



Northwest  
Natural Resource  
Group

2018-2020

STRATEGIC PLAN



## Mission

We strengthen the ecological and economic vitality of Northwest forests and communities by connecting people with the knowledge, skills, and markets they need to steward their land.

## Long-Range Goal

The majority of non-industrial forestland in Washington and Oregon is managed to Forest Stewardship Council standards or higher.

Natural landscapes teach us that change is the only constant. As NNRG's board and staff gathered last fall to begin crafting this strategic plan, the organization had a new executive director who'd been in office less than five months. While timber issues garnered a significant share of the region's headlines during NNRG's first decade, forests no longer loomed so large on the Northwest's political agenda.

But, like the enduring physical laws and ecological principles that govern the biosphere, some things haven't changed. Forests are still crucial to the quality of municipal water supplies, wildlife habitat, and carbon storage. Similarly, our commitment to helping forest owners practice good stewardship remains as strong as ever.

With those considerations in mind, we began our planning process by asking questions such as:

- What will attract new landowners to the practice of ecological forestry?
- What do our various audiences need to know about ecological forestry and NNRG?
- Is there a forest in our region "longing" to become part of NNRG's endowment?

This plan is our navigational chart for the next three years. It lays out the five targets we have chosen, the specific strategies we will pursue, and the metrics by which we'll hold ourselves accountable. The NNRG board and staff are very excited about the completion of this plan, and we invite you to join us on our journey to benefit Northwest forests and communities for generations to come.

Christine Johnson  
Board chair

Seth Zuckerman  
Executive director

# Target 1

## Consolidate NNRG's role as the leading provider of ecological forestry services in western Washington.

NNRG has grown its capacity to help landowners practice ecological forestry on their lands—teaching workshops, writing management plans, and overseeing harvest operations. We have forged relationships with NGOs and local government partners who promote our offerings.

Even so, many potential clients are unaware of our work and don't realize the potential productivity of ecological forestry. When we reach new audiences, we find deep veins of untapped demand for our services.



# STRATEGIES

## **Establish at least one demonstration forest managed to FSC standards within a 2-hour drive of Seattle or Portland.**

We'll use interpretive materials and tours to educate landowners, policy makers, and partners about the economic and ecological outcomes that this approach to forestry can accomplish. We'll also collect and analyze data about harvests and forest growth.

## **Partner with proven loggers and foresters beyond NNRG's own staff.**

We'll bring into our network other service providers with a track record of high-quality, light-touch forest management to speak at our panels and workshops, exchange data, and help meet the demand for ecological forest management.

## **Host a conference to spread the word about the benefits of ecological forestry.**

We'll organize a regional conference on forestry, carbon and climate, and collaborate on publishing the presentations given there.

## **What does success look like?**

- At least one demonstration forest is available for docent-led tours, with interpretive materials to describe the management strategies and results.
- NNRG has built a network of kindred forestry professionals in Washington and Oregon who share information with us and the landowners with whom we work, and who help meet the need for forest consulting services.
- A conference has been held, attracting at least 75 participants, and at least three journal articles have been published.



A habitat pile for wildlife built by an NNRG member in Olympia, WA.

# Target 2

## Demonstrate and enhance the value of Forest Stewardship Council certification for landowners in Oregon and Washington.

Although Forest Stewardship Council certification was established more than twenty years ago, it has yet to make significant inroads into the Pacific Northwest marketplace. Participants in NNRG's 190,000-acre group certificate harvest 4 to 10 million board-feet annually, but on average, only 11 percent of those logs are sold as certified. In partnership with other groups in the regional ecosystem of certified wood, NNRG will address obstacles to greater market recognition of the benefits that stem from the practice of ecological forestry.



# STRATEGIES

**Co-author a peer-reviewed paper on the financial results of ecological forest management.** Many landowners believe that ecological forestry would require them to forgo a disproportionate share of their potential returns. Our research will test that assumption by compiling data from dozens of harvests that meet FSC standards.

