

# MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

## FOREST SERVICE

Operation Order 2012-306

Annapolis, Maryland

TO: Regional Foresters and Project Managers

Effective: July 11, 2012

### FOREST STEWARDSHIP PLAN IMPLEMENTATION POLICY

#### General

This Operation Order supercedes all previous operation orders and policies pertaining to the development of Forest Management Plans, Resource Conservation Plans and/or Forest Stewardship Plans (FSP). A Forest Stewardship Plan can be developed by a Forest Service forester and or a licensed consultant and/or industrial forester and, at times in conjunction with a Wildlife & Heritage Service Biologist/Ecologist, or a MDE Non-Tidal Wetlands specialist who is guided by State laws, State regulations, Forest Service policies, and the objectives of the landowner. It includes restoration, management and protection recommendations for forests, water, wildlife, wildlife habitat, recreation, threatened and endangered species, species in need of conservation and their habitats, and for special natural communities.

#### Objective

This operation order establishes the policies and procedures for developing Forest Stewardship Plans on private or public lands of the State. For FSPs that are developed on properties within the Chesapeake\Coastal Bay Critical Area they must conform with all Critical Area regulations under COMAR 27.01, the local jurisdiction's Critical Area Protection Programs and with the critical area document, *Forest Service Stewardship Plans and Timber Harvest Plans: Amended Request for General Approval*.

FSPs forming the basis of a Forest Conservation and Management Agreement (FCMA) must comply with the requirements of Operation Order 2012-305 directing the implementation of the Forest Conservation and Management Program.

#### Criteria for Determining Eligibility

Requests for preparing FSPs shall be granted for those properties having a **minimum of 10 acres of forest or a maximum of 500 acres of forest** and is located within a **"Stewardship Priority Area"** (See Appendix B) as indicated on county maps. Otherwise, requests for FSP preparation shall be referred to consulting or industrial foresters. **If the property owner is renewing an existing FCMA, or renewing an existing Tree Farm, or establishing a riparian forest buffer,** then the request for preparing an FSP shall be granted regardless of tract size or location. If two or more adjacent properties shall be managed under the guidance of a single FSP, then those properties shall be eligible if they collectively meet the criteria described above.

### Criteria for Determining Fees

The following fee structure applies to all Plan preparation:

- 10<sup>0</sup>/<sub>8</sub>—25 acres = \$200
- 26—50 acres = \$225
- 51—100 acres = \$250
- 101—500 acres = \$275

### Activities Included in this Process

Any request from a landowner for written recommendations that address the restoration, management and/or protection of a property made to a Forest Service employee is subject to the following procedure. The collective recommendations for a property developed through this procedure will be called a Forest Stewardship Plan.

### Activities Exempt from this Process

1. Pine reforestation plans (PRP) - (plans which address only reforestation and not any other management practice) for reforestation of harvested sites subject to the Pine Tree Reforestation Law;
2. **Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)** and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) - plans that only address afforestation of fields and not any other management practices. Not exempted are plantings that impact a WSSC or fall in a SSPRA layer.

### Procedure for Developing Forest Service Forest Stewardship Plans

1. **A non-industrial forest landowner or land manager will request a FSP, via the Stewardship Application form either on-line or through the mail (Appendix A). The Landowner's Stewardship Application Form must be returned to the DNR Service forester prior to initiating work on the property.** *Randy!*
2. The **Service forester will review the Stewardship Application Form and determine if the property meets current eligibility criteria** for developing the FSP ( see above and Appendix B). Landowners with properties not meeting the eligibility criteria shall be referred to the current list of licensed consulting and/or industrial foresters.
3. The DNR Service forester shall review the property utilizing the most current version of DNR's GIS toolbox which contains the sensitive species project review areas, non-tidal wetland maps, state wetland maps and other habitat layers. Based on these maps, the DNR Forester will indicate the presence of:

- Non-tidal Wetlands & Wetlands of Special State Concern (WSSC)
- Threatened and Endangered Species
- 100 foot Critical Area buffers
- Other Significant Plant & Wildlife Habitat

1. The DNR Service forester shall include within the FSP maps that indicate any of the above describe habitat protection areas. The FSP shall contain written recommendations provided by the appropriate agency that reference these habitat protection areas.

If Delmarva Fox Squirrel (DFS), Forest Interior Dwelling birds (FIDS) and or Eagles are present on the property, WHS approved recommendations and protection guidance for that species shall be used in lieu of the FSP coordination process as long as #5 below does not apply.

