




NATIONAL
COMMISSION
ON SCIENCE FOR
SUSTAINABLE
FORESTRY

**"IMPROVING THE
SCIENTIFIC BASIS FOR
SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY
IN THE UNITED STATES"**

MISSION AND SCOPE

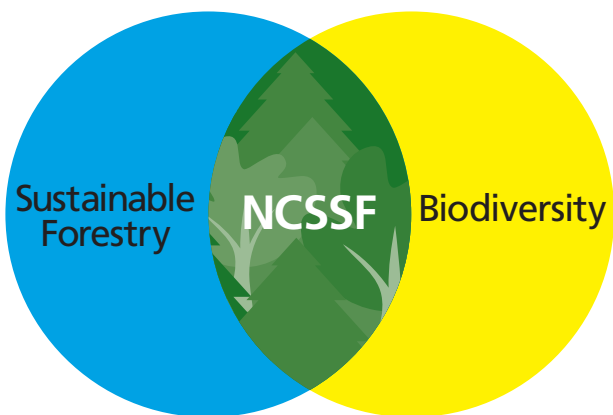


The National Commission on Science for Sustainable Forestry (NCSSF) has the mission of improving the scientific basis for the development, implementation and evaluation of sustainable forestry practices in the United States.

The Commission conducts a program to build a better scientific underpinning for assessing and improving sustainable forest management practices. The program produces information and tools that are both of the highest technical quality and greatest relevancy to the urgent needs of policymakers, forest managers and practitioners. The NCSSF program includes syntheses and surveys, research and assessments, tool development, and communication and outreach activities.

The initial five-year phase of NCSSF's program focuses on the relationships between biodiversity and forest management practices (Criteria 1 of the Montreal process). The program scope includes addressing the information needs for managed forest-lands, industrial and non-industrial, in the continental United States.

Program Focus



www.NCSSF.org

NCSSF APPROACH

The NCSSF program is results oriented and science based to provide practical information and approaches that serve the needs of policymakers, forest managers and practitioners.

The program emphasizes developing the knowledge and tools most directly relevant to improving sustainable forestry practices over the next five to ten years.

The advancement of sustainable forestry and biodiversity conservation are limited by:

- crucial gaps in the scientific understanding
- insufficient transformation of research results into usable information
- lack of tools to measure and evaluate progress; and
- inadequate communication between researchers and practitioners.

NCSSF Role Linking Science and Management Needs



Communication and outreach are woven into the entire NCSSF program process.



NCSSF addresses these current limitations using an interactive approach that includes an ongoing dialogue between the users and producers of sustainable forestry information as an integral part of planning, conducting and evaluating the science program.

The Commission overseeing the program is composed of both prominent scientists and diverse stakeholders. NCSSF's dialogue among its diverse membership and with the stakeholder communities serves to develop consensus on research priorities, evolve common terminology, produce the most useful outputs and ensure the widest possible acceptance of results.


NCSSF goes beyond traditional research programs which simply produce technical information. Communication and outreach are woven into the entire NCSSF program process. To ensure research is transformed into meaningful results, the program includes syntheses of knowledge, surveys of decisionmakers' needs, assessment of applications, and development of practical tools.

The Commission maintains its credibility by remaining distinct from any particular sustainable forestry practices or systems for certification. The results of the NCSSF program provide a stronger scientific basis for benchmarking the various practices and systems to enable more objective comparisons and evaluations of progress as well as the development of improved approaches.

www.NCSSF.org

NCSSF

PROGRAM AREAS



The Commission began the program's first ten projects in June 2002. The NCSSF conducts the science program using commissioned studies by leading researchers and institutions, competitively selected using external peer reviews. A sheet listing NCSSF's current projects is in this brochure's front pocket.

NCSSF'S SCIENCE PROGRAM INCLUDES FOUR MAJOR AREAS:

1

SYNTHESIS AND SURVEYS:

Projects to evaluate and document the existing knowledge base, data and models. Although our understanding of the connections between forest management practices and biodiversity may be limited, the current lack of synthesis and effective communication of existing information may be at least as important to the implementation of protocols that support biodiversity goals. The results from this program area will be used as a basis for identifying and prioritizing NCSSF research, assessments, tool development and communication efforts.

2

RESEARCH AND ASSESSMENTS:

Projects to develop relevant new knowledge and to assess the significance of scientific understanding for application to improve sustainable forestry management and biodiversity conservation. Examples include: establishing the scientific basis for management standards and practices at the stand, management unit and landscape levels; evaluating the role of ecosystem restoration; determining the trade-offs between management for biodiversity and crop productivity; improving the understanding of fragmentation; and assessing the impacts of non-timber product harvesting and management on biodiversity.

