

Appendix 2

Forest management plan (phase 1)
By Bob Williams
Draft copy

COMMUNITY FOREST PLAN

**Weymouth Township
Atlantic County, New Jersey**

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Prepared for

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COMMUNITY FORESTRY MANAGEMENT PLAN

for the

Township of Weymouth
Years 2009 - 2014

Prepared by

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LDE File No. F-1709

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A. Weymouth Township Owned Property List

Weymouth Township Environmental Commission Community Forestry Management Plan

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This is a critical time in the history for the Township of Weymouth. Significant forest stands of native forest types still exist in and around the built-out features of the Township’s overall

landscape. These forests provide innumerable benefits – economic, environmental and social – that improve the quality of life for every township resident. However, if careful planning and active forest management do not occur, these

native forests will decline in the face of ongoing residential growth, land development, catastrophic wildland fires, insects and forest diseases.

The purpose of the Community Forestry Management Plan is to provide tools that will begin to insure that forests are maintained to provide all possible functions and benefits, maintain forest cover in residential areas, protect life and property from wildland fires, and integrate trees as green infrastructure in developed urbanized landscapes.

A preliminary assessment of the inventory of Weymouth Township’s community forest was done by an assessment of aerial photography and geographic information system (GIS) data:

- The Township is composed of mixed deciduous and coniferous trees with a large majority of the trees held on public or nonprofit ownerships.
- The overall canopy cover averages are as high as 80 percent.
- Canopy cover has declined due to modest residential development. Ornamental or street trees area small percent of the canopy – at less than 2 percent.

Management Recommendations

- Sustain and maintain long-term, overall canopy coverage for the Township while retaining native forest structure throughout the Township.
 - Adopt an ecosystem-based approach to managing trees using this plan and possible incentives to conserve multi-functional, green space.
 - Encourage the retention of trees by creating awareness of their importance to quality of life.
- Trees and forest define the rural and visual character of Weymouth Township. By establishing ambitious but attainable community forestry management goals, Weymouth Township will distinguish itself as a leader in the New Jersey Pinelands Region, committed to providing its residents and visitors with a high-qualitylifestyle.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Municipal/County Information Form

Mission Statement

This plan **will** guide and promote sustainable forest conditions within the Township of Weymouth through education, incentives, and existing regulations on public and private property for the environmental, social and economic benefit of all Weymouth Township residents.

This management plan is intended to allow for the development of tree management strategies that compliment the changing patterns of land use and the potential impacts of environmental changes such as global climate change.

Weymouth Township is a distinctive, rural area and its boundaries are finite. The forest that the Township is located within, is not finite and extends in most directions beyond the township limits.

A medium portion of the Township is developed at low densities, with a significant amount of land in conservation. However, the Township has and continues to grow with single family residences scattered throughout the forest. It has become apparent that the community must plan for additional growth in the future and the impact on the forest and trees.

The intent of this management plan is to aid in maintaining healthy forest cover in both the developing residential areas, as well as the “preserved open space areas”.

This community forest management plan is intended to assist the shade tree commission, environmental commission, township council, township staff and citizens in implementing actions that ensure maintenance of forests that provide optimal functions and benefits.

2. INTRODUCTION

Without a comprehensive understanding of the value of our trees and forested areas, and a coordinated management plan to maintain and enhance them, we risk losing an enormously valuable resource that is at the heart of the Township’s character. By adopting this plan, the Township acknowledges the many contributions to our quality of life that are supplied by a healthy and vital community forest.

To fulfill the mission statement, Weymouth Township is committed to providing education and technical assistance, implementing incentive programs, and revising regulations to more effectively support and reflect the goal of integrating trees and forests into the changing environment.

Goals and Objectives

Goals Objectives

Protect, enhance and/or restore existing tree cover throughout the municipality.

- Begin inventory of overall problems, as well as specific problems i.e. insect outbreaks, hazardous trees.

Begin education program to begin to enlighten residents of need to steward the community forest, as well as individual trees within it.

- Participate in local and regional news media at least twice a year.
- Consider a forest field day on the municipal level.
- Distribute information i.e. brochures to all households.

