

## **2015 Illinois Forest Action Plan**

### **Addendum 2.0**

#### ***U S D A Forest Service State and Private Forestry National Priorities:***

##### ***Background:***

The 2008 Farm Bill, under Title VIII – Forestry, amends the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978, to include the requirement that each state develop a long-term, state-wide assessment and strategies for forest resources. These assessments and strategies focused on three national priorities:

- Conserve and Manage Working Forest Landscapes for Multiple Values and Uses
- Protect Forests from Threats
- Enhance Public Benefits from Trees and Forests

These documents were developed with a comprehensive team of stakeholders to address cross-boundary, landscape scale actions that would be the most efficient activities to address issues of concern developed for the assessment phase of the Forest Action plan.

This Illinois Forest Action Plan document will become Addendum 2.0 and be an official part of the plan until a significant update is accepted. It serves as a record of activities taken by all Illinois stakeholders to address strategic actions taken as part of Illinois's Forest Action Plan and will be updated annually.

#### ***U S D A Forest Service State and Private Forestry National Priorities:***

##### ***Highlights:***

#### ***Successes in Illinois Driven by the 2010 Illinois Forest Action Plan (IFAP):***

##### ***Projects in Illinois awarded competitive funding grants from NA S&PF since the IFAP***

The Illinois Forest Action Plan (IFAP) and its assessments have been noticed and remain a partial focus of most significant forestry partner organizations in Illinois. Each year Illinois has been awarded one or more competitive NA S&PF grant project(s) based on their forestry merit and their alignment with the assessments and/or strategies of the IFAP. Grants have included a good mix of urban and community projects, fire, forest health, and stewardship-based private forest management. All grants have been aligned with the assessments and Illinois's 5 priority concerns outlined in the IFAP. A list of these projects and those from other states and organizations can be found on the USDA Forest Service Northeastern Area S&PF website.

##### ***Universal Illinois Forest Management Plan cements commitment to wildlife habitat***

The Illinois Forest Management Plan (IFMP) was greatly influenced by the IFAP assessments and the historical commitment to expanding forestry and wildlife habitat by the Division of Forest Resources. In 2010 the IDNR Forestry Stewardship Forester, the Illinois Extension Forester, the Illinois Tree Farm

Director and USDA NRCS State Forester tasked themselves with developing, outlining and approving universal forest management plan standards that all Illinois forest management plans will follow so that each meets all the standards of the Tree Farm System, USDA NRCS EQIP 106, Forest Stewardship, and the Illinois Forestry Development Act (tax-law) programs. Making the management plan universal allows consultants to write more and better plans and allows DNR to be efficient in their review and implementation of Forest Stewardship and other plans. Illinois plans, since the winter of 2011/2012, now require wildlife habitat considerations and alignment with the principles found within the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan.

#### ***IFDA – IFA Partnership: Forestry Communication Initiative***

Each year the Illinois Forestry Development Council (Council) manages a budget authorized under the Illinois Forestry Development Act (IFDA) to forward and promote forestry across Illinois. In Illinois fiscal year 2015 the Council awarded a project grant to the Illinois Forestry Association as a forestry communication initiative. This project collects and builds an email database “group” for real-time forestry communication in Illinois that will be used by both the association, to email information, news, or issues; or by the forestry division, to email business and communications. In the past important communication on a forestry issue or opportunity was done by inefficient, time-consuming word of mouth, phone calls and US mail and was so burdensome the effort was rarely undertaken. The initial target is the 11,000 landowners already participating in Illinois’s IFDA private land forestry management program. A planned continuation of this partnership is expected in the Council’s 2016 and 2017 budget years. Thousands more forestry minded landowners - especially those participating in other IDNR land management programs – will hopefully be added. There are approximately 200,000 non-industrial private forest landowners in Illinois. The forestry communications email group will not be limited to forest landowners and can include anyone with an interest in forestry or forestry issues. Ultimately this type of forestry communication in Illinois results in communicating the IFAP itself and all related current issues to landowners, stakeholders at citizens at large.

#### ***Wood Utilization & Marketing HQ Forester***

The IFAP noted the decline of forest industry and lack of professional foresters in Illinois as huge concerns. Our State Forester was, appropriately, one of the first persons to take action on the IFAP to address these two concerns and in 2011 began the efforts which resulted in hiring in 2013 a Wood Utilization and Marketing forester position at DNR headquarters that had been vacant since year 2000. A number of positive effects have resulted in the 2 year period since hiring that forester with many essential and important projects ahead. In that Illinois DNR has less than 20 professional foresters within the division, each head-count added or replaced is significant to our operations and our responsibilities.

