Considering the contributions of Washington's forests involving Carbon Sequestration

A Position Statement of the Washington State Society of American Foresters

Position:

Washington State Society of American Foresters supports a series of accounting standards for carbon sequestration of wood-based carbon:

- **Carbon sequestered by forests and stored in wood products should be counted as carbon stored for the life of the forest or forest product.**
- **Any carbon trading system must be consistent across the nation. The system should provide full credit for progressive forest landowners in states with strict land management standards and guidelines.**
- **Incentives should encourage continuation and expansion of working forests.**
- **Emission and sequestration inventory protocols need to be accurate, useable and based upon life cycle assessments.**
- **Reporting and tracking systems must be credible and scientifically-supported.**
- **Carbon accounting for wood should acknowledge the substitution benefits when wood building products displace use of polluting construction alternatives such as steel and concrete and when wood biomass residuals are converted to clean energy thereby reducing emissions from fossil fuel alternatives.**

Issue:

Federal, Regional and State legislation are determining policies to reduce the effects of Climate Change and each needs to address the full value and abilities of forest and wood product to sequester carbon.

Background:

Combustion of fossil fuels results in emissions of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide that contribute to undesirable climate change. Reduction in atmospheric carbon occurs as a result of absorption of carbon dioxide associated with tree photosynthesis. Forests capture and store more than ten percent of the total carbon dioxide emissions in the United States.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is a globally-convened body of hundreds of scientists that are generally recognized as the pre-eminent international authority on climate change. IPCC investigation into potential climate change mitigation options resulted in the following conclusion.

"*In the long term, a sustainable forest management strategy aimed at maintaining or increasing forest carbon stocks, while producing an annual sustained yield of timber, fiber or energy from the forest, will generate the largest sustained mitigation benefit.*"

References:

Environmental Protection Agency, 2006. "Inventory of US Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990-2004. EPA-430-R-06-002. Washington, DC.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2007c. Climate Change 2007: Mitigation. Contribution of Working Group III to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. [B. Metz, O.R. Davidson, P.R. Bosch, R. Dave, L. Meyer (eds)], Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY., USA. 851 pp. http://www.ipcc.ch

This position statement was adopted by the Washington State SAF Executive Committee on July 23, 2009, and supported with 94 percent approval by member referendum in November 2009. This statement will expire July 23, 2014, unless after thorough review it is renewed by the Committee.