



Program of Action 2004-2013

THE ACTIONS TO BE CARRIED OUT IN THE UPCOMING DECADE ARE THE KEY COMPONENTS OF THIS PLAN. They are responses to issues brought up in Phase I of the planning process. The implementation of these actions will allow progress towards the desired “visions” for the state of Connecticut.

The actions are listed under the different “Vision” headings. If many different possibilities exist, the actions have been divided into related categories. Some action steps contain more details than others do.

Following the Key to Organizations page is a list of the Priority Areas as established through questionnaire responses from planning participants. These Priority Areas can be used as a guide in determining individual subcommittee’s action steps during plan implementation. Subsequent pages list all action steps in more detail as determined by the Advisory Committee.

This Program of Action is ambitious. The key to the success of this plan is the development of partnerships between the Department of Environmental Protection and various stakeholder groups to achieve goals that benefit all. Following each series of actions is a list of partnering organizations that may be responsible for carrying out identified actions. Partners are not obligated to work on all action steps in a category under which they are listed. A key to the partnering organizations follows.



Key to Organizations

AC	Audubon Connecticut
AMC	Appalachian Mountain Club
AWC	Aquarion Water Company
CAES	Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station
CCC	Central Cycle Club Inc.
CFB	Connecticut Farm Bureau
CFI	Connwood Foresters Inc.
CFPA	Connecticut Forest and Park Association
CFSC	Connecticut Forest Stewardship Council
CHC	Connecticut Horse Council, Inc.
CRMC	Connecticut Ramblers Motorcycle Club
CTF	Connecticut Tree Farm
CTNEMBA	Connecticut Chapter of the New England Mountain Bike Assoc.
CTSAF	Connecticut Division of the Society of American Foresters
CWC	Connecticut Water Company
DEP	Department of Environmental Protection
DOF	DEP Division of Forestry
DOFI	DEP Inland Fisheries Division
DOSP	DEP Division of State Parks
DOW	DEP Division of Wildlife
EGIC	DEP Environmental and Geographic Information Center
FW	Ferrucci & Walicki LLC
HFP	Hull Forest Products
LLT	Lyme Land Trust
MDC	Metropolitan District Commission
NEOC	New England Orienteering Club-Connecticut Section
NETRA	New England Trail Rider Association
NTSC	Nipmuck Trailriders Snowmobile Club Inc.
NWSC	Northwest Connecticut Sportsman's Council
RF	Rockfall Foundation
RGS	Ruffed Grouse Society
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
TOC	Town of Colchester
UCONNCES	University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System
USFS	United States Forest Service
YSAF	Yankee Division of the Society of American Foresters
YU	Yale University, School of Forestry and Environmental Studies



Priority Areas

The following summary of action steps is listed in order of priority as determined through planning participant's responses to a questionnaire distributed in August 2003:

The plan's top five priority action steps are as follows:

1. Education and Outreach-Includes creating a basic uniform message to disseminate to all audiences regarding the general value of forests, definitions and benefits of active forest management, the definition of a healthy forest (as listed in this plan), respect for all forestlands, and the threats to Connecticut's forestlands.
2. Forest Ecosystem Health-Establish measurable goals to monitor forest health
3. Public Forest Stewardship-Increase management on State forestlands
4. Private Forest Stewardship-Investigate and reestablish the balance of incentives versus disincentives to manage private forestlands
5. Private Forest Stewardship-Clarify the role of the DEP Service Forester and determine if more are needed

Other issues that were listed by individuals and organizations as high priorities include:

6. Address recreational needs on state lands including club recognition and user fees
7. Fully utilize the Forest Practices Act
8. Expand on and distribute the existing Best Management Practices guides
9. Reword language in easements to allow harvesting activities where appropriate
10. Increase funding for open space purchases
11. Determine forest integrity, implement evaluation, utilize a landscape approach to land acquisition and management
12. Create a Circuit Rider networking organization to disseminate information
13. Assist private landowners with liability issues for recreational opportunities and access
14. Continue ongoing research on forestlands and implement new research possibilities from stated list (especially on uses for low quality products)
15. Revise DEP plan for land acquisition



Plan Implementation

The DEP Division of Forestry along with several partnering organizations and individuals will determine strategies to implement the Connecticut Statewide Forest Resource Plan. The success of this plan lies in the partnerships formed between the various forestry organizations in the state and the numerous stakeholder and user groups.

