

DEVELOPING MANAGEMENT GOALS FOR YOUR PROPERTY
Clarifying What's Important To You About Your Woods

PA FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

LANDOWNER: _____ DATE: _____

Consider the following points and use the lines provided to make notes of your responses to the questions posed. It would be beneficial to have each family member do the same, and then to compare your thoughts at a family meeting prior to your meeting with the natural resource professional who will develop your Forest Stewardship Plan. If you are clear about what you'd like to see on your property and how much you're actively willing to do toward achieving your vision your plan writer will be better able to develop a plan that meets your needs. If you need more space continue on back or add pages.

1. PLACES YOU ENJOY

Think about what you enjoy about your woods. Is there a specific area or areas that you particularly like? Picture that special area. Try to identify what makes it special to you. Is it different from other parts of your woods or from other forest land in the area generally? Are the trees different? Are there many trees or few? Are they small or big? Is there a dense understory or is it open? Is it sunny or shady? Is it near the top of a hill or near the bottom or neither? Is there water nearby? Is the geology unusual? Do you feel a certain way when you're there? Does the location evoke a memory of a person or event of importance to you?

Once you've described your favorite places, and identified why they are special, consider that it may be possible through active management to create other areas on your property with the same special qualities that these places have. For example, if you particularly like the feel of an area where large trees remain, it may be possible to create a similar atmosphere elsewhere in your woods by accelerating the growth of the larger trees in that part of your woods. Consider whether you'd like to try to recreate a condition you find desirable in another part of your woods if it's possible.

2. APPEARANCE OF YOUR WOODS

From what vantage point do you look at your woods? From certain trails in the woods? From a nearby road? From the house? Do you particularly enjoy seeing fall leaf colors or spring flowers? Would you like to see more color during the seasons? It is possible to enhance the view of a forested hillside in the fall by creating more growing space for the crowns of trees with more vibrant color, removing those around them that are not so colorful. Wild flowers may require certain levels of light or moisture to bloom. The availability of those resources can sometimes be manipulated to improve growing conditions for the plants desired. Do you prefer to see all straight trees or do you enjoy the variation of twisted trunks and contorted branches? Do you

appreciate the differences color and texture of leaves, bark, and branches of various species, or is this not particularly important to you?

3. ACTIVITIES YOU ENJOY

If when you spend time in the woods are you on foot? On skis? On horseback? In an ATV or snowmobile? Do you amble along, exploring as you go, or do you go briskly? Is it a solitary activity or are usually in the company of others? Are you quiet or boisterous? Are there some places you use for one kind of activity and other areas you use differently? Are there some parts of the woods that you rarely get to? If yes, would you like to utilize those areas more? For recreation or for other uses?

4. WILDLIFE

Many people along forest land express a strong interest in managing for wildlife, although what some people mean by “managing for wildlife” can be very different from what other people mean. The first paragraph below contains fundamental management guidelines for all forest stewards, regardless of your level of interest in wildlife. If nothing else consider those guidelines as you decide how to manage early and. If wildlife is of great interest to you, consider the full section below and be sure to discuss this topic further with your plan writer. Use the spaces provided to narrow down your interests and concerns regarding wildlife.

What goes on beyond your property boundaries as you manage your land. Focus on creating or maintaining wildlife habitat areas that are rare in the region where your property is located, rather than rare on your property. Make it policy to retain trees with cavities for wildlife where ever possible, and dead snags for roosting and feeding stations. Retain some large old trees. Consider how long it will be before in mature tree will replace one now providing important habitat components. If you live in an area that is fragmented by farm fields and urban development, maintain forest cover on your land. If a stream runs through your property, retain or restore the forest shading the water. Pennsylvania was entirely wooded in Penn’s day - forest cover is essential to the aquatic life unique to our streams. Retain or plant evergreen cover if it is rare in your area. Protect special or unusual features such as a favored nesting site or a spring seep or a rock, outcropping.

