

2022-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN



**NORTHWEST NATURAL
RESOURCE GROUP**
LEADERS IN ECOLOGICAL FORESTRY

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.

INTRODUCTION

When we began creating the plan that will guide NNRG from 2022 to 2024, Covid-19 vaccination had just opened to the general public, and we glowed with the anticipation that in-person gatherings would soon become routine. Instead, in light of the Delta variant, we re-adjusted to work together by phone and video chat. Now, as we publish this framework in early 2022, we are preparing for our first in-person board-staff meeting in 27 months.

The last two pandemic years have called upon wellsprings of adaptability that will soon be needed for Northwest forests as well. As the climate shifts toward warmer, drier summers and less mid-elevation snow, forest stewards will need to be alert to predicted and unforeseen changes alike, and be nimble on our feet to respond. This plan reflects those ideas, with climate adaptation a consideration in two of our main targets.

In other ways, too, we have built adaptively on our 2018-2021 plan, to amplify what is working and test new strategies that round out our toolkit. The plan that follows lays out five targets for the coming years and the pathways we will follow to achieve them. The NNRG board and staff invite you to join us on this 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 a leader in ecological forestry in Oregon and Washington

NNRG helps 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

1. Improve and innovate NNRG's application of ecological forestry.

We'll build on our experience to further refine our practices of logging, forest restoration, and forest planning.

What success looks like:

- ☐ Through post-harvest surveys, we have ascertained a greater than 90 percent satisfaction level from clients.
- ☐ We have improved our forestry practices, and there is 95% staff satisfaction with availability and adoption of new practices and technologies (e.g., drones, GIS, inventory, log accounting, logging equipment systems, software, etc.).

2. Research and document the economics, application, and co-benefits of ecological forestry.

We'll create and publish resources such as videos, pamphlets, and guidebooks to help forest stewards understand the unique benefits of thinning and other ecological forestry practices

What success looks like:

- ☐ We have published an academic paper, video, and pamphlet on the economic potential of forest thinning.



TARGET 1

Consolidate NNRG's role as a leader in ecological forestry in Oregon and Washington

3. Partner with loggers and foresters to implement ecological forestry, and work to develop their capacity.

We'll bring into our network other service providers with a track record of high-quality, light-touch forest management and seek solutions to improve their economic viability and ability to continue providing these services.

What success looks like:

- ☐ NNRG has built a network of at least 15 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.
- ☐ NNRG has an internal list of at least 10 logging contractors and three tree-stand improvement / stewardship contractors in Washington willing and able to complete a wide range of ecological forestry practices.

4. Lead the way in climate adaptation for Northwest forestry.

We'll create and publish resources such as videos and guidebooks to help forest stewards adapt their practices to be more resilient in the face of accelerating climate change.

What success looks like:

- ☐ Our climate adaptation materials have been accessed by at least 2,000 unique users, leading to at least 5,000 downloads and video views combined from the "resources" tab on our website.



TARGET 1

Consolidate NNRG's role as a leader in ecological forestry in Oregon and Washington

5. Develop educational resources and outreach for demonstration forests 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.

What success looks like:

- ☐ At least one demonstration forest is available for docent-led tours, with interpretive materials to describe the management strategies and results. At least 200 visitors have experienced the two demonstration forests.



TARGET 2

Demonstrate to landowners the value of managing to Forest Stewardship Council® standards or higher

Although FSC® certification was established more than 25 years ago, it has yet to make significant inroads into the Pacific Northwest marketplace. Participants in NNRG's 198,000-acre certificate harvest 6 to 10 million board-feet annually, but on average only 8 percent of those logs are sold as certified, making it hard to realize an economic benefit from certification. In partnership with other groups in the regional forest products ecosystem, NNRG will seek greater market recognition for the practice of ecological forestry, both within FSC and beyond.

STRATEGIES

1. 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. We will publish the research we have conducted, which dispelled that assumption by compiling data from dozens of harvests that meet FSC standards.

What success looks like:

- ☐ 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).

2. Publicize the locations and sizes of FSC-certified forests in the Pacific Northwest.

Increasing transparency by mapping FSC-certified forests will highlight sources of supply and help the public to understand the distribution and scale of FSC-certified forests.

What success looks like:

- ☐ The boundaries of at least two-thirds of FSC-certified forests in Oregon and Washington are available for display on a public digital map.



TARGET 2

Demonstrate to landowners the value of managing to Forest Stewardship Council® standards or higher

3. Increase FSC® market opportunities for members of NNRG's group certificate.

By promoting existing and future market opportunities for FSC logs and pulp to NNRG's group certificate members, we can increase the proportion of their logs that are sold as FSC. We will work to expand existing relationships with FSC log and pulp buyers, and identify potential partners who are interested in purchasing FSC wood products in the Pacific Northwest.

