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Renee Williams



Kentucky Natural Resources Conservation Service

The Need for a Plan

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Land ownership of any kind is a large responsibility, and forest ownership in particular comes with its own joys and challenges. Whether enjoying a crisp fall morning while the leaves are ablaze or the deep shade by a creek on a hot summer day, there are many small moments that can make wonderful memories for any landowner. Forests also need periodic management to ensure you and future generations can continue to enjoy the benefits forest ownership provides, regardless of your personal reasons for owning forestland. Perhaps you desire a forest that can provide future income from harvesting valuable and high-quality timber or to have the best wild-life habitat for a whole host of species. Maybe you enjoy your forestland as a getaway from the daily grind, a place to bring family and friends to surround yourselves with nature, or even as a future place to retire. Your reasons could be these, many more, or even all the above.

A forest management plan is a way to begin to understand the condition of your forest, how your forest grew into that condition, and what conservation activities you can do over the short and long term to reach your ownership goals. Being a steward to the forest is often a lifelong endeavor; having a plan in place that is prepared by a forestry professional and that organizes and prioritizes the actions to take in your forest will make a lasting positive impact.

A forest management plan is organized into three parts. The first section is the most critical, in that it lays out your current and future goals and objectives. This should reflect your vision and the values you place on your proper-

ty. Individual goals are important, but creating a goal that incorporates input from family or other important users of the property and the future stewards of your forest can make a very powerful statement of purpose.

The second section is a brief history of the property, which is important to document so any legacy issues can be identified. Was the forest harvested heavily and certain important species of trees did not grow back? Was the property affected by an ice storm or windstorm? Maybe there was a disease outbreak, coal mining, or a forest fire. These are all disturbances that could shape the forest as it grows today.

This section will also document where roads and trails are located, any issues with access, and identify features that are important to note such as a picnic area, a favorite fishing pond, or a rock outcrop that offers a great view of the surrounding land.

A forestry professional also will inventory the forest itself. This inventory will tell you what kinds of trees you have and in what abundance, the sizes and the ages of the trees, and any specific issues such as disease outbreaks or invasive species that may be present. By having a detailed inventory and a snapshot of the state of the forest, management recommendations can then be made in the third section of the plan.

The final section will detail exactly what actions to take and when to best meet the management goals and vision for your forest you stated up front. Perhaps you

wish to grow the best and highest value timber that you can. By using the inventory information as well as looking at what soil types are present, the forestry professional may recommend that some trees be removed or killed to promote the best trees to thrive. They will tell you exactly how to do this, what trees to remove, and when to do this work.

In a Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) approved forest management plan, there will be a schedule of actions to take and there will be NRCS conservation practices listed. Recommendations in this schedule can be used to apply for NRCS financial assistance, and a forest management plan is a requirement for any forest landowner to receive funding from NRCS to practice conservation in their forest.

In Kentucky, there are multiple ways a landowner can obtain a forest management plan or have an older forest management plan updated to current standards. Perhaps you purchased or inherited your property from someone who had a plan, but your goals are different, or the property has never had a plan prepared of any kind.

NRCS financial assistance is available to help pay for the preparation of a plan by a private consulting forester who is registered with the agency as a Technical Service Provider. These fantastic men and women work directly with you as the landowner and the local NRCS office to write a plan that is technically sound, but also easy to follow and implement.

Kentucky NRCS also has a critical relationship with the Kentucky Division of Forestry. KDF foresters, at the request of the landowner and the local NRCS field office, can write a forest management plan that meets the NRCS requirements. The final option is to arrange for an NRCS forester to work directly with you to craft a management plan.

There are some locations in the state that do not have coverage by an NRCS forester, however, so some options may be limited. Regardless, if you wish to know what condition your forest is in, how it got to that state, and what you need to do to improve and conserve this amazing natural resource, NRCS will assist you in any way to get a plan prepared. To start the process of getting a new plan, updating an older plan, or to answer general questions about NRCS and forestland conservation, please stop by or contact your local NRCS field office to speak with any one of our great conservationists. To find your local NRCS field office or USDA service center, please visit offices.usda.gov.

We look forward to visiting with you and helping you start your journey to woodland conservation!



What's a forest management plan?

- Considers your ownership goals and capacity of the land
- A first step in managing your land
- An opportunity to connect with natural resource professionals

Connect with a Forester



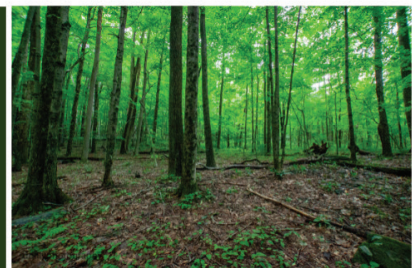
- Forest management plans are developed by qualified foresters
- The forester will work to incorporate your goals for the land in the plan
- Allows you to become aware of programs and organizations who can help you on your land



Your forest management plan

- Consists of three main parts, starting with your goals for the land
- Plans contain inventory information as well as natural resource concerns to be addressed
- Plans also contain detailed instructions on conservation practices to improve your land

Manage your land



- With a plan and a forester connection, you are on track to manage your land
- Your forester will show you how to implement conservation practices
- Your land will be healthier, more productive, and more resilient