



Becoming a TREASURE Forest Landowner

ALABAMA has approximately 22 million acres of forestland. We all depend on the products our forests provide. These same forests also furnish habitat for wildlife, clean the air, purify water, protect valuable topsoil, and provide scenic beauty and recreational opportunities.

Recognizing the importance of Alabama's forests and their multiple resources, the Alabama Forestry Planning Committee, made up of forestry and natural resource agencies and groups in the state, initiated the TREASURE Forest Program in 1974. TREASURE is an acronym that stands for Timber, Recreation, Environment, Aesthetics, for a Sustained Usable REsource.

TREASURE Forest is a voluntary program that seeks to promote sound and sustainable, multiple-use forest management. This type of management encourages landowners to use their forests wisely to meet their own needs while protecting and enhancing the environment. The TREASURE Forest Program promotes this management ethic through two avenues: education and recognition. Education is provided through information and on-the-ground technical assistance from the member agencies and groups of the Alabama Forestry Planning Committee. This magazine is also an educational tool. Recognition occurs through the TREASURE Forest Award.

The TREASURE Forest Program has been a tremendous success. In fact, it has been so successful that it was used as the pattern for the National Forest Stewardship Program passed by the U.S. Congress in 1990.



What Is the TREASURE Forest Award?

The TREASURE Forest Award is earned by private landowners who display their commitment to the TREASURE Forest ethic through the physical management that takes place on their land. The award includes a numbered and signed certificate, a TREASURE Forest sign to display on the property, and a TREASURE Forest cap. When the award is given, the land is called a Certified TREASURE Forest and the landowner is called a TREASURE Forest landowner.

TREASURE Forest and TREASURE Forest landowner are earned titles that represent good stewardship of the land, protection and/or enhancement of the multiple values of the forest, and providing benefits to both present and future generations. Since the inception of the TREASURE Forest Program, over 1,400 TREASURE Forests have been certified, collectively totaling more than 1.7 million acres of Alabama forestland.

Minimum Standards and Basic Guidelines

Minimum standards and basic guide-

lines are designed to help landowners, natural resource managers, and others involved in promoting the TREASURE Forest Program. They are the basis upon which the TREASURE Forest Award is earned and will be useful in two specific ways:

1) To identify the types of management practices that can be conducted, based on chosen objectives, to earn the TREASURE Forest Award.

2) To identify when management practices, based on chosen objectives, have been conducted by landowners in both quantity and quality that are deserving of the TREASURE Forest Award.

To use the criteria, a primary and at least one secondary management objective must be identified. Based on the identified objectives, appropriate minimum standards and basic guidelines can be determined. Though a landowner may do much more than the criteria listed, certification for the TREASURE Forest Award will be determined based on the appropriate minimum standards. In addition to the necessary accomplishments by objective, the non-objective accomplish-

ments must be met regardless of the primary and secondary objectives.

Non-Objective Accomplishments

1. Timber protected from fire, insects, and disease.
2. Damaged timber salvaged unless it interferes with primary or secondary objective.
3. Definitive plans to regenerate all forestland before final harvest, unless land use will change.
4. Management for primary and secondary objective performed in a manner least damaging to other resources.
5. Water quality protected and erosion minimized by following Best Management Practices.
6. Unique plant communities, critical wildlife habitat, and endangered species habitat are protected.
7. Management for primary and secondary objectives done in the most aesthetically pleasing manner.

TIMBER PRODUCTION As Primary Objective:

- Active protection of stands from

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fire, insects, and disease by:

- Reducing fire hazard.
- Timely salvage of damaged timber.
- Managing stands to reduce insect/disease hazard.
- Planned regeneration occurring soon after final harvest.
- Harvesting timber before biological maturity.
- Thinning stands as needed to maintain vigor
- Size and shape of harvest areas compatible with other objectives.
- Tree species favored and managed that are best adapted to specific sites.
- Non-merchantable trees controlled as compatible with other objectives.
- Stands managed toward achieving full stocking.

As Secondary Objective:

- Salvage of damaged timber unless it interferes with primary objective.
- Timely regeneration occurring after final harvest.
- Stands thinned as needed to maintain vigor.
- Trees may reach biological maturity but must be harvested before decline becomes evident.
- Tree species favored and managed that are best adapted to specific sites, unless it conflicts with another objective.
- Non-merchantable trees managed, unless it conflicts with other objectives.
- Adequate stocking maintained as compatible with other objectives and past history.
- Size and shape of harvest areas compatible with other objectives.

WILDLIFE

As Primary Objective:

- Feature species identified and wildlife management plan followed.
- Enough suitable habitat deliberately created, maintained, and/or improved to support healthy populations of desired species.
- Wildlife populations kept from becoming so dense that they are damaging their own habitat, or the habitats of other species.

- Other resources managed so as to enhance the habitat of featured wildlife species.

As Secondary Objective:

- Desired species identified and wildlife management plan followed.
- Some habitat created, maintained, and retained for desired species consistent with primary objective.
- Wildlife populations kept from becoming so dense that they are damaging their own habitat or the habitat of other species.
- Other resources managed in ways that supply some habitat needs of desired wildlife species, considering the property as a whole.

RECREATION

As Primary Objective:

- Recreational use specified and management plan followed.
- Recreational opportunities such as picnic areas, campsites, walking trails, boat docks, etc. must be actively maintained, retained, and created.
- Litter controlled.
- Actual recreational usage of the property.
- Environmental impact of recreational activities minimized.
- Area with hunting as recreational use must show evidence of developed hunting opportunities beyond wildlife management such as hunting blinds, camping areas, etc.

As Secondary Objective:

- Recreational use specified and management plan followed.
- Recreational opportunities maintained, retained, and created as compatible with primary objective.
- Litter controlled.
- Environmental impact of recreational activities minimized.
- Areas with hunting as recreational use must show evidence of developed hunting opportunities beyond wildlife management.

AESTHETICS

As Primary Objective:

- Significant accomplishment toward maintaining or enhancing aesthetics must be shown such as:
- Retaining trees with good fall colors.
 - Planting or maintaining flowering

trees, shrubs and wildflowers.

- Identifying and maintaining scenic overlooks, unique geological features, and waterfalls.
- Improving access to scenic areas.

As Secondary Objective:

- Some accomplishments toward maintaining or enhancing aesthetics must be shown.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

As Primary Objective:

Significant accomplishments toward:

- Sponsoring or organizing environmental education programs.
- Developing environmental education areas such as demonstration plots, nature trails, outdoor classrooms, etc.
- Featuring plant/animal species and communities and/or multiple-use management practices for educational purposes.

Examples of Environmental Education include the following:

- Soil and water protection education/demonstration.
- Plant and/or animal species identification.
- Endangered species identification and management.
- Landowner field day.
- Demonstration forest.
- Ecology workshop.

As Secondary Objective:

Some accomplishments must be shown toward:

- Sponsoring or organizing environmental education programs.
- Developing environmental education areas such as demonstration plots, nature trails, outdoor classrooms, etc.
- Featuring plant/animal species and communities and/or multiple use management practices for educational purposes.

Where Should You Begin?

If TREASURE Forest interests you or you know of someone who may be deserving of the TREASURE Forest Award, contact your local office of the Alabama Forestry Commission or other member agency or group of the Alabama Forestry Planning Committee. These agencies and groups are listed on page 3 of this magazine and are ready to assist you with the management of your lands. ♣