

# Summary of the Policy Process Survey

## New England Chapter of the Society of American Foresters

### Subcommittee on Policy Process

#### August 2009

## Key Points

- **The policy process is important to our members;** our survey had a 26% response rate from members who took the time to detail their responses in which they indicated broad support for the policy process work in which we've engaged.
- **The members who responded have a history of being very involved** and aware of what we're doing when the opportunity is available. They indicated 81 organizations in which they're involved and 67% of them have read 2 or more NESAF position statements.
- **Our members want to have a voice in an active organization;** 79% of our members made it clear that they wanted an opportunity to respond to individual position statements, and 68% would like to be serving on short-term committees to shape our voice within NESAF.
- **We have major communication hurdles to overcome.** While 93% of the members believe that we should be producing position statements, 14% believe that these statements are there to govern our members rather than to produce a unified voice clarifying our view of good forestry. In addition 77% of the responders believe that we should be making an effort to communicate our stance on forestry issues to non-members.
- **We need to get the process right.** The quantity and quality of text comments indicate strong feelings within the membership. We have highly active members that want to focus some of that energy within NESAF, and they want NESAF to have a louder, clearer voice on forestry issues in New England. We need a vehicle to properly accommodate these interests.

## Purpose

NESAF recently set out on a course of revising the process through which we take positions on forestry issues in New England. We have been engaged in conversations with members who have indicated that they want an organization that has a more active voice in New England Forestry. Through your prompting we have launched an initiative to revise our forest policy processes.

This document will serve as a baseline for how our members feel about the current process and potential changes that we could make in our public policy processes. It is based on a member survey conducted during the summer of 2009.

As one of our members has stated so well, we're seeking to build awareness on issues, to put in place a process enabling learning, to demonstrate leadership and integrity, and to take a well-considered and publicly-visible position regarding timely issues important to members, the public and the profession.

## Subcommittee Members

- Peter Howland – NESAF Policy Chair
- Peter L. Greeno – NESAF Membership Chair
- Roger Dziengeleski – Regional Council Representative
- Ronald Lemin Jr. – (Ex-Officio) NESAF Chairman

## A Description of our Responders

Initial survey announcements went out by email, with a subsequent invitation to follow in our October News Quarterly. Therefore at this time only approximately 863 members of our 1,032 member body have received the invitation. Additional input will be considered throughout our work on developing a better policy process as additional members respond. At the present time approximately 26% of NESAF members who received an invitation to complete the policy process survey responded, giving us membership coverage of 22%.

Most responses are from members that have been with NESAF for 5-34 years, with an average of 19 years of membership. These are members who have supported NESAF for a long time. The question was not posed to consider additional years that these members may have been with SAF in a chapter other than New England.

While our responding members have been with NESAF for an average of 19 years, they have been working in a natural resource profession for an average of 25 years. Our active membership base, i.e. those members who may be the most willing to contribute to the policy work before us, are older members likely with a significant wealth of professional experience.

### Survey Results

#### How many years have you been a NESAF member?

Mean	19 years
Median	19 years
Standard Deviation	14
Usable Responses	220

Many of the responders noted that they have been members of SAF for many more years in various chapters around the country. This question only considered membership in the New England Chapter.

#### How many years have you been working in natural resources?

Mean	25 years
Median	26 years
Standard Deviation	14
Usable Responses	223

#### Who responded to our survey on the NESAF Policy Process?

Number of NESAF Members at the time of the survey	1,032
Number of members to whom we sent the invitation (email only)	913
Number of members who likely received the invitation (est. 50 bad email addresses)	863
<b>Total Number of survey responses</b>	<b>227</b>
Number of member responses	221
Number of non-member responses	2
Number of responses of unknown origin	4
<b>Percent response of members who likely received the invitation</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>Percent coverage of our membership body as a whole</b>	<b>22%</b>

## Natural Resource Organizations that our Members Value

Members listed over 81 distinct organizations to which they are associated, including professional organizations and non-professional organizations such as land trusts, conservation organizations, and timberland owner associations. Professional organizations other than SAF included organizations in the fields of engineering, soil science, and ecology.

The three organizations with the highest member involvement are the Forest Guild, the International Society of Arboriculture, the Massachusetts Association of Professional Foresters, and the Ecological Society of America. While in no way do we wish to compete with these organizations, it is important to know what organizations our members value and are willing to support.

It is crucial that we consider the benefits, opportunities for involvement, and other services that these organizations are providing our members. We should look to any policy processes within these organizations when we develop a new policy process geared towards empowering and involving our members.

## Member Perceptions of NESAF Position Statements

Position statements are currently the primary tool of our policy work at NESAF. How our members perceive the purpose of those statements is no doubt one of the most important parts of redesigning the process. NESAF, and SAF as a whole, constructs position statements as a tool for communication. As our own members put it, “[Position statements] define why SAF exists,” they “provide a unified position regarding topics important to the forestry profession.”

What other organizations are you a member of?	
Forest Guild	27
International Society of Arboriculture	9
Massachusetts Association of Professional Foresters	9
Ecological Society of America	7
New Hampshire Timberland Owners Association	7
Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine	7
The Wildlife Society	6
Maine Forest Products Council	5
NERCOFE	2
Association of Consulting Foresters of America	2
Forest Resources Association	2
<b>Total number of distinct organizations listed</b>	<b>81</b>

Only some of the most referenced organizations are listed; see the appendix for a complete list. Many responses indicated confusion with the improper inclusion of the word ‘professional’ in our question. Therefore members likely left out many non-professional associations such as conservation organizations and trade associations. The responses still give us an indication of organizations that influence or engage them; however we need to recognize the incomplete nature of the responses.

Familiarity with NESAF Position Statements	%
I have never read a NESAF Position Statement	18%
I have read one NESAF Position Statement	15%
I have read more than one NESAF Position Statement	67%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>



The numbers suggest something that we did not expect. Sixty-seven percent of our members have read multiple NESAF position statements. These members understand how loudly our position statements speak for the organization and will no doubt continue to see both the value and the high stakes in putting out quality statements.

It is important to note that 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of our members have only read 0-1 position statement(s) at any time in the past. If these statements are a foundational piece of our organization’s future then we need to make certain that they are well understood in both content and purpose. It is also crucial that they are accessible, current, and publicized well.

