

# **Society of American Foresters – 2013-2017 Strategic Plan**

## **Vision**

The Society of American Foresters is the organization that represents forestry professionals, providing leadership to ensure that all members of the profession achieve excellence in sustainable forestry and natural resource management.

## **Mission**

The mission of the Society of American Foresters is to:

1. Advance the science, education, technology, and practice of forestry
2. Enhance the competency of its members
3. Establish professional excellence, and
4. 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.

## **Core Values**

- Forests are a fundamental source of global health and human welfare.
- Forests must be sustained through simultaneously meeting environmental, economic, and community aspirations and needs.
- Forest natural resource professionals are dedicated to sound forest management and conservation.
- Forest natural resource professionals serve landowners and society by providing sound knowledge and professional management skills.
- Forest natural resource professionals believe the scientific process, continuing research, and coordination with community traditions and knowledge lead to best land management decisions and sustainability of our forests.

## **Key Strategic Goals**

- 1) Recruit forest natural resource professionals to become members in SAF to recognize rewarding opportunities that meet our mission and provide a broader membership base to pursue those opportunities.
- 2) Engage in cooperative efforts to achieve sustainable forestry and natural resource management.
- 3) Provide and promote superior educational materials, meaningful experiences, and credentialing resources to help members achieve greater professional competence and competitiveness in the marketplace.
- 4) Advocate forest and natural resource policies at the national, state, and local levels that use forest and natural resource science to enhance the health and use of forest ecosystems to benefit society.
- 5) Increase coordination and relationships with state societies, working groups, and partners and allies that will help SAF fulfill its mission.
- 6) Assess the activities, programs, and operations of SAF and strive for continuous improvement in all facets of our organization.
- 7) Diversify and increase revenue to meet future operational and capital needs.

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**Strategic Goal #1:** Recruit forest natural resource professionals to become members in SAF to recognize rewarding opportunities that meet our mission and provide a broader membership base to pursue those opportunities.

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## Outcomes:

- Members speak of pride in their profession and SAF as an organization and how their role contributes to its success.
- A diversity of members become more involved and engaged in SAF, holding offices and committee positions at all levels of the organization.
- Membership is more meaningful to employers, the public, and other professionals.
- SAF is a more vibrant organization with much higher visibility in all communities: local units, regional units, legislative units, and the general public.

## Actions:

- 1) Develop an action plan that maintains our core values and to formally recognize as peers natural resource professionals for membership.
- 2) Delineate specific tactics for the state and multistate societies and national office to address and expand membership recruitment to welcome foresters and natural resource professionals and to retain existing members.
- 3) Establish a forum for dialogue on the broadening of membership issue so that members will have a chance to articulate opinions/views on this change effort.
- 4) Meet with forest natural resource program deans/departments chairs and jointly develop strategies for introducing students and faculty to the benefits of SAF membership.
- 5) Discuss with employers, clients, and partners, the benefits, value, and opportunities SAF membership and programs provide to enhancing the services and expertise of forest natural resource professionals bring to their work.
- 6) Encourage and engage the National Student Congress in developing strategies to introduce students to the benefits of SAF membership, participate in their local student chapters, and attend Leadership Academy workshops.
- 7) Leverage the TEM Task Force report and engage in dialogue with employers of natural resource professionals to better understand their needs and how their employees' skills and interests fit into the overall SAF mission.

## Success Indicators:

- SAF broadens the membership to forest natural resource professionals while protecting the rich history of our forestry foundation and begins to build new traditions as SAF membership increases.

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**Strategic Goal #2:** Engage in cooperative efforts to achieve sustainable forestry and natural resource management.

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### Outcome:

- Public and private forests are more effectively managed.
- Collaborative efforts involving all levels of the organization lead to relationships of mutual benefit and promote the SAF agenda.
- SAF is realized by the public and by other natural resource organizations and interested parties as a promoter of collaborative management.
- SAF is highlighted in news and magazine articles as the organization of choice when difficult management situations are apparent.

