

Forest Management Programs for New Jersey Woodlot Owners

Forest Management Programs in New Jersey

- Farmland/woodland Assessment Program
- USDA-Forest Service Stewardship Program
- New Jersey Forest Stewardship Program



New Jersey's Farmland/woodland Assessment Program

1. At least five acres
2. "Actively devoted"
3. Ten-year forest management plan written by an 'approved forester'
4. Annual income requirement: \$500/first 5 acres, \$.50/acre for each additional acre
5. Annually submit proof of activity and income



The USDA-Forest Service Stewardship Program

1. A federal program initiated in 1991; administered by the individual states
2. Open to all private, non-industrial forest landowners
3. Five-acre minimum
4. No annual income requirement (no FA)



The USDA-Forest Service Stewardship Program

5. Written management plan doesn't require an 'approved forester'; but does require review and approval by NJ Forest Service
6. Besides serving the landowner's objectives, the plan must also meet specified criteria



The USDA-Forest Service Stewardship Program

7. These criteria are:

- Soil and Water
- Biological diversity
- Range
- Aesthetic quality
- Recreation
- Timber
- Fish and wildlife



The USDA-Forest Service Stewardship Program

- Threatened and endangered species
- Forest health
- Archeological, cultural and historic sites
- Wetlands
- Fire
- Carbon cycle



The USDA-Forest Service Stewardship Program

8. While income or producing a product is not required, the plan must address all the criteria
9. The program is not a cost-sharing program, but acceptance into the program qualifies the landowner for cost-share programs



The USDA-Forest Service Stewardship Program

10. Cost-share for management plans provided by the NJ Forest Stewardship Committee through the NJ Forestry Association
11. Cost-share for plans and management practices provided through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service



New Jersey's Forest Stewardship Program

- Governor signed The Forest Stewardship Act, a bill creating the program, this past January
- Program scheduled to 'start' 1 January, 2011
- Establishes a Forest Stewardship Advisory Council



New Jersey's Forest Stewardship Program

- Authorizes forest stewardship plans
- Council will develop certification program for forest landowners preparing and implementing a forest stewardship plan prepared according to specified guidelines
- Also will create the NJ Forest Stewardship Incentive Program to help implement the plan



New Jersey's Forest Stewardship Program

- Council will also advise the Commissioner on forestry matters and issues “to conserve and provide stewardship to NJ forest lands”
- Program requires Council and state forester to develop sustainability criteria and indicators; report at seven-year intervals



New Jersey's Forest Stewardship Program

- Also requires that any land acquired by a government entity or a qualifying tax-exempt non-profit organization with public funds to be managed with a certified plan



New Jersey's Forest Stewardship Program

- Further: exempts a certified landowner from municipal ordinances or resolutions regulating forest stewardship practices
- Appropriates \$650,000 for the incentive program



New Jersey's Forest Stewardship Program

- ***Perhaps the biggest impact:** will “expand the current farmland assessment program under the Farmland Assessment Act of 1964 to provide differential property tax assessment to landowners with five acres or more of forest land who implement an approved forest management plan and enter into a ten-year stewardship agreement”



New Jersey's Forest Stewardship Program

- **So what is the current status?**
 - The State Forester tasked with creating the new advisory committee
 - Together they have to develop all the rules, guidelines, criteria, indicators, procedures, etc.
 - Implementation target: 1 January, 2011; to date: not authorized



So, ... What Does All This Mean for NJ's Forest Landowners . . . And Tax Assessors?

- Three programs by which to gain woodlot management assistance
- Two programs can provide a means for lower property tax assessment
- All require meeting specified criteria, working with resource professionals, obtaining DEP approval
- Perhaps most importantly: result in helping to keep NJ's forests in forests



So, ... What Does All This Mean for NJ's Forest Landowners ... and Tax Assessors?

- What if I already have a forest management plan?
- If I want to participate in NJ's Forest Stewardship Program, can I still harvest and sell products?
- Will the programs be combined into one?



Questions?