



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

LANSING

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May 5, 2006

The Honorable Michelle McManus, Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Natural Resources
905 Farnum Building
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536

The Honorable Howard Walker, Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Natural Resources
S-1388 House Office Building
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7514

Dear Senator McManus and Representative Walker:

Pursuant to Section 804, PA 154 of 2005, a combined report of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) timber treatments during the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2005-2006 and limiting factors during Fiscal Year 2004-2005 is attached.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Sharon M. Schafer, Chief
Budget and Support Services
517-335-3276

Attachment

cc: Senate Appropriations Subcommittee Members
House Appropriations Subcommittee Members
Ms. Jessica Runnels, Senate Fiscal Agency
Dr. Kirk Lindquist, House Fiscal Agency
Ms. Mary Lannoye, State Budget Director, Department of
Management and Budget (DMB)
Mr. Jacques McNeely, DMB
Ms. Jennifer Harrison, DMB
Director Rebecca Humphries, DNR
Mr. Dennis Fedewa, Chief Deputy, DNR
Ms. Arminda Koch, Resource Management Deputy, DNR
Mr. Dennis Fox, Chief of Staff, DNR
Mr. Rodney Stokes, Legislative Liaison, DNR
Ms. Lynne Boyd, DNR
Ms. Jane Schultz, DNR

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**Department of Natural Resources
Timber Report
Combined First Quarter FY 2005-06 and Annual FY 2004-05**

Background

In December, 2005, Michigan's state forest system was certified under both the Sustainable Forest Initiative (SFI) and the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) third party forest certification protocols. Forest certification protocols require public participation in forest management planning and forest operations (SFI Objective 12; FSC Principles 4, 6, 7, 8 & 9). This effort is essential in order for primary wood producers in Michigan to have continued access to national and international markets. The Department of Natural Resources' (Department) investment in forest certification will strengthen Michigan's forest products sector.

The Department's compartment review process has been audited by both the SFI and the FSC and has been recognized as a key public participation mechanism that meets requirements for forest certification.

First Quarter FY 2005-2006 Timber Treatments

Timber treatments in a given year are based on decisions made two years prior during the compartment review process. The Fiscal Year 2005-2006 plan of work addresses prescriptions on approximately 58,169 acres available for timber sale preparation. Timber managers have developed work plans to put up for sale all 58,169 prescribed acres. Timber sale preparation is done by Department staff and through timber marking contracts with consultants.

Timber sale preparation-marking contracts were awarded for approximately 5,300 acres in the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2005-2006. Typically during the first quarter of the fiscal year, fewer acres are prepared for sale than during subsequent quarters due to seasonal management activities, such as wildlife management during the deer season. Forest certification activities also had a major impact in driving down the number of acres prepared for timber sales during this period.

FY 2004-2005 Limiting Factors

Factors Limiting Timber Management

Although there may be a primary barrier to commercially harvesting a forest stand, there are typically multiple conditions to be resolved before a commercial harvest treatment may occur. Some limiting factors are temporary, while others are more permanent. For example, age and size diversity refers to maintaining a balanced range of forest types in all stages of growth. This provides a sustainable even flow of forest benefits, particularly timber and wildlife habitat, and a diversity of forest covers over time. A forest stand that is not cut in one ten-year cycle may be cut in the next ten-year cycle to maintain forest diversity. These decisions are made through the established compartment review process based on silvicultural criteria. The conditions most often cited as limiting timber harvest were:

- Too wet
- Delayed treatment for age/size class diversity

- Potential or designated old growth
- Inadequate volume due to low stocking/diameter
- Retention of stand for regeneration purposes

Plans and Efforts to Address Limiting Factors

The Department has taken several steps to review and address factors limiting timber availability including:

- Hiring additional foresters to assist in timber management activities
- Planning training in 2006 (with forest industry) to demonstrate equipment technology and advances specifically for wet areas
- Establishing a statewide Biodiversity Team to develop an old growth and biodiversity stewardship strategy that identifies biological and social values and compatible forest treatments and will provide a framework for addressing the potential or designated old growth
- Establishing a Special Conservation Area public recommendation process to comply with forest certification requirements
- Undertaking two key activities by the interdisciplinary Vegetative Management Team: updating and revising silvicultural guidelines and recommending methods for assessing cervid impacts on forest regeneration
- The Forest Management Advisory Committee will continue to assist the Department in achieving a balance between economic uses, social issues and environmental protection of state forestlands

The Department will continue to identify and resolve factors limiting timber management.