

Ontario Woodlot Association

Dedicated to the wise use of Ontario's private forests

Strategic Plan

2005 to 2010

Approved September 23, 2004

Ontario Woodlot Association

Strategic Plan 2005-2010

A. Purpose of the Plan

This Strategic Plan (the Plan) sets out the direction for the Association for the next 5 years, beginning January 2005. It clearly articulates the Association's Vision (our long-range goal), Mission (our core purpose), Guiding Principles (our values), and provides a strategic framework for action.

The Plan will guide the Association's activities as it works towards fulfilling its Mission. It is also intended to be a vehicle for ongoing dialogue with members, our partners, and the other parties interested in the goals of the Association.

The Plan will provide continuity from year to year, and will provide guidance to the Board and staff, in the development of the annual work plan. It is important to note that the Plan is not an operational plan, rather it describes actions in broad terms. It does not include detailed specifics (e.g., targets, responsibilities, and costs) relating to how the strategic framework outlined in this Plan will be achieved. This information will be included in the Association's annual work plan.

The Plan is an 'evergreen' document. To ensure it remains relevant to the changing times, and the changing needs of the Association and its members, it will be reviewed every five years. It is the responsibility of the Board to initiate the review, to seek input from the Chapters and members, to make the appropriate revisions, and to approve the Plan.

The next review is scheduled to take place in 2009, for implementation on January 1st, 2010.

B. Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles

Who Are We

The Ontario Woodlot Association (OWA) is a not-for-profit grassroots organization governed by an elected, volunteer board of directors. Our members own and manage woodlots throughout the province and include individuals and organizations that support our goals. We believe that private landowners have a key role to play to ensure that sustainably managed forests remain a part of Ontario's future.

Our Vision

Healthy and productive forests will always be part of Ontario's landscape. All Ontarians will recognize the importance of maintaining healthy and productive forests on private lands. Woodlot owners will be acknowledged and supported in their role as the caretakers of this valuable resource and natural heritage.

Our Mission

The OWA promotes the sustainable management¹ of Ontario's privately owned forest by providing our members with guidance and advice, and by representing their interests through a united provincial voice. We are working to ensure that Ontario's privately owned forest will always contribute to the health of our society, our environment and the economy.

¹ **Sustainable Forest Management** is management that maintains and enhances the long-term health of forest ecosystems for the benefit of all living things, while providing environmental, economic, social and cultural opportunities for present and future generations (*from Eastern Ontario Model Forest Phase III Action Plan*).

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Our Guiding Principles

- Membership is open to anyone who shares the Vision and supports the Mission and Goals of the OWA.
- Our Chapters play a key role in fulfilling the OWA's objectives, and we appreciate the efforts of our many volunteers.
- We recognize that each privately owned woodlot is part of a larger social, environmental and economic landscape and we seek balance in addressing these values.
- We uphold landowners' rights, under the law, and emphasize landowners' responsibilities.
- We believe that education and incentives are the principal, but not the exclusive, means of achieving the sustainability of privately owned forests.
- We communicate and often collaborate with those who take an interest in privately owned forests.
- We conduct ourselves in an ethical manner, ensuring that OWA partnerships, sources of revenue and other in-kind assistance do not compromise the Mission and Principles of our Association.

C. Strategic Direction

The purpose of this section of the Plan is to outline the Association's Goals and Objectives (including a strategic framework for action).

Our Goals

We will achieve our Vision and Mission by fulfilling the following goals:

1. Be the principal voice for private forest owners throughout Ontario and work actively to represent their interests before government, the public and the forest industry.
2. Be a key source of information about sustainable forest management and private land ownership, and educate OWA members about all aspects of owning and managing forested land.
3. Expand awareness of the importance of sustainable forest management beyond our membership.
4. Monitor and respond to issues that affect privately owned forests.
5. Facilitate and influence changes to government policy (e.g., the tax system) to ensure that it is economically viable to own and manage private woodlots and forests.
6. Increase OWA membership and the number of Chapters; also encourage and support Chapter activities.
7. Increase and diversify the OWA's sources of revenue.

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Our Objectives and a Framework for Action

This section of the Plan describes six key objectives, and for each objective, articulates a framework for action (strategies and key actions).

