



# Project Matrix

## ***Initiative Vision***

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

## ***Initiative Objectives***

### **1. Forested Land Base and Resource**

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

### **2. Forest Management**

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

### **3. Economic Development**

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

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

## I: Forested Land Base and Resource

### I a. Maintain Minnesota's forest resource base and reduce losses from conversion, parcelization and fragmentation

Project	Description	Status
<b>Conservation Easements: Minnesota Forest Legacy Partnership for the Itasca County Area (2006)</b>	<p>The Foundation awarded \$6.25 million in seed capital and program support to create a fund to purchase conservation easements on up to 75,000 acres of forestland in Itasca Area. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will hold and monitor easements.</p> <p>Partnering organizations include: The Conservation Fund, Trust for Public Land, The Nature Conservancy, MN Deer Hunters Association, Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce, MN Dept of Natural Resources, and Minnesota Forest Industries.</p>	<p>Conservation easements procured with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liila Forest Products, a division of Rajala Companies, on a 1,660-acre tract in southern Itasca County known as Sugar Hills; and</li> <li>• Forest Capital Partners on 51,163 acres (80 sq. mi) of forestland in northern Itasca and southern Koochiching counties. Known as the Koochiching-Washington Forest Legacy Project, this easement will connect adjacent public ownerships, including two state forests – George Washington and Koochiching -- resulting in close to 500,000 contiguous acres of permanently protected forests.</li> <li>• The Partnership has raised over \$12 million in private and \$10 million in public funds (state and federal) towards an initial fundraising goal of \$26 million. Fundraising efforts continue.</li> </ul>
<b>Research Study: Impact of Land Loss in Minnesota Counties (2007)</b>	<p>Contract to University of Minnesota to support research on the economic, social and ecological impacts of tax forfeited land disposal and retention.</p> <p>Co-funded with the Minnesota Association of County Land Commissioners (MACLC).</p>	Findings due January 2008.
<b>I b. Capture and enhance the productivity of Minnesota's forests</b>		
<b>Study Tour Project: <i>Seeing the Forest AND the Trees</i> (2007-08)</b>	<p>A 2007-08 study tour project to sites in Minnesota, Ontario and Scandinavia . Project learning objectives are (in summary): increase the quality and value of forests and the products that come from the land; optimize the balance of forest benefits, and develop a shared vision and public policy</p>	<p>A cohort of more than 40 forest professionals will participate in three tours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• October 29-30, 2007: UPM and Aitkin County Land Dept sites in Itasca and Aitkin Counties</li> <li>• May 14-16, 2008: sites identified by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources' Centre for Northern Forest</li> </ul>

	recommendations for forest management in Minnesota.	Ecosystem Research in Thunder Bay, Ontario <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sept 28-October 6 2008: Finland and Sweden</li> </ul>
<b>II. Forest Management</b>		
<b>II a. Establish Ecological Classification System-based (ECS) forest management as the norm in Minnesota.</b>		
<b>Project</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>Curricula development and delivery: Building Forester Capacity in Minnesota (2004)</b>	Grant to University of Minnesota Sustainable Forest Education Cooperative (SFEC) to develop and deliver a certificate course for natural resource professionals in the application of Ecological Classification Systems (ECS) to silvicultural and stewardship planning through field-based training.	Over 60 natural resource professionals in three cohorts completed the pilot six-module course, In 2008 Blandin Foundation is constituting and facilitating the work of a Task Force to evaluate and make recommendations to SFEC and MLEP on the design and delivery of ongoing continuing education for forest resource professionals, including a financially sustainable model for the ongoing delivery of the course.
<b>II b. Increase the number of acres of private woodlands being actively and sustainably managed.</b>		
<b>Project</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>Research study: Taking Care of Family Forests: Lessons for Minnesota (2004)</b>	Contract with Cooperative Development Services to identify best practices on landowner and community driven land management models relevant to Minnesota.	Research findings presented at May 2006 Family Forest Stewardship conference.
<b>Website development: Reaching Woodland Owners Online Using Information Technology to Promote Private Woodland Stewardship</b>	Contract with University of Minnesota to develop and implement innovative Internet resources to encourage sustainable management of Minnesota's family forest lands.	See MyMinnesotaWood.org. Launched spring 2007, site resources include: directory of professional foresters; "Ask a Forester"; forest management information; video clips; map;, airphotos; rich links to other resources, and an active site promotion email list of nearly 1,000.

