

How will we do it?

Minnesota Forest Resources Council

In 1995 the Minnesota Legislature created the Minnesota Forest Resources Council (MFRC) and gave it the job of ensuring that Minnesota's forests are able to meet the state's economic, environmental, and social needs now and in the future.

Recognizing the need to manage forests on a large scale, the MFRC set up a landscape-level forest resources program. A team of 50 individuals divided the forested part of Minnesota into six "regional forest landscapes"—multi-county areas with similar social, economic and ecological characteristics.

Regional Landscape Committees

The MFRC then brought together landowners, land managers, and others interested in forests in each landscape and gave them the job of answering three questions for their forests:

- Where have we been, and where are we today?
- Where do we want to go?
- How will we get there?

This brochure summarizes the East Central Landscape Committee's response to those questions. It also provides concrete suggestions on what each of us can do to help achieve the committee's vision.

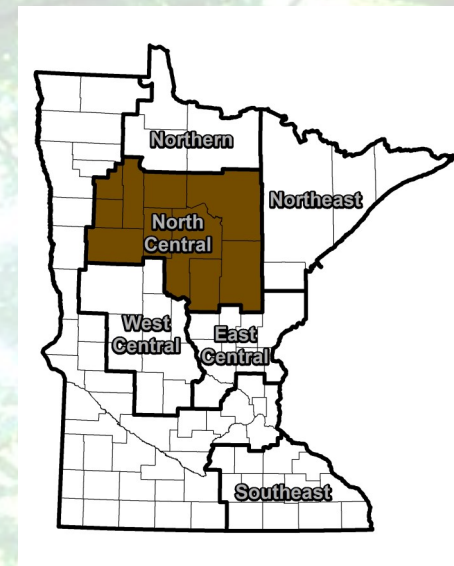


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Managing Forests at the Landscape Level

A cooperative approach to sustainability for public, private, and tribal landowners

North Central Landscape Region



Covers:
9.1 million acres

Includes:
Aitkin, Becker, Cass, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Hubbard, Mahnomon, and Itasca counties, the southern half of Beltrami County, and the East half of Polk County

Minnesota Forest Resources Council



Teaming up for Forests



North Central Minnesota landscape
Photo courtesy of MN DNR

What is landscape-level forest management?

Landscape-level forest management is when public, private, and tribal landowners and citizens cooperatively develop and carry out a coordinated plan for forests covering thousands or millions of acres.

Why is it important?

Changes in land ownership are carving Minnesota's forests into smaller and smaller parcels. Yet the benefits we seek from forests — timber, habitat, recreation, jobs, clean air and water — depend on their integrity on a much larger scale. If forests are to provide such benefits sustainably, we need to manage them in a way that reaches across ownership boundaries.



Where have we been, and where are we today?

The North Central Landscape Region

The North Central Landscape Region covers 9.1 million acres in Aitkin, Becker, Beltrami (southern portion), Cass, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Hubbard, Mahnomon, Polk (east half), and Itasca counties. Forestland cover in the southern portion of the North Central region has decreased since pre-settlement times. This is also true throughout the landscape for the following species: ash, aspen, balm of giliad, bur oak, cherry, basswood, red oak and sugar maple.

The region's population is expected to increase dramatically in the upcoming years. The North Central region is also known to have a relatively high level of poverty.

Key Issues and Challenges

- Fragmentation of landscape by development
- Development of riparian corridors
- Ecosystem sustainability
- Timber harvest sustainability
- Population is expected to continue to increase rapidly
- Maintaining water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, recreation, and tourism



Where do we want to go?

North Central Landscape Goals

The Planning Committee believes the following goals should be pursued over the next ten to twenty years to promote sustainable forest resources across the region.

Ecological Resource Initiatives

- Goal 1. Enhance the ability of the forest ecosystems in the region to adapt and respond to current and future threats.
- Goal 2. Maintain or increase the area of forestland in the North Central Landscape.
- Goal 3. Retain contiguous blocks of forestland.
- Goal 4. Protect and prevent the loss of sensitive and undeveloped lake and river shorelines. Restore natural characteristics to developed shorelines.

Economic Resource Initiatives

- Goal 1. Ensure a diverse and stable forested landscape.
- Goal 2. Support a diverse and stable forest products industry and infrastructure with diverse forestland ownership.
- Goal 3. Promote natural resource-based recreation and tourism.
- Goal 4. Stabilize and improve employment and incomes by sustainable use of landscape assets.

Social Resources Initiatives

- Goal 1. Improve natural resource education to students and cultivate public awareness about the importance of forests and ecologically sound forest management.
- Goal 2. Protect aquatic resources for clean and healthy water and improve the connection of forest and water quality.
- Goal 3. Increase private forest management.
- Goal 4. Promote high quality forest based experiences and the wellbeing of the people living and working in the North Central Landscape.
- Goal 5. Maintain the natural resource identity of the landscape and balance growth with resource protection.

Vegetation Goals

The Planning Committee developed specific native plant community goals and silvicultural strategies following Ecological Classification System Subsections.

Fire- Dependent

- Goal 1. Restore or emulate natural disturbances within the landscape to sustain fire-dependent species composition and longevity.
- Goal 2. Increase diversity of stands.
- Goal 3. Manage for diverse age class structures and species.
- Goal 4. Increase conifers on landscape.
- Goal 5. Reduce depredation of species by deer.
- Goal 6. Increase adaptability to climate change.
- Goal 7. Manage forests to ensure defensive spaces around communities and infrastructure.

Mesic Hardwood

- Goal 1. Increase species and structural diversity.
- Goal 2. Maintain and enhance species and age-class diversity.
- Goal 3. Maintain even-aged aspen.
- Goal 4. Increase the conifer component.
- Goal 5. Reduce depredation of seedlings by deer.
- Goal 6. Limit the spread of invasive species.
- Goal 7. Increase the timber and fiber quality.
- Goal 8. Increase private land involvement.

Acid Peatland/Forested Rich Peatland

- Goal 1. Maintain or restore hydrology.
- Goal 2. Encourage the use of silviculture systems.
- Goal 3. Support critical habitats and ecosystems.
- Goal 4. Regenerate white cedar on the landscape.

Wet Forest and Floodplain Forest

- Goal 1. Diversify stand structure & composition.
- Goal 2. Manage lowland hardwoods.
- Goal 3. Protect and maintain water table levels.
- Goal 4. Protect critical forest habitats.

How will we get there?

Get People Involved!

Whether you're an interested citizen, a city or township official, or a member of a lake association or other nonprofit organization, there are many ways to get involved. Remember, **you don't have to be a forester to be concerned about—and do something about — sustaining and managing our state's forests.**

How can I get involved?

Here are two initial steps for getting involved and learning more about the North Central Landscape Program:

- Visit www.frc.state.mn.us and review a copy of the **North Central Landscape's Forest Resource Management Plan** to learn more about the value of landscape planning, as well as the specifics of the North Central Landscape Plan.
- Incorporate appropriate landscape planning goals, objectives and action steps at your site.

Many more opportunities for **active involvement** are available to you on the MFRC Website and in the North Central Landscape Plan.

For more information, visit the following websites:

MFRC: www.frc.state.mn.us
DNR: www.dnr.state.mn.us
MFA: www.mnforest.com