



Keeping Forests
AS FORESTS

2018-2022

STRATEGIC PLAN

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KEEPING FORESTS AS FORESTS (KFAF) IS A REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP CREATED IN RESPONSE TO THE ONGOING CONVERSION AND LOSS OF FORESTLAND IN THE SOUTHERN U.S.

THE PARTNERSHIP represents an attempt to re-frame the conversation around forest conservation from one of “protection” to one focused on the long-term economic viability and sustainability of working forests. The following Strategic Plan was developed with input from over 30 organizations with diverse interests in conserving working forests in the South. Partnership organizations include federal, state, and local government agencies, private forest landowners, agriculture management agencies and environmental non-government organizations (ENGOs) that include working forest conservation as part of their mission. Additionally, representatives from drinking water utilities, land use planning organizations, corporations, philanthropic organizations, the forest products industry, and many others with a stake in working forest conservation have helped develop this plan. Over the course of two days, one in May 2016 and another in January 2017, executive leadership from these partner organizations gathered to develop voluntary, region-wide approaches to conservation that are responsive to the needs of private landowners as well as the local communities and industries that depend on functional forests for a wide variety of economic and environmental benefits.

The Strategic Plan that follows is intended to guide the Keeping Forests as Forests partnership for the next 3-5 years. This Plan will be adjusted in response to changing partner priorities, policies affecting land management, availability of funding for implementation, and other reasons as they develop. For more information on the Keeping Forests as Forests partnership, please visit www.keepingforests.org

The Executive Committee would like to thank the many professionals who contributed their input and advice to this living document.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OUR CHALLENGE

We are projected to lose over 23 million acres of forestland in the South by 2060. Currently, over 110 million people depend on the clean water, wood products, recreational opportunities, and wildlife habitat provided by the roughly 245 million acres of predominately privately-owned forest in the South (VA to TX). The demand on these forests and their benefits will only increase as the South's population continues to grow and these forests are converted to other land uses. As the intergenerational transfer of private forests

THE KEEPING FORESTS AS FORESTS PARTNERSHIP ENVISIONS A WORLD WHERE SOUTHERN FORESTS ARE VALUED AS CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

to a more urban generation accelerates, it will be necessary to expand conservation efforts to a more diverse group of stakeholders. Additionally, success in retaining the values that forests provide will depend on the development of new approaches to their protection. Historic methods of conservation will not meet the challenges of projected population growth and development. Nothing short of a paradigm shift—a change in how we think about and value forests—will protect the remaining 245 million acres of Southern forests.

VISION & GOAL

The Keeping Forests as Forests (KFAF) partnership envisions a world where Southern forests are valued as critical infrastructure that support the health, prosperity, security, and well-being of the American people. To achieve this vision, the goal of KFAF is to shift the paradigm of forest conservation in the South from one focused on piecemeal protection to one focused on the stewardship of the inherent social, economic, and ecological values of functional forest ecosystems for the benefit of current

and future generations.

The partnership will find new and innovative ways to protect and sustain the approximately 245 million acres of remaining Southern forests.

WHO WE ARE

To respond to these coming challenges, the KFAF partnership was created as a broad regional initiative with a focus on maintaining the

long-term economic and ecological viability of Southern forests. KFAF is supported by a diverse coalition of both private and public stakeholders ranging from human health professionals to traditional forest products manufacturers and conservationists. This uniquely diverse partnership has coalesced around a common appreciation for the ecological, economic and social importance of our Southern forests – and the need to develop new and innovative approaches to its long-term stewardship.

WHAT WE DO

The Keeping Forests as Forests partnership has agreed to the following set of guiding principles:

- » Respect the views and values of all with interests in Southern forests
- » Success can only be achieved with an “all hands” approach founded on intersecting interests
- » While the full range of tools and solutions will likely be needed, implementation is rooted in respect for private landowners and helping them achieve their objectives

With the above principals in mind, the ability of KFAF to reach its goals will depend on the successful implementation of three overarching strategies:

- » Repositioning our forests as critical infrastructure worthy of public and private investment and finding ways of valuing the myriad of critical services our forests provide.
- » Adopting a common regional identity to shape collective action in the South, thereby creating a unified platform to influence policy, leading to greater support for the conservation of Southern forests.
- » Adopting a voluntary policy across the region of no net loss of forest cover. While understanding that some forestland will be converted to other land uses, by adopting a no net loss approach we can stabilize existing forest cover and target reforestation to the most appropriate and critical areas.

HOW WE DO IT

Six workgroups have been formed within the KFAF collaboration to collectively move the partnership forward. These workgroups and their associated activities represent the current strategic focus of KFAF:

- » **Planning** - the identification of critically important forested watersheds within the Southern region.
- » **Political Action and Policy** - creation of the strategic policy and political actions needed to achieve KFAF goals.
- » **Markets** - the development of new markets for traditional and non-traditional forest products.
- » **Public/Private Partnerships** - the development of the public/private partnerships needed to sustain the initiative.
- » **Communication & Education** - the development of the communication and outreach materials needed to advance KFAF’s goals.
- » **Forest Values** - the identification of traditional and non-traditional forest values important to both people and the environment.