- Reach out to civic organizations

Reduce immediate mechanical tree risks and hazards

- Inventory hazardous trees.

- Begin hazardous tree removal.

Encourage and request forest management on public lands.

- Initiate contact with state agencies responsible for stewardship of public lands and request a program to initiate more active management.

- Prepare a forest assessment report that describes the essential need and concern for the management of state owned, public lands.

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Initiate fire-wise program to elevate understanding of wildfire issues

- Contact NJDEP to receive direction and resource materials.

- Use local, private lands for 2 fire field days.

Initiate evaluation of overall forest health • Begin to distribute educational and materials to both education citizens on specific concerns for forest health.

- Seek assistance from state and federal forest agencies on information on grant support.

Liability Statement

This community forest is of a rural character which is comprised of species that are highly dependent upon fire as part of their life cycle. This fact places special concerns for public health and safety. In concert with the concern for the overall health and safety of the public, this plan's goal of sustaining healthy forests will in turn insure the overall protection of the public's health and safety.

Forests grow and change with time, it is inevitable that this forest will require management and care in addition to restoration of individual stands of trees.

Implementation of this community forest plan will contribute to the environmental and economic vitality of Weymouth Township but will also reduce the potential hazards to public safety. An unhealthy community forest poses many hazards to public health beyond concerns for wildfire.

Insects and disease cause dead trees that become physical hazards to pedestrians and motorists. Loss of forest cover can negatively impact well-water quality, as well as air quality.

This community must work within a reasonable budget that may not be able to meet each and every need of the community forest immediately. Therefore, it is the intent of this plan to focus available resources to the greatest need and step by step work towards a healthy forest with commensurate reduced risks to public safety.

By taking logical steps outlined in this management plan, the Township of Weymouth

will garner public support for plan implementation and demonstrate the long-term benefits to the environment and public safety.

With implementation of this plan, Weymouth Township can begin to become more proactive in the management and care of its community forest.

This plan acknowledges that not all hazardous conditions can or will be predicted – particularly since a part of the community forest is owned by state entities that are not under the control of local municipal authorities. Proactive management will dramatically reduce the probability of tree hazard risks to the extent practical.

Following this management plan will demonstrate that the Township of Weymouth is devoting reasonable levels of resources in a planned manner to reduce the number of tree related accidents and thereby reduce its exposure to liabilities and increase public safety.

Weymouth is a township in Atlantic County, New Jersey. As of the U.S. 2000 Census, there were 2,257 people, 851 households and 623 families residing in the township.

The population density was 185.0 people per square mile and there were 909 housing units at an average density of 74.5/square mile.

The Township of Weymouth has a rich history of utilization of the forest resources.

Since colonial times, trees have been used for a wide range of local industries. Today, a few private owners have long histories of actively managing their forest resources.

These landowners may play a critical role in helping educate the general public as the importance of the Community Forest Management Plan. They can provide working models of how successful the township's plan can be in the management of forest cover over the Township.

With a land area of 12.6 square miles of which 12.2 square miles of it is land and 0.4 square miles of it (2.94%) is water, and a low population density, one can see that the forest cover is extensive. The average age class of trees in this forest is 60 - 80 years with scattered older trees. Many trees and forest stands have reached mid-age and demonstrate signs of stress and/or decline – an important concern for future management. The forest inventory is an even mix of both coniferous and deciduous trees. A more detailed mapping is provided on the attached community forest map. A priority in this plan's implementation will be to seek funding for a SIP Grant to provide an on-the-ground inventory and mapping of the forest resource.

Because of the rural character of Weymouth Township, and its location within the Pinelands National Reserve, implementation of this plan dovetails perfectly with the New Jersey Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan and the local master plan. The master plan for this region provides for specific zoning for forest zones. Under the master plan, there is specific land use requirements already in place with regards to forest management on both private and public lands. All tree and forest management actions that eventually take place under this community forest plan will be consistent with existing local forestry zoning requirements.

3. COMMUNITY OVERVIEW: Past, present, and future . . .

The Community Forestry Management Plan will become a needed component of the state/county/municipal open space plan. This region of southern New Jersey has been on the forefront of open space planning since the beginning of this effort in the last

century.

