

FINAL DRAFT

Future Challenges for Foresters

Retreat Outcomes

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Executive Summary

In the highly urbanized communities of the Northeast, people have little to no idea of the full range of goods and services provided by the surrounding forests. These same folks enjoy viewing wildlife, recreating in the outdoors, and are accustomed to clean fresh water, but don't understand the vital connection of these wants and enjoyments to the necessary activity of forest management. Urbanization has become both a challenge and an opportunity for the professional forester.

The following comments, identified by the participants at the retreat, highlight both the tough issues as well as some of the opportunities facing foresters in New England and New York between now and the year 2020.

- "There is limited land base (parcelization) and increasing competition for its use."
- "There is a perceived adversarial feeling between conservation/preservation groups and forestry."
- "A disconnect of society from the land."
- "There is an aging forester population."
- "There is increasing polarization and task fragmentation within the profession."
- "We have to contend with global economics and world trade."

Action items, identified during the retreat, underscore the need for the forestry profession, and particularly SAF, to be proactive not just reactive. Forest management will be different throughout the region, but nowhere more so than in areas experiencing rapid population increases. Foresters are going to have to know more than silviculture and will have to develop stronger professional partnerships to maintain their value to society.

Professional foresters will need to make themselves more marketable and will need to develop a diverse set of skills to be successful in future years. To be relevant in 2020, foresters may be of more service to a broader public as members of interdisciplinary management teams.

The Retreat Background and Process

On June 6, 2006, a facilitated retreat was held in Littleton, Massachusetts for the New England and New York Societies of American Foresters. Twenty SAF members, representing a cross section of the forestry profession, participated in the retreat. The retreat members concentrated their efforts on the following four objectives.

- 1) Provide a unified voice on what a forester is and what a forester should be.
- 2) Discuss what would be needed to create a strong sense of wanting to be SAF members among professional foresters.
- 3) Establish a foundation for a programmed process of professional development in a region undergoing rapid urbanization.
- 4) Develop a white paper describing what professional foresters must do to overcome the challenges of managing lands in the northeast in 2020.

The foresters retreat was funded by a grant from the 2006 SAF Foresters Fund with matching in-kind support from all Chapters/Divisions of NESAF, NYSAF, and from Leo Laferriere, District VI Council Member.

This "white paper" summarizes the conclusions of the retreat discussions. It will be made available to all NESAF and NYSAF members in the hope it will encourage further discussion. The retreat results will also be a topic of a workshop at NESAF's 2007 winter meeting. It is hoped that the ultimate outcome of these further discussions will be a published strategy that SAF, through its local units, can apply to help the membership cope with the expected changes to the profession in the Northeast.

Challenges and Action Items

The retreat participants identified challenges they expected in managing lands in the Northeast in the year 2020. Additionally, they were asked to develop some possible actions they felt would help them meet those challenges.

(The numbers in parentheses at the end of an action item identify that the action is duplicated elsewhere. For example, participants recognized that communications and public involvement are important to meeting most challenges. The recommended lead or responsible party for implementing and completing the action is noted with the following code: SAF national staff (SAF); District VI Council member (CD); NE/NYSAF state society executive committees (EC); division/ chapter executive committees (DC); and ALL. Finally up to the first five items in each Action Item listing are preferred by the retreat attendees)

Challenge 1: Altering the Public Image of Forestry

Challenge 1A: The public has a weak or negative image and little understanding of forestry.

Action Items to help the public know "who we are and what we want to be."

- Seek positive public relations. - ALL
- Identify or create a nationally recognized spokesperson - a new Gifford Pinchot to be an ambassador for forestry. (2C) - SAF
- Develop a national message about what forestry is; need a proactive and repetitive sound bite that the public can latch onto, "got milk", "wood is good", "have you talked with a forester today". (1C, 3B)- SAF
- Establish an education outreach committee with the goal of identifying and developing ways of using education results. - EC and DC
- Increase forester's presence in the news media with news releases and columns. - ALL
- Develop public communication skills of foresters and forestry organizations.
- Publicize SAF awards to the public through news media. (2C) - ALL
- Develop press kits for local chapters.
- Develop canned forestry presentations (distribute through website). (1C, 2B)
- Promote within, the ability to give to both the community and profession. -DC
- Strengthen ties with Project Learning Tree and others similar programs

to influence teachers to convey forestry information to students. (1C) - EC and DC

- Promote pre-wood harvesting walks with abutters, local town leaders, press and legislators. (1C, 3A)
- Identify specific target audiences, get on their agenda and make a presentation, e.g. organizations of towns, realtors, assessors, teachers, service clubs, land trusts, conservation organizations, Audubon Chapters, etc. (1C) - DC
- Develop speaker bureaus with people who are knowledgeable about a range of subjects. - EC

Challenge 1B: In some areas there is a perceived adversarial relationship between forestry/foresters and 'environmental' organizations that seem to have the public ear.

