

About 20 years ago, a number of landowners across the state began investing large sums of money into intensive pre-commercial treatments of young softwood stands, which included extensive herbicide release, and brushsaw spacing. The decisions to do this were driven largely by the effects of the spruce budworm epidemic, related age-class imbalance in the spruce-fir resource, and concerns about long-term fiber supply to the wood products industry. They represented the first large-scale intensive management of young forest stands in the Northeast.

Two decades, and several hundred thousand acres later, it's a good time to take another look at these practices. Have they worked as intended? Did they lead to unintended consequences? What are the real costs? What have we learned?

Join us for a spring field day in the western mountains. We'll visit the Austin Pond research site, maintained since 1977 by Plum Creek Timber Company and UMaine's Cooperative Forestry Research Unit. We'll be able to see first hand comparisons of untreated controls, aerially released spruce fir, and pre-commercially thinning stands, approaching merchantable size. Topics of discussion will include 1) the history of the Austin Pond Study, 2) an economic analysis of pre-commercial silviculture in our state, 3) effects of young stand treatments on wildlife, and 4) the suitability and hazards of herbicides as a tool in forestry.

Early Stand Management of Naturally Regenerated Stands:

Is it worth it?

A visit to the Austin Pond Research Site

May 23, 2002

**Sponsored by the Maine Division,
New England Society of American Foresters**