

COLORADO LANDOWNER FOREST STEWARDSHIP PLAN (LFSP) GUIDELINES

Introduction

Forest Stewardship Management Plans are plans developed for the landowner; to guide and assist the landowner to actively manage their forest, woody vegetation, and associated resources. The following outline is provided to facilitate the preparation of a forest management plan that meets the requirements of the Colorado Forest Agriculture Program and the Forest Stewardship Program. **Items related to, or required by the Forest Agriculture (Forest Ag) Program are in italics.**

For Forest Ag:

According to Colorado Revised Statute CRS 39-1-102, the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) is responsible for developing and implementing the Colorado Forest Agriculture Classification Program.

CRS 39-1-102 further defines a forest management plan ...an agreement which includes a plan to aid the owner of forest land in increasing the health, vigor, and beauty of such forest land through use of forest management practices and which has either been executed between the owner of forest land and the Colorado State Forest Service, or executed between the owner of forest land and a professional forester, and has been reviewed and has received a favorable recommendation from the Colorado State Forest Service.

LFSP Purpose:

To document, in a manner comprehensible to the landowner and subsequent forest managers, the current health and productivity, the desired future condition and the forest management practices recommended to achieve that future condition on a proposed property. The plan records the landowner objectives, the inventory of resources, and the management decisions, or schedule, made by the landowner and the resource professional to achieve the objectives. It also guides the landowner as to which management activities are to be completed each year.

Plan Considerations:

1. The plan should be written for all land managed as a unit, even if stratified into multiple management areas. This may include blocks of land that are not necessarily contiguous. *For Forest Ag: Parcels less than forty acres must be contiguous (see FAQs).*
2. A plan may cover more than one landowner property if the combined properties are to be managed as a unit. *For Forest Ag where two or more separate legal entities are under one umbrella plan: each entity must have its own implementation schedule and annual work plan.*

3. The plan is intended to be a working document and should be amended as necessary, by the landowner(s) and the preparing resource professional, to take into account changing biological conditions, markets, disasters, and program practice updates or changes.

For Forest Ag:

A Forest Ag plan is a long term land management strategy that clearly communicates how landowner objectives are to be met. A minimum ten year implementation schedule is required, detailing practices to meet these objectives and with proposed methods for accomplishment. Deviations due to unforeseen circumstances must be communicated and documented. It should be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary (no longer than ten years) to accommodate changes in landowner objectives, wood product markets, and forest conditions.

4. The plan should give consideration to environmental, social and economic management principles.
5. The following outline lists all of the items that are to be included and addressed as appropriate. The plan does not have to follow the exact format, but close adherence to the outline will help ensure inclusion of required items and will expedite the plan review process. If a listed item/resource is not present on the property, or does not apply, a statement should be made indicating that fact.
6. It is understood that LFSP will vary in length and detail depending on diversity of natural resource needs and landowners experience and objectives. *To maintain status in the Forest Ag Program a landowner must understand his/her responsibilities, and adhere to his/her Annual Work Plan (AWP) (based on the priorities in section VI).*
7. In this day and age, it is recommended to submit plans to the landowner and the CSFS electronically (i.e. flash drive, CD, e-mail, etc.). This format may improve the review process. Additionally, electronic copies will be beneficial for the purpose of updating and making revisions, especially since management plans are dynamic documents.

Landowner Forest Stewardship Plan Outline

I. Cover Page

- A. Name, address and phone number of landowner(s). Include legal title as recorded on property deed.
- B. Legal description of property covered by plan.
- C. *For Forest Ag: include the parcel id number and respective acres*
- D. Total acres and forested acres
- E. County
- F. Preparing resource professional's name, address and phone number.
- G. Date plan was prepared—include revision dates as well
- H. The following Management Plan acceptance statement signed by the landowner:

I have reviewed this plan, which has been prepared at my request to guide my stewardship management activities, and I will voluntarily apply them on my property. I believe the management recommendations in this plan are appropriate to meet my goals and objectives, and will benefit the natural resources on my property. I intend to apply the recommended practices, thus helping me to be a good steward of the forest and associated resources entrusted to me on my property. I agree to follow this plan to ensure the sustainability of my management. *For Forest Ag include: I understand that this is an agreement as described in the CSFS Forest Ag Program guidelines and intend to implement the recommendations of this plan according to CRS 39-1-102.*

This acceptance statement should only be signed after the landowner has reviewed the plan AND you have reviewed and approved the plan.

- G. District Forester approval signature and date block

II. Table of Contents

III. Goals

Prioritized land management goals of landowner, including the desired future condition (vision). Encourage landowners to make a list of their **goals (property)** and **objectives (management unit)** that reflect their expectations, personal values, and the potential of their forest. Their goal statements should broadly summarize their vision for their land, but should be specific enough to know if they are reaching them. The objectives may vary for each management unit and may be identified within the management unit descriptions or where appropriate for the organization of the management plan.

