

UI Extension Forestry Information Series

Management Planning For Woodland Owners

Ron Mahoney

While most woodland owners have specific reasons for owning their land and expect to continue enjoying the special attributes of their property, many owners reject active management on the premise that “*I don’t want to manage my land, I want it to stay just the way it is.*” I’ve heard this statement many times and gave some thought to its advantages and disadvantages. Here’s the results:

Positive Factors of Inactive Ownership:

- Relax, let nature take its course.
- Observe natural cycles.
- No additional money investment.
- Little involvement or control by others.

Negative Factors of Inactive Ownership:

- Natural changes may be undesirable.
- Less opportunity to observe and understand natural cycles.
- Little opportunity for active family involvement.
- Could increase pressure to regulate private land.
- May cause legal problems with taxes, inheritance or liability.
- Woodland will be affected by adjacent land uses.
- Nothing stays “just the way it is” without management.
- Increased fire danger.

It’s no surprise that as a forester, land owner and active manager, it’s easier for me to see the benefits of management. Consider the management of your woodland. Do you have a management plan? A management plan doesn’t have to be complicated but it must be a *written document*. Why? A written plan helps organize your goals, set priorities, and develop a schedule of actions to meet your expectations. It can save you a bundle on property and income taxes, and

of course is the best way to leave a trail that your heirs or other future owners can follow. A management plan includes descriptions and measurements to help you choose between alternative activities to meet your goals, including maintaining woodland. *Each of us, willing or not, leaves our signature upon the land. Give some thought to your legacy as a woodland owner.*

Need help? The UI Cooperative Extension System has a wide range of educational materials about woodland management planning. For a good start, contact your local CES educator or the Extension Forestry office and ask for CIS 675, *Management Planning For the Woodland Owner*. This publication is also available on-line at the UI Extension Forestry Web Site at: www.its.uidaho.edu/extforest

This information first appeared in Woodland NOTES, Vol. 2, No. 2.

About the Author: *Dr. Ron Mahoney* is an Extension Forester and Professor at the University of Idaho.

