



---

# Delaware Forest Service

# STRATEGIC PLAN

*A Vision for the Future*

---

## ***Mission Statement***

*To conserve, protect, and enhance Delaware's forests through education, management, and professional assistance.*

## ***Principles***

*Every member of the Delaware Forest Service commits to:*

- *Treat everyone with fairness, honesty, equity, and respect*
- *Work as a team*
- *Provide full-service forestry expertise*
- *Proactively address natural resources and land use issues*
- *Improve our management, personal, and professional skills*
- *Demonstrate proper forest management and provide forestry education*

## ***Vision***

*Delaware's urban and rural forests are healthy and ecologically diverse resources whose many benefits are fully valued and appreciated by the public.*

*Forests thrive under the stewardship of Delaware landowners who enjoy ample access to a wide range of markets.*

# Critical Issues

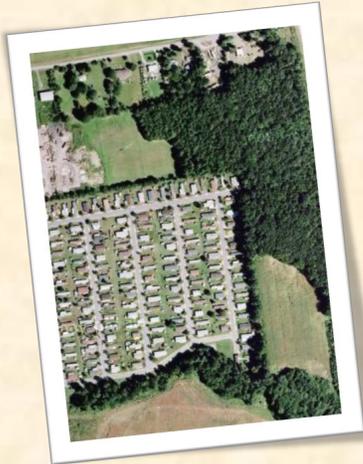
## **The public must understand the importance of our forests and forest management.**

While most citizens appreciate our forests, many do not understand the wide range of benefits forests provide – from wood to wildlife habitat to water quality protection to carbon sequestration. Furthermore, most Delawareans do not understand the need for professional forest management to ensure that our forests continue to produce the many benefits we enjoy and require.



## **The health of our forests is threatened by fragmentation, parcelization and invasive species.**

Delaware continues to lose forests to development – from 2002 to 2007, developments that included over 14,000 acres of forestland were approved throughout Delaware. This rate of loss cannot continue within a state that only has 380,000 forested acres. Furthermore, our remaining woodlands are owned by more and more landowners – this increased parcelization (more landowners owning smaller forested areas) also hinders our ability to manage our forestland.



Invasive species – such as chestnut blight and the gypsy moth – continue to degrade Delaware's forests and other invasives are found in our region. These introduced pests, with no natural enemies to control them in their new environment, can wreak havoc on our forests and reduce the forests' capacity to provide the many benefits we enjoy.

## **There is a need for diverse, stable forest markets.**

Landowners must have the ability to generate income from their forestland; otherwise, they are much more likely to convert their forestland to other uses (such as development). Many of the traditional wood products markets (sawmills and pulp mills) in Delaware and the surrounding states are suffering due to a weak economy and global competition; this has reduced the income that forest landowners receive. Other potential markets, however, are emerging, such as carbon and wetland mitigation (ecosystem services). A combination of traditional and new markets is needed to provide landowners with sufficient income opportunities.

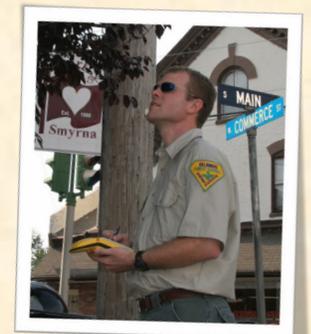


## **Many rural and urban forests are not sustainably managed.**

Most private forest landowners do not seek professional forestry assistance for their woodlands. Furthermore, many landowners only consider their short-term, financial return when they sell their timber – even if this option produces a poorly stocked forest. This practice results in poorly managed forests that cannot be sustained for future generations. Additionally, many cities and towns do not utilize (or cannot afford) professional assistance for their forests, which affects the long-term viability of these forests.

## **Staffing and funding resources are limited within the Delaware Forest Service.**

The DFS is a small organization and consequently career opportunities are limited; this can impact morale and limit the Department's ability to retain highly qualified staff. Furthermore, with ongoing state and federal funding constraints, it is difficult to maintain the staffing and programs necessary to provide a full range of services to Delaware's forest landowners and address the other critical issues facing our forests.



