Setting the scene – Forests and the Sustainable Development Goals

(Hardwood forests in Virginia)

Guy Robertson

US Forest Service

Research & Development

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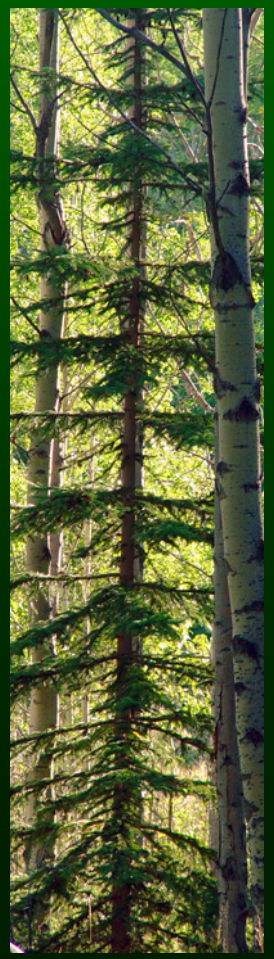
UN Sustainable Development Goals



(Outside Jasper, Canada)

- 17 Goals with 169 associated targets
  - Only two of which directly pertain to forests
- But forests and wood products have linkages throughout the SDG framework
- As such, the SDGs prompt us to think broadly and deeply about the relationship between forests and human aspirations for the future

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Forest Specific SDGs

(Urban Forest in Portland Oregon)

- 15.1.1 Forest area as a proportion of total land area

- US performance?
  - Good. Forest area stable to slightly increasing at around 770 million acres (312 million hectares)

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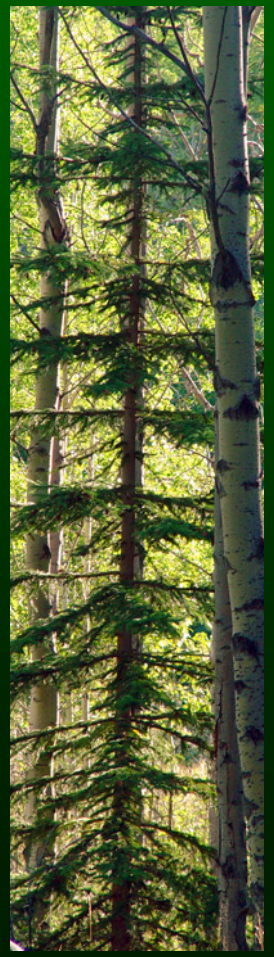
Forest Specific SDGs (2)



- 15.2.1 Progress towards sustainable forest management (5 subindicators)
  1. Forest area net change rate
  2. Above-ground biomass stock in forest
  3. Forest in Protected areas
  4. Forests in long-term management plan
  5. Forest under third party certification

Forest Specific SDGs (3)

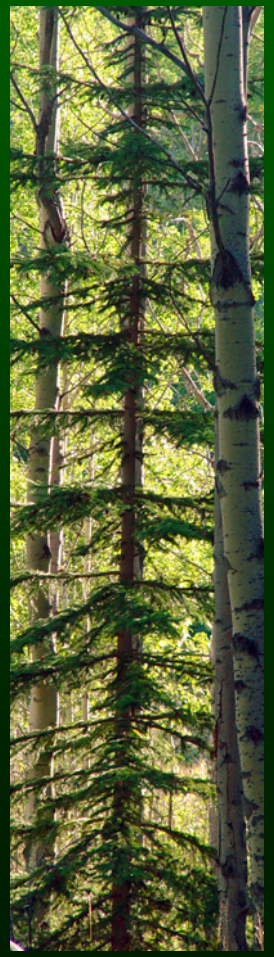
- US performance on 15.2.1?
  - Good. Stable to slightly increasing levels on most indicators
  - Reporting channels on certification remain unclear

BUT!

Disturbance, fragmentation and loss of biodiversity. These SDG measures do not target primary areas of US forest management concern

(Understory, Coast Range, Oregon)

Forest Specific SDGs (4)



US experience meeting reporting requirements?

It Was Easy!

