

Model Forest Application, Review and Approval

The Forest Guild Model Forest Program recognizes places, people, and relationships that foster sustainable forest management and demonstrate successful silviculture.

Goals of the Model Forest Review and Approval Process:

- Create a quick screening stage for applications to ensure they are appropriate candidates for the program, and so the Guild can build a network of Model Forests (MFs) that best meet our program goals and best utilize the time and talents of our volunteer reviewers.
- Educate the candidate Model Forest Managers and Model Forest Owners about the Model Forest program, what is expected in the review process, and what is expected of all parties in a Model Forest Designation so that the process runs smoothly and we achieve best-fit between the needs of all involved.
- Manage the Model Forest review process with local volunteer/reviewers, using the involvement of members to strengthen commitment to the Guild and its programs.
- Provide Model Forest Reviewers (MFRs) with criteria and clear supporting guidance to allow them to perform thorough, consistent reviews with minimal desk-time.
- Create a review and approval process that is meaningful (not a rubber stamp), adds value, but that does not create too much administrative work.

Proposed Sequence for Model Forest Application, Review and Approval.

1). MF Program criteria are made available on FG website together with a simple one-page pre-application that can be submitted electronically. Similar material will be available for non-computer users. The prospective Model Forest Manager (MFM) contacts Model Forest Program Coordinator (PC) to discuss and explain the program. If they remain interested and believe they meet the criteria, the prospective Model Forest Manager submits the 1-page pre-application for prospective Model Forest enrollments.



2). PC reviews pre-application for adherence to Model Forest Program goals and criteria. PC informs Model Forest Committee (MFC) of pre-applications received and which have received requests for full applications.



3a). Program Coordinator informs candidate MFM that because the forest does not meet Guild Model Forest Program goals or criteria, that the Guild will not be requesting a full application for Model Forest designation.

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3b). Program Coordinator requests MFM to complete a full application for Model Forest enrollment. The MFM submits a full application together with requested supporting materials within **4 months of notification.** (e.g. **If the MFC requests a full application from the MFM on January 20 then the MFM has until May 20 to submit the completed full application**)



4.) PC informs Model Forest Committee (MFC) of pre-applications received and which have received requests for full applications.



5). Program Coordinator, with input from the MFC, recruits a team of 3 local Model Forest reviewers from the ranks of the Forest Guild Professional Membership. The review team reviews the Model Forest application and supporting documentation and completes a field review. Following the review, the review team will take one of two actions:

- A recommendation for Model Forest designation
- A recommendation to reject Model Forest designation, with justification



5). Review team recommendation is sent with application materials to the MFC for approval.



6). The candidate Model Forest Manager and Model Forest Owner are notified of the status of designation by the Program Coordinator.

Initial Inquiry

Any Guild Professional Member in good standing with forest management responsibilities may enquire about Model Forest Designation by contacting the Model Forest Program Coordinator. The Program Coordinator will explain the program requirements and discuss the circumstances of the prospective candidate.

The Program Coordinator will send the applicant a 1-page pre-application together with the full program criteria for their self-assessment.

Pre-application

The Prospective Model Forest Manager, will prepare and submit a pre-application that includes basic information including:

- ✓ Prospective Model Forest Manager
- ✓ Prospective Model Forest Owner
- ✓ Property location, size and forest types
- ✓ Other simple questions to allow quick screening of candidates to ensure they meet program goals and criteria. (Ex. Length of ownership).

The Program Coordinator will review the pre-applications identify that the basic MF criteria can be met, and that a full application and review would be warranted.

Following receipt of the pre-application and interview, the Program Coordinator will submit all received pre-applications, along with their comments or recommendation, to the MFC for review during their quarterly meeting, and the MFC will approve or decline the pre-applications.

Full-application Process

The full application would be prepared by the candidate MFM with input from the Model Forest Owner (MFO). The completed pre-application will be considered part of the full application so information is not being requested twice. The full application, together with supporting documentation, provides more detailed information and is intended to allow evaluation of those aspects of the Program Criteria that can be evaluated on paper.

