

**PART 2**

**STATEWIDE FOREST RESOURCE STRATEGY**

## **SECTION 1. Opportunities Identified in the Assessment**

The following list summarizes many of the opportunities identified during the assessment process. Opportunities/action steps are also mentioned in other portions of this document. Opportunities and strategies are not meant to be exclusive of one another, rather they are meant to complement each other.

### **Issues identified from Criterion 1-7**

#### **Criterion 1. Conservation of Biological Diversity**

##### **Indicator 2: Forest type, size class, age class, and successional stage;**

##### **Opportunities exist:**

- To propagate more of an ecosystem balance within the forestlands of Connecticut by promoting size and age diversity within forests, especially in regards to maintaining early successional habitats.

##### **Indicator 3: Extent of forestland conversion, fragmentation, and parcelization;**

##### **Opportunities exist:**

- To determine the exact size distribution and characteristics of these tracts.
- To education landowners in regards to this issue.
- Additional tax incentives for land owners to retain forest land.
- Payments to land owners for ecological services provided.
- Provide more technical assistance to on the ground forestry.

##### **Indicator 4: Status of forest/woodland communities and associated species of concern.**

##### **Opportunities exist:**

- To improve the quality of information on distribution and abundance of various species, especially in regards to invertebrates and rare species.
- To further refine efforts to identify forest associated species needs.
- Increase active management for young forest habitats.

#### **Criterion 2. Maintenance of Productive Capacity of Forest Ecosystems**

##### **Indicator 6. Annual removal of merchantable wood volume compared with net growth;**

##### **Opportunities exist:**

- To track other industries often associated with timber removals.
- To track sustainability through better growth and removal data regarding the timber resources of the state.
- Help private land owners realize the value of their forests.
- Work to find ways to make forests an attractive investment.

### **Criterion 3. Maintaining Forest Ecosystem Health and Vitality**

#### **Indicator 7. Area of forest land affected by potentially damaging agents;**

##### **Opportunities exist:**

- To expand responsible hunting to stabilize and reduce an excessive deer population.
- Minimize additional conversion of forest to conventional subdivisions.
- To combat invasive plant species through research, planning, and earmarked funding.
- Utilize alternative techniques to control invasives.

### **Criterion 4. Conservation and Maintenance of Soil and Water Resources**

#### **Indicator 8. Soil quality on forestland**

##### **Opportunities exist:**

- To work with NRSC to develop forest soil indicators for Connecticut.

#### **Indicator 9. Forested riparian areas**

##### **Opportunities exist:**

- Expand CLEAR riparian corridor study, and apply analysis to whole state.

#### **Indicator 10: Water quality in forested areas**

##### **Opportunities exist:**

- To determine information regarding the value of forest and riparian areas, and the benefits derived by the public sector not currently included in water quality reports.
- Determine total stream miles impaired on a state level.
- Establishment of standardized format for watershed plans.
- Identify information needs.
- Improve access to data.

### **Criterion 5. Maintenance of Forest Contribution to Global Carbon Cycles**

#### **Indicator 11: Forest ecosystem biomass and forest carbon pools**

##### **Opportunities exist:**

- To educate and encourage landowners on the total values associated with forestland that, if successful, will maintain the major pools of forest carbon in the State.
- To encourage management of species and associated timber types that provides optimum carbon storage.
- Utilize active forest management to facilitate improved capacity for carbon sequestration and storage.

### **Criterion 6. Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-Term Multiple Socioeconomic Benefits to Meet the Needs of Societies**

#### **Indicator 13. Outdoor recreational participation and facilities**

##### **Opportunities exist:**

- To list recreational opportunities in town plans such as the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail system.
- To actively support planning and zoning regulations that provide protection for trails on private property.

- To pass ATV legislation.

**Indicator 15. Forest ownership, land use, and specially designated areas**

**Opportunities exist:**

- To increase pace of the inventory of all open space parcels in the State (Protected Open Space Mapping (POSM) Project.)
- To increase efforts to assist in private lands forestland protection.
- Advocating for more financial allocations for open space land acquisitions.
- To catalogue all DEP conservation easements.
- Connect landowners with appropriate cost share programs when applicable.

**Indicator 16. Employment and wages in forest related sectors**

**Opportunities exist:**

- Seek higher levels of legislative appropriations for DEP.
- Develop and nurture outside constituency support.
- Improve interdivisional cross training.

**Criterion 7. Legal, Institutional, and Economic Framework for Forest Conservation and Sustainable Management**

**Indicator 18. Forest-related planning, assessment, policy, and law**

**Opportunities exist:**

- To complete management plans for each State Forest management unit.
- To evaluate ways of determining urban forestry priority areas within the State.
- To increase funding for enhanced forest surveys to ensure long-term data input.
- To encourage Northeast Master Logger Certification.
- To create or adopt Biomass Harvesting Guidelines.
- Better engage community members in all aspects of urban forestry.
- Expand capacity to address emerging issues and opportunities to support healthy sustainable communities.
- Support research that monitors and integrates biophysical, social and economic attributes of urban forestry.
- Identify and focus urban forestry efforts in municipalities that are not active or that are early in the process.
- Increase involvement with other programs in the state that seek similar goals regarding the urban environment.
- Increase use of newer technologies to analyze and monitor urban conditions and accomplishments.
- Coordinate efforts with other forest related plans when possible.
- Strengthen environmental regulations to better protect forest resources.