Almost all of our members believe that we should be pursuing position statements.

We asked our responders what purpose NESAF Position Statements served to indicate if we had an internal messaging problem to overcome. For our position statements to be accepted and thus useful within the membership, their purpose must be clear. Fourteen percent of our members believe that these position statements govern the membership. This response rate is a clear indication that when we roll out any new policy process we need to include a clear statement on the purpose of the policy committee and it’s role within NESAF.

We are moving in the right direction. Our members want individual and direct involvement in the development process of each position statement. Elected NESAF State Representatives are crucial in guiding the process, with many members expecting them to review new developments and to report back to their respective State divisions. A surprise to us, not only do 79% of the respondents want the opportunity to comment on developing position statements, but 68% want to be invited to serve on short-term high impact committees during the

Should NESAF prepare position statements on issues that are important to our members?		%
Yes		93%
No		7%
Total		100%

In your opinion, what purpose do NESAF Position Statements serve?		%
A position statement is a policy that governs NESAF membership in order to promote sound forestry		14%
A position statement is not a policy, rather it is a statement that promotes sound forestry through education		65%
Other		22%
Total		100%

How do you feel members should be involved in the position statement development process?		%
Members should be given the opportunity to comment on Position Statements before they are passed		79%
Members should rely on their elected NESAF state representatives to review NESAF position statements		28%
NESAF position statements should be sent to the state divisions for comment		57%
Members should be invited to serve on short term committees that assist the policy committee on the preparation of NESAF position statements		68%
Other		5%

One person could select more than one option; therefore the percents will not total 100%.

development process.

The goal of our policy committee is clear: respondents value our policy committee for communication nearly evenly between both members and the general public (78% and 77% respectively); both are important. We need better public relations and internal communication and position statements are a valid tool for that communication. In addition our members expect us to be involved outside of our organization, representing forestry where input is needed on issues that matter to them.

While the highest interest in potential future directions include position statements on clearcutting, biomass harvesting and high-grading, there was little differentiation between the top 10 issues. These issues were included to get a feel for how broad the interest in producing position statements was. The question was by no means intended to serve as our primary or final method of gathering feedback on what issues we should tackle. Much more specificity is necessary. However it is clear that there are a vast number of issues with a very broad scope that closely resemble the list of issues that have been receiving attention in the media. Once again our voice is needed and we interpret the response to be that our members want us to take positions and to be vocal on some of the forestry issues that New England debates.

There is strong interest in having a high-grading position statement, but extreme concern as to what that statement will say. The issue ranked within the top 3 key issues that members would like to see us tackle in the near future, and 89% of members would support a high-grading position statement if it was in line with their values as foresters. Many members indicated that they could not support that high-grading statement unless they could see the

How can our Policy Committee best serve its members?	%
Our Policy Committee should prepare position statements to inform MEMBERS of our stance on current issues	78%
Our Policy Committee should prepare position statements to inform NONMEMBERS of our stance on current issues	77%
Our Policy Committee should keep members informed of current issues through mechanisms other than position statements	67%
Our Policy Committee should be serving in other forest based organizations and boards where our input is needed	59%
Other	4%

Responders could select more than one option; therefore the percents will not total 100%.

Member feelings on whether NESAF should have a position statement on each of the following issues	%
Clearcutting	75%
Biomass Harvesting	75%
High-Grading	70%
Local Regulation of Forest Practices	69%
Private Forest Management	67%
Herbicide Use	66%
Federal and State Forest Management	65%
Carbon Sequestration	64%
Forest Roads	62%
Wilderness and Recreation Values	60%
Climate Change	53%
Farm Bill Programs	50%

Listed in descending order with top three issues separated. Only those issues that received above 50% are shown.

contents before responding. There is likely more support available, but in this response and in the text responses it is clear that it is a sensitive issue.

## Where We Go From Here

As we begin to make changes to how our Policy Committee operates we are going to need the help of our members. **Our next steps are critical.** The Subcommittee on Policy Process is expanding to involve members who have a special interest in how our policy process develops useful information and engages our members and the public. We have begun reviewing like processes in other organizations to identify several alternatives from which to work. This committee will form the guiding documents that will determine how we form our position statements, how we best represent the opinions of our members, and how we use these statements to best represent the organization throughout New England.

The committee will provide a set of action items to the Executive Committee in December, 2009. A subsequent report to the member body will follow in the January, 2010. **The potential for the New England Society of American Foresters to have an impact on forestry in our region is great,** but it is crucial that we get these initial steps right and that they are done with our members in mind.

### Would you be supportive of a NESAF position statement on high-grading?

Yes, I would support a NESAF position statement on high-grading	89%
No, I would not support a NESAF position statement on high-grading	11%
Total	100%

Many responders noted that their answer to this question was highly dependent on what the position statement would say. Taking that into consideration we interpret responses to this question to mean that a) there is high interest in having a statement on high-grading; and b) it is an extremely sensitive issue that needs to be well vetted with our membership first.

## APPENDIX

Text responses elaborating on the question: "Should NESAF prepare position statements on issues that are important to our members?"

To provide a unified position regarding topics important to the forestry profession.

Position statements help the SAF speak with one voice. All too often I've come across situations where foresters that are members of other forestry professional societies (i.e. [other forestry professional societies]) say things that get attributed to the profession at large that simply don't make sense.

It helps to define why SAF exists

To give us an idea what sort of policy bent our organization is taking us.

They can provide sound data during a policy debate

As a professional forestry organization, we need to let our members as well as the public know where we stand on important forestry related matters.

There is a need for framing natural resource issues within a New England forestry context and in way that is not controlled by any one group. In other words, there is a need for democratizing the policy-making process in a way that provides people on-the-ground, like me, with access and the potential to impact.

So as to build awareness of issues, to convey accurate information, to counter misinformation, to put in place a process enabling learning, to demonstrate leadership and integrity, to take a well-considered and publicly-visible position regarding timely issues important to members, the public and the profession.

In order to address issues which impact us as professionals we need to develop positions and make those positions public. We are the scientists and the professionals, and we should not let the political processes that affect forests and foresters be developed by others without our input.

