

Chapter 1. Introduction

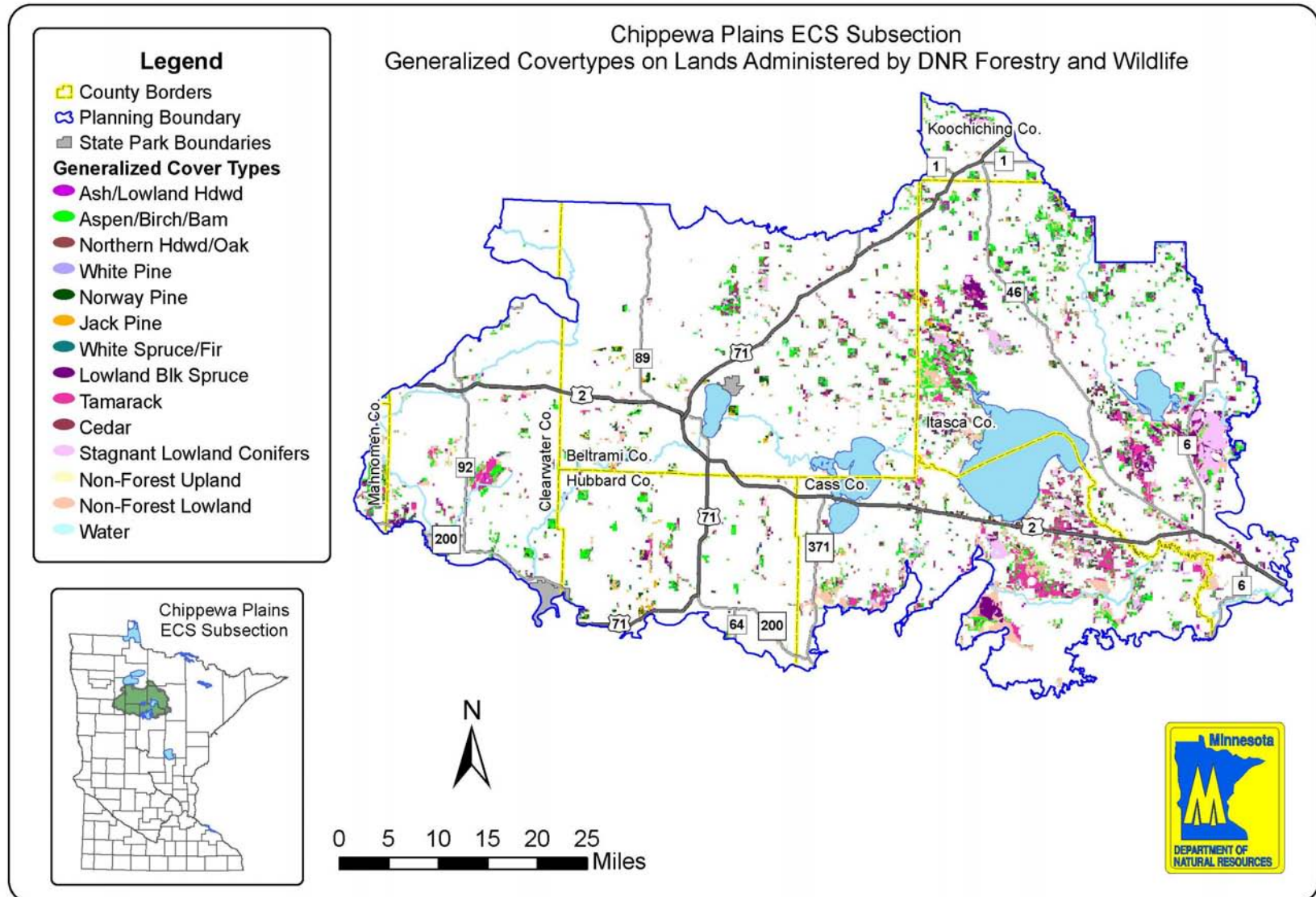
This Subsection Forest Resource Management Plan (SFRMP) process considers state forest lands administered by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) divisions of Forestry and Fish and Wildlife in the *Chippewa Plains-Pine Moraines and Outwash Plains* subsection landscape units. These two units cover approximately 4.6 million acres in an area from near Deer River on the east to Detroit Lakes on the west, and from Camp Ripley on the south to Kelliher on the north. (See Map 1.1a and Map 1.1b).