2. If the initial review of the property indicates the presence of a Sensitive Species Project Review Area (SSPRA) or Wetlands of Special State Concern (WSSC) then a FSP coordination form (Appendix C) must be completed. For plans being done by a licensed private forester, a completed coordination form must be provided to the DNR Service forester for submittal via the following process. This form along with a site location map must then be sent to the Environmental Review Coordinator for the Wildlife & Heritage Service and/or the MDE Non-tidal Wetlands program by the DNR Service forester under the following conditions:

*consultant*

- The Wildlife & Heritage Service (WHS) will be requested to review the plan and provide comments if Sensitive Species Project Review Areas (SSPRA) and or Wetlands of Special State Concern (WSSC) are found on the property.
- The MDE – Non-tidal Wetlands Program will be requested to review the plan and provide comments or authorization concerning the regulatory aspects of any Wetlands of Special State Concern (WSSC) that may be impacted.

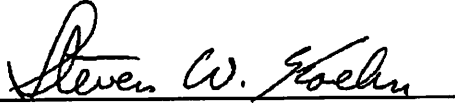
6. A response must be provided in writing to the DNR Service forester within 15 calendar days of the date the coordination form was sent. If WHS and/or MDE indicate they will provide management recommendations then written recommendations must be received by the DNR Service forester within 45 calendar days of the initial date of submittal of the coordination form. If the DNR Service forester receives no response by either the 15 day or 45 day deadlines then they may proceed to complete the FSP, but will still indicate within the plan the presence of the SSPRA or WSSC. If WHS recommendations are received after the deadline dates they will be forwarded onto the landowner for inclusion into the FSP.

*Heritage*

7. All FSPs shall be entered directly into the USDA Forest Service FSP data entry program.

8. Format for the information required within a Forest Stewardship Plan shall conform to the standards prescribed in Forest Service Op-Order 2012-307.

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



Steven W. Koehn  
Director / State Forester

## APPENDIX B

### FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM – PRIORITY AREAS

**Primary Priority Area** = Includes all parcels with more than 10 acres of forest within the Conserve Working Forests (CWF) Forest Action Plan Priority Area.

**Secondary Priority Area** = Includes all parcels with more than 10 acres of forest within MFS Forest Action Plan Priority Watersheds and Sensitive Species Project Review Areas (SSPRA).

**Tertiary Priority Area** = Includes parcels with more than 50 acres of forest, or parcels with more than 10 acres of forest and greater that have any portion in the Critical Area, or are identified in the Protect Forests From Harm Priority Area in the Forest Action Plan.

**APPENDIX A**  
**Application for Development of Forest Stewardship Plan**

In response to your inquiry about developing a stewardship plan, you will find enclosed several informational pamphlets about various forestry programs that you can take advantage of for your property. Please completely fill in the form below and return to my office at the address listed below.

I own \_\_\_\_\_ acres of woodland in \_\_\_\_\_ County and am interested in obtaining a Forest Stewardship Plan on my property. I understand I will be billed for the development of this plan according to the following fee schedule on acres receiving forestry/wildlife recommendations.

Plan preparation fees:

5—25 acres = \$200 \*  
26—50 acres = \$225  
51—100 acres = \$250  
101—500 acres = \$275

**\* If the property owner is renewing an existing FCMA, or renewing an existing Tree Farm, or establishing a riparian forest buffer, then the request for preparing an FSP shall be granted regardless of tract size or location.**

My objectives for this woodland are as follows, list in priority:

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*Possible Objectives may include: Forest Products, General Forest Information, Fish & Wildlife Management, Recreation, Natural Heritage, and Soil & Water Quality Protection.*

I would like a representative to further explain this program and walk over my property with me. **No fee for initial visit.**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Request: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Return To: *Forester's Office Address*

**If available please include a copy of your plat for this property.**

**\*\*Please do not send a payment at this time. You will be billed upon the completion of your Forest Stewardship Plan.**

*Property location*

**APPENDIX C**

**FOREST SERVICE  
FOREST STEWARDSHIP PLAN – COORDINATION FORM**

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_

Division: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Landowner: \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_ Tax Map No. \_\_\_\_\_ Parcel No. \_\_\_\_\_

Map Coordinates \_\_\_\_\_

Total Acreage: \_\_\_\_\_ Acreage in Critical Area: \_\_\_\_\_

Landowners Objective: \_\_\_\_\_

(Fill in information below only for those areas impacted by the SSPRA and or WSSC)

Dominant Species: \_\_\_\_\_ Average DBH: \_\_\_\_\_

B.A. Hdw: \_\_\_\_\_ B.A. Pine: \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS:

**THE FOLLOWING SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY THE DNR FORESTER:**

**Date Sent To:** ER Specialist: \_\_\_\_\_, MDE Nontidal Wetlands: \_\_\_\_\_,

**15 Day Due Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **45 Day Due Date:** \_\_\_\_\_