

Promoting Sustainable Forestry: Project Profile

One of a series of projects being developed by the MFRC regional landscape committees to promote sustainable forestry in Minnesota.

Four Corners Opportunity Area East Central Regional Landscape Committee

Summary

The East Central Landscape (EC) Committee is working collaboratively with private landowners, local officials, and resource managers to increase awareness on sustainable forestry management practices and to increase the amount of land under sustainable forest management within the Four Corners project area.

East Central Landscape—Photo Courtesy of MFRC

Minnesota Forest Resources Council

The EC Committee is one of six regional committees supported by the Minnesota Forest Resources Council (MFRC), a state agency responsible for implementing the Minnesota Sustainable Forest Resources Act (SFRA) of 1995. The MFRC serves as the chief advisors to the Governor and Legislature on sustainable forestry matters in the state. For more information about the MFRC and the landscape program, please see the Council's website at www.frc.state.mn.us.



Project Overview

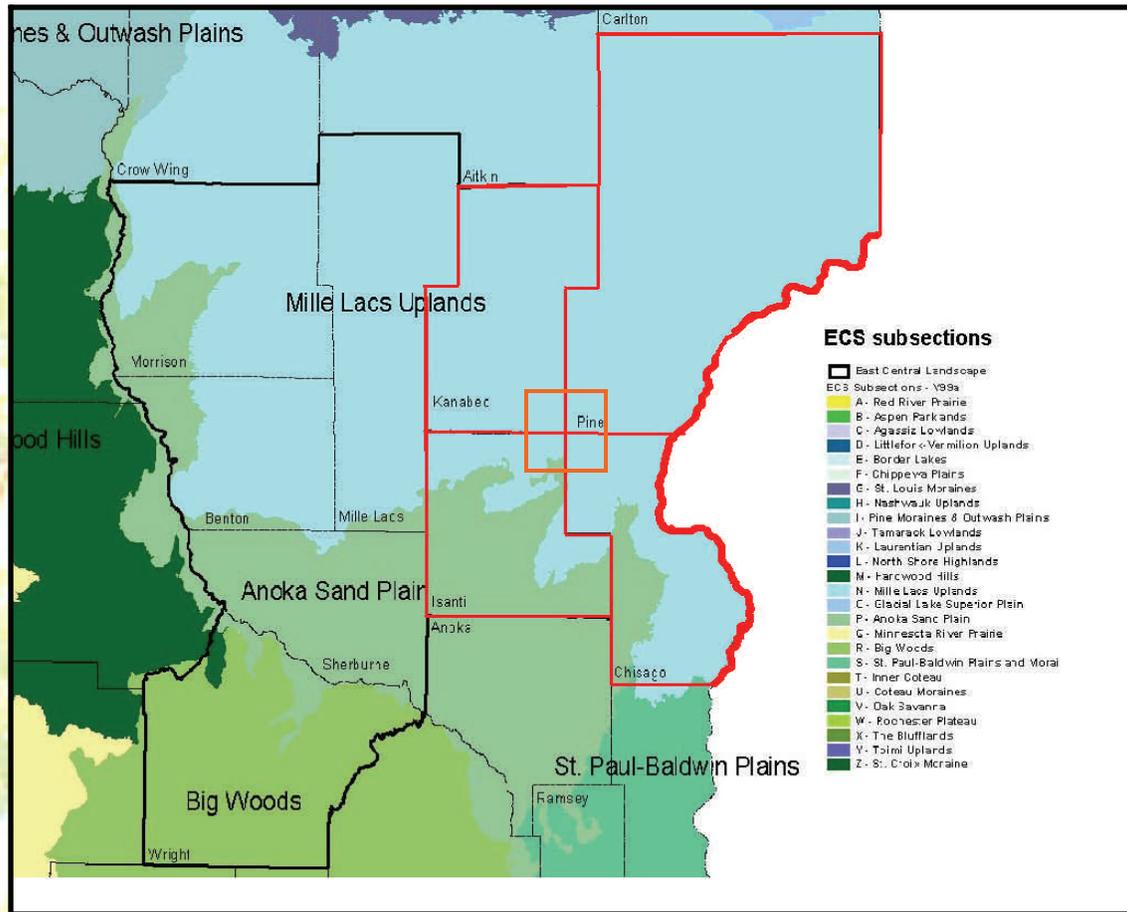
The Four Corners Pilot Forestry Project was developed by the MFRC's EC Committee to promote healthy forests, improve and protect water quality, and produce a full range of forest products, including recreation, in a sustainable manner. These goals and more are outlined in the East Central Landscape Plan. This project represents the Committee's first major effort to implement the East Central Landscape Plan on the ground.