One of the most anticipated outcomes of this planning process is the formation of a Connecticut Forestlands Committee representing the various stakeholder groups. A highly influential Committee will include the many types of forest users that depend on the forests of Connecticut. The primary responsibility of this Committee will be to monitor the progress of plan implementation through a series of semi-annual meetings over the ten-year life span of the plan.

Eleven members will be invited to serve on this Committee. Eight of the members will each act as a liaison for one of the eight subcommittees formed to address subject areas and related action steps. There will also be a designated leader to preside over the meetings, a scribe, and a DEP liaison. The DEP Division of Forestry will provide this liaison. This person will spearhead initial efforts of organizing potential partners and coordinating early committee meetings. The DEP contact will not be responsible for executing action steps. Committees implementing individual action steps will decide the best means of implementation.

The Connecticut Forestlands Committee will host a five-year review of the plan in 2008, and also work to determine a system for a ten-year retrofit to assure continuation of a Forest Resource Plan into the next decade (2013). Funding requests will be submitted in years four (2007) and nine (2012).

The eight subcommittees will be comprised of individuals and representatives of organizations that have volunteered to partner with this plan, as determined through an August 2003 questionnaire. Additional partners will be sought throughout plan implementation to expand the reach and scope of this plan of action. These subcommittees will each be directly associated with a vision and the related action steps.

It is recommended that these subcommittees meet at least four times a year. Each group will be able to use the summary of priority action steps to help guide their own plans of action. Each subcommittee will organize themselves with the help of the DEP liaison, educate themselves on the present status of issues and foreseeable roadblocks to success, and determine and carry out the best means of implementing listed action steps.



Forest Ecosystem Health

Vision

CONNECTICUT'S FORESTS CONTAIN HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE POPULATIONS OF NATIVE PLANTS AND ANIMALS. Biological diversity is exhibited through a full range of native plant communities and age classes, and diverse, stable animal populations on both public and private land. Forests are dynamic and resilient, and the processes of a healthy ecosystem overcome the damaging effects of adverse weather, wildfire, erosion, invasive exotic species, and outbreaks of insects and disease. A healthy forest promotes clean air, clean water, and a better-regulated climate. Forest management is a recognized tool for improving forest ecosystem health, while continued forest fragmentation, as defined in this plan, is recognized as one of the most detrimental factors currently affecting forest ecosystem health.

In defining a healthy forest, the above mentioned vision statement will be used as the basis on which to measure forest ecosystem health for the purposes of this plan. It will provide a baseline for the differing viewpoints that forest ecosystem health is “about what I want.”

Through the 10 focus groups meetings, the following issues were compiled as impediments to Connecticut’s forests ecosystem health. These factors need to be addressed and monitored to assess overall forest ecosystem health, since each impediment acts against forest ecosystem health. It is understood that over time these impediments may change, and that amendments and adjustments in future Forest Resource Plans might have to be made.

CONCERNS EXISTING ACROSS THE STATE:

Biological Impediments to a Healthy Forest Ecosystem

- Increased forest fragmentation
- Lack of age diversity within forests
- Declining species diversity/composition
- Limited success of seedling regeneration for some tree species
- Invasive species (both plant and animal)
 - Exotics
 - Out-of-Control Natives
 - Diseases and Pests
- Erosion



Human Impediments to a Healthy Forest Ecosystem

- Lack of forest management and habitat maintenance to maintain overall forest health
- Lack of understanding of forest management and silviculture treatments (from all user and non-user groups)
- Lack of a unified and active constituency of forest users to lobby for more resources/tools to ensure healthy forest habitats

Forest ecosystem health will be the baseline against which action steps throughout the plan will be measured during plan implementation. It is important to determine at the completion of this plan whether or not ground has been gained or lost in the improvement of forest ecosystem health. For that reason, the following action steps will be used to monitor progress. At the completion of the 10-year mark, an overall assessment will be made of progress.

ACTION STEPS

1. Establish baselines based on the current status of Connecticut's forests from which future conditions can be measured against
 - a. Use existing Forest Inventory and Analysis Data (FIA)
 - b. Conduct comprehensive analysis to assess current status in areas where needed (see also Planning and Policy action steps for Land Management Practices a-g)
 - c. Determine proactive conservation plans to maintain large healthy forest ecosystems in Connecticut
2. Establish measurable goals for the following topics to monitor gains or losses in forest health (effects of biological and human impediments)
 - a. Forest fragmentation
 - b. Age diversity within forests
 - c. Species diversity/composition within forest
 - d. Seedling regeneration
 - e. Wildlife diversity and stability of populations
 - f. Invasive species (both plant and animal)
 - g. Erosion
 - h. Forest and habitat maintenance on public and private lands
 - i. Education on forest management and silviculture treatments
 - j. Rare and endangered species populations
3. Using above information, develop site specific plans to outline the steps necessary for an effective and proactive approach to minimizing forest fragmentation
4. Utilize action steps within the Connecticut Statewide Forest Resource Plan to strive towards these goals
5. Monitor and track changes in the above listed forest ecosystem health indicators

