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Research Report

Content Analysis & Communications Evaluation
with Cross Analysis

Southern Group of State Foresters



Center for Public Issues Education
IN AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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Background

In March of 2012, the Center for Public Issues Education (PIE Center) in Agriculture and Natural Resources was awarded a bid by the Virginia Department of Forestry to conduct research for the Southern Group of State Foresters (SGSF). The scope of services included a content analysis of 15 State Forest Action Plans and communication evaluation. The results from these two pieces of research were then cross analyzed with the Southern Forest Futures Project. The content analysis portion of this project analyzed the plans to see how well they fulfilled the requirements of the 2008 Farm Bill (U.S. Farm Bill, 2008, p. 1038)¹. The language from the Farm Bill required the following:

- 1) “A State-wide assessment of forest resource conditions, including:
 - a) The conditions and trends of forest resources in that state;
 - b) The threats to forest lands and resources in that State consistent with the national priorities specified in section 2(c);
 - c) Any areas or regions of that State that are a priority; and
 - d) Any multi-State areas that are a regional priority
- 2) A long-term State-wide forest resource strategy including-
 - a) Strategies for addressing threats to forest resources in the State outlined in the assessment required by paragraph (1); and
 - b) A description of the resources necessary for the State forester or equivalent state official from all sources to address the State-wide strategy.”

In addition to assessing content to ensure the requirements of the Farm Bill were carried out, other components of the plans, such as the inclusion of common report components, were analyzed and common findings were reported.

The communications evaluation included a representative sampling of materials used by the Southern Group of State Foresters (SGSF) to plan communications with its target audiences about forests. The SGSF website was also evaluated. These materials were reviewed and analyzed for consistency, usability, messaging strategies, and effectiveness.

Lastly, the results of the content analysis and the communication evaluation were cross analyzed with the Southern Forest Futures Project. The purpose of this analysis was to see what similarities and differences existed between the documents.

A full explanation, report of the results, and suggested recommendations for each part of the research is detailed throughout this report.

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2008). *Farm Bill 2008*. Retrieved from http://www.usda.gov/documents/Bill_6124.pdf

Executive Summary

The Virginia Department of Forestry awarded the PIE Center a bid to conduct research for the Southern Group of State Foresters (SGSF), which represents 13 southern states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The scope of the project included a content analysis of 15 Forest Action Plans, a communications evaluation and cross analysis of the Forest Action Plans, communications evaluation and the Southern Forest Futures Project.

The content analysis and cross analysis analyzed the Forest Action Plans and Southern Forest Futures Project to see how well each fulfilled the requirements of the 2008 Farm Bill, which required a statewide assessment of forest resources, trends, conditions and threats, as well as a long-term statewide strategy for addressing threats and identifying necessary resources.

The communications evaluation included a representative sampling of materials used by SGSF to plan communications with its target audiences about forests. The SGSF website was also evaluated. These materials were reviewed and analyzed for consistency, usability, messaging strategies, and effectiveness.

Content Analysis

To conduct the content analysis, PIE Center researchers located all of the information for the Forest Action Plans and Forest Futures Project, as well as the directive from the 2008 Farm Bill which commissioned the states to develop the plans. These documents were printed in two sets for the PIE Center researchers' review.

Key Findings

Throughout the results, it was apparent that no two states or territories approached the plan in the same manner. The layout, organization, and inclusion of different components varied greatly from one state to another. Depth and detail of information varied by state and was sometimes very comprehensive and sometimes very vague. The total number of pages in the plans ranged from 102 to 510 and averaged 225.8. Nine states or territories published one document, while six published as many as three documents.

Several of the states did have commonalities that emerged throughout the data. Some of the most noteworthy commonalities were in active programs developed by the states, issues and threats, and benefits sections. In the active state programs section, many of the states had programs for the same topics.

As the plans addressed benefits, the plans showed areas of commonality. Three benefits (water quality & quantity, recreation/quality of life/heritage/community forests, air quality & carbon sequestration) were recognized by 12 of the 15 states or territories. The commonalities and overlap between states/territories offer beneficial implications.

Additionally, as the plans addressed issues and threats, two (Natural disasters/other climate related issues and invasive species) were important to all 15 states and territories. Six issues and threats (Natural disasters/other climate related issues, invasive species, wildfires, urban sprawl/development/fragmentation/parcelization, insects/pests, and disease) were identified by 12 of the 15 states or territories.

Identifying threats and strategies to overcome threats are two of the most important tasks when conducting strategic planning. In the ratings determined by the researchers, the states and territories scored the highest in these three areas. This indicates that the states and territories are working effectively to create a sound strategic plan.

In the ratings provided by the researchers, three areas for improvement emerged. As a collective group, the states and territories struggled to fulfill the following Farm Bill components: assessment of resource conditions, conditions and trends, and identification of necessary resources.

With lack of detail and explanation provided in the Farm Bill language, it was not surprising to see differences of interpretations among the states. One place where this was most apparent was in the discussion of trends and conditions. Each state defined and interpreted trends and conditions slightly differently.

Recommendations

PIE Center researchers suggest that SGSF develop a template to be used for the development of plans and reports such as the one used for this research report. The implementation of a template will add consistency and uniformity across all states and territories. In addition, SGSF should define and interpret Farm Bill language or other unclear policies. By doing this, all states and territories will have the same expectations and understanding, thus resulting in a more consistent product.

Similarly, clear definitions of the differences between goals, objectives, and strategies would increase consistency. Confusion over these terms was observed and many of the goals, objectives, and strategies overlapped, were unclear, and immeasurable. The scope of goals, objectives, and strategies should be realistic, to ensure achievement. It is recommended that each state or territory revise its goals, objectives, and strategies to ensure that they are appropriate and incorporate the appropriate components.

As a group, SGSF should identify and take advantage of the opportunities to increase collaboration. Several states operated separate programs that addressed similar topics. For example, SGSF should create a program for wildfires, rather than each state or territory spending money and resources to reinvent the same program in each state. Similarly, because many states identified the same issues and threats, SGSF should examine and address the issues and threats to benefit the whole organization.

In many cases vague resources were listed like “money,” “programming,” “people.” By going back and making these more specific and measurable the goals, objectives, and strategies are more likely to be reached because the resources needed will be identified. In addition, specifying what resources are needed and how much is required puts each state/territory in a better position to receive those resources.

Communications Evaluation

To conduct the communications evaluation, the PIE Center requested and received a representative sampling of materials SGSF uses to plan communications with its target audiences about forests. The SGSF website was also evaluated. These materials were reviewed and analyzed for consistency, usability, messaging strategies, and effectiveness.

Key Findings

The SGSF logo clearly shows the name of the organization with a leadership focused tag line, but does not articulate that the organization is a conglomeration of state agencies. In addition, the SGSF logo is a departure from the typical badge design of state departments or divisions of forestry logos as well as the National Association of State Foresters logo.

By using a logo that diverges from the typical badge design, some audience, particularly consumers, may not be connecting the SGSF logo to state or federal forest agencies. Without the connection, SGSF may be losing credibility and a sense of authority that is associated with the typical badge logo design.

A new branding campaign, suggested in a draft marketing plan, was still divergent from the typical badge logo and designed as a “sister brand” of the current SGSF. However, the creation of a new logo does not always result in effective branding and messaging.

Adding logos can also dilute the overall brand identity and therefore brand quality, while changing the brand logo reduces brand recognition. Also, without research, the potential impact of the updated logo and tag line remains indefinite. Without testing the brand’s attributes with the target audience, the effectiveness of the brand will remain unknown.

The marketing plan draft showed a lack of differentiation between the two marketing objectives. In addition, the objectives did not have specific strategies or tactics to achieve them, making the promotional goals of SGSF seem vague and possibly unattainable with a lack of actionable items.

The marketing collateral listed in the draft plan included more details about the logistics of developing the material than the content of each. For instance, the development of a SGSF presentation would be important for standardizing a promotional message, but without content parameters, it was unclear what would be included in the presentation.

Overall, the action requirements listed in the draft marketing plan for the SGSF website, marketing collateral, trade shows and economic development strategy are necessary and encourage transparency between the marketing group and SGSF as to how each will be accomplished.

Recommendations

In developing all future branding, marketing, communications and outreach materials, SGSF should pay special attention to defining a clear target and segmented audience, as well as a call to action. When possible, SGSF should consider a long range, forward-thinking strategy for issues identification to attempt to be more proactive in its communications, marketing and outreach campaigns.

SGSF should focus on personal relevance with target audiences in its overall messaging techniques. Personal relevance is achieved through the use of people who look like and are relatable to the target audience and the use of imagery to convey emotion and connectedness.

SGSF should continue to reach audiences first with communications and secondarily through education. When education is received first it can seem overwhelming and uninteresting. By communicating a message first, the audience member's interest is piqued and they can decide if they want to pursue more content about the topic or issue.

Continuing to test all marketing, communications and outreach materials, including specific logos and messages, with a target audience is important for SGSF to understand how branding materials are perceived. Without research, the impact of brand or campaign attributes is unknown. Therefore, research should be conducted before new materials are launched to ensure effective use of resources.

Specifically, SGSF should consider updating its current logo to incorporate recognition of the involvement of state forestry agencies and the locality of the organization. However, SGSF should attempt to accomplish its goals through messages associated with a logo to form a complete brand instead of trying to accomplish everything visually with just a logo.

SGSF should establish a brand manager and identity guide. An identity guide establishes a protocol for the creation of new communication material, including brochure or additional pages to a website. It specifies requirements for logo placement, colors to represent the organization, which fonts to use for headlines and body text, and any other specifications the organization wishes to use to help develop and maintain brand recognition.

SGSF should consider focusing its marketing and communications efforts on opinion leaders. Opinion leaders are consumers age 18 to 35 who are registered voters with some post-secondary education. This group takes a greater interest in current topics, have the ability to share information and influence the attitudes of others. By targeting opinion leaders, SGSF reaches an audience already willing to receive information that streamlines efforts, increases the flow of information and efficiently uses resources.

SGSF should develop and expand the objectives of the marketing plan draft for promoting forests and forest products. The plan should include goals, tactics, and strategies for accomplishing the objectives instead of the action requirements. Breaking down larger objectives into smaller, achievable tasks, will streamline the campaign.

Cross Analysis

For this project, researchers conducted a cross analysis on the results from SGSF 15 Forest Action Plans (FAP) and the communication evaluation with the Forest Futures Project (FFP). The FFP was completed as an effort to anticipate the future and analyze what the interaction of future changes might mean for southern forests and the services they provided in the region's 13 states. Both SGSF territories, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, were excluded from the FFP.

Key Findings

The FFP identified similar recurring issues and threats recognized by the FAPs. Therefore, there was a common theme of issues identified by both the region and individual states/territories, allowing SGSF to focus its attention on those dominant forces.

The alignment of conditions and trends between the FFP and the FAPs was also strong. Of the conditions discussed in the FFP, 76.4% were also discussed in the FAPs. Of the trends discussed in the FFP, 60.0% were also discussed in the FAPs. Similar topics were discussed throughout the FFP and the FAPs, though the topics were classified differently.

By using consumer input to identify the meta-issues affecting the region, a sense of buy-in and ownership of the process was created between the SGSF and the public. Therefore, SGSF has the opportunity to build communications strategies for each of the meta-issues and develop outreach materials surrounding those strategies.

Recommendations

The FFP should further consider public education/perception and the impact this issue may have on the future of forests. The majority of southern states identified this as a priority and therefore should be considered regionally. Similarly, collaboration between the region and the 15 states and territories should be increased. This will prevent the same work from being done multiple times, as well as increase the resources available to all of the agencies.

The FFP should consult the 15 southern states/territories for descriptions of forestry trends and conditions identified in the particular state or territory. Doing so will allow FFP to develop a comprehensive discussion of southern forest trends and conditions. SGSF should develop a set of consistent definitions of terms (i.e. issue, threat, trend, and condition) so that the region and its states are classifying items correctly.

To be more inclusive, FFP should expand to include Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, as they are part of SGSF.

SGSF should focus its consumer-based communication efforts on the 10 meta-issues defined by the consumers themselves. By focusing on issues that are already identified and of importance to consumers, SGSF can ensure communication is efficient and effective.

Content Analysis

A content analysis is defined as “the study of recorded human communications. Among the forms suitable for study are books, magazines, webpages, poems, newspapers, songs, paintings, speeches, letters, e-mail messages, bulletin board postings on the internet, laws, and constitutions, as well as any components or collections thereof” (Babbie, 2010, p. 333).² The basic process of a content analysis is depicted in Appendix A.

Methods

To conduct the content analysis, PIE Center researchers located all of the information for the SGSF Forest Action Plans and Forest Futures Project, as well as the directive from the 2008 Farm Bill, which commissioned the states to develop the plans. These documents were printed in two sets for the PIE Center researchers’ review. All plans were organized and duplicates of the tables of contents were printed.

Tables of contents for each of the 15 Forest Action Plans were reviewed and analyzed for content. This allowed the researchers to begin drafting a coding sheet – used to collect data and information from each plan – to use for the content analysis. During this time, two researchers were selected to analyze the Forest Action Plans. It is common in a content analysis to have more than one researcher conduct the analysis in order to eliminate single researcher bias. To ensure that researchers are coding consistently, they are trained on the content and coding sheet categories. A coding guide is also developed, which gives instructions and definitions for items on the coding sheet. Additionally, researchers must establish that they are coding consistently by analyzing the same document and checking for consensus among the researchers in the analysis. If the percent agreement is not ideal, the researchers must retrain and recode until desirable agreement is reached. In some instances 70% agreement is seen as favorable. For this study, the researcher team set a goal of 80% agreement.

After reviewing each table of contents, a coding sheet was drafted and reviewed by the researchers. After review, the coding sheet was edited, updated and inputted into Qualtrics, an online survey tool. By inputting the survey into Qualtrics, several researchers could simultaneously input large volumes of data from the analysis.

When the first draft of the coding sheet was completed and inputted into Qualtrics, the researchers were trained on coding sheet content and use. Training ensures the researchers interpret the information consistently and therefore increases the reliability of the research results. During this time, a coding guide was also developed to aid the researchers during the coding process.

Following the training, researchers completed the first reliability tests by separately analyzing the same Forest Action Plan. A reliability test involves comparing the analysis completed by two separate researchers to ensure that there is consensus between the researchers and that they agree on a large percentage of the analysis. If the researchers reach consensus and have a favorable rate of agreement the research is said to be reliable. By analyzing the same plan, the researchers were able to test the accuracy, or reliability, of the coding between them. Reliability was determined by the percent of coding sheet

² Babbie, E. (2010). *The practice of social research* (12th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

questions the researchers answered the same (percent agreement). The goal was to reach at least 80% agreement. The first reliability test resulted in the following:

Total number of non-qualitative entries = 165

Number of disagreements = 43

Percent agreement = 73.9%

Seeing that 80% agreement was not reached, the researchers reviewed the results of the first reliability test and discussed why and how they made coding decisions throughout the analysis process. After the discussion, the coding sheet was edited and updated to be more specific and reflective of the data important to the content analysis. The coding guide was also updated with clarifications and explanations to eliminate discrepancies and further aid in consistent coding.

Following the update, the researchers conducted a second training session with the revised coding sheet and guide. In the second reliability test, researchers separately reviewed a different state's Forest Action Plan. The second reliability test resulted in the following:

Total number of non-qualitative entries = 149

Number of disagreements = 29

Percent agreement = 80.5%

The second test revealed the researchers had reached an appropriate level of reliability between them. However, the researchers continued to review their results and discussed their differences in analysis. Based on the discussion, the coding sheet and guide was edited and updated a third and final time. A third round of training was also conducted, therefore making the results highly accurate.

Once the desired percent agreement was reached, the researchers divided the remaining Forest Action Plans and carried out coding individually.

Results

The results section for the content analysis is split up into three main sections. The general results refer to results concerning general report components, such as the presence of logos, mission statements, table of contents, etc. The main content results include things like history of the forestry in the state, conditions and trends, threats or issues, forest benefits, other programs/plans, goals, objectives, and strategies etc. The last section of results includes the researchers assessment of the content included within the report. This results section includes how the researchers rated each state/territory according to each farm bill requirement, as well as a critique of each plan. Throughout the results the state/territory names have been blinded. A code key for the blinded states is available in the executive version of the report.

General Results

Of the 15 Forest Action Plans, the total number of pages in the plans ranged from 102 (State G) to 510 (State K). The average number of total pages was 225.8. Analysis of the presence or absence of common plan components, like the

presence of logos, mission statements, table of contents, and others was conducted. These findings follow in the tables below.

Number of Documents

Some of the plans included only one document while some included as many as three documents. When more than one document was included, the first document was commonly specific to the forest resources assessment, while the second document was focused on the forest resource strategy. The table below summarizes the number of plans with one document and those with more than one document. One document was provided by 9 (60%) of the states/territories while 6 (40%) had more than one document. Those states/territories including more than one document were State A, State B, State E, State F, State N, and State O.

Table 1

Number of Documents	<i>f</i>	%
One Document	9	60.0
More than One Document	6	40.0

State/Territory Forestry Logo

Of the 15 states/territories, 12 (80%) included their forestry logo while 3 (20%) did not. State N, State J, and State D did not include a logo.

Table 2

Inclusion of Logo	<i>f</i>	%
Yes	12	80.0
No	3	20.0

Table of Contents

A table of contents was included by 14 (93.3%) of the states/territories. State N was the only state plan not including a table of contents. The tables of contents were commonly organized using two ($n=4$, 28.6%) or three ($n=5$, 35.7%) levels of headings (see Table 3). Additionally, the tables of contents were commonly organized according to section titles ($n=10$, 71.4%) (see Table 4).

Table 3

Number of Headings	<i>f</i>	%
Three	5	35.7
Two	4	28.6
Four	2	14.3
Five	2	14.3
One	1	7.1
Six or More	0	0.0

Table 4

Organization of Table	<i>f</i>	%
Section Title	10	71.4
Other	2	14.3
Chapter	1	7.1
Roman Numerals (I, II, III...)	1	7.1
Letters (A, B, C...)	0	0.0
Numbers (1, 2, 3...)	0	0.0

Note. The states/territories that fell into the “other” category used a combination of organization tactics such as chapters and letters or roman numerals and numbers.

Acknowledgments

Acknowledgment sections recognizing those who contributed to and made the creation of the plan possible appeared in 11 (73.3%) of the plans. These acknowledgement sections were commonly seen on the backside of the cover page or in the first few pages of the report before the main content. Those states/territories not including an acknowledgment section were State B, State N, State I, and State G.

Table 5

Inclusion of Acknowledgements	<i>f</i>	%
Yes	11	73.3
No	4	26.7

Letter from the State Forester

Some of the states/territories included a letter from the state forester explaining the background and purpose for the report, as well as expressing any gratitude. These letters were commonly seen in the first few pages of the report before the main content. A letter from the state forester was included in 6 (40%) of the plans while 9 (60%) did not include a letter. The states/territories not including a letter from the state forester were State E, State G, State I, State M, State O, State N, State L, State D, and State B.

Table 6

Inclusion of Letter	<i>f</i>	%
No	9	60.0

Yes	6	40.0
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USDA Non-Discrimination Statement

The USDA Non-Discrimination Statement was included in 9 (60%) of the plans. This statement was commonly found in the first few pages of the report before the main content; however, a few did appear at the end of the report after the main content. Those states/territories not including the USDA non-discrimination statement were State C, State I, State M, State N, State D, and State B.

Table 7

Inclusion of Statement	<i>f</i>	%
Yes	9	60.0
No	6	40.0

Recognition of Funding Sources

Some of the plans included recognition of those who provided funding for the project. Of the 15 states/territories, 6 (40%) provided a recognition of funding sources. The recognition of funding sources was commonly found on the back of the cover page. Those states/territories not including recognition of funding sources were State C, State E, State G, State I, State K, State M, State O, State N, and State B.

