



Strategic Management

Carlton County Tax
Forfeited Land
Management Plan

4.1

Sustainable Forestry

As public land manager in the State of Minnesota and subject to the provisions of Minnesota Statutes 89A, the Sustainable Forests Act, Carlton County adheres to the following principles:

- Sustainable Forestry: To practice sustainable forestry to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs by practicing a land stewardship ethic that integrates the reforestation, managing, growing, nurturing and harvesting of trees for useful products with the conservation of soil, air and water quality, biological diversity, wildlife and aquatic habitat, recreation and aesthetics.
- Responsible Practices: To use forests, and promote among other forest landowners, sustainable forestry practices that are economically, environmentally and socially responsible.
- Forest Health and Productivity: To protect forests from wildfire, pests, diseases and other damaging agents to maintain and improve long-term forest health and productivity.
- Protecting Special Sites: To manage forests and lands of special significance (e.g., biologically, geologically, culturally or historically significant) in a manner that takes into account their unique qualities.
- Legal Compliance: To comply with applicable federal, state or local forestry and related environmental laws and regulations.
- Continual Improvement: To continually improve the practice of forest management and also to monitor, measure and report performance in achieving the commitment to sustainable forestry.

4.2

Goal & Principles

The overall goal for managing the County administered tax forfeited lands is:

Maintain a natural resource base which generates sustained timber yields as determined by the quality of the land, establishes a diversity of habitats and ecosystems appropriate to the region, and encourages multiple use within the framework of a forest ecosystem management approach that recognizes the potential and limitations of the County resource as one part of a larger resource and management perspective.

County management activities designed to achieve this goal are guided by the following principles.

- **Strategic management** is based upon those landscape elements (landforms, soils, and site vegetation potential) which are the most

constant and enduring over time.

- **Retain forest integrity** as being essential to the ongoing health, diversity, and productivity of the forest.¹
- **Manage stands** so their forest type, cover type, and related characteristics are in accord with the underlying biophysical and ecological potential of the land.
- The general objective is to **manage the resource**, not to manage for specific outputs.
- **Humans are fundamental influences** in ecological processes and cannot be considered external factors. Human values and ethics play a dominant role in directing management initiatives and setting goals.'
- Management seeks to secure a representative distribution of **vegetational growth stages** (i.e., successional stages or phases) across the aggregated stands for each biophysical region or native plant community. Within this parameter certain cover types will be managed to establish an appropriate balance of age class groups.
- Strategic management **planning is dynamic** reflecting changes in ecological, social and economic conditions, and, is an on-going effort necessarily involving all interested and affected publics.
- Application of the above **principles may be modified** at the stand or aggregated stand level due to consideration of factors including but not limited to the following: Wildlife; Recreation; Ownership; Historical and cultural resources; Aesthetics / views; Water quantity or quality; or Natural disturbance.

Two aspects of integrity are: (1) *resistance*, the ability of a system to absorb small disturbances and prevent them from amplifying into large disturbances; and (2) *resilience or recovery*, the capacity to return to some given system state. An example of resilience is succession. Although a forest state to which a stable system recovers is unlikely to exactly replicate the forest which had been there before, it will possess the same core elements and support the same vital processes. A critical feature of recovery is the ability to rapidly stabilize the soil ecosystem, including nutrients, physical structure, and food webs. Perry, David A. and Michael P. Amranthus, *Disturbance, Recovery and Stability*, in "Creating a Forestry for the 21st Century", edited by Kathryn A. Kohm and Jerry F. Franklin, Island Press 1997.

² This language is taken from *A Framework for Ecosystem-Based Management in the Manitoba Model Forest*, prepared for the Manitoba Model Forest Inc., by Chris Wedeles and Dr. Jeremy Williams, September 12, 1995.

4.3

Initiatives

Carlton County will undertake the following strategic initiatives to implement the core elements of this plan:

- **Aspen:** The County manage this resource with three primary objectives in mind: retain the amount of acreage on lands that can be managed and harvested; balance the age class distribution of the resource so as to ensure a relatively sustained, even yield over time; and, maintain the mix of tree species within the general aspen cover type.
- **Nemadji River Basin:** Roughly 13% of the County's tax forfeited lands are located in the Nemadji River basin. Of this amount, about 34% are situated on the steep red clay slopes and erodible valleys; these lands are being removed from active management of any kind including timber harvesting — they will be allowed to naturally succeed into old spruce-fir forests. The upland portions of the "flats" within the basin will be managed as boreal hardwood-conifer mixed forests. The County will experiment with a variety of management approaches on these lands to determine which are best for securing quality stands and insuring vigorous regeneration of desired species.
- **Wildlife Management Areas:** While most management will, be determined by the ecological potential of the landscape and cover type-specific silvicultural practices, on designated wildlife management areas habitat and wildlife values will take precedence.
- **Staff Transition:** Both the current Land Commissioner and Forester are long-term employees who will retire at approximately the same time within the next decade. Between them they possess an incredible amount of knowledge and experience that will be invaluable to succeeding land managers. It is critical that this knowledge be captured, preferably directly as part of the inventory's electronic database, so it is readily accessible to future foresters.