



Michigan Forest Stewardship Program



Michigan Forest Stewardship Program: Statewide Plan for FY2015

Final Version 1.5

15 September 2014

Authors:

Mike Smalligan, Forest Stewardship Coordinator, Southern Lower Peninsula
Mike Hanley, Service Forester, Northern Lower Peninsula
Ernie Houghton, Service Forester, Eastern Upper Peninsula
Gary Willis, Service Forester, Western Upper Peninsula

Document History and Review Process

Version 1.0 – 13 March 2014	[drafted by Mike Smalligan]
Version 1.1 – 31 March 2014	[after Service Forester review]
Version 1.2 – 7 April 2014	[after internal DNR review]
Version 1.3 – 26 June 2014	[after FSP Plan Writer review at April workshops]
Version 1.4 – 27 August 2014	[minor updates prior to FSP Advisory Committee review]
Version 1.5 – 15 September 2014	[final plan after FSP Advisory Committee review on 4 Sept]

[Following review and input from multiple stakeholders from March through September, the final draft of this document will be implemented for Fiscal Year 2015 commencing 1 October 2014.]

Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
Introduction	4
Foundational Documents.....	6
Forest Action Plan	7
Priority Areas of the Michigan Forest Stewardship Program	10
Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee	11
Financial Structure of the Forest Stewardship Program in Michigan	13
FSP Plan Writers.....	16
Financial Assistance to Landowners	19
Landowner Enrollment in the Forest Stewardship Program	22
Required Components of a Forest Stewardship Plan	23
NASF Principles and Guides for a Well-Managed Forest	23
USFS Requirements of a Forest Stewardship Plan.....	23
Michigan Guidance on Federal Requirements.....	25
FSP Plans and Access to Additional Programs	35
Property Tax Programs	35
Financial Assistance for Implementation.....	37
Forest Certification Programs	37
SMART.....	38
FSP Outreach and Education Grants for Municipal Forests.....	38
Appendices.....	40
Appendix 1 – Suggested FSP Cover Page	41
Appendix 2 – Suggested FSP Contact Information Table.....	42
Appendix 3 – DNR Forest Health Report Form	43
Appendix 4. Forest Cover Type and Density Symbols.....	44
Appendix 5. Geographic location of Forest Stewardship Plans	45
Appendix 6. Annual number of Forest Stewardship Plans.....	46
Appendix 7. Forest Stewardship Plan frequency by acreage classes.....	47
Appendix 8. Regional coverage of the DNR Service Foresters.....	48
Appendix 9. Forest Stewardship Plan – Required Component Checklist.....	49

Executive Summary

This document describes the Michigan Forest Stewardship Program and outlines some modifications to the Program to be implemented in Fiscal Year 2015. The purpose of the Forest Stewardship Program is to encourage nonindustrial private forest landowners to actively manage their forest to accomplish their own personal goals for their land. The voluntary Program provides private landowners with professional planning and technical assistance to develop and implement a Forest Stewardship Plan.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has administered the Forest Stewardship Program in Michigan since its inception in 1991. There are 400,000 family forest owners who own 9 million acres of Michigan's 20 million acres of forest land. About 5,000 Forest Stewardship Plans have been written covering more than 765,000 acres and these stewardship forests are located in every county in Michigan except Wayne County.

Michigan utilizes private sector foresters to write Forest Stewardship Plans and DNR Service Foresters to review the plans to ensure they meet United States Forest Service (USFS) standards. There are about 75 certified plan writers in Michigan, with several professional foresters available to write plans in every county. Plan writers determine their own fees for developing a plan, and the Program provides a partial cost share to lower the landowner's cost. The Michigan Program develops about 215 Forest Stewardship Plans each year.

The USFS funds the Forest Stewardship Program and the Michigan DNR provides a 50%-50% match on incoming USFS funds. Federal funding for Forest Stewardship was cut in 2014, and the Michigan Program does not have replacement funding to offer abundant cost share to hundreds of landowners and is faced with the challenge of developing more plans with less funding. *Therefore, the Michigan Forest Stewardship Program is seeking ways to make the Program remain attractive to both plan writers and landowners to develop and implement a Forest Stewardship Plan even when the government cost share is decreasing.*

1. Promote private sector solutions for private forest land. The Program will seek to expand the number of certified plan writers and advertise their services to forest landowners.
2. Encourage plan writers to develop simple and low-cost Forest Stewardship Plans. The Program will eliminate the State requirements and enforce only the USFS standards for a simple yet comprehensive Forest Stewardship Plan written for the landowner as the primary audience.
3. Decrease cost share per plan in FY 2015. The Program must reduce the government investment in each plan to allow more landowners to gain access to professional planning and technical assistance. Landowners are encouraged to pay for a plan that meets their needs.
4. Simplify landowner enrollment process. The Program will reduce the landowner application forms to a single 3-page form, continue to allow year-round enrollment, and expedite the plan review process so that landowners have timely access to professional forestry advice.
5. Fund Outreach and Education grants. The Program will promote Forest Stewardship to entire communities in addition to individual landowners by offering grants to municipal forest owners (schools, counties, etc.) and private organizations (Scouts, land conservancies, etc.) to develop and implement a Forest Stewardship Plan on public land or land open to the public.
6. Leverage partnerships. The Program will partner with other agencies and organizations to offer technical assistance training to foresters and outreach and education to forest landowners.
7. Expand cooperation. The Program will partner with other government agencies working with private forest landowners to ensure coordination of services and the availability of several distinct but excellent forestry programs for forest landowners in Michigan.
8. Improve online delivery of information. The Program will expand the content and resources available on its website (www.michigan.gov/foreststewardship) to deliver more information to landowners and plan writers about Forest Stewardship in Michigan.

Introduction

“The purpose of the Forest Stewardship Program is to encourage the long-term stewardship of nonindustrial private forest lands, by assisting the owners of such lands to more actively manage their forest and related resources. The program provides landowners with the professional planning and technical assistance they need to keep their land in a productive and healthy condition” (USFS, 2009).

The United States Forest Service (USFS) developed the Forest Stewardship Program (FSP) in 1991. USFS research indicates that less than 4% of family forest landowners nationally have a written forest management plan. Therefore, the USFS supplies funding and partners with State Foresters to provide professional planning and technical assistance to private landowners in their state.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has administered the Forest Stewardship Program in Michigan since its inception in 1991. There are 400,000 family forest owners who own 9 million acres of Michigan’s 20 million acres of forest land. About 5,000 Forest Stewardship Plans have been written covering more than 765,000 acres, and these stewardship forests are located in every county in Michigan except Wayne County.

The USFS allows great flexibility to the states in how they deliver Forest Stewardship in their own state. States with additional funding sources for Service Foresters often use their own staff to write Forest Stewardship Plans for free or at a low cost to the landowner. Some states partner with the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) to use NRCS funding to develop Forest Stewardship Plans. A few states offer multi-day workshops where the landowners write their own Forest Stewardship Plan.

Michigan has primarily used private sector foresters to write Forest Stewardship Plans and DNR Service Foresters to review the plans to ensure that the plans meet USFS standards. Through the Program, professional foresters and wildlife biologists are trained and certified to write Forest Stewardship Plans that meet USFS guidelines for a comprehensive yet simple management plan. There are about 75 certified plan writers in Michigan, with several professional foresters available to write plans in every county. Plan writers determine their own fees for developing a plan, and the Program provides a partial cost share to lower the landowner’s cost. The Michigan Program develops about 215 Forest Stewardship Plans each year.

The **Vision** of the Michigan Forest Stewardship Program is universal access to information and resources that are rooted in both forestry science and environmental ethics so that all forest landowners in Michigan can maximize their enjoyment of their forests, sustainably manage their forests to protect the ecology of their land, optimize their economic returns from their investment of time and capital, and improve the forests of Michigan for the following generations.

The **Mission** of the Michigan Forest Stewardship Program is to partner with USFS, other government agencies, private organizations, foresters, and landowners to develop and implement outstanding Forest Stewardship Plans for owners of private and municipal forest land in Michigan.

This document reports how the DNR Forest Resources Division administers the Forest Stewardship Program in Michigan. This document seeks to explain the “what” and the “why” regarding the Michigan Forest Stewardship Program. This document also attempts to be a written plan for the next fiscal year and following years for the Forest Stewardship Program itself. Like a good forest management plan, this document has three essential components: goals, resource descriptions, and prescriptions for recommended activities.

Michigan Forest Stewardship Program: Statewide Plan for FY2015

The Michigan Forest Stewardship Program has several **Goals** for Fiscal Year 2015.

1. Streamline the procedures of the Michigan Forest Stewardship Program to provide better customer service to both plan writers and landowners.
2. Update the components of Michigan Forest Stewardship Plans to reflect the USFS “Standards and Guidelines” (USFS, 2009) and “Resource Elements” (USFS, 2013) documents.
3. Train FSP plan writers to ensure consistent application of USFS guidelines so that every Forest Stewardship Plan is a reasonably priced, simple, yet comprehensive document worthy of implementation.
4. Increase the number of Outreach and Education grants to municipal forests to leverage a single plan for a community-owned forest into multiple learning and public relations opportunities for many private landowners.
5. Coordinate programs, technical assistance, and landowner education with other agencies and organizations serving private forest landowners including NRCS, MDARD, MSUE, MTU, CDs, Tree Farm, SAF, ACF, MFA, MAT, and MFPC.
6. Promote Forest Stewardship Plans as the plan of choice for the Commercial Forest Program, Qualified Forest Program, and American Tree Farm System because of the flexible FSP program, simple plans, convenient timing, and partial cost share for landowners seeking to reduce their property taxes or certify their sustainable forest management.
7. Implement Michigan’s “Forest Action Plan” for private forest land.
8. Explore new funding opportunities to advance the Forest Stewardship Program.

The Michigan Forest Stewardship Program has natural, financial, and human **Resources** to steward. Our natural resources are abundant with more than 9 million acres of private family forest land to positively influence. Our financial resources include limited annual federal funding (<\$250k), but that investment is leveraged several times over with matching resources from the DNR, matching payments from landowners, and the additional economic impacts of the 75 FSP plan writers. Our human resources include four DNR foresters, about 75 plan writers, and additional foresters and natural resource professionals in our partner agencies. The largest group of human resources is the 400,000 owners of family forest land in Michigan. The Michigan Forest Stewardship Program also has an Advisory Committee that provides additional human resources and perspectives throughout the state.

This document will also suggest some **Prescriptions**, or recommended activities to accomplish our goals, to be performed in FY2015 and following. The DNR intends to make some minor modifications to the Michigan Forest Stewardship Program in FY2015 so that it can serve more private landowners with fewer government resources. The DNR intends to be outwardly focused and inclusive in collaboration with other agencies. The DNR staff will invest time and resources in both training and listening to FSP plan writers throughout the year. The DNR is committed to running the Forest Stewardship Program using a common sense approach to administering government programs while also providing great customer service to plan writers and landowners.

Please provide any feedback on the program to the Forest Stewardship Coordinator or your local Service Forester – contact information is given on page 48.

Foundational Documents

The DNR Forest Resources Division administers the Forest Stewardship Program in Michigan based upon requirements and recommendations from the following federal and state documents and laws.

United States of America

- Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 2013A
- (www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/library/SPF-CF%20handbook.pdf)

United States Forest Service

- Forest Stewardship Program National Standards and Guidelines, Revised February 2009
- Forest Stewardship Program Resource Elements, Version 7/15/2013
- (www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/programs/loa/fsp.shtml)

National Association of State Foresters

- Principles and Guides for a Well Managed Forest, 2003
- A Stewardship Handbook, August 2009
- (www.stateforesters.org)

State of Michigan

- Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, Public Act 451 of 1994
- Right to Forest Act, Public Act 676 of 2002
- Commercial Forest Act, Parts 511 and 512 of Public Act 451, 1994, as amended; PA 48 of 2013
- Qualified Forest Program, Public Acts 42 and 45 of 2013
- (www.legislature.mi.gov)

Department of Natural Resources

- Michigan Forest Resource Assessment and Strategy, IC4043, 6/23/2010 (“Forest Action Plan”)
- Sustainable Soil and Water Quality Practices on Forest Land, IC4011, Revised 02/24/2009
- (www.michigan.gov/dnr)

Forest Action Plan

The 2008 Farm Bill required that all states develop a “long-term, state-wide assessments and strategies for forest resources” document in order to be eligible for cooperative forestry assistance funding from the United States Forest Service. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources completed the “Michigan Forest Resource Assessment and Strategy” in 2010 (IC4043; 06/23/2010). The document describes Michigan’s forested resources and also identifies three major national themes and sixteen state-specific issues to be addressed primarily on private forest land. This plan is to be reviewed every five years and updated every ten years. This document, often called the “Forest Action Plan,” is available at www.forestactionplans.org.

The “Michigan Forest Resource Assessment and Strategy” describes the Forest Stewardship Program and its relationship to the strategic themes and issues on pages 79-83. All three major themes, and thirteen of sixteen issues, relate to the Forest Stewardship Program. The following text is a direct excerpt from the document to show the three themes, thirteen issues, and related goals of the Forest Stewardship Program as part of the larger Forest Action Plan for Michigan from 2010 to 2020.

Theme 1: Conserve and Manage Working Forest Landscapes for Multiple Values and Uses

Issue 1.1: Promote Sustainable Active Management of Private Forests

- Provide information to private forest landowners to promote sustainable forest management, forest certification programs, and the development of comprehensive Forest Stewardship plans for their properties.
- Utilize cost share opportunities and partner with groups that are assisting private forest landowners to encourage the sustainable management of private forestland.
- Create regional groups that examine the landscapes in which private forest owners exist, and to provide information about management recommendations that can be provided to professional plan writers and with landowners for inclusion in Forest Stewardship plans, and encouraged in other forest management plans.
- Direct outreach and education efforts to professional plan writers and with landowners that emphasize biomass production best management practices.

Issue 1.2: Reduce Divestiture, Parcelization and Conversion of Private Forestlands

- Promote the long-term maintenance of working private forestland through outreach with other partners and through participation in tax incentive programs, such as the Commercial Forest and the Qualified Forest Property Tax programs.
- Provide information and technical assistance to private forestland owners regarding the inter-generational transfer of their lands that will help to enable them to make informed decisions and that will help to transfer their land ethic values to the next generation.
- Utilize ecosystem market systems to provide an incentive for retaining forest land.

Issue 1.3: Reduce the High Cost of Owning Private Forestland

- Provide outreach and education materials to forest owners to inform them about cost effective strategies to maintain their forestland and reduce costs.
- Encourage landowner coalitions/cooperatives to provide technical assistance and to facilitate economies of scale for site preparation, tree planting, and wildlife habitat management.

Michigan Forest Stewardship Program: Statewide Plan for FY2015

- Partner with NRCS and other agencies to encourage new cost share opportunities for private forest land owners to offset the costs of forestland management.
- Facilitate outreach and education regarding reducing high inheritance costs that impact the inter-generational transfer of forest land.
- Streamline forest landowner access to cost-share programs and allow for a cumulative program.

Theme 2: Protect Forests from Threats

Issue 2.1: Maintain and Restore Aquatic Ecosystems and Watersheds

- Focus the development of Forest Stewardship Management Plans and reforestation and afforestation efforts where there are Water Resource Division approved watershed plans or USFS-identified Priority Watersheds for Restoration.
- Emphasize Non-Point Source identified priority watersheds in landscape assessments in outreach and education efforts to landowners, plan writers, and community leaders.
- Encourage distribution, reference, and use of the DNRE Sustainable Soil and Water Quality Practices of Forest Land (MDNR and DEQ 2009) through outreach and education efforts and in Forest Stewardship Management Plans.

Issue 2.2: Reduce Threats from Invasive Species, Pests and Disease

- Provide invasive species and forest pest, and disease information to professional forest stewardship plan writers and private forestland owners through educational products and outreach.
- Train foresters and loggers on known and upcoming invasive species threats so that they may serve as a front line of detection.
- Train foresters and loggers in proper sanitation techniques to minimize unintended invasive introductions during harvesting operations.

