FIVE HUNDRED YEAR PLAN

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Original Draft of the 500 Year Plan

A SYSTEMIC APPROACH INTEGRATING:

- GLOBAL FOREST ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION
- CERTIFIED LOGGING IN APPROPRIATE AREAS
- FIBER SUPPLY
- DEMAND-SIDE MANAGEMENT
- TRANSFORMATION OF GOVERNMENT & CORPORATE POLICY
- SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

BASIC PREMISE

The world's deforestation to date and its rate of increase have given rise to a state of global emergency. Yet, an effective response to this problem could help us build a sustainable society in our lifetime. Time is running out for the world's forests and all things for which they are connected. It is imperative to restructure the wood products sector of the economy to sustainable production and consumption systems. This 500-year approach is offered as a framework to halt deforestation and its consequences.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Wild, naturally evolving forests are an essential component of the biosphere's life support systems. Aside from providing innumerable services to humanity, forests fulfill the vital functions of preserving wildlife habitat, stabilizing the Earth's climate, protecting watersheds, and maintaining soil productivity. They are home to most of the world's vast array of life forms. Natural forests need to be viewed as dynamic, diverse, and integrated systems as articulated in the science of conservation biology and ecology. Their whole systems character must be both protected and restored.

If local community rights to utilize and control the local commons had been clearly established, and an understanding of the ecological and social costs had been reflected in price mechanisms and logging practices over the last 500 years, the actions below would not be necessary. Such rights and internalizing of external costs have not been and are still not in place. Subsidized deforestation is practiced instead. Market models that do not value whole forest systems or biological diversity cannot be depended upon to protect them. This desperate situation requires a reversal from industrial society's increasing dependence on wood fiber from natural forests.

Until such time as community rights, local control, and a deeply ingrained ecological ethic are in place (particularly in industrial societies), the positions outlined below are suggested as a framework of sufficient strength to reverse the tragic tide of logging-caused deforestation and its consequences. What remains is to make these positions politically feasible while assuring that they are economically and socially just.

No set of principles can adequately address the cultural, political, and economic reality of every local community. Exceptions to the outlined approach will need to be made on a case-by-case basis. However, a general adherence to this integrated, systemic framework as outlined below (I-VI) will orchestrate an ecological “U-turn”, stabilize existing natural forests, and provide for society’s needs including economic development. Most of the plan needs to be implemented over the next few decades. Over time (hundreds of years) necessary to improve quality of forest ecosystems and the vital services they provide for all inhabitants of the earth.

THE PLAN

In order to better ensure a world of healthy forests, Rainforest Action Network believes that society governments and corporations should:

A. ***Take an official position*** that the world’s deforestation to date and its rate of increase have given rise to a state of global emergency and that an effective response to this problem will help build sustainability.

B. Recognize and promote key ecological and human values, including:

- a resilient, diverse and healthy biosphere maintaining ecological services, evolutionary processes for all species, and hydrologic and nutrient cycles;
- a large network of reserves representing each type of wild, intact, natural ecological systems with migratory corridors and buffer zones
- an increase in areas of natural forest which foster viable populations of native species in pre-industrial patterns of abundance and distribution;
- prosperous communities, rooted in place, with meaningful work
- social equity between people and groups, now and in the future
- democratic governance with accountability, transparency, access to information, and effective public participation in decision making;
- sustainable economic models or systems that incorporate social and ecological costs into the price one pays for goods or services.

C. Cancel investments in ecologically harmful activities (such as logging, mining, grazing, drilling, road building or plantation establishment or conversion to agriculture)in high conservation value forests .

Input on the types of investments that need to be canceled should be sought from diverse interests including ecologists and citizen activists.

All employees should be schooled in the basic principles of ecology. This will help people identify problem areas and opportunities.