- Well developed national inventory and related forest reporting activities
- UN FAO reporting infrastructure and custodianship of SDGs 15.1.1 and 15.2.1

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Forest Specific SDGs (4)

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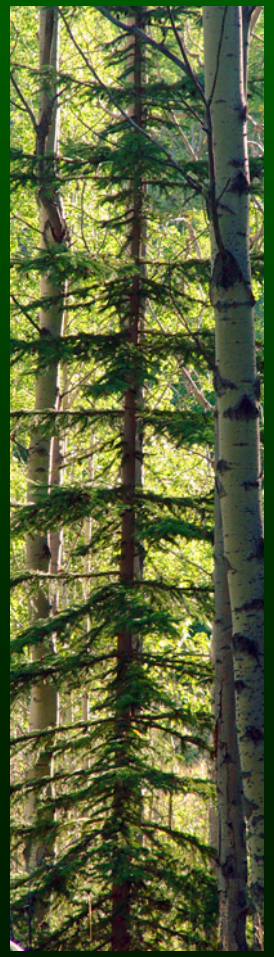
Reporting on Forests for the other SDGs?



Not so Easy

- A number of measures may call for forest data as a component of broader reporting requirements, but framing, compilation and harmonization will be very challenging

At the same time, forests have crucial implications for many of the SDGs. It's our job to identify and highlight them

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Forest contributions to other SDGs

Including (but in no way limited to) the presentations in this session:

SDG 6—Water

SDG 7—energy

SDG 11—Sustainable communities

SDG 13—Climate

(And forest ownership implications for attainment of SDG 15)

1990s Conflict in Forest Management

(Wahkeena Falls in the Columbia Gorge)

"Timber Wars" in the Pacific Northwest (and elsewhere):

Forest Preservation	VS	Timber Harvest
Old Growth & Spotted Owl		Industry
ENGOs and Public Opinion		forest dependent communities

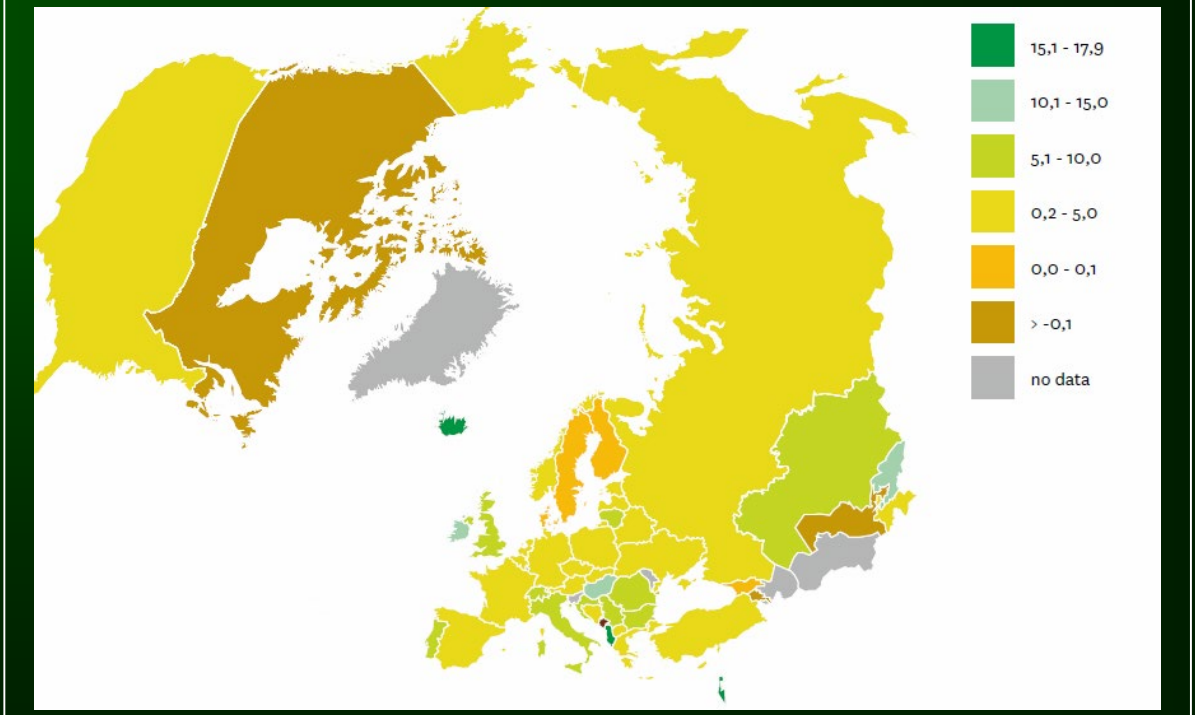
Zero sum game and <u>scarcity paradigm</u>

