

## 2011 Program Report Card: EC Fund (State Forest Lands Management in Connecticut) Department of Environmental Protection

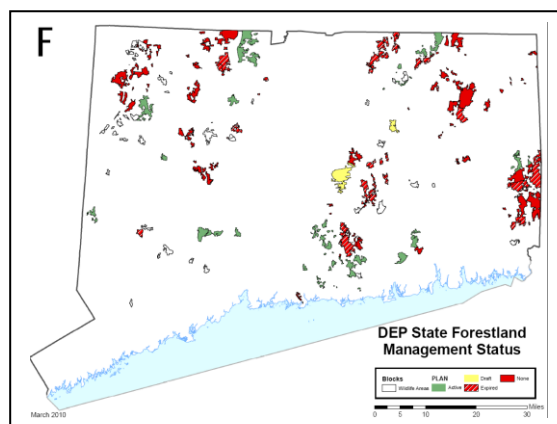
*(January 13, 2011)*

**Quality of Life Result:** As the largest single landowner and forest manager in the State of Connecticut, State Lands Management ensures State owned forestlands remain viable and productive forest ecosystems providing clean air, water, carbon storage, outdoor recreation, and forest products to all Connecticut residents while enhancing and protecting unique, fragile, and threatened fish and wildlife habitats. Forestry, when viewed as a land-use type, contributes significantly to human quality of life. All state forestlands flourish for the health and enjoyment of Connecticut residents.

**Contribution to Result:** State Lands Management is charged with the stewardship of 170, 000 acres of forestland held in public trust. Approximately three million board feet of high value, locally grown forest products are sold annually to small business owners who either directly or through resale to primary and secondary wood manufacturing facilities turn raw forest commodities into value added forest products such as flooring, furniture, and other building materials. Science based, resource driven stewardship decisions create resilient forest conditions able to respond to forest insect, disease outbreaks and catastrophic weather events. This ensures public forestlands provide the greatest good to the greatest many Connecticut residents who enjoy a wide variety of outdoor recreation such as; hiking, camping, hunting, fishing, nature viewing, and harvesting locally grown domestic renewable energy (firewood) for home heating purposes. State forests serve as a real life demonstration of excellent forest management for 100,000 residents who own the remaining 1.3 million acres of Connecticut forest land.

**Partners:** Municipalities, neighbors to the forest, Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, Connecticut Forest and Park Association, UCONN Extension Service, Connecticut College, Audubon, Nature Conservancy, Drinking Water Utilities, Department of Agriculture, Connecticut Farm Bureau, Tree Wardens, Connecticut Urban Forestry Council, and Connecticut forest products industry.

### Performance Measure 1: State Forests with current forest management plans



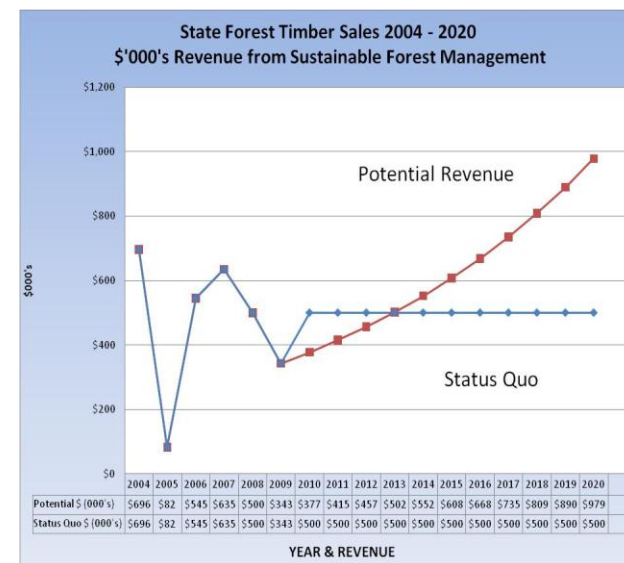
**Story behind the baseline:** Currently, there are 32 State Forests totaling about 170,000 acres in the [Connecticut State Forest system](#). These are lands owned by the State of Connecticut and managed by DEP's Division of Forestry and are distributed throughout the state. One –third of these forests have current 10 year forest management plans, 20,000 acres have expired forest management plans, and the remaining 100,000 acres have no recent professional evaluation or planning. The current forest age,

