

Summary of Northeast & Midwest Responses to Pre-Work for the National Meeting on Statewide Forest Resource Assessments and Strategies

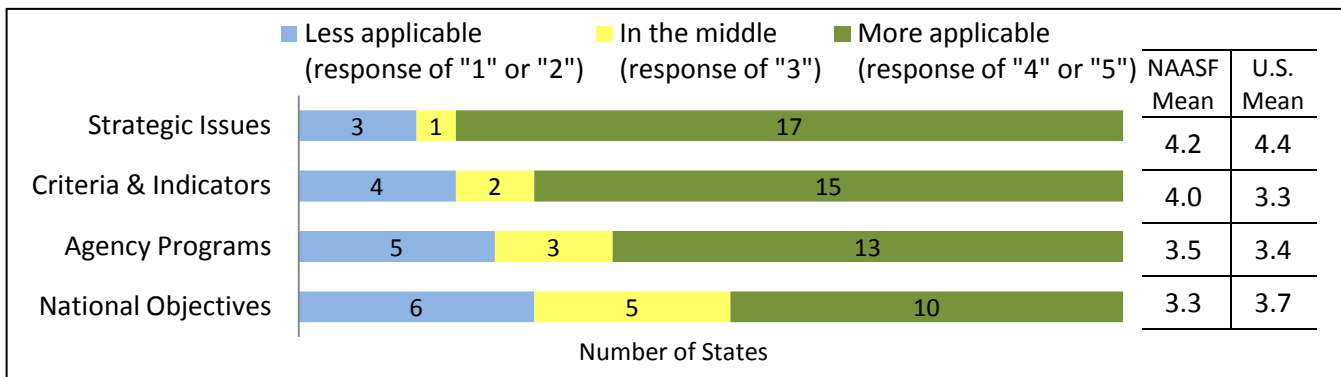
Background: The results presented here are purely informational to summarize the "pulse" of where the 20 States in the Northeast and Midwest and the District of Columbia were as of early November, 2009, in developing the State Assessments and Strategies. U.S. States and territories were asked to complete pre-work for the S&PF National Meeting on Statewide Forest Assessments and Strategies, held in Broomfield, Colorado, November 2009. This pre-work was used to guide the format and content for that meeting.

Highlights: All 20 Northeast and Midwest States and the District of Columbia submitted a response to the pre-work. These responses reflect the approach, opinions, and status as of early November, 2009. The State Assessment and Strategy documents are due June 2010 and may vary from what is reported here. Highlights of the pre-work responses are below, followed by a more detailed summary of the responses.

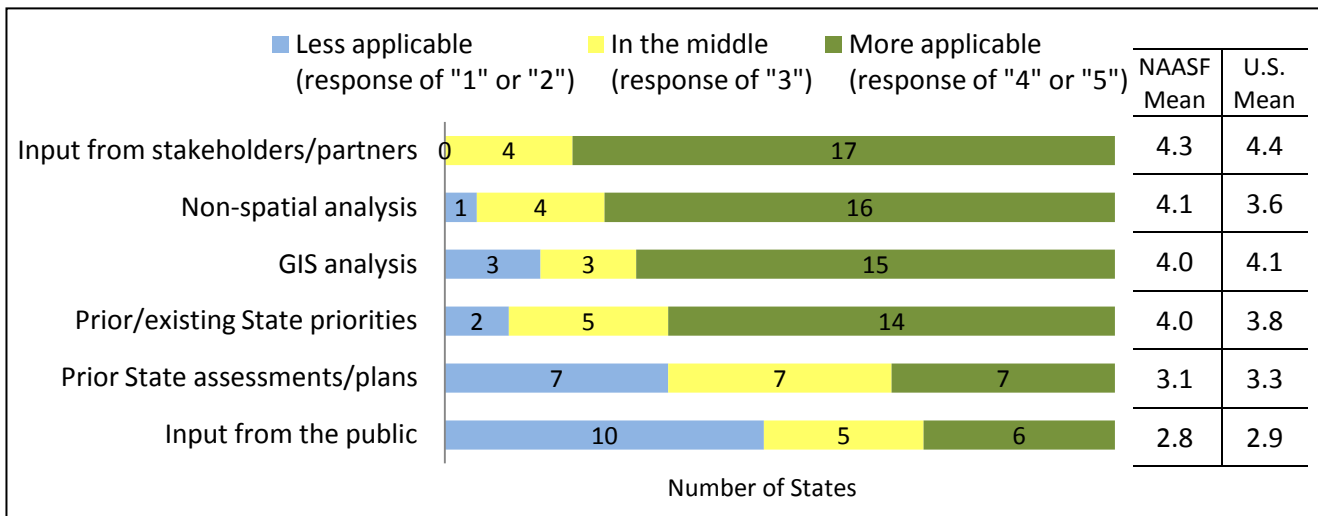
- **State Assessment approach**—States are organizing their State Assessment in a variety of ways, with the most common being around important State issues and criteria and indicators of forest sustainability. Important factors driving the assessment include input from stakeholders, non-spatial analysis, geospatial analysis, and prior/existing State priorities. In most States, agency staff are conducting the assessment. Several States are contracting the work to a 3rd party.
- **State Strategy approach**—States are organizing their State Strategy in a variety of ways, with the most common being around important State issues. Highest ranked factors driving the strategy include the results of the State Assessment and input from stakeholders. All States and the District of Columbia indicated that the strategy will be conducted mainly by agency staff; with a few States also contracting out or relying on partners for some of strategy.
- **Identifying priority areas**—all States are using GIS analysis to identify priority areas. Several are also identifying priority areas manually on maps using knowledge of staff or partners and several are identifying priority areas using place-based data outside of GIS, e.g., summarizing statistics by county. Three quarters of the States are defining the boundaries for priority areas at the pixel-scale, using raster data. Ecological units, watershed boundaries, and boundaries of counties or other administrative units are also being used to define the boundaries of priority areas. As of November, 2009, over half of the States and the District of Columbia are planning on including at least one multi-State priority area and 71% of States are using areas identified by partners as a factor for identify the priority areas.
- **Analysis tools**—ArcGIS and spreadsheets are the most common analysis tools States are using.
- **Stakeholder engagement**—partners and stakeholders States are coordinating with most closely include the State Forest Stewardship coordinating committee, State wildlife agency, lead for the Forest Legacy Program, State urban forestry council, State departments of environment and parks, State technical committee, NRCS, and National Forests. States also listed a variety of other important stakeholders including cooperative extension, universities, and NGO's.
- **Important issues**—Many of the issues, threats, and opportunities listed were ranked important by the States. The highest ranked were land use change/urbanization/fragmentation; invasive pests, pathogens, and plants; sustaining forests in important landscapes; changing land ownership and parcelization; active sustainable forest management of public and private forest land; public awareness and education; water quality/quantity; sustaining urban trees and forests; and sustaining traditional forest product markets.
- **Limitations, benefits, and data gaps**—Lack of time, lack of funding, and lack of available data were the highest factors limiting capacity to complete the State Assessment and Strategy. Aspects of greatest value so far in this process include the potential to attract additional funding, opportunity to engage partners, and developing GIS and planning expertise/capacity. Looking at data availability/quality for use in the State Assessment, gaps in data for invasive plants, economic potential, and green infrastructure, and climate change were the most common.