As a collection of natural resource experts, it's important for our organization to articulate and make publicly available our position(s) on natural resource issues.

Although some statements I may not agree with (Cap & Trade), it is important as a voluntary, professional organization that we are engaged collectively in furthering the use of forests for all its benefits. Also to educate the public, municipalities and regulating organizations, and landowners. NESAF should target private landowners to become engaged when it is their property that is being regulated as they as the tax payer carry more weight within their municipality.

Decisions should be based on knowledge and sound science. position statements are well reasoned, based on fact, and help foresters convey a uniform message when appropriate

As foresters, we have far too little impact on the policy process, or in general what goes on in the forests of New England. We are not serving anybody or any forest by being passive in the face of negative trends.

To voice a unified position for the management of forestland

If we do not say it, who will. We must promote our beliefs.

To keep members and outsiders informed and educated

It is important to have a position on important issues regarding forest policy, however it seems that it has been difficult to develop in anything resembling a timely manner. There is a need for state chapters to be more proactive in this regard.

Provide an informed science based analysis of issues that can become political and based on uninformed emotion!
It provides a document that members can utilize in helping others understand our policy or position on current natural resource issues. It is a collective statement, which may or may not reflect a individual member's viewpoint on a position.
We need to have something verbalized in order to agree on it.
..because the forest represents a vast, renewable-and presently vastly underutilized resource of fiber and chemicals that are being ignored because of the chokehold that the oil interests in the USA have on our economic, and thus our political system, INCLUDING SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN REPRESENTING MOST ALL OF THE FORESTED STATES THOUGHOUT THE USA!
To maintain SAF as a high-profile player in the minds of lawmakers and leaders of other conservation organizations. Too often the [environmental groups] comment on forestry issues, and without regard to the substance of their position, their names are kept to the fore. Also, to distinguish SAF as the voice of the profession, NOT the voice of the forest products industry.
They bring issues to light and educate our members and the public about that issue it is the only way we can ethically testify before lawmakers and regulators about an issue
If members acting as a committee reach a position all members benefit from understanding the logic and possible actions. After all, most of us don't have time to become learned on every issue and can benefit from those that work on a particular topic. Nobody in the room is any smarter than all of us.
If NESAF's representatives have ensured that they are providing the thoughts of a majority of the NESAF members they are speaking for. If we are to be truly professional, then we should provide the pubic and decision makers with information and education that will assist them in making informed decisions regarding natural resources. This also gives SAF recognition and credibility. We are true environmentalists. Without us speaking out, we give the "environmentalist" label to some who are less deserving. It gives some a reason for joining NESAF.
As many/most members have opinions ("positions"), some strong, I believe we'd like to see NESAF in a more visible posture on resource/forestry related issues, those that there is a general consensus on. This may encourage more members to voice their opinions/comments, rather than think they're unheard, under-appreciated and have no audible/visible message or forum.....
Mostly to help clarify our OWN thoughts, to engage each other in debate, and hopefully, arrive at a decent professional, scientific consensus.
It would be too difficult to get consensus of all members on issues. the way it works now with SAF, policy statements do not reflect the views of all members, but may appear so from the outside.
They should be imp to members and to the public- i.e. they further cons and appropriate mgt of nat resources. The posit. statements should be easily avail for all to read - on our web page -- the nat web page. When a new statement is prepared should there be a press release!!
That's one of the reasons for having the NESAF to start with. Position statements MUST be realistic and obtainable in today's society, not visions of the imagination.
I say that, but probably if I agree with then. The purpose would be to influence policy.
so the organization will more closely reflect the needs and values of the membership
It's a way to educate members and non-members about the current "standard" line on certain forestry-related

issues.
We claim that science should be used in decision-making. Position statements condense and make that science available to other policy actors. However, if NESAF position statements are not being read or viewed as credible by these other actors, they are not useful.
To keep members and the public informed of forest resource professional's views on issues related to forest issues.
because a united front is more powerful
To focus our communication with such as diverse and distributed membership. The more critical issue is if members READ and understand the position statement and can disseminate the information.
It's important for us as members to know how the organization stands on issues, even if we disagree on some points.
If we have a high degree of consensus as a profession on an issue of importance to the public, then we need to insert the position of the profession into the deliberations. However, I do not know if this is going to happen as much as we would like. Rather than position papers it may be more appropriate for some issues to prepare issue statements or white papers. This allows our profession to spend time researching and fully informing the debate rather than spending time getting consensus from the profession. While we are science based, our positions cannot help be tempered by our own value systems, especially in the absence of clear facts. The options for achieving consensus are getting it (which is great!), getting a watered down version of a position, or taking a solid position that alienates too many members. I would like NESAF to help me understand the components of the issue, the options, and the repercussions of those options. I would think that public policy makers would appreciate the same and it would give our profession more credibility.
It allows for a single and concise message to be put forth for the public and legislators to understand where resource professionals stand on an issue of importance.
If the society can't produce documents that are of interest and importance to the membership, why would a member stay interested in being with the group?
In the absence of a formal position, we are nothing more than the loudest and most persistent singular voice; Few things are more irritating than someone who is wrong, is also very effective in making his point!
Position statements let others (politicians, general public) know where we stand on natural resource issues. This can be used to influence legislation or policy.
provides a scientific and professionally based common message that foresters can refer to for their own guidance, and to educate others
NESAF should stop preaching to the choir. Position statements need to go out to the public.
Our expertise is needed as part of policy dialogue.
It's important to keep members informed
To become politically relevant as an association in the regional context, which should also attract new membership, and encourage a more favorable view of forestry and forest professionals among politicians and the general public.
We must take positions on various issues, if we want to truly become a "go-to organization". The trick will be in being able to craft the position quickly when new issues arise, and to come up with something that isn't so watered down as to be meaningless.

