



Project Matrix

Initiative Vision

Strengthen and diversify Minnesota's forest-based economy and promote the long-term ecological health of the forest resource that supports it.

Initiative Objectives

- **Forested Land Base and Resource**

- 1 a. Maintain Minnesota's forest resource base and reduce losses caused by conversion, parcelization, and fragmentation of private lands and disposal of public lands.
- 1 b. Capture and enhance the productivity of Minnesota's forests for forest products and consumption.

- **Forest Management**

- 2 a. Establish ecologically-based forest management as the norm in Minnesota.
- 2 b. Increase the number of acres of private woodlands being actively and sustainably managed.
- 2 c. Increase public understanding of forest management and practices and the role they play in ensuring resource health, quality, and productivity for vital communities.

- **Economic Development**

- 3 a. Create new products and markets for Minnesota's wood products industry.
- 3 b. Enhance the operating efficiency and economic viability of Minnesota's wood products industry.
- 3 c. Increase the number of acres of private woodland and number of forest products companies under third-party certification.
- 3 d. Increase the capacity of the forest management services sector (ex: logging operators, professional foresters).



This is an overview of the projects in which Blandin Foundation has invested to strengthen and diversify Minnesota’s forest-based economy, and promote the long-term ecological health of the forest resource that supports it. For more information about the Vital Forests / Vital Communities Initiative, including copies of all reports referenced, please visit our website www.blandinfoundation.org.

I: Forested Land Base and Resource		
I a. Maintain Minnesota’s forest resource base and reduce losses from conversion, parcelization and fragmentation		
Project	Description	Status
<p>Conservation Easements: Minnesota Forest Legacy Partnership for the Itasca County Area (2005 - 2009)</p> <p>Partnering organizations include: The Conservation Fund, Trust for Public Land, The Nature Conservancy, MN Deer Hunters Association, Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce, MN Dept of Natural Resources, and Minnesota Forest Industries.</p>	<p>In 2005, the Foundation awarded \$6.25 million in seed capital and program support to The Nature Conservancy to create a fund to purchase conservation easements on up to 75,000 acres of forestland in Itasca Area. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to hold and monitor easements.</p> <p>In December 2008, the Foundation awarded \$150,000 to The Conservation Fund for project support to help develop high value conservation easement projects on working forests in the Itasca area.</p> <p>In June 2009, the Foundation awarded an additional \$7 million in support of the Upper Mississippi Forest (UMF) Project. Closing on the easement set for July 2010.</p>	<p>Conservation easements procured:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liila Forest Products, a division of Rajala Companies, on a 1,660-acre tract in southern Itasca County known as Sugar Hills. • Forest Capital Partners on 51,163 acres (80 sq. mi) of forestland in northern Itasca and southern Koochiching counties. Known as the Koochiching-Washington Forest Legacy Project, this easement will connect adjacent public ownerships, including two state forests – George Washington and Koochiching -- resulting in close to 500,000 contiguous acres of permanently protected forests. • UPM Blandin on 187,000 acres (292 sq. mi) of forestland in Itasca and other Northern MN counties. Known as the Upper Mississippi Forest Project, this easement will create more than 4,000 square miles of contiguous forest habitat in six counties. • The Partnership raised over \$23 million in private and \$46 million in public funds (state and federal), exceeding an initial fundraising goal of \$26 million. • Inspired the Forest Legacy Project, a program of the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation to assist regional smaller landowners with keeping their private forestlands intact.
<p>Research Study: Impact of Land Loss in Minnesota Counties (2006)</p>	<p>Contract to University of Minnesota to support research on the economic, social and ecological impacts of tax forfeited land disposal and retention. Co-funded with the Minnesota Association of County Land Commissioners.</p>	<p><i><u>Evaluating the Economic Impacts of Retention and Disposal Policies for County Tax-forfeited Land in Northern Minnesota</u></i> released July 2008.</p>

