

The Management Plan

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What would you think of someone starting an automobile trip in an unfamiliar area without a roadmap or an unidentified destination?

Adventurous? Unwise? Forest landowners who operate without a management plan are very much like that person driving without a roadmap. Many of us would not dare attempt to travel across our country without the aid of a map or GPS to help us navigate from point A to point B. It would be a long uncertain trip with no guarantee of reaching our destination. Many people, however, are willing to do this with their forestland. A well-prepared forest management plan serves as a roadmap (a series of scheduled activities) showing how to reach a predetermined destination (your management objectives). A management plan can save money, increase profits, and decrease taxes.

Do I Need a Forest Management Plan?

Timber and timberland are valuable assets, and landowners cannot afford to ignore the importance of proper management. A forest-management plan will provide you, as a landowner, the direction you need to successfully reach your goals and objectives in a precise and efficient manner. A plan can also reduce your chances of making costly mistakes that may take years to overcome.

In addition to providing direction for forestry-related activities on the property, a plan may also provide an opportunity for you as a landowner to obtain assistance

through state and federal cost-share programs. These programs can provide financial assistance for responsible management practices. Limited funding under such programs is available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Of course, if your objectives change, you may need to modify your management plan. In summary, an approved forest-management plan is necessary for you as a forest landowner to have your forestland certified, such as with the American Tree Farm System, Forest Stewardship Council, or any number of the certification programs world-wide.

Determine Goals and Objectives

When determining goals and objectives, you must start with forest-management planning. A plan will help you determine where you want your property to be at some point in the future. This process helps identify opportunities and resources available on your property. Remember that opportunities and resources may vary depending on your goals and objectives. A plan can help you concentrate on enhancing the aspects and values of your forestland that are most important to you. These aspects and values can be aesthetics, immediate financial returns, long-term financial gains, inheritance values, recreational opportunities, improvement of wildlife habitat, and possibly others.

Once you have determined where you want to go, you need to determine where you are based on your goals and objectives. Inventory and evaluate your property's resources to help determine where you are. A detailed inventory can tell you a lot about your property, such as stand types, landscape features, and wildlife information. Remember that if your goals and objectives change over time, additional data collection will be necessary.

Once you have determined where you are, the next step is to take the necessary actions to get where you want to be. Specific activity tables listed in the management plan detail how, when, and where to implement scheduled management activities to help obtain your goals and objectives.

Obtain a Written Forest Management Plan

Obtaining a written plan is easy; however, there are several things to consider. As noted above, the first step is to determine your goals and objectives. The next step is to seek the help of a professional. Most often, landowners seek the help of a private consulting forester. Private consulting foresters charge a fee for their services, but once

they are hired, they are obligated to represent your best interest while working for you. They can take your goals and objectives and turn them into a proactive plan that will help you reach your goals. In addition, the Mississippi Forest Commission, through the Forest Stewardship Program, can produce management plans for landowners for a small fee. If you are interested in this program, contact your MFC County Service Forester.

A good forest-management plan has many components; however, not all plans are the same and can vary from simple to complex. Some of the components that should be included in the plan include these: ownership goals and objectives, a detailed property boundary description, inventory data, management recommendations, activity schedules, and maps of the property.

At the end of this chapter is a sample management plan you can use as a guide in developing a plan of your own. A forest-management plan is one of the most important tools landowners can have when making important decisions concerning the future of their forestland. A plan needs to be flexible so that it can be changed as key decision-making factors change.

References

Florida Forest Stewardship – Forest Management Plans.

www.sfrc.ufl.edu/extension/florida_forestry_information/forest_management/plan.html

Mississippi Forest Stewardship Program. www.mfc.state.ms.us/landownerassistance/la5.htm

FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN

for
John Doe

222 Acorn Road
Pine Valley, Mississippi 39341
Property located in
Your County, America

Field data collected and prepared by
Joe Q. Consultant
Trees R Us, Inc.
P.O. Drawer 1645
Big Town, America 39759
662-333-9199

Time period covered by this plan
2008 – 2018

Date prepared
April 9, 2008

INTRODUCTION

This management plan was prepared for John Doe to serve as a guideline for the management practices undertaken in order to satisfy his stated landowner objectives. The plan covers activities utilized to improve the quality of timber and wildlife resources available on the property and includes recommendations for maintaining the soil, water, and aesthetic quality of the site.

In addition to providing direction for forestry-related activities on the property, this plan may also qualify the landowner for various state and federal cost share programs such as the Forest Resource Development Program (FRDP), which provide financial assistance for responsible management practices. Limited funding under these programs is available on a first-come first-serve basis and this plan does not guarantee that assistance will be awarded.

LANDOWNER OBJECTIVES

The landowner's primary objective is to maximize timber income with some consideration for wildlife while making the property aesthetically pleasing. Would like to leave enough timber to sell at death in order for one son to buy out other siblings' share of estate without debt.

TRACT DESCRIPTION

Tract Location

This property is located in Sections 10, 11, 14, and 15, Township 14N, Range 15E in Your County, America, approximately 11 miles west of nowhere.

Tract Acreage

The Sample property consists of approximately 460 acres, which can be divided into

124 acres of pine plantation, established 2000

220 acres of pine plantation, established 2007

65 acres of bottomland hardwoods, and

51 acres of other/open land.

Accessibility of Tract

Accessibility to the tract is excellent in all areas.

