Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Division of Forestry

State Forest Strategic Plan
2008

Vision:
Ohio's state forests will be the best managed forestlands in the country, and will be recognized as such.

OBJECTIVES

1. ***Manage forests to ensure the health and sustainability of forest systems***
2. ***Produce high-quality forest products that contribute to local communities***
3. ***Provide recreational opportunities that require a large forest land base***
4. ***Provide unique forestry education sites and promote outreach and long-term research***
5. ***Maintain a highly trained and well-equipped work force***

Goals and Strategies

Objective 1: Manage forests to ensure the health and sustainability of forest systems

- *Goal: Implement a proved, verifiable approach to sustainable forest management*
  - Strategy: Achieve Certification of our state forests using the standards of The Sustainable Forestry Initiative and The Forest Stewardship Council in 2009
  - Strategy: Maintain commitment to SFI and FSC by meeting annual requirements.
- *Goal: Manage for site-appropriate, native forest systems and species*
  - Strategy: Review and revise state forest-specific land management objectives, goals, and zoning for forest management by 2009, and utilize appropriate silvicultural guidelines to promote site appropriate native species.
  - Strategy: Address conifer plantation management by establishing a conifer plantation management policy by 2009.
- *Goal: Maintain long-term forest productivity through conservation of soil, water, and forest resources*
  - Strategy: Review harvest standards for water quality, soil conservation, utilization, and monitoring and incorporate needed changes into harvest planning and timber contracts by 2009
  - Strategy: Review SMZ standards and adjust for consistency with FSC-SMZ guidelines.
  - Strategy: Review Wet Weather Logging policy and implement needed changes by 2009.
- *Goal: Retain or promote stand- and landscape-level wildlife habitat*
  - Strategy: Request the development of stand- and landscape-level habitat guidelines specific for Ohio forests from the Division of Wildlife, and implement into our harvest planning process.

Objective 2: Produce high-quality forest products that contribute to local communities

- *Goal: Base harvest volumes on the goals and guidelines for each forest system, current stand and forest-wide inventories, and science-based silviculture*
  - Strategy: Establish a base-line inventory for all state forests by first formulating specifications for the level of intensity and criteria for data collection in the next 6 months; followed by a plan of action to accomplish the project.

  - Strategy: Implement and test Growth & Yield model to calculate Annual Allowable Harvest in the next two years.
  - Strategy: Review our current policies on forest inventories for prescription cruising and adjust or develop new harvest schedules/policies accordingly. The land management staff of the Division of Forestry will be charged selecting a system that will most efficiently and accurately prescribe harvest schedules by 2010.
  - Strategy: Establish a plan to accomplish a Pre-commercial Silvicultural Activities in order to nurture young stands into quality, healthy, mature stands.
- *Goal: Develop marketing strategies to capture the maximum value of forest products*
  - Strategy: Immediately identify sales to conduct a pilot merchandized product sale in 2008, from logs harvested from various state forests. Merchandizing and marketing efforts located in Scioto Trail State Forest and shall utilize contract logging services and in-house logging. Evaluate the results of project compared to traditional stumpage timber sales.
  - Strategy: Add value by exploring utilization options, alternative markets, niche markets, and low-grade material markets.
  - Strategy: Implement a Timber Sale Administration training program to maximize our return from stumpage sales. Task to be accomplished by seasoned administrators by 2008.
  - Strategy: Review and revise Land Management Manual to adjust business practices for consistency by 2009.
  - Strategy: Improve and publicize a firewood program on state forests by 2008.

Objective3: Provide recreational opportunities that require a large forest land base

- *Goal: Develop a comprehensive backcountry recreation plan for the state forest system*
  - Strategy: Inventory Recreational Opportunities on each state forest
  - Strategy: Ensure User Safety
  - Strategy: Ensure Resource Protection
  - Strategy: Evaluate User Satisfaction (Quality of Experience)
- *Goal: Build recognition for unique and varied recreation opportunities on state forests*
  - *Strategy:* Emphasize backcountry (or back to basics) experience

  - Strategy: Work with DOF Communication Team to develop strategies to accomplish this goal

Objective 4: Provide unique forestry education sites and promote outreach and long-term research

- *Goal: Develop opportunities to showcase forest management practices to the general public, private landowners, and forest industry*
  - Strategy: Establish, maintain and promote demonstration sites at state forests
  - Strategy: Utilize and improve existing outreach programs to promote forest management to targeted audiences (students, woodland owners, media, recreational users, policy makers).
  - Strategy: Utilize new technology as a communications tool
  - Strategy: Promote the historical conservation legacy of the state forest system as part of the Division's strategic communications
  - Strategy: Integrate state forest management into the Division's strategic communications efforts
- *Goal: Support forest research with an emphasis on sustainable forest management (silviculture, prescribed fire, native systems, etc.)*
  - Strategy: Establish a forest research review team

Objective 5: Maintain a highly trained and well-equipped work force

- *Goal: Develop a training, continuing education, and/or certification standard for all division staff*
  - Strategy: Maintain a master training schedule for the DOF
  - Strategy: Develop a training guide for DOF employees
  - Strategy: Select and maintain a database to track employee training and certifications
  - Strategy: Establish training requirements by job classification
  - Strategy: Create and implement a new employee "mentor" program
- *Goal: Inventory and evaluate equipment and facilities and develop maintenance and replacement schedules*
  - Strategy: Establish written equipment replacement standards and schedule with a field request procedure
  - Strategy: Select and maintain a master facility and equipment database
  - Strategy: Establish a facility and equipment maintenance schedule and inspection procedure
  - Strategy: Conduct a facility and equipment needs assessment
- *Goal: Develop equipment and facilities budgets based on current and projected needs*

  - Strategy: Create a dedicated facilities budget separate from the regional maintenance and operating budget
  - Strategy: Develop the equipment budget to account for projected scheduled replacements
  - Strategy: Explore alternative funding sources
- *Goal: Ensure all staff has appropriate health and safety training*
  - Strategy: Determine what training is required by law, policy and position
  - Strategy: Establish an inspection procedure for equipment and facilities
  - Strategy: Ensure safety and health training is a priority
  - Strategy: Improve safety awareness that is job specific