Action Items to gain public confidence on the value of forestry/foresters

- The consumer/public must be better educated on the benefits of forestry. - ALL
- Explore innovative approaches to developing nontraditional partnerships, particularly where civic involvement is high. - DC
- Urgent consideration to forming a forestry council made up of associated interest groups. - CD and EC
- Be more adaptable to different values, interests, and capabilities of organizations and individuals who use in one manner, shape or form the same landscapes that foresters do. - EC and DC
- Cultivate more interaction and collaborative approaches to involving and including the public in forestry conservation. - EC and DC
- Pick targets of opportunity. - SAF, EC and DC
- Cooperation must have continuity and come across with enthusiasm, cooperativeness and commitment. - ALL
- Instances that downgrade the confidence of the public must be publicly denounced by SAF.

Challenge 1C: There is an identified disconnect between the land and the people.

Action Items to connect people back to the land, foresters need to go to where the people feel comfortable.

- Implement joint workshops with the Audubon Society, Ruffed Grouse groups, etc. - SAF, EC and DC
- Work with existing agencies or groups to accomplish outreach. - SAF, EC and DC
- Explore ways of building strategic coalitions. - SAF, EC and DC

Challenge 2: Altering the Structure of the Forestry Profession

Challenge 2A: Create a strong sense of wanting to be a member of SAF amongst professional foresters.

Action Items to make belonging to SAF a major professional expectation.

- Implement an orientation session for new SAF members at the annual meetings, including the SAF organization chart. - EC
- SAF should sponsor role models, mentors and facilitators. - DC
- Make the CF status nationally important by creating an icon. - SAF
- Emphasize that without SAF there would not be a Journal of Forestry, Forest Source, quarterly newsletters, legislative spokespeople and regional and national meetings and conferences. - EC and DC
- Cultivate more tangible interaction at the local level, thus demonstrating SAF's true value. - EC and DC
- NESAF and NYSAF needs to recruit, keep members, and reach out to other kinds of professionals and people from different kinds of backgrounds.
- Chapters offer a free 1-year membership to new members and for active officers. - EC and DC
- Provide workshops that are affordable, germane and accessible.- SAF, EC and DC
- Promote foresters, not forestry or forest management. - SAF , EC and DC
- Show employers there is benefit for their employees to belong to SAF and attend its meetings and conferences. - SAF
- Create an award for integrity and publicize it.
- Identify up and coming future foresters and help nurture them. - EC and DC
- Promote that SAF has a philosophy you believe in and provides creative and valuable interaction with peers. - SAF
- Promote the feeling of not being alone in our fast moving society.
- Conduct a survey of non-members asking why they do not participate, and what needs to change that will make them participate.
- Merge with other resource professional organizations; e.g. The Forest Guild. - EC

Challenge 2B: There is strong sense that the profession of forestry has become fragmented leaving some foresters feeling marginalized.

As expressed during the retreat by the expression "Other professionals are eating our lunch."

Action Items to increase the respect provided the professional forester.

- Today, foresters in their resource management often encounter conflicting interests. A forester needs more than traditional forestry skills, e.g. wetlands protection and rare species habitat conservation. (3A) - SAF, EC and DC
- Cultivate more interaction and collaborative approaches to involving and including the public in forestry conservation. - EC and DC
- Foresters must be at the "lobbying" table and stay at the table in order to be recognized as a player in the race for resources. - EC, DC and CD
- Focus on issues that most threaten forest sustainability. - SAF, EC and DC
- There is priority need to sharpen outreach skills. - SAF, EC and DC
- Promote the ability to create and build effective relations with all stakeholders. - EC
- Cultivate more interaction and collaborative approaches to involving and including the public in forestry conservation. - EC and DC
- Supporting greater interaction at the local level is a true value of SAF. - DC
- Form a council of forestry made up of associated interest groups; e.g. farm Bureau, forest and parks, etc. without jeopardizing 501-C3 status.

Challenge 2C: The educational needs of the SAF membership are diverse.

