



**MINNESOTA
FOREST
RESOURCES
COUNCIL**

2020 STRATEGIC PLAN



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OUR MISSION

The Mission of the Minnesota Forest Resources Council is to develop recommendations that result in the sustainable management of Minnesota's forest resources while protecting the balance of long-term economic, ecological, and social forest values in accordance with the 1995 Sustainable Forest Resources Act (Minnesota Statutes 89A.03).

OUR VISION

The Minnesota Forest Resources Council is a recognized leader that promotes sustainable forest policies and practices and works collaboratively to ensure ecosystems thrive, the human spirit is fed, and forest products and services meet societal needs today and into the future.

OUR SHARED BELIEF

The Minnesota Forest Resources Council recognizes that cooperation and collaboration between public and private sectors is critical to sustainably managing the state's forest resources. It values and respects individuals' and organizations' perspectives on the management, use, and protection of forests.





OUR STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

- ◆ Diversify the forest economy by supporting existing forest products industries and promoting emerging markets for sustainable forest products as a means to accomplish forest management strategies;
- ◆ Encourage private land forest management through active regional partnerships, collaborative education and outreach, and direct communication with stakeholder groups;
- ◆ Protect the biological diversity (flora and fauna), water quality, and aesthetic features of Minnesota forests that make them valuable to fish, wildlife and people;
- ◆ Address the threats of climate change on our forest ecosystems through the coordinated development, use and monitoring of adaptive silvicultural techniques and other management strategies;
- ◆ Publicly communicate the value of Minnesota forests and forest products, including for carbon sequestration, carbon storage, and potential as renewable energy alternatives;
- ◆ Continually evaluate and align our work to meet the forest-based interests and needs of Minnesota's increasingly diverse human population.
- ◆ Protect against net loss of forest land and ensure an adequate supply of climate resilient nursery stock for reforestation.
- ◆ Set measurable goals for all of these priorities.



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PERSONNEL & FINANCE COMMITTEE

GOAL

- 1) MFRC has a self-managed, well-trained, interdisciplinary team that effectively carries out its mission;
- 2) Adequate resources are effectively appropriated (or otherwise acquired) to carry out the MFRC/SFRA's statutory mission; and 3) MFRC has the mechanisms needed for effective internal governance, budget administration, and oversight of other SFRA functions.

STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

STRATEGY #1

Filling vacant MFRC positions in priority order using updated position descriptions, marketing strategies and DNR hiring practices that are fully understood and supported by Council .

- ♦ **Action 1A:** Prioritize the hiring sequence of vacant positions and prepare to recruit nationally at time of the postings.
- ♦ **Action 1B:** Prepare Forest Scientist, Landscape Coordinator, and Policy Analyst position descriptions with input from the appropriate MFRC committees.
- ♦ **Action 1C:** Circulate posted positions through Council member and stakeholder newsletters, listserve, professional forestry/conservation employment listing services.



STRATEGY #2

Developing funding strategy and budget, with full Council and Partner input, identifying public and private funding opportunities to support MFRC & SFRA statutory responsibilities and programs.

- ♦ **Action 2A:** Develop biennial budget and work plan that identifies appropriate and non-appropriated funding needs and opportunities.
 - ♦ **Action 2B:** Meet with MFRC Committee Chairs, Regional Committee Chairs and Partners to understand funding opportunities and funding needs.
 - ♦ **Action 2C:** Conduct Foundation search and public funding review to identify matches with Committee and Partner identified funding needs.
 - ♦ **Action 2D:** Secure funding for priority needs/opportunities for which MFRC qualifies as an applicant and assist partners in securing funds for MFRC collaborative efforts.
 - ♦ **Action 2E:** Assign MFRC staff to implement specific program/project responsibilities, including securing supplemental public and private funding as approved by the Committee.
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STRATEGY #3

Reviewing and updating MFRC operating protocols and SFRA reporting/oversight responsibilities.

- ♦ **Action 3A:** Assign a sub-committee to review current protocols and update as necessary.
 - ♦ **Action 3B:** Schedule biennial meeting with SFRA partners to review status of SFRA program operations and funding, and to solicit policy and appropriation recommendations.
-

STRATEGY #4

Using contracted professional services, inter/intra-agency employment agreements, student/graduate assistants, and collaborative partnerships to support essential MFRC functions and program needs.