I b. Capture and enhance the productivity of Minnesota’s forests		
Project	Description	Status
Study Tour Project: <i>Seeing the Forest AND the Trees</i> (2007-08)	A 2007-08 study tour project to sites in Minnesota, Ontario and Scandinavia. Project learning objectives were (in summary): increase the quality and value of forests and the products that come from the land; optimize the balance of forest benefits, and develop a shared vision and public policy recommendations for forest management in Minnesota.	<p>A cohort of more than 40 forest professionals participated in three tours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October 29-30, 2007: UPM and Aitkin County Land Dept sites in Itasca and Aitkin Counties • May 14-16, 2008: sites identified by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources’ Centre for Northern Forest Ecosystem Research in Thunder Bay, Ontario • Sept 28-Oct 6 2008: Finland and Sweden <p>Program deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project report released January 2009 • Project DVD released July 2009 – a documentary to extend the reach of the tour key learnings beyond participants to a broader audience of opinion leaders and decision makers.
II. Forest Management		
II a. Establish Ecological Classification System-based (ECS) forest management as the norm in Minnesota.		
Project	Description	Status
Video Production: <i>Forest Floor to Showroom Floor: Marketing “Green Forestry” in Minnesota</i> (2007)	Produced by Fretless Films, this 13 minute video documents the process of certification, follows the local value-added chain-of-custody, and illustrates how FSC certification fits into Aitkin County’s overall approach to practicing ecologically based, yet economically viable forestry.	Premiered at June 2008 Great Lakes Forest Alliance regional conference. Distributed 64 copies to forestry professionals, legislators, and MN Environmental Learning Centers. Available on the Blandin Foundation’s website.
Curriculum Development and Delivery: <i>Building Forester Capacity in Minnesota</i> (2004)	Grant to University of Minnesota Sustainable Forest Education Cooperative (SFEC) to develop and deliver a certificate course for natural resource professionals in the application of Ecological Classification Systems (ECS) to silvicultural and stewardship planning through field-based training.	<p>Certificate Course in Ecosystem Silviculture Over 80 natural resource professionals from multiple agencies have completed the year-long, six-module course. Another cohort started in July 2009.</p> <p>In 2008, Blandin Foundation convened a Task Force to evaluate and make recommendations to SFEC and MLEP on the design and delivery of ongoing continuing education for forest resource professionals, including a financially sustainable model for the</p>

		ongoing delivery of the course. See page 8 for more details.
II b. Increase the number of acres of private woodlands being actively and sustainably managed.		
Project	Description	Status
<u>Technical Assistance: DNR Stewardship Planning Project (2009)</u>	Contract with Dovetail Partners Inc. to work with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to formulate a five-year plan bringing together the goals of the MN DNR Stewardship Committee, the MN Forest Resources Partnership’s Action Teams, and the Blandin Foundation Family Forest Stewardship conference goals.	Completed the Stewardship Committee review and approval process, including a period of public comment. Final approval of the plan by DNR is expected by the end of 2009.
<u>Website Development: Reaching Woodland Owners Online Using Information Technology to Promote Private Woodland Stewardship (2006)</u> Website revision (2008)	Contract with University of Minnesota to develop and implement innovative Internet resources to encourage sustainable management of Minnesota’s family forest lands.	Launched in Spring 2007, www.MyMinnesotaWoods.org helps private woodland owners make sound, well informed woodland stewardship decisions. The site is promoted via a monthly newsletter and guest appearance on KAXE Northern Community Radio’s phenology program, and on the MyMinnesotaWoods blog. Final Report The site was redesigned in 2009, to combine with the Forest Resources Extension site to serve as the primary outreach platform for the Extension forestry team. It uses Web 2.0 principles and offer citizens, landowners, and natural resource professional’s tools to interact and share knowledge.
<u>State-wide Conference Series: Forest Values and Carbon Markets: Opportunities for Minnesota (2009)</u> <u>Family Forest Stewardship: Sustaining Our Commitment; Advancing the Agenda (2007)</u> <u>Family Forest Stewardship: Getting to the Next Million Acres (2006)</u>	The 2009 conference offered the opportunity to reflect on accomplishments and further refine the action plan. It also focused on the role of forests in global climate change. The 2006 and 2007 conferences introduced forestry professionals and woodland owners to tools for fostering sustainable forestry practices, and advanced a shared vision and action plan to increase the number of acres of family forest land with Forest Stewardship Management Plans from 1.3 million to 2.3 million by 2015. The action plan included addressing the <i>ad valorem</i> tax, forest stewardship capacity building, social marketing research and initiatives, and certification. The most significant accomplishment was the creation	Proceedings from all three conferences available on the Blandin Foundation website: http://forests.blandinfoundation.org/events/ A report providing information about the accomplishments made on reaching the goals and responding to the recommendations outlined at the Family Forest Stewardship conferences is also found on the website: Family Forest Stewardship – 2009 Report

