

Rhode Island Tree Farm System

"The Sign of Good Forestry in Rhode Island since 1949"



Strategic Plan 2010-2015

Prepared for the
Rhode Island Tree Farm Committee
September 2010

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A project of the Rhode Island Tree Farm Committee.

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September 18, 2010

Dear Fellow Rhode Islander:

The Rhode Island Tree Farm System is part of the American Tree Farm System®- a program of the American Forest Foundation which is committed to sustaining forests, watershed and healthy habitats through the power of private stewardship. Our mission is *“To promote the growing of renewable forest resources on private lands while protecting environmental benefits and increasing public understanding of all benefits of productive forestry”*.

The American Tree Farm System (ATFS) was established in 1941 in response to concerns that America's private forests were being cut at unsustainable rates without reforestation. In 1941, the first Tree Farm was designated in Washington State. Since 1941, the American Tree Farm System (ATFS) has educated and recognized the commitment of private forest owners in the United States. Currently, ATFS has 24 million acres of privately owned forestland and 90,000 family forest owners who are committed to excellence in forest stewardship, in 46 states.

Rhode Island's Tree Farm program started later, in 1949, and has grown to include 178 Tree Farms covering 35,919 acres of the state. Our Tree farms range from the smallest (10 acres) to the largest, some 11,900 acres of forest land owned by the Providence Water Supply Board which protect the Scituate Reservoir system. ***A Tree Farm sign hangs on one out of every ten forested acres in Rhode Island!***

I am pleased to let you know that Rhode Island's Tree Farmers share a unique commitment to help conserve our state's private forests and the environmental benefits that these forests provide to our citizens. In addition, our private forests can also help create thousands of new green jobs in rural America, increase the nation's energy security by promoting greater use of renewable energy, and address the most pressing environmental challenge our nation faces—climate change. These individuals hold the key to the kinds of forests, forest activities and forest resources future generations of Rhode Islanders will enjoy.

Rhode Island's network of family forest owners, our conservation partners, and environmental educators, strive to create a future where Rhode Island's forests are sustained by a public which understands and values the social, economic, and environmental benefits they provide to our communities, our state, our nation, and the world.

Rhode Island's forests are one of our state's greatest natural resources. Please join me and the other Rhode Islanders Tree Farmers in conserving this “Green Hope” for future generations.

Sincerely,

John Macera, Chair
RI Tree Farm Committee

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INTRODUCTION

This document is the Strategic Plan (Plan), or long-range strategic plan, for the Rhode Island Tree Farm Program (RITF). This strategic plan is responsive to identified needs specific to the state of Rhode Island served by the Rhode Island Farm Program and Committee. This Plan was developed through a process to ensure that the unique needs and opportunities in our state were fully addressed. We solicited input through completion of the PEM Survey and later through workshops to form Goals, Objectives and Activities from the survey responses. A committee of Executive Committee Members, with assistance from the Rhode Island Resource Conservation Development Area Council (RIRC&D) in the form of the USDA-NRCS RC&D Coordinator, worked hard to facilitate the process and ultimately develop this Plan. The Rhode Island counties served by this Plan include Providence, Washington, Kent and Bristol/Newport.

The purpose of this Plan is to provide a strategic direction for the Rhode Island Tree Farm Committee, to ensure that our resources are properly invested in our state and communities. This Plan helps us to remain responsive to our members and collaborative in our efforts. Since our state is dynamic, this Plan is dynamic and will evolve as needs emerge. While the Goals, Objectives and Activities contained in this plan are fairly comprehensive, they will be re-evaluated annually and implemented through an Annual Plan of Work.

The RI Tree Farm System (RITFS) is part of the American Tree Farm System (ATFS) and was established in 1949. The purpose of the American Tree Farm Program (ATFS) is to recognize the commitment of private family forest landowners in the United States who are committed to excellence in forest stewardship and share a unique commitment to protect wildlife habitat and watersheds, to conserve soil and to provide recreation for their communities while producing forest products for America. Today, ATFS has certified 24 million acres of privately owned forestland and over 90,000 family forest owners who are committed to excellence in forest stewardship, in 46 states. The RITFS has grown to include 178 Tree Farms covering 35,919 acres of the state. Our Tree Farms range from the smallest (10 acres) to the largest, some 11,900 acres of forest land owned by the Providence water Supply Board to protect the Scituate Reservoir system.

The American Forest Foundation (AFF) administers the American Tree Farm System program. This Plan serves as an agreement between AFF, ATFS, the Rhode Island Tree Farm Committee, and our members. We are committed to promoting the sustainable management of Rhode Island private forestlands for the benefit of all Rhode Islanders.

For more information on the Rhode Island Tree Farm Program, please contact us at:

Web: www.ritreefarm.org

Email: info@rifco.org

Tel: (401) 568-3421

TREE FARM OVERVIEW

WHAT IS TREE FARMING?

"The term "tree farming" was first used in the 1940's to introduce the public to sustainable forestry terminology they could easily understand. Farming implies continual stewardship and production of goods year after year. By linking the term "farming" with trees, foresters could communicate the concept of sustainable production of forest products over time. Tree Farming implies commitment to the land and was the philosophical opposite of the "cut-out and get-out" philosophy of the early 20th century.

Tree Farms are more than pine plantations or Christmas tree farms. Tree Farms are varied in nature and contain many different habitats and stages of forest regeneration, from seedlings to mature timber. Biodiversity is a critical component of a certified Tree Farm. Tree Farmers must maintain natural forest buffers and other aspects of conservation techniques.

THE AMERICAN TREE FARM SYSTEM (NATIONAL)

The American Tree Farm System® (ATFS), a program of the American Forest Foundation's Center for Family Forests, is committed to sustaining forests, watershed and healthy habitats through the power of private stewardship.

Since 1941, ATFS has educated and recognized the commitment of private family forest landowners in the United States. Currently, ATFS has certified 24 million acres of privately owned forestland and over 90,000 family forest owners who are committed to excellence in forest stewardship, in 46 states. Supported by 46 state Tree Farm Committees, and 4,400 volunteer foresters from the public and private sectors, ATFS comprises 87,000 family forest owners who, together, manage more than 23 million acres under the widely recognized green and white Tree Farm sign.

Tree Farmers share a unique commitment to protect wildlife habitat and watersheds, to conserve soil and to provide recreation for their communities while producing wood for America. These individuals hold the key to the kinds of forests, forest activities and forest resources future generations of Americans will enjoy.

ATFS has established standards and guidelines for property owners to meet to become a Certified Tree Farm. Under these standards and guidelines, private forest owners must develop a management plan based on strict environmental standards and pass an inspection by an ATFS volunteer forester every five years.

Water. Wildlife. Recreation. Wood. The four sides of the Tree Farm sign tell the story of sustainable forestry ... a thriving forestland that has clean water, a healthy wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities. Our green and white diamond shaped Tree Farm signs are widely recognized across the country.



Clean Water is a RI Tree Farm Product



American Forest Foundation

The American Forest Foundation (AFF) is a nonprofit 501(C)(3) conservation and education organization that strives to ensure the sustainability of America’s family forests for present and future Generations. The organization's vision is to create a future where North American forests are sustained by the public which understands and values the social, economic, and environmental benefits they provide to our communities, our nation, and our world.

Certification System - assuring through periodic on-site re-inspection by forestry professionals that properties continue to be managed in accordance with Tree Farm Standards. Ours is the oldest such system in the world, with thousands of properties now under the ownership of second, even third-generation owners. Tree Farm standards have been updated to conform to latest benchmarks for sustainability, by an independent standards review panel.



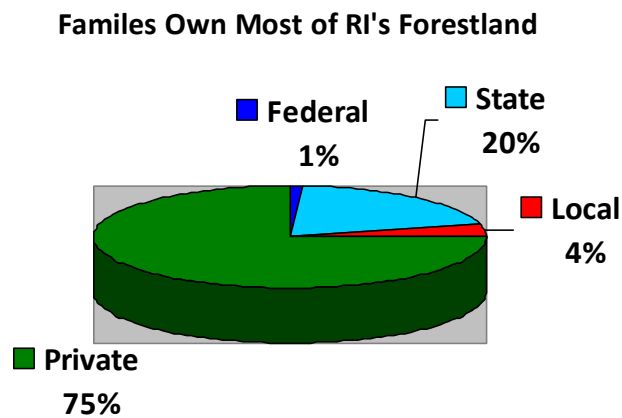
ATFS is endorsed by the world's largest forest certification organization



BACKGROUND: TREE FARM IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Owners of the largest blocs of forestland have, in one way or another, already set themselves on a path toward long-term sustainability – through law, regulation or, in the case of industrial owners, through voluntary efforts like the Sustainable Forestry Initiative.SM Industrial owners also participate in large easement and property transfers to protect green space.

Private individuals own most of the forestland in Rhode Island – roughly 34,000 individuals and families who together own 302 thousand acres of forests. This chunk of forestland amounts to nearly 75 percent all forested land in Rhode Island.



Put another way, most of the forests, watersheds, most of the headwaters, most of the lake shore, stream-sides and ponds – is in large measure owned by ordinary citizens. Their stewardship behavior ... what they do in the woods or don't do ... will have profound impact on our ability to sustain these

landscapes over time. Shaping stewardship behavior among such a broad and diverse population will demand aggressive and creative outreach strategies.

