

 <p>Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation</p> <p>Section: Environmental Stewardship and Planning</p>	<p>Policy Title: Tropical Hardwood Purchase and Use in State Parks and Historic Sites</p> <p>Directive: NR-POL-020</p> <p>Effective Date: 02/27/2020</p>
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Summary

In recognition of the ecological importance of tropical rainforests and the unsustainable logging of tropical hardwoods for building materials, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) aims to reduce to the maximum extent possible the purchase and use of tropical hardwoods on State Park properties.

This policy is intended to go beyond the requirements of New York State Finance Law §165, which says the State “shall not purchase or obtain for any purpose any tropical hardwoods or tropical hardwood products, wholesale or retail, in any form.” The State Finance Law §165 is also recognized in Appendix A of the Standard Clauses for New York State Contracts (Clause 18: “Prohibition on Purchase of Tropical Hardwoods”). However, State Finance Law §165 applies only to the hardwood species listed, meaning many other tropical hardwood species are excluded from the prohibition. This includes ipe and greenheart, which are both commonly used materials for decking and benches. The law also provides several exceptions, including ones based on cost or the lack of acceptable alternatives. Therefore, OPRHP intends to further restrict the purchase of and use tropical hardwoods beyond State Finance Law §165 and Appendix A.

Policy

Definitions

- “Tropical hardwood” is defined as any and all hardwood, scientifically classified as angiosperm, that grows in any tropical moist forest.

OPRHP will reduce its tropical hardwood purchases beyond the requirements of State Finance Law §165 and Appendix A of the Standard Clauses for New York State Contracts by implementing the following:

1. Prohibit the purchase and use of tropical hardwoods in all OPRHP’s contracts for goods and services, including construction contracts, at or within State Parks facilities.
2. To the maximum extent possible, utilize environmentally preferable alternative products for new and restoration projects.

Environmentally Preferable Alternatives

The following is a list of preferable alternatives that can be used in place of tropical hardwood. It is not intended as a comprehensive list of substitutes.

A. Recycled plastic lumber (RPL)

- These products are made from post-consumer and post-industrial recovered plastic or recovered plastic mixed with other materials, such as sawdust. They are durable and can be resistant to rot, moisture, graffiti, decay, and insects. They are also relatively maintenance free, long-lasting, and divert plastic from landfills.

B. Modified wood

- Wood can be modified to impart permanent properties that improve water resistance, stability, resistance to acids or bases, ultraviolet radiation, biodeterioration, and thermal degradation.
- Thermally modified: Wood is heated, which permanently modifies carbohydrates through the full cross section and makes the wood inedible to decay organisms and insects. The process can be applied to softwood and hardwood tree species. Thermally modified wood is appropriate for situations where wood is used above ground and is exposed to weathering.
- Chemically modified: Chemical processes are used to alter the cell structure of the wood, resulting in increased durability and dimensional stability. Since the process binds the chemicals to the cell wall, there is no risk of chemicals leaching into the environment, which can be the case with pressure treated wood where wood is infused with chemical preservatives, called biocides. For this reason, chemically modified wood is appropriate for situations in which wood is in direct contact with the ground or fresh water.
 - Acetylated wood: Uses acetic anhydride and heat to modify the composition of the wood. The process alters the full cross section of the wood.
 - Polymerized/kebonized wood: Enhances the properties of sustainable woods with a bio-based liquid to permanently modify the wood and cell walls. Wood becomes heavier and harder.

C. Domestic and non-tropical hardwoods and softwoods

- These woods originate within the United States or from other non-tropical forests, though they are generally not as strong or durable as tropical hardwoods. Black locust is one species noted for durability and decay resistance. Domestic, non-tropical softwoods and hardwoods have a lower ecological impact since these are not harvested from significant and sensitive ecological communities.

Policy Exception

Any exception to this policy must be documented using the associated “Justification for the Use of Tropical Hardwoods” form. The form must be submitted by the region and may be approved by the Commissioner or designee on a case-by-case basis.

Background

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN 2017), forests around the world account for 80% of all terrestrial biodiversity and 31% of global land cover. Tropical rainforests are vital ecosystems, and their destruction has a global impact. The IUCN reports that “over half of the tropical forests worldwide have been destroyed since the 1960s, and every second, more than one hectare [2.47 acres] of tropical forests is destroyed or drastically degraded. Forests serve as natural storage for carbon, and deforestation is the second leading cause of carbon emissions that contribute to climate change.” Climate change is considered by OPRHP as a major environmental threat according to the “Priorities for Environmental and Natural Resource Stewardship”, so by prohibiting the purchase of tropical hardwood OPRHP will reduce the Agency’s contribution to deforestation and its associated effect on the global climate.

Other Related Information

New York Consolidated Laws, State Finance Law – STF §165:
<https://codes.findlaw.com/ny/state-finance-law/stf-sect-165.html>

Standard Clauses for New York State Contracts—Appendix A:
<https://ogs.ny.gov/procurement/appendix>

IUCN Deforestation and Forest Degradation:
<https://www.iucn.org/resources/issues-briefs/deforestation-and-forest-degradation>

Forms

Justification for the Use of Tropical Hardwoods

History

02/27/2020 Policy created and effective immediately