Do you hope to increase your opportunities to catch a glimpse of a wild animal? Many people do. You can do this by increasing the diversity of food and cover available on your property – for example by planting a food plot, installing a variety of nesting boxes, or building brush piles. Understand though, that in general, the species you’ll attract in this manner are abundant throughout their ranges and are in no need of assistance to increase their numbers. Consider whether it is necessary to manage the entire property for increased viewing opportunities; or whether a smaller area, perhaps accessible from the house or from a favorite trail, might be

adequate to meet your needs so that other priorities can be established on other parts of the property.

Do you hope to improve hunting opportunities on your property? This can be accomplished by encouraging to growth of new kinds of plants that provide the food and cover most preferred by the types of wildlife you hope to attract. Keep in mind though, that game animals can be hunted because regionally they are abundant, and their populations are secure. Managing your land to attract certain game species will undoubtedly increase your hunting success, but understand that the species you are managing for are not those whose populations are in trouble. It is important to balance the desire for hunting opportunities with the long term viability of all the plants and animals that makeup a healthy ecosystem.

The species of wildlife that occupying a very young forest are very different from those that occupy a mature forest. Also, the wildlife community that occupies undisturbed land over time will change as the size and species composition of the plant community changes-nothing is static in nature. To maintain conditions ideal for a particular kind of wildlife will require some kind of management to keep the land and the successional stage those animals most prefer. Land can be manipulated, or "managed", through planting or removal of vegetation to create a desired mix of plant species, density of the understory, amount of vegetation of differing heights, and other factors affecting the type of food and cover available. As you consider which wildlife species you'd like to attract, think about the food and cover needs of each, and the size of its range. Many species of wildlife can occupy a wide variety of conditions, but those with more exacting requirements are the ones that would benefit most from thoughtful and deliberate management to meet their needs.

5. IMMEDIATE AND FUTURE MONETARY NEEDS

Timber prices in Pennsylvania are currently very high. Many landowners who had not considered harvesting timber previously are now receiving unsolicited offers for their timber. The money may sound tempting, but you'll want to be certain if you do harvest that it's in your best interest to do so now. If you're timber is immature you may be cutting it just as it begins to increase most in value. You may not have a pressing need for income at the present time, but may anticipate a need in the future-say when your children are college aged, or once you've retired and are on a fixed income. Not every wood lot has the potential to produce sustainable timber within the owner's lifetime. But you should consider whether it is important to you to obtain income from your land now or in the future, and let your plan writer know so that he can develop a plan to try and meet those needs.

OWNERSHIP & USE OF THE LAND

Do you own the land alone or with others in your family? Do others besides the owners use the land? For what kinds of activities? Are there other benefits you'd like to get from the land? Do you plan to keep the land in forest or to change the land use within your lifetime-perhaps develop

all or part of it? What are your hopes/plans for the land for the next ten or twenty years? What do you hope will happen to the land after your death?

7. RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Managing land requires a commitment of time, labor, and sometimes money. Think carefully about how often you (or others in your family) spend time in your woods, and how much time you to be able to commit to doing the actual work involved. What kind of equipment do you have available? How experienced are you at working in the woods? It is easy to under estimate the amount of skill and labor involved in completing the project. Are you willing to expend funds toward the management of your land to hire professional equipment operators? Some cost-share assistance is available to help; let your plan writer and service forester know if you'd want to apply for assistance. If you have little time or other resources available at present for managing your land, be sure to make that clear so that your plan can focus on only the most cost effective activities for your land.

8. UNDERSTANDING PROPERTY LIMITATION & CONFLICTING OBJECTIVES

If through land management it is possible to change the appearance, vegetative species mix, and wildlife species mix occupying a site - such factors as soil type, slope, aspect, and climate. It is also important to be aware of what can be changed over time cannot always occur within a human life span, so land management requires the landowner to think in terms that exceed his own tenure as steward of the land. These two points must be factored in when formulating management objectives. There is no point, for example, in establishing the objective of managing for loblolly Pine when the property is far north of the natural range of loblolly. And it is unrealistic to establish an objective of conducting a commercial timber harvest ten years from now if all the trees on the property are now four inches in diameter. What is possible given the quality of the site and the size and quality of what is presently growing there must be carefully considered in establishing management objectives for a site.

