



## **SAF Strategic Plan and Suggested Actions 2008-2012**

(Version as of 1 December 2007)

### **Executive Summary**

The Society of American Foresters (SAF) seeks to achieve the following strategic outcomes to achieve its mission to (1) advance the science, education, technology, and practice of forestry, (2) enhance the competency of its members, (3) establish professional excellence, and (4) ensure the present and future availability of forest resources to benefit society. The Strategic Plan guides the action of SAF officers, committees, members, staff, and State/Multi-State Societies. Our SAF **strategic outcomes** are listed below, and detailed suggestions to achieve those objectives follow in the full description.

#### **Outcome #1: Be the Leading Professional Forestry Organization in the World**

SAF is recognized by all technical and research foresters as their primary professional Society that meets their needs for service, networking, and professional growth.

#### **Outcome #2: Provide Enhanced Service to Landowners and Employers**

SAF is an organization that promotes sound scientific and experiential knowledge to meet landowner and employer objectives.

#### **Outcome #3: Provide Enhanced Service to Society at Large**

SAF will be broadly recognized as the primary organization that fosters sound scientific and experiential forestry knowledge to balance society's current and emerging needs and values ranging from commodities to wilderness and protection of the environment.

#### **Outcome #4: Accomplish Effective Engagement in Forest Policy**

SAF will be recognized by decision-makers and in policy development as the leader in providing credible and reliable forestry information.

#### **Outcome #5: Enhance Professional Education, Performance, and Leadership**

SAF is recognized for having high professional forestry standards in service to society.

#### **Outcome #6: Ensure Development and Sound Stewardship of SAF's Resources**

SAF at all levels is recognized for conserving and enhancing its human, financial, and physical resources.



# SAF Strategic Plan and Suggested Actions 2008-2012

## Preamble

The Society's strategic plan is an overall guiding document for all units and all levels of SAF. Under the broad guidance of the 2008-2012 Strategic Plan, each unit should develop an annual plan of action. Council should continually share success stories among each other and with the State/Multi-State Society Chairs and Chairs-elect. *The Forestry Source* and the *E-Forester* should be used to highlight unit successes. National office staff should periodically contact State Society Chairs, Working Groups and key committee chairs to share ideas and ways they can collaborate.

## Background

*Because SAF must be responsive to member needs and must proactively meet rapidly changing expectations in both the profession and society at large, and*

*Given that SAF's **Mission** is to:*

- a) advance the science, education, technology, and practice of forestry*
- b) enhance the competency of members*
- c) establish professional excellence, and*
- d) use the knowledge, skills, and conservation ethic of the profession to ensure the continued health and use of forest ecosystems and the present and future availability of forest resources to benefit society,*

*And given that SAF's **Core Values** are:*

- a) forests are a fundamental source of global health and human welfare,*
- b) forests must be sustained through simultaneously meeting environmental, economic, and community aspirations and needs,*
- c) foresters are dedicated to sound forest management and conservation, and*
- d) foresters serve landowners and society by providing sound knowledge and professional management skills*

*Therefore SAF's **Strategic Plan** is comprised of the following **Strategic Outcomes** and associated **Basic Strategies** that will be addressed throughout all levels and component bodies of SAF. In particular, emphasis and support will be directed to developing the quality of activities and programs at the local level. The **Suggested Actions** provide guidance to the National Office, local and other units for focusing their programs and activities. Those actions should be identified by each SAF unit and the National Office. Each unit should develop their own Actions to suit local situations, volunteer capacity, budget, and priorities. Underlined items are considered critical for implementation and should be given strong consideration in developing Plans at the local level.*

## Strategic Outcomes, Goals, and Suggested Actions

### **Strategic Outcome #1: Be the Leading Professional Forestry Organization in the World**

SAF is recognized by all technical and research foresters, and natural resource professionals employed throughout the broad field of forestry, as their primary professional Society that meets their needs for service, networking, and professional growth.

#### *Goals:*

- Seek to achieve a profession with membership that is as diverse as society at large.
- Create an environment that welcomes and includes those having or developing specialized knowledge and experience in forestry.
- Target recruitment of students, graduates, and faculty associated with SAF recognized or accredited programs and retain them as members, and recruit other students who show an interest in joining the field of forestry.
- Promote professional excellence.
- Promote a vital and stimulating organization at all levels.
- Promote awareness of internal and external factors, and current and emerging issues, affecting society and the profession.
- Provide effective communication and mutual support among members.
- Provide a forum for open and civil discussion of philosophies and opinions.
- Identify opportunities for SAF members to participate in international forestry programs.
- Foster partnership between all SAF units and the National Office to attain strategic objectives.