SOUTHERN FORESTS

HEALTHY FORESTS are one of the South's most ecologically and economically valuable intergenerational resources and several factors could interact to change forests, and the extent of forest cover, over the next 50 years.

Currently, the 13 Southern states contain some of the most productive forestlands in the world and provide over 18 percent of the world's pulpwood for paper and paper-related products and 7 percent of its industrial roundwood. According to a 2014 MS State Extension Service Bulletin (*Henderson et al. 2014*), forestry and the forest products industry substantially impact the economy of the 13 states in the Southern region. Not only does forestry have significant direct impacts to the economy, these industries, through the purchase of various goods and services, impact other sectors of the economy. These impacts amount to more than \$251 billion in total industry output, nearly \$106 billion in value added services, and almost \$54 billion in wages and salaries for the greater than 1 million jobs.

In addition to traditional forest products, healthy forests provide clean drinking water, recreational opportunities, wildlife habitat, soil conservation through flood and erosion control, carbon storage, cultural and heritage resources, and many other societal benefits. Over 110 million people call the South home and depend on the benefits provided by the roughly 245 million acres of forestland.

The Keeping Forests as Forests partnership was initiated in response to conclusions reached by the Southern Forest Futures Project (SFFP). The SFFP was a joint, multi-year effort to forecast changes to Southern forests from 2010 to 2060 under various scenarios by the Southern



Research Station (SRS) and the Southern Region of the U.S. Forest Service, and the Southern Group of State Foresters. To meet the needs of future population growth it is projected that 43 million acres of land will be developed in the next 45 years for urban uses with potentially 23 million acres of that land converted from forests. The Project identified 10 key findings that provide insights into the mechanisms and relative magnitudes of changes anticipated for Southern forests.

Key Findings of the Southern Forest Futures Project (*Wear and Greis 2013*):

- » The interaction of population growth, climate change, timber markets, and invasive species will define the South's future forests.
 - » Urbanization is forecast to result in forest losses, increased carbon emissions, and stress to other forest resources.
 - » Southern forests could sustain higher timber production levels, but demand is the limiting factor and demand growth is uncertain.
 - » A strong market for biomass energy could bring wood demands that are large enough to trigger changes in forest conditions, management, and markets.
 - » A combination of factors has the potential to decrease water availability and degrade quality; forest conservation and management can help mitigate these effects.
 - » Invasive species create a great but uncertain potential for ecological changes and economic losses.
 - » An extended fire season combined with obstacles to prescribed burning would increase wildland fire-related hazards.
 - » Private landowners continue to control the future of forests in the South, but ownership patterns could change and modify the future.
 - » Threats to species of conservation concern are widespread but are especially concentrated in the Coastal Plain and the Appalachian-Cumberland sub-regions.
- » Increasing populations would increase demand for forest-based recreation while the availability of land to meet these needs is forecast to decline.
 - » The South is heavily forested – several areas are more than 80 percent forested. The area of forestland generally exceeds 40 percent of the landscape area with most exceptions occurring outside the forest-grassland biome in western Texas and Oklahoma and in areas where agricultural uses dominate—in particular, the Mississippi Valley, the lower half of Peninsular Florida, and parts of Kentucky and Tennessee.

FORESTS AND POPULATION GROWTH

The SFFP findings emphasize the role and the influence of private landownership in determining future forest conditions. Approximately 86 percent of forestland in the South, defined in the SFFP as the 13 States from Texas to Virginia, is privately owned. Of that 86 percent, nearly 60 percent are family owned forests. Roughly 75 percent of these family forest owners are over 55 years old and plan to pass their land to heirs. If the generational migration of these heirs to cities continues, many of these small parcels could go unmanaged by the absentee owners. It is critical that a strategy is developed that encourages forest stewardship across the landscape and across generations so that regional populations can realize the ecological and economic benefits of Southern forests.

Over the next 10 years, the ongoing expansion of the South's population and economy are the most important drivers of change. Populations are expected to increase by 40-60 percent

by 2060, and most of this growth will be around cities. Population growth will expand the wildland-urban interface while reducing populations in some of the most rural areas. Increasing financial returns on investments to forest landowners for timber products and other ecosystem benefits will encourage retention of forests.

Short-run changes will continue to impact forests over the next 10 to 20 years, but they will also be compounded by additional factors. Projections of demand for bioenergy feedstocks, although driven by uncertainties such as the development of new technologies and State, Federal, and international policies, could accelerate in the 2020s. The SFFP indicates that strong demand for fiber could lead to intensified forest management, especially in the Coastal Plain. This, along with urbanization, could cause alterations to habitats, especially for amphibians and other aquatic species. Impacts on water availability and quality are also forecast to intensify beginning in the 2020s. These effects on ecosystem benefits could feed back to constrain management options in the region and affect the trajectory of investments in working forests.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Over the long-run, defined in the SFFP as more than 30 years, climate change effects will become more prominent. All climate projections predict increasing temperatures through 2060, but they differ in their predictions of precipitation. Impacts on water, wildlife, and nonnative plant species emerge during this timeframe but are manifest differently depending on the specific climate projection. For most climate futures, invasive plant impacts are forecasted to become a growing source of ecological change and

economic impact. Water stress accumulates, especially in the Piedmont, Coastal Plain, and parts of the Mid-South, mainly in response to increased demands associated with growing populations and land use changes. Wildlife impacts in the Coastal Plain become further compounded by changes in precipitation in some situations and by sea-level rise impacts on coastal forests.