1. Approach and Status of the State Assessments

Organization of the State Assessment—On a scale of 1-5, where 1 = *not applicable* and 5 = *highly applicable*, how applicable the following descriptors are for the organization of the State Assessment.

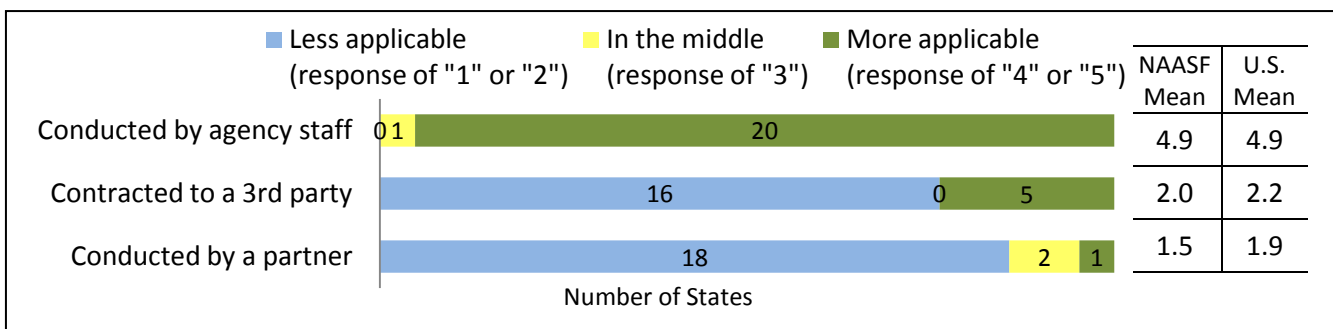


State Assessment drivers—On a scale of 1-5, where 1 = *not applicable* and 5 = *highly applicable*, how applicable the following descriptors are for what is driving the State Assessment.

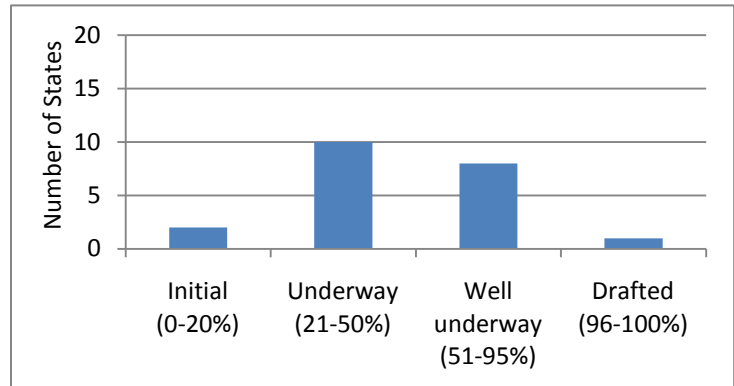


In addition to the factors listed above, States also noted that other factors driving the State Assessment include the Montreal Process criteria and indicators and current State issues.

Who is conducting the State Assessment—On a scale of 1-5, where 1 = *not applicable* and 5 = *highly applicable*, how applicable the following descriptors are for who is conducting the State Assessment.

