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Private Land Section

Forest Management Plans

Your Forest Stewardship Guide

Surveys indicate that most landowners care deeply for their woodlands and usually see themselves as stewards of their forest. Many use their forest lands for products such as firewood, Christmas trees and lumber. Some derive income from the sale of stumpage rights for high volume products such as pulpwood, studwood, and saw logs. Others hunt, trap, hike and bike ride, take photographs, or simply enjoy the natural wonders of our Island.



Whatever their reasons, most landowners want to do the right thing for their forest and for themselves. But often many have never really thought about their forest lands in terms of how the lands can work for the owner's benefit. And even if they have, they often don't know where to start or how to reach their forestry goals — in other words they need a plan.

Thousands of Island forest owners have developed forest management plans to help them meet their forestry goals in an effective and efficient manner. Their plan is a blueprint to follow and a statement of their goals and values.

How Can I Prepare a Forest Management Plan?

An effective forest management plan does not have to be hard to create or difficult to understand. Some woodlot owners develop their own plans but most hire a consulting forester or forest technician to develop it with them. For the purposes of this Woodland Note we will assume that you are working with a consultant to develop a plan and an approach which is right for you and your forest.



Getting Started

Your forest management plan should offer usable information designed to match your goals and values with the capabilities of your land. Therefore, the first part of the planning process is often not a trip to the forest — it is a general discussion with the consultant on what you want to achieve with your forest. Once you have a general sense of where you want to go, you can begin to explore how your forest can be managed to meet those goals.

The consultant should conduct an inventory of your forest and map the various stands.

A stand is an area of forest containing trees of the same species or mixture of species and which share similarities such as height, age, diameter, health, density, etc.

Each stand will have its own economic and environmental potential and limitations, so the plan should identify appropriate management options and a treatment schedule for each one over the next five to ten years.

These recommendations may include information on when to harvest and harvest options and alternatives, as well as how to enhance wildlife habitat, protect or encourage young trees and shrubs, develop non-timber forest products or maintain the aesthetic qualities of the forest.



The plan should also address issues at a property level, by offering information on how and where to establish proper roads and trails and the types and volumes of forest products which could be generated from the various treatments.

In summary, your plan should offer:

1) Level of Detail and Flexibility Suited to Your Needs:

Ranging from a general description to a detailed operating plan and a variety of appropriate options for you to consider.

2) Costs:

Treatment cost will depend on the size, complexity and level of detail required.

3) Components:

Map with stands identified, current aerial for site photographs, site history, stand descriptions, list of treatments/prescriptions, road and trail locations, and a suggested implementation schedule.

4) Tax Planning:

Management plans are an essential component of estate planning and property transfers.

5) Financial Planning:

Scheduling of investments and revenues to suit the owner's needs. Treatment costs may also be eligible for tax deductions.

Getting the Work Done!

Ultimately, as the owner, getting the work done is your responsibility. However, some forest consultants offer clients a range of additional forest management services and assistance. They may work with landowner clients to help them find qualified silviculture workers, negotiate price and harvest schedules with forest contractors and wood buyers, obtain permits and paperwork or identify tax breaks related to the forest management work.

Many woodland owners have found that professional assistance can quickly pay for itself, so check with your consultant on the range of services they can offer!



Are There Other Services Available to Me?

The Forest Enhancement Program offers many programs and services for land-owners who want to manage their forests. However, before you can access these funds and services, you must have an approved and up-to-date forest management plan registered with the department. Incentives and

forest professionals are available to help you develop a plan which meets your objectives and the potential of your forest.



It is important to realize that a forest management plan should be seen as a living document. Over time, the forest will change as older trees die or are harvested and as new trees grow to take their place. Insects, disease and fire will have an effect, new product opportunities will arise, or your personal circumstances can change; therefore, you may wish to update or revise the plan to reflect these new realities — usually once every five to ten years.

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