D. Take a six fold systemic approach to global forest protection, certified logging, fiber supply, and demand-side reduction as a framework to halt deforestation and its consequences. This plan would encompass the following points:

1. Primary Forests

Moratoria should be instituted for all ecologically damaging industrial operations (logging, mining, grazing, drilling, road building, plantation establishment or conversion to agriculture) in remaining primary forests worldwide. on both public and private land.

a) Provide incentives for individuals, companies, local communities, or governments controlling primary forest that agree to protect the remaining primary forests from logging and other forms of deforestation.
b) Parties should be recognized and honored for protecting these forests by all of us who ultimately benefit from their protection. Communities that protect natural forest systems are rendering an essential service to the rest of the world.
c) In part, massive deforestation and the timber trade have contributed financial benefits and hence lifestyle improvements, as well as political and economic leverage over less deforested countries. Those who have previously profited should provide the compensation for primary forest protection as a way to help offset the loss of ecosystem services deforested countries no longer provide to the biosphere.
d) A global compensation fund should be established and governed by an authorized international body, which includes citizen groups and NGOs.
e) Compensation should be paid on a periodic basis upon verification by an independent international body of successful protection of primary forests.

2. Secondary Forests

Secondary forests should be encouraged to mature. Using the principles of conservation biology, efforts must be made towards restoring primary forest functions and values. Local people and current landowners should be trained and employed in such restoration efforts.

Ecoforestry practices should be used whenever commercial logging is carried on in secondary forests. Independent certification should be adopted using the Forest Stewardship Council standards.

3. Commercial Restoration Zones (CRZ) and Plantations

Utilizing a transparent, public participation process, revert degraded land or existing plantations toward mixed native species (trees and other flora) mimicking native conditions while maintaining commercial extraction viability. Local community values, rights of approval, and local employment must be incorporated into this process.

- Society should look to CRZs for the main wood product supplies for the next 20 - 200 years.
- In 50 years, start a 300 - 400 year process to manage an appropriate percentage of commercially logged secondary forests and CRZs for a return to late successional forest characteristics. This should be done in areas adjacent to primary forests' core areas to create buffer zones and provide corridors for wildlife.
    - Large-scale tree monocultures (plantations) are not forests and do not foster or protect as broad an array of biological diversity as a natural forest. However, where it is socially, ecologically, and economically acceptable, utilize existing plantations or convert marginal or unused agricultural land to mixed species plantations.
    - Societies should plan to convert plantations to CRZs over the next 50 years and then to manage secondary forests and eventually towards late successional, forest ecosystem values.

5. Alternative Fibers

The use of alternative fibers such as Kenaf, hemp, and agricultural waste will allow us to shift demand away from virgin wood fiber and reduce pressure on the world's remaining natural forests. Alternative fibers can be used in virtually all papers and many building materials.

6. Additional Demand-side Management

Alternative fibers (as described in point five) are a form of demand-side management that can help alleviate pressure on forests to supply wood fiber. Using a holistic or systemic approach to the supply of wood products opens up additional opportunities. For example, we can meet the lumber needs of home building by utilizing earth architecture techniques.

Demand-side management promotes the most ecologically, economically, and culturally sustainable ways to meet the human needs now met by forest products. An aggressive search for options will be necessary for the environmental U-turn and allow for the realization of a goal such as the one stated below.

Institute the gradual reduction of wood and wood paper use of 7.5% yearly for the next 10 years (totaling 75%). Analogous goals have been set in the Netherlands. This should be done while supporting additional and appropriate economic activities at 8+%. This process alone will create an increase in sustainable economic activity while generating more meaningful jobs developing alternatives.

The general sectors of industrial wood use are:

• Paper and packaging

- Construction
- Pallets and other shipping uses
- Finished wood products including furniture

Categories of demand-side activity to reduce wood use (in the above general sectors) are:

- Decreased per capita consumption -reduce
- Increased reuse -re-use
- Increased recycling -recycle
- Increased use of alternative materials -replace
- Increased efficiency in processing -redesign
- Product durability, design improvements -redesign

Using a holistic demand-side approach opens up many solutions. Communication systems can shift to electronic mail and reduce wood use. An example would be accessing telephone directories via computers. Reusing copy paper by vacuuming toner off of the paper might be another solution. Salvaged wood from renovations, demolition, and natural disasters would be a way to increase reuse and recycling. Likewise, building techniques might replace wood with other natural materials such as earth or straw. Redesigned building codes can result in safe, strong wood-frame houses that use 30% less wood.

E. Commit to a timetable and submit a transition plan for implementation and independent verification. Ensure that all related government agencies, companies, operations, or divisions integrate this systemic approach into their business in order to become ecologically sustainable.