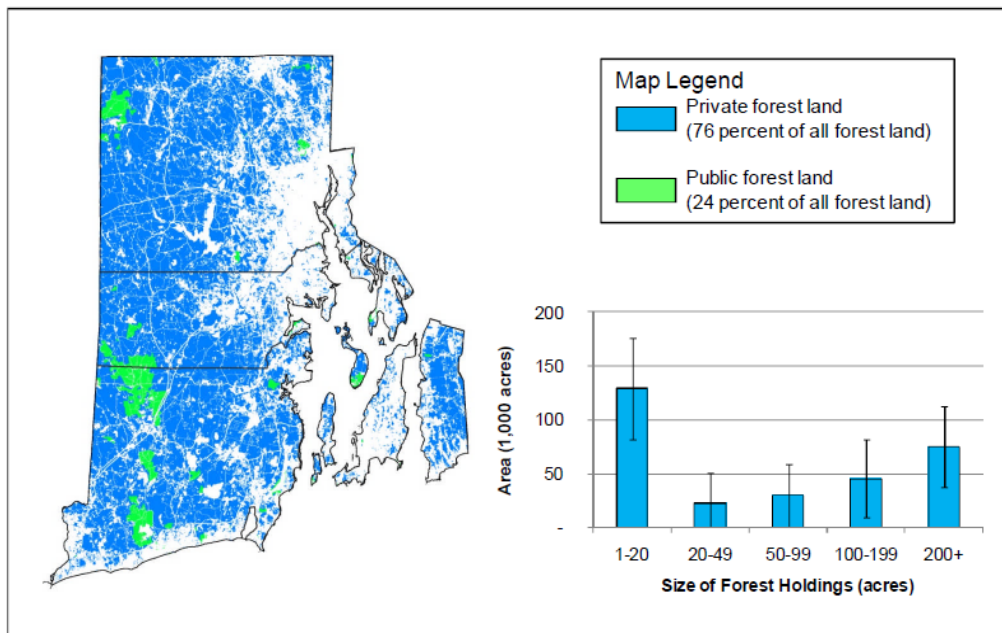
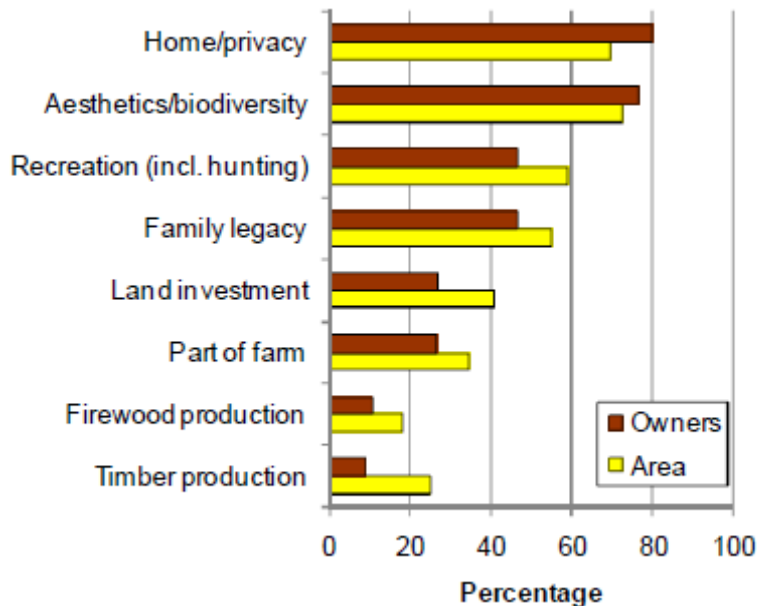


Figure 4. – Area of forest land by major owner group and size of private forest landholding.

PROFILE OF THE 21ST CENTURY FOREST OWNER

Very few of the people who own forest land are in the “business” of growing timber – less than three percent. Few are farmers – about eight percent. Most forest owners cite aesthetics, wildlife and outdoor recreation as their primary objectives for their land – if they have any concrete objectives at all.



Area and number of family forests in southern New England by reason for owning forest land. Source: USDA Forest Service Northern Research Station. Rhode Island's Forest Resources, 2007

Now, only five percent of current forest owners have a purposeful, written plan in place that sets out how they want their forests to be managed. Fewer than 20 percent consult a professional forester before they harvest timber.

Why is this problem? Because, most owners ultimately do cut trees. How they do it, when they do it, where they do it and how much they are willing to reinvest in stewardship of their lands is almost always a function of whether they've planned ahead. If forest owners don't have cash flow from their trees, it makes it all the more difficult to say “no” when a developer offers big money to put houses and subdivisions where wild turkey once roamed.

Sustaining forested landscapes, then, depends on getting more sustainable forestry on more acres. And that depends on getting more landowners to think purposefully about what to do with their woodlands.

COMPLICATING FACTORS: FRAGMENTATION, DEMOGRAPHICS AND CHANGING VALUES

A lot more people own forestland than in the past. Between 1978 and 1997, the number of folks who owned small tracts of 10 to 100 acres increased by 114 percent. Between now and 2010, that number will increase another 50 percent. By then, 95 percent of privately-owned forests and 38 percent of all the private acreage will be in tracts of less than 100 acres.

Looked at another way, every year for the next ten a Connecticut-sized hunk of land [about three million acres] will break down from larger forests into smaller forests of less than 100 acres (Birch 1994, Sampson and DeCoster, 1999).

And Rhode Island is not immune from these issues. The area of forest land in Rhode Island has decreased from 404,000 acres in 1972 to 365,000 acres in 2006 (Fig. 1).

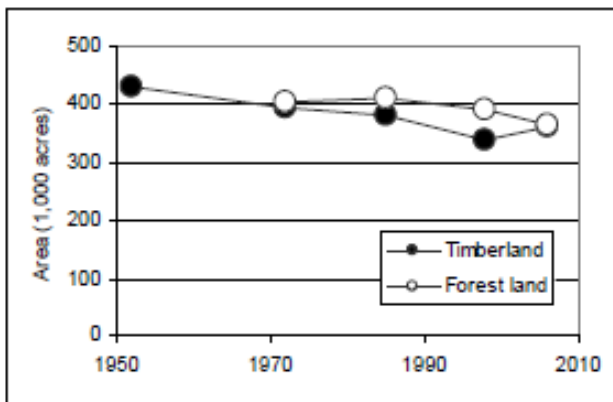


Figure 1.—Area of timberland and forest land by year.

This is a 10 percent net reduction in the area of forest land. Forest loss will continue to be one of the major issues facing the forests of Rhode Island for the foreseeable future. These net changes represent only part of the land-use change story. Between 1998 and 2006, 54,000 acres of forest land were lost to residential, commercial, and other developed uses; another 27,000 acres were converted to other uses, such as rights-of-way and recreational fields (Fig. 6).

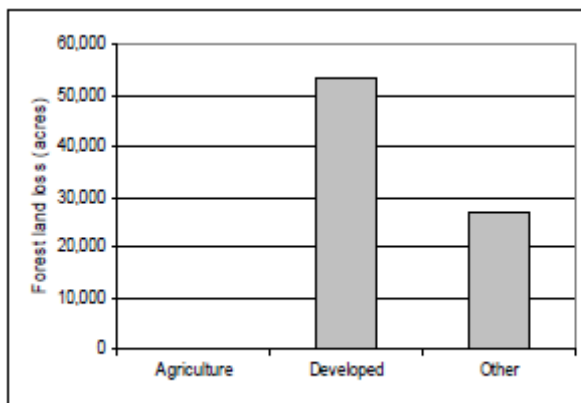


Figure 6.—Estimated area of forest land lost between 1998 and 2006 by current land use

Fragmentation like this complicates planning. Where 50 landowners might have “owned” 1,000 acres forestland twenty years ago, today 110 might share control of that forest land. In ten years, it might be 160. More decision makers, with more of them living away from the property – makes it difficult to plan and carry out comprehensive landscape-level forest conservation projects.

This vast intergenerational transfer of property also means that today’s forest owners are different from yesterdays – and tomorrow’s will be different still.

- Some will be attuned to market-based programs like certification. Others will respond to the increased pride and pleasure they derive from ownership – when their stewardship efforts are publicly acknowledged and recognized.
- For a growing majority of owners, wildlife, water, habitat and recreation values will often exert the greatest pull on the kinds of decisions they make about their land.
- Most will not be living on their property. Where people 50 years ago might gather at the Grange to talk about their land, today’s forest owners are more likely to be at a local coffee shop – and they’re not likely to be talking about trees.
- Many will be disconnected from traditional channels of rural outreach and communication – by virtue of racial and cultural differences, or because their media habits echo broader social trends.
- In the main, education and technical assistance will continue as powerful tools for change. Peer-to-peer contact will remain an important channel through which this information will flow – because the most commonly reported source of information about forestry for landowners is other landowners (Baldwin and Haymond, 1994).
- The private forest landowner audience has exploded in size, and grown increasingly diverse while, at the same time, the pool of forestry professionals to “staff” these programs – from companies, consultancies and public agencies – has shrunk.

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

HISTORY OF TREE FARMING IN RHODE ISLAND

The American Tree Farm System (ATFS) was established in 1941 in response to concerns that America's private forests were being cut at unsustainable rates without reforestation. In 1941, the first Tree Farm was designated in Washington State. The Tree Farm's purpose was to demonstrate sound forest management practices to area landowners.

Rhode Island's Tree Farm program started later, in 1949. The first six (6) Tree Farms in the state were recognized a ceremony on Friday, September 16th, 1949 at the property of Rhode Island's first Tree Farmer, Walter Kenyon of Hopkinton, Rhode Island. Governor John O. Pastore presented each of the six Tree Farmers with their certificates.

*State Honors
'Tree Farmers'
At Hopkinton*

*Program of Woodlands
Culture Gets Start in
Rhode Island*

Rhode Island's tree farm program, designed to increase the economic and recreational values of the state's woodlands, officially came into existence in a shady oak glade in Hopkinton yesterday.

Six farmers, one of them from virtually treeless Black Island, draw special honors for their work through the years to improve the quality of their wooded acres. Each of their farms was designated a "Rhode Island Tree Farm."

The six are the vanguard of what the State Department of Agriculture and Conservation and the State Agricultural Extension Service believe will become a strong, purposeful unit—made up of every farmer in the state with barren wasteland or neglected woodland in his holdings.

Gov. John O. Pastore, who presented each of the six "tree farmers" a certificate, told a group of conservationists, agricultural leaders, state officials and interested visitors that these first "tree farmers" through their efforts have given a

Continued on Page 10, Column 6

October 22, 1949



Governor John O. Pastore of Rhode Island congratulates Walter D. Kenyon of Hopkinton for being the first Tree Farmer in the State at dedication exercises held on Mr. Kenyon's woodland farm. Others in the photo are, from left, Ernest Westcott, Edward Vock, Christie Houston of Peace Dale (standing behind Governor Pastore) who received the citation for T. Pierpont Hazard in the latter's absence in Europe, A. M. Stearns and W. Earl Dodge.

THE FIRST
RHODE ISLAND TREE FARM
DEDICATION

through their efforts have given a
Continued on Page 10, Column 6

PROGRAM



Walter D. Kenyon's Farm
Hopkinton, R. I.

Friday, September 16, 1949 9:00 P.M.

Presentation of Certificates

Mr. Homer D. Stuart, Co-Chairman -- Director, R.I. Agriculture Extension
His Excellency the Governor, John G. Pastore

Receiving the first certificates are:

Mr. Walter D. Kenyon, Hopkinton, R.I. Mr. A.M. Stearns, Alicenton, R.I.
Mr. Earl Dodge, Block Island Mr. Edward Vock, Surriliville, R.I.
Mr. Thomas P. Hassard, Peace Dale, R.I. Mr. Ernest Westcott, Lincoln, R.I.

Address:

Mr. Francis Leaver, Co-Chairman -- Director, R.I. Dept. of Agriculture & Conservation
U.S. Representative, John E. Fogarty



Rhode Island's oldest continuously active Tree Farm is owned by the Greene Company (Tree Farm #15) and was certified on May 1, 1951.



Henry Arnold of the Greene Company (Courtesy of the Greene Company)



Today, the RITFS has grown to include 178 Tree Farms covering 35,919 acres of the state. Our Tree Farms range from the smallest (10 acres) to the largest, some 11,900 acres of forest land owned by the Providence Water Supply Board to protect the Scituate Reservoir system.



Scituate High School Tree Farm, 2010



Providence Water's Scituate Reservoir is our largest Tree Farm

Since 1949, the Rhode Island Tree Farm Program has educated and recognized the commitment of private forest owners in our state.

Rhode Island's Tree Farmers share a unique commitment to protect wildlife habitat and watersheds, to conserve soil and to provide recreation for their communities while producing wood for America. These individuals hold the key to the kinds of forests, forest activities and forest resources, future generations of Rhode Islanders will enjoy.

STATE TREE FARM COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

SPONSORSHIP

At the national level, the Rhode Island Tree Farm program is sponsored by the American Forest Foundation, and supported through the cooperative efforts of forest products companies, organizations and individuals interested in the sustainable development and management of the state's forest resources.

The local sponsors of the RITFS are the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management – Division of Forest Environment (RIDEM), the Rhode Island Forest Conservators Organization (RIFCO), and the Providence Water Supply Board (PWSB).



STATE TREE FARM COMMITTEE

Membership is open to any interested individual who can contribute to the advancement of forest management through the Tree Farm concept. There is no specific number of members recommended to serve on the RI Tree Farm Committee. Individuals may continue to serve as long as they maintain an active interest, or as otherwise provided for by the committee.

1. **The current Committee membership includes:**

- Active Tree Farmers
- State Forestry Agency Leader(s)
- State Forestry Association Executive(s)
- Industry Representation
- Consulting Forester Representation
- Society of American Foresters (SAF) Local Chapter
- NRCS Forester Representation

- Project Learning Tree State Coordinator
- Conservation organization representative
- Public Water Supply Agency

2. OFFICERS

The Tree Farm committee includes the following elected officers: chair, chair-elect or vice chair, secretary-treasurer. The term of office is two years for all officers. It is recommended that the chair-elect or vice chair succeed the present chair at the first regular meeting of the Tree Farm committee every other year. As soon as this succession takes place, elections are held to elect a new chair-elect and a new secretary-treasurer.

3. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Tree Farm committee appoints an executive committee comprising the chair, chair-elect, secretary-treasurer and executive(s) of the cosponsoring organization(s). The executive committee is responsible for guiding the program and authorizing interim expenditures of Tree Farm funds as necessary.

4. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR (RIFCO)

The Rhode Island Forest Conservators Organization (RIFCO) currently serves the designated Program Administrator to handle tasks such as Tree Farmer and volunteer database management, mailing lists, 004 Form filing and management, field information requests from Tree Farmers and volunteers, ordering of materials, logo items and signs. RIFCO is a co-sponsoring organization and, as part of their mission, spend an adequate portion of their time administering the state's Tree Farm program. In addition to RIFCO, RIDEM – Division of Forest Environment, Providence Water, the RI Chapter of the Society of American Foresters, USDA-NRCS, and dedicated volunteers assist with carrying out these program responsibilities.

5. MEETINGS

Regular meetings are called by the chair, preferably at a time, date and location agreed upon at the previous meeting. Meeting notices and agendas are prepared and distributed in advance by the secretary at the direction of the chair.

The full Tree Farm committee meets at least twice each year, and sometimes more frequently. Committee meetings can consist of both face to face meetings and conference calls. Meetings are utilized to discuss Tree Farm policy, use of funds, general administrative matters, developing incentives for inspecting foresters, discussing and outlining action to be taken, or for any other purpose which will utilize the full capabilities of the committee members in promoting private forest management.

Minutes of committee action are promptly prepared and distributed by the secretary-treasurer.

A year-end financial report is required for audit purposes, and must be submitted prior to the release of pass-through funding for the following year.

TREE FARM INSPECTORS

All registered or graduate professional foresters are invited to become Tree Farm inspectors, and must attend an Inspector Training Workshop to be instructed in Tree Farm procedures. Facilitators have been trained by AFF to carry out these workshops in most states. Official inspection forms, instructions and a copy of the current Tree Farm Inspector manual will be supplied by AFF through the state Tree Farm committee.

Within his/her particular working area, every inspecting forester is encouraged to initiate and conduct new inspections of properties which may qualify as Tree Farms. Requests from landowners for certification should be referred to the appropriate division chair who, in turn, should assign them to an inspecting forester for action. Active Tree Farm Inspectors receive a complimentary subscription to Tree Farmer magazine.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

RITF is committed to creating a future where the state's and nation's forests are sustained by a public which understands and values the social, economic, and environmental benefits they provide to our communities, our nation, and the world.

The Rhode Island Tree Farm Program (RITF) is committed to increasing the amount of good forestry on Rhode Island's family forestlands and keeping it there.

1. Our Vision

Sustaining forests, watersheds, and healthy habitats through the power of stewardship of private lands.

2. Mission

To promote the growing of renewable forest resources on private lands while protecting environmental benefits and increasing public understanding of all benefits of forest conservation and sustainable forestry.

3. Core Principles

- 3.1 The passion of our Tree Farmers and volunteers is our greatest asset and will be protected above all else.
- 3.2 Family forest owners deserve a favorable social climate to practice sustainable forestry
- 3.3 Voluntary education and recognition produces the greatest long-term impact for sustaining family forests.

4. Core Ideals

- 4.1 The health and well-being of Rhode Island's family forests is our goal.
- 4.2 We will work to reach Rhode Island's family forest owners and educate them about sustainable forestry.
- 4.3 Rhode Island's family forest owners have the right to practice sustainable forestry.
- 4.4 We will help family forest owners manage their forests consistent with their goals while ensuring the environmental integrity of the forest.

- 4.5 We will recognize and reward family forest owners for their outstanding demonstrations of commitment to practice sustainable forestry.

5. Core Challenges

- 5.1 Tree Farm System currently serves only 200 out of the 20,000 eligible tree farm families.
- 5.2 The ability of professional foresters to do inspections, reinspections, and landowner outreach on a volunteer basis is declining and is a primary constraint to the growth of the Tree Farm program.
- 5.3 Forest Certification programs are still in the process of seeking a balance between market demands for rigor and landowner demands for cost effectiveness.
- 5.4 The growth of certification as a core process for Tree Farm System has in some cases overshadowed or become a substitute for our education and outreach mission.
- 5.5 Increasing Development Pressure — Since 1985, RI has lost 48,500 acres of forest land to developed land uses.
- 5.6 Shrinking Size of Forest Tracts—As forest tracts become smaller, their ability to provide goods and services, such as clean water, forest products, wildlife habitat , recreational opportunities, diminishes.
- 5.7 Property & Estate Taxes — Taxes often make it unaffordable for families to continue forest ownership.
- 5.8 Aging Forest Owners - The average age of family forest owners is 60+ years. Consequently, a significant portion of family forest may soon change hands , often resulting in splitting forest into smaller pieces.
- 5.9 Inadequately Funded State Forestry Agencies— Dramatically reduced funding for state forestry agencies (RIDEM & URI) reduce important sources of technical and financial assistance for private landowners.

6. Core Opportunities

- 6.1 Drinking Water Supply — Forests protect watersheds, aquifers, and groundwater supplies that provide the bulk of our clean drinking water. 75% of Rhode Islanders get their drinking water from reservoirs protected by forests.

- 6.2 Healthy Rural Economies — Working forests provide jobs, forest products, recreation, tourism, hunting and fishing income to forest owners and the communities in which they live.
- 6.3 Climate Regulation & Clean Air — For every ton of wood a forest grows, about 1.5 tons of carbon dioxide are removed from the air, stored in forests and replaced with 1.1 tons of oxygen.
- 6.4 Energy - Forests have the tremendous potential to provide renewable energy solutions to rural America
- 6.5 Recreation — Forests provide countless recreation opportunities and income in the form of camping, fishing, hiking, etc.
- 6.6 Biodiversity & Endangered species — Almost 90% of the endangered species depend on forest for the habitat they provide.
- 6.7 Wildlife — RI's forests provide habitat for hundreds of species of wildlife including: 48 species of mammals, 130 species of birds, 48 species of freshwater fish, 19 amphibians and 20 species of reptiles.
- 6.8 Emerging Markets – The role of the forest in climate change through carbon sequestration and as an alternative source of renewable energy may provide new economic opportunities to forest owners.
- 6.9 Regional Forest Conservation Initiatives- There is a strengthening interest in regional, landscape approaches to forest conservation. Initiative such as the New England Governor's Conference Landscape Conservation proposal, the Wildlands and Woodlands Initiative, and the Rhode Island Borderlands Project create opportunities for new partnerships to promote forest conservation.

POLICY STATEMENT ON COMPLINACE WITH ANTITRUST LAWS

Fair and vigorous competition is essential to the maintenance of this country's free enterprise system. In furtherance of this principle, all activities are to be conducted in strict compliance with antitrust laws. Staff, officers, directors, members, and committee members are reminded that they are required to comply with the spirit and requirements of the antitrust laws.

A free exchange of ideas on matters of mutual interest to representatives of the forest community and others is necessary for the success of all meetings. Such an exchange of views is essential to the success of each meeting. It is not the purpose of this policy to discourage the exploration in depth of any matters of legitimate concern to meeting participants. Nevertheless, to ignore certain antitrust ground rules, either through ignorance or otherwise, is to create a hazard business people cannot afford.

The Sherman Antitrust Act, the Clayton Act, the Federal Trade Commission Act, and the Robinson-Patman Act compromise the basic federal antitrust laws, which set forth the broad areas of conduct considered illegal as restraints of trade. In general, agreements or understandings between competitors that operate as an impediment to free and open competition are forbidden. The broad language of the Clayton Act suggests the scope of federal antitrust prohibitions by forbidding any "agreement or understanding . . . to substantially lessen competition or trend to create a monopoly in any line of commerce."

This is, at best, only a general outline of some of the areas that pose antitrust dangers in discussions between competitors and between sellers and their customers. They are provided to guide discussion during meetings, and in connection with social or other gatherings on those occasions.

If any question arises about an item on a meeting agenda, it should be reviewed by legal counsel before the meeting. If the question does not arise until the meeting has begun, or if a questionable topic is about to be discussed in connection with any gathering, whether or not a formal meeting, that discussion should be immediately stopped and not resumed until approved by legal counsel.

TREE FARM COMMITTEE MEMBERS INVOLVED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PLAN

OFFICERS

John A. Macera, President, Tree Farmer

Thomas Abbott, Vice-President, Senior Forester, RIDEM-Division of Forest Environment

Ron Fasano, Secretary, Tree Farmer

Thomas Armstrong, Treasurer, Retired Forester, RIDEM- Division of Forest Environment

STRATEGIC PLAN COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Ron Fasano, Tree Farmers

Paul C. Dolan, Deputy Chief, RIDEM-Division of Forest Environment

Paul Boisvert, President, RIFCO

Hans T. Bergey, Consulting Forester

Rob MacMillan, Forester, Providence Water

Marc J. Tremblay, RIFCO

COUNCIL SPONSORS

Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

Rhode Island Forest Conservators Organization

Providence Water

USDA NRCS LIAISON

Christopher F. Modisette, State Staff Forester and RC&D Coordinator

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES

The process involved in the development of this strategic plan involved several steps which included:

1. The RI Tree Farm Committee held a workshop on May 27, 2009 to conduct the Tree Farm Performance Evaluation Matrix (PEM) exercise;
2. Submission of a grant proposal to the American Forest Foundation's American Tree Farm System (AFFATFS) under its 2009 Capacity Building grant to fund implementation of the findings from the PEM exercise;
3. Receipt of General Capacity Building grant from AFFATFS for the purpose, in part, of developing a strategic plan; and
4. Implementation of the strategic planning process and approval by the RI Tree Farm Committee.

1. Performance Evaluation Matrix: A Process for Self-Assessment (Appendix C)

On May 27, 2009, the RI Tree Farm Committee held a workshop at the NRCS Conference Room, 60 Quaker Lane, Warwick, RI, to conduct the Tree Farm Performance Evaluation Matrix (PEM) exercise.

The Best Management Practices Self-Assessment Tool is intended to help Tree Farm programs at the state level identify key areas of their operation that are functioning well and others that may need strengthening. By using this tool, a Tree Farm committee can identify important management practices that need attention and begin the discussion of how to effect the necessary improvements. The results of this process should benefit the organization's long term plan and annual work plan.

In attendance were: John Macera, Chair; Thomas Abbott, Vice-Chair; Ronald Fasano, Secretary; Marc Tremblay, RIFCO Outreach Coordinator; Christopher F. Modisette, RI RC&D Council; Hans T. Bergey, forestry consultant.

The group decided to use Collaborative Response Approach. The group completed the self-assessment as a group, using a collaborative approach. Each item was discussed a group, until they reached consensus about how to rate it. To record their decisions, the group utilized a process which involved the display of the PEM on a screen and an interactive discussion of each point in the PEM, with a group consensus of the rating and responses for each item. This completed PEM can be found in Appendix C.

A. Summary of PEM Exercise

The following describes the findings of the group PEM exercise;

a. *Identified Strengths:*

- Wide range of stakeholders on Tree Farm Committee
- Tree Farmers are in leadership roles
- Tree Farm Committee meets on a regular basis
- Annual reports are submitted to AFF
- Budget and analysis are done on a regular basis
- State Tree Farm Website on-line, and Tree Farm page in RIFCO newsletter
- O&E opportunities for Tree Farmers are available directly and through partners (RIFCO, DFE, RC&D, etc.)
- OTFY Award presented annually, and P-R conducted for awardee
- Required Inspections are completed annually, and entered into database

b. *Areas for Improvement:*

- Diversity of State Tree Farm Committee members
- Records maintenance and administration
- Bylaws availability in doubt
- MOU's with co-sponsors outdated
- No succession plan for Tree Farm Committee leadership
- Informal goal evaluation
- No long-term strategic plan
- Communications inconsistent
- Need more input and line of communications between Tree Farmers and Committee.
- No Inspector or volunteer awards/recognition
- Need PEFC audit awareness
- Marginal effort at advocacy, typically in cooperation with other groups, no identity of Tree Farm program in advocacy efforts.

c. *Possible Specific Actions:*

- Acquire administrative assistance to organize Tree Farm records, update bylaws and MOU's, etc. Future of office space at the RI DFE HQ is in question. Alternate site to store records should be part of this effort.
- Improve the Tree Farm page in the RIFCO newsletter to raise awareness of certification, audits, plan updates, website availability, and to establish a

better line of communications between Tree Farmers and Committee/volunteers

- Increase recognition of Tree Farm volunteers and Inspectors through periodic awards and incentives
- Establish monthly e-news for Tree Farm Committee, volunteers, and Tree Farmers.

d. Resource Needs:

In order to accomplish the above actions, an administrative/communications grant to a qualified person will be required. Records storage and organizational materials will be needed to support this effort. Since the Tree Farm newsletter page and the website are linked with the RIFCO outreach program, a cooperative effort between the Tree Farm Committee and RIFCO will be required.

2. 2009 Capacity Building Grant

The Rhode Island Tree Farm Committee (Committee) received a Capacity Building Grant (Grant) from The American Forest Foundation to increase leadership skills, improve infrastructure and build capacity to strengthen our state program.

The grant was the result of a program Performance Evaluation (Evaluation) that was undertaken by the Committee in May 2009. The Evaluation was used to identify program strengths and areas for needed improvement.

The Evaluation identified three areas of improvement for the Committee which included:

1. Records maintenance and administration;
2. No succession plan for TF Committee leadership; and
3. No long-term strategic plan

In order to address the recommended improvement, the Committee applied for and received the previously referenced Grant. Specifically the grant provides funding to accomplish the following tasks:

Task 1: Development of a 5-year strategic plan for future leadership and improved level of volunteerism;

Task 2: Updating our administrative processes, including MOU's with sponsors, bylaws, and records storage is required as part of this process to allow us to proceed legitimately into the future; and

Task 3: Improvement of communications amongst volunteers, the Committee, and Tree Farmers will be developed as part of the Outreach component of the strategic plan.

3. Strategic Planning Process

The following steps briefly describe the strategic planning process.

- a. Under the terms of the Capacity Building grant, The RI Tree Farm Committee hired a consultant (Mr. Paul Boisvert) to coordinate specific components of the grant;
- b. Chris Modisette, State Staff Forester with USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service agreed to facilitate and coordinate the strategic planning process with Mr. Boisvert;
- c. At its May 2010 meeting, the RI Tree Farm Committee authorized the formation of a strategic planning committee and set a timeline for completion of the plan;
- d. The strategic planning committee met on June 2010 to review the PEM exercise and develop draft goals and objectives;
- e. Draft Goals and Objectives were put compiled by Mr. Modisette and Mr. Boisvert in July and forwarded to the strategic planning committee and Tree Farm Committee members for comments;
- f. The Committee met on August 18, 2010 to review and finalize the Goals and Objectives and Draft Plan Document;
- g. The Final Draft was forwarded to the full Tree Farm Committee on September 2010 for final review;
- h. The Strategic Plan was submitted to the Tree Farm Committee at its regularly scheduled meeting on September 16, for approval.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Tree Farm standards require that all Goals, Objectives and Activities be SMART, or Specific, Measurable, Agreed Upon, Realistic, and Time bound.

Specifically, Tree Farm describes Goals, Objectives and Activities as follows:

1. Goal:

A broad statement that answers the question, "What does your organization hope to accomplish?" Goals are general, conceptual, and abstract. Goals that are supported by measurable objectives become self-fulfilling. Strategic plans with five to seven overarching goals to be achieved within three to five years are the most efficient to manage.

