

Kansas Forest Service Guidelines for Forest Stewardship Management Plan Development

2008

The purpose of a Forest Stewardship Management Plan is to provide long-range management recommendations for non-industrial private forest landowners (NIPF). In Kansas NIPF landowners own 94% of the forest land in Kansas. NIPF landowners can include private individuals, groups, associations, corporations, and Indian tribes or native groups. NIPF landowners do not include corporations whose stock is traded publicly or legal entities principally engaged in the production of wood products. Plans are prepared by a resource professional, generally a Kansas Forest Service District Forester, in consultation with the forest landowner. The State Forester has given District Foresters the responsibility to approve plans. The landowner's management objectives and goals for the wooded acreage are the foundation upon which the plan is built. Recommendations in the plan are based on these objectives and goals and the information collected during reconnaissance of the property. All plans will be prepared in accordance with national program standards and guidelines.

National standards require descriptions and recommendations on a variety of resources. Most Kansas Forest Service foresters have educational backgrounds in forest management. The Kansas Forest Service does not have the expertise to provide detailed descriptions or recommendations for all the natural resources that the national standards list. For this reason plans will provide landowners contact information for natural resource professionals who do have expertise in areas such as fisheries and range. Furthermore, the USDA/FS indicates that "plan acres may only include lands with existing forest cover or lands suitable for growing trees (including agroforestry) and only when the plan provides prescriptions for these areas. Closely related lands may also be considered as plan acres when a plan contains specific recommendations to enhance wildlife, recreation or other values of a landowner's forest. This would include wildlife openings, riparian areas, wetlands, roadways, and power-line right of ways." It should also be recognized that not all lands will include all the resources identified in the national standards. In those cases, the plan will indicate that the resource does not exist on the property.

The purpose of Forest Stewardship Plans is to assist private forest landowners to more actively manage their forest, and related resources; to keep these lands in a productive and healthy condition for present and future owners; and to increase the economic and environmental benefits of these lands. Forest Stewardship plans will assist the Kansas Forest Service in achieving its goal of sustainable forest lands for the people of Kansas.

Highlighted areas indicate that national standards and guidelines require that those components be included in plans. *Italicized* wording provides descriptions of plan components and procedure.

Forest Stewardship Management Plan

for

(Landowner's Name)



Introduction

*Indicate the purpose of the plan. In this section foresters may wish to encourage landowners to read the plan, edit it and return it to the forester's office with their signature. Forester's can then incorporate the landowner's suggestions into the plan and provide the landowner with a final copy. This is also a good place to explain how recommendations are made by management areas or timber stands which are identified on a map located in the appendix along with the practice plan. **Make sure to indicate that the plan is confidential and is not information that will be available to the public.** You may also wish to include a statement about their signature that reads "signing your name below indicates that you have read the plan and that you will make a good faith effort to implement the management recommendations for the woodlands on your property."*

Forest Stewardship Signatures

This Forest Stewardship Plan has been prepared at my request to assist in the management and protection of all natural resources on the property described in the plan. I believe that the recommendations in the plan will help me achieve my objectives and be a good steward of the land.

Landowner's Signature:

Date:

The landowner has been involved with the development of this Forest Stewardship Plan. I have discussed the plan with the landowner and the landowner understands their Forest Stewardship Management Plan.

Signature of Plan Author:

Date:

District Forester

*Signature Policy:
Foresters should encourage landowners to sign plans. However, landowner's signatures are not required by the national program standards and guidelines. National standards do require that each plan be approved by the State Forester or their designee. In Kansas, District Foresters are responsible for approving plans. Plan approval is expressed by the District Forester's signature. For this reason every plan must be signed by the District Forester. It is acceptable for other natural resource professionals to prepare plans, but they must be approved by a District Forester.*

General Information

Landowner:

Address:

Telephone:

Fax:

E-mail:

Date of Plan:

Plan Prepared By:

Address:

Telephone:

Fax:

E-mail:

Date of Site Visit:

Landowner Goals/Objectives

*List the landowners goals and objectives for their **forested acreage and potential afforestation areas**. Determining a landowner's goals and objectives can be frustrating. Getting to know the landowner and the resource is the best way to help them establish goals and objectives.*

Objectives may vary for each management area. A landowner may begin considering objectives and goals prior to the foresters visit. This may be accomplished by mailing the landowner a "goals worksheet" or "landowner assessment worksheet" prior to a visit. Objectives may need to be prioritized or identified with a particular management area.

