

MISSISSIPPI FORESTRY COMMISSION

COUNTY WIDE MANAGEMENT PLAN

FOR

JONES COUNTY SCHOOLS

JONES COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

INTRODUCTION:

Jones County has 16 sixteenth sections and 1 school land with the Jones County School Board overseeing these sections. There is a total land area of 10,314 acres. Of this amount 8,020 acres are growing timber and 2,294 acres are non-forested. Based on percentage, 78 percent is timberland and 22 percent is non-forested. The objective of the plan is to outline steps, which if followed, will allow for full timber production on every acre of sixteen section land covered by this plan. This plan was written for a ten (10) year period. This plan will have to be revised in 2022. It should be understood that the plan was prepared to be used as a guide and it can be changed as conditions warrant.

At this point in time, the cut cannot be regulated by the growth completely. This is due to several factors that will be discussed in detail later. This plan provides a starting point to continuously bring this land into full production with regulated annual cut. At the present time, the average stand and stocking is well stocked. Through improvement cuts, tree planting, and timber stand improvement work, growth can be increased to the desired level over the coming years.

HISTORY OF THE FOREST:

The forest management agreement between the Mississippi Forestry Commission and the Jones County School Board provides for the management of the timberland by the Forestry Commission. The Forestry Commission acts as the Board's technical advisor on all forestry matters. All work will be explained to and approved by the Board of Education prior to its execution. Work such as timber sale preparation and administration, prescribed burning, fire lane construction and maintenance, boundary line painting, and other work will be done on an actual cost basis.

In the past 30 years, a considerable amount of work has been done on these lands in an effort to get all forest acres into full production. These efforts will continue to be noticeable in the near future as more sales are made and the volumes should increase.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES:

Management objectives consist of four (4) main points. The first being to have the forest managed for sustained yield for pine sawtimber. The second is to build up growing stock. The third objective is to get every acre producing to its full potential. The fourth objective is to continue to provide adequate wildlife habitat while still producing good quality timber. The steps necessary to meet these objectives will be outlined in the remainder of this plan.

FOREST DESCRIPTION:

The school trust lands of Jones County are composed of three (3) primary timber types. Bottomland hardwood, mixed pine and hardwood, and pine are the three timber types. The bottomland hardwood stands are primarily located along the stream side management zones and in areas that are not conducive to pine production. The species found in these stands include: red oak, white oak, gum, poplar, cypress, maple and bay. These stands currently occupy six (6) percent, or four hundred and eighty-one (481) acres of the forested areas.

The mixed pine and hardwood stands are located in various areas that have not been converted to pine production at this time, but will be in the future. The species found in these stands include: red oak, white oak, hickory, longleaf pine, shortleaf pine and loblolly pine. These stands currently occupy twenty (20) percent, or one thousand, six hundred and four (1,604) acres of the forested acres.

The pine stands are located in areas that have been converted to pine production and are suitable for this purpose. The species found in these areas are primarily loblolly and slash pine. These stands currently occupy seventy-four (74) percent, or five thousand, nine hundred and thirty-five (5,935) acres of the forested acres.

The site index, which is the measure of the productivity of a site varies from eighty (80) to ninety-five (95) across the school trust lands. These sites range from good to excellent for pine production. The following is the product distribution for all of the school trust lands in Jones County: clear cut: 6% or 482 acres; reproduction: 4% or 304 acres; sub-merchantable: 17% or 1,349 acres; pulpwood: 24% or 1,934 acres; chip-n-saw: 15% or 1,192 acres; sawtimber 34% or 2,758 acres.

PRODUCTION OBJECTIVES:

The primary production aim is to produce high quality sawtimber at the lowest possible cost. Over-mature hardwood and mixed pine and hardwood stands will be harvested and converted to more productive loblolly pine plantations where it is feasible. Attention will be given to leaving enough hardwood to provide efficient wildlife habitat. This will be accomplished by leaving stream side management zones along perennial and some intermittent streams. Hardwood sites that are not convertible to pine will remain in hardwood production.

No amount of volume can be set at this time to be removed from these lands each year. Attention needs to be given to removing low grade material with the ultimate objective of having the best species of trees growing the most volume possible. Sales need to be made as rapidly as possible. The available market will be the governing factor on the size and speed of the sales, as well as the land classification and type of lease, if any, involved.

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

General Silvicultural Recommendations:

This plan was written with the idea of restocking using artificial regeneration. The overall plan for regeneration will be as follows: All merchantable timber will be harvested during the final harvest timber sale. The site will be evaluated upon the completion of the final harvest to determine what site preparation method will be suitable for the site. Site preparation may be completed by chemical site preparation, mechanical site preparation, or burning. All sites will then be planted with loblolly pine seedlings at a specified spacing. The planting may be done by hand or by machine. All reforested areas will be evaluated the fall after they are planted to ensure that adequate survival was retained and the areas are sufficiently stocked.

