

Washington State Integrated Forest Management Plan Guidelines

- **Forest Stewardship Plan**
- **Conservation Activity Plan (CAP)**
- **Tree Farm Management Plan**
- **Timber Management Plan (current use property taxation)**



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF
Natural Resources



Issued February 14, 2012

WASHINGTON STATE INTEGRATED FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN GUIDELINES

These guidelines have been cooperatively developed and adopted by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Washington Tree Farm Program, and the Washington Department of Revenue (DOR). The guidelines are intended to help landowners, who so choose, to simultaneously meet the “written management plan” requirements of multiple forestry-related programs administered by several agencies and organizations.

Forest management plans developed using these guidelines are intended to:

- Provide a “road map” to help forest landowners meet their objectives and manage their land sustainably for the future.
- Convey information and guidance to others, including heirs or subsequent owners.
- Help forest landowners meet the “written management plan” eligibility requirement for:
 - 1) Cost-share and financial incentive programs.
 - 2) “Stewardship Forest” recognition.
 - 3) Certification by the American Tree Farm System.
 - 4) “Current Use” forestry property tax classification.

Acceptance and approval of the plan will be determined by the agency or organization which administers each program.

Plans which meet these guidelines are intended to meet the requirements for each of the following programs:

Forest Stewardship Program (Administered by Washington State DNR in cooperation with USDA Forest Service - State and Private Forestry Programs)

- A DNR-approved **Forest Stewardship Plan** is required to be eligible for “Stewardship Forest” recognition (property sign) and to qualify for certain cost-share program funds administered by DNR.

USDA Farm Bill Conservation Programs (Administered by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service)

- Landowners who participate in NRCS-administered Farm Bill financial assistance programs, such as the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), are required to have an NRCS-approved **Conservation Activity Plan (CAP)** or other plan acceptable to NRCS. Other acceptable plans may include a Forest Stewardship Plan, Tree Farm

Management Plan, or NRCS Conservation Plan. Financial assistance may be available for development of a Conservation Activity Plan (NRCS practice identifier: CAP 106) by an NRCS-authorized Technical Service Provider (TSP). The term “CAP 106” refers to those plans for which NRCS is providing financial compensation for plan preparation.

Certified Tree Farm Program (Administered by the Washington Tree Farm Program, affiliated with the American Tree Farm System)

- An approved **Tree Farm Management Plan** is one of the requirements for the property to become a Certified Tree Farm/Certified Family Forest.

Current Use Forest Property Tax Programs (Administered by County Assessor’s Offices in cooperation with the Washington State Department of Revenue)

- A **Timber Management Plan**, described in state law (RCW 84.34.041) and approved by the County Assessor, is a requirement for eligibility for “current use” forest property tax programs. (Interested landowners should contact their County Assessor’s Office to determine their specific requirements before beginning the plan development process. Some Assessor’s Offices have developed their own guidelines and preferred format for submission of the plan which may vary from what is presented herein.)

Plans for each of the above-described programs are required to be prepared by, or in close collaboration with, a professional forester or other natural resource professional acceptable to the approving agency or organization. These guidelines are intended to help landowners simultaneously meet the written management plan requirements of several programs administered by different agencies and organizations. However, no assurance is either stated or implied regarding the acceptance or approval of any plan by any specific agency or organization.

PLAN CONTENTS

The following contents are **required** unless specifically identified as being “optional”.

I. COVER PAGE

- Landowner Information: Name(s), address, phone number, e-mail address.
- Property Information: Number of acres included in the plan, county, legal description (subsection, section, township, range), tax parcel number(s), street address or descriptive location from nearest town. (Include USDA Farm Service Agency Farm and Tract number if property has one). GPS coordinates (longitude and latitude) – optional.
- Plan Preparer: name, title, affiliation, address, phone, e-mail address.
- Assisted By (if applicable): If plan was prepared by the landowner, identify the primary natural resource professional(s) who assisted/advised in plan preparation: name, title, affiliation, address, phone, e-mail address.
- Plan Preparation Date

II. TABLE OF CONTENTS (OPTIONAL)

III. LANDOWNERS OBJECTIVES

Describe owner’s objectives, priorities, guiding principles, management philosophy, and “future vision” for the property for both short term (<10 years) and long term (10+ years).

