

Committee Name:
Assembly Committee – Rural Affairs and Forestry
(AC–RAF)

Appointments

99hr_AC–RAF_Appt_pt00

Committee Hearings

99hr_AC–RAF_CH_pt00

Committee Reports

99hr_AC–RAF_CR_pt00

Clearinghouse Rules

99hr_AC–RAF_CRule_99–

Executive Session

99hr_AC–RAF_ES_pt00

Hearing Records

99hr_ab0000

99hr_sb0000

Misc.

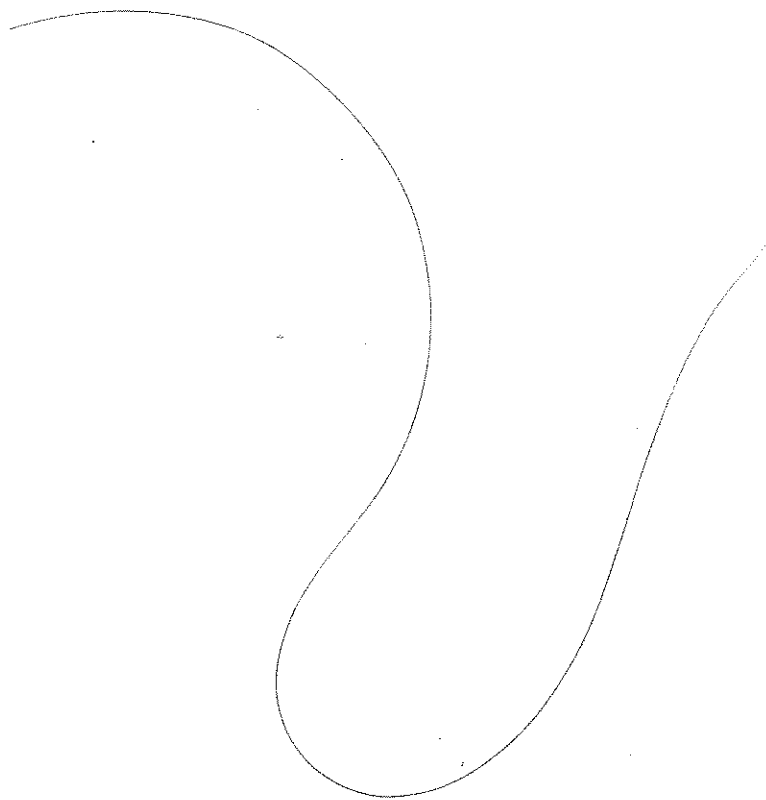
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Record of Committee Proceedings

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8-21-00

LAONA Forestry Mtg



file for Forestry hearing

MARK GREEN
8TH DISTRICT, WISCONSIN

**Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For additional information or
comment from Rep. Green, contact:
Chris Tuttle (office) 202-226-7402
(pager) 800-759-8888 PIN#1754041

June 20, 2000

Green denounces Forest Service plans again at public meeting

CRANDON – U.S. Rep. Mark Green (R-Green Bay) – in Washington this week for votes in Congress – had the following comments read into the record by a representative at a public meeting Tuesday night on the U.S. Forest Service’s proposed “Roadless Areas Initiative.”

“The purpose of this testimony is to share my continued concerns and frustrations with the administration’s proposed roadless policy. I appreciate the opportunity to enter my comments into the public record today.

“I want to start by thanking Chequamegon-Nicolet forest officials for holding this meeting, and I hope and trust that what you hear today will be sent to your superiors in Washington. I also want to take this opportunity to say that my frustrations all along have been focused on the White House and senior Interior Department officials rather than at Forest Service representatives from the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. I think we all know these policies have their origin at the highest level. In fact, I recently received a copy of a resolution passed by local 2165 of the National Federation of Federal Employees, which represents all of the employees of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, outlining their strong concerns with the roadless initiative. That’s right, even the people who are charged with managing the forests on a day to day basis recognize the problems with this type of one-size fits all Washington policy.

“Northeastern Wisconsin is currently under siege with several overlapping policies that will directly impact our access to the forests. I find it disturbing that we face several simultaneous policies on the future of our forests as this administration comes to a close. My greatest concern with this roadless policy is that it seems to be one part in an overall trend towards locking the public out of our public lands and raising troubling questions for the communities, businesses, and people who live as neighbors to our nation’s treasured woodlands.

- MORE -

*increased demand to
log off private
holding to qualify
for use value assessment*

GREEN ROADLESS AREA MEETING COMMENTS ADD ONE

“Earlier this year, I held a series of town hall meetings on our forests and the roadless initiative. Not surprisingly, hundreds of people showed up for these meetings to express their concerns with this proposal and the general attitude of the Clinton Administration towards forest management policies. At the time of these meetings, I expressed my frustration with the lack of specific answers to the critical issues facing our communities, particularly access to the forest and local control over local areas.

“When a local timber worker asks if these policies will eventually stand in the way of his paycheck, I think he is entitled to an answer. When an individual asks whether he will be able to ride his snowmobile on his favorite trails, I think he is entitled to an answer. When a community leader asks if she is going to be able to have some control over these policies that could so significantly change her community’s way of life, I think she is entitled to an answer.

“Unfortunately, the people of northeastern Wisconsin stand here as Washington throws one proposal after another in their direction. When is it going to stop? What are the real goals of this administration?”



