



Forest Management outside protected areas

Protected areas now cover around 10 per cent of the world's land surface. Yet they cannot alone preserve all biodiversity. Many are too small to be viable or are surrounded by radically altered habitat; these "islands" risk genetic isolation and further degradation.

WWF believes that forests outside formally protected areas are necessary for the maintenance of biodiversity and ecosystems services, both on individual sites and within the wider landscape. Well-managed commercial or community forests can for example provide vital buffers for and links between protected areas. In many countries demand for land is so great that total protection will only ever be applied to a small fraction of forests, and therefore the maintenance of biodiversity will require well-managed multi-purpose forests. Forest management should therefore seek to maintain forest quality and not degrade either the timber resource or the range of associated goods and services (non-timber forest products, environmental services, biodiversity, spiritual values, recreational uses etc). There have been many attempts to define what is often called "sustainable forest management", ranging from national criteria and indicators (e.g. the Montreal Process) to site approaches such as independent certification of good management. WWF has been active in developing and promoting good management through the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC, see separate position paper) and has a target to increase forests under FSC certification by 100 million hectares by 2005.

Forest management, including intensive commercial management, can be a critical and cost-effective conservation tool within larger-scale conservation strategies. Although any kind of management other than strict protection is likely to alter the biodiversity of a *site*, this is not necessarily true at larger scales such as a *landscape*, which is made up of many sites with different management objectives: biodiversity protection, community uses, timber production etc. The results should be judged at the landscape scale rather than for the individual site. WWF believes that improving forest management outside protected areas can:

- *Increase* biodiversity in forested landscapes or other cultural landscapes that have been poorly managed in the past
- Help to *maintain* biodiversity in natural forest landscapes that contain a proportion of managed forests sites
- Help to *buffer* biodiversity within protected areas.

Adapting forest management practices to conservation needs outside protected areas is particularly important in: protected area buffer zones; corridors linking protected areas or natural forests; cultural landscapes; and fragmented or depleted forests.

WWF recognises that conservation must be balanced with a range of other priorities at a landscape scale, including the role that forests can play in contributing to human well-being, poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods. WWF has, in association with IUCN, been actively developing a range of tools to help balance the trade-offs necessary in integrating improved forest management with other land uses, including participatory forest quality assessment and the landscape approach (see separate position paper).

WWF will work with NGOs, community groups, governments and the forest industry to promote responsible forest management outside protected areas by:

- Using the High Conservation Value Forests approach (see separate position paper) to integrate commercial forest management, protected areas and restoration within an ecoregional-scale approach to conservation
- Continuing to develop and promote responsible forest certification under the FSC as a key vehicle for encouraging and monitoring sustainable forest management
- Lobbying for responsible forest management principles in agreements and institutions such as the UN Forum on Forests, Convention on Biological Diversity, International Tropical Timber Organisation etc
- Working to encourage economically viable approaches to community-based forest management that also maintain biodiversity
- Liaising with researchers and forest managers to develop approaches that minimise environmental and social costs of management, such as Reduced Impact Logging.



Position Paper

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One of a series of position papers produced as WWF's response to the WWF/IUCN Forests for Life strategy and WWF's current five-year target-driven programme on forests. For further details contact

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