



NORTH CAROLINA FOREST SERVICE

STRATEGIC PLAN

2013-2016

*A Division of the
North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
N.C. Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler*



*Prepared for and by the employees
of the
North Carolina Forest Service
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Our Vision

We envision a North Carolina with healthy trees and forests that provide essential environmental, economic and social benefits served by a professional workforce recognized as a leader in forest protection, emergency response, resource management and environmental education.

Our Mission

To protect, manage and promote forest resources for the citizens of North Carolina.

Our Values

Leadership - We take initiative to influence the direction and course of action necessary to accomplish our mission.

Integrity - Our character is displayed through commitment and ethical performance of our duties and responsibilities.

Unity - Our care for and loyalty to each other creates teamwork, mutual respect and a sense of family.

Professionalism - We maintain and utilize the highest levels of knowledge and expertise to safely and effectively accomplish our mission.

Service - We perform our duties in the best interests of the people we serve and the resources we manage.

Development

The NC Forest Service (NCFS) began its strategic planning process in November 2010 with the first meeting of the statewide strategic planning committee held at the Mountain Training Facility in Crossnore. From the onset, we envisioned a strategic plan that would guide all who wear the NCFS patch and a commitment was made to involve every NCFS employee in the process.

Significant progress was made at this first planning session as the committee assessed our agency's history, current situation and relationship with partners and stakeholders, reviewed our legislative mandates and authorities, reviewed strategic plans from other agencies and organizations, and began exploring our core values, mission, and vision for the future.

Individual district and field office meeting were then organized to share this progress and obtain input from all employees.

In March, 2011, the statewide strategic planning committee held its second session at the Ralph Winkworth Training Center at Region 1 Headquarters. At this meeting, input from the first round of district and field office meetings was reviewed and incorporated into a draft plan and we continued our self-assessment through a comprehensive SWOT analysis of our agency's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges. We then began formulating key goals, strategic objectives and supporting actions. Immediately following this session, our strategic planning process was halted as our entire workforce was summoned to respond to the historic wildfires that occurred during the spring-summer of 2011. District and field office meetings were resumed beginning in the fall of 2011 to present the draft plan from March 2011 and again obtain input from all employees. On July 1, 2011, the NC Forest Service was transferred from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA).

In July, 2012, the statewide strategic planning committee met again for the third time at the Stanford M. Adams Training Center at Jordan Lake Educational State Forest. By this time, the NCFS had participated in development of the draft NCDA strategic plan. In this departmental plan, the NCFS is featured as a stand-alone functional area and the NCFS section drew heavily on the progress already made on the NCFS strategic plan during the 2010-2012 timeframe. NCFS management decided to design the final NCFS plan around the general structure of the NCDA plan so that the two plans would synchronize. Further refinement of the NCFS strategic plan continued through the fall of 2012.

Purpose

When we began the process of formulating this plan, we wanted to make sure we focused on our legislative mandates and improving the NCFS. We believe our new mission statement gets to the core of our mandates in protecting, managing, and promoting forest resources in the state. The idea behind the objectives and action items is not to add programs to our already full plate, but to improve on our ongoing efforts and our ability to do the job. That is why many of the action items included were items we had been working on at some level, but needed to focus our attention on completing or improving that area. Through a steady effort of completing the action items to meet the objectives and goals, we will naturally improve the quality and perhaps the quantity of work we do for the citizens in North Carolina. The measures are simply a way of recording and highlighting the good work done in these various areas each day. These measures do not capture all NCFS does in the various program areas, but the plan

was not intended to cover all the programs in the NCFS toolbox that are used to deliver services across the state.

Use of the Plan

Over the next three years, we will utilize the strategic plan to focus efforts to improve the NCFS and meet our mission. In carrying out our daily work, we are all expected to exhibit the values we have agreed to in our plan. By completing action items we hope to reach the various objectives and meet our six major goals. By improving our efforts through completion of action items and reporting our efforts through the measures, we will be better prepared with the information we need to acquire funding and resources needed to accomplish our mission. Strategic planning is critical to improving any organization. As we near the end of these 3 years, we will evaluate our plan and make any changes needed to continue moving us forward.

How Do You Fit In?

This is a STRATEGIC PLAN, not a TACTICAL PLAN. The Lead on action items are simply the conduit for gathering information and input necessary to formulate the tactics to accomplish the action item or report how the employees at all levels developed ways to accomplish action items to meet objectives and goals. The six major goals are not prioritized, leaving it to the local level to assess local needs and prioritize accordingly. Each county or field unit should work on a few priority objectives and action items each year that best fits the local need and improves our services the most. We understand that not all field units can increase measures in each single category. You may be doing all you can do in some areas. Focus should be on those areas that can be increased and will best meet the local need for our services. In short, we hope you see this as YOUR strategic plan that can be put into action at the local level.

Whether it is self improvement, career improvement, or improvement of our particular field of endeavor, we all work towards continuous improvement. This strategic plan is focused on improving what is already one of, if not the best forestry agencies in the nation. We look forward to seeing the improvement we can make in the next 3 years.

Protect the Forests

(GS 106-895, 106-920)

The NC Forest Service protects North Carolina's forests from wildfire and from insect and disease outbreaks. We accomplish this by suppressing wildfires, implementing fire prevention and mitigation programs, and responding effectively to large fire incidents, insect and disease outbreaks, and other threats to the forest.

