

New York State

Forest Stewardship Plan

for

2003 thru 2008

NEW YORK'S 2003-2008 FOREST STEWARDSHIP PLAN

Executive Summary

The U.S. Forest Service is administering the Forest Stewardship Initiative to increase management planning on non-industrial private forest land and to increase the educational outreach efforts to the general public on stewardship and its need. At the state level, the federally allocated funds will be administered through the state forester, who is the Director of Division of Lands and Forests, New York Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). The advisory State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee (SFSCC) representing numerous, diverse organizations assists the State Forester in planning New York's implementation.

New York's general mission statement and the goals for the stewardship initiative demonstrate the integrated nature of stewardship and its importance to the land ethic of New York.

The Stewardship mission is to protect, perpetuate and enhance forest values through planned management of forest land in New York. Stewardship recognition and education will stimulate action and technical assistance that will benefit a variety of forest values. Forest values that will be enhanced are open space, endangered species, unique forest communities, water quality and supply, recreational opportunities, wood products, fish and wildlife habitats, and clean air.

The overall goals of this program are twofold: 1) to heighten the general public and landowner awareness of the need for a stewardship ethic in relation to land use, and positively influence their land use attitudes, and 2) to influence their positive behavior in regard to land use -- their practice of good stewardship.

New York's forest resource is impressive, 18.6 million acres of forest land and 13.3 million acres owned by 491,300 non-industrial private (NIPF) landowners. The state has almost 3 million acres of forest preserve. The state's forest industry generates 4 billion dollars annually. The forest resource is a major component in the generation of upstate tourism dollars amounting to 9 billion dollars each year. New York has 70,000 miles of streams and rivers along with 3.4 million acres of lakes and ponds. Unique habitats support over 600 rare plant species and 200 rare vertebrate species. Stewardship management for this vast resource will insure future generations a continued supply of all the resources associated with the forest.

In the first twelve years of the program approximately 1.5 million acres have

participated in the Forest Stewardship Program within the state. Inadequate and unstable funding at the state level threatens continued interest and program accomplishment. Landowners are influenced through the use of technical assistance and incentives. Cost sharing provides an effective trigger to encourage landowners to direct their discretionary monies and energies into managing their properties. These actions simply won't occur in substantial numbers without stable levels of financial and technical assistance.

New York's SFSCC will continue to be engaged to provide guidance as the State's plan is integrated with the whole forest community. Accomplishments and revisions to the stewardship plan will be outlined in an annual report to the forest service. The SFSCC will also be involved in the development of an approach for the implementation of the Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP) and fulfill its role in Forest Legacy.

NEW YORK'S FOREST STEWARDSHIP PLAN

ABSTRACT

DEC has received federal monies, through the U.S. Forest Service, to develop and implement this Forest Stewardship Plan to facilitate the sound management of Non-Industrial Private Forest Lands in New York State. This document articulates a broad stewardship mission for the management of private forest lands, and sets forth specific actions that will be undertaken during 2003 thru 2007 to: 1) educate landowners, other targeted audiences, and the general public on appropriate stewardship activities; and 2) promote the preparation of individual management plans for these forest lands. Contingent upon continued federal funding, the Forest Stewardship Plan will be revised as appropriate to further expand public and private efforts aimed at promoting the wise stewardship of New York's private forest resources."

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A) Introduction and Mission Statement

The national Forest Stewardship Program Guidelines states, "Forest stewardship is applying environmental and economic resource management principles to benefit current and future landowners and the public."

The Stewardship Mission is to protect, perpetuate and enhance forest values through planned management on private forest land in New York.

The stewardship ethic will also be promoted on public lands. Stewardship recognition, education will stimulate action and technical assistance that will benefit a variety of forest values. Forest amenities that will receive benefit include green space, endangered species and unique forest communities, water quality and supply, recreational opportunities, wood products, fish and wildlife habitats, and clean air. Targeted audiences of landowners, town boards, harvesters, individuals, and groups that influence forest land management as well as the general public will be informed of environmental, economic and social benefits from sound forest management. These efforts will be directed towards the Forest Stewardship Goal.

