

Forest Stewardship Program Spatial Analysis Project

Statewide Assessment

Required Twelve Datalayers

The Forest Stewardship Program National Standards and Guidelines, as adopted in October 2005 state that *“each State is required to identify, describe and spatially define important forest resource areas where program outreach and activity will be emphasized. The establishment of these program focus areas is intended to enable the efficient, strategic use of limited program resources where they will address current State resource management priorities and produce the most benefit in terms of important forest resource values.”*

In order to identify their important forest resource – or program focus areas - all States and territories have chosen to participate in the Forest Stewardship Spatial Analysis (SAP) Program. The following twelve core datalayers must be included for consideration in each state’s SAP assessment, consistent with the intent of the National Standards and Guidelines as stated above.

PRIVATE FORESTLAND – This datalayer is intended to place emphasis on eligible private lands with existing forest cover. Nationally available data source – NLCD.

FOREST HEALTH – Forest Health/History of Traditional Pests – This datalayer is intended to place importance on areas where silvicultural treatments can address risks to forest health. Nationally available data source – US Forest Service.

PRIORITY WATERSHEDS – Watershed Boundary – This datalayer is intended to place emphasis on landscapes that impact long-term watershed function. Priority watersheds can be: those that are impaired or deforested, but could be measurably improved through planning and active management, or those that are currently productive, but somehow threatened. States are to use 8 digit HUC code or greater for defining watershed boundaries. State or region specific data source.

PUBLIC WATER SUPPLIES – Municipal Water Resource – This datalayer places emphasis on areas of watersheds that drain onto public drinking water supply intake points. State or region specific source.

RIPARIAN AREAS – This layer is intended to place importance on river and stream corridors where buffers of forest or vegetative cover can have a positive or restorative effect on water quality and riverine ecosystems. Acceptable buffer width is 300 ft or 100 m – or accepted Best Management Practice designation. Nationally available data source – USGS.

WETLANDS – This datalayer is intended to identify wetlands where planning and management can achieve a higher degree of protection for purposes including water quality and wildlife habitat. Nationally available data source – USFWS.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES – This datalayer is intended to identify areas that provide habitat for threatened and endangered species. State or region specific data source.

PROXIMITY TO PROTECTED AREAS – This datalayer is intended place emphasis around areas that are assumed to be permanently protected (and managed) and thus contribute to a viably large, interconnected forest landscape. This layer is based on the assumption that Public lands are in a permanently protected status, and is intended to include private lands in a permanently protected status (easements, or other). State or region specific data source.

SLOPE – This layer is intended as a proxy for forest timber or fiber productivity potential and can be substituted with a more meaningful soils datalayer if available. Slope was chosen as nationally available proxy for timber or fiber productivity because of its relationship to ease and feasibility for forest harvesting operations. Determination of what constitutes low, medium, and high slope will be done on a state-by-state basis. Nationally available data source – USGS.

FOREST PATCHES – Forest Patch Size – This datalayer is intended to emphasize forest patches of ecologically and/or economically viable size. Each state or territory is to determine a viable minimum forest patch size or preferred patch size range. Within each State’s spectrum of patch sizes, patches of intermediate size may present greatest potential to benefit from increased stewardship activity. The integrity of the forest resource is likely somewhat intact, while gaps in the landscape exist. Nationally available data source – NLCD.

THREAT OF DEVELOPMENT – This datalayer is intended to emphasize areas that are projected to experience increased housing development in the next 30 years. Increased management of private forests can improve the likelihood that these lands will remain forested *and* continue to provide forest values such as timber, wildlife habitat, and water quality. This layer is particularly important in the wildland-urban interface. Nationally available data layer – Housing Density Projections (D. Theobald, Colorado State University)

FIRE – This datalayer identifies areas where planning and management are likely to reduce a relatively high risk of wildfire. State or region specific data source.