Table 8

Recognition of Funding Sources	<i>f</i>	%
No	9	60.0
Yes	6	40.0

List of Abbreviations, Acronyms, Definitions, or Glossary

Lists of abbreviations, acronyms, definitions or a glossary are commonly included in reports to guide the reader. Many of the states/territories ($n=11$, 73.3%) did include one of these types of lists. These lists were commonly found in the first few pages of the report before the main content. However, some of these lists did appear after the main content, in the appendix, or at the end of each main section. State E, State G, State J, and State B were the 4 (26.7%) states/territories that did not include one of these lists.

A glossary ($n=5$, 45.5%) was used most frequently, followed by a list of abbreviations ($n=3$, 27.3%). The state/territory included in the other section did not title their list, but the list appeared to be using acronyms.

Table 9

List Type	<i>f</i>	%
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Glossary	5	45.5
Abbreviations	3	27.3
Acronyms	2	18.2
Other	1	9.1
Definitions	0	0.0

State Forestry Mission Statement

Mission statements are often included in reports to help readers connect the purpose of the report to the purpose of the organization. Two (13.3%) states/territories included a mission statement in their report. These were State L and State F. Both of these mission statements were found in the first few pages of the plan before the main content.



Table 10

Inclusion of Mission Statement	<i>f</i>	%
No	13	86.7
Yes	2	13.3

List of Figures

Indicating the location of figures throughout the report, 9 (60%) of the states/territories included a list of figures. The list of figures was commonly found within the first few pages of the report before the main content. In some instances the list of figures was included within the table of contents. Those states/territories not including a list of figures were State A, State G, State O, State N, State L, and State F. Of the 6 (40%) states/territories not including a list of figures, 5 had items labeled as figures within their report. The other state had items that appeared to be figures; however, they were not labeled as such.

Table 11

Inclusion of List of Figures	<i>f</i>	%
Yes	9	60.0
No	6	40.0

List of Maps

Indicating the location of maps throughout the report, 3 (20%) of the states/territories included a list of maps. The states including a list of maps were State C, State M, and State H. These lists were found within the first few pages of the report before the main content. One of the lists was included within the table of contents. Of the 12 (80%) states/territories not including a list of maps, 6 included maps within the list of figures, 5 labeled maps as figures but did not include a list, and 1 had maps but they were not labeled as maps and there was no list.

Table 12

Inclusion of List of Maps	<i>f</i>	%
No	12	80.0
Yes	3	20.0

List of Tables

Indicating the location of tables throughout the report, 8 (53.3%) of the states/territories included a list of tables. The list of tables was commonly found within the first few pages of the report before the main content. In some instances the list of tables was included within the table of contents. Those states/territories not including a list of tables were State A, State

G, State M, State O, State N, State L, and State F. Of the 7 (46.7%) states/territories not including a list of maps, 4 labeled tables appropriately but did not include a list, 2 had tables but they were not labeled as tables and there was no list, and 1 included tables within the list of figures.

Table 13

Inclusion of List of Tables	<i>f</i>	%
Yes	8	53.3
No	7	46.7

Inclusion of List of Boxes

One state (6.7%) included a list of boxes. This indicated where boxes of supplemental information were located throughout the report. The state including a list of boxes was State C. This list was included within the table of contents.

Table 14

Inclusion of List of Boxes	<i>f</i>	%
No	14	93.3
Yes	1	6.7

Executive Summary

Executive summaries are commonly included at the beginning of reports to guide readers' thinking and provide a summary of the report. Executive summaries were provided by 11 (73.3%) states. The executive summary commonly appeared within the first few pages of the report before the main content. In some instances it was the last thing before the main content, but in some reports it came before other content such as the table of contents. Those states/territories not including an executive summary were State G, State I, State N, and State L.

Table 15

Inclusion of Executive Summary	<i>f</i>	%
Yes	11	73.3
No	4	26.7

Appendices

Many ($n=14$, 93.3%) of the reports included appendices to highlight information that was important, but not necessary to be included in the main content of the report. The state not including any appendices was State N. The number of appendices ranged from 2 to 12, with an average of 6.1 appendices. The common subjects included in the appendices were forest legacy program assessments of need, descriptions of other programs or plans, stakeholders and partnerships, GIS processes, descriptions of priority areas, results from public surveys, descriptions of how assessments and strategies were developed, and wildlife information.

Table 16

Inclusion of Appendices	<i>f</i>	%
Yes	14	93.3
No	1	6.7

References

Many of the states/territories ($n=13$, 86.7%) included a list of references. The majority of references appeared at the end of the documents; however, in a couple of plans the appropriate references were listed after each section or chapter. The states not including references were State N and State B.

Table 17

Inclusion of References	<i>f</i>	%
Yes	13	86.7
No	2	13.3

Main Content Results

In addition to general findings, the researchers also analyzed the main content of the report for findings. The main content included things like history of the forestry in the state, conditions and trends, threats or issues, forest benefits, other programs/plans, goals, objectives, and strategies etc.

Forestry History in State/Territory

About half ($n=8$, 53.3%) of the states/territories discussed the forestry history in their state/territory. The discussion of forestry history in the state/territory was commonly found toward the beginning of the main content pages. Additionally, this discussion often included details about when forestry practices began in the state/territory, who had been involved, and how forestry had evolved in the state/territory over the years. The states/territories not including a discussion of history in their respective state/territory were State G, State N, State J, State H, State F, State D, and State B.

Table 18

Inclusion of History	<i>f</i>	%
Yes	8	53.3
No	7	46.7

Other Forestry Plans/Programs

Most ($n=14$, 93.3%) of the states/territories included a discussion of other forestry programs or plans that they take part in. The 1 (6.7%) state/territory not including a discussion of other forestry programs or plans was State N.

The plans/programs were categorized according to how they were presented in each plan. If a plan/program was described as specific to the state, certain areas within the state, or was a plan/program funded by state entities then it was classified as state level. If a plan/program was described as specific to several states (like a region), but not on a national level and was not funded by a national entity, then it was classified as multi-state level. If a plan/program was described as nationwide or was funded by a national entity it was classified as national-level.

Of those including a discussion of other programs and plans, all ($n=14$, 100%) discussed state level plans and most ($n=13$, 92.9%) discussed national level plans. Since many of the single- and multi-state plans were specific to states/territories, they were classified into program themes. Some of the common program themes discussed at the state level included plans focused on wildlife, wildfire, water, education and outreach, as well as others. The complete list can be seen below. Some of the common program themes discussed at the multi-state level included a long-leaf taskforce, Southern Pine Beetle Portal, Management of Invasive Plants of Southern Forests, as well as others. The complete list can be seen below. Since the national plans covered many states, a comprehensive list was created and frequencies counted. The Forest Legacy Program ($n=12$, 85.7) was the most common national program, followed by Community Wildfire Protection Plans ($n=8$, 57.1%). The rest of the national plan frequencies can be seen below in table 20.

Table 19

Types of Plans/Programs	<i>f</i>	%
State Level	14	100.0
National Level	13	92.9
Multi-State Level	6	42.9

State Plans/Programs Discussed

Since the plans/programs for each state/territory varied by title, they were grouped according to category. The following categories came up frequently (5 or more times) as areas in which plans/programs had been developed at the state/territory level.

- Wildlife
- Water
- Forest Resources (Issues and Development)
- Forest Stewardship
- Urban & Community Forests
- Wildfire
- Education & Outreach
- Forest Health
- Nursery & Tree Improvement
- Land & Resource Management

Other categories of state plans/programs (less than 5 times) that appeared less frequently include:

- Forest Protection
- Natural Heritage
- Forest Research
- Conservation for Long-Leaf Pines
- Outdoor Recreation Plans
- Ecosystem Improvement
- Economic & Ecological Impacts
- Invasive Species

- Best Management Practices
- Coastal habitat
- Private Lands & Ownership
- Public Lands
- Forest Marketing
- Student Internship
- Virtual Forest Management
- Aerial Mapping

Multi-State Plans/Programs Discussed

Twelve different multi-state plans/programs were discussed. These included plans/programs described as specific to several states (like a region), but not on a national level and was not funded by a national entity. Some of the plans identified all of the states/territories participating in the plan/program, but others did not. The following multi-state plans/programs were discussed.

- Southern Futures Forest Project
- Management of Invasive Plants of Southern Forests
- Strategic Planning Tool to Assess Wood Energy Demands on Timber Markets
- Shortleaf Pine Initiative
- Fire Activity & Emission tracking System
- Southern Fire Risk Assessment System
- Long Leaf Task Force
- Southern Pine Beetle Portal
- Cogongrass Collaboration
- Timber Supply
- Urban Forestry Trees for Energy
- Industry Cooperative Tree Improvement Program

Table 20

National Plans	<i>f</i>	%
Forest Legacy Program	12	85.7
Community Wildfire Protection Plans	8	57.1
National Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Program	7	50.0
Forest Inventory and Analysis Program	6	42.9
Urban and Community Forestry Assistance	4	28.6
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)	4	28.6
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)	4	28.6
Firefighter Program	3	21.4
Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)	3	21.4
Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)	3	21.4
Forest Stewardship Program	3	21.4

National Fire Plan	2	14.3
Federal Excess Personal Property Program	2	14.3
Healthy Forest Reserve Program (HFRP)	2	14.3
Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)	2	14.3
Community Fire Protection Programs	1	7.1
The Cooperative Forest Health Protection Program	1	7.1
Forest Health Monitoring Program	1	7.1
General Services Administration Wildland Fire Program	1	7.1
Limited Resource Farmer Program	1	7.1
Tree City USA	1	7.1
Rural Forestry Assistance	1	7.1
Southern Pine Beetle Prevention & Restoration Program	1	7.1
Conservation Stewardship Program	1	7.1
Biomass Crop Assistance Program	1	7.1
Community Forest Open Space Conservation	1	7.1
State Fire Assistance	1	7.1
Partners for Fish and Wildlife	1	7.1
Underserved Landowner Outreach Program	1	7.1
Conservation Education Program	1	7.1
Cooperative Fire Program	1	7.1
National Stewardship Standards	1	7.1
Volunteer Fire Assistance Program	1	7.1

Forestry Conditions

The farm bill language indicated that a description of forest conditions and trends should be included, but it did not specify the difference between forest conditions and trends. In an effort to try and separate conditions and trends the researchers defined each term and looked for conditions and trends based on the definition.

- Forest conditions were defined as existing conditions or the current state of forests in the state/territory.

- Forest trends were defined as the direction or movement of forestry related events and conditions in the state/territory³.

Most of the states ($n=14$, 93.3%) discussed forest conditions. The state that did not include discussion which matched the definition of a condition was State G.

The most common forest conditions discussed included forest abundance and distribution, forest types and composition, and land cover classifications, each being discussed in 13 (92.9%) of the plans including forest conditions. Please refer to the coding guide found in Appendix C to understand how researchers classified the discussion into each of the following categories of conditions. A complete list of the forest conditions and the corresponding frequencies can be found in table 21.

Some examples of the conditions discussed throughout the plans include:

- There are approximately 22.7 million acres of commercial forestland in State C. Forests comprise 70% of State C's land area. (Forest Abundance & Distribution).
- The forest types in State O are coastal plain forests (loblolly, slash, and longleaf pine and lowland hardwoods), piedmont forests (loblolly, loblolly pine-hardwood mix), blue ridge forests (upland hardwood types with small percentages of white pine and hemlock types), ridge and valley forests (upland hardwoods and Virginia and loblolly pine), and Cumberland plateau forests (upland hardwoods and some pine). (Forest Types & Composition).
- The land cover in State E includes hardwood/cedar forest, pasture, pine/oak forest, agriculture crop, pine forest, hardwood forest, urban areas, and water. (Land Cover Classifications).
- Most timberland in East State F is family forest ownership (69%) followed by forest industry (23%) and the national and public timber lands (7% combined). The forest industry owns a much larger proportion of timberland in southeast State F. Family forest ownership is greater in northeast State F while this region shows the least amount of forestry industry land. Public ownership is also smaller in the northeast region. (Forest Ownership).
- State K is the most physiographically diverse state in the eastern U.S. Elevation ranges from sea level to 6684 feet, there are more peaks above 6000 feet than any state east of Mississippi river. State K has an extensive barrier island and deep swamps. (Topography & Geography).

Table 21

³ Please refer to the coding guide in Appendix C to further understand how conditions and trends were defined by the researchers.

Forestry Conditions	<i>f</i>	%
Forest Abundance & Distribution	13	92.9
Forest Types & Composition	13	92.9
Land Cover Classifications	13	92.9
Forest Ownership	12	85.7
Topography & Geography	8	57.1
State Demographics	8	57.1
Stand-Size Class & Stand-Size Age	8	57.1
Wildlife	5	35.7
Climate & Weather	5	35.7
Management Practices	5	35.7
Natural Resources	4	28.6
Forest Products	4	28.6
Forestry Markets	4	28.6
Urban & Community Forests	4	28.6
Economic Impact	4	28.6
Other	4	28.6
Forest Health	2	14.3
Wildlife Habitat	1	7.1
Forest Regulation	0	0.0
Tree Grade	0	0.0 ⁴

Note. The forest conditions that fell into the “other” category included ecoregions, soil productivity, organic material, soil types, and recreation.

Since the researchers established a definition for conditions and trends, the discussion of conditions for each state/territory was analyzed to see if it matched the definition. Of the 14 states/territories discussing conditions, 10 (71.4%)

⁴ The categories established in the table of forestry conditions (Table 21) were developed based on an initial review of the tables of contents from each state. When the full analysis was completed the categories of *forest regulation* and *tree grade* did not appear as conditions.

matched the definition of a condition. Reasons why the remaining 4 (28.6%) states/territories' discussions of conditions did not match the definition included: they were labeled as conditions, but did not align with the definition; discussed items that matched the definition of conditions, but they were never labeled as conditions; or conditions were labeled as trends.

Table 22

Discussion Matches Definition	<i>f</i>	%
Yes	10	71.4
No	4	28.6

Forestry Trends

The farm bill language indicated that a description of forest conditions and trends should be included, but it did not specify the difference between forest conditions and trends. In an effort to try and separate conditions and trends the researchers defined each term and looked for conditions and trends based on the definition.

- Forest conditions were defined as existing conditions or the current state of forests in the state/territory.
- Forest trends were defined as the direction or movement of forestry related events and conditions in the state/territory.⁵

Most of the states ($n=14$, 93.3%) discussed forest trends. The state that did not include discussion which matched the definition of a trend was State G.

The most common forest trends discussed, included forest abundance and distribution ($n=10$, 71.4%), forest ownership ($n=8$, 57.1%), and state demographics ($n=50.0%$). Please refer to the coding guide found in Appendix C to understand how researchers classified the discussion into each of the following categories of trends. A complete list of the forest trends and the corresponding frequencies can be found in Table 23.

Some examples of the trends discussed throughout the plans include:

- State J has a historical trend of increasing forestland since 1971. However, more recent observation indicates that forestland acreage may be declining given the high percentage of new development and land use change. (Forest Abundance & Distribution).
- In 2006 the forest industry in State H owned 11% of forestland that has decreased from 16% since 2001. Additionally, corporate ownership has risen from 16% in 2001 to 18% in 2006. (Forest Ownership).

⁵ Please refer to the coding guide in Appendix C to further understand how conditions and trends were defined by the researchers.

- Population of State F is increasing at a rapid rate, 13% from 2000 to 2007. State F's population is projected to grow by 741.5% from 2000 to 2040. State F is also becoming increasingly diverse. State F's growth rate is more than 2 times the national average. (State Demographics)
- The forest cover in State D is decreasing. Throughout history, the landscape has changed from minimal use by indigenous people to heavy agricultural use through cotton and sugar to the current state of industry (agriculture, tourism, and clearing for development). Forests have changed dramatically since pre-Columbian times and exactly what forests looked like before Europeans arrived is not easy to discern. (Land Cover Classifications).
- State J is seeing an increase in maple-beech-birch, bottomland hardwood, yellow-poplar, and oak-hickory forest types, while oak-pine, eastern red cedar, loblolly-shortleaf pine and eastern white pine forest types are decreasing. (Forest Types & Composition).

Table 23

Forestry Trends	<i>f</i>	%
Forest Abundance & Distribution	10	71.4
Forest Ownership	8	57.1
State Demographics	7	50.0
Land Cover Classifications	6	42.9
Forest Types & Composition	5	35.7
Wildlife	4	28.6
Management Practices	4	28.6
Climate & Weather	3	21.4
Forest Products	3	21.4
Forestry Markets	3	21.4
Forest Health	2	14.3
Wildlife Habitat	2	14.3
Urban & Community Forests	2	14.3
Economic Impact	2	14.3
Stand-Size Class & Stand-Size Age	2	14.3
Tree Grade	1	7.1
Other	1	7.1

Topography & Geography	0	0.0
Natural Resources	0	0.0
Forest Regulation	0	0.0 ⁶

Note. The forest trend that fell into the “other” was tree removals.

Since the researchers established a definition for conditions and trends, the discussion of conditions for each state/territory was analyzed to see if it matched the definition. Of the 14 states/territories discussing trends, 10 (71.4%) matched the definition of a trend. Reasons why the remaining 4 (28.6%) states/territories’ discussions of conditions did not match the definition included: discussed items that matched the definition of trends, but they were never labeled as trends; or trends were labeled as conditions.

Table 24

Discussion Matches Definition	<i>f</i>	%
Yes	10	71.4
No	4	28.6

In addition to looking at the conditions and trends separately, the researchers assessed how the trends and discussions were discussed in relation to each other. The majority ($n=11$, 78.6%) of the plans did not distinguish between trends and conditions.

Table 25

How Trends and Conditions are Discussed	<i>f</i>	%
No Distinction was made between Trends and Conditions	11	78.6
Discussed Together	2	14.3
Discussed Separately	1	7.1

Forestry Related Issues and Threats

All of the states/territories ($n=15$, 100.0%) included a discussion of forestry related issues and threats. The most common issues and threats discussed included natural disasters/other climate related issues ($n=15$, 100.0%), invasive species ($n=15$, 100.0%), wildfires ($n=14$, 93.3%), and urban sprawl/development/fragmentation/parcelization ($n=14$, 93.3%). Please refer

⁶ The categories established in the table of forestry trends (Table 23) were developed based on an initial review of the tables of contents from each state. When the full analysis was completed the categories of *topography & geography*, *natural resources*, and *forest regulation* did not appear as trends.

to the coding guide found in Appendix C to understand how researchers classified the discussion into each of the following categories of issues and threats. The following forestry related issues and threats were discussed throughout the plans.

Some examples of the forestry related issues and threats discussed throughout the plans include:

- State K expressed concerns associated with increasing temperatures, late freeze vulnerability, longer growing seasons, increased hurricanes, heat related stress, sea level rise, droughts, wind, tropical storms, and freezing rain. (Natural Disasters/Other Climate Related Issues).
- State B discussed the threats that invasive species pose. Invasive species spread aggressively and displace or destroy both native and commercially cultivated plants and animals. Invasive species are considered the third largest threat to natural systems (after development and habitat conversion). Invasive species damage and degrade crops, pasture land, and forestlands, clog waterways, spread human and livestock diseases, and destroy trees. Invasive species cause an estimated \$137 billion in losses for the U.S. economy. (Invasive Species).
- State G discussed the wildfire threats. Wildfires are a year-round threat in State G, with 5,000 wildfires, and 234,000 acres burnt annually. State G has observed a buildup of forest fuel and indicates that 70% of all wildfires in the state threaten some type of structure because of high population density. (Wildfires).
- State I indicated that the threats caused by urban sprawl/ development/fragmentation/parcelization include an increase in resource demand, management challenges, negative effects on quality of goods and services, decrease in forest health, diversity, economic viability, stream stability, health and water quality, habitats, limits recreation, isolates wildlife, and causes wildlife migration difficulties. (Urban Sprawl/Development/Fragmentation/Parcelization).
- State M discussed that insects and pests can cause defoliation or can kill trees, negatively impacting the economics of the industry. Insects/pest identified as most threatening included the southern pine beetle, pine colaspis, engraver beetle, black-headed pine sawfly, Nantucket pine tip moth, and forest tent caterpillar. (Insects/Pests).