The extent of supporting documentation requested would partly depend on the scale and type of ownership involved, and would initially be left to the judgment of the Program Coordinator. Examples of Supporting Documentation could include:

- ✓ Forest Stewardship Plans (small properties)
- ✓ Strategic Forest Management Plan (large properties)
- ✓ Forest Operation Plan (large properties)
- ✓ Certification reports
- ✓ Conservation easement documentation
- ✓ MOU's, or other evidence of ownership intent

Field Review Process

The Program Coordinator will recruit Model Forest Reviewers for each approved pre-application with input from the MFC. The Field Review Team will consist of 3 Guild Professional Members. Field Review Team members should be selected to bring a balanced expertise to the review. Ideally the review team will include one experienced forester and one member who is experienced in other areas of forest conservation, such as ecology, biology or land protection.

One member of the Review Team will be designated as the Team Leader. The Team Leader will be responsible for: coordinating the site visit with the team, MFO and MFM; for leading the discussions among team members and candidates; for ensuring all of the program criteria are evaluated; and for serving as the primary point of contact with the Program Coordinator.

The Field Review Team will be the Guild's ambassadors to the Model Forest Program. The Program Coordinator will provide team members with information on MF program goals, criteria and basic responsibilities of reviewers.

The Field Review Team will review the candidate Model Forest application and supporting materials prior to the field review. The Team Leader will schedule a field inspection at a time when the candidate MFM and MFO can be present and available. MFM will provide reviewers with treatment map and history of treatments. Field Review Team will specify which stands they wish to observe. The Field Review Team will inspect the candidate Model Forest and interview the candidate MFO and MFM to evaluate compliance with the Model Forest program criteria. The team will use a standard checklist to note compliance with criteria.

Following the field review, the Review Team should meet privately to identify concerns and any program criteria that are not met or for which compliance is not clear. Additional information from either the MFM or MFO may be requested if needed. Finally the Review Team should develop a recommendation for Model Forest designation. Recommendation options include:

- A recommendation for Model Forest designation
- A recommendation to reject Model Forest designation, with written justification.

Review teams are strongly encouraged to work by consensus in making recommendations for Model Forest designations. In the event that consensus cannot be reached and 1 of 3 members of a review team is not in agreement with a recommendation, the minority opinion should be included in the recommendation document, and be considered in the approval process.

In the event that consensus cannot be reached by a 2-person review team, the team will deliver a criteria review and a narrative describing the opinions of both team members, but without a recommendation, to the Model Forest Committee for review.

Approval Process

The Model Forest Committee (MFC), a sub-group of the Guild Demonstration Working Group, will make the final approval of recommendations for Model Forest Designations.

The MFC will dedicate a portion of their 4 quarterly calls to review and approval of Model Forest designation recommendations. MFC members will review the MF full application, supporting materials, criteria and complying actions checklist, and the Review Team's recommendation.

Unless otherwise stated, actions of the MFC will be made by a simple majority vote of all members present at a scheduled conference call or other properly noticed meeting. The MFC may elect to request members of the Review Team and/or the Model Forest Manager to be present for part of their meetings. MFC members will be allowed to vote in-absentia provided they have received and reviewed all the information applicable to the decision.

A Review Team's recommendation to approve Model Forest designation (with either all, or 2 of 3 team members in agreement) will be considered and voted by the MFC. Recommendations for approval that are not passed by majority vote (including those members voting in-absentia) will be considered rejected.

A field review team's recommendation to reject Model Forest designation (with either all, or 2 of 3 team members in agreement), along with their written justification, will be considered binding and will be provided as informational items to the MFC. MFC may vote to accept a recommendation for rejection, but may not vote to overturn it.

A candidate Model Forest Manager whose application has been rejected but who believes that any deficiencies in meeting FG criteria have been corrected, may re-start the application process by submitting a new pre-application for the Candidate Model Forest no sooner than 12 months after the initial decision of rejection by the MFC. A second application, if accepted, will be treated with the same process as a new-application.

Notification Process

When the Model Forest designation has been approved, the MFO and MFM are sent appropriate agreements and background materials by the Model Forest Program Coordinator.

If the Model Forest Designation is rejected the Program Coordinator will notify the candidate MFO and MFM and inform them of the decision and justification for rejection.

MFC members will also be encouraged to make contact with both accepted and rejected forests in their respective regions.