<p>position statements from professional organizations help to educate the public and other decision makers (e.g. legislators) as to the professional opinion of the trade experts on a particular matter; positions of professional organizations MAY be weighed more heavily by decision makers.</p>
<p>Position statements summarize what we agree on, in principle, allowing for diversity within the practice of the profession and hopefully familiarize the general public and governmental decision-makers about our position on critical issues.</p>
<p>NESAF Position Statements are well-thought out documents that provide guidance to members.</p>
<p>I think it is important for natural resource policy/law makers to hear and understand the opinions of natural resource managers.</p>
<p>If we want to be seen as the voice for forestry, we need to be engaged, share our thoughts and facilitate discussions on forestry topics. I do think we need to communicate our positions more broadly and understand the perspectives of those, including our own members who may not agree.</p>
<p>It is important that our (local) professional forestry organization speak for us in a clear scientific manner.</p>
<p>There is no way to gain a consensus from our type of membership. Our position statements have been insignificant and ineffective.</p>
<p>We as members need to know where our organization stands on issues, and how NESAF represents those issues to the public.</p>
<p>Too much misleading/false info out there, segments our industry are being needlessly maligned.</p>
<p>Individuals and even small groups of individuals have little to no real voice in the political arena. One of the primary reasons to belong to a professional organization like SAF is to have a national and regional voice that is heard in the political arena and lobbies for the best interest of the forestry profession.</p>
<p>To strengthen members' attitude when considering natural-resource issues and when addressing these issues in public or professional forums.</p>
<p>They are noticeable by their absence. But be very selective about which ones to bother with and be faster in developing them. SAF normally winds up talking to the dust cloud after the parade has gone by.</p>
<p>It is important for both members and other non-member natural resource professionals to be aware of the overall position of the group as a whole.</p>
<p>To provide a concise and consistent message to both members and various publics.</p>
<p>To get our member's consensus on the issues. Also to let the public, regulatory agencies and legislative bodies know our position on those issues and why.</p>
<p>In order to promote our ideas and help persuade other to practice good sound forestry.</p>
<p>1. We have the capability to provide sound advice on these issues. 2. It is very important for NESAF to be recognized by policy makers as a source of scientifically sound, unbiased information. 3. NESAF membership depends on real and perceived returns on the monetary and time investments associated with membership. Positions on issues are part of that return that members value.</p>
<p>We need to have a unified voice to more effectively impact the issues that are important to profession.</p>
<p>NESAF should provide a regional and professional source of scientific information regarding the management of New England forests on common issues that threaten the integrity and economics of the working forests.</p>
<p>It promotes dialogue among members.</p>

They change too often in response to current events.
It is important that our communities and state governments know what NESAF foresters stand for and the work that we do.
Only if there is a clear reason to do so.
Information for members to know SAF's positions and to be used as reference material when working with public.
Foresters usually follow the attitudes of their employer. Their private thoughts are usually muted.
If not read why do it.
In order to better represent the views of its membership.
To promote sound forestry practices and ethical character
Policy issues are regional in many cases, and NESAF can be influential in formulating important regional and national policy issues
Not only do issues vary by region, but foresters reaction to them. A policy that is good for the northwest may be poor for New England and vice versa.
So that members can use ideas/issues/arguments from that statement when trying to publicly express an opinion.
by definition they are important to your members. How do you know how your members think? Nobody ever asked me.
Necessary as part of leading a professional society
It's a great way to get us all on the same page. Then we can talk with policy makers and all be saying similar things.
I think it can synthesize best practices at any time given most up to date information. Allows members to keep abreast of topics not in their particular branch/field of forestry.
We should actively participate in life.
It is important to provide decision making information and take a position on issues that could be derisive within the profession or are meaningful to the public.
Awareness and understanding.
They are generally a waste of time because they don't get used in policy situations much. The process used to develop them is helpful to understand what NESAF (particularly Exec Com) believes about an issue but beyond that they are not helpful. There is no regional government in NE and, as such, no regional venue to use NESAF policy statements. They sometimes could be helpful at the state level but state-based policy statements are more useful. Remember, public policy is only enacted at the state and federal levels.
To provide decision makers with information on forestry issues that is grounded in science, not politics.
Buy in and education
national SAF shouldn't be preparing statements on issues of concern only in New England. I think there's too much of a disconnect there for them to know enough, so I think it should rest with NESAF.
That's how groups such as NESAF can help contribute to natural resources policy
If you bring professionals together in an organization, as you do for NESAF, then you have a responsibility to

help them "be heard." This is one of the reasons people join organizations: so that they can be part of something bigger than just themselves. NESAF, and SAF, have long been criticized as ineffectual. That's because the organization doesn't seem to do anything for anybody, except serve its own members through networking. You need to fulfill your obligation to your membership by serving them (not just asking them to serve, e.g. as officers or other volunteers).	
To show professional solidarity with an issue and to create more (public) awareness about positions that affect our natural heritage,	
I think it is important as a professional society to take positions on issues that impact or have the potential to impact our profession.	
NESAF/SAF should be a leader on important and emerging issues for both members and the general public.	
Position statements can be an organizational expression of consensus building -- something that's valuable and makes groups in the long run stronger and more viable. Consensus building though, is hard work by all who choose to participate; and where minority viewpoints are especially valuable for all.	
I always want to know where my colleagues stand, and why.	
As long as they are important to the planet and to humanity.	
Probably only on those issues where there is broad consent among the members. Then I think it is the responsibility of a prof. organization to speak out/	
NESAF is the professional organization representing foresters across New England and should weigh in on issues of importance to its members and the forestry profession in the region.	
Total Responses	101

Text responses to the question "What purpose do NESAF position statements serve?"

As I stated previously, it is not just for our members, but to let others interested in forestry related issues, know where the premiere professional forestry organization in the region stands on this topics. We need to be the source of sound, scientific forestry information.

We need to play a leadership role in forest management, forestry, and in the role of forests in providing ecosystem goods and services. Policies can be a way to generate movement collaboratively and in new ways to ensure we sustain our forests. On the other hand, if we work on policies that serve to only govern our membership, we are wasting valuable human capital and time.

See also the above answer to "Why."

It lets the public know what the forestry profession considers best practices, and where we stand on controversial issues

A position statement is not policy, rather it is a statement that details the view of the membership on any item.