Wisconsin Counties Association

June 5, 2000

CAET-USFS
Attn: Michael Dombeck, Roads Project
P.O. Box 22300
Salt Lake City, UT 84122

Re: Road Management Policy

Dear Mr. Dombeck:

I am writing on behalf of the Wisconsin Counties Association to express concern over the Forest Service's proposed Road Management Policy Rule change. After taking several sources into account, it is apparent that this proposal, like so many other new initiatives coming from Washington, D.C., will have an adverse effect on local control of the Nicolet-Chequamegon National Forest.

Our members and the people of Wisconsin are growing increasingly frustrated with the Forest Service as it continues to make proposals that ease the process of eliminating roads from the National Forests, as this would do. Other recent proposals from the National Forest Service ban new road building like the Roadless Initiative, or set aside still more acres as wilderness area as the new Forest Plan Revision for the Nicolet-Chequamegon does. Because motorized recreation and the timber industry are so vital to the economies of our member counties that rely on the Nicolet-Chequamegon Forest, the agenda that the National Forest Service appears to be following is simply not in the best interest of the people of Wisconsin.

Second, our membership is concerned that, as with the Roadless Initiative, the National Forest Service has done an inadequate job of making the public aware of just what this proposal would do. Your answers to your own "Frequently Asked Questions" contain vague language about shifting from a socio-economic analysis of such programs to a "more scientifically based" procedure without providing any idea as to what criteria will become more or less important. Your answers to how this proposal will affect the local planning process are also unclear. Lastly, there has been no effort on the part of the National Forest Service to educate the public, especially those who live and work in or near the Nicolet-Chequamegon Forest, as to any specifics of this plan or how the process will work. This has followed the unfortunate precedent set by the Roadless Initiative and the Forest Plan Revision process.

100 River Place, Suite 101 ♦ Monona, Wisconsin 53716 ♦ 608/224-5330 ♦ 800/922-1993 ♦ Fax 608/224-5325

Mark M. Rogacki, Executive Director

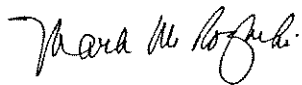
Mark D. O'Connell, Chief of Staff
Craig M. Thompson, Legislative Director

Darla M. Hium, Deputy Director
Lynda L. Bradstreet, Administrative Director

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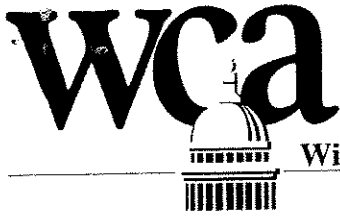
In summary, our members and many Wisconsin Citizens feel this proposal is yet another violation of the promise that was made by the National Forest Service when it purchased the lands that currently make up the Nicolet-Chequamegon Forest. This promise included local control and taking the people and economy of Wisconsin into consideration when changes were to be made, neither of which is evident in this proposal.

Sincerely,



Mark M. Rogacki,
Executive Director

cc: Governor Tommy Thompson
Lieutenant Governor Scott McCallum
Senator Russ Feingold
Senator Herb Kohl
Wisconsin State Assembly
Wisconsin State Senate
U.S. Representative Paul Ryan
U.S. Representative Tammy Baldwin
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Ashland County Board of Supervisors
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Wisconsin Counties Association

MEMORANDUM

TO: The National Forest Service

FROM: Mark M. Rogacki, Executive Director *mark*

DATE: June 20, 2000

SUBJECT: Notice of Roadless Area Conservation Rulemaking

The Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) would like to thank you for the opportunity to voice our concerns regarding the Roadless Area Conservation Rule proposal. On December 17, 1999 the Board of Directors of the Wisconsin Counties Association took a position to vehemently oppose the latest Roadless Initiative by President Clinton and the National Forest Service.

WCA's membership has legal, procedural, philosophical and economic objections over the proposed rule.

LEGAL

As outlined in a preliminary staff report of the Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health of the House of Representatives Committee on Resources, it is apparent that the National Forest Service and the Clinton Administration violated the due process rights of affected parties, as well as applicable statutes enacted by Congress to protect those rights, such as the Administrative Procedures Act (APA) and the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). This document outlines several conclusions that can be drawn from the review of documents and correspondence from the White House, the Department of Agriculture, the Forest Service and various environmental groups:

- The information received indicates that all of the Administration's roadless area initiatives were developed in an environmental vacuum with virtually all input coming from a select groups of environmentalists.
- There was disregard for balance in the advice solicited by other interested parties and a lack of concern for any adverse consequences on the affected users of the forestlands in question.
- The constant reference throughout the documents to the need for "permanent protection" of roadless areas reveals a predetermined outcome of the rule making.
- There was a clear lack of appreciation of the unique role of Congress under the Constitution in shaping policy on public lands and the environment.

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Lynda L. Bradstreet, Administrative Director

Secretary Glickman stated that the new rules were more than just a change in policy, but rather a fundamental change in philosophy. It appears that in order to accomplish this comprehensive change the new regulations and restrictions on future uses of National Forests were divided into several separate rules rather than one clear and straightforward proposal. The Roadless Initiative itself would affect 46,000 acres of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, and dictates how future management decisions will be outlined in Wisconsin's Forest Management Plan. However, the pervasiveness of possible regulations being proposed for National Forests under the Roadless Initiative is much clearer when considered in conjunction with the Transportation Policy proposal, and the Planning Regulations proposal.

