

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund  
2012-2013 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

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**Project Title:**

**ENRTF ID: 114-F**

Forest Management Guidelines: Implementation Tools for Improved Stewardship

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**Topic Area:** F. Outreach/Education/Training

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**Total Project Budget:** \$ 124,000

**Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested:** 2 yrs. July 2013 - June 2015

**Other Non-State Funds:** \$ 0

**Summary:**

Project creates a user-friendly field guide and web application to increase forest stewardship through enhanced awareness, understanding, and in-woods implementation of Minnesota's Forest Management Guidelines.

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**Location**

**Region:** Statewide

**County Name:** Statewide

**City / Township:**

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<input type="checkbox"/> Funding Priorities	<input type="checkbox"/> Multiple Benefits	<input type="checkbox"/> Outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge Base
<input type="checkbox"/> Extent of Impact	<input type="checkbox"/> Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific/Tech Basis	<input type="checkbox"/> Urgency
<input type="checkbox"/> Capacity Readiness	<input type="checkbox"/> Leverage	<input type="checkbox"/> Employment	<input type="checkbox"/> TOTAL <input type="checkbox"/> %



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) 2012-2013 Main Proposal

**PROJECT TITLE: Forest Management Guidelines: Implementation Tools for Improved Stewardship.**

## **I. PROJECT STATEMENT**

Minnesota is a leader in the development of comprehensive, voluntary forest management guidelines to protect soil and water quality, wetlands, wildlife habitat, historic and cultural sites, and visual quality during forest management activities. The guidelines are a set of practices grounded in best available science combined with flexibility considerations that provide a suite of cost-effective options for sustainable forest management. Broad acceptance and use of the guidelines in Minnesota has resulted in efficient and effective conservation of forest resources while limiting conflict among diverse stakeholder groups (e.g., industry and environmental organizations). The guidelines are also essential to maintenance of forest certification on over 8.4 million acres of forestland in the state, which provides a global competitive advantage to forest industry in Minnesota.

Given the voluntary and comprehensive nature of the guidelines, awareness and understanding are critical components influencing their proper implementation. Currently, the guidelines are presented in a print book that is in excess of 600 pages of text, figures, and some pictures. One consistent and widespread criticism of this format is that it is difficult to use in the field, and locating relevant information for specific management activities can be difficult. User groups have suggested creation of a pocket-sized field manual focused on timber harvesting to address many of these shortcomings. In addition, given the fundamental change in information acquisition over the past decade, there is an urgent need to update and transform the way in which the guidelines are presented to the user audience of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Development of an interactive web application would address this need as it would streamline and expand acquisition of guideline content, promote user learning and discovery, and facilitate incorporation of new information as it becomes available.

The overriding goal of this project is to maintain and improve use of the MN Forest Resource Councils (MFRC) voluntary forest management guidelines for efficient protection of important forest resources including timber production, water, and wildlife. We will achieve this goal by increasing the access and usability of guideline content by loggers, landowners, and managers. Specific outcomes are as follows:

1. Development of a readily accessible and usable field manual containing key guidelines for protection of forest resources during timber harvesting
2. Development of an interactive web-based application that streamlines acquisition of guideline content and expands access to value-added content including research, monitoring reports, case studies, and user feedback.

## **II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

### **Activity 1: Field guide development and publication**

**Budget: \$47,250**

The field guide will be developed with an inclusive process involving forest stakeholders and user groups (e.g., loggers and foresters). Guidelines critical to the protection of forest resources during timber harvesting will be identified by a technical team convened by the MFRC. Focus group sessions composed of loggers, resource managers, and foresters will be held across the state to solicit input on the content and presentation of the field manual. Survey's will be developed for users to evaluate alternative formats and presentation styles of the manual. The above information will be presented to the MFRC which will finalize the content and format for graphic design of the manual. Graphic design of the manual will be conducted by a private design firm following a competitive bid process. The draft

manual will be tested and reviewed by users, and feedback incorporated as appropriate prior to printing. Field manuals will be contract printed following final approval of design proofs.

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. Technical team recommendations completed	December 2013
2. Focus group / survey recommendations compiled	December 2013
3. Field manual content and format finalized	February 2014
4. Graphic design completed	October 2014
5. Manual usability testing and incorporation of feedback completed	November 2014
6. Field manuals printed and distributed	June 2015

**Activity 2: Web-based guideline application**

**Budget: \$ 76,750**

Focus groups will be convened to solicit input from stakeholder and user groups on desired content and format of the web application. Key criteria in the application design will be that it is usable on a range of platforms (e.g., smartphone, field computer, desktop), visually stimulating and interactive, and readily updated and modified. Value-added content (e.g., research, monitoring reports) will be identified and summarized for inclusion in the web application. Input on the web application design outlined above will be compiled and key themes summarized for presentation to a contract design firm which will be chosen using a competitive bid process. Following initial development, the application will be tested by user groups and suggestions for improvement will be incorporated prior to final delivery of the product.

