to get their land certified. This advantage persists under combined management, but by a much lesser degree. The advantages to owners in the Pacific Northwest are accrued primarily under...
the timber management and environmental impacts program elements. Oregon's comprehensive forest practices law addresses 8 of the 12 timber management standards and certification criteria, and 6 out of the 12 environmental impacts criteria (Table 1). Other regulatory approaches (mandatory BMPs, permit-based regulation and streamside management laws) as utilized in Montana met 5 of the 12 timber management criteria and 3 of the 12 environmental criteria, leaving substantial gaps for landowners to fill in both program elements.

No appreciable advantage exists for landowners in the remaining three standards and certification program elements. For the most part, regulatory programs neither require the type of information stipulated by the operational attributes and the community relations/operational efficiency guidelines; nor do states monitor the chain-of-custody. Again, Oregon landowners have a slight advantage in meeting operational attributes guidelines due to the requirements that they have management plans and file notice with the state prior to engaging in forestry activities.

No appreciable advantages exist in either state for any of the program elements under the combined management scenario. As a general rule, Oregon landowners have the fewest gaps to fill. In the table, Montana landowners appear to be limited, but this is due to Montana's approach to Stewardship that provides a high degree of discretion to landowners, rather than omissions in their Stewardship program. As with mandated management practices, none of the combined practices address chain-of-custody criteria.

Conclusions

Our results indicate that a regional advantage in certification exists for owners in the Pacific Northwest as far as the mandated management scenario is concerned. (This suggests that they are bearing greater mandated costs now.) Voluntary BMPs and Stewardship Programs are enough alike to result in a level playing field for landowners in the Pacific Northwest and Intermountain West.

This also suggests that sustainable forestry standards and certification organizations will need to reduce direct and indirect costs to small landowners and develop ways to increase benefits to attract a significant number of family forest owners to their programs. Sustainability continues to be an important issue in forest management, however, and interest in verifying the quality of forest management in the United States is increasing. Time will tell if standards and certification, as currently defined, will prove effective as an approach for small landowners.

Stevenson O. Moffat is a policy analyst for the USDA Forest Service in New Orleans, Louisiana. He can be reached at smoffat@fs.fed.us.

Frederick W. Cubbage is professor and head, Department of Forestry, NC State University, Raleigh, NC.

PENCE CONTRACTING
Forestry Consulting
Don Pence, Forester, (208) 667-2796 (home/fax)
Ned Pence, Forester
Arleen Pence, Business Manager
(208) 882-0831 (phone/fax), P.O. Box 8464, Moscow, ID 83843
FOUR-STATE REGULATORY COMPARISONS

Dare to Compare?
"Woodsy Weirdos," Politics and Forests in the PNW
Riparian Management Regulations Vary by State

Plus...
Managing Vole Damage

NEXT ISSUE . . .
Dirt Under Your Feet . . .
Your Soils

This magazine is a benefit of membership in your family forestry association.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

FEATURES

8
DARE TO COMPARE?
This article explores whether certain Northwest states’ regulations can truly be compared with each other, and also provides background on the history of state forest practices acts in the region.

10
FOREST PRACTICES TRENDS AND NEGATIVE EFFECTS
It has been a long-held belief that forest policy has not always been rooted in science and common sense. Specific trends impacting forest practices are highlighted, as are negative effects caused by policy decisions.
BY JIM COLLA

12
FOREST PRACTICES CONTRASTED AMONG FOUR STATES
Stream classifications, slash disposal, tree retention and reforestation practices rules in eastern Washington, eastern Oregon, Idaho and Montana are compared.
BY JOHN ERIXON

14
“WOODY WEIRDOS,” POLITICS AND FORESTS IN THE NORTHWEST
The political makeup of Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington is charted, with emphasis on the urban-rural split that occurs primarily in Oregon and Washington.
BY WILLIAM M. LUNCH

18
COMPARISON OF RIPARIAN PROTECTION STANDARDS
Detail is provided, with the aid of tables, on differences in state streamside management and leave tree requirements.
BY JIM COLLA

20
STATE PAYS SMALL FOREST LANDOWNERS FOR TREES
The Washington State DNR has launched a new program to help landowners endure increasing regulatory changes. Find out if you qualify for the Forestry Riparian Easement Program.
BY KIRK HANSON

24
MANAGING VOLE DAMAGE
Those pesky seedling eaters, meadow mice, wreak havoc on new plantations. Learn how to recognize the presence of voles and methods to rid them from your land. In a companion piece, an Idaho landowner describes his experience and results with various vole-control methods.
BY KIM WAGNER • CASE STUDY BY STU GOLDSTEIN

28
FOREST PRACTICES AND CERTIFICATION
If family forest owners follow state voluntary and mandated regulations, what more would it take to become certified? Oregon and Montana are used in a case study to compare different certification systems with levels of regulations.
BY STEVIERSON O. MOFFAT AND FREDERICK W. CUBBAGE

DEPARTMENTS

3
PRESIDENTS’ MESSAGES

6
DOWN ON THE TREE FARM

22
WORD FROM WASHINGTON, D.C.

27
TREEMAN TIPS

30
CALENDAR

ON THE COVER:
Idaho, Washington and Oregon have forest practices acts that include requirements for stream and riparian zone protection. (Photo courtesy of Washington State Department of Natural Resources)

STAFF:
LORI D. RASOR, Editor
KAI OLSON-SAUYER, Assistant
4033 S.W. Canyon Rd.
Portland, OR 97221
(503) 228-1367 ext. 104
FAX (503) 226-2515
e-mail: rasor@safwo.org
kai@safwo.org

MINTEN GRAPHICS, Graphic Design

Northwest Woodlands Advisory Committee Members:
Sherry Fox
Steve Gennett
Nels Hanson
Sara Leiman
Jean McCluskey
Chandler Noerenberg
John Popppino
Lori Rasor


Other than general editing, the articles appearing in this publication have not been peer reviewed for technical accuracy. The individual authors are primarily responsible for the content and opinions expressed herein.