For instance, the proposed rule for the National Forest System Road Management and Transportation System goes beyond the Roadless Initiative with the intent of decommissioning already existing roads. The new rules for Managing the National Forests states that the new focus is on sustainability, public participation, and improved use of science. However, under the proposal, each forest management plan developed by a Forest Supervisor must incorporate a regional guide developed by a Regional Forester. This guide is to be created with guidelines that are established and approved only by the Chief Forester, Mike Dombek. In addition, it appears that the main emphasis of the new rule is science over public participation. The team that is to help develop these plans and regional guidelines is to consist of a combination of Forest Service staff, federal government personnel and other individuals with technical and professional expertise. Rather than give local units of government representation on the planning committee, the rule simply requires that a notice of the preparation of a land and management plan and schedule be given to those who may be impacted. A provision for consideration of such conflicts is not adequate. Local units of government deserve to have the opportunity to help shape the forest management plans that have significant impacts on their communities and constituents.

Finally, within the roadless rule itself, the Procedural Alternatives are supposed to be guidelines to be used by local forest managers when creating or revising a forest management plan to determine if the "roadless character" should be preserved in additional areas. However, given that the long term intent of the National Forest Service is to significantly restrict multiple use activities in National Forests, there is concern that local forest staff will be directed to use local forest management plans as a vehicle to further that end. It is stated within the impact statement itself, that "it is reasonable to assume that the proposed procedural requirements would reinforce the effects achieved by the proposed requirements to prohibit road construction and reconstruction and that the procedural requirements would apply to a greater area than inventoried roadless areas..."

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June 20, 2000

Together, we must find a solution that will recognize the need for self-sufficient communities. Forest resources must be effectively managed in such an environmentally responsible manner that produces long term sustainable revenue to share with counties and schools as well as products for the nation. Only by empowering local communities and allowing the decision-making to take place on the local level - closest to the people- can the economic and social stability of rural counties be revitalized and restored.

WCA respectfully requests that the Administration and the National Forest Service give significant thought to the legal, procedural, environmental and economic implications of the Roadless Initiative and other National Forest Service Proposals before moving forward in the rule-making process.

Anti-logging bill overlooks practical policy

By Jeffrey C. Stier

GUEST COLUMN

Recently, the State Journal carried a guest column by Matthew Koehler headlined "We need to mobilize to protect forests from logging." Koehler has confused national forests with national parks and has ignored the laws that have guided the management of national forests for the past 100 years.

Commercial logging is not some covert operation the Forest Service has been conducting in the dead of night. The Organic Act (1897), the Weeks Act (1911), the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act (1960) and the National Forest Management Act (1976) all recognize production and harvest of timber as one of several purposes for which national forests are to be managed.

Koehler was also critical of spending tax dollars on federal timber harvests, including those in Wisconsin's own Nicolet-Chequamegon National Forest, and calls commercial logging "corporate welfare." The timber sale program on Wisconsin's national forest operates in the black and returned \$1.75 million to support public schools and roads in northern Wisconsin in 1997.

And while Koehler considered the timber from the national forests to be negligible in the grand scheme of things, it is worth noting that the United States is a net importer of forest products and that imports are at an all-time high. Placing our forests off-limits to harvests while exploiting those of other countries is hardly the way to responsible environmentalism.

In Koehler's words, "Every acre of our unlogged national forest land represents a link in a delicately balanced ecological chain.— a priceless treasure


that took million of years to create." This treasure presumably does not include the Nicolet-Chequamegon National Forest, which was created out of the cutover early in this century and is hardly pristine wilderness. Rather, it is a productive and diverse forest today precisely because foresters protected and managed it long before such work became environmentally fashionable.

Forest disturbance is a normal ecological event. A recent example is the windstorm that blew down an area of timber some 30 miles long and 3 to 5 miles wide in northern Minnesota last July 4. Yet Koehler cannot accept the harvest of a 40-acre aspen stand as part of the ecological chain, even if the harvest is conducted in accordance with all federal laws governing national forest management. He would tolerate no logging of any kind, not even the salvage logging that was done for human safety following the Minnesota windstorm.


The Forest Service has proposed revisions to regulations governing the national forests and is currently seeking public comment. The proposed regulations declare ecological sustainability to be the cornerstone of forest planning and require that planning be based on the best available science. Public debate will continue over why, where and how much logging should take place on the national forests. Public involvement in forest planning must be an important part of the decision-making process if our national forests are to serve as models of excellent stewardship.

But Koehler's one-size-fits-all logging ban would make forest management more difficult and at times even impossible, by precluding practices that encourage regeneration, reduce the risk of fire and insect and disease outbreaks, and diversify forest structure and composition. Such a ban is akin to demand-

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ing that doctors ensure the health of the American people while simultaneously prohibiting them from using modern medicine or surgery because they are not "natural."

Koehler referred only to national forests, but he should have told readers that the National Forest Protection and Restoration Act (H.R. 1396) he supports would prohibit all commercial logging, including salvage of dead timber to reduce fire risk or protect human safety, in all national parks, forests, wildlife refuges and all lands under the control of the Bureau of Land Management.

H.R. 1396 would abandon the science that underlies forest stewardship in favor of decision-making based on emotional appeals, simplistic economics and wishful thinking. One can but wonder why the 73 sponsors of this bill, including three of Wisconsin's representatives, think this will lead to good public policy.

