

Forest Stewardship Program

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forests remain healthy and continue to meet the needs of ours and future generations.

Forests and Trees

Forests encompass all that is fragile, from the tiniest microorganisms to the largest trees. When discussing forest management, it is important to distinguish between trees and forests.

Trees are renewable — they grow, die, and are replaced. The act of harvesting trees doesn't affect the life of the forest as much as how they are harvested.

Forest Stewardship challenges us to consider these natural processes in each decision we make. Through careful consideration and planning, we can continue to enrich the lives of all dependents of the forest — wildlife, humans, and generations yet to come.

Why do we need a Forest Stewardship Program?

More than 11.5 million acres of Pennsylvania's 16 million acres of forests belong to nearly a half million private landowners; however, the average ownership is just 23 acres.

Only an estimated 20 percent of the 11,000 timber harvests conducted annually on these lands involve a qualified forest manager. Should we be concerned that nearly 9,000 timber harvests occur annually without the benefit of professional resource management expertise? YES!

A trained resource professional can help to ensure that the landowner's objectives are met and that the future productivity of the forest is protected.

So, why is forest stewardship important to all Pennsylvanians? In addition to providing us with

many environmental and aesthetic benefits, our forests also make up an essential part of the state's economy. Pennsylvania's \$4.5 billion forest products industry employs over 100,000 people and produces more than 1 billion feet of lumber and over 780,000 tons of paper annually.

Hunting license revenues total over \$25 million each year, and countless dollars are spent on hunting supplies, transportation, and other essentials.

In addition, countless dollars are spent annually on tourism and other forms of recreation.

Forest Stewardship: A New Pennsylvania Program

The goal of the Forest Stewardship Program is to provide information, education, and technical assistance to encourage, assist, and recognize forest landowners who keep their lands and natural resources productive and healthy.

Landowner education is accomplished through workshops, multimedia public service messages, television and radio programs, and publications like this one.

Technical assistance for landowners is provided through state service foresters and other trained resource professionals. As part of the educational component of Pennsylvania's program, Penn State's School of Forest Resources, in conjunction with the Bureau of Forestry, develops and distributes stewardship educational materials, and conducts workshops for forest landowners.

The Forest Stewardship Program and the Stewardship Incentive Program (SIP) are two of several programs authorized under the Forestry Title of the 1990 Farm Bill. Both are nationally administered by the USDA Forest Service and are directed in Pennsylvania by the DER Bureau of Forestry with guidance from a statewide steering committee.

SIP is a cost-share program administered cooperatively in Pennsylvania through the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) and the Bureau of Forestry. In short, the Forest Stewardship Program encourages landowners to learn more about natural resource management, and offers direct assistance to those who wish to properly care for their lands.

Who can become a Forest Steward?

Any forest landowner can

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Adults also turn to forests and the natural beauty to seek escape from the demands of other people and society.

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