



# Virginia Department of Forestry

## Strategic Plan

*Harnessing the Winds of Change*

*June 2010*





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# Goal 1: Protect the citizens, their property and the forest resource from wildfire

## *Goal Summary and Alignment*

The Commonwealth's forestlands will be protected from damages resulting from wildfires. Virginia will be a national leader in the effort by ensuring the VDOF has adequate suppression equipment and radio communications to effectively interoperate with local, state and federal agencies; sufficiently trained personnel; an appropriate fire prevention program, and staff trained in arson investigation and law enforcement who are prepared for the changing needs in wildfire protection and wildland/urban interface. This goal aligns directly with the Agency's mission to protect the forest resources.

### **Objective 1.1 - We will reduce the forestland burned by wildfires.**

#### **Measure 1.1.1:** Reduce percentage of human-caused fires

**Target:** 94.7 percent or lower

##### *Strategies*

1.1.1.1 – Complete 12 new Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP) and carry out 12 wildfire hazard mitigation projects in high wildfire risk communities.

**Target:** 12 plans and 12 projects

1.1.1.2 – Agency Forest Fire Readiness and mobilization plan will be in place during the spring and fall fire seasons to maintain a state of high wildfire readiness.

1.1.1.3 – Reduce arson-caused wildfires by providing advanced law enforcement and fire investigation training to all special forest wardens and by maintaining a bloodhound program.

### **Objective 1.2 – Provide available financial resources to rural volunteer fire departments for training and the acquisition of small equipment and wildland fire personnel protective equipment.**

#### **Measure 1.2.1:** Increase percentage of eligible rural volunteer fire departments receiving state and federal financial assistance.

**Target:** 40.0 percent or greater

##### *Strategies*

1.2.1.1 – Maintain and update annually the contact for each volunteer fire department within the county to the regional database.



- 1.2.1.2 – Increase the use of available Federal Excess property to VDOF and volunteer fire departments within identified high fire risk areas.
- 1.2.1.3 – 20 percent of the Commonwealth's rural volunteer fire departments will receive VDOF pass-through financial assistance on an annual basis based on needs and current wildfire response capabilities.
- 1.2.1.4 – Promote continued development and expansion of both state and local wildfire suppression capacities. Provide localized wildland fire training in each VDOF region and at least one statewide training academy to improve the efficiency of wildland fire response.

## **Objective 1.3 – Continue long history of proactive fire prevention efforts, particularly in identified priority areas.**

**Measure 1.3.1:** Number of fire prevention presentations, seminars and/or outreach programs provided by VDOF personnel in identified high-risk areas.

**Target:** 30 programs/year

### *Strategies*

- 1.3.1.1 – Identify wildfire hazards and risks across Virginia and establish priority areas for wildfire prevention and mitigation efforts.
- 1.3.1.2 – Create a partnership between Virginia's public schools and VDOF to promote wildfire prevention and public safety.

## **Goal 2: Protect, promote and enhance forested watersheds, non-tidal wetlands and riparian areas.**

### *Goal Summary and Alignment*

Provide technical services; best management practices information, and silvicultural activity enforcement on the Commonwealth's forest watersheds, non-tidal wetlands and riparian areas to help ensure the quality of drinking and recreational waters from these areas for future generations.

## **Objective 2.1 – Increase the amount of forestland protected and/or established in Virginia watersheds, with a priority on significant watersheds.**

**Measure 2.1.1:** Number of acres of forestland established and/or protected in Virginia watersheds.



**Target:** 3,500 acres/year

**Measure 2.1.2:** Number of acres of riparian forest protected (acres in riparian forest buffer tax credit).

**Target:** 350 acres/year

### *Strategies*

- 2.1.1.1 – Work collaboratively with partners, agencies and groups to establish new buffers as outlined in the Riparian Forest Buffer Implementation Plan.
- 2.1.1.2 – Provide educational opportunities for the general public, SWCDs, private forest landowners, the development community and forest products manufacturers through meetings, published literature and articles. These educational opportunities will be aimed at a combination of promoting an increase in the number of riparian plantings; encouraging wider riparian plantings, when possible, and educating landowners in significant watersheds on the importance of forests to water quality.
- 2.1.1.3 – Use available grants and cost-share funds to increase accomplishments of buffers in rural and urban areas; fund logger BMP cost-share, and provide watershed protection through the regional grant program.
- 2.1.1.4 – Make stakeholders aware of the Riparian Forest Buffer Tax Credit program. VDOF foresters will actively seek and promote areas for the riparian forest buffer tax credit, including pre-harvest plans; harvest inspection process, and forest management plans.

## **Objective 2.2 – We will protect and enhance water quality by increasing compliance with BMPs on forest harvest sites.**

**Measure 2.2.1:** Cost to conduct a forest harvest water quality inspection.

**Target:** \$10.34/acre

**Measure 2.2.2:** Percentage of Best Management Practices implemented on timber harvesting operations.

**Target:** 90 percent

### *Strategies*

- 2.2.2.1 – Engage water quality specialists to provide more consistency to regional staff for implementation and enforcement of the water quality law.
- 2.2.2.2 – Utilize comprehensive Integrated Forest Resource Information System (IFRIS) to support the water quality law enforcement program that allows for harvest operation tracking from point of notification to inspection close-out.
- 2.2.2.3 – Identify BMP implementation rates by individual BMP practice groups and utilize that information to target specific training programs for the SHARP Logger Program.



2.2.2.4 – Improve statewide BMP implementation rate on timber harvesting operations by educating forest landowners on the value of BMPs and how to encourage harvesting contractors to use them where appropriate.

## Objective 2.3 – Mitigate the water quality impact of urban and suburban stormwater and impervious surfaces

**Measure 2.3.1:** Number of water quality improvement projects completed.

**Target:** 15 projects/year

### *Strategies*

- 2.3.1.1 – Encourage and implement tree planting projects and forest management strategies that mitigate the effects of storm water runoff and improve water storage.
- 2.3.1.2 – Encourage municipalities to include using forests and trees as a significant component of storm water management in their storm water plans.

## Goal 3: Improve the Stewardship, Health and Diversity of Forest Resources

### *Goal Summary and Alignment*

Provide information, advice and scientific-based recommendations to help landowners make informed decisions about their forest resources, which result in healthy, vigorous trees and forests on private land.

## Objective 3.1 – We will increase the number of forest management projects implemented on private land and promote cost-share funding for all appropriate projects.

**Measure 3.1.1:** Number of forest management projects implemented on private land.

**Target:** 650 projects/quarter

**Measure 3.1.2:** Percentage of eligible Reforestation of Timberlands (RT) incentive received by landowners.

**Target:** 95 percent

### *Strategies*

- 3.1.1.1 – Regenerate and improve forests, with added emphasis in priority areas by implementing silvicultural practices as outlined in forest management plans. Focus project implementations on tracts covered by active stewardship or equivalent



plans and promote certification through the Certified Stewardship process or other certification program.

- 3.1.1.2 – Develop educational materials and programs and use these to raise landowner awareness of the need for and methods available for forestland management.
- 3.1.1.3 – Focus efforts on afforestation of non-forested lands in all areas for multiple resource benefits.
- 3.1.1.4 – Implement wildlife habitat projects per plan guidelines and in consideration with the State Wildlife Action Plan.
- 3.1.1.5 – We will target and identify sites to be planted and improved under RT through priority maps and by use of the logging inspection process.

## **Objective 3.2 – Increase urban forest management in Virginia communities, particularly state and local capacity to address urban forestry issues and concerns.**

**Measure 3.2.1:** Number of communities assisted with forest and/or tree resource management.

**Target:** 110 communities/year

### *Strategies*

- 3.2.1.1 – Categorize Virginia communities into the various program levels using US Forest Service guidelines.
- 3.2.1.2 – Target U&CF grants and technical assistance to communities interested in upgrading their community tree program to the next level. When requested, assist local governments in establishing tree ordinances and policies.
- 3.2.1.3 – Promote the benefits of urban and community forestry to citizens and community officials through workshops, conferences, publications and other media.
- 3.2.1.4 – Within constraints of available funds and staffing levels, implement activities outlined in the Virginia Department of Forestry Urban and Community Forestry Program Area Strategic Plan.
- 3.2.1.5 – Establish comprehensive street tree inventory for major municipalities in Virginia (through Forest Health Grant).
- 3.2.1.6 – Partner with Virginia State University to increase involvement in U&CF programs by traditionally underserved citizens. Recruit greater underserved population participation in urban forestry related opportunities, including the Virginia Urban Forest Council and the Virginia Natural Resources Leadership Institute.
- 3.2.1.7 – Through grant funding, professional development activities and professional certification programs of the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), continue to promote development of the urban forestry profession in Virginia.



## Objective 3.3 – Increase the amount of forest management assistance on private lands in the Commonwealth.

**Measure 3.3.1:** Number of acres of all forest management plan types achieved on private and appropriate public forestland.

**Target:** 22,000 acres/quarter

### *Strategies*

3.3.1.1 – Prepare professional management plans for landowners and cooperatively work with consulting foresters; the Virginia Tree Farm Committee, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service to increase forest management planning through high-quality management plans. Seek to maintain the number of new forest stewardship plans by focusing landowner outreach and contact in high-priority areas and with newer landowners.

3.3.1.2 – Update state lands forest management plans on 10 percent of tracts and initiate recommended projects.

3.3.1.3 – In cooperation with Virginia State University and Virginia Tech, reach out to forest landowners, including specific techniques for reaching traditionally underserved landowner groups.

## Objective 3.4 – Implement actions to protect Virginia’s forest resource from species loss and from the impacts of detrimental native and invasive plants and pests.

**Measure 3.4.1:** Number of diminished species establishment or improvement projects implemented on private and non-federal public lands in Virginia.

**Target:** 40 projects/year

### *Strategies*

3.4.1.1 – Address activities in longleaf and shortleaf pine plans, including development of seed source; targeting and outreach; research; database development, and funding.

3.4.1.2 – Continue efforts to develop blight-resistant American chestnut in cooperation with partner organizations.

3.4.1.3 – Utilize available cost-share funding and technical assistance to establish and improve longleaf and shortleaf pine and other diminished species, when appropriate.

3.4.1.4 – Promote diminished species restoration efforts on larger blocks of land with higher ecosystem services values and within the known historic range of the species. Focus diminished species restoration efforts on the greater species ecosystem type.

**Measure 3.4.2:** Number of activities conducted that are designed to identify, protect and/or restore identified diminished species.

**Target:** 18 projects/year

***Strategies***

3.4.2.1 – Working with new and existing partners, continue to identify and protect the remaining individual trees or populations of the most threatened native species, such as American chestnut and longleaf pine. Maintain awareness (through inventory data and mapping) of other declining species, such as shortleaf pine, Atlantic white-cedar and eastern hemlock.

3.4.2.2 – Encourage private conservation of diminished species by promoting landowner interest and conservation easements on lands where target species are identified.

3.4.2.3 – Develop outreach and educational opportunities for master naturalists, master gardeners, tree stewards, tree farmers, landowners and other stakeholders important to the success of conservation and restoration efforts.

3.4.2.4 – Conduct research and establish methods, goals and targets for re-establishing specific tree species and ecosystems.

3.4.2.5 – The potential for climate change is a real threat to both current diminished species and to other tree species in Virginia, particularly those at the southern limit of their range. VDOF will continue its efforts to restore existing diminished species, and also monitor the potential effects.

**Measure 3.4.3:** Number of surveys and monitoring projects aimed at native and exotic insect, disease and weed pests, as well as other forest disturbances.

**Target:** 10 major pests surveyed/year

***Strategies***

3.4.3.1 – Continue aerial and ground survey efforts to monitor the extent and impact of native and invasive forest pests and work toward localized eradication of invasive weeds in high priority areas. Survey and/or monitor for species whose entry into Virginia represents an imminent threat.

3.4.3.2 – Coordinate survey and monitoring efforts among agency personnel via IFRIS reporting as well as other federal, state, municipal and public agencies, as appropriate. Research and develop more efficient means of detecting and measuring forest health problems using remote sensing.

3.4.3.3 – In conjunction with the appropriate state and federal agencies, develop a citizens' reporting system to broaden the scope of detection of forest health issues.

3.4.3.4 – Provide forest health education and outreach to agency personnel and the public via publishing the Forest Health review and other publications; pesticide recertification courses; landowner conferences; regional meetings; Master Naturalist training, and other appropriate groups and venues.

**Measure 3.4.4:** Implement forest management practices aimed at treatment or prevention of significant pest problems**Target:** 5,000 acres/year***Strategies***

- 3.4.4.1 – Provide cost-share and other assistance for thinning of priority overstocked pine plantations to mitigate the impacts of southern pine beetle and related pests.
- 3.4.4.2 – Target implementation of invasive weed eradication and pine restoration activities on state forestlands and appropriate non-industrial private forestlands.
- 3.4.4.3 – Develop a rapid response system to deploy against new invasive species threats. Assist sister agencies in upholding quarantine efforts for forest pests within the Commonwealth.

**Goal 4: Conserve the forestland base*****Goal Summary and Alignment***

VDOF will reduce the rate of conversion of forestland to other uses by providing technical assistance and information on the importance of forestland and on the conservation methods available to protect it. The VDOF will protect forestland from conversion by accepting working forest conservation easements and fee simple acquisitions. The VDOF will identify forested areas that provide the greatest combination of economic and environmental benefits and that are the most threatened by conversion and will focus efforts on protecting those acres first.

**Objective 4.1 – Increase the number of acres of forestland protected from conversion, focusing, where possible, on lands ranked as high in “Forest Conservation Value.” Include expanding efforts in non-permanent conservation.****Measure 4.1.1:** Number of acres protected from conversion.**Target:** 3,500 acres/year***Strategies***

- 4.1.1.1 – Utilize GIS analysis to rank all forested acres in the state by priority for forest conservation based on the multiple benefits provided by that forest and the threat of conversion of that forested area.
- 4.1.1.2 – Assist landowners in placing working forest conservation easements on forested properties, particularly for lands ranked as high in forest conservation value.
- 4.1.1.3 – Utilize funding from federal, state and other sources when available to purchase conservation easements or fee simple interest in land, focusing on lands ranked as high in forest conservation value.



4.1.1.4 – Develop and promote voluntary mitigation strategies and plans that include forest management practices to help mitigate the loss of forestland as a result of land development and land conversion.

4.1.1.5 – Work with conservation partners, local governments and other authorities to identify land conservation strategies (i.e. green infrastructure) that could find wider application at the state or local level.

## **Objective 4.2 – Increase awareness of the importance of and need for forestland conservation among landowners and local governments.**

**Measure 4.2.1:** Number of workshops, presentations, articles and other contacts delivered by VDOF regarding forestland conservation.

**Target:** 15 events or articles/year

### *Strategies*

4.2.1.1 – Work with legislators, local governments and landowners to encourage forest conservation through zoning; comprehensive plan updates, and land-use policies. Include information covering, in detail, emerging ecosystem services and markets. Forestland Conservation Division to coordinate with the Public Information Division for development of language for inclusion in county comprehensive plans. Work with regions to identify localities that are considering updating plans or ordinances and become involved in the process to advocate for forest conservation.

4.2.1.2 – Develop education materials and programs and use these to raise awareness of the need for and methods available for forestland conservation. Include special promotion of the Virginia land conservation tax incentive.

## **Objective 4.3 – Manage the state forestlands on a sustainable basis for research, demonstration, education and multiple-use benefits while staying within the allowable forest harvest levels.**

**Measure 4.3.1:** Percentage of annual allowable harvest actually harvested.

**Target:** 80 percent

### *Strategies*

4.3.1.1 – Develop a comprehensive annual work plan that will meet the goals of the State Forest System plan.

4.3.1.2 – Develop a survey to assess the best public uses of state forestlands and the reasons the public visits the State Forests.

4.3.1.3 – Define the best locations for public use on State Forests that complement forest management objectives and timber sales.



## Objective 4.4 – Promote a larger, connected forest landscape.

**Measure 4.4.1:** Ability to accurately measure and seek to reduce forest cover loss in Virginia.

**Target:** Construction and adoption of appropriate tool to measure annual change in forest cover for the Commonwealth.

### *Strategies*

4.4.1.1 – Assist localities, development associations and other stakeholders in understanding where key conservation priorities should be, and broadening their understanding of the importance of connecting forests across parcels. Working with partner agencies, assist localities in mapping their local green infrastructure resources.

4.4.1.2 – Promote establishment of regional and statewide forest cover goals, including urban tree canopy goals, where appropriate. Encourage localities to work toward meeting these goals.

4.4.1.3 – Support and promote state and local greenway initiatives, including GIS support through agency's public GIS program, when developed.

## Goal 5: Promote forest industry and diversified markets for forest landowners, including ecosystem service markets.

### *Goal Summary and Alignment*

The forest industry is the largest manufacturing sector in Virginia and provides economic benefits to communities and citizens in every county and city in the state. The majority of the forestland in Virginia is owned by private citizens. If forest landowners are to continue to own and manage forests in a healthy, sustainable way, they will need to receive benefits or forests may be converted into other uses. By fostering a strong forest products industry and providing diversified markets and benefits, this goal aligns with the agency's mission to protect and develop healthy, sustainable forest resources. Markets for ecosystem services, such as water quality, air quality and carbon sequestration, provide a financial opportunity for forest landowners. These markets will grow in importance and can provide additional tools and incentives to curb the loss of Virginia's forestland.

## Objective 5.1 – Promote diversification of forest markets and a healthy forest industry to keep forestland in forests.

**Measure 5.1.1:** Number of presentations, workshops, events, projects or activities promoting forest industry, forest products or markets.

**Target:** 20 projects/year



## Strategies

- 5.1.1.1 – Promote Virginia forest industry and products. Maintain up-to-date economic and industry data on the importance of forests and forest industry.
- 5.1.1.2 – Work with existing forest industry and other partners to identify concerns and opportunities, and identify new and changing markets.
- 5.1.1.3 – Develop and participate in conferences, workshops and demonstrations on market opportunities for landowners and industry.
- 5.1.1.4 – Work with Southern Group of State Foresters, SUM Taskforce Marketing Committee, and other partners to promote Virginia's forest industry and products and to help establish forest products businesses in Virginia.