	of the 2c Managed Forest Land tax classification.	
Research Study: Developing a Certification Framework for Minnesota’s Family Forests (2005)	Contract with University of Minnesota to provide recommendations on developing and implementing a system to promote third party certification of private woodlands in Minnesota.	Findings informed implementation of LCMR-funded pilot projects in four wood basket counties; available on the Blandin Foundation website. Final Report
Technical Assistance and Curriculum Design and Delivery: Promote third party certification of private woodlands (2005)	Based on a proposal coordinated by VFVC, the University of Minnesota led a multi-party collaboration to implement a \$376,000 LCMR-funded project to increase the number of acres of family forest lands in Minnesota under third party certification.	This project supported efforts by Minnesota Logger Education Program (MLEP) to implement Master Logger Certification in Minnesota. To date, the program has certified over 50 logging businesses as Minnesota certified Master Loggers. Group certification of private forestland owners in Aitkin County also was achieved through the Aitkin County Soil and Water Conservation District. Final Report The Minnesota DNR is exploring third party certification of its Stewardship Plans. Educational and outreach materials developed based on research findings of forestland owner attitudes and perceptions about forest management, management plans, and certification were developed and disseminated.
Convening: Sustainable Forests Incentive Act (SFIA) Revisions Project: Phase 1 (2005)	Support to Minnesota Forestry Association (MFA) to convene an advisory group of stakeholders and technical legal experts to recommend modifications to SFIA and government agencies policies to increase enrollment in SFIA by private landowners.	Results distributed to state legislators, committee staffs, agency officials, and incorporated into the Action Plan adopted at the May 2006 Family Forest conference.
Research Study: Taking Care of Family Forests: Lessons for Minnesota (2004)	Contract with Cooperative Development Services to identify best practices on landowner and community driven land management models relevant to Minnesota.	Research findings presented at May 2006 Family Forest Stewardship conference; available on the Blandin Foundation website. Final Report
II c. Increase public understanding of forest management practices		
Project	Description	Status
Video Production: The Northern Forest (2006) The project builds on video series <i>Minnesota: A History of the Land</i>	Support to Twin Cities Public Television and the University of Minnesota to produce a one hour film for TV and classroom use that focuses on the past, present and future of Minnesota’s forests to enhance public awareness and the impact of human choices on the landscape. Themes: how	Episode V of the <i>Minnesota: A History of the Land</i> series was released in October of 2006 and has aired multiple times on public television stations across Minnesota reaching an estimated 1/2 million viewers. The Nature Conservancy and Blandin Foundation contracted with the producers to create a five minute excerpt titled “Forest for Sale” . DVD available for purchase at

	research has led to a better understanding of the ecology of the northern forest; how that has influenced efforts to manage the forest; imperilment of the sustainable management of the forest in the face of rapidly expanding development.	http://www.historyoftheland.org/episodefive.htm .
Research Reports: Dovetail Partners, Inc. Forestry Reports (2006 – 2009)	Blandin Foundation commissioned Dovetail Partners between 2006 and 2009 to write reports relevant to VF/VC initiatives, its partners and stakeholders. A sampling of report topics include: working forest easements; ecological classification systems and certification requirements; innovation in family forest certification; opportunities for design and construction innovation in the wood industry; bio-energy and the forest economy; - merging forestry and farming for fuel; forest certification and ecological classification systems; TIMOs & REITs; and community-based bio-energy and district heating.	Reports are available on the Blandin Foundation website: http://forests.blandinfoundation.org/resources/reports-detail.php?intResourceID=791 and directly from Dovetail Partners, Inc. at http://dovetailinc.org/

