



Society of American Foresters' 2004 Foresters' Fund Information Form

Date: June 14, 2004

Requesting SAF Unit: Maine Division

Partnering SAF Unit (if applicable):

Student Chapter: University of Maine, Orono

Other: New England SAF (State Society)

Amount of SAF funds requested:

Regular Grant (between \$500 - \$1,500): \$1,500

Special Grant (between \$1,501 - \$5,000): \$5,000

Project Title: Enhanced Policy Development and Division Communication

Expected Date of Project Completion: June 1, 2006

Project Manager (name, address, and contact information)

Kenneth M. Laustsen

Maine Forest Service

22 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333-0022

Phone (207) 287-3135 Fax (207) 287-8422

E-mail ken.laustsen@maine.gov

Certification of the state society executive committee:

I hereby certify that this proposal has been reviewed and approved by the executive committee of the New England SAF State Society.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

SAF Title: Chair

Submitting the Proposal:

Please submit the Foresters' Fund proposal to:

Society of American Foresters

Foresters' Fund

5400 Grosvenor Lane

Bethesda, MD 20814

Fax: (301) 897-3690

E-mail: murgial@safnet.org

A. Summary of Project:

- Retool Division forest policy function to communicate and deliver current positions.
- Creation of a member available, interactive forest policy development, and delivery service:
 - To communicate current issues;
 - Focus and mobilize on emerging forest policy;
 - Develop system for web based member discourse.

B. Objectives

- Professional foresters have consistently played an active role in forest policy (see SAF Strategic Plan 2004, Strategic Outcome #4: Engagement in Forest Policy), usually through the development of an approved position statement. These positions are not always widely disseminated to both members and other interested parties. With this proposal, members will collect, document, and post both out-dated and current MESAF forest policy positions, as part of the Division's website, promoting an opportunity for education of its members and enhancing the public understanding and perception of the role professional foresters provide in policy development.
- The ability to conduct forest policy activities is central to this grant proposal. The use of Internet technology as both a communication and information format will provide an expansion of member involvement in policy awareness, interaction, and development beyond a normal committee structure and functionality.
- The capability to involve and allow interaction of Division members in policy development stages can only result in a better final position, which represents consensus by involvement rather than by committee fiat.

C. Target Audience:

The proposal's primary audience is members of the MESAF Division. The in-kind involvement of a policy committee and the disbursement of budgeted funds must continually address member needs, whether they are expressed or not. The development of forest policy will occur with or without the involvement of professional foresters. The proposal is structured to assist additional Division members in proactive development, rather than reactive testimony.

D. Methods

- MESAF currently communicates on a periodic basis with over 70% of its members through e-mail. A new role for the existing forest policy committee is to use this communication vehicle to inform members of both out-dated and existing policy positions. The available expansion of the MESAF website to include an active link to a special forest policy section will provide a ready connection for members and the general public.
- Leadership of this proposal is assigned to the forest policy committee chair.
- The committee will coordinate the creation of the MESAF member-only web based communication forum. This forum will allow active policy questions and discussions to take place as a way to better reach consensus. This consensus building can be set-up on a scheduled basis where all members are e-mailed that a specific policy discussion and development will take place. Member input is invited through instant messaging and web-conferencing technology.
- Providing these methods will require a major update and enhancement of our current website and communication process. The special grant request is dedicated to contracting for the needed services to provide this capability, particularly a member-only access portal.

E. Evaluation

The functionality and response to the general policy section where information and existing positions are available can be easily monitored through site hit counts. A similar counting process of involved members responding to a chat room discussion provides the best accounting of interest and representation.

F. Recognition

In correspondence or discussions with the public or media, make the point that MESAF has an active web-based policy section available for their perusal, and these policies were developed by in-state and local community members, who also just happen to be professional foresters.

G. Community Service

Maine professional foresters and SAF members are already involved in local and community based policy development through their service on planning boards, school boards, and other resource committees. Their ability to become more involved in policy development at multiple levels will serve not only to enhance their profession, but also their community receives benefits from these added skills.

