

THE FEDERAL FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY ON PRIVATE FOREST OWNERSHIPS IN THE UNITED STATES

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A 72 percent response rate was achieved in 1998 and 1999 national survey of 1,238 participants in the USDA Forest Service's Forest Stewardship Program, under which 130,000 individual multiple resource plans encompassing 16.5 million acres (6.5 million ha) of privately owned forest lands in the United States had been completed. Objectives were to determine if the plans were meeting the needs of private landowners and promoting long term sustainable management to meet public needs for wood products and other benefits. We found a very high rate of plan implementation and a high level of satisfaction with the quality of plans. FSP is reaching many owners who never before had received professional assistance in

managing their forests; large numbers of participants are implementing new practices; are managing for multiple forest outputs; and frequently, are spending their own personal funds. Owners who received cost sharing for tree planting and other practices were almost three times more likely to implement their plans than participants who did not receive cost share assistance. Declining funding for federal cost share programs in recent (post survey) years raises questions as to whether FSP will continue to enjoy its current high level of success in promoting sustainable management on privately owned forest lands.