

Beltrami County Forest Management Plan

Section I: Introduction

Beltrami County's Sustainable Forest Management Policy (LD-P1) was adopted by the County Board on May 2, 2006. That and other detailed operational policies can be accessed at the NRM offices.

Purpose

Beltrami County has been actively involved in the management of County-owned forest land for approximately 50 years. Throughout that time, forest managers have worked diligently to harvest the forest at sustainable levels. The purpose of this plan is to define the vision for county forest lands, the desired future forest condition, and the policies and strategies that the Natural Resource Management (NRM) Department will use to achieve that condition.

The plan will help guide staff in decision making and inform the public about the management of the County's forests. It is also a critical component of achieving third party certification for the management of County lands. This independent certification is critical for meeting the expectations of the public and the needs of the timber products market. Finally, all on-site decision making is subject to the *Sustaining Minnesota Forest Resources: Voluntary Site-Level Guidelines for Landowners, Loggers and Resource Managers* handbook. (www.frc.state.mn.us/FMgdline/Guidebook.html)

The Guiding Principles outlined here depict the starting point from which the staff began the planning process. These are the principle

Beltrami County Natural Resource Management Guiding Principles

Beltrami County Forest Lands will be managed for:

- Sustainable Harvest and Long Term Forest Health
- Managed Multiple Use
- Balanced Environmental, Social and Economic Values
- Financial Sustainability

values that are most frequently cited by the County Board, the public and NRM staff. This plan builds upon these guiding principles.

Scope

This plan covers the long term management of approximately 147,000 acres of County tax-forfeit forest land under the management control of the County Natural Resource Management (NRM) department. Located primarily in southern Beltrami County, this land is intermingled with private, state and federal land. Trends for development are primarily rural undeveloped, although some areas are increasingly located in developing, suburban and urbanizing areas of the County.

Forest management is a long-term endeavor. Planning today may not produce a desired outcome across a forest landscape for decades or hundreds of years. This plan addresses its desired future forest condition on a 60 year planning basis, with management objectives that will be appropriate.



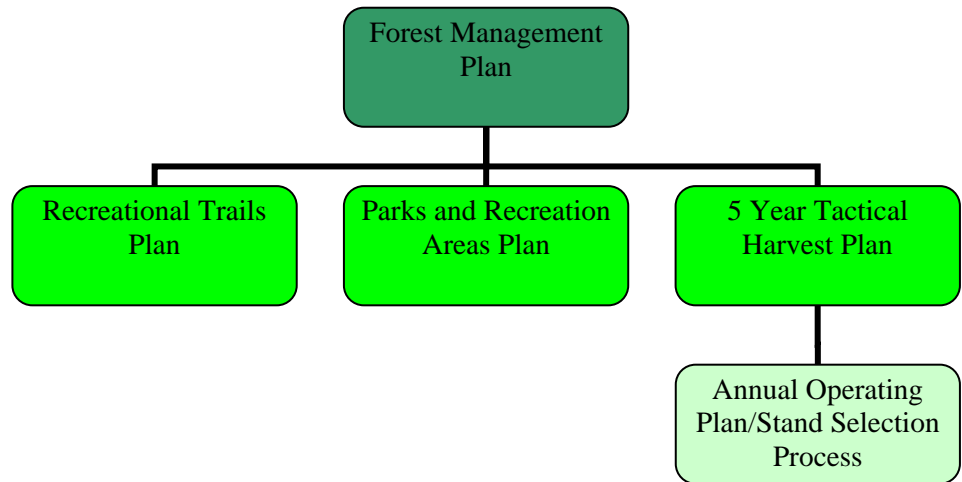
The County's Statement of Operational Commitments (LC-P2) provides the framework for balancing a range of public values in the forest and for accommodating change.



Turtle River in Three Island County Park

Additional 5-year tactical planning and annual work programming will be conducted utilizing the most up to date forest inventory information, by County foresters and staff regularly' during the course of implementing this long-range vision.

Beltrami County Forest Management Planning Structure



While every attempt has been made to include relevant planning-level information in this single document, not all information could be included. Considerable additional information is housed within the NRM department's databases, electronic and printed records, and policy manuals. Those records are a critical component of the planning process, and represent the most updated form of information for short-term planning and future updates to this long-range plan.

Process

The Beltrami County Forest Management planning process is geared toward helping the County achieve third party certification of its forest land management practices. Third party certification, in this case, means to meet either Sustainable Forestry Initiatives (SFI) and/or Forest Stewardship Council (SCI) standards, providing independent verification that forest management practices meet professional, sustainable standards. This verification process not only includes but goes beyond the Forest Management Plan to validate the adoption and implementation of specific management policies, office management procedures, and conducts third party audits of its practices.

The planning process used includes a number of steps, such as:

- Completion of an updated electronic inventory of the County Forest
- In-depth review of the current management of the forest and within each management district

- Development of a vision and goals for County forest management
- Identification of the strengths and weaknesses of the current management structure as it relates to achieving the county's forest management vision
- Review of Desired Future Forest Conditions (DFFC) identified for the North Central and Northern Landscape through a public input process
- Identification of a Desired Future Forest Condition (DFFC) that translates the vision into verifiable goals
- Creation of a computerized model that identifies harvest levels by species by district to achieve the DFFC.

Final adoption of the plan is at the consideration of the Beltrami County Board of Commissioners.