Objective - Resource Capabilities

Maintain and Improve resource capabilities to ensure early detection and rapid incident response.

Resource Capabilities Action Items:

- Seek annual funding for additional personnel and to replace equipment on a regular schedule. *Lead - State Forester's Office*
- Update General Statutes to address over weight issues related to restrictions placed on NCFs firefighting/emergency response heavy equipment. *Lead - State Forester's Office*
- Update General Statutes to address issues of NCFs use of red lights, sirens, and emergency response right-of-way related to restrictions placed on NCFs firefighting/emergency/law enforcement response equipment. *Lead - Safety, Planning and Analysis Division*
- Identify and access potential funding and partnerships in invasive species control. *Lead - Forest Health Branch*
- Provide frequent statewide insect and disease activity updates to the field. *Lead - Forest Health Branch*
- Establish a public facing web based reference resource for insects and disease diagnosis/treatment. *Lead - Forest Health Branch*
- Coordinate with partners to monitor and survey for the presence and movement of non-native invasive insect, disease, and plant species into the state, and take measures when appropriate to control, suppress or eradicate these threats. *Lead - Forest Health Branch*

- Create and utilize decision support tools such as web sites and predictive services/fire intelligence to manage needed resources and their appropriate response. *Leads -Forest Protection and Safety, Planning and Analysis Divisions*
- Obtain and upgrade equipment to meet the need for cooperator interoperability. *Lead - Fire Staff*
- Utilize predictive services/fire intelligence to secure and preposition needed resources. *Leads - Division Directors*
- Develop contracts for critical resources not available within NCFS (Aviation resources, large volume pumps, etc.) *Lead - Supply Branch*

Objective - Mitigation

Increase mitigation of wildfire risk and threats to communities, residents, and property.

Mitigation Action Items:

- Educate the public, land management professionals, and government officials on wildland-urban interface fire risks, issues, and mitigation techniques. *Leads - Fire Staff & I&E Branch*
- Encourage inter-organizational planning, policy-making, and collaboration that lead to the use of Firewise principles in construction and community planning. *Lead - Fire Staff*
- Encourage preparation and implementation of Community Wildfire Protection Plans. *Lead - Fire Staff*
- **Key Initiative** - Work with the NC Prescribed Fire Council to develop and implement strategies and actions to increase the annual non-industrial private forest landowner acreage treated with prescribed fire by 25% over a 4 year period. *Lead - Safety, Planning and Analysis*

Objective - Training Opportunities

Enhance training opportunities internally and externally to increase knowledge, response capabilities and development of employees and cooperators.

Training Opportunities Action Items:

- Increase fire and all risk cross-training opportunities for NCFS employees and cooperators. *Lead - Fire Staff*

- Increase NCFS employees' participation in out-of-state/national level fire training. (SA Academy, etc) *Lead - Fire Staff*
- Re-evaluate NCFS standard fire training curriculum and map out a standard by position (basic training for 'forest rangers'). *Leads - Fire Staff and Division Directors*
- Provide statewide comprehensive forest health threats training for field staff, natural resource professionals and landowners, with an emphasis on invasive species identification and control. *Lead - Forest Health Branch*

Objective - All-Risk Capability

Improve capability to safely and effectively respond to all-risk incidents of varying size and complexity.

All-Risk Capability Action Items:

- Take advantage of, support, and promote, out-of-state dispatch opportunities to increase training, experience and qualifications of NCFS employees. *Lead - Fire Staff*
- Develop and implement a succession plan for Incident Management Teams (IMT) to include increased interagency participation. *Leads - Fire Staff and IMT IC's*
- Complete implementation of NCFS Aviation Plan and Formalize Aviation scheduling and response plan with the realignment to 3 main hubs. *Lead - Aviation Division*

Objective - Prevention

Increase the prevention of wildfire and threats to forest health through effective education and prevention.

Prevention Action Items:

- **Key Initiative** - Finalize and work toward adoption of burning permit legislation to address changes in North Carolina's population and impacts from smoke and fire. *Lead -State Forester's Office*
- Through use of displays, publications workshops presentations and media releases, increase public awareness of invasive pest species, including their spread with firewood movement. *Lead - I&E Branch*

- Identify key messages (debris burning) and develop publications and radio/tv spots to address them on major networks or highly viewed social platforms. *Lead - I&E Branch*