### Actions:

1. Engage and support all levels of the organization in efforts to develop natural resource-based collaborative planning and project opportunities.
2. Designate key leaders in cooperative organizations willing to participate in such efforts.
3. Train SAF leaders in collaborative processes.
4. Publicize collaborative management efforts at local and national levels.

### Success Indicators:

- SAF is known as the organization that provides sound scientific and experiential knowledge to meet forest owner, employer, and member objectives.
- SAF is perceived as the organization that provides credible, reliable, and scientific information to policymakers, forest owners, and employers on ecological, economic, and social issues and opportunities associated with sustainable forest management.
- SAF's professional views regarding sustainable forestry are requested for collaborative problem solving at all levels of the organization.

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**Strategic Goal #3:** Provide and promote superior educational materials, meaningful experiences, and credentialing resources to help members achieve greater professional competence and competitiveness in the marketplace.

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### Outcomes:

- Superior educational and credentialing resources and scientific advancement opportunities provided.
- SAF is recognized as the primary professional Society that meets the needs of service, networking, and professional growth for forest natural resource professionals employed in the broad field of natural resource management.

### Actions:

- 1) Ensure that the SAF National Convention meets the needs of leaders, researchers, and practitioners of forest natural resource management.
- 2) Promote the Certified Forester® credential so that it is the sought-after credential in forestry, irrespective of employment sectors.
- 3) Use technology to provide low-cost continuing educational materials for forest natural resource professionals around the country to provide training to members and partners for continued learning and designing effective dialogues and forums and applying contemporary approaches in field trips and educational activities and events.
- 4) Continue Leadership Academy at a geographical (PNW, SE, NE, etc.) level as the foundation of SAF's leader training.
- 5) Provide high-quality accreditation programs for forestry and natural resources schools in the US.
- 6) Continually improve Continuing Education tracking and reporting as a means of partnering with state licensing boards, consulting groups, and others.
- 7) Produce publications that advance the practice of forest natural resource management.
- 8) Promote outreach to professionals in fields associated with the broad field of forest natural resources management.
- 9) Facilitate forums to improve the practice of foresters and forestry.
- 10) Improve the quality of forestry and natural resource graduates.

### Success Indicators:

- Chapters become invigorated or merged into effective chapters.
- Leadership Academy is well attended and produces a pool of future SAF leaders.
- SAF is recognized as having high professional standards in service to society.

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**Strategic Goal #4:** Advocate forest and natural resource policies at the national, state, and local levels that use forest and natural resource science to enhance the health and use of forest ecosystems to benefit society.

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### Outcomes:

- Favorable legislation and policies at the national, state, and local levels that encourage investment in private and public forestlands.
- SAF is the “go to” source for national, state, and local policymakers to address issues and need of forest resources.

### Actions:

- 1) Identify and develop an annual list of priority forest policy issues of importance to SAF members.
- 2) Identify and cultivate contacts with key policymakers at the national and state levels.
- 3) Provide direction and guidance to State Policy Chairs on a “how to” approach to advocate science-based forest policies at the national, state, and local levels.
- 4) Provide current SAF position statements for national, state, and local forest policy issues.
- 5) Evaluate and enhance the value of SAF policy materials and website.

### Success Indicators:

- SAF is recognized by elected officials and policymakers as the leader in providing credible and reliable forest resource information and guidance.
- The SAF-NASF Sustainable Forests Policy initiative compliments each organization’s goals and direction.
- SAF is asked to speak and represent the forestry profession and broad forest resource industry in the policy context.
- State and multistate societies and divisions use regionally developed policy statements, based on national SAF objectives and national SAF policy statements, to effectively influence local forest policies in their states.

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**Strategic Goal #5:** Increase coordination and relationships with state societies, working groups, and partners and allies that will help SAF fulfill its mission.

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### Outcomes:

- More effective partnerships with local members, working groups, and units.
- Effective partnerships with organizations that share our values.