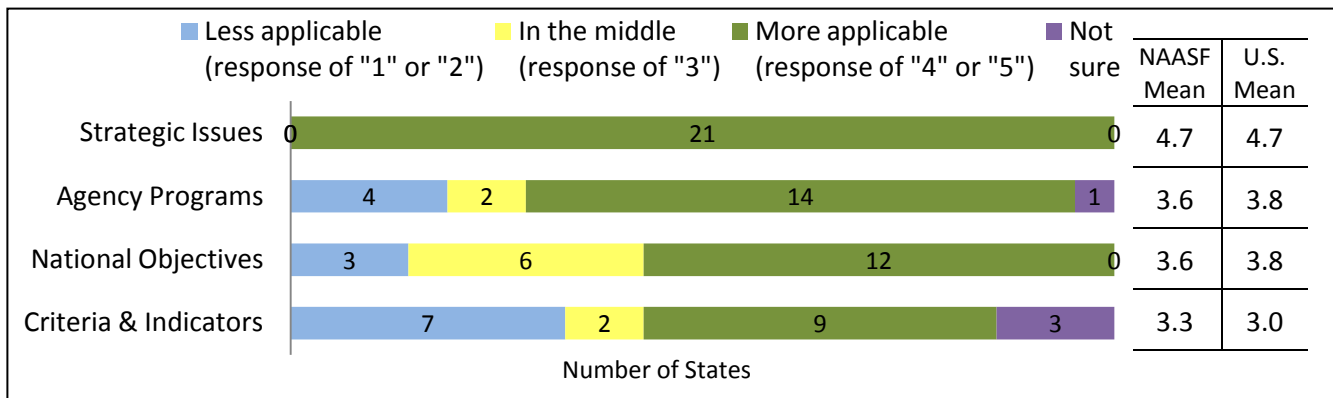


Status of the State Assessment—status of completion of the State Assessment as of early November, 2009, given the options: *initial stages* (0-20% complete); *underway*—compiling data and/or meeting with stakeholders (21-50% complete); *well underway*—have drafted sections of the assessment (51-95% complete); or *drafted*—a full draft of the assessment is complete or almost complete (96-100%).

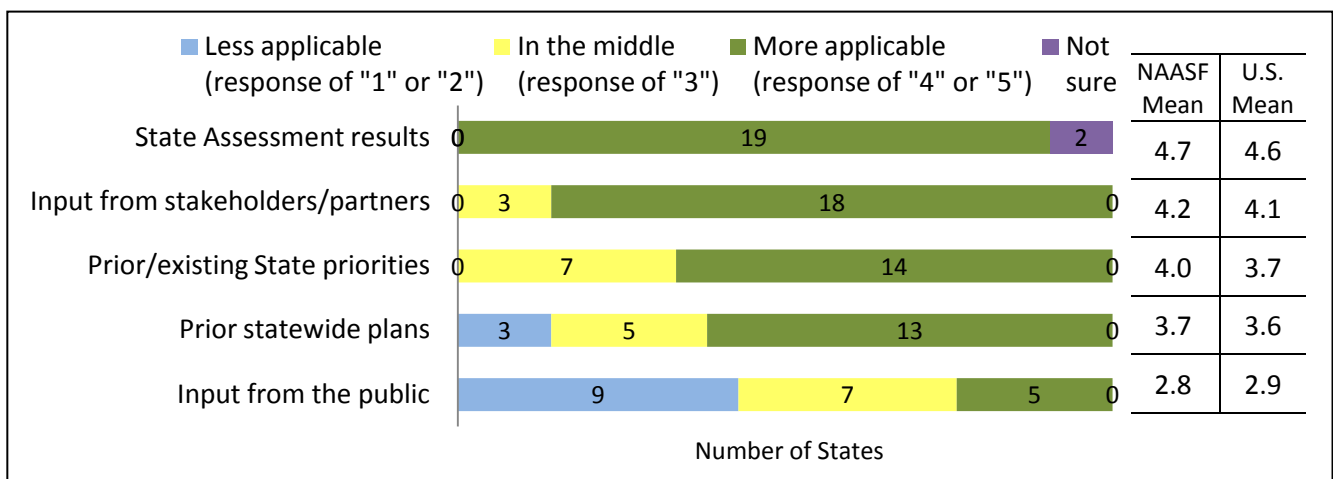


2. Approach and Status of the State Strategies

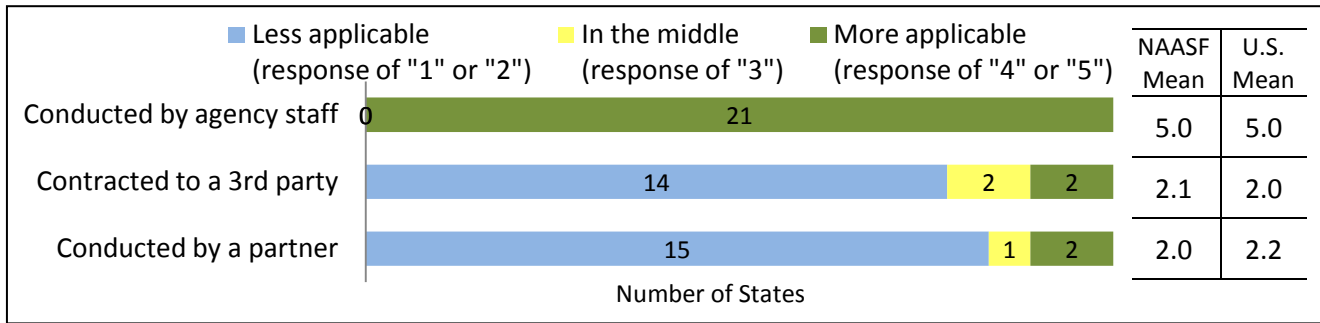
Organization of the State Strategy: On a scale of 1-5, where 1 = *not applicable* and 5 = *highly applicable*, how applicable the following descriptors are for the organization of the State Strategy.



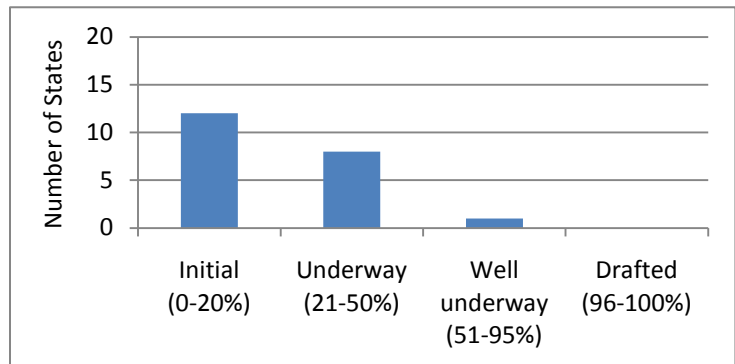
State Strategy drivers: On a scale of 1-5, where 1 = *not applicable* and 5 = *highly applicable*, how applicable the following descriptors are for what is driving the State Strategy.



