



# UNDERSTORIES

SPRING 2004

Dogwood Alliance's Quarterly Newsletter

The understory is one of the five basic layers, or strata, of a forest. The other four layers are the canopy, the shrub layer, the herb layer and the forest floor. The understory is made up of shorter, shade-loving trees—like the dogwood tree—and younger trees that may some day grow to join the canopy layer.

# DOGWOOD ALLIANCE CONVINCES OFFICE DEPOT TO CREATE A STRONG ENVIRONMENTAL PAPER POLICY



dogged the CEO at dozens of speaking events, and coordinated a 20-city outreach tour. Several socially responsible investment firms, including the As You Sow Foundation, Calvert Group, Ltd, Green Century Capital Management, and Trillium Asset Management, weighed in throughout the campaign.

**Under Office Depot's new policy, the company will:**

- Phase out all paper products coming from rare and vulnerable forests, forests containing exceptional biodiversity values, forests subject to unsustainable management, and forests that have been illegally logged. (This phase out means moving away from sourcing paper from endangered forests in specific regions including the Southern United States, the Boreal forests of Canada and the forests of British Columbia.)

- Achieve an average of 30% post consumer recycled content across all paper products.
- Phase out products from industrial forest operations that convert naturally diverse forests to monoculture plantations.
- Commit to stop sourcing its paper from areas where natural forests have been replanted using genetically modified trees.

Now, Dogwood Alliance will monitor Office Depot's actions to ensure adequate implementation of its policy and on the ground protection for endangered forests. Office Depot has already taken two key steps by canceling its contract with Asia Pulp and Paper (APP), which

is responsible for egregious and illegal logging in Indonesia's old growth rainforests and by pledging \$2.2 million toward the identification of endangered forest areas and the development of landscape conservation plans. Both of these actions indicate that Office Depot is headed in the right direction.

Weyerhaeuser, Bowater, and International Paper, three of Office Depot's suppliers, have large logging operations in the Southern United States. With recycled paper now comparable to virgin fiber in quality and price, shifting away from clearcut logging and toward increased reliance on recycled fiber for paper is more feasible for the industry and could result in the protection of millions of acres of ecologically significant forests. If all the paper mills in the South increased their use of recycled fiber by 30%, 15 million acres of forests, comparable in size to all the forests in Tennessee, could be saved over the next ten years. By

securing environmental policies from large corporate consumers of paper like Staples and Office Depot, we are fueling demand for ecologically sound paper products, thereby transforming the paper industry and helping to ensure the ecological sustainability of Southern forests for future generations.



Millions of acres of natural forests throughout the South have been converted to intensively managed pine plantations. Office Depot is the first office supply retailer to adopt a policy that discourages paper companies from converting forests to plantations.

**O**n March 22, Office Depot released a new and improved environmental policy, successfully ending Dogwood Alliance's sixteen-month campaign, which challenged the company to make a clear commitment to protect endangered forests. When Office Depot released an environmental policy on Earth Day 2003 that failed to provide protection for endangered forests, Dogwood Alliance launched a grassroots campaign criticizing the company for releasing a substandard environmental paper policy.

Over the past year and a half, Dogwood Alliance, ForestEthics, and other partners organized more than a hundred demonstrations, generated thousands of post-cards and phone calls to its headquarters, recruited over 200 national and international organizations to sign a letter to the CEO, critiqued Office Depot's policy at the Office Products International conference, bird-

# ACTIVISTS PROTEST THE INDUSTRY'S "SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE"



**T**hirty activists rallied outside the annual American Forest and Paper Association (AF&PA) meeting in New York City on March 23 in protest of the industry's bogus Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) certification program. The demonstration in New York was the most recent action by a coalition of groups that includes Dogwood Alliance, Sierra Club, American Lands Alliance, Greenpeace, Rainforest

Action Network, Natural Resources Defense Council, ForestEthics, National Wildlife Federation and Natural Resources Council of Maine. These groups have joined forces to educate consumers and the public about the truth behind the timber industry's "certified" SFI "eco-label" now appearing on products in the US market.