## **Issues identified from Issue Statements 1-9 (Not covered already in Criterion 1-7)**

### **Issue 3. Protecting Private Forest Lands: Challenges and Opportunities Facing Private Forest Landowners**

#### **Opportunities exist:**

- Develop potential revenue sources for forest landowners.
- Inform landowners about technical, educational and financial advice available.
- Provide communities with resources and information to guide conservation decisions.

### **Issue 4. Providing for Forest Based Recreational Opportunities**

#### **Opportunities exist:**

- To explore the dedicated use of user/registration/permit fees to be returned to associated recreational facilities.
- As part of the process for determining policies and budgets, and to better understand the needs of the public, there should be a continuing effort to engage recreational organizations for input.
- Raise awareness of recreational facilities available to the public.
- Inform landowners with liability concerns about the Recreation Use Law.
- Increase access (parking, emergency, Universal).
- Improved trail planning and maintenance.
- Address ATV/ORV concerns.
- Create an organization to represent all recreation users in Connecticut.
- Increase staffing and funding for public recreation facility maintenance.

### **Issue 5. Supporting a Sustainable Forest Based Economy**

#### **Opportunities exist:**

- Support nontraditional income sources from forests.
- Resolve regulation issues related with Forest Practices Act.
- Provide markets for low grade materials.
- Increase DoF staff to support forestry programs implementation.

### **Issue 6. Fostering Public Awareness and Support of Forests**

#### **Opportunities exist:**

- To create a manual on the basics of forestry that would be widely available to anyone who wants or needs it.
- To bring conservation groups together more often to ensure that the educational information they distribute provides a more clear and consistent message. [Create information dissemination process, i.e. local cable, CPTV, Web, List-serves, public service announcement announcing “Save the Forest” Campaign, mail a plan to each forest owner in the state of Connecticut.]
- Encourage programs that engage children with nature.
- Increase funding and opportunities for environmental education programs.

### **Issue 7. Advocating and Implementing Effective Forest Planning and Policy**

#### **Opportunities exist:**

- To lower the acreage requirement for PA490 to encourage additional protection of forest lands. Any minimum acreage requirement needs to allow for economic feasibility for land management activities.
- Improve on regional planning efforts between towns.
- Improve resources to protect working forestlands as open space.

### **Issue 8. Importance of Ongoing Forest Research**

#### **Opportunities exist:**

- Increase research (biological, social and communications).
- Increase dissemination efforts of research.

### **Issue 9. Limits and Threats to Urban Forestry in Connecticut**

#### **Opportunities exist:**

- To better utilize interested volunteers. Volunteer input is critical. Often, volunteer and volunteer groups serve to initiate and sustain urban forestry efforts in communities.

Throughout this Assessment and Strategy Process the Connecticut DOF along with its numerous partners and constituents have addressed the various needs and resources required to meet the many missions, goals and visions listed. There is a common theme among the public agencies and private conservation groups that emerges. In order to implement this assessment additional human resources are needed at the public agencies. Documentation is offered on the drastic reduction in the staffing levels of the Division. This can only change with a multi faceted approach. Additional support and coordination for conservation programs needs to be garnered from many sectors of the state. This support and coordination needs to come from within the Department of Environmental Protection, from other state agencies (CAES, Agriculture, Extension), from NGOs (Audubon, TNC), TIMPRO, Farm Bureau, and the general public.

## **SECTION 2. Visions for the Future**<sup>13</sup>

### **Connecticut Roundtable Process and Strategy Development**

Connecticut held a series of seven Forest Roundtables between November 2009 and March 2010 to provide the necessary public input for this plan. Over 260 individuals participated in one or more of these events. The roundtable process developed visions, principles, and action steps with strong agreement among many kinds of stakeholders of forests of the state.

The tables of 6 to 8 people were the basic element of each roundtable. They began their dialogues with the vision statements from the previous roundtable. When their discussion developed a sense of agreement, they moved on. When they felt ambiguity or disagreement with a vision, they worked on modifications until the table was comfortable and in agreement. The tables interacted as a whole from time to time through the process, sharing progress and observations with one another. The largest participant group –168 people – was at the November 24, 2009, Forest Forum, which lasted one hour. The local and statewide roundtables were daylong processes. The groups varied from 26 to 42 participants at the local roundtables, and 75 people attended the statewide roundtable on March 16, 2010.

The visions are from 2003 results for the Statewide Forest Resource Plan and recent work by the Connecticut Urban Forestry Council. Several iterations and revisions led to the 10 visions presented in this report. Principles and action steps emerged to guide each vision toward the desired future.

The results also will guide the Connecticut Forest Conservation and Research Forum, The Connecticut Forestlands Council, and several non-profit organizations concerned with the future of the state's forestlands and advocates for improved policies and practices.

Connecticut is one of the most heavily forested states in America. Our forests clean our air and water, shelter our wildlife, sequester carbon, contribute tens of millions of dollars to our economy, and add immeasurably to the quality of our everyday lives. Yet every day, our forests are under threat. Invasive insects and diseases and our dense and growing human population continue to stress our forests in unprecedented ways. Conserving a healthy forest for future generations will require creating public awareness, identifying solutions to our problems and taking action.

The Connecticut Forest Roundtable process began November 24, 2009, at the 5<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Forest Conservation and Research Forum. Invitations went out to various local and regional stakeholder groups, NGO's and federal land managers. Building on 8 visions developed for the 2004-2013 Connecticut Statewide Forest Resource Plan and an urban forestry vision developed by the Connecticut Urban Forestry Council, participants began in small, interactive groups to:

- Create agreed-upon visions for the future of our forest resources;
- Identify new and innovative ways to make the visions into realities; and
- Develop new relationships and strengthen existing partnerships to get the job done.

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<sup>13</sup> Information on the roundtable process and results were taken directly from William Bentley's "Connecticut Forest Roundtable Report: Input From Connecticut's Forest Stakeholders". This report, in its entirety can be accessed on the DEP Forestry webpage at [www.ct.gov/dep/forestry](http://www.ct.gov/dep/forestry).

Four local Forest Roundtables during December through February 2010 led to the Statewide Forest Roundtable on March 16, 2010. The results include strong agreement on 10 visions for the future of Connecticut's forests. The principles and action steps for each vision will help guide management and policy actions toward the desired future.

The visions and principles will help achieve three broad purposes:

**Conserve Working Forest Lands** – Conserve and manage working forest landscapes for multiple values and uses, especially in legacy areas, some of which cross state lines with our neighbors – NY, MA, and RI.

**Protect Forests from Harm** –Protect forests from threats, including catastrophic storms, flooding, insect or disease outbreak, & invasive species.

**Enhance Public Benefits from Trees and Forests** – Enhance air and water quality, soil conservation, biological diversity, carbon storage, recreation, forest products, production of renewable energy, & wildlife. Public benefits drive many of the draft principles.

***Essential public benefits from forests include:***

Climate moderation  
Water quality and quantity  
Air quality  
Biodiversity  
Forest products  
Aesthetics & scenic vistas  
Scientific research  
Education  
Recreation  
And other forest-based values

The products of the Forest Roundtables are visions, principles, and action steps. **Visions** are simple statements of our desired future forest in 5 to 20 years. They are a stretch but realistic goals for our forest policies and management activities. **Principles** are statements about how we think the world works; they are in a sense working hypotheses about the bigger world in which Connecticut forest problems exist. Principles guide our actions to reach our visions. As we learn from experience and others, our knowledge and understanding will lead to improved principles. **Action steps** are specific things identified organizations or groups can do now. Monitoring the implementation of action steps is an important way of really working toward the visions.

The visions, principles, and action steps are inputs to three policy efforts. First, they provide stakeholder input to the 2010 Connecticut Forest Assessment and Strategy. Second, they give direction to the 2010 Forest Forum and efforts to work with many partners in Connecticut, in our neighbor states of New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and in the rest of New England to promote the three broad purposes. Third, the results will guide the Connecticut Forestlands Council as it reconsiders its role in state forestry for the coming five years.

Over 260 individuals participated in the seven Forest Roundtables and some people attended two or three events. Their involvement and their statements testify to their enthusiasm for Connecticut's trees and forests, as well as their concerns about forces that lead to reduced area of working forests, increased harm from development and invasives, and decreased public benefits from forests.

The participants expressed their delight with Connecticut's forests, and their worries about the future. The visions and principles they developed are their current thoughts on how to address their concerns and continue to have the many benefits that forests provide.

## The Roundtable Process

The Roundtable process used in Connecticut follows the broad patterns of the 1996 Seventh American Forest Congress. Dialogues at the tables lead to three possible kinds of agreements or disagreements:

- ◆ Green – I agree with the statement
- ◆ Yellow – I am not sure/I feel ambiguous about the statement
- ◆ Red – I disagree with the wording or the values in the vision

Each table discussed:

- ◆ *Visions and Principles: Where do we have high levels of agreement?*
- ◆ *Can we improve the statements where we have ambiguity or disagreement?*

The moderator interrupted table discussions periodically to share results and discussion points and to ascertain levels of agreement. Most of the assessment of consensus was verbal or by show of hands, but use of green, yellow and red dots on statewide roundtable made the levels of agreement quite vivid and helped tables' focus on visions and principles where further dialogue had high payoffs.

The process led to consensus, and the results are not the outcomes of “votes” in the sense observed on town committees or state commissions. Because of repeated conversations and considerable careful listening by the participants and the moderators, we can be reasonably sure that the visions are statements upon which there is general agreement.

After the Forum Roundtable in November and after the statewide Roundtable, the moderator circulated draft results to facilitators and key leaders at the sessions to make sure interpretation of their notes were correct.

The over 260 individuals who participated in one or more of the Forest Roundtables came from all parts of the state. Many have work connected to forests or natural resources, but more often than not the participants came to a roundtable as part of their work and interests in one or more voluntary organizations. There are unavoidable biases in the roundtable process because some stakeholders simply cannot get the time to spend a day away from work or family. Members of the Connecticut Urban Forestry Council Urban represented urban perspectives well, but few participants live in one of Connecticut's major cities.

## Connecticut's Forest Vision Statements

The state-level results include 10 visions with solid agreement at the end of the Statewide Forest Roundtable on March 16, 2010. All the vision statements are in the future tense with the implied time frame of 5 to 20 years – not tomorrow, but not an indefinite future either. Therefore, the common phrase for all visions is, *In the future...*

**In the future,**

- 1. The fact that all forests provide important public benefits will guide Connecticut's forest and land use policies.**
- 2. Connecticut will increase the amount of forest protected from development following priority criteria based on core forest areas, forest legacy potential, and vulnerability.**
- 3. Connecticut's forests will contain healthy and sustainable populations of native plants and animals.**
- 4. Public agencies will manage Connecticut's public forestlands to enhance public benefits.**
- 5. Policies will fully support and encourage private forest owners that have environmentally, socially, and economically balanced stewardship goals.**
- 6. The people of Connecticut will understand and value the urban forests as essential parts of healthy urban ecosystems.**
- 7. Connecticut's forests will support a broad spectrum of appropriate recreational activities that attract users to Connecticut's forests.**
- 8. Connecticut will use its forests to stimulate learning about nature and ecology and to demonstrate various sustainable forest management strategies.**
- 9. Connecticut's forests will support a viable forest products industry that provides marketable products from renewable and diverse forest resources.**
- 10. Management of Connecticut's forests will use the best available scientific information and the best available data as the basis for sound conservation and management decisions.**

# Complete Set of Agreed-Upon Vision, Principles, and Action Steps

The vision statements evolved from the visions created in 2003-04 with stakeholder input to the Connecticut Statewide Forest Resource Plan 2004-2013 (which is still available on the DEP Forestry Division web pages). This Report's Appendix provides the starting point and the evolution of visions over the seven Forest Roundtables from November 2009 to March 2010.

## **1. In the future, the fact that all forests provide important public benefits will guide Connecticut's forest and land use policies.**

### **Principles:**

- a) All forests – urban, suburban, and rural – provide some combination of important public benefits that have real value, but the benefits often do not pass through the marketplace or have prices.
- b) Connecticut policies affecting forests will use the best available scientific research and information in a collaborative manner.
- c) Citizen understanding of the important benefits provided by Connecticut's forests requires more education.
- d) Connecticut legislators will recognize that ensuring a future supply of these important benefits requires incentives for those who provide them (e.g., PA 490).

### **Action steps to accomplish this vision**

- a) Connecticut policies and programs will promote active forest management to maintain a diversity of habitats.
- b) DEP Forestry, CFPFA, and other non-profit organizations will help coordinate and collaborate with public and private organizations and neighboring states.

## **1. Connecticut will increase the amount of forest protected from development, following priority criteria based on core forest areas, forest legacy potential, and vulnerability.**

### **Principles:**

- a) In the future, Connecticut forestlands will cover about 60% of the state's land area; as much as a third or more of the forest area will be more than 300 feet from non-forested areas (the purpose of such forest integrity needs CFC member review in 2010-2011 and a specific target set).
- b) Educational programs are necessary to develop public understanding and support for this vision.

### **Action steps to accomplish this vision:**

- a) The Connecticut legislature will pass a law to insure conversion of the approximately 14,000 acres of forestland under the "10 Mill" law to property tax rates under PA 490, or write a new law that strongly encourages continuation as open space and working forests.
- b) DEP will develop a Connecticut Forest Land Conservation program to aid in achieving this vision in cooperation with public and private programs such as local land trusts, the USDA Forest Service Forest Legacy Program, and The Nature Conservancy.
- c) All organizations concerned with forestlands will increase public awareness of opportunities to protect forestlands, emphasizing public benefits; the state may need a *Working Forests Initiative* (similar to Connecticut Farmland Preservation).

- d) CUFC will increase public awareness of opportunities to protect urban forestlands and urban trees, emphasizing public benefits.
- e) CFPA and land trusts will consider advocating for Connecticut income tax deductions for gifts of land or below-value sale of conservation easements that will preclude development of private forestlands.
- f) DEP Forestry will try to use federal funds to support Forest Legacy Program meetings of collaborators who are working with state and federal agencies to advise and implement strategies.
- g) Reverse the fragmentation process through identification and protection of properties that will create core forests or expand existing core forests.

## **2. In the future, Connecticut's forests will contain healthy and sustainable populations of native plants and animals.**

### **Principles:**

- a) A diversity of habitats is necessary to maintain a diversity of wildlife and native plants, so Connecticut landowners should manage forests and other open spaces for a mix of land uses from grasslands to shrublands to mature forest stands.
- b) Prompt control of alien invasive species will require public and/or private funds, given that removal often is very expensive.

### **Action steps to accomplish this vision**

- a) DEP and non-profit organizations will encourage population reduction in locally over-abundant species that damage ecosystems, such as native white-tailed deer; this may require new legal frameworks to permit reduction of deer populations on lands that prohibit hunting; e.g., Goodwin State Forest.
- b) CFPA, UConn Cooperative Extension System, and other organizations will provide the education needed in schools and adult workshops so that Connecticut citizens understand the linkages between ecological diversity and plant and animal populations.
- c) CFC, UConn, Yale F&ES, and non-profits will encourage the natural resource professional and scientific communities to monitor species populations; where decline or disappearances occur, and they will promote efforts to restore habitats and return the species to its previous position in the overall environment.
- d) Use Garden Clubs and non-profit organizations with expertise to educate garden centers regarding sale of non-invasive plants.

## **3. In the future, public agencies will manage Connecticut's public forestlands to enhance public benefits.**

### **Principles:**

- a) State-owned lands utilize the best, most current biological, physical, and social science information to make informed decisions.
- b) Municipally owned forestlands also will utilize the best science, but the forest management goals may be quite different from those for state forests and other forested state lands (e.g., parks, wildlife refuges).
- c) Coordination among DEP, DOT, utilities, and towns will improve management of the forest strips and corridors.

**Action steps to accomplish this vision:**

- a) The State Legislature will create a funding mechanism to ensure that revenues generated from state-owned forests be used for sustainable management of those lands.
- b) Local education programs will enhance the ability of municipal and state agencies to manage public forestlands for public benefits.
- c) Municipal conservation planning efforts will identify key properties for conservation.

**4. In the future, policies will fully support and encourage private forest owners that have environmentally, socially, and economically balanced stewardship goals.**

**Principles:**

- a) Public and Private programs will maximize (1) the area (acres) and (2) the number of parcels on which landowner goals and conservation of public benefit are aligned.

**Action steps to accomplish this vision:**

- a) Create effective, appropriately funded public/private support systems addressing education, research, consultation/advice, compensation/incentives, and communications.
- b) Local land management regulators will promote, and extension foresters, service foresters, and forestry consultants will encourage, forest owners, foresters, and forest harvesters to use Best Management Practices in all field operations.

**5. In the future, the people of Connecticut understand and value urban forests as essential parts of healthy urban ecosystems.**

**Principles:**

- a) Urban forests are composed of the trees where we live and work—in public and private ownership—including all the trees: along our streets and highways; in parks and public spaces; around our schools; in our yards; on residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, retail; and recreational properties of all types; and in green and open spaces.
- b) Urban forests exist in all our communities—urban, suburban, and rural—and are not limited to a few large cities.
- c) Healthy forest ecosystems are necessary to the function of all landscapes.
- d) Urban forest management is a complex undertaking that involves knowledge of trees, the personal and spiritual needs of people, and the difficulties and opportunities within the urban environment; professionals who manage urban forests will also need to be versatile, with a skill set that draws upon a range of disciplines.

**Action steps to accomplish this vision:**

- a) CUFC will work to increase public involvement in local urban forestry projects because community support is critical to the future of the urban forest.
- b) Municipalities, designers, architects, engineers, and urban foresters will explore and further develop ways by which urban trees will have a direct role in improving the functioning of the built environment; examples include cleaning the air, reducing storm water runoff, and reducing energy consumption.

## **6. In the future, Connecticut's forests will support a broad spectrum of appropriate recreational activities that attract users to Connecticut's forests.**

### **Principles:**

- a) Outdoor recreation is the single most common reason why people are in the forest and develop an appreciation of its many values.
- b) Recreation activities and sites provide excellent opportunities for education about forest management
- c) Outdoor recreation in forests can benefit state tourism aspects and increase revenue from tourist activities.

### **Action steps to accomplish this vision:**

- a) Educate users in the values and manners of multi-use recreation areas; where multi-use is not possible, there may be a need for dedicated areas that separate incompatible activities.
- b) Improve parking for cars and recreation trailers; improve trail signage, picnicking and camping areas, and other facilities that will encourage outdoor recreation.
- c) The Legislature should complete a review of proposed increases in fees using benefit/cost analysis that considers (1) impact on total revenues and use levels, (2) impact on users in lower income levels, and (3) impact of higher fees on other state policy goals, such as reducing damage to forest from high deer populations.
- d) Encourage more volunteer efforts to improve and maintain recreation facilities.
- e) CFPA, other trail organizations, land trusts, and towns will work together to protect Connecticut's Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails and other trail systems in the state.
- f) State and local organizations will provide more and better internet links regarding trails and other forest recreation opportunities.
- g) Require licenses and control recreation activities that pose safety hazards and potential nuisance problems.
- h) Promote outdoor recreation as part of *No Child Left Inside*.
- i) Allocate funding for activities, such as off-road vehicle use, currently prohibited in many locations. Specific areas would be designated that alleviate reasons for prior prohibitions. Design, control, maintenance, and cost issues will need resolution.
- j) Improve opportunities for willing private landowners to provide areas for some or all forest-based recreation activities.
- k) Towns and State should appropriate adequate funds to enforce restrictions on activities, licenses, etc., because unenforced laws encourage disregard for laws and leave people unprotected.

## **8. In the future, Connecticut will use its forests to stimulate learning about nature and ecology and to demonstrate various sustainable forest management strategies.**

### **Principles:**

- a) Increase the emphasis on nature and ecology in schools because education is integral to the success and sustainability of healthy forest ecosystems.

- b) Adults learn more rapidly and thoroughly about forests through experiential education focused on areas of specific interest to them (e.g., forest management, recreation, urban environment, etc.)

**Action steps to accomplish this vision:**

- a) Extension forestry, service forestry, and local organizations will use existing programs, such as Coverts and Goodwin Forest Outreach, as excellent templates for statewide replication to address adult education needs for forest landowners.
- b) CFPA, DEP, and other organizations will work with various stakeholders to write Connecticut's Environmental Literacy Plan (ELP) and insure that the Connecticut ELP addresses the public benefits of Connecticut forests as part of its content (Note – CT can receive up to \$1 million for *No Child Left Inside* funding, but only if state ELP is in place).
- c) CFPA and partners will work with the Connecticut State Department of Education during the next revision of the state's frameworks (standards) to include ecology of forests, wildlife, and aquatic systems in various disciplines (science, social studies, math, and language arts).
- d) CUFC, CFPA, and others will help connect the tools, resources, and funding to teach about urban forestry and the tools to manage urban trees and forests.
- e) CFC and member organizations will develop a plan and strategy of education for the Media, including web-based outlets like Facebook.
- f) DEP Forestry, CFC, CFPA, and educational organizations will collaborate with initiatives in education, communication, and efforts to realize the other nine forest visions. They will develop comprehensive information about Connecticut forests that is easy for the public to access and understand.

**9. In the future, Connecticut's forests will support a viable forest products industry that provides marketable products from renewable and diverse forest resources.**

**Principles:**

- a) A viable forest industry is essential to sustainable management of forests.
- b) Both timber and non-timber forest products comprise a viable forest economy.

**Action steps to accomplish this vision:**

- a) CFPA and its partners will distribute the *Notification of Timber Harvest* forms developed by the Ad Hoc Forest Regulation Committee to all Connecticut towns with a recommendation to use it instead of the odd mix of local application forms currently observed.
- b) TimPro, its partners, and individuals will develop stronger DEP and legislative support for public policies favorable to the industry and promote general initiatives to make Connecticut laws and regulations both simpler and more efficient for the industry.
- c) TimPro and other associations will advertise and promote the markets for Connecticut grown wood and fiber. This will include expanding the branding of Connecticut Grown crops and products to include Connecticut's forest resources.
- d) CFC and member organizations will promote education to increase awareness and understanding of the economic values forests provide.
- e) State legislation will support Federal Fair Trade laws to eliminate illegally harvested forest products in imported materials and require chain of custody certification on processed goods.

- f) TimPro and other organizations will argue to bring Connecticut truck weight limits into conformance with PA, NY, MA, and RI.
- g) TimPro will promote a viable forest products industry that contributes to Connecticut's economy.
- h) Obtain State (and local) Economic Development Commission support for the Connecticut forest products industry.

**10. Management of Connecticut's forests will use the best available scientific information and the best available data as the basis for sound conservation and management decisions.**

**Principles:**

- a) Science enables our understanding of forests and their dynamics; it provides a basis for predicting responses of forests to management, and responses by people to changes in their forests.
- b) Adaptive management will be the standard practice with data-driven results providing feedback to improve ongoing management decisions.
- c) Research priorities will be the result of an ongoing dialogue among scientists, forest owners and managers, and outreach specialists.

**Action steps to accomplish this vision:**

- a) Increase state funding for forest research by the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station and University of Connecticut and other entities; advocate increased federal competitive grants for forestry research from USDA Forest Service, DOE, and NSF that are open to all state research organizations concerned with forests.
- b) Increase state funding for extension and service forestry programs and advocate for increased federal support. Working forests are the least expensive way to maintain open space and produce public benefits from forestlands (e.g., clean water, scenery, wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, etc.)
- c) Outreach specialists will provide mechanisms to disseminate research findings to land managers and interested parties in ways that they can understand and use.
- d) Develop training programs to improve the collaborative dialogue among practicing foresters, forest landowners, and information service providers; hold regular meetings and field tours that bring these groups together for dialogue and planning.

## Common Threads among Principles and Action Steps

Several principles are applicable across many visions and received strong levels of agreement. These principles both set the tone of common ground among several interests and pave the way toward improved policies and on-the-ground practices. Progress in both rural and urban areas will highlight the importance of forests and trees to Connecticut citizens and help gain support for improved policies and management in the future.

- All forests – urban, suburban, and rural – provide some combination of important public benefits that have real value; forest benefit values often do not have prices or appear in marketplace transactions.
- Urban forests are composed of the trees where we live and work—in public and private ownership—including all the trees: along our streets and highways; in parks and public spaces; around our schools; in our yards; on residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, retail; and recreational properties of all types; and in green and open spaces.
- Private forest owners provide the vast majority of public benefits without compensation, except for reduced property taxes for open space values (i.e., PA 490) and some support services (e.g., extension and service forestry programs).
- A diversity of habitats is necessary to maintain a diversity of wildlife and native plants, so Connecticut landowners are encouraged to manage forests and other open spaces for a mix of land uses from grasslands to shrublands to mature forest stands.
- Urban forests exist in all our communities—urban, suburban, and rural—and are not limited to a few large cities.
- Healthy forest ecosystems are necessary to the function of all landscapes.
- Connecticut’s State Forests will continue to serve as demonstration areas for sound forest management, as was one of the original purposes when Connecticut established State Forests in the early 1900s.
- K-12 and adult education will help Connecticut citizens understand the linkages between ecological diversity and plant and animal populations.

Progress comes from actions successfully implemented, not just encouraging words. Some steps that can be taken in the near term will set the stage for more creative and bold thinking over the coming few years. The following are steps that garnered strong agreement and would, if implemented quickly and with effective follow up, set the stage for statewide and regional actions to conserve working forests, protect forests from harm, and enhance the public benefits flowing from forestlands.

- CFPA and its partners will distribute the *Notification of Timber Harvest* forms developed by the Ad Hoc Forest Regulation Committee to all Connecticut towns with a recommendation to use it instead of the mix of local application forms currently in use.
- The Connecticut legislature will pass a law to insure conversion of the approximately 14,000 acres of forestland under the “10 Mill” law to property tax rates under PA 490 or write a new law that strongly encourages continuation as open space and working forests.
- Local land management regulators will promote and extension foresters, service foresters, and forestry consultants will encourage forest owners, foresters, and forest harvesters to use Best Management Practices in all field forestry operations.
- Connecticut’s public natural resource management agencies will coordinate and collaborate with neighboring states and private non-profit organizations to achieve common visions.

- All organizations concerned with forestlands will increase public awareness of opportunities to protect forestlands, emphasizing public benefits. Connecticut should consider a *Working Forests Initiative* that is similar to the state's focus on farmland preservation.
- Connecticut public agencies will manage locally over-abundant species that damage ecosystems, such as native white-tailed deer, for population size and dynamics.

## What is New and What is Not

Three purposes drive the Forest Assessment and Strategy in Connecticut and other states:

- *Conserve Working Forest Lands*
- *Protect Forests from Harm*
- *Enhance Public Benefits from Trees and Forests*

Table 1 demonstrates the solid connection between these purposes and the 2010 visions. Each vision contributes to all three purposes. Strong Contributions are denoted by a large, bold **X**, medium with a middle contribution **X**, and modest contributions with a normal size **X**.

Another way of looking at the linkage of vision to desired goals is reconsidering the public benefits noted at the beginning of this report. Some visions are more specific and some, like science and education, are universal.

| <u><i>Essential public benefits from Forests:</i></u> | <u><i>Connecticut Forest Visions</i></u>                                    |
|---|---|
| ▪ <b>Climate moderation</b>                           | #1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8,9, & 10   |
| ▪ <b>Water quality and quantity</b>                   | #1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, & 10   |
| ▪ <b>Air quality</b>                                  | #1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, & 10   |
| ▪ <b>Biodiversity</b>                                 | #1, 2, 3, & 10 (and likely 4 and 5)   |
| ▪ <b>Forest products</b>                              | #1, 3, 5 & 8  |
| ▪ <b>Aesthetics &amp; scenic vistas</b>               | #1, 2, 3, 4, 5, & 7   |
| ▪ <b>Scientific research</b>                          | #1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, & 10*   |
| ▪ <b>Education</b>                                    | #1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, & 10*   |
| ▪ <b>Recreation</b>                                   | #4, 5, & 7  |
| ▪ <b>And other forest-based values</b>                | It is hard to imagine a value not covered by one or more vision statements. |

*\*Science and Education cut across all values and benefits from Connecticut's forests, and they are essential to sustaining and increasing these benefits in the future.*

The 2010 visions for Connecticut's forests are not dramatically different from the 2004 visions. In 2004, stakeholders produced 8 visions and CUFC added an urban forestry vision before the 2009 Forum Roundtable. We now have 10 visions, some of which are virtually the same (4 and 7). However, several are not the same (3, 5, 6, 8 and 9) and three are quite different (1, 2 and 10). The 2010 visions are more integrative and more focused on the quality characteristics of forest ecosystems than in 2004, and they point to improved social processes for continued dialogue about values and scientific priorities. See Table 2 for the comparison.