## Objective 5.2 – Increase awareness of ecosystem services provided by forestland and urban forest tree canopy to foster market development and incorporation into land-use planning.

**Measure 5.2.1:** Number of presentations, workshops, conferences and projects developed to promote market opportunities for landowners.

**Target:** 8 projects/year

## Strategies

- 5.2.1.1 – Develop and participate in ecosystem services workshops, seminars and presentations for landowners, natural resources managers and other stakeholders. Ensure full range of ecosystem services, both from rural forestland and urban tree canopy, are addressed and valued.
- 5.2.1.2 – Develop user-friendly, publicly available tools for quantifying ecosystem services that can be used in land-use planning; mitigating land conversion activities, and market participation.
- 5.2.1.3 – Participate in various efforts, such as climate change initiatives and market development, that promote ecosystem services. During this participation, promote inclusion of appropriate financial rewards, including forest carbon sequestration, for private forest landowners that will make forest management more profitable, productive and sustainable.
- 5.2.1.4 – Create awareness of ecosystem services and emerging opportunities for marketing these services with forest landowners by including pertinent language in Forest Stewardship Management Plans.
- 5.2.1.5 – To increase ecosystem services from urban areas, continue urban tree canopy (UTC) initiative in selected Chesapeake Bay watersheds. Include non-Bay communities if funding permits.



## Objective 5.3 – Manage the nurseries to provide the best quality seedling types demanded by the customer.

**Measure 5.3.1:** Percentage of customers who rate the quality of VDOF seedlings as satisfactory.

**Target:** 95 percent

### *Strategies*

5.3.1.1 – Obtain future seedling sales projection and obtain best seed to produce seedlings.

5.3.1.2 – Implement annual work plan to assure all seed are selected and managed appropriately and timely.

5.3.1.3 – When possible, grow and sell nursery stock for diminished species restoration.

## Objective 5.4 – Improve the efficiency of VDOF seedling nursery production.

**Measure 5.4.1:** Percentage increase in net revenue generated by the state nurseries.

**Target:** 5 percent

### *Strategies*

5.4.1.1 – Develop and implement a State Nursery business plan.

5.4.1.2 – Enhance the seedling application, moving toward a complete nursery management information system.

## Objective 5.5 – Promote stakeholder cooperation in growing Virginia's Green Energy sector.

**Measure 5.5.1:** Number of presentations, workshops, conferences and projects developed to promote woody biomass energy use, development and definition.

**Target:** 12 projects/year

### *Strategies*

5.5.1.1 – As efforts to formulate a consensus-based and workable definition of woody biomass move forward, VDOF will participate in these efforts and seek to influence decisions in ways that will increase benefits for forest landowners. For the definition, VDOF will seek to include urban wood waste and storm debris; in-woods waste from all land ownerships, and all materials sustainably harvested from private lands, at a minimum.



5.5.1.2 – Identify and promote opportunities for forestland owners, industry and the public to participate in the use of bio-energy. Work to ensure future biomass production is conducted in a sustainable manner.

5.5.1.3 – Develop and provide incentives for landowners to cultivate and harvest forest products suitable for energy production, and for forest industry and other stakeholders to promote the sustainable use of woody biomass. Where possible, make these incentives comparable in nature to similar incentives for other forest products.

## **Objective 5.6 – Facilitate opportunities for forest certification among private forest landowners.**

**Measure 5.6.1:** Number of presentations, workshops, conferences and projects developed to promote greater participation by non-industrial private forest landowners in existing or emerging certification programs.

**Target:** 6 projects/year

### *Strategies*

5.6.1.1 – Within existing certification systems, pursue additional opportunities that will make forest landowner participation feasible, practical and affordable.

5.6.1.2 – Pursue an expanded role for VDOF in certification by either establishing a method to certify forestlands, or taking a more active role in certification enrollment and monitoring.

## **Goal 6: Collect, maintain and disseminate forest resource in inventory information and applied research.**

### *Goal Summary and Alignment*

VDOF will deliver spatial and statistical forest resource data, coordinated with accurate, timely field-based forest resource information, dedicated to remote sensing, and Web-based information and marketing outreach to assure the public's awareness of the value and importance of Virginia's forests and to improve the health and quality of life for Virginia citizens. This goal aligns directly with the agency mission to protect and develop healthy, sustainable forest resources for Virginians.



## Objective 6.1 – Provide research information on forest resources in Virginia to all stakeholders.

**Measure 6.1.1:** Number of research reports and informational presentations issued or provided annually.

**Target:** 15 reports or presentations/year

### *Strategies*

6.1.1.1 – Develop and implement research projects that apply to a wider landowner base; address practical forest management problems, and achieve appropriate data results in time to address emerging issues and problems.

6.1.1.2 – Provide and communicate new information and research results to continuously improve the health, sustainability and conservation of Virginia's forests.

6.1.1.3 – Provide demonstration and training opportunities to employees, other technical experts, students and landowners.

## Objective 6.2– Provide an inventory of forest natural resources in Virginia on a continual basis.

**Measure 6.2.1:** Number of forest inventory panels measured annually.

**Target:** 1 panel/year

### *Strategy*

6.2.1.1 – Organize and equip the FIA inventory team to collect and enter the forest data for each panel for USFS analysis.

**Measure 6.2.2:** Accuracy of forest data collected statewide.

**Target:** 87 percent

### *Strategies*

6.2.2.1 – Ensure statewide crew average accuracy percentage of collected forest inventory data meets or exceeds USFS standards.

6.2.2.2 – Provide appropriate training opportunities and performance feedback from audited plots to correct any deficiencies and promote improved accuracy.



## Goal 7: Manage agency resources to effectively and efficiently accomplish the strategic initiatives.

### *Goal Summary and Alignment*

Ensure VDOF has sufficient employees with the right skills and knowledge to be a world-class forestry organization capable of meeting the challenges and needs in Virginia and who are equipped with technology and tools and possess excellent communication skills to provide the highest quality forest management assessments and recommendations and ensure a better informed private landowner. Provide for the most effective and efficient management of VDOF State Forest and Nursery production resources.

### **Objective 7.1 – Ensure resources are used efficiently and programs are managed effectively, and in a manner consistent with applicable state and federal requirements.**

**Measure 7.1.1:** Percent of administrative measures marked by “Meets Expectations” for the agency.

**Target:** 100 percent

#### *Strategies*

7.1.1.1 – We will continue to audit pages and applications at random using the online W3C Markup Validation Tool.

7.1.1.2 – We will attract and maintain a talented workforce. Target recruiting advertisement to obtain more female and minority applicants.

7.1.1.3 – Seek additional funding to enable our agency to pay competitive salaries to the area foresters; forest technicians; senior managers, and executive managers.

7.1.1.4 – Strengthen the internal control environment by combining the expertise of the fiscal and procurement functions, and provide immediate feedback to the buyer on issues of non-compliance with Department of Accounts and Department of General Services regulations as part of the pre-audit function.

7.1.1.5 – We will follow the Commonwealth IT Accessibility Standard (ITRM GOV 103-00) when creating and editing Web pages and applications.

7.1.1.6 – We will continue to review our agency’s summary of website accessibility on the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) website.

7.1.1.7 – We will promote fairness and equity.

7.1.1.8 – We will annually review positions for eligibility to telework or work an alternative schedule and continue to encourage employees in eligible positions to telework or work an alternative schedule.



7.1.1.9 – Comply with all federal and state regulations, including but not exclusively limited to legal, fiscal, procurement and collection practices authorized by the Code of Virginia, and whose rules are administered through the state agencies of the Office of Attorney General; Department of Accounts; Auditor of Public Accounts; Department of Planning & Budget; the Department of General Services, and others, and through appropriate federal agencies.

7.1.1.10 – We will continue to follow the Commonwealth Information Security policies, standards and guidelines as presented and directed by the Virginia Information Technology Agency (VITA) when creating and editing Web pages and applications.

7.1.1.11 – We will continue to review our agency's summary in the annual VITA Commonwealth of Virginia Information Security Report and make changes as appropriate.

## **Goal 8: Strengthen the culture of preparedness across state agencies, their employees and customers.**

### ***Goal Summary and Alignment***

This goal ensures compliance with federal and state regulations, policies and procedures for Commonwealth preparedness, as well as guidelines promulgated by the Assistant to the Governor for Commonwealth Preparedness, in collaboration with the Governor's cabinet; the Commonwealth Preparedness Working Group; the Department of Planning and Budget, and the Council on Virginia's Future. The goal supports achievement of the Commonwealth's statewide goal of protecting the public's safety and security; ensuring a fair and effective system of justice, and providing a prepared response to emergencies and disasters of all kinds.

### **Objective 8.1 – We will be prepared to act in the interest of the citizens of the Commonwealth and its infrastructure during emergency situations by actively planning and training both as an agency and as individuals.**

#### **Measure 8.1.1: Agency Preparedness Assessment Score.**

**Target:** 75 percent

#### ***Strategies***

8.1.1.1 – VDOF will complete two annual exercises, with after-action reviews, to identify areas to implement possible improvements.

8.1.1.2 – The agency emergency coordination officer will stay in regular communication with the Office of Commonwealth Preparedness; the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM), and other Commonwealth Preparedness Working Group agencies.



**Measure 8.1.2:** Agency firefighters and cooperators trained annually to meet national standards as set by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group.

**Target:** 85 percent

### *Strategy*

8.1.2.1 – VDOF will provide its employees with focused training that meets national NWCG standards in the areas of wildland fire suppression; all-risk emergency response, and incident management.

**Objective 8.2 – We will test the VDOF Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) sufficiently enough to encompass headquarters, regions, State Forests and nurseries and determine its effectiveness in a true emergency.**

**Measure 8.2.1:** Increase in agency COOP Assessment score.

**Target:** 5 percent

### *Strategy*

8.2.1.1 – Update the COOP Plan annually.

**Objective 8.3 – Develop the capacity of state and local urban forest programs and professionals to prepare for and respond to natural disasters affecting urban forests.**

**Measure 8.3.1:** – Number of communities incorporating urban forest planning in local response plans.

**Target:** 3 communities/year

### *Strategies*

8.3.1.1 – Continue to promote urban forest inventory and master plan development. Work with VDEM to encourage urban forest planning in local response plans.

8.3.1.2 – Assist communities in developing urban forest emergency response plans.

8.3.1.3 – Develop VDOF capacity to respond to urban forest emergencies situations by training appropriate staff in Urban Forest Strike Team protocols.

# Resources Necessary to Address Statewide Strategies

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**Table 1: Resource Needs Matrix**

Objective	State Resources in Place and Adequate	Increase in State Funding	Increased or New Local Funding	Continued Federal Funding at Current Levels	Moderate Increase in Federal Funds	Significant Increase in Federal Funds	Federal Funding for a New Initiative	Collaborative Leadership from USDA-FS or Other Federal Agency	Collaboration with Other State and Local Governments/Agencies	State Legislative Action	Federal Legislative Action
1.1 – We will reduce the forestland burned by wildfires.		***			***						
1.2 – Provide available financial resources to rural volunteer fire departments.	***				***				***		
1.3 – Continue long history of proactive fire prevention efforts.		***			***			***	***	***	
2.1 – Increase the amount of forestland protected and/or established in Virginia watersheds.		***				***		***	***	***	
2.2 – We will protect and enhance water quality by increasing compliance with BMPs on forest harvest sites.		***			***			***	***		
2.3 – Mitigate the water quality impact of urban and suburban stormwater and impervious surfaces.		***	***		***			***	***	***	

Objective	State Resources in Place and Adequate	Increase in State Funding	Increased or New Local Funding	Continued Federal Funding at Current Levels	Moderate Increase in Federal Funds	Significant Increase in Federal Funds	Federal Funding for a New Initiative	Collaborative Leadership from USDA-FS or Other Federal Agency	Collaboration with Other State and Local Governments/Agencies	State Legislative Action	Federal Legislative Action
3.1 – We will increase the number of forest management projects implemented on private land and promote cost-share funding for all appropriate projects.		***			***			***	***		
3.2 – Increase urban forest management in Virginia communities, particularly state and local capacity to address urban forestry issues and concerns.		***	***		***			***	***		
3.3 – Increase the amount of forest management assistance on private lands in the Commonwealth.		***			***			***	***		
3.4 – Implement actions to protect Virginia's forest resource from species loss and from the impacts of detrimental native and invasive plants and pests.		***				***	***	***	***	***	
4.1 – Increase the number of acres of forestland protected from conversion.		***	***			***	***	***	***	***	***
4.2 – Increase awareness of the importance of and need for forestland conservation among landowners and local governments.		***	***		***				***	***	

Objective	State Resources in Place and Adequate	Increase in State Funding	Increased or New Local Funding	Continued Federal Funding at Current Levels	Moderate Increase in Federal Funds	Significant Increase in Federal Funds	Federal Funding for a New Initiative	Collaborative Leadership from USDA-FS or Other Federal Agency	Collaboration with Other State and Local Governments/Agencies	State Legislative Action	Federal Legislative Action
4.3 – Manage the state forestlands on a sustainable basis for research, demonstration, education and multiple-use benefits.		***			***				***	***	
4.4 – Promote a larger, connected forest landscape.		***	***			***		***	***	***	
5.1 – Promote diversification of forest markets and a healthy forest industry.		***		***					***		
5.2 - Increase awareness of ecosystem services provided by forestland and urban forest tree canopy.		***				***	***	***	***	***	
5.3 – Manage the nurseries to provide the best quality seedling types demanded by the customer.		***			***			***	***		
5.4 – Improve the efficiency of VDOF seedling nursery production.		***		***							
5.5 – Promote stakeholder cooperation in growing Virginia's green energy sector.		***	***			***	***	***	***	***	***
5.6 – Facilitate opportunities for forest certification among private forest landowners.							***	***	***	***	

Objective	State Resources in Place and Adequate	Increase in State Funding	Increased or New Local Funding	Continued Federal Funding at Current Levels	Moderate Increase in Federal Funds	Significant Increase in Federal Funds	Federal Funding for a New Initiative	Collaborative Leadership from USDA-FS or Other Federal Agency	Collaboration with Other State and Local Governments/Agencies	State Legislative Action	Federal Legislative Action
6.1 – Provide research information on forest resources in Virginia to all stakeholders.		***			***			***	***		
6.2 – Provide an inventory of forest natural resources in Virginia on a continual basis.					***			***			
7.1 – Ensure resources are used effectively and programs managed effectively, and in a manner consistent with applicable state and federal requirements.		***			***					***	
8.1 – We will be prepared to act in the interest of the citizens on the Commonwealth and its infrastructure during emergency situations.		***			***			***	***		
8.2 – We will test the VDOF COOP sufficiently enough to encompass HQ, regions, state forests and nurseries, and determine its effectiveness in a true emergency.	***			***					***		
8.3 – Develop the capacity of state and local urban forestry programs and professionals to prepare for and respond to natural disasters affecting urban forests.		***	***			***		***	***		



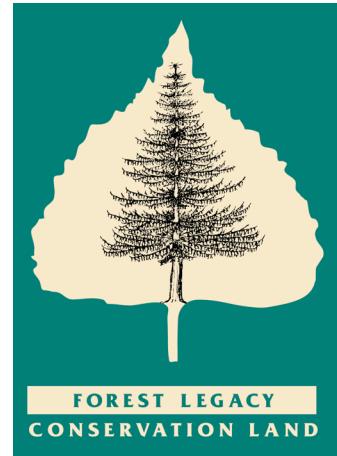
## Appendix A

### US Forest Service Forest Legacy Program – Virginia Program Guidelines

Updated April 2010

#### Introduction

This Virginia Program Guidelines document for the Forest Legacy Program (FLP) in Virginia is part of the larger effort by the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) to undertake a Statewide Assessment of Forest Resources. This FLP document is being incorporated into the assessment document, and is intended to state the program's Eligibility Criteria; Forest Legacy Area; requirements, and procedures. This Virginia Program Guidelines document, along with the associated Statewide Assessment of Forest Resources document, supersedes the *Virginia Forest Legacy Program Assessment of Need*, dated September 2000, and the *Assessment of Need (AON) Revisions*, dated April 25, 2008.



This Virginia Program Guidelines document is intended to complement the booklet entitled *Forest Legacy Program Implementation Guidelines*, dated June 30, 2003, and the booklet entitled *Forest Legacy Program Users' Guide*, dated June 2006, both of which are US Forest Service (USFS) guiding documents for the FLP. These three documents, used jointly, guide the FLP in Virginia.

The FLP is one of several federal programs that the VDOF partners with the USFS in implementing, and is a program critical for the conservation of important forestlands within the Commonwealth, an emphasis of State Forester Carl E. Garrison III.

Interim FLP program changes related to the Eligibility Criteria and the Forest Legacy Area were presented to the USFS for approval in April 2008, and approved in July 2008. These interim revisions are incorporated into this document, and in addition, the processes followed during these revisions are found in the Appendix to fully inform the reader as to the processes followed in developing the Eligibility Criteria and Forest Legacy Area.

Finally, these program procedures include detailed information on: 1) the FLP advisory sub-committee; 2) program promotion; 3) the application process; 4) project prioritization; 5) grant management; 6) due diligence; 7) deed preparation; 8) closing, and 9) easement monitoring. Previously, detailed FLP procedures have not been presented in Virginia's FLP guiding documents.

#### *Virginia's Forest Legacy Program Overview*

Virginia's forests are extremely diverse and provide a multitude of economic, environmental and social benefits to Virginians. Of the Commonwealth's more than 16 million forested acres, approximately 77 percent are in private ownership. The importance of forests in cleansing air; purifying water; providing traditional forest products, and fostering opportunities for recreation is



unparalleled. One primary goal of the FLP in Virginia is to make available to the citizens of Virginia these “working forests” across the Commonwealth providing the multiple benefits inherent to healthy, productive forests.

Of Virginia's 25.3 million acres of land area, 15.7 million acres are classified as commercial forestland. Additional forested acreage found in parks; wilderness areas, and scenic and historic resources result in a combined total of more than 16 million forested acres providing value to the citizens of Virginia and the United States. While Virginians annually enjoy, and are benefited by, this abundance of forestland, a sobering fact is that approximately 27,000 acres are lost annually by conversion of forestlands to urban and suburban development. While many of these acres remain forested, they are essentially lost as working forests, and the other forest amenities of clean water; wildlife habitat; recreation opportunities, and scenic vistas are significantly diminished.