Who is conducting the State Strategy—On a scale of 1-5, where 1 = *not applicable* and 5 = *highly applicable*, how applicable the following descriptors are for who is conducting the State Strategy.

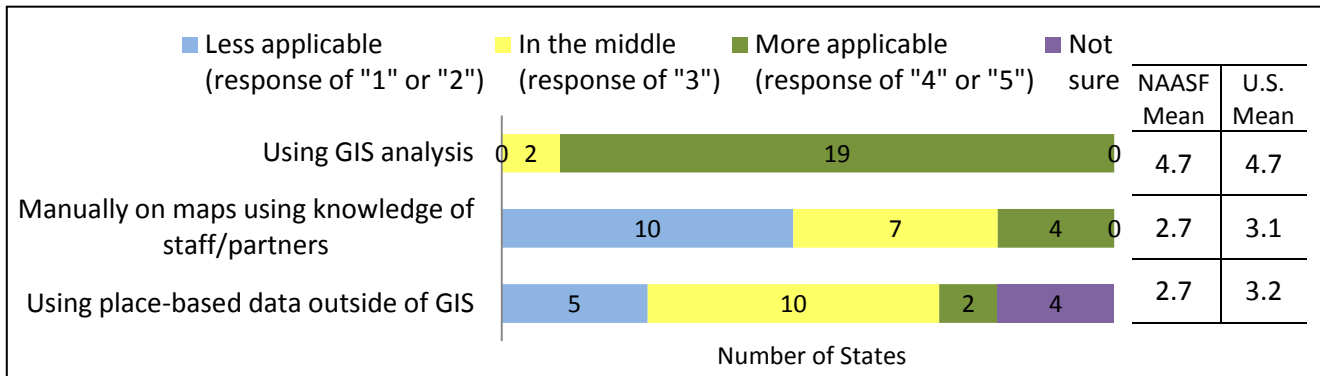


Status of the State Strategy—status of completion of the State Strategy as of early November, 2009, given the options: *initial stages* (0-20% complete); *underway*—meeting with partners/stakeholders (21-50% complete); *well underway*—have drafted sections of the strategy (51-95% complete); or *drafted*—a full draft of the Strategy is complete or almost complete (96-100%).

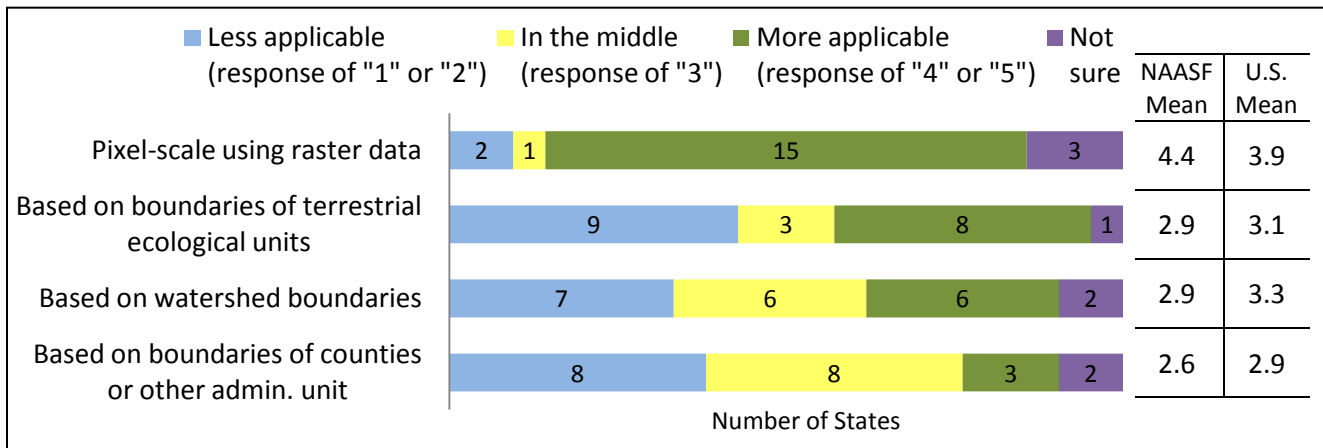


3. Identifying and Delineating Priority Areas

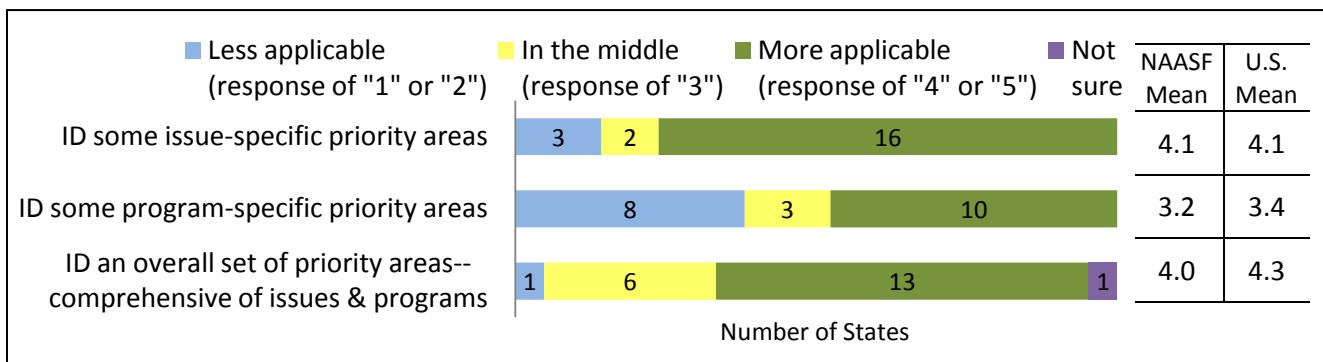
Approach for identifying priority areas—On a scale of 1-5, where 1 = *not applicable* and 5 = *highly applicable*, how applicable the following descriptors are in describing the approach for identifying priority areas.