The majority of the hardwood sites located on the school trust lands in Jones County are utilized as stream side management zones to protect water quality and enhance wildlife habitat. These sites will be worked over the life of the plan, but the integrity of the sites will be maintained. The hardwood sites that are suitable for pine production will be converted during the life of this plan. All site preparation, release, burning, and sales are scheduled in the individual plan activities. All management recommendations will take into account Mississippi's Best Management Practices guidelines.

Fire Control:

The Mississippi Forestry Commission has the responsibility of the fire control on all sections. The Commission operates two (2) suppression units in Jones County. In the event of emergency, units may be called in from adjoining counties.

Dispatching of fires is done by contacting the central dispatch located at this District Office in Bay Springs, Mississippi at 1-601-764-2711.

Insects and Disease:

At the present time there are no real problems in the area. The best prevention of insects and disease is a healthy vigorous stand. A close watch must be kept to detect an outbreak of insects and disease. If an outbreak occurs, the area will be treated by the use of an emergency timber sale, cutting, piling, burning, spraying with chemicals, and/or a combination of these measures.

Utilization and Marketing:

All products removed from the lands covered by this plan will be marketed and utilized to their best use. All marketing will be in accordance with the schedule in the appendix. All intermediate thinning will be conducted by utilizing operator select harvesting. These sales will be sold by the ton. All final harvests will be cruised by forestry commission workers and the cruise data will be computed by the forester in charge of the sale. Volume will be computed using the Doyle Scale with the appropriate form classes. The sale will be advertised by the Jones County Board of Education, Jones County. The period of advertisement will be 21 days. Sample contracts will be sent to all buyers in the area of the sale by the Forestry Commission. All bids must be marked "bid" and sent to the Jones County Board of Education, Ellisville, Mississippi. The successful bidder will be governed by the terms of the contract. These sales will be sold on a lump sum basis. The forester in charge will make periodic checks of the cutting operation to insure compliance with the terms of the contract.

The Board of Education will be invoiced for the work at the completion of the sale. A minimum of 15% percent of the sale will be placed in an escrow fund for forestry work of any approved type. When more funds are needed, the Forestry Commission may request the Board of Education to place additional funds in the escrow account. This may be from timber sales, or from the general fund money.

Physical Improvement:

Physical improvements are needed. Boundary lines need to be painted and/or maintained on a six (6) year cycle; permanent firelanes need to be plowed on some sections. All work must be approved by the Board of Education.

The work may be done by Forestry Commission employees or by contractors. Contract work should be limited to injecting, machine site preparation, herbicide application, and tree planting. All other activities can typically be best handled by Forestry Commission employees. Funding of firelanes, site preparation, and the tree planting can be cost shared under the Forest Resource Development Program.

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES:

The term "best management practice" refers to a practice or combination of practices, which is determined to be the most effective, practical means of preventing or reducing the amount of pollution generated by non-point sources to a level compatible with the water quality goals.

Public land management can generally be divided into three categories as follows:

1. General forest management which consists of prescribed burning, hardwood brush control with chemicals and other general maintenance work.
2. Timber harvesting – this is the cutting and removing of forest products. These cutting operations will vary in size, shape and type cutting according to the specific situation. These cuttings will include but not be limited to insect removal, thinning of stands or clear cutting of stands.
3. Post harvesting – this is any activity carried out as a result of harvesting and conducted after the harvesting has been completed. These activities will include but not be limited to hardwood brush control, regeneration work and road construction/maintenance.

All work on public lands will address pollution matters on upland, bottomland and wetland sites. All work will be planned and carried out according to Mississippi's Best Management Practices Handbook.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES:

All public lands will be managed in accordance with the current laws and regulations governing both plants and animals that are considered threatened and/or endangered. Prior to any management activity the tract(s) in question will be surveyed for any known threatened or endangered species. If any species is found on tract, then the tract will be managed in accordance with the guidelines published for that particular species.

HISTORICAL, CULTURAL OR ARCHAEOLOGICAL ITEMS:

Any historical, cultural, or archaeological item that is found on public land will be identified, located, marked and preserved. No silvicultural practice that will damage or destroy these items will be conducted on the site. Sufficient area around the site may be excluded to insure that the site will not be damaged. There are no published lists of items to be preserved. Items would generally consist of old monuments, grave sites, Indian mounds, etc.