



STAKEHOLDER'S GUIDE TO REGIONAL STATE FOREST MANAGEMENT PLANNING

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) uses a 3-tiered planning structure for the management of Michigan's State Forest resources: statewide, regional and unit levels. The **Michigan State Forest Management Plan** and **Regional State Forest Management Plans** are plans that are intended to provide landscape-level analyses and direction to enable decisions for management of forest stands and compartments at the Forest Management Unit (FMU) level. The aggregate of all forest prescriptions from compartment reviews are contained in the Annual Plan of Work, which represents the tactical level of planning for State Forest operations.

The Regional State Forest Management Plans will provide focused direction for management of State Forest resources in each of the four eco-regions: the northern and southern halves of the Lower Peninsula, and the eastern and western halves of the Upper Peninsula. Multi-disciplinary planning teams of DNR staff in each ecoregion (**ecoteams**) have been formed to develop two plans for the ecoregions in the Upper Peninsula, and one plan to address state forest resources for the ecoregions in the Lower Peninsula. Timelines for the development of Regional State Forest Management Plans (RSFMPs) can be downloaded by clicking on the following links:

[NLP/SLP RSFMP Timeline](#)

[EUP RSFMP Timeline](#)

[WUP RSFMP Timeline](#)

Specific planning for the management of State Forest resources in each Regional State Forest Management Plan will be accomplished by dividing the State Forest into distinct **Management Areas (MAs)**. Management Areas are essentially groupings of existing compartments (1,500-acre to 3,000-acre blocks of State Forest lands) that have similar attributes, such as vegetation types, proximity to key user markets, or portion(s) of landscape in different ownerships. Planning within the framework of management areas will help the DNR provide landscape level analyses and direction that will guide operational decisions made at each Forest Management Unit, through the existing compartment review process.

In order to analyze and select State Forest lands for assignment to specific MAs, it is necessary to identify significant and common attributes that can guide the formation of MA boundaries. The selection attributes that the DNR are using for development of MAs are as follows:

Ownership Attributes:

1. Adjacency to other public (including DNR parks and wildlife areas) or private ownerships, and also considering their varying intensity of stewardship and protection.
2. Percentage of the landscape in different public and private ownerships.
3. Consideration of ownership size and connectivity.

4. Areas with existing DNR management plans.

Social/Economic Attributes:

1. Proximity to wood product markets.
2. Proximity to population areas and major transportation arteries.
3. Trends in population growth and recreation demands.
4. Proximity to known historical/cultural sites.
5. Degree of access.

Ecological Attributes:

1. Similar site potential as expressed by habitat type.
2. Historic vegetative composition.
3. Current vegetative composition and structural characteristics.
4. Wildlife species distribution patterns for select species (including threatened and endangered species and those defined by the DNR Wildlife Action Plan (WAP)).
5. Proximity to known ecologically sensitive sites.
6. Existing forest connectivity or fragmentation.
7. Analyses of watersheds and the climate, bedrock geology, glacial landform and soils in Ecological Classification Systems.

The process for formulating management direction for each MA is a multiple-step process involving landscape analysis using the above criteria, meetings with DNR unit-level staff and the public to develop initial concepts of management, writing of specific management direction by ecoteams, and internal DNR and public review of draft and final plans. Public input to develop initial concepts of management will occur through August and September 2008. Public review of draft plans is expected to occur in June through September of 2009. Final public review of plans is expected to occur in December 2009 through February 2010.

Each ecoteam has completed landscape analyses and a series of workshops with DNR foresters and wildlife and fisheries biologists within each Forest Management Unit to develop initial concepts for management of forest resources within each MA. The DNR is now seeking public involvement to gain similar input from the public and stakeholder organizations, which will aid in drafting specific management direction for each MA and provide guidance for the operational management of the State Forest.

Public meetings have been scheduled to provide an opportunity for the public and stakeholder organizations to:

1. Engage with DNR staff on the application of MAs in Regional State Forest Management Plans,
2. Provide input on concepts of management for MAs, and
3. Provide additional knowledge and background information specific to MAs and sites therein.

Meeting schedules are as follows:

Northern Lower Peninsula

- August 12 at 7:00 p.m. at the DNR Ralph A. McMullen Conference Center, 104 Conservation Dr, Roscommon, MI 48653 (next to North Higgins State Park). An Open House period will be held from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.
- August 13 at 7:00 p.m. at the DNR Gaylord Operational Service Center, 1732 West M-32, Gaylord, MI 49735. An Open House period will be held from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.
- August 14 at 7:00 p.m. at the Clam Lake Township Hall, 8809 E M-115, Cadillac, MI 49601. An Open House period will be held from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Eastern Upper Peninsula

- TBD

Western Upper Peninsula

- TBD

The DNR currently welcomes public comments on initial concepts of management direction for all Management Areas in the NLP and SLP eco-regions. Draft maps of State Forest MAs, summary documents of initial concepts of management direction for each MA, and contact information for submittal of web-based comments to the DNR NLP eco-regional planning team may be viewed at the following link:

[NLP/SLP Management Areas](#)

The public comment period is open until September 15, 2008.