Measures - Protect	Baseline	June 30, 2016 Target
Average number of acres impacted per wildfire. Through continuously improving our suppression and mitigation efforts, the intent is to reduce acreage impacted over the long run.	8.39 acres/fire	8.31 -8.14 acres/fire
This measure will come from the NCFS Fire Reporting System (Acres Burned Total). The baseline is a five year average of State Fiscal Years (SFY) starting on July 1, 2007 and ending June 30, 2012. Reporting will occur quarterly and will be a rolling average calculated on the quarter being reported and 19 preceding quarters of the SFY. The target will be the five previous SFY's starting July 1, 2011 ending June 30, 2016.		
Number of wildfires caused by debris burning. This is the largest single cause of wildfire in the state. The goal is to effect a 4-6% reduction by June 30, 2016.	1609 debris fires/year	1545 – 1513 debris fires/year
This measure will come from the NCFS Fire Reporting System (Fire Cause). The baseline is a five year average of State Fiscal Years (SFY) starting on July 1, 2007 and ending June 30, 2012. Reporting will occur quarterly and will be a rolling average calculated on the quarter being reported and 19 preceding quarters of the SFY. The target will be the five previous SFY's starting July 1, 2011 ending June 30, 2016.		
Increase the annual non-industrial private forest landowner acreage treated with prescribed fire by 25% over a 4 year period. This effort will reduce wildfire threat, improve forest management and wildlife habitat, and increase many other benefits realized from the use of prescribed fire.	31,742 acres/year	39,677 acres/year
This measure will come from the NCFS Forest Management Reporting System (Hazard & Silvicultural Burning). The baseline is a five year average of State Fiscal Years (SFY) starting on July 1, 2007 and ending June 30, 2012. Reporting will occur quarterly and will be a rolling average calculated on the quarter being reported and 19 preceding quarters of the SFY. The target will be the five previous SFY's starting July 1, 2011 ending June 30, 2016.		
Narrative of responses to insect and disease outbreaks, large fire incidents, and other natural disasters or forest threats.	No Baseline	Narrative Report
This measure will be reported quarterly by the Forest Protection Section.		

Manage the Forests

(GS 106-870, 106-875, 106-1001/1002, 113A-52.1)

The NC Forest Service assists private landowners in responsibly managing their forest resources. We also monitor The Forest Practices Guidelines (FPGs) Related to Water Quality in order to protect our water resources. We prepare objective-driven management plans for private landowners, assist landowners in implementing recommended management practices and promote sound management of North Carolina's urban forests.

Objective - Forest Management

Increase the acres of forest land under active management.

Forest Management Action Items:

- **Key Initiative** - Develop a web-based Prescribed Fire Plan generator and a Smoke Management database. *Lead - Safety, Planning and Analysis*
- Work with NC Forestry Association (NCFA) and the Legislature to evaluate and improve the FDP Program. *Lead - State Forester's Office*
- Increase NCFS forestation program capabilities where needed by procuring better forestation equipment and increase efficiencies through the use of technology. *Lead - Regional Foresters*
- Tailor FM activities/recommendations so they meet landowner objectives and encourage implementation. *Lead - FM Branch*
- Develop and implement customer satisfaction protocols using results for continuous Improvement (plan writing, implementation rates and increased customer base) *Lead - FM/FD Division*
- Strengthen and support forest nursery and tree improvement programs to ensure a stable supply of seedlings. *Lead - FM/FD Division*
- Develop an acquisition plan to increase lands being managed by NCFS. *Lead - State Forester's Office*
- Work with various groups to develop strong Forest Landowner Associations in each county or group of counties. *Lead - Regional Foresters*
- Implement focused outreach campaigns to promote forest management. *Leads - I&E Branch and FM Branch*

Objective - Water Quality

Increase the effectiveness of the NCFS Water Quality program.

Water Quality Action Items:

- Retain or increase forestland within watersheds and riparian areas and educate the public on the values of these forested watersheds and riparian areas. *Lead - FM Branch and NPS Branch*
- Implement recommendations within the most current version of the BMP Survey. *Lead - NPS Branch*
- Be proactive in searching the county for possible ownerships needing our services. (Water quality flights for multiple purposes, cold calls to recently harvested tracts, concentrated efforts in one part of the county in a given year, etc.) *Lead - Regional Foresters*
- Increase field staff and associated funding to implement and improve the water quality program, especially in the mountain counties. *Lead - State Forester's Office*

Objective - Urban Forestry

Develop and promote an urban-focused effort that meets ownership objectives for urban-rural interface landowners and communities.

Urban Forestry Action Items:

- Provide assist to municipalities on obtaining managing status on the USFS CARS report. *Lead - Urban & Community Forest Branch*
- Increase assistance in the development of community forest. *Lead - Urban & Community Forest Branch*

Measures - Manage	Baseline	June 30, 2016 Target
<p>The annual number of written management plans to private forest landowners and the annual acres addressed within those plans. Plans contain forest management recommendations based on the owner's management objectives. Our goal is to maintain or slightly increase both the number of management plans and the number of acres addressed by management plans by June 30, 2016.</p>	<p>6,957 plans/year addressing 366,032 acres/year</p>	<p>6,957 – 7,166 plans/year addressing 366,032 – 377,013 acres/year</p>
<p>This is a two-part measure. These measures will come from the 4220 Forest Management Accomplishment Report. For "Management Plans" the calculation is the "Count, or Number of Activities" of all plan types. For "Acres" the calculation is "Total Acres" for all plan types. The baseline will be the average of the last five SFY's ending on June 30, 2012. The target will be the five previous SFY's ending June 30, 2016. Quarterly reporting will be the cumulative year to date acreage, with the annual report to be the current year's achievement. To be reported by the Forest Management/Forest Development Section.</p>		
<p>Percentage of Forest Stewardship Plan acres located within priority forest areas that are being implemented by landowners. Priority forest areas are identified in NC's Forest Action Plan indicating areas of high conservation value or at risk of conversion to non-forest use. Our goal is to increase the rate 3 to 6 percentage points by June 30, 2016.</p>	<p>86% located in priority areas</p>	<p>89-92% located in priority areas</p>
<p>This measure will come from the annual USFS PMAS report for the Forest Stewardship Program. It is calculated as the Current Plan Priority Acres Implemented divided by the Current Plan Priority Acres and expressed as a percent. The baseline uses the 2011 PMAS report values. The target will be the five previous SFY's ending June 30, 2016. To be reported annually in January by the Forest Management/Forest Development Section.</p>		
<p>Total number of FPG inspections conducted annually. These inspections determine compliance with the FPGs. Our goal is to maintain or increase the current level by up to 3 percentage points by June 30, 2016.</p>	<p>5,507 inspections/year</p>	<p>5,507 – 5,672 inspections/year</p>
<p>This measure will come from the 4220 Forest Management Accomplishment Report. The calculation will be the total of all FPG inspections (including re-inspections) in the reporting system for the SFY. The baseline will be the average of the last five SFY's ending on June 30, 2012. The target will be the five previous SFY's ending June 30, 2016. Quarterly reporting will be the cumulative year to date total, with the annual report to be the current year's achievement. To be reported by the Forest Management/Forest Development Section.</p>		