FORESTS AND WATER

People throughout the South also rely on healthy forests for clean and reliable surface drinking water supplies and groundwater recharge. According to a recent SRS study, just over thirteen million acres of National Forest System lands in the Southern region provide some drinking water supply to 17.3 million people (*Caldwell et al. 2014*). Similarly, state and private forest lands in the South provide drinking water supply to 48.4 million people. In total, almost 50 percent of people in the South receive at least some of their drinking water from forested lands. A significant portion of total surface water supply for many of the largest cities in the South – such as Raleigh-Durham, Charlotte, Atlanta, Greenville, and Birmingham – comes from forested lands. In places where water availability is a limiting factor, climate change could cause more frequent and severe droughts. Coupled with increased demand from growing populations, this would stress water supply in parts of the region. Conversion of forest land to urban uses frequently increases discharge, peak flow, and velocity of streams, but will ultimately decrease the quality of water supply. Forest conservation and management can help mitigate these effects.

FOREST PESTS, DISEASE, AND NON-NATIVE INVASIVE SPECIES

New non-native insects, diseases, and pest complexes are emerging across the South with significant implications expected for several tree species, such as hemlock, ash, and redbay. The rate of introduction and spread for several invasive plant species has accelerated over the past decade. Some species have

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almost immediate and acute impacts on stand composition, diversity, and productivity; an example is the quick-spreading and fire-adapted cogongrass, which effectively precludes forest regeneration in affected forests and significantly increases risk of and severity of wildfires. Other species, such as tree-of-heaven, act on a slower time frame and gradually displace native species. Either type—or in some cases, both types—of invasion of forested ecosystems can bring long-term changes in plant and animal communities, displacement of wildlife, and reduced forest productivity.

TIMBER MARKETS

Fluctuations in timber markets will also shape the Southern forests of tomorrow. The South contains some of the most intensively managed forests in the U.S., and over the last 50 years timber production more than doubled while the area of planted pine grew from virtually nonexistent to 39 million acres, or about 19 percent of forests. Future timber markets could affect the forests of the South in two important ways. First, strong

timber markets encourage retention of forests rather than conversion to other land uses, so high timber prices can help delay or even reverse forest losses in areas where forest management is still feasible. Second, strong timber markets encourage continued investment in forest management, and forecasts suggest that the area of planted pine could increase from the current 19 percent to between 24 and 36 percent by 2060. Strong growth in market

demand could result from the emergence of markets for bioenergy. The potential of cellulosic nanotechnology and mass timber construction to fill losses behind traditional product markets is promising.

BIODIVERSITY

Outside of the tropics, forests in the South are some of the most biodiverse in the world. The South has 1,076 native terrestrial vertebrates: 525 birds, 196 reptiles, 176 mammals and 179 amphibians. Forty-six percent of the imperiled vertebrate species are amphibians. Hot spots

SOUTHERN FORESTS

of vertebrate species of conservation concern include the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico coasts, Peninsular Florida, and the southern Gulf, although sections of the Blue Ridge, Southern Ridge and Valley, Cumberland Plateau, and many other areas are emerging areas of concern. Species of conservation concern are imperiled by habitat alteration, isolation, invasive species, environmental pollutants, commercial development, conversion of working forest to non-forest uses, and human disturbance.

SUMMARY

The combination and interaction of timber markets, climate change, invasive species, and population growth will define the South's future forests, and the resources they provide. The SFFP evaluates the impacts of these factors together - to evaluate one set of drivers in isolation from all the others would lead to incomplete and perhaps erroneous conclusions. The SFFP identified 4 distinct pathways of growth and development, called Cornerstone Futures. A future with high population growth, high income growth, and lower timber prices, is predicted to lead to the biggest losses in forest area. The smallest amount of forest loss is projected under a future of low population growth, low income, and high timber prices.

The SFFP indicates that urbanization affects forest area but can be offset by market futures that place higher values on forest uses. This logic extends to any other source of forest

values, including payments for non-timber forest products and crucial ecosystem services. Land use models also indicate that urbanization rates strongly depend on income as well as population so that the intensity of development for a given level of population is variable and could be altered by policy.

Although it is difficult to predict specifically how the various pathways will impact Southern forests in the future, several things are clear. Without intervention, significant losses of our Southern forests are inevitable; and traditional approaches to conservation will not be adequate to meet the challenge. As noted in the goal statement, nothing short of a paradigm shift in how we think about and value our forests will be needed to conserve these systems over the long-term. New strategies and approaches - implemented and focused at regional scales - will be critical to success. Important points of leverage in the social, economic and political systems that impact our forests and their protection and/or conversion will have to be identified to develop new policy approaches, sources of funding, and a better understanding of the critical role functional forests play in our everyday lives. Conservation at these scales will take time. Strategies will involve a variety of different stakeholders, require considerable time to implement, and will likely look very different than traditional approaches to conservation. The development and implementation of these strategies is the focus of KFAF.





