

Research Activities under way in Phase I (Summer 1999 through January 2000):

The project, “Saving the World’s Forests,” examines the long-term potential (to 2050) for forest protection, focusing particular attention on the consequence of the emerging shift towards more intensive production of pulp and wood products.

The effort is proceeding in two phases. The Council on Foreign Relations (David G. Victor) is managing Phase I, during which the team will conduct a limited number of pilot studies on the major issues that affect long-term forest protection. These pilot studies will help provide an initial, quantitative “working hypothesis” on the area of land that will be needed for roundwood production in 2050 and the areas that might be part of various protection schemes. We seek a plausible, feasible and attractive vision for the world’s forests in 2050, and we seek to identify ways to reach that vision.

The pilot studies will also help set the agenda for Phase II of the effort, which could begin early in 2000 and run for perhaps 2-3 years. A decision on the funding and management of phase II has not yet been taken.

On 20-21 January 1999, we will hold a meeting in Washington, DC, to review the results from the pilot studies. The Council, funded by the Lounsbery Foundation, is sponsoring four pilot studies, which were selected on the basis of a review of the project-planning meeting on 17 June (for the background paper and report from that meeting see: <http://greatreversal.rockefeller.edu>). The studies are:

1. Forest Cover Trends and Inventories in ECE nations. This study will examine long-term trends in forest cover and biomass in the region of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), which has the most complete forest data. The region has also seen a “great reversal” from an earlier period when agriculture uses encroached onto forest lands to the reverse: a growth in forests due to the return of agriculture lands to forests. The study will also examine the potentials for monitoring through ground observations and remote sensing. Initial analysis suggests that large quantities of biomass are accumulating in the UNECE forest lands and that there is net growth in all 55 of the UNECE countries. Principal Investigators: Pekka Kauppi (University of Helsinki Department of Limnology and Environmental Protection, pekka.kauppi@helsinki.fi); Jari Liski (European Forest Institute, Jari.Liski@efi.fi); Ranga Myeni (Boston University, rmynemi@crsa.bu.edu).

2. Encroachment by Agriculture. In the industrialized nations, it is clear that net encroachment on to forested lands by agriculture has stopped and reversed. Intensification of agriculture explains why food production has continued to rise even as the area under cultivation has declined. Data from the United States make it possible to characterize this “great reversal” closely, but data from other nations—especially developing countries—are less complete and have not been studied so closely. This study will examine intensification of agriculture and agriculture encroachment patterns in 10 countries: Brazil, China, Colombia, Congo, India,

Indonesia, Mexico, Russia, Tanzania, and United States. These nations account for about half of the world population, agriculture land area, and forested land area. The study will explore whether a similar study would be feasible for a larger set of countries in Phase II. Initial analysis suggests that large areas of forested lands could be “spared” as agriculture yields rise, reducing the threat of agriculture encroachment upon forests. Principal investigators: Jesse Ausubel (Rockefeller University, ausubel@rockvax.rockefeller.edu) and Paul Waggoner (Connecticut Agriculture Experiment Station, Paul.Waggoner@po.state.ct.us)

3. The economic context for high yield forestry. A critical element of the possible future vision for forests are the yields in plantation as well as semi-natural forests industrial forests. This study will review existing studies of actual and potential yields and also evaluate the implications of high yield forestry for the supply of industrial roundwood. In collaboration with the FAO and the World Bank, the study will examine the plausibility of different high yield scenarios and the barriers that must be overcome to make intensive management a reality. It will also explore the economic implications of intensive management, such as on delivered wood costs. The analysis will include case studies in 10 countries: Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Finland, Indonesia, New Zealand, Russia, Sweden, United States. Principal investigator: Gary Bull (University of British Columbia, Vancouver, garybull@interch.ubc.ca)

4. International Protection Strategies. This study explores how the “vision” of high yield forestry concentrated in a small area of the forest estate might be achieved. It explores why efforts to create a global forest convention have not (yet) been fruitful. It gives particular attention to three issues: (1) legal agreements that should be part of an effective forest protection strategy, including indicators (e.g., yields) that should be monitored; (2) the role that formally “protected areas” might play in an international forest protection strategy, and (3) the role of production standards, such as those envisioned in the FSC and the SFI. Principal Investigator: David G. Victor (Council on Foreign Relations, dgvictor@cfr.org).

In addition to these four studies, the project has a relationship with the World Bank/World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Alliance. The Alliance has set the target of protecting an additional 200 million hectares of forests by 2005 and they are in the process of envisioning long-term goals. As part of the Alliance’s long-term goal-setting it is sponsoring several studies that contribute to the effort led by the Council on Foreign Relations. In particular:

5. Location and Structure of the Forest Industry. The study will look at the major spatial and structural changes in the global forest industry and in the ten countries included in study #3. It will examine the factors driving these trends and the demand for wood; it will also explore alternative scenarios and the implications for intensive production of roundwood. Principal Investigator: Michael Bazett (Bazett & Associates, mbazett@direct.ca).

6. Protected Areas. The study will examine the designations of “protected areas” that are appropriate for intensive forest management. In particular, it will explore the potential need to

make greater use of multiple use designations (e.g., IUCN classes V and VI) and whether revisions to the criteria that define protected areas are needed. Principal Investigators: Nigel Dudley (Equilibrium Consultants, equilibrium@compuserve.com), Sue Stolton (Equilibrium Consultants, equilibrium@compuserve.com), and Adrian Phillips (World Commission on Protected Areas, Adrianp@Wcpa.Demon.Co.Uk).

7. Indigenous Peoples and Intensification. This study will examine the implications for indigenous peoples and other vulnerable social groups of the “intensification model” that is at the core of the scenario being developed in this project. It will look at experience with intensified natural forest management, plantations, and protected area set asides. It will explore the key policy, legal and institutional issues that need to be addressed. Principal Investigator: Marcus Colchester (marcus@fppwrm.gn.apc.org).

The above is intended to provide an overview of the effort. For more information on individual studies contact the investigators. We will update this website with results and links to other sites as the effort proceeds.