

WVOA STRATEGIC PLAN

September 10, 2005 ~ Updated on May 1, 2007

The Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association is in the process of updating its strategic plan. Chapter involvement was sought by survey and participation in a March planning session. What came out of this effort are four goals and suggested actions to be completed as part of the strategic plan. **It was determined not every objective could be addressed at the same time. The actions to implement the objectives were addressed and are found below the objective in blue.** Following are those goals and actions.

GOAL I IMPROVE INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

Description: Every organization including WVOA has a tendency to ignore its internal operations when things are functioning well. That works fine but over time things change and the organization needs to assess and make appropriate changes in operating procedures. WVOA proposed four actions to improve its internal operation.

- A. Assess WVOA's structure to improve organizational effectiveness.
WVOA operates with a system of five officers, an executive director, a board of directors, a system of chapters, committees and a foundation. Operating as a 501(c)(3) organization under Federal IRS rules and under state law requires WVOA to have a certain organizational structure in place. The goal is to assess the current structure and improve the communication by clarifying roles and interactions between all levels.

- B. Develop and implement a job description for WVOA Board of Directors, chapter chairs and officers, committee chairs, WVOA staff and others who may represent WVOA. All leaders of an organization need to have a firm grasp of their responsibility. Job descriptions help lay out those expectations and provide a measuring device to assess effectiveness. These will be developed in consultation with board members, chapters, and committees.

Action: Established a subcommittee that has developed job descriptions for the Board of Directors including the executive committee officers and committee chairs, executive director, chapter chairs, and charters for the external committees.

- C. Assess Internal and Board of Directors operations to improve WVOA's effectiveness. WVOA presently conducts its business with quarterly meetings. As organizations mature, the business of the board continues to grow sometimes requiring a re-alignment of board responsibilities and utilizing modern communication methods and procedures. WVOA will explore all options to improve its effectiveness.

Action: Established a permanent Past President's Committee to address Internal operations since members of this committee had experience working with the Internal operations of WWOA.

The Board is using email more as most Board members have email and it is also looking into the use of conference calls.

GOAL II STRENGTHEN CHAPTERS

Description: An organization such as WWOA is strongest when it has a structure closest to its members. Chapters provide that and ways should be found to build on that strength. WWOA proposes three actions to strengthen chapter relationships.

- A. Assist chapter building by working with the chapters to develop one central program or event per year to be shared by all chapters. Any organization's strength comes from the sum total of its parts. While chapters are encouraged to utilize their unique strengths there are some activities that should be common to all chapters that help build unity between chapters and WWOA. The objective is to recommend a set of common activities covering statewide topics.

Action: Asked the Chapter Chairs committee to consider Arbor Day as a single event each chapter could have statewide. Some of the chapters have established Arbor Day as an annual event. Some schools already had this year's activities planned so Arbor Day could not be an event for this year. The Chapters will continue working on implementing Arbor Day as a statewide event.

- B. Strengthen chapter interaction and joint events. Chapters are designed to operate independently, but there are common goals that could be achieved when all adjacent chapters act in unison. Efforts will be taken to explore what can be done by strengthening chapter interactions and sponsorship of events.
- C. Increase chapter consistency and expectations to improve organizational effectiveness. Chapters are strong when they meet the expectation of their members. Examples are consistent field days, annual meetings, and election of officers with term limits. WWOA and its chapters will develop materials that will help ensure these expectations are met.

GOAL III INCREASE WWOA MEMBERSHIP

Description: WWOA is basically a membership organization of over 2,300 members who pay dues. Members have a right to expect that the organization is doing certain things to meet their membership requirements. It is increasingly difficult to attract new members. The goal is to increase WWOA members from a potential of 264,000 woodland owners in Wisconsin. Four actions are proposed to increase membership in WWOA.

A. Assess WWOA's outreach efforts. The public is too diverse to reach all. An analysis will be made to focus WWOA's outreach effort to attain better results and place emphasis on those efforts that affect the majority of private woodland owners.

B. Increase WWOA's membership by broadening membership appeal. Some like a good newsletter or magazine; others want regular communication; still others may want workshops or an annual meeting. Some may want all of these. WWOA will make an assessment of its membership or potential membership appeal.

Action: Developed a joint newsletter with American Tree Farm System that is published twice a year. In this way WWOA reaches the Tree Farm audience, many of which are not WWOA members and this is their first exposure to WWOA.

C. Develop a public relations program to produce an organization that is more friendly and welcoming to members and non-members. While some members may join WWOA for its award winning magazine, that alone is rarely enough to maintain interest in remaining and actively participating in WWOA affairs. This goal will develop a program to create an atmosphere of "welcome" to all new members and non-members. In addition, WWOA will reach out to our members to encourage active participation in the organization.

Action: Created a Publicity Committee and assigned them to develop an article promoting WWOA for local newspapers. Telling individual stories of why an individual belongs to WWOA is a good way to relate to nonmembers.

D. Increase working relationships with organizations of similar interests. There are literally dozens of organizations WWOA should have a working relationship with. Some have forestry interests while others may have diverse interests that if shared, would strengthen both organizations. WWOA has limited financial and human resources to engage all opportunities. WWOA will explore these opportunities and recommend which need to be strengthened.

Action: WWOA via the Membership committee has joined the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation with the objective to work with the Wildlife Federation in promoting WWOA.

GOAL IV INCREASE EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS AND EFFECTIVENESS

Description: WWOA's mission is to educate not only its members but others outside the organization. The question is how to best utilize WWOA's financial and human resources to accomplish this basic mission. Four efforts will be undertaken.

- A. Increase youth activities through partnerships with existing organizations. There are a number of youth organizations that already exist and are effective in educating youth. One example is Wisconsin's system of school forests and requirements to teach forestry in public schools. The task will be to thoroughly explore all options and select those that most closely match WWOA's expectations.

- B. Increase working relationships with the WWOA Foundation and its Seno Woodland Education Center. While these operate independently of WWOA, the Foundation and Center can and should play an increasing role in education. The Foundation provides an opportunity to increase revenue for educational activities while the Seno Center offers a facility in an urban setting to reach a large urban/suburban population. Efforts will be explored that can tie WWOA closer to the Foundation and the Center.

- C. Increase educational efforts to reach urban and non-woodland owner audiences. While 264,000 people own over half of the woodlands in the state, the bulk of our 5.5 million residents have no direct tie to Wisconsin's forested land except through the mil tax on real estate and their daily use and consumption of forest products. This urban population, as it does in other resources management decisions, is much of the voting block that eventually determines the fate of our woodland and woodland management programs. WWOA will explore all of the options to engage the urban and non-woodland owner audiences.

- D. Develop an estate planning and awareness program for WWOA. WWOA members and many woodland owners, who are not members, are justly proud of their woodland management program and would like to see their woodland remain under management when they pass it onto other family members or others for other reasons. Most woodland owners are not fully aware of all options they have through estate planning to pass on this legacy of management. WWOA will facilitate discussions on this and work toward a program to assist private woodland owners interested in estate planning.

Action: The WWOA's 2006 Annual Meeting and the North Central Woodlands Owners Conference had presentations on estate planning.