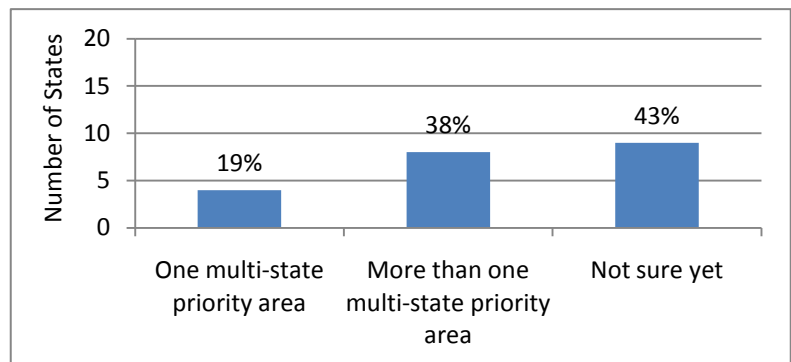
Defining the boundaries of priority areas—On a scale of 1-5, where 1 = *not applicable* and 5 = *highly applicable*, how applicable the following statements are for defining the boundaries of priority areas.



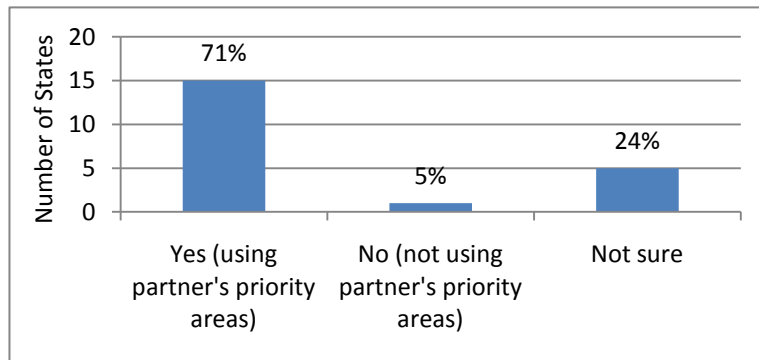
Issue and/or program specific priority areas—States were asked about their approach with respect to the nature, i.e., issue and/or program specific, of their priority areas, on a scale of 1-5, where 1 = *not applicable* and 5 = *highly applicable*.



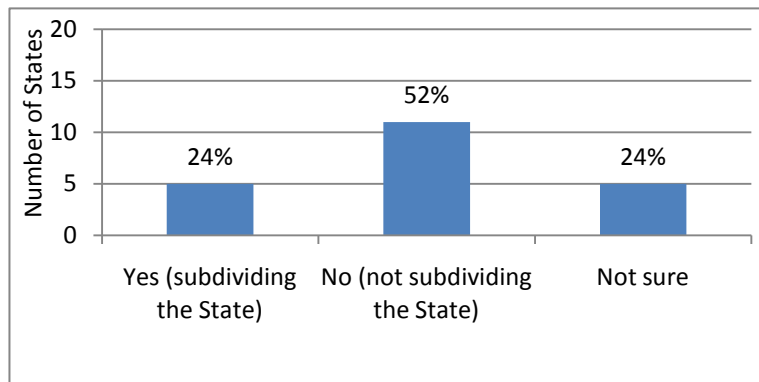
Multi-State priority areas—States were asked about plans for identifying multi-State priority areas, given response options of (1) *yes, one multi-State priority area*, (2) *yes, more than one multi-State priority areas*, or (3) *not sure yet*. Comparing to responses across the country, nationally 7% responded *one*, 31% responded *more than one*, and 61% responded *not sure yet*.



Priority areas identified by partners—States were asked if they are using priority areas identified by partners as a factor for identifying their own priority areas (given response options of *yes*, *no*, or *not sure*). Response to this question was similar to those across the country; nationally, 70% responded *yes*, 4% responded *no*, and 26% responded *not sure*.