(Implementation: AC, AMC, AWC, CAES, CFI, CFPA, CHC, DOF, DOFI, DOW, EGIC, NWSC, RGS, TNC, TOC, UCONNCS, USFS, YU)



Public Forest Stewardship

Vision

PUBLICLY OWNED FORESTLANDS ARE VARIOUSLY MANAGED TO PROMOTE CLEAN AIR, WATER, AND SUSTAINABLE ECOSYSTEMS, PROTECT UNIQUE AND FRAGILE AREAS, MODEL SOUND FOREST MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES, PROVIDE A VARIETY OF FOREST PRODUCTS, AND OFFER MANY TYPES OF RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES. Urban forests are managed to enhance the quality of life in Connecticut communities. Retention of large tracts of forestlands is ensured through supportive public and private programs and policies.

Two different categories of public lands exist for the purposes of this plan. The primary definition of public lands pertains to state-owned forestlands, which includes state forests, parks, wildlife management areas, and Natural Areas. Other public lands considered include municipal lands. Municipalities often do not have the expertise to manage their lands, and may also have different criteria they have to abide by regarding use of lands (i.e. liability). Water companies generally have their own expertise for land management and can be treated as both public and private lands during the implementation of the listed action steps.

ISSUES

Impediments to Public Forest Stewardship

State-owned lands

- Lack of sufficient state field personnel to manage state forestlands
- State funding to accomplish management goals has decreased over the years

Municipal-owned lands

- Lack of towns practicing forest management

ACTION STEPS

State-owned lands

1. Increase forest and habitat management on state forestlands
 - a. Increase personnel and/or resources to provide management
 - i. Inform legislators and DEP staff of state forest management issues and needs
 1. Allocate more funds

2. Pass legislation to authorize user fees on state forestlands that could be used to generate funding for associated state forestlands
3. Create a dedicated fund for revenues associated with forestlands to be returned for forest management purposes
- ii. Create partnerships (both externally and internally) to implement management goals
 1. Encourage closer cooperation among DEP Divisions including Forestry, Wildlife, Fisheries, Parks and EGIC to achieve management goals
 2. Partner with consulting foresters to implement certified management activities
 3. Partner with recreational user groups to work on aspects of recreation management
 4. Partner with TNC and other private conservation organizations to continue to update and complete existing forest management plans, maintain boundaries, and conduct forest operations so that management quality and quantity will be eligible for either Sustainable Forestry Initiative or Forest Stewardship Council green certification.
- iii. Pursue private and federal grants
- b. Increase biological and habitat diversity through management
 - i. Create partnerships with interest groups to access funding, equipment, and in-kind services to help with managing their interests
- c. Continue to update and complete existing forest management plans, maintain boundaries, and conduct forest operations

Municipal-owned lands

1. Increase Best Management Practice (BMP) models of management to educate conservation commissions, municipalities, land trusts, and private landowners
2. Promote models of management for all interested stakeholders
3. Increase funding to municipalities for management purposes
4. Provide technical assistance to towns who would like to implement management plans

(Implementation: AC, AMC, CAES, CFI, CFPA, CHC, DOF, DOFI, DOSP, DOW, FW, NWSC, MDC, RGS, TNC, TOC, YU)



Private Forest Stewardship

Vision

CONNECTICUT LANDOWNERS VALUE FORESTLANDS FOR ALL THEIR USES:

AESTHETIC, RECREATIONAL, ECONOMIC, AND ENVIRONMENTAL. Programs and policies are in place and sufficiently funded to promote a continual flow of public benefits including clean air and water, productive habitat, wood products, and other essential public benefits derived from privately owned forests. Connecticut landowners understand the impacts of forest fragmentation and land parcelization, and actively participate in programs that curtail development of existing forestlands.

Private landowners control 85% of Connecticut's forestlands. In addition to individual private landowners, the following landowner groups are also included within this section: land trusts, sportsmen's clubs, large organizational landowners, environmental groups owning land, and water companies.