Issue 2.4: Reduce Impact of Recreational Activities on Forest Resources

- Assist in distributing comprehensive information on control and prevention of invasive species, especially in relation to recreational activities that serve as vectors to their introduction and spread.

Theme 3: Enhance Public Benefits from Trees and Forests

Issue 3.1: Maintain Markets for Utilization of Forest Products

- Support the maintenance of existing and traditional markets by facilitating the completion of management plans and the production of wood fiber from private forestland.
- Encourage the development of ecosystem services markets through grants, an ecosystem services bank, or partnerships to provide economic incentives to private forest owners for the sustainable long-term management of their forest land.

Michigan Forest Stewardship Program: Statewide Plan for FY2015

- Assist private landowner participation and support of biomass energy markets and forest certification systems through incorporation in Forest Stewardship Plans.

Issue 3.2: Maintain Ecosystem Services from Private Forestlands

- Facilitate the understanding and appreciation of ecosystem services markets by both landowners and the public.
- Enable private forest owners to participate in the carbon credit market through the Working Forest Carbon Offset project.
- Include information regarding forests' carbon sequestering and cycling capacity, anticipated impacts of climate change, and adaptive actions to mitigate adverse impacts of climate change in Forest Stewardship Management Plans.

Issue 3.3: Provide Effective Conservation Outreach for Private Forestlands

- Continue to offer leadership and guidance for the Non-Industrial Private Forest Coalition networking effort.
- Provide outreach and education choices for landowners and forestry professionals, in cooperation with partners, that emphasize the full range of sustainable forestry management options for timber and habitat production.

Issue 3.5: Maintain Community Quality of Life and Economic Resiliency

- Use outreach and education to help local decision makers understand the economic benefits of forested lands, including new markets.

Issue 3.6: Maintain and Enhance Scenic and Cultural Quality on Private Forestland

- Provide information and technical guidance to private forestland owners to encourage the enrollment of scenic forestland in the Commercial Forest Program.
- Provide information and technical guidance to private forestland owners to encourage the enrollment of scenic forestland in the Qualified Forest Program.

Issue 3.7: Maintain Forested Ecosystems for Biodiversity and for Wildlife Habitat

- Incorporate information about biodiversity values into Forest Stewardship and other forest management plans, as well as information about threatened and endangered species, so that landowners can make informed decisions.

Issue 3.8: Maintain and Enhance Access to Recreational Activities on Private Forestlands

- Provide information about the Commercial Forest Program to private forestland owners to gain public access rights for dispersed recreation.

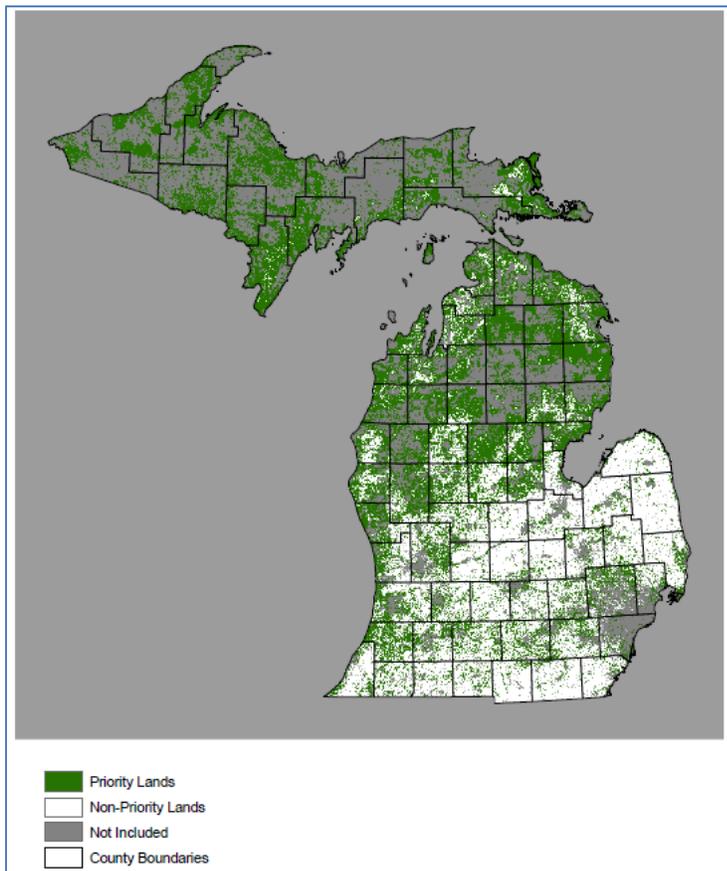
Priority Areas of the Michigan Forest Stewardship Program

The Michigan Forest Stewardship Program, in response to a USFS request, determined priority areas for developing Forest Stewardship Plans. Figure 1 shows the location of the priority areas as determined in 2011. The current priority areas appear to cover a very high percentage of private forest lands and do not provide much geographic focus (see row 4 in Table 2). The priority areas should be reevaluated in FY2015 to better reflect societal goals for forest stewardship. For example, priority areas could reflect the three main DNR goals of protecting natural resources, providing recreational opportunities, and maintaining vibrant rural economies. The Michigan Forest Stewardship Program will engage multiple stakeholders throughout FY2015 to determine useful criteria to consider narrowing the priority areas to be included in a potential modification of the Forest Action Plan in 2015.

Potential criteria to be considered include:

1. Proximity to major sawmills
2. Proximity to forest certification groups (Tree Farm and FSC groups)
3. Proximity to rare and important forest types, ecosystems, watersheds, or species
4. Proximity to major recreational locations (Hunter Access Program, trails, parks, etc.)
5. Proximity to municipal forests
6. Other criteria...

Figure 1. Priority Areas for Forest Stewardship Planning (2011).



Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee

Each State Forester or equivalent State official must establish a State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee, administered by the State Forester or designee thereof. State Foresters are encouraged to actively pursue partnerships with Committee and non-committee agencies, organizations and institutions interested in forest resource management and conservation.

The Committee shall include, to the extent practicable, individuals representing the following:

1. United States Forest Service
2. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
3. Farm Service Agency (FSA)
4. Cooperative Extension Service
5. NRCS State Technical Committee
6. Local Government
7. Soil and water conservation districts
8. Consulting foresters
9. Environmental organizations
10. Forest products industry
11. Forest landowners
12. Land-trust organizations
13. Conservation organizations
14. State fish and wildlife agency
15. Tribal representatives
16. Other relevant interests as deemed appropriate

Existing State committees may serve as the State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee if their membership includes the interests specified above. The Committee must be ongoing to address stewardship planning and implementation concerns and overall program coordination, and not convened on a temporary basis. The Committee's primary function is to provide advice and recommendations to the State Forester concerning implementation of the Forest Stewardship Program, and other associated landowner assistance and cost-share programs. The Committee also provides assistance and recommendations concerning the development, implementation, and updating of the state-wide assessment and resource strategy.

The Michigan Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee will meet in person twice each year and have additional conference calls as needed. The Forest Stewardship Coordinator will plan all logistics with the Chair of the Committee. Meetings shall generally be held in the Gaylord or St Ignace area in the spring (April) and fall (September). Conference call capacity will be provided for those not able to attend in person. The State Forester or Forest Stewardship Coordinator invites members to serve on the committee for a two-year term. Service on the Advisory Committee is voluntary as the DNR is not able to not provide reimbursement for time or travel expenses. The Chair of the committee shall be a person outside the DNR and elected from within the committee or appointed by the State Forester for a two-year term. The Chair shall conduct the regular Committee meetings, consult with the Executive Committee between meetings, and shall call special meetings of the entire Committee if such a meeting is deemed necessary by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee is comprised of the Chair, State Forester, Forest Stewardship Coordinator, Forest Legacy Coordinator, Immediate Past Chair, and heads of other sub-committees.

Michigan Forest Stewardship Program: Statewide Plan for FY2015

Current members of the Michigan Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee include:

1. United States Forest Service - Dennis McDougall
2. Natural Resources Conservation Service - Garry Lee
3. Farm Services Agency - Dale Allen
4. MSU Extension - Bill Cook, Georgia Peterson, Julie Crick
5. NRCS Technical Committee - Andy Henriksen
6. Michigan Townships Association - Bill Anderson
7. Michigan Association of Conservation Districts - Lori Phalen, Angela Sandusky
8. Consulting Forester - Jerry Grossman, Grossman Forestry Company (Immediate Past Chair)
9. Sierra Club - Anne Woiwode , Marvin Roberson
10. Michigan Forest Products Council - Scott Robbins
11. Michigan Forest Association - Bill Botti, Deb Huff (Forest Legacy)
12. The Nature Conservancy - Rich Bowman, Emily Clegg, Patrick Doran, Tina Hall
13. The Stewardship Network - Lisa Brush (Chair for FY2015 and FY2016)
14. DNR-Wildlife Division - Sue Tangora
15. Tribal Representative - *vacant*
16. Martell Forestry - Keith Martell, (Forest Legacy); David Kossak
17. Paul Drysdale, Association of Consulting Foresters (Forest Legacy)
18. Steve Kalisz, Old School Forestry
19. Matt McDonough, Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy (Forest Legacy)
20. Warren Suchovsky, Michigan Association of Timbermen (former Chair, Forest Legacy)
21. Jerry Lambert, Michigan Tree Farm System
22. Karen Potter-Witter, MSU Forestry Department
23. Michigan Technological University - *vacant*
24. MDARD-Forestry Assistance Program - Ben Schram, Steve Shine
25. Brenda Owen, Michigan Association of Timbermen
26. Phyllis Higman, Michigan Natural Features Inventory
27. Amy Trotter, Michigan United Conservation Clubs
28. Lisha Ramsdell, Huron Pines
29. Eric Ellis, Ruffed Grouse Society
30. Bill O'Neil, State Forester, Chief of Michigan DNR – Forest Resources Division
31. Paul Kollmeyer, Section Manager, Resource Protection and Cooperative Programs, DNR-FRD
32. Mike Hanley, Service Forester, DNR-FRD
33. Ernie Houghton, Service Forester, DNR-FRD
34. Gary Willis, Service Forester, DNR-FRD (Forest Legacy)
35. Kerry Wieber, Forest Legacy Coordinator, DNR-FRD (Forest Legacy)
36. Mike Smalligan, Forest Stewardship Coordinator, DNR-FRD (Secretary)

Participation on the Michigan Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee is always open to any interested resident, forest landowner, private organization, or government agency. Please contact Mike Smalligan at smalliganm@michigan.gov or (517) 284 - 5884 to express interest in joining the committee.

Financial Structure of the Forest Stewardship Program in Michigan

Source of Funding. Each year the DNR responds to an invitation to apply for USFS State and Private Forestry grants for core funding to implement the Forest Stewardship Program in Michigan. Recent USFS funding levels for Core FSP funds and competitive Redesign (Landscape Scale Restoration) grants related to the Michigan Forest Stewardship Program are shown in Table 1. The average annual USFS investment in the Core FSP program is \$272,347 and declining over the past fifteen years. The DNR is required to provide a 50%-50% match on incoming federal funds for the USFS grant.

Table 1. USFS funding for Michigan FSP from 2000 to 2014.

Fiscal Year (Oct – Sep)	USFS Core FSP Grant Amount	Competitive USFS Grants to DNR Related to FSP
2000	\$163,000	(no data)
2001	\$200,000	(no data)
2002	\$311,200	(no data)
2003	\$330,500	(no data)
2004	\$419,000	(no data)
2005	\$321,100	(no data)
2006	\$325,400	\$55,000 – Spatial; \$10,000 – Conservation Education
2007	\$398,900	\$99,450 – Biomass; \$53,000 - WERC
2008	\$325,500	\$25,000 – Intergenerational Transfer
2009	\$220,800	\$117,500 – Delta Carbon Offsets
2010	\$199,889	\$299,745 – EAB in UP (GLRI); \$325,000 – EAB Communities
2011	\$216,700	\$0
2012	\$210,940	\$300,780 – Forestry Assistance Program
2013	\$259,134	\$0
2014	\$183,149	\$0

The USFS does offer annual competitive grants where all states participating in USFS cooperative programs can apply for and compete for additional funds. These funds do not typically support the development of Forest Stewardship Plans, but sometimes do as in the case of a 2009 Carbon Offsets grant and the 2010 Emerald Ash Borer grants. The DNR does not have additional grants beyond the core FSP grants to support the Forest Stewardship Program for FY2014 or FY2015.

The USFS funding level for the Forest Stewardship Program is a combination of five separate elements. Most of the components are not under state control, but Michigan can partially influence their funding level by increasing the number of current Forest Stewardship Plans and the number of acres participating in the program (item #5 in Table 2).

Table 2. Components of the USFS funding for the Michigan Forest Stewardship Program in FY2014.

1	Core Funding	\$65,000
2	Nursery Funding	\$0
3	Rural Forestry Assistance	\$76,818
4	Potential (total NIPF Owners & Acres in a state)	9.6% of total funds for 20 NE states
5	Performance (current FSP Plans & Acres in a state)	2.8% of total funds for 20 NE states

Michigan Forest Stewardship Program: Statewide Plan for FY2015

Funding levels for the FSP program are partially influenced by the past performance of the state in implementing the FSP program. The primary indicators for the 20 northeast states are the number of current Forest Stewardship Plans and the number of acres under forest stewardship. Michigan produces about 215 plans each year, much less than the 546 average annual plans compared to the other 19 states in the northeast region (Indiana is an outlier with 2,500 plans per year). See Table 3 for an example of annual performance for calendar years 2012 and 2013 reporting to the USFS.

Table 3. Michigan Forest Stewardship Accomplishment Reporting for Calendar Years 2012 and 2013.

	Accomplishment Criteria	2012	2013
1	Landowner Assistance	2,343	1,729
2	Landowner Education	3,754	244
3	<i>New and or revised Forest Stewardship Plans: Total Acres</i>	<i>31,722</i>	<i>33,224</i>
4	New and or revised Forest Stewardship Plans: Priority Acres	31,324	33,106
5	<i>New and or revised Forest Stewardship management Plans - # of plans</i>	<i>184</i>	<i>223</i>
6	Base NIPF Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas	12,321,667	12,321,649
7	Acres covered by Current Forest Stewardship Plans	330,500	321,638
8	Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas covered by current plans	328,384	318,938
9	Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas being managed sustainably	315,249	304,203

[Note: NIPF acres includes corporate land. Priority acres as identified by State Forester.]

