

# Report to Southern Group of State Foresters

*June 2026*



NORTHEAST-MIDWEST  
**STATE FORESTERS  
ALLIANCE**

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## Regional Concerns

### **National Insect and Disease Risk Map (NIDRM)**

NMSFA sent a letter to the US Forest Service Washington Office Forest Health Protection director in late February outlining state forestry agencies' concerns with the current risk map, particularly the way in which risk is assessed across the landscape that does not accurately capture forest health risks in the East. The Alliance also has concerns about the possible implications of using the risk map to drive funding allocations. NASF's Forest Science and Health Committee is hosting a call on June 11 for regional forest health representatives to discuss NIDRM concerns.

### **US Forest Service Reorganization**

Aside from the discussions NASF has already had about the implications of the reorganization, there are particular concerns in the Northeast and Midwest about the three field offices (Durham, NH; Morgantown, WV; and St. Paul, MN) where the majority of State, Private, and Tribal Forestry (SPTF) staff operate and interact with the states. These facilities also house US Forest Service Research and Development work and are not slated for closure as R&D units, but their future role in SPTF delivery is unclear. Also, many states in the region are concerned about the impacts to place-based research with several R&D facilities being evaluated for possible closure.

### **Summer Meeting**

NMSFA is hosting its summer meeting June 23-24 online. State Foresters will discuss the transformational changes happening at the US Forest Service and how states and NMSFA can best prepare to move forward with their work. The agenda will also cover shared stewardship, Good Neighbor Authority, forest markets issues, and state travel availability.

## Projects and Initiatives

### **Landscape Software Pilot Program**

The first phase of the Alliance's 24-month Dendroyka "Landscape" conservation software pilot program is nearly complete. Seven state Forest Legacy programs including Connecticut, Maine, Mississippi,

# Report to SGSF

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## **Landscape Software Pilot Program Continued**

Montana, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Utah are taking part in the pilot. Participants have been exploring record-keeping and reporting tools that can help them effectively and efficiently implement conservation acquisition, monitoring, and stewardship activities. The Alliance secured IRA funding for an additional 10 states nationwide to participate in the second phase of the program later this year. Please reach out to [Ian MacFarlane](#) if your state is interested in exploring Landscape software.

## **Underserved Landowners Toolkit**

Work is winding down on the Alliance's underserved landowners toolkit project. Contractor Welsummer Consulting expects to wrap up the development of resources and materials for states to use by the end of July. These tool kits are tailored for each of the three targeted landowner groups (veterans, beginning landowners, and landowners in high-poverty areas) and include things like templates for leave-behinds at landowner meetings with suggested language and perspectives to better reach each group. The tool kits include background information on how and why the suggested approaches work best for each group and align with similar efforts in the southern states to target underserved landowners. For the rollout, the Alliance is planning a webinar for states in late summer/early fall as well as a one-pager to help navigate people to the resources, which will be posted on its website. NMSFA may also offer a recorded tutorial for field staff and partners.

## **State Utilization and Marketing Capacity Project**

Work is progressing on several facets of the NMSFA state utilization and marketing capacity project. The Alliance continues to provide state forestry agencies with access to several trade journals and pricing reports. In April, the Forest Markets and Utilization Committee hosted an online training entitled Sawmilling 101. Finally, Michigan State University is conducting a study documenting the importance of forestry and the forest products industry in the region and providing an updated analysis for comparison between pre- and post-COVID and with other regions and other industries via contract. The final product will include a region-wide report along individual state reports. States are currently reviewing draft versions of the reports.

## **Wildfire Risk Assessment Update**

The Northeast-Midwest regional wildfire risk assessment update kicked off in early 2026 with Timmons Group and the US Forest Service working on the project. Three fuels calibration workshops are being scheduled this spring and summer for states to review the fuel models and provide input based on local conditions. The Alliance continues to receive funding from US Forest Service Region 9 to host and support the wildfire risk assessment portal ([northeastmidwestwildfirerisk.com](http://northeastmidwestwildfirerisk.com)).

## **Climate Working Group**

NMSFA Policy and Program Implementation Coordinator Maura Ross is leading the creation of a new climate working group comprised primarily of state forestry agency staff. The group will support their engagement with private landowner assistance programs, including funding from the Inflation Reduction Act aimed at helping landowners access climate markets. The group is developing several webinars with topics that include salt intrusion and coastal forests, impacts of drought on wildfire, and mesophication and maintaining species diversity. They are also creating peer-to-peer learning opportunities focused on Thermal Renewable Energy Credits, assisted range migration, and conducting prescribed burns within shorter time frames.

# Report to SGSF

June 2026



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## Upcoming Meetings

### **Forest Resource Planning Committee**

June 1 & 3 | Virtual

### **Summer Meeting**

June 23-24 | Virtual

### **Fall Meeting**

October 27-29 | Milford, PA

### **Forest Fire Supervisors Committee**

June 9-11 | Portland, ME

### **Public Land Management Committee**

October 6-8 | Glouster, OH

## Committee Updates

### **Cooperative Forest Management Committee**

The committee met May 6-7 online. Agenda items for the meeting included forest landowner support, federal updates, landowner outreach, and presentation of the Outstanding CFM Forester award.

### **Forest Fire Supervisors Committee**

The committee is meeting June 9-11 in Portland, ME. Agenda items for the meeting include NMAC Surge Task Forces, Type 3 IMTs and use in EACC area, and subcommittee updates. The committee is also planning a tour of Maine islands featuring fire preparedness programs, fire prevention, and response on islands.

### **Forest Health Committee**

The Forest Health Committee met March 24-25 online. The agenda featured federal updates, state sharing, and presentations on environmental DNA and using drones for bug bombs and seed bombs.

### **Forest Inventory and Analysis Committee**

The Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) Committee met virtually February 24-25. Attendees discussed FIA Program updates, changes at the US Forest Service, the halt to i-Tree funding, the Pennsylvania Forest Assessment Project, and more.

### **Forest Legacy Committee**

The committee met May 27-28 online. Topics discussed included best practices for working with NGO partners, navigating the conservation easement amendment process, and strengthening conservation action for globally threatened tree species.

### **Forest Markets and Utilization Committee**

The Forest Markets and Utilization Committee met April 28 online. Discussion included federal partner updates and issues impacting forest products markets.

### **Forest Resource Planning Committee**

The committee is meeting June 1 and 3 online. Agenda items for the meeting include a carbon conflicts panel discussion, state sharing, and a State Wildlife Action Plan panel discussion.

### **Public Land Management Committee**

The committee is currently planning its agenda for a meeting October 6-8 in Ohio.

### **Urban and Community Forestry Committee**

The committee met May 11-13 online. The agenda featured subcommittee updates, news from partners, and an update on the committee's strategic plan implementation.

**Northeast-Midwest State Foresters Alliance**

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