#### ***Fire Program western/Illinois and Fire Management Cooperatives***

The IFAP documented the changing dynamics and loss of the Illinois oak-hickory forests due to lack of disturbances. Fire and harvesting are the primary stand and landscape disturbances that promote oak-hickory forest types in Illinois. The Illinois DNR fire-program, which is two-faceted, has grown in

response. DNR and other related disciplines outside and inside DNR are now required to have minimum annual classwork, physically pass annual refresher, and carry a Prescribed Burn Managers card. The IDNR Forestry program manager has expanded the Illinois fire program to train hundreds of rural fire district personnel and more division foresters as well as maintaining an entire Illinois crew of re-carded firefighters available for NWCG fire duty and has been, for the last decade, active every season. The prescribed burn and wild land fire training programs and grants have expanded the capacity for the DNR and its partners and allied agencies to be better geared and more efficient on their expanded use of fire on the landscape. Noteworthy is a prescribed fire project partially funded by a competitive NA S&PF grant. A multiple county burn association was formed which functions like a cooperative to deliver prescribe fire to mostly private forestland in Illinois's most important forest region in southern Illinois.

#### ***River to River Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA)***

This southern Illinois weed management cooperative was inspired by the IFAP assessment and the NA S&PF competitive grant which it received to survey and map bush-honeysuckle, Illinois's worst forest understory invader, between the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers in the heavily-forested southern counties of Illinois. The mapping project was successful and now the CWMA lives on and remains active in battling the invasion of the unwanted forest shrub. As an example, the email blast below circulated in November 2015:

The River to River CWMA, in cooperation with our partners at the IDNR, Shawnee NF, and Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry would like to invite you to participate in a Honeysuckle Roundup and Pot-luck to be held at Trail of Tears State Forest, December 18 from 9am-4pm. Please RSVP to me by December 11, 2015 so we know how many to plan for ...  
<http://www.rtrcwma.org>      <http://www.facebook.com/rtrcwma>

#### ***IL CREP 1400 CEs and Required Timber Harvest Plans***

The State of Illinois Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) program has developed approximately 1,400 permanent conservation easements with private landowners owning forest and non-forestland in river bottoms and directly adjacent lands across Illinois two biggest watersheds. Owners in the Illinois and Kaskaskia River basins are eligible if they have active federal CRP or CREP contracts in or adjacent to a floodplain and after detailed property inspection and an internal technical review. The IFAP illustrated how important the need for professional foresters is across Illinois and so CREP program managers are now working with the forestry division to approve timber harvest plans for any CREP easement landowners who wish to cut timber on their easement. Approval of a harvest involves either a qualified forestry consultant and/or a state service forester to review, further develop, and/or approve timber harvest plans assuring each addresses silvicultural management and forest regeneration principles.

#### ***U&CF Committee Expansion and Urban Assessments and Strategies***

Since 2010 the IFAP inspired the need for further assessment and strategies within the Urban & Community Forestry arena. Partners and organizations that support urban forestry within the state

found, in the 2010 IFAP, a lack of a detailed urban assessment and strategy a handicap for both the mission of urban forestry and the competitiveness of projects and initiatives for NA grants. The forestry division's U&CF state-wide program manager subsequently expanded and assembled the Council's urban forestry committee which ultimately developed the current Addendum 1.0 to the IFAP (2014). The U&CF committee continues to meet regularly to monitor, assess and strategize on that work and on current issues which will be meshed and included in the updated 2016 IFAP.

***Be a Hero Transport Zero message/campaign***

Illinois Division of Fisheries has been working with the Illinois-Indiana sea-grant on the aquatic message of the "Be a Hero" campaign since 2014. The grant team asked DNR wide for volunteers for developing a companion land message to address, primarily, invasive and exotic plants and insects . Due to the IFAP, and it confirming the threat of changing forest dynamics and forest health issues, the Stewardship Forester of the Illinois Division of Forest Resources volunteered. The IDNR Invasive Species Coordinator (also a forester) volunteered as a second. Together both worked with sea-grant specialists on a message and main points to create a parallel icon for terrestrial land threats and invaders affecting forests.



For more information visit [TransportZero.org](http://TransportZero.org) and [ReleaseZero.org](http://ReleaseZero.org). To learn more about becoming a Be a Hero partner, contact Charlebois at [charlebo@illinois.edu](mailto:charlebo@illinois.edu).

