

Planners' Pages

Spring/Summer 2004

NFRPA Resolution to NAASF Passes

By Teague Prichard, Wisconsin Bureau of Forestry

The Northeastern Area Association of State Foresters (NAASF), an organization consisting of 20 State Foresters and the District of Columbia Forester, passed a resolution forwarded by the Northeastern Forest Resource Planners Association (NFRPA) on July 13, 2004. The resolution, the first that NFRPA has forwarded to NAASF in its 25-year history, focused on developing and maintaining planning capacity in State forestry agencies and guiding the USDA Forest Service Cooperative Planning Assistance Program implementation. It was crafted by the NFRPA executive committee and e-mailed out for all NFRPA members to review prior to submittal. Jon Nelson, Minnesota Forest Planner and former NFRPA president, presented the resolution and information about NFRPA at NAASF's summer meeting. Jon noted that the presentation and discussions prior to approving the resolution raised some questions and sparked debate among the State Foresters, primarily about the appropriate level of access of staff organizations, such as NFRPA, to NAASF.

For more information contact Jon Nelson (651-297-2256 or jon.nelson@dnr.state.mn.us) or Teague Prichard (608-264-8883 or pricht@dnr.state.wi.us).

The NFRPA resolution to NAASF states:

BE IT RESOLVED that planning is an important function to address sustainable forestry, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NAASF supports and encourages participation by all NA States in forest resource planning priority initiatives, the annual NFRPA conference, and other opportunities to advance State forest resource planning expertise in the NA States, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that by July 2005, NAASF will work closely with NFRPA to examine and recommend options to guide the Planning Assistance Program and help facilitate building and maintaining forest resource planning capacity in NA States.

Sustainability Assessment Highlights Poster

A new poster is available on the *Sustainability Assessment Highlights for the Northern United States*. The poster describes the purpose and contents of the highlights document and provides example data in graphs, bullets, and maps for each of the seven national sustainability criteria.

The poster is 36 inches tall by 56 inches wide and can be provided on CD or printed. To obtain a copy, contact Sherri Wormstead at 603-868-7737 or swormstead@fs.fed.us.



Meet us on the shores of beautiful Lake Champlain for the

Northeastern Forest Resource Planners Association 2004 Conference

Burlington, Vermont
September 12-16

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A Message from the President on Forest Certification

If you haven't noticed, the topic of forest certification is being discussed in many circles, and forest planners are often in the middle of the circle. What makes the certification discussion so fascinating is the fact that it can be heard all the way from the field forester to the Governor's office. Since the NFRPA Conference, scheduled for this fall, will focus on forest certification, I thought I would talk about the status and implications for State forest management and planning.

Forest certification has been around for nearly a decade now and, in fact, many States have been certified for years. Early on, however, forest certification was an unknown and many States wanted to see how the certification issue would play out. Well, it's playing out and several things have changed. Most notably, the fact that we live in an increasingly global economy is starting to directly impact the forest-based economy. While certification has not been a top issue in North America, it has a much higher profile in Europe and elsewhere. We now find major global purchasers of forest products (e.g., Time-Warner, Home Depot, Staples) increasing the pressure on suppliers to provide certified products. If we ignore this, forest product companies are at risk of losing market share, which could have significant adverse impacts on the economy, as well as negative ecological and social impacts on forests.

Although certification was once promoted as a tool to obtain a price premium for products sold, that has, by and large, not been realized. Rather, what seems to be emerging in this very competitive global market is that certification may well be a cost of doing business. At least in some markets, it appears that those who obtain certification will maintain or gain market share and those who do not will lose it.

In addition to the potential for market-based benefits, certifying lands that are sustainably managed could lend much deserved recognition and credibility to State forest land management. This could increase public appreciation and support for forestry.

States are not alone in moving to assess forest certification. Pennsylvania was an early leader, receiving SFI and FSC certification. This trend continued with Wisconsin accepting dual certification in 2004. Several other States—Maine, Minnesota, and Michigan among them—are looking hard at this issue and Governors from a couple of States have made strong commitments to certify large acreages.

We often hear that some States feel, and rightfully so, that they already practice sustainable forestry and there is no need for an independent third-party to verify this. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that simply stating a commitment to sustainability is not convincing to either the world market or the general public.

