

**Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Forest Certification Work Instruction**

DRAFT FINAL

Date of Draft Document:

Effective Date: 6-01-16

Revision Number: 10

Supersedes Version Dated: 6-23-15

Work Instruction Title: 1.3 Regional State Forest Management Plan Implementation and Revision

Work Area Group: 1 – Plan, Monitor, and Review

Purpose: Define roles and responsibilities for the implementation and revision of Regional State Forest Management Plans.

Work Instruction:

1. Background

The primary purpose of Regional State Forest Management Plans (RSFMPs) is to provide operational direction for management of state forest resources based on landscape-level forest assessments, by building on the direction provided in the state-level plan (2008 Michigan State Forest Management Plan) and providing goals and objectives for forest cover type and wildlife habitat management for the 2016-2026 Year-of-Entry planning period. Although RSFMPs do not specifically address planning objectives for other values of the state forest (e.g., camping and trail use), they consider these values and attempt to minimize any impacts from forest management activities. The plans are also intended to address the planning requirements of Part 525 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended (NREPA), and the Forest Stewardship Council and Sustainable Forestry Initiative forest certification standards. There are three RSFMPs, one each for the northern Lower Peninsula, eastern Upper Peninsula, and western Upper Peninsula regions.

Management Areas (MAs) are the landscape unit used in the RSFMPs. The MAs are groupings of State Forest compartments that have similar attributes, such as vegetation types, landform, or proximity to key user groups. The MAs are used as a framework for describing the current conditions and management direction for vegetative management in the RSFMPs. The section on special resource areas (SCAs, HCVAs, and ERAs) in the Michigan State Forest Management Plan (April 10, 2008) addresses management direction for other uses and values (recreation, etc.) of the State Forest. In each RSFMP, these values are described for each MA.

The purpose of using the MA framework in RSFMPs is to enable landscape-level analyses and specific direction that, when combined with other existing standards and guidelines will help to guide tactical decisions. These decisions will be coordinated at the Forest Management Unit (FMU) and implemented through the compartment review process.

2. Plan Implementation

Using MAs as a framework, RSFMPs contain specific, quantitative landscape-level direction that informs tactical decision-making during compartment review at the FMU level of operations. This management direction is embodied in Section 4 of the plans by MA. Analyses required by Forest Certification Work Instruction 1.6 will be conducted so as to achieve progression toward achievement of management objectives for each forest type in each MA.

3. Plan Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring of RSFMP implementation is an integral component of a responsible management program based on the principles of ecosystem management. Monitoring, assessment and reporting requirements include the following:

- a. The DNR budget process
- b. Special purpose funding (e.g. federal grants)
- c. The compartment review process
- d. Timber sale preparation and inspection process
- e. Forest regeneration survey protocols
- f. The resource damage reporting system
- g. The forest health monitoring program
- h. Wildfire detection
- i. Sustainable Forestry Initiative certification standard
- j. Forest Stewardship Council certification standard
- k. Public reporting – as required by the certification standards.

Monitoring works to its greatest advantage in three basic ways:

- a. Monitoring provides an accurate assessment of the status of the resource being managed;
- b. It validates if management decisions are correctly interpreted and implemented such that decisions achieve desired results; and
- c. It provides insight into how systems operate.

Based on this description, the state forest monitoring program includes five basic components:

- a. Baseline Monitoring - Inventory
- b. Baseline Monitoring - Surveillance
- c. Implementation Monitoring
- d. Effectiveness Monitoring
- e. Validation Monitoring

The DNR has an established and systematic process for gathering information regarding the state forest and forest management practices for each of the above components, which is identified in Section 5 RSFMPs, and shall be reviewed and updated with each plan revision. Assessment of the data and reporting on the findings is a key component of improving management of the state forest. The basic reports that will be produced on a regular basis are listed below.

- a. Internal Audit Reports – prepared by the Forest Certification Specialist.
- b. Annual Forest Certification Reports – prepared by the FSC and FSI auditors (one for each system).
- c. Annual Management Review – an annual report on compliance with forest certification standards.
- d. Forest Resource Division and Wildlife Division Accomplishments Reports – annual reports on the cooperative management of Michigan’s State Forest.
- e. Timber Sale Report – quarterly and annual reports required by annual appropriation legislation.
- f. Forest Inventory and Assessment Report for Michigan – analysis and report on the permanent sample plot network for forest inventory (U.S. Forest Service) produced every five years (subject to change based upon federal budget limitations).
- g. Public Summary of Monitoring Results – A web-based summary of the most recent monitoring information related to FSC criterion 8.2.
- h. State of the State Forest Report – produced every 10 years in preparation for revision of RSFMPs to provide a summary of annual monitoring data for all three ecoregions, and to evaluate progress towards or maintenance of sustainable forest conditions.

4. Plan Review and Revision

Consistent with the Forest Stewardship Council certification standard, RSFMPs will be reviewed every 10 years and revised as necessary to incorporate the results of monitoring or changing ecological, social or economic circumstances.

