

## Michigan's State Forest Management Strategy

For several years, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has dedicated resources toward drafting of regional-based management plans using principles of ecosystem management. The recent certification of State Forest lands has had some impact upon the content and structure of these plans and has also provided an impetus to move this planning process forward. The original concept of a multi-ownership ecoregional management plan remains a priority of the DNR. However, for purposes of forest certification there is an immediate need to complete more focused state and regional plans that provide a landscape-level perspective of our State Forest resources. The following discussion provides more detailed information on the DNR's planning process for the management of the State Forest.

### What kinds of plans does the DNR use for management of the State Forest?

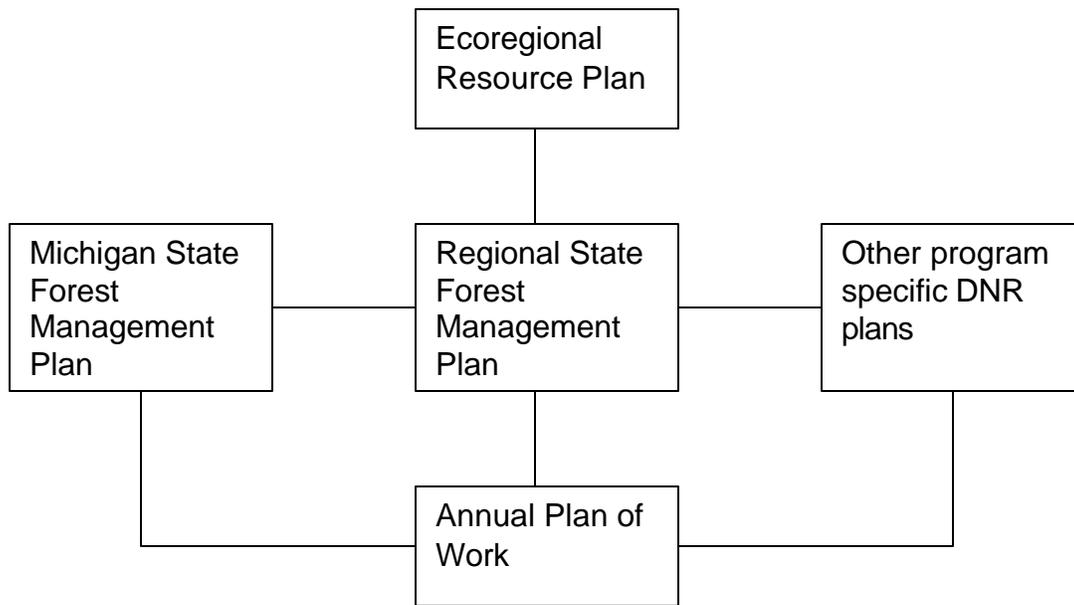
The DNR uses a 3-tiered planning structure for the management of Michigan's State Forest resources: statewide, regional and unit levels. The [Michigan State Forest Management Plan](#) and the four [Regional State Forest Management Plans](#) are operational plans that provide landscape-level analyses and direction to enable tactical decisions for management of forest stands and compartments at the unit level. The aggregate of all forest prescriptions from compartment reviews are contained in the [Annual Plan of Work](#), which represents the tactical level of planning for State Forest operations.

The DNR is also developing strategic plans that will address all ownerships in a region (including all DNR lands – forests, parks and wildlife areas, other public plans, and private lands), which will be known as [Ecoregional Resource Plans](#) (ERP). ERPs will provide strategic goals and objectives that will inform Regional State Forest Management Plans.

The DNR has many other plans that are related to specific program areas, including the Michigan's Wildlife Action Plan, the Michigan Off-Road Vehicle Plan, the Michigan State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, or Natural River plans.

### What is the relationship between these different types of plans?

The relationship of the various types of DNR plans is shown in the diagram below. The Michigan State Forest Management Plan and Regional State Forest Management Plans (RSFMPs) are companion documents that also provide direct linkage to the other programmatic DNR plans. The SFMP contains goals and objectives for all resources uses and values that apply to all State Forest lands throughout the State. The RSFMP's are structured using a concept of distinct [Management Areas](#) (MAs) as a framework for describing the history, current conditions and trends, and specific management direction for vegetative management and other uses within the MA. Plan sections on special resource areas (Special Conservation Areas, High Conservation Value Areas, and Ecological Reference Areas) will address management direction for other uses and values (recreation, etc.) for more focused areas of the State Forest. Management prescriptions that are contained in the Annual Plan of Work are based upon the aforementioned plans.