In November of 2003, the coalition developed and launched a website

that details problems with the SFI and documents damaging forestry practices "certified" as good forestry under the SFI program. The site contains downloadable reports and studies about the SFI as well as a photo gallery of SFI certified lands that have been decimated by clearcuts and chemicals. [www.DontBuySFI.com](http://www.DontBuySFI.com)

Designed by Natural Arts Design Studio (877-290-8768), specializing in exceptional design for nonprofits and sustainable businesses.



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# NRDC DESIGNATES CUMBERLAND PLATEAU AS BIOGEM

**O**n February 26, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) featured the Cumberland Plateau in its annual list of the twelve most endangered wild lands in the Americas. NRDC is an international environmental organization that uses law, science and the support of more than one million members and online activists to protect the planet's wildlife and wild places to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all living things. NRDC's effort to protect imperiled wilderness throughout the Western Hemisphere, dubbed the BioGems campaign, will mobilize citizen action over the coming year to defend the Cumberland Plateau and eleven other extraordinary areas, ranging from the Arctic to the Amazon.

When Dogwood Alliance announced victory on the Staples campaign in 2002, NRDC scientists contacted our staff to discuss the formation of a partnership to enhance efforts to protect Southern forests. Since then, NRDC has worked with Dogwood Alliance and the Conservation Biology

Institute to identify and map endangered forests and design a market-based campaign to protect the endangered forests. These discussions eventually evolved into the designation of the Cumberland Plateau, which encompasses parts of Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee, as a BioGem by NRDC.

"We are drawing a line in the trees. We are going to stop the multinational paper companies from plundering what's left of the Cumberland Plateau," said Allen Hershkowitz, an NRDC senior scientist. "NRDC's million members and Internet activists, working with the Dogwood Alliance and other local partners, will defend the endangered forests of this region from these corporations, which are bent on destroying it for newsprint and toilet paper."

For more information, go to <http://www.savebiogems.org/>

# THE UNIQUE ECOLOGICAL VALUES OF THE CUMBERLAND PLATEAU BIOGEM

The Cumberland Plateau BioGem, which encompasses parts of the Appalachian Mixed Mesophytic and Appalachian Blue Ridge eco-regions, is one of the most biologically diverse temperate forested regions on Earth.

- It is home to some of the last remaining intact hardwood forests in the South, represented by canopies of red and white oak, hickory, red maple, black gum, tulip trees, sugar maple, sweet buckeye and red spruce trees.
- It is second only to China's temperate zone in plant diversity, and provides habitat for some of North America's rare and endangered species.
- It has the highest total amount of plant and animal species endemism (species that exist nowhere else on Earth) in North America.
- It is the center for Neotropical migratory songbirds in eastern North America.
- It has the richest concentration of salamanders of any temperate zone in the world.
- It encompasses the most biologically diverse freshwater temperate ecosystem in the world with over 230 fish species and dozens of mussels and crayfish species found nowhere else on Earth.
- It provides habitat for species such as the eastern cougar, dusky and marbled salamanders, cerulean warbler, and red-shouldered hawk.



Photo Credit: Mark Pritchard

According to the U.S. Forest Service, the Southern United States has more threatened forested ecosystems than any other region of the country. We recognize that we cannot immediately protect all of the region's endangered forests. After working with the Natural Resources Defense Council and conservation biologists over the past year, we are directing the efforts of the next phase of our campaign on protecting the Cumberland Plateau, which is home to some of the region's last remaining intact, hardwood forests. We believe that with this focus we will not only see on the ground protection in the years to come but will also develop a model for forest protection that we can eventually apply to other endangered forest areas in the region. Meanwhile, we will continue to promote protection of other Southern endangered forest areas.



Photo Credit: [unreadable]

Activists Cielo Sand, Bud Watson and Gary Bowers with scientist Jon Evans are keeping watch over the Cumberland Plateau.



