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## Theme D: Forests as Economic Contributors

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### **GOAL**

**FOREST VALUE: Forest ecosystem services have economic values that are realized and managed to maximize the benefits to society and improve quality of life. (Ecosystem services are functions performed by natural ecosystems that benefit human society, such as hydrological services, protection of the soil, biomass, carbon sequestration, habitat for wild species, and recreation opportunities.)**

### *DESCRIPTION OF GOAL*

Ecological services provide value to people in both an intrinsic and economic context. While realizing the economic values can be the basis of more tangible goals, there are also opportunities to develop public understanding of the value of investing in forests, especially if based upon the values that the public already holds.

There are emerging systems being used to value ecosystem services from a traditional forestry perspective as well as for urban and community forests.

Building public understanding and influencing public actions can be more effective if we build upon language and terminology that the public understands. At the most basic level, we may need to build an understanding that the benefits do exist and the consequences if they are lost. Forested wetlands are a good example of how a forest provides a breadth of ecosystem services: water purification and recreation and tourism to visit these areas.

### **STRATEGY**

37. Invest in forest conservation to contribute to a strong economy and provide clean water and air, wildlife, and other ecosystem services.

Forest conservation means that forests are kept as forests and continue to provide an array of benefits – ecological, economic and social. For the forests that drive the traditional forest economy, the need and opportunity exists to describe the additional benefits of those ecosystems in terms that the public already believes valuable, particularly the value of providing clean water. The level of benefits can be tied to level of investment.

Forest conservation includes maintaining and sustainably managing working forests, as well as protecting passively managed forests. Long-term sustainable forest management conserves forests and the benefits they provide.

Possible Actions:

- Develop data sets to characterize and estimate potential benefits/forest values (e.g. water and wildlife) by ecological landscape, watershed, or other common unit of measure.

- Develop regional long-term plans to provide for conservation (i.e. maintenance, development, and enhancement) of forest benefits.
- Support efforts to address forest conservation in local comprehensive planning and implementation process.
- Identify key source water protection opportunities that can be protected through forest conservation.
- Protect and sustainably manage forest lands to produce the benefits of ecosystem services (e.g., water conservation, carbon sequestration, improving air quality)

## **STRATEGY**

38. Encourage communities to invest in their urban forest canopy as part of a long-term plan for a community's quality of life.

Connecting community investments in planning, planting, and tree maintenance to the benefits derived from the community forest can show the value in real dollar terms of energy savings, storm water management, public safety, etc. Informing urban residents, public officials, businesses and organizations of the value and services urban trees provide may increase the number of people who are committed to insuring that urban forests are managed.

Working with a multitude of people and resources can increase the availability of people, equipment and finances needed to plan and manage local urban trees. The development of partnerships can help communities leverage investments that can improve the entire urban forest canopy.

Urban forests, like rural forests, have research needs to keep trees healthy and actively growing. Urban forests have many stressors that are not commonly found in rural forests, so research that focuses on urban areas is essential.

### Possible Actions:

- Develop urban forest plans for all communities.
- Implement tree maintenance programs in all communities.
- Encourage collaboration and participation among governments, businesses, nonprofit organizations, citizens, and communities to plant and manage local urban trees and the tree canopy.
- Develop regional and community foundations/funds to receive and disperse tree planting and management funds from individual and corporate philanthropists and leverage investments.
- Exempt urban forestry expenditures from property tax levy limits.
- Provide funding for community to sustainably manage their urban forests.
- Encourage communities to create and enact aggressive tree preservation/protection.
- Encourage communities and the state to change "generally accepted accounting principles" to allow designation of their trees as a capital asset.

## **STRATEGY**

39. Build public understanding about the benefits provided from investing in forest conservation.

Building public interest and understanding about the benefits from forests can help people value the need to invest in both rural and urban forest management. Long-term investments in forestry education as well as focused efforts to build upon values that the public already holds are necessary.

Forest conservation includes maintaining and sustainably managing working forests, as well as protecting passively managed forests. Long-term sustainable forest management conserves forests and the benefits they provide.