Formative experience in the careers of many foresters and environmentalists of a certain age

Increasing Fiber Supply in N. Hemisphere

- ECE Region forest area increased by 28 million ha (1.5%) between 2000 and 2015.
- Mostly natural expansion onto agricultural land, also some afforestation under public programmes

ECE Region. Percent change in forest area between 2000 and 2015



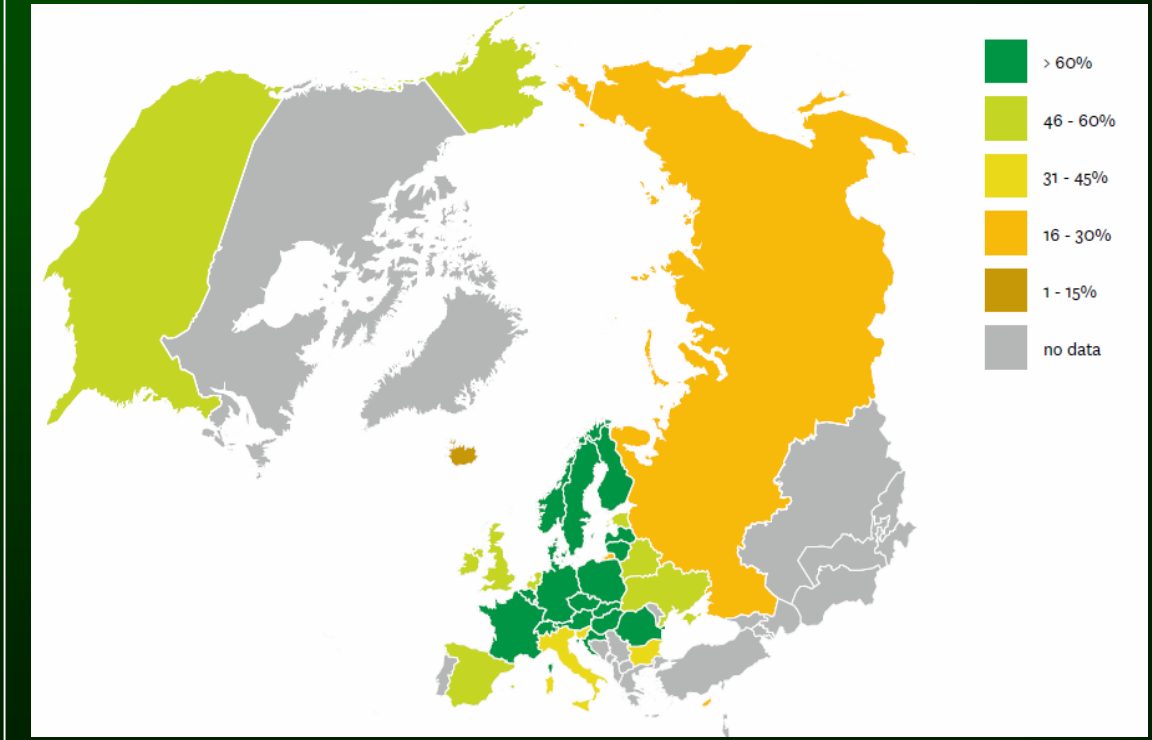
Source: Forests in the ECE Region: Trends and challenges in achieving the global objectives on forests UNECE 2015

Increasing Fiber Supply in N. Hemisphere

- Growing stock, total and per hectare, has been increasing steadily

- Net annual increment has risen, and is more than harvest in all countries where this parameter is measured.

Ratio of fellings to net annual increment, 2010



Source: Forests in the ECE Region: Trends and challenges in achieving the global objectives on forests UNECE 2015

Increasing timber supply in N. Hemisphere

For example: 750 Million Cubic meters net annual increment in USA

- Relieves harvest pressure on forests elsewhere
- Widely known by forest professionals but not by the public at large
- US South demonstrates the elasticity of supply in response to silviculture effort (but currently low stumpage prices suppress silvicultural investments)

<u>Paradigm of abundance</u>

Substantial Challenges As Well

(Forest Fire in California)

Increasing forest disturbance

- Fire, insects and disease, drought, etc., working in dynamic interaction
- Driven by climate change and legacy of past management (notably fire suppression in North America)

Catalyst for major ecosystem transition?