For Forest Ag, a primary goal should be to produce and market tangible wood products consistent with the land's productivity, and for the purpose of obtaining a

profit. Be sure to specify the objectives for the appropriate management units to help achieve the tangible wood product goal, and specify forest products to be removed and produced to achieve desired future condition.

IV. General Description/Discussion

Provide a description of the property to help the landowner learn about the history and site conditions. This description must also address the following **resource and forest management concerns**:

- A. **Climatic** characteristics.
- B. Current and historical **land use** which created existing conditions.
- C. **Impact** on neighbors, and surrounding communities.
- D. **Social, economic, and market conditions** of county and how these factors may influence management decisions.
- E. Summary of **insect and disease** presence, damage, or risk, including information on significant incidents, historical and current.
- F. **Fire hazard** rating and risk factors of the area with statement of risk rating method.
- G. **Noxious weeds**, presence and abundance.
- H. **Wildlife** species observed on the property, extent of habitat, condition and potential impact of forest management activities to wildlife.
- I. **Threatened and Endangered species** (plant, fish and animal), presence or known habitat. Recommended practices will be done consistent with Federal and State laws.
- J. **Unique** recreational, scenic and aesthetic qualities present.
- K. Known **archeological or cultural** sites.

Maps and photos are important tools used to illustrate property location, description and other important information that can be displayed visually. There are many tools that are now available online to create maps. Where specific items are required in the plan, the same base maps may be utilized for consistent and clear spatial representation.

Delineate on a (topographic) map where appropriate:

- A. **General location** of the property covered by the plan. Delineate parcels if more than one.
For Forest Ag: County Assessor parcel delineation should also be illustrated on a map.
- B. **Management units** and/or compartments with corresponding acreage, and how management units were identified. Illustrate accessibility and describe operability.
Forest Ag: Areas that are inoperable should be clearly identified on a map and be accompanied with an explanation of the area's limiting factors.

- C. **Vegetation types** might represent the management units. If not, they need to be spatially represented on a map.
- D. **Cruise plot locations** to effectively compare inventories pre- and post- harvest activities, which is part of helping the management plan to function better as a living document.
- E. **Soil types.** A main source of information is the NRCS soil map with the NRCS written description. <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov>
- F. Access **roads and trails**, including a description of current or possible limitations.
- G. Aquatic, **riparian** or wetlands features on the property and any limitations or concerns needed to protect and maintain.
- H. **Features** such as buildings, fences, power lines, etc.
- I. *Optional:* **Recommended forest management activities**

V. Inventory

Discussion of current forest condition as inventoried and observed in each management unit or subunit. Describe understory and other vegetation issues and concerns for the resource descriptions below. Summarized data must be included in the appendix. Inventory of forest stands and other natural resources should be well documented and sufficient to adequately evaluate condition, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Forest products harvesting recommendations must be based on sufficient inventory data.

On operable forest land, forest tree and stand inventories must include a cruise of at least +/- 20 percent accuracy (or sampling error) at one standard deviation. This is a requirement for programs that have a forest product harvesting component. Additionally, inventories for properties with at least 40 acres of forest land must cruise at least 10 plots. While at least 10 plots is the cruising minimum for 40 acres of forest land, properties that are stratified need to have at least 3 plots per stratified stand for statistical purposes.

Minimum items to be included:

- A. Summary of each vegetative cover type area, which includes species, age, height, DBH, stocking level, condition, site index, acreage, and understory regeneration conditions particularly for managed stands.
INCLUDE VEGETATIVE TYPES ON A MAP.
- B. Type of timber cruise conducted (i.e., variable plot, fixed plot, strip), and how cruise accuracy was determined. **INCLUDE PLOT LOCATIONS ON A MAP.**
- C. **Soil types description.** Relate the soil type and description to the

management activities to be done on the ground. Describe any positive aspects, limitations or concerns. For example, a soil survey may include issues such as “Woodland Management and Productivity” where the soil type is identified and “management concerns”, related to Equipment Limitation, Seedling Mortality, Windthrow Hazard, and Plant Competition are identified and assigned a slight, moderate, or severe management concern.

VI. Recommended Treatments and Silvicultural Prescriptions

A. Specific management practices, general specifications, implemented by unit. Examples include:

- Short & long-term silvicultural strategy. (Even vs. Uneven aged mgmt)
- Planned harvest/regeneration methods and treatments.
- Planned intermediate treatments (including commercial, non-commercial, and pre-commercial activities and anticipated expenses)
- Planned “Rotation” & “cutting (entry) cycle”.
- Planned understory treatments.
- Planned maintenance activities.
- Planned activities involving fire.
- Herbicide, insecticide and integrated pest management.
- If cost-share is to be used what practices are specified.
- *For Forest Ag: Identify management recommendations should implementation get ahead of schedule.*

B. Additional or improved roads and trails needed to manage the property. Apply implementation of Colorado’s Best Management Practices and utilize Colorado’s Forest Roads Manual.

