

Redesigning State and Private Forestry

In 2008, the U.S. Forest Service will begin implementing a “Redesigned” State and Private Forestry (S&PF) program. The S&PF Redesign effort was conceived in response to the combined impacts of increasing pressures on our nation’s forests and decreasing S&PF resources and funds. Significant threats to forests, such as insect and disease infestations, catastrophic fire, and the loss of critical forested landscapes to development, coupled with the pressure placed on local economies by the increasingly global nature of the forest products industry, point to the need for more progressive strategies for conserving our nation’s forest resources.

Over the past two years, the U.S. Forest Service has been working closely with the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) to:

1. Examine the current conditions and trends affecting forest lands,
2. Review existing S&PF programs to determine how to best address threats to our forests, and
3. Develop a strategy, including guiding principles and components of change, for delivering a relevant and meaningful set of S&PF programs, skills and opportunities.

The new Redesign approach will focus on three consensus-based S&PF National Themes:

- Conserve working forest landscapes,
- Protect forests from harm, and
- Enhance public benefits from trees and forests.

“The S&PF Redesign offers State Foresters and their partners a tremendous opportunity to work together in identifying the highest priority landscapes in their states and regions and develop focused strategies for addressing the forest resource challenges on those landscapes,” says E. Austin Short, III, State Forester of Delaware and President of NASF.

National and state resource assessments will be used to develop competitive proposals for S&PF funds; those projects that receive S&PF dollars will respond directly to the National Themes as well as annual national direction developed by the U.S. Forest Service. The amount of S&PF funds competitively awarded will gradually increase over the next several years, beginning with 15% in 2008.

The Redesigned S&PF will also include an emphasis on transitioning to a more flexible and adaptive organization and will examine opportunities to integrate and maximize current programs with other, similar federal forestry programs.

“Implementing the S&PF Redesign will enable us to apply our increasingly limited resources in a more targeted and meaningful way—improving our ability to shape and influence forest land use in a way that maximizes public benefits and addresses nationally significant priorities,” says Jim Hubbard, Forest Service Deputy Chief for S&PF.

The national S&PF office will report annually to Congress and partners on the progress of the Redesigned S&PF. New emphasis will be placed on improving our collective ability to demonstrate and communicate accomplishments.

For more information on the S&PF Redesign effort, please contact Paige Lewis (CO State Forest Service, pagie.lewis@colostate.edu) or Melissa Zaksek (Forest Service, mzaksek@fs.fed.us).

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