- ♦ **Action 4A:** Maintain this Strategy as a permanent P&F agenda item to be reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis.
- ♦ **Action 4B:** Pursue a Post Retirement Option position to provide professional technical assistance for review of the site-level guidelines.
- ♦ **Action 4C:** Pursue a Work Out of Class position to temporarily fill Landscape Coordinator and/or Policy Analyst position (or hybrid of two).





POLICY INFORMATION COMMITTEE

GOAL

Reauthorize, amend as needed, and fully fund the Sustainable Forest Resources Act. Establish strategic relationships with the Governor and Legislature. Effectively advance MFRC policy analysis, recommendations, and strategies consistent with MFRC's policy priorities (2017-2020 Strategic Plan) and linked to MFRC's Climate Change Report.

STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

STRATEGY #1

Seek support from the full Council to take positions on policy issues which meet a set criteria—affecting sustainable forestry statewide, of current salience, and with the potential for political traction.

STRATEGY #2

Establish MFRC policy priorities on contemporary sustainable forestry issues, consistent with the SFRA purpose and the MFRC strategic plan.

- ♦ **Action 2A:** Search for a model decision-tree (or develop one if none exist) to assist the PIC with identification and prioritization of policy issues; if possible, the decision-tree will also clarify what work products are undertaken.



- ♦ **Action 2B:** Bring forward a list of Council-identified issues each October for the Committee to consider and prioritize (Proactive)
 - ♦ **Action 2C:** Have a process to proactively identify and refer to the Committee pertinent policies slated for introduction into the legislative session; engage early in order to impact on select policy issues during the session
 - ♦ **Action 2D:** Using SFIA as an example, engage in coalition building by bringing key stakeholders and program administrators together to identify program policy and/or funding issues.
 - ♦ **Action 2E:** Using the Wisconsin letter as an example of high-level policy agenda, consider similar approach for Minnesota Climate Change agenda.
 - ♦ **Action 2F:** Strike a balance between staff initiative and Council-directive; use transparency, communication, and accountability to allow for a degree of leadership on certain issues by qualified staff persons
-

STRATEGY #3

Fill the policy analyst position in support of the MFRC's mission.

- ♦ **Action 3A:** Provide Personnel and Finance Committee with input on position duties, position description (or work plan) and assist in the recruitment of applicants.
 - ♦ **Action 3B:** Be ready to hire, consider temporary/work out of class position, perhaps combined responsibilities with landscape coordinator position (focus on skill set).
-

STRATEGY #4

Update both PIC and MFRC meeting protocols and procedures via their respective charters to facilitate responsive and more impactful action.

- ♦ **Action 4A:** Establish clear protocols/procedures regarding quorum and voting requirements for Policy and Information Committee to submit policy recommendations to Council, and for Council to pass policy recommendations via resolution.



- ♦ **Action 4B:** Consider developing a process by which MFRC opinions could be documented and acted upon in a variety of formats; e.g. majority and minority, or similar pro/con positions, as well as consensus positions that establish common ground.
 - ♦ **Action 4C:** Consider “informative” position or higher-level consensus position.
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STRATEGY #5

Empower and equip Council members with tools to actively promote MFRC's work at legislative sessions and within other policy settings.

- ♦ **Action 5A:** Conditional upon receiving the full support and assistance of individual Council members, build “face-to-face” relationships with the Governor, Members of the MN Legislature, the MN Congressional delegation, and their staff using the MFRC Biennial Report, RAC Climate Report, and SFRA’s “Sunset Clause” as talking points.
 - ♦ **Action 5B:** In coordination with the Landscape Advisory Committee, engage Regional Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs in establishing strategic relationships with Governor, Legislature, Congressional delegation and stakeholders at the local (district) level.
 - ♦ **Action 5C:** Work with the Communications Committee to develop a strategy to maintain “constant contact” with individuals and organizations that are key to policy-related portion of MFRC’s mission. The Communications Committee will lead this effort once established.
 - ♦ **Action 5D:** Work with Council representatives and stakeholder partners to explore the establishment of a bipartisan, bicameral Forest Legislative Caucus.
 - ♦ **Action 5E:** Schedule an annual “day-on-the-hill” for Council members, Regional Committee chairs, and their stakeholders to assist them in meeting with Legislators.
-

STRATEGY #6

Soliciting policy concerns and recommendations from stakeholders to support the accomplishment of MFRC goal.



