

State Forestry Assessment and Strategy Summary

North Dakota

Overview:

“The statewide assessment provides a comprehensive analysis of the forest-related conditions, trends, threats and opportunities within the state. The forest resource strategy is a long-term collaborative plan with local, state, federal and tribal partners to help shape and influence forest land use on a scale and in a way that optimizes public benefits from trees and forests for present and future generations.”

-- State Forester Larry A Kotchman

Statewide Assessment of Forest Resources:

The North Dakota Forest Service engaged a wide variety of partners in the development of the statewide assessment. At an assessment session on July 30, 2009, stakeholders developed a list of threats and public benefits of trees and forests in North Dakota. Priority areas were also determined through stakeholder participation.

Key threats identified by stakeholders and described in the report include invasive (insects and pathogens) tree pests; over-maturity and limited natural regeneration of forest resources; lack of tree species diversity and vulnerability to damaging agents; strengthening education outreach; conversion from historic vegetation types; wildfire; limited wood utilization opportunities; and climate change.

Priority areas for North Dakota include:

- **Upland Forests:** Turtle Mountains, Devils Lake Hills, Pembina Gorge, Killdeer Mountains and the conifer forests of southwestern ND.
- **Riparian Forests:** Red river, Sheyenne River, James River, Mouse River, and Missouri River.
- **Rural Plantings:** forested and Native American lands as described in the Spatial Analysis Project (SAP) for North Dakota.
- **Community Forests:** boulevard trees, city parks, and other trees within city limits.
- **Multi-state priority areas:** Coordination and collaboration with the other Great Plains states is encouraged to address the emerald ash borer and the over maturity facing cottonwood forests along the Missouri River.

Forest Resource Strategy:

Partners attended a follow-up meeting in February 2010, where they developed strategies to address threats and identified potential areas of collaboration. Seven components were identified for each for each of the threats: strategies, priority areas, programs that contribute, potential stakeholders, resources required, measures of success, and manner in which it supports the national

objectives. The strategy also incorporated existing statewide forest and resource management plans to enhance future program, agency and partner coordination.

Priority Issues & Strategies:

Invasive Tree Pests

- Assist communities in planning to mitigate potential damage caused by invasive tree pests.
- Develop multi-agency task force to develop a state invasive action plan.
- Restore/renovate native forests and rural tree plantings impacted by invasive tree pests and invasive weeds.
- Reduce risk of introduction in areas where risk of introduction is greatest.
- Development of a first detectors program.

Overmaturity and Limited Natural Regeneration

- Identify, conserve, and actively manage high priority native forest lands.
- Develop incentives and cost-effective measures for management (harvesting, Rx burn, thinning.)
- Promote forest health concepts to reduce grazing, invasives, promote management.

Lack of Species Diversity and Vulnerability to Damaging Agents

- Identify seed sources and species adapted to biotic and abiotic conditions of the state.
- Promote species diversity and forest health practices in communities

Strengthening Educational Outreach

- Increase awareness of the benefits of and threats to forest resources.
- Connect people to trees and forests and engage them in environmental stewardship activities

Conversion from Historic Vegetation Type

- Mitigate forestland lost due to urban sprawl, agricultural clearing, and utility development.
- Incorporate management techniques and or disturbances that promote /sustain terrestrial ecosystems.
- Develop, learn, and teach methods to remove nuisance woody plants.

Wildfire

- Assist communities in planning for and reducing wildfire risks.
- Restore fire-adapted lands and reduce the risk of wildfire impacts.
- Wildland restoration and fuels reduction.

Limited Wood Utilization Opportunities

- Identify wood utilization and biomass opportunities
- Actively and sustainably manage trees and forests

Climate Change

- Manage existing forests to improve health
- Reduce forest conversion
- Plant new trees to increase carbon sequestration

Strategy Implementation & Moving Forward:

The coordination with partners and potential stakeholders provided a framework to begin formulating actions to address issues. The state strategy will be used to develop a long range (5-year) and annual action plan that contain more detailed information and budgets. Coordination with stakeholders involved with the assessment and strategy process, coupled with the state action plans, will be utilized for grant proposal development and eventual narrative development for US Forest Service funds.

Resources required in implementing strategies include: partnerships (local and national), funding (grant funding, S&PF program funding, research funding), equipment, training, inventory data (including GIS), demonstration areas, wood utilization opportunities, infrastructure, use of fire as forest management tool, and others.