Table 26

Forestry Related Issues and Threats	<i>f</i>	%
Natural Disasters/Other Climate Related Issues	15	100.0
Invasive Species	15	100.0
Wildfires	14	93.3
Urban Sprawl/ Development/Fragmentation/Parcelization	14	93.3
Insects/Pests	13	86.7

Disease	12	80.0
Public Perception/ Education	10	66.7
Forest Economics & Changing Markets	9	60.0
Fire Exclusion/Prescribed Burn Issues	8	53.3
Water Quality & Quantity	8	53.3
Forest Sustainability & Conservation	6	40.0
Declining Species	6	40.0
Other	6	40.0
Longleaf Regeneration & Ecosystems	4	26.7
Care & Health of Community Forests	4	26.7
Atmosphere/Air Quality	3	20.0
Lack of Reforestation	3	20.0
Lack of Natural Resource Program Funding	3	20.0
Hardwood Regeneration	2	13.3
Cypress-Tupelo Management	1	6.7
Forest Age	1	6.7
Lack of Tree Improvement	1	6.7

Note. The forestry related issues and threats that were discussed in the “other” category included the lack of increase and enhancement of benefits of working forests, mismanagement, recreation and human activities, regulation, small forest ownership, coal mining, and funding.

Forest Benefits

Most ($n=13$, 86.7%) of the states/territories included a discussion of the benefits of forests. Those states/territories ($n=2$, 13.3%) not including a discussion of forest benefits were State G and State M. The most common forest benefits discussed included water quality and quantity ($n=13$, 100.0%), recreation/quality of life/heritage/community forests ($n=12$, 92.3%), and air quality and carbon sequestration ($n=12$, 92.3%). Please refer to the coding guide found in Appendix C to understand how researchers classified the discussion into each of the following categories of forest benefits. The following forest benefits were discussed throughout the plans.

Some examples of the benefits of forests discussed throughout the plans include:

- State I discussed the forests benefits to water quality and quantity. State I indicated that forests provide water cycling, nutrient transformation, water flow, and reduce pollutants in water. (Water Quality & Quantity)

- State A discussed the recreation/quality of life/ heritage/community forest benefits of forests indicating that the state is seeing an increasing trend in outdoor recreation. Some of these recreational activities include hunting, fishing, trail use, camping, park use, and water sports. Additionally, State A discussed that forests provide physical and psychological benefits for an overall improved well being. (Recreation/Quality of Life/Heritage/ Community Forests).
- State L indicated that forests provide ecosystem services like clean air. In addition, forests help regulate climate and carbon sequestrations. State L also highlighted that it is projected that forests in the South account for 1/3 of the annual carbon sequestration in the U.S. (Air Quality & Carbon Sequestration).
- State N indicated that health forests provide the benefit of a healthy habitat providing food and water for a healthy wildlife population. (Wildlife Habitat & Support).
- State O indicated that forests contribute more than \$28.77 million to the state’s economy, with an additional \$1.8 billion coming from sportsmen and &1.5 billion from anglers. State O also indicated that forests increase property values. (Economic Activity & Forestry Values).

Table 27

Forest Benefits	<i>f</i>	%
Water Quality & Quantity	13	100.0
Recreation/ Quality of Life/ Heritage/ Community Forests	12	92.3
Air Quality & Carbon Sequestration	12	92.3
Wildlife Habitat & Support	11	84.6
Economic Activity & Forestry Values	11	84.6
Industry Employment	9	69.2
Scenic Beauty & Open Space	8	61.5
Non-Timber Forest Products	7	53.8
Energy Conservation	7	53.8
Other	5	38.5
Timber Products	4	30.8
Storm Water Management	3	23.1

Note. The forestry benefits discussed in the “Other” category included ecosystem services, health, education, safety, erosion control, phyto-remediation, and food.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies

The researchers analyzed the plans for goals, objectives, and strategies identified by the states/territories to address the issues and threats to forests and to contribute to their overall strategy. The goals, objectives, and strategies were recorded according to how they were listed by the state/territory. The researchers observed that a clear distinction was not made among goals, objectives, and strategies throughout the plans.

Goals were included by 14 (93.3%) states/territories. The state not including goals was State L. Strategies were also included by 14 (93.3%) states/territories. The state not including strategies was State N. Only 11 (73.3%) states/territories included objectives. The states/territories not including objectives were State I, State N, State L, and State J. For the categories of goals, objectives, and strategies the researchers analyzed the presentation, the number, and common themes associated with each category⁷.

Table 28

Inclusion of Goals, Objectives, Strategies	<i>f</i>	%
Goals	14	93.3
Strategies	14	93.3
Objectives	11	73.3

Goals

A goal is defined as a statement of a broad desired outcome that acknowledges the issue and sketches out how the organization hopes to see it settled. An example of a goal would be “To enhance the relationship between the public and the forestry sector.”

The goals were presented in 10 (71.4%) of the plans in list format, while 3 (21.4%) presented goals both in-text and in a list (see Table 29). Nine (64.3%) of the plans included eight or more goals, while 2 (14.3%) plans included 7 goals, and 2 (14.3%) plans include 3 goals (see Table 30).

Table 29

⁷ Goal - a statement of a broad desired outcome that acknowledges the issue and sketches out how the organization hopes to see it settled. An example of a goal would be “To enhance the relationship between the public and the forestry sector.”

Objective - a statement that is rooted in goals and explains what will be accomplished. Objectives should be specific, measurable, attainable, results focused, and timeline specific. An example of an objective would be “To have an effect on [state] residents; specifically to generate plantings of new trees (5,000 trees planted in 6 months).”

Strategy - helps an organization accomplish an objective. An example of a strategy correlated to the objective listed above would be “Hold a tree planting day where citizens can pick up a free sapling from a central location to take home and plant.”

Presentation of Goals	<i>f</i>	%
List	10	71.4
Both	3	21.4
In-Text	1	7.1

Table 30

Number of Goals	<i>f</i>	%
Eight or More	9	64.3
Seven	2	14.3
Three	2	14.3
Four	1	7.1
One	0	0.0
Two	0	0.0
Five	0	0.0
Six	0	0.0

A total of 248 goals were found throughout all of the plans. To make this amount of data more manageable and provide more meaningful findings, the researchers sampled the goals according to the methods outlined by Israel (2009)⁸. Sampling with 10% precision left the researchers with a sample of 72 goals. It is important to note that of the 72 goals analyzed, 11 were not written in a manner that presented a clear desired outcome. These goals were analyzed for common themes. The common themes and sub-themes of the goals included:

To maintain...

- Inventories
- Environment
- Programs
- Equipment

Example (State B): “Collect, maintain and disseminate forest resource inventory information and applied research.”

⁸ Israel, G. D. (2009). *Determining sample size*. EDIS publication #PEOD6. Retrieved from <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pd006>

To enhance/improve...

- Economic resources
- Public benefits of forests
- Environment

Example (State O): “Enhance public benefits from trees and forests including air and water quality, soil conservation, biological diversity, carbon storage, forest products, forestry-related jobs, production of renewable energy and wildlife.”

To increase...

- Forest diversity
- Ecosystem support
- Support for forestry markets

Example (State J): “Increased species diversity in pine forests.”

To promote...

- The forest industry
- Ordinances
- Larger/ undivided forests

Example (State C): “Promote traditional forest industry markets.”

To minimize...

- Impacts of insects and pests
- Environmental and economic impact

Example (State G): “Minimize impacts of non-native invasive pest plants (and other pests) on State Forests and other public and private properties.”

To manage and protect...

- Current forests and landscapes

Example (State H): “Conserve and manage working forests landscapes in State H to achieve multiple objectives.”

To educate...

- Increase awareness
- On native and non-native threats
- About wildfires

Example (State N): “Provide leadership, support, and coordination for educating the public about wildfires in State N.”

Objectives

An objective is a statement that is rooted in goals and explains what will be accomplished. Objectives should be specific, measurable, attainable, results focused, and timeline specific. An example of an objective would be “To have an effect on [state] residents; specifically to generate plantings of new trees (5,000 trees planted in 6 months).”

All of the plans presented their objectives in list format ($n=11$, 100.0%) (see Table 31). In addition, all of the plans included eight or more objectives ($n=11$, 100.0%) (see Table 32). It is important to note that many of the objectives included in the plans were not measurable. State N, State H, and State B were the only states to include measurable objectives.

Table 31

Presentation of Objectives	<i>f</i>	%
List	11	100.0
In-Text	0	0.0
Both	0	0.0

Table 32

Number of Objectives	<i>f</i>	%
Eight or More	11	100.0
One	0	0.0
Two	0	0.0
Three	0	0.0
Four	0	0.0
Five	0	0.0
Six	0	0.0
Seven	0	0.0

A total of 589 objectives were found throughout all of the plans. To make this amount of data more manageable and provide more meaningful findings, the researchers sampled the objectives according to the methods outlined by Israel (2009)⁹. Sampling with 10% precision left the researchers with a sample of 86 objectives. These objectives were analyzed for common themes. The common themes and sub-themes of the objectives included:

To enhance/improve...

- Forest programs
- Forest benefits
- Media and communications

Example (State E): “Enhance recharge benefits to important aquifers and/or enhance protection of priority watersheds.”

To develop...

- Specific programs/plans

⁹ Israel, G. D. (2009). *Determining sample size*. EDIS publication #PEOD6. Retrieved from <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pd006>

- Long-term strategies
- New technology/reporting systems

Example (State G): “Develop and implement programs to provide equipment and support to establish and maintain local fire departments and other cooperators.”

To provide...

- Information and educational resources to public and stakeholders
- Improved planning and practices

Example (State B): “Provide and inventory of forest natural resources in Virginia on a continual basis. Measure 1 inventory panel/year.”

To increase...

- Public understanding and participation in forest events
- Funding
- Tree plantings
- Wildfire planning and management

Example (State N): “Ten percent annual increase in the number of post mined acres reforested.”

To promote...

- Forest benefits
- Forest management practices
- Programs and initiatives

Example (State I): “Promote professional training about assessing the forest cover and its benefits on agencies involved in determining present and future land use.”

To maintain...

- Natural resources
- A healthy and balanced forest

Example (State A): “Maintain healthy vigorous forest ecosystems.”

To collaborate...

- With other organizations and communities
- For promotion of forests and development of programs

Example (State H): “Serve as a catalyst for promotion, development and expansion for the forest resource and forestry-related industry in the state. Desired outcome is a positive five-year trend in total economic impact of forestry on the state (billions of dollars); new capital investments announced 9millions of dollars; and forestry jobs created 9actual number). For R&D efforts, the metric is research projects with State H Forestry Commission’s “20 by 15” project for jobs and economic development.”

To reduce...

- Forest threats

Example (State N): “minimize deforestation of forestlands for agricultural or herbaceous bio-mass production. A ten percent decrease in the number of acres converted from FIA forestland classification to agricultural classification.”

Strategies

A strategy helps an organization accomplish an objective. An example of a strategy correlated to the objective listed above would be “Hold a tree planting day where citizens can pick up a free sapling from a central location to take home and plant.” Most ($n=13$, 92.9%) of the plans presented their strategies in list format (see Table 33). In addition, all of the plans included eight or more strategies ($n=14$, 100.0%) (see Table 34).

Table 33

Presentation of Strategies	<i>f</i>	%
List	13	92.9
Both	1	7.1
In-Text	0	0.0

Table 34

Number of Strategies	<i>f</i>	%
Eight or More	14	100.0
One	0	0.0
Two	0	0.0
Three	0	0.0
Four	0	0.0
Five	0	0.0
Six	0	0.0
Seven	0	0.0

A total of 1,745 strategies were found throughout all of the plans. To make this amount of data more manageable and provide more meaningful findings, the researchers sampled the strategies according to the methods outlined by Israel (2009)¹⁰. Sampling with 10% precision left the researchers with a sample of 95 strategies. These strategies were analyzed for common themes. The common themes and sub-themes of the objectives included:

To develop/establish...

- Plans/ programs
- Manuals / guides

Example (State L): “Develop wildlife manual/guide for incorporating species-specific wildlife recommendations into Stewardship Management Plans developed by MFC foresters.”

To identify...

- Priority forests, areas, and communities

¹⁰ Israel, G. D. (2009). *Determining sample size*. EDIS publication #PEOD6. Retrieved from <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pd006>

- New resources and information

Example (State B): “Identify forest sites that may be particularly susceptible to climate change stress.”

To increase...

- Community and legislator awareness
- Funding and financial assistance
- Urban trees
- Forestry markets
- Forest management practices
- Wildlife habitat

Example (State J): “Expand markets for hardwood forest products, including biomass, biofuels, and urban waste.”

To promote and encourage...

- Forest services and resources
- Recreation and tourism
- Education demonstrations and classes
- Certification programs

Example (State F): “Encourage the ISA Certified Arborist credential and training for local tree care companies.”

To utilize...

- Sources, tools, measures, and resources
- Collaborations
- New markets

Example (State H): “Seek additional resources to increase the Forestry commission’s capacity to respond to the increased number and intensity of wildfires that is predicted due to climate change.”

To provide...

- Forest information, education, and training
- GIS based information
- Incentives to landowners

Example (State A): “Provide incentives and a quality investment climate that will motivate landowners to sustainably manage their forestland.”

To support...

- Initiatives for recreation
- Disaster recovery efforts
- Safety and training programs
- Expansion of data sources

Example (State N): “Support the purchase of lands specific to recreational uses.”

To track and evaluate...

- Market trends
- Insect and pest movements
- Urban benefits of trees

Example (State O): “Deploy 3,000-5,000 traps per year to detect the presence of gypsy moth.”

Priority Areas

Of the 15 states/territories, 13 (86.7%) included a discussion of priority areas within their respective state/territory. Those states/territories not identifying priority areas were State M and State B. Eight (61.5%) of those plans discussing priority areas, discussed them both in-text and in a list (see Table 35). In addition, 7 (53.8%) of the plans had eight or more priority areas (see Table 36).

Table 35

Presentation of Priority Areas	<i>f</i>	%
Both	8	61.5
List	3	23.1
In-Text	2	15.4

Table 36

Number of Priority Areas	<i>f</i>	%
Eight or More	7	53.8
Seven	3	23.1
Six	2	15.4
Two	1	7.7
One	0	0.0
Three	0	0.0
Four	0	0.0
Five	0	0.0

Needed Resources

Needed resources included the discussion of resources needed by the states/territories in order to be able to carry out their goals, objectives, and strategies. Ten (66.7%) of the states/territories included needed resources; however, in the majority of cases these resources were not specific or measurable. The states/territories not including a discussion of needed resources were State E, State G, State J, State H, and State D.

Table 37

Inclusion of Needed Resources	<i>f</i>	%
Yes	10	66.7
No	5	33.3

Researcher Assessment of Content

Following an assessment of the content included within the report, the researchers rated each plan according to how well the plan met each of the farm bill requirements. To rate each section of the farm bill requirements, researchers used a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from very poor to very good. In addition, the researchers provided a critique of each plan, indicating the good qualities and areas for improvement in each plan.

Alignment with Farm Bill Requirements

Five (33.3%) of the plans provided a “fair” assessment of forest resource conditions. The average score for this category, on a 5-point Likert-scale, was 2.73, with a standard deviation of 1.03. Eight (53.3%) of the plans provided a “poor” assessment of conditions and trends. The average score for conditions and trends was 2.33, with a standard deviation of .617. Eight (53.3%) of the plans provided a “good” assessment of threats. The average score for threats was 3.73, with a standard deviation of .799. Eight (53.3%) of the plans provided a “good” identification of priority areas. The average score for priority areas was 3.47, with a standard deviation of .990. Eight (53.3%) of the plans provided a “good” long-term resource strategy. The average score for resource strategies was 3.27, with a standard deviation of .884. Eight (53.3%) of the plans provided a “fair” strategy to address threats. The average score of the strategy to address threats was 3.47, with a standard deviation of .834. Ten (66.7) of the plans provided a “poor” or “very poor” description of the resources needed. The average score for resources needed was 2.33, with a standard deviation of 1.39. All of the ratings can be seen in table 38.

Table 38

Farm Bill Requirements	Very Poor		Poor		Fair		Good		Very Good		Mean	SD
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%		
Assessment of Forest Resource Conditions	2	13.3	4	26.7	5	33.3	4	26.7	0	0.0	2.73	1.03
Conditions and Trends	1	6.7	8	53.3	6	40.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2.33	.617
Threats	0	0.0	1	6.7	4	26.7	8	53.3	2	13.3	3.73	.799
Identification of Areas or Regions in the State that are a Priority	1	6.7	1	6.7	4	26.7	8	53.3	1	6.7	3.47	.990
Long-Term State-Wide Forest	0	0.0	4	26.7	3	20.0	8	53.3	0	0.0	3.27	.884

Resource Strategy													
Strategy to Address Threats	0	0.0	1	6.7	8	53.3	4	26.7	2	13.3	<u>3.47</u>	.834	
Description of the Resources Necessary for the State Forester to Address State-Wide Strategy	5	33.3	5	33.3	2	13.3	1	6.7	2	13.3	<u>2.33</u>	1.39	

For each category of the farm bill requirements, the researchers kept notes on why plans were ranked as fair, poor, or very poor. These categories were further analyzed in order to provide specific suggestions for improvement across all state plans. A summary for the rankings in each category can be seen below.

Assessment of Forest Resources Conditions:

For this category, plans were rated as fair, poor, or very poor because of a lack of discussion in this area. Some plans included discussion of this assessment, but it was vague or did not provide a comprehensive overview of the forest resource conditions in that state. Additionally, some of the plans did not include the assessment in one central location, rather it was spread throughout the plan and blended with other topics. Inconsistent presentation of the assessment within a plan also decreased the ranking.

Conditions and Trends:

For this category, plans were rated as fair, poor, or very poor due to several reasons. It was common for states to only discuss conditions or only discuss trends. In other plans, the discussion would cover both conditions and trends, but the use of these terms was not consistent between topics. Trends were commonly not discussed at all or were lacking essential detail to get a good idea of what had been occurring in the state in the last several years. This discussion also tended to be intermixed with other sections and not given the appropriate amount of comprehensive coverage. Lastly, some of the data presented was outdated (1990s) and did not provide a good look into the current condition of the forest conditions or trends since the data was collected.

Threats:

For this category, plans were rated as fair, poor, or very poor because the threats were not comprehensive and not measurable. In addition, redundancy, lack of organization, and clarity affected the ratings in this category. The discussion of threats was also limited in some plans at the issues level and did not address the overarching forests threats.

Identification of Areas or Regions in the State that are a Priority:

For this category, plans were rated as fair, poor, or very poor because the priority areas were identified, but an accompanying discussion indicating why those areas were a priority was not included. In other instances, the priority areas were not clearly identified, were sporadically discussed, and were only identified for one issue.

Long-Term State-Wide Forest Resource Strategy:

For this category, plans were rated as fair, poor, or very poor because the discussion of statewide forest resource strategies was brief, vague, and did not indicate how the strategies would be accomplished. In addition, some plans did not include any statewide strategies.

Strategy to Address Threats:

For this category, plans were commonly rated as fair, poor, or very poor because the discussion of strategies to address threats was vague or it did not line up with the threats previously discussed in the plan. Additionally, the discussion often neglected to include how the strategy would be accomplished and how long it would take. Some of the plans did not discuss strategies specific to the threats or provided strategies that were too broad.

Description of the Resources Necessary for the State Forester to Address State-Wide Strategy:

For this category, plans were rated as fair, poor, or very poor because the discussion of needed resources was vague and not measurable. For example, it was common for plans to indicate that funding was needed to complete a strategy; however, the amount of funding would never be specified. A few of the plans did not discuss needed resources at all. In addition, the resources were often limited and did not demonstrate a reflective assessment to establish what resources would really be needed.

Critique of Each Plan

During the analysis of each plan, researchers kept notes on things they found that were well done, as well as things that needed to be improved. The critiques are not comprehensive and only include things that were noticed while doing the main analysis. It is recommended that a formal evaluation be done on each state/territory's plan in order to have a complete understanding of what each state did well and how they may improve.

State A:

This state provided an overall good plan. The plan was well organized and easy to follow. State A should assess the use of two documents and establish if it is necessary to separate the documents or if they could be combined into one document.

