Private Forest Management in Minnesota and the Options Available for Private Woodland Owners Interested in Forest Stewardship

Amber Jungwirth
Cooperative Forest Management Regional Specialist
Minnesota DNR Forestry
Outline

• What is Private Forest Management (PFM)?
• Recent History of PFM in Minnesota
• A New Approach to PFM
• Where are we Today?
• Property Wide Management Options
• Project Level Planning Options
• Special Project Areas
• Sources of Information
• Get Involved and Take Action!
What is Private Forest Management?

Why is PFM important?

Forest land has a significant impact on:

- Wildlife Habitat
- Clean Air
- Clean Water
- Soil Conservation
- Outdoor Recreation
- Landscape Aesthetics
- Forest Products Economy
What is Private Forest Management?

Why is PFM important?

Non-industrial private forest land or “family-owned forest Land”

- Largest forest landowner group in Minnesota
- 6.8 million acres (40% of forests)
- Approximately 194,000 landowners
What is Private Forest Management?

Private lands is where there is the greatest risk

Conversion to other land uses
- Development
- Agriculture

More susceptible to forest threats
- Insects and disease
- Climate change
- Wildfire
Recent History of PFM

Business was booming (pre-2009)

MN DNR Forestry was heavily involved

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Full Time Equivalents (FTEs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1981 - 1993</td>
<td>30 - 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994 - 2002</td>
<td>30 to 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 - 2008</td>
<td>19 - 25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Cost share programs were readily available
- Free Woodland Stewardship Plans
- Frequent assistance on timber sales
Recent History of PFM

Business was booming (pre-2009)

Robust Private Industry
- 12 large mills
- Private industry had a strong PFM Program
  - 15+ FTEs
Recent History of PFM

Business was booming (pre-2009)

Active Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
  - Healthy Farm Bill
  - Lower crop prices
  → More tree planting

Tax Incentive Programs were introduced
  - 2001 – Sustainable Forest Incentives Act (SFIA)
  - 2008 – 2c Managed Forest Land
Recent History of PFM

PFM Program Downsizing (2009 - 2014)

Reduction in PFM staff and funding

- 75% budget cut to DNR Forestry PFM program in 2011
- DNR Forestry eliminated cost share programs
- DNR Forestry PFM program cut down to 9 FTEs (6 of field time)
- DNR Forestry started charging for Woodland Stewardship Plans
  → Pushed more work out to private consultants
- NRCS State forester down to 0.5 FTE
- U of MN extension forestry position left vacant
- BWSR forester position vacant
- SWCD foresters reduced
Recent History of PFM

PFM Program Downsizing (2009 - 2014)

Shrinking Forest Products Economy

- 5 large mill closings
- Industry PFM programs were virtually eliminated
- Some loggers went out of business and never returned
- Harvest on private lands decreased
Recent History of PFM

A Change needed to happen

We all were trying to do more with less while the threats to Minnesota private forest land was increasing

→ Have a Plan
Recent History of PFM

System Framework Plan

June 2014 – Meeting with the Minnesota Forest Stewardship Committee (MNFSC)

- Forrest Boe (MN DNR Division of Forestry Director) and Don Baloun (NRCS State Conservationist) charged the MNFSC with developing a long-term plan for private forestland assistance in Minnesota
- Current sponsors are Forrest Boe, Cathee Pullman (NRCS) and Carleen Yokum (USFS)

The request from these two leaders was:

- To create a systems approach to PFM
- To build more trust among partners
- To stabilize the DNR Forestry PFM Program by reducing volatile swings in the system
- To increase the number of private landowners who are choosing to manage their forests in a sustainable manner
Where are we today?

The PFM Initiative

A bill to re-energize PFM was introduced and passed during the 2016 legislative session

Why?
- Multiple public benefits
- Important part of MN forest products economy
  - Louisiana Pacific siding mill looking to move to MN

→ Increase in State General Fund money to PFM
  - “$2,500,000 the second year is for private forest management assistance. The agency base is increased by $2,000,000 in fiscal year 2018 and thereafter”
Where are we today?

The PFM Initiative

MN DNR Forestry

- State Cost-share is back ($800,000 in FY2017)
  - Cost-share for projects has been spent
  - Cost–share for Stewardship Plans is still available
  - FY 18 Cost-share - $600,000

- Statewide coverage of DNR PFM foresters
- Dedicated DNR PFM Outreach Forester
Where are we today?

An increase in PFM involvement

- SWCD foresters
- BWSR
- NRCS
- American Bird Conservancy (ABC)
  - Golden Winged Warbler
- Private Industry
- Private Consultants
Where are we today?

• Going forward we will focus our efforts on
  • Meeting with landowners
  • Encouraging active forest management - including harvesting timber
  • Contracting with consulting foresters to work with landowners
  • Cost share funds for tree planting, stand improvement projects, and other activities
  • Continuing the robust inventory of all forest lands via the FIA program
Where are we today?

Looking to implement the PFM System Framework Plan

→ Increase landscape scale stewardship
→ Increase targeted efforts
Management Options
Property Wide Management Planning

Why would I get a woodland management plan?

I want to improve my woods but I don’t know who where to begin

I need more ideas on how I can improve my woods

The cost of owning my woodland is high and I would like to qualify for a tax incentive so I can keep it
Property Wide Management Planning

Forest Stewardship Program

Encourages long-term stewardship of important State and private forest landscapes, by assisting landowners to more actively manage their forest and related resources.

Provides landowners with professional planning and technical assistance they need to keep their land in a productive and healthy condition.

Federal program that is administered by MN DNR Forestry.

Product → Woodland Stewardship Plan
Property Wide Management Planning

**Woodland Stewardship Plan**

- Need 20 acres of non-ag and non-developed land to qualify
- 10-year forest management plan
- Must be written by a DNR approved plan writer
- A professional forester walks your woods and develops management recommendations based on your goals and objectives
- Plan qualifies landowner for tax incentive programs
  - 2c and SFIA
- Private forestry consultants write most plans
- DNR Forestry Fee: $350 + $7/acre
- $300 incentive payment currently available!
Property Wide Management Planning

Woodland Stewardship Plan

Land is broken down by similar cover types

Management recommendations are developed for each cover type

• Google: “MN Forest Stewardship”
Property Wide Management Planning

Forest Management Conservation Activity Plan (CAP or CAP 106)

- Administered by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
- Landowner receives incentives payment through EQIP
- Similar to the Woodland Stewardship Plan with some additional criteria
- Written by NRCS staff or Technical Service Providers (TSPs)
- Can also be used to qualify to 2c or SFIA

Contact your local NRCS service center to start an application:

offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app

or Google: “NRCS EQIP MN”
Tax Incentive Programs

Sustainable Forest Incentives Act (SFIA)

- Administered by the MN Department of Revenue
- Provides incentive payments to encourage sustainable use of forest lands
- ~ $7.00/acre incentive payment (taxable)
- Can’t develop land or use for agriculture
- 8 year minimum enrollment
- September 30 application deadline
- Requires a current Woodland Stewardship Plan written by an approved plan writer to be eligible
Tax Incentive Programs

Changes to come for 2018 enrollment

- Co-managed – DOR and DNR
- Plan registration
- Tiered payment approach
  - 8 years - $8.50
  - 20 years - $11.72
  - 50 years - $15.04
Tax Incentive Programs

Tax Classification – 2c Managed Forest Land

- Administered by the County Assessor
- Reduces tax rate to 0.65%
- Can’t develop, use for agriculture, or subdivide property
- Apply by May 1 annually
- Requires a current Woodland Stewardship Plan written by an approved plan writer to be eligible
- Woodland Stewardship Plan must be registered with the DNR
Tax Incentive Programs

To learn more about 2c and SFIA:

dnr.state.mn.us/foreststewardship/index.html

Or Google: “MN 2c SFIA”
Project Level Assistance

Why would I seek assistance for a woodland project?

I have a Woodland Stewardship Plan and now I want to start implementing it

I want to do woodland project and I would like financial help to do it

I have an idea for a project but I don't the best way to complete it
Project Level Assistance

Project Examples

• **Goal:** Improve wildlife habitat

• Plant oak seedlings

• Install tree tubes to improve growing conditions and protect from deer browse

• Herbicide spray to reduce heavy grass competition
Project Level Assistance

Project Examples

Goal: Improve forest health and productivity

• Thin out undesirable trees
• Promote growth of healthy crop trees by removing competing vegetation
Project Level Assistance

Project Examples

Goal: Protect water quality and reduce soil erosion

- Smooth out and grade skid trails
- Install water bars
- Apply grass seed
Project Level Assistance

Financial assistance is available

1. State Cost-share
2. Federal Cost-share
3. County Cost-share
Project Level Assistance

State Cost-share – MN DNR Forestry Cost-share Program

Program launched September 2016 for the first time since 2010

• A Woodland Stewardship Plan is not required
• A professional forester prepares a project plan
• No minimum acreage
• Landowner is reimbursed roughly 50% of the cost to install the project after work is complete

Funds are available today
Project Level Assistance

State Cost-share – MN DNR Forestry Cost-share Program

Process:
1. Contact a DNR CFM Forester
2. Discuss what type of project you are thinking of doing
3. A professional forester walks your land and marks out the project area
4. A project plan is developed for you to complete the project
5. The cost-share application is submitted and funds are secured
6. The work is completed by yourself or hired out to a contractor
7. A DNR Forester inspects work and verifies it is completed according to the project plan
8. Payment is made to the landowner
Project Level Assistance

- Sample project plan

- Contact a DNR Cooperative Management Forester (CFM) to apply:
  - www.dnr.state.mn.us/woodlands/cost-share.html
  - Google: “MN DNR Financial Assistance”
Project Level Assistance

Federal Cost-share Programs:

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
1. Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
2. Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

Farm Services Agency (FSA)
1. Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
Project Level Assistance

Federal Cost-share - Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Technical and financial help to landowners for conservation practices that protect soil and water quality.

- Administered by the NRCS
- Project plans can be written by DNR Foresters, NRCS staff, and Technical Service Providers (TSPs)
- Will take applications year round. Next deadline is August 2017?

Contact your local NRCS service center to start an application:

offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app

or Google: “NRCS EQIP MN”
Project Level Assistance

**Federal Cost-share – Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)**

Rewards participants for existing conservation performance

- Administered by the NRCS
- Complete overhaul for 2017
- 5 year contract
- Annual payment on previous years performance
- The higher the performance the higher the payment
- Need to adopt one additional enchantment
- Next application deadline TBD in 2017

Contact your local NRCS service center to start an application:

[offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app](http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app)

or Google: “NRCS CSP MN”
Project Level Assistance

Federal Cost Share - Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

- Administered by the Farm Services Agency (FSA)
- Landowner receives annual incentive payments by taking sensitive cropland out of production by planting grass or trees
- 10 or 15 year agreements
- Must have planted a crop on the land 4 out of the last 6 years
- General Sign-up – periodic competitive application process
- Continuous Sign-up – applications are taken any time

Contact your local FSA office to apply:

Google: “MN FSA CRP”
Project Level Assistance

County Cost-share - Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCD)

- Annual tree seedling sale in the Spring
- Specialize in water quality and soil protection
- Cost share for forestry projects are available in certain counties (Tullibee Lakes Waters Project)

www.maswcd.org

Google: “MN SWCD”
Project Level Assistance

Timber Sale Assistance

DNR Foresters

- Appraise timber, paint boundaries, and send out bid announcement to buyers
- Service fee is 13% of sale value
- Can’t administer sale once cutting begins

Private Forestry Consultant

- All services listed above
- Negotiate price for service
- Can administer sale when cutting begins and recommend loggers
Special Project Area

Golden Winged Warbler Habitat

Target Landowner: Looking to harvest trees, especially if tree value is low due to over maturity

- Administered the NRCS through EQIP
- Promotes creation of young forest habitat for wildlife
- American Bird Conservancy Forester designs a woods harvest in a way to benefit the Golden Winged Warbler
- Landowner receives incentive payment per acre to offset project cost

Eligible Counties: Lake, St. Louis, Koochiching, Itasca, Aitkin, Carlton, and Cass

www.gwwa.org

Contact the NRCS in Duluth: 218-720-5209, ext. 3
Special Project Area

- **Tullibee Lakes**
  - Administered by County SWCDs
  - Funded by Clean Water Legacy
    - Projects must be linked to protecting or improving water quality
  - Goal is to get forested vegetation on 75% of the watershed
  - Protect forestland through easements and SFIA
  - Receive a Woodland Stewardship Plan for $200
  - Cost-share is also available for projects
Special Project Area

- Tullibee Lakes

- Website shows if your land is in the project area:
  - www.dnr.state.mn.us/tullibee.html
  - Google: “MN DNR Tullibee”
Sources of Information

MyMinnesotaWoods

• www.myminnesotawoods.umn.edu
Sources of Information

- *Woodlands of Minnesota* Landowner Handbook Series
Sources of Information

- **Woodlands of Minnesota Landowner Handbook Series**

- Other content available online

- EBook and PDF version

- mndnr.gov\woodlands
Sources of Information

Sustainable Forestry – A Management Guide for Private Forest Landowners

Sources of Information

Tax Advice

Geary Searfoss CPA

715-266-8290

gscpa@centurytel.net
Sources of Information

- Minnesota Forestry Association’s Call Before You Cut hotline
- Sample timber sale contract
- Professional forester contacts
- Logger contacts

Thinking of harvesting timber from your land?

Call Before You Cut

You will be sent a packet of information with no cost or obligation to you.

218-879-5100
Get Involved!

Join the Minnesota Forestry Association (MFA)
* The MFA works on behalf of family forest owners, through education and advocacy, to promote stewardship of woodlands

www.minnesotaforestry.org

Join the Minnesota Women’s Woodland Network (MNWWN)
* Provides the opportunity to recognize and enhance the role of women in woodland management

www.mnwwn.org
Get Involved!

Join a landowner cooperative

Central MN Small Woodland Owners Association
Email: CJConv@staplesnet.com

North Shore Forest Collaborative
- Revitalize and maintain a healthy and functioning ecosystem along the North Shore of Lake Superior with emphasis on restoring and maintaining native trees and associated forest communities.

northshoreforest.org
Get Involved!

Become a Master Woodland Owner
mwop.umn.edu

Become a Tree Farm
www.treefarmsystem.org

American Tree Farm System
We grow stewardship from the roots.
Take Action!

- Get a Woodland Stewardship Plan

- Contact an approved Minnesota Stewardship Plan Preparer

- $300 cost share payment available until 6/30/2017

- Google: “MN stewardship plan writer”

www.myminnesotawoods.umn.edu/minnesota-stewardship-plan-preparers
Take Action!

- Get a Project Plan
- Contact a MN DNR CFM Forester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James MacDonald</td>
<td>218-386-1314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>218-634-2172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Gronewold</td>
<td>218-308-2064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josh Donatell</td>
<td>218-328-8912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steven Horndt</td>
<td>218-753-2580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thor Pakosz</td>
<td>218-723-4791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roger Nelson</td>
<td>218-735-3954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex Brothen</td>
<td>218-203-4428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent Wolf</td>
<td>218-846-8284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kylee Berger</td>
<td>218-846-8286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony Miller</td>
<td>320-679-3683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troy Holcomb</td>
<td>218-429-3025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff Wilder</td>
<td>651-539-3315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Reinikainen</td>
<td>651-259-5830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Val Green</td>
<td>507-724-5264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brett Anderson</td>
<td>507-333-2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randy Schindle</td>
<td>507-389-8811</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Take Action!

Install the project

Contact a Private Forestry Consultant
- Timber harvest assistance
- Install or design a forestry project
- Woodland Stewardship Plan writing
- General forestry advice and assistance

MN Association of Consulting Foresters
web.paulbunyan.net/norfor

Approved Woodland Stewardship Plan Writers
www.myminnesotawoods.umn.edu/minnesota-stewardship-plan-preparers

Society of American Foresters Certified Foresters
www.eforester.org
Take Action!

- Contact a trained Logger

Also includes a Master Logger Certification program

www.mlep.org
Take Action!

Contact a MN DNR Wildlife Private Land Specials

For wildlife habitat assistance in wetlands, brushlands, and forestland

www.dnr.state.mn.us/privatelandhabitat/specialists.html

Google: “MN DNR Wildlife Private”
Questions?

Amber Jungwirth
Cooperative Forest Management Regional Specialist
amber.jungwirht@state.mn.us