

FAMILY FOREST ACTION TEAM

Strategy 1: Forest Stewardship Capacity Building

Action Step: Build the capacity of professionals to deliver technical assistance to the non-industrial private forest landowners in Minnesota necessary for them to sustainably manage their forestlands

Tasks	Responsible Parties	Benchmarks
Evaluate existing programmatic costs and benefits.	MDNR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete evaluation by 1/1/08. • Report results to the Stewardship Committee. • Address identified needs and gaps in capacity to meet existing and future demand for services. • Work with MACF to determine incentives to encourage follow-up work with family forest landowners. • Work to encourage development of increased forestry consultant base in MN. • Work with NRCS to secure EQIP dollars for Stewardship Plan writing.
Implement tools for tracking and reporting accomplishments.	MDNR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop proposed metrics by 1/1/08. • Obtain reviews and comments on proposed metrics. • Include metrics for tracking small forest properties (<20 acres). • Implement metrics for tracking technical assistance accomplishments by 1/1/08. • Set goals for growth or other changes based on baseline metrics.
Develop programs or tools to support and track family forestland certification and certified wood harvest from private lands.	MDNR, Minnesota Logger Education Program (MLEP), Master Logger Certification Program (MLCP).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue third party certification for family forestlands in the Stewardship Program and/or SFIA. • Promote the use of certified loggers. • Implement tracking mechanisms to monitor certification activities and uptake on family forestlands. • Provide training to foresters and service providers about opportunities for certification on family forestlands and the potential benefits. • Provide/Devise incentives and/or benefits to family forest landowners that partake in certification programs.
Develop promotional strategies to increase interest from eligible family forest landowners into the Woodland Stewardship Program.	Stewardship Committee, MDNR, Woodland Advisors, other partners.	Pursue professional advertisement agency advice.

Strategy 2: Enhance the availability of incentives that are meaningful in encouraging forest practice implementation on family forestlands

Action Step 1: Property tax and SFIA law changes

Tasks	Responsible Parties	Benchmarks
Prepare a letter to the appropriate tax committee chairs in the House and Senate declaring support for the woodland related changes in the vetoed tax bill and attach an enhanced version of the property tax law changes that follow suggestions made by Tom Kroll as presented at the Family Forest Conference.	MFA	Complete letter by 12/1/07.
Garner support from other natural resource based organizations for the proposed changes.	MFA	Send letter with listing of supporters by 12/31/07.
Be prepared to testify at the 2008 legislature in support of the law changes when the tax bill is brought back for reconsideration.	MFA, other organizations that signed onto the letter.	Ensuring the proposed changes are addressed and heard in legislative committees when the legislature starts 2/12/08.
Once the law changes are enacted, conduct local training sessions at each DNR Forestry Area for natural resource professionals (e.g. DNR, consultants, SWCD foresters, industry foresters) and local county officials to explain the new law changes.	MDNR, MDOR.	Training sessions completed within one year of the enacted law changes.
Promote woodland owners to take advantage of the enacted law changes.	MDNR, MFA, all organizations that signed the support letter or testified in support of the changes.	1,000 applications for management plans per year above current annual levels (in order to reach another 1,000,000 acres under management plans by 2015).

Strategy 2: Enhance the availability of incentives (continued)

Action Step 2: Increase the amount of cost-sharing funds available to implement forest management practices recommended in forest stewardship plans

Tasks	Responsible Parties	Benchmarks
Organize representatives from forestry interests to attend local Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Working Group meetings during the fall of 2008 to provide input into raising the priority for allocating cost-share monies for forestry practices.	MDNR, MASWCD Forestry Committee, Woodland Advisors, MFA.	Each of the ninety-one SWCD Working Group meetings will have had a forestry representative from the above organizations or a family forest owner attend the local meeting to raise the priority in the allocation of funds for forestry practices.
Collaborate with local, state, and national resource based interest groups to encourage extra forestry incentive payments for specific practices offered through cost-share programs that coincide with the interests of their members (e.g. Ruffed Grouse Society, MN Deer Hunters Association, National Wild Turkey Federation, etc.)	MDNR, MASWCD Forestry Committee.	All potential groups that provided similar funding under the previous LCMR cost-sharing program have been approached by 12/1/08.
Promote availability of cost-sharing funds to family forest landowners through contacts with woodland owners and local media.	MDNR, SWCDs, MN Stewardship Plan Writers (e.g. consultants, industry foresters, etc.).	No woodland owner is turned down for cost-sharing a forestry practice due to a shortage of funds.

Strategy 2: Enhance the availability of incentives (continued)

Action Step 3: Study and recommend a means to trade carbon credits

Tasks	Responsible Parties	Benchmarks
<p>Ask the MFRC or the Forest Research Advisory Committee to explore the feasibility of carbon trading and emerging energy opportunities and recommend a course of action.</p>	<p>MDNR Forestry</p>	<p>The MFRC forms a committee of interested stakeholders to address the opportunities and barriers to carbon trading and emerging energy markets and make recommendations to develop a system that is a good fit for Minnesota by October 2008.</p>
<p>The committees' recommendations could include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Policy modifications as necessary to ensure that use of wood as a raw material and energy source is appropriately encouraged and to remove any existing barriers or disincentives. 2. Working with ATFS to serve as an aggregator of carbon credits or identify another third party to serve as the aggregator for Tree Farm members. 3. Proposing legislation to develop a program similar to the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006. 	<p>MFRC, MDNR Forestry, State Tree Farm Committee.</p>	<p>Identify a course of action by December 2008.</p>
<p>Develop a training program around the recommended framework to encourage family forestland owners to participate in carbon trading by providing them with information about income opportunities from carbon trading, eligibility requirements for carbon trading, assistance to enroll in the program, and take advantage of emerging energy markets.</p>	<p>MDNR Forestry, State Tree Farm Program or other non-profit organization that would serve as an aggregator.</p>	<p>Training program in place by July 2009.</p>

Strategy 3: Retaining Family Forestlands

Action Step: Identify and implement priority strategies that result in the retention of family forestlands and the continued supply of timber products from those lands

Tasks	Responsible Parties	Benchmarks
Form an ad hoc task force to identify and refine relevant issues regarding family forestland retention, parcelization, and timber availability.	MFRC	Establishment of committee and identification of issues and policy tools by 12/07.
Support funding efforts to secure resources to conduct forestland retention and parcelization research and inclusion in the Governor’s budget.	MFRC, MDNR, other stakeholder groups.	Funding of research proposal by 1/04 - 4/08.
Conduct research and develop recommendations for decision-makers.	UM, MFRC.	1) Assessment of trends, drivers, and effects of forest parcelization. 2) Assessment of broad and integrated set of policy approaches. 3) Provide decision-makers with recommendations. Completed 1/08 – 6/09 with numerous interim products to inform legislative and other policy discussions.

Acronyms:

ATFS – American Tree Farm System
 EQIP – Environmental Quality Incentives Program
 LCMR – Legislative Commission on MN Resources
 MACF – MN Association of Consulting Foresters
 MASWCD – MN Association of SWCDs
 MDNR – MN Department of Natural Resources

MDOR – MN Department of Revenue
 MFRC – MN Forest Resources Council
 MLCP – MN Logger Certification Program
 MLEP – MN Logger Education Program
 NRCS – Natural Resources Conservation Service
 SFIA – Sustainable Forest Incentive Act
 SWCD – Soil and Water Conservation Districts

NOTE:

This is a compressed document, highlighting the action steps. More details and background about this Action Team and its strategies can be found on the MFRP website www.mnforestpartnership.com. You are encouraged to visit the website and download the complete information regarding this Action Team.