State B:

This state provided great organization and was well written. The main contents of the report were adequately addressed. Issues and threats were both used in this report; however they seemed to be redundant and overlapping. Additionally, priority areas were identified for issues, as well as in a section by themselves. The issues and threats and the priority areas had areas of overlap that are likely to lead to confusion for the reader. The sections should be revised to reduce overlap and make the distinction more apparent. The use of footnotes may also benefit the current organization of this report.

State C:

This state provided an easy-to-follow layout and design accompanied by good organization. Throughout the report, this state did a great job including the farm bill language. By doing this, the state justified the inclusion and purpose for each section. The connection between the strategies to national priorities, provided in the appendix, demonstrated how the strategies were relevant at the state and national level. Some of the common report components were missing, such as a

mission statement and acronym guide. The acronym guide would have been particularly useful to the reader. Additionally, abbreviations/acronyms were not used consistently (i.e. switching back and forth between writing out and using the acronym). The plan did not discuss the benefits of forests.

State D:

Although this state does not have as much of an abundant forestry industry as other states, the researchers applaud the state for making an effort to meet the plan requirements adequately. The plan had some formatting errors that hindered the ease of reading. For example, the page numbers start over within the plan and the table of contents headings do not match the headings used in text. Additionally, there was an inconsistent use of font size and type throughout the plan. This plan should work toward developing a more comprehensive holistic way to present information rather than having it split by geographical area.

State E:

This plan was easy to follow and had good organization. The strategic matrix used in the plan was well organized and was a great approach to present this information; however, the matrix could have been more informative and beneficial if it was made more inclusive. This plan used several documents. It is recommended that the use of several documents be assessed. If not all documents are needed, it is suggested that they be combined into one. If the documents are kept separate, the state should ensure that the style, formatting, and organization stay consistent throughout all documents. Some of the images appeared to be pixelated; the use of high quality images in reports is recommended.

State F:

This plan was well written and organized. Each section was presented with clarity and completeness. State F should assess the use of two documents and establish if it is necessary to separate the documents or if they could be combined into one document. Currently the page numbers and appendices listings are inconsistent between the two documents. This should be corrected. Some of the sections in the report were almost too thorough and had a tendency to incorporate subjects that should be included separately in a different section.

State G:

This state did a good job at connecting goals, objectives, and strategies to the threats that they were addressing. The organization of the report allowed the reader to have all of this information in one place rather than having to flip back and forth from the issues section to the goals, objectives, and strategies section. This state neglected to include some of content required to meet the requirements of the farm bill. In addition, some general report content was not included. The layout of the report was inconsistent and hard to follow. Additionally, the writing style in this report needs improved as tenses were used inconsistently and there was the occasional use of jargon and slang.

State H:

This plan was well written and organized. The researchers appreciated the detail and explanation provided in the discussion of the priority areas. The report did tend to have a heavy focus on the issues and threats of forests. Although an

important section to include in this report, it may have limited the discussion in other areas such as conditions, trends, and benefits.

State I:

The farm bill requirements included at the beginning of this plan guided the reader and helped make the purpose of the plan clear. The overall formatting and organization of this report needs improvement. The current document was hard to follow, includes irregular spacing, typos, and changing locations of page numbers. Additionally, some of the categories overlapped with each other or were inter-mixed when they should be separated out. Appendix A, in the current plan, has a title but does not include any information.

State J:

This state spent a considerable amount of time on the formatting and organization of this document. The tabs on the side of the document increased the organization, format, and aesthetics of the report. Additionally, the two columns of text added to the readability of the document. The report was well written and provides adequate detail in most places. The front-end matter of the report (before the main content) was confusing. In the front-end matter, some pages are missing numbers and the all of the letters are not together. Some of the sections throughout the report had characteristics of redundancy and overlap. An effort should be made to eliminate redundancy and overlap ensuring that each section is specific to the topic at hand.

State K:

This state was very transparent in communicating how the plan was developed. In addition, the summaries at the beginning of some of the sections helped guide the reader; however, this should be done consistently. The organization and depth provided in many of the sections was also beneficial. The two column layout of this plan had the potential to add to the readability of this document, but the current font, text size, and margin width made the text choppy and hard to follow. In several places there were issues with image and text layout. This plan was very long and may include too much information for the purposes of this plan.

State L:

The two column layout and design of the report was attractive and easy on the eyes of the reader. The heading structure of the report, however, was confusing and inconsistent. Overall organization of the report was not linear in places. It is indicated that the report is broken into two sections; however the reader could not identify where one part ended and the other begun.

State M:

This plan did a good job of predicting future threats of forests from the current issues. The other programs discussed in the report lacked organization and did not appear to be comprehensive. Informal language, like the use of idioms and other phrasing, was used throughout the report. Some of the sections seemed to overlap and were not specific to the topic at hand. In addition, the headings used were confusing and inconsistent.

State N:

This state did a good job providing performance measures for each objective. The plan started on page 19. This was very confusing from a reader's standpoint and the plan was missing some of key components like a cover page, table of contents, as well as other front-end material. State N should assess the use of multiple documents and establish if it is necessary to separate the documents or if they could be combined into one document. Additionally, the organization was often confusing throughout the report and some of the topics were intermingled and unspecific. Some of the sections were vague and unclear.

State O:

This plan was well organized and easy to follow. The inclusion of the farm bill requirements in the introduction added to the report and prepared the reader for the topics to be discussed. This state did a nice job providing a thorough description of the resources. The plan did not include some common report elements such as the mission statement. Each appendix should be labeled individually. Additionally, some of the images appeared to be pixilated. An effort should be made to use only high quality images in reports. The three column layout used in this report was often choppy, going down to a two column layout will add to the readability of this report.

Conclusions

Common Programs, Issues and threats, and Benefits

Several of the states did have commonalities that emerged throughout the data. Some of the most noteworthy commonalities are in the state program, issues and threats, and benefits sections. In the state program section, many of the states had programs for the same topics. In the issues and threats sections two issues and threats (Natural disasters/other climate related issues and invasive species) were important to all 15 states/territories. A total of six issues and threats (Natural disasters/other climate related issues, invasive species, wildfires, urban sprawl/development/fragmentation/parcelization, insects/pests, and disease) were identified by at least 12 of the 15 states/territories. Additionally, the benefits section showed areas of commonality. Three benefits (water quality & quantity, recreation/quality of life/heritage/community forests, air quality & carbon sequestration) were recognized by 12 or more of the 15 states/territories. The commonalities and overlap between states/territories offer beneficial implications and highlight the important categories in each of these sections.

Keys for Strategic Planning Addressed

When conducting strategic planning, three of the most important tasks are to identify threats and strategies to deal with the threats, as well as identify priority areas. In the ratings determined by the researchers, the states/territories scored the highest in these three areas. This is encouraging as it indicates that the states/territories are working effectively to create a sound strategic plan.

Inconsistent Formatting, Organization, and Depth

Throughout the results the researchers concluded that no two states/territories approached the plan in the same manner. The layout, organization, and inclusion of different components vary greatly from one state to another. Additionally, the

sections included in the main content vary by state. Depth and detail of information varies by state and is sometimes very comprehensive and sometimes very vague. In some instances, the inconsistencies mentioned vary within a state/territory as well. In several of the states/territories, the organization and depth of information was variable depending on the section that was being discussed.

Understanding of Farm Bill

With lack of detail and explanation provided in the farm bill language, it is not surprising to see differences of interpretations among the states. One place where this is most apparent is in the discussion of trends and conditions. Each state interpreted trends and conditions slightly differently. In addition, different interpretations were also seen in the strategies and priority area sections, likely due to the inexplicit language in the farm bill.

Areas for Improvement

In the ratings provided by the researchers, three areas for improvement emerged. As a collective group the states/territories struggled to fulfill the following farm bill components: assessment of resource conditions, conditions and trends, and identification of necessary resources.

Recommendations

Based on the results and findings of this research the following recommendations should be made.

- The SGSF should develop a template to be used for the development of plans and reports such as the ones analyzed in this research. The implementation of a template will add consistency and uniformity across all state/territories. In addition, a template will help ensure all necessary components are included and will add to the brand recognition of SGSF (An example of a template can be seen in Appendix D).
- As a group, SGSF should define and interpret farm bill language or other unclear policy language similar to the language requiring these reports. By doing this, all states/territories within SGSF will have the same expectations and understanding, thus resulting in a more consistent product from all states/territories.
- SGSF should identify and take advantage of the opportunities to incorporate increased collaboration within SGSF. Several of the states had state-level programs addressing the same topics as other states. It would be beneficial for a group, such as SGSF, to create a program for wildfires for example, rather than each state/territory spending money and using resources to re-invent the same program in each state. Additionally, the findings show that many states have the same issues and threats. Looking at these issues and threats at the SGSF level and developing strategies to address them will be beneficial to all states/territories. Lastly, several of the states have similar benefits. Although not all states identified the same benefits of forests, it is expected that the benefits would be the same throughout SGSF. It is recommended that SGSF create a comprehensive list of forest benefits that can be used by state/territories as talking points.
- It is recommended that each state/territory discern the difference between goals, objectives, and strategies. Confusion over these terms was observed and many of the goals, objectives, and strategies overlapped, were

unclear, and un-measurable. It is recommended that each state/territory revise their goals, objectives, and strategies to ensure that they are appropriate and incorporate the appropriate components. Doing this, will add life to the goals, objectives, and strategies in each plan and increase the likelihood that they will be carried out.

- The scope of the goals, objectives, and strategies in each plan should also be revisited. The researchers observed that several of the goals, objectives, and strategies were somewhat unmanageable and undefined. Goals, objectives, and strategies should be realistic and should not set the state/territory up for failure. For example, a goal to stop the increase of global warming is likely not a realistic goal for a Department of Forestry to accomplish.
- It is recommended that each state/territory address the timeline for their goals, objectives, and strategies. The amount of goals, objectives, and strategies should be achievable within a given timeline. Additionally, the goals, objectives, and strategies should be organized into short and long-term categories. This will help the states/territories prioritize and will provide a more realistic scope of what can be accomplished in the given timeline.
- Numerous goals, objectives, and strategies were listed for each state/territory. It is recommended that each state/territory refine their goals, objectives, and strategies. In general, it is recommended that each goal should have 3 corresponding objectives (one action/information based objective, what attitude based objective, and one behavior based objective), and each objective should have 1-2 corresponding strategies. By limiting goals objectives, and strategies to these general guidelines, states/territories should be able to create more specific and meaningful goals, objectives, and strategies.
- It is recommended that each state/territory go back and reassess the resources needed to reach their goals, objectives, and strategies. In many cases vague resources were listed like “money,” “programming,” “people.” By going back and making these more specific and measurable the goals, objectives, and strategies are more likely to be reached because the resourced needed will be identified. In addition, knowing specifically what resources and how much of them are needed puts each state/territory in a better position to receive funding whether through a grant or other funding source.
- Due to the comprehensive nature of the content analysis across all 15 plans, it was outside of the scope of the research to do an in-depth formative evaluation for each state/territory plan. It is recommended that a formal individual evaluation be conducted for each state/territory. This process will allow for the plans to be addressed at an individual level, providing specific feedback.

Communications Evaluation

A communications evaluation consists of a thorough review of an organization's ability to transfer information. The evaluation assesses an organization's external and internal communication. The purpose of a communications evaluation is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of an organization's communications process internally with the organization as well as externally with its stakeholders.

Methods

To conduct the communications evaluation, the PIE Center requested and received a representative sampling of materials used by the Southern Group of State Foresters (SGSF) to plan communications with its target audiences about forests. The SGSF website was also evaluated. These materials were reviewed and analyzed for consistency, usability, messaging strategies, and effectiveness. The following communications materials were reviewed and analyzed:

Marketing/Communication Planning Materials

1. Marketing Plan Draft
2. Regional *Don't Move Firewood* Communications Plan

Outreach Planning Materials

3. Promoting Prescribed Fire – Reframing our “product” to me “customer” needs
4. Website: <http://www.visitmyforest.org>

Other Materials

5. Brochure insert on policy priorities
6. Template for a brochure insert for specific legislation
7. Sample cover letter
8. SGSF legislative talking points
9. Biography of SGSF chairman; Carl Garrison III
10. Biography of SGSF executive director; G. Michael Zupko IV

Results

In the following sections, each group of materials listed above was evaluated. Additionally, the organization's logo and other brands or campaigns associated with SGSF outreach or promotional campaigns were evaluated.

Logo

The current logo of the SGSF (see Figure 1) clearly shows the name of the organization with a leadership focused tag line and incorporates trees as well as a the outline of a globe suggesting the global reach of southern forests. However, the logo does not articulate that the organization is a conglomeration of state agencies. In addition, the SGSF logo is a departure from the typical badge design of state departments or divisions of forestry logos (see Figure 2) as well as the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) logo (see Figure 3).

Figure 1: Current SGSF logo



Figure 2: Examples of state forestry logos with badge designs



Figure 3: National Association of State Foresters logo



Marketing/Communication Planning Materials

Overall, SGSF has developed and planned many communication goals, objectives, and strategies. In addition, the marketing and communications plans have clearly segmented and targeted audiences. The abundance of planning materials and audience segmentation shows the focus SGSF has on communication.

Marketing Plan Draft – forest and forest product promotion

The marketing plan draft prepared by the Avant Marketing Group was developed to promote forest products and resources for the SGSF in domestic and international markets, by developing new forest industries and products in the south. The target audiences of these promotions were investors and forest products buyers. Though the plan states that there will be separate communication strategies and messages developed for each audience, the plan does not list any specific strategies that will be used to reach the separate audiences. In addition, only one overall objective was listed per audience.

A seven-question survey was conducted with a small (nine individuals), select group of SGSF individuals, including the SGSF executive director, past chair, SUM task force chair, a staff member and other SGSF members, to assist in the development of the marketing plan. The survey asked questions about branding, target audiences, tradeshow participation, and a marketing contact directory. The participants responses were included as part of the marketing plan draft.

In general, the survey's findings showed the participants agreed that a new branding identity could be formulated to position SGSF future industry expansion opportunities. The participants also identified investors and forest product buyers as accurate target audiences. However, participants had a general lack of knowledge of trade shows and conferences that SGSF should participate in and confusion as to the importance of the shows overall. This lack of knowledge and confusion was also true for the collection of contacts for a state and regional directory of southern forest marketing contacts, as well as the development of a new branding theme. Generally, the participants agreed that updates to the website were needed. But, several times throughout the survey, the participants expressed the need for the communications committee involvement.

Following the survey, the marketing plan draft identified two marketing objectives. The objectives were concise and each was geared toward one of the target audiences previously determined (investors and forest product buyers). However, determining that each objective was directed toward one of the target audiences was difficult. This ambiguity was

compounded by the similarity and vagueness of the objectives, the second objective differing from the first by only one word.

The audience for the first marketing objective, “promote southern forests,” was investors. This objective contained a specific marketing plan, which included three messages. Of the messages developed, the first two clearly matched the audience of investors and owners because both were economically focused. However, the third message regarded certification of forestland, was much longer, unclear and seemed geared toward a different audience.

The audience for the second objective, “promote forests products,” was forest product buyers. This objective did not contain a marketing plan so it was unclear what messages would be used to reach this audience.

To help achieve the two marketing objectives, the plan suggested the development of a new brand identity under the positioning statement “Southern Forests: abundant resources and lower net cost supply chain.” The branding campaign emphasizes the importance for the marketing initiatives of this objective to be positioned distinctly from the SGSF as a whole. This would be accomplished by a new logo that parallels the current logo and attempts to depict the region’s global outreach and promotes the accessibility of the southern products through well-established port systems. The new brand also changes the current leadership based tag line to “Abundant. Sustainable. Accessible.” However, the plan does not include a research approach to test the new brand’s effectiveness with the target audience before it is launched. Though the plan lists two separate objectives, each with a different target audience, and recommends different strategies to reach each, the plan suggests using the same new branding campaign and tag line for both objectives.

The marketing plan draft also suggested developing more marketing collaboration with other similar organizations that have shared mission and objectives with SGSF at the state, regional, and national level. Collaboration included obtaining membership within the organizations, when membership is available, and nominating a SGSF representative to serve as a liaison to those organizations. However, international forestry organizations were not mentioned, only collaborating with domestic organizations with international reach.

Finally, the draft marketing plan addressed the SGSF website, marketing collateral, trade shows and economic development strategy, each of which had specific action requirements needed for the marketing group to move forward. For the website, the overall design, hierarchy, and content were determined to be in strong condition by the hired marketing firm. However, the plan suggested adding a page for marketing timber and investing in forestland, as well as blog for communicating news and information about SGSF marketing efforts. Other updates to the website included reducing the amount of state information on the site and concentrating on regional data to minimize website revisions.

Marketing collateral included in the draft plan included a brochure, SGSF presentation, tradeshow exhibit and promotional trade show collateral. However, no content parameters were listed for the marketing collateral so it was unclear the purpose of each. The plan did identify a list of over 70 trade show events in which SGSF could consider participation. The economic development strategy created by the plan targeted southern economic development organizations through a strategy of southern economic development marketing communications. The only tactic listed for

the communications strategy was the creation of an email newsletter to be distributed to over 450 economic development organizations in the southern region.

Regional *Don't Move Firewood* Communications Plan

This plan addresses concerns of spreading forest pests through the movement of firewood by using a regional communications approach. The regional approach compliments individual state activities and avoids duplication of efforts with the goal of building public relations around the *Don't Move Firewood* campaign. The campaign's goal was to generate awareness about the issue in order to change attitudes and behavior among members of the target audience over a three-year period from 2011 to 2013.

However, branding was missing from the plan. In addition, the introduction section of the plan mentions The Nature Conservancy (TNC) as the *Don't Move Firewood* campaign manager, but also lists the funding credit for the regional communications plan to a State and Private Forestry, Southern Region, *Don't Move Firewood* grant. Therefore, it was unclear who has charged the SGSF to develop the regional communications plan for the campaign and to determine the funding agency or organization that supports the plan's outlined efforts.

The plan clearly outlines three key issues with an overall goal supported by a communications goal and an overall communications strategy seeking to target two major audiences. These audiences were external and internal, with the external audience segmented more specifically into four categories. The external and each internal segmented audience had specific communications objectives with action oriented strategies and tactics to complete each one. In addition, the plan included a communications toolbox for each of the four external audience segments to ensure the campaign accomplishes the objectives for each audience segment.

The plan also stressed the use of a marketing mix strategy to reach its goal and ensure the audiences have maximum exposure to the communications. Additionally, the plan emphasized the impact of previously conducted research regarding consumers' perceptions of forests and messaging about forests had on the creation of new messages for the *Don't Move Firewood* campaign. *Don't Move Firewood*, though achieving some brand recognition, had a negative association with viewers because the message focused on what *not* to do instead of what to do. For instance, "Buy it where you burn it." or "Buy local. Burn local." are messages that inform the viewer what they *should* do and are more accepted by the audience. The research guided the campaign away from negatively framed messages and a realization that "key messages should be a conversation controlled by an agenda and backed by detailed information." The research findings match other current communications research¹¹.

Lastly, the communications plan for the *Don't Move Firewood* campaign included a detailed timeline for the three-year initiative. The timeline included tactical items, the time period in which each will be achieved, as well as who would be responsible for each and deadlines for accomplishment. This timeline also included the execution of a survey with both the external and internal audiences to evaluate the progress of the campaign and test for awareness and behavior change.

¹¹ Goodwin, J. (2012). *Agriculture Institute of Florida message framing and appeals focus group report*. Unpublished manuscript.

The surveys for the internal audience were delivered as a pre and post test to measure the level of public awareness before and after campaign implementation. Internal surveys were delivered in person or through the mail and also included a cover letter to explain the purpose of the research. The external audience survey used an online survey tool, Survey Monkey, to collect data.

Outreach Materials

Of the materials received from the SGSF, only one piece included specific materials used for outreach. The remaining materials were planning-based. Though the planning materials included concepts to perform or develop outreach, image media or promotional materials were not included or identified. The major focus of the reviewed outreach materials was promotion of prescribed fire and forest benefits. First, the presentation describing the outcomes of consumer perception research was reviewed, followed by a review of the *Visit My Forest* the website, which was believed to have been built based on the research findings.

