



Montana DNRC Forestry Division

FORESTRY ASSISTANCE

Biomass Utilization

Forest Pest Management

Forest Practices

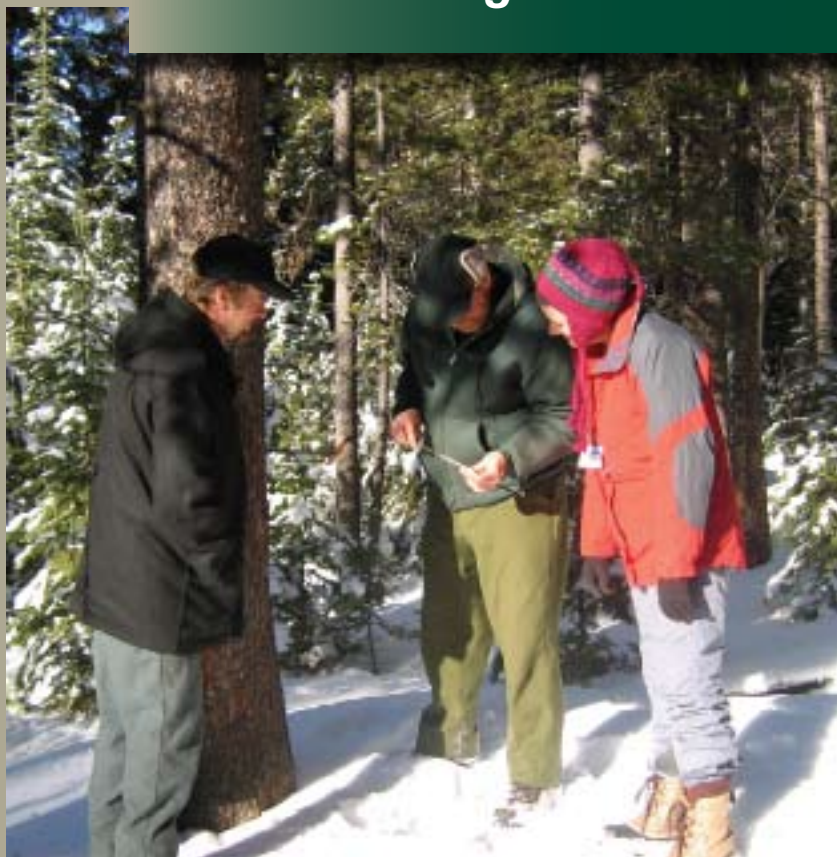
Forest Stewardship

Montana Conservation
Seedling Nursery

Urban and Community
Forestry

Forest Stewardship

***Helping Montana's Private Forest
Owners Reach Their Forest
Management Goals***



**Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
Forestry Division
Forestry Assistance Bureau
Forest Stewardship**

Over 5 million acres of Montana’s 23 million acres of forestland are privately owned, non-industrial forests. These “family forests” provide Montana and their owners with many benefits, including nearly a third of the state’s timber harvest. DNRC’s Forest Stewardship Program encourages long-term stewardship and informed management of private forestlands by providing information and education, technical assistance, and financial assistance to help landowners acquire personal knowledge about their forest resources and to develop and implement forest management plans.

DNRC works in close partnership with federal and state agencies and the private sector to deliver the Forest Stewardship Program. Together, the partners empower private forest owners through education, build commitment to informed forest management and to compliance with Montana’s forestry laws and forestry best management practices, and help private forest owners achieve their forest management goals. The Forest Stewardship Program also provides technical and financial assistance to family forest membership organizations such as the Montana Tree Farm System, the Montana Forest Owners Association, and the Forest Stewardship Foundation.

DNRC’s Service Forestry Bureau staff and Service Foresters in 6 Land Offices are responsible for implementing the Forest Stewardship Program.

/// Goal ///

Private forestlands are well managed, in part because of current information, education, and assistance given by DNRC professionals.

Well-managed Private Forestlands Benefit All Montanans

Montana’s millions of acres of forestland exist in a patchwork of public and private ownership, but natural forces and wildlife do not recognize the boundaries between public and private lands. Elk may summer on federal lands in the high country and spend the winter on private lands in the foothills; streams flow through all categories of land ownership; and weeds and wildfires can spread from public to private land or from private to public land. Thus stewardship of private forestland is as essential as stewardship of public forestland in maintaining the many benefits of healthy forests—clean water, wildlife, recreation, forest products, and scenic beauty—that Montanans enjoy and value. DNRC’s Forest Stewardship Program helps private landowners manage their forests in ways that result in good land stewardship, a healthful environment, personal profit, and general economic development.