There are known deficiencies in the RSFMPs where data or other information for some uses and values which should or are desired to be included in the plans, but for various reasons (such as incomplete data sets or lack of other information or incompatible timelines for data acquisition) are excluded from the plan content until such time that they are available for inclusion. These gaps, as identified in section 5 of each RSFMP, will need to be addressed in the future revisions to the plans.

Review and revision of plan management direction should be founded on Section 3 of the plans and other analyses of landscape-level conditions and trends, as provided by:

- a. Approved statewide, regional or local plans identified in the document “A Comprehensive Summary of the Department of Natural Resources Planning Process for Natural Resource Management in Michigan”, specifically including:
 - 1) The Michigan State Forest Management Plan (2008),
 - 2) Michigan’s Wildlife Action Plan,
 - 3) The Kirtland’s Warbler Management Plan,
 - 4) DNR River Assessments,
 - 5) Pigeon River Country Concept of Management.
- b. Analyses of the forest cover types in each Management Area, specifically including:
 - 1) Age-class distributions,
 - 2) Cover type structural and compositional trends,
 - 3) Basal area, size classes and stocking,
 - 4) Primary understory vegetation types.
- c. Analysis of successional trends and site suitability analysis using the Kotar Guide to Forest Communities and Habitat Types for each Management Area.
- d. Forest health conditions and trends analysis.
- e. Recreational use assessments.
- f. Economic demand assessments.

Revisions to management direction in Section 4 of RSFMPs should provide specific language to achieve landscape-level goals (as expressed by the plans listed in subsection 4a above) through compartment-level prescriptions, including the following examples:

- a. Current forest cover type acres within each MA,
- b. Special Resource Area acreages within each MA,
- c. Projected sums of cover type acreages within each MA at the end of the 10-year planning period,
- d. Treatments to achieve the projected sums of cover type acreages within each MA at the end of the 10-year planning period,
- e. Detailed descriptions of cover type maintenance, expansion, conversion or natural succession, and management for achieving featured species habitat objectives.

Acreages must be estimated where possible, recognizing that treatments often serve multiple objectives (e.g. age class balancing and provision of wildlife habitat such as in the case of aspen management) and some general objectives may not be easily quantified at the acreage level (e.g. within-stand retention of biodiversity and landscape level diversity).

Management direction will be consistent with divisional program goals and objectives for resource uses. Where there are conflicts regarding disparate regional goals and objectives, attempts at resolution should first occur at the District Supervisor level. Where resolution at the District level is not successful, conflict resolution shall be elevated to the level of divisional field coordinators. The Resource Bureau Management Team has the final decision-making authority for program-level conflicts that cannot be resolved by field staff.

Scope: (All State Forest Land and Affected Divisions): State Forest Land Other: Michigan lands other than State-owned

DNR – FRD DNR – Wildlife DNR – Fish DNR – Law DNR – PRD

Responsibility and Role: (Staff who will implement or supervise this instruction)

Job Title/Division	Role
All DNR personnel within an Ecoregion	All staff will participate in implementing the plan through on-the-ground operations. Select staff will participate in revision of the plans. All staff will have opportunity for input and need an awareness of regional planning processes.
FRD Inventory and Planning Specialists & Wildlife Ecologists	Document and summarize the revisions to regional planning processes and assist with the review of the regional plans through the Ecoregional Planning Teams.
Other specialists	Assist with the development of particular plan sections pertaining to specialty.
Ecoregional Planning Team: Wildlife Mgt Unit Ecologist/Planner (WE) FRD Inv. & Planning Specialist (IPS) Lansing FRD Cert. planner (FCP) FD representative	Revise Regional State Forest Management Plans: WE and IPS – Draw on field-based Division resources to revise local sections of plan and integrate with statewide components. FCP – Draw on Lansing and other Division resources to revise statewide components of plans and integrate with regional sections. Assures compliance with legislation and compatibility with certification requirements.
DNR Director	Approves regional plans.

Training/Skills: (Those required to accomplish work instruction)

Item:	Brief Description of Skill or Course	Exists/New
Familiarity with OI, FIA, & T-Sale Data	Good computer skills with databases	<input type="checkbox"/> E <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N
GIS/Analysis Skills	ArcView/ArcInfo	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> N
Models/Modeling	Skills or knowledge of resource models and modeling	<input type="checkbox"/> E <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N
Facilitation Training	Facilitate meetings with stakeholders-internal and external	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> N
Plan process	Review planning process with Department staff	<input type="checkbox"/> E <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N

References:

- 2008 Michigan State Forest Management Plan
- Part 525, Statewide Forest Resources Plan, NREPA.
- A Comprehensive Summary of the DNR Planning Process for Natural Resources Management in Michigan
- Regional state forest management plans
- Current suite of work instructions.

Monitoring:

- Reporting, monitoring, analyzing, and adapting management would take place at all 3 levels-FMU (management areas), Ecoregion and Statewide. Monitoring of the regional plans will be the primary responsibility of the Forest Resources Division (FRD). Specifics of this will be outlined in Section 6 of the plans.
 - Subsequent review and revision of the process will be the responsibility of the FRD Forest Planning and Operations Section.
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Records:

- Public comments
 - Public meeting notes and comments
 - Documentation of plan approvals
 - Maps and background documents
 - Analysis results
 - Draft and final plan documents
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