



Making Forestry Policy: An Interagency Enterprise

In 1978, as an outgrowth of his advisory task force, Gov. Hunt established a Governor's Interagency Committee on Small Woodlots to be chaired by then State Forester Winkworth.²³ "The philosophy of the group," says Green, who has headed the group since Winkworth died in 1980, "is to create and motivate local committees. That's where the work gets done." The state-level committee includes, in addition to Green, representatives from the federal Soil Conservation Service, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Agricultural Extension Service, Extension Forest Resources, the School of Forest Resources at NCSU, N.C. Agricultural and Technical University, the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, the Division of Soil and Water Conservation within NRCD, and the Governor's office. Green has in turn instructed his local staff — county rangers and foresters — to bring together the local counterparts of these state and federal agencies on a regular basis. Some 90 county interagency committees are in place, according to Green.

The 1982 Duke/SGPB report included "Coordination of Efforts" as one of its five areas of recommendations and pointed in that section to North Carolina as a model for other states. "At the state level, the various agencies concerned with forestry — timber management and services to forestland owners, wildlife, recreation, and soil conservation agencies — too frequently do not work together," reports the Duke/SGPB authors. "An exception is the North Carolina Interagency Small Woodlot Commission (sic)."²⁴

The coordination achievements in the state extend beyond just governmental agencies. Ben Park, the executive vice-president of the N.C. Forestry Association, works closely with the interagency committee and especially with the state Forest Service. Formed in 1911, the Forestry Association has some 1,600 members, about one-third companies and two-thirds

individuals, says Park. During the 1970s, the Forestry Association initiated many of the legislative proposals eventually enacted, working closely with legislators involved in the forestry business, like state Sen. Robert Jordan, and with the State Forest Service. "There was great interchange between Winkworth and forestry leaders," says Park, leading to "the gradual emergence of what might be termed a partnership between the Forest Service and forestry community."

During the 1970s, when most of the legislative initiatives took hold, the small woodlot owners in the state were conspicuously absent from the "forest community" to which Park refers. But this is beginning to change. The N.C. Forestry Association has recently appointed a small woodlot owners committee, organized landowners sessions at its annual meetings, and sponsored three regional "forestry festivals." This organization, the forestry industry's trade association, also set aside nine "landowner" slots on its board of directors — three each for 1981, 1982, and 1983. "We're beginning to make some progress," says Guy Troy, a Randolph County tree farmer and retired army officer who has spearheaded these changes. "People are beginning to be more and more aware of forestry in North Carolina."

In addition to the Forestry Association efforts, the forestry extension staff at N.C. State University has developed some 65 county forestry associations, with about 4,000 members. "Most landowners don't know the value of their timberland and don't know where to go for help," says Charles Cone of Greenville, president of the Pitt County Forestry Association. "Associations give the professional forester a chance to talk with many landowners. And landowners learn from their peers. Seeing and hearing what their neighbors have done means a whole lot more than lectures, publications, and mass media efforts."