

GREY SAUBLE CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

FOREST MANAGEMENT POLICY

For the lands owned by Grey Sauble Conservation Authority (GSC), this Forest Management Policy provides a framework for forest management, including classification, inventories, properties and areas for preservation, sustainable harvesting and measuring performance.

Revised Sept 27, 2017

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1. Vision and Desired Outcomes

Grey Sauble Conservation's (GSC) overall Vision is:

A healthy watershed environment in balance with the needs of society.

Healthy, diverse forest ecosystems support this vision and provide ecological, social and cultural, and economic benefits. The key Desired Outcomes of GSC's Forest Management are:

1.1. Healthy and Enough Forests and Habitats

Improve the health and diversity of GSC's forests, and the habitats they provide, to maintain native forest species populations. Activities are conducted to:

- Monitor and report on the extent, connectivity, and current condition of GSC's forests,
- Carry out Forest Management activities to improve forest health, and
- Identify, maintain and/or enhance wildlife habitats.

1.2. Support for Economic Development and Community Needs

Support the local economy and forest-related industry through the management and sale of forest products. Activities are conducted to:

- Use forest management practices to produce a sustainable yield of wood products;
- Provide opportunities for local businesses to work in GSC's forests and to buy wood products; and
- Generate revenue for current and future conservation activities.

1.3. Species Protection and Protection from Invasive Species

Ensure native species and Species at Risk (SAR) are protected and the spread of invasive species (IS) is controlled. Activities are conducted to:

- Identify SAR that live on GSC lands and protect them and their habitats,
- Identify IS on GSC lands, and prioritize actions to control them.

1.4. Performance Measures

The following chart shows examples of possible measurements of success in achieving the Desired Outcomes from the Forest Management Plan.

Desired Outcome	Performance Measure Options
Healthy and Enough Forests and Habitats	1) Area of Forest interior habitat found within GSC properties 2) % of Managed Forest area with an ideal Basal Area (BA) Distribution
Support for Economic Development and Community Needs	1) Annual value of forest product contracts with forest industry 2) Annual volume of wood products harvested
Species Protection and Protection from Invasive Species	1) Percent of sustainably harvested area where SAR and IS inventories documented prior to forest management operations 2) Amount of area (or #) of IS controlled and/or treated

1.5. Other GSC Desired Outcomes

Other GSC Desired Outcomes that are supported by this Forest Management framework and Forest Management activities include:

1.5.1. Recreation / Healthy Living Opportunities

Provide opportunities for the public to enjoy recreational and healthy living activities on GSC properties.

1.5.2. Healthy Groundwater, Stream and Lake Conditions

Ensure all activities conducted within GSC properties protect and, where possible, enhance the quality of groundwater, stream and lake conditions.

1.5.3. Identify and Protect Conservation Lands

Identify, acquire and manage properties containing environmentally significant areas, special/rare features, natural and cultural heritage sites.

1.5.4. Healthy Wetland Conditions and Enough Wetlands

Monitor and protect wetland areas found within GSC properties.

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2. Forest Management Plan

To set out the actions that GSC will take to achieve its forest-related Desired Outcomes and Vision, GSC will maintain a Forest Management Plan (FMP). For the FMP to achieve performance measure success, it is dependent upon the practice, experience and expertise of GSC's staff.

GSC will participate in applicable tax reduction programs, including the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program (MFTIP) and the Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program (CLTIP). Under the MFTIP, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) specifies that forest managers develop an FMP covering a 20-year period which must be renewed every 10 years and has 5-year progress reports on activities.

GSC will use current silvicultural standards and guides for the development of the FMP, as set out by certification and governmental bodies including the most current version of the:

- Forest Stewardship Council Great Lakes/St. Lawrence and/or National Standards;
- Forest Management Guide for Conserving Biodiversity at the Stand and Site Scale (OMNR, 2010);
- Forest Management Guide for Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Landscapes (OMNR, 2010);
- A land manager's guide to conserving habitat for forest birds in southern Ontario (OMNR, 2011);
- A Silvicultural Guide to Managing Southern Ontario Forests (OMNR, 2010); and
- Silvicultural Guide for Northern White-Cedar (Eastern White Cedar) (USDA Forest Service, 2012).