Possible Actions:

- Develop stable funding for forestry K-12 education programs.
- Promote general awareness of forestry-related contributions in Wisconsin, including development of a center for forestry education.
- Target marketing to the public using ideas people have shown interest and understanding in (e.g. water quality).
- Connect forest investments to the broad range of benefits such as improved health, protection of water quality, sustainable timber products, and energy conservation.
- Increase the number of municipalities that promote the benefits of their urban forestry programs.

## **GOAL**

**MARKETS: Wisconsin is a hub of green forest product markets, producing a diversity of value added solid wood, fiber, energy and ecosystem services.**

### *DESCRIPTION OF GOAL*

Wisconsin needs to maintain existing forest products businesses while actively working to attract new businesses and markets. Existing companies need support for constant improvement of business practices, adoption of new technology, and expansion into international markets.

Future success will depend on maintaining the economic viability of 'green' markets and developing new markets that can be integrated with existing markets to use an expanded sustainable wood supply rather than just competing for existing supplies. The large volume of 3<sup>rd</sup> party certified forests is an opportunity to differentiate forest products grown in the Great Lakes states.

New markets for ecosystem services have a high degree of uncertainty because policies and frameworks for markets are still under development.

## **STRATEGY**

40. Support existing forest products companies so that they are competitive domestically and internationally.

Businesses need comprehensive business services and support for international market development and process improvements. These can require long-term investments. Industries benefit from current and reliable data that helps companies compete in rapidly changing markets.

Possible Actions:

- Fund participation for WI representatives in international trade missions.
- Develop annual reporting methods to provide reliable Timber Product Output data.
- Provide business development services for process improvement, business capital, technology improvements, and planning and permitting to streamline business expansion.
- Develop a unified forest products trade organization to represent the industry.
- Regularly produce data to characterize the potential supply of primary and secondary forest product raw materials.
- Produce sustainably managed forest products to add value to the marketplace.

### **STRATEGY**

41. Encourage the development of new markets and companies that leverage sustainable (e.g. third-party certified) supply and ecosystem services in emerging markets.

There is a broad range of opportunities and challenges for new markets in biomass, energy, ecosystem services, composites, chemical feedstocks, etc. The development of partnerships, associations, coordinated research efforts, and business models can help companies lessen the risk of entry into new markets. There are roles and opportunities for the full breadth of stakeholders, from landowners and loggers to foresters and industry and rural to urban.

Coordinating policy and strategy development can help develop and maintain a positive business climate for forest products companies. Incentives for new cooperative models, urban wood utilization, ecosystem services, and combined heat and power development, etc. are needed to support the development of new markets.

Possible Actions:

- Determine the feasibility of developing a cooperative biomass energy facility.
- Facilitate new partnerships between green building organizations and trade associations for both rural and urban wood.
- Build a forest products research community that can focus on opportunities for Wisconsin companies (e.g. biomass, composites, advanced fuels, chemical feedstock development, etc.)
- Develop Great Lakes regional branding to market sustainably produced products.
- Create a Great Lakes Biomass Exchange
- Develop a state agency strategy (Dept of Administration, Dept of Commerce, Dept of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection, DNR) to support new forestry business development and a positive business climate.

- Establish incentive programs that encourage market development for energy and ecosystem services (e.g. carbon, water).
- Adopt policies that encourage communities and institutions to use sustainable wood supply for construction, heat, and power.
- Develop new markets for urban wood including potential uses in biomass and bioenergy.

## **GOAL**

**CAPACITY:** Forest management/protection providers, business, and other organizations in the forestry community have increased capacity to protect and sustainably manage forests.

### *DESCRIPTION OF GOAL*

Even in the current depressed business climate, high state government vacancy rates, increased workload due to new markets, threats and opportunities, and increased demand from landowners for information and services, there are many ways to increase capacity of service providers, businesses, and other organizations. The increase in capacity could come from increasing the quality of work through certification and training, increasing the ability of service providers to be successful business owners, and new students and professionals entering the forestry profession.

Public and private agencies, organizations and individuals are likely to be enthusiastic in meeting forest resource needs if they have the funding, knowledge and resources available to do their job. With adequate support more agencies and business will be successful, thus increasing the capacity for existing personnel to do more or for businesses to increase their size and/or services.