# Goals and Objectives

## Goal #1 Public Awareness

*The public recognizes the importance of both Delaware's forests and the Delaware Forest Service and willingly advocates for them.*

### Objectives:

- Objective #1 Increase public awareness and appreciation of forests
- Objective #2 Increase educators' and students' understanding of forests and forest management
- Objective #3 Promote forest stewardship
- Objective #4 Increase number of students in the forestry profession



## Goal #2 Healthy Forests

*Delaware has a sufficient, protected healthy forestland base to ensure the perpetual production of forest outputs (lumber, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, water quality protection, etc.)*

### Objectives:

- Objective #1 Increase the amount of forestland permanently protected
- Objective #2 Prepare for invasive species infestations
- Objective #3 Maintain forestland base and reduce further forest parcelization and fragmentation



## Goal #3 Forest Markets

*There are adequate and diverse forest markets for forest landowners to earn a satisfying return on their investment.*

### Objectives:

- Objective #1 Maintain and improve existing markets - including markets for low-value timber
- Objective #2 Encourage new markets for forest products, including wood energy
- Objective #3 Develop funding sources for forest investments



## Goal #4 Sustainable Management

*Delaware's rural and urban forests are sustainably managed.*

### Objectives:

- Objective #1 Increase use of professional forestry assistance - rural and urban
- Objective #2 Establish urban tree canopy goals



## Goal #5 Maximize Resources

*The Delaware Forest Service is recognized as the source for forestry expertise in Delaware and has sufficient funding to implement its programs.*

### Objectives:

- Objective #1 Maintain a well-trained, professional staff
- Objective #2 Delaware's State Forests are the premier example of sustainable forest management
- Objective #3 Viable and stably funded rural and urban forestry cost share programs



# DELAWARE FOREST SERVICE STRATEGIC PLAN COMMITTEE

*The D.F.S. thanks the following people for their help in developing this strategic plan:*



- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Dot Abbott           | University of Delaware Cooperative Extension   |
| Billy Baker          | Delaware State Fire School                     |
| Chris Bennett        | DNREC, Parks and Recreation                    |
| Brenda Brady         | City of Lewes                                  |
| Valann Budischak     | Delaware Nursery and Landscape Association     |
| Peggy Coster         | Delaware Equine Council                        |
| Steve Ditmer         | Delaware Forestry Association                  |
| Arthur Egolf         | Delaware Forestry Association                  |
| Mary Everhart        | Delaware Equine Council                        |
| John Graham          | The Nature Conservancy                         |
| Kate Hackett         | The Nature Conservancy                         |
| Bill Jones           | DNREC, Division of Fish and Wildlife           |
| W. Allen Jones       | Governor's Council on Forestry                 |
| W. Allen Jones, Jr.  | Consulting Forester                            |
| Faith Kuehn          | Delaware Department of Agriculture             |
| Ed Lewandowski       | Center for the Inland Bays                     |
| Bill McAvoy          | DNREC, Division of Fish and Wildlife           |
| Rick McCorkle        | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service                 |
| Bill McGowan         | Facilitator, Kent County Cooperative Extension |
| Leslie Merriken      | Delaware Tree Farm Committee                   |
| Rick Mickowski       | New Castle County Conservation District        |
| Kenna Nethken        | Certified Arborist                             |
| Blaine Phillips, Jr. | The Conservation Fund                          |
| Bill Pike            | City of Milford Parks Department               |
| Richard Pratt        | Hagley Museum and Library                      |
| Al Rizzo             | U.S. Fish and Wildlife                         |
| Chip Rosan           | Delaware Department of Transportation          |
| Pam Sapko            | Delaware Center for Horticulture               |
| Patrice Sheehan      | Delaware Center for Horticulture               |
| Doug Simpson         | Timber Industry                                |
| Les Stillson         | USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service    |
| Karen J. Sykes       | USDA Forest Service                            |
| George Torbert, III  | Delaware TreeFarm Committee                    |
| Shelley Tovell       | DNREC Division of Fish and Wildlife            |
| Dan Twardus          | USDA Forest Service                            |
| Joseph Wick          | Governor's Forestry Advisory Council           |
| Norm Wilkerson       | Timber Industry                                |
| Amelia Wright        | Delaware Forestry Association                  |
| Al Zentz             | USDA Forest Service                            |

*... and the professional staff of the Delaware Forest Service*