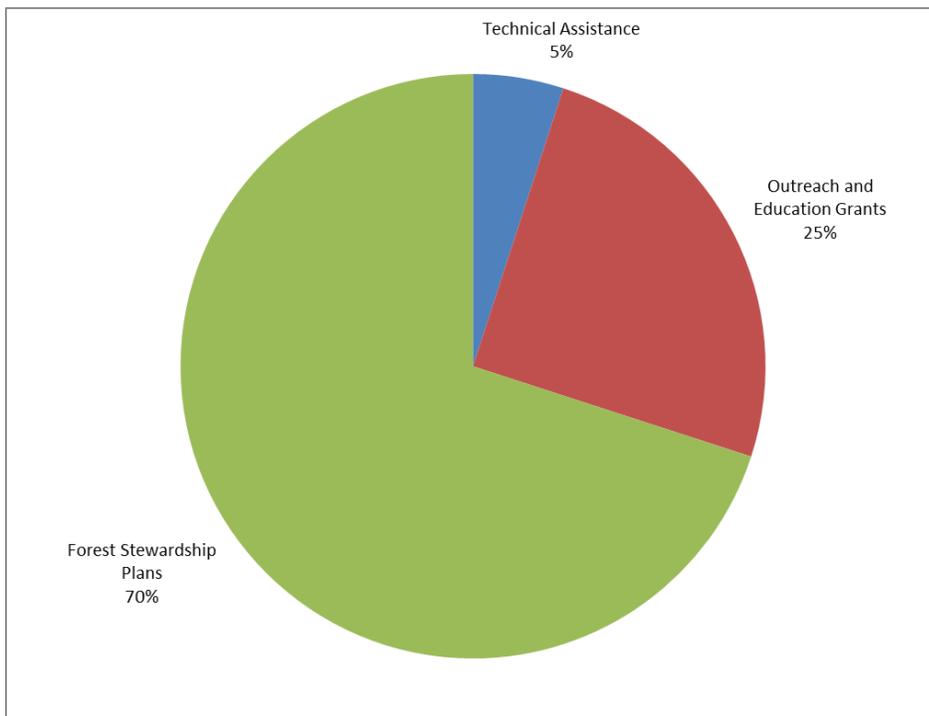
Use of Federal Funding. The DNR uses the USFS core funding to administer the program and to provide financial assistance to landowners. The DNR spent \$234,130.94 in FY2013 on the Forest Stewardship Program. Most of the Forest Stewardship Coordinator’s salary and benefits are funded through the USFS grant. The three Service Foresters are paid through internal DNR funds rather than the USFS so the DNR applies part of their time in support of the required 50% match for receiving the federal grant. Additional administrative funds are used to support training, educational workshops, program reporting, program monitoring, and 15.8% indirect charges (overhead) to the state. The DNR’s annual administrative costs to run the Forest Stewardship Program are approximately \$125,000. The remainder of the FSP grant is used to provide contractual grants to certified plan writers so that they in turn can provide financial assistance to landowners when developing the forest stewardship plan. Grants are made to plan writers rather than directly to the landowners to lower the administrative costs of administering 47 grants to plan writers rather than ~250 grants to landowners. Total grant obligations to plan writers fluctuate from year to year in the range of \$100,000 to \$150,000. As of September 2014, there are 47 grants agreements covering 75 plan writers (a single grant is made to a company with multiple plan writers on staff) for a total of \$174,974 obligated funds. The average grant amount to a company or lone consultant is \$3,721 in FY2014. If all funds are not spent in a fiscal year, the USFS does allow the DNR to roll over funds to distribute in the next fiscal year.

When funds are available, the Michigan Forest Stewardship Program also offers grants to municipal forest owners (county, township, city, school) or other private entities through the Outreach and Education Program. Partial funding may be available for developing a forest stewardship plan, outreach and education, demonstration areas, and ecosystem projects. All Outreach and Education funding must be for land open to the public or on public land, include a strong component of outreach and education to private forest landowners near the municipal forest, and should provide a match from grantee.

Budget for Contracts in FY2015. The amount of available funds for outgoing contracts will be greatly reduced in FY2015 because of the 30% cut in the USFS grant for FY2014. (Note: Because the federal funds arrive so late in the fiscal year, spending for each current fiscal year is often based entirely upon funding for the prior fiscal year.) The grant agreements for FY2014 are approximately \$182,133 but the amount of funds available for grant agreements in FY2015 will be between \$75,000 and \$100,000. The upper end of that range is dependent upon plan writers not using all of their grant allocation in FY2014.

The reduced amount of funding for grants will force several changes for FY2015. First, the limited grant funds will result in a decrease in the grant amount to each plan writer. The average amount per grant will decrease from \$3,721 in FY2014 to approximately \$1,150 per plan writer in FY2015. Second, the limited funds will require a decrease in the cost share the Program provides to each landowner. The current formula of “\$300 per plan plus \$1.25 per acre (maximum \$2,000) up to 50% of the cost of the plan” must be reduced to “\$200 per plan plus \$0.50 per acre up to a maximum of \$2,500.” The revised formula will not mention any percentage for government investment or landowner match, but it is expected that landowners should pay a significant portion of the overall cost (likely >75%). Third, the Program must be committed to make investments in Technical Assistance and Outreach and Education grants to expand the statewide and community-wide impacts of the Program even at the expense of the scarce funds for individual landowners. A proposed allocation of available funds for contracts in FY2015 is shown in Figure 2 where investments in individual landowners remains the primary Program investment but is not the entire use of funds (that should be around \$100,000).

Figure 2. Composition of outgoing funds in the Michigan Forest Stewardship Program for FY2015.



FSP Plan Writers

The USFS guidelines state that “All Forest Stewardship Plans must be prepared or verified as meeting the minimum standards of a Forest Stewardship Management Plan by a professional resource manager, and be approved by the State Forester or a representative of the State Forester” (FSP National Standards and Guidelines, 2009).

Michigan has primarily used private sector consulting foresters to write Forest Stewardship Plans for landowners. There have been periods since 1991 when government foresters including both DNR Service Foresters and Conservation District Foresters wrote Forest Stewardship Plans. Michigan also currently allows natural resource professionals other than foresters to write Forest Stewardship Plans.

The current Michigan guidelines for minimum qualifications to become a certified plan writer are:

1. Have a four-year degree in forestry or related natural resource field OR have a two-year degree in forestry or related natural resource field with approved experience.
2. Maintain six hours of approved continuing education in natural resource management yearly and submit documentation to the Forest Stewardship Coordinator.
3. Present yourself in a professional manner in both appearance and conduct, and provide service to your clients in a timely manner.

An internal review of the quality and consistency of the Forest Stewardship Program and changes in Michigan law in June of 2013 indicate that modifications to the eligibility requirements for writing forest stewardship plans should be considered. The following are proposed eligibility rules for obtaining and maintaining certification as a Forest Stewardship Plan Writer for FY2015.

1. Have a two year or four year forestry degree (AS, BS, MS, PhD) from a college or university accredited by the Society of American Foresters.
2. Professional resource managers without a degree in forestry are eligible to become FSP plan writers in Michigan. A four year college degree in a related field such as ecology, biology, wildlife management, or natural resources is required. The plan writer must document at least three classes in forestry (dendrology, silviculture, mensuration) on their academic transcript OR document at least three years of professional experience in forest management with a proficiency in silviculture.
3. Maintain professional standards of ethical conduct that are just and honorable in service to society and advocate competent and ecologically sound land management. Appropriate codes of ethical conduct include the State of Michigan Forester Registration Administrative Rules (Article 21, Part 3), the Society of American Foresters Code of Ethics, and the Association of Consulting Foresters Code of Ethics.
4. Obtain initial training from the Forest Stewardship Coordinator or a Service Forester about the Michigan Forest Stewardship Program. This may be individual training offered quarterly or obtained at an annual plan writing workshop offered throughout the state each spring. The training will cover the Forest Stewardship Program and how to write Forest Stewardship Plans. New plan writers must submit a plan to their DNR Service Forester for review, feedback, and approval prior to full certification.
5. Maintain and document at least eight hours of annual forestry ongoing education. Education does not have to be provided by the Michigan Forest Stewardship Program, but all plan writers

Michigan Forest Stewardship Program: Statewide Plan for FY2015

are encouraged to attend annual workshops hosted by the DNR. Continuing Forestry Credits (CFEs) from the Society of American foresters are accepted for this requirement. All Forest Stewardship Program trainings will seek to offer CFEs.

6. Maintain on file with the DNR a Memorandum of Understanding and current resume or biographical sketch describing education, qualifications, and services provided for private landowners. The MOU and Plan Writer Certification shall be valid for three years. The resume can be updated only as needed.
7. Submit at least one plan each year during a three year period that is approved by the DNR Service Forester as meeting all USFS requirements.
8. Employees of government or public agencies whose primary job responsibility is to provide direct technical assistance to private landowners are not eligible to be Forest Stewardship plan writers. These include DNR Service Foresters, NRCS Technicians, Conservation District Foresters, and MSU Extension Educators.
9. Plan writers must maintain liability insurance and provide it to the DNR upon request.

The expanded rules regarding a forestry degree or other acceptable credentials is meant to address a loophole in the eligibility requirements of "Qualified Foresters" who write plans for the Qualified Forest property tax program as described in Public Act 42 in June 2013. The rule change regarding government foresters is meant to provide clarity to the forestry community in Michigan following the passing of Public Act 48 in June 2013 that restricts DNR Service Foresters from writing plans for the Commercial Forest Program and Public Act 45 in June 2013 that prohibits Conservation District foresters from competing with the private sector while also restricting them from writing forest management plans except under very unique conditions. The MDARD maintains a public list of more than 150 Qualified Foresters with at least 20 Qualified Foresters that work in every county in Michigan.

The DNR shall develop a standard curriculum used to offer training to new plan writers so that all new plan writers receive consistent training regardless of the individual Service Forester or Forest Stewardship Coordinator that is delivering the training. The curriculum shall include electronic and paper versions of all current policies and forms for the Michigan Forest Stewardship Program.

De-Certification of FSP Plan Writers

There is not currently a process in place to de-certify Forest Stewardship plan writers for inactivity, substandard work, eligibility requirements, or ethical violations. Certification of plan writers is open-ended without any stated expiration of certification, although grants are given for only a single fiscal year. Plan writers that do not submit at least one Forest Stewardship Plan each year that are approved by the Service Forest and the Forest Stewardship Coordinator in a three year period (fiscal years) shall no longer be a certified plan writer. Plan writers that consistently submit substandard work that does not meet minimum federal and state requirements and show no effort for improvement in their work shall no longer be a certified plan writer. Substandard work is three or more plans returned for significant revisions a three year period. Plan writers that do not comply with all nine eligibility requirements shall no longer be a certified plan writer. Plan writers that have more than one confirmed ethical violation shall no longer be a certified plan writer. Ethical violations include any felony conviction and more than one complaint filed against them related to common forestry codes of ethical conduct including the State of Michigan Forester Registration Administrative Rules (Article 21, Part 3), the Society of American Foresters Code of Ethics, and the Association of Consulting Foresters Code of Ethics.

Michigan Forest Stewardship Program: Statewide Plan for FY2015

Plan writers may appeal their de-certification to the Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee with a final decision offered by the State Forester within six months of their appeal.

Promotion of FSP Plan Writers

The DNR maintains a list of certified FSP plan writers on State of Michigan website at www.michigan.gov/foreststewardship. The DNR shall list all current certified plan writers and provide contact information so that landowners may interview several plan writers in their area prior to hiring a plan writer. The list of plan writers shall be provided according to Michigan counties to avoid any geographical bias due to plan writer proximity. Plan writers are allowed to select which counties they offer their services. The current website only lists a small amount of contact information for each plan writer. The DNR, by the middle of FY2015, shall expand the amount of information about each plan writer to help them advertise their credentials, services, and service areas to the public. Expanded contact information about websites and emails will also be included. Proposed information to describe and advertise plan writers will be similar to Table 4.

Table 4. Suggested information provided by the DNR to advertise the certified plan writers.

Company Name			
Primary Plan Writer			
Mailing Address			
Office Phone			
Cell Phone			
Fax			
Email			
Website			
Counties Served			
Forestry Services			
Credentials	(Association of Consulting Foresters, Certified Forester, Registered Forester, International Society of Arboriculture, etc)		
Additional Programs	(Technical Service Provider, Qualified Forester, Tree Farm, Quality Deer Management Association, etc)		
Type of Forester	Consulting Forester or Industrial Forester or Wildlife Biologist		
Additional Plan Writers	Name	Email	Cellphone

Distribution of Grants to FSP Plan Writers

Funding levels to plan writers are not presently made known to the public or other plan writers. If greater transparency is desirable, the DNR shall make available the funding levels requested by all plan writers and the actual grant amount contracted to all plan writers in each fiscal year.

There is not currently in place an established process or written criteria used to determine the funding levels among the plan writers. Funding appears to be somewhat haphazardly distributed based on total current funding levels, past funding levels for a plan writer, and the amount requested by the plan writer. The following shall be the criteria for distributing limited funds among plan writers.

Michigan Forest Stewardship Program: Statewide Plan for FY2015

List of criteria for allocating financial assistance contracts to plan writers.

1. Amount of total USFS funds available for FSP plan writing contracts.
2. Amount of USFS funds set aside for FSP Outreach and Education contracts.
3. Amount of funds requested by plan writer.
4. Number of plan writers covered by the grant.
5. Quality of past work performed by plan writer as indicated by Service Forester reviews.
6. Volume of past work performed by plan writer as indicated by number of plans.
7. Volume of past work performed by plan writer as indicated by number of acres.
8. Ethical conduct of plan writer.

Funding allocations will start with the assumption of an equal distribution of funds among plan writers. Funding levels will be increased or decreased for each plan writer (or company with multiple writers) based on the eight criteria listed above. Initial allocations of financial assistance for Fiscal Year 2015 are shown in Table 5. These suggested amounts are neither minimum nor maximum levels, but rather are a starting point for distributing limited federal funds among 75 plan writers. **Funding levels from the USFS annual grants to the DNR may not support a full \$1,150 each for all 75 plan writers.**

Table 5. Initial allocations of financial assistance contracts to plan writers.

Plan Writer Company	Starting Cost Share	\$ / Plan Writer	# of plans (assumes a set of three 40 acre plans and two 80 acre plans)
1 Plan Writer	\$1,150	\$1,150	5
2 Plan Writers	\$2,300	\$1,150	10
3 Plan Writers	\$3,450	\$1,150	15
4 Plan Writers	\$4,600	\$1,150	20
5 or more Plan Writers	\$5,750	\$1,150	25

Financial Assistance to Landowners

The Forest Stewardship Program supplies indirect financial assistance to private landowners by giving a grant to the plan writer to subsidize the total cost of developing a forest stewardship plan. The current cost share formula is “\$300 per plan plus \$1.25 per acre (maximum \$2,000) up to 50% of the cost of the plan” and has not been modified for several years. The Michigan Forest Stewardship Program does not regulate the total fees that plan writers charge for any of their services. The “up to 50% of the cost of the plan” may be confusing to landowners because many plan writers choose to charge more than double the current financial assistance formula while other plan writers only charge double the formula. Although the USFS does not require that landowners pay for the plan or pay a certain percentage of the plan, research shows that landowners are more likely to implement a plan when they have shared in the cost. Therefore, the formula for FY2015 will be modified to remove any indication of what percentage of the total cost the government subsidy indicates or the landowner should pay. The Michigan Forest Stewardship Program will educate landowners that plans vary in contents and price and that their out-of-pocket cost for each Forest Stewardship Plan will exceed the financial assistance available from the Program. Plan writers are allowed to charge fair market rates for their services, and the Michigan Forest Stewardship Program does not regulate prices for writing plans.

Michigan Forest Stewardship Program: Statewide Plan for FY2015

The Program will also provide financial assistance to landowners by educating them to interview multiple plan writers prior to hiring a forester to develop their forest stewardship plan. Plan fees, contents, intensity of inventory, and writing quality vary greatly among plan writers. Very low prices or very high prices are not always accurate indicators of plan quality. It is the responsibility of the landowner to educate themselves and to hire the plan writer that best meets their needs. It is the responsibility of plan writers to distinguish themselves for quality work and to charge fair market prices for services that meet landowner objectives. *Every landowner should call multiple plan writers to compare prices.* Plan writers should offer quotes for their services and be willing to supply an example plan so that landowners can review the quality and strengths of each plan writer’s typical work and areas of emphasis. The DNR will not provide recommendations to plan writers or private landowners about plan writing fees, other than reporting major trends. The DNR’s primary concerns are ensuring plan quality and program-wide consistency, not establishing plan cost.

Because of a 30% cut in USFS funds for the Michigan Forest Stewardship Program in FY2014, it is necessary to *decrease* the financial assistance formula for FY2015 rather than increase the government investment in each landowner. The Program must also find ways to offer forest stewardship opportunities to more landowners while spending less government dollars per landowner. Therefore, the Program is reducing the cost share formula to “\$200 per plan plus \$0.50 per acre up to \$2,500.” There will be no indication of what percent the partial cost share is or should be of the total plan cost. Plan writers are encouraged to simplify their plans in FY2015, but they are always allowed to determine their fees for developing their customized Forest Stewardship Plans. Financial assistance will be capped at \$2,500 per plan. It is possible to seek an exemption up to \$5,000 per plan for very large properties (>5,000 acres) with multiple landowners or uses if Program funds are available.

Table 6. Potential impacts of decreasing the financial assistance formula to \$200/plan plus \$0.50/acre.