Stier is a professor and chairman of the Department of Forest Ecology and Management at the UW-Madison.



Legislature Creates Division of Forestry

The 1999-00 Legislative session ended with help for the Packers and restoration of the property tax rent credit in an extraordinary session called by the Governor. One of our significant victories during the past year was the creation of the Division of Forestry within the DNR. Senator Roger Breske (D-Eland) and Representatives Lorraine Seratti (R-Florence) and John Gard (R-Peshtigo) were instrumental in guiding our amendment through the often-rocky budget process. The industry was very pleased when State Forester Gene Francisco was named to the position of Division Administrator.

As the DNR moves ahead to begin preparing the next 2-year state budget, we hope to continue working closely with Secretary George Meyer, Gene Francisco and others.

Governor Names Byron Hawkins to Forestry Council

It was also significant that the Governor named Byron Hawkins to the Governor's Council on Forestry. He will serve his term at the pleasure of the Governor.

The Assembly proposed a significant amount of legislation that had an impact on our industry. We supported the two bills that passed both the Senate and Assembly for the Governor's signature.

AB 504, Rep. John Gard's timber theft bill related to the cutting, removal and transportation of raw forest products, and seizures of forest products. The Governor will sign this bill when he signs the Green Bay Packers Bill.

AB 804/SB 450, Rep. Lorraine Seratti's bill, which has already been signed into law, reverts distribution of National Forest Payments back to towns, with at least 50% of the money used on public roads (the 99-00 budget directed the funding to schools, which caused many problems).

The following bills died in process and might be REINTRODUCED in the next legislative session beginning January 2001.

SB 27/AB 82 (Rep. Spencer Black/Senator Fred Risser) Appoint DNR Secretary by DNR Board rather than Governor.

AJR 49 (Rep. Eugene Hahn) Asks Congress to authorize production of industrial hemp.

AB 104 (Rep. Rick Skindrud) Allows managed forest land in

cities. Was amended to address our concerns but died in the Senate.

AB 311 (Rep. John Ainsworth) Trucks traveling slowly on certain highways need to be equipped with an amber strobe light.

AB 356 (Rep. Marc Duff) Created a privilege for environmental audit and provides immunity for disclosures related to environmental audits.

AB 669 (Rep. Mark Pettis) Timber contract bill involved new remedies relating to failure to pay owners of raw forest products.

AB 681 (Joint Legislative Council) Managed Forest - Related to adding a 15-year term for orders designating land under the managed forest land program, allowing the Department of Natural Resources to contract with private foresters to prepare management plans under the managed forest land program and making an appropriation.

AB 687 (Rep. Suzanne Jeskewitz) Made changes to land surveyor laws. We amended it in the Assembly to exempt foresters and remove language that could have been construed to require a certified survey for harvesting timber.

AB 737 (Rep. Sheryl Albers) Required a city, village, town or county to develop a procedure to mitigate the effects on landowners of certain zoning or land use decisions.

AB 738 (Rep. Sheryl Albers) Related to property taxation of land adjusted in value by state laws or local ordinances or local resolutions.

AB 739 (Rep. Sheryl Albers) Required notice to persons affected by zoning actions that change the allowable use of their property.

AB 776 (Rep. Steve Freese) Strengthens and clarifies existing rules about membership on the Natural Resources Board and conflicts of interest.

AB 792 (Rep. Lorraine Seratti) National Forest Land Acquisition - withdraws federal authority to acquire new land in Wisconsin for national forests.

Farmland Tax Stirs Interest in MFL

The Use Value Farmland Tax is winding its way through the courts. Last week the Dane County Circuit Court refused to issue a temporary restraining order against the Department of Revenue as it makes preparation to invoke

emergency implementation of property tax relief for farmland. The legality of "Use Value" for agricultural land has still not been addressed by the court. While the impact of Use Value Taxation, once implemented, is unknown, it has raised awareness of the MFL program, which has experienced a 40% increase in applications this year.

Early indications from the Department of Revenue show that the forest products industry should not be negatively impacted by the Use Value tax change.

More Funding for Gypsy Moth and Foresters

The DNR's requests for emergency funding for gypsy moth control and two additional foresters was approved by the Joint Finance Committee in early May. Because it was an emergency request, the funding will be available immediately. Many of the DNR's requests for additional non-forest related positions were denied.

Environmental Coalition in Planning Stage

An initiative launched this session was the creation

of a Wisconsin Environmental Coalition of Labor & Industry. We believe this could be a useful advocacy group in the future and will keep you apprised of its development.

Census Causes Redistricting

Looking ahead, besides elections, reapportionment is upon us again. The recent census could force a changing of legislative and congressional districts. As populations shift, so, too, do the lines marking legislative boundaries. There is a very real chance that Wisconsin could lose a congressional seat.

Meet Your Legislator

It is very important that every association member does their share to let candidates and incumbents know what issues are important to you. If you'd like to participate in having area legislators visit your site to learn more about the forest products industry, please let us know. Call Gunnar or Alice at (608) 255-7211 or e-mail us at: oconnor@itis.com.

Assembly Speaker, Scott Jensen

When I was sworn in as Assembly Speaker, I stressed the need for the state legislature to balance environmental stewardship with economic development. As you well know, when that balance is upset, all too often it is our families' economic interests that ultimately suffer.