1.1 Planning Area Description

Recreation, forestry, and tourism are major uses of land in these two subsections. Public agencies administer 42 percent of the land with the state portion being 682,986 acres or 14 percent. Approximately 429,229 acres (9 percent) of the state land is timberland that will be considered for wood products production and other resource management objectives in this plan. Other state lands include state parks and non-timberlands such as bogs and brush lands that will not be considered. As shown on Table 1.1a and Figure 1.1a the federal government owns 12 percent (560,314 acres) that are managed by the U.S. Forest Service as part of the Chippewa National Forest. Becker, Beltrami, Cass, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Hubbard, Itasca, Koochiching, and Wadena counties own and manage 16 percent (732,079 acres). Private lands comprise 54 percent (2,526,459 acres), of that, industry owns 3 percent and tribal governments own 1 percent.

Map 1.1a

Chippewa Plains ECS Generalized Cover Types

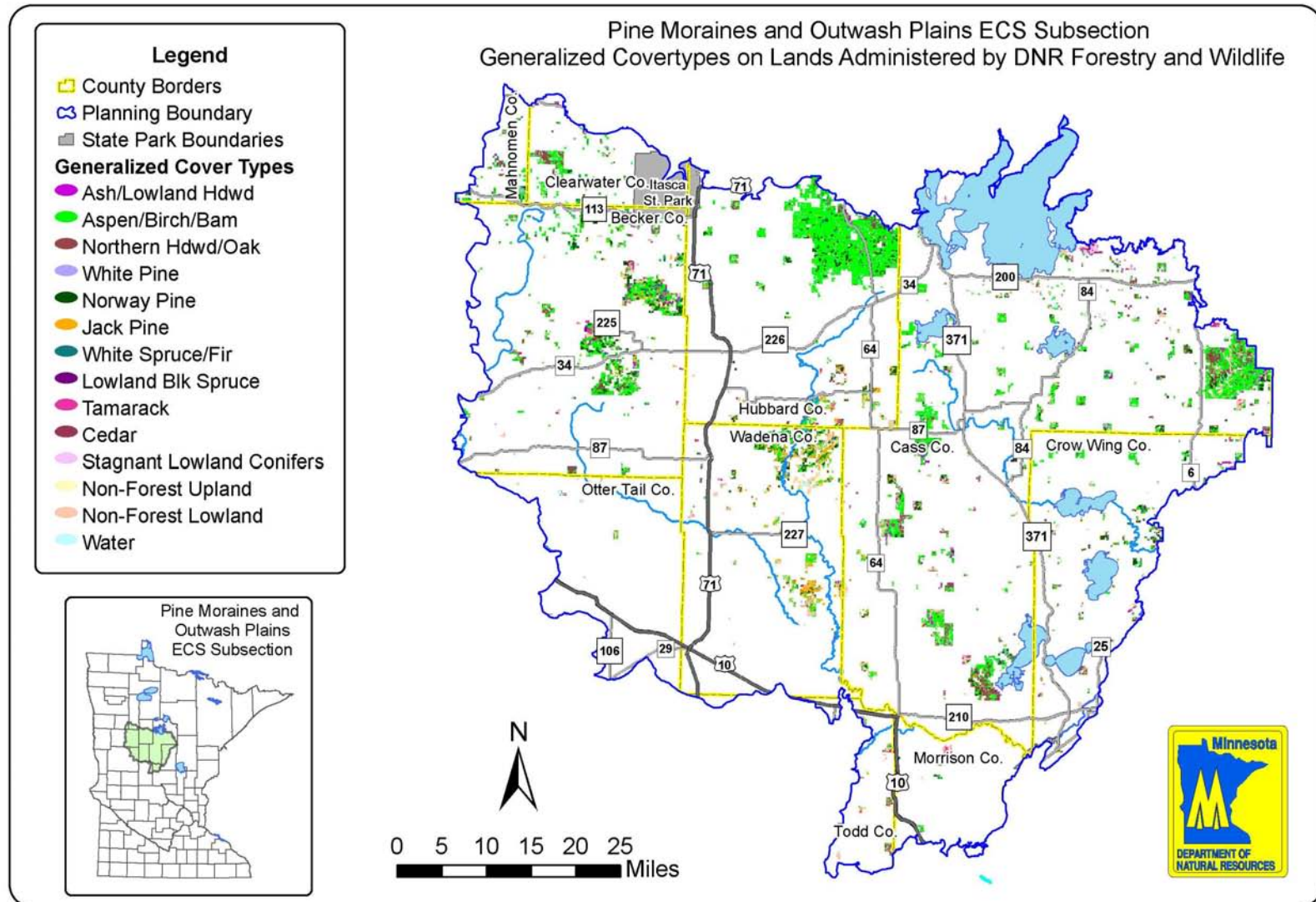


Note: The maps have been reduced and printed in grayscale in this document. It is recommended that these maps be viewed at a larger scale and in color. The colored maps and this report can be viewed at :