Acreage Class	Plans Since 1991	% of Total Plans	250 Annual Plans	Assumed Acres	FY2014 Formula: \$300 + \$1.25/acre	FY2014 per Plan	Cost per Acre	FY2015 Formula: \$200 + \$0.50/acre	FY2015 per Plan	Cost per Acre
0-19	135	3%	7	20	\$2,268	\$325	\$16.25	\$1,465	\$210	\$10.50
20-39	511	11%	26	40	\$9,244	\$350	\$8.75	\$5,810	\$220	\$5.50
40-79	1,367	28%	71	80	\$28,261	\$400	\$5.00	\$16,957	\$240	\$3.00
80-119	1,030	21%	53	120	\$23,956	\$450	\$3.75	\$13,841	\$260	\$2.17
120-159	467	10%	24	160	\$12,068	\$500	\$3.13	\$6,758	\$280	\$1.75
160-239	543	11%	28	240	\$16,839	\$600	\$2.50	\$8,981	\$320	\$1.33
240-319	257	5%	13	320	\$9,298	\$700	\$2.19	\$4,782	\$360	\$1.13
320-479	252	5%	13	480	\$11,722	\$900	\$1.88	\$5,731	\$440	\$0.92
480-639	114	2%	6	640	\$6,481	\$1,100	\$1.72	\$3,064	\$520	\$0.81
640-1279	123	3%	6	960	\$9,536	\$1,500	\$1.56	\$4,323	\$680	\$0.71
>1280	38	1%	2	1280	\$3,732	\$1,900	\$1.48	\$1,650	\$840	\$0.66
	4,837	100%	250		\$133,405			\$73,362		

The Forest Stewardship Program must also consider the impacts of the Natural Resources Conservation Services offering much higher financial assistance for plans since the 2008 Farm Bill. The USFS grants for Michigan Forest Stewardship Program do not allow the DNR to compete with the NRCS financial assistance that is often double or triple the current FSP financial assistance for a given acreage. For comparison, the Michigan NRCS provided \$511,800 to develop 457 forest management plans through EQIP in FY2013 at an average of \$1,120 per plan. It is not beneficial to duplicate programs and areas of emphasis so the DNR will continue to work with the NRCS to define areas of cooperation in order to

Michigan Forest Stewardship Program: Statewide Plan for FY2015

provide programs that complement each other, but also to deliver programs that are very distinct from each other so that landowners have two good choices for forestry assistance.

Table 7. Comparison of modifications to FSP cost share and current NRCS financial assistance.

Plan Acres	FY2014 Formula		FY2015 - Landowners		FY2015 - O & E Grants		NRCS - FY2014		
	\$300 + 1.25 / acre	CS/acre	\$200 + \$0.50 / acre	CS/acre	\$500 + \$0.50 / acre	CS/acre	NRCS Acres	Assistance	FA/acre
20	\$325	\$16.25	\$210	\$10.50	\$510	\$25.50	0-50	\$676	\$33.80
40	\$350	\$8.75	\$220	\$5.50	\$520	\$13.00		\$676	\$16.93
80	\$400	\$5.00	\$240	\$3.00	\$540	\$6.75	51-100	\$959	\$11.99
120	\$450	\$3.75	\$260	\$2.17	\$560	\$4.67	101-200	\$1,466	\$12.22
160	\$500	\$3.13	\$280	\$1.75	\$580	\$3.63		\$1,466	\$9.16
200	\$550	\$2.75	\$300	\$1.50	\$600	\$3.00	201-400	\$2,200	\$11.00
240	\$600	\$2.50	\$320	\$1.33	\$620	\$2.58		\$2,200	\$9.17
280	\$650	\$2.32	\$340	\$1.21	\$640	\$2.29		\$2,200	\$7.86
320	\$700	\$2.19	\$360	\$1.13	\$660	\$2.06		\$2,200	\$6.88
360	\$750	\$2.08	\$380	\$1.06	\$680	\$1.89		\$2,200	\$6.11
400	\$800	\$2.00	\$400	\$1.00	\$700	\$1.75	401-600	\$3,102	\$7.76
440	\$850	\$1.93	\$420	\$0.95	\$720	\$1.64		\$3,102	\$7.05
480	\$900	\$1.88	\$440	\$0.92	\$740	\$1.54		\$3,102	\$6.46
520	\$950	\$1.83	\$460	\$0.88	\$760	\$1.46		\$3,102	\$5.97
560	\$1,000	\$1.79	\$480	\$0.86	\$780	\$1.39		\$3,102	\$5.54
600	\$1,050	\$1.75	\$500	\$0.83	\$800	\$1.33	600-1000	\$4,005	\$6.68
640	\$1,100	\$1.72	\$520	\$0.81	\$820	\$1.28		\$4,005	\$6.26
960	\$1,500	\$1.56	\$680	\$0.71	\$980	\$1.02	>1000	\$4,795	\$4.17
1,280	\$1,900	\$1.48	\$840	\$0.66	\$1,140	\$0.89		\$4,795	\$3.13
1,360	\$2,000	\$1.47	\$880	\$0.65	\$1,180	\$0.87		\$4,795	\$2.94
1,920			\$1,160	\$0.60	\$1,460	\$0.76		\$4,795	\$2.09
2,560			\$1,480	\$0.58	\$1,780	\$0.70		\$4,795	\$1.56
3,200			\$1,800	\$0.56	\$2,100	\$0.66		\$4,795	\$1.25
4,000			\$2,200	\$0.55	\$2,500	\$0.63		\$4,795	\$1.00
4,600			\$2,500	\$0.54				\$4,795	\$0.87
CAP	\$2,000		\$2,500						
MATCH	FSP up to 50%		match expected but percentage not specified						
Green cells highlight the acreage classes (20-240 acres) that account for 81% of Forest Stewardship Plans.									

The Forest Stewardship Program is seeking to provide the forest management plan of choice for hundreds of landowners seeking to reduce their property taxes in the Commercial Forest Program and the Qualified Forest Program, or to certify their sustainable forest management in the American Tree Farm System. The strengths of the Forest Stewardship Program includes a very flexible program, simple yet comprehensive plans written for lay people, convenient year-round timing, and a small number of experienced DNR Service Foresters reviewing plans. The weakness of the Program is that it can only provide a partial cost share for landowners (likely <25%). However, landowners may find that the benefits of paying a higher percentage of the cost for a simple and timely Forest Stewardship Plan often exceed the cost of waiting a year for the generous financial assistance for a NRCS plan but missing the application deadlines for the Commercial Forest (April 1) or Qualified Forest (September 1) programs.

By comparison, the NRCS requires a high quality, detailed plan and their generous financial assistance is quite attractive to many forest owners. The NRCS provides an excellent option for many landowners, but the Forest Stewardship Program will seek to provide a distinct and equally good alternative for forest landowners in Michigan at a lower cost and faster delivery.

Landowner Enrollment in the Forest Stewardship Program

One of the strengths of the Forest Stewardship Program is the ease of access for landowners. Forest landowners can enroll in the program throughout the year. Participation in the program is voluntary as landowners are not mandated by law or the USFS to do anything after developing their plan. Certainly the intention is that a good Forest Stewardship Plan will enable landowners to actively manage their forest to accomplish their own unique goals, but implementation is voluntary. The Forest Stewardship Program does monitor the effectiveness of a management plan to enable a landowner to accomplish their goals. USFS research indicates that low-cost investments in technical assistance are often as effective as high-cost investments in detailed management plans [Butler et al. 2014. Effectiveness of Landowner Assistance Activities: An Examination of the USDA Forest Service's Forest Stewardship Program. *Journal of Forestry*. 112(2):187-197].

Application Form. There are just two short forms that are required for enrolling in the Forest Stewardship Program. However, the two forms used to enroll landowners into the FSP can certainly be improved and even shortened. The two page Application and Invoice form (PR4065-3, rev 10/7/2013) asks for demographic information that neither the DNR nor USFS monitor or require for reporting. The three page Assessment form (PR4061, rev 9/24/2013) requests duplicate information and does a poor job of helping landowners evaluate their goals for their forest. Both of these forms will be combined into a single three page form that better describes the property and the landowner's goals for their forest on the first two pages while reserving the third page for internal DNR tracking and review. See separate document for the proposed revision of PR4065-3 for use in FY2015. Plan writers may still use the optional Assessment form if they find it useful, but it does not need to be submitted to the DNR.

Minimum Acreage. Current Michigan Program rules require that landowners have a minimum of 12 acres of forest land or 5 acres to be planted with trees. The USFS guidelines do not specify a minimum acreage requirement. In order to increase landowner access to the Forest Stewardship Program, the minimum acreage requirement will be eliminated in FY2015. However, access to financial assistance will be limited to landowners with parcels at least 20 acres in size with 16 or more acres of timberland (similar to Qualified Forest Program minimum requirements). Landowners with properties less than 20 acres are welcome and encouraged to develop a Forest Stewardship Plan, but financial assistance will not be available to the plan writer and landowner for this plan. Historically, plans for forests less than 20 acres are only 3% of the ~4,837 plans written in Michigan since 1991. About 50% of all FSP plans have been developed for properties between 40 and 120 acres.

Maximum Acreage. The USFS and Michigan Forest Stewardship Program do not state a maximum acreage for non-industrial private forests. There is also not a clear definition for "non-industrial private forests" in Michigan as the DNR, following Forest Inventory and Analysis reports, often includes corporate lands in their reporting of non-industrial private forest land. It is possible to seek exemptions to the \$2,500 maximum financial assistance cap up to \$5,000 for very large properties (>5,000 acres) with multiple landowners (dependent upon the availability of Program funds).

Electronic Paperwork. All paperwork is encouraged to be submitted electronically to expedite the process. Both Applications and Forest Stewardship Plans should be submitted by email whenever possible as a Word or pdf document. Important forms will be provided as fillable pdf documents. The Forest Stewardship Program does not require a hard copy of the signature page, but the Commercial Forest program does require hard copies of a management plan signature page.

Required Components of a Forest Stewardship Plan

The Michigan Forest Stewardship Program is currently using an outdated checklist for the USFS and DNR requirements for a Michigan Forest Stewardship Plan. Since the checklist was last modified in 2005, the USFS has published revised “National Standards and Guidelines” (2009) and further guidance on “Resource Elements” (2013). The USFS also requires that states consider the seven principles published by the NASF in their “Principles and Guides for a Well-Managed Forest” (2003). The Michigan Forest Stewardship Program seeks to implement all of these national standards, guidelines, and principles. Additional state recommendations seek only to clarify the fair and comprehensive implementation of these national guidelines in Michigan. This document is meant to give plan writers clear guidance on expectations of a quality plan so that landowners can be assured of receiving a high quality forest management plan that meets their needs for stewardship planning. This document is also meant to give clear boundaries to reviewers to ensure that plan writers are given a fair, reasonable, and quick review of their work prior to approval or requests for plan modifications.

NASF Principles and Guides for a Well-Managed Forest

1. Contribute to the conservation of biological diversity of the forest and landscape in which it resides
2. Maintain or improve productive capacity
3. Maintain the health and vigor of the forest and its landscape and watershed
4. Protect soil and water resources
5. Consider carbon cycles
6. Consider socio-economic benefits and impacts
7. Comply with laws and legally adopted rules and implement applicable guidelines in states not using the regulatory approach

USFS Requirements of a Forest Stewardship Plan

[The following USFS requirements for a Forest Stewardship Plan are quoted directly from the “Forest Stewardship Program National Standards and Guidelines” document (USFS, 2009).]

Plan Criteria

All Forest Stewardship Management Plans must:

- Be prepared or verified as meeting the minimum standards of a Forest Stewardship Management Plan by a professional resource manager, and be approved by the State Forester or a representative of the State Forester.
- Document authorship.
- Clearly state landowner objectives.
- Describe current forest condition or condition class.
- Describe desired forest condition or condition class.
- Include practices and activities aimed at reaching the desired forest condition or condition class.
- Document a feasible strategy and timeline for practice and activity implementation.
- Describe any suggested monitoring activities to be done by the forester or landowner.
- Be developed for a specified management period that adequately allows for progress with the landowner’s long term stewardship objectives.

Michigan Forest Stewardship Program: Statewide Plan for FY2015

- Be reviewed and renewed, revised or rewritten at the end of the specified management period or sooner as needed, to be considered current.

Landowners must be involved in plan development by setting clear objectives, timetables and targets, and clearly understanding the plan's details and implications.

Resource Elements

The plan preparer will consider, describe and evaluate resource elements present and their importance to the ownership. Resource elements to be considered include:

1. Soil and water
2. Biological diversity
3. Aesthetic quality
4. Recreation
5. Timber
6. Fish and wildlife
7. Threatened and endangered species
8. Forest health
9. Archeological, cultural and historic sites
10. Wetlands
11. Fire
12. Carbon cycle
13. Range or agroforestry systems

Prescriptions

Management recommendations and alternative strategies, consistent with landowner objectives, will be provided to protect or enhance all resource elements that are present. Prescriptions or treatments must be stand or site specific. An ownership map drawn to scale, or photo that accurately depicts vegetation cover types, hydrology and other significant forest related resources with a legend, is required. The professional resource manager will discuss the Forest Stewardship Management Plan with the landowner, following completion, and periodically, to assure understanding and encourage plan implementation.

Additional Information

The landowner's understanding may be improved by including additional information appendices.

Appendices might include:

- Educational materials.
- A glossary of terms.
- An explanation of applicable Federal, State and/or county regulatory programs, especially as they apply to: Archeological, cultural and historical sites; Wetlands; Threatened and Endangered Species
- Descriptions of assistance available and incentive programs.

The 2008 Farm Bill explicitly expands eligibility for many USDA conservation programs to include non-industrial private forest landowners. The Farm Bill also recognizes that Forest Stewardship Management Plans (FSMP) and other forest management plans may address conservation program planning requirements for certain programs, where forest land is concerned, thus eliminating the need for a separate conservation plan. The Forest Service will work with State Foresters and USDA agencies to facilitate participation in USDA conservation programs by providing relevant training and information to foresters and landowners. All who are providing technical and planning assistance should make landowners aware of programs for which they may be eligible. Plan preparers can also help to prepare landowners for participation in these programs during and after the planning process. State Foresters are encouraged to consult with their State Conservationist to mutually agree to any additional information needed by NRCS for landowners to participate in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and other USDA conservation programs. Through these programs, eligible landowners may be able to receive assistance to implement their FSMP.

Michigan Guidance on Federal Requirements

For Fiscal Year 2015, the Michigan DNR does not require state elements in addition to those components required by the USFS Forest Stewardship Program. This section is meant to provide specific guidance to FSP plan writers on how to apply USFS guidelines in Michigan. These Michigan guidelines serve three major purposes: 1) ensure quality plans so landowners know that every Forest Stewardship Plan is high quality, 2) ensure program consistency so landowners know all plan writers meet minimum standards while still allowing for plan writer creativity and special additions in their plans, and 3) ensure program fairness so plan writers can expect a reasonable and consistent review process when submitting plans to the different DNR Service Foresters for review.

Major components of a Michigan Forest Stewardship Plan include a Cover Page, Contact Information, Table of Contents, Introduction, Landowner's Goals, Resource Description, Prescriptions, and Appendix. Plan writers may use comparable terms and deliver required contents in any order they choose.

All USFS required components are described as MUST while optional components are described as SHOULD in the following description of federal and state guidelines.

Cover Page, Contact Information, Table of Contents

Cover Page. The plan writer may use the suggested cover page provided by the Michigan Forest Stewardship Program as shown in Appendix 1 or they may design their own customized cover page as long as it includes the required cover page components. All covers should have a professional and high quality appearance.