IV. INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEW OF THE PROPERTY

Brief general introductory overview of the property, which may include: location, access, boundaries, associated and surrounding land uses, topography, climate/weather, family and land use history, forest management and timber harvesting history, unique or interesting features, general comments on property resources, management opportunities, and factors which may affect use or management of the property. (Detailed discussion of resource conditions and management practices will follow in the next section)

V. RESOURCE DESCRIPTIONS AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

For each of the following Resource Categories, the plan should describe:

- Current resource conditions, issues, needs, and opportunities
- Any management practices which the owner plans to implement to protect, enhance, or restore these resources

See Appendix I on pages 13-16 for examples of items to potentially include under Resource Descriptions and Management Practices

RESOURCE CATEGORY I – FOREST HEALTH/WILDFIRE/INVASIVE SPECIES

- Overall description/assessment of forest health conditions and tree vigor across the ownership.
- Describe nature and extent of current or potential forest health problems, including both biotic and abiotic factors.
- Describe any management practices to maintain forest health and/or to prevent or help alleviate forest health problems.
- Describe any management practices to help reduce wildfire hazard to the forest and any structures on the property.
- Describe the nature and extent of invasive species issues, if any, and identify any anticipated monitoring and control measures (including use of Integrated Pest Management techniques).

RESOURCE CATEGORY II – SOILS

- Attach soils map and USDA-NRCS soils descriptions.
(Refer to Web Soil Survey: <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/HomePage.htm>)
- For each soil type, describe productivity (site index) and the nature and extent of any soils-related problems and how they may affect species composition, tree growth, forest management activities, equipment operability, or other uses of the property.
- Describe any management activities, or operability and use restrictions, to maintain soil structure, stability, productivity, or to prevent, correct, or cope with soils-related problems.

RESOURCE CATEGORY III – WATER QUALITY/ RIPARIAN AND FISH HABITAT/
WETLANDS.

- Attach a map showing all water on the property, including a stream type map.
- If known, identify significant fish or other aquatic species which use water bodies associated with the property.
- Describe stream, wetland, and riparian conditions, including any problems and opportunities for protection, enhancement, or restoration.
- Describe any management practices to improve or restore riparian habitat, fish passage, fish habitat, water quality, or create or restore wetlands.

For NRCS CAP 106 plans, refer to Water Quality and/or Biological Technical Notes in Section I of the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide for resource assessment and analysis requirements.

RESOURCE CATEGORY IV: FOREST INVENTORY/TIMBER/WOOD PRODUCTS

- Attach copy of aerial photo or map with forest stand types delineated and labeled.
- Describe timber type (tree species), age(s), tree size(s)/diameter(s) at breast height, stocking level/stand density, and tree quality in each stand.
- Describe site productivity (site index) for each stand.
- Attach any information on tree measurements, stand volumes, etc. (optional)
- Describe understory vegetation in each stand. In eastern WA, include plant associations.
- Describe any management practices to maintain or improve tree growth and to enhance the quantity, quality, or value of future timber or other wood products.
- Describe any present or future commercial harvest opportunities

For NRCS CAP 106 plans, refer to Washington Specification Guide for CAP 106 in Section III, and Forestry Technical Notes in Section I, of the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide.

RESOURCE CATEGORY V: PROPERTY ACCESS/ ROADS AND TRAILS

- Attach map showing location of current and planned roads and trails.
- If one exists, attach Road Management and Abandonment Plan (RMAP) or RMAP checklist.
- Describe current vehicle access onto and throughout the property, including types of existing roads and anticipated use.
- Describe needs/opportunities for road and trail maintenance, improvement, replacement, or abandonment
- Describe any needs for restricting property access or use of roads and trails.
- Describe any needs for improved access.
- Describe any management practices to construct, maintain, or abandon roads or trails.

RESOURCE CATEGORY VI: WILDLIFE

- Attach list of common wildlife species in this area.
(See www.woodlandfishandwildlife.org for publications containing species lists)
- Identify any species which the owner wishes to attract, enhance, or control.
- Describe the present condition of key wildlife habitat components
- Describe any management practices to protect, improve, or restore wildlife habitat.
- Describe any practices to control wildlife damage.

For NRCS CAP 106 Plans, refer to Biological Technical Notes in Section I of the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide for resource assessment and analysis requirements.