NCSSF goes beyond traditional research programs by developing the knowledge and tools most directly relevant to sustainable forestry practices.



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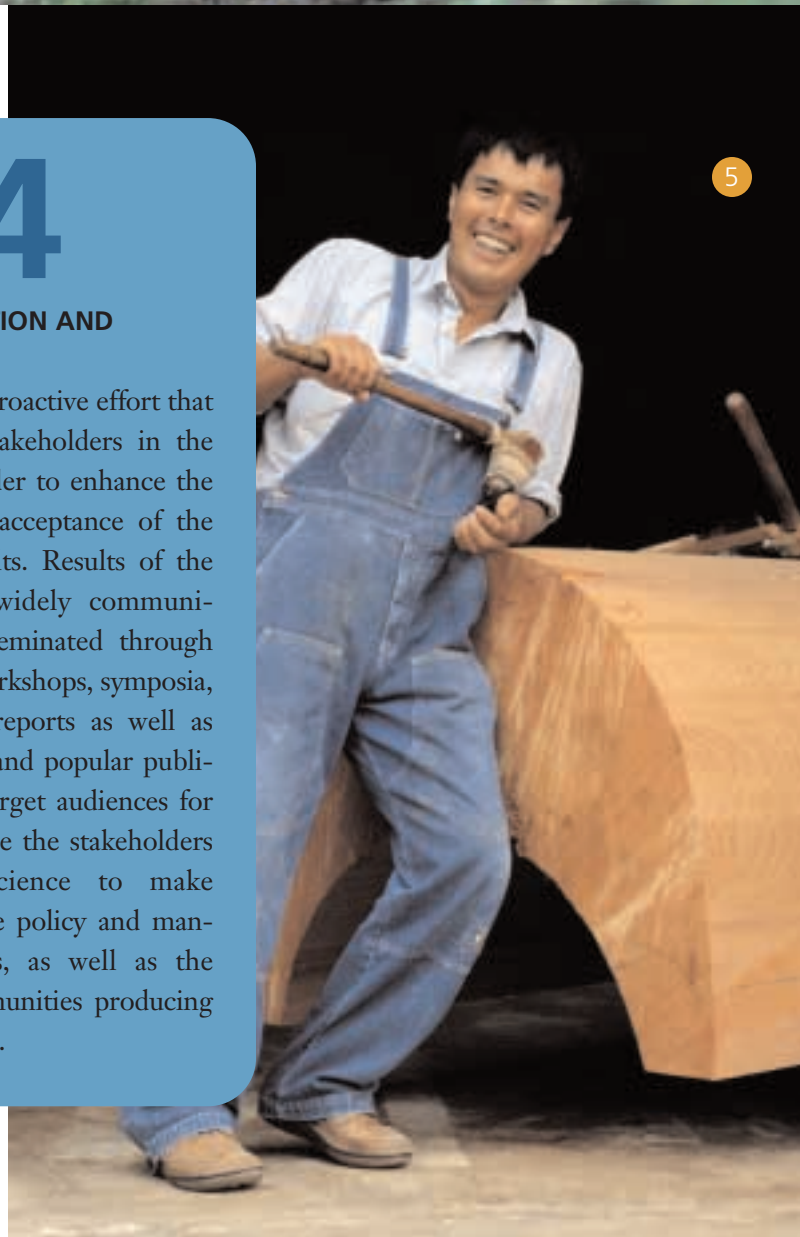
TOOL DEVELOPMENT:

Projects to develop new tools to assess biodiversity trends, forest health, ecosystem function and decision support systems (DSS) to provide scientific understanding in usable forms to aid in decisionmaking. There are situations where the science underpinning biodiversity management may be in place, but key tools for implementation or monitoring are missing. Examples of tools include: simple indices of complex ecological processes; practical approaches for biodiversity status assessment in the field; and development of new monitoring technologies.

4

COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH:

NCSSF has a proactive effort that involves the stakeholders in the program in order to enhance the relevancy and acceptance of the program's results. Results of the program are widely communicated and disseminated through the website, workshops, symposia, briefings and reports as well as peer-reviewed and popular publications. The target audiences for the program are the stakeholders that apply science to make decisions at the policy and management levels, as well as the scientific communities producing new knowledge.