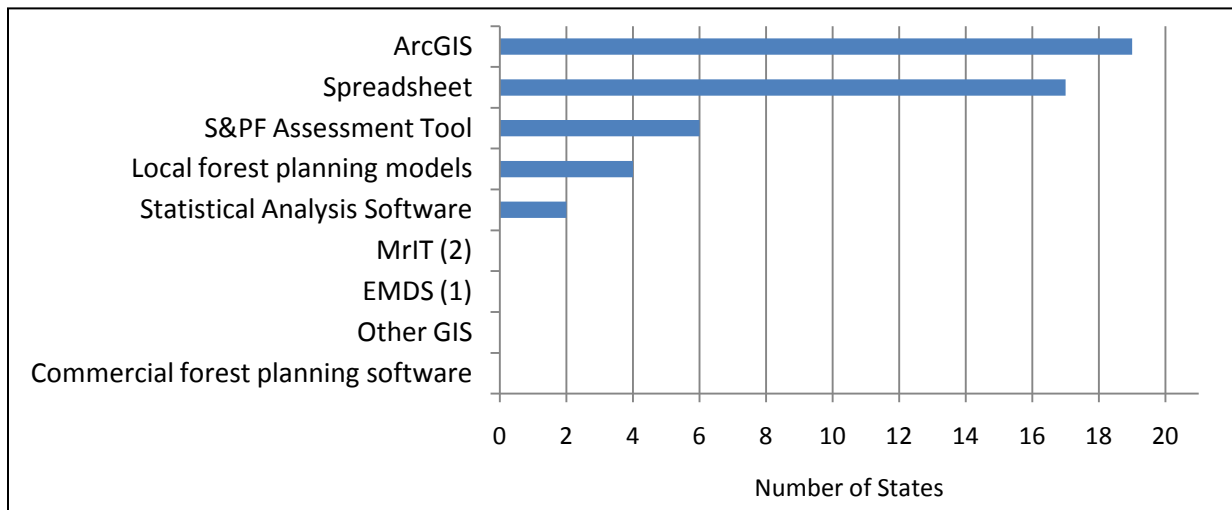


Subdividing the State for priority area identification—States were asked if they are subdividing the State for priority area identification to ensure distribution of priority areas within geographic or ecological zones. At the national level, 39% responded *yes*, 33% responded *no*, and 24% responded *not sure*.



4. Analysis Tools

States were asked whether they are using or plan to use any of the tools in the graph below for the State Assessment and Strategy. Similar responses were received nationally, with ArcGIS and Spreadsheets the most common analysis tools used nationwide. EMDS¹, local forest planning models, and the S&PF assessment tool were the tools States most wanted to learn more about.



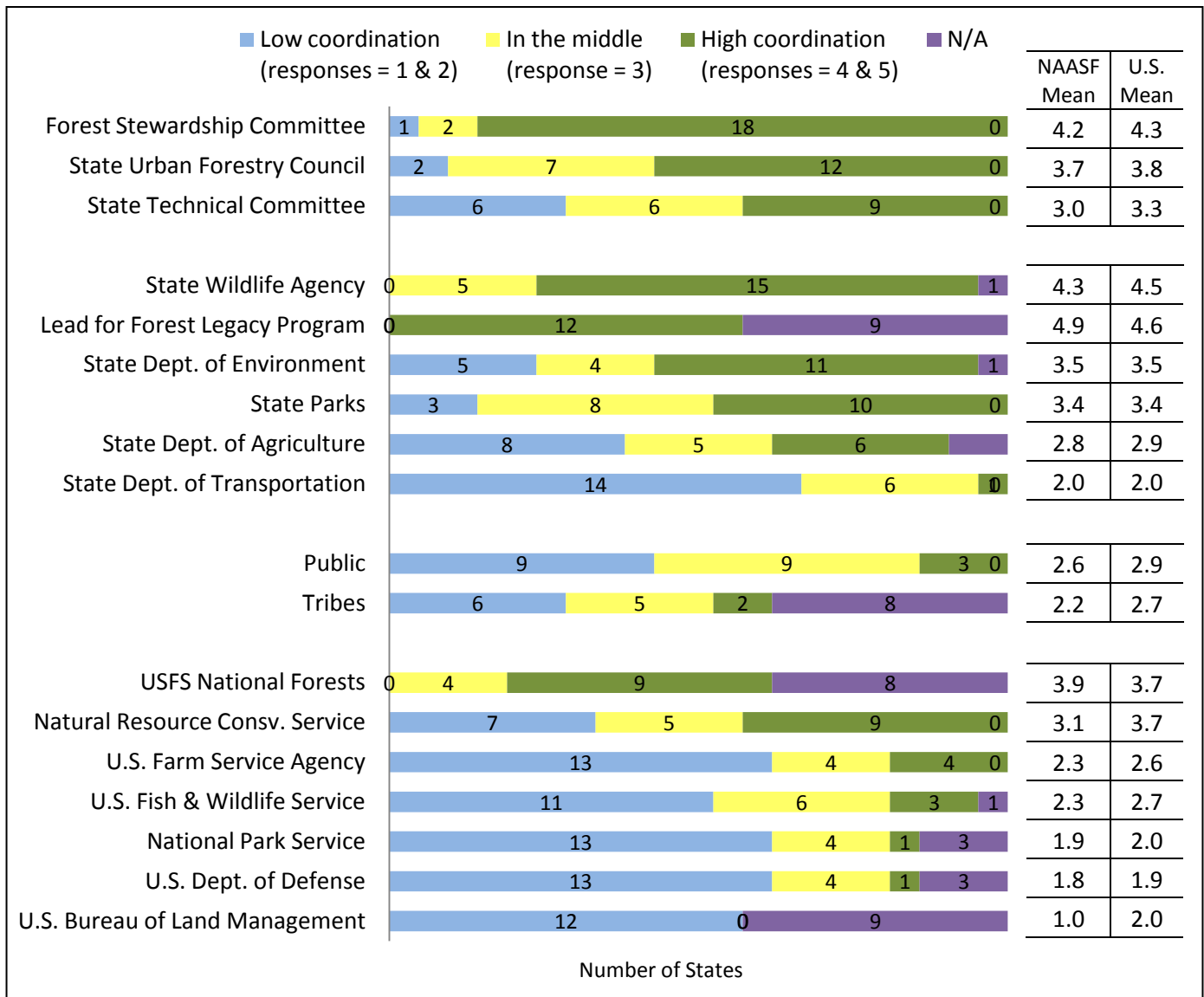
In addition to the analysis tools provided above, others listed (in the open-ended portion of this question) include Leica ERDAS Imagine and the USFS Forest Vegetation Simulator (FVS).

