

Preface

The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the "Earth Summit," focused world attention on the importance of sustainable forest management as a key component of sustainable development. As a result of this international conference, the United States and 144 other countries adopted a non-binding Statement of Forest Principles that recognized the importance of sustainably managing all types of forests in order to meet the needs of present and future generations.

In 1993, a United Nations committee convened an international seminar in Montreal, Canada on the sustainable development of boreal and temperate forests. This conference resulted in subsequent initiatives to develop and implement internationally agreed upon criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management.

In 1994, the United States and nine other nations formed the Working Group on Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forests. This working group soon became known as the "Montreal Process."

The ten original Montreal Process countries met in Santiago, Chile in 1995 to endorse a statement of political commitment, known as the "Santiago Declaration," along with a comprehensive set of seven criteria and 67 indicators for the conservation and sustainable management of temperate and boreal forests.

Montreal Process countries currently number twelve and include Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, the Russian Federation, the United States of America, and Uruguay. These countries encompass five continents and together contain 90 percent of the world's temperate and boreal forests, 60 percent of all forests globally, and 35 percent of the world's population.

Recently, efforts have been undertaken in the United States to assess the use of the Montreal Process Criteria and Indicators at regional, state and local levels. The following report represents the initial application of the Montreal Process Criteria and Indicators to the assessment of sustainable forest management in the State of Illinois.

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