Objective #1: To increase the profile and awareness of the Association within the government and relevant ministries.

This objective directs the Association to develop an ongoing dialogue with the Ontario government, and its relevant ministries, in an effort to raise our profile as an organization that represents woodlot owners. Building support and enhancing our credibility as an effective contributor in the development of relevant government policy and programs is important in order for the Association to achieve its stated goals.

This objective will contribute to the following goal(s) outlined in this Plan – primarily goal(s) #1, #5 and secondarily goal(s) #2.

Framework for Action

1.1 Initiate and maintain communications with key provincial members of parliament and government personnel whose portfolios affect the management and ownership of private forests (primarily the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Agriculture and Food).

Key Actions:

- Develop and maintain a contact list of key ministers and their liaison staff, government opposition critics, and key government personal.
- Communicate and meet regularly with elected officials and key government personnel (regional and provincial).
- Provide executive summaries of position papers to relevant elected officials and key government personnel.
- Encourage Chapters, with support from the provincial body, to meet with local MPPs to discuss issues, government policy, new legislation, etc.
- Encourage Chapters to communicate with local municipalities to establish a local presence.
- Encourage Chapters to maintain an open line of communication with those government initiatives with similar goals serving within their community (e.g., Ontario Stewardship).

Objective #2: To participate proactively in the development of legislation, policy and programs affecting the ownership and management of private forests.

This objective directs the Association to take an active role in the development of new legislation, policy and programs affecting the ownership and management of private forests. The Association must effectively communicate our interests and position to the government, non-government organizations (NGO's), and the general public.

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This objective will contribute to the following goal(s) outlined in this Plan – primarily goal(s) #1, #4, #5 and secondarily goal(s) #3.

Framework for Action

2.1 Participate in the review and development of provincial legislation, policy, and programs that may affect the ownership and management of private forests.

Key actions:

- Develop a system and regularly monitor legislative and policy development and current issues relevant to private forest owners.
- Communicate to the relevant ministries that the Association is interested in providing input in the review or development of legislation, policy, and programs (e.g., place on mailing list and advise when new initiatives are undertaken).
- Participate and contribute to the public consultation process for new legislation, policy, and program initiatives.

2.2 Prepare position papers and media briefings on key matters affecting the management and the ownership of private forests.

Key actions:

- Establish a steering committee to review and prepare position papers.
- When appropriate, distribute position papers and media releases.

2.3 Strengthen and develop alliances to promote the interests of the Association.

- Seek out and network with other organizations to exchange information.
- Develop, promote and support new alliances with organizations with compatible goals.

2.4 Serve on provincial and national committees concerning the development and implementation of forest programs.

Key actions:

- The Association will seek out new opportunities to serve on provincial and national committees.
- The Association will continue its commitment to serve on national and provincial steering committees working on sustainable forestry initiatives (e.g., forest certification, tree conservation bylaws, Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program, etc.).

2.5 The Association will utilize the Canadian Federation of Woodlot Owners (Federation) as the lead to facilitate change in federal legislation, policy and program development, and to bring national issues to the forefront of the government and public.

Key actions:

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- Retain membership in the Federation.
- Through participation the Association will support and provide input into the Federation's programs and initiatives.

Objective #3: To develop and facilitate the transfer and exchange of resource information to woodlot owners.

This objective provides direction for the Association to participate in the development and dissemination of resource management information to woodlot owners (members and non-members) across Ontario.

This objective will contribute to the following goal(s) outlined in this Plan – primarily goal(s) #2 and #3.

Framework for Action

3.1 Maintain the Association's web site(s) as a relevant source of information.

Key actions:

- Continually upgrade the web site(s) and provide for regular quarterly updates (e.g. events, issues, resource information, listings of landowner services, etc.).
- Develop a 'forum' and/or 'bulletin board' feature for the web site.

3.2 Maintain the integrity of the Association's newsletter as a tool to transfer resource information to members.

Key actions:

- Maintain a high component (e.g. 70%) of the newsletter's content as 'landowner friendly' technical information versus news.
- Cap the advertisement space at approximately 15-20%.

3.3 Ensure the Association's *Private Land Code of Forestry Practice* remains relevant and is readily available for distribution.

Key actions:

- Undertake a review of the code to ensure its relevancy.
- Proactively distribute the code to woodlot owners across Ontario.

