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Subject: Farm Bill 2007 Official Comments - 01/03/2006 02:27 PM CST
Date Sent: 01/03/2006 02:27:11 CST
Date Received: 01/03/2006 02:27:57 CST

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Question1:

Question2:

Question3:

Question4: I would like to request that the 2007 Farm Bill put a higher priority on Forestry Programs. Currently less than 1% of Farm Bill programs are directed to private forest owners. Family Forests provide a myriad of benefits to society and the environment. They supply wood to local sawmills, provide habitat for fish and wildlife, and provide recreation opportunities for family, friends, and neighbors. Two-thirds of U.S. Forests are family owned which equates to approximately 400 million acres.

I'm particularly in support of the Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP) and would like to see it funded. The conduit for this and all Federal Forestry Programs should be the USDA-Forest Service through their State & Private-Cooperative Forestry Program. The ties with the State Departments of Forestry is a strong one and should be continued. Groups like the Association of State Foresters should also be contacted for opinions on the importance of Forestry Programs, which after distribution of funds, are administered by the various states. The states have the knowledge and resources to deliver sound forestry advice on reforestation, timber stand improvement, ie. thinning and pruning, and management recommendations in the form of Management Plans. The process is in place and the delivery system exists.

I don't see agencies like the Natural Resource and Conservation Service (NRCS) as being able to deliver Forestry Programs and advice. They have neither the manpower nor the expertise to deliver forestry assistance. They are an agency whose ties and allegiance is to agricultural interests. That is the advice and programs they provide and they do a fair job at what they are geared for. Programs like the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) are agriculture orientated- and let them stay that way. We need separate Forestry Programs administered by the USDA-Forest Service and delivered through our State Forestry Departments. The cumbersome and cookbook systems of the NRCS can stay with agriculture but I hate to see it bog down forestry. The FLEP program provides needed environmental projects to forest landowners that can be delivered in a short time frame while providing advice from knowledgeable forestry professionals.

Again family forestowners have been left out of past Farm Bills and we need congress support to continue good forestry with assistance programs such as FLEP.

Sincerely, Steven J. Cuvala
Forester&Family Forestowner

Question5:
Question6: