

Forest Management Programs for New Jersey Woodlot Owners

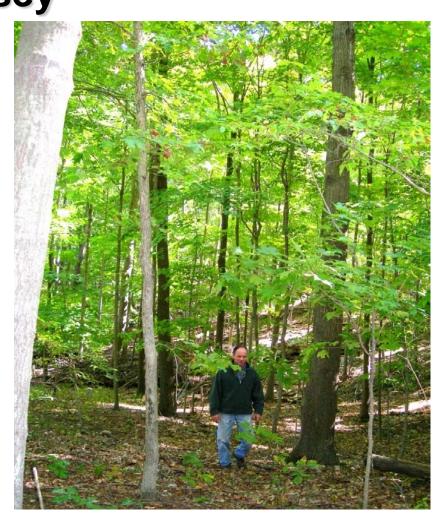


Mark C. Vodak, Ph.D. Rutgers Cooperative Extension 31 August, 2010



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"
- 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





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





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





7. These criteria are:

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





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





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



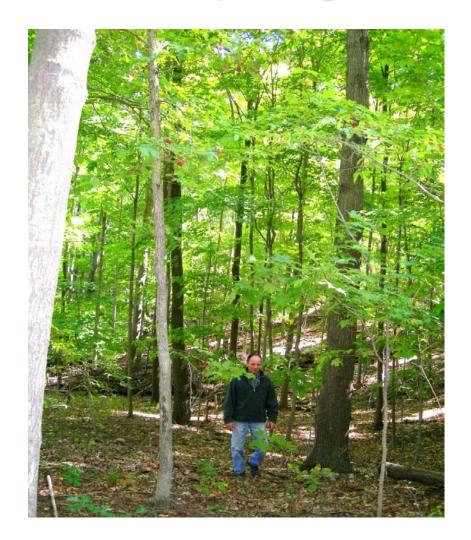


- 10. Cost-share for management plans provided by the NJ Forest Stewardship Committee through the NJ Forestry Association
- 11. Cost-share for plans and management practices provided through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service





- 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



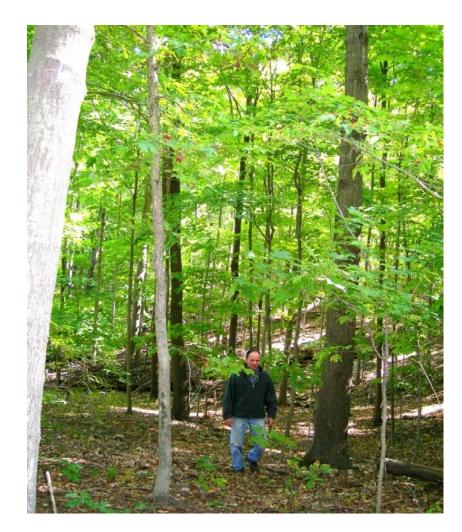


- Authorizes forest stewardship plans
- Council will develop certification program for forest landowners preparing and implementing a forest stewardship plan prepared according to specified guidelines
- Also will create the NJ
 Forest Stewardship
 Incentive Program to help
 implement the plan





- 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



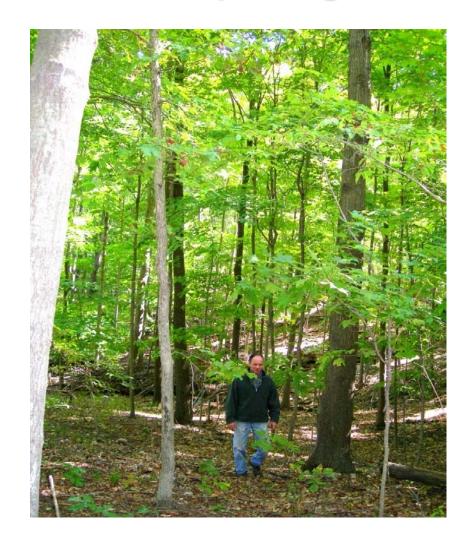


 Also requires that any land acquired by a government entity or a qualifying taxexempt non-profit organization with public funds to be managed with a certified plan



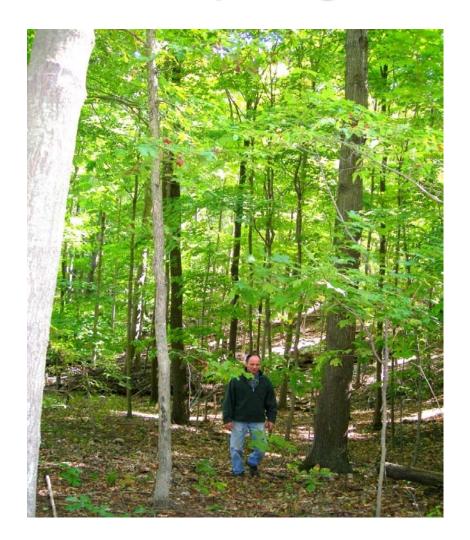


- Further: exempts a certified landowner from municipal ordinances or resolutions regulating forest stewardship practices
- Appropriates \$650,000 for the incentive program



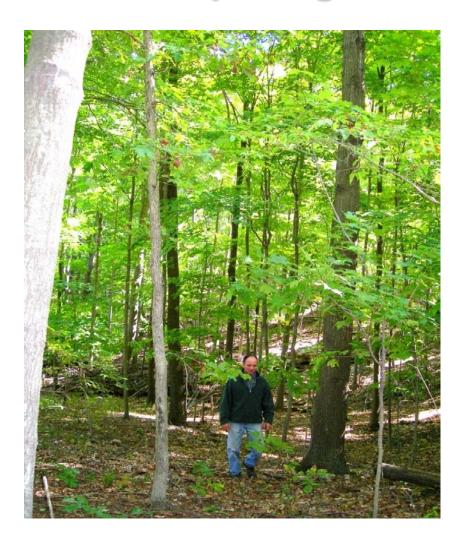


 *Perhaps the biggest impact: will "expand the current farmland assessment program under the Farmland Assessment Act of 1964 to provide differential property tax assessment to landowners with five acres or more of forest land who implement an approved forest management plan and enter into a ten-year stewardship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





- 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?



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