What success looks like:

- ☐ At least 15 percent of timber harvested from NNRG's group certificate is sold as FSC-certified — nearly twice the current average.
- ☐ NNRG has identified two new strategic partners in our region who purchase or are willing to purchase FSC logs and two new partners who purchase secondary FSC products (paper, lumber etc.) and distribute them into the Seattle or Portland markets.
- ☐ At least one new institutional builder and one new developer have specified FSC wood thanks to the efforts of NNRG and its partners.

4. Explore opportunities for collaboration with other sustainability designations.

NNRG's management practices may align well with Local, Fair Trade, Salmon Safe, Carbon Neutral, Climate-Smart, and other designations. These designations have the potential to increase the market value of their timber.

What success looks like:

- ☐ We understand the opportunities for collaboration with other sustainability certifications/designations.



TARGET 3

Increase outreach to raise awareness of the benefits of ecological forestry among forest owners, wood buyers, and forest enthusiasts

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. We need to pay systematic attention to the way each of those audiences is touched by our narrative.

STRATEGIES

1. Produce a trade paperback book on ecological forestry.

We'll author a book that articulates the full spectrum of ecological forest management principles and practices. The book will serve as a how-to guide for forest owners and managers as well as a field guide to Pacific Northwest forests for the general public.

What success looks like:

- ☐ NNRG staff have written a book communicating the value, practice, and intricacies of ecological forestry for non-industrial forest owners and forest enthusiasts. The book has been published and sold at least 6,000 copies.
- ☐ We have produced a workshop and video series tied to the book's table of contents.
- ☐ At least 5 educators are using the book in academic courses (high school, undergraduate, graduate).



TARGET 3

Increase outreach to raise awareness of the benefits of ecological forestry among forest owners, wood buyers, and forest enthusiasts

2. Make the case to wood buyers for sourcing materials from well-managed forests.

We'll develop and disseminate materials—in print, online, and at point of sale—that tell the story of ecological forestry and explain why wood from responsibly-managed sources is preferable.

What success looks like:

- ☐ We've developed outreach materials (explaining benefits of responsibly-sourced wood) that wood buyers see at the point-of-sale.

3. Increase the number of people who have heard about ecological forestry, understand what it entails, and prefer it to conventional forestry practices.

Ecological forestry strategies enable landowners to manage their forests for multiple benefits, from boosting the structural complexity that provides good habitat to improving tree growth by removing suppressed trees that are choking the understory.

What success looks like:

- ☐ 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 over the next three years.



TARGET 3

Increase outreach to raise awareness of the benefits of ecological forestry among forest owners, wood buyers, and forest enthusiasts

4. Showcase ecological forestry as a climate solution.

We will explore, evaluate, and explain the role ecological forestry can play in increasing carbon sequestration and reducing the embodied carbon of new construction, thereby mitigating the drivers of climate change. Additionally, we'll highlight and publicize the value of ecological forestry techniques in promoting climate adaptation and resiliency.

What success looks like:

- ☐ Our work on ecological forestry and climate adaptation has entered the regional and professional conversation about forestry, climate change, and the built environment. Our work has garnered at least 2 mentions in local major media outlets and 2 appearances at forums not produced by NNRG.

5. Partner with educators to bring ecological forestry education to K-12 and post-secondary students.

We'll cultivate relationships with educators at all levels, and showcase the benefits of ecological forestry to the next generation of foresters and forest stewards.

What success looks like:

- ☐ NNRG has partnered with 2 educators to incorporate ecological forestry education into their curriculum.
- ☐ NNRG has presented on ecological forestry topics at two or more conferences or symposiums with an academic audience.



TARGET 4

Increase the number of forest practitioners using ecological forestry techniques in Western Washington

It takes more than broad outreach to shift the management of forests in an ecological direction. Fostering changes in behavior will require a symphony of approaches: peer-to-peer education, outreach across the boundaries of professional disciplines, technical assistance, and direct provision of professional services. To advance toward this target, we will use all of those.

STRATEGIES

1. Create more connections among ecological forestry practitioners.

We will draw on our staff and membership to provide best-in-class guidance and resources, host in-person events to foster community, recognize leaders in the field, and provide digital forums to connect practitioners with one another.

What success looks like:

- ☐ We have directly engaged with 400 people through in-person and virtual workshops.
- ☐ We have created and published two high-quality, emotionally resonant video interviews that solve specific problems for landowners.

2. Encourage watershed-level thinking among forest owners.

We'll connect landowners in the same landscape by providing geographically and ecologically specific forums and discussions to encourage passive landowners to become more active.

