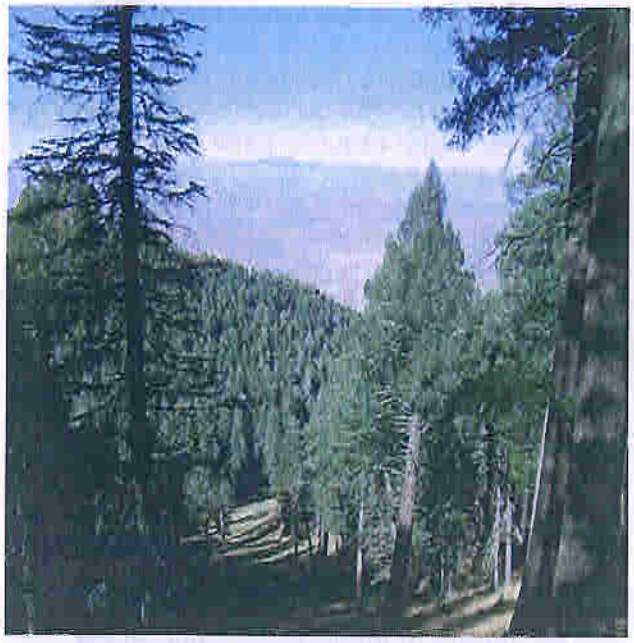
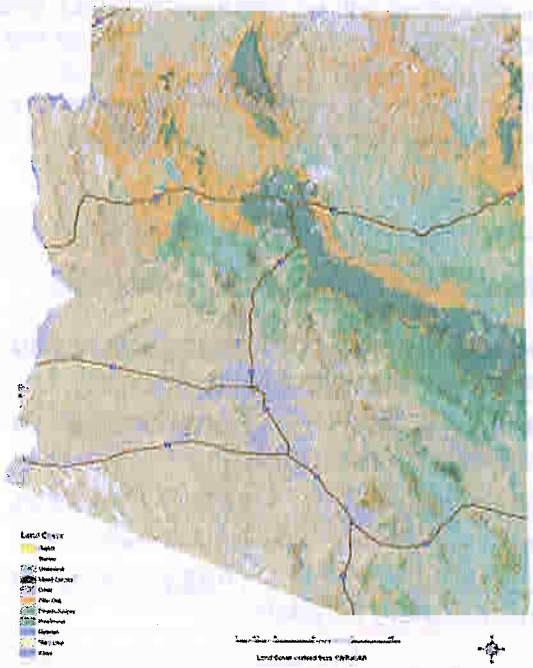
-Forest Resource Assessment Fact Sheet -

Background:

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (commonly referred to as the Farm Bill) was enacted on June 19, 2008. The legislation amended the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 and requires each state to complete a Statewide Forest Resource Assessment, followed by the development of a Statewide Forest Resource Strategy to receive, or continue to receive, funds under the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act (CFAA).

CFAA funds are provided to states through the State and Private Forestry (S&PF) organization of the USDA Forest Service. Currently, Arizona receives several million dollars annually to protect communities from wildfire, assist private forest landowners, promote healthy forest practices, and assist communities with their urban forests. Most of the CFAA funding received by the Arizona State Forestry Division is passed by way of grants to local organizations that provide matching funds and additional implementation resources. The combination of state and local efforts along with coordination and collaboration with federal, tribal, and other land management agencies provides substantial leveraging of these funds to benefit Arizona forests and citizens.





Legislative Requirements:

The amended Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 2008 added new requirements for the states to identify priority forest landscape areas and highlight work needed to address national, regional and state forest management priorities:

1. **A State-wide Assessment of Forest Resources.**
2. **A Statewide Forest Resource Strategy.**

The Assessment and Resource Strategy must be completed by June 2010 and later approved by the US Secretary of Agriculture. Annual accomplishment reporting will begin in 2011.

National Priorities:

For State and Private Forestry program funding, the 2008 legislation also requires focus on landscape level outcomes to achieve national private forest conservation priorities:

- **Conserve and manage working forest landscapes**
- **Protect forests from threats**
- **Enhance public benefits from private forests**

1. Forest Resource Assessment:

The first step in the overall process will be completion of the Forest Resource Assessment. The National Association of State Foresters (NASF) and the State and Private Forestry (S&PF) organization of the USDA Forest Service have collaborated to provide more specific guidance to states for completion of the assessment. The guidance provides the following minimum requirements for the Resource Assessment:

- Provide an analysis of present and future forest conditions, trends, and threats on all ownerships in the state using publicly available information.
- Identify forest related threats, benefits, and services consistent with the S&PF Redesign national themes.
- Delineate priority rural and urban forest landscape areas to be addressed by the state forest resource strategy.
- Work with neighboring states and governments to identify any multi-state areas that are a regional priority.
- Incorporate existing statewide plans including Wildlife Action Plans, Community Wildfire Protection Plans, and address existing S&PF program planning requirements.

In Arizona, considerable analysis and planning has been completed by state and federal agencies, non-profit organizations, academic institutions, and collaborative groups. It is anticipated that a large portion of the required new assessment work will build upon these earlier activities.

It is also the goal of the Arizona Forestry Division for the Resource Assessment and Strategy to address not only the national private forest conservation priorities, but also to be a useful tool to a wide range of organizations and the basis of future work in Arizona to address our forest resource issues.

Assessment Task Group:

In July 2009 the Arizona State Forester appointed a Forest Resource Assessment Task Group to work with Forestry Division staff in developing recommendations for an Arizona Forest Resource Assessment.

Task Group Membership includes representatives from:

- **Arizona State Forestry Division**
- **Arizona Community Tree Council**
- **Arizona Forest Health Council**
- **Arizona Forest Stewardship Committee**
- **Arizona Game and Fish Department**
- **Ecological Restoration Institute at NAU**
- **The Nature Conservancy**
- **USDA Forest Service**
- **USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service**
- **U.S. Bureau of Land Management**
- **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

The Task Group began meeting in August 2009 and expects to continue work until the Assessment is complete in early 2010.

2. Forest Resource Strategy:

Work is expected to begin on the Arizona Forest Resource Strategy in late 2009, once the Assessment is substantially underway. The Arizona State Forester will appoint a second interagency task group to work with Forestry Division staff to provide assistance with this strategy component.

Where possible, the strategy will complement other state and federal agency assessment and planning work.

3. Annual Reporting:

Annual reporting will be required by 2011 and will include information about activities of the Arizona State Forestry Division as well as activities by other agencies and organizations working toward our common objectives and outcomes.

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