**Publicize the locations and sizes of FSC-certified log suppliers in the Pacific Northwest.** Highlighting the sources of supply—whether certified through NNRG or independently—will make it easier for potential customers to access them.

**Collaborate with regional partners to dismantle obstacles to the growth of the FSC wood market.** We'll describe barriers to FSC wood markets, identify the leverage points to support its growth, and work with FSC-US to implement the solutions we identify.

**Conduct a feasibility study of FSC log producers forming a sort yard, or log or lumber co-op, or jointly filling an order for FSC logs.** An intermediary dedicated to certified log supply can make it easier for producers and customers to deal with the episodic nature of certified wood supply and demand.

**Approach western Washington mills and persuade at least one more of them to become certified** based on the opportunity they perceive in FSC. The more mills that purchase FSC logs, the more likely FSC logs are to be sold as certified, and the less expensive it will be to haul logs to a certified mill.

## What does success look like?

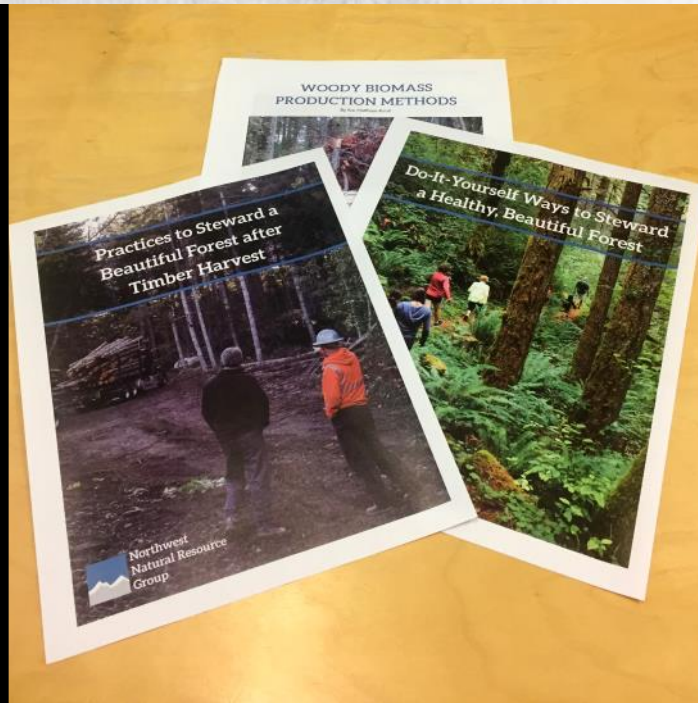
- At least 22 percent of timber harvested from NNRG's group certificate is sold as certified — twice the current average.
- At least one new institutional builder and one new developer have specified FSC wood as a result of our partnership's efforts.
- At least one new mill in western Washington is FSC-certified for chain of custody.
- Our research on the economics of forest thinning enters the regional conversation about forestry through at least 4 mentions in major media outlets (metropolitan newspaper, public radio, TV, web news sites, magazines).



# Target 3

## Create and implement a plan for outreach and education.

To accomplish our mission, we need to spread the word about ecological forestry to prospective landowner clients, to wood buyers and sellers, and to the general public. Each of those audiences will be captivated by different aspects of our story. We need to pay systematic attention to the way each of those audiences is touched by our narrative.





# STRATEGIES

## **Identify the specific groups we want to reach.**

Landowner possibilities include youth camps, land trusts, other NGOs, large family forest landholdings, municipal land managers, native tribes, and small family forest owners. Others include green builders, K-12 school programs, and environmental NGOs.

## **Develop and implement an outreach and education strategy customized for each audience.**

We'll create customized materials to reach each of those audiences over the next three years so that forest owners, loggers, school children and others each learn what they need to know about ecological forestry.

## **Create dedicated outreach tools for wood buyers and sellers.**

We'll develop and disseminate materials—in print, online, and at point of sale—that tell the story of ecological forestry.