**Table 1: Relationship of 2010 Vision Statements to Three Major Purposes of 2010 Connecticut Forest Assessment.**

| <p><b>In the future,</b></p>   | <p><b>Conserve Working Forest Lands</b> – Conserving and managing working forest landscapes for multiple values and uses, especially in legacy areas, some of which cross state lines with our neighbors – NY, MA, &amp; RI.</p> | <p><b>Protect Forests from Harm</b> – Protect forests from threats, including catastrophic storms, flooding, insect or disease outbreak, &amp; invasive species.</p> | <p><b>Enhance Public Benefits from Trees and Forests</b> – Air and water quality, soil conservation, biological diversity, carbon storage, recreation, forest products, production of renewable energy, &amp; wildlife.</p> |
|--|--|--|---|
| 1. The fact that all forests provide important public benefits will guide Connecticut’s forest and land use policies.  | <b>X</b>   | <b>X</b>   | <b>X</b>  |
| 2. Connecticut will increase the amount of forest protected from development, following priority criteria based on core forest areas, forest legacy potential, and vulnerability.    | <b>X</b>   | <b>X</b>   | <b>X</b>  |
| 3. Connecticut’s forests will contain healthy and sustainable populations of native plants and animals.  | <b>X</b>   | <b>X</b>   | <b>X</b>  |
| 4. Public agencies will manage Connecticut’s public forestlands to enhance public benefits.  | <b>X</b>   | <b>X</b>   | <b>X</b>  |
| 5. Policies will fully support and encourage private forest owners that have environmentally, socially, and economically balanced stewardship goals.                                 | <b>X</b>   | x  | <b>X</b>  |
| 6. The people of Connecticut will understand and value the urban forests as essential parts of healthy urban ecosystems.   | x  | <b>X</b>   | <b>X</b>  |
| 7. Connecticut’s forests will support a broad spectrum of appropriate recreational activities that attract users to Connecticut’s forests.   | <b>X</b>   | x  | <b>X</b>  |
| 8. Connecticut will use its forests to stimulate learning about nature and ecology and to demonstrate various sustainable forest management strategies.                              | <b>X</b>   | <b>X</b>   | <b>X</b>  |
| 9. Connecticut’s forests will support a viable forest products industry that provides marketable products from renewable and diverse forest resources.                               | <b>X</b>   | <b>X</b>   | <b>X</b>  |
| 10. Management of Connecticut’s forests will use the best available scientific information and the best available data as the basis for sound conservation and management decisions. | <b>X</b>   | <b>X</b>   | <b>X</b>  |

**Table 2: Comparison of 2004 Vision Statements (top) with 2010 Vision Statements (side).**

|  | 1. Forest Ecosystem Health | 2. Public Forest Stewardship | 3. Private Forest Stewardship | 4. Recreation | 5. Sustainable Forest Based Economy | 6. Education and Outreach | 7. Planning and Policy | 8. Research | 9. Urban Forestry |
|--|----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| <b>In the future,</b>  |                            |                              |                               |               |                                     |                           | <b>X</b>               |             |                   |
| 1. The fact that all forests provide important public benefits will guide Connecticut's forest and land use policies.  |                            |                              |                               |               |                                     |                           |                        |             |                   |
| 2. Connecticut will increase the amount of forest protected from development, following priority criteria based on core forest areas, forest legacy potential, and vulnerability.    | <b>X</b>                   |                              |                               |               |                                     |                           |                        |             |                   |
| 3. Connecticut's forests will contain healthy and sustainable populations of native plants and animals.  | <b>X</b>                   |                              |                               |               |                                     |                           |                        |             |                   |
| 4. Public agencies will manage Connecticut's public forestlands to enhance public benefits.  |                            | <b>X</b>                     |                               |               |                                     |                           |                        |             |                   |
| 5. Policies will fully support and encourage private forest owners that have environmentally, socially, and economically balanced stewardship goals.                                 |                            |                              | <b>X</b>                      |               |                                     |                           |                        |             |                   |
| 6. The people of Connecticut will understand and value the urban forests as essential parts of healthy urban ecosystems.   |                            |                              |                               |               |                                     |                           |                        |             | <b>X</b>          |
| 7. Connecticut's forests will support a broad spectrum of appropriate recreational activities that attract users to Connecticut's forests.   |                            |                              |                               | <b>X</b>      |                                     |                           |                        |             |                   |
| 8. Connecticut will use its forests to stimulate learning about nature and ecology and to demonstrate various sustainable forest management strategies.                              |                            |                              |                               |               |                                     | <b>X</b>                  |                        |             |                   |
| 9. Connecticut's forests will support a viable forest products industry that provides marketable products from renewable and diverse forest resources.                               |                            |                              |                               |               | <b>X</b>                            |                           |                        |             |                   |
| 10. Management of Connecticut's forests will use the best available scientific information and the best available data as the basis for sound conservation and management decisions. |                            |                              |                               |               |                                     |                           |                        | <b>X</b>    |                   |