¹ [EMDS—Ecosystem Management Decision Support \(EMDS\) system](#): is an application framework for knowledge-based decision support of ecological assessments.

² [MrIT—Multi-scale Resource Integration Tool](#): summarizes, integrates, and classifies spatial data to help set management priorities.

5. Partner and Stakeholder Engagement

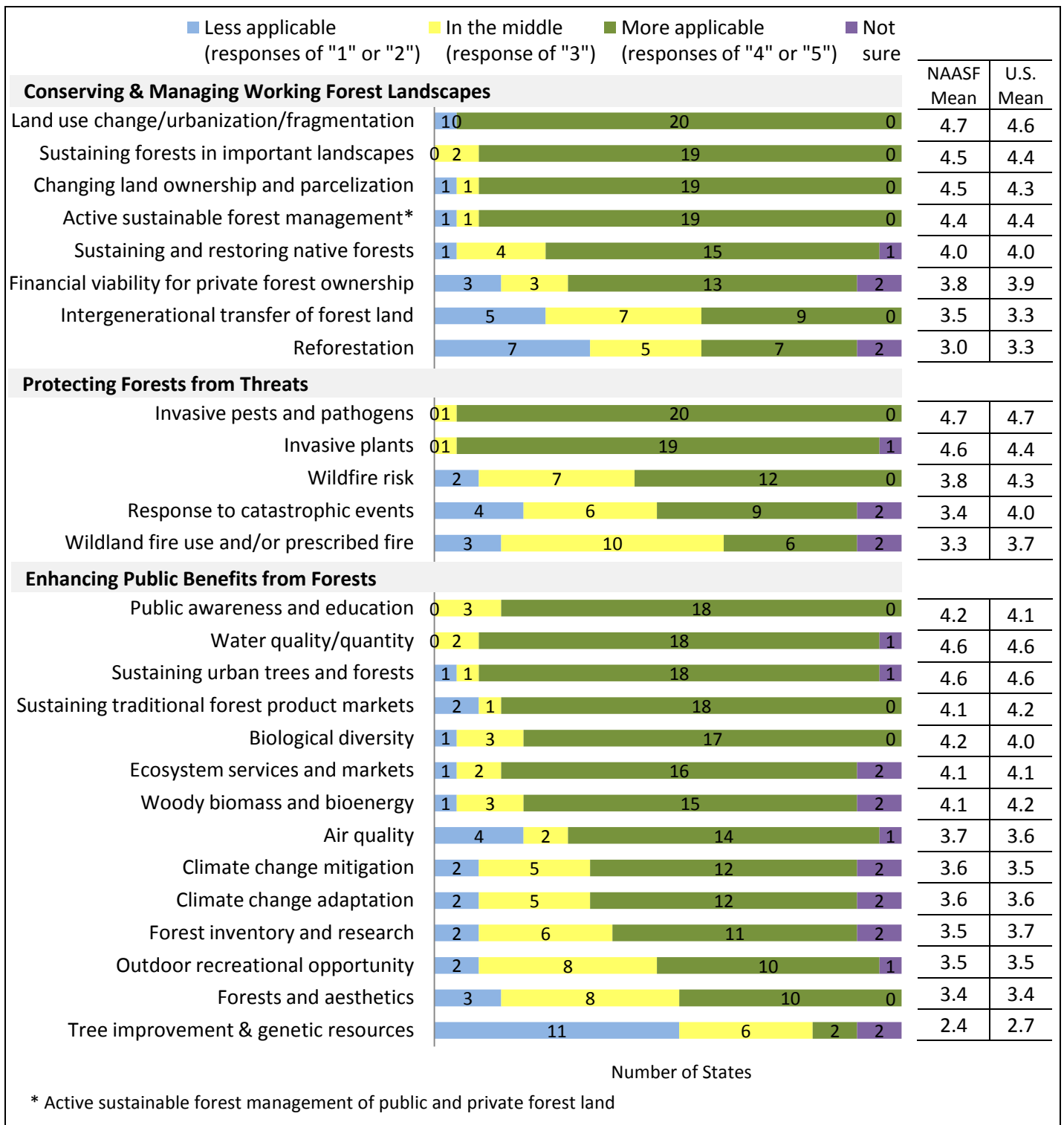
Extent of engagement with the partners and stakeholders listed below, on a scale of 1-5, where 1 = *no coordination* and 5 = *high coordination*.



In an open-ended portion of this question, other stakeholders States listed that they are coordinating with include cooperative extension; universities; public supply agencies; State department of Commerce; and NGO's such as The Nature Conservancy, timberland owners association, and State forest products council.

