

A Cooperative Forest  
Stewardship Support  
Program for  
Qualified  
Landowners of Loui-  
siana



# The Louisiana Forest Stewardship Program



# THE LOUISIANA FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

## *What is Forest Stewardship?*

Forest stewardship is the wise use and management of resources that maintains and enhances the value of the forests for present and future generations.

A forest is a complex and vital element of our environment. Forests provide habitat for wildlife such as deer, turkeys, squirrels and songbirds. Forests clean the air, purify water and protect valuable topsoil. Forests provide recreation -- a place to walk, picnic, hunt and camp.

About 48% of Louisiana's land area (13.8 million acres) is in forest cover. Private nonindustrial landowners own 62% of the state's forested land. Forest industries are the second largest manufacturing employer in Louisiana, providing more than 25,700 jobs. In addition, an estimated 8,000 people are employed harvesting and transporting timber. Trees are Louisiana's No. 1 agricultural crop.

The Forest Stewardship Program gives public recognition to landowners who are good stewards of their land. Certified STEWARDSHIP FOREST landowners practice multiple-use forest management based on their own long-term objectives. Landowners' objectives can be classified into five major resource areas:

- **Timber**
- **Wildlife**
- **Recreation**
- **Aesthetics**
- **Environmental Enhancement**



## MISSION

*To provide private non-industrial forest landowners with technical assistance in achieving their long-term multiple resource management objectives.*

## *To become a certified STEWARDSHIP FOREST landowner,*

one must choose a primary objective and at least one secondary objective. A resource management plan is developed to make recommendations to the landowner on practices needed to meet the landowner's objectives. The landowner then manages woodlands to maximize these benefits while still providing for the other multiple benefits in a compatible fashion. Any forest with a minimum of 10 acres qualifies, providing a plan is developed, approved and followed.

Louisiana's Stewardship Program is sponsored by a State Stewardship Coordinating Committee, which is made up of representatives from the following agencies:

- Association of Consulting Foresters
- Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry
  - Office of Forestry
  - State Soil & Water Conservation Committee
- Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
- Louisiana Forestry Association
- Louisiana Stewardship Forest Landowners (8)
- Louisiana Society of American Foresters
- Louisiana Tech School of Forestry
- Louisiana Wildlife Federation
- LSU Agricultural Center
  - School of Renewable Natural Resources
  - Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service
- U. S. Department of Agriculture
  - Consolidated Farm Services Agency
  - Forest Service
    - *Kisatchie National Forest*
  - Natural Resources Conservation Service

## *Who Is Eligible?*

Any private forest landowner who owns 10 acres or more of forestland and wants to manage it for multiple-use. If a landowner owns more than one tract of land, each will be considered separately for certification as a STEWARDSHIP FOREST.

To be certified as a STEWARDSHIP FOREST, the land must be managed for multiple-use. This means the management plan will include recommendations to assist the landowner in meeting primary and secondary objectives. The landowner may manage for other objectives. In addition, land must be protected from insects, disease, wildfire, trash dumping and other abuse.

Achieving the status of certified STEWARDSHIP FOREST landowner will have no effects on rights of ownership, but it can increase the value of that ownership in many ways.

## *How Do I Get Started?*

Begin by asking "What do I want from my land?" To help you answer this question, take a moment and complete the following questionnaire.

## What Do I Want From My Land?

Are You Interested In:

- Building a retirement income
- Getting periodic timber income
- Growing pine trees
- Growing fine quality hardwoods
- Hunting -- *what species:*
  - Deer
  - Squirrel
  - Turkey
  - Wood Duck
  - Rabbit \_\_\_\_\_
  - Quail \_\_\_\_\_
  - Raccoon
  - Other
- Leasing your land for hunting \_\_\_\_\_  
*What species?* \_\_\_\_\_

Developing a fishing site \_\_\_\_\_

- Building hiking or walking trails
- Building camping or picnic sites
- Stopping soil erosion on land
- Enhancing fall colors
- Enhancing variety of songbirds
- Enhancing variety of wildflowers

Rank These Goals in Order of Your Preference:

- Timber Income
- Recreation
- Wildlife and Hunting
- Environmental Enhancement
- Aesthetics (Natural Beauty)

If you need assistance in managing your property to meet your long-term objectives, fill out the application form found at the back of this publication. It is especially important to state if you have previously received technical assistance and from whom. Stamp and mail the application to the State Stewardship Coordinator. You will begin receiving the quarterly Forest Stewardship Program Newsletter, and your application will be forwarded to the appropriate resource specialist, who will contact you to further explain the Forest Stewardship Program and begin the process of developing your long-term multiple-use management plan.



## *Advantages of a Written Forest Management Plan*

A well-written forest management plan functions much like a road map. It helps you to reach a destination. Before leaving on a long trip, you pull out your road map and plan a path to get to your final destination. The first step is to identify where you are. Second, identify where you want to go. And third, determine the best approach to get there (including the fast route and the scenic route). A well-written forest management plan is no different. It provides a straightforward method of determining and documenting several things.

### **1 Where are you?**

What type and amount of resources do you have now? And, what is the condition of your current resources?

### **2 Where do you want to go?**

What are your objectives for your property in general and for specific areas or stands?

### **3 How will you get there?**

What management practices will help you achieve your objectives? When and how should they be conducted? Finally, what cost-share assistance programs are available to help offset the cost?