- Silvicultural investments not sensitive to public goods and positive externalities
- Ongoing loss in biodiversity

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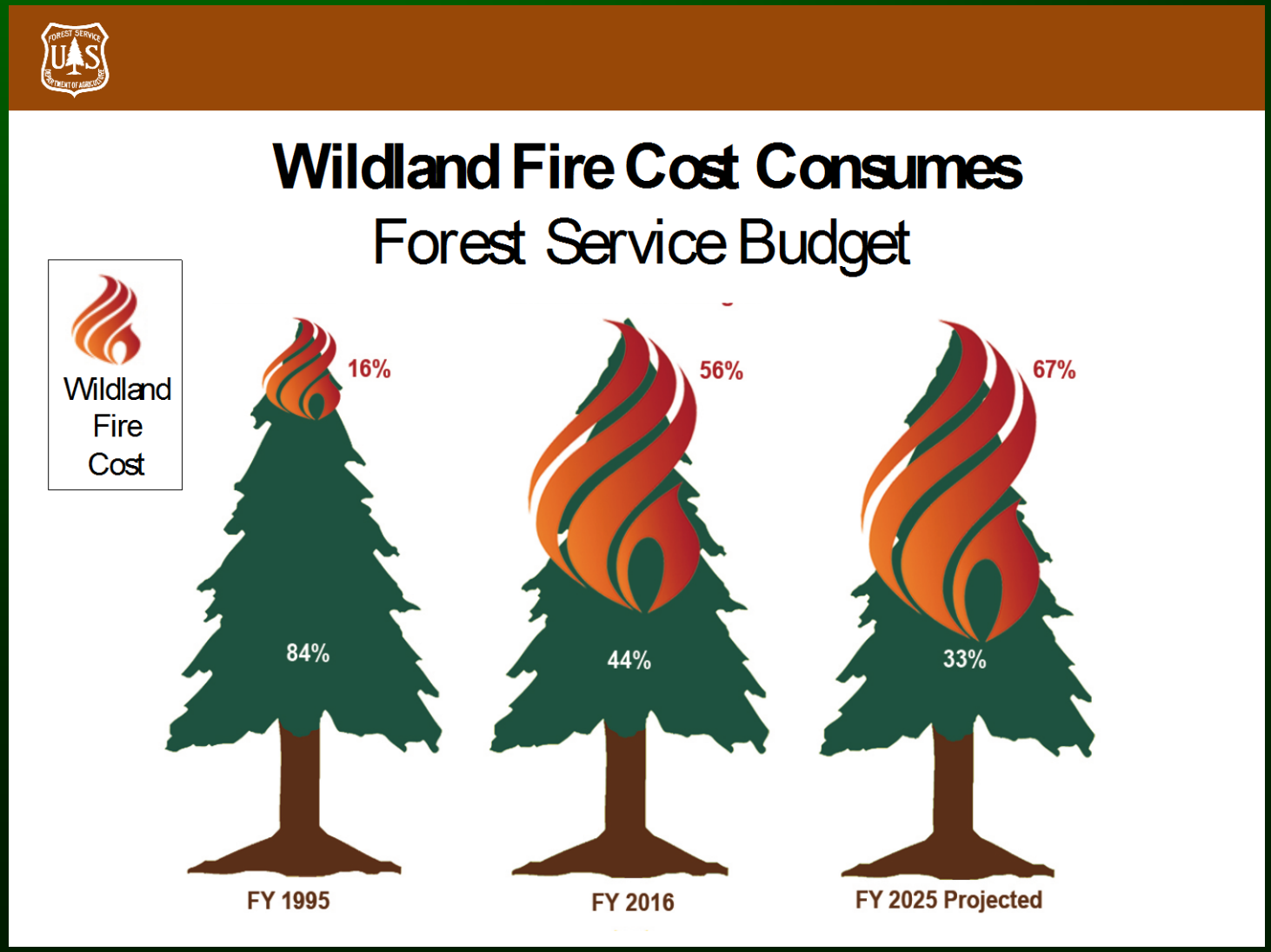
Challenge for US Forest Service



Putting out fires instead of investing in the future (literally)

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At Last—the Conclusion

- SDGs highlight the whole range of forest benefits and the need to manage for same
- Stakeholders extend well beyond traditional constituencies to encompass diverse interests and ultimately all society
- Forest product sector alone cannot motivate needed investments in silviculture and management
- We need to start planting a lot more trees

(Bald Eagle near Mendenhall Glacier SE Alaska)

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Thanks…

(Chilkoot Inlet, SE Alaska)

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