**How are these plans related to other DNR initiatives, such as the Natural Area Program or the Biodiversity Conservation Planning Process?**

The Michigan State Forest Management Plan and each Regional State Forest Management Plan will contain a section on special resource areas (Special Conservation Areas, High Conservation Value Areas, and Ecological Reference Areas) that address management direction for other uses and values (biodiversity, recreation, etc.) of the State Forest. Dedicated Natural Areas and Biodiversity Stewardship Areas are a type of High Conservation Value Area. Proposed or nominated Natural Areas are a type of Special Conservation Area. More information about the Biodiversity Conservation Planning Process may be found at: [http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-30301\\_30505\\_33935--00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-30301_30505_33935--00.html).

**Who is developing these plans and how can the public participate?**

Program staffs in Lansing are developing the Michigan State Forest Management Plan in consultation with the public and stakeholder organizations that occurred in 2006. Ecoregional Teams (ecoteams) are developing Regional State Forest Management Plans in consultation with the public and regional stakeholder organizations, and will use forums such as stakeholder focus groups and internet-based programs for public participation and review. All ecoteams will use a [collaborative public process](#) for development of their ERPs in the form of Regional Advisory Teams, which are to be comprised of regional stakeholder organizations.

**When will these plans be completed?**

Completion of the Michigan State Forest Management Plan is targeted toward the end of 2007. Completion of Regional State Forest Management Plans will be the immediate focus of the Northern Lower Peninsula and the Eastern and Western Upper Peninsula (NLP, EUP and WUP) ecoteams. The NLP ecoteam will assist the Southern Lower Peninsula (SLP) ecoteam in drafting a management plan for the limited State Forest lands located in the SLP ecoregion. The goal for completion of these plans is by the end of 2008.

Completion of an ERP is the immediate focus of the SLP ecoteam. It is anticipated that the SLP ecoteam will complete this plan in 2009, with the northern ecoteams to follow in 2010.

## **Glossary of Terms**

**Annual Plan of Work** – The compilation of all planned forest prescriptions for any given year, as determined by the compartment review process.

**Collaborative Public Process** – A means of public participation in which the DNR partners with the public (in the form of citizen advisory committees) in a cooperative manner to seek alternatives and solutions with broad support for management of public lands. The advice and recommendations of the advisory committee will be incorporated into DNR decisions to the maximum extent possible.

**Ecoregional Resource Plan** – Strategic plans that have a scope of all ownerships within an ecoregion, which are developed in collaboration with regional stakeholder groups working together as Regional Advisory Teams. Each of the four DNR ecoteams in the State will complete one of these plans for their ecoregion.

**Ecoregional Team (Ecoteam)** – A multi-disciplinary, regional-based management team comprised of field staff from all DNR divisions. There are four ecoteams, one each for the Southern Lower Peninsula, the Northern Lower Peninsula, the Eastern Upper Peninsula, and the West Upper Peninsula.

**Management Area** – Groupings of State Forest compartments (1,500 to 3,000 acres blocks of DNR lands) that have similar attributes, such as landform, vegetation types, or proximity to key user markets. MAs are the framework for operational planning and direction for the management of the State Forest.

**Michigan State Forest Management Plan (SFMP)** – A statewide operational plan with a scope that is limited to State Forest lands. Development of this plan began in 2006. The SFMP is a companion document to Regional State Forest Management Plans, providing statewide goals and objectives for all use and values of the State Forest.

**Regional State Forest Management Plan** – Regional-based operational plans with a scope that is limited to State Forest Lands. Each of the four DNR ecoteams in the State will complete one of these plans for the State Forest lands within their ecoregion. These plans implement the concept of management areas as a framework to implement strategic goals and objectives that are contained in Ecoregional Resource Plans.