Spring 2024 Friday Harbor Forest Stewardship Coached Planning Course Executive Summary Report
I. Introduction and program description

Program description

Forest Stewardship Coached Planning is a forestry course for people who own forested/wooded property. This comprehensive course teaches property owners everything they need to know about forest stewardship, and it helps property owners identify and achieve their long-term objectives such as forest and ecosystem health, wildlife and biodiversity, aesthetics, and periodic income. The course is usually taught one session per week for nine weeks. The 2024 Friday Harbor course introduced a new format, which was a three-day intensive course. It included all the same content as the regular nine-week course, including a field trip. Class sessions were taught by a variety of experts, and participants received a digital library of reference materials and how-to guides, along with suggested readings and plan-writing steps. Each participant received a site visit to their property from a service forester.

Topics covered

1. Intro to forest stewardship
2. Native trees
3. Forest stand development
4. Forest health
5. Wildlife habitat
6. Silviculture
7. Forest inventory
8. Forest soils
9. Water and sensitive resources
10. Invasive weeds
11. Climate change
12. Wildfire risk reduction
13. Timber sale issues
14. Current use taxation
15. Writing a forest stewardship plan

Forest stewardship plans

The course is structured around the development of a personalized written forest stewardship plan. Class topics relate to different sections of a forest stewardship plan. Participants write their plans using samples and “coaching” from the course instructors and site visit foresters. Plans follow the Washington Integrated Forest Stewardship Plan Guidelines template. Approved plans qualify participants to receive a “Stewardship Forest” sign from the Department of Natural Resources, can be used to help qualify for cost share grants or forest certification, and are necessary to enroll in current use tax programs (if all other requirements are met).
II. Participation

Participant numbers
A total of 24 people participated, representing 16 families, 14 properties, and 262 forested acres. Ownership sizes ranged from 1 — 120 acres, with a median ownership size of 10 acres. 71% of the participants were new forest landowners. All participants were from San Juan County, except for one family from Island County. San Juan County participants were from San Juan and Orcas Islands.

Participant values
The top values were lifestyle and ecosystem values, with maintaining a healthy ecosystem, wildlife habitat, privacy/solitude/rural lifestyle, and observing nature being the highest ranked values. Two participants were interested in timber income, and overall it was ranked lowest by a wide margin.

Forest Stewardship Values - Friday Harbor 2024

- Maintaining a healthy ecosystem
- Wildlife Habitat
- Privacy, solitude, rural lifestyle
- Observe nature
- Residence (living on the property)
- Aesthetic enjoyment
- Personal attachment to land
- Sound financial investment
- Personal/family recreation
- Produce items for personal use
- Family legacy
- Hunting/Fishing
- Income from timber harvest

Very Unimportant <-> Very Important
III. Outcomes and Impacts

Knowledge and attitude change
The most immediate impact is knowledge change. Post-event evaluations found documented knowledge increase across 12 core forest stewardship topics. The four topics with the greatest knowledge increases were how to write a forest stewardship plan, silviculture and reforestation, forest inventory, and the importance of stewardship planning. 100% of evaluation respondents said that the course increased their enjoyment and appreciation of their forestland.

Behavior change
100% of respondents who have forestland intend to implement new or different stewardship practices based on what they learned in this course. The top intended practices identified by respondents were thinning and writing a stewardship plan.

Our one-year follow-up surveys over the past 16 years have consistently shown that 88% of participants will indeed implement one or more practices within a year of taking the course (n=796), 86% are more likely to retain their forest as forest because of taking the course (n=773), 94% will enjoy their forest more (n=782), 87% will recommend the course to someone else (n=837), and 95% will share course knowledge with an average of 8 other people (n=826).

IV. Participant Feedback

General Impressions:
- 100% had their expectations met, with 85% having their expectation exceeded.
- 100% would recommend the class to other landowners.
- 100% were glad they took the class.
- 100% found the class to be a good value for the cost of registration.

Sample Participant Feedback
- This course is amazing. Incredible depth of resources and information to reference.
- I learned so much in this course! I’m grateful to know I have this course (and all the many provided resources) under my belt when I approach writing a stewardship plan.
- I had heard a lot of positive things about this course, and it still exceeded expectations!
- Very high value. Well-supported with handouts, additional reading, and valuable resource references.
• So much information – very high quality, research-based. Very appreciative of this.
• It has opened my eyes to the complexity of my forest.
• I was really impressed with the organization of this course! Even the binders were organized by day, and we had all the material available to us online. The further readings were also helpful.
• Way more info and resources than I expected! Very nicely done!
• Yes, a ton of information but it was clearly presented, and info started to coalesce over the 3 days. Great course, very informative.
• Really enjoyed the course and learned a lot of useful info. I prefer the intensive course.
• Kevin is an excellent teacher, especially with his ability to engage with the class.
• Loved the intensive course! We could not have done the 9 weeks, so this was perfect for our needs. Would do it or other courses in the future.
• Three-day format is a winner. Nine weeks would have been rough with ferry cancellations!
• Kevin was an excellent facilitator! Knowledgeable, engaging, and great at making lots of information more digestible.
• So glad we did this.
• Thoroughly enjoyed this course!
• Every landowner with forest should take this course.
• I’m sure I will benefit from this course and my forest will be better off because of it.
• I already have new eyes for the forest.
• I feel much more confident (though still lots to learn) and therefore much more excited because [I’m] less hesitant about getting into shaping/care for our forest.

V. Acknowledgements

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