

Northwoods Forestry Cooperative Offers Responsible Forest Management Opportunities

CASE STUDY: CERTIFICATION IN MINNESOTA

Formed in 2001, the Northwoods Forestry Cooperative (NFC) is located in North Central Minnesota. With about 25 members owning a total of about 3,000 acres of forestland, the co-op's mission is to promote sound woodland management and to assist members in wood products marketing.

“With members helping members, there’s a lot we can do,” says NFC member, Gary Bradford. Gary and his family have hosted workshops and field days on their property to demonstrate forest management practices and the use of small equipment for harvesting on small properties.

The 2004, the co-op created The Sawmill Partnership Group. One of the objectives of the partnership was to reduce the financial risk of owning, maintaining, and operating wood processing equipment.

Composed of NFC members, the Partnership purchased a Peterson Swingblade Portable Sawmill for member milling and value-added operations.



Field days and workshops are important opportunities for landowners to learn about forest management.

Several NFC Co-op members also have their forestland certified as meeting the standards of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). To reduce the costs and record keeping responsibility of certification for each landowner, the landowners are able to have their land certified through the services of an FSC-Certified Resource Manager.

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Peter Bundy, an FSC-Certified Resource Manager and owner of Masconomo Forestry, offers forest management services for co-op members.

The NFC has offered members many opportunities to learn more about responsible forest management. Many of the members have had negative experiences with logging in the past and find the co-op a helpful resource for making sure their next harvest gets done right. Many of the members are interested in the use of smaller, reduced-impact harvesting equipment.

The co-op is interesting in continuing to provide an example of responsible forest management on family forestland in Northern Minnesota. In its efforts to work with a number of partners including environmental learning centers, public land managers, non-profit organizations, and educators, the co-op is able to network with a wide range of resources and information.

In addition, the cooperative has explored other environmental options, such as a solar kiln that it hopes to construct in the future. These kinds of progressive ideas offer additional alternative opportunities for members of the co-op to embrace ecological practices.

The co-op also networks with other landowner groups in the region and other certified land managers. By working together, improving education, and examining resource management possibilities, there's a lot that can be accomplished.

For more information about the Northwoods Forestry Cooperative, please contact: Gary Bradford, 218-927-4599, nfc_coop@hotmail.com

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