F. Avoid working with other corporations or governments which do not adhere to the above systemic approach and standards of ecological sustainability.

CONCLUSION

Along with our practical day-to-day work, those in the timber trade, finance community, ecology movement, and general public need first and foremost to speak the truth about what must be done. Additionally, we need to orchestrate ecological policy shifts and real world practices in a manner that achieves social equity (within and between nations). Nature — with her ecological systems and myriad life forms — cannot speak for herself in our government chambers, and corporate or environmental boardrooms. It is our responsibility to speak on her behalf as best we can. We cannot ask for too much, and we had better not ask for too little. Everyone must aggressively do his or her part. If we do not, history will be justifiably unkind to us. While fostering (in our lifetime) a sustainable society, we must demand what is needed to support all life on Earth.

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Definitions & Comments

Alternative Fiber: An alternative fiber refers to non-wood fibers. Examples include: Kenaf, hemp, and agricultural waste. They will allow us to shift demand away from virgin wood fiber and reduce pressure on the world's remaining primary forests. Alternative fibers can be used in virtually all papers and many building materials.
Commercial Restoration Zones (CRZ): Utilizing a transparent, public participation process, revert degraded land or existing plantations toward mixed native species (trees and other flora) mimicking native conditions while maintaining commercial extraction viability.
Demand-side Management: Anything that changes consumption patterns. In the context of forest protection, it means redesigning the way we use timber products and wood-based papers, in order to reduce pressure on the world's remaining primary forests.
Natural Forest: Primary and secondary forests. Tree farms or plantations are not forests.
Tree Farms/Plantation: Tree farms or plantations are not forests. They do not foster or protect as broad an array of biological diversity as a natural forest.

Given what we know about the value of forest systems, the last 400 years of destruction of the world's great forests alone is enough to destroy the planet's ecological balance. Add the fossil fuel burning (particularly from WWII to the turn of the century) and destruction feels guaranteed -- should we not radically alter our course. Speculation perhaps, but it feels like an imminent actuality to more and more thinking people.

<u>How to Construct a Vision of a Better World?</u>

When a thoughtful analysis is achieved and problems are fairly well understood a vision of a better way needs to emerge. For a sensible vision, it is important to decide upon what basic human and ecological values such visions of a better world should be based? The systems of commerce, with its profound cultural, ecological, and political impacts, are critical to solving our problems. We believe that religious, political, scientific, academic, and business leaders along with the general public must help. They must help implement business systems, practices, and policies consistent with the values of an ecologically sustainable society that respects and fosters cultural diversity. Regarding key values, we have different tendencies or degrees of focus, however we generally agree on the following list. Of course no list is perfect, but here is our start:

Ecological (big picture) values:

· A functioning biosphere (a healthy livable planet for us and others). Nature's systems, such as the atmosphere, oceans, or forests, help make up the biosphere's life support systems. We value most desperately the systems that support life.

· Large, intact, wild, natural systems networked to help ensure the survival of the planet's vast biological diversity and ecosystem types are of great value. [We humans benefit enormously from nature's bounty & health.]

Human values:

- Security/survival (immediate and long-term)
- Sense of place in nature and the cosmos
- Personal health
- Meaningful work to provide a livelihood for the family without harming future generations. This allows for the pursuit of comfort & happiness.
- Communities rooted in place

· Gratitude, because our lives depend on air, water, soil, plants, humans, and other animals
· Empathy, because we are connected with all of creation
· Compassion, because it moves us to attend to suffering and injustice
· Humility, because we cannot know all of the consequences of our actions
· Respect, because it is fundamental to good relationship
· Restraint, because the Earth is finite, and we must honor its limits
· Simplicity, because we are only one species sharing Earth with many others
· Humor, because it helps us carry on.

Societal, trans-societal, & trans-generation values:

- Democratic self-governance
- Freedom of speech and assembly
- Accountability: transparency, access to information, effective public participation in decision making
- Essential self-reliance. Our ability to care for ourselves and community should not be systematically undone by others. The local production, marketing, and consumption of basic needs (food, clothing, & shelter) as well as many comfort items (communication tools, music, art, and culture) is what we call "localization." Localization is an antidote to many of the problems with corporate led economic globalization.
- Cultural diversity (particularly rights of indigenous peoples)
- Respect for other cultural traditions and the role of elders
- Cultural exchange
- Equity between peoples or groups, now and in the future
- International (cross-cultural) cooperation not competitiveness (symbiosis over competitiveness). It is time that we sought primarily to help others achieve essential self-reliance instead of trying to capture market share and throwing all other values aside to maintain international competitiveness.