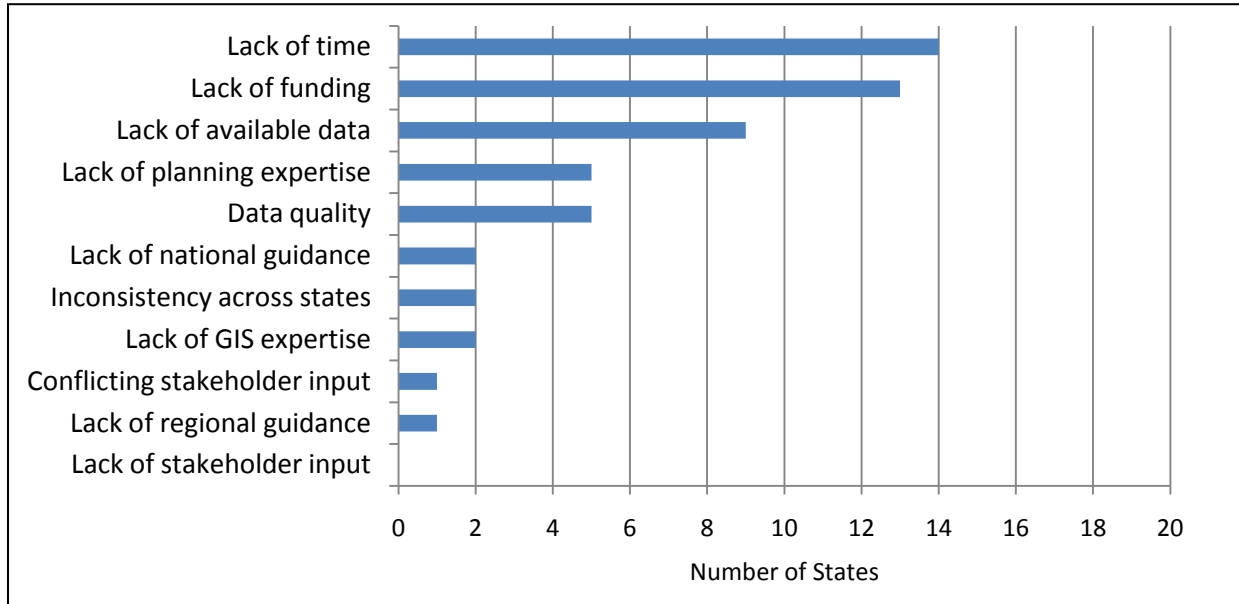
6. Important Issues, Threats, and Opportunities

Extent to which the State Assessment and Strategy are addressing the following issues, threats, and opportunities, on a scale of 1-5, where 1 = *not applicable* and 5 = *highly applicable*.

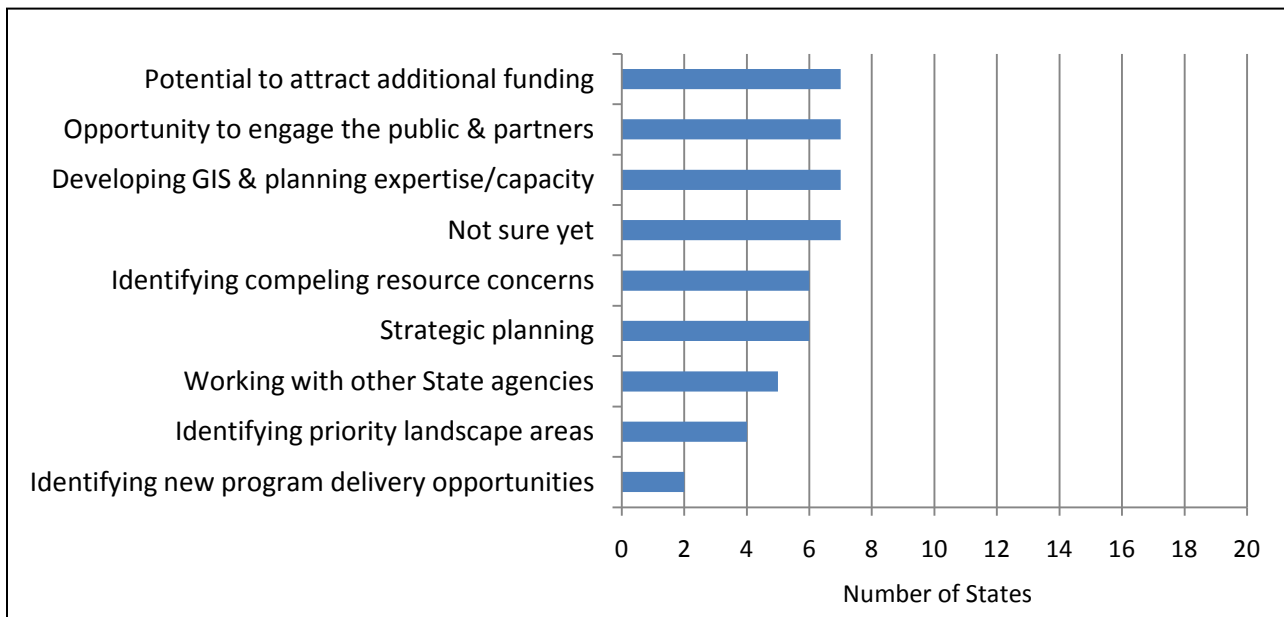


7. Limitations & Value of the State Assessment & Strategy Effort

Factors limiting capacity to complete the State Assessment & Strategy—States were asked to choose up to three of the factors listed below that are limiting their capacity to complete the State Assessment and Strategy. In addition to the factors provided, three States noted that “lack of staff time/personnel resources” as a limiting factor. Similar responses were given nationally, with *lack of time*, *lack of funding*, and *lack of available data* also rating as the top three limiting factors.



Of greatest value—States were asked to choose up to three of the elements listed below that are of greatest value so far in developing the State Assessment and Strategy. Overall, similar responses were given nationwide. One notable difference was the response to *identifying priority landscape areas*: 37% of States nationwide indicated that is one of the greatest values in this process so far, whereas, 19% of the Northeast and Midwest States indicated that is one of the greatest values.



8. Data Gaps

States were asked about gaps in data availability and/or quality for the State Assessment and Strategy, given the categories below. Overall, similar responses were given nationwide; the top five data gaps shown below are also in the top five list of gaps nationwide. Comparing responses from the States in the Northeast and Midwest to those across the nation, differences to note include a higher proportion of States nationwide indicating a data gap for *urban forest extent*, a lower proportion of States nationwide indicating a data gap for *economic potential*, and a lower proportion of States nationwide indicating a data gap for *invasive plants*.