In addition it is important to recognize that it may not be possible to achieve a number of different objectives on the acre of ground. Sometimes what needs to be done to accomplish one objective directly conflicts with what is necessary to achieve a different objective. If, for example, your desire is to recreate the open park-like "big tree" feel of a favorite part of your property elsewhere on your property, it probably will not be possible to manage that same area for a brush loving wildlife species such as rabbits or grouse. Depending on the size of the property it may be possible to manage for both objectives, but in different areas. On a smaller property you may have to decide which takes priority.

In the space provided list any particular hopes or plans you have for one part of your property or another. When you meet with your plan writer be sure to discuss the feasibility of your ideas.

9. INTEREST & EXPERIENCE

Following are a few additional questions that will help in developing to our plan:

Please rate from one to five the importance to you and your family of each of the following uses of your forest land.

(where 1 = Very important, 5 = Not important at all, and NA = Does not apply to your property)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Firewood | <input type="checkbox"/> Timber production |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing | <input type="checkbox"/> Source of income |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics/beauty | <input type="checkbox"/> Privacy from neighbors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking | <input type="checkbox"/> Protection of natural community such as a wetland or old growth forest |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Real estate investment | <input type="checkbox"/> Hunting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife/nature observation | <input type="checkbox"/> Others of importance: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural history | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Maintaining the present forest atmosphere | |
-

Check any of the land management practices below that you've done in the last ten years:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cut firewood | <input type="checkbox"/> Control insects and disease |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plant trees | <input type="checkbox"/> Control grapevines in high value timber |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Install deer fencing | <input type="checkbox"/> Build road |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Install livestock fencing along streams | <input type="checkbox"/> Cut trees for wildlife habitat improvement (not for sale) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Build brush piles for wildlife | <input type="checkbox"/> Cut trees to improve stand of timber (not for sale) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sell timber | <input type="checkbox"/> Clear trees from around a spring seep or in some way try to improve the spring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apply herbicides to control weeds | <input type="checkbox"/> Control burn a portion of your property |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plant or seed wildlife food plots | <input type="checkbox"/> Install erosion and sedimentation control Structure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tap maple trees for syrup | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stabilize stream bank | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Build fish habitat structure | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Build and install nesting boxes | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Build trail | |

Are any of the practices listed above things you'd particularly like to do on your property? Are there other activities not listed that you'd like to do?

Are the boundaries of the property marked or otherwise apparent (via roads, field edges, hedgerows, fences)? No, Yes, some yes, some no Describe the boundaries:

If you have had a commercial timber harvest in the last 10 years, please check the primary reasons why you chose to harvest:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thought it was the right thing to do | <input type="checkbox"/> Needed timber for own use |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Believed timber was mature | <input type="checkbox"/> Wanted to improve wildlife habitat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Part of land clearing operation | <input type="checkbox"/> Salvage dead or dying trees |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Needed the income | (from insect or disease mortality, |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Management plan called for a harvest | wind throw, etc.) |

Other:

Have you ever received any on-site assistance in managing your forest land before now? No Yes
If yes, what was the nature of the assistance?

Were you aware that federal cost-share funds were available (prior to SIP) for forest management practices on private land? No Yes If yes, have you enrolled in any of the following USDA cost-share programs within the last 10 years?

- Forestry Incentive Program (FIP)
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
- Agriculture Conservation Program (ACP)
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)
- Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

Other:

Summarize your primary interests and concerns in the stewardship of your land:

*Thank you for completing the questionnaire!
Please be sure to provide a copy to your plan writer and to your service forester.*