Objective #4: To promote and increase public awareness of the Association as an advocate of sustainable management of private forests.

This objective mandates the Association to undertake activities that will work towards raising its profile as an advocate of sustainable forest management (e.g., among the general public, NGO's, woodlot owners).

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This objective will contribute to the following goal(s) outlined in this Plan – primarily goal(s) #1, #2 and secondarily goal(s) #3.

Framework for Action

4.1 The Association will seek opportunities to speak at regional, provincial, and national events.

Key actions:

- Develop a 'ready to go' presentation that articulates the Association's Vision, Mission, Principles and Goals.
- Encourage and support Chapters to seek opportunities to make presentations within their communities (e.g. Rotary Club, local field naturalists, etc.).

4.2 The Association will reach out to woodlot owners by participating in public events.

Key actions:

- The Association will participate in strategically located woodlot conferences and related events across Ontario.
- Encourage and support Chapters to participate in local events.

4.3 Utilize the media as a means to communicate the Association's messages.

Key actions:

- Issue press releases regarding Association business (e.g., events, products) and respond strategically to public issues.
- Invite media to attend Association events.
- Encourage and support Chapters to prepare press releases and invite media to attend local Chapter events.

Objective #5: To seek and develop opportunities to grow the Association.

This objective allows the Association to investigate and develop means to grow the organization. Growth can take several forms including an increase in membership numbers, an increase in the number of chapters, and growth of membership benefits (or programs). This objective encompasses all three.

This objective will contribute to following goal(s) outlined in this Plan – primarily goal(s) #6 and secondarily goal(s) #7.

Framework for Action

5.1 Increase the membership of the Association.

Key actions:

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- Establish a membership committee (e.g. sub committee reporting to the Board).
- Develop a marketing plan on 'how best' to promote the Association to prospective members.

5.2 Develop new chapters in areas of the province where the Association is not represented.

Key actions:

- Develop a presentation and material outlining the advantages of creating (or joining) as a chapter of the Association.
- Approach the independent woodlot associations in Ontario to join as a Chapter of the Association.

5.3 Survey the membership to assess their needs and to evaluate OWA's progress in meeting these objectives.

Key actions:

- Develop and undertake a survey of the members to determine their wants and needs and to monitor how the Association is doing.
- Discuss with the Chapters what tools are needed and establish priorities for product development.

5.4 Foster a stronger relationship between Chapters and the provincial body of the Association.

Key actions:

- On an annual basis, the Executive Director and/or a provincially elected Board member will visit with each Chapter.
- The Association will develop a workshop for Chapter representatives to meet and exchange information. The event will be held on a bi-annual basis and co-hosted with a local Chapter.

Objective #6: To increase the Association's revenues through membership, program development, sponsorship and fundraising.

This objective mandates the Association to undertake several new initiatives that will generate additional revenues. It recognizes the need for the Association to continue to build a well-diversified financial base to support its activities.

This objective will contribute to the following goal(s) outlined in this Plan – primarily goal(s) #7 and secondarily goal(s) #2, #3 and #6.

Framework for Action

6.1 Review of membership fees.

Key actions:

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- On a periodic basis, membership fees will be reviewed to ensure they adequately reflect the cost and value of the services the Association provides to its members.
- Chapters and members will be solicited for their input (e.g., AG meeting) as part of any review.

6.2 Increase revenues generated from the Forest Services Directory.

Key actions:

- Develop a business plan to investigate means of increasing revenues from the service directory (e.g., commercial banner advertisements, a section for equipment suppliers, a classified advertisement page, etc.).
- The Chapters will be encouraged to work with the Association to enlist local forest service providers for the service directory.

6.3 Develop the annual general meeting into a fund raising event.

Key actions:

- Develop a business plan to investigate means of increasing revenues from the Association's AG meeting (e.g., exhibitor's fees, sponsorships, silent auction, etc.).

6.4 Investigate opportunities to develop new partnerships for the delivery of programs and/or services to woodlot owners.

Key actions:

- Identify potential services and/or programs to be delivered.
- Identify potential funding partners (e.g., government, NGO's, etc.).
- Identify how the delivery of the services and/or programs will achieve the goals of the Association and its partners.