

Forest Service Chief F. Dale Robertson presented this policy statement during his testimony,  
concerning H.R. 1969, clearcutting, and ecosystem management  
Before the Subcommittee on Forests, Family Farms, and Energy, Committee on Agriculture  
United States House of Representatives  
June 16, 1992

### **Policy Statement: Reduce Clearcutting on the National Forests**

The objective of this new provision is to reduce clearcutting on National Forest System lands and make greater use of individual tree selection, group selection, green tree retention, shelterwood, seed tree, and other regeneration cutting methods which collectively provide for a more visually pleasing and diverse vegetative appearance on a forest-wide basis.

This policy would reduce clearcutting where it has been used as a standard timber harvest practice on the National Forests. Clearcutting would be limited to areas where it is essential to meet forest plan objectives and involve one or more of the following circumstances:

1. To establish, maintain, or enhance habitat for threatened or endangered species.
2. To enhance wildlife habitat or water yield values, or to provide for recreation, scenic vistas, utility lines, road corridors, facility sites, reservoirs, or similar developments.
3. To rehabilitate lands adversely impacted by events such as fires, windstorms, or insect or disease infestations.
4. To preclude or minimize the occurrence of potentially adverse impacts of insect or disease infestations, windthrow, logging damage, or other factors affecting forest health.
5. To provide for the establishment and growth of desired tree or other vegetative species that are shade intolerant.
6. To rehabilitate poorly stocked stands due to past management practices or natural events.

This clearcutting policy combined with the new USDA-Forest Service ecosystem management can reduce clearcutting by as much as 70 percent from FY 1988 levels. The reduction in timber volume due to the clearcutting policy over the short-run is likely to be about 10 percent. There would be little reduction in timber volume over the long-term. There will be increases in timber sale costs and some areas will not be harvested because local timber industries do not have appropriate logging equipment to use other methods on steep slopes. However, judicious use of alternative harvest methods can be substituted for clearcutting on most areas of the National Forests.