



Forest Management Plans for Private Forest Landowners

Why you need one!

What are Forest Management Plans?

Forest landowners have a variety of reasons for owning forestland: for the beauty, to protect nature, to pass land on to their heirs, for privacy, or financial investment, to name a few. No matter the reason, in deciding what management (or non-management) activities to undertake, landowners need to consider the impacts on their forest, the surrounding forest, their community at-large, and even impacts at a regional level. Because of the complexity of these decisions, and the long-term timeframe involved in forest management, having a written forest management plan (FMP) is a useful tool for all landowners.

A FMP:

- Describes your goals and objectives (wishes and desires for your forest);
- Creates a snapshot in time of your forest's current condition;
- Is an opportunity to learn more about the ecology of your forest;
- Outlines historic and future management activities;
- Helps you prioritize future activities;
- Allows you to clearly communicate with family members, neighbors, and natural resource professionals; and
- Can help guide your heirs in continuing management of the forest.

A FMP can be as simple as your goals and objectives list, maps and photos you assemble yourself; as complex as a California Cooperative Forest Management Plan (CCFMP) developed through a relationship with a Registered Professional Forester (RPF); or somewhere in-between. No matter the complexity of the plan, simply having one will help you as a forest landowner make better informed management decisions.

Forest Management Goals & Objectives

Goals are broad statements that reflect your wishes. Objectives are the specific and measurable actions you take to move you towards your goals.

Examples of goals include:

1. Improve forest health
2. Increase fire resiliency
3. Increase wildlife habitat
4. Provide a means of income

Examples of objectives include:

1. Decrease stand density to reduce competition and improve the health and vigor of the remaining trees.
2. Establish a shaded fuels break on the ridgetop to provide a place for low-intensity fire and fighting wildfire.
3. Construct two woody material piles in thinned areas for small mammal habitat.
4. Contract with an RPF to develop a timber harvest plan on 15 acres for single tree selection to generate income for reforestation project.

Read Forest Stewardship Series18: Stewardship Objectives and Planning, UCANR Publication 8248 for additional examples of goals and objectives.

Different Types of Forest Management Plans

There are many types of plans available to landowners and which one you choose, depends on:

- your goals and objectives;
- if you are doing the work yourself;
- if you have 20 acres or less of forestland;
- if you are responding to a disturbance such as wildfire or pests;

Plan vs. Project

A **Plan** is the big picture or roadmap to guide how you will achieve your goals and objectives for your property. Examples include Forest Management Plans, Certified Rangeland Management Plan, and Prescribed Burn Plans. Within a plan, you may have a number of projects identified to address your different goals and objectives. Plans are usually property or landscape scale.

- if you are applying for cost-share funding;
- if you plan to harvest timber.

Forest management plans include:

California Cooperative Forest Management Plan (CCFMP) - This management plan template meets management plan requirements for grant agreements and other provisions available through CAL FIRE, NRCS, USFS, and the American Tree Farm Association. Requires input, verification and signature from an RPF. Generally, considers a planning horizon of at least 5 years but may include objectives that require a much longer time period.

CAL FIRE's Mini-management plan – Not as detailed as the CCFMP. Intended for small landowners (<50 acres) or for properties that have become substantially damaged by wildfire. Requires input, verification and signature from an RPF.

Timber Harvest Plan (THP) or Nonindustrial Timber Management Plan (NTMP) – Required if landowner pursues commercial timber harvest. Both plans are developed by an RPF and contain state-approved environmental documents. THP's are good for 5 years with the potential for a 2-year extension. NTMP's are for landowners with less than 2,500 acres and have no expiration, though they can be withdrawn by the landowner.

Modified THP for Fuel Hazard Reduction – Intended for the reduction of ladder and surface fuels (fuel break or defensible silvicultural practices only) and road construction. Developed by an RPF and valid

A **Project** is a smaller scale look at the property and an individual activity performed that will get you closer to your goals and objectives. Your FMP might have the goals of creating forest resiliency, enhancing wildlife habitat and re-introducing fire to the ecosystem and will prioritize timber harvesting projects, prescribed fire projects, and stream restoration projects in order to achieve those goals. Projects are usually at a stand level, unit level or a portion of the property.

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CFIP Emergency Forest Management Plan (EFMPP) - This management plan is only intended for immediate reforestation efforts after a wildfire. Requires input, verification and signature from an RPF.

CAL FIRE Exemptions - Exemptions are intended to permit forest landowners to respond to or prevent disasters, and restoration efforts. They may or may not require an RPF to develop and will have certain limitations associated with them such as acreage, tree cutting diameter limits and silviculture or stocking requirements. Exemptions are only valid for 1 year.

Refer to UC ANR Publication 8716 Planning and Permitting Forest Fuel-Reduction Projects on Private Lands in California for more information on exemptions, see link below.

Further Reading & Resources:

[Forest Stewardship Series 2: A Forest Stewardship Framework](#), UCANR Publication 8232

[Forest Stewardship Series 18: Stewardship Objectives and Planning](#), UCANR Publication 8248

[Planning and Permitting Forest Fuel-Reduction Projects on Private Lands in California](#), UCANR Publication 8716

[UCANR Forest Stewardship Workshops](#)

[CAL FIRE Plan Templates](#)