



Forest Facts

THE MONTREAL PROCESS

April 2007

In its technical reports, correspondence, and public meetings, the Oregon Department of Forestry frequently refers to something called “The Montreal Process.” Its concepts are important to sound stewardship practices in Oregon’s forests, and in forests around the world.

History

At the 1992 United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, the U.S. committed itself to the concept of forest sustainability. In 1994, the U.S. participated in the *Working Group on Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management*¹⁹ of Temperate and Boreal Forests (known as the Montreal Process group). The working group was charged with developing internationally recognized criteria and indicators for the conservation and sustainable management of temperate and boreal forests at the national level.

Along with 11 other nations, the United States was a signatory to the *Montreal Process Santiago Declaration* in 1995.²⁰ This group of countries represents:

- more than 90 percent of the world’s temperate and boreal forests
- 60 percent of all the world’s forests
- 45 percent of the world’s trade in wood and wood products
- 35 percent of the world’s population.

The *Santiago Declaration* established seven criteria and 67 indicators of sustainable forest management for use by forest managers, policy-makers, and the general public. A “criterion” is defined as a category or

process by which sustainable management may be assessed. An “indicator” is defined as a measure (or measurement) of an aspect of a criterion.

The seven criteria are:

1. Conservation of biological diversity
2. Maintenance of productive capacity of forest ecosystems
3. Maintenance of forest ecosystem health and vitality
4. Conservation and maintenance of soil and water resources
5. Maintenance of forest’s contribution to global carbon cycles
6. Maintenance and enhancement of long-term multiple social and economic benefits to meet the needs of societies
7. Legal, institutional, and economic framework for forest conservation and sustainable management

Montreal Process Indicators

The first six criteria deal with forest conditions, attributes or functions, and the values or benefits associated with the environmental and socio-economic goods and services that forests provide. These have become the goals and guideposts for the Montreal Process.

The Montreal process established 67 indicators that describe seven criteria or goals necessary for the conservation and sustainable management of temperate and boreal forests (The Montreal Process, 1999).

They are:

- conservation of biological diversity
- maintenance of productive capacity

- forest ecosystem health and vitality
- conservation of soil and water resources
- forests' contribution to global carbon cycles
- socioeconomic benefits
- legal and institutional framework.

Another “first” for Oregon

Oregon’s Board of Forestry has endorsed the use of this internationally recognized criteria and indicator framework as a tool to respond to legislative direction to assess and report on the cumulative effects of forest practices. In 2000, Oregon became the first state in the nation to publish a “first approximation report” to assess the status and trends of the state’s forest resources as measured against the Montreal Process criteria and indicators.

In Oregon’s *First Approximation Report for Forest Sustainability*, the indicators are presented not as a set of thresholds that must be met to achieve sustainability, but rather as a set of agreed-upon topics on which to base forest policy dialogues. The report provided a snapshot of Oregon’s forests at that point in time, based on available data, and a starting point for discussions about future forest sustainability.

The Forestry Program for Oregon

The seven strategies listed in the *2003 Forestry Program for Oregon* are directly related to the Montreal Process criteria:

Strategy A. Promote a sound legal system, effective and adequately funded government, leading-edge research, and sound economic policies.

Strategy B. Ensure that Oregon's forests provide diverse social and economic outputs and benefits valued by the public in a fair, balanced, and efficient manner.

Strategy C. Maintain and enhance the productive capacity of Oregon's forests to improve the economic well-being of Oregon's communities.

Strategy D. Protect, maintain, and enhance the soil and water resources of Oregon's forests.

Strategy E. Contribute to the conservation of diverse native plant and animal populations and their habitats in Oregon's forests.

Strategy F. Protect, maintain, and enhance the health of Oregon's forest ecosystems, watersheds, and airsheds within a context of natural disturbance and active management.

Strategy G. Enhance carbon storage in Oregon's forests and forest products.

In 2007, the Oregon Board of Forestry endorsed a set of 19 Oregon Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management. These indicators will provide a foundation for future measurements and discussion regarding the environmental, economic, and social conditions and trends of Oregon’s forest resources. Each of these Oregon indicators can be linked to one or more Montreal Process indicators used in comparable national and international forest assessments.

In 2003, the United States published a report on the conditions and trends of the nation’s forest resources using the criteria and indicators as an organizing framework.²¹ The National Association of State Foresters has produced an online publication titled *Principles and Guidelines for a Well-managed Forest*. These principles and guidelines are also built on the Montreal Process criteria.²²