Measures - Manage	Baseline	June 30, 2016 Target
<p>Annual percentage of initial FPG harvest inspections conducted on forestry sites that are still active. Our intent is to conduct the initial inspection when forestry operations are active as opposed to after they have been closed-out. This proactive approach results in more timely resolution of water quality issues, and can prevent problems from occurring in the first place. Our goal is an increase of 4 to 8 percentage points by June 30, 2016.</p>	<p>57% inspections are Initial inspections on active harvest operations</p>	<p>61 - 65% inspections are Initial inspections on active harvest operations</p>
<p>This measure will come from the 4220 Forest Management Accomplishment Report. In simple terms, it is the total initial active harvest inspections divided by the total of all initial harvest inspections (active + complete). The baseline will be the average of the last five SFY's ending on June 30, 2012. The target will be the five previous SFY's ending June 30, 2016. Quarterly reporting will be the cumulative year to date percentage, with the annual report to be the current year's achievement. To be reported by the Forest Management/Forest Development Section.</p>		
<p>Number of annual Tree City USA, Tree Line USA, and Tree Campus USA recognitions. Our goal is to increase the number of recognitions by 2 to 4 by 2016.</p>	<p>78 recognitions</p>	<p>80-82 recognitions</p>
<p>This is a direct measure from Urban and Community Forestry Program records. The baseline will be the number of recognitions in CY 2012. The target will be the number of recognitions in CY 2016. This measure will be reported annually in the first quarter of each CY. To be reported by the Forest Management/Forest Development Section.</p>		

Promote the Forests

(GS 106-895, 106-907)

The Forest Service is responsible for promoting the conservation, development and profitable use of North Carolina's forests. We accomplish this by helping forest landowners establish new forests; supporting existing, new, and emerging forest product markets; and educating youth and adults on the benefits of our forest resources.

Objective - Forest Products Industries

Promote, develop and maintain traditional and new forest products industries.

Forest Products Industries Action Items:

- Utilize NCDA&CS marketing opportunities. Develop a plan to ensure NCFS is an integral part of this effort. *Lead - Technical Development Branch*
- Publicize the importance of forest industry in NC through strengthened partnerships with NCFA, NCSU, NC Woodlands, ATFS, NCACF, Farm Bureau and others. Utilize these partnerships at the local level to provide a communication/feedback flow. *Lead - FM/FD Division*
- Market NC to the forest industry as a place to locate and/or expand. *Lead - Technical Development Branch*
- Additional training for all personnel in forest products markets and utilization, focusing on the local area. *Lead - Technical Development Branch and FM Branch*
- Actively participate in the development of non-traditional forest product markets, such as biomass, green energy, etc. *Lead - Technical Development Branch*

Objective - Benefits and Services Awareness

Increase public awareness of the benefits of forests and NCFS services available.

Benefits and Services Awareness Action Items:

- **Key Initiative** - Continue with the longleaf pine initiative and develop/implement a plan to address sustainability of other tree species, forest types, and forest ecosystems in decline; to include Atlantic white cedar, shortleaf pine, baldcypress, and bottomland hardwoods. *Lead - FM Branch and Technical Development Branch*

- Identify key messages and develop publications and radio/tv spots to address benefits on major networks or highly viewed social platforms. *Lead - I&E Branch*

Objective - State Forests

Increase support to the Education State Forests (ESF) and State Forests (SF)

State Forests Action Items:

- Fund and open Mtn. Island ESF. *Lead -State Forester’s Office*
- Restore Information & Education Branch support staff positions at the Central office to restore functionality of the branch. *Lead -State Forester’s Office*