ISSUES

Impediments to Private Forest Stewardship

State's role

- Lack of sufficient forestry services available to assist the public in forest management advice
- Competition is perceived to exist between private consulting foresters, DEP service foresters, and extension educators because of overlap of responsibilities

Education

- Not all private landowners understand the importance of their forestlands to the quality of life in Connecticut
- Lack of understanding by private landowners of forest management techniques and effects of fragmentation

Incentives

- Positive incentives are needed to outweigh disincentives for retaining and managing private forestlands, thus minimizing fragmentation

ACTION STEPS

State's role

1. Clarify the role of the DEP service forester and the extension educator in promoting sound forestry to private landowners
 - a. Help private landowners understand the costs and benefits of management
 - b. Advise private landowners to speak to private forestry consultants for specific management plans and advice
 - c. Provide more technical advice and assistance to municipalities
 - d. Establish better working relationships between DEP foresters, extension educators, and private forestry consultants
2. After clarification of the role of DEP service foresters and extension educators, determine whether additional DEP service foresters or extension educators are needed to fulfill established roles, and determine best means of acquiring them.
 - a. If needed, inform legislators, DEP staff, and UCONN Extension of needs of private landowners for additional forestry services
 - b. Create dedicated fund to support forest stewardship objectives
3. Utilize other public/private partnerships to achieve management goals

(Implementation: AC, CAES, CFI, CFSC, DOF, FW, UNCONNCGES, YU)

Education

1. Expand on promotion of open space protection and sustained forest stewardship
 - a. Promote estate planning
 - b. Start conservation planning for children who have no interest in forest management
 - c. Teach economic incentives of ownership and management to landowners
 - d. Develop programs to educate private landowners about the value of their land as open space
 - e. Implement conservation easements that contain provisions for sustained forest management (May look at Land Trust Alliance for examples of proper language for easements)

2. Increase communication between stakeholders in the interest of better private forest stewardship

(Implementation: AC, AMC, CAES, CFB, CFPA, CFSC, CHC, DOF, DOFI, NWSC, TOC, UCONNCS, YU)

Incentives

1. Reestablish the balance of incentives versus disincentives to manage private forestlands (See Research 2b.)
 - a. Do a systematic study of cost of forestland ownership in Connecticut for various sized parcels of land (include aesthetics, open space, recreation, forest management)
 - b. Research why more landowners do not manage their forestland
 - i. What are the disincentives
 - ii. What does it take to overcome them
 - c. Analyze different tax incentives to see what works best in today's society for long term sustainable management (whether it be for a forest preserve or for timber management)
 - i. Public Act 490 (section 12-107)
 - ii. 1913 Tax Law/10 Mill (section 12-96 through 12-103)
 - iii. Investigate models from other states to see if there are other appropriate tax incentive programs
 - d. Lobby for reduced inheritance tax on forests and open space

(Implementation: AC, AWC, CAES, CFSC, CTF, CWC, TNC, UCONNCS, YU)



Recreation

Vision

CONNECTICUT'S FORESTS PROVIDE RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR BOTH RESIDENTS AND VISITORS. Examples include hiking, fishing, hunting, camping, horseback riding, and mountain biking. More passive opportunities exist in the ability to enjoy the scenery, and observe wildlife. These opportunities allow individuals to experience the forests in a personal way. Opportunities also exist for public recreation on private property, allowing quality outdoor recreation to be available to everyone close to home. These factors foster a conservation ethic among Connecticut residents from all walks of life.

ISSUES

Impediments to Positive Recreational Experiences in the Forestlands of Connecticut

Access on state lands

- When appropriate, public lands should be multiple use for all user groups
- Not enough parking (including maintenance of areas, winter access, room for horse trailers)
- Difficult emergency medical access
- Desire from all terrain vehicle (ATV) user groups for access where appropriate (no legal place to ride in Connecticut)
- Official trail rerouting process on state lands is a slow and tedious process
- Increasing competition for use of trails by different user groups

Access on private lands

- Public access to private lands is diminishing
- Recreational access problems with people who don't respect private boundaries
- Desire from ATV user groups for access where appropriate (no legal place to ride in Connecticut)
- Liability issues for private landowners who may be otherwise willing to let public access their property

Liability

- Municipalities, land trusts, private landowners, and user groups are having difficulty obtaining or maintaining liability insurance coverage



User fees

- Registration/permit fees do not go directly to help associated management programs

Club recognition

- Recreational club members invest a lot in public and private lands (time, money, equipment, and labor), but feel they do not receive adequate benefits or recognition that they are making a positive contribution