In the 1999-2000 legislative session, we had the opportunity to put this balanced principle into practice by addressing some of the concerns of the forestry industry and I wanted to update you on the progress we have made over the past two years. Specifically, I would like to focus on two issues brought forward by Representative Lorraine Seratti - greater cooperation with the Department of Natural Resources and the recent actions by the U.S. Forest Service on the National Forest Management plans.

DNR Cooperation

The DNR has a regulatory role over our state's environment, but that role need not be adversarial. In this budget, we supported the creation of a Division of Forestry within the Department that we hoped would foster a more cooperative relationship with timber producers. From recent accounts, we are very pleased to learn that the new Division Administrator has demonstrated a willingness to work with you and other timber producers in a meaningful manner. In the next few years, we will be watching very carefully to make sure that these first impressions result in real productive changes.

June 2000



National Forest Management Plans

Recent action by the U.S. Forest Service brings to mind a phrase that is being used quite a bit these days - "they keep moving the goalposts." That is exactly what the U.S. Forest Service appears to be doing in its proposed rule for land and resource management planning for the National Forest System. The principles set forth regarding sustainable forest management were designed to balance local economic interests with environmental concerns. Unfortunately, the U.S. Forest Service appears to have weighed in on behalf of ecological concerns at the overwhelming expense of local timber producers.

The proposed rules would cause significant harm to the future viability of many small communities located within or around our state's national forests who have come to rely on the economic benefits provided by local timber producers and the tourism industry. To express our displeasure and raise awareness of this matter, the Assembly secured passage of legislation that would require the federal government to receive state approval before they could acquire more land for a national forest. While our action was rebuffed by the state Senate, we intend to keep the pressure on the U.S. Forest Service.

The Future of Forestry-Related Legislation

As we look ahead to the next legislative session, Assembly Republicans intend to adhere to the principle of balancing environmental and economic concerns when it comes to forestry-related legislation. We appreciate your continued support and encouragement in our efforts to convince our legislative colleagues, the DNR, and the U.S. Forest Service that when we can work together, we are all winners.

Forests Trimmed to Cut Risk of Fires

In Prevention Techniques, Flagstaff, Arizona, Sets Example That Other Cities Might Follow

By Patrick O'Driscoll, USA Today

FLAGSTAFF, AZ - After an alarmingly early start to this year's wildfire season, the urgent whine of chain saws might become a familiar sound of fire prevention in the inland West.

A 48,000-acre blaze that destroyed more than 220 homes in May in Los Alamos, NM, jolted many who live in the West's woodlands. The talk, from here to the nation's capital, is less about putting out wildfires than about thinning the dangerously overgrown forests that make such fires explode.

When Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt traveled to New Mexico to admit federal government blame for the Los Alamos fire, he cited Flagstaff, his hometown, as a model for how to protect booming communities on forest boundaries "so that the experience of Los Alamos is not repeated."

In the fire's wake, Congress is drafting emergency legislation for \$115 million for wildfire prevention work. That could include



both "prescribed" fires to remove flammable underbrush and the cutting of trees in crowded stands prone to devastating "crown" fires that race through dense treetops.

In June, Babbitt returned to New Mexico to crusade for fire safety in another potential tinderbox: the steep, overgrown forest drainage where Santa Fe, the state capital, get its water. Babbitt says that watershed is "at the very top of the list for... fireproofing."

Fireproofing is an everyday practice in Flagstaff, population 62,000. A gateway city to the Grand Canyon, Flagstaff is surrounded by 1 million acres of Ponderosa pine forest. It's a living laboratory for foresters and wildfire experts who are trying to fireproof the "urban-wildland interface," that risky perimeter where urban sprawl and scenic nature meet. The U.S. Forest Service estimates that as many as 40 million Americans live in such zones across the country.

Here and elsewhere, new subdivisions creep into the woods. Flagstaff has 17,000 acres of undeveloped forest within its boundaries. But since 1996, when a 16,000-acre wildfire threatened, city fire department crews have "treated" more than 1,500 acres by felling trees to reduce forest density and by setting controlled burns to clear undergrowth.

"If you're not creating stumps and smoke, you're not doing anything to treat this problem on the ground," says Jim Wheeler, Flagstaff's assistant fire chief. His office also promotes fire-safe construction and landscaping around new homes on the forest's doorstep.

"Fire is a definite concern," says Meg Roederer, who lives off Curling Smoke Road in the city's Observatory Mesa highlands. She and her husband, Lance, cleared and thinned their 5-acre parcel before building a 4,500-square-foot dream home last year. The city required them to install fire sprinklers, and

they used fire-resistant building materials. "You have to take responsibility and precautions when you choose to live in a wooded area," says Roederer, whose family carries extra insurance and has a fire escape plan.

Most local residents "love seeing us out there," says Mark Shiery, a city firefighter directing a crew of eight workers who felled trees last week in a city park. They give away the logs as free firewood and pile branches and other "slash" for burning in winter, when wildfire danger is low.

Even so, the size of the task is daunting. Wheeler estimates that it would take eight years for two year-round crews to finish the needed "fuel management." The city only has a single seasonal crew, spring to autumn. The General Accounting Office estimates that it would cost \$12 billion to do such work in all the nation's urban-wildland area.

Advocates for large-scale "restoration" of the overgrown forests have proposed a controversial way to help pay for the work.