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. Focus group recommendations compiled	December 2013
2. Value-added content identified and acquired	December 2013
3. Content, features, and delivery styles of web content finalized	February 2014
4. Initial development of web application completed	December 2014
5. Beta testing for usability completed	February 2015
6. Final product delivery and unveiling	June 2015

**III. PROJECT STRATEGY**

**A. Project Team/Partners**

The project will be managed by Dr. Robert Slesak, and all proposed work associated with technical content will be conducted by MFRC staff in cooperation with MFRC members and stakeholder groups. Dave Chura, Executive Director of the Minnesota Logger Education Program, will conduct work associated with the focus groups, user surveys, and usability testing for each of the activities. Contract work associated with design and printing will be awarded with a competitive bid process.

**B. Timeline Requirements**

The proposed project duration is 2 years starting in July 2013. The timeline assumes that revision of the forest management guidelines will be completed by the start date. A two-year timeframe is necessary to solicit input from stakeholder groups, award contracts for design, and publish the final products.

**C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs**

The proposed project is part of a strategy to expand awareness and understanding of the guidelines while reducing future publication costs. We do not anticipate future funding requests for this project.

## 2012-2013 Detailed Project Budget

### Forest Management Guidelines: Implementation Tools for Improved Stewardship

**Project team:** Dr. Robert Slesak, MN Forest Resources Council; Dave Chura, Executive Director Minnesota Logger Education Program

#### IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET (2 years)

<b>BUDGET ITEM</b> <i>(See list of Eligible and Non-Eligible Costs, p. 11)</i>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
<b>Personnel:</b>	NA
<b>Contracts:</b> MN Logger Education Program (administered by Dave Chura). Chura has extensive experience in the design and delivery of classroom and online training, focus group development, and survey methods. - 12,000 to develop, conduct, and compile input from 6-8 focus groups around the State (3-4 for each Activity) - \$3000 to conduct surveys outlined in Activity 1 - \$2500 to conduct 2 usability sessions of draft products and compile feedback (1 for each activity)	\$ 17,500
Contract with graphic design firm to conduct field manual design and layout. Cost estimate assumes 100 pages of content, 2 hrs. per page for design, and \$75 hr. Contract will be awarded with a competitive bid process.	\$ 15,000
Contract with printing firm for printing of 10,000 copies of the field manual on glossy, laminated paper from a certified source. Cost estimate assumes \$2 per book. Contract will be awarded with a competitive bid process.	\$ 20,000
Contract with web development firm for the design and publication of an interactive web-based application. Cost estimate assumes 9000 hrs to complete the work with an hourly rate of \$75. Completion time estimate based on similar web design efforts at DNR. Contract will be awarded with a competitive bid process.	\$ 67,500
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies:</b>	NA
<b>Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements):</b>	NA
<b>Travel:</b> Funds will be used to reimburse cooperators assisting with technical aspects of guideline content and formatting for mileage (80%) and other reimbursable travel expenses (e.g., meals, parking; 20%)	\$ 4,000
<b>Additional Budget Items:</b>	\$ -
<b>TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =</b>	<b>\$ 124,000</b>

#### V. OTHER FUNDS

<b>SOURCE OF FUNDS</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:</b>	NA	
<b>Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:</b>	NA	
<b>In-kind Services During Project Period:</b> In kind salaries (0.2 FTE each year of the project) from Rob Slesak and Leslie McInenly (MFRC staff).	\$ 28,440	Secured
<b>Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation (if applicable):</b>	NA	
<b>Funding History:</b>	NA	

## **Forest Management Guidelines: Implementation Tools for Improved Stewardship**

### **Project manager qualifications**

**Robert A. Slesak**

#### **Qualifications**

Rob is the manager of the Site-level Program at the Minnesota Forest Resources Council. He is responsible for evaluation and development of Minnesota's Forest Management Guidelines, assessing their implementation and effectiveness with monitoring and research, and coordinating targeted training and outreach designed to improve guideline application and use. In his position at the MFRC, Rob has extensive experience convening multi-stakeholder groups to address complex forest resource issues, and identify information needs for efficient and effective solutions to the challenges of sustainable forest management. He is a principal investigator and project manager on several ongoing projects, and has also collaborated on the development of web-based guideline training led by Dave Chura at the MN Logger Education Program. Rob is proficient in the development and administration of competitive contracts, including development of milestones and criteria to ensure effective administration and completion of contracted work.

#### **Responsibilities**

As project manager, Rob will coordinate and manage all activities of the proposed work including development of collaborative efforts among cooperators and stakeholders for assessment of guideline content, evaluation of feedback and input from focus groups and surveys, and administration of all contracts for the design, development, and publication of finished products (web or print).

#### **Organization description**

The Minnesota Forest Resources Council is a state council composed of a broad range of stakeholder groups including the DNR, US Forest Service, County land departments, forest industry, loggers, environmental organizations, game and fish organizations, labor organizations, and forest tourism and recreation. It was established by the Sustainable Forest Resources Act (SFRA) of 1995 to promote long-term sustainable management of Minnesota's forests.

The Minnesota Logger Education Program (MLEP) provides continuing education to loggers, resource managers and landowners in the areas of sustainable forest management, transportation, business management and safety. MLEP has over 450 logging business members which are responsible for approximately 95% of the timber harvested annually in Minnesota. A core part of MLEP's mission is to develop and deliver educational training and outreach on Minnesota's Timber Harvesting and Forest Management Guidelines (FMGs).

