

INTEGRATED FOREST MANAGEMENT: THE OLD WINE OF MULTIPLE USE MANAGEMENT IN A NEW SKIN?

Recently, new forest management concepts have been introduced in many countries. In the Netherlands, integrated forest management has been enthusiastically welcomed by a large part of the forestry community. This type of forest management aims at a better fulfilment of forest functions by means of integration of functions. This integration will be achieved by the application of silvicultural measures that lead to uneven-aged forests with a mix of species, natural regeneration and small-scale structure. Another management concept that has come forward is that advocated by the Pro Silva movement. Pro Silva aims at timber production in a more natural way; the ecological function is stimulated to serve the timber production function.

Also in the 1993 Forest Policy Plan of the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries considerable attention has been paid to integrated forest management. According to this policy plan, an action plan has to be drawn up to introduce integrated forest management. It is not clearly indicated, however, how and to what extent integrated forest management contributes to functions which are very important in the Netherlands, such as recreation and environment (including CO₂ sequestration). The impression exists, these functions are expected to follow in the wake of the timber production and the ecological function.

In Austria, it has been argued integrated forest management has to mean that an increase in the fulfilment of one function not will be at the cost of another function. This, however, may be considered as a type of multiple use.

The conclusion must be that it is not clear what integrated forest management is. What is missing in particular, are strategic goals for integrated forest management. To the extent that goals are mentioned, they are more or less on a tactical level and largely related to characteristics

of the forest. Integrated forest management as described so far, is not more than a type of multiple use and in this sense old wine in a new skin. It is a type of multiple use in which the ecological function is emphasized.

A related concept is that of ecosystem management, which was declared to "the Forest Service way" in 1992 by the Chief of the USDA Forest Service. This management concept has been typified as an ecocentric approach to forest management. Also in the case of ecosystem management, it is not clear which objectives are pursued.

If it has to be more than multiple use, what could integrated forest management be? The integration aspect could be broadened in at least four ways. Firstly, forest management could be vertically integrated into the timber processing chain. If the so-called integrated forest management leads towards uneven-aged forests, which produce larger dimensions than the current even-aged forests, vertical integration deserves more attention in the Netherlands. Secondly, forest management in one management unit should be integrated with that in other spatial units. This seems a very relevant type of integration in the Netherlands, particularly within the framework of the policy to construct a national ecological network. Thirdly, such spatial integration should include a better adjustment of forest management of public and private land, as well as a better cooperation between private forest owners. The usually small private forests can play an important role in the ecological network. Lastly, integration should not be limited to the integration of forest functions, it should also include integration with the general objectives of socio-economic policy such as community stability and rural development.

Elements of this broader interpretation of integrated forest management are already practised. A challenge to forest policy and management is the coordinated implementation of the various dimensions of the concept.

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