The FLP assists state governments in the identification of, and protection of, important private forest tracts that are threatened by conversion to non-forest uses. The primary protection tool under the program, the conservation easement, is an effective means of influencing the disposition of important forestland while continuing private ownership. The program also funds the fee simple purchase of properties as state forests and other state-owned lands protected from development.

The FLP was initiated in Virginia in October 1999, when then-Gov. James S. Gilmore III designated the VDOF as the state lead agency for the program. The VDOF is responsible for managing the program and the associated federal grant funds for the conservation of important state forestlands. The VDOF believes that diverse, well-managed working forests are the healthiest and the most productive and, consequently, provide the most public benefit when protected from the economic pressure for development.

## ***Program Eligibility Criteria***

The Eligibility Criteria for Virginia's FLP were revised during 2007 and 2008 during an interim revision to the program's Assessment of Need document (see Appendix A-1). The current Eligibility Criteria for Virginia's FLP, defined at the time of these interim revisions, are:

- ◆ **Threatened by conversion** to non-forest use (fragmentation and reduction in linkages);
- ◆ Continued production of **timber and other forest commodities** (local and regional economic base);
- ◆ Consideration of **natural heritage resources** (e.g., natural communities; habitat for rare, threatened and endangered species; significant geologic features), and
- ◆ **Watershed values** (water quality; wetlands; riparian buffers; groundwater recharge; public water supplies).

## ***Program Priority Areas (Forest Legacy Area)***

The FLP must be focused to be effective with limited funding availability and to meet the demands of a competitive grant application and approval process. By identifying areas of the state that possess the highest conservation value (based on the program's Eligibility Criteria), limited grant funding can be best utilized to conserve those areas most deserving of conservation. This strategy also puts the state in a position to compete well at the national level.

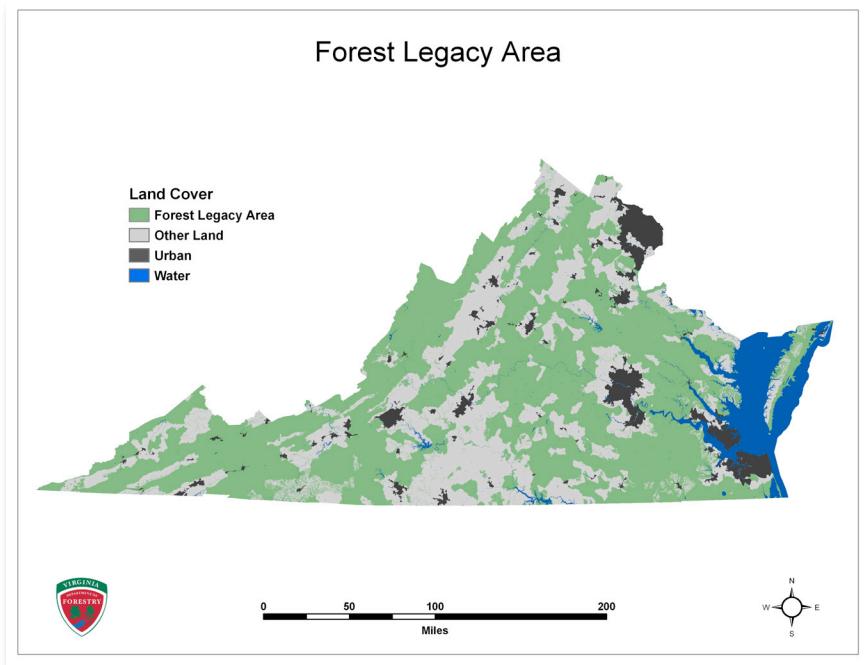
Beginning in 2007, Virginia undertook a process to identify the priority areas for the state (see Appendix A-1). This process resulted in the designation of a revised Forest Legacy Area for the state



in 2008, as shown in Appendix A-1, based on the revisions to the Eligibility Criteria, and the resulting GIS analysis at that time.

In mid-2009, it became apparent that the GIS analysis in 2008 was flawed because some of the data in one of the models used was not converted from 100 x 100 meter resolution to 30 x 30 meter resolution before the analysis was done. Once this change was made in January 2010, and the GIS analysis was repeated, additional hydrologic units ranked highly enough to be included in the Forest Legacy Area using the same parameters as in 2008. These corrections resulted in a 19 percent increase in land area for the Forest Legacy Area for a total area of 16.0 million acres, of which 11.7 million acres are forested. The Forest Legacy Area is 63 percent of the land area in Virginia.

**Figure 1: Forest Legacy Area**



## Program Requirements

Below are the basic requirements for tracts and landowners in the Virginia FLP.

Each tract approved in the FLP must meet the following stipulations:

- ◆ The tract of land must be at least 50 acres in size;
- ◆ The tract must be at least 75 percent forested (see note regarding tree planting in landowner requirement section below) [forested land as defined by the State Forester under the authority of §58.1-3230 et seq. of the *Code of Virginia*, and published in the most current version of the "Manual of the State Land Evaluation Advisory Council"];
- ◆ The tract must be within, or partially intersect, the Forest Legacy Area;
- ◆ The title to the land must be free and clear of any liens and/or encumbrances, and



- ◆ For tracts offered for easement, existing mortgage holders must be willing to subordinate the mortgage to the easement.

Landowners participating in the FLP must:

- ◆ Be “willing sellers;”
- ◆ Be willing to participate in a perpetual easement that allows for annual monitoring, or be willing to sell their property in fee simple;
- ◆ Allow the Forest Legacy Monitoring Team access to the tract for evaluation;
- ◆ Be willing to plant trees on portions of the tract if the tract is less than 75 percent forested at the time of application;
- ◆ Be willing to sell the easement or fee simple rights at a bargain price not exceeding 75 percent of the appraised value according to federal appraisal standards (Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions; commonly called a Yellow Book appraisal);
- ◆ Be willing, if necessary, to pay the due diligence costs necessary to acquire the conservation easement or land in fee simple, and to accept less than the full 75 percent allowed under the program to cover these costs [these costs are for required title work and closing fees; an environmental site examination; a timber cruise; an appraisal meeting federal standards; a forest management plan or Forest Stewardship Plan (for easements), and occasionally a survey];
- ◆ Be willing to sign an option contract or sales contract, prior to national competition, showing commitment and interest in placing a conservation easement restricting development rights on their land, or selling their land, to remain as forestland in perpetuity, and
- ◆ In the case of an easement, provide a Forest Stewardship Plan, or multiple-resource forest management plan, for review by VDOF and the USFS prior to closing on the easement.

## Program Procedures

### Forest Legacy Sub-committee

The Forest Legacy Sub-committee (FLSC) is a sub-committee of the State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee (SFSCC). FLSC members are asked to serve on the FLSC in addition to their continued presence on the SFSCC. The makeup of the FLSC is intended to represent a broad range of forestry stakeholder groups including: landowner; forest industry; land trusts, and state natural resource agencies.

Both the FLSC and the SFSCC are advisory committees to the State Forester.

### Program Promotion

#### External

The public is made aware of the FLP in Virginia through printed information; one-on-one contacts; the VDOF website, and various presentations made by VDOF personnel. Additionally, properties or



easements acquired utilizing FLP funds are promoted by newspaper articles, media events and during other public gatherings.

VDOF has produced a narrative document and a brief question and answer sheet, both providing general information about Virginia's FLP. These documents are made available to VDOF county personnel for distribution to local landowners, or as pass-out materials at public presentation sessions regarding land conservation.

VDOF field personnel are encouraged to discuss the topic of land conservation, and in particular the FLP, during one-on-one contacts with landowners in their respective counties. They are instructed to direct specific interest in, or inquiries about, the FLP to the state legacy manager for VDOF.

Information about the FLP is found on the VDOF website ([www.dof.virginia.gov](http://www.dof.virginia.gov)):

- ◆ General FLP program information;
- ◆ Frequently asked questions about the FLP;
- ◆ The two FLP informational documents noted above, and
- ◆ Application information and materials.

Once this Virginia Program Guidelines document is approved, it will be made available on the VDOF website as well.

Upon the acquisition of a property or an easement, VDOF promotes the FLP through public media, events and signage. These activities include the submission of news releases or written articles to print media; the coordination of on-site interviews or public events, and the posting of program signs on properties acquired with FLP funds. In addition, an FLP sign is presented to landowners of FLP-funded conservation easement properties and the landowner is encouraged to post the sign in a conspicuous location. Every effort is made to make the public aware that Legacy funds were utilized to protect the property and its associated conservation values.

## *Internal*

The state legacy manager visits the three VDOF regions on an as-requested basis and outlines for regional and field personnel the FLP, the application procedures, and the ranking and approval process. All personnel are urged to promote and provide information about the FLP to clients at the local or regional level.

# Application

## *Pre-Application*

Because the Forest Legacy Area does not cover the entire geographic area of the state, the FLP Request for Application document suggests that the applicant submit a Pre-Application (See Appendix A-3). This enables the state legacy manager to determine, before a full application is submitted, whether or not a particular project falls within the Forest Legacy Area. This is an effort to avoid undue effort by the applicant in preparing a full application, only to find that the project is not within the Forest Legacy Area.

The state legacy manager compares the map or sketch submitted with the Pre-Application to the Forest Legacy Area, and then notifies the pre-applicant of eligibility.



## *Application*

Program application materials are posted to the VDOF website, and an email message regarding the availability of these materials is transmitted to land conservation agencies, land trusts and individuals who have expressed interest in the program in mid-March of each year. Also, these materials are sent to the VaULT (Virginia United Land Trusts) member group through that group's list serve. In addition, the application materials are available by request to those who prefer the individual electronic documents.

The application materials include:

- ◆ Request for Applications (including instructions for application submission);
- ◆ Pre-Application;
- ◆ Application, and
- ◆ Landowner Inspection Consent Agreement.

Examples of the latter three of these documents, from the FY2011 year, are shown in Appendices A-3, A-4 and A-5.

In addition, the VDOF website includes links to the project scoring criteria and the Forest Legacy Area map to assist applicants in application consideration and preparation.

## *Due Dates and Application Requirements*

Pre-applications are due in early-May and include the Pre-Application and a map or sketch of the proposed project. Full applications are due in late-June and require:

- ◆ One original, and six copies, of an Application for each ownership (tract) represented in the project;
- ◆ One original, signed Landowner Inspection Consent Agreement for each ownership represented in the project, and
- ◆ Additional items (photos, maps, legal description, etc.) found at the end of the Application.

## *Optional Application Methods*

Applications can be written and submitted in one of three ways:

1. A conservation group (such as a land trust or conservation organization) completes the application reflecting the attributes of all the various tracts in a project, and individual tract landowners provide a letter with the application stating that they understand their land is being presented for FLP consideration, or
2. A conservation group can have each individual tract owner complete and sign an application and provide the associated maps and documents; the conservation group then compiles the individual tract applications into one packet and submits the compiled application, or
3. An individual landowner can complete and submit an application for their ownership (one or more combined tracts or parcels).



## ***Application Receipt, Review and Acceptance***

FLP applications will be accepted that fall, wholly or partially, within the boundaries of the Forest Legacy Area.

Upon receipt of an application, the state legacy manager:

1. Signs and dates the beginning of the Application;
2. Signs and dates the Landowner Inspection Consent Agreement;
3. Reviews the Application to make certain all essential information has been submitted;
4. Confirms that the project falls within the Forest Legacy Area, and
5. Notifies the applicant of the application acceptance or rejection.

## ***Evaluation and Prioritization of Projects***

### **Site Visits**

The state legacy manager visits the site of all projects presented for the program. The visit includes meeting with the project applicant (if available) to discuss specifics of the project and to address questions the state legacy manager may have about the project or property. Additionally, the property visit includes becoming more familiar with the site and the surrounding area or other nearby conserved properties, photographing key sites and structures at the site for presentation to the FLSC, and scoring the project.

### **Field Scoring of Projects**

During the site visit, the state legacy manager scores the project according to the scoring guidelines presented in the Project Scoring section, utilizing the Project Evaluation shown in Appendix A-6. This score sheet is used to provide a beginning score to each project for consideration by the FLSC during the state project ranking process.

### **Presentation to FLSC**

Program applicants are invited to the fall FLSC meeting in late-August to present their project to the committee. The state legacy manager assists with this presentation, when needed, by providing photographs of the site and additional helpful information gained by the site visit and prior discussions with the applicant.

### **Project Ranking by FLSC**

The FLSC considers the merits of each project; reviews the Project Evaluations for each project; considers the amount of FLP funding requested; ranks the projects based on this information, and makes recommendations to the SFSCC based on these rankings.

### **Presentation to SFSCC**

The state legacy manager presents the projects to the SFSCC at their fall meeting in early-October; provides the FLSC project rankings, and answers any questions that may arise. The SFSCC makes the final decision on which projects, and in what order, are recommended to the State Forester.

### **Recommendation to the State Forester**

The state legacy manager provides the recommendations of the SFSCC to the State Forester, and determines his/her decision regarding the projects that should be offered for national competition,



and the rank order of the projects. Virginia usually, but not always, offers the top three ranked projects for consideration by the National Panel.

### **Initial Data Entry into Forest Legacy Information System**

The state legacy manager enters project information into the Forest Legacy Information System before the annual deadline (usually the end of November).

### **Assistance to the National Panel**

The state legacy manager makes himself/herself available during the two days of the National Panel meeting (usually in January) to provide additional information and assistance, if needed, during the ongoing panel discussions and national project ranking.

## ***Grant Management***

### **Receipt of Grant Funding**

Once FLP funds are appropriated, the VDOF Fiscal Division receives the grant award letter, along with an Award Approval/Obligation/Acceptance document. The State Forester signs and returns the acceptance document to the USFS, obligating the VDOF to utilize and expend the grant funds according to Federal guidelines as stated in the award letter and other grant-related standards.

### **Tracking of Grant Funding**

The VDOF Fiscal Division tracks FLP grant funds through a series of spreadsheets. Both land grant funds and administrative grant funds are tracked by this method.

### **Filing, Record Keeping, and Reporting**

The VDOF Fiscal Division keeps original grant documents, with copies held by the state legacy manager. In addition, both the VDOF Fiscal Division and the state legacy manager maintain spreadsheets of administrative grant fund balances for each grant year. The state legacy manager (in consultation with the VDOF Fiscal Division) submits an annual report for land and administrative funds to the regional legacy manager (in Atlanta). In addition, the VDOF Fiscal Division submits annual grant balance reports to appropriate federal grant personnel.

### **Data Entry in Forest Legacy Information System**

Upon award of grant funding, the Forest Legacy Information System is updated by the state legacy manager (or his/her designee) to reflect the grant funds and to update the project status.

## ***Due Diligence/Program Requirements***

### **State Capital Project Forms**

Once FLP grant funds are awarded, the state legacy manager, in consultation with the VDOF Fiscal Division, files a CO-2 form with the state Bureau of Capital Outlay Management. This form is required before the VDOF can expend funds for FLP project due diligence costs or purchase costs.

### **Title**

Tracts funded by the FLP must have a title search, and said search must prove a title free and clear of any encumbrances or clouds on the title. Title insurance, in the dollar amount paid for the easement or fee, is required. The state legacy manager arranges for the title search and title insurance.



## Appraisal

An appraisal to UASFLA (Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions) standards (commonly called a Yellow Book appraisal) is required. The state legacy manager contracts for this appraisal. The appraiser must meet the qualifications found in Appendix H of the *Forest Legacy Program Implementation Guidelines*, dated June 30, 2003. In addition to these requirements, preference is given to an appraiser who has earned the MAI designation awarded by the Appraisal Institute.

The appraisal guidelines found on pages 19 and 20 of the *Forest Legacy Program Implementation Guidelines*, dated June 30, 2003, are followed during the hiring of an appraiser and during the appraisal process.

## Appraisal Review

The appraisal must be subjected to a technical review to determine if the appraisal meets the Yellow Book appraisal standards. This review does not consider, or comment on, the values found in the appraisal. This appraisal review can either be conducted by a federal appraisal reviewer, or by an appraisal reviewer contracted by the VDOF. If contracted by the VDOF, the appraisal reviewer must meet the qualifications found in Appendix H of the *Forest Legacy Program Implementation Guidelines*, dated June 30, 2003. When contracting with an appraisal reviewer, preference is given to a reviewer who has earned the MAI designation awarded by the Appraisal Institute. The State Legacy Manager makes arrangements for this appraisal review.

The appraisal review guidelines found on pages 19 and 20 of the *Forest Legacy Program Implementation Guidelines*, dated June 30, 2003, are followed during the appraisal review process.

## Timber Cruise

Since all FLP projects include properties that are forested, a timber cruise is usually necessary to provide timber value information for use by the appraiser. The VDOF contracts for a cruise, and provides it to the appraiser for proper incorporation into the appraisal report.

## Environmental Assessment

Tracts are examined during the on-site visit during the Evaluation and Prioritization of Projects phase previously described. The state legacy manager examines the site on foot, and also examines aerial photography of the site, during this property examination. In addition, the owners of tracts accepted into the program are expected to complete a short questionnaire about their knowledge of any past or present hazardous waste dumping on or near the tract.

For a conservation easement, if on-site scoping indicates a potential issue of concern, a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment is performed as part of due diligence for the tract. For a fee acquisition, a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment is required by state acquisition guidelines.

## Stewardship Plan

Conservation easement properties require a Stewardship Plan, or multiple-resource forest management plan, for the tract(s) being offered prior to closing. The VDOF can prepare this plan in some cases, but if the plan cannot be completed by a VDOF forester due to workload or other factors, the state legacy manager assists the landowner by providing a list of consultant foresters who can prepare this plan. The plan must be approved by VDOF prior to closing. This plan is not required for fee acquisition properties.



## Survey

Tracts offered for the program that are full-tax parcels (or combinations of full-tax parcels) are described in the legal description in the deed, and do not require a survey. For tracts offered that are only a portion of a tax parcel, a survey is usually required to define the land area being offered. Tracts offered as a fee simple acquisition require a survey to meet state acquisition requirements.