Although significant efforts and investments have been made in “preserving” open space have been made, except for a few private landowners, little effort has been initiated in active management of these forest resources. The Weymouth Township’s Community Forest Plan will play a critical role in helping to initiate the management of the forest resources in a wide and more meaningful way.

The community forestry program will be administered by the Weymouth Township Shade Tree Commission.

Shade Tree Commission Members:

- James Pridgeon, Chairman
- Jill Baxter, Secretary
- Anthony Cekada, Member
- Lynne Lohr, Member
- Christopher Miller, Member
- Dr. Julie Powell, Member
- Dr. George Zimmermann, Member

Organizational Chart:

- Frank Craig
Mayor
- Bonnie S. Yearsley
Certified Municipal Clerk
- James Pridgeon
Chairman, Shade Tree Commission

4. COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

See map following this page.

5. COMMUNITY MAP

N
W E
S

**WEYMOUTH TOWNSHIP FOREST TYPE MAP
LAND DIMENSIONS ENGINEERING**

F1709

PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS, PLANNERS, LAND SURVEYORS,
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS, & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENTISTS

6 EAST HIGH STREET

GLASSBORO, NEW JERSEY 08028, (856) 307-7800

WEYMOUTH TOWNSHIP

ATLANTIC COUNTY, NJ SCALE: 1"=3,600

weymouthtwplanduse2000.shp

- ATLANTIC WHITE CEDAR WETLANDS
- CONIFEROUS BRUSH/SHRUBLAND
- CONIFEROUS FOREST (10-50% CROWN CLOSURE)
- CONIFEROUS FOREST (>50% CROWN CLOSURE)
- CONIFEROUS SCRUB/SHRUB WETLANDS
- CONIFEROUS WOODED WETLANDS
- DECIDUOUS BRUSH/SHRUBLAND
- DECIDUOUS FOREST (10-50% CROWN CLOSURE)
- DECIDUOUS FOREST (>50% CROWN CLOSURE)
- DECIDUOUS SCRUB/SHRUB WETLANDS
- DECIDUOUS WOODED WETLANDS
- FRESHWATER TIDAL MARSHES
- HERBACEOUS WETLANDS

MIXED DECIDUOUS/CONIFEROUS BRUSH/SHRUBLAND
MIXED FOREST (>50% CONIFEROUS WITH 10-50% CROWN CLOSURE)
MIXED FOREST (>50% CONIFEROUS WITH >50% CROWN CLOSURE)
MIXED FOREST (>50% DECIDUOUS WITH 10-50% CROWN CLOSURE)
MIXED FOREST (>50% DECIDUOUS WITH >50% CROWN CLOSURE)
MIXED SCRUB/SHRUB WETLANDS (CONIFEROUS DOM.)
MIXED SCRUB/SHRUB WETLANDS (DECIDUOUS DOM.)
MIXED WOODED WETLANDS (CONIFEROUS DOM.)
MIXED WOODED WETLANDS (DECIDUOUS DOM.)
PHRAGMITES DOMINATE COASTAL WETLANDS
PHRAGMITES DOMINATE INTERIOR WETLANDS
PLANTATION
SALINE MARSH (HIGH MARSH)
SALINE MARSH (LOW MARSH)
TRANSITIONAL AREAS
UNDIFFERENTIATED BARREN LANDS
UPLAND RIGHTS-OF-WAY DEVELOPED
UPLAND RIGHTS-OF-WAY UNDEVELOPED
WETLAND RIGHTS-OF-WAY
Atroads.shp
Weymouth outbound.dxf

Training

Since the Township of Weymouth is new to the issue of planning for the care of trees and forests within its township limits, significant training will be required. The Township will begin to outline the training needs immediately upon receiving approval of their community forestry plan. To enable the Township to reduce or eliminate their exposure due to a poor condition or decline of the community tree resources, it will begin to participation in the State's training skills and Accreditation

Program in concert with its approved Community Forestry Management Plan.

The Weymouth Township Council will designate individuals to participate in this training program.