They want to sell commercially the trees that are thinned out for fire safety.

About 15 local and regional agencies and groups formed the Grand Canyon Forests Partnership to accomplish the work. As a result, the Forest Service issued a proposal to restore 100,000 acres around Flagstaff. The idea is to approximate how the forest was before 19th-century logging, 20th-century overgrazing by livestock and decades of fire suppression.

It's based on research by Wally Covington of Northern Arizona University. It suggests that the Southwest's Ponderosa pines once grew in small islands of up to 15 trees, separated by grassy meadows. Beneficial, ground-level wildfires regularly burned through without destroying mature trees in towering infernos so common in today's "crown" fires.

The Timber Producer

Covington's scenario is to return the woods to scattered pine clusters, anchored by the forest's dwindling "yellowbellies": huge, centuries-old Ponderosas (named for their pinkish-yellow bark) that somehow escaped the lumberjack's blade.

"The forest densities have increased 10- to 20-fold," says Covington, a college contemporary of Babbitt. He will lead the Santa Fe tour today.

Skeptical environmental activists appealed the proposal last year and sued in March to stop the project. Although they support limited thinning of forests, most say the planned cuts are too drastic - in some cases, as many as 80% of the trees in an area. Some contend the plan is a veiled attempt to bring back commercial logging. Others argue that Covington's theory ignores evidence that intense crown fires did, indeed, occur centuries ago. They deride his scenario as "Wally World."

"You can't even pretend it's 'forest restoration' anymore," says local resident Roxane George of the Flagstaff Activist Network, a plaintiff in the lawsuit. "It's plain old log-

ging."

Sam Hitt, founder of Forest Guardians, a Santa Fe-based group that filed the lawsuit, says, "Removing four out of five trees for 100,000 acres around Flagstaff will certainly make the timber industry happy, but it will not protect your home."

Sharon Galbreath, who represents the Southwest Forest Alliance, a coalition of local and regional groups, contends the 100,000-acre zone is far greater than Flagstaff's true urban-wildland zone.

The plots "are in the middle of the national forest, with the nearest house 3 to 4 miles down the road," she says. "They're fanning the flames of public hysteria about wildfire."

However, Covington compares the results of his extensive experiments with thinning and burning to a medical breakthrough during a clinical drug trial: The treatment is "so obviously effective that you can't ethically keep the control group from receiving the treatment, too."

In the wake of the appeals and lawsuit, the Forest Service is redoing its proposal. That could take months

longer, now that the fire season is under way.

Extreme fire danger already is closing vast tracts of national forest in Arizona and New Mexico. Potential relief with the region's traditional mid-summer monsoon storms, is still at least a month away. And it seems that whenever one major fire is contained, another one flares up somewhere else.

Brad Ack of the Grand Canyon Trust, a partnership member says, "Everybody who is working on the project is out fighting fires." (*USA Today*) †

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FOREST MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AVAILABLE

Crews battle spring wildfires in Western Wisconsin -Dry conditions and downed trees added fuel to flames

*By John Elliott, Jackson County EM
Al Spaulding, La Crosse County EM
Cindy Struve, Monroe County EM*

Emergency responders in Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe and Trempealeau Counties battled two large wildfires on April 5, 2000, that threatened homes and forced evacuations.

A 650-acre fire in the rolling hills of northwestern La Crosse County spread quickly in winds of 25-50 mph. This fire was started approximately 4 miles west of County Highway A in what is referred to as the "Four Corners" area.

Fourteen fire departments responded to this fire. At one point these various fire crews positioned themselves across the line of advance of the blaze on Highway 162 to keep it from moving into Monroe County. Bulldozers were brought in from Fort McCoy and La Crosse.

A 450-acre fire northwest of South Beaver Creek (only about 10 miles from the La Crosse County blaze), occurred simultaneously in steep hills on the edge of Trempealeau County. Wind and deep gullies contributed to problems in fighting this second blaze. Flames directly threatened homes but quick action saved all of them.

For both fires, an estimated 300 to 350 nearby fire department members, a Black River Correctional crew, and state agencies were involved. **Downed trees from June 1998 straight-line winds provided ample fuel for the flames and made moving fire fighting equipment difficult.**

Over 50 families were evacuated. Although several homes were hosed down, none were reported to have burned in these two fires.

At one point, a unit of Department of Natural Resources firefighters were forced to shelter themselves during a "burn over" situation in which the fire actually swept over and around them.

Jackson County Emergency Management Director John Elliott, La Crosse County Emergency Management Director Al Spaulding, and Monroe County Emergency Management Director Cindy Struve, coordinated with each other and with emergency responders.

Thanks to the Salvation Army and the American Red Cross for providing food and shelter. Special thanks goes to Jerry Haberl and Rick Risler of Wisconsin Emergency Management for bringing out the Mobile Command Center trailer.

Financial relief for St. Nazianz

Low interest loans and grants have been designated to help with the recovery efforts in St. Nazianz.

Federal low-interest disaster loans are now available from the U. S. Small Business Administration (SBA), Disaster Assistance Program for homeowners, renters, landlords, and business owners located in Manitowoc County and the contiguous Counties of Brown, Calumet, Kewaunee, and Sheboygan. This assistance is available to those with any uninsured or under-insured damages caused by the severe storms and tornadoes that occurred on May 12, 2000.