<p><b>State-wide conference: <i>Family Forest Stewardship: Getting to the Next Million Acres</i> (2006)</b></p> <p><b>State-wide conference: <i>Family Forest Stewardship: Sustaining Our Commitment; Advancing the Agenda</i> (2007)</b></p>	<p>Conference participants achieved consensus on a strategic vision and action plan: Increase by one million the number of acres of family forest land under sustainable management by 2015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a Family Forest Initiative Fund of approximately \$2 million (annual)</li> <li>• Revise the Sustainable Forestry Incentive Act (SFIA) to improve its effectiveness</li> <li>• Revamp the <i>ad valorem</i> property tax to eliminate unintended incentives to parcelize and develop vacant rural lands</li> </ul>	<p>Pocceedings from both conferences available on the Blandin Foundation website. VF/VC Advisory Board will oversee and facilitate implementation of approved Action Plans.</p>
<p><b>Convening: Sustainable Forests Incentive Act (SFIA) Revisions Project: Phase 1 (2005)</b></p>	<p>Support to Minnesota Forestry Association (MFA) to convene an advisory group of stakeholders and technical legal experts to recommend modifications to SFIA and government agencies policies to increase enrollment in SFIA by private landowners.</p>	<p>Results distributed to state legislators, committee staffs, agency officials, and incorporated into Action Plan adopted at the May 2006 Family Forest conference.</p>
<p><b>Research study: Sustainable Forests Incentive Act (SFIA) Revisions Project: Phase 2 (2006)</b></p>	<p>Contract with University of Minnesota to support research to identify the most and least desirable SFIA enrollment requirements per recommendations by MFA's SFIA advisory group. MFA will use results to finalize recommended modifications to SFIA during the 2007 legislative session.</p>	<p>A conference committee of the 2007 MN state legislature incorporated select findings into legislation to revise SFIA, but the measure was vetoed by Governor Pawlenty.</p>
<p><b>Research study: Third party certification of private woodlands (2004)</b></p>	<p>Contract with University of Minnesota to provide recommendations on developing and implementing a system to promote third party certification of private woodlands in Minnesota.</p>	<p>Findings informed implementation of LCMR-funded pilot projects in four wood basket counties.</p>
<p><b>Technical assistance and curriculum design and delivery: Promote third party certification of private woodlands (2005?)</b></p>	<p>Based on a proposal coordinated by VF/VC, the University of Minnesota led a multi-party collaboration to implement an LCMR-funded project to increase the number of acres of family forest lands in Minnesota under third party certification.</p>	<p>Project supported efforts by Minnesota Logger Education Program (MLEP) to implement Master Logger Certification in Minnesota. To date, the program has certified over 50 logging businesses as Minnesota certified Master Loggers. Group certification of forestland owners as is group certification through the Aitkin County Soil and Water Conservation District. The Minnesota DNR is exploring third party certification of its Stewardship Plans.. Educational and outreach materials are being developed based on research findings of forestland owner attitudes and perceptions about</p>

		forest management, management plans, and certification. <a href="#">Final Report</a>
<b>II c. Increase public understanding of forest management practices</b>		
<b>Project</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Status</b>
<p><b>Video production: <i>The Northern Forest</i></b> The project builds on video series <i>Minnesota: A History of the Land</i></p>	<p>Support to Twin Cities Public Television and the University of Minnesota to produce a one hour film for TV and classroom use that focuses on the past, present and future of Minnesota’s forests to enhance public awareness and the impact of human choices on the landscape. Themes: how research has led to a better understanding of the ecology of the northern forest; how that has influenced efforts to manage the forest; imperilment of the sustainable management of the forest in the face of rapidly expanding development.</p>	<p>Episode V of the <i>Minnesota: A History of the Land</i> series was released in October of 2006 and has aired multiple times on public television stations across Minnesota reaching an estimated 1/2 million viewers. The Nature Conservancy and Blandin Foundation contracted with the producers to create a five minute excerpt titled "Forest for Sale". Both pieces on the Northern Forest are available online at <a href="http://www.historyoftheland.org">www.historyoftheland.org</a>.</p>
<p><b>Forestry Reports</b></p>	<p>To date the Blandin Foundation has commissioned Dovetail Partners to write nine reports relevant to VF/VC objectives. Report topics have included: working forest easements; ecological classification systems and certification requirements; innovation in family forest certification; opportunities for design and construction innovation in the wood industry; bio-energy and the forest economy; - merging forestry and farming for fuel; forest certification and ecological classification systems; TIMOs &amp; REITs;</p>	<p>Blandin Foundation continues to commission Dovetail reports in support of VFVC objectives. Four reports were commissioned in 2007</p> <p>Topics: 1. Ecological classification systems and forest certification (Feb) 2. Trends in TIMOs and REITs in North America with a focus on the Great Lakes region (April/May) 3. Innovations in Eco-affordable housing (Aug/Sept.) 4. Certification in the Great Lakes States (Nov).</p> <p>Two of the reports have been produced:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">1. Forest Certification and Ecological Classification Systems: The Potential for Shared Objectives and Benefits</a></li> <li><a href="#">2. TIMOs &amp; REITs: What, Why, &amp; How They Might Impact Sustainable Forestry</a></li> </ol>