Promoting Prescribed Fire – reframing research

The format of this document was slightly different from the marketing and communications plans in that it was in a presentation style with the purpose of exploring the current and new messaging used to promote prescribed fire. The Tall Timbers logo was found throughout the presentation materials. However, it was unclear if the campaign was collaborative with state forest agencies or the SGSF because brand identification for those organizations was missing.

The presentation addressed three goals of prescribed fire promotion, which were clear and concise. Historically, Smokey Bear has been used dominantly to display information about fire, most of which used negative framing about the problems and risks of fire and not the benefits of fire. By concentrating on the negative fire frame, the campaign's focus remained on the risks and relied on a logical appeal. So, the presentation suggested concentrating instead on forest framing, which focuses on the benefits of forests and relied on an emotional appeal. Though detailed research was performed to determine consumer perceptions of previous and new prescribed fire promotional materials, it was unclear if there was target audience the campaign was trying to reach.

The forest framing concepts were tested with focus groups and interviews. The results of the qualitative research showed that when shown images or words about fire, participants thought the message was about fire prevention, regardless of the overall message. Based on those results, a new approach was developed which focused on filling a need of the audience, followed by information about the importance of prescribed fire to protect their need. By changing the approach, and focusing on the audience's needs, the participants understood the message and knew what actions they were supposed to take. The main action of the new campaign calls viewers to pursue is to consider visiting a forest and to use the website VisitMyForest.org.

VisitMyForest.org

The new campaign, based on the reframing research, to promote prescribed fires has its own landing page with a modern design. However, once you arrive at the landing page, the images or messages associated with the media that drew viewers to the sight were not available. There was also a lack of social media presence on the site.

The *Visit My Forest* campaign logo (see Figure 4) is simple and descriptive with a modern design and clear call to action. The design of the boot prints reflects the campaign's calls to action to visit a forest. However, there was no recognition of the collaborating organizations contained within the logo.

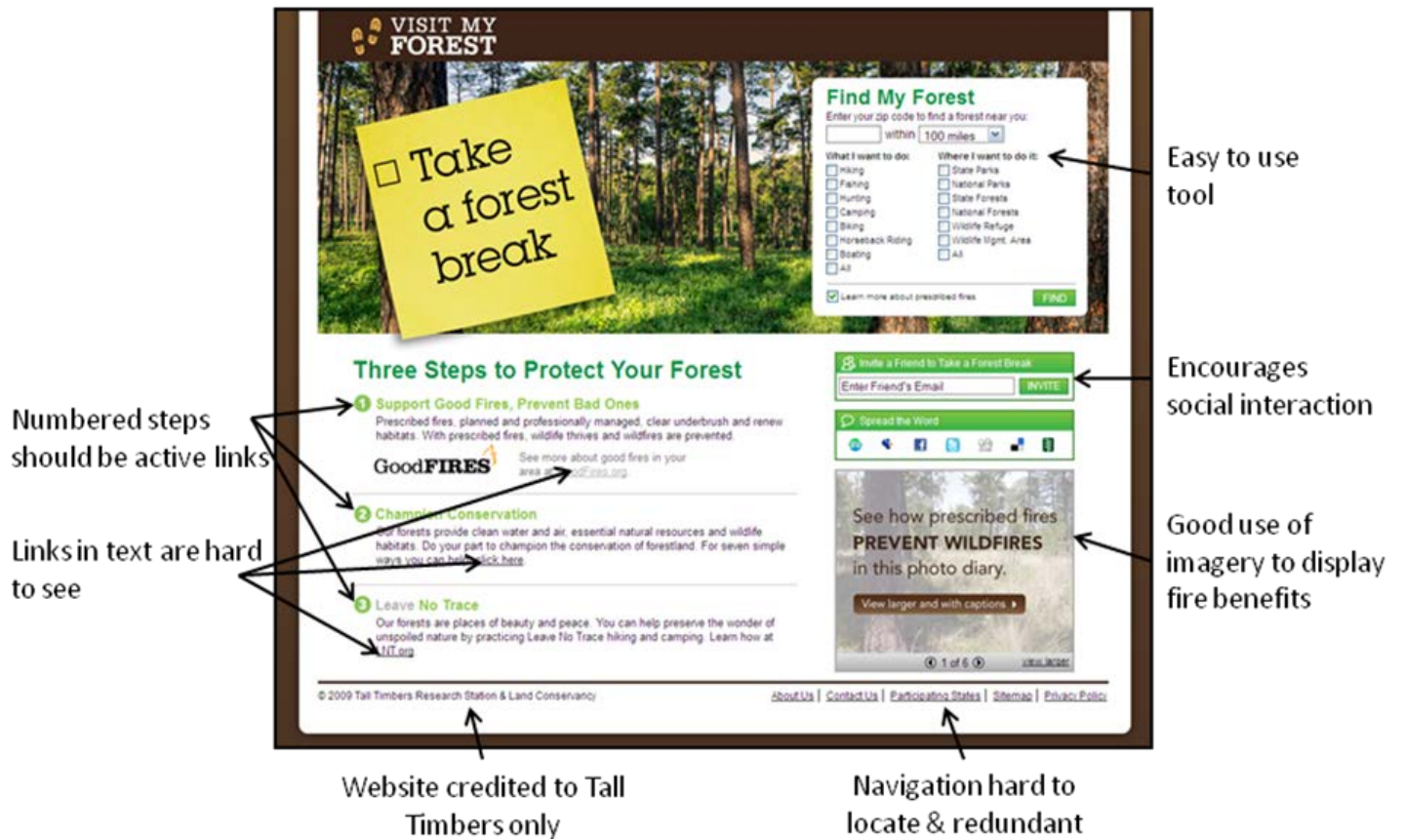
Figure 4: Visit My Forest campaign logo



The site's navigation was hard to find because of its location in the bottom right corner of the home page (see Figure 5). Since reading occurs from top to bottom and left to right, the bottom right is last place the eye will be drawn to. The navigation was also repetitive. The "About Us," "Contact Us," and "Participating States" pages all include the same information, but the pages do introduce the participating state sponsors and partners of the campaign. However, the copyright credit of the page was given to Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy, which was not listed as a participant of the campaign.

On the home page, the imbedded tools to find a forest and invite a friend to a forest were easy to use and reinforce the campaign's call to action for increased forest visits. In addition, the slideshow with information about prescribed fire reinforces the positive messages regarding the benefits of fire. However, the numbered steps on the left side of the page appear as if they are links to other pages or sites, but they were not. Instead, links were included in text (see Figure 5). In addition, there was at least one dead link and no cross-linking to SGSF, Tall Timbers, or any state forestry agency. Linking seems to be one way, from VistMyForest.org to agencies but not from the agencies back to VistMyForest.org.

Figure 5: Screenshot of the VisitMyForest.org homepage



Other Materials

In addition to the marketing and communications plans as well as the outreach materials, SGSF has other materials used organization wide. These materials included documents for legislative talking points, policy priorities brochure insert, brochure for specific legislation, sample cover letter and biographies of SGSF leadership.

The legislative talking points and brochure insert for policy priorities were both detailed and in depth. Each document covers the major issues and subjects of the industry by separating each one and describing the impacts. The legislation template outlines why a piece of legislation would be relevant to the organization and allows for SGSF members to ask policy makers to take an action on the legislation. However, the brochure insert was lengthy and text heavy. It was unclear how or where the insert has been used.

The sample cover letter also helps standardize the communications of the organization, creating uniform messaging. The biographies of the SGSF chairman and executive director included background information about the SGSF organization as well as the educational and career background of the chairman and executive director. In addition, each biography included the specific duties each was responsible for in their position at SGSF.

Conclusions

The majority of SGSF current communications, marketing and outreach materials seem to be issue based. When a forestry problem arises, such as forests being destroyed through the transportation of invasive insects and diseases in firewood, the campaign developed to alleviate the issues is reactive. This scenario would also be true for the lack of public understanding of prescribed fire and wildland urban interfaces as well as lack of forest market diversity. However, legislatively advocating for southern forestry needs, through the legislative talking points, sample cover letter and policy priorities, allows the organization to be more proactive.

In the *Don't Move Firewood* and *Visit My Forest* campaigns, the SGSF appears to reach its target audience by first communicating to make initial contact. Once the audience has been reached through the initial communications, SGSF follows up and allows the audience to seek further more detailed information about the topic or issue.

Logo & Branding

By using a logo that diverges from the typical badge design, some audiences (i.e. consumers), may not be connecting the SGSF logo (see Figure 1) to state or federal forest agencies. Without the connection, SGSF may be losing credibility and a sense of authority that is associated with the typical badge logo design¹². Additionally, any messages or other brand attributes developed in coordination with the logo would lack recognition with those audiences. However, by using a logo that varies from other state departments or divisions of forestry and the NASF, SGSF may be able to differentiate itself among audiences enough to stand out, making messages have a higher impact. Nevertheless, the leadership-based tag line of the logo, "Providing Leadership for the South's forests," focuses on SGSF role as an advocate of forests and misses an opportunity to focus on outreach and education or promoting forestry products.

The new brand logo, as suggested by the marketing plan draft, was still divergent from the typical badge logo, but was designed as a "sister brand" of the current brand. However, the creation of a new logo does not always result in effective branding and messaging. Adding logos can also dilute the overall brand identity and therefore brand quality while changing the brand logo reduces brand recognition⁸. In addition, the new logo attempts to visually link too many aspects of the organization, which becomes distracting and hard to understand, confusing the viewer. Also, without research, the potential impact of the updated logo and tag line remains indefinite. Without testing the brand's attributes with the target audience, the effectiveness of the brand will remain unknown.

When considering all of the communications, marketing and outreach materials reviewed, there were at least four different campaigns and even more logos. Additionally, there are federal, state and regional governmental forestry agencies as well as many other non-governmental and non-profit forestry organizations, all with multiple campaigns. Therefore, with all of the layers of the various media, messaging strategies and websites, individual forestry organizations may have difficulty breaking through, having an impact and becoming a recognizable brand.

¹² Settle, Q., Divine, R. (2011). Florida Forest Service focus group and employee survey report. Unpublished manuscript.

Marketing/Communications Planning Materials

Marketing Plan Draft – forest and forest product promotion

The audience segmentation of the messaging strategies within the draft is a key in influencing the opinions and attitudes of individuals within those audiences. However, there was a lack of differentiation between the two marketing objectives. In addition, the marketing objectives did not have specific strategies or tactics to achieve those objectives making the promotional goals of SGSF seem vague and possibly unattainable with a lack of actionable items. The lack of strategies was reflected in the deficit organization, making the plan hard to understand and interpret. Though the draft plan included action requirements for the marketing group, these items were not related to marketing strategies but contractual logistics.

The draft plan also states that the branding campaign associated with the marketing objectives will be positioned distinctly from SGSF, but still related to the overall mission. As with the sister logo, this strategy has the potential to dilute the overall brand identity and messaging of the organization. All messages of an organization are usually centered around and reflect the main prongs of mission and vision of an organization.

In the survey portion of the draft marketing plan, there was a lack of survey participant consensus showing a need for more internal communication about the future priorities of the organization. By excluding the communication committee as participants in the survey, the group selected as participants did not feel comfortable responding to some of the questions without the committee's input and the results were not as in-depth as they could have been.

Marketing collaboration with organizations that have similar promotional goals will maximize the marketing efforts of SGSF. Obtaining membership in other forestry and wood industry organizations with mutual objectives increases the likelihood of collaboration. In addition, liaison activities between SGSF and those similar organizations, places an emphasis on relationship building. Relationship building and the pursuit of common goals may be the best first step to achieve the marketing objectives. However, the emphasis on trade show involvement may not be as valuable or efficient for the southern forestry industry because of the resources needed to participate.

The marketing collateral listed in the draft plan included more details about the logistics of developing the material than the content of each. For instance, the development of a SGSF presentation would be important for standardizing a promotional message, but without content parameters, it was unclear what would be included in the presentation. This was also true for the tradeshow exhibit. Other collateral included promotional material for tradeshows and a brochure. As the draft plan states, collateral at tradeshows is typically not a good investment and therefore suggests using jump drives with pre loaded with SGSF information. However, jump drives are expensive to produce and may not be that much more effective. In tradeshow circumstances, it is more significant to have interactivity at booth instead of souvenirs.

Also included in the draft plan, was a communications outline for marketing in economic development. However, the plan simply stated the presence of over 450 economic development organizations in the south and suggested only one way to reach them: a monthly, electronic newsletter. However, even though the marketing group would create the newsletter and recipient list, SGSF would still need to develop and approve content. Based on the subject, the economics of the forestry industry, there may not be enough new content for a monthly newsletter. Moreover, an electronic newsletter,

without proper introduction, may not be the best way to reach the target audience. Currently there is no strategy to introduce the SGSF to the economic development organizations. If individuals within these economic development organizations just start receiving emails they are likely to delete the emails or unsubscribe from the list, making the effort obtain minimal impact.

Overall, the action requirements listed in the draft marketing plan for the SGSF website, marketing collateral, trade shows and economic development strategy are necessary and encourage transparency between the marketing group and SGSF as to how each will be accomplished.

SouthernForests.org

The SGSF website has a modern, clutter-free design that contains many of the key aspects of a website including the organization's mission, contact page, list of members, education materials and information regarding some the organizations key priorities. Based on the tone and content, the site appears to be directed more toward an internal audience. If an internal audience mostly views the site, the high quantity of educational content may not be effectively or efficiently placed.

After reviewing SGSF materials, advocating for forests, increasing the economic impact of forest products and educating the public seem to be recurring themes. However, there was no content about the economics of southern forest products on the site.

The site also contains a mix of state and regional information and overall, the content on the site seems to be static and not updated frequently. Lastly, the "About Us" page of the SGSF site was layered with multiple third-tier pages. The more tiers involved to reach a page, the more clicks are needed to reach the page. Pages that need multiple clicks to be reached are typically not viewed with high frequency.

Regional *Don't Move Firewood* Communications Plan

This plan had clear, strong goals with well-defined target audiences. In addition, the campaign has established partnerships with states and other organizations makes to ensure efficiency and create a bigger campaign impact. In addition, the plan was well organized. The importance of the issue, the goals of the campaign as well as the objectives and strategies used to achieve those goals were all easy to understand.

However, the overall plan lacked branding both visually and in-text by any specific organization, especially SGSF. If the campaign was developed and implemented by SGSF, the organizations branding should be apparent so that it receives the appropriate recognition.

The marketing mix and key messaging strategy falls directly in line with current communications research¹³. The SGSF understands that audiences want more positively framed messages that are concise, but contain enough information to know what to do when the message is viewed. The messages and message delivery techniques were segmented by audience

¹³ Goodwin, J. (2012). *Agriculture Institute of Florida message framing and appeals focus group report*. Unpublished manuscript.

and targeted to the needs of each. In addition, there were detailed strategies and tactics to accomplish the objectives for each audience. This layered approach breaks down larger objectives into smaller, achievable tasks, which will lead to the overall success of the campaign.

By creating a timeline for the communications plan, with deadlines and listing groups or individuals responsible for each, a sense of accountability was created. Accountability is important for large campaigns so that the organization can successfully move through the phases of the campaign in a structured time frame and use funding appropriately. In some cases, without proper planning, campaigns are attempted in a shorter period than allotted. In these circumstances, the campaigns are usually not as successful. However by developing a detailed timeline and deadlines, SGSF has taken the steps necessary to avoid the potential issue.

In addition to the timeline, the campaign used communications toolboxes and a survey to help ensure the messages stick and the overall campaign is evaluated. Specific communication tools were used throughout the campaign for each external target audience. The continual segmentation of the target audience is important for consistency and solidify the message among the different audience groups. Separate surveys for the internal and external audiences were also developed to maintain audience segmentation. The pre- and post-test for the internal audience, as well as the introductory cover letter, allows the internal audience to feel included and creates buy-in to the campaign objectives. The web-based external survey, though delivered in cost effective manner, was short with some redundant questions and lacked question logic. In addition, no demographic information will be collected from participants. Demographic information helps an organization understand the current environment, diversity and culture. Understanding the demographics enables organizations to better define and reach the target audience in the future.

Outreach Materials

Promoting Prescribed Fire – reframing research

Though the direct outreach materials received were limited, the presentation for promoting prescribed fire was thorough in its conception. The research based findings regarding consumer perceptions of prescribed fire match other current communications research. Specifically, findings referencing a need to effectively communicate before educating as well as focusing on the needs, demands and interests of the target audience¹⁴.

By drawing in the audience with a concept that was meaningful to them, the participants felt they were more likely to pursue information on the topic. This process creates a relationship in which the audience becomes more engaged.

Based on the images displayed in the presentation, campaign materials promoting prescribed fires seem focused on outdoor media (i.e. billboard displays). The images and messages based on the fire frame were outdated in appearance, some were text heavy and others did not contain a clear call to action for the viewer. In addition, typical billboard advertising is only moderately successful at creating meaningful impressions unless part of a large, broad campaign that

¹⁴ Goodwin, J. (2012). *Agriculture Institute of Florida message framing and appeals focus group report*. Unpublished manuscript.

includes widespread broadcasting. However, the newly developed images and messages based on the forest frame had an updated appearance with a clear call to action (i.e. Take a forest break).

VisitMyForest.org

Though the prescribed fire promotional campaign has its own landing page, the website's uniform resource locator (URL), vistmyforest.org, may be inhibiting the success of the campaign. The main calls to action of the campaign is for the audience to view the *Visit My Forest* campaign website, however, the URL is not intuitively searchable, which can lead to low page views as well as low unique visitors. For instance, if a consumer wanted to find a forest for recreation near their home in Georgia, they would likely search "forests in Georgia" or "hiking trails in Georgia," not "visit Georgia forest." So, even though there is a Find My Forest tool on the site, the consumer may never find the tool.

The website title, *Visit My Forest*, does not insinuate anything about prescribed fire. While the campaign may increase visits to forests, positive perceptions forests as well as knowledge of the benefits of forests in may not lead viewers to support prescribed fire. There may be too many cognitive leaps between the campaigns call to action (visiting a forest) and prescribed fire. Generally, only one theme or action can be achieved by a campaign. Therefore, the overall purpose of the campaign is unclear. Is the campaign encouraging consumers to visit forests more frequently, or promoting prescribed fire?

The lack of connection between the images, messaging, and the website may lead to high bounce rate. A bounce rate represents the percentage of visitors who enter the site and quickly leave the site rather than continuing to view other pages within the same site. The site also contains a dead link which can also increase the likelihood of a high bounce rate. In addition, most of the campaign content exits on other campaign sites like *Good Fire*, *The Nature Conservancy* and *Leave No Trace*. Therefore, there is a lack of content on the site and the credibility of the *Visy My Forest* campaign is reduced.

Since it was unclear if there were any existing partnerships that support the consumer research or the campaign, until visiting a second tier page and the logo does not suggest campaign collaborators, the branding could lead to lack of credibility. In addition, the site's copyright and list of participating states differ, which causes confusion and could also reduce the reliability of the information included on the site.

Lastly, the *Visit My Forest* campaign does not use social media and therefore, the website lacks connections to social media platforms. Social media platforms give campaigns opportunities to reach niche audiences, provide consistent information, and reinforce the key messages.

Other Materials

The development of legislative talking points, policy priorities brochure insert, brochure for specific legislation, and sample cover letter shows SGSF focus on standardization. By standardizing the talking points and priorities, SGSF encourages and promotes consistency in its policy messages. The legislation template has reinforced the importance of consistency. By standardizing and making messages consistent, the SGSF communications have a higher impact.

The biographies of the SGSF chairman and executive director create trust by establishing the credibility of the individuals holding leadership positions in the organization.