C. Restrictions or special practice requirements, including equipment types, implementation timing, weather limitations, roads conditions, erosion control, slash treatment, etc.

D. Specific implementation standards necessary to meet the landowner objectives.

E. Management recommendations are necessary for operable and inoperable areas.

F. *For Forest Ag: Include a short discussion on the type(s) of products being managed for, practices to produce these products and estimated amounts of products to be harvested. Include estimated costs and incoming revenues.*

VII. 10–Year Implementation Schedule, with projected dates for start and completion. This is an essential component for Forest Stewardship Program and Forest Ag Program plans. Provide recommendations with quantifiable measures and appropriate standards or specifications to accomplish recommended forest

management activity. For example, plant 150 ponderosa pine and/or Douglas-fir seedlings across 2 acres (75 seedlings per acre) in the spring. An effective implementation schedule provides a landowner adequate guidance yet enough flexibility to adapt to changing conditions. A sample implementation schedule, which can operate as an accomplishment record is available below section IX (Appendices).

VIII. Accomplishment Record

- A. Document all practices and activities that are achieved as your 10-Year Implementation Schedule and management plan is implemented. Include: Management Unit, Activities & Treatments, and completion dates. Quantify acres treated, product type and wood volumes harvested, prices received, costs, and revenues. Form 338.3 can be used as documentation to fulfill this item as required for Forest-Ag participation.

IX. Appendices

- A. Summarized inventory data for each management unit with error calculation (*required*). This data should include individual tree data for each plot, any other representations of the data (i.e. stock and stand tables, visual and other graphical representations, and any additional information about meeting the statistical requirements not already addressed in the body of the plan.
- B. Listing of individuals and agencies participating in evaluation and recommendations (*optional*)
- C. Bibliography of reference material utilized (*optional*).
- D. Glossary (*optional*).
- E. Photos—features identified in item V., before treatment, etc. (*optional*).
- F. Annual work plans, other forms and landowner assistance practice specifications. (*as needed*)
- G. Other pertinent information.

Annual Work Plan:

The landowner and the preparing resource professional should complete an annual work plan (AWP) based on sections VI and VII. The AWP will be consistent with the forest management plan and will list those items that will be implemented that year. Information to include is: Management Unit, Activity, Unit of Measurement and amount, date for start of activity and date of estimated completion, forest product(s) produced and quantity, objective for activity and other comments relating to the forest management plan and the scheduled activity(s).

Cost share practices should be noted in the AWP.

For Forest Ag:

The AWP form (CSFS 338.2) is submitted each year along with the landowner's request for inspection and program participation (CSFS form 338.1). For continuing participants submit a list of that year's accomplishments (CSFS 338.3). Completion of these forms is used by the CSFS to verify participation and landowner program compliance.

The AWP's merit will be determined according to how accurately it implements the approved management plan recommendations. Any changes or adjustments to the AWP due to unforeseen circumstances must be mutually agreed upon and documented as soon as they are realized for that calendar year.

Plan Revisions

Direction from the FSP National Standards and Guidelines state that management plans "be developed for a specified management period that adequately allows for progress with the landowner's long term stewardship objectives. It should "be reviewed and renewed, revised or rewritten at the end of a specified management period or sooner as needed, to be considered current".

Plans should be reviewed and amended as necessary, no longer than every ten years, to accommodate changes in landowner objectives, ownership changes, wood product markets, and changes in forest conditions. A ten-year plan revision should address the items in the management plan guidelines, and outlines a new ten-year implementation schedule. Address each property and unit individually, including inventory, depending on these changes.

Revise as necessary and cruise to reflect current conditions. In many cases, where conditions have not changed a walk-thru may suffice. If a future sale is planned or property boundaries are expanded, cruise the timber at the required statistical standard. Prior to the sale, cruise with the +/- 20% standard if not already completed. The work schedule portion of the plan should also identify future planning and inventory needs just as it identifies recommended implementation activities such as thinning, harvesting, etc.

Updating Process Checklist

- _____ Update cover page with correct current landowner and property information.
- _____ Update acceptance statement with signature and current date.
- _____ Adjust Table of Contents as needed.
- _____ Modify goal and objectives that best address desired future conditions.
- _____ Update changes in resource and forest management concerns (as identified in section IV General Description/Discussion) where appropriate.
- _____ Update maps for treated areas, modified property boundaries, modified management units, and any other required map item as needed.
- _____ Inventory property added to Forest Ag program, treated areas to evaluate meeting objectives including desired future conditions, and untreated areas specifically for emerging forest health issues. **Inventory should be well documented to adequately evaluate the forest condition, quantitatively and qualitatively (apply the +/- 20% accuracy at 1 standard deviation and document how cruise accuracy was determined in the appendix). Forest products harvesting recommendations must be based on inventory data.**
- _____ Reassess management and silvicultural priorities and update implementation schedule to help achieve desired future conditions and other landowner objectives consistent with the program.