http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/forestry/subsection/cp_pmop/index.html

Map 1.1b

Pine Moraines and Outwash Plains ECS Generalized Cover Types



Note: The maps have been reduced and printed in grayscale in this document. It is recommended that these maps be viewed at a larger scale and in color. The colored maps and this report can be viewed at :

http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/forestry/subsection/cp_pmop/index.html

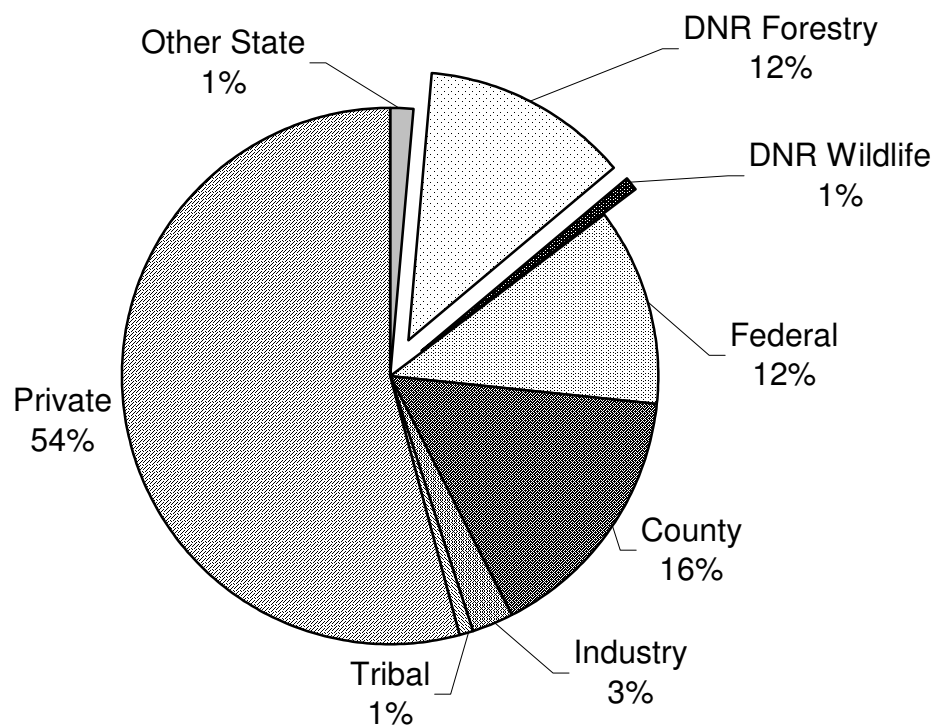
Table 1.1a Land Ownership – Total Acres by Subsection

	Chippewa Plains	Pine Moraines and Outwash Plains	Two Subsections Total
Private	854,295	1,672,164	2,526,459
Federal	427,607	132,707	560,314
Tribal	4,979	26,742	31,721
State – All	340,001	342,985	682,986
Forestry	314,265	264,546	578,811
Wildlife	6,031	30,238	36,269
Industry	33,856	89,334	123,190
County	288,051	444,028	732,079
Total	1,948,789	2,707,960	4,656,749

Source: 1976 to 1998 Minnesota DNR GAP Stewardship---“All Ownership Types” data.

*Includes all lands administered by units of DNR including Forestry, Wildlife, Fisheries, Parks, Trails and Waterways, and Ecological Services. SFRMP only covers Forestry- and Wildlife-administered lands.