Personally, I applaud the move toward increasing the percentage of forest products that are generated from sustainably managed forests. While we might debate the merits of having to demonstrate this through an independent third-party, I believe we should focus on the opportunities this creates—market niche, increased public recognition for sustainable forestry, and ongoing quality improvement in forest management programs. I think you'll agree that we have not cornered the market on knowing how to most effectively and efficiently practice sustainable forestry.

And finally, planners must participate in sustainable forest certification efforts. Planners will continue to have the opportunity to work directly, side by side, with a number of partners and constituencies who participate in the certification programs. We have participated regularly in the past with working groups focused on developing the criteria and indicators. Through this participation, we are actively engaged with providing input and influencing how sustainability is interpreted in the Northeast.

Before closing, I want to acknowledge the work of the folks organizing the upcoming Planners Conference. They are working hard to provide a program that has something for everyone. I am also excited to welcome GIS folks to the meeting to discuss opportunities in data management and decision support tools. Please join me in expressing thanks to these individuals when we visit in September in beautiful Vermont. I hope to see you all in September and "tap" in to the beauty of Vermont.

—Teague Prichard, NFRPA 2003 President,
Wisconsin Bureau of Forestry

NFRPA 2004 Meeting in Burlington, Vermont

This year's annual NFRPA meeting will be held on the shores of beautiful Lake Champlain in Burlington, Vermont, September 12 to 16.

The theme will be "Forest Sustainability in a Rapidly Changing Environment," with special emphasis on forest certification. In addition, at the request of the Northeastern Area Association of State Foresters, NFRPA will be co-hosting the first meeting of the Northeastern Forest Geographic Information Technology (GIT) group. As a result, the agenda is packed with items of interest to both GIT folks and planners. Updates will be provided on how certification issues are being addressed in States from Maine, New York, and Missouri to the Lake States. The meeting will include presentations on data requirements related to forest certification and comparisons of three separate approaches to managing data. There will also be some discussions on the relationship (if any) between managing and monitoring forest sustainability through certification versus the larger scale approach of using criteria and indicators to measure regional forest



sustainability. An impressive poster session will offer a chance to showcase many of the more exciting examples of GIT projects from Vermont and around the region.

Opportunities for networking are built into the meeting, including a dinner cruise on Lake Champlain, so planners and GIT people can get to know each other and begin what we view as the most important objective of the meeting—making contacts and exchanging information. NFRPA feels this will prove to be one of the most important meetings it has sponsored to

date. If you have any interest in forest planning or geographic information technology as it relates to forest planning, you won't want to miss this one.

Registration information was sent to all NFRPA members in July. For more information, contact Bill Moulton, Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, 5 Perry Street, Suite 20, Barre, VT 05667, or e-mail at bill.moulton@anr.state.vt.us.

—by Bill Moulton, VT Division of Forests
and Jeff Horan, MD Forest Service

NA/NAASF Base Indicators of Forest Sustainability

Three NA/NFRPA C&I task groups are working to implement the NA/NAASF Base Indicators of forest sustainability.

The Reporting Task Group has developed templates for the Web-based indicator clearinghouse, which will provide data on the base indicators at State and regional levels. State C&I contacts will be asked to review the Web pages when all of them have been drafted.

The Data Issues and Gaps Task Group completed the first annual review of the base indicators for data issues and gaps and have developed an approach for addressing each one.

The Outreach Task Group has identified communication and outreach strategies for the NA/NAASF Base Indicators and will work on several related tasks over the next fiscal year.

If you would like to participate on one of the task groups or for more information, please contact Sherri Wormstead at swormstead@fs.fed.us or 603-868-7737.

Review of Brochure on the NA/NAASF Base Indicators

The NA/NFRPA C&I Outreach Task Group has drafted a new brochure that planners can use to help explain criteria and indicators and the NA/NAASF Base Indicators to audiences such as advisory boards and other State agencies. This brochure was recently mailed to all State C&I contacts for review.

**Comments are due
September 1, 2004.**

Monitoring Forest Sustainability
in the Northeastern Area



Are songbirds declining? Are we cutting too much timber? What will happen to forests if current rates of development continue? How much development is too much? How many livelihoods depend on forests?

These issues raise questions about forest sustainability and demonstrate the strong ties among the ecological, social, and economic aspects of forests. Forest ecosystems, individuals, and communities are intricately linked. People want to see forests managed with long-term sustainability in mind. Good information will help define sustainability and determine if current practices are sustainable.