### **STRATEGY**

42. Develop collaborations and partnerships to engage all forestry stakeholders

It is rare for one organization or agency to have all of the resources needed to meet the needs of its customers. Partnerships between all types of organizations are needed to meet the needs of society. This strategy recognizes existing partnerships in rural and urban settings and hopes to strengthen them, as well as establish new partnerships. If successful, services can be provided by an agency or organization with minimal overlap or duplication. The actions for this strategy do not cover all current partnerships that exist. It highlights those that are considered critical at this time.

Possible Actions:

- Support and expand the role of the Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council in representing the voice of urban forests in the state.
- Create a Wisconsin Forestry Association that represents the forestry community and which helps set direction while fostering greater involvement and buy-in to collaboratively address items and issues facing both the resource and owners of that resource.

- Establish research priorities for forestry and mechanisms to implement those priorities.
- Establish clear roles and common goals between public agencies and non-governmental organizations.
- Continue providing fire departments with needed resources so that they remain a strong partner for wildfire initial attack.
- Develop partnerships to more efficiently deliver and expand public land management and outreach programs.
- Continue to provide training and tools for public agencies and partners to administer programs efficiently and effectively.
- Continue to improve consultation with Native American tribes to insure their rights on lands and protection and management of natural resources.
- Develop and implement a communication strategy to inform public officials, business, nonprofits, and residents of the value and services trees provide them.
- Increase the membership in forestry landowner organizations and forestry cooperatives.
- Develop forestry ambassador programs in local communities.
- Grow partnerships between organizations, agencies and landowners working to fight invasive species.

### **STRATEGY**

43. Increase the number of students who enter forestry related studies or a forestry profession in order to recruit and hire high quality and diverse individuals.

The potential workforce for forestry related jobs is decreasing except for in the urban forestry related fields. The workforce reduction includes field foresters, loggers, tree planters, timber stand improvement contractors, and other resource management specialists. This strategy looks at the long range view of increasing the number of service providers by focusing on attracting existing natural resource professionals and students into forestry related careers, thus insuring that a pool of diverse, high quality candidates is available to fill vacancies in both the public and private sectors. A focus would be on ensuring students and professionals have field forestry skills.

Possible Actions:

- Provide low interest education loans, grants, or scholarships for students who choose a career in a forestry-related profession.
- Provide information on careers at high schools, job fairs, etc. to encourage people to enter the forestry profession.
- Provide stable funding source for programs to encourage students to enter forest product manufacturing programs.
- Promote Wisconsin as being a great place to be a forester or other forestry-related professional.
- Provide more opportunities for students to gain field forestry skills (e.g., through internships with professional foresters or field courses).
- Work with educational institutions to promote forestry as a green career.

## **STRATEGY**

44. Increase the number of private businesses (loggers, cooperating forester firms, tree planters, arborists, timber stand improvement contractors, etc.) that provide high quality goods and services to effectively and efficiently reach more forest landowners and sustainably manage more forest.

Providing high quality goods and services is necessary for businesses to succeed. Successful businesses increase the capacity of the forestry community to service the needs of the public and private individuals. Successful businesses are able to hire more people, complete high quality work in less time, purchase tools and equipment easier, and ultimately service a large clientele.

This strategy focuses on increasing the quality of work through certification and training and increasing the ability of service providers to manage a business. New service providers need opportunities to learn good business practices.

### Possible Actions:

- Develop and deliver courses on business management for forestry related businesses.
- Provide incentives for cooperating foresters to work on the large number of practices that public foresters are not able to take on due to workload and often are not implemented because of their low commercial value.
- Provide low interest business loans for forestry-related companies just starting up or expanding capacity, including hiring of new employees.
- Provide incentives for foresters, arborists, loggers and other forestry-related professionals to attend high quality, certified training courses.
- Increase the number of private foresters practicing sustainable forestry.
- Provide incentives to landowners to hire private consulting foresters.
- Develop programs to maintain and strengthen the professional logging industry.
- Educate the public and landowners on the benefits of professional resource managers (rural and urban).

