



# NORTH DAKOTA FOREST SERVICE

*"To care for, protect and improve forest and natural resources to enhance the quality of life for present and future generations."*

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VP Agricultural Affairs

November 29, 2017

SBARE

Attn: Keith Peltier, Chair  
NDSU Dept. 7520  
PO Box 6050  
Fargo ND 58108-6050

Dear SBARE Chairman Peltier and State Board Members,

The purpose of the ND Agricultural Experiment Stations and the NDSU Extension Service is twofold. First, to research solutions to negate adverse impacts on crops, livestock, and the livelihood of the citizens of North Dakota. Second, to provide education, resources, and strategies that will improve their lives and strengthen the agricultural economy of the state.

These two entities, along with the NDSU-North Dakota Forest Service, share a responsibility to facilitate the exchange of ideas and information between the various stakeholders who influence the future of the state's agricultural and related natural resources.

The North Dakota Forest Service engaged its partners to develop the ***ND Forest Action Plan*** to address critical forestry needs. Our forest resources face tremendous pressures in the northern Great Plains and two of the key priority issues identified in the plan include: (1) mitigating invasive tree and forest pests/diseases (Dutch elm disease, emerald ash borer, pine wilt disease) and (2) enhancing species diversity to reduce vulnerability to biotic and abiotic pressures. To address these issues, investments in research directed toward tree improvement are greatly needed. Improved tree cultivars are desired by many forestry/horticulture stakeholders, including the North Dakota Nursery and Greenhouse Association and the North Dakota Urban and Community Forestry Association.

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Tree improvement research is a major need for sustaining North Dakota's forests, conservation tree plantings, and community tree resources. Trees enhance rural vitality and quality of life by providing key ecological services for residents, farmers, and ranchers. Field windbreaks reduce soil erosion during years of drought, reduce water evaporation from adjacent cropland and increase crop yields. Tree plantings stabilize streambanks, filter water runoff from adjacent agricultural lands, protect livestock from inclement weather events, provide wildlife habitat, and protect rural homes and roads from wind and snow accumulation. Trees within communities provide many benefits including: reduced winter heating and summer cooling costs, ecological services (CO<sup>2</sup> sequestration and storm water runoff mitigation), wind and snow protection, and enhanced quality of life.

The benefits from education outreach, long-term tree improvement and forest health research include:

- Greater number of cultivars and increased tree diversity with improved cold hardiness, pest/disease resistance, tolerance to unpredictable weather-related events and enhanced form/growth rates for the northern Great Plains.
- A more diverse and resilient green infrastructure for small and large communities, farmers, and ranchers.
- New economic opportunities for local retail and production nurseries and enhanced ecological services to the citizens of North Dakota.

We urge your consideration of the many beneficial impacts the ND Agricultural Experiment Stations and the NDSU Extension Service provide across the state and encourage you to maintain the financial resources needed to continue their success.

Sincerely,



Larry A. Kotchman  
State Forester

LK/gf