#### *Suggested Actions:*

- Meet with forestry school deans and jointly develop strategies for introducing students and faculty to the benefits of SAF membership. (EVP and President)
- Establish annual, personal communication link between SAF national (i.e. either the Member Services Manager or Council representative) and student faculty advisors to investigate issues related to student involvement and membership and to share ideas on how to enhance student membership.
- Each State Society should track student members for one year after graduation, providing advice, encouragement and other assistance to help keep them in SAF.
- Engage SAF's World Forestry Committee, Working Groups, local units, and Council in discussions of future international forestry opportunities and needs.
- *Develop specific tactics to address membership recruitment and retention needs.*
- *Develop tactics and programs aimed at invigorating less-active chapters and working groups, and field well-qualified nominees for SAF recognition and leadership development opportunities.*
- *Make specific efforts to welcome and invite technician, undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and recent minority and women graduates to become SAF members.*
- *Continue diversity scholarship initiatives and incentives to provide potential and existing members opportunities to attend SAF events, meetings and conventions.*
- *Conduct dialogues and assess internal attitudes and perceptions about the broad field of forestry, seek active involvement of scientists and technical specialists in SAF products, publications and services so programs and activities are enhanced.*

## **Strategic Outcome #2: Provide Enhanced Service to Landowners and Employers**

SAF is an organization that promotes sound scientific and experiential knowledge to meet landowner and employer objectives.

### *Goals:*

- Enhance capacities to serve landowners and society with personal integrity, ethical behavior and accountability.
- Promote management that ensures the availability of sustainable supplies of timber and non-timber goods and services to meet expanding landowner and societal needs while sustaining diverse forest values.
- Promote direct benefits of SAF membership to employers of professional foresters.

### *Suggested Actions:*

- Discuss, with employers, clients, and partners, the benefits, value and opportunities SAF membership and programs provide to enhancing the services and expertise professional foresters bring to their work and employers and how these services could be further improved.
- Assist forest land owners, logging contractors, and forest industry employers in understanding and supporting the use of state-approved Best Management Practices, and implementing other recognized sustainable forest management practices.
- *Provide credible, reliable scientific information to landowners and employers on ecological, economic, and social issues and opportunities associated with sustainable forest management.*
- *Use SAF Working groups and Science structure to provide current relevant information to the public and employers through journals, technical meetings, and other means.*

## **Strategic Outcome #3: Provide Enhanced Service to Society at Large**

SAF will be broadly recognized as the primary organization that fosters sound scientific and experiential forestry knowledge to balance society's current and emerging needs and values ranging from commodities to wilderness and protection of the environment.

### *Goals:*

- Provide the public, educators, and decision-makers with current scientific information related to forestry.
- Gain broadly based public support by demonstrating that professional stewardship of forest resources is the most effective means to achieve a balance between people's needs from forests and society's environmental goals.
- Communicate our professional view regarding the importance of sustainably managing forest lands to policy makers, the news media, and the public.
- Expand local and national media exposure to the profession of forestry.
- Expand the cultural diversity of SAF communications themes and contacts.
- Expand the dialogue with environmental organizations, community groups, and elected officials.

*Suggested Actions:*

- Proactively use SAF's mission, core values, publications and Walk-In-the-Forest and Ask-A-Forester activities to show how the Society shares public values.
- Develop and strengthen media and editorial working relationships to profile SAF and how it helps solve contemporary professional forestry problems as well as provide societal benefits and respect values important to America and the world.
- Aggressively extend SAF's presence on the internet, as well as that of professional forest resource management in general.
- *Develop and present to teachers and youth groups, the concepts of sustainable forest management, conservation and professional forestry.*
- *Explore opportunities to develop public and private incentives for payments to forest landowners and entities for current non-market valued forest environmental services.*
- *Continue to enhance our participation in the broader natural resource, environmental and business communities so that society realizes the contribution SAF can make in helping solve problems in concert with partners and key leaders.*
- *Explore opportunities with urban foresters and elected officials to enhance SAF unit partnerships and progress in metropolitan cities and counties.*

**Strategic Outcome #4: Accomplish Effective Engagement in Forest Policy**

SAF will be recognized by decision-makers and in policy development as the leader in providing credible and reliable forest resource policy information.

*Goals:*

- Continue to develop and promote the new SAF-NASF Sustainable Forests policy initiative introduced in 2006.
- Expand the use of current, high-quality scientific and technical information in development of forest policy at the local, state, national, and international levels.
- Effectively engage and advocate in all important forestry-related public policy issues at the national, state, and local levels.
- Become a leader in policy development, communication, and delivery strategies for sustainable forest management systems.
- Work cooperatively with other natural resource professional organizations to better integrate management of forests and to strengthen the voice of the natural resource community.
- Represent and speak for the forestry profession and forest resource professionals in the policy context.

