



Forest Management Plans

Maintaining your forested property by developing a Forest Management Plan

The Critical Areas Ordinance adopted on October 25th, 2004 generally does not change the jurisdiction of Forest Practice Permits in King County. Most Forest Practices will continue to be regulated by Washington Department of Natural Resources. In instances where King County does have jurisdiction over forest practices, the new ordinances allow more flexibility for property owners practicing forestry under a Forest Management Plan. The ordinances also allows flexibility in firewood cutting in critical area buffers, in habitat restoration areas, and in vegetation removal for forest fire prevention. The Forest Management Plans emphasize a long term approach to growing healthy forests while protecting fish, wildlife, and water.

Applicability

Forest Management Plans are most applicable in the rural and forest production districts, however, anyone with forest resources can complete a Forest Management Plan. The Forest Management Plan itself does not address residential development. If you will be conducting forestry along with development and/or agricultural activities, you can combine the elements of Farm, Forest, and Rural Stewardship Plans into one plan, rather than completing multiple plans.

Goals and Objectives of the Forest Management Plan

Forest Management Plans will strive to meet the following goals and objectives:

1. Institute practices to protect natural resources of the site including: soil, water, fish and wildlife, natural vegetation, recreation, and aesthetic resources.
2. Balance the economic, ecological and social values of forested parcels.
3. Maintain healthy forest ecosystems through active management.
4. Increase economic, environmental, and social benefits the property provides.
5. Where feasible, coordinate forest management across property boundaries.
6. Manage forest resources for long-term stewardship beyond the tenure of current ownership.
7. Maintain natural vegetation systems by addressing removal of noxious and invasive plant species.

Benefit of Forest Management Planning

Forest Management Plans are voluntary and they provide certain benefits to forest landowners. Developing a Forest Management Plan will help you clarify short and long-term objectives for your property. Through the process, you inventory current conditions of your forest resources, determine which resource protection or enhancement measures would be beneficial on your property, and develop an organized sequence of activities to accomplish your objectives.

A forest management plan may help you achieve the following benefits:

- Tax benefits under the Public Benefit Rating System or Timberlands current use taxation program. Enrollment in this program could result in lowering your property taxes by 40-90% on the undeveloped portion of your property;
- Flexibility in firewood cutting in a critical area buffer, habitat restoration area, or vegetation removal for forest fire prevention;
- The ability to apply for a building permit within the Forest Production District;
- Eligibility for a King County Class 4G non-conversion permit;
- The ability to conduct forestry under Washington State Class 2, 3, or 4S Forest Practice permit or King County Class 4G non-conversion permit without being subject to a Forest Practice Moratorium.
- Application to the Transfer of Development Rights or Forest Legacy programs.
- Recognition as a "Stewardship Forest" (property sign and certificate).
- Ability to practice forestry in a resource tract of a cluster development or in resource area.

Preparing a Forest Stewardship Plan

There are several options for preparing a Forest Stewardship Plan:

- You can participate in Forest Stewardship Class with instruction and personalized coaching from natural resource professionals. In King County these classes are offered in cooperation with Washington State University Cooperative Extension, King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, and Washington State Department of Natural Resources.
- You can hire a natural resource consultant to prepare a plan for you.
- You can write your own plan. Technical assistance is available from King County foresters to help you know what to include and how to evaluate your resources.

More information

King County adopted a Forest Management Plan Public Rule in June 2002. It describes the requirements for forest stewardship or forest management plans to meet the requirements of several King County programs. Minor revisions to the rule will be made to reference the sections of the Critical Areas Ordinance that reference forest plans; however, the substance of the rule will remain largely unchanged.

For more information, please contact:

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More information is available online at <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/lands/forestry/Forestry-Plan.htm>

Alternative formats available upon request by calling 206-296-6519