A responsible party will be designated to head the community forestry program.

CORE Training

CORE training is designed to familiarize individuals with the background of community forestry and shade tree commissions, the legal aspects of managing trees and the recognition of hazardous tree situations. CORE training will enable individuals to help the Township of Weymouth gain approved status under the New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act. CORE training programs will accredit the individuals attending the program. If an individual moves out of a municipality or county, the accreditation status goes with them. CORE training is for:

- Persons participating in local tree boards, commissions, or groups designated by the mayor as the responsible party for community trees.
- Any municipal representative or employee charged with the mission of providing maintenance or stewardship to community trees.

6. TRAINING PLAN

Requirements

A minimum of two persons per municipality or county seeking accreditation under the Act must attend CORE training.

- One person must be a local government employee or elected official.
- Once person must be a commission member, board member, or volunteer from the community.
- Completion of the CORE training program will satisfy one of the three requirements of municipalities and counties seeking approved status for the **initial year** under the requirements of the New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act. The other two initial requirements are an approved Community Forestry Management Plan, and the submission of an Annual Accomplishment Report prior to the deadline of

February 15th.

After the initial year, municipalities are expected to meet all requirements regarding approved status. These requirements are: an approved Community Forestry Management Plan, a CORE trained municipal volunteer, a CORE trained municipal employee, submission of an annual accomplishment report, and compiling of total of eight (8) CEU's by a minimum of two (2) people.

No person or profession is exempt from CORE training.

CORE Training Topics

Background of Community Forestry and Shade Tree Commissions in New Jersey

- History and development in New Jersey
- Programs
- Technical resources available
- Local, state and national organizations
- Community forestry program grant opportunities

Legal Aspects

- Tort claims/New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act
- Commissions vs. Advisory Boards
- State Statute governing municipal Shade Tree Commissions
- Model ordinances for municipal Shade Tree Commissions

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- Model resolutions and regulations for County Commissions or County Boards
- Right-of-way issues
- Hazardous Tree Situations
- Understanding target areas
- Recognizing common tree defects
- Recognizing tree species that are prone to problems
- Prioritizing problem trees for maintenance or removal
- Recognizing sight line problems

Continuing Education Unit (CEU) Requirements and Plan Preparation And Implementation Assistance

- Continuing Education (CEU's)
 - Fulfilling CEU requirements
 - CEU training opportunities
- Community Forestry Management Plans
 - The Municipality-Consulting Forester relationship
 - Guidelines
 - Submission and Approval Procedures
 - Reaching and Maintaining Approved Status

CEU Categories - Township of Weymouth Priorities

1. Municipal Tree Budgets
2. Tree Inventories
3. Public Relations/Community Involvement
4. Hazardous Tree Conditions
5. Insect and Disease Identification
6. Fire Issues

Note: Participation in training opportunities of selected individuals will be initiated soon

Outreach to the public is critical to the success of the Community Forestry Plan. Without public support the plan will fail. As with most rural communities, educational efforts have been limited except for modest efforts to educate citizens with regards to the dangers of wildland forest fires. A primary objective will be: Develop a community-wide program to enhance the community's awareness of the value of trees and the urban forest.

Initial Actions

- Seek access to existing print media materials that can be distributed to all households by volunteers i.e. forest fire brochures such as "Protecting and Landscaping Homes in the Wildland Urban Landscape".
- Apply for and maintain Tree City USA status.
- Consider partnering with organizations like: Society of American Foresters, NJ Forestry Association to sponsor an annual community education workshop on forest and tree management topics. This should be coordinated with adjacent municipalities.
- Request township forestland owners who presently manage their lands to consider allowing their forest to be used for field tours and demonstrations.
- Promote wildlife tree programs that brings wildlife in as a component. People love wildlife.
- Develop specific brochures in concert with county park systems.
- Seek print media coverage two times a year.
- Consider Arbor Day celebration
- Begin to take advantage of program/materials through Rutgers Forestry Extension and or New Jersey Forest fire and Forest Service.
- Outreach to schools, clubs, organizations. Seek business contributions.

Note: All of the above must be implemented to insure a meaningful implementation of the Community Forestry Management Plan. It will take effort by interested parties and volunteers to make it a success.