IN MAY 2016, the inaugural meeting of the Keeping Forests as Forests partnership brought together representatives from federal, state, and local governments, non-governmental organizations, and private corporations and businesses around the central question, “How can our collective efforts impact the future of forest conservation in the South?” As participants engaged in dialogue to answer this question, it became clear that the incremental nature of current efforts needs to shift dramatically in order to create new outcomes.

The Strategic Plan presented here was born out of a shared desire and commitment to influence the trajectory of working forest conservation in the South. It was designed with an eye towards including both traditional and non-traditional stakeholders in accelerating conservation progress. This plan also recognizes that the success of this partnership will be determined by bringing together people with the knowledge, passion, commitment, and tools to transform the current approach to working forest conservation. This is a living document that is supported by strong relationships and an ongoing, adaptive implementation process.

The partnership recognizes that to truly impact the future of Southern forests requires a long-term investment that is aligned with ecological timeframes. The design of the Strategic Plan takes this into account while also creating a sense

of urgency for current partners to act now. In its current iteration, the Strategic Plan includes:

- » **Vision:** the shared commitment of the partnership to create a better future for Southern forests.
- » **Goal:** the measurable outcomes that determine progress toward the vision.
- » **Guiding Principles:** a set of core principles that members of the partnership have agreed are key to the success of the initiative.
- » **Priority Focus Areas (PFA):** the six key leverage points that are critical to the success of the vision and goal.
- » **PFA Strategy:** the 5-year strategy (2018-2022) to change the approach to working forest conservation in the South.

Implementation of this Conservation Plan is intended to be accomplished through voluntary collaborative efforts of the organizations represented by the KFAF collaboration and members of the various Working Groups (PFAs) committed to strategy implementation. Participants in the Working Groups and others will work to advocate on behalf of KFAF, and will also support and encourage local, specific, on-the-ground efforts to support the sustainable management and conservation of forests throughout the South.

STRATEGIC PLAN

VISION

THE KEEPING FORESTS AS FORESTS PARTNERSHIP ENVISIONS A WORLD WHERE SOUTHERN FORESTS ARE VALUED AS CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE THAT SUPPORT THE HEALTH, PROSPERITY, SECURITY, AND WELL-BEING OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

Southern forests provide a host of benefits for landowners and residents across the region. These forests provide income for landowners and jobs for residents, particularly in rural areas. The forest industry in the South was responsible for nearly 1.1 million jobs and over \$251 billion in economic output in 2012. Southern forests are a source of clean, reliable drinking water and a majority of the regional population depends on source water from forested watersheds. The forests of the South also provide recreational opportunities, help clean the air of harmful particulate matter, protect cultural resources, provide habitat for wildlife, and store significant amounts of carbon.

GOAL

The goal of KFAF is to shift the paradigm of forest conservation in the South from one focused on piecemeal protection to one focused on the stewardship of the inherent social, economic, and ecological values of functional forest ecosystems for the benefit of current and future generations. The partnership will find new and innovative ways to protect and sustain the approximately 245 million acres of remaining Southern forests.

Achieving this goal will:

- » Improve regional resiliency to changing environmental conditions.
- » Maximize the appropriate mix of resource values at the appropriate scale and time.
- » Sustain healthy communities throughout the Southern U.S. while improving the health and vitality of the Gulf and the South's water resources.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Keeping Forests as Forests partnership agreed to the following set of core principles to guide their work together:

- » Respect the views and values of all with an interest in Southern forests.
- » Success can only be achieved with an "all hands" approach founded on intersecting interests.
- » While the full range of tools and solutions will likely be needed, implementation is rooted in respect for private landowners and helping them achieve their objectives.

PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS (PFAS)

The partnership identified six priority focus areas that are critical to achieving success of the vision and goal:

- » Planning
- » Political Action and Policy
- » Markets
- » Public/Private Partnerships
- » Communication and Education
- » Forest Values

These six areas reflect the complexity and broad range of issues affecting Southern forest conservation. Individually and collectively, they represent leverage points where even small shifts in the current approach could make a significant difference in the conservation of Southern forests.

KFAF - STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINING SOUTHERN FORESTS

The following sections detail the strategies, objectives and key actions necessary to achieve KFAF's long-term conservation goals. KFAF is an initiative that will require decades to fully implement, and strategies will necessarily be focused at several different temporal and spatial scales. At a regional scale, strategies will focus on the creation of the enabling conditions necessary to facilitate conservation at state and regional scales - essentially supporting conservation simultaneously across multiple sites. Such strategies could include efforts based in any of the focal areas that have been identified as critical to the success of the vision and goal - but especially in areas such as Communication and Education and Political Action and Policy.

That said - even regionally based strategies need to touch down in specific places. The Planning PFA will be primarily responsible for determining

where across the region the most appropriate sites are for the application of a specific strategy or for use as demonstration sites, etc. There was also an understanding by the members of the Planning Committee that although public lands will be an important component of the overall conservation effort, strategy would be primarily focused on the maintenance of privately owned working forests.

