Minnesota Association Soil and Water Conservation Districts
Forestry Guiding Principles
Adopted by the MASWCD Membership - MASWCD Annual Meeting, December 3, 2013

Working in Support of the State Soil and Water Conservation Policy (M.S. 130C.005)
The Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) supports the State Soil and Water Conservation Policy. The MASWCD works to maintain and enhance soil and water quality for environmental and economic benefits, preventing degradation, and restoring degraded soil and water resources with the understanding that these soil and water resources contribute to the health, safety, economic well-being, and general welfare of the state and its citizens. The MASWCD applies sound forest management principles to control or prevent erosion, sedimentation, siltation, and related pollution, ensure continued soil productivity, protect water quality, prevent impairment of dams and reservoirs, reduce damages caused by floods, conserve wildlife, protect the tax base and public lands and waters.

Recognizing the Multiple Benefits Derived from Healthy Forests
The MASWCD recognizes that healthy forests have intrinsic value as a vital component of Minnesota's diverse ecosystems that support all life. Healthy forests provide local economic benefits including jobs, wood products and biomass, tourism, and areas for recreation. Forested ecosystems provide environmental benefits including clean water, filtration of harmful nutrients and chemicals, water infiltration, buffering the impacts of climate change, protection of fragile soils, and wildlife and fisheries habitat. Society also -benefits from healthy forests through increased aesthetic values, natural disaster buffering, and important contributions to Minnesota's history and culture. Today's well managed forests serve as the foundation for the benefits that our generation is bestowing to future generations.

Managing Forests Based on Scientifically Based Best Management Practices
The MASWCD recognizes that forests are sustainable and sound forest management is a long-term activity, which can provide a perpetual supply of economic, social, and environmental benefits while protecting the natural resource base. Forest management activities take place at several scales ranging from the stand level to the regional and state landscape level scale. Soil and Water Conservation Districts are well poised to work with local landowners to address local forest management goals while being sensitive to the larger scale implications of management activities.

Private Landowners are a Vital Actor in the Management of the State's Forest Resources
The MASWCD is committed to working with Minnesota's private landowners who own more than 40% of the state's forests. These forests range from native woodlands to urban forests in metropolitan communities to agroforests found throughout the state's farmlands. Soil and Water Conservation Districts have and should continue to play the primary role in reaching out to private landowners across Minnesota with information and management assistance that can help in ensuring the long term productivity of these forested resources.

Conservation Districts are the Leading Local Governmental Unit in Providing Forest Management Assistance for Private Woodland Owners
Soil and Water Conservation Districts cover the entire state with locally elected boards that are leaders in understanding and promoting local conservation efforts. The voluntary nature of conservation district programs helps private landowners through providing advice, suggestions, and incentives for the implementation of best management practices. Conservation districts are staffed by resource professionals who are connected to the local community and can help landowners identify their own management goals and provide scientifically based assistance proper to the local environment. In addition to providing local expertise, conservation districts have a long history of developing and maintaining partnerships that can bring state, private, and federal resources to bear on local concerns. These partnerships are critical in ensuring the state's forest resources are managed on a regional scale for the perpetual protection of the state's soil and water resources.