Presently, forestry assistance and awareness in the Four Corners area is rather limited. The region is experiencing rapid parcelization, and the area's smaller sized parcels do not readily lend themselves to active forest management.

Forests provide tremendous benefits to landowners and communities. Thus, to ensure an equal share in those benefits, the EC Committee encourages all private landowners, foresters, loggers, citizens, community leaders and organizations to get involved in this pilot project.

In hopes to foster healthy, working relationships, the Four Corners Pilot Forestry Project seeks to promote cooperation and collaboration between as many local jurisdictions and landowners as possible. Thus far, the pilot project has worked with private landowners, local officials and agency staff to help increase the amount of land under sustainable forest management.

Ecological Subsection Map: Setting the Project Context



Deciding on an Opportunity Area for Implementation

The EC Committee decided that it needed to focus efforts in a specific geographic area within the 3.6 million acre landscape in order to initiate the implementation of the Plan. Committee members wanted a specific geopolitical area that would maximize the amount of connections with counties and townships in the nine-county region in the implementation of the East Central (EC) Landscape Plan.

The crossroads of the four northeastern counties (Kanabec, Pine, Isanti and Chisago and the four cornering townships) provided the greatest number of LGUs in a small defined area and was selected as the pilot project area. This intersection of four counties is the only such geopolitical condition in the EC region.

The EC Committee recognizes that new working relationships will need to be developed to successfully attain their goals of increase forestland cover and improving water quality. The pilot project area includes four townships in four counties:

- Grass Lake (Kanabec)
- Royalton (Pine)
- Nessel (Chisago)
- Stanchfield (Isanti)

Pilot Forestry Project: Goals and Results:

Goals

The EC Committee established the following four overall goals for the pilot project:

Goal 1. *Landowners.* Increase the awareness of and to stimulate interest by landowners to enhance forest resources on their properties in sustainable ways.

Goal 2. *Township and County Officials.* To increase the awareness by township and county officials of the importance of forest resources to local communities and landowners alike and to identify ways they can help support sustainable forestry resource management.

Goal 3. *Resource Managers.* To coordinate efforts by public and private resource managers in a collaborative manner in order to maximize the efficient delivery of professional services to landowners and local officials on sustainable forest management including the use, conservation, protection and restoration.

Goal 4. *Efficient and Effective Coordination and Implementation.* To secure the appropriate political, technical, financial and administrative resources necessary to successfully implement sustainable forest management throughout the pilot area. Through the pilot project it is intended that lessons learned can then be transferred to other portions of the four counties, the rest of the East Central landscape region as well as to other regions in the state.



Four Corners' Wildlife Workshop — Photo Courtesy of Barb Spears, TWF Consulting, LLC

Results

In order to fulfill these goals, then East Central Landscape Committee put on a series of events which brought together landowners, local officials, and resource managers. Below is a list of the events that took place:

- Four Corners Pilot Forestry Project Open House—Braham, Jan. 31
- Guide to Rural Living Workshops—Mora and North Branch, March 1 and March 8
- Wildlife Habitat Workshop for Landowners in East Central Region—Mora, April 5
- Cartwright Property Tour—Rush City, April 19

While the main focus of these events was on promoting sustainable forestry, participants also learned how forest health is directly linked with plant and wildlife health as well as water quality.



Four Corners Pilot Forestry Project Open House — Photo Courtesy of East Central Energy Staff

"This workshop has been very helpful for locating useful sources of information to us. Thank you!"



Four Corners' Wildlife Workshop — Photo Courtesy of Barb Spears, TWF Consulting, LLC

Making It Work: Partnerships and Collaboration

How can I get involved?

Whether you're an interested citizen, a city or township official, or a member of a lake association or other nonprofit organization, there are many ways to get involved. Remember, **you don't have to be a forester to be concerned about—and do something about—sustaining and managing our state's forests.**

Here are three initial steps for getting involved and learning more about the East Central Landscape Program and the Four Corners Pilot Forestry Project:

- **Review a copy of the East Central Landscape's Forest Resource Management Plan** to learn more about the value of landscape planning, as well as the specifics of the East Central Plan. Copies are available from the MFRC Web site at www.frc.state.mn.us

"Woodland, in addition to yielding lumber, fuel, and posts, should provide its owner a liberal education. This crop of wisdom never fails, but it is not always harvested."

- Aldo Leopold, *Sand County Almanac*

For more information, visit the following websites:

- MFRC: www.frc.state.mn.us
- DNR: www.dnr.state.mn.us
- MFA: www.mnforest.com

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 2003 Upper Buford Circle
 St. Paul, MN 55108

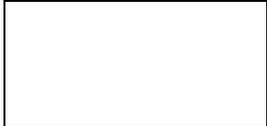
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