ACTION STEPS

Access on state lands

1. Expand parking areas in state forests and wildlife management areas
 - a. Include linear parking spaces for horse trailers
 - b. Increase wintertime maintenance
2. Use gates to block roadways and trails instead of permanent structures to improve emergency access
3. Expand access or open old existing access roads for recreational use
4. Expedite procedure through DEP for rerouting trails
5. Investigate options to facilitate purchase of new land or use of existing land for ATV use, where appropriate
6. Increase input and oversight by user groups for allocation of recreational funds (ISTEA) and fees that occur on public lands
7. Repeal clause against motorized vehicles in the small states exclusion of ISTEA.
8. Evaluate impacts and effects of implementing any of the above mentioned steps on forest ecosystem health
9. Coordinate through a comprehensive management planning process

(Implementation: CCC, CFB, CHC, CRMC, CTNEMBA, DOF, DOFI, DOSP, DOW, EGIC, NEOC, NETRA, NTSC, TNC)

Access on private lands and liability

1. Create a statewide clearinghouse for group liability insurance policies
2. Use recreational opportunities on private land to reestablish the balance of incentives versus disincentives to manage private forestlands



3. Assist landowners with implementation of formal agreements for public recreational access on their lands
 - a. Increase economic incentives
 - b. Provide protection from liability issues
 - c. Promote easements for public access
4. Investigate options to facilitate private sector dedication of lands for ATV use, where appropriate

(Implementation: CFPA, CHC, CTNEMBA, CWC, DOW, NEOC, NETRA, NWC, TNC)

User fees

1. Earmark user fees at state facilities to a dedicated fund to assist in providing recreational opportunities and facilities

(Implementation: DEP, DOF, DOFI, DOSP, DOW)

Club recognition

1. Implement an annual "State Forest Day" where user groups are given a chance to give back to the forests that they use, while networking with other user groups
2. Increase goodwill/public relations on the part of the State by acknowledging forest stewardship work that user groups perform
 - a. Greater use of Green Circle Awards
 - b. Increase grants to assist clubs
 - c. Acknowledge background people with stewardship awards
3. Document work done on state forestlands by user groups
4. Work more closely with user groups to utilize their resources to achieve management goals and educational outreach
 - a. Trail development and maintenance
 - b. Equipment purchases
 - c. Cartography (map making)
 - d. Education
 - e. Forest inventory and monitoring

(Implementation: CCC, CHC, CTNEMBA, DOF, DOFI, DOSP, DOW, NEOC)



Sustainable Forest Based Economy

Vision

CONNECTICUT'S FORESTS ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE QUALITY FOREST PRODUCTS FROM SUSTAINABLE AND DIVERSE FOREST RESOURCES. Connecticut's forests will contribute to our nation's supply of forest products, while locally ensuring employment for those involved with these activities. Proper management and use of forest resources locally will reduce worldwide pressures in more sensitive and less sustainable habitats. Sustainable forest based economy allows the landowner to offset the cost of owning land, while also providing other benefits including protection of land from development and as a means of increasing diversity within forests. Recreation and tourism suppliers will benefit from well-planned forest management.

ISSUES

Impediments to a Sustainable Forest Based Economy

Fragmentation/Parcelization

- Economy of scale issue (smaller parcels of land mean smaller woodlots, which cost the same to harvest as large lots)

Sustainability of Connecticut's forests

- Connecticut's forests are predominantly the same age (not economically sustainable over years)
- Limited markets for low grade material
- Gradual loss of most economic species, with no future age classes taking over
- Negative public opinion of harvesting limits types of harvesting activities performed

Long term trend of current values (Public lack of understanding of forest management)

- Information reaching the public concerning management and harvesting activities is confusing, which is affecting the degree of trust between landowners and industry
- Young people are not entering the logging or forestry business
- Inconsistent application of town controlled regulations between towns
- Training for town officials regarding practices is not adequate

- Inability of towns, foresters, and loggers to communicate and understand each other's responsibilities

State lands

- Number of state lands forest product sales has decreased
- Base land management on state lands will likely decrease due to budget and staff constraints

ACTION STEPS

Fragmentation/Parcelization

1. Work with land trusts, TNC, other non-profit organizations, and lawyers to get proper language in easements so that land remains available for sustained forestry management activities
2. Work with legislative lobbying organizations to put political programs in place to halt forest fragmentation
3. Work towards legislation to enact appropriate changes to increase funding for open space acquisitions to maintain forest integrity

(Implementation: CAES, DOF, NWSC, RGS, TNC, TOC, UCONNCS, YU)

Sustainability of Connecticut's forests

1. Monitor forest ecosystem health using measurable goals listed in forest ecosystem health action steps
2. Make disease resistant chestnut and other tree species of concern widely available for reforestation efforts
3. Educate landowners, foresters, and loggers about the detriments of regressive harvesting techniques

(Implementation: CHC, DOF, NWSC, TNC, UCONNCS, YU)

Long term trend of current values

1. Expand and distribute the Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development Program's "A Practical Guide for Protecting Water Quality While Harvesting Forest Products" to include additional Best Management Practices.