RESOURCE CATEGORY VII: PROTECTION OF SPECIAL RESOURCES

- Identify any known state or federal threatened or endangered wildlife or plant species or habitat issues.
- Identify any known cultural resources or historical sites for which protection may be required or desirable.
- If none are known to exist, include this or a comparable statement: *“There are no known threatened or endangered species, cultural, or historical resource protection issues on this property. A formal review, to identify these resources, if any, and their potential protection requirements, will be conducted by the State Department of Natural Resources if and when the landowner proposes to conduct significant forestry activities which require a DNR-approved Forest Practices Application”.*

- Identify any sites unique, important, or special to the landowner and any other sites deemed to have “high conservation value” or otherwise deserving of specific protection.
- Describe any measures to protect or enhance any of the above-mentioned resources.

RESOURCE CATEGORY VIII: AESTHETICS AND RECREATION

- Describe any areas which are aesthetically important to the owner or the public.
- Describe any current or potential personal or public use of the property for recreation or education.
- Describe any management activities to protect or enhance aesthetic and recreational resources or enhance educational opportunities.

RESOURCE CATEGORY IX: SPECIALIZED FOREST PRODUCTS (OPTIONAL CATEGORY)

- Describe presence and quality of special forest products (aka non-timber forest products)
- Describe any potential for agro-forestry practices
- Describe any potential opportunities related to biomass production, carbon sequestration, or ecosystem services
- Describe any management practices which the landowner plans to implement related to the above.

VII. AERIAL PHOTO(S)/PROPERTY MAP(S)

Attach copies of aerial photos or maps showing the following:

- Location of the property within the Section
- Property boundaries
- Forest stand types
- Soil types
- Location of water bodies and identification of stream types
- Location of roads and trails
- Topography (optional)

For NRCS CAP 106 plans, the specific location of all planned management activities for which financial compensation is anticipated from NRCS-administered programs must be shown on a map or photo.

VIII. LANDOWNER SIGNATURE(S)

LANDOWNER APPROVAL SIGNATURE (REQUIRED)

I/we approve of the contents of this plan and intend to implement the described management activities to best of my/our ability.

Landowner Signature(s) and Date Signed

IX: PLAN APPROVAL SIGNATURES

DNR FOREST STEWARDSHIP PLAN APPROVAL (IF APPLICABLE)

This plan meets the requirements for a Forest Stewardship Plan.

WA State Department of Natural Resources Authorized Representative Date

Print Name:

Affiliation:

Address:

Phone :

E-mail:

USDA-NRCS CONSERVATION ACTIVITY PLAN APPROVAL (IF APPLICABLE)

This plan meets the requirements for a USDA-NRCS Conservation Activity Plan.

Signature of USDA-NRCS Authorized Representative Date

Print Name:

Title:

Affiliation:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

APPENDIX I

RESOURCE DESCRIPTIONS AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Purpose

This appendix is intended to provide additional guidance and suggestions for things plan preparers may wish to include in their Resource Description and Management Practice narratives. The relevance of each these items to a particular plan will vary. Some, possibly many, of the items mentioned may not be applicable depending on the particular property, resource conditions, and the owner's objectives. Similarly, there may be items relevant to a specific property which may not be listed here.

RESOURCE CATEGORY I: FOREST HEALTH/WILDFIRE/INVASIVE SPECIES

Resource Conditions

Insects, diseases, drought, wildfire hazard/excessive fuels, damage from weather and natural disasters (fire, snow/ice, wind, flooding, debris slides, etc.), damage from wild or domestic animals, site-inappropriate species, stressed/overstocked stands, invasive species/noxious weeds, human-caused damage, etc.

Management Practices

Thinning, pruning, slash disposal, firebreaks and defensible space around structures, improved access for firefighters, prescribed burning, changes in tree species composition, prevention/control treatments for animal damage, insects, and diseases, sanitation and salvage practices, biological, mechanical, and chemical control of noxious weeds/invasive species.

RESOURCE CATEGORY II: SOILS

Resource Conditions

Soil names, parent material, textures, drainage, productivity, erosion, unstable slopes, mass wasting, compaction potential, hard pan layers, high water table, poor drainage, seasonal

flooding, droughty soils, access and operability problems. (Soils issues related to roads and trails should primarily be discussed in that section).

Management Practices

Erosion and mass wasting prevention and control, seeding and planting, access and equipment operability restrictions, limitations on road and trail location and construction, species selection for planting on “problem soils”, specific site preparation techniques, changes to drainage, fertilization, moisture conservation measures. (Management practices related to roads and trails should be primarily discussed in that section).