The cover page must include the following components:

1. Title of "Forest Stewardship Plan" in font significantly larger than surrounding text
2. Name of landowner(s). Note: if multiple landowners intend to enroll their forest into a property tax program, all landowners on the deed must be listed on the Forest Stewardship Plan.
3. Name of plan writer

Michigan Forest Stewardship Program: Statewide Plan for FY2015

4. Plan start date
5. Plan duration or expiration date

The cover page should include the following components:

1. Forest Stewardship Program logo (at least 1" in size) – either the black and white trees logo or the new color four quadrant logo
2. DNR logo (at least 0.75" in size)
3. Indication of revision or renewal of a prior plan
4. Legal text about as shown in Appendix 1 – “Required by authority of Part 501 of Act 451, PA 1994 as amended to certify that this Forest Stewardship Plan has been reviewed and approved by the Landowner, Plan Writer, and the DNR Service Forester.”

Contact Information. The plan writer may use the suggested contact information table provided by the Michigan Forest Stewardship Program as shown in Appendix 2 or they may design their own customized contact information table as long as it includes the required contact information components. The plan writer may place the contact information table in the beginning or at the end of the plan.

The contact information must include the following components:

1. Name, mailing address, phone number, and email for the landowner(s). Note: if multiple landowners intend to enroll their forest into a property tax program, all landowners on the deed must be listed with their contact information on the Forest Stewardship Plan.
2. Name, mailing address, phone number, and email for the plan writer
3. Legal description of the property including county, township, section, town, range
4. Total acres in parcel(s), acres included in plan, forested acres
5. Landowner’s primary goals for the plan
6. Signature blocks for landowner, plan writer, and DNR Service Forester. These signatures should indicate compliance with the plan and coordination with other programs – “This plan describes my goals and objectives for my forest. Participation in the Forest Stewardship Program is voluntary and only indicates my intent to practice sustainable forest management. I understand that enrolling forest land into separate property tax programs like the Commercial Forest program or the Qualified Forest program requires my compliance with an approved forest management plan in exchange for the reduction in property taxes.”

The contact information should include the following components:

1. Directions to the property
2. Stewardship text as shown in Appendix 2 – “Stewardship is an ethic recognizing that the land and its natural inhabitants have an inherent worth and that we have a responsibility to consider the land as we protect, manage, utilize, and enjoy the forest. Stewardship guides us to conduct our activities to the utmost of our abilities, to insure the future health, productivity, diversity,

and well-being of the land, its natural communities and species, and to provide opportunities to our successors that are at least equal to ours to use and enjoy the land and its resources.”

Planning Time Period. Forest Stewardship Plans are typically written for a ten year planning period but certainly may be written for twenty years. For internal reporting purposes, the DNR considers the start date for a plan as the date that the DNR Service Forester signs and approves a plan. The plan is considered active for ten years after that date unless another end date is specified. USFS guidelines do not specify planning periods for Forest Stewardship Plans. Both the Commercial Forest and Qualified Forest property tax programs in Michigan allow for forest management plans with a twenty year planning period. Forest Stewardship Plans must cover at least ten years of planning period. Plans may be longer as appropriate and clearly defined in the plan. Plans must be reviewed, revised, or rewritten at the end of the current planning period or sooner as need to be renewed and considered current. Plans must include recommendations for the landowner or forester to monitor the implementation of the plan at appropriate time intervals and level of effort throughout the lifespan of the plan.

Table of Contents. The Forest Stewardship Plan should include a Table of Contents with page numbers for major sections such as Introduction, Landowner’s Goals, Resource Description, Prescriptions, and Appendix. Plan writers may modify these section headings as appropriate to their plan organization and preferred terminology.

Introduction

All Forest Stewardship Plans must include an Introduction or Overview section.

General Property Description. The Introduction section must include a general description of the entire property. This is a short narrative overview of the property discussing major forest types present, landforms, topography, wildlife habitat quality on the parcel and in landscape, presence or absence of threatened and endangered or special concern species, soils and water quality issues, recreational use or potential, interaction with surrounding landscape, and other general impressions of the parcel.

Landowner’s Goals. *The landowner’s goals are the foundation for a good forest management plan.* The landowner’s unique goals will influence the plan writer’s choice of inventory methods and the description of resources based on the landowner’s higher interest in some resource elements. The landowner’s goals will also influence the prescriptions that the plan writer provides to the landowner to guide their stewardship activities over the next ten to twenty years. Plan writers must list and describe the landowner’s most important management goals for the property in general and also stand specific goals for each management unit. Plan writers must have a conversation with landowners during the planning process to help them to identify and define their goals for their property. Potential tools that plan writers should consider using include the list of landowner goals on the required FSP Application form, the optional FSP Assessment form, the National Woodland Owner Survey questionnaire, or the MSU Extension publication that can help forest landowners clarify their goals (http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/seven_questions_that_can_help_forest_landowners_clarify_their_goals).

Ownership Map. All Forest Stewardship Plans must include at least one “ownership map” that shows forest cover types and water features on the property. Plans should also include a separate soil type map. An activities map is not required and should only be included if it is useful for the landowner. All maps included in a plan must have a title to explain the type of map, a legend, north arrow, and scale.

Plan writers should not misrepresent their maps as boundary survey maps that are provided by licensed land surveyors. Plan writers may include maps of the property in the Introduction section or they may be provided elsewhere if preferred. Plan writers may include other maps as desired (general location, wetlands, etc.).

Maps do not have to use DNR forest type abbreviations or other symbols that landowners may find confusing. However, plan writers should take into consideration any preferred terminology for Qualified Forest program or Commercial Forest program when labeling their forest cover types in a plan or on a map. Suggested forest types and their symbols are shown in Appendix 4. If a plan writer uses another convention to define and label forest types, they must define their terms and provide legend to explain their alternate symbols. Forest type can be determined by dominant basal area, crown canopy or other metric as described in the plan.

Map Standards. Maps should show an aerial photo as the base layer so that landowners can easily identify features on their property. Maps should label essential location features including town, range, section, township, and county. Maps must include a north arrow and scale. All of these map standards are essential to allow for accurate geographic reporting of the annual accomplishments of the Michigan Forest Stewardship Program (see Appendix 5).

GIS Data Sources. Free geographic data are available for download at the Michigan Geographic Data Library website at www.mcgi.state.mi.us/mgdl. These data can be used to develop high quality maps.

GIS Data Submission. Plan writers are encouraged to submit their GIS data along with their Forest Stewardship Plan to allow for easier monitoring and reporting of Program geographic information. Acceptable GIS data formats include shapefiles (zipped folder), KMZ files, or GPX files. Plan writers are also encouraged to submit Word or pdf files of their Forest Stewardship Plans.

Planning Process. The Introduction section should include a description of the planning process used to develop the plan. This is a short narrative of the communication between the landowner and the plan writer that describes how and when the plan was developed.

Stand Assessment Methods. The Introduction section should include a narrative description of the stand assessment methods used to inform the plan. *A formal forest inventory is not required for Forest Stewardship Plans, but plan writers should document their process used to evaluate all stands included in the plan.* Plan writers are allowed to use their own professional judgment to utilize appropriate data collection methods, cruising methods, sampling methods, and levels of intensity that are suitable to the property and landowner's goals for the plan. Plan writers are encouraged to conduct inventories when appropriate and describe the sampling design, plot layout, and sampling intensity used to inventory the forest resources.

Resource Descriptions

Most Forest Stewardship Plans will divide the Resource Descriptions section into stands or management units. All plans must begin stand descriptions with a narrative description of the stand. This narrative should summarize the most important resource elements in that stand. These could include cover type, stand composition, soils, stand condition, age, quality, stand history, site quality, timber volume, timber production potential, health, threatened and endangered species, wildlife habitat, erosion and water

quality issues (BMPs). The relationship of the landowner's goals to the stand should be discussed. Forest Stewardship Plans should identify the acreage of the stand to the nearest acre.

Forest Stewardship Plans are meant to be a comprehensive description of natural resources on a forested property. Forest Stewardship Plans are more than a "timber harvest schedule", although planning for timber management is certainly a primary consideration in private landowner forest management. The USFS guidelines require that plan writers "consider, describe and evaluate resource elements present and their importance to the ownership." Every Forest Stewardship Plan must include all thirteen resource elements defined by the USFS. Plan writers may use their professional judgment and each landowner's unique goals to determine the level of depth to describe each required element. Some resource elements may be more appropriately described at the entire property level, while other resource elements should be addressed at the stand level. Guidance of property vs stand level descriptions is given below, but plan writers may determine how best to describe all thirteen resource elements in each plan. Forest Stewardship Plans must describe current forest conditions for all thirteen resource elements in the resource descriptions. Plan writers may also address desired future conditions when describing the resources or they may describe desired future conditions in a separate Prescriptions section.

1. **Soil and Water.** "All Forest Stewardship Plans should include a discussion of soil features in a manner compatible with the landowner's objectives. Diverse conditions and cover type may necessitate several different descriptions for the property. Use practices that promote soil stability and water quality, and refer to your state's Best Management Practices (BMPs) where applicable" (USFS, 2013).

Michigan Guidance: Important soil series occurring on the property must be described in a soil narrative that describes the soil and how to manage it. The narrative should include a summary description, drainage class, common trees, site index, and expected annual volume growth for that soil series. USDA Soil Web Survey reports may be included in the Appendix, but important information must be summarized in narrative in the plan body. All Forest Stewardship Plans should include a soil map generated from the online resources at the USDA Soil Web Survey. The map should include a north arrow, scale, legend to define the symbols, and a table to summarize the acreage for each soil type in the area of interest (AOI). The soil map should use the aerial imagery provided by the USDA Soil Web Survey as the background layer for the map.

"All forestry activities must protect water quality and comply with, among others, your state's Best Management Practices (BMPs) for forestry activities" (USFS, 2013).

Michigan Guidance: All Forest Stewardship Plans must reference the "Sustainable Soil and Water Quality Practices on Forest Land" as published by the DEQ and DNR in 2009 and available at http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-31154_31261---,00.html. Plan writers may address them anywhere that it is appropriate in the plan, but they must address any relevant best practices related to prescriptions, treatments, or recommended activities. Forest Stewardship Plans should describe best practices for forest roads, trails, and landings when present or planned to be developed on the property.

"Forest Stewardship Plans should draw attention to bodies of water located on the landowner's property that should be protected during all management activities. This may include the establishment of streamside management zones (SMZs), which are meant to prevent

sedimentation and maintain healthy water temperatures for aquatic life. Proper pre-harvest planning prior to cutting timber can help ensure protection of both soil and water resources” (USFS, 2013).

Michigan Guidance: All Forest Stewardship Plans must identify streams or lakes on the property on at least one map included in the plan. The plan writer must include narrative text advising the landowner on how to manage their forest to protect water quality. Soil and water issues may be addressed at either the property or stand level as appropriate.

2. **Biological Diversity.** “Biodiversity is the variety of life (including diversity of species, genetic diversity, and diversity of ecosystems) and the processes that support it. Landowners can contribute to the conservation of biodiversity by providing diverse habitats. It is important to select management options that offer the greatest opportunities for promoting wildlife habitats and conserving biodiversity while fulfilling other land ownership objectives” (USFS, 2013).

Michigan Guidance: All Forest Stewardship Plans must identify the major tree species present in each stand. Plan writers should include information about wildlife habitat, riparian forests, landscape features, rare plants or communities, and special sites as appropriate to the property and the landowner’s goals. Biological diversity should be addressed at the stand level.

3. **Aesthetic Quality.** “Visual impacts of various forest management practices can also increase or decrease aesthetics. There are numerous proven management techniques that may be employed to achieve the landowner’s desired level of aesthetic quality” (USFS, 2013).

Michigan Guidance: All Forest Stewardship Plans must describe the aesthetic quality of the current resources and any likely impacts from implementing prescriptions. Plan writers should consider the aesthetic guidelines in the Right to Forest Act, 2002 PA 676. Aesthetic quality may be addressed at either the property or stand level as appropriate.

4. **Recreation.** “Management practices to enhance recreation opportunities may be easy to implement depending on the type of forest-oriented recreational activities valued by the landowner. Examples of recreational management activities include: birding, hiking trails, hunting, fishing, and camping” (USFS, 2013).

Michigan Guidance: Forest Stewardship Plans must describe the current use of the property for recreation. Plan writers should evaluate opportunities to enhance recreation through prescriptions or making the landowner aware of other relevant programs or information. Recreation may be addressed at either the property or stand level as appropriate.

5. **Timber.** “The Forest Stewardship Program assists landowners in sustainably managing their forest to be productive, vigorous, and healthy. Each Forest Stewardship Plan will likely contain detailed information on timber management activities associated with the landowner’s property. The type of management required by forest stands is based on your management recommendations, landowner objectives, and the current condition of the stand. The Forest Stewardship Plan should identify and recommend sound silviculture practices designed to help establish a new forest stand (regeneration), manage the existing trees (intermediate stand management), or implement a harvest activity to reach desired future stand condition based on management objectives” (USFS, 2013).

Michigan Guidance: All Forest Stewardship Plans must have stand level descriptions of the timber resources. This narrative should include site quality, stand quality, age, dominant size class, and density according to size class. Site quality should report site index for common species growing on the primary soil series in the stand as reported in the USDA Soil Web Survey. Stand quality should be reported and is a qualitative evaluation such as good, fair, or poor based on the current merchantable volume of the stand. The Forest Stewardship Plan should include a quantitative estimate of merchantable volume in units of cord, boardfeet, or other appropriate unit. The plan should specify the stand as either even-aged or uneven-aged. The plan writer should make an attempt to estimate the age of the stand to the nearest decade if possible. The size class of the stand should be reported as seedling (<1" DBH), sapling (1" to 4.9" DBH), pole (5" to 9.9" DBH), or sawtimber (≥10" DBH) based on the most dominant basal area size class. The density of the stand should be reported as trees per acres for seedlings and saplings or the basal area for pole and sawtimber size stands. Basal area should be reported according to dominant species and size classes. Stand density should also be described as under-stocked, well-stocked, or over-stocked. Plans should also include a harvest history of the stand when it is known by the landowner or determined in the resource inventory. Timber resources should be addressed at the stand level.

6. **Fish and Wildlife.** "Fish and other aquatic species depend on healthy water quality and quantity. Following state Best Management Practices (BMPs), which include establishing streamside management zones (SMZs), can increase and create fish habitats and wildlife diversity. Landowners that have bodies of water present on their property should contact natural resource professionals to obtain technical assistance on improvement, aquatic maintenance, and fish habitat conservation" (USFS, 2013).

Michigan Guidance: All Forest Stewardship Plans must describe the landowner's preferred wildlife species for viewing or hunting and evaluate the wildlife habitat potential of the stand. Plans should direct landowner towards relevant wildlife associations that emphasize scientific management of wildlife habitat such as Quality Deer Management Association, Ruffed Grouse Society, Ducks Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation, Sierra Club, Nature Conservancy, Audubon Society, etc. Plans should direct landowners to relevant resources offered by the DNR Wildlife Division. Wildlife habitat may be addressed at either the property or stand level.

7. **Threatened and Endangered Species.** "Federally protected species will affect Forest Stewardship Plans. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Endangered Species Program provides information on state and federal threatened and endangered (T&E) plant and wildlife species. All Forest Stewardship Plans should address rare, threatened, and endangered species" (USFS, 2013).

Michigan Guidance: All Forest Stewardship Plans must include the results of a Michigan Natural Features Inventory database query on rare, threatened, and endangered species in Michigan. The plan should include the results a DNR Service Forester's more detailed check of the MNFI database. If a potential species is identified, the plan must include information on how to identify that species and recommendations on how to mitigate any impacts on that species. The MNFI database should be checked at the beginning of the planning process and before

the plan writer submits a plan for review. Threatened and endangered species may be addressed at either the property or stand level as appropriate.

8. **Forest Health.** “A healthy forest is a forest that possesses the ability to sustain the unique species composition and processes that exist within it. Active management of the forest helps to maintain and improve its productive capacity, taking into account all the factors that influence the resource elements addressed in the Forest Stewardship Plan. Silviculture harvest practices and the use of prescribed fire as a tool can reduce risk from wildfire, pests, and invasive species, and ensure long-term forest health and vigor. Forest health protection issues are often directly related to the active management of insects and diseases, invasive plants, and wildfire. Yearly inspections for signs of insects, diseases, or invasive plant infestations should be completed by the landowner” (USFS, 2013).