III. Economic Development		
III a. Create new products & markets for Minnesota’s wood products industry		
Project	Description	Status
State-wide Conference: <i>Seizing Opportunity: Forestry and the Bio Economy</i> (2007)	Conference participants heard and discussed the results of two commissioned research studies on opportunities for MN’s forest products industry to participate in and benefit from the bioeconomy. Governor Pawlenty and industry economists addressed the 120+ participants. Iron Range Resources co-sponsored the event.	Informed by the conference, Governor Pawlenty formed a Forestry Sub-Cabinet that meets periodically to better coordinate initiatives relevant to forestry’s role in the bioeconomy. Participants in the Foundation’s Seeing the Forest and the Trees Study Tour Project continue to contribute to the development of a bioenergy strategy for Minnesota that adequately addresses forest-based, along with other natural resources.
Convening: A Series of Statewide Conferences to support wood products manufacturing industry (2004 – 2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Building the Capacity of Minnesota’s Wood Products Industry:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2004: <i>Creating the Edge for Global Competition and Future Investment</i> 	No stakeholder groups stepped forward to assume the role of convening conferences in support of Minnesota’s secondary forest products industry. Link to conference archives on the Blandin Foundation website.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2005: <i>Creating Our Edge</i> ○ 2006: <i>Harnessing Innovation</i> ● 2006 Minnesota Wood Products Manufacturing Industry Achievement Awards introduced 	
Technical Support: Branding and Marketing of Local Wood and Forest-based Products and Manufacturers (2004)	Grant to Minnesota Wood Campaign for market research and technical assistance to wood processing businesses to improve marketing practices and brand wood products from northeastern and north central Minnesota.	Brand developed: <i>True North Woods</i> , with membership of 80 diverse forest-product companies Project partnering with <i>Goods from the Woods</i> Major project support also provided by United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Iron Range Resources
Technical and Grant Support: Goods from the Woods: Enhancing Stewardship and Livelihoods (2003 – 2005)	An annual ‘Up North’ Marketplace held in Grand Rapids in September, combined with educational workshops on sustainable harvesting and specialty products and initiatives to increase utilization of forest resources through improved harvest coordination.	A project of Blandin Foundation from 2003 - 2005, in 2006 the Minnesota Wood Education Project (MWEP) started managing this event and related educational workshops in partnership with others. The marketplace continues to be held annually in Grand Rapids.
III b. Enhance operating efficiency and economic viability of Minnesota’s wood products industry		
Project	Description	Status
Grant Support: Improving Forest Land Manager Continuing Education (2009)	Outcome of the 2008 Forest and Natural Resource Continuing Education Capacity Building Project . Grant to the U of MN, Cloquet Forestry Center to implement the recommendations of the VFVC Task Force on Forest and Natural Resource Continuing Education Capacity Building.	SFEC has hired a .5 FTE an administrative assistant who is developing an Educational Advisory Committee that will help guide the work of the organization.
Curriculum Development and Delivery MN Logger Education Program Continuing Education for Loggers and Harvesters (2009)	Outcome of the 2008 Forest and Natural Resource Continuing Education Capacity Building Project . Grant to implement the recommendations of the VFVC task force to restructure and strengthen how to deliver continuing education and professional development for loggers and foresters.	Resources from this grant have assisted with the delivery of 11 safety training workshops in the spring of 2009. In addition, a safety training RFP has been initiated and development is underway on several training modules including: defensive driving, fire fighting, electrical safety, personal protective equipment/ergonomics, new operator/experienced operator OSHA overview and operations ethics.
Convening and Technical Support: Forest and Natural Resource Continuing Education Capacity Building Project (2008)	Contract with Cleveland Management and Consulting Group to facilitate a multi-agency Task Force convened by the foundation. The Task Force was charged with reviewing current professional	The Task Force’s recommendations focused on a two-phase integration of existing training efforts, and increased staffing and funding capacity for continuing education. The Sustainable Forestry Education Cooperative and the Minnesota Logger