- ♦ **Action 6A:** Conditional upon receiving the full support and assistance of individual Council members, build “face-to-face” relationships with key stakeholder group leaders through regular Zoom meetings, internet forums, and attendance at stakeholder meetings. Consider annual “Zoom” forums with stakeholder leaders before legislative sessions to identify/vet policy concerns and recommendations, with care not to create unrealistic expectations.
- ♦ **Action 6B:** Encourage input from Council members representing their stakeholder issues/interests, and encourage stakeholder participation in Council and Committee meetings.



LANDSCAPE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

GOAL

Catalyze and coordinate cross-boundary forest management activities to accomplish widely agreed-upon landscape-scale objectives.

KEY OBJECTIVES

Improve the climate-resiliency and productivity of forests for wide-ranging goods and services, including habitat, forest industry, recreation, traditional/cultural value, water quality, and greenhouse-gas mitigation.

The landscape program will help to:

- 1) Define measurable objectives and targets based on SFRA Language, guidance in landscape plans and regional committee input, and the Council Strategic Plan;
- 2) Identify a clear private lands strategy including communications, as well as engagement of providers of private lands assistance;
- 3) Identify potential priority locations on the ground where plan objectives could best be met;
- 4) Facilitate identification and application for funding for implementation (Council to play an assisting role; Council can potentially provide seed funds);
- 5) Monitor results; and
- 6) Report results to the council and to wider MFRC stakeholders in ways that communicate the impact and utility of the Landscape Program.



STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

STRATEGY #1

Set metrics for the Landscape Program, whether quantitative or qualitative, in accordance with statewide goals; improve monitoring of landscape program outcomes and successes.

- ♦ **Action 1A:** Articulate region-specific, landscape-level priorities with metrics to monitor.
- ♦ **Action 1B:** Track and evaluate outcomes.

Examples of objectives to be completed over the next 5-10 years:

- ♦ Partners will plant X trees to address economic, ecological and social goals, increase climate resilience, and mitigate carbon emissions.
- ♦ Partners will conduct X acres of forest habitat management based on LSOHC funding.
- ♦ Partners will reduce understory fuel over X acres (with benefits to the bioeconomy).
- ♦ Partners will implement prescribed fire as appropriate on their landscape.
- ♦ Partner activities will help sustain or increase forest-related jobs over the next 10 years.
- ♦ Partner activities will help maintain or increase a healthy tourism industry in forested regions of the state.
- ♦ Partners will help maintain large unfragmented landscapes of working forests.

STRATEGY #2

Identify priority areas for cross-boundary management, i.e. areas in need of management/conservation efforts with buy-in/agreement on shared objectives across landownerships.

- ♦ **Action 2A:** Conduct “All-lands” analyses that will help identify priority locations for projects/funding.
- ♦ **Action 2B:** Consider identifying several “flagship projects” that get priority attention from program coordinator.
- ♦ **Action 2C:** Consider focusing cross-boundary management efforts on private lands.



- ♦ **Action 2D:** With help of IIC or other partners, develop tools for spatial data management and data sharing that facilitate cross-boundary, landscape-scale management (e.g., online GIS tools).
-

STRATEGY #3

Empower and equip Council members with tools to actively promote MFRC's work at legislative sessions and within other policy settings.

- ♦ **Action 3A:** Rotating regional update reports to full Council as a standing agenda item. Updates could include current projects underway, local forest management assets or issues, support needs from the Council, policy impacts at the local level etc.
- ♦ **Action 3B:** LAC members to attend regional committee meetings at some regular interval, e.g. annually. Council members not on the LAC are also encouraged to attend when they can.
- ♦ **Action 3C:** Improved reporting to the regional committees from staff liaisons on Council activities, e.g. policy undertakings, as a way to gather information on local level impacts and also to solicit support via the committee participants.
- ♦ **Action 4C:** Hire a new landscape program coordinator with required skills to help meet the objectives; leverage the Program Coordinator in improving communication between the regional committees and the Council, as well as across the regional committees.
- ♦ **Action 4D:** Semi-annual meetings of Regional Committee Chairs with LAC.
- ♦ **Action 4E:** Semi-annual meetings of the regional chairs ('landscape leaders meetings') to share what is working well for them in terms of implementation, funding, etc.
- ♦ **Action 4F:** Dedicate a whole MFRC meeting to Landscape Program/regional.
- ♦ **Action 4G:** Take advantage of more Zoom/web-based meetings.

