

How does the Stewardship Program benefit landowners?

The Stewardship Program encourages landowners to practice multiple-resource management and seeks to recognize those who do. Landowners who manage their land according to the multiple-resource principal deserve recognition for leading the community in good forest stewardship. Landowners who become certified as Forest Stewards will be rewarded with a certificate and a sign to post on their land.

The Stewardship Incentives Program (SIP) provides funds to landowners for practices carried out on their stewardship lands. Up to 75 percent of the costs of some practices may be reimbursed. Maximum payments are \$5,000 per year per owner. Cost-shared activities must be completed within 18 months and landowners must maintain and protect stewardship resources for a minimum of 10 years. Seven general SIP practices have been approved for cost-share assistance in Florida:

- reforestation and afforestation;
- forest and native range improvement;
- soil and water protection and improvement;
- riparian and wetland protection and improvement;
- aquatic habitat enhancement;
- wildlife habitat enhancement including habitat for listed threatened and endangered species protection; and
- forest recreation and aesthetic enhancement.

Other benefits to the landowner are:

- increased long-term productivity of the land;
- increased economic opportunities and diversification of the timberland investment portfolio;
- public recognition as a leader in wise forest-resource management;
- integrated technical assistance from natural resource agencies;
- improved skills in forestland management;

- the satisfaction of contributing positively to the nation's environmental health and economic well-being; and
- improved public perception of landowners as true forest stewards.

The good example set by Forest Stewards will demonstrate the benefits of multiple-resource management to the public, and other landowners will be encouraged to practice forest stewardship.

How to use this stewardship publication

The purpose of this Extension circular is to help you become familiar with Florida's Forest Stewardship Program and how to manage for multiple forest resources according to your goals and objectives. After the next chapter, on *Developing a Management Plan*, each of the five resource areas is presented in a separate chapter. Each chapter includes: (1) reasons to manage for the resource; (2) options for managing the resource; and (3) examples of management scenarios.

The list below provides sources of additional information about the Forest Stewardship Program. These contacts can help tailor a plan to meet all your stewardship needs. Related publications are also listed in the chapter *Additional Reading*. These can be obtained from your local County Forester, or state forestry Cooperative Extension Service office.

To find out more about how to become a Forest Steward contact:

- your county forester (Florida Division of Forestry);
- your county Extension agent (IFAS Cooperative Extension Service);
- your Soil and Water Conservation Office (SCS);
- your regional stewardship wildlife biologist (Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission);
- a natural resource consultant in your area;
- or contact the Florida Division of Forestry State Office in Tallahassee, (904) 488-9829.