General Property Description and Recommendations

County:

HUC 8 Watershed:

Legal Description and General Directions to Property:

Total Ownership Acres:

Forested Acres:

Stewardship Plan Acres: *Includes the forested acres or potential afforestation acres with management prescriptions.*

History: *List current and historic land use, length of ownership, past forest management activities, timber sales, previous foresters or other natural resource professional contacts, and government or other conservation program history.*

General Property Description and Recommendations

Soils: Provide a general description of the major soil types as they relate to commercial timber production or agroforestry practices. Indicate the most productive soils and the species that are best suited for the soil type. NRCS conservation tree and shrub suitability groups and capability classes may be listed. List site index or projected growth if available. Indicate if a soils test is necessary. For detailed soil descriptions refer landowners to NRCS county soil surveys. Refer to the soils map in the plan.

Water: Describe the condition of riparian areas (both intermittent and perennial) wells, springs and ponds. Indicate any activities that are needed to protect or enhance water quality. Refer people to the State Conservation Commission's Wetland and Riparian Protection Program for bank stabilization practices.

Range: (Optional) Describe to the best of your ability the type of range that exists on the property. Make special note if you observe any noxious weeds or destructive grazing. Provide contact information for the local KDWP Wildlife Biologist, NRCS or KSU Extension specialist for specific recommendations.

Recreation: Describe any management activities that will increase the recreational value of the property. Examples of activities are trail construction, KDWP's Walk In Hunting Program, or stocking ponds for fishing. Address any objectives that relate to improving the aesthetic value of the property. Again reference other natural resource professionals when appropriate.

Fish & Wildlife: Describe the current wildlife habitat condition. Based on the landowner's objectives identify what habitat components are missing in relation to food, cover, water, space and their arrangement or juxtaposition to each other for specific species. Indicate any signs of wildlife you observed during reconnaissance. Consider the habitat offered by surrounding properties and its effect. Again reference KDWP wildlife biologists.

Forest Health/Protection: Indicate insect, disease, fire hazards, off-target herbicide problems, wildlife damage or destructive grazing that may effect the health and management of the woodlands. If specific problems are observed then control measures should be listed or appropriate publications added to the appendix.

General Property Description and Recommendations

Archeological, Cultural and Historical Sites: *Plan preparers must provide a legal description of the property to the local NRCS County Office to determine if any archeological, cultural or historical sites have been identified on the property. If a cultural resource does exist on the site the KSHS will review the plan and provide direction. Anita Frank is the KSHS contact and can be e-mailed at afrank@kshs.org or called at 785-272-8681 ext. 257. Forestry practices recommended in plans may not disturb cultural resource sites. All plans must indicate that Kansas State Historical Society has been contacted and whether or not an archeological, cultural or historic resource exists on the site. If foresters observe archeological, cultural or historical sites they should encourage landowners to protect and preserve the sites in accordance with state and federal laws. **Specific information that describes the site including the specific location should not be included in the plan.***

