

Forest Stewardship Plan Criteria and Templates, one-year free membership to SC Tree Farm, Program Monitoring and Forest Stewardship Recognition

1. Forest Stewardship Plan Criteria.

All Forest Stewardship Plans must:

- Be prepared or verified as meeting the minimum standards of a Forest Stewardship Management Plan by a professional resource manager and be approved by the State Forester or a representative of the State Forester.
 - Consulting Forester must be on the SCFC Consulting Forester list.
- Document authorship.
- Include landowner information.
- Include location and plan maps to the stand level.
- Clearly State landowner objectives.
- For each Forested Stand:
 - Describe current and desired forest condition.
 - Include practices and activities aimed at reaching the desired forest condition or condition class.
 - Document a feasible strategy and timeline for each practice and activity implementation.
- Describe any suggested monitoring activities to be done by the forester or landowner.
- Be developed for a 10yr management period that adequately allows for progress with the landowner's long-term stewardship objectives.
- Be reviewed and renewed, revised or rewritten at the end of the specified management period or sooner, as needed, to be considered current.

2. Plan Elements

The plan preparer will consider, describe and evaluate resource elements present and their importance to the ownership. The extent to which management plans addresses these elements will depend upon their prevalence on the property and their importance with respect to the landowner's primary objectives. Plan elements to be considered include:

- Soil and water
- Biological diversity
- Range
- Agroforestry
- Aesthetic quality and desired Timber species
- Recreation
- Wood and fiber production
- Fish and wildlife
- Threatened and endangered species
- Forest health and invasive species

- Conservation-based estate planning / legacy planning information
- Timber taxes
- Archeological, cultural, and historic sites
- Wetlands
- Fire
- Carbon Sequestration & Climate Resilience
- Monitoring*
- Forests of Recognized Importance (FORI)**

*It is recommended to include standard language in the Forest Stewardship Plan informing the landowner of the possibility of monitoring visits to the property during the life of the plan. More information regarding monitoring is under number 8.

**When Forest Stewardship Management Plans are desired to align with American Tree Farm Standards, FORI must be considered. Forests of recognized importance (FORI) represent globally, regionally, and nationally significant large landscape areas of exceptional ecological, social, cultural, or biological values. These forests are evaluated at the landscape level, rather than at the stand level, and are recognized for a combination of unique values, rather than a single attribute. FORIs may include landscapes with exceptionally high concentrations of one or more of the following:

- Protected, rare, sensitive, or representative forest ecosystems such as riparian areas and wetland biotopes.
- Areas containing endemic species and critical habitats of multiple threatened or endangered plant and animal species, as identified under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) or other recognized listings.
- Recognized large-scale cultural or archeological sites including sites of human habitation, cities, burial grounds, and in situ artifacts.
- Areas containing identified and protected water resources upon which large metropolitan populations are dependent.
- Areas containing identified unique or geologic features including geysers, waterfalls, lava beds, caves, or craters.

While landowners are encouraged to contribute to or support the values that led to the FORI designation of the area, the FORI designation does not compel the landowner to take any actions.

3. Forest Stewardship Plan Templates

There are templates available that address all required plan criteria and elements. It's recommended to use a version of these when preparing a Forest Stewardship Management Plan.

- [FSP Template Link](#)

4. One-year free membership to SC Tree Farm

Once the landowner has an approved Forest Stewardship Management Plan, they are then eligible for a one-year free membership to SC Tree Farm. It is their responsibility to apply for this membership.

- [Flyer from tree farm](#)
- [SC Tree farm](#)

5. Monitoring

Selected properties will be visited and assessed by SC Forestry Commission Stewardship Foresters to verify that current forest conditions are consistent with landowner stewardship objectives and the result of sustainable management, as defined in the landowner's approved Forest Stewardship Management Plan. Visits will only be done with permission from the landowner or their representative. No personal information will be collected beyond the SC Forestry Commission such as landowner name or parcel ID, and all data collected will be under the Plan ID#, which contains no personal information. Visits to selected properties will yield a percentage of total acres visited that are being managed sustainably as defined by approved Forest Stewardship Management Plans. This percentage will be used as an indication of overall accomplishment in SC in terms of acres managed. The monitoring process is also an opportunity for the landowner to report to the stewardship forester any challenges they have had and to be recognized for the goals and objectives they have accomplished.

6. Forest Stewardship Recognition

The Forest Stewardship Program wants to recognize exemplary landowner forest stewards with a Forest Stewardship certificate and sign. Stewardship Foresters usually identify these landowners during the monitoring process, but all landowners within the Forest Stewardship Program qualify once they have made significant progress with their plan.