Map Credit: Conservation Biology Institute

MAP OF NRDC'S BIOGEM

# PAPER COMPANIES CONSUMING WOOD FROM THE CUMBERLAND PLATEAU

## *Local Efforts to Protect Tennessee's Forests Gain Momentum* By Cielo Sand, Tennessee Forests Council co-chair

It might have been the clarion call to the state of Tennessee's forests in 1993 when the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) denied permits to three Tennessee River chip mills. Timber companies were considering a dozen additional sites for chip mills along this 652-mile river. TVA conducted a two-year environmental impact study. After completing the assessment, TVA argued that if the chip mills were permitted, existing state laws would not adequately protect water quality and species if upwards of two million acres of forests were cut each year.

Since 1993, despite growing demands on forests, the state of Tennessee has not only failed to implement policy but also has thwarted numerous attempts to pass protective legislation for the ecological and economic values provided by a diverse, temperate forest.

In this 2004 legislative session, the Farm Bureau, Chamber of Commerce and the state's Department of Agriculture, exerted overwhelming influence to stop the passage of Save Our Cumberland Mountains (SOCM) chip mill permit bill, which would require a forest resource review of a new or expanding chip or pulp mill.

In the face of the state's formal obstructionism over the past decade, conservation organizations and (precious few) biologists and economists, within their specialties, have attempted to parry the momentum of the unregulated timber machine. Last year, Tennessee organizations were presented with an opportunity to collaborate with the Model Forest Policy Program (MFPP), which had selected Tennessee as a pilot state for a Southern legislative reform campaign. In response, the Tennessee Forests Council was formed to combine the power of Tennessee's conservation groups and speak with one voice to effect forest policy reform in the coming years.

Adding NRDC's BioGem Campaign and Dogwood Alliance's markets strategy to the mix of efforts to protect the Cumberland Plateau could be the critical turning point in gaining protection for valuable Southern hardwoods.

## COMPANY

## PAPER PRODUCTS

Bowater	Newsprint, book paper, tissue, magazine and catalogue paper, advertising circulars
International Paper	Copy paper, magazine and catalogue paper, shopping bags
Weyerhaeuser	Copy paper
Smurfit-Stone	Cardboard
Blue Ridge Paper Company	Milk and juice cartons, cups, envelopes
Temple-Inland	Linerboard
Abitibi-Consolidated	Newsprint

Photo Credit: Mark Pritchard





Josh Marks, Robyn Williams Heeks, Phil Osborne, Sarah Hodgdon and John Beal enjoying the party in Atlanta.

Photo Credit: Dogwood Alliance

Thank you to the generous donors and foundations listed below and to all of the supporters who make it possible for Dogwood Alliance to defend Southern forests.



Special thanks to Phil Osborne, pictured here with M.E. Wegman and Caro Carter, who hosted a party and fundraiser at his home in Atlanta on behalf of Dogwood Alliance.

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## MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW...

**June 4-6:** Kentucky Waterways Alliance 2004 Annual Meeting  
Prestonsburg KY \* [www.KWAlliance.org](http://www.KWAlliance.org) \* [hopper@prodigy.net](mailto:hopper@prodigy.net)

**June 14-21:** Eastern Forest Justice League Third Annual Eastern Forest Action Camp  
Southern Appalachia \* [www.easternforestdefense.org](http://www.easternforestdefense.org)

**June 18-27:** Natural Building Workshop

**June 27:** Ecoscapes Adventures Fourth Annual Poker Paddle Fundraiser for Dogwood Alliance  
Lake Hartwell, SC \* [Eso2000@earthlink.net](mailto:Eso2000@earthlink.net) \* [www.svionline.org](http://www.svionline.org) \* [mediarights@bledsoe.net](mailto:mediarights@bledsoe.net)

**July 8-11:** "Food For Life" Workshops

**September 17-19:** Dogwood Alliance Annual Meeting, TN  
[michelle@dogwoodalliance.org](mailto:michelle@dogwoodalliance.org) Specifics TBA later

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