SAF HAS MADE THE STATEMENTS, BUT THE STATEMENT HAS NO STARCH IN IT. IN ORDER TO CHANGE THE THINKING, POLICY AND STATEMENTS RULING OUR COUNTRY, THE SAF HAS TO GET DOWN AND DIRTY IN THE MATTER, AND : 1.BELIEVE OUR FORESTS AND FORESTERS HAVE A ROLE IN MAKING FOREST GROWTH RELEVANT IN THE ENERGY PICTURE, AND 2. GET THE FOREST OWNERS AND THE ENERGY PRODUCERS COMPLETELY AND SINCERELY INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS. Europe has demonstrated the forest-to-energy path. We have to fight off the OPEC element dominating our energy decisions and get right into the process, using technology readily available, and not starting a new Department of Energy system that will take years to put into place!!

<p>A position statement is not a policy, rather it is a statement that promotes sound forestry through education, defines the logic and lets others who are not specialists in our field know what our learned opinion is. The forestry profession should not be silent on matters important to good forestry.</p>
<p>well, some of both of the above; it is impossible for a statement(s) to "govern" members; while information/education is absolutely essential, is not advocacy/activism/the "question authority' (ie misinformation) posture likewise critical to push effective policies? SAF in general seems to lack the latter stance, and many members feel that a position statement is okay it carries little clout. Perhaps more broad &amp; effective communication of NESAF positions via media/lobbyists (do we have any?)When was the last time any of us saw/heard something in the regional (or national) media re "SAF believes.."?</p>
<p>What is policy, The dictionary says - a definite course of action adopted for the sake of expediency, or action or procedure to be considered with ref to prudence or expediency, or prudence, practical wisdom, or expediency. Is a position statement a policy, or a position, attitude, or goal We can not force our policy on those outside SAF. Are most of our policies an expression of ethical attitude or goals? A tough ?</p>
<p>It provides guidance</p>
<p>A statement that frames, approaches, comments, tackles, explains, critiques an issue from forest science perspective with the intent of interjecting forest science considerations into a particular dialogue.</p>
<p>It should be both of the other choices.</p>
<p>A position statement is a statement of policy</p>
<p>So that we are perceived as more than just a group of individuals going in what ever direction that garners the most voices at that moment in time</p>
<p>This is a difficult distinction. I prefer the first option, wherein policy statements are governing documents that regulate the behavior of members, creating an enforceable standard of performance. This will provide a more cohesive group identity and serve as a better marketing tool.</p>
<p>A position statement could be either a policy or a "statement of fact", depending on the issue. Most of the time, I would expect that a Position Statement could be more of a fact based statement describing the scientific facts around an issue, as well as social concerns, etc. It would state how the membership of NESAF feels, and will act.</p>
<p>I am more in agreement with the second than the first statement, but our position statements should reflect more than education. They should reflect our views of issues in which we are involved and consider ourselves among the leaders and experts in knowledge of. This should serve as decision making avenue to policy makers, information and/or education for the media and their audiences.</p>
<p>Position statements are not policy per se, but they inform members and the public on where NESAF stands on certain issues.</p>
<p>A position statement should not be a policy, and for the amount of effort that goes into a position statement it should certainly reach beyond NESAF itself. It should be a clear statement of the stance of forestry professionals within the organization. It should not be a document designed to educate, as the necessary extent of the education will likely get in the way of the actual message. However SAF and NESAF should always be prepared to provide the necessary educational information to support a position statement to people and organizations who want the education as well as an opinion.</p>
<p>Our position statements also serve other purposes (see above).</p>
<p>Well, a position statement could be either or both of the first two statements. Some statements will simply promote sound forestry through education; others will do that but also establish policy to which members should adhere. A rare few could primarily provide guidance to members. (My definition of a forest policy is "a</p>

standard or guideline that an individual, an organization, or a society has chosen to direct behavior towards the accomplishment of a stated goal through the management and use of forest resources.”)
Better to have: Vision; Mission; Strategy. These provide overall guidance, but should not be constantly changing in response to current pressures, politics, or events.
A position statement can, on occasion, be helpful in articulating the “common ground” of the forestry community. It is only useful when there is an outside audience, taking action on a policy issue, that clearly needs that kind of input.
See previous comments
Unsure of purpose
A public statement of what we believe in.
I’d say it’s both – it guides the membership on certain issues and promotes sound forestry through education.
Addresses forestry issues with science and knowledge.
It is just a values statement about a particular issue, adopted by the elected members of the Exec Com. It “governs” nothing because NESAF members are not bound by them.
I’d like to pick “a position statement is not a policy” but often it comes across as policy. Statements come out that aren’t necessarily representative of the entire membership. Or maybe they are, and that’s why lots of people aren’t members. Opposing statements should be allowed just like in the Supreme Court. Or, more discourse should happen before these statements come out so there’s more compromise and input from those that may not entirely agree. Hard to do b/c lots of the opposing views have left the organization. That’s too bad b/c opposing views are healthy and vital to the continued success of a group IMHO.
A position statement is a policy that invites NESAF members and its community to promote sound forestry
Position statements do serve to guide members (as stated in the second answer to this avenue, which I would have checked if this survey allowed multiple answers). They also, perhaps more importantly, tell others what the expert opinion of SAF membership is re: contemporary issues. They have the potential to influence policy at multiple levels of government: local to national or international.
A position statement is not a policy, rather it is a statement that promotes the development of sound forestry policies.
Important in both respects described above.
It is very difficult to get our diverse membership to decide on policy.
I would hope that these statements tell the public more than they tell the members.
They serve no purpose
It depends. If the position is related to ethical forestry practices, then I think it should govern NESAF membership. If it is more directed towards a political policy that benefits the forest industry, then it is more of a statement.
Position statement is a short term policy statement. They are for matters of immediate concern and generally of short term duration because the CONCERN changes over time.
Can’t quite make out of the difference between the two options.
Generally a position statement represents our professional consensus on a particular issue. Usually based in science and consistent with professional values.

A position statement is a policy that provides guidance to NESAF membership and informs the public where NESAF stands on important natural resource/forest/forestry related issues...	
It provides our ( foresters )perspective on sound forestry matters	
See statement above: Position Statements allow NESAF to assert leadership on important issues, influence public policy and bring value to members. How does a position statement “govern” NESAF membership? Maybe they provide ☐ and direction, hopefully they promote sound forestry.	
I cannot comment since I haven’t read one.	
A position statement should not “govern” the membership	
Total Responses	48

Text responses to the questions:

- (1) “How do you feel members should be involved in the position statement development process?”
- (2) “How can our Policy Committee best serve its members?”
- (3) “To what extent do you agree or disagree that NESAF should have a position statement on each of the following issues?.”