2. Create uniformity in existing Forest Practices Act regulations for eventual enforcement
3. Re-evaluate tax incentives for landowners for keeping land forested (ties into Incentives action under Private Forest Stewardship)
4. Create innovative ways to maintain large forest blocks (both landowner and habitat based) (Ties into Planning and Policy action steps)
5. Administer forest practitioner certification exams more frequently to assist people entering the business

(Implementation: AMC, CAES, CFP, CWC, DOF, NWSC, UCONNCS)

State lands

1. Increase timber sales on state forestlands
 - a. Use as a model of good management practices
 - b. Keep local economy going
 - c. Encourage use of low grade material
 - d. Partner with consulting foresters to implement certified management activities on state land
 - e. Where appropriate, use forest management practices to increase diversity of habitats for wildlife

(Implementation: CAES, DOF, DOW, NWSC, RGS, UCONNCS)



Education and Outreach

Vision

OPPORTUNITIES EXIST FOR ALL SECTORS OF CONNECTICUT'S POPULATION TO UNDERSTAND CONNECTICUT'S NATURAL RESOURCES. Education in both schools and public settings promotes awareness and appreciation of Connecticut's working forests. This includes the historical aspects, role of management and harvesting activities, biological diversity, and recreational values of forests. Private forest landowners, who control 85% of Connecticut's forests and the public benefits those forests provide, have adequate access to advice and technical assistance on both forest stewardship and family estate planning.

For the purposes of this plan it is understood that improving forest health is the overarching issue dictating all other areas. Maintaining large unfragmented forest blocks is critical to all of the other goals of this plan, such as sustaining a forest based economy, maintaining wildlife diversity, promoting forest based recreation, and providing clean drinking water. Ideally stated, healthy forests provide a stable ecosystem in which other activities may take place with predictable results. In this context, the purpose of associated education is to either 1) change peoples' attitudes regarding forest ecosystem health, or 2) change peoples' actions to improve overall future forest ecosystem health. In addition to education issues listed in other sections of this plan, the following issues were identified.

ISSUES

Impediments to Successful Education and Outreach Programs

- Education material regarding Connecticut's forestlands is not standardized or readily available
- Limited monitoring of educational programs exist to validate performance
- Teachers and funding sources have become more limited for educational outreach



- Teachers can not introduce new material into classrooms to educate about forestry unless it falls under pre-approved criteria

ACTION STEPS

1. Create basic uniform messages to disseminate to all audiences. Make it easily applicable to all audiences.
 - a. General value of forest (and the relation to quality of life in Connecticut)
 - b. Active forest management (definitions and benefits of)
 - c. Definition of a healthy forest (as listed under Forest Ecosystem Health section of this plan)
 - d. Respect for all forestlands (both public and private)
 - e. Threats to Connecticut's forestlands, and what individuals can do to help protect Connecticut's forestlands
2. Monitor educational programs-Identify which educational programs are working and which programs have not succeeded. Determine what went wrong and how it can be fixed. Solicit teacher input.
3. Pursue alternate sources of funding for educational purposes
4. Facilitate user group meetings to disseminate information and make it readily available
5. Expand and distribute the Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development Program's "A Practical Guide for Protecting Water Quality While Harvesting Forest Products" to include additional Best Management Practices (as listed under Planning and Policy action step)
6. Compile a public, accessible, and comprehensive natural resources map database both at state and regional levels utilizing user group and DEP maps
7. Set up a well organized and maintained information/education website with a comprehensive inventory of resources
8. Implement a "Call Before You Harvest" phone number that landowners can easily use to verify information and have questions answered when considering harvesting activities on their land

Audiences

1. Private landowners (who can manage their land-both hands on and off)
 - a. Short and long term management (including estate planning)
 - b. Alternative forest products to help offset cost of owning forests