7. PUBLIC EDUCATION, AWARENESS and OUTREACH

Community Forestry Management Plan Budget

Budgeted

Year 2009

Budgeted Year

2010

Budgeted Year

2011

Budgeted Year

2012

Budgeted Year

2013

\$2,000.00 To be determined To be determined To be determined To be determined

8. BUDGET: Community Forestry Management Plan

Note: Implementation schedules are dependent upon available funding and economics.

Year One - 2009

Forest Inventory: The forest and tree inventory is the fundamental baseline information needed to begin to implement specific on-the-ground actions. Funding for this inventory will be applied

for immediately in late 2008 and early 2009. Initiation development of individual forest plans for individual forested tracts owned by Weymouth Township.

Because of the rural character of Weymouth Township, this inventory will be a blend of a traditional wildland forest inventory and a street urban forest tree inventory. This inventory would include an inventory of trees on municipal infrastructure land i.e. schools. Once the inventory is developed, more specific management objectives will be developed.

However, it is planned to initiate a subset of the inventory that will address hazard trees and possibly the highest fire hazard concerns. There are numerous concerns of standing dead trees from insect, drought, and disease occurrences in this area of Atlantic County. Many of these trees pose significant hazards to pedestrians, motor vehicles, and improvements. It may be essential to prepare a inventory to begin to address these critical issues in 2009. The issue of fire hazard can be dealt with in the larger inventory for the Township. In addition, in year one (2009), an initial forming of tree representative by the mayor and council will have to occur. This will likely be a representative from the public works department.

Evaluation and the need for specific training within the context of the Community Forestry Program will be done once this person is selected. Finally, during the first year, some modest public outreach will begin.

Outreach Specifics

1. Seek educational materials that are readily available at no charge from state and federal forestry agencies. Begin distribution to general public with notification that a plan is in place and available for review at the municipal hall or public library.

9. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

2. Initiate media contact for a press release.

3. Seek participation from township residents who own and manage their private forest resources to enlist an owner to provide a field tour of examples of management success, i.e. a forest in-management and field day.

4. Initiate outreach for volunteers to participate in the program.

5. Consider a Forest Tree Commission similar to the Shade Tree Commission – evaluate pros and cons.

Funding

Once the Community Forestry Management Plan is approved, and CORE training requirements have been met, the community will be eligible to apply for Community Stewardship Incentive Program (CSIP) grants to help implement their management plan. The CSIP practices are as follows:

CSIP #2 Training

CSIP #3 Public Education and Awareness

CSIP #4 Arbor Day Activities

CSIP #5 Assessment/Inventory

CSIP #6 Tree Hazard Identification Plan

CSIP #7 Tree Planting

CSIP #8 Tree Maintenance

CSIP #12 Insect and Disease Management

CSIP #13 Other

Year Two - 2010

Beginning in this year, the Annual Accomplishment Report for 2009 will have been filed and this will allow the tree committee to focus on what was done and what accomplishments can now be built upon.

By now, it is hoped a tree inventory is well underway and will be completed early in this year. The hazard tree inventory should have completed and work to remove hazardous trees should be accelerated in this second year.

Education: This has to become an active priority at this stage. Getting people to understand the importance of the plan will not just get support, it will be key to getting people to volunteer and participate.

With present federal, state and local budget concerns, getting people to volunteer and help will be critical to the long-term success of the management plan. If people have stepped up to help, they'll need:

1. Exhaust all opportunities for funding. Funding will be needed to all aspects of plan implementation.
2. Plan at least one forestry/tree field day for residents to attend.
3. Plan Arbor Day handouts or Arbor field events.
4. Begin to consider and plan reforestation of some of the urban facilities, i.e. schools. The inventory should begin to indicate those kind of needs.
5. Begin initial discussions with NJDEP with regards to becoming a fire wise community and implementation of fire prevention activities.
6. Continue to develop hazard tree management.

Year Three - 2011

By year three, it is hoped that a realistic program is underway. By this time, there will be a clear understanding of the level of interest and funding that may be available. Although education and outreach will remain a high priority throughout all years of the plan, planners must be practical and realistic. Goals need be achievable to insure enthusiasm continues.

This year will build on what has been accomplished.

1. Tree hazard removal and assessment will be ongoing.
2. Fireside issue will now rise as a priority. This is an effort to educate the owners of 5 – 10 acres and larger home lots of the need to consider a fire hazard federation program with cooperation from the state forest fire service. It will be essential to educate the local residents as to the need to manage the local forests for forest tree health but secondly, to prevent catastrophic wildland forest fire.

3. The third major agenda to start this year will be to approach the various state and county agencies that control the active management of a large portion of the Township's forest land. Long term efforts to manage township or private land will be jeopardized if public land remains unmanaged. Insect, disease, and wildland fire issues coming from public lands will simply overwhelm local efforts and defeat the purpose of this plan.

Initially, the town council and major will likely need to pass a resolution urging cooperation from agency ownerships. This should encourage the active management of these lands to help achieve the stated goals and objectives of this community forestry management plan. This initiative would also enhance the asset value of the land in terms of their recreational and aesthetic values to the Township. The Township will also seek contact with state land planners and the New Jersey Pinelands

Commission to support the active management of these publicly-owned natural resources. The issue of overall public health and safety should be of a high priority on this issue.

Year Four - 2012

Initially, a review of the accomplishments will help direct priorities and how time and money can bring the best return. It has been, and clearly will be, an ongoing issue for annually assessing CORE and Continuing Education Unit DES training responsibilities to insure compliance with the

Act and remain eligible for grant money. CSIP Grant applications will continue to be an annual effort. At this point, adaptive management technique will begin to take place. This plan has been prepared to be realistic. Adaptive management will allow the managers to take advantage of what is working.

The Annual Accomplishment Report will be helpful in directly the focus for these last two years of this five year management period.

As of this writing of this plan, we predict the education overall forest health and wildland fire issues will remain a primary focus and likely to present continued funding availability. The U. S. Forest Service has placed these issues high on their priority list for support and funding.

It's anticipated to continue:

1. Active management of hazard tree management.
2. Active reforestation at municipal facilities, i.e. schools, town hall, etc.
3. Active fireside and hazard reduction management.

Overall education and outreach will continue but it is hoped results from earlier years may allow this priority to be lowered. Again, funding opportunities must be an initial priority in late 2011 into early in the year 2012.

Year Five - 2013

At this stage, it is planned to have a program that has clear direction with the intention that the next five year Community Forestry Management Plan be a priority now. A conceptual outline of what the next plan can realistically accomplish will be prepared during the last year of this plan's period. The initial review of the Annual Accomplishment Report will set the schedule for this last year. If things have been successful, we feel as though we should just be continuing with what was started

last year and more of the same.

By year's end, it is the goal to submit a realistic five-year management plan for the next five-year period. Again, we believe because this is the start of a new program.

It is difficult to predict out five years what will be happening on the ground. The adaptive management approach will allow for the shifting and adjusting of priorities and goals to maximize effectiveness of different aspects of the plan. However, the primary goal and objectives will remain intact.

Once the community Forestry Management Plan is approved, and CORE Training requirements have been met, the Weymouth Township Shade Tree Commission will be eligible to apply for Community Stewardship Incentive Program (CSIP) grants to help implement their management plan.

CSIP Grants Implement CSIP Practice

CSIP #1 Plan Preparation Year 2009

CSIP #2 Training Year 2009

CSIP #3 Public Education & Awareness Year

CSIP #4 Arbor Day Activities Year

CSIP #5 Assessment/Inventory Year

CSIP #6 Tree Hazard Identification Plan Year 2009

CSIP #7 Tree Planting Year

CSIP #8 Tree Maintenance Year

CSIP #9 Tree Recycling Year

CSIP #10 Ordinance Establishment Year 2009

CSIP #11 Tree Care Disaster Plan Year

CSIP #12 Insect and Disease Management Year

CSIP #13 Other Year

10. COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP INCENTIVE PROGRAM

APPENDIX

A. Weymouth Township Owned Property by

Block and Lot