RESOURCE CATEGORY III : WATER QUALITY/RIPARIAN AND FISH HABITAT/WETLANDS

Resource Conditions

Water quality impaired waterways (303d listed), unstable or failing stream banks, fish passage barriers or impairments, lack of adequate riparian vegetation, less than desirable conifer component in riparian areas, lack of woody debris or spawning gravels, livestock impacts to riparian areas and waterways, known or potential sources of sediment delivery to waterways, opportunities to create off-channel fish habitat, problematic riparian or aquatic species.

Management Practices

Riparian and wetland planting, livestock exclusion fencing, control of invasive riparian or aquatic species, removal of fish passage barriers, in-channel and off-channel fish habitat improvement, creation or expansion of wetlands, control of sediment delivery.

RESOURCE CATEGORY IV: FOREST INVENTORY/TIMBER/WOOD PRODUCTS

Resource Conditions

Site quality, unstocked or understocked stands, overstocked stands, site inappropriate species, tree form and quality, tree damage, insect infested/diseased trees, competing vegetation.

Management Practices

Afforestation, reforestation, conversion of brush patches or understocked stands to trees, competing vegetation control, animal damage control, release from brush competition, pre-commercial thinning, commercial thinning, pruning, fertilization, root disease control, species conversion.

RESOURCE CATEGORY V: PROPERTY ACCESS/ROADS/TRAILS

Resource Conditions

Road and trail surface type and condition, erosion or drainage issues, ditch and culvert conditions, need for maintenance, repair, upgrades, abandonment, or new construction. Trespass, access, or easement issues.

Management Practices

Access/use restrictions, grading, new or additional rock surfacing, ditch and culvert maintenance, install/improve drainage or erosion control devices, install/replace culverts, upgrade undersized culverts, install/repair/replace/remove stream crossing structures, right of way vegetation control, erosion control seeding, removal of hazard trees near roads and trails, installation of gates, fencing, signage or access control devices, boundary marking, routine inspection of roads/trails, prompt inspection of roads/trails following storm events, new road or trail construction, road or trail abandonment.

RESOURCE CATEGORY VI: WILDLIFE

Resource Conditions

Food, water, shelter/cover, nesting/rearing habitat, travel corridors, snags, downed woody debris, designated wildlife leave trees or habitat recruitment trees, nesting and roosting structures, food plots/forage seeding areas, tree and shrub plantings. Animal damage problems.

Management Practices

Snag/woody debris retention and creation, installation of nesting structures, forage seeding, retention and planting of food producing tree and shrub species, spring development, water guzzler installation, variable density thinning, wetland creation or enhancement, designation and retention of wildlife leave trees. Animal damage control measures.

RESOURCE CATEGORY VII: PROTECTION OF SPECIAL RESOURCES

Refer to the DNR publication Forest Practices Illustrated (pages 22-27, 100-101) for examples of threatened, endangered, cultural, and historic resources and further discussion regarding their protection and sources of additional information. Additional helpful information can also be found on websites for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Priority Habitats and Species); Washington Natural Heritage Program (rare/endangered plants); and Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

RESOURCE CATEGORY VIII: AESTHETICS AND RECREATION

Resource Conditions

Panoramic vistas, viewpoints, waterfalls, unique geologic features, cabins, camping and picnicking areas, aesthetic buffers to undesirable views. Access, suitability, and infrastructure for current and proposed recreational activities by the owners or others (e.g. picnicking, hiking, camping, fishing, hunting, bird watching/nature study, horseback riding, mountain biking, x-c skiing, swimming, boating, snowmobiling, ATV's, group recreation or education events, etc.).

Management Practices

Activities to create, improve, or maintain recreational access and infrastructure. Create, maintain, or improve viewpoints. Retain or create aesthetic buffers. Activities to enhance user safety during recreational use. Activities to control, restrict, or direct recreational use.

RESOURCE CATEGORY IX: SPECIALIZED FOREST PRODUCTS (OPTIONAL)

Resource Conditions

Presence and condition of floral greens, boughs, Christmas trees, mushrooms, berries and other edibles, medicinal plants, etc. Current condition and functional status of any agroforestry practices such as windbreaks, silvopasture, ally cropping, and forest farming. Current or potential income opportunities from biomass, carbon sequestration, ecosystem services, ecotourism, land leasing, etc.

Management Practices

Thinning, pruning, fertilization, shearing, weed control, planting, seeding, insect and disease control, etc.

END