Recommendations

- In developing all future branding, marketing, communications and outreach materials, SGSF should pay special attention to defining a clear target and segmented audience, as well as a call to action.
- SGSF should focus on personal relevance with target audiences in its overall messaging techniques. Personal relevance is achieved through the use of people who look like and are relatable to the target audience and the use of imagery to convey emotion and connectedness.
- When possible, SGSF should consider a long range, forward-thinking strategy for issues identification to attempt to be more proactive in its communications, marketing and outreach campaigns.
- SGSF should continue to reach audiences first with communications and secondarily through education. When education is received first it can seem overwhelming and uninteresting. By communicating a message first, the audience member's interest is piqued and they can decide if they want to pursue more content about the topic or issue. In addition, communicating a message is less intensive than delivering educational material. By communicating first, SGSF can help ensure that audience members who participant in education are involved, allowing SGSF to efficiently use it resources.
- Continuing to test *all* marketing, communications and outreach materials, including specific logos and messages, with a target audience is important for SGSF to understand how branding materials are perceived. Without research, the impact of brand or campaign attributes is unknown. Therefore, research should be conducted before new materials are launched to ensure effective use of resources. Additionally, research should be conducted as an evaluation of the progress and success of marketing, communications and outreach materials.

Logo & Branding

- SGSF should consider updating its current logo (Figure 1) to incorporate recognition of the involvement of state forestry agencies and the locality of the organization. However, SGSF should attempt to accomplish its goals through messages associated with a logo in order to form a complete brand instead of trying to accomplish everything visually with the logo.
- Further testing needs to be conducted to see if the new logo and tag line for promoting southern forest products are meaningful to the target audiences and translate well with international audiences.
- SGSF should establish a brand manager and identity guide. An identity guide establishes a protocol for the creation of new communication material, including brochures or additional pages to a website. It specifies requirements for logo placement, colors to represent the organization, which fonts to use for headlines and body text, and any other specifications the organization wishes to use to help develop and maintain brand recognition.

A brand manager would ensure the proper application of the identify guide and that the logos were used properly (An example of an identity guide can be seen in Appendix E).

- Since the organization is involved in multiple campaigns, each with its own brand, SGSF should consider uniquely identifying itself within each of those campaigns. For example, on the *Firewise* website (Figure 6), the National Fire Protection Association recognizes itself at the top of the page while on the “About” page of the *Don’t Move Firewood* site (Figure 7), TNC describes the nature of collaboration but also claims ownership of the site.

Figure 6: Screenshot of Firewise website with recognition of the National Fire Protection Association.

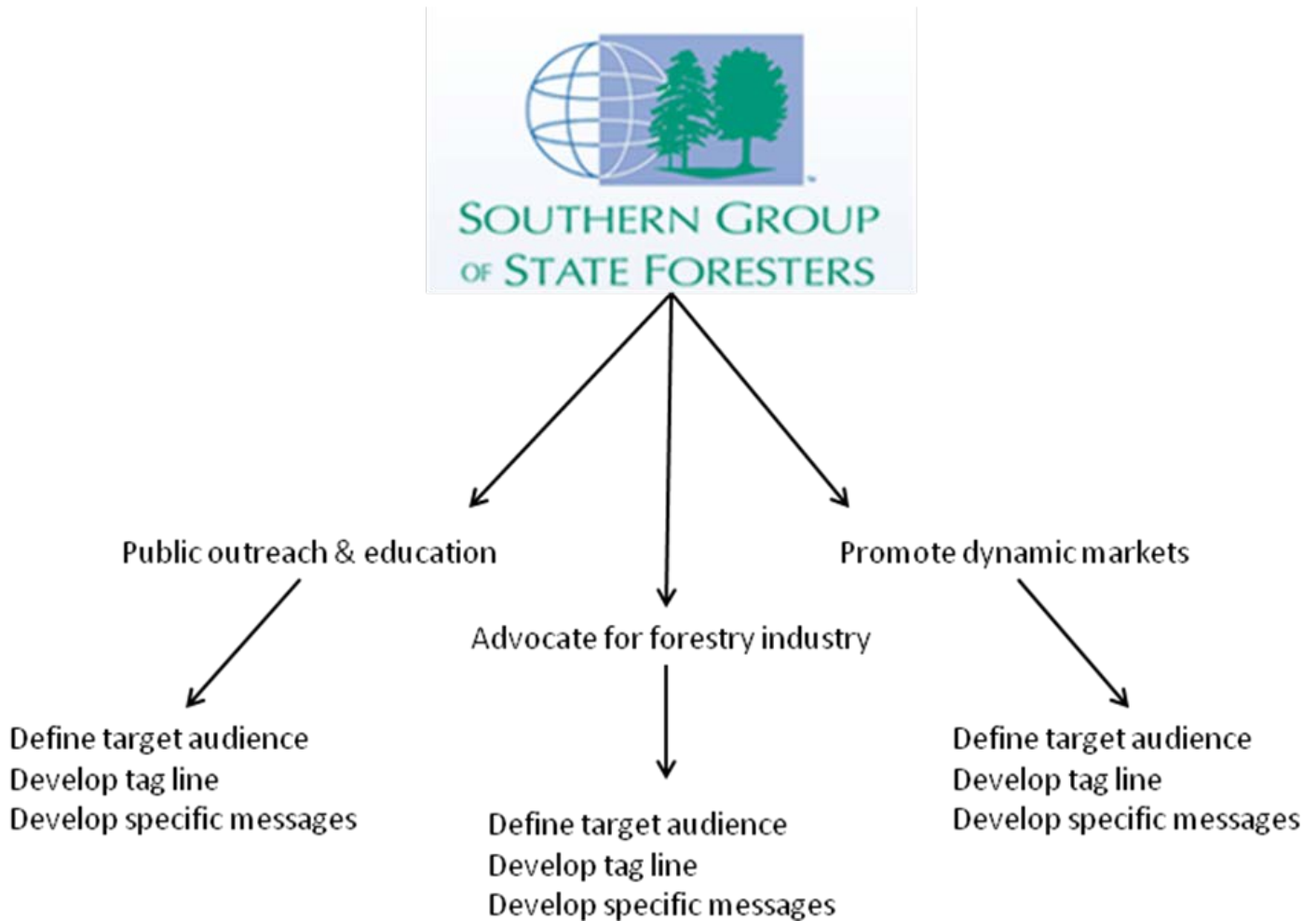


Figure 7: Screenshot of Don’t Move Firewood’s “About” page with information website ownership.



- SGSF should consider nesting brands to differentiate the organizations key priorities and address the needs of the audiences within each of those priorities (see Figure 8). Brand nesting forms a hierarchy of brands within a brand supported by an identity guide.

Figure 8: Outline of how SGSF could nest its brands by the key priorities.



Marketing & Communications Planning

- SGSF should consider focusing its marketing and communications efforts on opinion leaders. Opinion leaders are consumers ages 18 to 35 who are registered voters with at least some post-secondary education. This group takes a greater interest in current topics, have the ability to share information and influence the attitudes of others. By targeting opinion leaders, SGSF reaches an audience already willing to receive information which streamlines efforts, increases the flow of information and efficiently uses resources.

Marketing Plan Draft – Forest and forest product promotion

- SGSF should develop and expand the objectives of the marketing plan draft for promoting forests and forest products. The plan should include goals, tactics, and strategies for accomplishing the objectives instead of the action requirements. Breaking down larger objectives into smaller, achievable tasks, will streamline the campaign. The development of more tasks should also organize the plan’s efforts more clearly so that connections between the objectives and audiences are clearer.

- The plan should incorporate the details of the content for marketing collateral and how it is used to ensure effective use of resources and that the collateral is appropriately targeted toward the audience.
- A timeline should be developed for the marketing plan to increase the sense of accountability.
- The plan should include an evaluation component to determine the progress and impact of the promotion and its effectiveness in reaching the objectives.
- More than one tactic for developing relationships with economic development organizations in the southern region should be established.
- SGSF should increase internal communication regarding the development of the marketing plan to make sure the leadership of the organization and the communications committee are all involved in the process. More internal communication about the development and allowing for input will create buy-in to the plan.
- Focus on relationship building with similar organizations in order to multiply marketing efforts and access to information. Nominating a SGSF staff or member to serve as a liaison between new organizations in which the organization obtains membership could help establish collaboration and increase opportunities for dual branding at events
- SGSF should also find international forestry organization to collaborate with and partner with, in order to continue to enhance marketing efforts and promotion of products.
- SGSF should hold in person meetings with the executive staff or boards of the associations SGSF is intending to obtain membership with to form new collaborations with them instead of focusing on participation in trade shows.

Regional *Don't Move Firewood* Communications Plan

- Within the communications plan for the regional *Don't Move Firewood* campaign, SGSF should clarify the connection between TNC and the funding source of the project. In addition, SGSF should consider adding the appropriate branding to the plan. By adding more detailed information, the transparency of the plan is enhanced and therefore the credibility.
- SGSF should include demographic questions in the consumer evaluation survey, as well as more in depth questions regarding the overall campaign.

Outreach Materials

- Since SGSF has multiple issues and priorities for outreach, SGSF should develop materials for those topics being sure to test the materials before launch. SGSF should also coordinate any new materials or campaigns with current campaigns.

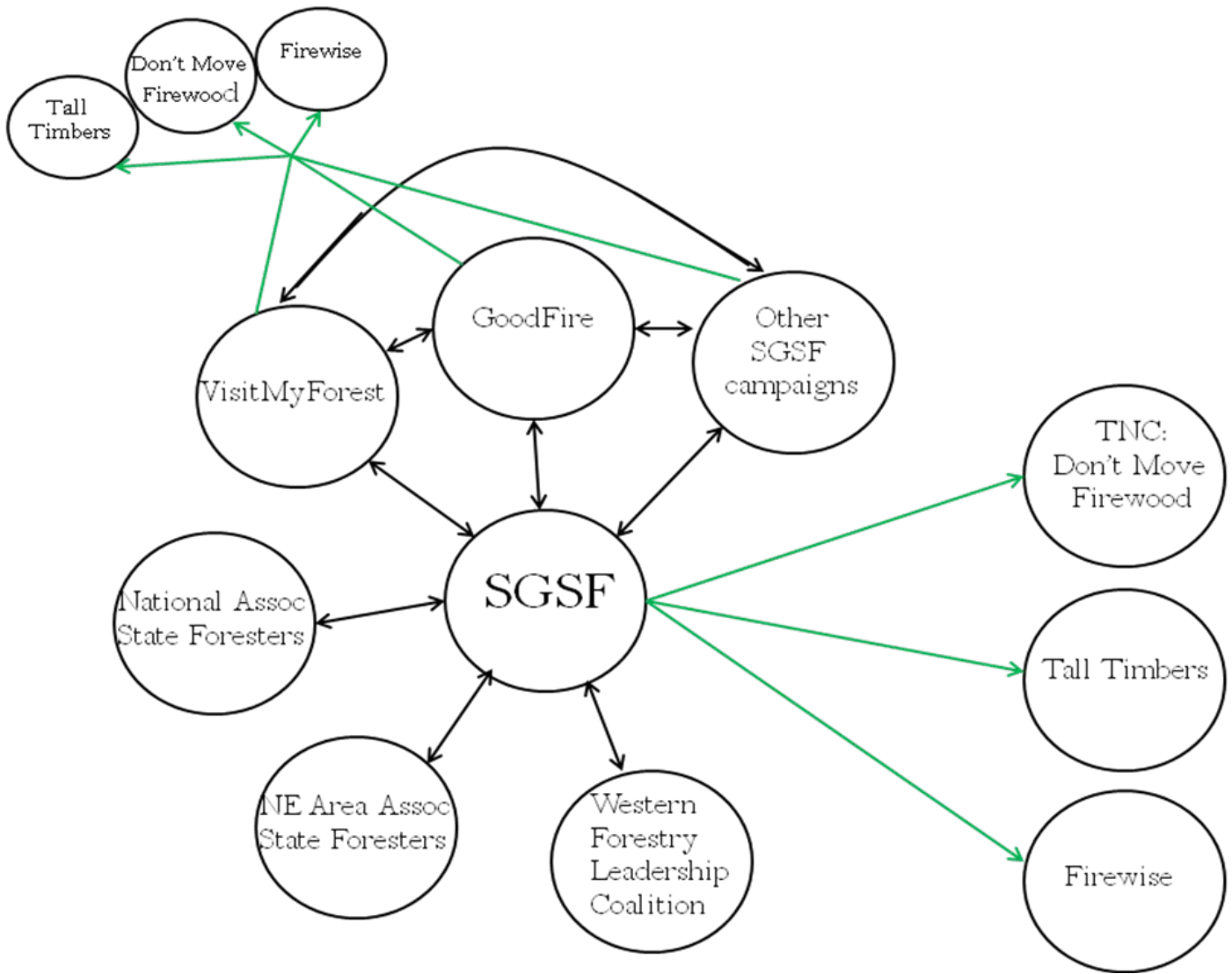
- The outreach materials of SGSF should include the use of a variety of media including print, outdoor, broadcast, and web-based.
- SGSF should include social media platforms in current and new outreach campaigns. Social media could strengthen the communication channels and online presence of the campaigns. Platforms SGSF could consider include: Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Establishing a YouTube channel would allow SGSF to post educational and outreach videos while Facebook and Twitter would generate conversations with external audiences. However, when considering social media involvement, organizations should consider the following:
 - Assign someone within the organization the responsibility of maintaining social media profiles. A consistent, unified voice is extremely important.
 - Social media should be active and parallel other communication activities or events happening within the organization including status updates, links to articles, and posting pictures.

Websites

- To increase the traffic to the websites, SGSF should consider exploring Google AdWords for the sites in which it manages.
- SGSF should strive to link its website and all of the campaigns in which it is involved more directly and clearly (see Figure 9). Clearer connections to SGSF and other campaigns will help viewers seeking information move from one topic to another more seamlessly.

Figure 9: Diagram of possible SGSF website connections.

Each circle represents a website. The black, two way arrows represent opportunities to cross link pages while the green, one way arrows, represent opportunities for SGSF to link with other outside campaigns.



VisitMyForest.org

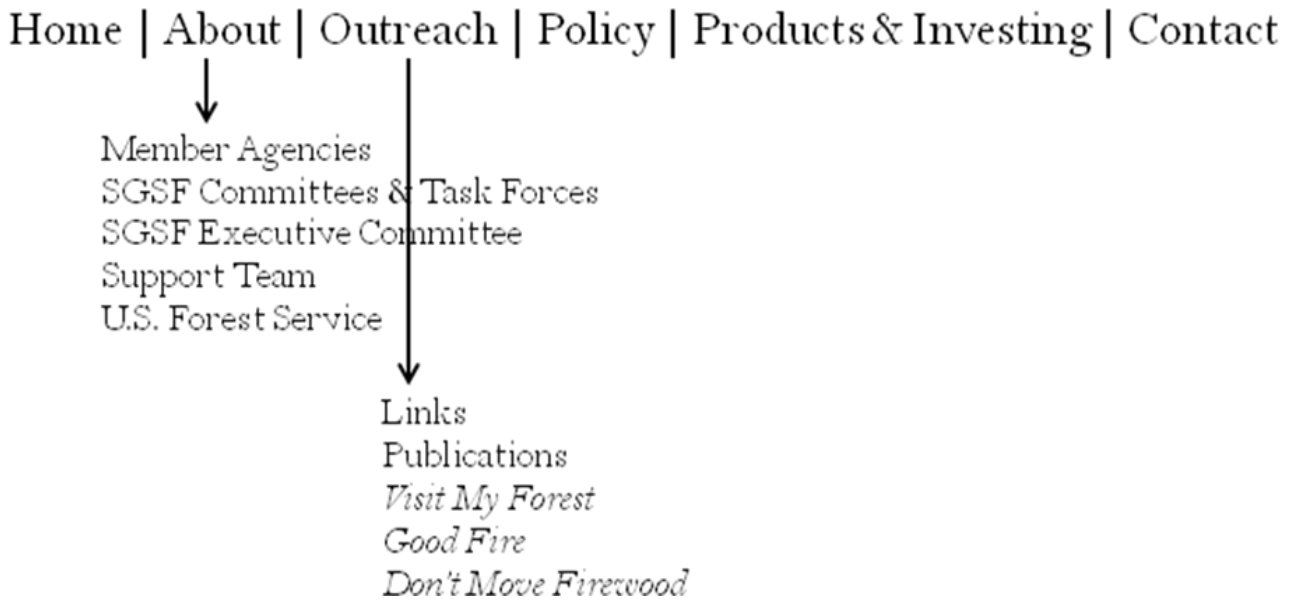
- SGSF should consider updating the URL to be more intuitively searchable.
- SGSF should assess the overall goal of the campaign (increased forests visits versus promote of prescribed fire) and evaluate if the campaign is achieving its purpose.
- The image media of the campaign and the website should be more connected. Viewers will expect to see the same images on both aspects of the campaign and large difference between the two will cause confusion.
- The navigation for the site should be moved to a higher visual level and the redundancies in the content of the “About Us,” “Contact Us,” and “Participating States” pages should be removed.
- SGSF should increase the amount of existing content on the site. Currently, most of the material on the site is links to other campaign sites, minimizing the intent of the site. SGSF could consider adding more material about the benefits of forests. In addition, the website should be checked for the presence of dead or outdated links to outside sites.

SouthernForests.org

- SGSF should reduce the amount of individual state information and concentrate on information regarding the region and strive to keep material regarding the region up to date.
- The communications committee of SGSF should nominate a website manager to oversee all updates, changes, and possible reorganization of the site, if the committee has not done so already.
- At first glance the website appears organized and modern. However, it was difficult to find information easily due to the layered nature of the site. Therefore, SGSF should consider updating the site’s navigation and overall organization. New organization would focus the tabs on the key priorities of the organization: consumer education, involvement in policy, and increasing forest market investment.
- The “About Us” tab of the site should be un-layered using a drop down menu for the pages titled Member Agencies, SGSF Committees & Task Forces, SGSF Executive Committee, Support Team and U.S. Forest Service (see Figure 10).
- The “About Us” landing page should include the organization’s mission and vision as well as the “What We Do” section, but remove the “Who We Are” section and include the list of states in text or on the contact page.
- Since the tone and majority of the content on the SGSF site is geared more toward an internal audience, SGSF should consider removing the educational materials from the left side of the page. Instead, SGSF could make a tab for outreach and education (see Figure 10) with a links to the campaigns and host the content on outside sites (i.e. *Visit My Forest* campaign site) where external audiences are more likely to view the content.

- The development of a blog, as suggested by the marketing plan draft, would also be considered outreach and may need to be reevaluated before it is created.
- The “Links” and “Publications” tabs could be consolidated into one and/or included in a drop down menu of the outreach tab.
- As addressed in the marketing plan draft for forests and forest product promotion, the SGSF site could add a tab for marketing and investing in timber (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: Diagram of possible SGSF website navigation.



Cross Analysis of Forest Action Plans, Forest Futures Project & Communications Evaluation

A cross analysis is a comparison between several documents to see what similarities and differences appear between each. For this project, researchers conducted a cross analysis on the results from 15 SGSF Forest Action Plans (FAP) and the communication evaluation with the Forest Futures Project (FFP). Both SGSF territories, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, were excluded from the FFP.

Forest Futures Project Summary

The FFP was completed as “an effort to anticipate the future and to analyze what the interaction of future changes might mean for the forests of the South and the services they provided in the region’s 13 states” (Wear & Greis, 2011)¹⁵. The project identified four dominant forces of change for southern forests. These dominant forces included:

- Population growth
- Climate change
- Timber markets
- Invasive species

The four forces, according to the FFP, have the potential to have the greatest implications for Southern forests. Additionally, the project provided forecasts and meta-issues for Southern forests. The forecasts that were provided compute modes designed to project alternative futures for forests in the United States. The forecast identified the following as the biggest issues contributing to Southern forests in the future:

- Forestry alternatives
- Climate change
- Land uses
- Forest conditions
- Recreation
- Timber product markets

To identify relevant issues in the region, a series of public information gathering sessions were held. These meetings allowed attendees to contribute their input on what they felt were the most important issues affecting forests and the key future uncertainties. Based on the input, the following forest meta-issues were identified and discussed in the FFP:

- Forest ownership
- Demographics and recreation
- Bioenergy
- Tax influences
- Jobs and income

¹⁵ Wear, D. N. and Greis, J. G. (2011). *The Southern Forest Futures Project: Summary report*. Retrieved from <http://www.srs.usda.gov/futures/>

- Water
- Wildlife, biodiversity, and forest communities
- Invasive plant species
- Insects and diseases
- Fire

Throughout the discussion of forest forecasts and meta-issues, the FFP discussed many conditions and trends of forests.