**Figure 1.1a Land Ownership - Chippewa Plains - Pine Moraines and Outwash Plains
4,656,749 Total Acres**



Based on the Gap Analysis Program (GAP) classification completed by the DNR Division of Forestry using satellite imagery of all lands in the subsection, 52 percent of the land area (nonwater) is covered by forest in the CP and 50 percent in the PMOP. Five percent of the CP land area is cultivated with 11 percent in the PMOP. Based on CSA forest inventory data, the primary cover types across both subsections are aspen/balm of Gilead and birch, making up approximately 48 percent of the total forested lands.

1.2 Scope of Subsection Forest Resource Management Plan (SFRMP)

Subsection Forest Resource Management Plan (SFRMP)

A SFRMP is a DNR plan for vegetation management on forestlands administered by the DNR Divisions of Forestry, and Fish and Wildlife. Vegetation management includes actions that affect the composition and structure of forestlands, such as timber harvesting, thinning, prescribed burning, and reforestation. The geographic area covered by these plans is defined by Ecological Classification System (ECS) subsections. In response to growing public interest in DNR timber management planning, the DNR SFRMP process was developed to provide a more standardized, formal process and opportunities for increased public involvement. In addition, it is based at the subsection level of the DNR's ecological classification system (ECS) rather than DNR administrative areas as in the past (i.e., DNR Forestry Area boundaries). The SFRMPs do consider the condition and management of forest lands not owned by the DNR, but will only propose forest management direction and actions for DNR lands.

Consistent with state policy (Minnesota Statutes 89A), the SFRMP process will pursue the sustainable management, use, and protection of the state's forest resources to achieve the state's economic, environmental, and social goals.

The SFRMP planning process is divided into four steps. In Steps 1 and 2, the subsection planning team prepares information to assess the current forest resource conditions in the subsection and identify forest resource management issues that will be addressed in the subsection plan. In Step 3 (preparation of the Draft CP-PMOP SFRMP), the subsection planning team finalizes the issues and develops general directions and strategies to address these issues. The strategies are used to develop cover type management recommendations, stand selection criteria, stand treatment levels, 10-year stand exam list, and new access needs list.

Step 4 (Final CP-PMOP SFRMP) is preparation of the final plan following public review of the draft plan, and incorporating changes resulting from comments received into the Final CP-PMOP SFRMP.

There are two opportunities for public input during the SFRMP process. First in review of the *Preliminary Issues and Assessment document*; and second, review and comment on the *Draft CP-PMOP SFRMP* which includes forest management strategies, desired future forest conditions, and the 10-year stand exam and new access needs lists.

ECS Subsections

The DNR has developed an ECS as a tool to help identify, describe, and map ecosystems (see Appendix A *Ecological Classification System*). ECS units are defined by climatic, geologic, hydrologic, topographic, soil, and vegetation data. The DNR ECS divides the state into six levels of ecological units, each level nested together within the next higher level. Subsections are the third level down in the ECS hierarchy in Minnesota. There are 17 forested subsections in the state, ranging in size from 339,285 to 3,657,011 acres.

Goals for the Planning Effort

While the planning process will produce many tangible products, such as assessment information, issues, and strategies, the end result of the planning process will be development of the CP-PMOP SFRMP including several key products, among them:

- **Desired Future Forest Composition (DFFC) goals:** The goals will include long-term (50 years or more) and short-term (10-years) desired changes in the structure and composition of DNR forest lands in the subsection. Composition goals could include the amount of various cover types, age-class distribution of cover types, and their geographic distribution across the subsection. DFFC goals for state forest lands will be developed from assessment information, issues, the general direction identified in response to the issues, and strategies to implement the desired management direction.
- **List of DNR forest stands to be examined for treatment over the next 10-year period.** SFRMPs will identify forest stands on DNR Forestry- and Wildlife administered lands that are proposed for treatment (e.g., harvest, thinning, regeneration, and re-inventory) over the 10-year plan implementation period. Forest stands will be selected using criteria developed to begin moving DNR

forest lands toward the long-term DFFCs. Examples of possible criteria include stand age and location; soils; site productivity; and size, number, and species of trees. Many decisions and considerations go into developing these criteria and the list of stands proposed for treatment. Examples include 1) identifying areas to be managed as older forest or extended rotation forest (ERF), 2) identifying areas to be managed at normal rotation age, 3) identifying areas for various sizes of patch management, 4) management of riparian areas and visually sensitive travel corridors, 5) age and cover type distributions, and 6) regeneration, thinning, and prescribed burning needs. Decisions will be made based upon the management activities (including no action) that will best move the forest landscape toward the DFFC goals for state forest lands.