The right to own land is among the most treasured and most valued rights of all American citizens. The ownership of land not only grants landowners the privilege of

pursuing personal goals but also carries the responsibility of good stewardship. Life, and its supporting ecosystems, depends on stewardship or the ethic we apply to caring for our earth resources; consequently there is a moral obligation that we all become better stewards of our earth resources.

Forest management on non-industrial private forest (NIPF) lands will positively influence national concerns outlined in New York's mission statement. The program will improve our overall quality of life and at the same time meet future renewable resource demands. It will also contribute to rural community stability and economic diversity.

Good stewardship of forest lands will help provide this country's needs for clean water and air, healthy thriving populations of fish and wildlife, quality outdoor recreation experiences, and a continual supply of wood products.

Good stewardship contributes to the natural beauty of the United States and guards against soil erosion and depletion of soil productivity and protects our wetlands.

International concerns of global warming and the build-up of carbon dioxide can be partially ameliorated through good stewardship.

Good stewardship protects forests from insects, diseases, wildfire, overgrazing and poor harvesting practices.

Good stewardship conserves New York's biological diversity by protecting endangered species and rare forest communities.

New York's 15.4 million acres of timber land (forest land capable to growing a crop and not legally held in reserve) is held by government, 491,300 private (NIPF), and industry owners. Benefits other than income from the sale of timber have always been important to these owners. Forest management enhances the values forest owners enjoy, and can serve as an effective, efficient tool in attaining other resource goals. Some owners will forgo timber values in order to promote forest values, such as old growth forests, habitat, aesthetic and wild area qualities.

Public demands are growing for the goods and services that forest lands provide. But while demands are growing, the public and many landowners have a generally poor understanding of the potential for New York's forest lands and the Stewardship of them. A concerted effort aimed at landowners and the public will help New York forest lands be more fully appreciated and hence better managed and enjoyed for the many benefits they bring the state and the nation. While strides have been made to develop an appreciation for forest stewardship by owners and the general public, new efforts directed to increased audiences will further support and understanding for forest stewardship.

New York's stewardship goal, if it is to be achieved, requires a combined effort and support of both public and private landowners, public agencies, academic institutions, and other interest groups. This team work will in itself encourage a better future partnership between these groups and the management of New York's forest land. This effort will promote working towards common objectives of public and private interests, that until now have not been fully explored.

B) New York's Stewardship Goals

The overall goals of this program are twofold:

- 1) To heighten landowner awareness of the need for a stewardship ethic in relation to land use, and positively influence their land use attitudes.
- 2) To influence landowner's positive behavior in regard to land use -- their practice of good stewardship.

In broad terms general goals of the program, from which action plans follow, are to:

- 1) inform landowners, the general public, and targeted audiences such as schools, policy makers, and land resource managers on stewardship actions that will assure a healthy balance of forest resource values for present and future generations;
- 2) promote, in conjunction with stewardship outreach and education efforts, the preparation of forest management plans for non-industrial forest owners to meet their goals and society's needs;
- 3) protect soil, water, flora and fauna, and forest resources for future generations; and
- 4) encourage diversity and enhancement of all forest resource values, such as:
 - clean air;
 - clean water;
 - quality recreational opportunities;
 - quality fish habitats;
 - quality wildlife habitats;
 - vigorous, healthy, diverse forest ecosystems;
 - renewable forest products;
 - viable carbon sink to mitigate global

- warming concerns;
- urban interface zones;
- biological diversity by protecting endangered species and forest communities.

C) New York's Resource Statement

New York, the Empire State, is a diverse area, both in its resources and its people. There are over 18 million residents, the vast majority living in urban areas. Over 70 percent of the population live in the greater New York City metropolitan area and Long Island. Cities and smaller villages predominate the upstate population.

The state's natural resources and its diverse citizen population must both be addressed as this project is designed. Ninety-seven percent of New Yorkers do not own forest land; their influence over the policies affecting the resource are significant.