Wetlands: *NRCS estimates that only 5% of the wetlands in KS have been officially identified based on Clean Water Act or Food Security Act definitions. In 1994 Secretary Glickman placed a moratorium on wetland inventories so that determinations can only be made on a voluntary basis if requested by a landowner or for legal reasons when landowners who participate in programs associated with the Food Security Act violate laws. Plan preparers must provide a legal description of the property to the local NRCS District Conservationist to determine if a wetland determination has been made on the property. If a determination has been made, it should be noted in the plan and KFS must avoid making any recommendations that might lead to draining water off the wetland. **All plans must indicate that NRCS has been contacted and the wetland determination status.** If obvious wetland conditions exist (wetland plants, hydric soils-water stands for 7 days every other year, etc.), foresters may wish to encourage landowners to seek a wetland determination by NRCS. Determinations are free and voluntary. Determinations are generally labeled as “prior converted” or “farmed wetland”. If existing drainage work has been done prior to 1985, landowners generally don’t mind whether a wetland determination is made. However, some landowners may be reluctant to have determinations made on areas not yet drained. Refer to KDWP Wildlife Biologists and programs like WRP and USFWS Partners.*

General Property Description and Recommendations

Threatened and Endangered Species: Refer to the Kansas Heritage data base maps to determine if the plan occurs in a T & E or designated critical habitat area. If it does and the landowner will be implementing a forestry practice call or e-mail Kristen Hase with KDWP at 620-672-0710 or kristenm@wp.state.ks.us. Provide the specific location and objective of the forestry practice. They will tell you if a T & E species occurs on that site and if the forestry practice will effect it in any way.

KDWP may request a copy of the plan. Their address is Environmental Services Section, 512 SE 25th Ave., Pratt, KS 67124-8174; Fax : 620-672-2972.

The plan should contain the following statement: **“The Kansas Heritage data base has been consulted and T & E species do/do not occur on this property”**. Remember that just because a T & E species is not listed in the data base, does not necessarily mean there are none on the property. Foresters may wish to indicate whether or not T & E species were observed during the visit. The plan may also fall into an area designated as “critical habitat” for a T & E species by KDWP. Critical habitat is an area that either supports a self-sustaining population or is essential for the conservation of a T & E species. If critical habitat or a T&E species occurs on the property, foresters may want to include information about their habitat requirements. For example, “the eastern spotted skunk prefers forest edges and upland prairie grasslands, especially where rock outcrops and shrub clumps are present. It relies heavily on riparian forests, woody fencerows, odd areas and abandoned farm buildings”. Information on T & E species may be obtained from KDWP fact sheets. Foresters should maintain two sets of fact sheets for their districts, one providing specific information about individual T & E species and the other listing T & E species known or likely to occur by county. These fact sheets may also be included in the appendix.

Management Area Prescriptions for Timber Stands or Tree Plantings

Area A - Recommendations for a specific area or timber stand should be made whenever there is a significant change in forest types (upland, bottomland, eastern red cedar/hardwood, oak/hickory, etc.), stand age or condition, past management, soil type or land use (cropland to be planted to trees). Areas should be identified by letters or numbers that correspond to the map. For some plans there may only be one management area.

Acres: List the number of acres in the timber stand or field to be planted to trees.

Objective: List the management objectives of the stand or tree planting and the desired future condition.

Stand/Area Description: National standards suggest that stand description should be based on a “reliable field inventory”. Due to the small size of most woodland tracts in Kansas and the heavy work load of KFS foresters, a random sample inventory is not required. However, based on a reconnaissance of the woodland, foresters should include as much of the following information about stand description as possible. The **dominant tree species** and their **size classes**, **average stand age**, **stocking** (# trees/acre), **% of desirable/undesirable species**, **health**(grazing, herbicide damage, etc.), **potential productivity of the site for commercial timber** (site index if available), **the quality of the timber**, **growth rate**, the **reproductive capacity** or reproductive status of the stand. If the landowner’s objectives include areas not in timber, describe the landuse and cover type(cropland, pasture, etc.), and the potential productivity of the site for commercial timber or agroforestry practices. For windbreaks describe **rows** by **species**, **spacing** (within and between), **average d.b.h. and height**, **age**, **percent missing** (within row), **regeneration/understory development** (species, size, stems/acre).