State Issues, Challenges, and Successes

New Hampshire Assessment for Comprehensive Forest Resource Plan Revision



In advance of revising its comprehensive Forest Resource Plan, New Hampshire will begin conducting a statewide assessment of forest resources this summer. Assessment teams representing a variety of agencies, organizations, and interests will be compiling and analyzing data. Using the NA/NAASF base indicators of forest sustainability as a starting point, they will identify additional indicators and metrics specifically relevant to New Hampshire.

For more information, contact Susan Francher at sfrancher@dred.state.nh.us or 603-271-2214.

New Jersey Incorporates C&I Into a State Forest Management Plan



The New Jersey Forest Service is preparing a State lands forest management plan for the 35,000-acre Brendan T. Byrne State Forest. This will be the first State lands management plan in New Jersey to introduce and incorporate criteria and indicators (C&I) based on the Montreal Process. Brendan T. Byrne State Forest has a rich history of forest restoration, research, and other silvicultural practices dating to the early 1900s. The planning process has involved multidiscipline natural resource management input from forestry, botanical, wildlife, and historical perspectives. The Brendan T. Byrne Management Plan will pave the way for additional forest resource planning incorporating C&I on a statewide scale.

For more information, contact Jon Klisches at jklishi@dep.state.nj.us or 609-984-0827.

Michigan Seeks FSC and SFI Certification for State Forest System



Governor Jennifer Granholm announced on February 11, 2004, that Michigan would seek to have its 4-million acre State forest system certified as being sustainably managed under the FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) and SFI (Sustainable Forestry Initiative) standards. Legislation requiring the State forests to be certified was signed by the Governor on June 2, 2004.

A DNR Certification Implementation Team was established shortly after the Governor's announcement in February. The team consists mostly of personnel from the Forestry, Mineral and Fire Management (FMFM) Division, but also includes several representatives from the DNR's Wildlife and Fisheries Divisions. The team's major emphasis has been on presenting all-day pre-assessment work sessions to almost 300 DNR field personnel. These sessions reviewed the details of the FSC and SFI standards, focusing on how the DNR currently complies with the standards or what would need to be done to achieve compliance. Other work has included developing invitations to bid for certification audits and consulting. Thus far, the FMFM Division has assigned two full-time, three half-time, and four quarter-time personnel to the effort and expects to add another two full-time positions.

Pre-assessments (or "scopings") are expected to be carried out this fall (between October 1 and November 15) with formal, final audits to be completed in the late summer or early fall of 2005.

For more information, contact Larry Pedersen at pedersel@michigan.gov or 517-335-3330.



Upper Mississippi River Basin Roundtable

By Constance Carpenter, NA Liaison to NFRPA, USDA Forest Service, Durham, NH



The Upper Mississippi River Forestry Partnership had a coming out party of sorts, hosting the Sustainable Forest Regional Roundtable in LaCrosse, Wisconsin, March 23–24, 2004. The partnership was formed in 2002 by the State foresters of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, and Indiana, and the Forest Service’s Northeastern Area to promote forestry solutions to water quality problems in the

189,000-square-mile Upper Mississippi River Basin. Over a hundred people at the roundtable contributed to the goals of the partnership by sharing their vision for the basin, explaining their ongoing sustainable forestry efforts, and suggesting how it may be possible to leverage resources among them. Samuel Osinde, the Upper Mississippi River Forestry Partnership Coordinator (Samuel.Osinde@dnr.state.wi.us), invited the participants to become active members of the partnership and to share the opportunity with a wide variety of stakeholders—residents, communities, businesses, environmental and social groups, and agencies.

A portion of the conference was dedicated to a discussion of conditions within the basin. Scientists shared information on each of seven sustainability criteria or goals that guide national forest policy: the maintenance and protection of (1) biodiversity, (2) forest productivity, (3) forest health, (4) soil and water resources, (5) global carbon cycles, (6) social and economic benefits of forests, and (7) the legal, institutional and economic framework to support action in the previous six. The criteria and associated

indicators generated discussion about the importance of providing a comprehensive set of information that can be used to measure progress and indicate when course corrections in policy and programs are needed.

Among the illustrious speakers were Mark Rey, USDA Under Secretary for Forests and Natural Resources, who described forestry as a “mature” policy arena; Forest Service Deputy Chief Joel Holtrop; Northeastern Area Director Kathryn Maloney; and Northeastern Forest Resource Planners Association president Teague Prichard. Meeting participants received copies of the *National Report on Sustainable Forests—2003* and the *Sustainability Assessment Highlights for the Northern United States*.



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