## *Payment of Due Diligence and Other Costs*

FLP administrative grant funds are utilized to pay the costs of the necessary due diligence and other acquisition costs. This includes the costs for: 1) title work, title insurance and closing; 2) the appraisal and appraisal review; 3) the timber cruise; 4) the Phase I ESA, if needed, and 5) the Stewardship Plan.

FLP administrative grant funds are fixed each fiscal year, so if the due diligence and other costs for a tract exceed the administrative funds available, the landowner may be asked to pay all or a portion of these costs, or to accept a lesser amount for his/her land or easement to cover these costs. The landowner agrees to this payment arrangement in the Application for the program.

If a survey is necessary to define the area to be placed under easement, the landowner is expected to pay this cost. The landowner agrees to this payment arrangement in the Application for the program. The FLP will fund required surveys for fee simple acquisitions under the program.

## *Deed Language and Negotiations*

As with any real estate transaction, a deed is necessary to record the transfer of the property (or rights to the property in the case of a conservation easement). A deed for a fee acquisition under the FLP is fairly typical to a standard real estate transaction. However, with the purchase of development rights under a conservation easement, the deed language negotiation process can be more arduous, and requires additional effort by both parties so both can be satisfied by the language found in the deed.

VDOF recommends that legal counsel be sought by landowners entering into a real estate transaction, and in particular, a conservation easement. The FLP does not pay for this counsel; it is a cost that must be borne by the landowner.

The FLP requires language in the deed (whether fee simple or easement) that: 1) states the purposes of the Forest Legacy program and the federal code section; 2) allows for reversion of the funds to the FLP should the land or easement be sold, exchanged or otherwise disposed of, and 3) requires that a governmental entity hold the property/easement. In addition, an easement deed must place the easement restrictions over the property in perpetuity.

## *Pre-Closing Activities*

### **Baseline Documentation Report (Conservation Easements Only)**

In the case of a conservation easement, within a few weeks prior to closing, the state legacy manager visits the property to ascertain the condition of the property (land, forest and structures) at the time of the easement. This visit involves both written notes and photography of the site.

The state legacy manager prepares the Baseline Documentation Report and presents two originals of the report to the landowner for review and confirmation signature immediately prior to closing. One original is kept by the landowner and the other is retained by VDOF.



## Program Level Approval

Prior to closing, the state legacy manager submits copies of the deed, title insurance binder, appraisal and appraisal review report to the regional legacy manager for review and approval. Additionally, for conservation easements, a copy of the Stewardship Plan, Baseline Documentation Report and match letter are provided.

## Optional Fiscal Processes

If funds are not available within the VDOF for closing, the VDOF Fiscal Division files proper grant forms with the USFS grant personnel to receive an advance on the necessary funds.

## Closing

### Deed

The final deed, agreed to by both parties, is circulated for signatures, and is then provided to the settlement agent (a title company or attorney), for closing.

### Closing

The settlement agent prepares a settlement statement, and circulates it and other required documentation to both parties for signatures. The VDOF Fiscal Division wires funds to the settlement agent approximately two days before closing. The settlement agent records the deed and disburses funds to the seller.

## Post-Closing Activities

### Document Filing

Upon receipt of the original recorded deed and title insurance policy from the settlement agent, the state legacy manager files the original deed; the original Baseline Documentation Report; the VDOF original settlement statement, and the title insurance policy in the fireproof filing cabinet.

### Data Entry in Forest Legacy Information System

After closing, the closing date and final tract acreage, cost and conservation values information are entered into the Forest Legacy Information System.

### State Capital Project Forms

Once closing occurs, the state legacy manager, in consultation with the VDOF Fiscal Division, files a state CO-14 form with the state Bureau of Capital Outlay Management to report actual expenditures for the project.

## Optional Fiscal Processes

If an advance on grant funds prior to closing was not necessary, the VDOF Fiscal Division files proper grant forms with the USFS grant personnel to receive a reimbursement of the funds necessary for closing.

## Easement Monitoring

### Easement Tracking

Recorded FLP easements are added to a VDOF easement records spreadsheet, and denoted as being funded by the FLP. A unique easement number is assigned to the easement.



## Monitoring Schedule and Field Monitoring Visits

FLP easements are monitored annually. Upon closing, the state legacy manager records the easement in a monitoring record file which is used to prompt the state legacy manager, or appropriate VDOF field personnel, when the annual monitoring visit should be scheduled.

Prior to the monitoring visit, every attempt is made to contact the landowner and to encourage their presence during the visit.

## Monitoring Reports and Filing

Monitoring reports are completed during the visit through a series of notes and fill-in-the-blank questions on the report form, and example of which is shown in Appendix A-7. Upon return to the office, the report is completed electronically and then two original reports are printed and signed by the employee who performed the monitoring. One original is kept in the permanent file; the other is provided to the landowner.

## *Program Parameter Revisions*

### Eligibility Criteria Revisions

The FLSC may recommend amending the Eligibility Criteria on a periodic basis to ensure they are kept current with statewide resource priorities and needs.

Revisions to the Eligibility Criteria should, at the same time, include a re-consideration of the models and weights used in GIS modeling for the Forest Legacy Area, and a revision to the Forest Legacy Area.

As a minimum, the Eligibility Criteria are re-considered by the FLSC during the process of revising the overarching Statewide Assessment of Forest Resources.

### Forest Legacy Area Revisions

The FLSC may recommend amending the Forest Legacy Area periodically to:

1. Fully encompass approved tracts whose geographic boundaries only partially intersect the current Forest Legacy Area (a minor revision).
2. Update the Forest Legacy Area (a major revision):
  - a. Due to changes to program Eligibility Criteria;
  - b. To take advantage of new GIS models that may become available;
  - c. To keep current with a changing resource base or other parameters that may affect the designation of priority conservation areas, and
  - d. To incorporate updates to conservation partner group focus areas.

As a minimum, the Forest Legacy Area should be reconsidered by the FLSC during the process of revising the overarching Statewide Assessment of Forest Resources.

### Minor Forest Legacy Area Revisions to Incorporate Entire Tracts

Tracts (within a project) that are submitted for consideration under the program are individually compared to the current Forest Legacy Area. Tracts that partially intersect the Forest Legacy Area are considered "in," and are eligible for participation in the FLP. In this case, a minor revision to the Forest Legacy Area is made to incorporate the entire tract.



## Submission of GIS Files

In the case of either a minor or major Forest Legacy Area revision, revised shape files are submitted by the state legacy manager to USFS GIS personnel.



## ***Appendix A-1: Assessment of Need Interim Revisions Process (2007-2008)***

Beginning in January 2007, Virginia embarked on an extensive process to amend the Assessment of Need (AON) for the Forest Legacy Program in the Commonwealth. This process involved revision of the program Eligibility Criteria (EC) and Forest Legacy Areas (FLA), and well as some procedural changes.

The following sections provide a brief overview of the process undertaken by the Forest Legacy Sub-committee (FLSC); the State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee (SFSCC); the State Forester, and the forest legacy manager to develop the interim changes to the AON approved in 2008.

### **Revised Eligibility Criteria**

Changes to the EC for Virginia's program were considered by the FLSC during its January 2007 meeting; confirmed by the SFSCC at its March 2007 meeting; approved by the State Forester in March 2007, and approved by the USFS in July 2008. Further details about public input regarding these revisions are found below.

This process resulted in the current EC for Virginia's program stated in the Purpose of Virginia's Forest Legacy Program section above.

### **Revised Forest Legacy Areas**

Based on the recommendation of the two committees (FLSC, SFSCC), and the approval of the State Forester, the revised EC were subjected to GIS analysis using various models and tools (see GIS Data Layers) during July and August 2007 to derive draft FLA for Virginia. The GIS analysis, as directed by the committees, weighted the four criteria equally, and ranked the land area of the entire state according to conservation values from 1 to 12 (see Figure 2). Using hydrologic unit as the defining geographic unit, a draft FLA map showing hydrologic units that had a conservation value ranking of six or greater was offered for public comment.

### **Public Input**

The proposed revisions to the EC and FLA were distributed for widespread review by land conservation professionals via email, and to the public via the agency website, beginning in October 2007. The input received by email, letter and in person at a January 2008 public input session, was considered by the FLSC and the SFSCC in determining the next steps to take in revisions to the EC and FLA.

### **Call for Target Areas**

Based on the information received, the importance of the inclusion of target areas of land conservation stakeholders across the state became apparent. In January 2008, the FLSC recommended to the State Forester that the land conservation community be given the opportunity to submit GIS data and shape files of their target areas for possible inclusion in the new FLA. The deadline for submission was late February 2008. Submissions from 10 groups were received.



## Change in FLA Determination

At the time that the call for target areas was made, the FLSC also recommended that consideration be given to the idea that:

1. All areas of the state that possess a high conservation value in the GIS analysis should automatically be **included** in the FLA;
2. Target areas that fall within areas of the state where conservation values ranked in a mid-range should also be **included** in the FLA, and
3. Target areas that fall within areas of the state that have low conservation value in the GIS modeling should be **excluded** from the FLA.

## Target Areas Submitted

Target area submissions were received from the following land conservation stakeholders:

- ◆ Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
- ◆ Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
- ◆ Northern Virginia Conservation Trust
- ◆ New River Land Trust
- ◆ Potomac Conservancy
- ◆ Piedmont Environment Council
- ◆ Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation
- ◆ The Nature Conservancy
- ◆ Valley Conservation Council
- ◆ West Piedmont Planning District Commission

The target areas received showed significant overlap between the areas submitted by the various groups, and the draft FLA presented for public review.

## Finalizing the FLA

Following the submission of target areas, GIS maps were provided to the FLSC for consideration. These maps included both the hydrologic units that ranked highly and would automatically be included in the FLA, and the target areas that were submitted.

In April 2008, after consideration of the new maps, the FLSC recommended to the State Forester that the revised FLA should include areas with a conservation value ranking of seven or greater, and the targeted lands that fall within areas ranked from five to seven.

The resulting FLA map (shown in Figure 3) included 13.8 million total acres – 55 percent of the total land area in the state – and 9.9 million acres of forestland, which is 63 percent of the total commercial forestland statewide.



## GIS Data Layers

### Purpose

Identify areas where forests meeting the conservation values identified in the Eligibility Criteria should be conserved.

### Data Layers

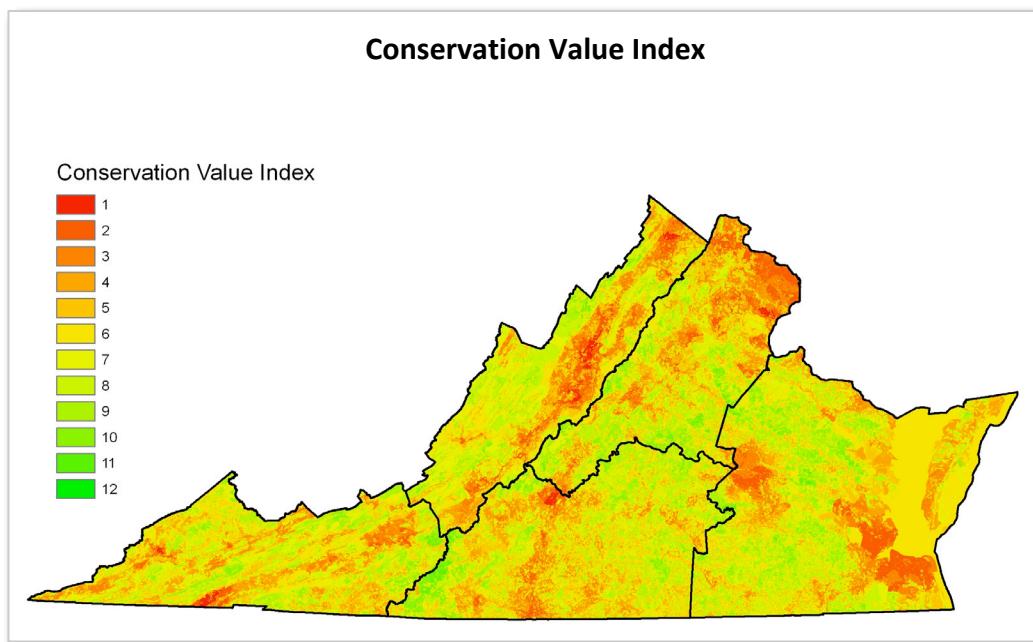
1. **Streams, shorelines and floodplain forests** – created Euclidean distance model for NHD data and overlaid stream buffers up to 500 meters with forested wetlands.
2. **Forests in headwaters and steep slopes** – ran Euclidean distance model on watershed boundary dataset (used boundary lines between watersheds) and overlaid with slopes  $\geq$  25 percent.
3. **Forest protecting drinking water supplies** – used surface water protection areas provided by DOH.
4. **Large continuous blocks of forest** – used VANLA (Virginia Natural Landscape Assessment) data and extracted forests with at least 100 acres of interior conditions.
5. **Sustainable, managed working forests** – used forest economic model developed by VDOF – based on woodland soil productivity, forest types and economic value of timber.
6. **Index of terrestrial integrity** – based on NLCD 2001 data; area of natural cover, river-stream corridor, area of roads and imperviousness:
  - a. **Index of terrestrial integrity** =  $(0.75 * \text{Nat Cov}) + (0.25 * \text{River/Stream}) - (0.25 * \text{Road area}) - (0.25 * \text{Imperviousness})$ .
7. **Index of aquatic integrity** – Greg Garman of the Center for Environmental Studies and Department of Biology, Virginia Commonwealth University, provided Modified Index of Biotic Integrity (*mIBI*) for the sixth order hydrologic units of the Virginia Chesapeake Bay watershed.

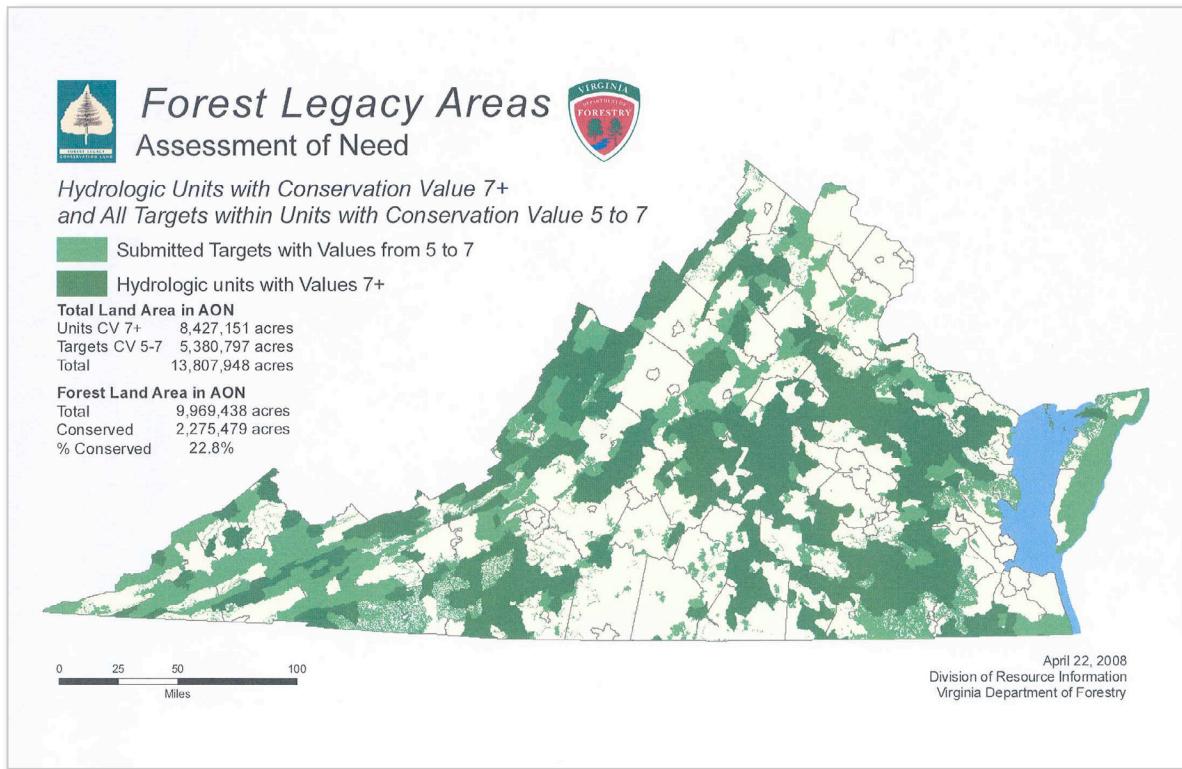
The *mIBI* is computed from six metrics that are used to determine watershed biotic integrity across broad spatial scales:

  - ◆ Number of intolerant species;
  - ◆ Native species richness;
  - ◆ Number of RTE species;
  - ◆ Number of non-indigenous species;
  - ◆ Number of Critical/Significant species, and
  - ◆ Number of Tolerant Species.
8. **Threat of Forest Conversion** – based on Theobald's housing density model

**Table 2: Virginia Forest Legacy Eligibility Criteria**

Virginia Forest Legacy Eligibility Criteria					
GIS Data Layer	(1) Threatened By Conversion	(2) Timber & Other Forest Commodities	(3) Natural Heritage Resources	(4) Watershed Values	(5) Percent Weight in Model
Streams, shorelines & floodplain forests			2	2	4
Forests in headwaters & steep slopes				3	3
Forest protecting drinking water supplies				4	4
Large continuous blocks of forests		6	5	4	15
Sustainable, managed working forests		4	2		6
Terrestrial Integrity		15	4	4	23
Aquatic Integrity			12	8	20
Threat of forest conversion	25				25
	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

**Figure 2: Conservation Value Index (Ranking: 1 (lowest) to 12 (highest))**

**Figure 3: Forest Legacy Areas (July 2008)**



## Appendix A-2: Sample Request for Applications

**Commonwealth of Virginia**

**Forest Legacy Program**

**Program Year 2011<sup>1</sup>**

### FOREST LEGACY REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

**Pre-Application Deadline: May 22, 2009**

**Application Deadline: July 17, 2009**

## Introduction

The Forest Legacy Program assists state governments in identifying and protecting important private forestland across the Commonwealth through conservation easements and fee-simple purchases. Conservation easements allow private individuals to retain ownership, while providing for the conservation of working forests. Fee-simple purchases provide for additional State Forest properties that will be maintained and managed as working forests. Both tools allow the Commonwealth of Virginia's private landowners the opportunity to help conserve important working forests, in perpetuity, for future generations.

The Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) seeks applications for the Forest Legacy Program for the federal 2011 fiscal year. Successful applicants may be awarded a grant in an amount up to 75 percent of the federally approved appraised value.

## Background and Purpose

The Forest Legacy Program was created to allow private individuals the opportunity to place conservation easements on their land or sell their land to remain as forestland into perpetuity. The USDA Forest Service delivers the program funding and provides guidance to states. Virginia completed all requirements for Forest Legacy in 2000 with the full support of the Governor. The Virginia Department of Forestry administers Virginia's Forest Legacy Program.

Virginia's Forest Legacy Program emphasizes environmentally important working forests. Working forests, as noted in the original Virginia Forest Legacy Assessment of Need document, dated September 2000, are forests that provide timber products as well as other forest commodities, such as clean air; pure water; wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities.

## Prior History of Forest Legacy in Virginia

Virginia landowners have been awarded Forest Legacy grant funds. Virginia has been very successful in receiving Forest Legacy grant funds. The following listing provides grant information since Virginia became part of the program.

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<sup>1</sup> Sample Request for Applications is for program fiscal year 2011.

**Table 3: Virginia Forest Legacy Grant History**

Virginia Forest Legacy Grant History			
Year	Amount	Number of Approved Projects	Type
2001	\$967,800	2	Fee Simple & Easement
2002	\$1,012,000	1	Fee Simple
2003	\$1,167,000	2	Fee Simple & Easement
2004	\$2,981,000	2	Fee Simple & Easement
2005	\$829,000	2	Fee Simple & Easement
2006	\$229,000	1	Easement
2007	\$2,100,000	3	Easement
2008	\$1,485,000	2	Fee Simple & Easement
2009	\$490,000	2	Easement
<b>2010</b>	<b>Grant Approvals Pending</b>		

## Forest Legacy Areas

Applications will be considered from areas of the Commonwealth that are located within the Forest Legacy Areas (FLA) for the state. A map of the current FLA is attached. Please examine the map to determine if the proposed project appears to be within these areas.

## Eligibility Criteria

The FLA was defined for the Commonwealth, using Geographic Information System analysis based on the following Eligibility Criteria:

- ◆ Threatened by conversion to non-forest use (fragmentation and reduction in linkages);
- ◆ Continued production of timber and other forest commodities (local and regional economic base);
- ◆ Natural Heritage Resources (e.g. natural communities; habitat for threatened and endangered species; significant geologic features), and
- ◆ Watershed Values (water quality; wetlands; riparian buffers; groundwater recharge; public water supplies).

## Forest Legacy Program Requirements

Each tract approved in the Forest Legacy Program must meet the following stipulations:

- ◆ The tract of land must be at least 20 acres in size.
- ◆ The tract must be at least 80 percent forested.
- ◆ The title to the land must be free and clear of any liens and/or encumbrances.



Landowners participating in the Forest Legacy Program must:

- ◆ Be "willing sellers;"
- ◆ Be willing to participate in a perpetual easement that allows for annual monitoring, or be willing to sell their property in fee simple;
- ◆ Allow the Forest Legacy Monitoring Team access to the tract for evaluation;
- ◆ Be willing to sell the easement or fee simple rights at a bargain price not exceeding 75 percent of the appraised value according to Federal appraisal standards (Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions);
- ◆ Be willing, if necessary, to pay the due diligence costs necessary to acquire the conservation easement or land in fee simple, and to accept less than the full 75 percent allowed under the program to cover these costs [these costs are for required title work and closing fees, an environmental site examination, a timber cruise, an appraisal meeting Federal standards and occasionally a survey];
- ◆ Be willing to sign an option contract or sales contract, prior to national competition, showing commitment and interest in placing a conservation easement restricting development rights on their land, or selling their land, to remain as forestland in perpetuity, and
- ◆ In the case of an easement, provide a Forest Stewardship Plan or multiple-resource forest management plan for the property for review by VDOF and the USFS prior to closing on the easement (there may be a cost to have this plan prepared).

## Pre-Application Due Date

All potential applicants may submit the attached Pre-Application Data Sheet and a map, or sketch, of the proposed property (project) to VDOF for determination as to whether the project is located within the current FLA. These maps/sketches will be compared by VDOF to Geographic Information System shape files of the FLA to make this determination. Potential applicants who submit this sheet will be notified by VDOF within two weeks of receipt of the sheet whether or not their project is located within the FLA, and thus eligible for participation in the 2011 program. Potential applicants can then begin preparation of a full application for the program.

The attached Pre-Application Data Sheet and associated map/sketch must be received by VDOF by no later than **Friday, May 22, 2009**.

**You do not need to submit a pre-application to apply for the program; the purpose of the pre-application is to let you know beforehand if your project falls within the FLA and can be considered for the program.**

## Application Due Date

To assure that all qualifying applications for the Forest Legacy 2011 program year can be evaluated and considered, the VDOF must receive applications by no later than **Friday, July 17, 2009**.

## Completing the Application/Application Ranking

A completed application for the program, and all associated documents listed in the application, must be submitted by the due date listed above.



The application includes a section where the applicant provides information about how important, threatened and strategic the project is. Attached is a draft of the Legacy scoring criteria that will be used during the application review and ranking processes. By providing information about how the project meets these criteria, the applicant can help to improve the ranking of the project.

If specific documents are referenced in the application write-up, please include with the application copies of the specific pages in the document that are referred to, but not the entire document. As an example, if you reference the zoning ordinance for the county, only include copies of the parts you reference, not the entire document

In addition to considering the importance, threat and strategic nature of a project, it is also given a readiness ranking. The project's readiness ranking is improved if one or more of the following items have been accomplished:

- ◆ Information has been documented to support cost estimate, such as completed market analysis; preliminary appraisal, or appraisal;
- ◆ Landowner and easement holder have agreed to easement or fee acquisition conditions;
- ◆ Cost-share commitment has been obtained from a specified source;
- ◆ Signed option or purchase and sales agreement with the state has been executed;
- ◆ Title search is completed, and
- ◆ Stewardship plan or multi-resource management plan is completed.

## Application Requirements (and number of documents)

Each application packet must include the items listed below:

- ◆ One completed and signed Landowner Inspection Consent Agreement, and
- ◆ One manually signed original, and six copies, of a Forest Legacy Application, and all attached materials (aerial photo, maps, etc.).

## Process for Applicants to Submit Applications

All applications must be completed in conformance with requirements set out in this Request for Applications. Failure to complete all parts of the requirements found here could result in your application not being accepted for review and ranking for 2011.

All applicants must mail or deliver their written applications to Virginia Department of Forestry, Attn: Larry Mikkelsen, 900 Natural Resources Drive, Suite 800, Charlottesville, Virginia 22903. If hand delivering your application materials, you may deliver them to the receptionist located on the first floor of 900 Natural Resources Drive, Charlottesville, VA 22903.

We will not accept facsimile or email documents, as all documents must be clear and legible and appear with original signatures on the application.

## Application Review/Ranking Process

All application documents will be reviewed by VDOF to assure that they meet the minimum requirements outlined here. Applications that meet minimum requirements will be evaluated in more detail. The information provided in the application materials, and information and photos



secured from a field visit to the project site, will be provided to the Virginia Forest Legacy Subcommittee for review and ranking at its **August 18, 2009** meeting. **Applicants will be asked to make a presentation to the sub-committee on this date.** The top three (or less) ranked applications will be forwarded to the Virginia Forest Stewardship Committee for review.

The recommendations from the Virginia Forest Stewardship Committee will be forwarded to the State Forester for final review, approval and final ranking. The State Forester's recommendations will be forwarded to the USFS for consideration by a National Panel from across the country in January 2010. The final decisions from the National Panel will be forwarded to the Office of the President for federal fiscal year 2011 budget consideration.

## Additional Sources of Information and Assistance

**USDA Forest Service Forest Legacy;** <http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/programs/loa/flp.shtml> – this website provides links to additional information about the Forest Legacy Program.

**Virginia Department of Forestry;** <http://www.dof.virginia.gov/mgt/index-flp.shtml> – this website has complete application documents for downloading.

**United States House District;** <http://www.house.gov> – this website will provide Congressional district information.

### Contact Information

Larry Mikkelsen – Forest Legacy Manager  
Phone (434) 220-9091  
FAX (434) 296-2369  
Email – [larry.mikkelsen@dof.virginia.gov](mailto:larry.mikkelsen@dof.virginia.gov)

### Attachments

- ◆ Map of Forest Legacy Areas
- ◆ Pre-Application
- ◆ Forest Legacy Application
- ◆ Landowner Inspection Consent Agreement
- ◆ Scoring Criteria (draft)



## *Appendix A-3: Sample Pre-Application*

**Commonwealth of Virginia**

**Forest Legacy Program**

**Program Year 2011**

### **FOREST LEGACY PRE-APPLICATION**

Description of land being considered for application for the Forest Legacy Program:

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County: \_\_\_\_\_

Landowner Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

General Location (state route name/number; nearby town, direction from town or other landmark, etc.):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Total Acreage of Property: \_\_\_\_\_

Acreage Being Considered for Forest Legacy Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Tax Map Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Attach map or sketch showing the property boundaries. Indicate the area to be offered for the program if it is less than the entire property.



## Appendix A-4: Sample Application

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**

Received By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Commonwealth of Virginia  
Forest Legacy Program  
Program Year 2011**  
**FOREST LEGACY APPLICATION**

**APPLICANT INFORMATION**Landowner's Name(s) (list all owners of record):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_Landowner's Mailing Address:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Landowner's Agent: \_\_\_\_\_

Landowner's Agent Mailing Address:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Does the agent have authority to make decisions in behalf of the landowner?  Yes  No

U.S. House District: \_\_\_\_\_

**PROPERTY INFORMATION**

County of Record: \_\_\_\_\_

Tax Map Parcel Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_



Deed Reference Book/Page: \_\_\_\_\_

Plat Reference Book/Page: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Local Zoning Where Property is Located: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Tax Valuation or Recent Appraisal Value (attach if available): \_\_\_\_\_

Tax Parcel Acreage: \_\_\_\_\_

Acreage of Forested Land: \_\_\_\_\_

Acreage of Cleared/Open Land: \_\_\_\_\_

Acreage Offered for Forest Legacy Program: \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: Area offered for Forest Legacy Program must be at least 80% forested. Planting of trees on open land to meet this requirement is acceptable.*

#### **LANDOWNER GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Your answers to the following questions will determine the importance of your application to the Forest Legacy Program. Include specific information and supporting references if available.

Describe why you believe it is important that this property be considered for the Forest Legacy Program. Important is defined as the public benefits gained from the protection and management of the property including the ecological values and the economic and social aspects.

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Describe why you believe this property is threatened and should be considered for the Forest Legacy Program. Threatened is defined as conversion to non-forest uses is likely or imminent and will result in a loss of forest values and public benefits.

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Describe why you believe this property is strategic and should be considered for the Forest Legacy Program. Strategic is defined as fits with a larger conservation plan, strategy, and initiative and enhances previous conservation investments.

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Provide information about the readiness of the project. Examples of the documents or tasks that may affect readiness can be found in the Request for Applications document.

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Describe your long-term goals and objectives for the property.

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Describe what have been the traditional use(s) of the forestland on the property.

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Please check one of the two options below:

- I am willing to sell my property in fee simple (sell my land to the state).
- I am willing to sell only my development rights by placing my property under a conservation easement (I will retain ownership of the land and also my other rights, such as farming, timbering, selling the property or passing it to my heirs, etc.).

Please initial each statement below to indicate that you have read and understand them:

- \_\_\_\_\_ The Forest Legacy Program will pay me (us) a maximum of 75% of the appraised value of my (our) property (or easement) as appraised under the Federal Yellow Book (UASFLA) appraisal standards.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The Forest Legacy Program requires a 25% match to the Federal dollars granted under the program and I (we) will be asked to sign a statement indicating that I (we) agree that the 25% of the appraised value that I forego can be used as the required match for the program.
- \_\_\_\_\_ It may be necessary for me (us) to pay some of the due diligence costs (appraisals, title search, environmental site assessment, etc.) required during the acquisition process, and if so, the amount of funds I (we) receive for my (our) land (or easement) will be reduced by the cost of these services.

Please state whether you are ready to sign an option or sales agreement, contingent upon final appraisal and approval for Forest Legacy funding?

Yes       No

Do you currently have a Forest Stewardship or other Forest Management Plan?       Yes       No

If not, are you willing to obtain a plan prior to closing?       Yes       No

#### LANDOWNER COMMENTS

Please provide any additional information that you believe makes your property a good candidate for the Forest Legacy Program.

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**VALUE ESTIMATES**

What is the estimated value of the land (easement) offered for the Forest Legacy Program? How did you determine the value? (appraisal, landowner estimate, tax assessment, etc.)

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**LEINS AND ENCUMBRANCES**

List any and all liens and encumbrances on the property proposed for enrollment in the Forest Legacy Program (e.g. utility easements, public rights-of-way, water flow or use restrictions, septic systems or water easements, deed restrictions, tax liens, mineral leases, etc.).

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**AGREEMENT**

The information provided above is true to the best of my/our knowledge and belief.

**ALL TITLEHOLDERS MUST SIGN.**

Name (print)	Signature	Date

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**Forest Legacy Application – Additional Items**

Your Forest Legacy Application should also include the following:

- ◆ Aerial Photo (can be obtained via Google Maps at <http://maps.google.com>, or through your local Farm Services Agency office)
- ◆ Legal Description (if available; may be found in your deed or title insurance policy)
- ◆ List of Existing Permanent Improvements on the Tract, including houses, barns, lakes, ponds, dams, wells, roads, other structures and the total number of acres occupied by improvements.
- ◆ Map Information (provide as much map information as is available):
  - Copy of Road Map indicating location of the property
  - Copy of Plat or Survey Map of the parcel indicating location of tract
  - Map identifying all dams, dumps, or waste disposal sites on the property
  - Copy of Tax Map, or portion thereof, containing the parcel

**NOTE: All materials become the property of the Commonwealth of Virginia and are non-returnable.**



## **Appendix A-5: Sample Landowner Inspection Consent Agreement**

**Commonwealth of Virginia  
Forest Legacy Program  
Program Year 2011**

**FOREST LEGACY LANDOWNER INSPECTION CONSENT AGREEMENT**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, as the landowner or the landowner's authorized agent (proof of authorization must accompany this document), agree to allow inspection, appraisal, environmental site examination, timber cruise, and survey of my property being offered for consideration under the Forest Legacy Program. I agree to allow employees of the Virginia Department of Forestry (the "Agency") or members of the Virginia Forest Legacy Sub-Committee to inspect the property as may be required, with the understanding that I shall be notified in advance of all inspection visits. I agree to allow contractors hired by the Agency to enter the property to perform the services listed above so long as I am provided contractor contact information in advance, and notified in advance of their visit to the property.

---

Landowner Signature

---

Date

---

Virginia Department of Forestry Signature

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Date

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Title



## Appendix A-6: Project Evaluation

**Commonwealth of Virginia  
Forest Legacy Program  
Program Year 2011**

**FOREST LEGACY PROJECT EVALUATION**

Property/Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Landowner(s): \_\_\_\_\_

County/City: \_\_\_\_\_

Acres: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Evaluation: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

**READINESS INFORMATION**

- Yes     No    Completed Market Analysis or Preliminary Appraisal?
- Yes     No    Bargain Sale of 75% agreed to?
- Yes     No    Signed Option Agreement?
- Yes     No    Signed Purchase and Sales Agreement?
- Yes     No    Held by Third Party, at Request of the State?
- Yes     No    Title Search Completed?
- Yes     No    Minerals Determination Completed?
- Yes     No    Management Plan Completed for the Property (CE only)?

**PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

- Yes     No    Owned by Willing Seller(s)?
- Yes     No    Signed Consent Agreement?
- Yes     No    25% Match Available?