Given the scale and complexity of the system, it is not unreasonable to assume that specific strategies and their application, at any scale, may also be, at least partially, opportunity driven.

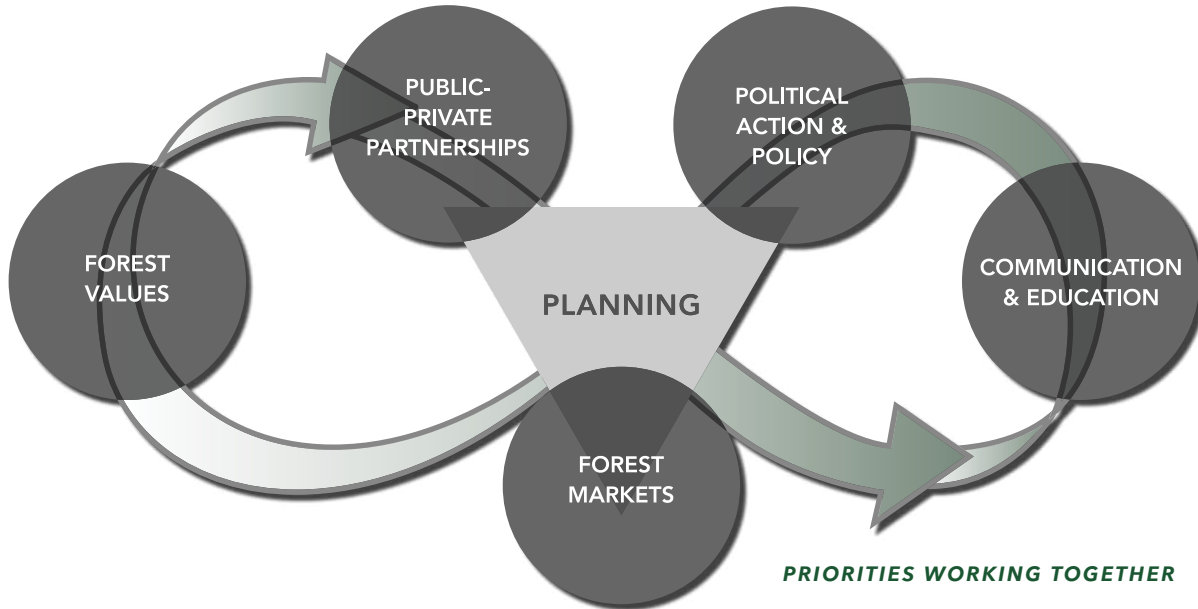


The 6 priority focus area strategic approaches should be viewed as both stand-alone as well as integrated cross-cutting approaches. Clearly most, if not all, are related and success in one area will often depend on success in one or more related areas. The integration of PFA workstreams will be critical to long-term success and would be expected to produce collective results that transcend the work of any individual team. An additional challenge for KFAF will be understanding the need for both sequential and simultaneous action around certain strategies.

STRATEGIC PLAN

PFA WORK GROUP STRATEGIES

Following is an annotated description of the PFA Workgroup strategies. A more detailed description of strategies, baselines, constraints and prioritizations is available at www.keepingforests.org.



PLANNING STRATEGY

The Planning Strategy will focus on positioning water as the essential value that everyone across the region shares. Water quality and water supply are important to everyone and planning will be based on watersheds to transcend limits of jurisdictional boundaries.

Current Team Membership: American Planning Association, The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Forest Service, Knobloch Family Foundation, The Conservation Fund.

GOAL: Conserve forested watersheds in highly critical areas in the South

Objective 1: By 2018, identify at least 5 watersheds in the South where the partnership can leverage the highest impact.

Strategy 1.1: Develop a process to identify the most critical watersheds for the partnership.

Strategy 1.2: Establish a team made of individuals and organizations within KFAF to conduct the analysis.

Objective 2: By 2020, establish a collaborative partnership for each watershed that shares a vision for and commitment to working forest conservation.

Strategy 2.1: Identify and/or cultivate a leadership entity for each watershed.

Strategy 2.2: Identify the funding to support a collaborative partnership in each watershed.



Key actions related to the Planning 5-Year strategy include:

- » Identifying watershed selection criteria (e.g. size, % forested, public water supplies, etc.) and drafting a written, defined process that details the methodology.
- » Developing a geospatial map with priority watersheds identified.
- » Developing a report that accompanies the map to recommend priority watersheds.
- » Incorporating feedback and finalizing list of five critical watersheds to be shared with entire KFAF group.
- » Completing an assessment of existing collaborations and leadership capacity ending with identification of a leadership entity for each selected watershed.
- » Establishing a Philanthropy Team to guide fundraising efforts.
- » Contacting top prospects to explore feasibility of funding and to discuss potential additions to the prospective list.
- » Creating a funding plan for each selected watershed.

POLITICAL ACTION AND POLICY STRATEGY

The Political Action and Policy Strategy will focus on motivating legislators to organize regionally and support the long-term sustainability of Southern forests by engaging an inclusive and coordinated group of stakeholders focused on the economic value of functional forest ecosystems.

