

# Spatial Analysis Project – Forest Stewardship Program

USDA Forest Service  
Northeastern Area  
State and Private Forestry

*Capturing impact, establishing baseline, and focusing future efforts through spatial analysis*



**Description:** The Spatial Analysis Project provides participating state forestry agencies with a strategic management tool that spatially displays important forest lands (rich in natural resources, vulnerable to threat, or both); existing stewardship tracts (properties under Forest Stewardship Plans); and areas of opportunity to focus future Forest Stewardship efforts (stewardship potential). This is achieved using consistent methodology, while offering States the ability to customize the tool according to State conditions.

## **Key Issues:**

- By design, the Forest Stewardship Program is implemented on a first-come, first-serve basis. While this is customer-friendly, it does not facilitate strategic program delivery, particularly as funds become limited or otherwise constrained.
- There has been no standard or consistent way to assess the impact that stewardship plans have had on the forest resource as a whole, or in addressing regionally or nationally significant issues.
- There is an increasing need to address accountability for results on the ground, assuring that program implementation is effective and efficient, and positively affects forest resources.

The Spatial Analysis Project provides the capability to address all of the issues identified above. It responds directly to the Northeastern Area mission and vision, and is being implemented according to all of NA's guiding principles. It touches every Goal of the Strategic Plan in its innovation, focus on sustainable forest management, and providing effective public service. It is helping our partners change the way they do business, leading to a more efficient and effective way of redeeming our federal role in program implementation and administration.

## **Accomplishments:**

- Four States served by NA are involved with NA staff in pilot development of the Spatial Analysis Project. They are Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Missouri.
- The pilot states are nearing completion of product and process development.
- Five state forestry agencies are interested and poised to enter into the Spatial Analysis Project during fiscal year 2004.

Products include a digital datalayer of all existing Stewardship Plans and an electronic Stewardship database containing tract characteristics and planned / implemented activities and practices, both to be maintained through time; a statewide spatial display of NIPF lands that would most benefit from the Forest Stewardship Program, developed from data common among participating states; and an analysis of Forest Stewardship Program impact since its beginning.

**Budget History:** The pilot project was initially funded in fiscal year 2001. It received funding from four program areas: Forest Stewardship, Forest Legacy, Economic Action, and Title II Fire. Since FY 2001, subsequent funding has been entirely borne by the Forest Stewardship Program. It is anticipated that funding would continue to be provided through the Forest Stewardship

Program, although the indirect benefits touch all program areas through integrated program delivery and statewide assessment.

<b>Forest Stewardship Program – Spatial Analysis Project</b>				
<i>(\$ Thousands)</i>				
	<b>FY 2001</b>	<b>FY 2002</b>	<b>FY 2003</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>
Forest Stewardship	\$49	\$5	\$10	\$285
Cooperative Fire	69	0	0	0
Economic Action	25	0	0	0
Forest Legacy	20	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$163</b>	<b>\$5</b>	<b>\$10</b>	<b>\$285</b>

**Future Direction:**

- During FY 2004 five NA state forestry agencies anticipate beginning their Forest Stewardship Program Spatial Analysis Project, with assistance from the pilot states.
- All state forestry agencies served by NA will have an opportunity to participate in the Spatial Analysis Project, over the course of the next three to four fiscal years.
- During FY 2004, the Washington Office-Cooperative Forestry, has provided funding for the western states to participate in a pilot Spatial Analysis Project. Three western states are interested in participating in the pilot, and as funding allows, will receive project guidance from NA and pilot state staffs.
- Long term, the products of this project and their ongoing maintenance will change the way participating states implement the Forest Stewardship Program and track and report program progress. The maps and tabular data will provide a tool for strategically determining forest resource needs on a statewide basis, and help professional foresters determine within a regional locale, a more local priority of needs for future Stewardship Program delivery, as the Stewardship tracts relate to adjacent lands.
- As more state forestry agencies adopt this process, NA’s ability to administer the Forest Stewardship Program, and track and report accomplishments will be significantly improved through streamlined and more accurate state reporting, and ability to display the results, therefore increasing NA’s ability to demonstrate accountability for federal funds expended through the Forest Stewardship Program on a broad geographic scale. It will also help to quantify activity and practice needs identified in Forest Stewardship Plans for out-year planning purposes.
- The statewide assessments of vulnerabilities and resource richness include elements of most State and Private Forestry programs. Opportunities to integrate multiple programs’ objectives and actions will be facilitated through use of the results and analysis capabilities developed through the Spatial Analysis Project.
- A web-based data-entry tool, including plan and map creation, is under development that will aid professional foresters record Stewardship Plans and their associated planned and implemented activities and practices, one time, so as to streamline and improve their reporting capabilities.

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