VFVC Project Matrix

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	forestry continuing education practices and devising a strategic plan of action for the delivery of continuing education and training services for Minnesota forestry professionals, including foresters, forestry technicians, loggers, and closely related positions.	Education Program are implementing the recommendations with the help of grant funding from the Foundation. See Improving Forest Land Manager Continuing Education and MN Logger Education Program Continuing Education for Loggers and Harvesters above. Final Report
Research Report: Evaluate Minnesota's Timber Harvesting Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) (2006)	Grant to Minnesota DNR to evaluate Minnesota's progress on implementation of the 1995 Timber Harvesting GEIS. Goals: study the extent of implementation and accuracy of original GEIS and assess need for updating. Co-funding provided by DNR.	Phases one and two of the study, completed in 2005, concluded that: in general, GEIS projections were fairly accurate; there has been a very high degree of implementation of the GEIS mitigation strategies; and several important information needs identified in the GEIS remain to be addressed. Final Report Phase three focused on developing recommendations for more fully assessing the cumulative environmental impacts of timber harvesting and forest management activity within the context of economic development proposals and associated environmental review processes.
Professional logger training (2004)	Grant to Minnesota Logger Education Program (MLEP) to develop and deliver advanced professional curriculum for loggers, including courses addressing state-of-the art forest mgmt concepts and technologies.	An early focus of the work transitioned from curriculum development to the design and implementation of a "Master Logger" certification program for the state of Minnesota. Over 50 logging operations have now been certified. The Foundation is supporting MLEP-led focus groups to strengthen and enhance the program. With the Master Logger program in full swing, curriculum has been completed for workshops addressing: accessing online photos and other planning tools, silviculture, operator select thinning, federal taxation issues for loggers, timber cruising and forest measurement, timber sale design and timber stand improvement.
Forest professional training (2004)	Grant to Itasca & Vermilion Community Colleges (ICC & VCC) to develop curriculum to train & educate natural resource planners, managers and logging operators to create and implement land management plans.	Curriculum for a Stewardship Plan Writing certificate program developed. Curriculum has not been implemented.
Primary Forest Products Industry Investment Study (2004)	Grant to the Port Authority of Duluth to study the feasibility of a centralized clay and pigment handling and intermodal distribution facility at the Port of Duluth. Additional funding for the study was contributed	The Port Authority continues to look for possible investors. They included mention of the project in their 2009 ARRA Duluth Intermodal Project proposal, which would establish the fundamental port cargo handling capacity that is prerequisite for a clay facility.

	by the Duluth Seaway Port Authority, Minnesota Power, and four major local paper mills.	
III c. Increase number of acres of private woodlands and number of forest products companies under third party certification		
Project	Description	Status
<u>Technical Assistance: Forest management database tool (2008)</u>	Contract with Pro-West & Associates to develop an integrated web-based forest management database for the land departments of the six counties that participated in the Certification of County Lands project.	The database is functioning and 25 plus county foresters are currently using it with “huge success”. The database has been migrated to the Beltrami county server, which will host the program into the future.
<u>Convening and Technical Assistance: Certification of County Lands (2005)</u>	Facilitated a collaborative project to prepare six counties to become third party certified. Participating counties: Becker, Beltrami, Carlton, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Koochiching.	Five counties continued on to apply for dual SFI and FSC certification: Carlton, Clearwater, Crow Wing and Koochiching were SFI certified December 18, 2008, and FSC certified November 1, 2009.
See II b. — Third party certification of private woodlands		
See II b. — Promote third party certification of private woodlands		
III d. Increase the capacity of the forest management services sector		
See III b. — Professional logger training		
See III b. — Forest professional training		