- c. Tax incentives, economic benefits of ownership
 - d. Effects of fragmentation and parcelization
 - e. Ways to minimize liability for access to private lands
2. Municipal officials and volunteers
- a. Policy (growth plans, open space subdivisions)
 - b. Train to interact with loggers/timber harvesters/foresters
 - c. Urban forestry issues (funding, planning and implementation)
 - d. Economic worth of open space (preservation versus development)
 - e. Teach sustainable forest based economy, and how to manage town lands
 - f. Educate town officials on landscape-scale issues that may not be readily apparent by only looking within town boundaries
 - g. Assist with development of municipal, local, and regional programs to conserve forest lands
3. Forest practitioners
- a. Increase offerings of Continuing Education Units (CEU's) inexpensively and locally
 - b. Educate on the negative impacts of regressive harvesting techniques
4. Policy makers (government officials both at state and municipal levels)
5. Children
- a. Expand Project Learning Tree for K-12 (made for integration into classroom)
 - b. Expand scope and reach of Envirothon
 - c. State Department of Education-work on changing curriculum
 - d. Future Forest Practitioners-increase technical/vo-ag programs
 - e. Use clubs (K.O.R.P.-kids off road programs or NETRA Youth programs)
6. Land trusts
- a. Help educate about management possibilities
 - b. Benefits of easements
7. Media
8. Recreational user groups
9. General public (primarily non-users and non-landowners who demand benefits)
- a. Help them understand the issues

(Implementation: AC, CAES, CFB, CFPA, CHC, DOF, LLT, MDC, NEOC, NWSC, RGS, TOC, TNC, UCONNCS, USFS, YU)



Vision

COOPERATION AMONG DIFFERENT SECTORS INCLUDING THE GOVERNMENT, FOREST USERS, AND FOREST LANDOWNERS RESULTS IN PARTICIPATION BY ALL OF SOCIETY IN DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING PUBLIC POLICY. Long term comprehensive planning for state owned land occurs in collaboration with Connecticut's citizens and local government. Connecticut municipalities have the knowledge and resources to build forest sustainability into their community growth plans and patterns. Regional plans of conservation and development build on these local plans, and in turn become the foundations of the State plan of conservation and development.

ISSUES

Impediments to Effective Planning and Policy

Land management practices

- Forest Practices Act authorized regulations are not in place
- No comprehensive land use plans comparable to other states (disconnect between state, regional, local plans including planning and zoning and building regulations)
- Questionable use of open space lands designation within towns
- Town land use regulations are often misguided or not followed
- Ecosystem and habitat issues cross town boundaries because they share some of the same resources (e.g. riverways, unfragmented habitat blocks)

Open space protection

- Lack of financial resources readily available for agencies or organizations who want to purchase land for protection
- Lack of proactive, planned and coordinated approach to forestland protection by DEP

Dissemination of information

- Lack of coordination across public and private groups for education purposes and for commonality (overlapping, fragmented)

Implementation of Forest Resource Plan

- Concern over whether this plan will ever be implemented

ACTION STEPS

Land management practices

1. Determine forest integrity (decide what is wanted)
 - a. Determine size and continuity of forest (what is desirable)
 - i. Identify ecological attributes of different regions in Connecticut to determine workable forest blocks (allows you to better focus on issues)
 - b. Determine desired composition (condition and forest health) (garden or not?)
 - c. What is the desired landscape context (islands of individual forests or connectivity)
 - d. What are the threats to the forests?
 - e. How to address threats
2. Implement evaluation of the current status of forests
 - a. Identify and delineate habitat age classes and types
 - b. Create management plans on a regional basis, complete with maps
 - c. Create site specific conservation and management plans
 - d. Identify which habitats are lacking
 - e. Identify contiguous public and private forestlands (where they abut)
 - f. Take existing plans and layer them (FIA, TNC Matrix)
 - g. Set goals of sustainable yield
3. Greater utilization of a "Landscape Approach" to identify key parcels for acquisition.
Use existing objective and qualified data to facilitate process:
 - a. Forest Legacy Program "Assessment of Need"
 - b. The Nature Conservancy's Matrix Forests data
 - c. Connecticut Resource Protection Project Maps
 - d. DEP information (including ECO)
 - e. Audubon Connecticut Important Bird Area (IBA) Program
 - f. DEP Environmental GIS Data for Connecticut (Seven CD map set)
4. Expand on the Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development Program's "A Practical Guide for Protecting Water Quality While Harvesting Forest Products" to include additional Best Management Practices
5. Fully utilize Forest Practices Act
6. Propose a bill that would lead local planning and zoning regulations
 - a. Encourage conservation subdivisions
 - b. Town moratoriums on development can be dovetailed by the State DEP
7. Evaluate and record specific goals and strategies for controlling invasive species on public and private forestlands
8. Expansion of Natural Area Preserve Lands
9. Incorporate maintenance of forest block integrity into state and local plans of conservation and development.