All decisions included in the FMP are made with the best available knowledge and integrate the latest available research and field data. A large component of uncertainty is climate change and the effects it will have on the future state of the forest. As such, GSC's forest management practices will be adapted to respond to changing forest conditions.

Every ten years GSC will review and update the Forest Management Plan. Each update will include consultation opportunities on the draft plan for the public and the forestry industry. Local Aboriginal communities will also be engaged in dialogue to ensure recognition of their traditional and legal rights, and their customs and culture.

3. Forest Management Definition

Forest Management includes the following components, and each is outlined in the following sections:

- Classification of property parcels and stands,
- Forest Resource Inventory,
- Identification of Values and Areas of Concern,

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- Forest Database Management / Geographic Information System (GIS) Management,
- Forest Management Program,
- Forest Operations, and
- Performance Measure (success) Reporting.

3.1. GSC Property Parcel and Stand Classifications

All properties owned by GSC have been assigned a unique identifier based on the Assessment Roll Number and each is termed a Compartment. Some properties are designated as Nature Preserves. While these areas maybe inventoried and have values identified, they will be left in a natural state.

All GSC owned properties are further classified by their natural and/or cultural features; these are termed stands. Stands within a compartment that have similar features/qualities can be grouped together and assigned a unique identifier for quick reference. Each stand is then designated as either being suitable or not suitable for forest management. Stands not suitable for forest management are further classified into one of three categories: Protection Forest (protection of unique areas/values or areas are not accessible), Nature Preserve (stands within properties designated on title as a Nature Preserve) or No Forest Management (designated by Forestry Committee members and/or a forest advisory committee). Stands that are suitable for forest management are classified into one of two categories: commercially operable (stands that can be managed within this 20-year planning period) or commercially inoperable (stands that can not be managed within this 20-year planning period).

3.2. Forest Resource Inventories

GSC will conduct resource inventories on all forested stands, typically:

- in areas where sustainable tree harvesting activities are planned,
- within five years following any operation on a stand (e.g. harvesting or planting), or
- at least once every 20 years.

During an inventory, data will be collected on stand boundaries, tree species, tree diameters, tree heights, sawlog heights, basal area, tree regeneration, herbaceous vegetation, wildlife habitat features, pests and diseases, and to identify or refine Values/Areas of Concern (see section below).

3.3. Identification of Values and Areas of Concern (AOC)

Properties owned by GSC contain many different Values that contribute to achieving GSC's Vision and Desired Outcomes.

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Long-term enduring Values may include:

- old growth forests,
- Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSW),
- Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) and
- Escarpment Natural areas within the Niagara Escarpment
- streams and riparian areas,
- steep slopes,
- spring seepage areas, and
- culturally significant heritage areas.

Potentially transitional values include the following, and will be updated from time to time as Forest Resource Inventories or other information becomes available:

- significant flora and fauna,
- significant recreational trails,
- SAR habitat or sightings, and
- Wildlife habitat features (such as stick nests, and cavity trees).

If a Value may be affected by a forest management activity, an Area of Concern (AOC) can be established around the Value and forest management activities will be modified or stopped to minimize and/or mitigate impacts.

3.4. Forest Database Management / Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Mapping

GSC will maintain a multi-user database to organize and store pertinent information supporting forest management and reporting, including:

- property and stand classifications;
- stand locations, boundaries, areas and cover types;
- Values and associated AOC;
- Forest Resource Inventory;
- Forest Management Operations; and
- Forest Management history.

The database is essential for performance measures reporting and preparing products such as property level maps which require current orthophotography and GIS tools.

3.5. Forest Management Program Development

GSC will prepare a 20-year forest management program for forest operations, including the projected year that each stand that is suitable for forest management will be harvested. The program development will consider criteria such as inventory, past management activities.

For the proposed program, high level revenues will be estimated for the first five years, and each subsequent 5-year operating period.

The year-to-year detailed tendering plan, in-year decisions on activities such as insect and disease control and detailed annual revenue estimates are outside the scope of the 20-year FMP.

3.6. Forest Operations

Forest operations include tree marking, sustainable tree harvesting, tree planting, vegetation control, pest and disease management and stand tending. Before any forest operation begins, a prescription will be developed providing long-term and short-term objectives, treatment and integrated resource management instructions and any follow-up recommendations. The prescription will be prepared and stamped by a member of the Ontario Professional Foresters Association (OPFA).

Where not carried out in house, operations will be awarded according to the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Wood Products Tendering Policy and other applicable policies.

3.7. Performance Measure (success) Reporting.

The results of forest management activities, including performance measure indicators and third-party audits will be posted on GSC's website annually.

4.0. Communications and Education

Grey Sauble Conservation will follow a communications plan regarding all forest operations and respond to inquiries in the timelines set out in the Communications Policy. The Communications Plan will include educating the public about sustainable forest management.

Grey Sauble Conservation will proactively communicate with adjacent landowners regarding scheduled forest management activities. Grey Sauble Conservation will inform and educate these landowners about sustainable forest management activities and the reason why they are being conducted.

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Date of Approval by Board of Directors:

Signature of Meeting Chair:

The original Forest Management Policy was approved by the Board of Directors on December 16, 1998, and was developed with the assistance from the Forest Advisory Committee:

Dick Hibma, Chair, Grey Sauble Conservation Authority
Carl Noble, Vice Chair, Grey Sauble Conservation Authority
Gerald Shortt, Grey Sauble Conservation Authority
Dave Fidler, Owen Sound Field Naturalists
Frank Beirnes, County of Grey, Tree By-law Enforcement Officer
Bob Hurst, Trapper
Austin Ramage, Horse Logger
Peter Robson, Grey Sauble Conservation Foundation
Robert Lesperence, Maple Syrup Producers Association
Russell Horning, Woodlot Owner, former Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Director
Mark Cressman, Retired Forester, Grey Association for Better Planning
John Hallman, Logger
Doug Thompson, Cutter for Sawmill
Ron Hodson, County of Bruce, Tree By-law Enforcement Officer
Bob Day, retired Parks Canada, Forestry training
Blake Smith, Sydenham Sportsmen's Association, retired Fish & Wildlife supervisor MNR
Carl Nuttall, Bruce peninsula Sportsmen's Association
Rick Allen, Logger
Don Scott, Planner, Niagara Escarpment Commission Director
John Lambie, Forester
Mac Kirk, Retired Resources Manager
Dave Taylor, Bruce Trail
Kevin Reese, Ministry of Natural Resources, Forester

The 2017 update of this Forest Management Policy was completed by the GSC Forestry Committee and GSC staff on September 26, 2017:

Dick Hibma, Chair, Forestry Committee, City of Owen Sound, Appointed Representative
Jaden Calvert, Municipality of Meaford Councilor
Sue Carleton, Township of Georgian Bluffs Councilor
Shawn Greig, Township of Chatsworth Councilor

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Cathy Little, Municipality of Grey Highlands Councilor

John McGee, Town of the Blue Mountains Councilor

Ana Vukovic, Town of South Bruce Peninsula Councilor

Sonya Skinner, Grey Sauble Conservation Authority, CAO

Anne Lennox, Grey Sauble Conservation Authority, Forestry and Species Coordinator

Cam Bennett, Grey Sauble Conservation Authority, Forest Technician

Mike Fry, Grey Sauble Conservation Authority, GIS / Forest Technician