2. Objectives:

Specific statements that explain what will be done to achieve the goals (should be measurable and can be within a specific time frame). Objectives are written in such a way that they describe a broad plan for achieving an established goal or goals. Objectives should include what will change (the outcome that will be achieved), when will it change, how much change (criterion for deciding whether the outcomes have been achieved) and who will change (target population). Objectives are achieved through work plans. They should be SMART:

- S = Specific
- M = Measurable
- A = Agreed upon (by everyone involved)
- R = Realistic
- T = Timebound

3. Activities:

Activities are the direct, tangible and measurable outputs that state how you will achieve your objectives. Be specific as to how many of each activity is proposed (i.e. 4 workshops will be held). Examples could include workshops, publications such as fact sheets and brochures, field days websites, trainings, media activities, webinars, videos and/or DVD's, etc.

4. Measures of Success:

Measures of success track the progress of work plans and document the achievement of strategic vision.

The Goals, Objectives and Strategies which are listed below serve as the foundation on which this Strategic Plan is constructed.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

GOAL I: CERTIFICATION SYSTEM - Assuring through periodic on-site re-inspection by forestry professionals that Tree Farms continue to be managed in accordance with AFF 2010-2015 Standards of Sustainability for Forest Certification.

OBJECTIVE A: Train Tree Farm Inspectors in new standards by Sept. 2010

ACTIVITIES:

1. Sent RI TF representative to ATFS National Leadership Conference in February 2010, he attended Facilitator Training and received training on the new 2010-2015 Standards of Sustainability .
2. Held TFI training workshop on new standards in May 2010
3. Keep records to assure that all existing and new TF Inspectors are trained to current standards.

OBJECTIVE B: Assure that all Tree Farms have forest management plans that comply with new AFF standards by December 31, 2011.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Presentation of AFF 2010-2015 Standards of Sustainability for Forest Certification in the March/April 2010 issue of "tree farmer" Magazine (by AFF)
2. Landowner webinars on the new Sustainability Standards available on ATFS website (by AFF)
3. Tree Farmers notified of forest management plan requirements in Summer 2010, Vol. 4, No. 2 issue of AFF's Forests Families (by AFF)
4. Tree Farm article on forest management plan requirements and 2012 Program Audit by AFF will be placed in RIFCO quarterly newsletter in Fall 2010.
5. Keep Tree Farmers informed through placement of quarterly reminders in RIFCO Quarterly newsletter and Tree Farm eNews through December 31, 2011.
6. Conduct three (3) informational workshops for Tree Farmers on forest management plan requirements under the new "Standards" by June 2011.
 - a. Identify Tree Farmers not in compliance by March 31, 2011
 - b. Tree Farm Inspectors/Committee/Forestry Consultants will work with all non-compliant Tree Farmers to assure that they have an updated plan by December 31, 2011.

OBJECTIVE C: Assure that the Rhode Island Tree Farm Committee complies with AFF Annual Program Reporting requirements.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Process necessary program compliance paperwork as shown on AFF *Events and Responsibilities Timelines* for 2010-2015.

OBJECTIVE D: Assure that inspections over a certain age are performed in a timely manner on an annual basis.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Complete Annual Re-certifications as identified by National Headquarters, approximately 6 per year.
2. Annually review and recertify ten percent of those inspections in excess of six (6) years old.

OBJECTIVE E: Prepare for 2012 program audit**ACTIVITIES:**

1. Assure that Tree Farm Committee records are up-to-date re: Tree Farm Inspection 004s, required reporting, Tree Farm Inspector training, etc.
2. Assure that all Tree Farms have forest management plans that comply with new AFF standards by December 31, 2011 (see OBJECTIVE B).
3. Notify Tree Farmers selected for audit, upon receipt of Audit Notice by Committee
 - a. Schedule Tree Farm visit
 - b. Assure that Tree Farmer has an up-to-date management plan

GOAL II: OUTREACH, INFORMATION, PROMOTION AND EDUCATION -

Cooperate with a wide array of state and local partners to educate Rhode Islanders on the public benefit of conserving and protecting Rhode Island's forests for the benefit of present and future generations through educational materials, workshops, field days, fairs, urban seminars, magazines, and public service announcements.

OBJECTIVE A:

Provide unbiased forest resource information to municipalities, land trusts, communities, other conservation partners, and the public.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Develop a comprehensive list of organizations and individuals for potential partnership and investment in the development of educational programs to inform them of RITF program activities and address forest and natural resource conservation topics by 2010.
2. Partner with RIFCO, NRCS, Soil Conservation Districts and conservation partners to identify and distribute via the Rhode Island Tree Farm Program website (<http://rifco.org/RITreeFarm/>) educational materials on the importance of forests and natural resources in the state by 2011.
3. Place catalogued resource links on Rhode Tree Farm Program website for use by partners and others as needed by 2011.
4. Develop Tree Farmer e-News to communicate Tree Farm news to partners, etc. by March 2011. (mentioned below in Goal IV , Objective A)
5. Develop a media campaign to promote the role of Tree Farmers in Rhode Island through a variety of media outlets.

OBJECTIVE B: Promote and support educational programs that create a stewardship ethic and enhance technical capabilities of landowners, partners and the general public.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Continue to provide funds and technical assistance to host annual events and professional workshops such as the RI Envirothon, RIDEM's Project Learning Tree, RISAF – Walk In The Woods, School to Career Days, RIDEM/RIFCO Demonstration wood lot program, RIFCO Workshops, and others as may be appropriate.
2. Work with conservation partners to identify opportunities for developing new environmental and forest education programs &/or materials such as, Forest Steward Training course, Master Tree Farmer/Forest Owner, and Estate Planning for implementation in the state by 2014.
4. Annually inform landowners about the value of their forest resources and encourage sustainable forestry practices and certification on private lands in conjunction with RIDEM and RIFCO.
5. Work with conservation partners such as RIDEM, RIFCO, RI Farm Bureau, RI Ag Partnership Collaborative, GrowSmart RI, RI Land Trust Council, RI RC&D Council, and others, to hold two (2) workshops on Estate Planning for farm and forest landowners.
 - a. One workshop in 2011.
 - b. One workshop in 2013.
6. Provide an Ongoing Platform for Peer-to-Peer Education through:
 - a. Providing access to workshops, seminars on current issues (webinars, etc)
 - b. Tree Farm eNews, RIFCO newsletter, Tree Farmer Magazine
 - c. Development of Master Tree Farmer program
 - d. Website, resources, publications, links
 - e. Tree Farmer Profiles
 - f. Tree Farmer involvement in workshops, field days

OBJECTIVE C: Recognition

ACTIVITIES:

1. Develop an annual recognition program for Tree Farm Inspectors by 2011 to include:
 - a. TF Inspector of the Year
 - b. TF Inspector Profiles on website, etc.
 - c. Hard-hat Awards
2. Tree Farmer of the Year
3. Tree Farm Anniversary awards
4. Submit RI award recipients to Regional and National recognition programs.

GOAL III: ADVOCACY – Provide a voice for family forest owners in national and state affairs by setting priorities and organizing education and lobbying efforts in support of policies that advance sustainable forestry on family-owned forests.

OBJECTIVE A: Support RIDEM – Division of Forest Environment and RIFCO efforts to implement activities and strategies identified in the *2010 Rhode Island Forest Resources Assessment and Strategies* that promote private woodland stewardship (Appendix 2).

ACTIVITIES:

1. Seek to place a Tree Farm representative on the Stewardship Committee, Forest Legacy Committee and others that may oversee (coordinate) the implementation of the Forest Resources Management Plan in 2011.

OBJECTIVE B: Encourage Tree Farmers to become local advocates for forest conservation.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Communicate with Tree Farmers about actions they can take to become local Tree Farm ambassadors. See Appendix 1 for some examples.
2. By becoming a member of a local forest conservation organization.
3. By attending regional, state and local workshops on forest and natural resource conservation workshops, etc.

OBJECTIVE C: Encourage Tree Farmers to be familiar with and have a voice in national Tree Farm affairs.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Become a member of a local forest conservation organization
2. Stay connected with news and information from ATFS.
3. Participate in the ATFS Grassroots Action Network
4. Read “Tree Farmer” magazine
5. Join the ATFS Facebook Group
6. Become familiar with national, regional, state and local forest conservation issues
7. Contact your federal and state congressional delegation(s) to inform them of important national, state and local forest conservation issues.

GOAL IV: TREE FARM COMMITTEE CAPACITY BUILDING - Increase public awareness of the role and Activities of the Rhode Island Tree Farm program

OBJECTIVE A: Improve Internal Communication between the Committee, Tree Farmers, Tree Farm Inspectors, National Office and Sponsors.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Keep Rhode Island Tree Farm Program website updated.
2. Update Tree Farmer contact information; especially email addresses, to facilitate communication by March 2011.
3. Use Tree Farm e-News to provide a periodic update on issues pertinent to RI Tree Farm program by March 2011.
4. Develop Tree Farmer profiles for use on the website, newsletters and promotional literature.

5. Fund and Develop Rhode Island Tree Farm page within RIFCO News Quarterly.
6. Keep Tree Farm Inspectors up-to-date on National and local information pertinent to Tree Farm inspections
 - a. Develop a Tree Farm Inspectors Corner on the website.
 - b. Use Tree Farm eNews
 - c. Tree Farm Inspectors workshop(s) as needed
7. Take advantage of “new” communications vehicles such as ATFS website (Tree Farm Facebook Group, Grassroots Action Network), partner listserv’s (RI Natural History Survey, What Grows on in RI) and more.
8. Include National Office and Sponsors/Partners in communications re RI Tree Farm program events, highlights, etc.