Measures -Promote	Baseline	June 30, 2016 Target
Acres of forests established annually. Forest establishment has declined 30 percent over the past 4 years largely due to a downturn in forest product markets. Our goal is to meet demand for forest establishment while striving to maintain or slightly increase 2010-2011 levels.	57,712 acres/year	57,712 -58,866 acres/year
This is a direct measure from the 4220 Forest Management Accomplishment Report for Establishment Acres. The baseline will be Forest Establishment acres for the year ending June 30, 2012, not a five year average, since the trend shows a steady decline over the last five years. The target will be the five previous SFY’s ending June 30, 2016. To be reported by the Forest Management/Forest Development Section. Quarterly reporting will be the cumulative year to date acreage, with the annual report to be the current year’s achievement.		
Acres of longleaf pine in NC. Our goal is to increase the overall acreage 1 to 3% by June 30, 2016.	389,000 acres	404,795 – 437,823 acres
This measure comes from data compiled as part of a regional assessment and goal setting effort led by the Longleaf Partnership Council. North Carolina’s baseline and goal projections were completed June 2012 and consist of A). Private lands: NC 2003-2011 FIA data for longleaf pine forest type code 141 and longleaf pine-oak forest type code 403; B). Public lands: this is a synthesis of data collected on the actual acres of all known longleaf pine on public lands in NC (federal, state, university, local). Data consists of geospatial data, where available, plantation and management records, and reports from public land management personnel. The target is a 1 to 3 percent annual increase and is based on a number of factors including past establishment trends, financial cost share program impacts and seed source/seedling availability and capacity, among others. Annual data will be reported as it is available.		
Number of educational events conducted annually. Our goal is a 3-6% increase by June 30, 2016.	1,579 events	1,626 – 1,673 events
This measure is a combination of events entered into the I&E database and the Outreach database. The baseline will be the average of the last five SFY’s ending on June 30, 2012. This baseline data will come from all of the I&E accomplishments recorded in the Total Accomplishment Report (TAR) since the I&E database was not implemented during this complete time frame. The target will be the five previous SFY’s ending June 30, 2016 and will consist of accomplishments from the TAR and I&E database, excluding any duplicate reporting. To be reported by the Forest Protection Section. The quarterly reporting is the cumulative year to date numbers with the annual reporting being the total number of events for the SFY.		

Measures -Promote	Baseline	June 30, 2016 Target
Number of annual attendees at state forests. Our goal is to increase visitation by 3-6% by June 30, 2016.	346,329 visitors/year	356,718 – 367,108 visitors/year
This measure will come from the Educational State Forest Reporting system for total attendance and a quarterly reporting from DuPont State Forest on total attendance. The baseline will be the average of the last five SFY's ending on June 30, 2012. The target will be the five previous SFY's ending June 30, 2016. To be reported by the Forest Protection Section. The quarterly reporting is the cumulative year to date numbers with the annual reporting being the total attendance for the SFY.		
Narrative accounts of our efforts to support forest-based product and commodity market retention, recruitment, and expansion.	No Baseline	Narrative Report
This measure will be reported quarterly by the Forest Management/Forest Development Section.		

Leadership in Forestry (Branding & Recognition)

The NC Forest Service strives to be the leading authority on issues concerning forest resources in the state. Through a professional, highly trained workforce we take initiative to influence the direction of forestry and serve citizens.

Objective - Target Audiences

Inform target audiences of our programs and legislative mandates.

Target Audiences Action Items:

- Develop and implement outreach strategies that improve participation in NCFS programs and services. *Lead - I&E Branch*
- Utilize “Changing Roles” or other programs to better equip personnel to outreach new audiences. *Lead - Urban & Community Forestry Branch*
- Identify key messages of importance to the public that can be used to increase awareness of NCFS similar to the Highway Patrol Governors’ Safety Program. *Lead - Division Directors*
- Develop position statements/talking points for each program to deliver a uniform message and give county personnel a tool to sell programs. *Lead - Division Directors*
- Develop uniform reports and presentations, utilizing standard elements.(County Commissioner Reports). *Lead - I&E Branch*

Objective - Image

Maintain strong, consistent public image.

Image Action Items:

- Maintain a uniform/standard image throughout NCFS. *Lead - Division Directors*
- Actively participate at all levels in any group making decisions related to forestry. *Lead - Division Directors*
- Utilize the patch as a central theme on any item. *Lead - I&E Branch*
- Develop NCFS vehicle marking standards. *Lead - I&E Branch*

- Review and adjust all Policy and Procedure related to appearance standards (uniforms, vehicles, and signage). *Lead – Administrative Services Supply Branch*
- Utilize NCDA&CS marketing division to assist with branding. *Lead - Technical Development Branch*
- Continue to reinforce ourselves as the “North Carolina Forest Service”. *Lead - Division Directors*
- Develop a calendar of local events. *Lead - Regional Directors*
- Fully staff state, regional and county fairs. *Leads - I&E Branch and Regional Directors*

Objective - Visibility and Recognition

Increase visibility and recognition of NCFS qualifications.

Visibility and Recognition Action Items:

- Increase opportunities to train and deploy with other agencies. *Lead - Fire Staff*
- Actively participate with any group making emergency response decisions. *Lead - Forest Protection Division*
- Capture and publicize NCFS role in emergency response (IMT web page, dispatch record). *Lead - I&E Branch*
- Train more personnel on working with the media at the local level. *Lead - I&E Branch*
- Take a more proactive role in providing content to the media. *Lead - I&E Branch*
- Place qualifications on email signature and business cards. *Lead - Division Directors*

Measures - Leadership	Baseline	June 30, 2016 Target
Set up and maintain a calendar of local events in which the NCFS is participating. This calendar will be posted and maintained on the NCFS public website.	No Baseline	Calendar set up and in full use by NCFS employee
Baseline measure not needed. Measure is a complete or non-complete task.		

