



What is the Minnesota Forest Resources Council?

The Minnesota Forest Resources Council (MFRC) is a 17-member organization working to promote long-term sustainable management of Minnesota's forests as directed by the Minnesota legislature in the Sustainable Forest Resources Act of 1995 (SFRA - Minnesota Statutes §89A).

What is the Council's purpose as stated in the SFRA?

- **Pursue the sustainable management, use, and protection** of the state's forest resources to achieve the state's economic, environmental, and social goals.
- **Encourage cooperation and collaboration** between public and private sectors in the management of the state's forest resources.
- **Recognize and consider forest resource issues, concerns, and impacts** at the site and landscape levels.
- **Recognize the broad array of perspectives** regarding the management, use, and protection of the state's forest resources, and establish processes and mechanisms that seek these perspectives and incorporate them into planning and management.

What does the Council do?

- **It advises the Governor and federal, state, county, and local governments on sustainable forest resource policies and practices.** Since 2001, the Council or Council staff has advised the Governor and/or legislature on the global competitiveness of the forest products industry, federal roadless areas, bioenergy, climate change, forestland taxation, and invasive species.
- **It develops and periodically revises site-level forest management guidelines** used by loggers and public and private forest owners statewide to assure sustainable forest resource management, use, and protection. The guidelines address wildlife habitat, soils, riparian areas, water quality, wetlands, aesthetics, and historic and cultural resources. Guidelines were produced in 1999, revised in 2005, and amended in January 2008 to include the first state-level guidelines in the U. S. for the sustainable removal of woody biomass for energy from forests, brushlands, and open lands.
- **Via regional committees, it develops and implements landscape plans for Minnesota's six major forested regions.** Since 1997, regional forest resource plans have been prepared for each four to eight million-acre region (Figure 1). The plans describe desired future conditions for the region's forests over a long-term horizon (up to 100 years). The plans also include shorter-term goals and strategies to guide efforts by landowners, forestry professionals, and industry, tribal, and agency managers in the sustainable management of each region's forest resources.
- **It supports forest resources research.** In 2008, the legislature directed the Council to fund \$500,000 in research projects relating to ecological and wildlife impacts of biomass harvest for energy and to state timber sale policy. The Council is also conducting a \$200,000 study on development of forestland and policy tools the legislature can use to address it.

Landscape-Level Forest Resource Management

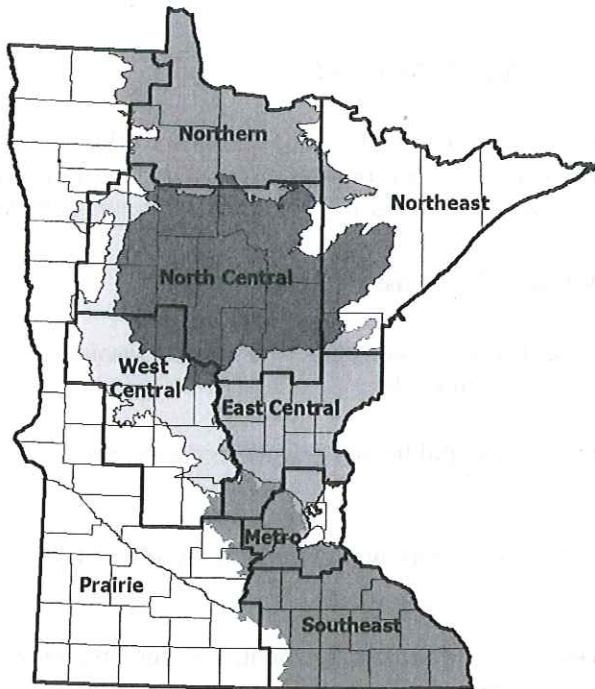


Figure 1: Landscape Regions. The MFRC divided the state into six major forested regions plus two other (metro and prairie) regions. Solid lines represent administrative boundaries; shaded areas represent ecological boundaries. Although regional borders follow county boundaries (represented by fine lines) to facilitate coordination among units of government, they also correspond closely with the borders of ecological regions.

What is the role of regional landscape committees?

Volunteer, citizen-based regional landscape committees are central to carrying out landscape management processes. Regional landscape committees provide an open public forum for diverse interests to cooperatively promote forest sustainability. By bringing together representative interests from landscape regions, the committees serve as springboards for effective forest management activities that address specific needs and challenges in each region.

How do the regional landscape committees implement their plans?

With the planning process in all six of the major forested landscapes completed, the Landscape Program is now focused on plan implementation. Regional committees meet on a regular basis to guide implementation of landscape plans and coordination of land management activities. The six committees are actively working to:

- **Encourage consideration of the landscape-level context** by all agencies, organizations, industry, and private landowners when developing their resource management plans and implementation projects.
- **Coordinate and support projects by partnering organizations** that promote sustainable forest management practices in the landscape region.
- **Develop and implement committee projects** that proactively address the goals and strategies outlined in the regional forest resource plans. Within the context of these plans, some wildlife habitat and related projects undertaken by private nonprofit and public agency partners would be likely candidates for Lessard Outdoor Heritage funding.
- **Monitor activities and outcomes** of projects implemented by the committees, as well as those by partnering organizations and landowners across the landscape region.