OBJECTIVE B: Identify opportunities for increased participation of Rhode Island’s woodland owners in the Tree Farm program.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Coordinate Annual Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year Open House to inform the public about RITF programs and accomplishments.
2. Encourage Committee member’s attendance and presentations at a variety of organizations, associations, and industry groups to promote Tree Farm.
3. Co-sponsor or participate in workshops, events, etc. with current and potential Partners
 - a. Host Annual Fall Workshop in conjunction with RIFCO
 - b. Partner with RIFCO to hold Annual Meeting
 - c. Partner with RIFCO’s Annual spring workshop

OBJECTIVE C: Develop a RITF informational program that describes Programs and accomplishments.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Update and develop a RITF presentation for use at various functions.
2. Develop a RITF informational brochure.
3. Develop a RITF eNews letter, an electronic newsletter
4. Develop fact sheets on RITF projects
5. Produce and distribute an **Annual Program Report** highlighting RITF’s annual impact in Rhode Island:
 - a. Provide to Rhode Island’s Congressional delegation
 - b. Provide to Rhode Island State Legislature, and
 - c. Make the report available to partners and the general public
6. Work in collaboration with partners to investigate opportunities for the use of “new” communication methods to promote RC&D, i.e. PSAs, You Tube, Twitter, Facebook, etc.
7. Establish a RITF award program to recognize outstanding contributions to the RIFCO.

OBJECTIVE D: Committee development and recruitment.

ACTIVITIES

1. Inform current committee members of their roles and Responsibilities
 - a. Update and distribute RITFC Handbook by 2010.
 - b. Schedule annual training, as part of the regularly scheduled Committee meeting schedule, on the pertinent topics such as, Standards, etc., and others.
 - c. Update RITFC MOUs with Sponsors
 - d. Encourage participation of Committee Members at state and national association meetings/conferences to include:
 - National Leadership Conference.
 - RITC Spring Workshop, Annual Meeting, etc.

OBJECTIVE E: Develop and/or update policies and procedures to ensure compliance with ATFS *State Tree Farm Administration and Procedures, 3.0.0 State Program Administration*.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Annually, review the diversity of expertise, persons within the committee and identify organizations, partners and/or individuals to provide missing expertise to achieve program and continuity goals
2. Annually assess RITFC strengths and weaknesses relating to committee membership
3. Identify and invite potential RITFC candidates to annual meetings
4. Develop a Business Plan to describe the RITFC's goals, capacities and plans regarding its current and future operations by 2011
5. Update current financial plan to determine how much money the RITFC will need for future projects and operations by 2011.
6. Develop an annual calendar of events and critical reporting dates and distribute to Council members by 2010
7. Update State Tree Farm Administration and Procedures (Bylaws)
8. Update RITFC MOUs with Sponsors
9. Develop/Administer an Annual Work Planning
10. Update of Strategic Plan in 2015.
11. Develop a Strategy for Succession and Leadership

OBJECTIVE F: Designate a Program Administrator to handle or assign tasks such as Tree Farmer and volunteer database management, mailing lists, 004 Form filing and management, field information requests from Tree Farmers and volunteers, ordering of materials, logo items and signs.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Investigate options for a volunteer or part-time paid staff position to fill the role of Program Administrator by December 31, 2010.

CURRENT AND POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS

In efforts to ensure that our project activities are collaborative and complimentary to other organizations active in Rhode Island , rather than duplicative, Rhode Island Tree Farm partners with a variety of federal, state, regional and local agencies and organizations. We are constantly striving to develop new partnerships that will help us realize our vision for the conservation of Rhode Island's forests.

FEDERAL PARTNERSHIPS

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service
Natural Resources Conservation Service

STATE PARTNERSHIPS

RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Office of the Director
Division of Agriculture
Division of Forest Environment
Division of Fish & Wildlife
Office of Sustainable Watersheds

UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

College of the Environment & Life Sciences
Department of Natural Resources Science
Cooperative Extension

RI DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

Division of Statewide Planning

RI ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Office of Sustainable Energy

NON-PROFIT/CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS

Rhode Island RC&D Area Council, Inc.
RI Rural Development Council, Inc.
The Nature Conservancy
The Audubon Society of Rhode Island
Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association
RI Natural History Survey
RI Forest Conservators Organization
RI Tree Council
The Ruffed Grouse Society
Society of American Foresters
RI Ag Council

RI Farm Bureau
Preserve RI
Trout Unlimited – Narragansett & Northern RI Chapters
RI Sheep Cooperative
RI Christmas Tree Growers Association
RI Land Trust Council
RI Envirothon
Save the Bay
GrowSmart RI
RI Ag Partnership

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Providence Water
RI Association of Municipal Officials

RHODE ISLAND ASSOCIATION OF SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICTS (SCD)

Northern RI Conservation District
Southern RI Conservation District
Eastern RI Conservation District

LINKAGES TO THE AFF STRATEGIC PLAN

The AFF Strategic Vision Plan 2005-2010 seeks to, “Increase the amount of good forestry on America’s family forestlands...” through implementing their mission of “*Promoting the growing of renewable forest resources on private lands while protecting environmental benefits and increasing public understanding of all benefits of productive sustainable forestry*”. The Rhode Island Tree Farm Strategic Plan is linked to the 2010 AFF Components and Strategic Objectives which include:

1. Creating Value For Program Stakeholders: Create value through comprehensive education and outreach programs, advocacy, and certifying sustainable forest practices.
2. Grow The Program: Significantly increase the family forest owner and volunteer component of the American Tree Farm System with a program framework that supports managed growth.
3. Recognition: Foster and nurture the passion of Tree Farmers and program volunteers through recognition programs that acknowledge and highlight their contributions to the environment and their communities.
4. Advocacy of Sustainable Forestry On Family Forestlands: Develop a nationally recognized and respected corps of trained and empowered family forest owners who are engaged in local, state, and national family forestry related issues that foster a favorable social and political climate for practicing sustainable forestry on family forestlands

REQUIRED CLAUSES AND SIGNATURES

The Rhode Island Tree Farm Committee hereby adopts this Strategic Plan and agrees to use the plan to realize the goals and objectives outlined herein.

By: _____ Date: September 16, 2010
John A. Macera, President
Rhode Island Tree Farm Committee

By: _____ Date: September 16, 2010
Ron Fasano, Secretary
Rhode Island Tree Farm Committee

This action authorized at an official meeting of the Rhode Island Tree Farm Committee on September 16, 2010.

APPENDIX A

COMMITTEE ROSTER AND LIST OF SPONSORS

OFFICERS

John A. Macera, President, Tree Farmer
Thomas Abbott, Vice-President, Senior Forester, RIDEM-Division of Forest Environment
Ron Fasano, Secretary, Tree Farmer
Thomas Armstrong, Treasurer, Retired Forester, RIDEM- Division of Forest Environment

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Paul C. Dolan, Deputy Chief, RIDEM-Division of Forest Environment
Paul Boisvert, President, RIFCO
Hans T. Bergey, Consulting Forester
Rob MacMillan, Forester, Providence Water
Marc J. Tremblay, RIFCO

COUNCIL SPONSORS

Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management – Division of Forest Environment
Rhode Island Forest Conservators Organization
Providence Water Supply Board

USDA NRCS LIAISON

Christopher F. Modisette, State Staff Forester and RC&D Coordinator

APPENDIX B MAP OF RHODE ISLAND & PRIORITY FOREST AREA

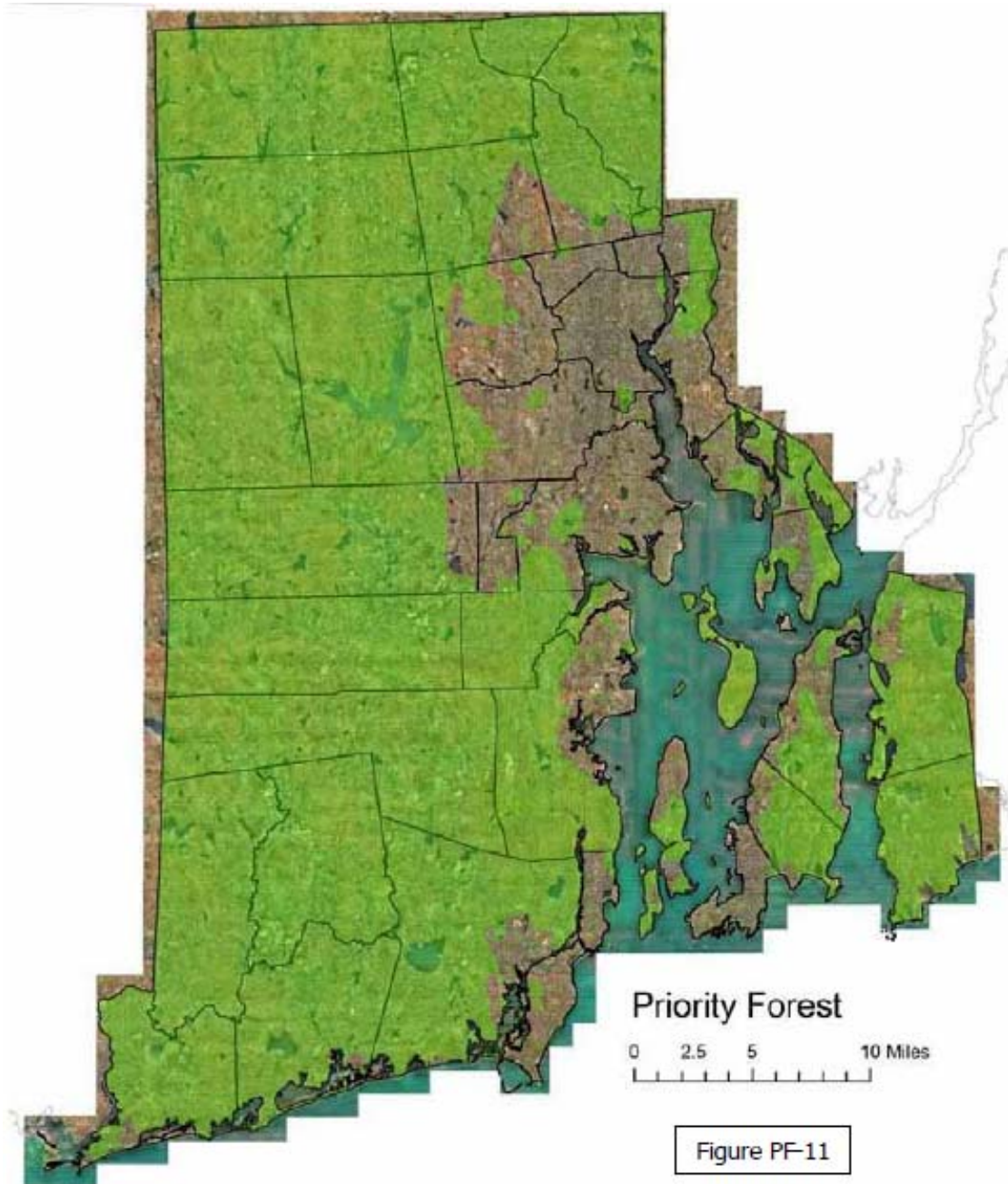
The State of Rhode Island covers approximately 1,083 square miles and is composed of Providence, Kent, Washington, Bristol, and Newport Counties.

