

**Forest Products Society
Visioning and Strategic Planning Listening Session
June 19, 2010**

COMPILED RESULTS

The Forest Products Society (FPS) Board held a "listening session" on June 19, 2010 from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Monona Terrace in Madison, Wisconsin. The listening session was the official launch of a visioning and strategic planning process to help the FPS prepare for the future. The objectives of the session are listed below (*Attachment 1 – Meeting Agenda*).

Objectives:

1. Review and discuss visioning background information.
2. Identify key elements of a future vision for the Forest Products Society.
3. Provide other advice to the FPS Board as they continue the visioning and strategic planning process.

The meeting facilitator offered the following guidelines for discussion among the participants. The group agreed to follow the "participation guidelines" as listed below.

Participation Guidelines

1. Contribute your ideas.
2. Listen to understand.
3. Disagree by stating your idea.
4. Work on behalf of the whole group (build on points of agreement)

After the President and President-Elect made introductory comments, the Executive Vice President presented a preliminary listing of strategic strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats (SWOT). The participants were grouped at four tables of nine participants. The facilitator asked the participants to answer the questions on a worksheet (*Attachment 2 – Future Vision Discussion*). In particular, participants were asked to review the preliminary SWOT and identify any points that needed to be clarified or added and to make any other comments they had regarding the SWOT. A few comments were shared and listed below. The facilitator also collected the worksheets so that all the ideas could be considered.

Suggested clarifications and additions to the SWOT included:

- What is the potential membership by group?
- What is /is not a "forest product"?
- High levels of disorganization
- FPS has never been good at fostering innovation & research
- Shrinking forest products & wood science profession
- Shrinking of academic programs which have fed membership.
- Journal publication has been both a strength and a weakness.
- Constant rate of decline in membership (past 30 years).

- What do customers actually do with our products?
- No mention of other professional organizations/competition.
- Technical aspects of Journal are too broad -- could have added focus in sciences (e.g., chemistry).
- SWOT should have an expanded list of opportunities in technical areas.
- "Forest products" has a bad connotation with many people.
- Young people are not "joiners." They want to "surf" resources, but do not want to support an organization.
- Young people join differently than baby-boomers.

Other comments on the preliminary SWOT.

- Is there a greater sense of urgency now as compared to five years ago?
- Explore unknown areas.
- Explore idea of whether FPS is a client-based or a membership-based organization.
- What is our industry group(s) (scope of academics, industry, government)?
- Not well defined client or audience.
- Huge cultural and generation shifts are occurring (demographics) and there are fewer years within the generational groupings.
- The FPS needs to look at a comprehensive restructuring.

After a short break, the facilitator asked the participants to imagine it is January 2014 (three and a half years from now). He asked that they imagine reading a feature article about the Forest Products Society and its recent transformation. He then asked the members to silently respond to the following questions:

1. What does the article highlight about the Society's mission?
2. What does it say about the Society's members and key partners?
3. What does it tell you about the difference the Society is making in the world?

The facilitator then asked the members to work in their four small groups to generate an unduplicated list of their best descriptions of the preferred future. The groups produced the following lists.

Group A List:

- Brings together disparate areas of science.
- Linking of lignocellulosic organizations & people.
- Better understanding by public of the need to use wood & natural fiber.
- Expert in transferring wood/natural fiber technology/info to the world.
- Rebranding of what FPS is and does for relevance and services.
- Addressing misperceptions of public of societal needs/demands.
- Major players in policy and standards development (where FPS members are recognized as key resource).
- Help to achieve a sustainable economy.
- Recognition of FPS as a relevant organization by members and non-members.
- More wood & natural fibers are used.
- Reorganize members to include other organizations and areas of interest.

- Source of innovative educational methods.
- Shaping the future of the world's sustainable forest-biomaterials & bioenergy.
- An endless source of "creamy chocolate pudding."
- Plays a pivotal role in facilitating cooperation / coordination of biomaterials industry.
- Widely recognized as linking two greens: money and environment (FPS has become a leading environmental group).
- Society has a truly international association.
- A vibrant organization of expert interaction with colleagues.
- A go-to source of bioproducts information by media.

Group B List

- Self-funded, web-based, relevant, high quality, and current.
- Trusted source of technical wood and wood products information.
- FPS is a globally recognized source for information for promoting wood and forest products as a "great" (sustainable, etc.) natural resource.
- Encouraging new professional is wood products profession on a global & multidisciplinary scale.
- Wood is generally accepted as a preferred green material -- as defined by global supply chains.
- Less non-renewable (fossil fuel based products/materials).
- Positive forward thinking & flexible organization with active membership & rich and diverse financial base.

Group C List

- Robust membership base.
- Medium sized membership, high quality (active, contributing, participating, dues paying).
- Just-in-time delivery of helpful knowledge and information to key target audiences.
- Info delivery system that is respected and affordable.
- Capacity to attract professionals from a broader sector.
- "Client" based organization
- Google goes to FPS first (on "forest products" issues).
- Aligned with emerging trends.
- "FPS" is a filter & amplifier of industry information.
- Provides excellent customer service
- Best research, data, and practices } FPS { Associated industry participants
- "Industry" individuals are making informed decisions ➡ Success.
- Integrating & packaging
- Industry sees Society as important to their business.

