



PRESS RELEASE

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JEFFERSON CITY, MO. Missouri's Sierra Club recently filed a complaint with the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service regarding the Missouri Department of Conservation's (MDC) harvesting practices on public lands. Specifically, State Forester Lisa Allen has responded to questions about timber harvests implemented in Shannon County and has explained how they meet forestry/wildlife related objectives. These timber sales also support a rural economy dependent upon timber markets for many Shannon County residents that rely heavily upon forests to make a living.

"Shannon County is home to at least 17 sawmills, logging companies, and secondary wood processors that utilize locally produced raw materials to manufacture other products, such as pallets, flooring, cabinets and millwork," said Brian Brookshire, Executive Director of Missouri Forest Products Association. State Representative John Kuessner for Shannon County added, "The forest products industry is the leading employer in Shannon County." "Harvests from public lands help support this vitally important economic engine." They also provide demonstrations of scientific timber management practices to private landowners to promote comprehensive forest/wildlife management practices while at the same time realizing economic returns.

It is the responsibility of MDC to properly manage the forests that have been purchased with public funds to meet multiple public objectives. State Forester Lisa Allen has indicated that an average of 5,000 acres of MDC's forest land receives a commercial harvest on an annual basis. This means only one percent of their 500,000 acres of forest land is harvested annually. "The forest industry is concerned that at this slow pace of harvesting the public forest will become over mature and mortality will occur before the trees can be harvested and utilized by local industry," said Brookshire. "This has become a reality on many conservation areas in Shannon and surrounding counties. Therefore, the forest industry would encourage MDC to consider harvesting more acres per year to combat rapid mortality of their mature forest to ensure the long term future of forests throughout the Ozarks."

Wood is a renewable natural resource that all people utilize on a daily basis. Unfortunately, many people do not realize where the wood comes from and what it takes to manufacture the materials that they rely upon. "Not in my backyard" is a sentiment firmly grounded in the United States today. People living in the United States will utilize much more wood annually 15-20 years from now than they do today. Not because we will consume more personally in the future but because population growth is expected to drastically increase. The question becomes do we produce the wood products we want and need in the United States from our forest lands or do we import our desired wood products from other countries? If we choose the latter, we must

understand that we are also exporting the environmental consequences of non sustainable harvesting practices that often occur in other countries.

The Missouri Department of Conservation has professionally trained staff who implement timber harvests, with the assistance of professional loggers, that comply with science-based, long term plans. The timber sales are occurring in forests that are in desperate need of management. The timber harvest allows both mature and unhealthy trees to be utilized by the forest industry to provide products desired by the public. The harvest design encourages the forest to regenerate and become healthy and sustainable once again. This is a desirable process producing positive short term and long term impacts for both the environment and the local economy.

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