Recommendations: Provide prescriptions for the next 5 years based on the landowner’s objectives and include a date when each activity or recommendation will be completed. Recommendations may be provided in a table or paragraph format. Recommendations should consider afforestation, reforestation, timber stand improvement, timber harvest, protection (wildfire, destructive grazing, off-target herbicide damage), conservation programs that help the landowner’s reach their objectives by providing financial incentives to implement recommendations. **If necessary list additional recommendations for resource elements (wildlife, water, etc.) described under General Property Description and Recommendations.** If practical and useful to the landowner, long-term prescriptions and completion dates can be provided up to 10 years from the time the plan is written, or even to the time of rotation. **Detailed recommendations for implementing forestry practices (tree planting, timber stand improvement, etc.) should be listed in a separate practice plan included in the appendix.**

Management Area Prescriptions for Timber Stands or Tree Plantings

Listed below is an example of prescriptions and completion dates in a table format.

| Summary of Recommendations and Project Dates for Completion | | | |
|---|-------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Area/ Stand | Description | Objective/Recommendation | Completion Date |

Summary

Emphasize the importance of implementing the plan, the social and economic benefits of good management and any other information that will inspire the landowner to action.

Appendix

The appendix may include a variety of information. Listed below is a check list of some items to consider including.

- ✓ **Maps:** A map (usually an aerial photo) should include a legend that clearly labels all items of interest. Property boundaries, management area boundaries, soils, streams, ponds, roads, and trails, buildings, wells and fences should be clearly identified on the map. Landowner's name, scale and legal description, should also be listed. A USGS 1:24,000 topographic map and soils map may also be included in this section of the appendix.
- ✓ **Publications, Fact Sheets and Lists:** Include publications and fact sheets (T & E species, etc.) that will help landowners reach their management objectives and lists like Kansas Timber Buyers and Consulting Foresters.
- ✓ **Glossary of Technical Terms:** A glossary of forestry terms may be included, however, it is best to limit the use of technical jargon.

Appendix

- ✓ **Woodland Owner Associations:** *Encouraging landowners to join organizations such as Tree Farm , Walnut Council, or the Kansas Forest Products Association can often help them reach their objectives and become better managers of their woodland. When appropriate include information about these organizations in the appendix and list their web sites.*
- ✓ **Practice Plans:** *When appropriate include specific plans that help the landowner implement the recommendations in the Forest Stewardship Plan. These could be tree planting plans or timber stand improvement plans. It is important to include cost estimates within each practice plan.*
- ✓ **Cost Share Programs:** *List additional information about cost-share programs appropriate for the landowner's management objectives.*
- ✓ **Where to Get Additional Help:** *List contact information for other natural resource assistance pertinent to the landowner's management objectives. This may include the local KDWP Wildlife Biologist, NRCS District Conservationist, etc.*
- ✓ **Tax Information:** *Include appropriate references for tax information such as the National Timber Tax Website <http://www.timbertax.org>; Depletion Accounts: A Guide for Consulting Foresters and Landowners, North Central Regional Publication 609, and Minimizing Federal Income Tax for Landowners, North Central Regional Publication 343 Michigan State University, Department of Forestry; Forest Landowner's Guide to the Federal Income Tax, USDA/FS, AG Handbook #718; Estate Planning for Forest Landowners, USDA/FS, Southern Forest Experiment Station, General Technical Report S0-97.*
- ✓ **Federal or State Regulatory Programs:** *If appropriate include additional information/laws pertaining to archeological, cultural and historical sites; wetlands; threatened and endangered species; and any permits necessary for the landowner to have to complete forestry practices recommended in the plan.*
- ✓ **Web Sites:** *If appropriate list the KFS web site and other pertinent web sites that can help the educate the landowner. A great web site has been created for woodland owners who live in the northeastern United States. The site includes states like Missouri, Iowa, Indiana, and Illinois. The address is <http://www.na.fs.fed.us/pubs/misc/ir/index.htm>.*