Percent Match Offered? \_\_\_\_\_ %

**IMPORTANCE SCORING****Forestry and Potential Forest Productivity:**

- (0-2 points) Land managed according to a Forest Management Plan  
 (0-1 point) Land is third party certified  
 (0-2 points) Forestry activity contributes to resource-based economy  
 (0-1 point) Contains characteristics (slope, soils) to sustain a productive forest

**Threatened and Endangered Species Habitat:**

- (0-3 points) Property contains documented T&E species (consider numbers show below during scoring)

Number of Federally-listed species       Number of State-Only-listed species

**Fish, Wildlife, Plants and Unique Forest Communities:**

- (0-3 points) Contains unique forest communities as documented by a formal assessment or wildlife conservation plan or strategy

**Water Supply and Watershed Protection:**

- (0-3 points) Provides a public drinking water supply buffer, contains an aquifer recharge area, or protects an ecologically important aquatic or marine area  
 (0-3 points) Contains important riparian area, wetlands, shorelines, river systems or sensitive watershed lands

**Public Access:**

- (0-3 points) Will maintain or establish access by the public for recreation

**Scenic:**

- (0-3 points) Is located within the viewshed of a formally-designated scenic feature, such as a trail, river or highway

**Historic/Cultural/Tribal:**

- (0-3 points) Contains formerly-documented features of historical, cultural and/or tribal significance

**Non-Timber Economic Benefits:**

- (0-3 points) Provides non-timber revenue to the local or regional economy through hunting leases, ranching, non-timber forest products (maple syrup, pine straw, ginseng collection), guided tours (fishing, hunting, bird watching) and recreational rentals (bikes, boats, outdoor gear)

---

**SUBTOTAL** (30 points maximum)

---



## STRATEGIC SCORING

### Conservation Strategy:

(0-15 points)	Fits within a larger conservation plan, strategy or initiative as designated by a government or non-government entity
---------------	---

### Supports Conservation Investments:

(0-15 points)	Strategically linked to enhanced previous conservation investments (past FLP projects, protected federal, state or NGO lands) or other federal land protection efforts (NRCS, NOAA, etc.)
---------------	---

<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	(30 points maximum)
-----------------	---------------------

## THREATENED SCORING

### Legal Protection:

(0-4 points)	Legal protections that currently exist (zoning, easements); whether these protections remove the threat of conversion, and to what extent
--------------	---

### Land and Landowner's Circumstances:

(0-4 points)	Landowner circumstances including: property held in an estate, aging landowner, future use by heirs is uncertain, property is for sale or has a sale pending, purchase offers received, has an approved subdivision plan, or good land steward interested in conserving the land (no penalty for latter type of landowner)
--------------	--

### Adjacent Land Use:

(0-4 points)	Use of adjacent land including: current use of adjacent land, rate of development growth or conversion, population growth, rate of change in ownership
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### Ability to Develop:

(0-4 points)	Physical attributes that will facilitate conversion: access, slope, water/sewer, electricity, etc.
--------------	--

### Third Party Ownership:

(0-4 points)	Acquired by a third party at the request of the state (evaluate threat based on situation before third party acquisition)
--------------	---

<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	(20 points maximum)
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<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>(80 points maximum)</b>
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## Appendix A-7: Easement Monitoring Report

**Commonwealth of Virginia**

**Forest Legacy Program**

**Program Year 2011**

### **EASEMENT MONITORING REPORT**

Current Easement Name: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

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

Easement Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Monitoring Visit: \_\_\_\_\_

Monitored By: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **CONTACT WITH LANDOWNER**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  Phone  Email  In Person

#### **Current Landowner Information (if changed):**

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

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

Daytime Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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

#### **PROPERTY INFORMATION**

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Owner on Date of Easement: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Easement Recorded: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Current Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

Page/Date Recorded: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Post-Easement Deeds/Grantee: \_\_\_\_\_

Page/Date Recorded: \_\_\_\_\_

Subdivisions of Property/Grantee: \_\_\_\_\_



Page/Date Recorded: \_\_\_\_\_

**Conservation Values Protected:**

---

**Restrictions/Requirements: (see Easement Deed for specific restriction or requirement language)**

---

**Division (describe):**

---

**Structures (describe):**

---

**Commercial/Industrial (describe):**

---

**Forest Management (describe):**

---

**Pesticides (describe):**

---

**Grading/Mining (describe):**

---

**Trash (describe):**

---

**Signs (describe):**

---

**Riparian Buffer (describe):**

---

**Prior Review of Boundary Line Adjustment (BLA) by VDOF:**

---

**VDOF to be party to BLA deeds**

---

**Prior written notification to VDOF before beginning any ground clearing for construction of structures**

---

**Forest Management Plan required before commencement of forest management activities**

---

**Notification to VDOF before and after any material forest activity, including timber harvest**

---

**Prior review by VDOF of pre-harvest plans**

---

**Prior notice to VDOF of grading, blasting or earth removal greater than one acre**

---

**Deed reference required in deeds conveying property**

---

**Prior written notification to VDOF before actions that may have adverse affect on conservation values**

---

**Prior notification to VDOF of sale affecting property**

---

**Compliance with Terms of the Easement:**

Yes     No       Complies with Conservation Easement?

Yes     No       Investigation Necessary?

Note: If an investigation is indicated, a follow-up report will be issued after the investigation.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR INFORMATION**

---

**ATTACHMENTS TO THIS REPORT**

Aerial Photo                   Updated Maps

Updated Site Photos                   Additional Pages

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

---

Virginia Department of Forestry Signature

Date

---

Title



## Appendix B

### Virginia Forest Stewardship Operating Plan



#### **STEWARDSHIP**

***The wise application of environmental and economic resource management principles to maintain and enhance the multiple benefits of the forest for current and future landowners and the public***

This Operating Plan was developed by the Virginia Department of Forestry in cooperation with the Virginia Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee to guide forestry professionals in the implementation of the Forest Stewardship Program.

#### ***Statement of Purpose and Cooperating Organization Agreement***

The National Association of State Foresters in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service, State and Private Forestry Program, developed an initiative called the **Forest Stewardship Program** in 1990. The purpose of this state-based program is to improve the management of Private Non-Industrial Forestlands (PNIF) for multiple resource benefits, including wildlife, water, recreation and forest products.

Better coordination and cooperation among resource management specialists from various state and federal agencies and the private sector should result in more efficient and effective technical assistance to private forest landowners. Total multiple-use forest resource management plans will be prepared jointly by the cooperating agencies, consulting foresters or forest industry landowner assistance foresters incorporating the landowner's objectives with sound conservation practices.



Forest stewards are custodians of our bountiful forest resources. Their thoughtful management of the forests in their care helps provide many benefits to them; society, and the world as a whole. The right to own land is among the most treasured and most valued rights of all American citizens. The ownership of land not only grants landowners the privilege of pursuing personal goals, but carries the responsibility of good stewardship.

The increased demand for forest amenities, combined with a shrinking land base accentuates the need for all forest landowners to actively manage their forested properties. A number of opportunities exist for improved resource management.

PNIF landowners, who hold nearly 11 million acres of forestland in Virginia, present the greatest opportunity for making improvements to the supply and condition of the state's forest resources. Most of these forestlands are unmanaged. With good stewardship management, these forestlands could better provide Virginia's needs for clean water and air; healthy, thriving populations of fish and wildlife; quality outdoor recreation experiences; essential forest products, and the protection of important archaeological and other historic resources. Good stewardship contributes to natural beauty; guards against soil erosion and depletion of soil productivity, and protects wetlands. Good stewardship also protects forests from insects, diseases, wildfire, over-grazing and poor resource management. Making sound, long-term economic decisions is also part of good stewardship.

The Virginia Forest Stewardship Program is designed to educate and guide forest landowners in the complex and rewarding field of resource management by providing coordinated assistance from the many varied professionals with an interest in multiple-use management. Participating natural resource professionals make a deliberate effort to contact forest landowners to assess their personal objectives and generate interest in stewardship management. Landowners targeted for contact are prioritized as follows:

1. Those who have performed little or no management of their forestlands.
2. Those who have managed exclusively for one resource and wish to diversify their activities.
3. Those who presently manage their properties according to the stewardship concept and deserve recognition for their efforts.

## *Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee*

The **Virginia Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee** shall provide direction for the Virginia Forest Stewardship Program administered by the Virginia Department of Forestry. The Committee will meet biennially to address stewardship planning and implementation concerns and overall program coordination. Normally, committee members serve three-year terms and may be reappointed for consecutive terms. Terms for persons who by virtue of their positions are committee members (e.g., State Conservationists; Agency Directors; Officers of Organizations, etc.) would be ongoing during their tenure in the position.

The committee's primary responsibility is to provide technical, procedural and logistical guidance to the State Forester, who is responsible for the administration of the Forest Stewardship Program. Therefore, the committee will:

- ◆ Provide advice and recommendations to the State Forester concerning implementation of the Forest Stewardship Program, and other associated landowner assistance and cost-share programs.
- ◆ Provide assistance and recommendations concerning the development, implementation and updating of the State Forest Stewardship Operating Plan.



Individuals from each of the following agencies or groups are invited to serve on the Virginia Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee:

**Table 4: Agencies and Organizations Invited to Serve on the Virginia Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee**

Agencies/Organizations	
Virginia Department of Forestry	George Washington Jefferson National Forest
VA Board of Forestry	Virginia Forestry Association
VA Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF)	USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
VA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)	USDA Consolidated Farm Service Agency (FSA)
VA Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts	Virginia Tech – College of Forestry & Wildlife Resources
VA Department of Environmental Quality	VA Cooperative Extension Service
VA Department of Historic Resources	Forest Industry
VA Division of Natural Heritage	Environmental Organizations
VA Division of Soil and Water Conservation	Forest Landowners
Consulting Foresters	Conservation Organizations
Land Trust Organizations	Local Government

## *Program Implementation*

### **State Level**

A state forest stewardship coordinator will administer and coordinate the Virginia Forest Stewardship Program. The State Coordinating Committee and coordinator may be assisted as needed by appointed sub-committees. These sub-committees should be comprised of representatives from the committee with a key interest in forest stewardship, such as other state and federal agencies; trade or professional associations; consulting foresters; industry foresters, and environmental and conservation organizations.

### *Administrative Objectives*

- ◆ To update program policies, procedures and standards contained in the State Forest Stewardship Operating Plan as necessary;
- ◆ To develop strategies that can enhance the success of the program;
- ◆ To assist in meeting statewide program goals and objectives and to monitor accomplishment of those goals;
- ◆ To provide input to the VDOF from a wide variety of natural resource-related interests;
- ◆ To incorporate private natural resource concerns in program implementation;



- ◆ To coordinate program activities so as to complement those of existing programs, such as Tree Farm; Partners for Fish and Wildlife; Landowner Incentives Programs, and Farm Bill Programs, and
- ◆ To generate widespread support for the program from forest landowners, concerned groups and the general public.

## Regional Level

For purposes of implementing the Virginia Forest Stewardship Program, the state will be divided into three regions corresponding to the Virginia Department of Forestry's administrative regions. In each region, a VDOF assistant regional forester will serve as the regional stewardship coordinator for activities in their respective regions.

These regional stewardship coordinators, working with the state coordinator, will be responsible for implementing the state program in their region. They will be responsible for coordinating publicity and participation of field personnel in Stewardship Plan preparation, implementation and property inspections. They will review Stewardship Plans; review nominations for Forest Steward Certification; inspect and, if deemed appropriate, approve properties for Certification; publicize the Stewardship program, and conduct activities which arise that will promote the program.

## *Publicity*

On the regional level, the regional stewardship coordinators will direct publicity they deem appropriate through radio, television, newspapers, other printed media, speaking engagements and mailings.

## *Program Outreach*

Virginia is beginning to focus outreach efforts in important forest resource areas that are defined in the statewide assessment and resource strategy. Within those areas, the Forest Stewardship Program should be accessible to all landowners. In addition, outreach efforts will:

- ◆ Identify and address underserved communities and groups;
- ◆ Balance the needs of current participants and potential future participants;
- ◆ Coordinate with other landowner assistance programs to avoid duplication and support ongoing efforts as appropriate;
- ◆ Identify opportunities for landscape-scale and/or multiple-landowner planning and technical assistance delivery, especially where ownerships are relatively small, and
- ◆ Promote and foster the development of peer-to-peer landowner networks.

## **Outreach For Traditionally Underserved Landowners**

The VDOF recognizes that there are traditionally underserved groups of landowners that may need specific outreach methods. Each year, the agency cooperates and provides funding to Virginia Tech for landowner outreach. A portion of these funds is specifically set aside for outreach to these groups. Specific examples of use of these funds have been minority landowner tours and mini-grants for specific projects. The Virginia Department of Forestry and Virginia Tech work with Virginia State University (1890 School) in these efforts. In early 2010, the VDOF, Virginia State and Virginia Tech signed a Memorandum of Understanding to cooperate on forestry research. Results and application of this research will be targeted at underserved landowners. One of the small



farmer outreach coordinators with Virginia State University serves on, and is vice-chair of, the Virginia Reforestation of Timberlands Board. Specific efforts are being made to recruit minority students to the annual Virginia Department of Forestry Camp at Holiday Lake. It may be appropriate as well to include a Virginia State representative on the Virginia Forest Stewardship Committee.

The Forest Stewardship Program and associated outreach efforts must adhere to the USDA non-discrimination policy: *The USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status.*

## Training

Continued program orientation for new personnel and participating consultant foresters will be conducted by the regional coordinators with assistance by the state coordinator.

## Priority Areas

The Virginia Department of Forestry has professional field staff located throughout the Commonwealth. Additionally, as a tax-supported public service agency, we are tasked to provide service to landowners throughout the state in all areas. We have and will continue to do so based upon requests. However, there is a need to concentrate finite staff time and resources in a manner that will be most effective and achieve the greatest results. This will be done through prioritization.

Virginia will take a two-level prioritization process for priority areas for Forest Stewardship.

### Level 1 – Landscape-Level Priority Areas

We have identified broad landscape-scale areas within the state in which we will identify regionally specific goals for stewardship delivery, with particular emphasis placed upon implementation of recommended practices. These are:

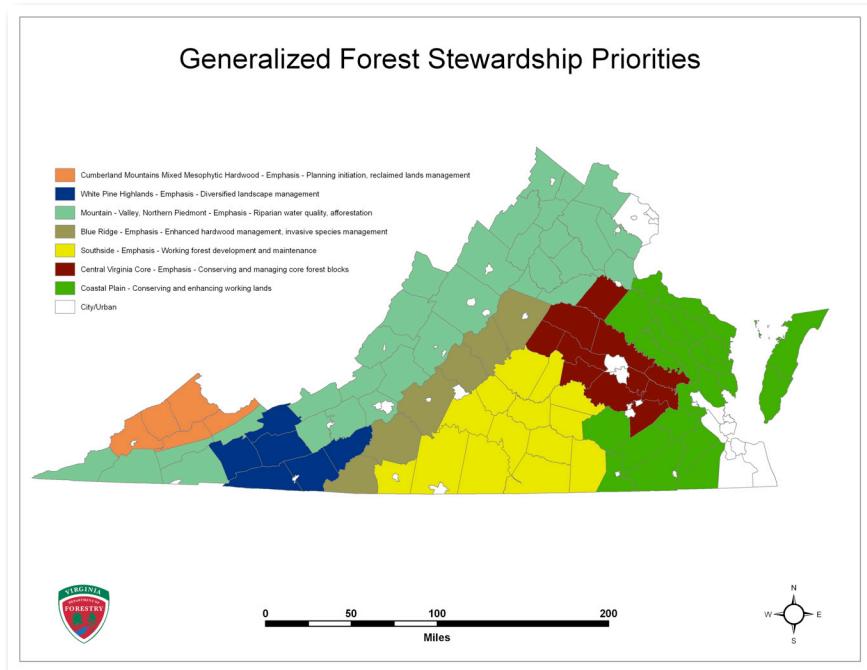
1. **Cumberland Mountains Mixed Mesophytic Hardwood – Emphasis – Planning initiation, reclaimed lands management.** The area is one of the most heavily forested areas in Virginia. Land-use has historically been extractive in nature for timber and minerals (coal and natural gas) with a high occurrence of damaging wildfire. Emphasis on long-term forest management has been limited. Current (2010) USFS S&PF funding is focusing on mixed mesophytic hardwood restoration on mined lands.
2. **White Pine Highlands – Emphasis – Diversified landscape management.** This is the primary white pine production area in Virginia with history of management and value-added industries, including furniture; Christmas trees and greenery, and lumber. The private forest landscape is fragmented with agricultural uses and primary and second home construction. There is growing interest in diversified management, including a forestry cooperative and through a VDOF-NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant – Total Forest Makeover.
3. **Mountain – Valley, Northern Piedmont – Emphasis – Riparian water quality, afforestation, forest improvement, multiple-resource management.** This is a wide-spreading and diverse area where forest management is often passive and secondary to other uses, including grazing (cattle and horses), other agriculture and recreational or estate ownership. Some notable exceptions occur near major wood-using facilities. There is



high need and opportunity for improved watershed management through forested buffers and tree planting on marginal open land. Ongoing and current projects that exemplify this are the Chesapeake Bay and Southern Rivers riparian forest buffer emphasis and the Forest to Faucets watershed project near Charlottesville. Historic high-grading in the area provides many opportunities for forest improvement. Highly varied ownership objectives offer opportunities to develop diverse resource management, including wildlife management.

- 4. Blue Ridge – Emphasis – Enhanced hardwood management, invasive species management.** The eastern slopes of the Blue Ridge provide some of the most productive hardwood sites in the state. There are large cores of non-federal mountain land, as well as dispersed sites well-suited for quality hardwood management. Invasive species are beginning to complicate management on good sites. Central location; good transportation, and proximity to metropolitan (small and large) areas make this area attractive for primary and recreational home development and use. There is ample opportunity to coordinate with National Forests along the central Blue Ridge.
- 5. Southside – Emphasis – Working forest development and maintenance.** The Southern Piedmont has historic and continuing strong production forestry uses. The landscape is accessible and fragmented with agricultural uses and some extensive (large lot) scale rural home development. This area of Virginia has the greatest potential for continued and improved utilization-based forestry as well as complementary agricultural and wildlife resource management.
- 6. Central Virginia Core – Emphasis – Conserving and managing core forest blocks.** These historically rural but transitioning counties are on the outer ring of Virginia's high development crescent. Here, there are a number of high-priority core forest blocks, often former forest industry lands. There is a window of opportunity for land conservation and continued management in face of future development and fragmentation.
- 7. Coastal Plain – Emphasis – Conserving and enhancing working lands.** There is a high concentration here of well-managed forests on productive sites, accessible, with a good transportation network, but with growth pressure from major metropolitan areas. There are well-developed wood markets, but they are beginning to transition. Forest industry land ownership transition is nearly complete. There are concentrations of unique and diminished animal and plant habitats, often associated with wetlands. There is a high need for land conservation and continued management. Efforts include state forest acquisitions and private land conservation work through several land trusts; conservation organizations; county Purchase of Development Rights programs, and VDOF's Tomorrow Woods program. Continued forest management is complementary to the potential for agricultural and wildlife resource management.

Within these areas, we will work to develop and emphasize these resource attributes and their potential and values. This will be done in recognition and in concert with the highly varied and diverse objectives of the citizens; organizations; businesses, and local governments of these areas.