*Suggested Actions:*

- Assess how national and local policies are being utilized at the local levels. Determine opportunities for sharing the information with local leaders, related natural resources professional organizations, and the public.
- State/Local Policy Committees actively seek opportunities to use both National and Local policy statements to affect forest policy in their area.
- *Identify current and emerging forest science, management, policy, and conservation issues for which position statements or white papers are needed or which could form the basis*

*for local or regional conferences or workshops.*

- *Develop and present field programs to inform decision makers of the principles and practices of sound forest management.*
- *Enhance the Committee on Forest Policy, the Forest Science and Technology Board, and Working Group agreements to provide improved science information and involvement in SAF policy development and public communication and access to adopted SAF policies, their rationales, and practical policy and practitioner applications and impact.*
- *Provide SAF members and partners opportunities for policy training and experience to continue learning, designing effective dialogues and forums, and applying contemporary approaches in field trips and educational policy activities and events.*

## **Strategic Outcome #5: Enhance Professional Education, Performance, and Leadership**

SAF is recognized for having high professional forestry standards in service to society.

*Goals:*

- *Maintain and enhance standards for professional forestry education.*
- *Expand the use of current, high-quality scientific and technical information in professional education.*
- *Provide ethical awareness, education, and training at all levels of the organization.*
- *Foster a climate for life-long learning.*
- *Pro-actively champion credentialing programs involving forestry and its specialties with SAF members, policy makers, and the public.*
- *Continue the Leadership Academy as the foundation of SAF's leader training.*
- *Promote opportunities for leadership development and succession for all members.*

*Suggested Actions:*

- *Evaluate the needs and opportunities for long-distance learning, conferencing, and virtual committee meeting using electronic media. (EVP)*
- *Offer relevant technical and science-based state, chapter, and working group meetings for members to attend and maintain professional expertise and networks.*
- *Promote the involvement of student members in SAF units, working groups, and the national convention.*
- *Secure funding for, and member participation in, the Leadership Academy.*
- *Provide leadership training for local SAF members.*
- *Provide SAF Code of Ethics and Certified Forester training and educational forums for members, partners, and leaders.*
- *Work with states interested in using the Certified Forester program for credentialing forestry and its specialties.*
- *Encourage Working Groups to participate in national convention through the poster and technical sessions, and field trips.*
- *Promote Council, Forest Science & Technology Board, SAF units and local National Association of University Forest Resources Programs (NAUFRP) leader dialogues on challenges, opportunities, and needs for enhancing professional forestry and forest science in SAF and forestry and natural resource-based educational institutions.*

## **Strategic Outcome #6: Ensure Development and Sound Stewardship of SAF's Resources**

SAF at all levels is recognized for conserving and enhancing its human, financial, and physical resources.

### *Goals:*

#### All Levels:

- Value and respect colleagues and employees and their contributions to the organization.
- Develop non-dues ways and means of securing funds that support programs and activities that are aligned with SAF's mission.
- Develop methods that ensure sound budgeting, financial management, and reporting.

#### National Office:

- Offer competitive salary and benefits to employees.
- Provide stimulating work environment and growth opportunities.
- Foster a diverse workforce.
- Develop and implement a 5-year financial plan, updated annually.
- Enhance and maintain a national structured giving program.
- Develop investment guidelines providing safeguards to protect and use reserve funds.
- Continue to provide prudent oversight to managing SAF's property assets in Bethesda, Maryland

### *Suggested Actions:*

- *Conduct fund raising at state, local and national meetings, and emphasize SAF's planned giving program to achieve annual and long-range financial objectives that further SAF's mission and professional forestry objectives.*
- *Review current financial accounting and auditing systems for all SAF units.*
- *Implement a multi-year capital needs budget that effectively addresses Wild Acres and national office facility needs to protect SAF investments and facilities.*
- *Establish specific yearly and five-year revenue objectives that make progress towards strengthening yearly operating fund capabilities, enhancing and growing the SAF Science Fund, Foresters' Fund, and other dedicated funds to provide resources to implement the quality of SAF programs important to all SAF units and contributors.*
- *Implement strategy for the SAF Task Force on Volunteer Organizational Structure recommendations in concert with SAF members and units.*
- *Provide for leadership and development opportunities for SAF staff at the national, state, and local levels.*
- *Continue efforts to resolve the dispute with RNRFF as soon as is reasonable.*