Figure 13



PRIORITY FOREST AREA

Designation of priority forest areas are in the process of being identified through a collaborative process by the RIDEM Division of Forest Environment through a statewide forest assessment conducted as a requirement of the 2008 Farm Bill (Rhode Island Forest resources Assessment and Strategies, June 2010).



APPENDIX C
PERFORMANCE EVALUATION MATRIX
PLANNING SURVEY

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	ATFS Performance Evaluation Matrix									
2	Core or Higher Performance	Components of a State Tree Farm Program	Responsible Party	Best Management Practice is...						Notes
3				Present	Mostly Present	Sometimes Present	Absent	Don't Know	Needs Improvement	
4	Section 1. Management of the state ATFS program									
5	a. Maintaining a Viable State Committee									
6	Core	Committee reflects diversity and considers the national organizational diversity guidelines when .	Exec. Committee				X		X	Develop Policy/Seek diverse membership
7	Core	Committee is not dominated by any single element, includes wide range of stakeholders such as Tree Farmers, foresters, forest industry, resource conservation, environmental interests, etc.	Exec. Committee	X						
8	Core	Tree Farmers are in leadership roles on the committee	Exec. Committee	X						
9	Core	Committee maintains appropriate records/documentation as defined by AFF	Exec. Committee		X				X	Organize records/Consider options for admin. Assistance
10	Core	Committee maintains regular communication with committee and volunteers	Exec. Committee	X						
11	Core	Committee has method of disseminating important information back to the committee (i.e. after regional leadership conference calls or National Leadership Conference)	Exec. Committee		X				X	Establish comm. Method between committee members; monthly updates, Tree Farm e-News
12	Core	Meeting Minutes are recorded and made available	Secretary	X						
13	Core	Committee has an operating set of bylaws that address committee(s), term limits and governance structure	Exec. Committee					X	X	Locate and update
14	Core	Committee leadership participate regularly in AFF leadership meetings and quarterly conference calls	Exec. Committee			X				
15	Core	Committee convene on a regular basis	Chair	X						3 times per year plus annual meeting
16	Higher Performance	Committee has active sub-committees, to include:								
17	Higher Performance	a. Reinspection	Vice-chair				X			Not necessary given program size
18	Higher Performance	b. Outreach & Education	RIFCO Outreach Coordinator			X				
19	Higher Performance	c. Finance	Treasurer				X			
20	Higher Performance	d. Program Growth	Exec. Committee				X			
21	Higher Performance	e. Nominating	Exec. Committee				X			
22	Higher Performance	f. Awards	Chair	X						
23	Higher Performance	g. Advocacy	Exec. Committee				X			
24	Higher Performance	Committee has program to recognize and develop relationship with sponsors.	Exec. Committee				X			
25	Higher Performance	Committee has MOUs with Co Sponsoring organizations	Exec. Committee					X	X	Investigate need +/or update
26	Higher Performance	Committee has a succession plan to recruit, train, foster and groom new leaders.	Exec. Committee			X				Informal - more need for new member recruitment
27	Higher Performance	Committee has a comprehensive policy manual that includes policies on expenses/spending, job descriptions, investment policy etc	Exec. Committee				X			Check national status

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	ATFS Performance Evaluation Matrix									
2	Core or Higher Performance	Components of a State Tree Farm Program	Responsible Party	Best Management Practice is...						Notes
3				Present	Mostly Present	Sometimes Present	Absent	Don't Know	Needs Improvement	
28	Higher Performance	Provides training for incoming committee members	Exec. Committee				X			
29	Higher Performance	Participation on boards/committees (gov't, NGO, Companies)	Exec. Committee	X						
30	Higher Performance	Levels of governance/structure within state (sub committees, Executive Committee etc)	Exec. Committee		X					
31	Higher Performance	Committee is recognized in the state as a credible voice and go-to organization	Exec. Committee			X				
32	b. Program Administration, Annual Work Plan & Budget:									
		Annual work plan includes measurable goals, an action plan to achieve the goals for major program areas and a budget for major program areas and program administration	Chair	X						Submitted annually to AFF
33	Core	Committees uses AFF forms and formats for reports, and repeatedly meets AFF reporting requirements and deadlines	Chair & Treasurer	X						
34	Core	State develops an annual report summary of achievements	Chair	X						
35	Core	Committee utilizes opportunities to clean up data in the Tree Farm National Database (i.e. deduping duplicate Tree Farm numbers, deduping duplicate records.	Vice-chair	X						Periodically
36	Core	Evaluates and measures goal achievement	Exec. Committee			X			X	Currently review meeting to meeting.
37	Core	State has long term goals/strategic plan for Tree Farm Program including setting stretch goals	Exec. Committee				X		X	
38	Higher Performance	Revenue/budget includes fund sources in addition to AFF funding	Exec. Committee			X				
39	Higher Performance	State reviews and develops plan to fix deficiencies on a regular basis	Exec. Committee				X			
40	Higher Performance	State conducts a mid year review and does a course correction if necessary	Exec. Committee		X					Currently review meeting to meeting.
41	Higher Performance	State is financially stable, has outside sources of funding and not 100% reliable on any one organization	Exec. Committee			X				
42	Higher Performance					X				

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	ATFS Performance Evaluation Matrix									
2	Core or Higher Performance	Components of a State Tree Farm Program	Responsible Party	Best Management Practice is...						Notes
3				Present	Mostly Present	Sometimes Present	Absent	Don't Know	Needs Improvement	
43	Higher Performance	State works with other states and has developed regional initiatives in their work plan	Exec. Committee				X			
44	Higher Performance	State does a budget verses actual budget analysis	Treasurer	X						Treasurer's year end report
45	Section 2. Communications									
46	Core	Committee has a system to and regularly communicates with volunteers, inspecting foresters, and Tree Farmers	Chair/V. Chair		X				X	Establish comm. Method between committee & Tree Farmers, committee/inspectors monthly updates, Tree Farm e-News, etc.
47	Core	Maintain a state website or page on another website that is up to date and relevant. A point person is identified to maintain and monitor website	RIFCO Outreach Coordinator	X						
48	Core	Follows AFF/ATFS logo rules	Exec. Committee	X						
49	Core	Committee uses email to extent possible, but uses standard mail where required.	Exec. Committee	X						

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	ATFS Performance Evaluation Matrix									
2	Core or Higher Performance	Components of a State Tree Farm Program	Responsible Party	Best Management Practice is...						Notes
3				Present	Mostly Present	Sometimes Present	Absent	Don't Know	Needs Improvement	
50	Core	Committee has a system to fulfill sign request	Chair	X						
51	Higher Performance	Committee has a regular schedule for collection of articles and distribution of a Tree Farm newsletter and/or regular bulletins	RIFCO Outreach Coordinator		X				X	Could use more input from members as articles appear
52	Higher Performance	Committee pursues opportunities to partner with other organizations to disseminate information.	RIFCO Outreach Coordinator	X						
53	Higher Performance	Utilize electronics communications	Exec. Committee	X						
54	Higher Performance	Evaluates readership levels					X			
55	Higher Performance	Sponsorship and partners have ATFS links on websites	RIFCO Outreach Coordinator	X						
56	Higher Performance	Public relations strategy	RIFCO Outreach Coordinator			X				
57	Higher Performance	Method for Tree Farmers to communicate with committee	RIFCO Outreach Coordinator		X				X	Only on website - need on TF page in RIFCO newsletter
58	Section 3. Tree Farmer continuing education:									
59	Core	Committee provides Continuing Education opportunities for Tree Farmers	Exec. Committee	X						
60	Core	Committee partners with related stakeholder organizations	Exec. Committee	X						
61	Core	Develops partnerships to provide O&E to Tree Farmers	Exec. Committee	X						
62	Higher Performance	Committee has developed other mechanisms for maintaining landowner/forester connection (examples 5-year reinspections, forester/landowner workshop series, tours etc)	Exec. Committee			X				
63	Higher Performance	Committee reps attend Tree Farmer Convention	Exec. Committee	X						
64	Higher Performance	Committees have O&E "manager"	Exec. Committee				X			
65	Higher Performance	Committee monitors and records participation on outreach/education.	Exec. Committee				X			
66	Higher Performance	Track inspector extra-curricular activities	Exec. Committee				X			
67	Higher Performance	Mentor program that address strategic goals (i.e. experience inspectors/Tree Farmers coaching new inspectors/incoming landowners etc)	Exec. Committee			X				Informal
68	Higher Performance	Regional Outreach & Education efforts	Exec. Committee				X			
69	Higher Performance	Targeted outreach to different segments of landowners (i.e. urban interface, watersheds, women, minorities, next generation owners etc)	Exec. Committee			X				
70	Higher Performance	Targeted exhibit opportunities that directly help committee achieve stated goals	Exec. Committee			X				
71	Higher Performance	Management plan workshops – plan writing	Exec. Committee				X			
72	Higher Performance	Monitoring programs	Exec. Committee				X			
73	Section 4. Program Retention and Growth:									
74	Core	Committee sets annual goal to increase number of Tree Farms and/or acres and work plan addresses the goal	Exec. Committee			X				