Measures - Leadership	Baseline	June 30, 2016 Target
Number of meetings attended or programs given not related to school presentations or parades. This may include a wide range of efforts to present the NCFS in a leadership role in forestry in NC and the nation.	No Baseline	Increase use of events calendar
This measure relies on the completion of the events calendar in the above measure. No baseline is currently available as NCFS has not full tracked these activities. The completion of the Events Calendar will facilitate the tracking of these activities.		
Increase the number of web site visits to ncforestservice.gov/ .	140,140 visits	140,200 – 150,000 visits
Baseline is average of quarterly Google Analytics reports of site visits from January, 2011 – March 2013. Statistics previous to this period (which used WebTrends) are not a valid comparison to the Google Analytics numbers .		

Safety

The NC Forest Service will provide a safe and healthy work environment and develop a workforce that is committed to safety. We will strive to reduce the number of workplace injuries to our employees, while finding better ways to communicate safety information and train employees. We will also focus on the physical and mental well-being of each employee.

Objective - Effective Safety

Implement a more effective state-wide safety program that reduces risks and mitigates hazards

Effective Safety Action Items:

- Develop a coordinated communications system for safety information (use of safety alerts, newsletter others). *Lead - State Safety Committee*
- Develop appropriate funding mechanisms and timelines to address safety needs as identified by safety committees. (also dedicated positions, coordinators). *Lead - State Forester's Office*
- Develop in-house subject matter experts in specialized training areas. *Lead - Safety, Planning and Analysis*
- Evaluate the effectiveness of Pure Safety. *Lead - State Safety Committee*
- Analyze the accident database to determine statewide issues and share with field units. *Lead - State Safety Committee*

Objective - Reduce Injuries

Reduce three of the most prevalent types of workplace injuries by 15% by 2016.

Reduce Injuries Action Items:

- Identify the three most prevalent injuries, their causes and mitigations. *Lead - State Safety Committee*
- Regularly communicate the progress towards the goal. *Lead - State Safety Committee*
- Clearly define behavioral expectations to achieve the goal. *Lead - Division Directors*

Objective - Wellness

Implement a uniform statewide wellness program that increases the physical and mental wellbeing of our employees.

Wellness Action Items:

- Obtain funding for wellness activities. *Lead - State Forester’s Office*
- Have a functioning wellness committee serving as an information clearing house for wellness/fitness information to the field. *Lead - Safety, Planning and Analysis*
- Communicate and encourage wellness activities. *Lead - State Wellness Committee*
- Explore the possibility of establishing a fitness standard for NCFS personnel (moderate pack test?). *Lead - Division Directors*
- Allocate time towards physical training. *Lead - Division Directors*

Measures - Safety		Baseline	June 30, 2016 Target
Reduce the number of slips, trips and falls, struck bys, and vehicle accidents by 15% by June 30, 2016. These are the three most prevalent types of accidents within the NCFS.	Slips, Trips and Falls	12/year	10/year
	Struck bys	8/year	6/year
	Vehicle Accidents	6/year	4/year
This measure will come from the NCFS Workers Comp Database. The baseline is a five year average of State Fiscal Years (SFY) starting on July 1, 2007 and ending June 30, 2012. Reporting will occur quarterly and will be a rolling average calculated on the quarter being reported and 19 preceding quarters of the SFY. The target will be the five previous SFY’s starting July 1, 2011 ending June 30, 2016.			
Increase the number of field units meeting the Department of Labor Silver and Gold award standards.	Silver	5/year	No Specific Target
	Gold	8/year	
This data comes from the actual number of Gold and Silver awards received from the NC Department of Labor. Count provided by NCFS Safety Coordinator. Department of Labor awards are tied to the DART rates related to restricted and lost days of work due to an employee injury. Although no specific target this measure will provide and overall evaluation of the NCFS safety program.			
Increase the number of personnel voluntarily taking the work capacity test for fire fighters.		194/year	No Specific Target
Count of employees that have passed the light, moderate or arduous work capacity test as of the end of each fiscal year. This data comes from the Incident Qualifications System. Report will be run on June 30th of each year by Central Office Operations.			

Business Efficiencies and Effectiveness

The NC Forest Service will strive to become an organization valued by its internal and external customers for efficient and effective business practices. We will meet this goal by maximizing our funding, hiring and retaining excellent employees, and utilizing technology, innovation, and improved communication.

Objective - Recruitment and Retention

Establish and implement practices that support the recruitment and retention of a highly skilled and professional workforce.

Recruitment and Retention Action Items:

- **Key Initiative** - Complete a comprehensive equity study of all NCFS positions to identify pay inequities and develop a plan to address them. *Lead - Administrative Division*
- Review and evaluate training programs for all positions. *Lead - Division Directors*
- Work closely with NCDA&CS and relevant agencies to develop a comprehensive overtime/on-call compensation policy and secure funding. *Lead - State Forester's Office*

Objective - Streamline Processes

Streamline processes through innovation and technology.

Streamline Processes Action Items:

- **Key Initiative** - Develop a geospatially referenced, internet-based reporting system with appropriate metrics for all program accomplishments. *Lead - Safety, Planning and Analysis Division*
- Develop a centralized repository for graphics, images, power point presentations, etc. accessible to counties. *Lead - I&E Branch*
- Develop an efficient IT support model and evaluate the aging IT infrastructure of the NCFS. *Lead - Safety, Planning and Analysis Division*

Objective - Accountability

Develop a budget process that stresses accountability while maximizing all available funding sources to meet the needs of all levels of the organization.