## **GOAL**

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| <b>RECREATION: Diverse recreational opportunities are available and have minimal impacts on forest ecosystems.</b> |
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### *DESCRIPTION OF GOAL*

Wisconsin's population grew 4.72% from 2000 to 2008 and outdoor recreation participation is expected to follow suit. The baby boom population is reaching retirement age and will increase demand for outdoor recreation facilities for the growing aged population. In addition, recreation participation tends to cycle through peaks and valleys which will account for upward or downward demands for a particular activity (SCORP, 2006). Preference of recreation activities change and each has different effects on the forest ecosystem. The overall recommendation for this goal is to first plan for activities

statewide considering where the most sustainable location for specific activities could be and then discuss where to provide for those activities.

### **STRATEGY**

45. Plan for a range of recreation opportunities at a statewide level suitable to the capability of the land and with minimal long term impacts.

Supporting and enabling communities to develop recreational facilities will increase the local economic diversity and opportunities. Communities are able to develop recreational facilities specific to their needs, keeping recreational dollars close to home.

Public lands and private enterprises have different experiences to offer. Each has a niche and expertise that can provide a wide spectrum of opportunities. Urban forests and areas around population centers are especially important to consider for providing recreation options because more people are likely to take more frequent, shorter trips for recreational activities if facilities are located within a one hour drive from their home

The diverse recreational activities now and in the future will likely make user conflicts intense, especially if the perception is that recreational uses are not compatible. Fostering discussion between divergent recreational user groups will increase the likelihood that compromises can be made to adequately address the needs of most recreational users.

Not all recreation is appropriate in every forest ecosystem. Trails placed in inappropriate areas can harm the forest, for example eroding soil and causing water quality issues or spreading invasive species. Sites must be evaluated for activities that can be sustained environmentally and economically.

#### Possible Actions:

- Determine the types of individual or group recreational activities and where additional facilities should be located that are easily accessible to the public, paying particular attention to those areas close to urban areas.
- Determine if recreational areas and activities can be best provided by public or private entities.
- Foster communication amongst recreational user groups to accommodate a variety of forest recreational activities and educate users on why not all activities should be provided everywhere.
- Provide educational materials and outreach to inform recreationists what impacts the resource and how to reduce it.
- Support communities in developing forest recreation opportunities to increase local economic diversity.

### **STRATEGY**

46. Provide sustainable recreation opportunities on forested public lands.

Public lands are held in perpetuity and provide many recreational opportunities for the public. Lands should continue to be purchased or leased to fulfill land management and recreational needs. Master plans on state owned properties provide opportunities for the public to share views on appropriate activities and how they think recreation should be managed on the property. Not all recreation is appropriate in every forest ecosystem. Trails placed in inappropriate areas can harm the forest, for example eroding soil and causing water quality issues or spreading invasive species. Sites must be evaluated for activities that can be sustained environmentally and economically.

Possible Actions:

- Continue to purchase or lease lands that provide recreational opportunities for the public.
- Complete and keep up to date master plans on public forests.
- Design, construct, and maintain trails and other recreational facilities using funding sources that adequately meet the financial and personnel needs of the facility.
- Research, develop, and share sustainable recreation design, construction, and maintenance practices.
- Increase capacity for friends groups to build, maintain, and manage facilities and trails.

### **STRATEGY**

47. Increase acreage of lands open to public recreation in areas where public land is not abundant.

As the population grows and communities expand, land is an important resource to provide recreation opportunities. Significant sectors of the state economy are dependent on growing recreation markets, and readily available lands are essential for that growth. Of the 5,782,353 total acres of public lands available for recreation, 45% of it is owned by counties, 31% by the federal government, and 24% by the state. City, town, and village parks account for 1%. There are parts of Wisconsin that do not have a lot of public land and it is difficult for citizens to access outdoor recreation areas. There has been an increase in the amount of people closing their MFL acres to public access. Recreation easements are an option on private lands for activities ranging from hiking to hunting to both motorized and non-motorized trails. Snowmobile clubs are a good example of a statewide group working to increase the amount of private land open to snowmobile routes.

Possible Actions:

- Continue providing incentives for private landowners to open lands for public recreation.