Michigan Guidance: All Forest Stewardship Plans must include a description of insect, disease, or invasive plants identified on the property or in a particular stand. When known forest health problems are identified, the plan must include information on how to identify the problem and suggest reasonable actions to address the problem. Forest Stewardship Plans should include recommendations for monitoring for forest health. Forest Stewardship Plans should also include information about potential problems that do not yet exist on the property but may soon arrive. Examples of forest health problems not yet in Michigan or throughout the state include Thousand Cankers Disease, Asian Longhorn Beetle, Beech Bark Disease, Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, etc. Plans should direct landowners to the annual Forest Health Highlights document published by the DNR. Plan writers could also include a Forest Health Report in the Appendix so that landowners can report forest health issues to the DNR – see form in Appendix 3. Forest health may be addressed at either the property or stand level as appropriate.

9. **Archeological, Cultural and Historic Sites.** “Cultural resources refer to landscapes, structures, archeological artifacts, and vegetation that represent a culture or society of historic value. Federal and state laws protect archeological, cultural, and historic sites from disturbances, destruction, or removal. Landowners should be made aware of laws pertaining to archeological, cultural, and historic sites in their state. As the plan writer, make sure you are aware of any such sites as you begin to develop the Forest Stewardship Plan. If you have specific questions about such sites, contact the historic preservation office, office of archeology, or agency in your state responsible for distributing cultural resource information. It is critical to understand where such sites may be located prior to ground-disturbing forest management activities” (USFS, 2013).

Michigan Guidance: All Forest Stewardship Plans must identify any known archeological, cultural, and historic sites. This description should include the results of a DNR Service Forester’s check of the State of Michigan’s historical database. When an archaeological concern is found on a landowner’s property, the plan writer should refer the landowner to an archaeologist with the State of Michigan for more information about their property and how to manage unique sites on their property. Archeological, cultural or historic site may be addressed at either the property or stand level as appropriate.

10. **Wetlands.** “Wetlands include areas where water covers the soil or is present either at or near the surface of the soil all year or for varying periods of time during the year (including during the growing season). Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and fens. Wetlands are

also highly diverse and productive ecosystems with emphasis on supporting timber production, water quality protection, wildlife habitat, and more. The landowner is responsible for understanding laws and regulations related to forestry practices before engaging in wetland management activities on their land” (USFS, 2013).

Michigan Guidance: All Forest Stewardship Plans must identify the location of any known wetlands and describe how to manage them if present. If wetlands are a significant component of the property, the plan writer should add another map to identify wetlands on the property with map data supplied by <http://www.mcgi.state.mi.us/wetlands/>. The plan writer should direct the landowner to relevant laws and regulations about wetlands as described on the DEQ website for wetlands at http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,1607,7-135-3313_3687---,00.html. A permit is not required for typical forest management activities, but a permit is required for filling, dredging, draining, or development. Wetlands may be addressed at either the property or stand level as appropriate.

11. **Fire.** “Prescribed fire, also known as “controlled burn,” refers to the controlled application of fire by a team of fire experts under specified weather conditions that help restore health to fire-adapted environments to obtain specific management objectives. Prescribed burning is a critical management tool that enhances and benefits forests, grasslands, and wildlife habitats. Reducing excessive amounts of hazardous fuel build up prescribed burning helps reduce the catastrophic damage of wildfire on our lands and surrounding communities. Prescribed fire is one of the most effective tools we have in preventing the outbreak and spread of wildfires. Prescribed fire is especially important in States where there is a large amount of land lying in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). State forestry agencies provide fire management services to help prevent wildfire” (USFS, 2013).

Michigan Guidance: All Forest Stewardship Plans must inform the landowner of potential benefits from prescribed fire on their property as appropriate to the forest and relevant to the landowner’s goals. Plan writers should refer the landowner to burn bosses in their region if desired – see <http://firecouncil.org/> for more information. All Forest Stewardship Plans must also inform the landowner of potential risks from wild fire in their region and actions to mitigate risks if the property is in a high risk region – see <http://firewise.msu.edu/> for more information. Fire may be addressed at either the property or stand level as appropriate.

12. **Carbon Cycle.** “All forest plants and soils “store” carbon, so management influences the natural cycles of that storage in both living and dead plant material. The removal of carbon from the atmosphere is the process called carbon sequestration. Carbon sequestration is the process by which atmospheric carbon dioxide is consumed by trees, grasses, and other plants through photosynthesis and stored as carbon in biomass (trunks, branches, foliage, and roots) and soils. Sustainable forestry practices can increase the ability of forests to sequester atmospheric carbon while enhancing other ecosystem services, such as improved soil and water quality. Planting new trees and improving forest health through thinning and prescribed burning are some of the ways to increase forest carbon in the long run. Harvesting and regenerating forests can also result in net carbon sequestration in wood products and new forest growth” (USFS, 2013).

Michigan Guidance: All Forest Stewardship Plans must include a brief description of the terrestrial carbon cycle. Plans should inform landowners about the terrestrial carbon pools of

above ground biomass, below ground biomass, dead wood, litter, and soil organic carbon. FIA data for Michigan show that 63% of the carbon stocks in Michigan forests are in the soil, 19% is stored in above ground biomass, and the remaining 18% is stored in the other three carbon pools. The carbon cycle is likely best addressed at the property level, but may be address at the stand level if appropriate.

13. **Range or Agroforestry Systems.** “Rangelands are described as lands on which the indigenous vegetation is predominately grasses, grass-like plants, forbs, and possibly shrubs or dispersed trees. Existing plant communities can include both native and introduced plants. Disturbed lands that have been re-vegetated naturally or artificially are included. Rangelands provide a diverse and significant production of economic benefits and ecosystem goods and services. Livestock production and sustainable wildlife populations provide major, direct economic benefits; however, tourism, recreational uses, minerals/energy production, renewable energy, and other natural resource uses can be quite significant” (USFS, 2013).

Michigan Guidance: Rangelands are not a common land use in Michigan so plans should only include information about rangelands if appropriate and requested by the landowner.

“Agroforestry intentionally combines agriculture and forestry to create integrated and sustainable land use systems. Agroforestry takes advantage of the interactive benefits from combining trees and shrubs with crops and/or livestock. In the United States, agroforestry is commonly divided into five main practices: Windbreaks, Alley Cropping, Silvopasture, Riparian Forest Buffers, and Forest Farming” (USFS, 2013).

Michigan Guidance: All Forest Stewardship Plans must list the five common temperate agroforestry practices of windbreaks, alley cropping, silvopasture, riparian forest buffers, and forest farming. These practices can be merely listed and defined in the glossary if agroforestry is not relevant to the property or of interest to the landowner. Agroforestry practices are not common in Michigan so plans should include additional information about agroforestry only if desired by the landowner.

Prescriptions

“Management recommendations and alternative strategies, consistent with landowner objectives, will be provided to protect or enhance all resource elements that are present. Prescriptions or treatments must be stand or site specific. An ownership map drawn to scale, or photo that accurately depicts vegetation cover types, hydrology and other significant forest related resources with a legend, is required. The professional resource manager will discuss the Forest Stewardship Management Plan with the landowner, following completion, and periodically, to assure understanding and encourage plan implementation” (USFS, 2009).

The USFS Forest Stewardship Program does not give much guidance on what prescriptions, treatments, or recommended activities must be included in a plan. Therefore FSP plan writers have great flexibility in using their professional judgment to give sound advice to landowners on what they should be doing on their land over the next ten to twenty years. All prescriptions must be written at the stand level, except where general recommendations apply to the entire property. Prescriptions should be based on commonly accepted silvicultural practices, forest ecology principles, and accurate forest inventory data.

Prescriptions must be directly related to landowner's goals, current stand condition, and the desired future condition for the stand. Prescriptions must include the recommended year (or a range of acceptable years) and seasons during the year when the treatment should occur. Prescriptions should include guidance on compliance with the "Sustainable Soil and Water Quality Practices on Forest Land" (DNR and DEQ, 2009). Prescriptions should include a summary table that includes the stands, description of treatment, and suggested date of treatment.

Monitoring

All Forest Stewardship Plans must include suggested monitoring activities to be done during the planning time period. These monitoring activities may be performed by the landowner or a natural resource professional. Monitoring activities might include forest health inspections, timber inventories, regeneration surveys, and other general activities to implement the plan and monitor its effectiveness. Monitoring throughout the lifespan of the plan is especially important if plan writers are writing plans for 20 years for the Qualified Forest or Commercial Forest property tax programs.

Appendix

"The landowner's understanding may be improved by including additional information appendices. Appendices might include: educational materials, a glossary of terms, descriptions of assistance available and incentive programs, and an explanation of applicable Federal, State and/or county regulatory programs, especially as they apply to archeological, cultural and historical sites, wetlands, and threatened and endangered species" (USFS, 2009).

All Forest Stewardship Plans should include a glossary of common forestry terms. One potential glossary for a plan writer to adapt is available at <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/forests/gloss.html>. Plans should include a list of potential programs and resources for landowners to implement their plans such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program or the American Tree Farm System. Plans should include additional information about any regulatory programs related to the landowner and their property such as the Commercial Forest Program or the Qualified Forest Program.

FSP Plans and Access to Additional Programs

Forest Stewardship Plans are meant to provide opportunities for landowners to seek additional resources and programs to implement their plans and to achieve their goals. All FSP plan writers should be aware of common programs and how a FSP plan can create opportunities for their clients.

Property Tax Programs

The Forest Stewardship Program is well suited to coordinate with the two property tax programs because of its flexible program and simple plans. Plan writers must make landowners aware that participation in the Qualified Forest (QF) or Commercial Forest (CF) property tax programs require landowners to comply with their forest management plans. Both programs require forest management

plans that “prescribe measures to optimize the production, utilization, and regeneration of forest resources.” Plan writers should use their professional judgment to compose appropriate prescriptions for landowners in these programs. Landowners do not have to use cost share programs such as FSP or NRCS to develop forest management plans for these property tax programs and may instead write a plan that meets only the minimum requirements of the Qualified Forest or Commercial Forest programs. There are several required plan components additional to the FSP requirements for the Qualified Forest or Commercial Forest program including a parcel tax identification number, locating buildings on maps, provisions for record keeping, provisions for amendments after unexpected events, and a statement of landowner intention for commercial forestry. Property tax program requirements in addition to the standard Forest Stewardship Program requirements are bolded in the two following lists.

Forest Management Plan Requirements for the Commercial Forest Program

1. Name, address, and telephone number of each owner.
 - a. Name, address, telephone number, signature, and date of signature of plan writer.
2. Legal description(s) of the property, and total acreage covered by the plan.
3. **Statement of owner’s objectives and intentions for Commercial Forestry and any other forest uses and benefits.**
4. Narrative overview of the property.
5. Soil information, including restrictions on use to prevent rutting or soil disturbance during harvesting operations or equipment use.
6. Type map enumerating stands by cover type, size and density (use DNR cover type symbols); show scale (must be at least 4 inches = 1 mile); location within Township/Range/Section; trails and surface water. If the property does not border a county or state controlled road, indicate the legal and physical access for timber removal and public hunting and fishing.
7. Narrative descriptions of each stand including the acreage, cover type, stand composition, stand density by size class, and stand age. Indicate for which forest products the stand is being managed and the silvicultural system used to achieve them. Include remarks on how to optimize production, harvesting, utilization, and promotion of effective regeneration.
8. **Summary table of all stands listing the prescribed practices and their approximate completion dates.**
9. Date plan was completed and time period covered by plan (must be at least ten (10) years and not more than twenty (20) years).
10. **Provision for keeping a continuous record of silvicultural practices accomplished.**
11. **Provision for amendments to reflect disasters or other unexpected events.**

(Source: DNR Information Circular 4168 revised 02/12/2014)

Forest Management Plan Requirements for the Qualified Forest Program

(a) “Approved forest management plan” means a forest management plan developed by a qualified forester. An owner of property shall submit a forest management plan to the department for approval as prescribed in subsection (2). The forest management plan shall include a **statement signed by the owner that he or she agrees to comply** with all terms and conditions contained in the approved forest management plan.

(e) “Forest management plan” means a written plan prepared and signed by a qualified forester that prescribes measures to **optimize production, utilization, and regeneration of forest resources**. The forest management plan shall include a schedule and timetables for the various silvicultural practices used on forestlands, which shall be a maximum of 20 years in length. A forest management plan shall include all of the following:

- (i) The name and address of each owner of the property.
- (ii) The legal description and **parcel identification number** of the property or of the parcel on which the property is located.
- (iii) A statement of the owner's forest management objectives.
- (iv) A map, diagram, or aerial photograph that identifies both forested and unforested areas of the property, using conventional map symbols indicating the species, size, and stocking rate and other major features of the property, including the location of any buildings. The location and use of any buildings can be established on a map created by a qualified forester and does not require a survey by a registered surveyor.
- (v) A description of forest practice, including harvesting, thinning, and reforestation, that will be undertaken, specifying the approximate period of time before each is completed.
- (vi) A description of soil conservation practices that may be necessary to control any soil erosion that may result from the forest practice described pursuant to subparagraph (v).
- (vii) A description of activities that may be undertaken for the management of forest resources other than trees, including wildlife habitat, watersheds, and aesthetic features.

(Source: PA 42 of June 6, 2013)

Financial Assistance for Implementation

Forest Stewardship Plans are accepted by the NRCS to guide the implementation of conservation practices under financial assistance contracts. NRCS specifications for conservation practices require much more detail in describing conservation practices than are required by USFS guidelines for FSP prescriptions. *Plan writers are NOT required to provide NRCS specifications in a Forest Stewardship Plan, even if a landowner intends to apply for NRCS funding to implement their plan.* Landowners may need to work with their forester and District Conservationist to fill out supplemental "Job Sheets" if they apply for financial assistance from the NRCS to implement specific "conservation practices" in a Forest Stewardship Plan.

Conservation practices commonly funded by the NRCS related to forestry include Forest Stand Improvement (#666), Tree and Shrub Establishment (#612), Tree and Shrub Site Preparation (#490), Forest Trails and Landings (#655), Riparian Forest Buffer (#391), Windbreak or Shelterbelt Establishment (#380), Windbreak or Shelterbelt Renovation (#650). Other conservation practices related to forestry include Brush Management (#314), Herbaceous Weed Control (#315), Early Succession Habitat (#647), Stream Crossing (#578), Tree Shrub Pruning (#660), Prescribed Burning (#338), and Firebreaks (#394).

Forest Certification Programs

Common forest certification programs such as Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Forest Stewardship Council, and Tree Farm all require forest management plans prior to certification. The Tree Farm System recognizes Forest Stewardship Plans as acceptable forest management plans. FSP plans should include a description of the eight standards included in the 2010 AFF Standards and mention their relevance at appropriate places in the plan. A Tree Farm plan must include ownership information, property description, property history, goals, maps, protection of natural resources, stand level descriptions, management activity schedule, and signatures. See "Standard 1: Commitment to Practicing Sustainable Forestry" for a more complete description of the required contents of a Tree Farm forest management plan. The 2010-2015 Standards of Sustainability are available on the Tree Farm website at www.treefarmssystem.org/certification-american-tree-farm-standards.

Participants in the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) must have management plans that “ensure that forest management plans include long-term harvest levels that are sustainable and consistent with appropriate growth-and-yield models.” Forest management plans for SFI must address timber management, soil and water conservation, wildlife management, best management practices, recreational uses, and endangered species. See www.sfiprogram.org for more information.

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is seeking to include family forest landowners (<2,500 acres) through individual or group certification efforts. Forest Stewardship Plans may be eligible for enrolling in FSC if the plan writer meets all requirements for a FSC forest management plan. FSC plans must be a written management plan appropriate for a family forest, describe actions that help achieve the plan, allow for revisions that keep the plan up-to-date, ensure that workers that are properly trained to carry out the plan, and have a plan summary available for public review. See <https://us.fsc.org/family-forests.202.htm> for more information about FSC certification.