New England is very densely populated and our landscapes are becoming even more urbanized. NESAF should have policies that relate to issues all along the urban, suburban, rural forest continuum. NESAF should have a policy that looks at how will we have a forest to manage in 2050? What will the quality of that forest be? Why are we so slow to join the conservation community in calling for bold forest conservation to protect the stage?

Forest biodiversity. NESAF should be more vocal about this issue, which was hot in the 90s but is fading now that climate change is so prominent. The negative trends noticed back then have not ceased, we just aren't spending as much time trying to work on them.

Point to remember is that each Chapter or Division has equal opportunity to craft a position statement that may better reflect that group's viewpoint without being in conflict with NESAF or National SAF

Invasive species, pests, and other forest health threats - we need to be leaders in the public's eye on these issues.

See Above comments on forest use for a major source of the Nation's Energy

I selected other for the last 3 questions so here goes. For the first question there are issues that are developing and dynamic that should go before the membership. There are other issues that are just too immediate that our NESAF officials should handle. All should be reviewed by the divisions EC's or PC's. Members should be allowed and solicited to serve on committees for topics of their expertise or interest. All of our pc's should serve on other committees, it is a great way to network, give our input and stay in the loop. in regard to what we should have positions on: I thought we had one on local forest regulation, (I think I wrote it. [Another person] wrote one on wilderness, it could be expanded. Carbon and climate change are an evolving science and although we can't expect more than Milktoast for a position we probably should be working on something keeping in mind that serving pabulum to a legislator when others are trying to serve meat and potatoes can be embarrassing. i think highgrading is one we should stay right away from. issues like highgrading involve factors other than science like politics and markets. Science doesn't always mix with politics and markets.

Whence healthy, vigorous, balanced (age class/diversity) forests. Whence economic benefits of mgmt, for communities, taxes, employment, individuals? Whence risk reduction (fire, invasives, ice/wind storms) via sound mgmt? Any wildlife out in the forest, and effects of mgmt/lack of? There needn't be a position

statement re all things forest(ry), but some visible, constant message of values/benefits of applied forestry, v "wild land", conversion, risk, etc. has not been well addressed by any forestry group in ways that truly inform, thus motivate, forest owners, much less joe sixpack & policy makers. The public perception of foresters for managed forests must get beyond the 'special interest' mire.

13 topics listed-- how many are covered in a NESAF of Nat policy or posit statement. Is there merit in addressing all? Has the committee time to address all. Should select some priorities and have sessions at annual meeting for open discussion and see if a consensus can be reached. The debate may be the most valuable [educational] experience. Any position statement should have a short summary, - 1 par, about 200 words or less.

NESAF statements should focus on regional issues, many of these are national or global and could best be addressed by the national SAF. While all these issues affect the region, and NESAF input would be beneficial, I am not sure these larger issues are best addressed through position statements.

The need for position statements is governed in part by social and political concerns. For example, a statement supporting strong federal and state forest management programs is need when such programs are threatened. A statement on carbon sequestration is needed when policy makers may consider carbon sequestration issues and when federal and state lawmakers and bureaucrats might consider laws and regulations relating to sequestration.

Position statement on adequate and comprehensive forest regulations at the State level. This to (1) eliminate/reduce local regulations which conflict across municipal boundaries and are not silviculturally sound, and (2) improve our professionalism. I work in regulated and non-regulated states - those with forest practices acts, etc., have far superior forest management activities going on. (Did the forest practices acts push to bad one across state lines?) It's the activities of poor foresters/loggers (high grading, bad skid trail locations, etc.) that are taking the profession down and causing the negative public opinion. I was once against regulations but now support them as I've seen the "good, bad and the ugly,"

By forest roads if you mean roadless areas then yes, we need one -strongly agree.

ALL statements should include brief pros and cons; together with a Preferred position; ie High grading & clearcutting have major cons, but it is still a landowners right, and possibly the only option given prevailing market conditions!!! assuming no major off property impacts. Simply taking high minded, science only, black & white based positions will marginalize our organization; economic and people realities must be incorporated and tolerated. It doesn't mean we wont strive & advocate for the highest standards where possible!

On many of these issues the position may be as simple as supporting development of best management practices (e.g. herbicide use, biomass harvesting, clearcutting), whereas for important pieces of legislation such as Farm Bill Programs it is probably more important to have a timely position statement (as well as a committee devoted to Farm Bill issues)

In general, I think we as foresters can come to some agreement on all relevant forestry issues even if our policy is simply to state that there is more than one solution and we agree to disagree within the boundaries of what we hopefully can deem to be "good forestry".

Water quality issues that involve forests and watersheds, timber harvesting restrictions, tax policies on forest land, and federal programs that affect forests, harvesting or forest land owners. I also think we should be developing policy statements on wildlife management programs that affect forest ecosystem. In the next question you ask about a policy on high grading. Before a policy is developed for that, I would urge NESAF to very clearly define their view of what high grading is and the options available in New England.

Not sure what statements NESAF would make on such topics as Forest Roads and fire and some of the others. If SAF has statements on any of these they probably don't need to be changed. While there are regional