An Apology
A New 500 Year Plan

by Randall Hayes

Setting the Historical Record Straight

The Columbus myth of discovery represents a 500 year period of cultural & ecological destruction far more extensive than Hitler's atrocities in WWII. We need to acknowledge the tragedy this act brought to the Indigenous peoples of this hemisphere. Even to this day the original peoples are threatened, killed, & increasingly marginalized from their ancestral domain.

We need to acknowledge a debt to Indigenous peoples for the European's initial survival -- teaching us about the food & medicinal plants. We need to understand that Indigenous peoples' philosophies were then & still are on the forefront of a profound understanding of the cycles of nature -- of natural law itself.

An Apology is Due

We wish to express our deepest apologies for the 500 years of death & destruction wrought upon Indigenous peoples, the land, & all life. Further, we understand that apologies are not enough when these tragic problems still occur. We must renew our commitment fight for Indigenous peoples rights, for what is wild, & for all life.

The Next 500 Years

Thinking in geologic time, the Earth's perspective, the next 500 years is but a brief moment. Now, we must look forward & chart an ecological course for the next 500 years. The Earth is over four billion years old. We must make ecologically bold & just choices if we are to see nature, as we know it, to survive. Toward this end, we have developed a template, a sample 500 year plan, for you to gauge efforts to solve big ticket ecological problems. Your assignment is to develop it further. You can update & improve it as you learn more about orchestrating social change. Portray your vision of an ecologically based society through the chart. Then, plan for achieving these goals. And most importantly, before you pass on pass the best of your thinking, your 500 Year Plan, along to the next generation as your legacy.

Why a 500 Year Plan?

One can easily feel depressed & hopeless when confronting the immensity & complexity of orchestrating global change. When asked if you can envision problems like *global warming* being solved in your lifetime, the answer is generally, "No, I don't think so." But when asked, "Do you think it is possible to solve the problem of *global warming* in 500 years?" The answer changes, "Well yes, I would hope so." Do you think it can be solved in 200 years or in 100 years?

This 500 year planning process is powerful. It allows you to see the opportunity for success in every category. You can see the whole picture and see how it all works together to get the job done.

You can take any problem such as *loss of tropical rainforests, over-consumption in the industrial North,* or *population pressures* & imagine a timespan for solving it. Starting at 500 years into the future, count backwards to estimate when you think a problem could be solved. Say the problem is *over-consumption & waste in the industrial North*, I believe this could be solved in 100 years from the turn of the century. What do you think?

From the year 2100 you then count backwards again & set objectives or benchmarks to achieve the goal. In 35 years homes will not be heated with fossil fuels. In 7 years we eradicate all throw away fast-food packaging. In 3 years we ban the use of throw away chopsticks.

These benchmarks let us know how we are progressing toward the solution. It will also let future generations know & give them a plan to improve upon. Your fforts in the 1990s, however bold or humble, are now seen not as a drop in the bucket. They are an important step toward achieving a final goal as fast as possible.

If asked to gauge the chances of humans surviving to help orchestrate a transformation to a post-industrial sustainable society I would give a 2 rating on a 1-10 scale. But in 100 years I think we can get that up to a five. In 300 years we could be at a nine. What do you think? Participating in this effort is participating in the greatest drama of all time -- the battle for life on Earth.

Pull Quotes:

• We wish to express our deepest apologies for the 500 years of death & destruction wrought upon Indigenous peoples, the land, & all life in this hemisphere.
• Thinking in geologic time, the Earth's perspective, the next 500 years is but a brief moment.
• We will work to chart an ecological & just course for the next 500 years.

About the author:

Randy Hayes has been described in the Wall Street Journal as "an environmental pit bull." His is Executive Director of Foundation Earth, a new organization fostering the big rethink to help protect the planet's life support systems. Hayes, a former filmmaker, is a veteran of many high-visibility corporate accountability campaigns and has advocated for the rights of Indigenous peoples throughout the world. Hayes founded Rainforest Action Network.