

Forest Futures Visioning Process and Recommendations: The Fatal Flaws

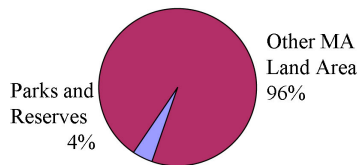
The “Forest Vision” process was formed to make recommendations on the future management of Massachusetts' state forests after strong citizen protest over harmful state public land logging. See www.maforests.org The process comprised of a Technical Steering Committee (TSC) and an Advisory Group of Stakeholders (AGS) representing public interests.

Problems with the Process

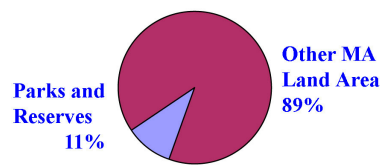
1. The “Forest Future Vision” process has left out 44% of state owned public forests (240,000 acres), including the heavily logged Quabbin watershed protection forests and Department of Fish & Wildlife forests.
2. The TSC which holds the decision power has been dominated by timber interests and coached by state personnel who promote aggressive logging of state forests. Citizen efforts to fairly balance the TSC were spurned by the state.
3. The AGS majority, which includes environmental and public interest advocates produced dissenting statements and recommendations, many of which have been ignored and/or marginalized in the TSC recommendations.
4. The state is not allowing the AGS to present the dissenting opinion at the public forums. The AGS majority calls for protecting 80% of the state public forests under consideration from commercial logging.
5. The public forum small discussion group format used at all venues except Amherst stifles citizen participation. This structure is unacceptable as it weakens and dilutes the voice of the people. Citizens have the right to hear each other first hand and to directly express dissenting opinions. Also, there is no public forum in Boston, the most populous area.

Problems with the TSC Recommendations and Genuine Solutions

1. Only 216,000 acres of the state forests would be set aside in parks and reserves, meaning that 61% of state public forests would be open to commercial logging and statewide, only 4% of the 5,017,000 acres of all Massachusetts’ land area would be protected from logging in state parks and reserves. **Prohibit commercial logging on state public forests.**



TSC Proposal



With State Forests Fully Protected

2. Allows clearcuts up to 5 acres (~5 football fields) There is no legitimate justification for clearcutting, it is the most destructive form of forestry. **Prohibit clearcutting on state public forests, watersheds or parks.**
3. Biomass fuel extraction from public forests is not prohibited. **Specifically prohibit biomass extraction.**
4. The proposal for creating “early successional wildlife habitat” is used as a false excuse for clearcutting forests. **Instead, maintain existing open areas in 10-15 year rotations to provide this habitat if genuinely needed.**
5. Promotes demonstration logging “education” projects that promote logging to benefit the timber industry. **Keep state public lands off limits to this product marketing and propaganda campaign for private industry.**
6. Logging in Parks and Reserves is not clearly prohibited. **Definitively prohibit logging in parks and reserves.**
7. Promotes FSC certification program, which is costly, promotes logging and has proven ineffective for protecting public forests. See www.fsc-watch.org **Instead, implement strong regulations and oversight to protect forests.**
8. The study proposes to elevate the Forestry Bureau to a higher commissioner level. This move is a brazen “power grab” by timber interests. **Instead, a forest ecologist or conservation biologist position should be created to advise the state agencies on how to best protect and preserve public forests.**

Please email MODRDCRFFVP@umb.edu with your comments to protect public forests!