**Accomplishments
FY 2008**

Forestry assists by service foresters	701
Family Forest Owners attending stewardship educational events	1058
Participants in Forest Stewardship Workshops	214
Forest Stewardship plans verified	55



Information and Education

Information and education are the foundation of the Forest Stewardship Program. The program uses a number of delivery methods to help inform and educate private forestland owners, loggers, and the general public about the value of forest stewardship. These include 3-day Forest Stewardship Planning Workshops; single-day workshops on specific forestry topics; the *Inside Forests* series of publications on topics of interest to forest landowners; workshops on forestry best management practices and the Streamside Management Zone Law; classroom presentations; the Conservation Education Program; displays at county fairs; and a website.

The Forest Stewardship Planning Workshops are the centerpiece of DNRC's information and education activities. Five 3-day workshops are offered each year, and provide Montana family forest owners with a learning experience that allows them to make informed decisions about the management and stewardship of their forest lands. Participants learn basic forestry principles and techniques, establish goals for their property, inventory their forestland, use the information to assess their forest's potential and limitations, and then develop a stewardship plan which addresses all forest resources, including elements like soil, water, wildlife, recreation, and aesthetics.

The workshop program is made possible through a partnership with the USDA Forest Service's State and Private Forestry Program, which provides funding, Montana State University (MSU) Extension Service Forestry, which delivers the workshops, and the Montana Forest Stewardship Steering Committee, which provides program management advice to the State Forester.

Montana's approach to stewardship planning is a little different from most states, in that plans are prepared by landowners with the guidance of natural resources professionals, rather than prepared for landowners by natural resources professionals. Montana's approach offers an alternative for landowners who want to become personally involved with their property and make better-informed management decisions. By working and learning



Forest Stewardship Workshop participants in the classroom and in the field.



Participants learning methods for an inventory of their own forestland.



side-by-side with other forest landowners, workshop participants also build camaraderie and a shared sense of commitment to forest stewardship.

120 Forest Stewardship Workshops
2,857 Participants
1,342 Stewardship plans produced
969,536 Forested acres under plans

Nearly 3,000 participants have been trained in the 120 Forest Stewardship Workshops offered since

1991. The participants have developed 1,342 verified stewardship plans, representing a collective total ownership of 969,536 acres of forestland, nearly 20% of the state's family forestland.

The Forest Stewardship Program helps fund a number of one-day workshops delivered by MSU Extension Forestry that provide specialized follow-up to the Forest Stewardship Workshops on topics such as wildfire hazard reduction, windbreaks/living snowfences, tree pruning and care, riparian forest stewardship, and forest roads maintenance.



Through the Conservation Education Program, DNRC has helped launch Project Learning Tree (PLT), and helped sponsor the 2008 Montana Natural Resource Youth Camp - programs aimed at providing educational opportunities for youth (K-12) in Montana.

Technical Assistance

Service Foresters based in the Forestry Division's 6 Land Offices provide technical assistance to private landowners upon request. The basic assistance program is a one-day visit with the landowner to answer questions and provide guidance, and to identify further sources of assistance if necessary.

DNRC Service Foresters typically assist landowners whose needs are quickly met, or who feel they do not need a consultant. Some landowners require more extensive assistance, or wish to employ a consultant; DNRC has developed a directory of forestry consultants to help these landowners locate further assistance.



Service Foresters helping landowners assess their forest's condition (above) and develop a management plan (below).



Service Foresters provide technical assistance related to many different aspects of private forestland management, including silviculture, fuels management, insect and disease identification and management, timber management, timber sale preparation and contracts, Montana forestry law, best management practices, reforestation and afforestation, road management, and cost-share assistance programs. DNRC's Service Foresters have helped private forestland owners achieve their management goals on hundreds of thousands of acres of forestland across Montana.

Financial Assistance

The Forest Stewardship Program has administered a number of different federally-funded programs over the years that have provided cost-share assistance for management of private forestlands in Montana. While federal programs and conservation priorities have changed over time, DNRC Forestry has consistently strived to maximize on-the-ground results from the available funding. Montana has put 95% of the funds from the most recent cost-share program, the Forest Lands Enhancement Program (FLEP) towards on-the-ground work, much higher than the national average of 65%.

FLEP was first offered in 2003, with the initial priority of helping landowners with emergency forest rehabilitation after that year's large wildfires. Funding was then made available for projects addressing a broader set of forestland management objectives. To date, DNRC has awarded FLEP funding for projects covering over 100,000 acres of private forestland in Montana. DNRC is continually seeking new sources of cost-share assistance for private landowners, as well as new opportunities for collaboration with other agencies to bring assistance to private landowners.

Partnerships

Partnerships with other agencies, organizations, and individuals are critical to the success of the Forest Stewardship Program. Key partners include the USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry Program, MSU Extension Forestry, Montana Logging Association, Montana Wood Products Association, University of Montana College of Forestry,



Meeting of the Montana Forest Stewardship Steering Committee.

Conservation Districts, Resource Conservation and Development Areas, tree farmers, forestry consultants, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Partnerships produce greater collaboration, efficiency, and project effectiveness, and are key to maximizing results from the funding available for private forest stewardship.

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