***U S D A Forest Service State and Private Forestry National Priorities:  
Illinois's Forest Action Plan:***

Our original assessment identified five main priorities in which affected forestry in Illinois:

Decline of oak dominance	USFS Objective 1.1 USFS Objective 1.2 USFS Objective 2.1 USFS Objective 3.5
Changing Forest Landscapes	USFS Objective 1.1 USFS Objective 3.1 USFS Objective 3.5
Forest Health Decline	USFS Objective 2.2
Loss of State Forestry Professionals	Objective 3.6
Decline of Forest Industry	

***U S D A Forest Service State and Private Forestry National Priorities:  
How Illinois Addresses National Priorities:***

**Conserve and Manage Working Forest Landscapes for Multiple Values and Uses**

- 1) Provide an adequately staffed Division of Forest Resources to serve the needs of Illinois forest landowners, in addition to stewardship responsibilities on public lands.
- 2) Provide property tax relief for owners of well-managed forests as a means of incentivizing and maintaining sound forest stewardship.
- 3) Provide incentive programs to make investments in forest management more appealing and affordable to landowners.
- 4) Encourage intergenerational transfer of family-owned forests and training for the heirs
  - i. Estate Planning workshops
  - ii. Conservation education for future landowners
  - iii. Outreach and service projects for widows and children
- 5) Make landowners aware of conservation easement programs that can secure their legacy of good forest management
- 6) Foster collaborations that engage in landscape level planning and implementation across public and private ownership boundaries.
- 7) Monitor young hardwood stands established by the CRP/WRP programs for adequate stocking, composition, and presence of invasive species; take corrective measures to achieve management goals, as needed.
- 8) Develop workshops and outreach programs to educate landowners about the importance, methods, and benefits of forest management

- 9) Convert thousands of Marginal Lands to Forest Cover
  - a. Continue operation of two state tree nurseries in order to provide affordable and locally sourced seedlings for tree planting projects.
  - b. Encourage development and maintenance of riparian buffers and wildlife corridors.
  - c. Monitor young hardwood stands established by the CRP/WRP programs for adequate stocking, composition, and presence of invasive species; take corrective measures to achieve management goals, where needed.
- 10) Maintain a prescribed fire program
- 11) Address Wildlife Needs (Active goals from IL Wildlife Action Plan)
  - \*Increase the percentage of Illinois' lands which are not plowed, paved, drained, or landscaped.
    - \*Implement sustainable forestry practices, including timber stand improvement, prescribed fire, timber harvesting and invasive species control to enhance oak-dominance
    - \*Increase the quality of Illinois' natural lands as measured by their ability to support robust (abundance and richness) communities of native plants and animals.
    - \*Illinois Natural Areas Inventory forest sites restored and managed
    - \*Improve the capacities of Illinois' agricultural and urban lands to support populations of native fish and wildlife.
    - \*Increase access to Illinois' lands and waters for outdoor recreation purposes.
    - \*Protect or connect forests for 500 acre and larger contiguous forestland
    - \*Meet or exceed recreational and commercial demands upon Illinois' plant and animal populations.
    - \*Increase statewide forest acreage by 350,000 acres
    - \*Restore populations of plant and animal species that have become rare or are declining.
      - \*Eradicate, control, and prevent the introduction of invasive exotic species.
      - \*Urban forests are healthy and well-maintained

## **Protect Forests from Threats**

- 1) Develop and support regional and statewide cooperative weed management programs
- 2) Monitor for presence of exotic insects and disease, using the early detection/rapid response approach on new invasions.
- 3) Support research and demonstration of new control methods and integrated pest management
- 4) Prioritize forest types and landscapes at risk of invasion
- 5) Identify geographic areas not overtaken by invasives and monitor regularly

- 6) Encourage development of fire protection plans in the 7 southernmost counties of Illinois where wildfire is a risk.

## **Enhance Public Benefits from Trees and Forests**

- 1) Improve and Expand Urban Forest Composition and Health
- 2) Achieve Widespread Illinois Urban Forestry Sustainability and Management
- 3) Education and Training for Professionals and Non-professionals
- 4) Urban Forest Plants, Insect and Disease Invasive Species Awareness and Management
- 5) Nurture Urban Forestry Partnerships
- 6) Expand and Support Advocacy
- 7) Increase Funding for Urban & Community Forestry
- 8) Increase State Urban Forestry Staffing

### ***U S D A Forest Service State and Private Forestry National Priorities:***

#### ***Future National Priority Objectives in Illinois:***

Illinois continues to strengthen its planning with the collaborative efforts of our two forestry universities, our forestry organizations including the Illinois Forestry Association and the Illinois Arborist Association, a governor's Forestry Development Council as USFS recognized S&PF coordinating committee and the dedicated executive, regional and field staffs of the Division of Forest Resources.

A significant update of the IFAP has been in draft stage to coincide with the 5-year review. Illinois is re-writing our IFAP for the 5 year update which will be forthcoming yet this calendar year.

END  
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