III. Economic Development		
III a. Create new products & markets for Minnesota’s wood products industry		
Project	Description	Status
<b>State-wide Conferences to support wood products manufacturing industry</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Building the Capacity of Minnesota’s Wood Products Industry:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 2004: <i>Creating the Edge for Global Competition and Future Investment</i></li> <li>○ 2005: <i>Creating Our Edge</i></li> <li>○ 2006: <i>Harnessing Innovation</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• 2006 Minnesota Wood Products Manufacturing Industry Achievement Awards introduced</li> </ul>	No future conferences are planned.
<b>Branding and Marketing of Local Wood and Forest-based Products and Manufacturers</b>	Grant to Minnesota Wood Campaign for market research and technical assistance to wood processing businesses to improve marketing practices and brand wood products from northeastern and north central Minnesota.	Brand developed: <i>True North Woods</i> , with membership of 80 companies Project is partnering with Goods from the Woods Major project support also provided by United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Iron Range Resources
<b>Goods from the Woods (GFTW)</b>	Annual ‘Up North’ Marketplace held in Grand Rapids in September, educational workshops on sustainable harvesting and specialty products, and initiatives to increase utilization of forest resources through improved harvest coordination.	Originally a project of Blandin Foundation, Minnesota Wood Education Project (MWEP) is now managing this event and related educational workshops in partnership with others.
<b>State-wide conference: <i>Seizing Opportunity: Forestry and the BioEconomy</i> (2007)</b>	Conference participants heard and discussed the results of two commissioned research studies on opportunities for MN’s forest products industry to participate in and benefit from the bioeconomy. Governor Pawlenty and industry economists addressed the 120+ participants. Iron Range Resources co-sponsored the event.	The Foundation is convening and facilitating a Forest Biomass Harvesting Stakeholders Forum to support on-the-ground forest biomass harvesting projects through best practice sharing and coordination.

<b>III b. Enhance operating efficiency and economic viability of Minnesota's wood products industry</b>		
<b>Project</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>Evaluate Minnesota's Timber Harvesting Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS)</b>	Grant to Minnesota DNR to evaluate Minnesota's progress on implementation of the Timber Harvesting GEIS. Goals: study the extent of implementation and accuracy of original GEIS and assess need for updating. Co-funding provided by DNR.	Phases one and two of the study, completed in 2005, concluded that: in general, GEIS projections were fairly accurate; there has been a very high degree of implementation of the GEIS mitigation strategies; and several important information needs identified in the GEIS remain to be addressed.  Phase three focuses on developing recommendations for more fully assessing the cumulative environmental impacts of timber harvesting and forest management activity within the context of economic development proposals and associated environmental review processes.
<b>Professional logger training</b>	Grant to Minnesota Logger Education Program (MLEP) to develop and deliver advanced professional curriculum for loggers, including courses addressing state-of-the art forest mgmt concepts and technologies.	An early focus of the work transitioned from curriculum development to the design and implementation of a "Master Logger" certification program for the state of Minnesota. Over 50 logging operations have now been certified. The Foundation is supporting MLEP-led focus groups to strengthen and enhance the program. With the Master Logger program in full swing, curriculum has been completed for workshops addressing: accessing online photos and other planning tools, silviculture, operator select thinning, federal taxation issues for loggers, timber cruising and forest measurement, timber sale design and timber stand improvement.
<b>Forest professional training</b>	Grant to Itasca & Vermilion Community Colleges (ICC & VCC) to develop curriculum to train & educate natural resource planners, managers and logging operators to create and implement land management plans.	A Stewardship Plan Writing certificate program is being implemented for recent graduates of ICC and VCC's two-year forestry degree programs.

<p><b>Primary Forest Products Industry Investment Study</b></p>	<p>Grant to the Port Authority of Duluth to study the feasibility of a centralized clay and pigment handling and intermodal distribution facility at the Port of Duluth.</p> <p>Additional funding for the study was contributed by the Duluth Seaway Port Authority, Minnesota Power, and four major local paper mills.</p>	<p>The Port Authority continues to look for possible investors.</p>
<p><b>III c. Increase number of acres of private woodlands and number of forest products companies under third party certification</b></p>		
<p><b>Project</b></p>	<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p><b>Status</b></p>
<p><b>Certification of County Lands</b></p>	<p>Facilitated a collaborative project to prepare six counties to become third party certified. Participating counties: Becker, Beltrami, Carlton, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Koochiching.</p>	<p>Based on results of an evaluation of participating counties, the Foundation is investing in the creation and implementation of a web-based information management tool and related training and other convenings to help participating counties overcome remaining barriers to achieving third party certification.</p>
<p><b>See II b. — Third party certification of private woodlands</b></p>		
<p><b>See II b. — Promote third party certification of private woodlands</b></p>		
<p><b>III d. Increase the capacity of the forest management services sector</b></p>		
<p><b>See III b. — Professional logger training</b></p>		
<p><b>See III b. — Forest professional training</b></p>		