H. Member Involvement

Member involvement in the Maine Division Forest Policy Committee has ebbed and flowed depending upon the issue, from just a Chair to a very active committee of 50 trying to deal with Forest Practices in the 1980's to changes in the licensing of professional foresters and state referendum in the 1990's. The intent of this grant is to provide a different forum for general participation in Maine's forest policy and specific involvement in the Division's development of a policy position. At the worst, it will provide a new communication venue for the existing forest policy committee (6 members) to interact and more readily address new evolving issues. At best, it will allow the involvement of Maine's 300+ SAF members in a general discourse and a new consensus building policy process.

I. Communications Plan

Existing sources are the *News Quarterly*, the NESAF publication, which provides division level news to all members on a regular, if somewhat dated basis and the Maine Division Chair mailing of 2 member letters on an annual basis. Increasingly the Maine Division has been using e-mail, contacting 70% of its members with the Chair's letter, division meeting agendas and registration information, available lecture series at the University of Maine, and other meeting/workshops of general interest. This proposal is just another expansion of those ongoing internal communication efforts with a focus on forest policy. Each member will decide on how best they prefer to receive SAF information.

MESAF will not disenfranchise members who do not have e-mail, offering to mail copies and allow a suitable time for a non-electronic response. This proposal provides every member with another active link to receive timely information that may be of interest to him or her.

Attracting external communications will be a harder sell. The Forest Policy and Communication Committees will offer visits to editorial boards of in-state newspapers, radio and TV stations. At these visits, a booklet of current policy positions will be distributed. Consistent listing of and reference to our website and its forest policy section will attract additional media use and attention.



Society of American Foresters' 2004 Foresters' Fund Budget Worksheet

J. Budget

Please submit this worksheet with your Foresters' Fund grant proposal.

Category	Total Budget	Foresters' Fund Grant Request
Contracted services for Website Development and Enhancement	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
Forest Policy Booklet - Printing and Distribution Expenses	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500
In-Kind Professional Services	\$ 5,000	
Operating Expenses (Phone, Mail, Copy Services, E-mail)	\$ 1,500	
TOTAL:	\$13,000	\$ 6,500

Please list **all** cosponsors, foundations, or other **confirmed** sources of funds or in-kind support for this proposal (including SAF unit funds):

1. **New England State Society SAF (In-Kind)** - The state society had a first option on the development of this funding proposal. At the Business meeting in March, members decided to postpone the grant development and action. NESAF is still very interested in its outcome, mostly as a way to piggyback its success to NESAF and its other Divisions and Chapters.
2. **University of Maine, Student Chapter (In-Kind)** – The student chapter will search out and provide policy based hyper-links and assist in the collation and transcription of policy information and positions into *html* and *pdf* files for posting on the MESAF website.

If applicable, please list other funders considering this proposal:

1. _____

K. Needs Statement

If the Maine Division waits until the next "HOT" issue arrives, a more effective forest policy position development process and dissemination will not be available in a timely enough manner to effectively address that topic.

We need to take the baby steps of getting this set-up and running, initially as more of an expanded communication effort to the public and media, and then, when needed as a more reactive and timely response to a policy resource issue.

L. Schedule & Timetable

- The \$5,000 special grant request can be disbursed as soon as the selection of a suitable website developer can be decided upon by the Maine Division Executive Committee, and it is anticipated that a completion of this phase would be by year-end 2004.
- Concurrently with this contracted effort, the Policy and Communication Committees and the UMO Student Chapter will be reviewing historic files and creating a timeline folder of Division position statements, both out-dated and current for posting to the new Forest Policy section on the website.
- By January 2005, the two Division committees (Policy and Communications) would be able to request editorial board visits to outline and provide information on the availability of resource positions by its professional foresters. This would be a very timely juncture given that the Maine Legislature also begins its long session in January.
- The interest and level of involvement by additional Maine SAF members in new policy issues will be very dependent on what, when and where the next hot topic arises. It is anticipated that this portion of the proposal play out over the remainder of a 2-year period, with completion of the combined grant proposal scheduled to be June 2006.

M. Adaptability

The tools to build this new policy development and communication process are available, it requires a concerted effort by Maine Division members (professional and student) and some timely funds to make it happen. The future adaptation by other state societies or divisions would be the sincerest form of flattery, and we would be very willing to share our trials and tribulations, preferably in person, but also through our new website with its Forest Policy Library and Communication Center.