health, tree species composition/distribution, and wildlife habitat importance is not documented and for the most part unknown on these remaining acres. Constraints limiting increased number of managed acres include manpower and use of technology. Per CGS CH 449 Sec 23-32a, the [October 2008 Yale University study](#) of annual sustainable yield from Connecticut's State Forest system concluded current timber harvests are less than one-third sustainable. In other words the forest resource has the ability to provide three times the current forest products, three times the current revenue to State, and three times the number of private sector green jobs without compromising the other natural resource attributes enjoyed by Connecticut residents and visitors.

**Proposed actions to turn the curve:** A DEP results based project team identified forest management planning process improvements using electronic data recorders, creating a centralized data base, and utilizing updated geographic information systems. Full implementation will reduce forest management plan development time by 49% at current staff

levels. This will enable DEP to double the number of State Forest acres with management plans in 10 years.

Performance Measure 2: Potential Revenue from sustainably harvested timber annually from State Forests.



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*Actual SFY 10 Total Program Exp.:* **\$483,000**    *State Funding:* **\$483,000**    *Federal Funding:* **\$0**    *Other Funding:* **\$0**    *Income:* **\$570,000**

*Est. SFY 11 Total Program Exp.:* **\$497,000**    *State Funding:* **\$497,000**    *Federal Funding:* **\$0**    *Other Funding:* **\$0**    *Income:* **\$587,000**

**Story behind the baseline:** Increasing the number of State Forest acres with current management plans from 50,000 acres to 100,000 acres in 10 years should proportionally increase the number of acres harvested. The data in chart (above) includes actual revenue from harvested timber from 2004 through 2009 then projected 10 years at a constant 10 percent incremental increase. The 2005 dip in harvested board feet is attributed to substantial revisions to standard operating procedures. Note immediate return to normal harvest levels thereafter. On average three million board feet of timber is harvested annually from State Forests. The Yale sustainability study calculated over nine million board feet could be harvested annually without depleting the forest resource. (And, DEP believes that significant improvements in biodiversity through proper harvesting of these forest resources can be achieved). State forests currently contain approximately 640 million board feet of accessible timber. If nine million board feet were harvested annually, at the calculated sustainable rate, at the end of 50 years State Forests would contain approximately 640 million board feet. No net change. The sustainable yield calculation includes tree replacement through natural regeneration and increased annual volume appreciation through improved annual tree growth.

### **Proposed actions to turn the curve:**

Significant forest planning efficiencies realized through modernized data collection, storage, and

management means more acres of State Forests having current management plans designed to increase individual tree growth, improve essential wildlife habitat, and spur economic activity through the harvest and creation of green jobs producing value added forest products. DEP will have sufficient information to make informed decisions required to increase harvest rates reaching Yale's calculated sustainable volumes. DEP will need to increase monitoring forestry staff to ensure competitively bid timber harvest contracts are executed in an environmentally sensitive manner. Increased staff costs will be offset by increased revenues generated through sale of forest products. DEP increased state land management staff from two to four seasonal employees in FY 10. Four additional full-time EP forest technicians will provide sufficient assistance to implement new forest management plans.

Performance Measure 3: Enhanced ecosystem services derived from third party certified State Forests



**Story behind the baseline:** Per CGS Ch. 447 Sec. 23-20. The Commissioner of DEP shall apply to have State forests or the forest products sold third-party certified under one or more acknowledged sustainable forest certification systems by January 10, 2010, provided the Commissioner uses private funds for the cost of all such applications. Current levels of forest management on State forest disqualify the Commissioner from applying for third party certification therefore pursuit of private funding cannot be genuine.

**Proposed actions to turn the curve** Fully implementing DEP's results based forest sustainability project coupled with a commitment to increase forest harvest monitoring staff will enable the Commissioner to seek funds to complete a third party certification application. Third party certifiers will accept graduated plans to increase sustainable forest management. With certification in place, additional opportunities and acknowledgements will follow such as carbon trading, and possibly ecosystem service credits. State forests will become more diverse, imperiled wildlife habitat saved, and Connecticut grown forest products and green jobs created.