“Family forest plans are driven by landowner objectives, within the constraints of site capability and the best available data on ecological, silvicultural, social and economic conditions. Management plans need only be as complex as the forest and activities to which they apply. Plans can be made up of multiple written documents – including silviculture guidelines, environmental assessments, Forest Inventory Analysis and Geographic Information Systems maintained by state conservation agencies – that are used to direct management of a forest management unit. At a minimum, site-level information including species and size/age-classes sufficient to guide management decisions is needed. The FSC standard does not, however, prescribe statistical sampling requirements or how to measure forest inventories” (FSC, 2011).

SMART

The Michigan Forest Stewardship Program will continue to utilize the Stewardship Mapping and Reporting Tool (SMART) to report statewide results to the USFS. The Michigan Forest Stewardship Program will also train certified plan writers on the benefits of using the SMART tool to develop and report their Forest Stewardship Plans. The online SMART software may be a useful tool to help plan writers increase their productivity and reduce the time to produce a Forest Stewardship Plan. SMART also facilitates easier reporting of the spatial locations of a Forest Stewardship Plan. For more information, see http://spfnic.fs.fed.us/hd/tdocs/SMART_User_Guide.pdf.

FSP Outreach and Education Grants for Municipal Forests

The Michigan Forest Stewardship Program allows private organizations and municipal forest owners to apply for financial assistance for plan development, demonstration projects, outreach and education projects, and ecosystem projects. Municipal forests include schools, cities, townships, and counties. These projects must all have a strong component of outreach and education towards private landowners. These projects must also be on public municipal forest land or on private land open to the public. These projects suggest that the grantees pay at least 50% of the cost of the plan/project. More than 78,000 acres of forest land in 49 counties are included in the Municipal Forest Act – see Table 7.

Michigan Forest Stewardship Program: Statewide Plan for FY2015

Table 7. Municipal forests in Michigan.

#	County	Parcel Count	Total Acres	Peninsula	Average Parcel Size
1	Gogebic	708	27,018	Upper	38
2	Marquette	221	7,924	Upper	36
3	Chippewa	165	5,856	Upper	35
4	Ontonagon	127	5,021	Upper	40
5	Antrim	81	2,871	Lower	35
6	Oceana	96	2,574	Lower	27
7	Iron	69	2,573	Upper	37
8	Emmet	75	2,037	Lower	27
9	Delta	61	1,730	Upper	28
10	Midland	43	1,693	Lower	39
11	Newaygo	56	1,620	Lower	29
12	Manistee	47	1,550	Lower	33
13	Gladwin	37	1,471	Lower	40
14	Alger	39	1,392	Upper	36
15	Osceola	38	1,302	Lower	34
16	Dickinson	35	1,061	Upper	30
17	Kalkaska	27	915	Lower	34
18	Menominee	23	914	Upper	40
19	Wexford	109	834	Lower	8
20	Arenac	20	718	Lower	36
21	Charlevoix	18	665	Lower	37
22	Grand Traverse	21	596	Lower	28
23	Mason	16	539	Lower	34
24	Presque Isle	11	479	Lower	44
25	Mecosta	21	354	Lower	17
26	Benzie	11	345	Lower	31
27	Missaukee	9	343	Lower	38
28	Isabella	8	320	Lower	40
29	Leelanau	9	304	Lower	34
30	Otsego	9	301	Lower	33
31	Cheboygan	15	299	Lower	20
32	Houghton	7	280	Upper	40
33	Mackinac	6	240	Upper	40
34	Ogemaw	6	239	Lower	40
35	Barry	10	232	Lower	23
36	Baraga	6	220	Upper	37
37	Clare	9	210	Lower	23
38	Iosco	5	197	Lower	39
39	Oscoda	7	182	Lower	26
40	Muskegon	130	181	Lower	1
41	Lake	5	120	Lower	24
42	Crawford	3	100	Lower	33
43	Roscommon	2	85	Lower	42
44	Alcona	3	70	Lower	23
45	Montmorency	2	50	Lower	25
46	Bay	1	40	Lower	40
47	Schoolcraft	1	40	Upper	40
48	Luce	1	20	Upper	20
49	Van Buren	33	17	Lower	1
	Total	2462	78,138		31

These municipal forests are a great opportunity to promote the Forest Stewardship Program throughout Michigan. A single management plan could be reviewed by an entire community rather than just a single landowner. Writing a Forest Stewardship Plan for a municipal forest also creates an opportunity for a plan writer to advertise the quality of their work to a larger audience. A municipal forest plan should generate additional opportunities to educate private landowners as the municipal forest owner implements the plan, potentially with the assistance of the plan writer. Plan writers should include recommendations for future demonstration projects (cost share up to \$2,500) or further outreach and education activities (cost share up to \$2,500) within the text of the Forest Stewardship Plan.

The Michigan Forest Stewardship Program sees the Outreach and Education (O&E) Grants as a high priority for Fiscal Year 2015. Grants for O&E are made directly to the municipal forest owner and do not count against the plan writer's grant agreement with the DNR for plans for private landowners. Financial assistance will be available up to \$2,500 per plan or project in consideration of the budget cuts in FY2014. The cost share formula for Forest Stewardship Plan development will be "\$500 per plan plus \$0.50 per acre with a maximum of \$2,500." The grantee match is not specified, but is expected to pay at least 50% of the plan development costs. More information and forms are available on the DNR website at www.michigan.gov/foreststewardship.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Suggested FSP Cover Page

Appendix 2 – Suggested FSP Contact Information Table

Appendix 3 – DNR Forest Health Reporting Form

Appendix 4 – Forest Cover Type and Density Symbols

Appendix 5 – Geographic Location of Forest Stewardship Plans

Appendix 6 – Annual Number of Forest Stewardship Plans

Appendix 7 – Forest Stewardship Plan Frequency by Acreage Classes.

Appendix 8 – Regional Coverage of the DNR Service Foresters

Appendix 9 – Michigan Forest Stewardship Plan – Required Component Checklist

Appendix 1 – Suggested FSP Cover Page

	
<h1>FOREST STEWARDSHIP PLAN</h1>	
Prepared for _____	
Plan Prepared by _____	
Plan Start Date: June, 2014	Plan Duration: 20 Years (May, 2034)
	Department of Natural Resources - Forest Resources Division www.michigan.gov/foreststewardship
<i>Required by authority of Part 501 of Act 451, PA 1994 as amended to certify that this Forest Stewardship Plan has been reviewed and approved by the Landowner, Plan Writer, and the DNR Service Forester.</i>	
Renewal or Revision of Prior Plan? - NO	

Appendix 2 – Suggested FSP Contact Information Table

Landowner Contact Information		Plan Writer Contact Information	
Name:		Name:	
Address:		Address:	
Phone:		Phone:	
Email:		Email:	
Property Information			
Total Acres:	Forested Acres:	Acres in Plan:	Tax ID:
Town:	Range:	Township:	County:
Property Legal Description (Quarter Section, Section, Town, Range, Township, County):			
How to Find Property from Nearest Town:			
Landowner's Goals for this Forest Stewardship Plan			
1) 2) 3) 4)			
Michigan's Stewardship Ethic			
Stewardship is an ethic recognizing that the land and its natural inhabitants have an inherent worth and that we have a responsibility to consider the land as we protect, manage, utilize, and enjoy the forest. Stewardship guides us to conduct our activities to the utmost of our abilities, to insure the future health, productivity, diversity, and well-being of the land, its natural communities and species, and to provide opportunities to our successors that are at least equal to ours to use and enjoy the land and its resources.			
Signatures of Approval from Landowner, Plan Writer, and DNR Service Forester			
This plan describes my goals and objectives for my forest. Participation in the Forest Stewardship Program is voluntary and only indicates my intent to practice sustainable forest management. I understand that enrolling forest land into separate property tax programs like the Commercial Forest program or the Qualified Forest program requires my compliance with an approved forest management plan in exchange for the reduction in property taxes.			
Landowner:		Date:	
Plan Writer:		Date:	
DNR Service Forester:		Date:	

After review and approval by the Landowner, the Plan Writer will submit the entire Plan to the nearest DNR Service Forester for their review. **Electronic submission of the Plan is encouraged by emailing a Word document or pdf file to the Service Forester.** The DNR Service Forester will return a hard copy or pdf of the final signature page to the Plan Writer after approval.

Appendix 3 – DNR Forest Health Report Form

 <p>Michigan Department of Natural Resources Forest Resources Division</p> <h2 style="text-align: center;">FOREST HEALTH FIELD REPORT</h2>		
<i>Please complete ALL areas in this section.</i>		
Observer	Date	
Telephone (if non-DNR observer)	Email (if non-DNR observer)	
County	FTP Number	
Town	Range	Section
Latitude D.D (E.G. 45.717°)		
Longitude D.D (E.G. -85.123°)		
Ownership <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> Other:		
IF NO PROBLEMS OBSERVED, CHECK THE FOLLOWING BOX, AND RETURN FORM TO THE ADDRESS BELOW. <input type="checkbox"/>		
Symptoms		
<input type="checkbox"/> Brooming <input type="checkbox"/> Dieback <input type="checkbox"/> Stunting <input type="checkbox"/> Other Symptoms: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Canker <input type="checkbox"/> Dying <input type="checkbox"/> Wilting <input type="checkbox"/> Dead <input type="checkbox"/> Reddening <input type="checkbox"/> Yellowing		
Signs		
<input type="checkbox"/> Holes in bark <input type="checkbox"/> Defoliation <input type="checkbox"/> Webbing <input type="checkbox"/> Sawdust		
Life Stages Observed		
<input type="checkbox"/> Eggs <input type="checkbox"/> Adult insects <input type="checkbox"/> Cocoons <input type="checkbox"/> Larvae <input type="checkbox"/> Fungi Name of pest (if known): _____		
Location		
<input type="checkbox"/> Bole <input type="checkbox"/> Buds <input type="checkbox"/> Foliage <input type="checkbox"/> Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Seeds <input type="checkbox"/> Branches <input type="checkbox"/> Flowers <input type="checkbox"/> Fruits <input type="checkbox"/> Roots <input type="checkbox"/> Twigs		
Species Affected		

DBH (inches)		

Trees Affected		
<input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Scattered <input type="checkbox"/> Pockets <input type="checkbox"/> Entire Stand		
Percent of Tree Affected (if applicable)		

Acres Affected (if applicable)		

Stand Type		
<input type="checkbox"/> Planted <input type="checkbox"/> Seed <input type="checkbox"/> Natural <input type="checkbox"/> Roadside <input type="checkbox"/> Ornamental		
Comments		

Return to: HEALTH MONITORING SPECIALIST DNR FOREST RESOURCES DIVISION PO BOX 30452 LANSING MI 48909-7952		
OR		
FOREST PEST MGT SPECIALIST DNR MARQUETTE OPER SERVICE CTR 1990 US-41 SOUTH MARQUETTE MI 49855		
R4029-3a (Rev. 03/20/2012)		

Appendix 4. Forest Cover Type and Density Symbols

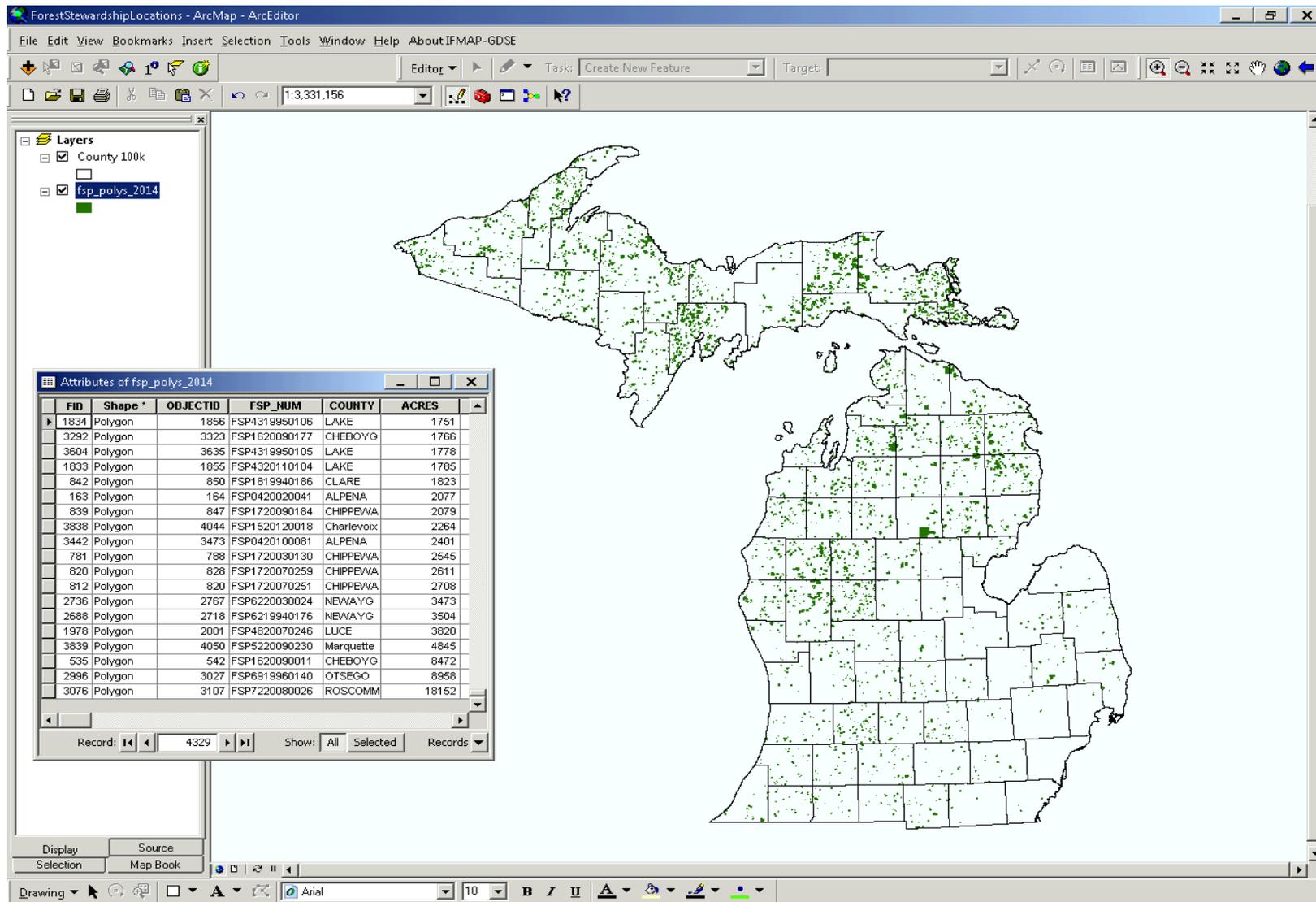
Suggested forest types and their symbols.