Group D List

- Means to tap the expertise of other disciplines to improve the understanding of wood and related products/research.

- Clear up any misconceptions of "forest products" being anti-environment, for the public and environmental groups, and policy makers.
- Meetings that expose forest products people to relevant emerging technologies from unrelated disciplines.
- The increased online content is now more accessible internationally and impacts decision makers, researchers, and students more than even thought possible.
- Make universities stronger in wood sciences.

Each group then wrote their best ideas onto half-sheets of paper and gave them to the facilitator. The facilitator read and posted each idea on a large sheet with adhesive so that the ideas could be repositioned during the discussion. Once all the ideas were posted, participants categorized the ideas into seven main groupings (vision elements) and labeled each grouping, as follows:

Theme 1: Rich & Diverse Financial Base

- Rich & diverse financial base

Theme 2: Global Outreach

- FPS: Reaching out to the world
- FPS: Umbrella; organizing & communicating across generations and cultures
- Linking wood and people
- Public understanding of wood and fiber needs
- Two-way information flow (North America – Global)

Theme 3: Help to achieve a sustainable economy

- Shaping sustainable forest bio-based materials
- Recognized globally as linking two greens: Money and Environment
- Help to achieve sustainable economy
- Help reduce environmental footprint
- Significant player in green economy
- Help industry become more profitable/viable
- More wood and natural fibers used
- More wood – Less non-renewables
- Forest Products: Not taking resources from feeding the world

Theme 4: Vibrant “client-based” (broadly defined) Organization

- True international organization
- Robust/sustainable client base
- Recognized as relevant by members and non-members
- Plays a pivotal role in facilitating cooperation/coordination of bio-products sector
- Associates are more successful as a result
- Rebranding of what FPS is and does for relevance and service
- Young pros want to join!
- FPS: Connecting the unexpected in research/industry
- Reorganize membership to include other organizations/areas of interest
- Brings together disparate areas of science

- Vibrant expert for interaction with colleagues

Theme 5: A major force in shaping policy standards

- Informing/Influencing policy with science knowledge
- Major player and recognized as experts in policy and standards development
- Technical outreach function (influence policy)
- Powerful North American influence

Theme 6: Accurate and unbiased source of information

- Go-to source for bio-product information
- (In)credible technical information
- Globally recognized and trusted source for technical information regarding wood
- Valuable technical information
- Global transfer of natural fiber technology
- Source of innovative educational materials

Theme 7: FPS Goal – 1) Wood recognized as green material

2) FPS recognized as leading environmental organization

- Wood is the ultimate “green” material
- Forest Products: Have you seen the oil-soaked birds?
- Forest Products: The spotted owl lives in harmony with us.
- Forest Products: The moral choice
- Leading environmental group
- Forest Products does not equal clear cut
- Addressing misconceptions of public and societal needs

Following the discussion, the facilitator asked the participants what they found most exciting about vision elements they had identified. Participants shared the following.

- FPS could shape policy (be a major force!!!)
- Members (especially industrial) would see the benefits.
- FPS would fill a vital and valuable role by bringing together expertise from broad array of sources.
- Information and expertise would be accessible and appreciated!
- FPS would have the potential to change negative perceptions.
- There would be a HUGE new demand for education and training.
- FPS would truly have a global reach!!!

The President then thanked the participants for their time and hard work. He explained that he would be presenting the vision elements at an informal session the following day. The session is intended for people coming to participate in the annual convention. He said that this was one way to encourage broad participation in the discussion of the future for FPS. He also said that the FPS Board would be discussing the results of the listening session and continue the strategic planning process.

Participants completed a session evaluation form and the session adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

ATTACHMENT 1

Agenda

Listening Session

Forest Products Society: Visioning and Strategic Planning

June 19, 2010

OBJECTIVES:

1. Review and discuss visioning background information.
2. Identify key elements of a future vision for the Forest Products Society.
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AGENDA:

1. Welcome and introductions (John Shelly, President)
2. Overview of objectives and agenda (Ryan Church, Facilitator)
3. Present background information (Barry Goodell, President-Elect)
(Stefan Bergman, Exec Vice President)
4. Discuss SWOT analysis (Table Groups and Large Group)
5. Identify key elements of future vision (Table Groups and Large Group)
6. Reflection and additional comments (Large Group)
7. Wrap-up and Adjourn (John Shelly, President)

ATTACHMENT 2

Future Vision Discussion

Imagine it is January 2014 (three and a half years from now). You are reading a feature article about the Forest Products Society and its recent transformation.

1. What does the article highlight about the Society's mission?
2. What does it say about the Society's members and key partners?
3. What does it tell you about the difference the Society is making in the world?
4. Summarize your best 3-5 points about the preferred future. What 3-5 important features would you hope to see?