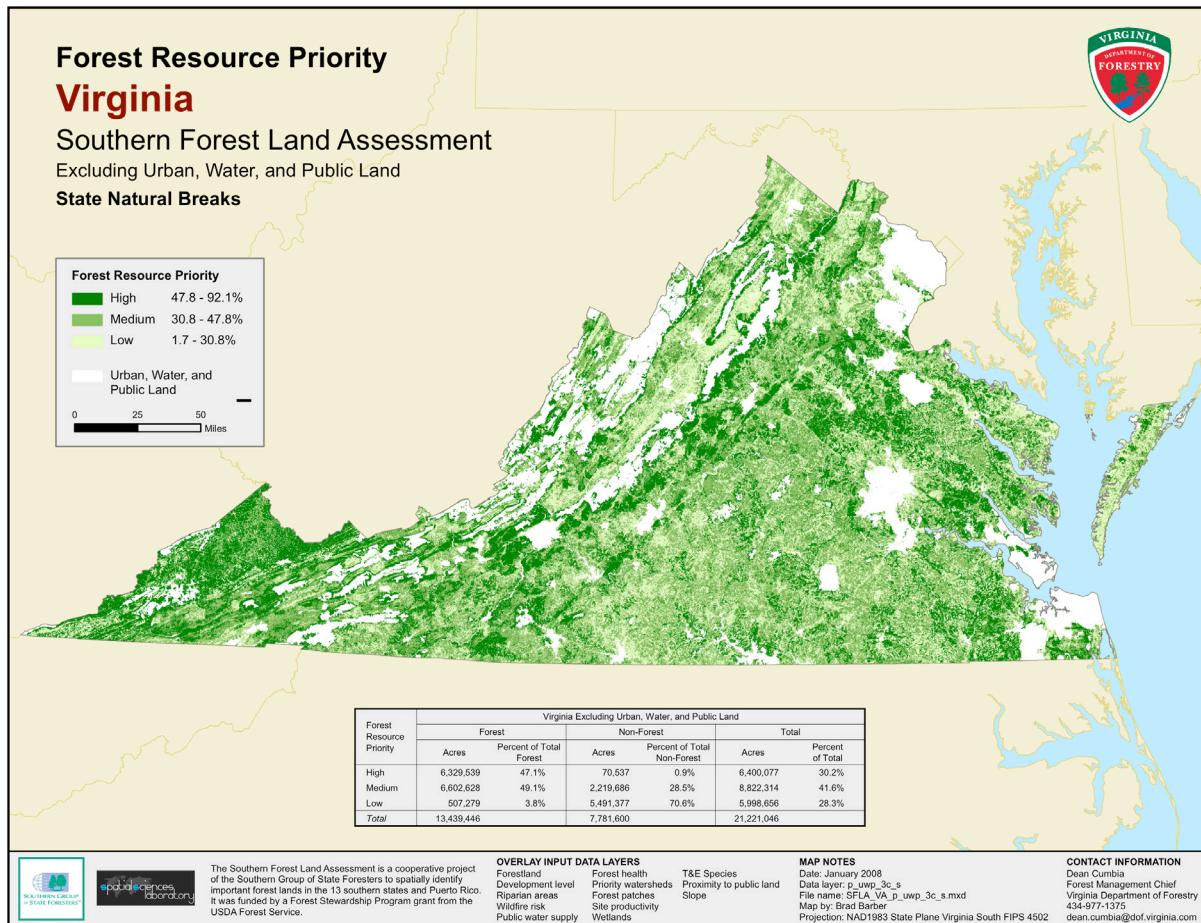
**Figure 4: Generalized Forest Stewardship Priorities**

## Level 2 – Area-Based Priority Areas

The VDOF agency service organization is county-based. Within counties, field employees are generalists and function in many capacities to service the varied natural resource management and protection needs of landowners and citizens. Workload is often request-driven and geographically random. Regional and field staff will utilize regional and county-level prioritization maps to focus landowner outreach, planning and implementation to priority areas, based upon the analysis done through the Southern Forest Lands Assessment (SFLA). The agency will use the SFLA Regional Breaks – excluding urban, water and public land – as the principle priority map. Area offices will have access to the State Natural Breaks map as well, that can assist them in further focus and prioritization. Examples would be scheduling landowner workshops in high-priority areas, or when making planning contacts for management practice implementation, focus first on tracts in high-priority areas.

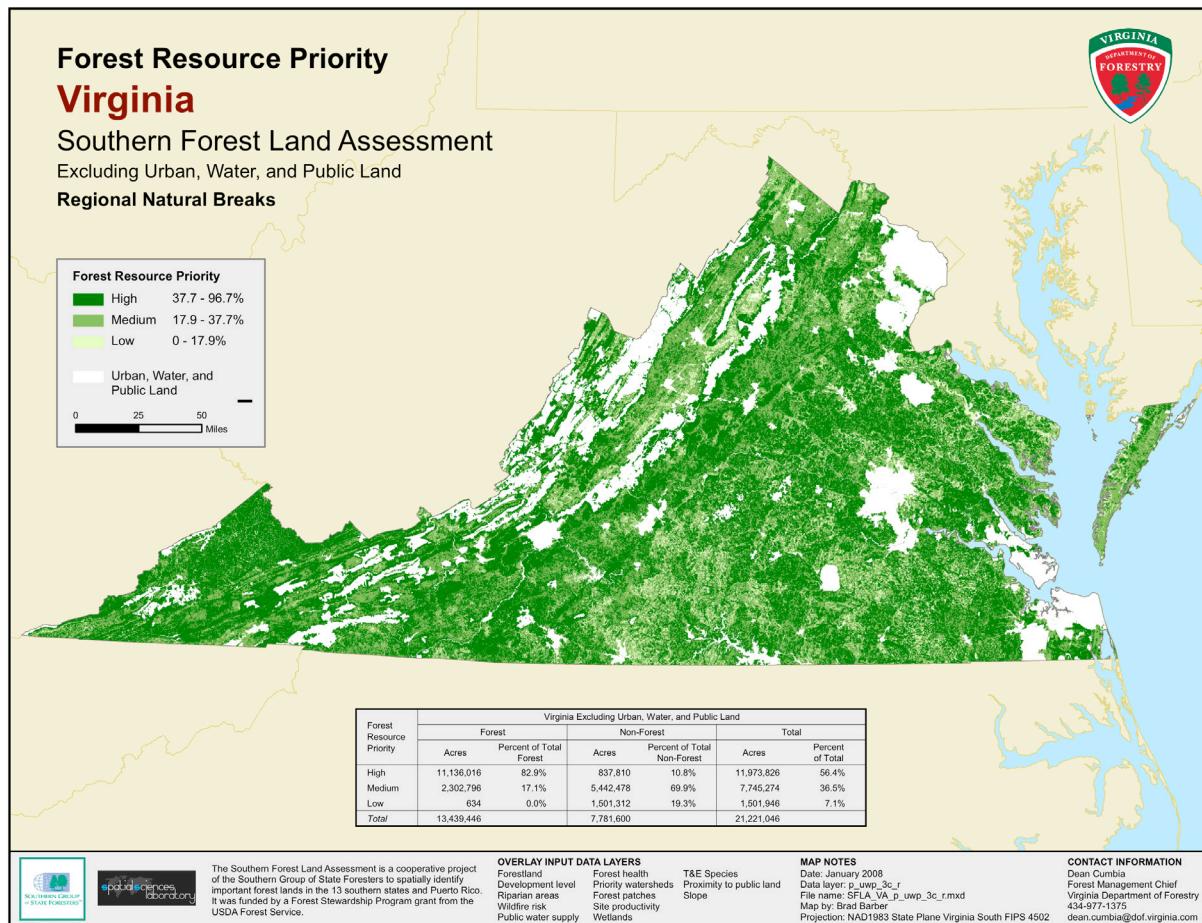


**Figure 5: Forest Resource Priority for Virginia from the Southern Forest Land Assessment  
Excluding Urban, Water and Public Land – State Natural Breaks**





**Figure 6: Forest Resource Priority for Virginia from the Southern Forest Land Assessment  
Excluding Urban, Water and Public Land – Regional Natural Breaks**



## *Delivery System to NIPF Landowners*

Implementation of the Virginia Forest Stewardship Program will primarily be the responsibility of the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF).

Although several agencies and resource management specialists from the private sector will be cooperating to provide multiple-use management services, the VDOF will coordinate these activities so that the landowners will have a single point of contact. This will help the individual PNIF landowners implement their plan more efficiently and effectively.

Virginia has an outstanding record of accomplishment in multiple-use forestry practiced by private landowners. The Forest Stewardship Program will focus on three major opportunity areas in Virginia where the greatest need exists for providing enhanced management assistance to private landowners:



1. To develop programs and activities to reach new landowners and absentee landowners who are not practicing multiple-use forestry or do not have a forest management plan (FMP). Landowners who already have a FMP will be encouraged to upgrade their plan to include consideration and activities for comprehensive multiple-use management in accordance with Forest Stewardship Program guidelines.
2. To provide funding for special projects and programs identified to inform landowners of services available for technical assistance from both government agencies and the private sector.
3. To better coordinate management assistance activities and cooperation among the various agencies, organizations and interest groups, which provide management programs to landowners. The Stewardship Committee will continually strive to avoid duplication or competition with established programs, while providing a cooperative coordinating role to increase overall program effectiveness.

The VDOF area foresters and technicians located in almost all counties of the Commonwealth will be the principal coordinators with PNIF landowners to promote and implement this program. They will provide this "on-the-ground" technical assistance and expertise in cooperation with other natural resource agency professionals and natural resource management professionals from the private sector to develop a Forest Stewardship Management Plan (FSMP) for individual forest landowners.

Action programs on a state-level will be developed by the state stewardship coordinator to accomplish stewardship goals. The combination of state-level and local-level action programs will provide the successful implementation of stewardship management on private forestlands in Virginia and enhance the forest and related resources for all citizens of the Commonwealth.

## ***Plan Preparation Procedures***

### **Eligibility**

PNIF landowners who own a minimum of 10 acres of forestland and have a desire to manage their ownerships according to the program standards may participate in the Forest Stewardship Program. Forestland is defined as land at least 10 percent stocked by trees of any size or formerly having had such tree cover and not built-up or developed for agricultural use. Landowners who are interested in the Forest Stewardship program must enroll their entire contiguous property into the program; however, open pasture, cropland or water body acreage will not be eligible for plan preparation cost-share assistance. A water body, within the Virginia Forest Stewardship Program, is defined as a natural or man-made water impoundment that is greater than a half acre in size.

### **Program Enrollment**

Landowners who are interested in the Stewardship Program should contact their local VDOF area forester; a participating consultant forester, or the local representative from one of the other participating agencies to learn more about the program. It is the responsibility of the agency representative and/or consultant to carefully explain to each landowner the benefits of the program and the procedures involved in the development of their Forest Stewardship Plan.

The natural resource professional who made first contact with the landowner should ensure that a follow-up letter highlighting the benefits of the program is sent to the landowner, if necessary. A



copy of the Forest Stewardship Program brochure and an application should be included with the letter.

Landowners should also understand that the purpose of the program is to encourage *active forestland management*. This includes measures to increase timber growth, ***but not necessarily the harvest of timber***; improvement of wildlife habitat, ***but not necessarily for hunting***, and opportunities for recreational pursuits, ***but not necessarily public access for recreation***.

To enroll in the Forest Stewardship Program, the landowner will be asked to complete and **sign** a Forest Stewardship application that includes a "Stewardship Pledge" to indicate their good faith intentions to manage their natural resources in accordance with good Stewardship principals. The next step is for landowners to **send the application and a map of the property** to their local VDOF area forester or to the state stewardship coordinator in Charlottesville.

If the VDOF area forester receives the application, he/she will:

1. Send a copy to the regional stewardship coordinator, and
2. Send a copy to the designated consultant forester, if one is identified.

If the state stewardship coordinator receives the application from the landowner or the consultant, he/she will:

1. Send a copy to the regional stewardship coordinator, and
2. Send a copy to the designated consultant forester, if one is identified.

## ***Professional Qualifications to Prepare FSMPs***

A Forest Stewardship Management Plan (FSMP) can be prepared by any Virginia Department of Forestry forester. Consulting foresters; forest industry landowner assistance foresters, and foresters who have completed the Virginia Forest Stewardship Program Training Orientation, at a statewide meeting or individually with a regional stewardship coordinator, can also prepare an FSMP.

All FSMPs must be reviewed by a VDOF regional stewardship coordinator to ensure the plan includes all the information specified in the Virginia Forest Stewardship Operating Plan.

To use the title of forester in connection with any practice of forestry, the person shall hold a baccalaureate or higher degree from a college or university curriculum accredited by the Society of American Foresters, and such degree curriculum shall meet the minimum education criteria set forth by the Society in the fields of forest ecology and biology; management of forest resources, and forest resources policy and administration. (*Code of Virginia 10.1-1181.9*)

## **Involvement of Consultant Foresters**

Landowners, who wish to have a state-approved consultant forester write their plan, must identify the consultant on the Stewardship Application form and the application must be approved by the state stewardship coordinator prior to any field work being started. When the plan is complete, it must be submitted to the assistant regional forester for review and recording.

VDOF foresters should provide landowners with the approved Stewardship Consultant List. Landowners will be encouraged to use consultant foresters to prepare their plans, unless:

- ◆ No consultants are available within the landowner's immediate area to prepare their plan, and/or



- ◆ The landowner does not want to use the services of a private natural resource consultant. If this is the case, the landowner will be required to pay the Virginia Department of Forestry the established per acre charge.

## Qualifications for Other Natural Resource Management Specialists

If the landowner has chosen primary or secondary objectives in the areas of **Wildlife; Environmental and Recreation, or Soil and Water**, then the FSMP recommendations can be made by any resource management specialists who are determined by the **regional stewardship coordinator** to be qualified to provide assistance based on needs and resources of the private landowner. The regional stewardship coordinator may call upon the various agencies and organizations represented on the Virginia Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee for advice should there be a question on the recommendations made by the specialist.

In the case where, in the preparation of a FSMP, the forester and wildlife biologist or other resource specialist make conflicting or incompatible resource management recommendations, a compromise recommendation should be reached with the landowner's primary objectives as the guiding factor in the recommendation. If an acceptable compromise cannot be reached, the recommendation decision will be arbitrated by the VDOF regional stewardship coordinator.

## Plan Preparation Format and Plan Elements

A Forest Stewardship Management Plan is a multiple-use document, which contains integrated strategies for managing each of the major resource components on the landowner's property over a 10-year period. Resource specialists from the administering agency and the private sector contribute to the plan. All forested property is included.

The landowner shall rank his/her first three objectives for the property as a whole, while providing for each of the other objectives in a compatible manner. The plan will be based upon the landowner's stated objectives; field examinations; observations, and other data. With the landowner's objectives known, the professional forester can refer to the appropriate minimum standards and basic guidelines when developing the plan. The following components constitute the **minimum** information that should be included in all plans.

### 1. Cover Page (See sample in Appendix B-1)

The cover page shall include bold terminology identifying the plan as a Forest Stewardship Plan. It shall also include the landowner's name; address; telephone number; the county where the property is located, and the name; address, and phone number of the professional forester who prepared the plan.

### 2. Introduction Letter (See sample in Appendix B-1)

This letter will briefly explain the importance of good forest management; management planning, and how their Forest Stewardship Plan is organized. This letter should also congratulate the landowner for entering into the Forest Stewardship Program.

### 3. Table of Contents

This table will provide a quick reference to the specific sections of the management plan.

### 4. Landowner's Objectives



The landowner's primary management objectives for the property, along with the other resource concerns, are identified in several paragraphs or in a list format. These goals and objectives should be identified on the Stewardship application and through personal conversations with the landowner.

## 5. Location and Accessibility

This includes the landowner's name; total property acreage; the county where the property is located, and reference to the closest town and major highways. Accessibility may include public road access to the property as well the condition of access in the forested areas of the property itself.

## 6. General Property Description

Describe the boundaries; how well they are marked, and briefly describe the current woodland conditions. This may include such things as a general description of the timber conditions; wildlife habitat present; existing recreational facilities; invasive species info; etc.

## 7. Summary of Forest Management Needs and Opportunities

This section should contain a few short paragraphs which briefly state (**not** describe or explain) what practices should be performed to achieve the landowner's goals. **This section should not duplicate detailed information contained in the stand recommendations.** Examples are as follows:

- a. **Timber/Forest Products** – Identify target cutting schedule and opportunities for reforestation; improving timber growth, and harvest, considering the overall objectives.
- b. **Fish and Wildlife** – Identify featured species; presence of listed species according to the screening procedure; desirable habitat types present, and opportunities for improving desirable habitat, considering the overall objectives. Reference to any threatened and endangered species lists for the particular county that is included in the appendix.
- c. **Threatened or Endangered Plant or Animal Species** – Identification of T & E species observed on the property or any species that are known to occur in the general vicinity of the property as identified by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries T & E lists.
- d. **Natural Heritage Resources** – Identify any existing features.
- e. **Soil and Water Conservation** –
  1. Identify areas that have existing erosion problems and areas requiring special consideration and monitoring (highly-erodible areas, wetlands, water features, riparian zones, sinkholes, etc.).
  2. Note applicable BMP considerations and provide supplemental BMP information in the appendix if needed.
- f. **Recreation** – Identification of existing recreational facilities; present and potential uses, and general strategies for enhancing the landowner's desired uses.
- g. **Aesthetics** – Identification of areas that are unique from a scenic, vegetative, geological or historical standpoint. Should also include strategies and goals for enhancing these amenities.



- h. **Cultural and Historic Resources** – If artifacts are found or the landowner has knowledge of archaeological sites on his/her property and wish to record them or are interested in determining whether known sites exist on their property, he/she should be provided contact information for one of the four regional preservation offices (located in Roanoke, Stephens City, Newport News and Richmond) for the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.
- i. **Invasive Plant Species** – Identification of areas where invasive plant species have been found and the importance of monitoring and/or controlling them.
- j. **Fire** – Identification of potential benefits that can be achieved through the use of controlled fire and any steps that can be taken to avoid potential wildfire damages to the property.

## 8. Explanation of Size Class and Forest Types

Provide a brief description of site index and forest types and how this information is used in the plan.

## 9. Topography and Soils Description

Provide a brief description of the primary soil types, slopes and aspects on the property. Include soil descriptions and potential forest productivity. Identify any potential equipment limitations and/or erosion problems that may limit management opportunities. Include a soils map if necessary.

## 10. Stand Management Descriptions and Recommendations

Stand management recommendations should integrate the various resource activities which are to be performed over the next 10 years. These activities should be designed to correspond with the landowner's objectives. They should describe in site-specific detail **what, where, when, why and how** to perform practices, supplemented with appendix material where appropriate.

The following information should be included in each stand description, **if applicable**.