<p>differences I would think most policy statements would be general enough to pertain country wide. Also not sure why State/Fed is separated from private management. While working as a public employee you are beholden to more and varied stake holders good management is still good management.</p>
<p>What happened to wildlife, watershed, soils, BMP's?</p>
<p>We should only develop policies when there is a clear outside audience. Developing shelf-documents is not helpful, since these policies tend to be a product of the current times, and become obsolete quickly.</p>
<p>Forest land conservation, protecting drinking water supplies.</p>
<p>Public policy is enacted at the state and federal level so NESAF developing policy statements at the regional level results in statements with no policy usefulness. SAF policy statements should be developed at the national and state level only...</p>
<p>Any contentious issues on which there is sound science that NESAF can draw upon to support its position. Some topics, like carbon sequestration, are still not fully understood re: issues like impacts of management, below ground carbon storage, life cycle analysis, etc. NESAF should not have position statements based on opinion.</p>
<p>1. Forest land taxation and open space laws 2. Payment of public funds to private forest owners for ecosystem services that are "public goods."</p>
<p>A position statement on the incorporation of active forest management as a conservation tool (e.g. part of a long-term or permanent conservation restrictions/easements) may be useful to inform &amp; encourage private landowners and/or conservation organizations, potentially keeping private forestland from being "locked down" in perpetuity.</p>
<p>As needed positions on topical issues.</p>
<p>Professional licensing.</p>
<p>National has statements on most of these already. A NESAF position would have to be consistent with national with additional information that adds a regional perspective. To be effective, we need timely position statements that we can use as a basis for communicating with policy makers. There is no need for many of the above unless they are on the current agenda of a decision making body or office.</p>
<p>Any issue that impacts the health of the forested resource</p>
<p>Perhaps target the most pressing issues with position statements, where we (NESAF) wishes to reach a wider audience on the role of professional forest management (e.g., the role of keeping working forests on the landscape, invasive insects/disease, conversion of forests to other uses, etc.).</p>
<p>Forest practices regulation, state forester licensing, etc.</p>
<p>Local and Regional Stumpage Trend</p>
<p>Invasive exotic organisms.....These will dictate the future of our forests more than anything else mentioned above. We must aggressively address these organisms and everyone needs to be aware of them and how to manage them in ALL ecosystems. There is no greater threat to our forests than the potential impact of these organisms.....PERIOD.</p>
<p>NESAF Leadership should draft position statements with more rigorous attention to the meaning and nuance of language and policy implications. There have been some very sloppy recent drafts on recent climate change and high-grading statements. These should be very carefully considered and provided to state chapters for review and buy-in before being adopted by default or through the acquiescence of silence. High-grading is very complex and a volatile, divisive topic, no doubt.</p>

Other means other topics not listed, as in I believe there should be position statements in others.

I believe NESAF would be best served by utilizing national position statements. These can serve as the core or foundation for issues most relevant to this region. Whenever possible our position statements should build on and or clarify how/why the national position relates to forest practice/policy in this region.

I also think that there should be a piece on logging, The actual practice of it since many foresters have never experienced the profession of logging.

Some of these are divisive issue and a statement will no be able to represent the diversity of professional opinion.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that NESAF should have a position statement on each of the following issues?

Issue	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Local Regulation of Forest Practices	90	66	24	6	4
Farm Bill Programs	41	73	61	10	4
Wilderness and Recreation Values	52	85	43	4	6
Forest Roads	59	81	38	10	3
Federal and State Forest Management	70	77	32	7	3
Private Forest Management	75	77	26	4	6
Herbicide Use	52	98	33	3	3
Biomass Harvesting	80	90	14	2	3
Clearcutting	87	84	15	0	3
Carbon Sequestration	57	88	36	3	4
Wildland Fire	38	68	57	14	7
High-Grading	89	69	20	5	6
Climate Change	49	72	45	10	9
Other	19	7	11	0	3

#### Additional comments

NESAF's position on high grading should reflect the fact that it is ultimately the landowner's choice to do what they want with the property, as they are the taxpayers. However, every effort should be made to provide information to the landowner on the consequences of their actions.

Thanks to you all for your continued efforts

I encourage NESAF to be the bridge and boundary spanner it needs to be. Consider who else out there will

"own" the spirit of forestry for NE, who will help to galvanize the champions for forests in NE? If not SAF, then who?

I agree that we elect representatives to formulate policy and need to be supportive, but there will be occasional issues that a policy committee should know are extremely controversial, and in those cases broader support should be sought prior to issuing statements.

While I would support a position statement on high-grading, I do not support SAF controlling what a member does on their clients' property. High grading is only immoral if the forester misleads the landowner as good forestry. If high grading is an option where the landowner needs immediate funds then that is between the forester and client. However, it is the SAF members obligation that the client understands the likely outcome of such as practice.

On the above question, it would depend on the statement. This is also why I had so many neither agree or disagree, I might believe we should have a position statement, but might be in total disagreement with the statement drafted.

Way to go

With the vast need for use of low grade forest growth for energy, there is absolutely no justification for high grading of our forests...anywhere.

There is potential here for a lot of work for a few people, and volunteer efforts suffer from burn-out. It would be too bad for NESAF to rise to an exalted level of public trust and confidence only to drop the ball for lack of continued participation.

I think NESAF policy has a role but i think that policy at the state level is more important and influential. i think that anything NESAF and national policy can do to help state policy is more important. Thanks for taking the initiative to making SAF more relevant

Way to go Pete, good survey

I hope many members weigh in to help with a sense of how our great group can be more effective. I believe addressing state/New England issues is more effective that the national fire/climate drum (even I'm getting tired of it). Address of employment, compatibility of values w/ mgmt, risks facing NE (& forests), and the tried/true "quality of life" i.e. clean air, water, scenery, outdoor rec, will find more ears, and shoulders, here than will national concerns/issues. Thanks for the opportunity to blab!

Re highgrading- one may question how the practice may mesh with owner goals or obj-- max income and sell bare land or let it regenerate over time. For all these questions there may not always be an unqualified agree or disagree answer. I would look forward to some debate-discussion sessions at our next NESAF meeting

THANKS for trying to improve. We need it.

The previous question re: would I support a NESAF position on high-grading depends on what that position is. I support the idea of NESAF dedicating the time and effort to forming a formal position, but I may not agree with it. Thanks for putting out this questionnaire, I appreciate that you want more feedback from the members.

The high - grading issue will be tricky. We work to carry out the objectives of the landowner. If that includes high grading, how do we handle the conflict between our commitment to managing the resource with those objectives?