The question is what skills will be needed by a professional forester in 2020?

Action Items to develop a better educated forester in 2020.

- It is important to redefine the accreditation process and review whether or not it meets today's and the year 2020 needs. - SAF
- The education process should stress professional integrity and ethics. - SAF
- Bring the Leadership Academy back to New England and rotate by divisions. (2C) - SAF, EC and CD
- Education should instill the foundation of being environmentally literate in advancing community involvement.
- Create a local SAF organization with fewer rules so small groups can meet more often informally to create a unified voice. These small scale meetings could meet monthly at the convenience of the group. - EC and DC
- While not required, a degree from an SAF accredited forestry school is beneficial and is to be promoted.
- Give less stress to accreditation and more emphasize towards certified forester. - SAF
- Develop participatory decision making and communication skills.
- Require a result - oriented education that will produce Certified

- Foresters (CF). - SAF
- Explore the potential of delivering online courses and degrees possibly coordinated with certificate programs. - SAF and EC
- Forestry students should have a grasp of conflict resolution. - SAF
- At the annual NESAF and NYSAF meetings have more breakout sessions and less formal sessions. - EC
- Get over the fear of making money at meetings. Show that the money can do things; e.g. influence on policy. - DC

Challenge 3: Adjusting to External Influences and Business Trends

Challenge 3A: The current trend in the Northeastern United States is that parcels of forest lands are becoming smaller and smaller. Development and increasing populations are splitting land into smaller units to the point it affects and in some cases eliminates forest management.

Action Items to retain the management of forest resources in areas with a decreasing tract size.

- Maintain a broad perspective and be ready to serve as a leader helping stakeholder groups solve problems associated with parcelization. - SAF, EC and DC
- Professional foresters in the northeast must invest in forestry practices that adjust for a future limited land base and competing demands brought about by parcelization. - SAF, DC and EC
- Become more involved in forest recreation allowing more public access. - EC and DC

Challenge 3B: The wood market place is shifting with global resource economics playing an ever increasing role in forest product competition.

As Dr. Mila Alvarez said at the 2006 NESAF annual meeting "Shifts toward private ownership and entrepreneurship around the world since the 1970s are now challenging forest managers in New England".

Action Items to retain competitive equality for Northeastern forest products in a global market.

- *The American consumer must be educated on the benefit of forestry and the value of purchasing US made wood products.* - SAF
- *SAF must help identify and promote global initiatives.* - ALL

Challenge 3C: Fewer large timber-related firms are hiring professional foresters.

Action Items for promoting the hiring of credentialed foresters.

- Communicate to the resource employment market that professional foresters provide added value to land development teams. -SAF
- Communicate the value and benefit of forestry in communities. - SAF, EC and DC
- Become involved in local civic and governmental organizations that control and influence land development. - ALL
- Host employers at regional and local meetings to discuss issues and opportunities of forestry; e.g. career fairs. - EC and DC
- Promote understanding that competition, current and ethical, is an acceptable practice. - SAF, EC and DC
- Promote more employer involvement in SAF. - SAF
- Throughout a forester's education, stress the need to create effectiveness and relations with all stakeholders. - SAF and EC

Challenge 3D: There is an increasing effort to locally legislate forest management activities.

Action Items for being involved in the legislative process.

- Be strongly involved in integrating and solving forester/logger/landowner issues. - DC
- Involve and invite organizations of towns, assessors, Nature Conservancy, land trust, etc to local meetings and in return seek invites to their meetings. - EC and DC
- The consumer / public must be told the benefit of the forestry story. - ALL
- Explore ways to build coalitions with foresters being at the table, staying at the table, and recognized as a player when discussions concerning forestry and land development are on the agenda. - SAF and DC

ATTENDEES at "FUTURE CHALLENGES of FORESTERS" RETREAT

June 6, 2006

William Bentley, CT
Charles Bingaman, NH
Thomas Degnan, Jr., CT
Paul Dolan, RI
Michael Fleming, MA
George Frame, NH
Brett Guglielmo, NH
Charles Hersey, NH
Peter Howland, NH
Richard Johnston, NH

Anne Marie Kittredge, MA
Leo Laferriere, VT
Kenneth Laustsen, ME
Edward O'Leary, VT
Christopher Pryor, MA
Lawrence Rousseau, CT
James Savage, NY
Mervin Stevens, NH
Benjamin Urquhart, MA
Craig Vollmer, NY