Accountability Action Items:

- **Key Initiative** - Develop a system and actions to allow for more efficient and effective administration and management of grants and awards. *Lead - Administration Division*
- Identify our core organizational priorities and establish an allocation process that adequately funds these. *Lead - Division Directors*

Objective - Effective Support

Improve internal coordination, communication and data management to effectively support program delivery.

Effective Support Action Items:

- **Key Initiative** - Complete the NCDA&CS and NCFS Strategic Plans. Mesh these with the NC Forest Action Plan and integrate into NCFS programs. *Lead - State Forester's Office*
- Establish, update and enforce strong internal controls that are regularly reviewed for relevance and necessity. *Lead - Division Directors*
- Evaluate and address the staffing and resource needs of the Safety, Planning & Analysis Division. *Lead - State Forester's Office*
- Continue to establish and refine business processes and procedures between NCDA&CS and NCFS. *Lead - Administration Division*
- Re-establish annual administrative training meetings and other face-to-face opportunities for interaction between personnel in the CO, NCDA&CS, and the field. *Lead - Administrative Division*
- Clarify program emphasis and benefits, allowing for prioritizing at a local/county level. *Lead - Division Directors*

Measures - Business	Baseline	June 30, 2016 Target
Show improvement to the retention rate of NCFSE employees by evaluating general action/retention reports that summarizes numbers for retirements, select separations, promotions	No Baseline	Narrative Report
Administrative Services to provide quarterly updates		
Reduce the percentage of budget accounts that are overspent, show a negative, each quarter.	No Baseline	Narrative Report
Administrative Services to provide quarterly updates on administrative training initiatives		
Increase the number of employees receiving administrative training.	No Baseline	Narrative Report
Administrative Services to provide quarterly updates		
Increase the number of internal administrative reviews or audits conducted annually.	No Baseline	Narrative Report
Administrative Services to provide quarterly updates on administrative reviews/audits, discussing where we're getting better and where we may need attention.		
Reduce the number of outdated policies, procedures and processes annually.	No Baseline	Narrative Report
Administrative Services to provide quarterly update on revised/new P&P and SOPs		

Reporting Results

At the end of each quarter the Safety, Planning, and Analysis Division will facilitate through the designated leads the collection of data and a status summary. This information will be logged on the Strategic Plan Progress Reports for each measure. At the end of the State's fiscal year the Safety, Planning, and Analysis Division will facilitate through the designated leads the collection of data and progress for an annual summary report.

Key NC Forest Service Initiatives

Initiatives were crafted to answer the question: what changes need to be made so that the NCFS can more effectively accomplish our mission? Initiatives are intended to introduce new processes or make significant organizational changes that will improve performance and enhance our ability to meet our 2016 performance targets and better achieve our mission. They are inspired by a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) of internal and external forces impacting our ability to accomplish our mission. This analysis was conducted by the NCFS statewide strategic planning committee. Initiatives were then developed and prioritized by the NCFS Management Team into a manageable number.

The nine NCFS strategic initiatives are featured in the NC Forest Service functional area of the NCDA&CS strategic plan. One NCFS initiative "Maintain and Restore Forests in Decline" was selected to be featured among eight other departmental initiatives which highlight key citizen-focused initiatives within the Department. Nine of these key initiatives, described below have been incorporated into the NCFS Strategic Plan as action items under the goal and objective where they most logically fit. Within the plan these initiatives are designated with the words 'Key Initiative'.

Name	Description and intended impact	Responsible	Begin	Target Completion
Develop Geospatial Reporting Tools	Develop a geospatially referenced, internet-based reporting system, with appropriate metrics, for all program accomplishments. This system will help monitor success in effecting positive and beneficial forest management practices in areas with the greatest need.	Safety, Planning & Analysis Manager: Craig Clarke 919-857-4820	10/1/2011	1/1/2016
Develop Prescribed Fire Tools	Develop an internet-based Prescribed Fire Plan generator and a Smoke Management database. These tools will allow for more opportunities to utilize prescribed fire on forested acres in North Carolina.	Safety, Planning & Analysis Manager: Tim Howell 828-665-8688	10/1/2010	10/1/2016
Finalize Burning Permit Legislation	Finalize and work toward adoption of burning permit legislation to address changes in North Carolina's population and impacts from smoke and fire. These changes will assist NCFS in wildfire prevention.	Forest Protection Manager: David Lane 919-857-3838	7/1/2012	7/1/2013
Maintain and Restore forests in decline	Continue with the longleaf pine initiative and develop and implement a plan to address sustainability of other tree species, forest types, and forest ecosystems in decline-, targeting Atlantic white cedar, shortleaf pine, baldcypress, and bottomland hardwoods. It is vital that we pass on to future generations the ecological, economic and social values these forests provide.	Forest Management / Forest Development Manager: Barry New 919-857-4843	7/1/2012	7/1/2014

