

Developing Your Management Plan



A team of natural resource professionals works with each landowner to develop a plan for managing forest land for multiple benefits.

The Management Plan: A Blueprint for Benefits Now and in the Future

We all know that planning pays off in the long run. This applies to your Stewardship Forest as well. For example, landowners who plan to use technical assistance often reap bigger economic returns on timber sales and have healthier stands than those who don't (Hubbard and Abt, 1989). Planning also results in increased efficiency, lower costs, reduced tax liability, less negative environmental impact, and multiple returns from the same land by using several resources at a time.

Let's Work Together

The Stewardship Program brings together a team of natural resource professionals from several agencies to work with you on developing a management plan to make the most out of your forestland. The team can include your county forester, a resource biologist, a soil conservation specialist, the county Extension agent and/or a private natural resource consultant. They can direct you to technical and financial resources available from both public and private sources. Various government agencies offer information on every aspect of forest management. Where landowners are already practicing active management, existing efforts are used as a foundation and professionals already helping the landowner are involved in the planning process.

The management plan:

- outlines your goals and objectives, such as income generation, investment, erosion control or wildlife viewing,
- describes the current management practices,
- summarizes what resources are available,

- prioritizes management recommendations for achieving your future goals.

Specific recommendations might include a timetable for planting wildlife food plots, or an outline of the costs and revenues associated with timber management. The Forest Stewardship Plan serves as the basis for all management decisions on a landowner's property. It should be updated AT LEAST EVERY FIVE YEARS to be a truly effective planning tool.

● The Resource Assessment

The interagency team or resource consultant assesses the potential of the timber, wildlife, soil, water, recreational, aesthetic and grazing resources on your forestland. For each resource, a strategy is developed which describes how the landowner's objectives can be met in relation to that particular resource.

The resource assessment starts with a description of the landowner's management goals in relation to his/her property size and location, equipment, facilities, capital, experience, time, and the quality, quantity and distribution of the natural resources on the land. The types of information that could be collected are discussed below.

● Timber Resources

Foresters evaluate timber resources by dividing the property into "stands" of similar vegetation, soils, tree species and other unique features. Each stand is mapped and then "cruised" to gather information on tree species diversity, number of trees/acre, density or basal area, size classes, growth rate and disease incidence. The information is used to determine the different forest management options available to the landowner such as timber harvesting methods, replanting needs, or potential wildlife habitat which could be upgraded.

● Wildlife Resources

Wildlife biologists seek to define the abundance and distribution of food, water and shelter resources available for wildlife on the property. The description includes the wildlife