(Implementation: AC, CAES, CFB, CWC, DOF, DOFI, DOW, MDC, RGS, TNC, UCONNCS, USFS, YU)



Open space protection

1. Revise DEP's plan for land acquisition-Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program (make it more streamlined and proactive).
2. Make funding more readily available for land acquisitions-go after development rights
3. Explore avenues of incentives
 - a. Real estate conveyance tax
 - b. Increase open space incentives
 - c. Upper Housatonic Valley Natural Heritage Area Act of 2003 (H.R. 1798)
 - d. Municipalities encouraging conservation subdivisions
 - e. Improve open space grant process
 - f. Fully utilize and support federal resources for land acquisitions
 - g. State bonds

(Implementation: AC, CFP, DOF, DOFI, TNC, TOC)

Dissemination of information

1. Create a "Circuit Rider" networking organization to work with town commissions, land trusts, conservation commissions, recreationalists and private consulting foresters.
 - a. Facilitate education and land acquisitions
 - b. Distribute information between towns (especially key parcels)
 - c. Expand on existing sources of information (newspapers)
 - d. Generate funding other than state funding
 - e. Coordinate volunteers/equipment/in-kind services
 - f. Utilize Internet to disseminate information

(Implementation: CAES, DOF, NWSC, RGS, TNC, UCONNCS)

Implementation of this plan

1. Implement advisory committee of people (Connecticut Forestlands Committee) who have genuine interest and influence to address forestry issues and to make sure Forest Resource Plan is implemented
 - a. Semi-annual review of plan
 - b. Five year midpoint review of plan
 - c. 10 year retrofit of plan
 - d. Funding requests made for 4th and 9th years of plan
2. Implement task force sub committees to address different action steps of the plan

(Implementation: AC, DOF, RGS, TNC, UCONNCS)



Research

Vision

CONTINUATION OF ONGOING RESEARCH, ALONG WITH IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW RESEARCH BY BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ENTITIES PROVIDES A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF CONNECTICUT'S FORESTS, AND OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM. Findings of such research are disseminated to the general public and interested parties in a way that the public can understand and use.

ISSUES

Impediments to Comprehensive Forest Research

- Not enough well planned targeted research and monitoring of biological issues associated with forest ecosystem health
- Lack of well planned targeted social research associated with forest ecosystem health to determine how social behavior impacts land management actions
- Need for effective dissemination/extension of research information

ACTION STEPS

1. Continue ongoing research programs at the state level on forest health and management, critical habitat, wildlife issues, and recreation including:
 - a. Beech bark disease
 - b. Chestnut blight/reintroduction of chestnut
 - c. Hemlock wooly adelgid
 - d. Oak regeneration
 - e. Continuous Forest Inventory Plots (CFI)
2. Develop new applied research programs on the following topics:
 - a. Liability issues for municipalities, land trusts, private landowners, and user groups
 - b. Comparative analysis of economic incentives for landowners for land retention and management opportunities (see Private Forest Stewardship Incentives 1a and 1b)
 - c. Research models of recreational uses (Especially for appropriate and ecologically sustainable ATV uses)

Research

- d. Uses for low-grade woody material
 - e. Increase social research on various audiences to determine attitudes about forestry and forestlands of Connecticut to implement successful communication channels with them for educational purposes
 - f. Atmospheric deposition of pollutants and climate change on forest health in Connecticut
 - g. Research why more landowners do not manage their forestlands
 - i. What are the disincentives
 - ii. What does it take to overcome them
 - h. Analyze different tax incentives to see what works best in today's society for long term sustainable management (whether it be for a forest preserve or for timber management)
 - i. Public Act 490 (section 12-107)
 - ii. 1913 Tax Law/10 Mill (section 12-96 through 12-103)
 - iii. investigate models from other states to see if there are other appropriate tax incentive programs
3. Develop partnerships with universities and private forestry associations to promote research on key issues
 4. Monitor research programs to make sure that they are achieving goals
 5. Gather existing information (assemble both published information, and gray literature) to make available in one location and in a useable, easy to understand format
 6. Disseminate new and ongoing research results to various audiences (determine whom it is useful to)

(Implementation: AC, CAES, CFPA, CHC, DOF, EGIC, MDC, TNC, UCONNCS, USFS, YU)