SBA offers loans of up to \$200,000 to repair disaster-damaged homes. Home-

owners and renters are eligible for up to \$40,000 to replace personal property. Loans to businesses and non-profit organizations of up to \$1.5 million are also available to repair damage to real estate, machinery and equipment, inventory, etc. Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL's) also may be made to small businesses unable to pay bills and meet expenses because of this disaster.

Governor Thompson also released grants of \$10,000 to provide temporary housing for victims of the St. Nazianz storm. The Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) grant provides grants to local government or disaster relief agencies to provide temporary housing for people displaced by disasters.



Hail and winds of more than 100 MPH caused damage to many homes and businesses.

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Forest road plan worries loggers

Proponents want areas preserved

By NATHAN PHELPS
PRESS-GAZETTE

LAONA — The crack of the tree and thud as it hits the ground resonate through a small section of the forest near Crandon.

Behind the chain saw, Bill Lemerande is uncertain about his future logging near the Nicolet National Forest.

The Clinton administration and U.S. Forest Service are proposing a rule that would limit construction and reconstruction of roads in parts of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest and other national forests throughout the country — a plan they admit could cost hundreds of jobs nationally.

They contend the rule would help protect the environment and offer unspoiled wilderness, but some Northwoods residents and loggers fear the region could feel a serious economic pinch if the proposal is implemented.

"I don't know what else they expect a guy to do," said Lemerande, a 22-year logging veteran. "If they shut us down logging, or even cut a little bit back, it's going to hurt everybody."

About 3 percent of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest could be affected. The Forest Service first designated the areas "roadless" more than two decades ago.

Last October, the Clinton administration and Forest Service decided to re-evaluate the situation because of continuing pressure to open more of the land for timber harvesting. Since then, the government has been developing the plan and taking public comment.

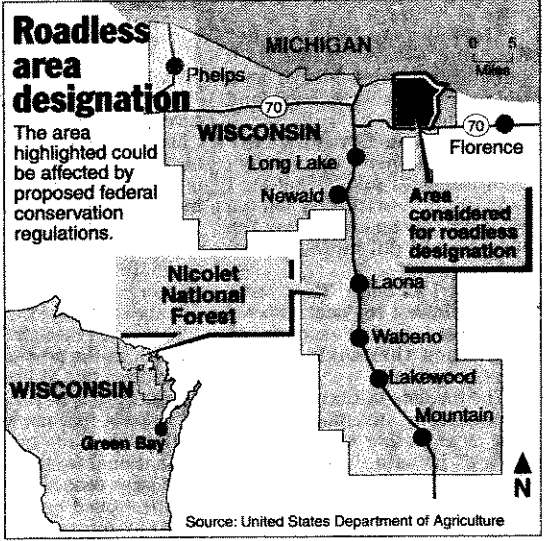
Please see Forest, A-2



Contract logger Mark Bath of Laona worries about his future in the timber industry if the government approves a rule prohibiting roads in some parts of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest in northern Wisconsin.



Bill Lemerande, a 22-year logging veteran, does not want the federal government to limit construction of roads in parts of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest.



Source: United States Department of Agriculture Press-Gazette

Crowd cheers Ten Commandments posting

readings echoed from the just so excited that it was "I'm real pleased," said were registered.

Forest/Impact of proposal on jobs, tourism unknown

From A-1

Mark Bath, 39, of Leona, cuts trees in the forest for Nicolet Hardwoods on a contract basis. Like Lemerande, he owns \$60,000 to \$70,000 worth of equipment and worries about the proposal.

"What else am I going to do? What else is here?" asked Bath while harvesting timber from a site on U.S. Forest Service land near Crandon.

Pointing to his forehead, a machine used to move timber from cut areas, Bath said, "What am I suppose to do with this \$50,000 piece of equipment? Raise the boom up and put birdhouses on it?"

But Carl Zichella, The Sierra Club's Midwest regional director in Madison, said the amount of production that could be lost won't be noticed.

"The roadless initiative will not be noticed by anyone doing logging or any other extractive industry," he said. "Earth to the timber industry. The sky is not falling. This is not a significant thing."

Unknown impact

A final rule is expected late this year, but just how the area's economic loss? The only honest answer, in my opinion, is we don't know for sure," said Paul Strong, a public affairs officer with the U.S. Forest Service in Rhineland.

He said some of that volume could be made up elsewhere in the forest and state.

But U.S. Rep. Mark Green, R-Green Bay would like to see solid figures.

"This is a dramatic step that's being proposed, and I believe we need a very clear understanding of what it could mean economically, environmentally and culturally," he said. "There has been no clear economic analysis of this done."

The proposal
Under the plan the government favors road construction and reconstruction — including tempo-

rary roads like those used in logging — would be prohibited in certain areas.

Nationwide, the Roadless Area Conservation Proposed Rule covers 54 million acres of national forests. That's about 28 percent of the total national forest system. In the Chequamegon Nicolet, at least 48,000 acres could be included in the proposed road prohibition.

The forest covers 1.5 million acres. Since 1983, the Nicolet and Chequamegon national forests have been managed as one administrative unit with headquarters in Park Falls and Rhineland.

In the Nicolet part of the forest, about 17,000 acres would be affected, mainly at the Whistler Lake wilderness area in Florence County Strong said.

