

State Collaboration with National Forests

State Forest Action Plans Foster State-Federal Relationships

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry



Description: In December 2009, the Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry (NA S&PF), Region 9, the Northern Research Station, and the Northeastern Area Association of State Foresters jointly developed and signed a Landscape Scale Conservation position paper. In 2010, each State forestry agency consulted with key stakeholders and the public to develop a Statewide Forest Resource Assessment and Strategy, now known as a State Forest Action Plan. They outline important issues, opportunities, and strategies for each State, and meet the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act (CFAA) (as amended by the 2008 Farm Bill) requirement for the State to be eligible for funds authorized by the CFAA. The CFAA ensures Federal and State programs target shared management priorities to achieve meaningful outcomes.

Accomplishments: As a key partner in 13 of the States across the Northeast and Midwest, National Forests are actively engaging with States on efforts that contribute to the State Forest Action Plans and shared management goals, including landscape-level projects. The following examples show the range of activities and long-standing cooperation between National Forests and States.

Missouri – State Forest Action Plan and Mark Twain National Forest Plan

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) has launched a multidisciplinary effort to focus agency resources and coordinate activities on privately owned lands with the highest natural resource values. The lands have been identified as important in the State Forest Action Plan, Wildlife Action Plan, and Fisheries Priority Watershed process, and include locations targeted by nonprofit conservation partners.

The MDC Forestry Division and the Mark Twain National Forest (MTNF) have made a commitment to completing joint projects and are discussing cooperative work where MDC focus areas and MTNF restoration landscapes and watersheds coincide. Specific efforts include exploring the potential for a joint project among the MTNF, the Northern Research Station, and MDC in high priority MTNF watersheds, and/or in the collaborative forest landscape restoration area. Coordinated work would be completed by the MTNF on National Forest System Lands and by multi-disciplinary MDC staff working with landowners on private lands. Northern Research Station staff would conduct research and monitor results.

New Hampshire – State Forest Action Plan and White Mountain National Forest Planning

The White Mountain National Forest (WMNF) has an exceptional working relationship with the New Hampshire Division of Forests and Lands that spans several decades. New Hampshire's Forest Resources Planning program dates back to the 1950s. The WMNF provided staff support and data for all of the state's planning processes, which have occurred about every ten years. The WMNF staff similarly supported the development of the 2010 State Forest Action Plan.

The State Forester's commitment of staff to assist with completion of the WMNF Plan in 1986 and again in 2005 yielded Forest Plans that were consistent with State forest policy and plans. New Hampshire's Best Management Practices were incorporated into the WMNF 2005 Plan. Environmental Assessments for management projects on the WMNF routinely incorporate strategies from the State Forest Action Plan as part of the Purpose and Need. Forest Supervisor Tom Wagner and State Forester Brad Simpkins maintain a strong professional relationship and frequently discuss matters of mutual interest.

West Virginia – Hemlock Conservation Project and Monongahela National Forest

The West Virginia Division of Forestry and Monongahela National Forest (MNF) worked closely to identify issues of mutual interest and strategies in the State Forest Action Plan. Hemlock woolly adelgid

(HWA) is the most serious threat facing West Virginia hemlocks, now infesting or threatening priority hemlock stands on more than 224,000 acres. The State Forest Action Plan identifies HWA management as a top priority and cites the MNF as a key partner. Resource managers from Federal, State, and private organizations have formed the *West Virginia Hemlock Conservation Working Group*, facilitated by NA S&PF, which is taking a statewide approach to HWA.

The MNF has been an active participant in West Virginia's battle against HWA. It has worked with the Northeastern Area to develop a model HWA suppression strategy and provided a venue to convene partner group meetings. Building on the group effort, the West Virginia Department of Agriculture, with assistance from a Forest Service Forest Health Protection grant, is treating high value hemlocks on state-owned and private lands and providing technical assistance and treatments on the Monongahela National Forest and on Nature Conservancy lands in the State.

Wisconsin – Windstorm Recovery by the State and Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), Division of Forestry outlined their role and niche for the Forest Action Plan in the Wisconsin Strategic Direction and asked other agencies and partners to identify strategies to contribute to.

The Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (CNNF) and the WDNR jointly took action to recover from a 2010 wind storm that toppled trees on 200,000 acres of forest. The area was so extensively damaged that the State requested immediate assistance. The CNNF provided personnel to evaluate damage on both Federal and State lands. The WDNR provided direct assistance to CNNF to help with fuels reduction on and near the Forest boundary. National forest funds under the Wyden amendment were used to reduce fuel hazards threatening CNNF. NA S&PF Cooperative Forestry provided funds to expedite work on private and State lands and the Eastern Region provided the Midewin Shot Crew for recovery work on these lands.

Minnesota – State, County, and Superior National Forest Wildfire Coordination

Wildfire risk was identified in the Minnesota Forest Action Plan as a multi-state priority with opportunity for collaboration on hazard mitigation and prescribed burning with National Forests and other partners.

The Superior National Forest (SNF), Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and Lake County and St. Louis County governments are cooperating on land restoration within the National Forest to protect communities from the threat of wildfire along the southern boundary of the SNF. National Forest personnel have evaluated restoration needs on Federal and State lands and in communities that border the SNF. The Forest has also provided funds under the Wyden amendment to reduce fuel hazards that threaten both the SNF and adjoining communities. NA S&PF Cooperative Forestry provided grant and staff support to help the counties hire staff and contractors to work within and around communities.

During the past 2 years, hundreds of acres have been restored on both Federal and State lands. Numerous communities have received hazard reduction treatments, making them more defensible in the event of a large wildfire. The work is ongoing and will take another year or more to complete.

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