

Outline of Proposed Strategic Planning Approach, STATE Tree Farm Committee

American Tree Farm System staff

The outline below lays out a pathway for the creation of a strategic plan for the STATE Tree Farm Committee. The strategic plan will be an important addressing the three fundamental needs as identified through a process carried out for the American Tree Farm System by the Center for Non-Profit Strategies in 2010. These area are 1) Improving and professionalizing services to members, 2) Improving and expanding Outreach and Education and, 3) Developing a pathway to long-term financial sustainability for the program. Recognizing the limited time available to volunteers, the proposed approach is purposefully lean, and intends to maximize the results of the planning time the team will spend together.

1. Establish Mission

- a. STATE core team develops “straw” mission statement, and works through a couple iterations prior to STRATEGIC PLANNING meeting.
- b. A Mission Statement defines the organization's purpose and primary objectives. Its prime function is internal – to define the key measure or measures of the organization's success – and its prime audience is the leadership team and stockholders. How to create such a statement (from Mindtools.com):
 - i. Identify the idea or approach that will make your organization stand out
 - ii. Next identify the key measures of your success. Make sure you choose the most important measures (and not too many of them!)
 - iii. Combine your winning idea and success measures into a tangible and measurable goal.
 - iv. Refine the words until you have a concise and precise statement of your mission, which expresses your ideas, measures and desired result.
- c. From Wikipedia: A **mission statement** is a statement of the purpose of a company or organization. The mission statement should guide the actions of the organization, spell out its overall goal, provide a path, and guide decision-making. It provides "the framework or context within which the company's strategies are formulated."¹
- d. Examples
 - i. The mission statement of Farm Fresh Produce is: "*To become the number one produce store in Main Street by selling the highest quality,*

freshest farm produce, from farm to customer in under 24 hours on 75% of our range and with 98% customer satisfaction."

- ii. The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.
 - iii. The American Tree Farm System Mission is to promote the growing of renewable forest resources on private lands while protecting environmental benefits and increasing public understanding of all benefits of productive forestry.
 - iv. The Montana Tree Farm Mission is to promote the growing of renewable forest resources on private lands while protecting environmental benefits and increasing public understanding of all benefits of productive forestry and to raise the level of knowledge about natural resource issues as related to forestry management.
2. Establish and agree on basic goal elements of the strategic plan. They should, at a minimum, address the three distinct areas outlined below, but may also include other elements important to the State Committee (no more than five in total):
- a. Outreach and Education: Note that these could be interpreted as two separate topic areas, or kept together due to the degree of overlap.
 - i. Outreach =
 1. Growth of Tree Farm
 2. Outreach to new Inspectors
 3. Motivation of Inspector corps
 4. Newsletters and other communications tools of the state committee
 - ii. Education =
 1. General education of the public as needed
 2. Educational programs for Tree Farmers (could also be characterized as outreach)
 3. Training of Inspectors
 - b. Professionalization of Services
 - i. Follow-up landowner inquiries and requests for inspection in a timely manner
 - ii. Provide timely data entry and data maintenance for inspections and related information
 - iii. Ensure conformity to ATFS certification requirements and implement relevant corrective actions

- iv. Submit Grant and Annual Reporting materials to ATFS by deadlines as required
- c. Attaining Long-term financial stability of the program
 - i. Prepare STATE Tree Farmers for increased giving campaign
 - ii. Determine viability of Certification to STATE Tree Farmers
 - iii. Identify potential sources of partnership and funding
 - iv. Establish a mechanism for soliciting donations and fundraising