

Review: Farm Bill 2002 Forum

Last May, Congress passed the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, otherwise known as the 2002 Farm Bill. The legislation contains a number of provisions that create or modify forestry-related programs. Not only will these programs help ensure the sustainable management of our nations' forests, they will also provide much-needed technical, financial, and educational assistance to non-industrial, private forest landowners. Various agencies within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) will coordinate with states to develop rules and implementation strategies for these programs.

The Pinchot Institute for Conservation hosted "Farm Bill 2002 Forum: Review and Discussion of Forestry Opportunities" on August 8, 2002 at the Washington Terrace Hotel in Washington, DC. The forum's objectives were to highlight the forestry-related provisions of the 2002 bill, the agency's potential strategies for implementing them, and to provide opportunities for the public to provide input to the agency.

Approximately 80 individuals participated in the forum. These individuals represented state and federal agencies, forest landowner associations, community organizations, environmental organizations, universities, and private forest landowners.

The first half of the forum consisted of presentations from federal and state agency representatives and Congress. The presentations highlighted several programs that were introduced through the Farm Bill's Forestry Title (which was mentioned in the previous issue of this newsletter), including the Forest Land En-

hancement Program (FLEP), the Sustainable Forestry Outreach Initiative (SFOI), and the Community and Private Lands Fire Assistance Program (CPLFA). Conservation Title programs that provide opportunities for the forestry community were also reviewed. Several USDA agencies—including the Forest Service, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Farm Service Agency—have responsibility for administering these programs. Speakers noted that these programs are being developed collaboratively by federal agencies and non-federal stakeholders, such as state foresters, state committees, landowners, etc.

Following two lunchtime presentations by private forest landowners, the afternoon was devoted to breakout sessions on the Forestry and Conservation Titles' programs that presented during at morning panels. At these sessions, participants asked questions of federal and state representatives, and provided invaluable comments on the proposed implementation of the programs. Agency representatives indicated that they would consider this input as they develop implementation strategies for the programs.

The Pinchot Institute has produced a report that summarizes the morning presentations and compiles the participant's comments from the afternoon breakout sessions. Appendices include the forum's agenda, a participant list, and fact sheets on each of the programs discussed.

The report is available on our website at www.pinchot.org/pic/farm-bill/forum.html. If you would like to receive a printed copy, please email publications@pinchot.org or call (202) 797-6580.