STRATEGY #4

Clarify the budget strategy for the landscape program including seed money for committees; assist with grant applications when appropriate.

- ♦ **Action 4A:** Create annual budget process through P&F committee to support the Landscape Level program and distribute this budget in ways that helps meet stated goals.
 - ♦ **Action 4B:** Assist and in some cases lead in fundraising that will help meet the objectives; develop a clear process for writing and approving council letters of support.
 - ♦ **Action 4C:** Seek grant writing as a skill in the future Program Manager position.
-

STRATEGY #5

Assess and address opportunities for improvement in Landscape Level Plans in terms of geographic extent, diversity of forest resources, and application across land ownership categories.

- ♦ **Action 5A:** Prepare recommendation to Council for whether or not to pursue a new Metro regional landscape plan/and or find other ways to meaningfully engage in this region.
- ♦ **Action 5B:** Prepare strategy for achieving Landscape level goals and objectives on private non-industrial lands.





SITE LEVEL COMMITTEE

GOAL

Provide a recommendation to the council and facilitate any necessary revision of Minnesota's forest management guidelines, based upon results of a stakeholder survey, analysis of monitoring results, and a thorough scientific research review.

STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

STRATEGY #1

Evaluating the necessity and scope of any revision to the voluntary site-level forest management guidelines (FMGs).

- ♦ **Action 1A:** Devise, distribute, and analyze the results of a survey of the greater Minnesota forest management community to determine if there are portions of the FMGs that are working well, need improvement, or are not working well.
- ♦ **Action 1B:** In coordination with the Guideline Monitoring Program, perform a review of FMG implementation monitoring reports to determine if they reveal trends that indicate that portions of the FMGs are not accomplishing their intended purpose, and therefore warrant revision.
- ♦ **Action 1C:** In coordination with the RAC, perform a literature review to see whether new research related to the major headings of the FMGs warrants revising the guidelines.



- ♦ **Action 1D:** Compile the results of Actions 1A, 1B and 1C, and make a report to the Council on whether or not we feel that i.) a revision is not warranted; ii.) an addendum to the FMGs is warranted; iii.) a minor revision is warranted; or iv.) a full revision is warranted.
-

STRATEGY #2

Increasing awareness within the general public, private landowners, and legislature regarding the historical and future impact of the voluntary adoption of MFRC's site-level guidelines on achieving sustainable management of Minnesota's forests.

- ♦ **Action 2A:** Contribute to the MFRC Biannual Report on the importance of the Site Level Committee's programs as they relate to ensuring that Minnesota's forests are managed in a manner that is socially, ecologically and economically sustainable.
 - ♦ **Action 2B:** In coordination with the Communications Committee, create entertaining and informative tools (videos or other publications) for communicating the importance and role of the FMGs, targeted towards the general public.
 - ♦ **Action 2C:** In coordination with the Communications Committee, coordinate with partners to develop materials that help share the story of sustainable forest management in Minnesota (perhaps targeted towards realtors, private landowners, etc.).
 - ♦ **Action 2D:** Partner with other organizations (BWSR, NRCS, etc.) that work with private landowners to better communicate the role of the FMGs in sustainable forest management with private landowners.
 - ♦ **Action 2E:** Develop content for the MFRC's updated website.
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STRATEGY #3

Partnering with training and certification entities to provide updated continuing education to loggers and foresters regarding forest management guidelines and the importance of the PCRFP in meeting sustainability requirements.

- ♦ **Action 3A:** Initiate a review of the PCRFP in order to assess opportunities to increase program effectiveness and enhance knowledge of the program.



- ♦ **Action 3B:** Work to develop a synchronous process for addressing registered concerns that crosswalks between the FMGs and certification standards.
 - ♦ **Action 3C:** Identify partnership opportunities with certification and training entities.
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STRATEGY #4

Investigating the possible options for increasing the accessibility of the forest management guidelines.

- ♦ **Action 4A:** Consult on the development of searchable PDF(s) and/or web-enabled applications for online publication of the guidelines.
- ♦ **Action 4B:** Research the possibility of developing a smartphone-enabled application for the guidelines.





COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

GOAL

Develop and institute a strategic communication plan that will tactically target stakeholder groups, policy leaders, decision makers, and Council member constituencies.

STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

STRATEGY #1

Utilize various communication plan components to develop and create an efficient and effective plan.

