

## CRITERIA AND PROCESS FOR DETERMINING PRIORITY OF ACQUISITIONS

### A. Forest Legacy Project Selection Criteria

Each project proposal will receive a qualitative ranking based on the extent to which it addresses the criteria. These guidelines will be further revised as experience dictates.

1. **FLA Area Inclusion:** The proposed property boundary must lie, at least in part, within a defined Forest Legacy Area.
2. **\*Willing Landowner:** Written expression of interest must be received from the landowner.
3. **\*Easement Condition:** Conservation easement terms must be clearly consistent with FLP guidelines.
4. **\*Plan Quality:** The land management plan must encourage active forest stewardship through compliance with Forest Stewardship Program plan guidelines.
5. **\*Money Leverage:** At least 25% of the project costs must be secured from non-federal cash or in-kind sources.
6. **\*Threat of Conversion to Non-Forest Use:** The proposal must demonstrate that the traditional uses of the forest are likely to become diminished or impossible to continue in the foreseeable future.
7. **\*Readiness:** Proposal must clearly describe the current status of project development and the timeline for transaction completion.
8. **\*Value of Project:** Proposal must clearly describe the cost-benefit relationships of the project.
9. **\*Size:** Size of the parcel will be given a value in ranking of the proposals submitted. Larger parcels will be given a higher value than smaller parcels. Smaller parcels may be given a high value during ranking based upon the other criteria.
10. **Forest Type:** Forest types will be ranked using a numbered grading system based upon forest types in Michigan and their economic and ecological values.
11. **Forest Condition:** Current condition of the forested area and its use will be graded on a numbering system.
12. **Continuity with Other Protected Lands:** Proposed lands which are contiguous or adjacent to other public and protected lands will be given a higher point value than those that do not border public or protected lands.
13. **Wildlife Habitat:** Proposed lands, which demonstrate important habitat to wildlife, or demonstrate a high diversity of wildlife species on the land will be given a higher ranking than those lands which do not contain significant wildlife habitat.
14. **Urgency:** Submitted projects will be given consideration dependent on the urgency of the project need, i.e. projects with an immediate

danger of development or other conversion to non-forest uses will be given a higher ranking than projects with a lesser threat of conversion.

15. **Partnership:** Partnerships with other management agencies, either local or state/federal, or partnerships with other conservation organizations, will be given a higher ranking than those that are relying solely on the FLP.
16. **Community Support:** Projects that demonstrate support and/or acceptance from surrounding landowners or communities will be given a higher ranking than projects that have little or no acceptance from local community groups.
17. **Scenic Resources:** Proposed properties which have a positive aesthetic appearance or those properties which would preserve an overall positive aesthetic appearance to the surrounding areas will be given higher ranking than areas that do not, or would not promote a positive aesthetic appearance.
18. **Ecological/Environmental Significance and Resources:** Projects that demonstrate the occurrence of significant ecologic or environmental resources will be given a higher ranking than projects that do not have significant quantities or qualities of ecologic or environmental resources.
19. **Economic Significance:** Project areas which can demonstrate a significant economic impact through traditional forest use will be given a higher consideration than projects which will not provide economic returns from forest products or traditional forest uses.
20. **Aquatic Resources:** Submitted project plans which show a demonstrated effort to protect or enhance aquatic resources such as lakes, rivers, wetland areas and streams, will be given a higher ranking and consideration than projects which do not.
21. **Historic Land Use:** Lands which have demonstrated a historic and ongoing traditional forestry land use, and which ensure that such uses will continue, will be given a higher consideration in the ranking procedure than lands which have not historically demonstrated traditional forest uses.
22. **Public Access:** Project areas that allow public access for recreational, educational, or other use of the subject property, or use of adjacent public lands will be ranked higher than plans that do not allow for access.
23. **Water Quality Protection:** Submitted project plans which show a demonstrated effort to protect or enhance water quality resources in lakes, rivers, and streams, will be given a higher ranking and consideration than projects which do not.
24. **Cultural Resources:** Project areas which contain significant cultural resources, such as historic sites or archeological resources, will be given a higher consideration than project areas which do not contain these resources.

25. **Other Public Values:** Other resources or assets contained within a proposed project area, or proposed project plan, will give additional ranking points to the project at the discretion of the SFSAC members.

## **B. Forest Legacy Project Selection - Project Application and Review Process**

The Michigan Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee (SAC) will submit a prioritized list of potential Forest Legacy projects to the United States Forest Service-Cooperative Forestry. To ensure that Michigan considers a broad range of potential Forest Legacy projects, the Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee will use two methods to identify and consider potential Forest Legacy projects:

1. Each year, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) will submit potential projects to the SAC that the MDNR and its land protection partners have identified through negotiations with private landowners owning forested areas.
2. Once each year, the SAC will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP)

Using either of the two processes described above, new projects must develop a proposal in the format described below and submit said proposal to the MDNR by June 1 of each calendar year. Proposals submitted after that date will be put into the list of potential projects for the following calendar year. **However, an exception will be made for projects proposed for funding during the federal fiscal year of 2004. For FY 2004, the MDNR and the SAC will work with its land conservation partners and landowners to receive proposed projects by no later than September 15, 2003.**

However, all interested parties should review the minimum eligibility requirements for participation in Michigan's Forest Legacy Program (see **Appendix D**) prior to initiating any expense in submitting a proposal for consideration. As part of the application process and format, all applicants must submit 4 copies of the following information for each parcel (see **Appendix C** as reference) :

- A. Summary of the Project
- B. Description of how the proposed project meets Minimum Eligibility Criteria Standards
- C. Description of how the proposed project addresses each of Michigan's scoring criteria
- D. Completion of Landowner Rights Retention Form
- E. Summary of a state-approved Forest Stewardship or Multi-Resource Management Plan
- F. Map of the proposed project area
- G. Copy of a county road map (s) indicating the location of the property

- H. Copy of plat or survey map of the parcel
- I. Copy of the “last deed of record” for the parcel
- J. An aerial photo of the proposed project area

Proposals will be evaluated and scored by a subcommittee of the SAC (see **Appendix E**). Numeric scores and assessment of each project (including a section regarding the project’s readiness for easement/fee acquisition) will be forwarded to the SAC for a final decision on the selection and prioritization of that year’s potential projects. Applicants will be notified of the Committee’s project decisions by September 1 of that application year. Furthermore, the SAC will submit a prioritized list, including funding levels, of potential projects to the United States Forest Service for funding in the following fiscal year.