

Contribution of Silviculture towards sustainable Forestry, in Greece.

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ABSTRACT

Greece is a mountainous Mediterranean country characterized by a variety of climates, geological substrates, soil types, topography and microenvironmental conditions. As a consequence, many natural forest types have evolved. Natural irregularity of stand structure has been favored; as well as mixture of different forest species. Conifer forests extent almost in all elevations from the sea level to tree borders; evergreen broadleaved trees occupy low elevation areas and deciduous broadleaved forests as well as a wide variety of mixed forests cover the slopes of the mountains all over the country. The ecologically desirable irregularity of stand structure and mixture can be maintained and enhanced by appropriate silvicultural treatment, following the natural laws. These silvicultural treatments should be based on the principle of sustainability, taking care for forest preservation and site improvement. Natural regeneration, mainly used in forest management in Greece, obtains the natural species composition as well as their provenances. Silvicultural treatments aim at the improvement of stand stability, habitat conservation and flora and fauna biodiversity. Clear cutting is prohibited in high forests but not in coppices. In same, coppice forests are under conversion to high forest by silvicultural treatments. First results are optimistic and these treatments must be applied to the most of coppices. From all the above, it becomes quite clear that silviculture applied in Greece is a “close to nature” silviculture and successfully contributes towards to sustainable forestry.