

NEFA Strategic Plan

2014-2019

As adopted at 7/13/15 NEFA Board meeting

Introduction

The North East *State* Foresters Association (NEFA) is the state foresters of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York cooperating with the USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry. NEFA was formed in the 1980s and has focused its work in this four-state region on areas where the missions of the individual state forestry agencies and State and Private Forestry meet and where joint action yields greater benefits to the forests of the region and the people who care about these forests than action by any individual state.

Strategic plans were adopted in the 1990s and 2000s. This plan is an update from the 2008-2013 plan based on new information and learnings and the adoption of the Forest Action Plans at the state level since the last plan. These efforts and this strategic plan are designed to better allow NEFA to secure public and private funds for its work.

NEFA is a small organization that has and can continue to produce good information while not generally being the lead action organization that carries out the actual activity that leads to reaching the goal. NEFA's role in advocacy will be accomplished through building partnerships, securing resources, and assisting in advocacy at the right time and place for NEFA. This plan will be implemented on two levels--information sharing among the member states to support core goals and then advocating for the goals through policy change or securing funding to carry out specific strategies.

Mission

The Mission of NEFA is to keep the region's forests as forests, to assure their productivity and health, and to support the businesses and forest landowners that depend on the forest for their livelihood.

Goals

1. Support sound stewardship of the forests of the NEFA region to assure productive, healthy forests.

Strategies

- a. Research additional income streams for forest landowners that encourage long-term management and stewardship of private forests in the region.

- b. Advocate for maintaining and diversifying forest products markets to encourage sustainable forestry.
- c. Support other land conservation/stewardship initiatives such as federal tax policy that encourages intergenerational and other transfers of forest ownership to keep forestland parcels intact and other efforts that are mutually beneficial among the NEFA states.
- d. Encourage stewardship of private forestland in the region through supporting, promoting and educating on state incentives such as current use programs and other means.
- e. Encourage practices that maintain biodiversity and allow for adaptation to the effects of climate change.
- f. Encourage forest certification for forestland in the region.
- g. Advocate for maintaining and improving forest health including through efforts of the Northeast Forest Health Compact for mutual aid sharing of resources.

2. Provide timely, credible regional information of consistently high quality, and support applied research that will enhance the health, productivity, and sustainability of forests across the NEFA region in order to reach public officials, forest industry, environmental groups, private forest landowners, and other interested members of the public.

Strategies

- a. Develop data on forest resources of regional significance in the NEFA area.
- b. Promote the development and standardization of new forest data sets throughout the region such as biodiversity, forest health, effects of climate change, landowner attitudes and practices, and wood flow.
- c. Continue reporting both regionally and by state the economic importance and contributions from a viable and sustainable forest economy.
- d. Continue the dialogue with the Northeast States Research Cooperative to assure this research is useable in the stewardship and economic research areas.

Note: The purpose of completing *a* and *b* is to provide for data that is comparable and compatible among states.

3. Support the forest products industry in the region to assure markets for forest landowner harvests, jobs, and economic health in the rural areas of the region.

Strategies

- a. Advocate for a fully funded FIA program to assist in program planning, forecasting, and business development.
- b. Encourage governmental policies that support the forest products sector of both existing and emerging markets.

4. Provide a forum for the NEFA states for presentation and discussion of current resource issues and trends to reduce duplication, share experiences, attract and focus resources, and benefit from the strength of multi-state initiatives and partnerships where appropriate.

- a. Advocate for federal programs and other funding which support the wise stewardship of private and state lands in addressing critical forest issues in the region.
- b. Use NEFA to provide for a regional context for state and local decision making.
- c. Coordinate implementation of the regional landscape-scale efforts identified in state Forest Action Plans.
- d. Coordinate the efforts of the governors on issues of importance to NEFA.
- e. Communicate with key partners and constituents on issues of importance to NEFA and forests of the region.