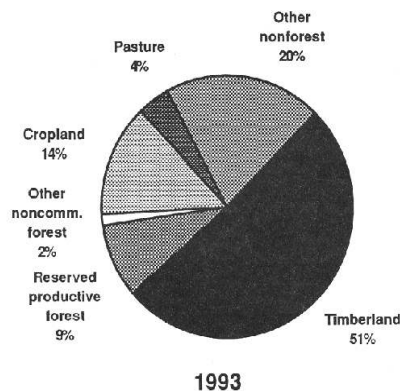
New York State:

- encompasses of 30 million acres
- has 18.6 million acres of forested land(62%)
- has 491,300 nonindustrial private forest (NIPF) landowners controlling 13.3 million forested acres
- contains 2.8 million acres of state owned "forever wild" Forest Preserve
- maintains 800,000 acres of multiple use State Forest and Wildlife Management Areas
- provides non-consumptive recreational use to untold millions
- has 2 million sportsman primarily dependent on the forest resource for their activities
- generates a 4 billion dollar forest industry, which is 6th in the nation
- is the 2nd largest producer of wood pulp
- has forest resources that provides 80,000 forest industry jobs
- has a 9 billion dollar upstate tourism industry
- manufactures a diverse line of forest products such as furniture baseball bats, paper for magazines, maple syrup and many others
- contains 3000 native plant species, 608 of which are rare

- supports 837 vertebrate species of wildlife, 200 of which are rare, and thousands of invertebrates, most of which have not yet been surveyed to determine their r
- has water resources that contain 70,000 miles of streams and rivers along with 3.4 million acres in lakes, ponds, and reservoirs

The chart below shows a graphic representation of forest land in New York. Approximately 16 percent, 3 million acres, of forest land is noncommercial, held as a public preserve. The remainder, 15) million is commercial forest land held by public agencies, industry, and non-industrial private forest landowner.

Forest Land in New



York

The rate of residential development is increasing across much of the State. The rate of housing development, both primary and vacation homes, has increased dramatically during the 1980's. The New York City metropolitan area and the large upstate centers: Syracuse, Rochester, Albany, and Buffalo, are expanding their urban influences. This development pressure has fragmented the forest resources, decreasing the available land for recreation, forest product harvesting, and other forest resources. Many of the new landowners, with their urban backgrounds, have attitudes and perceptions much different than rural residents, creating conflicts in views of acceptable land use.

There are a host of organizations working with landowners and the population with a concern for New York's natural resources. Public agencies, including federal, state and local, work directly with landowners and indirectly in policy development affecting New York's resources.

Private organizations, both business enterprises and non-profit groups deal with a variety of landowners, from large industrial holdings to small woodlot. The national

non-profit groups have their largest memberships where the population is, in urban centers.

New York's organizations, working within their frameworks, reach only a small percentage of landowners and people. An increase in their funds could provide the necessary staff and resources to expand their expertise and influence over New York's resources.

D) New York's Process Statement

The State Forester chairs the State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee (SFSCC) representing key leaders in natural resource positions. Committee members have been asked to serve on the basis of their known expertise and broad interests to assure representation of a wide range of New York's populace.

The State Forester, after receiving committee advice, establishes program priorities, prepares the Stewardship Plan, and directs specific projects, described in this document, which serve either to: 1) educate landowners, targeted audiences or the general public on appropriate stewardship activities; or 2) facilitate the implementation of stewardship actions through the preparation of individual management plans for forest landowners.

The committee will review the Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP) and make recommendations regarding practices applicable in New York. FLEP will provide a critical element to encourage implementation of on the ground sustainable forestry practices by NIPF landowners.

The committee will continue to be involved in its Forest Legacy role establishing eligibility criteria for the designation of forest areas in accordance with Section 7 paragraph (e) of the 1990 Farm Bill and activity in identification of tracts worthy for consideration under the Legacy program.

State Forester

Date