

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

FOREST SERVICE

Operation Order 2012-307

Annapolis, Maryland

TO: Regional Foresters and Project Managers

Effective: July 11, 2012

FOREST STEWARDSHIP PLAN FORMAT

General

This order supersedes Operation Order 2003-302 dated June 1, 2003. The objective is to update the management planning process. The purpose is to improve plan quality while providing the landowner with the necessary information for the management of their forest lands that will be universally recognized by the Forest Stewardship Program, NRCS, and the American Tree Farm System.

Stewardship Plan Format

The format for all stewardship plans prepared by all Forest Service personnel will be as follows:

- A. **Title Page** - the title page shall include the following:
 1. Landowner name, address, phone number (unless it is unlisted) and email.
 2. Location of property
 3. Watershed Name and 8-digit code
 4. County
 5. Tax Map# Parcel # (and Lot #, if applicable)
 6. Acres (Breakout woodland, agricultural fields, idle fields and marsh)
 7. Author(s), to include contact information
 8. Date: original and revised date if applicable
 9. Forester's Stamp - lower right corner with signature
 10. Stewardship Sticker - upper right corner

- B. **Maps**

All maps shall conform to each of the following:

 1. Appropriate scale: 330, 660, 1320
 2. Appropriate detail of adjacent property
 3. Standard orientation of North arrow
 4. Acres match what is on title page (to tenths of acres)
 5. GIS generated stand management map and or aerial photo showing property location, maps may be combined.
 6. Soils, wetlands, topographic and other maps as appropriate. These should be presented as separate maps, unless they can be combined into an easily interpreted format.

- C. **Landowner Objective / Property Overview**

This section shall include each of the following:

 1. Clearly state that the overarching goal is to provide the landowner with a plan ensuring the long-term health and sustainability of the forest. Additionally,

articulate the landowner's primary and secondary objectives conforming with the four established stewardship objectives that are:

- a) Fish & Wildlife,
- b) Natural Heritage and Recreation,
- c) Soil & Water, and
- d) Forest Products.

2. A brief overview of the physiographic and vegetative nature of the property.

D. Stand Description and Recommendations

Each stand shall be individually described using clear terminology suitable for a layperson's understanding. Recommendations should be in narrative form and as specific as possible. For example, if a thinning is recommended, the basal area to remain should be specified.

1. Stand Number.
2. Area (Acres).
3. Dominant Overstory Species.
4. Dominant Understory Species.
5. Developmental Stage.
6. Age (if even, give age).
7. Stocking/Basal Area.
8. Site Growth Potential.
9. Soil Types, slope, topography, aspect, and suitability for forestry activities.
10. Documentation of existing practices.
11. Past harvest history, from documentation or field evidence.
12. Notation of resource concerns.
 - a) Income potential: Forest Products (timber) & NTFP (non-traditional Forest Products)
 - b) Needed forest stand improvements
 - c) Wildlife habitat
 - d) Threatened & Endangered Species Habitat (as verified per database search)
 - e) Riparian areas
 - f) Recreational opportunities
 - g) Other management needs as identified through collaboration with landowner.
13. Natural and cultural features.
14. Risks to health or productivity.
15. Presence of noxious or invasive species.
16. Water features and recommendations for protection.
17. Recommendations/Desired future stand conditions to include stocking, species composition, habitat, recreation, and other recommendations as applicable to landowner's objectives.

Recommendations should include mention of how to initiate the practices. The landowner should be directed to contact a logger, forester, or other resource professional depending upon the landowner's capabilities and the practice recommended.

E. Additional Information

This section shall be used to supply additional information not included elsewhere in the plan.

1. Plan shall address regulatory issues relating to forestry that include:
 - a) Chesapeake Bay Critical Area law;
 - b) Forest Conservation Act,;
 - c) BMPs for Forest Harvest Operations, and Sediment and Erosion Control plans;
 - d) Wetlands;
 - e) Sensitive Species Protected Resource Areas; and,
 - f) Cultural and Historic Resources.

2. Practices or activities that involve the entire property. These include:
 - a) Monitoring for insects and diseases, and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) shall be utilized to the extent possible in addressing outbreaks;
 - b) Boundary line establishment and maintenance;
 - c) Fire protection;
 - d) Recommendations for aesthetic protections or enhancements;
 - e) Maintenance of roads/trails to reduce erosion and to maintain emergency access; and,
 - f) Protection of riparian forest buffers.

3. The Plan shall demonstrate to the landowner how the property relates to landscape level issues. In particular, the following two issues shall be addressed as appropriate:
 - a) High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF), which are defined as forests of outstanding and critical importance due to their environmental, social, biodiversity, or landscape values. HCVF, when present, should be first mentioned in the Property Description, and specific management recommendations for fostering HCVF attributes should be detailed in the Stand Recommendations. The impact of management activities on HCVF shall be considered in the Plan.
 - b) Carbon Management. For landowners interested in carbon sequestration, plans should address opportunities to enhance carbon sequestration on the property by recommending silvicultural practices that enhance the forest's ability to sequester carbon. Carbon Management generally involves practices that are typically recommended throughout the Plan, such as: tree planting, thinning, fuel reductions, avoided deforestation, harvesting. It can also involve extending harvest rotations. A full description explaining the importance of carbon management and descriptions of related specific practices can be efficiently addressed in the Appendix.

4. Mention shall be made, as applicable, of the potential for developing the following management opportunities:
 - a) Potential for agro-forestry;
 - b) Pollinator habitat establishment or protection.

5. Other optional useful information includes nursery seedling ordering, consultant referrals if applicable, tax incentive programs, and information pertaining to forest landowner organizations.

F. Practice Schedule

This section shall give the suggested schedule (month & year) for practice implementation.

1. A schedule for monitoring practice implementation shall be specified, and any needed corrective actions taken shall be noted by the landowner and/or forester. This can be efficiently and concisely accomplished in a table format.
2. The schedule should not include administrative activities such as applying for the FCMA program or inspections for FCMA or Tree Farm Certification.
3. An asterisk shall be placed next to a practice that is cost-sharable. A list referencing the WIP and EQIP practice codes applicable to the recommended practices shall be included.
4. Plan shall have a completion date of not more than fifteen years, ending date and a re-examination date as final plan practice.

G. Appendix

This section shall include any appropriate management inserts.

This operation order shall remain in effect until revisions or modifications are necessary.



Steven W. Koehn
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