## **What does success look like?**

- We have created digital and printed outreach materials specific to the needs of at least five clearly described sectors of potential clients, certified forest owners and the broader public.
- By tracking the viewing and downloading of digital materials, we have ascertained a growth of 30 percent in our online engagement with web, newsletter, and social media contacts.
- We have tracked 12 transactions—wood purchases, log sales, or new certifications—with people who had previously encountered our sector-specific materials.



# Target 4

## Increase client recruitment and retention in western Washington.

Among the non-industrial forest owners whom NNRG serves, our work generates the greatest benefits in these three circumstances: when once-neglected forests come under active stewardship; when well-managed forests are located near one another, generating landscape-scale effects from good management; and when landowners build a long-term relationship with the forester who guides their practice. As we connect with landowners, we will place our greatest emphasis on forests that fall into at least one of those three categories.



# STRATEGIES

## **Catalyze more connections among practitioners of ecological forestry.**

We'll create tools to connect practitioners with one another, such as an online directory, a forest-owner forum, and tours where practitioners can showcase their forestry projects and solicit others' ideas on the conundrums they face.

## **Designate and recognize leaders in forest stewardship.**

We will identify forest owners and service providers who exemplify the practice of ecological forestry and enlist them to reach new audiences, including the recruitment of new certifiable forests.

## **Choose a watershed, identify the passive forest owners there, and encourage them to become active stewards.**

We'll use a variety of means to connect with landowners about the benefits of active forest management for habitat, climate resilience, fire safety and other considerations.

## **Create online tools to reach prospective clients.**

We'll develop digital entry points for landowners to explore the potential benefits of ecological forestry and our services in particular, such as online videos and questionnaires.

## **What does success look like?**

- We have developed new working relationships—certification, planning, or harvest management—with 15 forest owners through events hosted by existing members.
- Of the forest owners in our chosen watershed who were passive managers, 30 percent have adopted an active ecological management approach.
- We have established new working relationships with 20 forest owners through the use of online tools.



# Target 5

## Diversify NNRG's sources of revenue.

The Pacific Northwest's working forests will always need thoughtful, long-term management, regardless of the ebb and flow of institutional support for NNRG. To make sure we can help landowners steward well and can

enable citizens to understand ecological forestry, NNRG aims to build a secure financial base for our work. We will cultivate a wide variety of income streams, marked by an increased reliance on program service revenue.



# STRATEGIES

## **Enroll new landowner clients with large holdings.**

Larger forests (several hundred acres or more) tend to bring with them a year-in, year-out need for forestry services, which will contribute to NNRG's stable baseline income.

## **Build an estate planning and working forest endowment program.**

Some forestland owners cannot rely upon family heirs to continue their stewardship legacy. We will offer forest owners a variety of ways to engage NNRG in the long-term care of their land to achieve both ecological and financial goals.

## **Create a development plan to build our base of charitable support.**

We'll use new approaches, including sponsorships of our public events and newsletters, and actively solicit gifts from individuals and businesses.


## **Build the organizational capacity to support the goals of this plan.**

We will increase our in-house capabilities in GIS, data management, and financial tracking to ensure we can accomplish the objectives we've laid out.

## **What does success look like?**

- NNRG has gained at least five new management clients of at least 640 acres each.
- NNRG has obtained an ownership interest in, or long-term management contract for, at least one forest parcel.
- NNRG has tripled its private individual and corporate donations over 2017 levels.
- NNRG has increased its revenues in each of the three years of this plan, and increased the share made up of earned income to 67 percent.





This plan was created and produced by NNRG's board and staff.

Board of directors: Eden Brukman (vice-chair), John Harrison, Ben Hayes, Brad Hunter (treasurer), Christine Johnson (chair), Sue Long, Marco Lowenstein (past chair), Norm MacLeod, and Ryan Temple.

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April 2018 | Photography by Matt Freeman-Gleason

Except: these photos taken by NNRG: habitat pile on page 5; brochures on page 8; tree measurement on page 10; nest box on page 11; hand holding tree cores on page 12.