- ♦ **Action 1A:** Have staff collect and compile relevant documents and literature to be used as a guide for developing a communication plan.
- ♦ **Action 1B:** Engage with Amy Kay Kerber (DNR) to check our process and direction.

STRATEGY #2

Develop contact lists specific to the targeted parties identified in the Goal, which are accessible to all committee members and facilitate targeted communication.

- ♦ **Action 2A:** Start compiling stakeholder/constituency lists. Reach out council members.
- ♦ **Action 2B:** Explore electronic tools (check with AKK & MNIT)



STRATEGY #3

Engage in communication with the other MFRC committees and assist in the development of relevant content.

- ♦ **Action 3A:** Include committee-specific messaging and guidance in all communications that are relevant to the respective committee.
 - ♦ **Action 3B:** Establish an appropriate conduit/channel for the communication needs of each respective committee and the Communications Committee.
 - ♦ **Action 3C:** Determine priority messages by analyzing the questions “what do you want to happen? Who can make that happen? What message do they need to hear? From whom do they need to hear it? And, what is the best way to convey it?”
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STRATEGY #4

Contribute to the development and dissemination of MFRC reports to the targeted parties identified in the GOAL.

- ♦ **Action 4A:** Develop a process of review/edit of MFRC reports within the Committee as well as with outside ‘editors.’
- ♦ **Action 4B:** Review Strategy #2 with each ‘report’ to ensure thorough dissemination of the reports.





RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

GOAL

To anticipate and be responsive to the MFRC's research-based needs to further the Council's ability to carry out its mission as specified in the Sustainable Forest Resources Act and fulfill the obligations of the Research Advisory Committee under MN Statutes 89A.08.

STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

STRATEGY #1

Assessing and adapting the RAC's capacity to serve in its role as a facilitator and partner with the forest research community in order to communicate and respond to the science-based needs of the Council and other stakeholder groups.

- ◆ **Action 1A:** Ask MFRC to better articulate their vision and expectations for the RAC.
- ◆ **Action 1B:** Assess staff capacity to do the work of the RAC.
 - ◇ **Action 1B(i):** (In coordination with the MFRC) Develop a detailed job description for the MFRC's Forest Scientist position, emphasizing the role of this position in achieving the State's goal of sustainable forestry.
- ◆ **Action 1C:** Assess project capacity, including opportunities for partnerships with other organizations, MFRC, etc., grant-writing capability, and funding availability.



- ♦ **Action 1D:** Review RAC membership and identify additional committee members as needed.
 - ♦ **Action 1E:** Partner with MFRC to obtain necessary resources to do the work (through an annual budget process).
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STRATEGY #2

Opening lines of communication with the MFRC to be responsive to the research-based and technical needs of the Council.

- ♦ **Action 2A:** Have an annual RAC meeting with MFRC.
 - ♦ **Action 2B:** Designate a RAC liaison (staff) to the MFRC and the committees, who can represent the needs of the committees and the MFRC to the RAC and vice versa.
 - ♦ **Action 2C:** With additional resources:
 - ◊ **Action 2C(i):** Communicate history, purpose and statutory requirements of the RAC to the MFRC.
 - ◊ **Action 2C(ii):** Create communication tools (e.g., a research dashboard) to better provide the MFRC with updates and information related to forest science and research.
 - ◊ **Action 2C(iii):** Provide educational and technical updates to the MFRC on the state of forest resources research on topics of interest, as requested by the MFRC and/or the committees.
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STRATEGY #3

Enhancing communication and engagement with stakeholders regarding scientific information needs, opportunities for collaboration, and improved understanding of current and emerging forest issues.

- ♦ **Action 3A:** Identify targeted stakeholders/groups with whom the RAC would like to develop improved communication.



- ♦ **Action 3B:** Consult with CFANS Communications (Tim Loesch) (and/or other communications experts) about developing a communications strategy to reach the identified stakeholders.
- ♦ **Action 3C:** Work with existing and emerging stakeholder groups (e.g., LSAFRC) to build partnerships and advance communication related to applied forest research needs and information sharing.
- ♦ **Action 3D:** Establish biennial forum(s) or other informational exchange program(s) to increase communications between the individuals/organizations conducting forest resources research and the users/stakeholders with interest in such information.
- ♦ **Action 3E:** Restructure how RAC communicates to non-expert audiences, e.g. by using storytelling (see the CFC's Camp 8 Stand story), etc.