Symbol	Cover Types	Species
A	aspen	big tooth aspen, trembling aspen
B	paper birch	
C	cedars	
D	treed bog	
E	lowland hardwoods	ash, elm, red maple
F	balsam fir, white spruce	
G	upland grasses	grasses, blueberry, bracken, sweetfern
H	hemlock	
I	local use	non-commercial or exotic species (Scotch pine, Ailanthus, etc)
J	jack pine	
K	rock	
L	lowland brush	alder, dogwood, viburnum, willow
M	northern hardwoods	sugar maple, red maple, elm, beech, yellow birch, basswood, cherry
N	marsh	
O	red and white oak genera	
P	balsam poplar	
Q	lowland conifers	cedar, spruce, balsam fir, tamarack
R	red pine	
S	black spruce	
T	tamarack	
U	upland brush	briars, dogwoods, hazel, juneberry, sumac, thornapple, viburnum
V	bog	
W	white pine	
X	non-stocked	
Y	sand dunes	
Z	water	

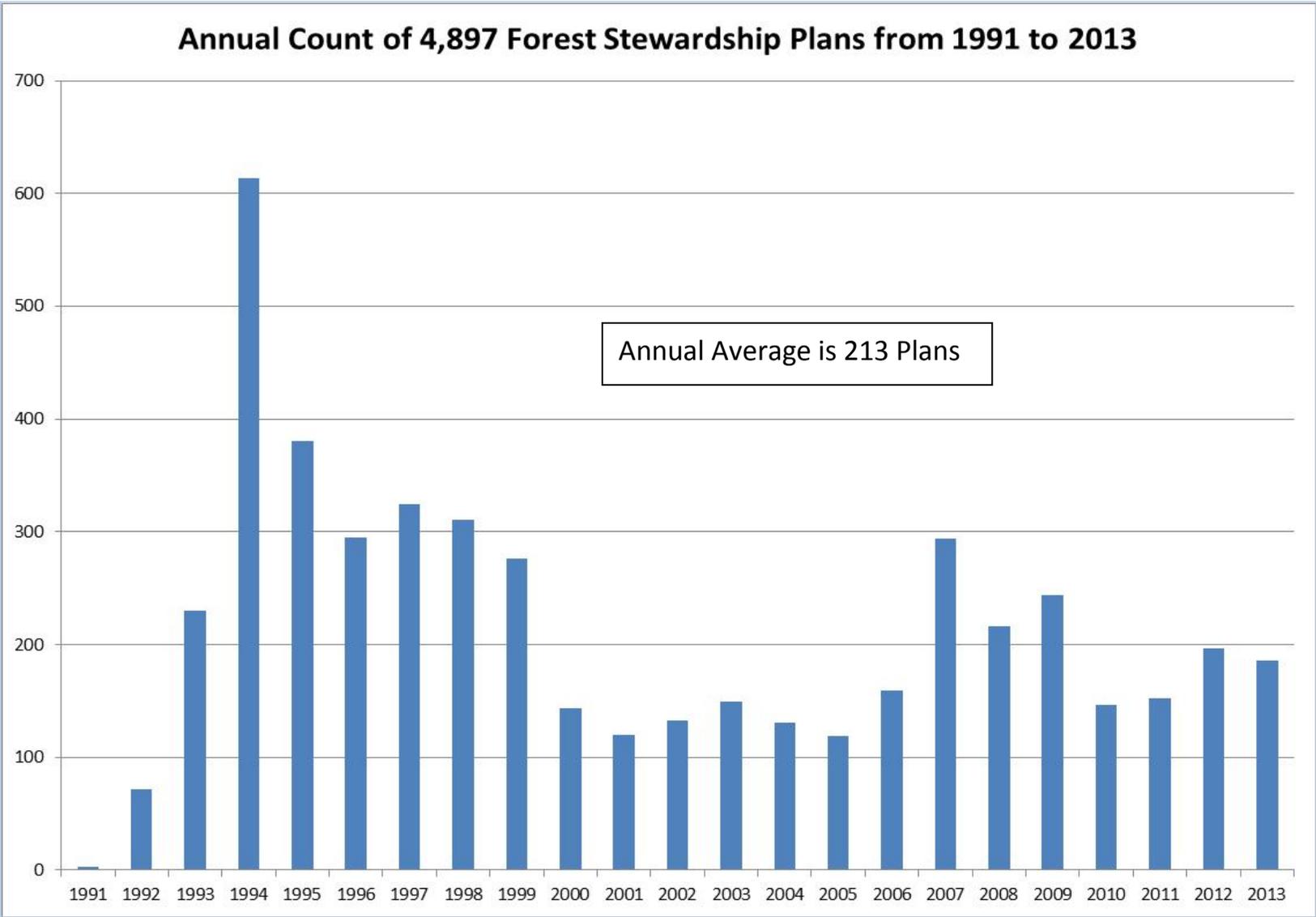
Suggested classification of stand density according to trees per acre or basal area.

Symbol	Density	Unit	Stocking Grade
Non-Stocked			
0	<17%	trees per acre	Non-stocked
Seedlings and Saplings 0" - 4.9" DBH			
1	17% to 39%	trees per acre	poor
2	40% to 69%	trees per acre	medium
3	>70%	trees per acre	well
Poles 5" - 9.9" DBH			
4	10 - 39	basal area (ft ² /acre)	poor
5	40 - 69	basal area (ft ² /acre)	medium
6	> 70	basal area (ft ² /acre)	well
Sawlogs ≥10" DBH			
7	10 - 39	basal area (ft ² /acre)	poor
8	40 - 69	basal area (ft ² /acre)	medium
9	> 70	basal area (ft ² /acre)	well

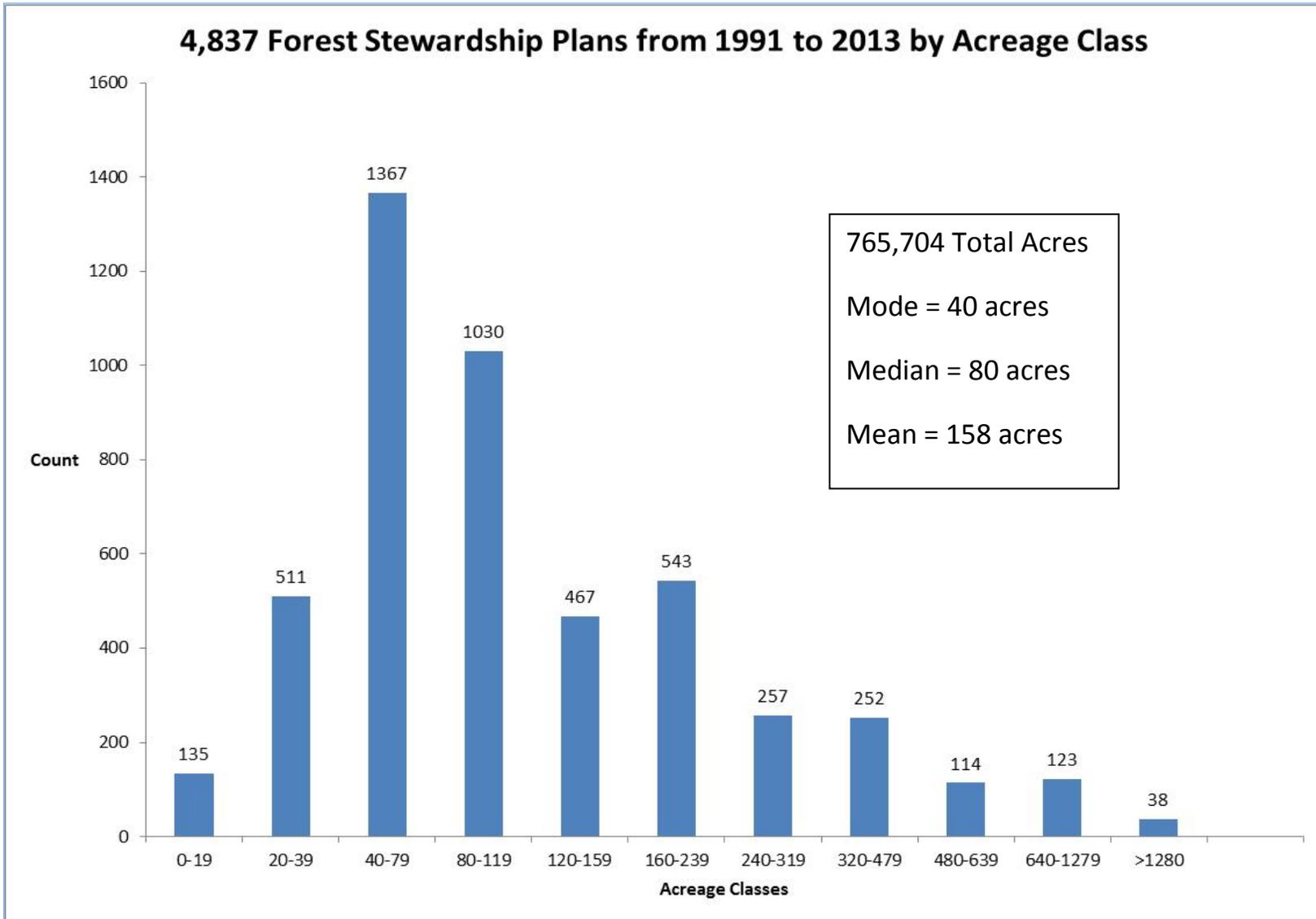
Appendix 5. Geographic location of Forest Stewardship Plans



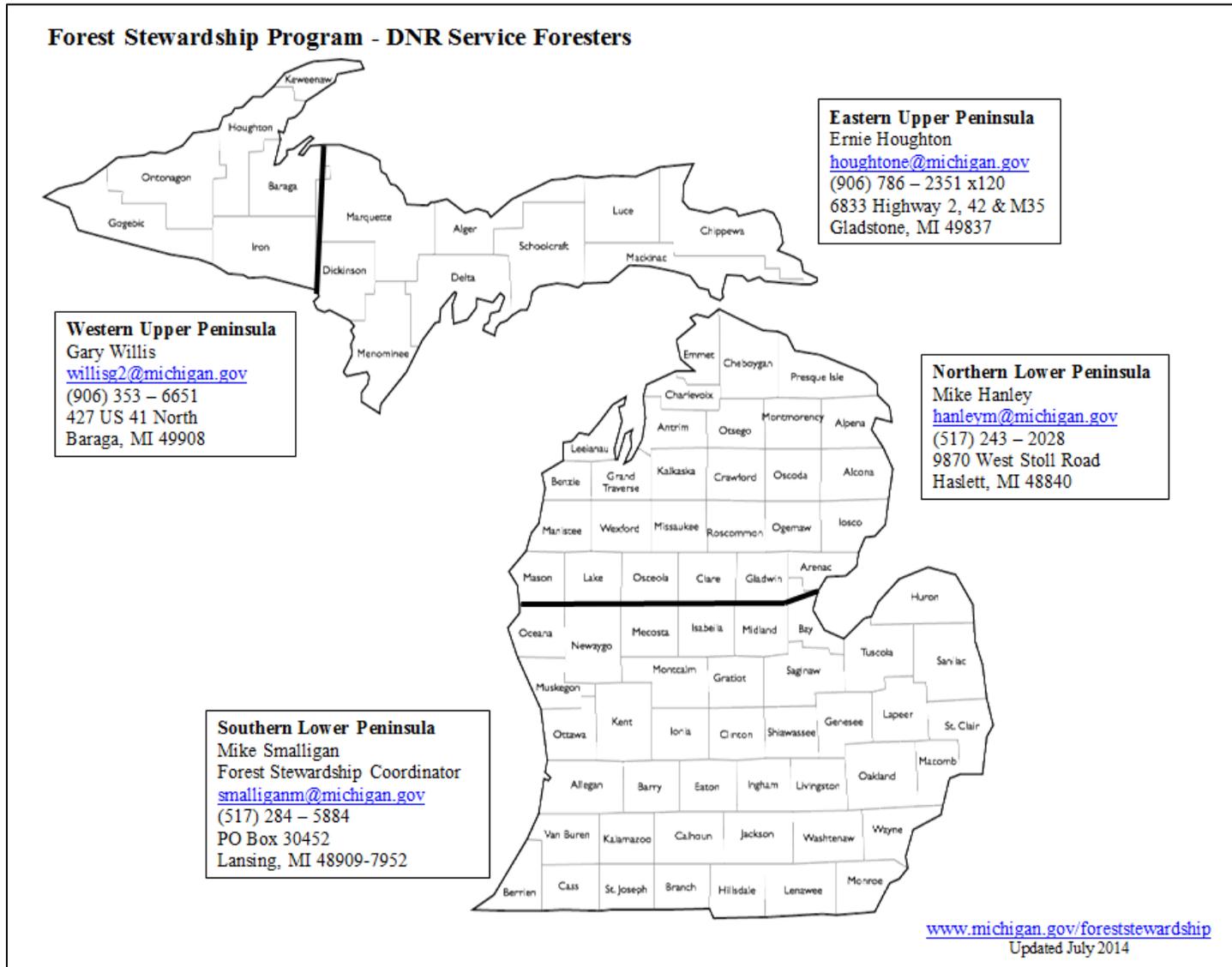
Appendix 6. Annual number of Forest Stewardship Plans.



Appendix 7. Forest Stewardship Plan frequency by acreage classes.



Appendix 8. Regional coverage of the DNR Service Foresters



Appendix 9. Forest Stewardship Plan – Required Component Checklist

Forest Stewardship Plans. Forest Stewardship Plans are meant to be comprehensive yet simple plans to help landowners be good stewards of their forests. This document is a summary checklist for the required components for a Michigan Forest Stewardship Plan. This checklist is to be used by Plan Writers when writing Plans and DNR Service Foresters when reviewing Plans. For more complete guidance, see the “Michigan Forest Stewardship Program: Statewide Plan for FY2015.”

Program Requirements. Forest Stewardship Plans must meet all USFS requirements. Plan writers should include the components recommended by the Michigan DNR, but plan approval is dependent upon meeting USFS requirements. Forest Stewardship Plans must meet the required components for the Commercial Forest Program or Qualified Forest Program if the landowner intends to enroll in either property tax program. Forest Stewardship Plans are accepted by the Natural Resources Conservation Service when a landowner applies for financial assistance to implement practices in their plan. *Forest Stewardship Plans do NOT have to include NRCS requirements for a CAP 106 forest management plan.*

Supporting Documents

1. United States Forest Service (www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/programs/loa/fsp.shtml)
 - a. Forest Stewardship Program National Standards and Guidelines, Revised February 2009
 - b. Forest Stewardship Program Resource Elements, Version 7/15/2013
2. Department of Natural Resources (www.michigan.gov/foreststewardship)
 - a. Michigan Forest Stewardship Program: Statewide Plan for FY2015

Landowner _____ Plan Writer _____ Reviewer _____

Forest Stewardship Plan Checklist

Component	USFS Requirement	DNR Recommendation	Included in Plan?
COVER PAGE		X	
Title - “Forest Stewardship Plan”	X		
Forest Stewardship Logo		X	
DNR Logo		X	
Landowner Name	X		
Plan Writer Name	X		
Plan Start Date	X		
Plan Duration or End Date	X		
Renewed or Revised Plan Indication		X	
CONTACT INFORMATION	X		
Landowner Contact Information	X		
Plan Writer Contact Information	X		
Acres Included in Plan	X		
Signature Blocks	X		
Property Legal Description	X		
Directions to Property		X	
Stewardship Definition		X	
TABLE OF CONTENTS		X	
Component	USFS	DNR	Included in

Michigan Forest Stewardship Program: Statewide Plan for FY2015

	Requirement	Recommendation	Plan?
INTRODUCTION	X		
General Property Description	X		
Landowner's Goals and Objectives	X		
Planning Process Review		X	
Stand Assessment Method		X	
Ownership Map (Forest Type, Water, Legend)	X		
RESOURCE DESCRIPTIONS	X		
Narrative of Current Conditions	X		
Soil and Water	X		
Soil Map from Web Soil Survey		X	
Best Management Practices	X		
Biological Diversity	X		
Aesthetic Quality	X		
Recreation	X		
Timber	X		
Fish and Wildlife	X		
Threatened and Endangered Species	X		
MNFI Database Check		X	
Forest Health	X		
Archeological, Cultural and Historic sites	X		
State Historical Database Check		X	
Wetlands	X		
Fire	X		
Carbon Cycle	X		
Range and Agroforestry Systems	X		
PRESCRIPTIONS	X		
Narrative of Desired Future Conditions	X		
Stand Specific Recommendations	X		
Strategy and Timeline for Implementation	X		
MONITORING ACTIVITIES	X		
APPENDIX		X	
Glossary		X	
Financial Assistance Programs		X	
Educational Materials		X	
Regulatory Programs		X	
COMMERCIAL FOREST PROGRAM		X	
Landowner Intent for Commercial Forestry		Required by law	
Summary Table of Silvicultural Prescriptions		Required by law	
Records of Silvicultural Practices Completed		Required by law	
Amendments Due to Unexpected Events		Required by law	
QUALIFIED FOREST PROGRAM		X	
Measures to optimize production, utilization, and regeneration of forest resources		Required by law	
Parcel Tax ID Number		Required by law	
Statement of Landowner Compliance		Required by law	