ORGANIZATION AND FUNDING



The Commission membership includes eminent scientists and leading forest management professionals from academic, government, industry and environmental organizations. A sheet listing the Members is in this brochure's front pocket. The Commission is an independent, non-advocacy, multistakeholder body that plans and oversees the NCSSF science program. NCSSF neither endorses specific policy positions nor promulgates specific management practices.

The Commission is established under the auspices of the National Council for Science and the Environment (NCSE), a policy neutral, non-profit organization dedicated to improving the scientific basis for environmental decisionmaking. NCSE appoints the Members, who are respected researchers and managers and are opinion leaders in diverse fields with broad perspectives. Members serve as individuals rather than as official representatives of the organizations they are affiliated with professionally.

NCSSF is funded by a partnership of sponsoring organizations, mutually committed to improving the scientific basis for sustainable forestry practices, through grants to the National Council on Science and the Environment (NCSE). The founding sponsors include: Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Surdna Foundation, Packard Foundation and the National Forest Foundation.

Twice annually the Commission convenes with meetings in the spring and fall to plan and oversee the program. The Commission identifies research priorities, defines the specific projects to meet NCSSF goals, integrates the program's results and communicates the significance to decisionmakers.

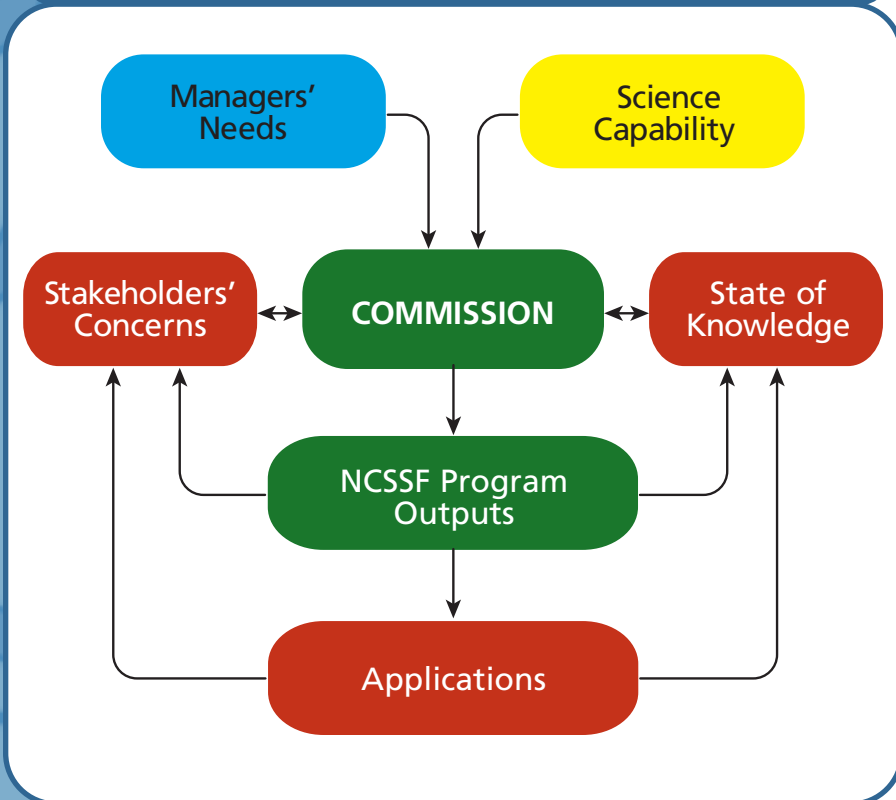


The NCSSF Program Office supports the Commission's efforts by providing program management, planning, communication and coordination with external activities. NCSE hosts the Program Office and provides the Commission's Program Director and staffing. The Program Director coordinates the Commission and manages the NCSSF's program.

Each year NCSSF announces new projects and solicits proposals to perform the work. Applicants are chosen based on the results of external

reviews by panels of scientific peers and practitioners. Proposals are evaluated on their scientific quality, responsiveness to NCSSF needs, and relevancy to improving sustainable forestry management practices and policies. NCSSF anticipates annually awarding over \$1 million in funding to conduct multiple projects lasting one to three years.

Commission Function



Each year NCSSF announces new projects and solicits proposals to perform the work.



SPONSORS

THE David &
Lucile Packard
Foundation



DORIS DUKE
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

NCSSF's mission is to improve the scientific basis for the design, conduct and evaluation of sustainable forest practices in the United States.

NCSSF



NCSSF produces information and tools that are both of the highest technical quality and greatest relevancy to the urgent needs of policy-makers, forest managers and practitioners.



For more information please contact us at www.NCSSF.org

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