

Subject: Scientist ECL letter  
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Date: Thu, 13 Mar 2003 19:40:24 -0500 (EST)

Thought folks on this list would be interested in the letter to which Alan Gregory recently referred, sent to President Bush last year by 221 scientists urging him to end commercial logging on national forests. I've also attached the list of signatories which includes such notables as Dr. E.O. Wilson, Harvard, Dr. Anne Ehrlich, Stanford, Dr. Peter Raven, 2000 National Medal of Science Winner, and Dr. David R. Foster, Director of Harvard Forest.

Rachel Martin

Tuesday, April 16, 2002

The Honorable President George W. Bush  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

As conservation-minded scientists with many years of experience in biological sciences and ecology, we are writing to bring your attention to the need to protect our National Forests. Logging our National Forests has not only degraded increasingly rare and valuable habitat, but also numerous other services such as recreation and clean water.

Our National Forest System was first established over one hundred years ago to bring an end to the reckless destruction that had ravaged wildlife habitat and watersheds. At the time, Congress acknowledged that establishing National Forests would provide America with diverse wildlife, healthy watersheds, and a sustainable supply of wood products.

Unfortunately, the past emphasis of management has been on logging and the original vision for our National Forests has failed to be fully realized. During the past several decades, our National Forests have suffered from intense commercial logging. Today almost all of our old growth forests are gone and the timber industry has turned our National Forests into a patchwork of clearcuts, logging roads, and devastated habitat. More than 3,000 species of fish and wildlife and 10,000 plant species-- including 230 endangered plant and animalspecies-- make their home in National Forests. Scientific research has repeatedly reaffirmed the tenet that wildlife need an abundant, healthy, and intact environment to survive. Unless the destruction of fragile ecosystems is immediately reversed through scientifically based restoration and recovery, the damage done to terrestrial and aquatic habitat will be irrevocable.

It is now widely recognized that commercial logging has damaged ecosystem health, clean water, and recreational opportunities-- values that are highly appreciated by the American public. The continued logging of our National Forests also wastes American tax dollars and diminishes the possibilities of future economic benefits. The Forest Service and independent economists have estimated that timber accounts for only 2.7 percent of the total values of goods and services derived from the National Forests, while recreation and fish and wildlife produce 84.6 percent. Annually, timber produces roughly \$4 billion per year while recreation, fish and wildlife, clean water, and unroaded areas provide a combined total of \$224 billion to the American economy each year. When the dramatic values of ecological goods and services are taken into account, it is clear that protecting National Forests creates more economic benefits than continued logging. Moreover, only 4 percent of America's timber supply comes from National Forests. Timber should no longer be extracted from our National Forests, especially when it comes at the expense of biological diversity and healthy ecosystems.

Logging has caused devastating impacts on the ability of our National Forests to provide wildlife habitat and economically valuable goods and services. The loss of biodiversity is the folly our descendants are least likely to forgive us. National Forests are our largest source of wildlife habitat, clean water, and recreation areas. Without protection from further logging, the biological diversity we so greatly need could be lost. Mr. President, we urge you to end the destructive practice of commercial logging in the National Forests and to begin a scientifically based program to restore habitat and native species.

Sincerely,  
221 Phd Scientists

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Protecting and Restoring Allegheny Forests

"We deeply need the humility to know ourselves as the dependent members of a great community of life."

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The Pennsylvania Biodiversity Listserve encourages open discussion about biodiversity issues in the state. It is hosted by the Allegheny Institute of Natural History, University of Pittsburgh-Bradford and is moderated by the Pennsylvania Biodiversity Partnership. The opinions expressed in messages are those of the authors and NOT the Pennsylvania Biodiversity Partnership.