- a. Acreage
- b. Forest type
- c. Species Present
- d. Age
- e. Size
- f. Quality
- g. Stocking level
- h. Growth Rate
- i. Stand History
- j. Soil Description & Site Index
- k. Topography
- l. BMPs for known Historic Resources
- m. Fish and/or Wildlife Habitat
- n. Unique or Special Areas
- o. Recommended treatment(s)
- p. Identification and control of invasive plant species

## 11. Five-Year Suggested Schedule of Management Recommendations



This information will be in table format and will include the landowner's name, date and the following column headers.

Activity Year	Parcel #	Suggested Activity	Cost Share

## 12. Topographic Stand Map

The stand map should be computer generated or neatly hand drawn over a topographic map. The topographic stand map shall include the following:

- ◆ North arrow
- ◆ Landowner's name
- ◆ County
- ◆ Plan acreage
- ◆ Plan preparer's name
- ◆ Property boundaries
- ◆ Access roads
- ◆ Direction and distance to nearest town
- ◆ Roads or trails within the property
- ◆ Fixed improvements within the property
- ◆ Bodies of water within or adjacent to the property
- ◆ Map scale (no less than 1":1000', if possible)
- ◆ Clearly-defined stand boundaries
- ◆ UTMs or latitude and longitude coordinates

## 13. Overall Tract Recommendations (Standard Paragraphs)

Each plan shall include information about the following topics.

- a. Boundary Lines
- b. Threatened and Endangered Species
- c. Forest Health
- d. Integrated Pest Management
- e. Water Quality Protection
- f. Forest Carbon, Air Quality
- g. Fire Management and Protection
- h. Cultural and Historic Resources
- i. Forest Conservation
- j. Biological Diversity
- k. Cost-Share Programs
- l. Environmental Evaluation Form – (*NRCS Plans only*)

## 14. Appendices

Each landowner copy of the Forest Stewardship plan should include the Forest Stewardship Program appendix set. The following additional appendices should be included if applicable.

### a. Invasive Plant Species Information

This appendix should contain information about invasive plant species found on the property and species that could potentially invade the property.

Short information briefs on invasive plant species are available at [http://na.fs.fed.us/fhp/invasives\\_plants/weeds/index.shtml](http://na.fs.fed.us/fhp/invasives_plants/weeds/index.shtml)



## After the Plan is Completed

The consultant forester or the VDOF area forester will contact the Forest Stewardship landowner to encourage and help him/her begin implementing the plan's recommended practices. The plan writer will also direct him/her to potential sources of financial assistance, such as the **Reforestation of Timberlands Program (RT); Wildlife Habitat Incentives Programs (WHIP); Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP); Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), or the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)**, should funding be available. If necessary, the resource professional shall return to the site to provide additional technical assistance. He or she may also help landowners find contractors to perform the work, or materials and supplies to do the work themselves.

## Future Plan Revision or Addendums

Landowners may request a revision or addendum to their Forest Stewardship Plan under the following circumstances:

- ◆ Ten years following the plan's original completion date if/when they have completed their management recommendations;
- ◆ Change in ownership and/or objectives, and/or
- ◆ Additional acreage has been added to the original parcel.

New plan requests due to landownership changes will be paid at the regular plan preparation rates. All acreage addendums and new plan requests will be subject to approval by the state stewardship coordinator.

## Plan Revision and Addendum Procedures

Revisions and addendums must follow the plan preparation procedures as established in this operating plan.

The landowner must complete another Forest Stewardship Plan application form and send it to the Virginia Department of Forestry headquarters office in Charlottesville. The word "REVISED" must be written in bold letters on the top of the application. If a consultant is involved, the landowner must first receive the approval letter from the state office before the consultant begins the fieldwork.

As a minimum, updates to the following plan components must be included in Forest Stewardship Plan revisions. These updates should be either incorporated into the previous plan or attached to the plan as an addendum.

1. **Updated Title Page** – Same format as the original, plus the wording "Revised Plan."
2. **Updated Introduction** – Including a short paragraph stating the reasons for the plan update, defining the scope of the update (i.e. what is included within the update and the landowner's management objectives).
3. **Updated Table of Contents** – includes the plan update as an addendum to the original plan.
4. **Updated Forest Type Map** – computer generated, if possible, including any new acreage, roads or change in stand types.



5. **Updated Topography Map** – computer generated, if possible, including boundary lines and UTMs or Latitude and Longitude coordinates.
6. **Updated Stand Descriptions** – if the stand characteristics or recommendations have changed due to management activities or landowner objectives.
7. **Updated Five-year Timeline** – for entire plan acreage.
8. **Updated Overall Tract Recommendations** – Include most current information on general management recommendations; harvesting recommendations; invasive species management; wetland and riparian zones, and threatened and endangered species.

## **Stewardship Forest Certification Criteria**

Landowners who make *substantial* accomplishments toward implementing their management recommendations and reaching their goals will be recognized as "Certified Forest Stewards" and publicly acknowledged for their accomplishments. All landowners enrolled in the Forest Stewardship Program will become recipients of various mailings on topics of interest and should remain in close contact with resource professionals so that their accomplishments can be maintained.

## **Eligibility**

To be eligible for certification as a "Certified Forest Steward," properties must be actively managed with a truly multiple-use forest management approach based upon the landowner's priorities and objectives. This involves performing management activities, which enhance the following resource areas:

- ◆ Timber Growth
- ◆ Aesthetics
- ◆ Soil and Water Conservation
- ◆ Wildlife Habitat
- ◆ Recreation
- ◆ Historic & Cultural Resources

Woodland livestock grazing may also be included as one of a landowner's management objectives if a portion of the property is used for that purpose.

It is important to note that multiple-use benefits do not have to be obtained on every acre. Some areas may provide only one benefit, while other areas may provide many uses. When the property is considered as a whole, however, the landowner must demonstrate active management for at least two of the above-mentioned resources. In addition to active management, passive management within forested wetlands and streamside management zones (SMZ) will be viewed as good overall management and worth recognizing during the certification process.

Stewardship certification is a subjective decision recommended by the local VDOF area forester; forestry consultant, or other forestry professional, and made by the regional stewardship coordinator or the state stewardship coordinator. As a rule of thumb, landowners who have practiced no previous active management before entering the program may need one to three years to bring their properties up to program standards. However, landowners should not have to wait for certification until they have performed all practices described in their Forest Stewardship Management Plans.



## Inspection Procedure

Agency representatives, landowners or consultants may request a certification inspection for a participating property by contacting the VDOF area forester or regional stewardship coordinator. The certification inspection team will consist of the regional coordinator; the VDOF area forester, and any other resource professional who had input into the plan. The landowner should also be present, if possible.

## Nomination

Any consulting, industrial or VDOF area forester or other natural resource professional who is assisting the landowner in carrying out the recommendations in his or her FSMP may nominate the landowner using the Form 129 Virginia Forest Stewardship Certification Inspection Record.

## Award

In recognition of certification as a Forest Steward, the landowner receives a letter of acknowledgment and congratulations for his/her achievement from the State Forester. The nominating forester schedules an appropriate recognition event for presentation of a special laser engraved walnut Stewardship plaque; Stewardship lapel pin, and a "Stewardship Forest" sign for placement on the forest property. This special landowner recognition is publicized as deemed appropriate through local and statewide media and agency/organization information newsletters.

## Follow-Up Re-inspection

This certification program is ongoing and includes periodic revisits by professional foresters and other natural resource specialists to keep in touch with the landowner's progress and to be available for future stewardship management activities. After a minimum of 10 years, the forester will revisit the tract where an FSMP was completed and reevaluate the FSMP; the tract, and the landowner's progress to ensure that the landowner is continuing to practice good resource management.

## *Minimum Standards and Basic Guidelines for Certification*

These **minimum standards and basic guidelines** are designed to help the natural resource manager or specialist with his/her involvement in the Forest Stewardship Program. The natural resource professional should use these criteria as a measure of the landowner's progress and accomplishments towards Forest Stewardship Certification.

To use the criteria, the natural resource professional must know the landowner's resource management objectives. To qualify for Stewardship Forest certification, a landowner must manage one of his/her resources intensively as his/her primary management objective and also designate at least one secondary resource management objective. With the landowner's objectives known, the natural resource professional can refer to the appropriate minimum standards and basic guidelines in determining whether the property and landowner should be certified. Though a landowner may do much more than the criteria listed, these are minimum standards he/she must do to qualify. In addition, a special category of Preliminary Standard Accomplishments is listed. Regardless of a



landowner's resource management objectives, he/she must meet all of these criteria to qualify for certification.

## Preliminary Standard Accomplishments

- ◆ Protection from wildfire, insects and disease.
- ◆ Salvage of damaged timber, unless it interferes with primary and secondary resource management objectives.
- ◆ Definite plans to regenerate all lands before final harvest, unless there is a land-use change.
- ◆ Primary and secondary resources managed in a way least damaging to other resource values.
- ◆ Water quality maintained and erosion minimized by following BMPs.
- ◆ Protection of natural heritage resources, including unique plant communities; important wildlife habitat; endangered species habitat; archaeological and historical resources.

## Timber Production

### *Primary Objective Criteria:*

- ◆ Active protection of stand from wildfire, insects and disease by:
  - Reducing wildfire hazard;
  - Salvaging all damaged timber in a timely manner, and
  - Managing stand in manner that reduces insect or disease hazard.
- ◆ Planned regeneration occurring soon after final harvest.
- ◆ Timber harvested before biological maturity of the stand.
- ◆ Stands thinned as needed to maintain vigor.
- ◆ Size and shape of harvested areas compatible with other objectives.
- ◆ Tree species favored and managed that are best adapted to specific sites.
- ◆ Non-merchantable trees controlled as compatible with other objectives.
- ◆ Stands managed toward achieving full stocking.
- ◆ Livestock grazing limited to levels compatible with Resource Plan.
- ◆ Forestry BMPS implemented where appropriate.

### *Secondary Objective Criteria:*

- ◆ Salvage of damaged timber, unless it interferes with primary objective.
- ◆ Planned regeneration occurring in a timely manner after final harvest.
- ◆ Stands thinned as needed to maintain vigor.



- ◆ Trees which may reach biological maturity, but harvested before decline becomes evident in the stand.
- ◆ Tree species favored and managed that are best adapted to specific sites, unless it interferes with other objectives.
- ◆ Non-merchantable trees managed, unless it interferes with other objectives.
- ◆ Adequate stocking maintained in stands compatible with other objectives and past history.
- ◆ Size and shape of harvested areas compatible with other objectives.
- ◆ Forestry BMPs implemented where appropriate.

## Wildlife

### *Primary Objective Criteria*

- ◆ Feature species identified and wildlife management plan followed.
- ◆ Enough suitable habitat deliberately created, maintained and improved to support fairly dense populations of desired species.
- ◆ Wildlife populations kept from becoming so dense they are damaging their own habitat, or the habitats of other species.
- ◆ Other resources managed to enhance the habitat of featured wildlife species.

### *Secondary Objective Criteria*

- ◆ Desired species identified and wildlife management plan followed.
- ◆ Some habitat created, maintained and retained for desired species consistent with primary objective.
- ◆ Wildlife populations kept from becoming so dense they are damaging their own habitat, or the habitats of other species.
- ◆ Other resources managed in ways that supply some habitat needs of desired wildlife species, considering the property as a whole.

## Environmental And Recreation

### *Primary Objective Criteria*

- ◆ Develop management plan to protect, enhance, utilize or restore identified natural heritage historic resources.
- ◆ Recreational use specified and management plan followed.
- ◆ Recreational opportunities, such as picnic areas, campsites, riding or walking trails, or boat docks, etc., must be actively maintained, retained and created.
- ◆ Litter controlled.
- ◆ Actual recreational use of property.



- ◆ Environmental impact of recreational activities minimized.
- ◆ Area with hunting as recreational use must show evidence of developing hunting opportunities beyond wildlife management.
- ◆ Significant accomplishments toward maintaining or enhancing aesthetics must be shown.

### ***Secondary Objective Criteria***

- ◆ Development management plan to protect, enhance, utilize or restore identified natural heritage and historic resources.
- ◆ Recreational use specified and management plan followed.
- ◆ Recreational opportunities maintained, retained and created as compatible with primary objective.
- ◆ Litter controlled in recreational activities.
- ◆ Environmental impact of recreational activities minimized.
- ◆ Areas with hunting as recreation use must show evidence of developing hunting opportunities beyond wildlife such as hunting blinds, camping areas, etc.
- ◆ Some accomplishments toward maintaining or enhancing aesthetics must be shown. Examples include the following:
  - Retaining trees with good fall colors;
  - Planting or maintaining flowering trees, shrubs and wildflowers;
  - Identifying and maintaining scenic overlooks, unique geological features, and
  - Improving access to scenic areas.

## **Soil And Water**

### ***Primary Objective Criteria***

- ◆ Conduct all land management activities on both forest and agricultural lands in accordance with Best Management Practices (BMPs) or field office technical guide (SCS).
- ◆ Significant accomplishments towards conserving soil and enhancing water quality must be shown. Additional examples include the following:
  - Completing projects suitable for BMP demonstration areas;
  - Rehabilitating critical areas and stabilizing old roads;
  - Maintaining streamside management zones and filter strips, and
  - Manage wetlands so as to maintain or improve their functions.

### ***Secondary Objective Criteria***

- ◆ Accomplishment must be shown toward conserving soil and enhancing water quality. Examples include the following:
  - Maintaining cover on highly erodible lands, and
  - Use of BMPs on forestry and other land management practices.



## ***Monitoring Forest Stewardship Plan Implementation***

Successful implementation of landowner Forest Stewardship Management Plans, and thus sustainable forestry in practice, provides the best indication that the program is achieving its primary purpose of encouraging the long-term stewardship of non-industrial private forestlands.

The State Forester will follow a program for periodically monitoring the implementation of a representative sample of current (10 years and younger) Forest Stewardship Management Plans in important forest resource areas and other areas as appropriate. Guidelines for an acceptable random, representative sampling methodology will be maintained by the State Forester and periodically reviewed by the USFS, Atlanta Office. Acceptable sample size will vary depending on the number, acreage and distribution of current Forest Stewardship Management Plans.

Selected properties will be visited and assessed by the state forestry staff to verify that current forest conditions are consistent with landowner stewardship objectives and the result of sustainable management, as defined in the landowner's approved Forest Stewardship Management Plan. A visit to a property will indicate whether or not that property is being managed sustainably as defined by the Forest Stewardship Management Plan. Visits to selected properties will yield a percentage of total acres visited that are being managed sustainably as defined by approved Forest Stewardship Management Plans. This percentage will be used as an indication of overall accomplishment in terms of acres managed.

Visits to selected properties may be conducted by the plan preparer or another natural resource professional and the VDOF assistant regional forester. Management plan implementation monitoring programs may be conducted in partnership with other landowner assistance and/or land management agencies and organizations.



## *Appendix B-1: Sample Forest Stewardship Plan*

### 1. Cover Page

# FOREST STEWARDSHIP PLAN



*A Forest Resources Management Plan for the Property of*

*(Mr. and Mrs. John Q Landowner)  
(DOF Tract Number)*

*Located in  
(Any County), Virginia  
(Address)  
(Telephone#)*

Prepared By:

Forester

Address:

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Phone:

---



## 2. Introduction Letter

Carl E. Garrison III  
State Forester



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY

900 Natural Resources Drive, Suite 800  
Charlottesville VA 22903

434.977.6555 ~ Fax: 434.296.2369  
[www.dof.virginia.gov](http://www.dof.virginia.gov)

October 23, 2004

Mr. & Mrs. Landowner  
PO Box #  
Orange, VA 22960

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Landowner:

Your property has many potential stewardship opportunities. Your strong concern for the environment, your interest in conservation and your desire to carry out stewardship activities is to be commended. In view of this, I'm pleased to provide you this Forest Stewardship Management Plan.

The information that follows includes two components. The first section is a customized plan that describes your property and includes management options and specific recommendations. It matches your goals with the potential of your land. The remainder is reference material for your general use. This information also will assist you with the specific decisions needed to carry out the recommendations.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

Joe Forester  
Area Forester



- 3. Table of Contents**
- 4. Landowners Objectives**
- 5. Locations and Accessibility**
- 6. General Property Description**
- 7. Summary of Forest Management Needs and Opportunities**

- a. Timber/Forest Products
- b. Fish and Wildlife
- c. Threatened or Endangered Plant or Animal Species
- d. Natural Heritage Resources
- e. Soil and Water Conservation
- f. Recreation
- g. Aesthetics
- h. Cultural and Historic Resources
- i. Invasive Plant Species
- j. Fire

- 8. Explanation of Size Class and Forest Types**

- 9. Topography and Soils Description**

- 10. Stand Management Descriptions and Recommendations**

- a. Acreage
- b. Forest type
- c. Species Present
- d. Age
- e. Size
- f. Quality
- g. Stocking level
- h. Growth Rate
- i. Stand History
- j. Soil Description & Site Index
- k. Topography
- l. BMPs for known Historic Resources
- m. Fish and/or Wildlife Habitat
- n. Unique or Special Areas
- o. Recommended treatment(s)
- p. Identification and control of invasive plant species

- 11. Five-Year Suggested Schedule of Management Recommendations**

Activity Year	Parcel #	Suggested Activity	Cost Share

- 12. Topographic Stand Map**

- 13. Overall Tract Recommendations (Standard Paragraphs)**

- a. Boundary Lines
- b. Threatened and Endangered Species



- c. Forest Health
- d. Integrated Pest Management
- e. Water Quality Protection
- f. Forest Carbon, Air Quality
- g. Fire Management and Protection
- h. Cultural and Historic Resources
- i. Forest Conservation
- j. Biological Diversity
- k. Cost-Share Programs
- l. Environmental Evaluation Form – (*NRCS Plans only*)

## 14. Appendices

### a. Invasive Plant Species Information

Short information briefs on invasive plant species are available at  
[http://na.fs.fed.us/fhp/invasives\\_plants/weeds/index.shtml](http://na.fs.fed.us/fhp/invasives_plants/weeds/index.shtml)

# Sample Resource Management Activity Record

LANDOWNER : \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTY: