

(IS-01) SETTING OBJECTIVES FOR MANAGING YOUR FOREST LAND

Forest stewardship is the managing of forest resources in a way that is, at once, economically expedient but conservative, and socially, environmentally, and ecologically responsible. As the owner or manager of forest land in Maryland, your practice of good forest stewardship is essential so that our human resource use doesn't threaten its use by future generations.

A forest steward...
 ∪ feels a sense of responsibility
 ∪ knows the opportunities
 ∪ is aware of the consequences

And most importantly... ∪ is guided by objectives

Developing objectives for
your property helps you to... ∪ Describe the purpose of ownership
 ∪ Help identify opportunities
 ∪ Frame your interest within the context of opportunities
 ∪ Is the essential pre-requisite for satisfying forest

management

When you call a forest or other natural resource professional to prepare a management plan for your property, it is a great help for you to have well thought-out, written objectives. For it is these objectives that will help the forester develop recommendations. Unfortunately, many landowners have no idea what their objectives are or how to develop them. This fact sheet will provide an easy method to help you verbalize your objectives, given the many possibilities.

Setting Objectives

Forest management objectives can be looked at in two ways (please refer to the table below).

First, according to the human values we want to achieve – those across the top of the table – Income, Investment, or Personal Satisfaction. *Second*, according to the resource benefit we want to maximize, listed down the side of the matrix.

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Forest Management Objectives Matrix

		Human Values		
		Income Production	Long-term Investment	Personal Satisfaction
Resource Benefits	Timber			
	Wildlife			
	Recreation			
	Aesthetics			

The matrix works like this: An owner might decide that he/she wants to manage timber resources for long-term investment and wildlife resources for personal satisfaction. We are picking a resource objective – timber – to achieve a human benefit objective – long term investment (see example 1).

The two examples below illustrate landowners with very different forest management objectives. Each has prioritized his/her top three objectives in order of importance. Given all the combinations, there are a possible 1,320 choices. After prioritizing objectives, each has written a simple statement that verbalizes each objective. These objectives will be the basis for developing a forest management plan.

Example 1

		Human Values		
		Income Production	Long-term Investment	Personal Satisfaction
Resource Benefits	Timber	2	1	
	Wildlife			3
	Recreation			
	Aesthetics			

Statement of Objectives

1. Enhance long-term investment potential of the timber resource.
2. Produce income from the sale of timber.
3. Get personal satisfaction through creation and enhancement of wildlife habitat.

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Example 2

		Human Values		
		Income Production	Long-term Investment	Personal Satisfaction
Resource Benefits	Timber			
	Wildlife			1
	Recreation			2
	Aesthetics		3	

Statement of Objectives

1. Create and maintain a diversity of habitats for wildlife.
2. Develop a system of hiking and riding trails.
3. Maintain vistas to enhance property values.

You can see from the two contrasting examples above that the objectives developed by each of these landowners would result in very different management recommendations by a foresters or other natural resource professional. Now, complete the forest matrix for yourself and verbalize your three objectives.

In general, landowners who choose objectives from the upper left of the matrix will be more active managers, while those who choose combinations from the lower right are more passive managers. Active managers will need fairly detailed information on which to make management decisions while passive managers need considerably less detail. This is why it is important to provide well thought-out objectives to the natural resource professional prior to the development of a forest management plan.

		Human Values		
		Income Production	Long-term Investment	Personal Satisfaction
Resource Benefits	Timber	Active Managers		
	Wildlife			
	Recreation		Passive Managers	
	Aesthetics			

Adapted by Jonathan S. Kays from *Planning to Assure Your Stewardship Extends Beyond Your Tenure*, by Thom McEvoy, University of Vermont.

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