Name	Description and intended impact	Responsible	Begin	Target Completion
Reduce workplace injuries	Reduce three of the most prevalent types of workplace injuries by 15% by 2016. This emphasis will reduce worker injuries, lost work days, and worker compensation costs.	Safety, Planning & Analysis Manager: Karen Patterson 919-857-4845	7/1/2012	6/30/2016
Complete Strategic Planning	Complete the NCDA&CS and NCFS Strategic Plans. Link these with the NC Forest Action Plan and integrate into NCFS programs and services. Implement the Goals, Actions and Initiatives through expectations in each employee's work plan. These plans will better focus activities to meet the NCDA&CS and NCFS mission.	State Forester's Office Manager: Greg Pate 919-857-4854	11/17/2010	4/1/2014
Streamline administration of external sources of funding	Develop a system and actions to allow for more efficient and effective administration and management of externally funded grants and awards. This will position the NCFS to remain competitive in securing external funding and to use these resources wisely.	Administration Manager: Greg Pate 919-857-4854	1/1/2012	6/30/2013
Complete NCFS Salary Equity Study	Complete a comprehensive equity study of all NCFS positions to identify the most significant pay inequities and develop a plan to address them. This will allow the NCFS to get in line with other NCDA&CS divisions in following NC OSP Compensation guidelines.	Administration Manager: Joe Gilroy 919-857-4853	7/1/2012	6/30/2013
Increase acres treated with prescribed fire	Work with the NC Prescribed Fire Council to develop and implement strategies and actions to increase the annual non-industrial private forest landowner acreage treated with prescribed fire by 25% over a 4 year period. This effort will reduce wildfire threat, improve wildlife habitat, and increase many other benefits realized from the use of prescribed fire.	State Forester's Office Manager: Greg Pate 919-857-4854	7/1/2012	6/30/2016

Relationship to the NCDA&CS Strategic Plan

In March of 2012, the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS), of which the North Carolina Forest Service is a part, began a fast paced effort to develop what was termed a 'lite' version of a department strategic plan. The department's 21 divisions were grouped into 5 functional areas: Agricultural Services, NC Forest Service, Regulatory Programs, Enterprise Centers, and Administrative Services. The departmental strategic planning committee was comprised of two representatives for each functional area who served as liaisons between the committee and individual division directors and senior managers. Each functional area was tasked with developing a mission and vision statement, identifying key stakeholders, identifying 2 to 3 key representative goals and associated performance measures, and finally, a manageable number of strategic initiatives.

For the NC Forest Service functional area, much of this work had already been developed as part of the NCFS strategic planning effort that had begun in November 2010 and continued concurrently with the departmental planning effort. As the NCFS strategic planning effort progressed into 2012, 6 primary goals emerged and were eventually adopted into this NCFS plan. Since we will report progress on our measures to NCDA&CS, it was a natural fit to incorporate these same departmental measures into our NCFS strategic plan. As we worked to finalize the NCFS plan, a decision was made by the management team to follow this same model and develop a few select performance measures for the 3 remaining goals unique to the NCFS plan.

The two strategic plans mesh and complement each other. The two plans are organized into a consistent format and flow with two notable exceptions: 1). The NCFS strategic plan is more detailed, consisting of 6 goals and associated performance measures, compared with 3 NCFS goals in the NCDA&CS strategic plan. These 3 NCFS goals found in the NCDA&CS strategic plan: Protect the forests; Manage the forests; and Promote the Forests are based on the 3 cornerstones of the new NCFS mission statement adopted in 2012. In the NCFS plan, each goal is supported by additional objectives and strategic actions that will guide NCFS priorities through June 2016; and 2). The 9 NCFS functional area initiatives featured separately within the department plan have been woven into the NCFS plan and are incorporated as either objectives or strategic actions.

Relationship to the NC Forest Action Plan

In June, 2010 the NC Forest Service, along with numerous partners, completed a comprehensive forest resource assessment for North Carolina. This state-wide assessment, along with its accompanying strategic plan and priority maps, was titled "North Carolina's

Forest Resources Assessment, 2010." It also came to be known as "North Carolina's Forest Action Plan, 2010." This comprehensive effort developed a broad and collective vision for protecting and enhancing North Carolina forest values and benefits over a five-year period.

This plan, developed by and for all partners and stakeholders with an interest in the future of North Carolina's forest resources, goes beyond what a single organization has the ability to influence, let alone accomplish. The NC Forest Acton Plan identifies numerous objectives and strategies to accomplish 7 broad goals. It has also served as a solid foundation and influence on the NC Forest Service's agency strategic plan. Many of the goals, objectives and strategies in the NC Forest Action Plan have been incorporated into the NCFS Strategic Plan in ways that are more focused on NCFS strengths, capabilities, and legislative responsibilities.

Glossary/Acronyms

Term	Definition
Act	Active
ATFS	American Tree Farm System
BMP	Best Management Practices
CARS	Community Accomplishment Reporting System
CC	Citizen Complaint
Cmp	Completed
CO	Central Office
CY	Calendar Year
ESF	Educational State Forest
FDP	Forest Development Program
FIA	Forest Inventory Analysis
FM	Forest Management
FM/FD	Forest Management and Forest Development
FPG	Forest Practice Guidelines
I&E	Information and Education
IC	Incident Commander
IMT	Incident Management Team
InC	In Compliance
IT	Information Technology
NC OSP	North Carolina Office of State Personnel
NCACF	North Carolina Association of Consulting Foresters
NCDA&CS	North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
NCFA	North Carolina Forestry Association

Term	Definition
NCFS	North Carolina Forest Service
NCSU	North Carolina State University
NInC	Not In Compliance
NPS	Non-Point Source
P&P	Policy and Procedure
SFY	State Fiscal Year
TAR	Total Accomplishment Database
USFS	United States Forest Service
USFS PMAS	United States Forest Service Performance Measurement Accountability System