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	ATFS Performance Evaluation Matrix									
2	Core or Higher Performance	Components of a State Tree Farm Program	Responsible Party	Best Management Practice is...					Notes	
3				Present	Mostly Present	Sometimes Present	Absent	Don't Know		Needs Improvement
75	Core	Committee has program to keep inspectors engaged and actively participating in the program	Exec. Committee				X			
76	Core	Committee actively follows up with Pioneer Tree Farmers	Exec. Committee				X			No PTF
77	Higher Performance	Committee has program to assess and address needs of varied audience groups	Exec. Committee				X			

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	ATFS Performance Evaluation Matrix									
2	Core or Higher Performance	Components of a State Tree Farm Program	Responsible Party	Best Management Practice is...					Notes	
3				Present	Mostly Present	Sometimes Present	Absent	Don't Know		Needs Improvement
78	Higher Performance	Committee actively reaches out to the "member" Tree Farmers	Exec. Committee		X					workshops, newsletters, annual meeting, partner meetings
79	Higher Performance	Targeted growth with partnering organizations	Exec. Committee				X			
80	Section 5. Stakeholder Recognition Program:									
81	Core	Committee has recognition program for Tree Farmers and program volunteers (i.e. inspectors, field leader, co-sponsor, partners etc)	Exec. Committee		X				X	Work on recog. TF volunteers and inspectors
82	Core	Committee participates regularly in AFF/ATFS recognition program (NRCS, OTFY, OTFIY, State Forester, Field Leader etc)	Exec. Committee		X					
83	Higher Performance	Looks for other opportunities for recognizing others (i.e. loggers, contributors etc) and venues for promotion	Exec. Committee				X			
84	Higher Performance	Provide opportunities for OTFY to promote sustainable forestry and be a spokesperson for ATFS (platform)	Exec. Committee			X				
85	Higher Performance	PR for OTFY and Inspector of the Year	RIFCO Outreach Coordinator	X						
86	Higher Performance	Proclamations	Exec. Committee				X			
87	Higher Performance	Legislator of the Year award	Exec. Committee				X			

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	ATFS Performance Evaluation Matrix									
2	Core or Higher Performance	Components of a State Tree Farm Program	Responsible Party	Best Management Practice is...					Notes	
3				Present	Mostly Present	Sometimes Present	Absent	Don't Know		Needs Improvement
88	Section 6. Certification:									
89	Core	Completes required sample on time	Vice-chair	X						
90	Core	Recruit and train inspecting foresters	Vice-chair			X				
91	Core	Maintain adequate and active corps of inspectors	Vice-chair	X						
92	Core	Committee members are aware of PEFC and audit process and able to promote the PEFC endorsement	Exec. Committee			X				
93	Core	Cooperates w/PEFC audits	Exec. Committee					X		
94	Core	Timely data entry and maintenance	Vice-chair	X						
95	Core	Maintains appropriate documentation for certification	Vice-chair					X		

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	ATFS Performance Evaluation Matrix									
2	Core or Higher Performance	Components of a State Tree Farm Program	Responsible Party	Best Management Practice is...						Notes
3				Present	Mostly Present	Sometimes Present	Absent	Don't Know	Needs Improvement	
96				Core	Communication to landowner to keep management plans available and up to date	Vice-chair		X		
97	Core	Committee has viable system to educate landowners about PEFC and audit process.	Exec. Committee				X			Article in upcoming RIFCO newsletter about upcoming audit
98	Section 7. Advocacy:									
99	Higher Performance	Committee is active with other organizations in grassroots advocacy programs.	Exec. Committee		X					
100	Higher Performance	Committee has mechanism for monitoring state legislature	Exec. Committee			X			X	
101	Higher Performance	Committee has relationship with legislative contacts and communicates regularly with them	Exec. Committee			X			X	
102	Higher Performance	Committee has an action plan to repond to critical issue action alerts including utilizing electronic means of communication (contact lists are clean etc).	Exec. Committee			X			X	
103	Higher Performance	Committee has relationships with local/state level policy and decision makers.	Exec. Committee			X			X	
104	Higher Performance	Organizes a legislative day	Exec. Committee				X			
105	Higher Performance	Works with coalitions	Exec. Committee		X					Informally

APPENDIX D

Ideas for Becoming a Local Tree Farm Ambassador

1. Commit to practicing stewardship on my own woodland, and to use my experience and my woodland to teach others.
2. Publicize the fact that I am a Tree Farmer and I am available to provide advice and answer questions for fellow woodland owners
3. Plan or assist with Tree Farm outreach activities either on my own or with fellow Tree Farmers

Examples:

- a. Share your experience with fellow woodland owners.
 - Invite them to walk your woodland with you, and if possible, with your forester.
 - Welcome Scouts, 4H clubs, the town Conservation Commission, etc. out to see what you've accomplished.
 - Consider asking fellow Tree farmers and the Committee to help you arrange a tour of your forest.
- b. Contact your local newspaper and talk with the person who handles conservation/environmental stories. Tell them about your involvement as a Tree Farmer.
- c. Familiarize yourself with the Tree Farm reference materials and plan to keep it updated.
- d. Plan for a workshop on your woodland.
- e. Call the local daily and weekly newspapers. Locate a reporter who handles environmental stories and tell him/her about the Tree Farm program and your role as a Tree Farmer.
- f. Consider Service Clubs (Rotary, Lions, etc.), local environmental groups, fairs, etc. as opportunities to present information on Tree Farming. Tree Farm personnel and other professionals are available to give presentations.
- g. Recruit potential Tree farmers. Keep a few "Best Prospects" in mind and call the Committee if you need more information and/or assistance.
- h. Assist the Tree Farm program with development of newsletter, materials, etc.

4. Work with a land trust or conservation agency to permanently conserve your woodland with a conservation easement. Support your local Land Trusts.
5. Get involved with a local woodland group, regional conservation partnership, or other entity currently working to promote the conservation of our forests.
6. Apply to the Coverts citizen training to learn more about sound forest stewardship, wildlife habitat and land conservation. Learn more about the natural landscape by attending a workshop by the RI Wild Plant Society, Audubon Society, or other environmental education organization.
7. Vote for candidates at the local, state and national level who will prioritize land conservation and promote sound forest stewardship, including current use legislation and rural land conservation. Check your state's League of Conservation Voter or PIRG (Public Interest Research Group) website for a legislative scorecard on your current state and federal representatives. Ask your federal representatives to support the newly announced New England Land Conservation Act, in addition to fully funding the Forest Legacy Program as well as the Land and Water Conservation Act.
8. Collaborate with your local officials to use a municipal-owned woodland or park as a demonstration for sound forestry and wildlife management practices. In the process, your city or town may benefit from revenue generated from sustainable forestry practices.
9. Work with local town planners to support land conservation and protect core wildlife habitat and corridors to retain connectivity.
10. Buy local: firewood, Christmas trees, lumber, and farm products.
11. Engage citizens in a visioning exercise, i.e. Forest Values Mapping, to raise awareness for conservation and determine local priorities for conservation.
12. Work with state and private professionals; Foresters, biologist, naturalists to provide education programs for community members: tree identification, bird walks, nature walks, invasive species ID.
13. Create a local conservation fund for your town or region.

APPENDIX E

Potential Advocacy Issues

1. State Level

- a. Support identification of forest resources as a significant state natural resource in statewide planning documents
- b. Support the demonstration of sustainable, best forest management practices on state forestlands
- c. Support the continued purchase of land and development rights to protect sufficient forestland to meet present and future resource needs
- d. Encourage voluntary preservation and stewardship of open space by landowners
- e. Support the promotion of the current tax provisions of the FFOS Act as a tool to conserve forestland and work with municipal tax assessors to reach eligible land owners.
- f. Support comprehensive statewide forest planning and management of Rhode Island's forest resources
- g. Support increased and sustainable funding for the RIDEM – Div. of Forest Environment
- h. Use public lands, state forestland, town forests, and private lands to educate forest landowners
- i. Encourage forest management actions to promote and conserve wildlife habitats that will meet the needs of the state's wildlife in order to encourage a diversity of species
- j. Inform landowners about the value of their forest resources and encourage sustainable forestry practices and certification on private lands
- k. Provide resources and partner with other organizations to educate the general public on the value of forest resources and forest management
- l. Increase public awareness about the role forests play in protecting water quantity & quality
- m. Build and strengthen partnerships with municipalities, local land trusts and conservation organizations to provide sound policies for the protection enhancement of community forest resources
- n. Support sustainable forest product industry as a means to retain forestland and to prevent fragmentation
- o. Promote the wood and paper industry as a significant economic resource to the state, using forest products that focus on renewable resources and promote carbon sequestration

2. Local Level:

- a. Encourage the adoption of innovative land use ordinances and incentives to protect forests
- b. Support the continued purchase of land and development rights to protect sufficient forestland to meet present and future resource needs

- c. Encourage voluntary preservation and stewardship of open space by landowners
- d. Support the promotion of the current tax provisions of the FFOS Act as a tool to conserve forestland and work with municipal tax assessors to reach eligible land owners.
- e. Encourage good forest practices on private owned forest
- f. Use public lands, state forestland, town forests, and private lands to educate forest landowners

3. Landowners

- a. Encourage voluntary preservation and stewardship of open space by landowners
- b. Support increased and sustainable funding for the RIDEM – Div. of Forest Environment
- c. Encourage good forest practices on private owned forest
- d. Support the use public lands, state forestland, town forests, and private lands to educate forest landowners
- e. Build and strengthen partnerships with municipalities, local land trusts and conservation organizations to provide sound policies for the protection enhancement of community forest resources
- f. Increase public awareness about the role forests play in protecting water quantity & quality
- g. Support sustainable forest product industry as a means to retain forestland and to prevent fragmentation
- h. Promote the wood and paper industry as a significant economic resource to the state, using forest products that focus on renewable resources and promote carbon sequestration