What success looks like:

- ☐ We have evaluated long-term impacts of engagement with the San Juan Islands, Nisqually and Olympia areas in order to determine best approaches for successful geographically-defined engagement.
- ☐ We have exposed 30% of landowners in an identified geography to an ecological forestry approach.



TARGET 4

Increase the number of forest practitioners using ecological forestry techniques in Western Washington

3. Work directly with landowners to shift their management toward ecological forestry.

Some forest owners will be moved to action by the availability of trusted professionals to create new management plans and oversee forest stewardship actions. We will work with landowners to help them realize their ecological forestry intentions, specializing in family forests, land trusts, youth camps, and tribal and municipal forests.

What success looks like:

- ☐ 30,000 acres have had their management improved to FSC standards or higher. This includes lands now being managed where no management was previously occurring, as well as improved management where forests had been managed more aggressively than allowed under FSC standards.
- ☐ At least three more municipal or tribal forest owners have worked with NNRG to bring their management up to FSC standards or better, and at least one of them has sought certification to guide and affirm the sustainability of its forestry practices.

4. Establish ecological forestry as a key method in regional forest restoration.

We'll increase the recognition among forestry professionals in western Washington that ecological forestry enables the restoration of industrial forest areas, and increase recognition of NNRG's harvest approaches as a restoration service.

What success looks like:

- ☐ We have created two resources for restoration professionals to use in their work.
- ☐ We have created a location-specific communications campaign around one of our demonstration forests, highlighting the ways in which ecological forestry represents ecological restoration.



TARGET 4

Increase the number of forest practitioners using ecological forestry techniques in Western Washington

5. Amplify our outreach to professionals in forestry-adjacent fields.

While forests are top of mind for us, they are just a small though salient part of the work done by people in related fields, such as architecture, geology, hydrology, and reserve management. We will create professional development opportunities that bring the insights of ecological forestry to practitioners in those specialties.

What success looks like:

- ☐ We have provided three professional development resources or workshops to professional groups such as Conservation Districts, the Grange, or county government.
- ☐ We have discussed educational resource needs with local logging businesses and have offered loggers the opportunity to get a certificate of completion from NNRG that shows they have completed a course on ecological thinning and its financial benefits.
- ☐ We have provided a tailored educational experience for a group of non-forest landowning stakeholders along the supply chain, e.g., architects, builders, or environmental lawyers.



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

1. 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.

What success looks like:

- ☐ NNRG has gained at least five new management clients of at least 640 acres each, beyond the three we already have.

2. Develop a business sponsorship program tailored to firms that are in the forestry field or are forestry-adjacent.

We will reach out to businesses that supply forestry tools and outdoor recreation products.

What success looks like:

- ☐ By 2024, NNRG obtains \$7,500 or more in business sponsorships annually.



TARGET 5

Diversify NNRG's sources of revenue

3. Expand NNRG's estate planning and working forest endowment program.

Some forestland owners cannot rely upon family heirs to continue their stewardship legacy. We will expand our work in this area through outreach to estate attorneys and estate planners, by highlighting the arrangement we have made with our original forestland donors, and creating other ways for forest owners to dedicate their land to charitable causes beyond NNRG.

What success looks like:

- ☐ We have formalized an arrangement with our original forestland donors through a long-term management agreement.
- ☐ NNRG is in conversation with at least one more donor to convey an ownership interest in their forest to NNRG.
- ☐ NNRG has helped to create a vehicle for Washington forest owners to direct the revenues from their forest to the charitable cause of their choice, complementing the forestland fund developed at the Oregon Community Foundation.

4. Use NNRG ecological forestry book as a fundraising tool.

Through dedicated solicitations, we have raised enough money to pay for the cost of research and writing even before completing the manuscript.

What success looks like:

- ☐ We have broken even on the project before publication, through dedicated fundraising toward the cost of research and writing.
- ☐ We have sold 800 copies of the book ourselves, garnering approximately half the cover price as net income for NNRG.



This plan was created and produced by NNRG's board and staff in 2021.

NNRG Board of Directors

Sophia Amberson (Secretary), John Harrison (Vice-chair), Ben Hayes, Brad Hunter (Treasurer), Christine Johnson (Chair), Sue Long, Marco Lowenstein (Past Chair), and Grace Wang.

NNRG Staff

Rowan Braybrook (Director of Programs), Sam Castro (Forester), Alexandra Dolk (Program Manager), Karen Gray (Finance Director), Kirk Hanson (Director of Forestry), Rick Helman (Forester), Jaal Mann (Lead Forester), Gustavo Segura Flores (Forest Technician), Seth Zuckerman (Executive Director)

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