Current Team Membership: American Forest Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, American Forest & Paper Association, National Wild Turkey Federation, Knobloch Family Foundation, Southern Group of State Foresters, Environmental Defense Fund, Resource Management Service, Private Consultants.

GOAL: Key policymakers support and adopt policies and legislation that advance forest conservation in the South.

Objective 1: By 2020, raise the profile of and build support for KFAF from key policymakers at the federal, state, and/or local level.

Strategy 1.1: Develop an animating case statement with policy solutions.

Strategy 1.2: Identify and build a coalition with a clear leader to direct policy/political efforts.

Strategy 1.3: Engage and co-create policy solutions with a broad base of supporters – from “grassroots to grasstops”.

Objective 2: By 2022, champion the passing of at least one policy improvement at the federal, state, and/or local level that is supported as a priority in the KFAF agenda.

Strategy 2.1: Use research and empirical information to determine the best policy solutions to address the KFAF agenda.

Strategy 2.2: Advance specific policy solutions through direct lobbying and coalition engagement.

Key actions related to the Political Action and Policy 5-Year strategy include:

- » Creating 3-5 talking points that can be used to communicate with key audiences about the vision, goal, and importance of this initiative.
- » Developing a near-term case statement, key messages, and identifying policy solutions in existence that can be directed towards the Farm Bill.
- » Developing a grassroots to grasstops engagement strategy to co-create policy solutions with key audiences.
- » Determining the appropriate and most effective policy level (federal, state, local) based on priorities of other Working Groups and input from KFAF partnering organizations.
- » Developing a network influence map that includes key audiences to engage.

MARKETS STRATEGY

The Markets Strategy will focus on increasing commitment to and acceptance of wood-based products. The focus will include unifying regional leadership around a common message that promotes Southern forestry and the value of all forests.

Current Team Membership: U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, Georgia Forestry Association, Enviva, The Nature Conservancy, Environmental Defense Fund, Arkansas Agricultural Department, Southern Group of State Foresters, American Forest & Paper Association, Conservation Forestry LLC.

GOAL: Support, advocate, and advance the role of markets in forest conservation.

Objective 1: By 2022, develop and implement a regional plan to support efforts of key partners in marketing traditional and new forest products derived from Southern forests.

Strategy 1.1 Develop broad partnerships with traditional and non-traditional stakeholders to achieve the KFAF vision.

Strategy 1.2 Develop a collaborative forum that helps to advance a regional, sector-wide agenda for forest markets.

Objective 2: By 2022, the KFAF partnership will have successfully advanced at least five high leverage opportunities to enhance forest markets.

Strategy 2.1 Build external support for regulatory, policy, and legislative actions that lead to increased demand for wood.

Strategy 2.2 Build external support for regulatory, policy, and legislative actions that lead to the enhancement of non-traditional forest market opportunities.

Strategy 2.3 Develop a process that engages stakeholders - both internal to KFAF and external - to identify and leverage five opportunities that will enhance forest markets.

Objective 3: By 2022, identify and develop support for research needed in at least three key areas to enhance forest products markets.

Strategy 3.1 Develop a collaborative forum that helps to advance a region-wide agenda for forest research.

Strategy 3.2 Engage research institutions with the interest and capacity to accomplish research that supports the region-wide research agenda.

Strategy 3.3 Develop a methodology to leverage partnership resources that advance the region-wide research agenda.

Key actions related to the Markets 5-Year strategy include:

- » Developing a matrix of key partners and critical regional marketing efforts.
- » Engaging key partners to support their marketing efforts
- » Developing a list of 5 high leverage opportunities
- » Developing a prioritized list of the most viable non-traditional forest market opportunities
- » Developing a stakeholder engagement plan.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS STRATEGY

The Public/Private Partnership Strategy will focus on organizing public/private partnerships in a strategic way which aligns interests to increase resources devoted towards achieving the KFAF goal.

Current Team Membership: The Conservation Fund, American Forest & Paper Association, Centers for Disease Control, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, The National Wild Turkey Federation, U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Resource Management Service.

GOAL: Align interests around new and existing public-private partnerships to marshal necessary resources and actions to achieve the KFAF goal.

Objective 1: By 2022, advance at least five existing funding opportunities through public-private partnerships

Strategy 1.1: Develop three funding opportunity streams:

- a) Choose 5 states to develop partnerships around existing funding opportunities

- b) Choose 3 place-based areas to develop partnerships around existing funding opportunities.

- c) Choose 2 existing federal funding opportunities to develop partnerships around KFAF.

Strategy 1.2: Engage individual partner organizations in identifying and committing human resources for partnership development.

Strategy 1.3: Create opportunities to increase the breadth of non-traditional partners engaged.

Objective 2: By 2022, support or create at least one new regional or five landscape level public-private partnerships that engage the thirteen Southern states in KFAF.

Strategy 2.1: Develop a clear understanding of existing public-private partnerships and gaps in the South.

- a) Inventory existing and potential public-private partnerships
- b) Identify critical gaps in public-private partnerships

Strategy 2.2: Facilitate high leverage opportunities by building coalitions around selected public-private partnerships

Key actions related to the Public/Private Partnership 5-Year strategy include:

- » Creating a list of states and locations in addition to a list of potential and existing funding sources.
- » Developing an action plan for each public/private partnership developed or enhanced.
- » Identifying and developing a list of strategic partners to commit resources.
- » Developing a list of potential champions for each partnership.
- » Developing a framework for a regional partnership or at least five landscape level partnerships.
- » Convening stakeholders to develop or support selected partnerships.

COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION

The Communication and Education Strategy will focus on creating clear, simple messaging targeted to pre-determined audiences delivered by the appropriate messengers. These messages will be developed based on the audience's values and needs but focused on meeting KFAF's desired outcomes.

Current Team Membership: Sustainable Forestry Initiative, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, The Nature Conservancy, Center for Heirs' Property Preservation, SC Rural Water Association.

GOAL: Motivate action by raising awareness of the critical need to conserve Southern forests.

Objective 1: By 2020, complete identification, analysis, and segmentation of the key audiences.

Strategy 1.1: Engage KFAF PFA Working Groups in the identification of key individuals, organizations, and sectors to target.

Strategy 1.2: Develop a suite of target audience profiles based on values, interests, relationships, and financial/personal interests.

Objective 2: By 2019, KFAF partners and their organizations speak consistently using a set of core messages that advance the KFAF vision and mission.

Strategy 2.1: Create and execute an internal communications plan.

Strategy 2.2: Create and execute an external communications plan.

Objective 3: By 2022, identify and cultivate 10 partnerships with non-traditional stakeholders.

Strategy 3.1: Engage the PFA Working Groups in the identification of existing and new non-traditional stakeholders.

Strategy 3.2: Build upon relationships, touchpoints, and opportunities to advance and amplify the KFAF vision and mission.

Key actions related to the Communication and Education 5-Year strategy include:

- » Developing a communications plan.
- » Developing a message synthesis of all partnering organization messages around conservation.
- » Developing an online presence and shareable digital assets for partner organizations to drive traffic to website.
- » Identification of data requirements for analysis and segmentation of nontraditional stakeholders.
- » Researching and recommending potential online tools that can be used to manage and enhance relationship networks.



FOREST VALUES STRATEGY

The Forest Values Strategy will focus on creating a fundamental shift in perception for everyone about what it means to live together in our compressed natural resources world. Focus will also include creating a conversation about the benefits that forests provide so that demand is created for ecosystem services markets.

Current Team Membership: Sustainable Forestry Initiative, American Forest & Paper Association, Centers for Disease Control, Forest Landowners Association, The Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Fund, Resource Management Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Center for Heirs' Property Preservation.

GOAL: Improve understanding and acceptance of the critical human and inherent values of forests in the South

Objective 1: By 2018, identify and prioritize 5 critical forest values.

Strategy 1.1: Ensure inclusivity and resonance in the identification, prioritization, and messaging of forest values.

Strategy 1.2: Use a scientific approach to evaluate data on disparate perspectives to determine the five critical forest values.

Strategy 1.3: Leverage available and existing resources to carry out the objective.

Objective 2: By 2020, develop a synthesis of key data for each critical value that can be translated and used to influence forest conservation outcomes.

Strategy 2.1: Ensure that critical data exists and is available.

Strategy 2.2: Establish a team to synthesize and translate data for each critical forest value.

Key actions related to the Forest Values 5-Year strategy include:

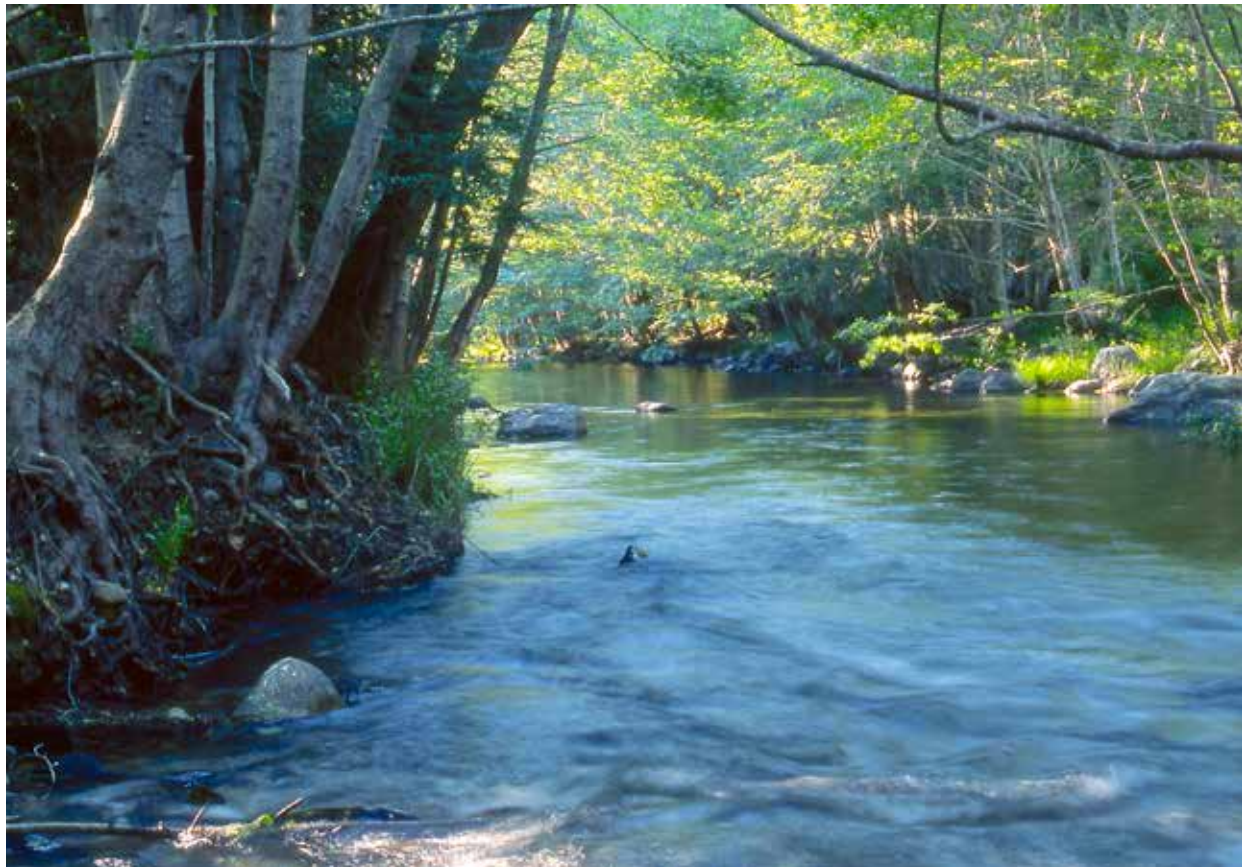
- » Developing a plan for forest value prioritization.
- » Surveying stakeholders to identify their perspectives on critical forest values.
- » Cataloging available resources at the national, regional, state and local scale.
- » Structuring the necessary resources and developing a process for refining the 5 critical values, as well as sharing the process widely for evaluation and feedback.
- » Developing a diverse reporting team to synthesize and translate data for each critical forest value.

THE BROAD coalition of partners represents both a strength and weakness of the KFAF initiative. Diverse stakeholders provide the collaboration with a wide range of social, economic and conservation perspectives which ultimately create a broad base from which to drive collective action. However, that same diversity can present challenges in developing priorities and sustaining committed engagement.

Key actions for each PFA Strategy will be developed and implemented by partner organizations whose staff are adding KFAF activities to an often already busy professional calendar. Additionally, each PFA Working Group will be guided by volunteers from representative organizations who choose to provide input to the 1-2 year Action Plan. The implementation of the Action Plans developed by each PFA will be the result of a collaborative effort determined and led by that PFA Working Group.

It is anticipated that Action Plans and related strategic approaches will be frequently reviewed (every 2 years) and modified as needed to reflect changes in various social, economic and political realities and the opportunities they present.

Ultimately, success will depend on our collective ability to integrate the larger goals of the KFAF initiative with the professional and institutional goals of participating organizations and their respective staff. By bringing the collective focus and resources of multiple organizations and agencies to bear on a commonly agreed upon set of goals and outcomes, the KFAF collaboration hopes to accomplish what any single organization could not; the long-term sustainability and conservation of our Southern forests and, consequently, the long-term conservation of the local communities, water supplies, wildlife habitats and recreational opportunities these forests provide.



KEYS TO LONG-TERM SUCCESS

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

KFAF's success will depend upon the breadth of its partnership and the ongoing cooperation and collaboration of participating organizations. The participation of non-traditional stakeholders as well as public and private interests will be critical to the development and adoption of the paradigm shifts necessary to sustain Southern forests over the long-term. Whenever possible, KFAF will also need to resist the temptation to re-invent the wheel and will instead build on the existing work, investments and commitments of partner organizations. Ultimately, the power of KFAF will come from our ability to integrate and align its actions and goals with those of our participating collaboration members; and find ways to integrate the capacity, resources and talents of participating organizations to produce meaningful leveraging opportunities and the collective action needed to create change.

STRATEGIC PLAN AS A FRAMEWORK AND CATALYST

This Strategic Plan is intended to provide a conceptual framework for a new scale of Southern forest conservation, to identify the most significant strategic actions to conserve these systems, and to serve as a forum and catalyst for the development of additional innovative approaches to conservation. The Strategic Plan is not intended to be prescriptive, but rather acknowledges that the true work of identifying and addressing specific conservation activities will occur through subsequent efforts, with as many stakeholders as possible working collaboratively under the umbrella of the Keeping Forests as Forest initiative.



EVALUATION OF PROGRAMMATIC SUCCESS

As described in earlier sections, the KFAF collaboration anticipates that nothing short of a multi-decade paradigm shift around how we collectively think about and value our forests will be needed to sustain them over time. We can and will measure progress against shorter-term action plans and strategic approaches. However, measuring progress against the larger vision will be difficult and defining the appropriate metrics will be challenging. It is not likely to be in "acres" or some other easily measured attribute. Success will be measured over time by our ability to collectively work toward the common goal, and in the resulting changes in the social, economic and political systems needed to support those goals. It is anticipated that meaningful metrics will be developed for each strategy as part of the larger implementation process.

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