Who Develops SFRMPs?

SFRMP planning team members include DNR forestry, wildlife, ecological services, and other agency staff. A list of SFRMP team members for the Chippewa Plains - Pine Moraines and Outwash Plains subsections is included in this plan. These planning teams have primary responsibility for the work and decision making involved in developing the subsection plans. Decision-making by the team is through an informed consent process. Managers of adjacent county, federal, tribal, and industrial forestlands may be invited to provide information about the condition of their forest lands and future management directions. As much as possible data relating to all ownerships are used in the planning process.

SFRMP and Minnesota Forest Resources Council Regional Landscape Planning

The recommended desired outcomes, goals, and strategies developed for the North Central Landscape Region by the North Central Regional Landscape Committee under the direction of the Minnesota Forest Resources Council (MFRC) Landscape Program were considered in developing this SFRMP. Members of the CP-PMOP Planning Team participated as members of the North Central Regional Landscape Committee. By considering the recommendations from the *North Central Landscape Region Plan*, the decisions for management of DNR-administered lands incorporate recommendations from a broader landscape perspective across all ownerships and assist in cooperation across ownerships in this larger landscape area.

1.3 SFRMP Process Overview

Table 1.3a outlines the steps in the DNR SFRMP process. Figure 1.3a shows the opportunities for public involvement during the SFRMP planning process.

