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BROAD NATIONAL PROGRAM  
PROPOSED FOR FOREST LANDS

Report to Senate in Response to Copeland Resolution  
Recommends Coordinated Plan for Land Utilization

A land use program affecting more than a third of the entire land area of the United States is presented in a comprehensive report transmitted to the Senate today by Secretary of Agriculture Wallace. The report was prepared by the Forest Service in response to Senate Resolution 175 of the last session of Congress, introduced by Senator Royal S. Copeland.

The report presents a coordinated plan intended to insure all of the economic and social benefits which can and should be derived from productive forests by fully utilizing the forest land, and by making all of its timber and other products and its watershed, recreational, and other services available in quantities adequate to meet national requirements.

Main findings, as summarized in Secretary Wallace's letter of transmittal, are as follows:

1. That practically all of the major problems of American forestry center in, or have grown out of, private ownership.
2. That one of the major problems of public ownership is that of unmanaged public lands.
3. That there has been a serious lack of balance in constructive efforts to solve the forest problem as between private and public ownership and between the relatively poor and the relatively good land.

4. That the forest problem ranks as one of our major national problems.

As the only assured means of anything approaching a satisfactory solution of the forest problem, the report recommends, first, a large extension of public ownership of forest lands, and, second, more intensive management on all publicly owned lands.

Solution of the forest problem, the Secretary's letter states, "is the only means to stable, permanent forest industries, with a predepression value including forests of \$10,000,000,000 and gross products prior to 1929 of nearly \$2,000,000,000. This is also true of industries using forest resources other than timber and of a large group of other industries dependent on both.

"The solution will provide an important source of employment for labor at a time when the development of labor-saving machinery makes employment a critical national problem. Our forest land in productive condition and the dependent primary forest industries alone would furnish employment for 2 million men.

"The solution offers an important aid in public finance by increasing the amount of taxable property. (Pulp and paper mills, for example, depend on productive forests for their existence.)

"It offers one important means for maintaining a balanced rural economic and social structure in the parts of the country which will grow timber, by utilizing all of the land productively for the purposes for which it is best suited, maintaining industries in perpetuity, and holding a reasonable part of the population in the country in a healthy, diversified rural life.

"Programs for the various activities which make up forestry, such as protection against fire, insects, and disease; extensive and intensive forest practice; provision for watershed protection, recreation, forest wild life, and for the management and utilization of forest ranges have been worked out in as much detail as present information permits and incorporated in the national plan which

forms an important part of the report on the Senate Resolution. The Department endorses the recommendations for these programs."

Ninety per cent of the total area of devastated and poorly stocked forest land and 95 per cent of the current devastation is on privately owned forest lands, according to the Forest Service report. Forest deterioration, which is far more extensive and hence more serious than devastation, results from cutting without regard for future productivity of the forest, or from forest fires, or from the two combined. More than 99 per cent of such cutting and 98 per cent of the area burned annually is on private lands.

The public policy of passing excessive areas of forest land to private ownership and the private cut-out-and-get-out policy, according to the report, has wrecked or seriously reduced the productivity of the land, made it difficult or impossible to pay taxes, and hence has led to tax reversion so large in several forest regions as to constitute virtually a breakdown of private ownership. Stability of tenure is one of the essentials for timber growing.

The report recommends that public agencies should acquire 224 million acres of forest land, including a part of the abandoned agricultural land now available and place it under forest management at the earliest possible date following acquisition. A considerable part of this land has or will come into public ownership in any event by reason of tax delinquency, the report states. The States and their local subdivisions should take over as much of this acquisition program as their resources permit. The Federal Government should assume only that part which the States can not carry.

Other recommendations include the placing of an additional area of 191 million acres under fire protection and raising the standards of much of the 321 million acres now under protection; planting at least 25 million acres during the next 20 years; raising the area under intensive forest management during the next few decades to at least 70 million acres and preferably to 100 million acres, and the area under extensive management to at least 279 million and preferably to 339 million acres.

"Although at first opposed, the national forest enterprise now has practically universal public approbation", says Secretary Wallace in his letter of transmittal. "I am convinced", he adds, "that the public program recommended will command equal approval in the future, and that the extension of the national and State forests recommended is as important and as necessary as the creation of the existing national and State forests. The Federal share of the proposed program, including both acquisition and the management of acquired and existing national forests has, therefore, the unqualified endorsement of the department.

"The plan recommended goes as far as possible in coordinating the efforts of all interested agencies. In the acquisition of land it is believed that the soundest principle will be for each public agency to finance its own purchases and to acquire only what it can subsequently afford to manage. The part of the undertaking left to the private owner is believed to be within practical possibilities. A substantial increase in public aid is provided, in which the Federal Government and the States should join forces. Aid to private owners should not, however, go beyond the public interest. The States and their local subdivisions are encouraged to take on as much of the remainder of the undertaking as they can and will. This will leave for the Federal Government only what neither private owners nor the States can carry, and beyond that, what is clearly within the national interest. The resolution stresses aid to the States. A detailed examination of the program proposed will show that the very liberal Federal contribution to the whole plan in the form of aid to private owners and otherwise constitutes in the last analysis aid to the States which would otherwise have to carry the entire burden.

"So far as I can see, nothing can be gained and much will be lost by delay. The contribution to our national land problem will be very large, and it is a contribution which is more and more urgently needed. There should be the opportunity for the large employment of labor in constructive public works. The longer that forest devastation and deterioration continue the higher will be the cost of forest restoration. A high percentage of the initial costs are in the nature of capital investments for which low-interest long-term loans would be justified. I strongly recommend, therefore, the earliest possible action on the Federal part of the plan."