The conditions discussed included:

- Forest Management
- Land use
- Forest types
- Air quality
- Cubic feet
- Tree removals
- Forest abundance & distribution
- Forest age
- Forest ownership
- Outdoor recreation
- State demographics
- Economics
- Water quality
- Topography/geography
- Wildlife & wildlife habitat
- Invasive plants
- Land Taxes

The trends discussed included:

- Climate
- Land use
- Parcelization/ fragmentation/ urbanization
- Forest ownership
- State demographics
- Outdoor recreation
- Timber markets
- Product demands
- Forestry products
- Forest management
- Economics
- Biodiversity
- Soil fertility
- Water quality
- Industry employment
- Air quality
- Wildfire
- Invasive plants
- Wildlife & wildlife habitat
- Forest types
- Pests and diseases

Results

When cross analyzing the FFP with the FAPs the following results emerged.



Meta-issues

- The 4 dominant forces identified by the FFP (population growth, climate change, timber markets, and invasive species) were identified as issues/threats by the FAPs.
- Climate change and invasive species were both identified by all 15 states/territories as issues/threats to forest.
- Urban sprawl/development/fragmentation/parcelization (comparable to population growth) was identified as an issue/threat by 14 of the 15 FAPs.
- Forest economics and changing markets (comparable timber markets) were identified by 9 of the 15 FAPs.

- Of the meta-issues identified by the FFP, 5 were identified as issues by the FAPs. These issues included:
 - Water (comparable to water quality & quantity)
 - Wildlife, biodiversity and forest communities (comparable to declining species and lack of tree improvement)
 - Invasive plant species (comparable to invasive species)
 - Insects and diseases (comparable to insects/pests and disease)
 - Fire (comparable to wildfires and fire exclusion/ prescribed burn issues)
- Of the meta-issues identified by the FFP, 5 were not directly identified as issues/threats by the FAPs (forest ownership, demographics & recreation, bioenergy, tax influences, and jobs & income). However, these topics were discussed in the plans as conditions and/or trends and were often included as part of a larger issue. For example forest ownership was often discussed as a condition and/or trend, but it also could be considered a sub issue of urban sprawl/development/fragmentation/parcelization, as well as forest sustainability and conservation.
- An issue identified by 10 of the 15 FAPs that was not identified by the FFP was public perception/education.

Conditions

- Of the 17 forest conditions discussed in the FFP, 13 were discussed in the FAPs. The conditions discussed in both documents included:
 - Forest management (comparable to management practices)
 - Land use (comparable to land cover classifications)
 - Forest types (comparable to forest types & composition)
 - Cubic feet (comparable to stand-size class & stand-size age)
 - Forest abundance and distribution, forest age (comparable to stand-size class & stand-size age)
 - Forest ownership
 - Outdoor recreation (discussed in the other category of the FAPs conditions)
 - State demographics
 - Economics (comparable to economic impact)
 - Topography and geography
 - Wildlife and wildlife habitat
 - Invasive species (included in forest health)
- The 4 conditions not discussed in the action plans were air quality, removals, water quality, and land taxes. However, some of these remaining conditions were discussed elsewhere in the 15 FAPs. For example water and air quality were discussed in the FAPs as forest benefits.
- Conditions that were discussed by some of FAPS that were not discussed by the FFP included climate and weather, natural resources, forest products, forestry markets, and urban and community forests.

Trends

- Of the 20 forest trends discussed by the FFP, 12 were discussed by the FAPs. The trends discussed in both documents included:
 - Climate (comparable to climate & weather)
 - Land use (comparable to land cover classifications)
 - Parcelization/ fragmentation/ urbanization (comparable to state demographics and forest ownership)
 - Forest ownership
 - State demographics
 - Timber markets (comparable to forestry markets)
 - Forestry products
 - Forest management (comparable to management practices)
 - Economics (comparable to economic impact)
 - Invasive plants (included in forest health)
 - Wildlife and wildlife habitat
 - Forest types (comparable to forest types and composition)
 - Pest and diseases (included in forest health)
- The remaining 8 trends not discussed by the FAPs were outdoor recreation, forest management, biodiversity, soil fertility, water quality, industry employment, air quality, and wildfire. However, these remaining trends were discussed elsewhere in the 15 FAPs. For example, outdoor recreation and industry employment were discussed in the FAPs as forest benefits.
- Trends that were discussed by some of the FAPs that were not discussed by the FFP include forest abundance and distribution, urban and community forests, stand-size class and stand-size age, tree grade, and tree removals. However, some of these trends were discussed elsewhere in the FFP. For example, forest abundance and distribution was discussed in the FFP as forest conditions.

Conclusions

- The dominant forces identified by the FFP are aligned with the recurring issues and threats recognized by the 15 FAPs. Therefore, there is a common theme of issues identified by both the region and individual states/territories allowing the SGSF to focus its attention on those dominant forces.
- The alignment of conditions and trends between the FFP and the FAPs was also strong. Of the conditions discussed in the FFP, 76.4% were also discussed in the FAPs. Of the trends discussed in the FFP, 60.0% were also discussed in the FAPs.
- Similar topics were discussed throughout the FFP and the FAPs. However, the categories in which the topics were classified varied (i.e. air quality discussed in FFP as a condition and trend, but in the FAPs as a forest benefit).

- SGSF has the opportunity to build communications strategies for each of the meta-issues and develop outreach materials surrounding those strategies. In addition, for the forecasted issues, SGSF has the opportunity to build a proactive communications strategy to address the potential issues before they become meta-issues.
- By using consumer input to identify the meta-issues affecting the region, a sense of buy-in and ownership of the process was created between the SGSF and the public.

Recommendations

- The FFP should further consider the issue of public education/perception and the impact this issue may have on the future of forests. This issue was identified by a majority of the southern states/territories FAPs and therefore should be considered regionally.
- Collaboration between the region and the 15 states/territories should be increased. This will prevent the same work from being done multiple times, as well as increase the resources available to all of the agencies.
- The FFP should consult the 15 southern states/territories for descriptions of forestry trends and conditions that they have identified in their state/territory. Doing so will allow FFP to develop a comprehensive discussion of southern forest trends and conditions. This comprehensive discussion should then be shared with the individual states.
- The FFP should be expanded to include the territories of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, as they are part of SGSF and the southern forest region.
- SGSF should focus its consumer-based communication efforts on the 10 meta-issues defined by the consumers themselves. By focusing on issues that are already identified and of importance to consumers, SGSF can ensure communication is efficient and effective.
- SGSF should develop a set of consistent definitions of terms (i.e. issue, threat, trend, and condition) so that the region and its states are classifying items correctly and consistently.
- SGSF should include a standard set benefits provided by Southern forests in the FFP to include in communications strategies for different audiences.

Appendix A – Content Analysis Process

A GENERAL MODEL FOR CONTENT ANALYSIS

Based on this volume’s definition of content analysis and the need for careful conceptualization and research design, how should a researcher go about the work of conducting a content analysis? Although we offer a fairly detailed discussion in subsequent chapters on issues related to measurement, sampling, and so on, we are now ready to offer a verbal model of the process of content analysis guided by this definition. We present the model in terms of primary and secondary questions that a researcher might ask or address at different stages, and we organized under larger headings representing the three processes of conceptualization and purpose, design or planning of what will be done to achieve that purpose, and data collection and analysis—the content analysis itself (see Table 3.1).

Although Table 3.1 suggests a linear progression—and certain steps should precede others—the process is viewed as a recursive one in the sense that the analyst must continually refer back to the theory framing the study and must be prepared to refine and redefine when situations dictate.

TABLE 3.1
Conducting a Content Analysis

Conceptualization and purpose
Identify the problem
Review theory and research
Pose specific research questions and hypotheses
Design
Define relevant content
Specify formal design
Create dummy tables
Operationalize (coding protocol and sheets)
Specify population and sampling plans
Pretest and establish reliability procedures
Analysis
Process data (establish reliability and code content)
Apply statistical procedures
Interpret and report results

Appendix B – Content Analysis Coding Sheet

What state/territory is this plan for?

Does the plan include more than one document?

Yes

No

Please specify what each document is called. (In the following page number questions please list a page number for each document).

How many total pages is the plan?

How many pages is the plan not including front or end matter?

Does the cover page of the plan include the state/territory forestry logo?

Yes

No

Does the plan include a table of contents?

Yes

No

How many levels of headings are used in the table of contents?

one

two

three

four

five

6 or more

How is the table of contents organized?

Chapter

Numbers (1,2,3...)

Roman Numerals (I, II, III...)

Letters (A,B,C,...)

Section Title

Other _____

Does the plan include an acknowledgement section?

Yes

No

Where in the report does the acknowledgement section appear?

Does the plan include a letter from the state forester?

Yes

No

Where in the report does the letter from the state forester appear?

Does the plan include the USDA non-discrimination statement?

Yes

No

Where in the report does the non-discrimination statement appear?

Does the plan include recognition of the funding sources?

Yes

No

Where in the report does the recognition of funding sources appear?

Does the plan include a list of abbreviations /acronyms/ definitions/ glossary?

Yes

No

Where in the report does the list of abbreviations/acronyms/definitions/glossary appear?

Does the plan recognize the list as abbreviations, acronyms, definitions, or a glossary?

abbreviations

acronyms

definitions

glossary

other _____

Does the plan include the state/territory forestry mission statement?

Yes

No

Where in the report does the mission statement appear?

Does the plan include a list of figures?

Yes

No

Where in the report does the list of figures appear?

Does the plan include a list of maps?

Yes

No

Where in the report does the list of maps appear?

Does the plan include a list of tables?

Yes

No

Where in the report does the list of tables appear?

Does the plan include a list of boxes?

Yes

No

Where in the report does the list of boxes appear?

Does the plan include an executive summary?

Yes

No

Where in the report does the executive summary appear?

Does the plan include the history of forestry in that state/territory?

Yes

No

Where in the report does the history appear?

Does the plan include other forestry plans/programs for the state/territory?

Yes

No

The other plans/programs include

State level plans/programs

Multi-state level plans/programs

National plans/programs

Please mark the national plans/programs that this state is participating in.

National Fire Plan

National Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Program (includes Firewise)

Community Wildfire Protection Plans

Community Fire Protection programs

The Cooperative Forest Health Protection Program

Invasive Species Management Program

Forest Health Monitoring Program

Forest Legacy Program

Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program

Federal Excess Personal Property Program

Firefighter Program

General Services Administration Wildland Fire Program

Limited Resource Farmer Program

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Healthy Forest Reserve Program (HFRP)

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

Other _____



Please list the state level plans/programs.

Please list the multi-state level plans/programs, if specified in the report please include the other states participating in the plan/program in your response.

Where in the report are other forestry plans/programs discussed?

Does the plan include forest conditions in that state/territory?

Yes

No

What forest conditions are included?

Topography & Geography

Climate & Weather

Natural Resources

Forest Abundance/Distribution

Forest Types/Composition

Forest Ownership

Wildlife

Forest Health

Land Cover Classifications

Wildlife Habitat

Forest Products

State Demographics

Management practices

Forestry Markets

urban/suburban forests

Economic impact

Forest regulation

Stand-size class and stand-size age

Tree grade

Other _____

Specify each marked condition.

Does the discussion of forest conditions consistently match the definition of a condition?

Yes

No

Explain why the discussion of forest conditions does not match the definition of a condition.

Where in the plan are the forest conditions discussed?

Does the plan include forest trends?

Yes

No

What forest trends are included?

Topography & Geography

Climate & Weather

Natural Resources

Forest Abundance/Distribution

Forest Types/Composition

Forest Ownership

Wildlife

Forest Health

Land Cover Classifications

Wildlife Habitat

Forest Products

State Demographics

Management practices

Forestry Markets

urban/suburban forests

Economic impact

Forest regulation

Stand-size class and stand-size age

Tree grade

Other _____

Specify each marked trend.

Does the discussion of forest trends consistently match the definition of a trend?

Yes

No

Explain why the discussion of forest trends does not match the definition of a condition.

Where in the plan are the forest trends discussed?

How are the forest trends and conditions discussed?

- Trends and conditions discussed separately
- Trends and conditions discussed together
- No distinction is made between trends and conditions

Does the plan include forestry related issues of threats in that state or territory?

- Yes
- No

What forestry related issues or threats are included?

- Wildfires
- Urban sprawl/development/ fragmentation/parcelization
- Natural disasters/ other climate related issues
- Insect/pests
- Longleaf regeneration and ecosystems
- Hardwood regeneration
- Invasive Species
- Cypress-Tupelo Management
- Disease
- Fire exclusion/ prescribed burn issues
- Atmosphere/Air quality
- Forest Sustainability & Conservation
- Forest Economic and changing markets
- Care and health of community forests
- Water quality and quantity
- Public perception/ education
- Lack of reforestation
- Forest Age
- Lack of natural resource program funding
- Declining species
- Lack of tree improvement
- Other _____

Specify each marked threat.

Where in the plan are issues and threats discussed?

Does the plan discuss benefits of forests?

Yes

No

What benefits of forestry are discussed?

Industry Employment

Non-timber forest products

Water quality & quantity

Wildlife Habitat and support

Recreation/quality of life/ heritage/ community forests

Economic Activity/ Forestry values

Scenic Beauty/ Open space

Air Quality/Carbon Sequestration

Timber Products

Energy Conservation

Storm water management

Other _____

Specify each marked benefit.

Does the discussion of benefits include ways to enhance or conserve these benefits?

Yes

No

Where in the plan are forests benefits discussed?

Does the plan include goals/ strategies/objectives? Check all that apply.

Goals

Strategies

Objectives

Where in the plan do the goals appear?

Are the goals presented in a list or in text?

List

In-text

Both

How many goals are included?

- One
- Two
- Three
- Four
- Five
- Six
- Seven
- Eight or more

Where in the plan do the objectives appear?

Are the objectives presented in a list or in text?

- list
- in-text
- both

How many objectives are included?

- One
- Two
- Three
- Four
- Five
- Six
- Seven
- Eight or more

Where in the plan are the management strategies discussed?

Are the management strategies presented in a list or in text?

- list
- in-text
- both

How many management strategies are included?

- One
- Two
- Three
- Four

- Five
- Six
- Seven
- Eight or more

Does the plan include priority areas?

- Yes
- No

Where in the plan do the priority areas appear?

Are the priority areas presented in a list or in text?

- list
- in-text
- both

How many priority areas are included?

- One
- Two
- Three
- Four
- Five
- Six
- Seven
- Eight or more

Does the plan include needed resources?

- Yes
- No

Where in the plan are needed resources discussed?

Does the plan discuss drivers of change?

- Yes
- No

Where in the plan are drivers of change discussed?

List any direct or indirect drivers of change that are discussed.

Does the plan include appendices?

Yes

No

How many appendices are included?

Where do the appendices appear?

Does the plan include a list of references?

Yes

No

Where does the list of references appear?

How well does the plan meet the requirements of the 2008 Farm Bill?

	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good
Assessment of forest resource conditions					
Conditions and trends					
Threats					
Identification of areas or regions in the state that are a priority					
Long-term state-wide forest resource strategy					
Strategy to address					



the threats					
A description of the resources necessary for the state forester to address the state-wide strategy					

Please indicate why the assessment of forest of resource conditions was ranked as very poor, poor, fair. This should include ways it could be improved.

Please indicate why the conditions and trends were ranked as very poor, poor, fair. This should include ways it could be improved.

Please indicate why the threats were ranked as very poor, poor, fair. This should include ways it could be improved.

Please indicate why the identification of areas or regions in the state that are a priority were ranked as very poor, poor, fair. This should include ways it could be improved.

Please indicate why the long-term state-wide forest resource strategies were ranked as very poor, poor, fair. This should include ways it could be improved.

Please indicate why the strategy to address the threats was ranked as very poor, poor, fair. This should include ways it could be improved.

Please indicate why the description of the resources necessary for the state forester to address the state-wide strategy was ranked as very poor, poor, fair. This should include ways it could be improved.

List any critiques here.

List any positive components or good things seen in this plan.



Appendix C – Content Analysis Coding Guide

1. Does the plan include more than one document?
 - a. Answer yes if the plan includes two separate documents. For example Oklahoma has 2 documents the “Oklahoma Forest Resources Assessment” and the “Oklahoma Forest Resource Strategy.” In the following question you would list the names of the separate documents.
2. How many total pages are in the plan?
 - a. This includes the total number from the front of the cover page through the very last page. *Note if there is more than one document list the total page number for each document separately
3. How many pages is the plan not including front or end matter?
 - a. This should include the first page of main informational content through the last page of main content. This should not include cover pages, table of contents, references, appendices, etc... **The executive summary SHOULD be counted as main content** *Note if there is more than one document list the total page number for each document separately
4. Cover page
 - a. indicate if the cover of the forestry plan includes the state/territory logo/seal
5. Heading in table of contents
 - a. This should include the number of heading types used, but not counting the header " table of contents" e.g.

Heading 1

Heading 2

Heading 3
6. How is the table of contents organized?
 - a. Mark the appropriate choice according to the organization.
 - b. Chapter would be used if they say “chapter 1”
7. Where do the acknowledgements appear
 - a. Specify the page number and a descriptor, like the beginning before main report content or at the end after main report content
8. Does the plan include a letter from the state foresters?
 - a. This letter should be relative to and addressing the plan. Do not mark yes if the only letter included is something like a letter they sent to stakeholders to collect data.
9. Where does a letter from the state forester appear
 - a. Specify the page number and a descriptor, like the beginning before main report content or at the end after main report content
10. Where does the USDA non-discrimination statement appear
 - a. Specify the page number and a descriptor, like the beginning before main report content or at the end after main report content
11. Where does the acknowledgment of funding sources appear
 - a. Specify the page number and a descriptor, like the beginning before main report content or at the end after main report content
12. Where does the list of abbreviations, acronyms, definitions, or glossary appear

- a. Specify whether the page number and a descriptor, like the beginning before main report content or at the end after main report content
13. Where does the mission statement appear
 - a. Specify the page number and a descriptor, like the beginning before main report content or at the end after main report content
14. Where does the list of figures appear
 - a. Specify the page number and a descriptor, like the beginning before main report content or at the end after main report content
15. Where does the list of maps appear
 - a. Specify the page number and a descriptor, like the beginning before main report content or at the end after main report content
16. Where does the list of tables appear
 - a. Specify the page number and a descriptor, like the beginning before main report content or at the end after main report content
17. Where does the list of boxes appear
 - a. Specify the page number and a descriptor, like the beginning before main report content or at the end after main report content
18. Where does the executive summary appear
 - a. Specify the page number and a descriptor, like the beginning before main report content or at the end after main report content
19. Where does the history of forestry appear
 - a. Specify the page number and a descriptor, like the beginning before main report content or at the end after main report content
20. Other plans or programs include...
 - a. State level plans/programs – programs specific to the state or certain areas within the state, or programs funded by state entities
 - b. Multi-state level plans/programs – programs specific to several states (like a region) but not on a national level, these should not be funded by a national entity
 - c. National plans/programs – plans/programs that are nationwide and/or funded by a national entity such as the USFS, USDA etc..
21. Where do the other plans or programs appear
 - a. Specify the page number and a descriptor, like the beginning before main report content or at the end after main report content *Note: if there is more than one place that these plans or programs appear please specify all locations
22. Does the plan include forest conditions?
 - a. Forest conditions are defined as the existing conditions of the forest, or the current state. **ONLY LOOK FOR CONDITIONS IN THE TRENDS/CONDITIONS CONTENT AREA. DON'T LOOK FOR THEM IN OTHER CONTENTS AREAS SUCH AS ISSUES & THREATS**
23. What forest conditions are included? - select all that apply based on the definition above of forest conditions (this may not match how they are listed in the report)
 - a. Topography & Geography – Any description of the current land in the state and its features and surface shapes *Note if the discussion includes how these things have been changing over the years it should be listed as a trend