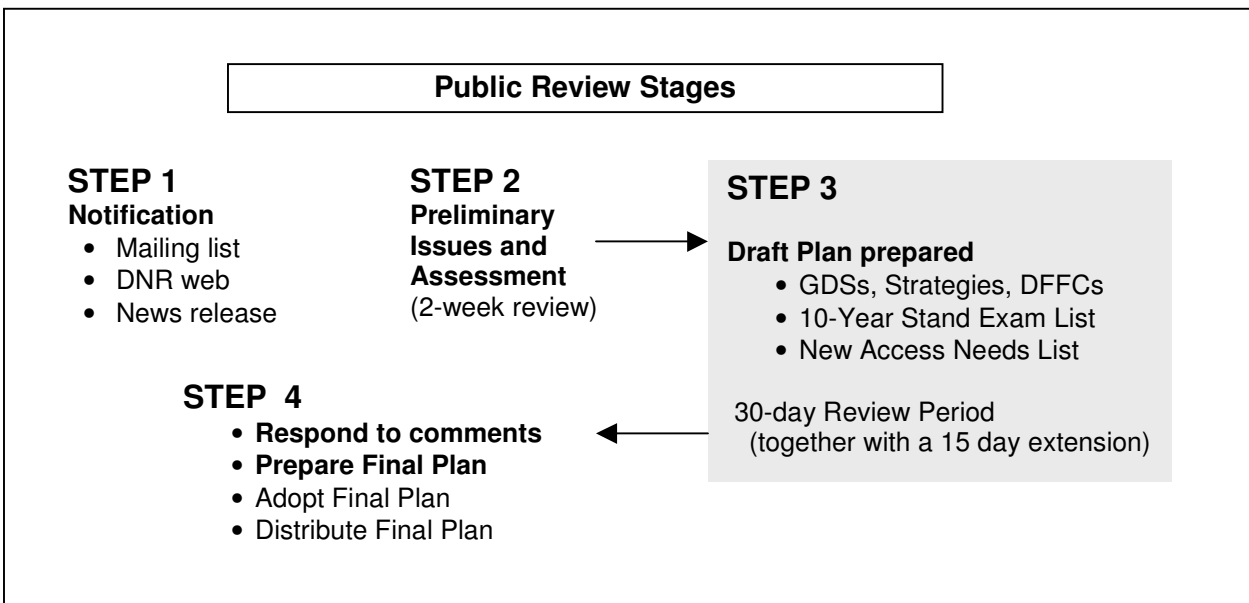
Table 1.3a SFRMP Process Overview

Step 1	Initiating the Planning Process <ul style="list-style-type: none">• DNR forms interdisciplinary team for the subsection(s).• DNR staff assembles base assessment information.• Web page is established for the subsection on the DNR Web site.• DNR develops mailing list of public/stakeholders.• Public is informed that the planning process is beginning in the subsection, the estimated schedule for the planning process, and how and when they can be involved.
Step 2	Preliminary Issue and Assessment Identification <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subsection team adjusts and supplements the base resource assessment information for the subsection.• Team identifies the preliminary issues to be addressed in the plan.• DNR distributes <i>Preliminary Issues and Assessment</i> document for public review and input.
Step 3	SFRMP Draft Plan including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• DNR finalizes the list of Issues to be addressed in the plan based on public input from Step 2.• Subsection Team develops General Direction Statements (GDSs) in response to the final list of Issues.• Subsection Team and work groups develop Strategies and Desired Future Forest Composition (DFFC) goals consistent with the general direction.• Team develops Draft Plan and stand selection criteria to help identify DNR forest stands for treatment over the 10-year plan implementation period to move toward the DFFC goals.• DNR staff identifies state forest land stands to be considered for treatment over the 10-year plan implementation period (10-Year Stand Exam List).• DNR staff identifies road access needs associated with the list of stands proposed to be treated.• <i>Draft CP-PMOP SFRMP</i> and draft 10-Year Stand Exam List are distributed for public review and comment.
Step 4	Final Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subsection Team summarizes public comments and develops DNR responses.• A summary of comments, responses, and plan revisions are presented to the department for commissioner's approval.• Commissioner approves final plan.• Final Plan is distributed, including summary of public comments and DNR responses.

1.4 Contents of the CP-PMOP SFRMP

In Step 2 of the process, the CP-PMOP Team identified a preliminary list of Issues to be addressed in the plan. These Issues were developed based on the general field knowledge of department staff and forest resource information assembled by the team in the *Preliminary Issues and Assessment* document. The preliminary list of issues was distributed for public review and comment in October 2006. The preliminary list of issues was revised based on input from DNR staff and the public. This revised list of issues is presented in Chapter 2 of this plan as the final list of issues that have been addressed in the CP-PMOP plan.

Figure 1.3a SFRMP Public Involvement Opportunities



This plan contains products developed by the SFRMP CP-PMOP Team for public review as part of Step 3 in the planning process. These products include the final list of issues addressed, general direction statements (GDSs) and strategies to address the issues, desired future forest composition (DFFC) goals, stand selection criteria, cover type management recommendations, responses to public comments received from the *Preliminary Issues and Assessment* document, and the 10-year Stand Exam Lists and New Access Needs Lists.

In Step 3, the CP-PMOP Team, working with technical work groups, developed GDSs and strategies and DFFCs to address the final list of Issues. DFFC goals are most commonly expressed in terms of desired changes in the age-class structure, the amount of various forest types within the subsection, and the geographic distribution of forest types and age-classes across the subsection. The GDSs, strategies and DFFCs developed by the work groups are based on existing DNR policies/mandates, technical expertise from within and outside the planning team, forest resource information from the *Preliminary Issues and Assessment* document and other sources, and public input from Step 2 of the process. Strategies developed to address the various Issues were then examined to identify and group similar strategies, and to resolve strategies that might be contradictory.

GDSs, strategies, DFFC goals were used to develop cover type management recommendations as presented in Chapter 4 of this plan. These cover type management recommendations define proposed criteria to select a pool of forest stands for treatment over the 10-year plan implementation period as identified in Step 3. Stand selection criteria can include: “normal” rotation ages (i.e. ages at which most forest stands will be harvested); extended rotation forest rotation ages (i.e. ages at which stands designated for older forest management will be harvested); potential productivity of the site for timber (i.e., site index); soil types; stand density, or stocking measures (e.g., basal area); tree species composition; brush and ground cover; stand size; stand location; insect and disease occurrence; and other specific criteria needed to address issues. Stand selection criteria presented in the CP-PMOP Plan are those identified by the CP-PMOP Planning Team as best moving DNR forest lands toward the identified DFFC goals for the CP and PMOP subsections.

The CP-PMOP Planning Team summarized and developed responses to public comments received during Step 2 of the overall SFRMP planning process. These responses are included in Chapter 6 of this plan. In Chapter 6 specific references are provided as to where and how comments and concerns were incorporated into the issues, strategies, DFFC goals, or stand selection criteria identified in the plan.