That could mean a 9 percent reduction in the amount of timber offered for sale to lumber companies and mills, he said.

"To state that not being able to build new roads in 3 percent of the national forests would cause very large economic losses has to be questioned because there are so many uncertainties," Strong said.

Both Lemerande and Bath said that even if the timber supply is shifted to another part of the state, they don't want to leave their hometowns.

City and county officials also worry a purge of people could dilute the tax base and services they are able to offer to both residents and tourists.

Public comment on the rule is open until July 17. A final draft is expected in December.

Keep it wild

While the timber industry doesn't like the plan, others in the state and nation want to see wild areas preserved.

"I think it's possible it's going to affect some lumber jobs," said Rob Weekes, an outdoor enthusiast from Green Bay. "But with the land being developed the way it is, I think the economic value of a set-aside like that would far surpass what you could pull out in lumber."

He points to the Sylvania Wilderness Area in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan as an ex-



Nathan Phelps/Press-Gazette
Tim Lemerande cuts brush from newly harvested trees in a forest near Crandon.

ample of an area that has been left undeveloped and has heavy tourist traffic.

Areas without roads "allow you to experience nature in a way that is becoming much harder to do," Weekes said.

The government agrees. "We have a lot of roads on this forest... we don't have a whole lot of these unroaded areas of size and shape," said the Forest Service and Michigan, said the Forest Service has reduced the amount of timber coming from the national forest system from 12 billion board feet in 1980 to about 2 billion board feet.

Al Murray, a forester with Nicolet Hardwoods in Leona, said reductions from the roadless plan are not huge but take a toll when added to other areas taken out of production.

"They already cut out two-thirds of the timber they were producing and now they're taking another 6 percent," he said. "As you keep going, you're going to end up with nothing."

Nicolet produces lumber used in furniture, hardwood floors and other products.

The government estimates that could cost 550 timber-related jobs nationwide.

Critics of the plan say that number is underestimated. "I'll stay in it until I absolutely have to park it," said Bath, who is married with three kids. "I love

What's next

Public comment on the Roadless Area Conservation Proposed Rule remains open until July 17. Written comments can be sent to:

USDA Forest Service — CAET
Attention: Roadless Area Proposed Rule

P.O. Box 221090
Salt Lake City, UT 84122

Comments can be sent by e-mail to roadless@fs.fed.us.
Comments can be sent via fax to (877) 703-2492.

doing it, and I ain't going to give it up."

According to the Timber Producers of Wisconsin and Michigan, 37,424 people in the state are employed in forestry and wood products with another 53,572 employed in paper or pulp production.

May unemployment in Forest County was 4.8 percent; 4.3 percent in Florence County; and 4 percent in Oneida County.

Those counties are near the Nicolet portion of the forest and have unemployment rates above the state figure of 3.3 percent.

Brown County was at 2.3 percent last month, according to the state Department of Workforce Development.

There is some consensus in the timber industry that the roadless areas will be established, regardless of comments made by the public.

"We don't have a choice," Lemerande said. If worse comes to worse, "I put my stuff up for sale and hope somebody buys it before all this happens."

The impact of what happens in northeastern Forest County and other parts of Northwoods could have a trickle-down effect on consumers and paper mills in the Fox River Valley.

Murray said if the timber harvest slows in the United States, companies could look to foreign producers for wood and paper products.

"It's basic economics, as the supply goes down the price goes up," Murray said.

Lemerande added, "It's not only going to be just my family... it's going to be yours eventually."

To place an ad

To place an ad

To place an ad

To place an ad

Correction

LOCAL/STATE: People interested in attending the July 19 Asthma Camp at De Pere High School should call Mary Feldhausen at (920) 431-5042. The number was listed incorrectly in Saturday's Press-Gazette.

The Press-Gazette corrects factual errors promptly and courteously if you have a correction or clarification, please call the metro desk at (920) 431-6646.

an exceptionally fierce, vicious and villain. With his bloodhound face, spambling, spayfooted walk and New York speech, he seemed miles remote from the Hollywood concept of a leading man.

The Academy Award and the other Oscar — Madison changed all that. Henceforward his name would be above the title, and he was even allowed romance with the likes of Ingrid Bergman ("Cactus Flower"), Carol Burnett ("Pete n' Tullie") and Elaine May ("A New Leaf").

In his "real" life he enjoyed improving on the actuality of his own adventures, Matthew resembled the characters he played: bluntly outspoken, gruff, iconoclastic. He relished exposing — and exaggerating — his own foibles. He claimed to have lost millions in gambling over the years, and in 1983 proclaimed he had stopped betting.

"Gave it up after the Super Bowl," he said. "I had Buffalo (vs. the victorious Dallas Cowboys), and I just quit. Cold turkey." It was one of his many vows of abstinence. As Jack Lemmon remarked: "If you couldn't find Walter on the set you could look in the phone book; he'd be placing a bet."

In an industry where stars tip-toe around controversy with co-stars, Matthew was inclined to engage his leading ladies with both fist and foot. Matthew talked readily about his physical problems, which began with a 1964 heart attack. That event prompted him to give up his bad habits such as smoking and junk food, but his resolve was often the same as giving up the books.

While filming "Grumpy Old Men" in Minnesota in 1983, he contracted double pneumonia, and doctors marveled that he had survived. "I beat the odds," he said. Early Saturday his luck ran out, and he died of a heart attack at 79.