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CONTACT: Jonathan Cook
(202) 419-3263

NEW U.S. FOREST SERVICE DATA REVEALS POSITIVE GAINS

2007 Numbers Support Landmark Study on State of Forests

Washington, DC – The most recent USDA Forest Service data confirms that United States forestland is roughly as abundant today as it was 100 years ago. The Forest Service's Resource Planning Act 2007 (RPA data) reveals both state and regional increases in forestland across the country. Among the key findings in the report (<http://www.fia.fs.fed.us/program-features/rpa/default.asp>) are:

- There are 750 million acres of forestland in the U.S. today, about the same as in 1907.
- 11 states had increases of over 25 percent over the last century, and nine had increases of over 30 percent.
- Overall, forestland in the northern U.S. has increased by almost 30 percent.

This encouraging data is provided by the Forest Service's Forest Inventory and Analysis National Program (FIA). On the state level, statistics show:

- Virginia, South Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Louisiana all have more forestland today than a century ago.
- Over the same period of time, forestland in Vermont, Pennsylvania and North Dakota has almost doubled.
- Forestland in Massachusetts and New York have shown an increase of over 70 percent.

These assessments include present and anticipated uses, demand for, and supply of renewable resources, with consideration of the international resource situation, and an emphasis on pertinent supply, demand, and price relationships trends.

The new data reinforces findings in *The State of America's Forests*, a 2007 report by the Society of American Foresters, which found that replanting and reforestation efforts, as well as natural forest re-growth on abandoned agricultural lands, have generally offset any loss of forestland during the 20th century due to urban/suburban growth. The report reinforces the importance of continuing sustainable certified forest practices to ensure forestland remains abundant for

generations to come.

Historical trends indicate that the standing inventory (volume of growing trees) of hardwood and softwood tree species in U.S. forests increased by 49 percent between 1953 and 2006. For the past 50 years, tree removals have remained below two percent of standing inventory (the figure for 2006 was 1.68 percent).

Meanwhile the net growth of trees has been near three percent (in 2006, 2.64 percent). It is also noted that the stability and abundance of forestland, together with the growing conservation ethic of the American public over the past century, has helped many species on the brink of extinction (e.g., wild turkey, elk) make full recoveries.

The report was produced with support from the Abundant Forests Alliance (AFA), a trade group representing the wood and paper products industry in the midst of a multimillion public education campaign. AFA's mission is to convey to customers and consumers alike, that through a strong commitment to sustainable forestry, our forests and the renewable resources they produce will remain abundant for generations to come.

Similarly, while *The State of America's Forests* report notes that America's forests face significant challenges – such as fire, which has recently shown how destructive it can be, insects and disease, invasive weeds, unmanaged recreation, and land conversions – it documents a variety of reasons to be optimistic about our nation's forestland. The report is available for viewing or downloading at <http://safnet.org/aboutforestry/index.cfm>.

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About the Abundant Forests Alliance

Members of the wood and paper products industry in the United States formed the Abundant Forests Alliance. We share information with consumers and customers about the many ways our industry is helping to ensure that with proper care and management there will always be abundant forests. We also listen and respond to environmental concerns about our forests and products. Through sustainable forestry practices, improved recycling and new technologies, our industry is helping to maintain the delicate balance between supplying the wood and paper products people need and giving the forest what it needs to flourish.

AFA members include: Anthony Forest Products Company | Green Diamond Resource Company | International Paper | MeadWestvaco | Monadnock Paper Mills | Plum Creek Timber Company | The Westervelt Co. | Weyerhaeuser

Visit abundantforests.org for more information about AFA.