### Actions:

- 1) Provide additional support at the national level to help state societies, divisions, and working groups leverage partnerships.
- 2) Provide leadership training and development for SAF members at Leadership Academies and other venues.
- 3) Establish a network of leaders of forestry organizations to coordinate policy and communication efforts to more effectively achieve common objectives.
- 4) Continually improve the SAF website.

### Success Indicators:

- SAF is recognized as the primary organization that fosters sound scientific and experiential forestry knowledge to address current and emerging needs and values.
- SAF's mission, core values, and key goals are fully communicated through SAF publications and society activities such as "walks in the forest" and "teacher education" type activities.
- State and multistate societies are able to identify current and emerging forest science, management, policy, and conservation issues for position statements and white papers needed to form the basis for local and regional conferences and workshops.

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**Strategic Goal #6:** Assess the activities, programs and, operations of SAF and strive for continuous improvement in all facets of our organization.

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### Outcomes:

- Improved membership participation and service, communications, and networking.
- A strengthened management and financial condition to provide reliable, sustained support for its mission, programs, and governance operations.

### Actions:

- 1) Update and continually improve the use of technology to connect with SAF members.
- 2) Utilize the *Forestry Source* to communicate timely and relevant information on new developments in the broad field of forestry.
- 3) Determine effectiveness of scientific and technical publications of SAF such as the regional Journals of Applied Forestry and the JOF. Identify cost savings opportunities that lead to more effective technology and streamlined transfer to forest practitioners and managers deemed appropriate for SAF membership.
- 4) Promote and invest in the scientific advancement of sustainable forestry.
- 5) Ensure effective use and recognition of member volunteer time.
- 6) Evaluate national nomination and election procedures to ensure well qualified and quality candidates for Council, and national office positions. Support local and state chapter candidates and leadership.
- 7) Review the organizational capacity and structure of SAF in order to a) simplify roles and responsibilities, b) improve staff efficiencies, c) build understanding of internal management and governance practices, and d) support the SAF membership.
- 8) Identify desired plans for managing the SAF headquarters buildings and grounds.
- 9) Maintain an appropriate financial control and reporting mechanism that includes an auditing system to ensure protection of SAF's assets and understanding of SAF's financial condition by its Officers, Council, and members.
- 10) Evaluate and continually improve SAF programs to support the vision and mission.
- 11) Evaluate SAF's financial capacity and sources of funding to improve/increase the sources and mechanisms of funding to effectively and efficiently pursue the SAF vision, mission, and goals of the membership.

### Success Indicators:

- SAF, at all levels, is recognized for conserving and enhancing its human, financial, and physical resources and respecting members, employees, colleagues, and volunteers for their contributions to the organization.

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- Nondues ways and means of operations for securing funds to support programs and activities that align with SAF mission are procured.
- SAF national office employees are offered competitive salary and benefits and are provided with career growth opportunities.

**Strategic Goal #7:** Diversify and increase revenue to meet future operational and capital needs.

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Outcomes:

- Instill a new “culture of giving” from SAF members to advance the field of forestry and natural resource management.
- Explore the development of programs that would attract funding from corporations, foundations, and governmental entities, and support SAF’s mission.

Actions:

- 1) Establish a revenue development subcommittee of the Finance Committee to recommend a strategy for raising nondues sources of revenue.
- 2) Develop the business case for hiring or contracting for professional fundraising services, which should be benchmarked against other professional societies similar to SAF.
- 3) Staff will develop a plan and collateral materials to solicit funds from members above traditional dues payments. This plan and outreach materials will be prepared in a manner that SAF leaders will be engaged in soliciting these funds. The primary area of focus will be 4-year pledged contributions of \$1900.
- 4) Create a task force of SAF members that would consider development of a national program for SAF that attract sustained funding from corporations, foundations, and governmental entities.

Success Indicators:

- 250 members will have pledged \$1900 by the end of 2013. (This would exceed the total given by individuals in the Centennial Campaign by \$25,000 in 18 months versus the 4 prime years of the Centennial Campaign.)