- b. Climate & weather – any discussion of the current climate in the state and weather pattern *Note if the discussion includes how these things have been changing over the years it should be listed as a trend
- c. Natural Resources – any discussion of the current natural resources available in the state *Note if the discussion includes how these things have been changing over the years it should be listed as a trend
- d. Forest Abundance/distribution – any discussion of the current forest abundance and distribution. For example this may include discussion of what types of trees/forest are abundant or dominate and how tree types are distributed throughout the state’s forests. *Note if the discussion includes how these things have been changing over the years it should be listed as a trend
- e. Forest types/composition – any discussion of current tree types making up or composing the state’s forests. *Note if the discussion includes how these things have been changing over the years it should be listed as a trend
- f. Forest ownership – this would include discussion about the current classification of forest ownership. *Note if the discussion includes how these things have been changing over the years it should be listed as a trend
- g. Wildlife – this would include discussion about the wildlife that currently resides in or benefits from state forests. *Note if the discussion includes how these things have been changing over the years it should be listed as a trend
- h. Forest health – this would include any discussion about current forest health. This may include current diseases or invasive species. *Note if the discussion includes how these things have been changing over the years it should be listed as a trend
- i. Land cover classifications – this should include a discussion of the percentages of land classifications throughout the state. i.e. xx% forest, xx% agriculture, xx% water, etc...May also include a discussion of the dominance of forest land compared to other land. *Note if the discussion includes how these things have been changing over the years it should be listed as a trend.
- j. Wildlife habitat – this would include a discussion of the current types and amount of wildlife habitats that the state’s forests provide. *Note if the discussion includes how these things have been changing over the years it should be listed as a trend
- k. Forest products – This would include a discussion of the current forest products coming from the state’s forests. *Note if the discussion includes how these things have been changing over the years it should be listed as a trend
- l. State Demographics – this would include discussion of the people in the state, including their residency locations, ethnicities etc... *Note if the discussion includes how these things have been changing over the years it should be listed as a trend
- m. Management practices – This would include any discussion about the types of things being done currently to manage the forests. *Note if the discussion includes how these things have been changing over the years it should be listed as a trend
- n. Forestry markets – this would include any discussion about the current state of the forestry market. *Note if the discussion includes how these things have been changing over the years it should be listed as a trend
- o. Urban/suburban forests – This would include any discussion about the current state or abundance of urban/community forests. *Note if the discussion includes how these things have been changing over the years it should be listed as a trend

- p. Economic impact – this would include any discussion of the current economic impact that the forestry industry has on the state. *Note if the discussion includes how these things have been changing over the years it should be listed as a trend
 - q. Forest regulations – This would include any discussion of current forest regulations. *Note if the discussion includes how these things have been changing over the years it should be listed as a trend
 - r. Stand-size class and stand-size age – This would include a discussion of the average or common stand-size class and stand-size age. *Note if the discussion includes how these things have been changing over the years it should be listed as a trend
 - s. Tree grade – Any discussion of the average or common tree grades. *Note if the discussion includes how these things have been changing over the years it should be listed as a trend
 - t. Other – Discussion of any other conditions that are current to the state. *Note if the discussion includes how these things have been changing over the years it should be listed as a trend
24. Specify the forest conditions - for each condition that is selected you will be asked to specify that condition, this should include a short description or synopsis of how the condition is described in the report e.g. If forest types was selected you would list all of the forest types described in the report in the specify box
25. Does the discussion of the forest conditions match the definition of a condition?
- a. To answer yes the discussion of conditions should match the definition seen in question 22.
26. Where does the list of forest conditions appear - specify the page number and a descriptor, like the beginning before main report content or at the end after main report content
27. Does the plan include forest trends?
- a. Forest trends are defined as the direction or movement of forestry related events and conditions. **ONLY LOOK FOR TRENDS IN THE TRENDS/CONDITIONS CONTENT AREA. DON'T LOOK FOR THEM IN OTHER CONTENTS AREAS SUCH AS ISSUES & THREATS**
28. What forest trends are included? - select all that apply based on the definition above of forest trends (this may not match how they are listed in the report)
- a. Topography & Geography – Any description of the land in the state and its features and surface shapes and how they have been changing *Note if the discussion includes only how these things currently are it should be listed as a condition
 - b. Climate & weather – any discussion of the how the climate in the state and weather patterns have been changing *Note if the discussion includes only how these things currently are it should be listed as a condition
 - c. Natural Resources – any discussion of the how the natural resources available in the state have been changing *Note if the discussion includes only how these things currently are it should be listed as a condition
 - d. Forest Abundance/distribution – any discussion of how the forest abundance and distribution has been changing. For example this may include discussion of what types of trees/forest are abundant or dominate and how tree types are distributed throughout the state's forests and how these are different from the past or are expected to be different in the future. *Note if the discussion includes only how these things currently are it should be listed as a condition

- e. Forest types/composition – any discussion of how the composition and types of trees making up the forests are changing. *Note if the discussion includes only how these things currently are it should be listed as a condition
- f. Forest ownership – this would include discussion about how the classification of forest ownership has changed throughout the years *Note if the discussion includes only how these things currently are it should be listed as a condition
- g. Wildlife – this would include discussion about how the residing or benefiting from the state forests has changed over the years. *Note if the discussion includes only how these things currently are it should be listed as a condition
- h. Forest health – this would include any discussion about how the forest health has changed over the years. This may include changes in diseases or invasive species. *Note if the discussion includes only how these things currently are it should be listed as a condition
- i. Land cover classifications – this should include a discussion of the percentages of land classifications throughout the state. i.e. xx% forest, xx% agriculture, xx% water, etc... and how this is different than it used to be or how different it is expected to be in the future. May also include a discussion of the dominance of forest land compared to other land *Note if the discussion includes only how these things currently are it should be listed as a condition
- j. Wildlife habitat – this would include a discussion of how the wildlife habitats that the state's forests provide have changed or are expected to change. *Note if the discussion includes only how these things currently are it should be listed as a condition
- k. Forest products – This would include a discussion of the how the forest products coming from the state's forests has changed or is expected to change. *Note if the discussion includes only how these things currently are it should be listed as a condition
- l. State Demographics – this would include discussion of the people in the state, including their residency locations, ethnicities etc... and how these demographics have changed over the *Note if the discussion includes only how these things currently are it should be listed as a condition
- m. Management practices – This would include any discussion about the types of things done to manage the forests has changed over the years. *Note if the discussion includes only how these things currently are it should be listed as a condition
- n. Forestry markets – this would include any discussion about how the forestry market has or is changing. *Note if the discussion includes only how these things currently are it should be listed as a condition
- o. Urban/suburban forests – This would include any discussion about how the abundance of urban/community forests has or is changing. *Note if the discussion includes only how these things currently are it should be listed as a condition
- p. Economic impact – this would include any discussion of how the economic impact that the forestry industry has on the state has changed or is changing *Note if the discussion includes only how these things currently are it should be listed as a condition
- q. Forest regulations – This would include any discussion of how forest regulations have changed or how they are changing. *Note if the discussion includes only how these things currently are it should be listed as a condition
- r. Stand-size class and stand-size age – This would include a discussion of how the average or common stand-size class and stand-size age has changed or is changing. *Note if the discussion includes only how these things currently are it should be listed as a condition

- s. Tree grade – Any discussion of how the average or common tree grades have changed or are changing. *Note if the discussion includes only how these things currently are it should be listed as a condition
 - t. Other – Discussion of any other conditions that are changing or have changed in the state. *Note if the discussion includes only how these things currently are it should be listed as a condition
29. Specify the forest trends - for each trend that is selected you will be asked to specify that trend, this should include a short description or synopsis of how the trend is described in the report e.g. If forest types was selected you would list all of the forest types described in the report in the specify box
30. Does the discussion of the forest trends match the definition of a trend?
- a. To answer yes the discussion of trends should match the definition seen in question 26.
31. Where does the list of forest trends appear?
- a. Specify the page number and a descriptor, like the beginning before main report content or at the end after main report content
32. How are the forest trends and conditions discussed - this question should be answered according to the organization of the report regardless if they were correctly identified as trends and/or conditions
- a. Separately – a separate trend section and separate condition section
 - b. Together – discussed in the same section, but a differentiation was made between trends and conditions in the discussion
 - c. No distinction – trends and conditions are discussed together and interchangeably with no clear identification separating trends for conditions
33. What forest related issues or threats are included- select all that apply
- a. Wildfire – the discussion of any issues or threats associated with wildfires
 - b. Urban sprawl/development/fragmentation/parcelizations – any discussion of the issues and threats to forests associated with these things
 - c. Natural disasters/other climate related issues – the discussion of how weather and climate threatens or creates issues for forests
 - d. Insects/pests – any discussion of how insects or pests may threaten or create issues for forests. If the discussion is specific to invasive species, please mark the invasive species box. Also this should not include disease.
 - e. Long leaf regeneration and ecosystems – any discussion of things that are creating issue for or threatening the regeneration and ecosystems of long leaf tree types.
 - f. Hard wood regeneration – any discussion of the things that are creating issues for or threatening the regeneration of hardwood tree types
 - g. Invasive species – the discussion of the threats and issues associated with invasive species, whether plant based or insect
 - h. Cypress tupelo management – any issues or threats associated with cypress tupelo management
 - i. Disease – the discussion of any threats or issues associated with disease. This should not include insects, pests, or invasive species.
 - j. Fire exclusion/prescribed burn issues – The discussion of the issues and threats created by fire exclusion and limits on prescribed burns
 - k. Atmosphere & Air quality – The discussion of the effect of air quality and the atmosphere on forests and/or the discussion of the effect on air quality or atmosphere from declining forests. Make sure to specify when prompted

- l. Forest Conservation/sustainability – The issues or threats associated with or preventing conservation/sustainability
 - m. Forest economics and changing markets – The issues and threats associated with the economy and changing forest markets
 - n. Care and health of community forests – the issues and threats associated with the care or lack of care of community forests
 - o. Water quality and quantity – the discussion of how water quality and quantity may effect forests or how a lack of forests may effect water quality and quantity
 - p. Public perception/education – the issues and threats associated with insufficient forest education and misperceptions of forestry
 - q. Lack of reforestation – the issues and threats associated with a lack of reforestation
 - r. Forest Age – The issues and threats associated with the current average age of forests in the state or maintaining a certain forest age
 - s. Lack of Natural resource funding – The threats and issues associated with a lack of funding and its impact on forests
 - t. Declining species – the issues and threats associated with declining tree/plant species. If they discuss issues and threats related to declining wildlife or insect species please specify in the “other” box.
 - u. Lack of tree improvement – the issues and threats associated with a lack of tree improvement and the impact it may have in the future
 - v. Other – any issues or threats that are discussed but don’t fit into the categories above
34. Specify the forestry related issues or threats - for each issue/threat that is selected you will be asked to specify that issue/threat this should include a short description or synopsis of how the issue/threat is described in the report e.g. if insects/pests was selected you would list all of the insects/pests described in the report in the specify box
35. Where does the list of forest issues/ threats appear?
- a. Specify the page number and a descriptor, like the beginning before main report content or at the end after main report content
36. What forest related benefits are included?- select all that apply
- a. Industry employment – the benefits provided due to industry employment
 - b. Non-timber forest products – the benefits associated with non-timber forest products, this may include something like pine needles or bioenergy. Any product that isn’t strictly recreation related.
 - c. Water quality & quantity – the benefits that forests contribute to water quality and quantity
 - d. Wildlife habitat & support – the benefits that forests provide to wildlife habitats. This may include wetland and riparian habitats as well as habitats that support rare & endangered species
 - e. Recreation/quality of life/natural heritage/community forest – the benefits that forests provide to increase the activity of citizens or connect them to their roots (no pun intended)
 - f. Economic activity/forestry values – the economic benefits that the industry provides to the community, state, nation etc.
 - g. Scenic beauty/open spaces – the aesthetic benefits that a forest provides
 - h. Air quality / carbon sequestration – the benefits that forests have on air quality
 - i. Timber products – the benefits provided to citizens by timber products or byproducts
 - j. Energy conservation – the benefits provided by forests in term of energy conservation, such as shading to help cool land
 - k. Storm water management – the benefits that forests provide in managing storm water

- l. Other – any other benefits provided by forests that are not mentioned above
37. Specify the forestry related benefits - for each benefit that is selected you will be asked to specify that benefit, this should include a short description or synopsis of how the benefit is described in the report e.g. If recreation was selected you would list all of the recreation activities described in the report in the specify box
38. Where does the list of forest benefits appear?
 - a. Specify the page number and a descriptor, like the beginning before main report content or at the end after main report content
39. Does the plan include goals, objective or management strategies?
 - a. For each included you will be asked to specify how they are discussed, where they appear, and how many there are. *Note discussed in-text refers to discussion in paragraph form without bullets or headings
40. Where do the priority areas appear?
 - a. Specify the page number and a descriptor, like the beginning before main report content or at the end after main report content
41. Where does the needed resources appear?
 - a. Specify the page number and a descriptor, like the beginning before main report content or at the end after main report content
42. Where do the drivers of change appear – These should be directly stated in the plan if not there are none
 - a. Specify the page number and a descriptor, like the beginning before main report content or at the end after main report content
43. List the drivers of change - list each driver of change in as much detail as possible so that they may be understood in the results
44. Where do the appendices appear?
 - a. Specify the page number and a descriptor, like the beginning before main report content or at the end after main report content
45. Where do the references appear?
 - a. Specify the page number and a descriptor, like the beginning before main report content or at the end after main report content
46. How well does the plan meet the requirements of the farm bill?
 - a. Rank each item accordingly
 - b. If fair, poor, or very poor is selected for any of the categories you will be prompted to explain why that category was rated that way and how it could be improved
47. List any critiques here – keep a list of critiques of the plan throughout your analysis of the plan and list those critiques here (note anything you notice that may be helpful for the comm audit may also be listed here)
48. List any positive components or good things – keep a list of things that the plan did well throughout your analysis and list those here

Appendix D - Template Example

Month Year

Project Title

With Organization

¹⁰²Written by



Center for Public Issues Education
IN AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

UF IFAS

Contents

Background.....	104
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Background

Text here

Methods

Text here

Results

Text here

Findings

Text here

Recommendations

Text here

Identity and Signature System Quick Reference

The University of Florida Signature System

The University of Florida has several variations of the signature to meet differing design needs. Together they comprise the university's signature system. The University of Florida signature is the official logo for use on all university communications. The signature consists of two elements: a typographic rendition of the monogram "UF" and the words "University of Florida." These two elements work together to create a graphic identity representation of the University of Florida.

The signature is the most identifiable image that the university uses. It consistently represents the university in all of its communications.

General UF Signature Usage Summary

- A primary UF signature must be used as a prominent graphic element in all publications — print and electronic — affiliated with the university.
- A primary UF signature should not be used in conjunction with any other logo.
- The UF signatures should not be modified in any manner. These symbols may be reproduced only from original master copies at www.identity.ufl.edu. If you do not find the signature you need, contact the University Relations Publications Group at 352-392-0186 or identity@admin.ufl.edu.
- Any associations or affiliates of the university wishing to use a specific identifier other than a primary UF signature must have prior approval and must use it in accordance with the guidelines in the UF Graphic Identity manual found at identity.ufl.edu.
- Secondary signatures are NOT to be used on major publication covers, advertising, stationery or business cards.

For More Information

Visit identity.ufl.edu

Frequently Asked Questions

Visit identity.ufl.edu/faq

Signature Downloads

The University of Florida signatures are available for download at <http://identity.ufl.edu/signatureSystem/> in EPS and TIF file formats.

Variations of the UF Signature:

Primary UF Signature:

Required: Primary signature. The preferred logo graphic for all applications. Reproduce in orange and blue, whenever possible.

UF Signature with Themeline:

Primary signature with themeline. Use this version whenever possible, when size allows the themeline to be large enough to be legible.

UF Vertical Signature:

Vertical signature. Can be used when space is limited or when the signature must be placed in a grouping of other logos. (For example, sponsorship or partnership listings)

UF Wordmark:

Wordmark: For limited use on publications when, for design reasons, the complete signature cannot be used.

Other UF Marks

University Seal:

The seal is reserved for official UF documents of recognition such as diplomas, awards and certificates, as well as legal documents and formal correspondence. The seal is used in combination with any of the UF signatures.

UF Monogram:

Primarily for use on promotional items. Cannot replace a primary university signature on covers of publications, advertising or web sites. May be used alone on inside pages of publications, on letterheads, graphics or titles with other logos, graphics or titles without approval.

Secondary Signatures

These versions of the signature have been developed for use by colleges, units, departments, schools, administration, centers, institutes and extended campus units. By replacing the University of Florida with the unit name, the unit name receives prominence while retaining an overall university identity. The secondary signatures are not to be used on major publication covers, stationery or business cards.

The University of Florida as the primary identifier.

One Level Unit:

Two Level Unit:

Three Level Unit with Supervising Unit:

Secondary signatures: For use by individual colleges and units. Best for applications such as internal publications, promotional items, staff attire, internal newsletters, etc. Not to be used on external publication covers, stationery or business cards.

Identity and Signature System

Quick Reference

Stationery System

A letterhead Word template is available at: <http://identity.ufl.edu/print/#letterhead>

Secondary signatures should not be used on letterhead, envelopes or business cards.

Personal information, such as names and personal email addresses, should not appear at the top of the letterhead with unit contact information.

Special printing prices for letterhead, business cards and envelopes can be found at <http://identity.ufl.edu/print/#print/vendors>

Special Pricing for Printing Orders/UF Purchasing

Special printing prices for letterhead, business cards and envelopes can be found at <http://identity.ufl.edu/print/#print/vendors>

Collateral Materials

Fliers, Announcements, Posters, Banners, etc.

A primary UF signature must be used in all advertising and appear prominently in the layout. Any usage with a partner logo or logos should be reviewed with University Relations prior to production.

Audio and Video

All radio, video and film produced for the university requires a "University of Florida" reference in the completed published or aired version.

Advice, Approvals and Licensing

These standards have been developed as a resource for anyone responsible for the creation or implementation of communication materials. Should you need a custom signature, additional information or interpretation, please contact:
Office of University Relations
352-846-3903 or identity@admin.ufl.edu

Athletic Marks

The University of Florida athletic logo, trademark, mascot and name are reserved for use by the University Athletic Association and its entities. The "Gator Head" logo should never appear with or replace the primary university signature.



The athletic logo is available to organizations that have signed an agreement with the university. For more information, contact the UF Licensing Department at 352-375-4683 or cebbegators@uaa.ufl.edu for permission to use University Athletic Association logos.

Colors

Orange and blue are one of the most distinguishable elements of the university's identity. The two-color signature is always preferred. Both black, blue and white signatures may be used as a substitute if the official colors do not work or are not available.

Official UF colors are:

Pantone 172 (UF orange)

PMS: 172
 RGB: 255, 74, 0
 CMYK: C0, M70, Y100, K0
 HEX: #FF4A00

Pantone 287 (UF blue)

PMS: 287
 RGB: 0, 33, 165
 CMYK: C100, M60, Y0, K20
 HEX: #0021A5

Clear Zones

The signature must be surrounded on all sides by clear space. The clear space should be no less than one-half the height of the "UF" monogram. Do not print graphics, rules, typography or other elements in this area.



Size

For the greatest impact and readability, a minimum logo size has been established. The size of the UF signature should not be less than one and one-half inch in length, and proportions should not be altered.

Questions?

Contact the Office of University Relations
352-846-3903 or identity@admin.ufl.edu

Publications Checklist

- A primary university signature must be clearly and prominently displayed on the front cover of all university publications.
- No other logo or icon affiliated with the University of Florida may appear on the cover of primary publications. Some exceptions may be permitted for secondary publications targeting internal audiences.
- Units of the university that have long-standing graphic identifiers can use such marks only on inside pages or the back cover of printed materials. No secondary logos are allowed on the front cover of publications or in proximity to a primary university signature.
- In magazines, a primary university signature must appear on the front cover. When and where appropriate, the words "University of Florida" are to be used in page folios.
- A primary university signature may be printed over a photograph or other image, provided it remains a prominent visual element and is legible.

Web Identity Standards

Content standards, graphic standards, web signature downloads, web colors and accessibility guidelines are available at identity.ufl.edu/web

Need More Information?

Contact the Office of University Relations 352-846-3903 or identity@admin.ufl.edu