



SFEC Transition White Paper

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Introduction

This white paper summarizes planned and proposed changes to the Sustainable Forests Education Cooperative's administration, staffing, financial support and programming. This white paper relies heavily on the spring to fall 2008 effort of the Continuing Education of Forestry Professionals Task Force. The full Task Force Final Report is available at the SFEC website (<http://sfec.cfans.umn.edu/audit.html>).

The primary purpose of this white paper is to prepare SFEC members for the Monday, November 17th all-member meeting at the UMN Cloquet Forestry Center. I strongly recommend, at a minimum, reading the entire **Executive Summary** of the Task Force Final Report for additional details prior to the November 17th meeting.

Planned changes

Staffing

A new SFEC Coordinator is needed by spring 2009 to facilitate a smooth transition. As I wrote in the October SFEC Newsletter, I will retire from SFEC at the end of June to concentrate on my other full time job, mother and wife. I recommend **formation of a search committee** at the November 17th meeting to develop a position description and timeline.

A new administrative support staff will be needed between January and July; a position description has been approved and is almost ready for posting; negotiations with Extension are taking place to explore the possibility of sharing support staff capacity for an interim period until a new SFEC Coordinator is hired and can direct other staff hires.

Administration

SFEC is currently administered through the Cloquet Forestry Center, which is part of the Division for Translational Research and Engagement in the College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resource Sciences. To promote enhanced recognition of and greater presence for SFEC within the University of Minnesota system, the CFANS Dean will be advised to approve moving SFEC to the Department of Forest Resources.

Financial Support

Currently SFEC receives “hard money” support from the University to cover 60% of the Coordinator’s salary and benefits. Thought no specific decrease or end date is known at this time, this support is expected to decline in coming years. (Membership dues have averaged \$38,000 per year for the past eight years.)

Programming

Using web-based technologies to decrease attendee costs while maximizing learning will be explored and implemented for upcoming programming cycles. This will involve multi-party collaborations within and outside the University. Program delivery is expected to rise beginning in summer 2009 corresponding with increased staff capacity.

Proposed changes

Operating model

A two-step implementation recommendation for Continuing Education of Forestry Professionals centers on adoption of first a **Dual non-Integrated Logger and Forester Continuing Education model**, and then after two years and a review a **Dual Integrated Model**. Please refer to page 5 of the Executive Summary of the Task Force Final Report for more detail.

Included in both models is establishment of an SFEC Advisory Board to meet regularly (in-person and remotely). This is a significant change for SFEC and its member organizations, as the first decade utilized decentralized communication as the norm, per direction from the 1997 Advisory Committee that created the Education Cooperative. I highly support this recommendation – Membership involvement and guidance are the backbone of SFEC and foundational to its continued operation.

Staffing

In addition to a new Coordinator and administrative assistant, the Task Force recommends hiring at least one professional programming staff to focus on developing and delivering training events, maintaining close contact with SFEC member organizations, and connecting higher-level collaboration and networking with on-the-ground program delivery. These staff changes would bring SFEC slightly above the staff capacity enjoyed in the period between 1998 and 2004.

Administration

Human resource and financial management support will be retained in St. Paul (and Cloquet) as University organization dictates. With the recommended Dual Integrated model, after successful adoption of the Dual non-Integrated model, the administrative framework for a merged forester-logger continuing education program will need to be developed.

Financial Support

Potential sources for increased financial support for SFEC should include membership dues and course fees, annually recurring legislative funding (\$120,000 per

year proposed), matching funds, grants, and funding targeted at advertising, marketing, teleconferencing, and web support needs.

Programming

Professional forest resource manager continuing education programming should continue providing field to classroom learning opportunities. Additional products and services for SFEC members should be developed by SFEC staff to strengthen the array of benefits offered to Minnesota's forest resource management community.