

N.C. Tree Farm Program Guidance on Forest Management Plans

What must be in a forest management plan to qualify for certification?

A written forest management plan is the primary document that demonstrates compliance with the American Tree Farm System Standards of Sustainability and is required for all certified Tree Farms. In addition to providing the landowner's name and contact information, the Tree Farm location and Tree Farm acres, the management plan must address:

- landowner objectives
- wood and fiber production
- management prescriptions
- forest condition and health
- invasive species
- soils
- water
- pesticide usage
- threatened and endangered species, and the resources consulted to determine their presence or absence
- special sites and the resources consulted to determine their presence or absence
- forests of recognized importance
- and include a map that shows significant property features including water resources, forest management areas, roads, boundary lines and special sites (unless there is a concern about disclosing their location)

Plan writers can find guidance on how to address each of these elements in a management plan on the N.C. Tree Farm Program website at:

<https://www.nctreefarm.org/forest-certification/inspectors/inspector-resources/>.

What constitutes a forest management plan?

Currently certified Tree Farms may use a written forest management plan with a variety of supporting documentation to comprise a qualifying forest management plan. Supporting documentation includes management plan addendums and amendments, practice plans (prescribed burn, harvest, reforestation, etc.), written contracts and the ATFS inspection report.

New Tree Farms must have a comprehensive forest management plan that addresses all of the required topics before it can be certified. However, the N.C. Tree Farm Program will accept an ATFS Management Plan Addendum to address:

- Pesticide usage
- Special Sites
- Forest of Recognized Importance.

No other supplemental documentation may be used to meet the management plan requirements for new Tree Farms.

What information can be covered in an addendum?

Currently certified Tree Farms may use an ATFS Management Plan Addendum to address any of the topics covered on the addendum. New Tree Farms may only use an addendum to address pesticide usage, special sites and forest of recognized importance.

	Forest Management Plan	Addendum for New Tree Farms
Landowner Name	X	
Tree Farm Location	X	
Tree Farm Acres	X	
Landowner Objectives	X	
Map	X	
Wood and Fiber Production	X	
Management Prescriptions	X	
Forest Condition/Health	X	
Invasive Species	X	
Soils	X	
Water	X	
Threatened and Endangered Species	X	
Pesticide Usage	X	X
Special Sites	X	X
Forest of Recognized Importance	X	X

When should a forest management plan be updated?

A forest management plan should be updated or amended when any of these circumstances are relevant:

- the landowner's objectives have changed
- the conditions on the ground no longer align with the management plan description
- the recommended dates for prescribed management activities have passed

How can a management plan be updated?

A management plan can be updated by:

- editing or revising the content of the existing plan
- adding notes to the existing plan
- attaching an amendment or addendum to the existing plan
- or by writing a new plan.

Is the inspection record part of the management plan?

The inspection record provides evidence of compliance with the sustainability standards but does not replace the forest management plan as the primary document.

- For currently certified Tree Farms, inspectors may use the inspection record to update ownership, contact information and acreage, report on management activities that have occurred since the last inspection or since the management plan was written and to address required topics that are inadequately addressed in the management plan or addendum.
- For new Tree Farms, the inspection record provides evidence of compliance with the sustainability standards but cannot be used to address topics that are inadequately addressed in the forest management plan and addendum.