All of these items are critical to successful forest management. Using a written forest management plan to document this information provides three distinct advantages: organization, scheduling and planning. Unlike many projects we encounter in our lives, managing a forest is a long-term proposition, and a good one. Although planning and attention to detail are



important for success, regardless of objectives, a written management plan provides an opportunity to outline a plan of action, have a ready reference for ensuring activities are conducted at the right time, and can be amended and changed as needed. Building options into the plan gives you the ability to take the fast route or the scenic route.

Forest management plans should be developed only by a professional resource specialist. A list is available from the state coordinator or any office of the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (Office of Forestry). The Office of Forestry will assist with smaller properties. For large properties, your best option is to work with a consulting forester or one of the landowner assistance programs available from paper companies or large sawtimber companies.

## *What Should Be in a Forest Resource Management Plan?*

Every tract of land and every landowner are different, but there are some general guidelines that apply to most certified properties. Timber management work must maintain good growth and quality of trees. Trees should be cut when they are mature or when the forest management plan indicates. An exception are trees left for wildlife or aesthetic purposes.

Any final cutting plan should include reforestation needs. When planting trees, the type of tree must match the site, with hardwood trees on hardwood sites, and pine trees on pine sites.

Many parts of timber management affect wildlife habitat. Harvest cuts should be done so that there are stands of many different age classes to provide all wildlife needs within a species range. Timber stands preferably should not be square, but should have irregular boundaries. This will create



more habitat variety of what is called “edge effect,” which is the best habitat for deer, quail and rabbits. Prescribed burning, the careful use of fires under exact weather and fuel conditions, is of great benefit to most species of southern wildlife. A light fire will “green up” the woods, improving deer browse and opening up the forest for better turkey habitat.

## *How Do I Get the Job Done?*

Having a complete, well-organized management plan will not qualify you for the STEWARDSHIP FOREST award. Accomplishments are the key. What have you done with your land? Have you been a good steward? In your forest management plan, your resource specialist will give you specific suggestions about what work your land needs. Your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office is ready to help you with erosion control projects. The La. Department of Wildlife and Fisheries has biologists who can help you improve your wildlife habitats. Specialists also are available to help you with problems in hardwoods, water quality or recreation.

Many recommendations made by the resource specialists will be do-it-yourself projects you can complete on weekends and holidays. Other projects such as road building, pond building and heavy site preparation for tree planting may require large machinery and professional help. The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service agents and specialists can assist with

education, soil analysis, information and sources of assistance.

There are people in the business of doing most types of forest management work. Most consulting foresters have contractors available to do your work for you. Your district Office of Forestry also maintains a list of vendors who will do work in your area. Cost-share money may be available to assist in carrying out recommended management practices. Your resource specialist will assist you in locating the appropriate program.

## *How Do I Get My Property Certified as a STEWARDSHIP FOREST?*

Once you have completed several of the practices outlined in your forest management plan, and feel you are a good steward of your land, have your resource specialist nominate your property for certification.

When your property is nominated for certification as a STEWARDSHIP FOREST, a team is formed to make a field inspection and determine if the property is being managed according to stewardship standards.

The inspection team consists of a forester and a biologist other than those involved in managing the property, a representative of the NRCS, and any other specialists needed to address your objectives. You and your resource specialists are invited to participate and answer any questions inspectors may have.

The inspection team will complete an inspection record listing the accomplishments on your land. The team members will make a decision following the inspection as to certifying the property or deferring until a later date. Landowners are notified in writing as to reason for deferring certification.

When your nomination is approved, you will receive a letter of congratulations from the state forester, a STEWARDSHIP FOREST sign to place on your property and you will be presented a plaque. The plaque is usually presented by the state forester along with public recognition of your accomplishments.

## *Where Do I Go From Here?*

Getting your land certified as a STEWARDSHIP FOREST is an important milestone, but it is not the end of the journey. Your property must continue to meet the qualifications of the program. STEWARDSHIP FOREST certification is good for five years. At that time your property will be reinspected to see if it continues to meet the STEWARDSHIP FOREST standards. This is an opportunity for you to get an evaluation of how well your property is doing and to get new ideas on implementing new projects or improving existing projects.

# CREED OF THE FOREST STEWARD

**I Believe**.....the right to own land is among the most treasured and most valued rights of all Americans; and

- the ownership of land not only grants me the privilege of pursuing my own goals but that it also carries the responsibility of good stewardship;
- that good stewardship of this country's precious natural resources is necessary to the strength and well-being of our nation and our world; and
- that good stewardship of my land will help provide this country's needs for forest products, for clean air and water, for healthy and thriving populations of fish and wildlife, and for forest-based recreation; and
- further that good stewardship of my lands will protect our valuable and fragile soils; and
- that good stewardship will improve the quality and condition of our environment while contributing to the natural beauty of Louisiana; and
- that good stewardship also involves protecting my lands from insects, diseases, wildfires and overgrazing; and
- that by practicing good stewardship I can set an example for other landowners while helping my country set an example for the rest of the world.

Therefore,

**I Pledge**....that I will practice stewardship management of my land; and

- I will strive to enhance the resources of timber, wildlife, soil, water, recreation, environmental quality and aesthetics on my land.

I pledge to follow a written management plan which addresses the minimum standards for stewardship management as detailed by the Louisiana Forest Stewardship Program.

By participating in the Louisiana Forest Stewardship Program, it is my intent to care for my land in such a manner that it will be in better condition for those generations to follow.



**Louisiana State University Agricultural Center**

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**Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station**

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

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**Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry**

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