The last question regarding high grading, I would have to see the specific position statement before knowing whether I would support or not support such a position. Policy statements are different from position statements -- position statements are specific to a particular instance, e.g. a specific forest plan, or legislative bill, or an agency policy, whereas policy statements are for issues of a broader context

My support for a P.S. on highgrading would depend on what the Statement said.
RE; Policy serving members. You have a tough job, but an important one!
No way to go back and/or change previous answers.
The high grading issue is a tough one. Although I have done few if any high grades, and would never given the choice I still have strong support for private property rights and as much as I dislike them still feel it should be the right of the landowner as long as it is an informed decision and this is where I feel many private foresters (and landowners) cave in too easily for the quick/easy buck. I have also seen many instances over the years where foresters have used the excuse of lack of markets to justify some form of high grading. One of the things that has really disillusioned me with our profession (here in MA anyway) is the number of foresters that are against biomass harvesting. It is the best and most economical way to regenerate a low quality or degraded stand, especially softwoods, and now that it is becoming a reliable way around here to move the junk we were all crying about 20 years ago 1/2 these guys are fighting it! Don't even have to worry about the preservationists shutting us down we're doing a fine job ourselves of dividing and being conquered.
In regard to climate change, I am fearful that Foresters may prematurely jump on this political bandwagon.
The definition of highgrading is very subjective, and is driven by local markets. If there is no market for low grade wood, how can landowner make money without being accused of highgrading?
In response to the last question, I would only be supportive of a NESAF position statement on high-grading if the statement met with my own personal beliefs regarding high-grading.
It depends on what the statement says. The original statement was highly charged. I think it is important that position statements are effective if they are based in our science, and not in rhetoric or opinions.
I presume the position statement on high-grading would be in opposition to the practice.
If we don't oppose high grading we are killing the forest industry more than it is now relative to growing and harvesting quality solid wood. All these inactions are turning the industry into a bunch of biomass FARMERS. Throw away your degrees!!
I don't know what the position would be - how can I say if I would support it??
Pete - I have seen all the effort that has gone into policy statement development and I just don't believe there is a role for NESAF in this given where public policy is enacted. If NESAF ever had the resources to hire a full-time lobbyist to cover public policy making in the 6 states, then policy statements might be useful in that work. For now, the best place to develop them is at the state (or national) levels.
I would support a NESAF position on high-grading if it came out against the practice.
Interactions with so-called environmental groups can be interesting and worthwhile.
I think a position statement on what foresters should say to clients who want to high grade could be useful, but I am reluctant to see NESAF say private owners cannot high grade if they choose to do so after being informed as to the consequences.
Don't be afraid to do something different.
Thanks for the opportunity to participate.
I would be in support of a position state on high-grading but I would like to read and comment if need be, because there are many different types of highgrading cuts that may not necessarily be bad.
I would like to actually read the position statement before actually agreeing to support the statement or not.
The HG statement is long overdue. Unfortunately, recent versions were so diluted that they were not

particularly useful.
Thanks for the effort to get the word out to members and non members.
Footnote: I would be supportive of a carefully worded statement on high-grading only. In the context of forest management, I am less concerned with poor-quality harvest management than I am with conversion of forests to non-forest uses. And so should the public be.
Saying I would support a NESAF position statement on high-grading is NOT the same as saying I would support any NESAF position statement on high-grading. I'm simply saying I support the idea that we should HAVE one.
I would support discussion of high grading as a policy/position statement issue. Alternatively, a position statement as an informational tool that discusses logging practices that lead to high grading, including the economic reasons that it happens could be a good idea.
My answer to the last question might depend on what the position statement says about high-grading.
I'm long retired from professional activity, but I'm impressed by the efforts of active SAF and NESAF members to widen the influence of informed practitioners.
This was a very impressive survey method, clearly someone took some time to create this. Now what is a position statement for those of us that didn't know?
I think the Policy Committee should take advantage of any and all opportunities to comment on policy issues and inform policy makers of science-based forestry.

Text responses from the question: "What other organizations are you a member of?"

Adirondack Mountain Club	1
Alpha Zeta	1
American Association for Advancement of Science	1
American Chestnut Foundation	1
American Phytopathological Society	1
American Phytopathological Society	1
American Society of Mammalogists	1
American Water Works Association	1
Association of Consulting Foresters of America	2
Botanical Society of America	1
Canadian Institute of Forestry	4
Chai	1
Connecticut River Joint Commissioners	1
Connecticut River Watershed Council	1
Connecticut Tree Protective Association	1
Conservation Biology	1
Council on Forest Engineering	2
Ducks Unlimited	1
Ecological Landscapers Association	1



Ecological Society of America	7
Forest Fuels	1
Forest Guild	27
Forest History Society	1
Forest Products Society	1
Forest Resources Association	2
Forest Society of Maine	1
Greater Lovell Land Trust	1
International Association for Society and Natural Resources	2
International Society of Arboriculture	9
International Society of Tropical Foresters	1
International Union of Forest Research Organizations	1
Josselyn Botanical Society	1
Lant Trust Alliance	2
Maine Arborists Association	2
Maine Association of Wetland Scientists	1
Maine Entomological Society	1
Maine Forest Products Council	5
Maine Hardwood Association	1
Maine Professional Guides Association	1
Maine Project Learning Tree	1
Maple Producers	1
Massachusetts Arborist's Association	1
Massachusetts Association of Professional Foresters	9
Massachusetts Wood Producers Association	1
National Arbor Day Foundation	1
National Association for Interpretation	2
National Hardwood Lumber Association	1
Natural Resources Conservation Service	1
Nature Conservancy	1
New Brunswick Registered Professional Foresters	1
New England Association of Environmental Biologists	1
New England Regional Council on Forest Engineering	2
New Hampshire Arborist Association	1
New Hampshire Association Of Natural Resource Consultants	1
New Hampshire Timber Harvesting Council	1
New Hampshire Timberland Owners Association	7
New York Forest Owners Association	2
Northeast Association of Forest Watershed Managers	1

Northern Loggers Association	2
Professional Appraisal	1
Quebec Order of Forest Engineers	1
Quebec's Forest Engineers Association	1
RABQSA	1
Raptor Research Foundation	1
RI Forest Conservators Organization	1
RI Tree Farm Committee	1
SAR	1
SES	1
Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine	7
Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests	2
Society of Soil Scientists of Northern New England	1
Society of Tropical Foresters	1
Society of Wetland Scientists	3
Soil Science Society of America	1
Sullivan County Conservation District	1
The Wildlife Society	6
Torrey Botanical Society	1
Trappers Association	1
Tree Farm	3
USDA Cheshire County Soil Conservation District	1
Utility Arborists Association	2
<b>Responses indicating "None"</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>230</b>