Hydrology

Special protection must be given on this property to maintain the water quality. This protection will be done through the use of streamside management zones (SMZ's) and other precautions identified in the Best Management Practices (BMP's) guidelines. Intermittent streams and a pond are the only water sources that will need protection on this site.

Historical, Cultural, or Archeological Features

These areas can range from old cemeteries or Indian mounds to old home sites or other areas of historical significance. There were no such areas of historical, cultural, or archeological value identified on the property.

Soil Series Present

The USDA Soil Survey of Your County shows the following soil series present on the site:

Cahaba Series – Cahaba soils are well-drained soils found on uplands. They are usually associated with Lexington, Luverne, Providence, and Susquehanna soils. These soils are well suited to both pines and hardwoods. The erosion hazard for these slopes is severe due to the slope.

Ruston Series – Ruston soils are well-drained sandy soils found mostly in the eastern part of the county on hilly uplands with side slopes of 12 to 50%. These soils are best suited for pine production.

Stough Series – Stough soils are somewhat poorly drained sandy loam soils located on upland flats and nearly level stream terraces. These soils have a slight erosion hazard and are best suited for loblolly pine production.

Soil Types Present

(CaA) Cahaba fine sandy loam, 0 – 2% slopes – This well drained soil occurs on terraces and is low in natural fertility and organic matter. These soils have a slight to moderate equipment limitation and erosion hazard. Loblolly pine is the best-suited timber species for this soil type with a site index of 75 – 85.

(RuB2) Ruston fine sandy loam, 2 –5% slopes – This a well-drained soil type found on upland ridgetops. RuB2 soils are best suited for loblolly pine production and have a site index of 84 for this species. Both the erosion hazard and equipment limitations are considered slight, so there are no significant restrictions for properly conducted forest management activities.

(StA) Stough fine sandy loam, 0 – 2% slopes – This somewhat poorly drained soil is found on nearly level stream terraces and upland flats. Although sites containing this soil type are moderately suited for cherrybark and water oak production (site indices are 85 and 80, respectively), they are best suited for loblolly pines and have a site index of 90 for this species. The erosion hazard is slight and equipment limitations are considered moderate due to potential wetness, so forest management activities involving heavy equipment use should be restricted to dry periods.

STAND DESCRIPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

For management purposes, it is common practice to break property down into different stands that are similar in age class distribution, species composition, and structure. Each stand identified in this document will contain all areas on the property that should be managed under the same management regime. The following stand(s) are present on this property:

Stand 1 – Pine plantation, established 2000

This area contains approximately 124 acres of 8-year-old pine plantation. Deer and turkey habitat is considered good to fair for this stand. Soil types present on the stand are as follows: CaA, and RuB2 (See “Soil Types Present”).

There is currently no evidence of any existing erosion problems or any threats to water quality in this stand. Care should be taken in any management activities to ensure that no such problems occur in the future. This can be accomplished by using Best Management Practices (BMP’s) in forestry operations, which are discussed in a separate section of this management plan. A Streamside Management Zone (SMZ) will be needed around the stream if any logging operations are carried out on the property.

Prescription

This stand is currently in good condition. Let it grow until age 14 –16 and check for a first thinning. A prescribed burn is needed prior to thinning.

Stand 2 – Pine plantation, established 2007

This area contains approximately 221 acres of pine plantation. Deer or turkey habitat is considered good to fair for this stand type. Soil types present on the stand are as follows: CaA, (See “Soil Types Present”).

There is currently no evidence of any existing erosion problems or any threats to water quality in this stand type. Care should be taken in any management activities to ensure that no such problems occur in the future. This can be accomplished by utilizing Best Management Practices (BMP’s) in forestry operations, which are discussed in a separate section of this management plan.

Prescription

This stand is in good condition and should be left to grow.

Stand 3 – Bottomland hardwood

This area contains approximately 65 acres of bottomland hardwoods. The average age is 60 years. The average basal area is 80 square feet/acre. The stand is 75% sawtimber and the rest is pulpwood. The major hardwood species present are these: white oak, hickory, water oak, and cherrybark oak. Deer and turkey habitat is considered good for this stand type. Soil types present on the stand are as follows: StA (See “Soil Types Present”).

There is currently no evidence of any existing erosion problems or any threats to water quality in this stand type. Care should be taken in any management activities to ensure that no such problems occur in the future. This can be accomplished by using Best Management Practices (BMP’s) in forestry operations, which are discussed in a separate section of this management plan.

Prescription

Maintain this stand as a hardwood stand. Thin periodically to promote establishment of desired hardwood regeneration. An alternative to thinning would be to make small clearcuts for regeneration.

WILDLIFE CONSIDERATIONS

Habitat Assessment and Recommendations

Overall, this tract currently offers good habitat for deer and turkey. Keep in mind that most silvicultural practices recommended for timber management also enhance wildlife habitat.

Threatened and Endangered Species

There wasn't evidence of any threatened or endangered species noted on this property while conducting the field visit.

TENTATIVE 10-YEAR ACTIVITY SCHEDULE

Year	Stand #	Activity
2009		
2010		
2011	3	Check for timber stand improvement or clearcut
2012		
2013	1	Check for first thinning
2014		
2015		
2016		
2017		
2018		

This schedule is a timetable of suggested timber management practices that will assist you in meeting the stated objectives for your property. It is highly recommended that you seek professional assistance before performing any of these activities.

