

FOREST

(Reference: Manual of the State Land Evaluation and Advisory Council)

Minimum Acreage:

A minimum of 20 acres required. "...forest use consists of a minimum of twenty acres...". (See 58.1-2322).

Exception:

Timber under 20 acres which meets the forestry standards may qualify only as a rider to another qualifying use, such as agriculture/horticulture. "Trees ... meeting standards prescribed by the State Forester, if less than twenty acres, and produced incidental to other farm operations ...". (See SLEAC Manual 13-A-11).

ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINIONS: 1/27/75 (Can forest acreage under 20 acres qualify with agriculture? Yes).

7/9/85 (Will a parcel with a total of 20 acres qualify if there is a home site and a pond on the property? No).

Qualifying Use:

The land must be growing a well distributed, commercial forest crop that is physically accessible for harvesting when mature. "To be qualified, the land must be growing a commercial forest crop that is physically accessible for harvesting when mature." (See SLEAC Manual 13-1-B).

➔ If the timber is fenced in and livestock are allowed to graze (used in addition to other pasture land), then agricultural values would be applied.

ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINION: 5/21/75 (Does the land use value apply to land and timber or land only? Both).

Stocking:

The land must be devoted to forest use which has a well distributed, commercially valuable trees to compose at least 40% stocking. "...which has existent on it, and well distributed, commercially valuable trees of any size sufficient to compose at least 40% normal stock...". (See SLEAC Manual 13-1-B. Chart included which reflects the required 40% stocking requirements). This would include land that has recently been cleared and is being regenerated into a new forest.

Exception:

Land which is unable to grow a crop of industrial wood because of inaccessibility such as steep rock, shallow soil on mountain side, steepness, heavily eroded areas,or other conditions which prohibit the growth and harvesting of a crop of trees shall qualify as non-productive. (See SLEAC Manual 13-1-C).

ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINION: 2/23/76 (Is the value of the standing timber part of the SLEAC values? Yes).

Non- Productive:

Land which is incapable of growing commercial quality timber due to location, soil conditions, or other conditions which prohibit timber growth. "...which is not capable of growing a crop of industrial wood because of inaccessibility or adverse site conditions such as steep outcrops of rock, shallow soil on steep mountain sides, excessive steepness, heavily eroded areas, coastal beach sand, tidal marsh...". (See SLEAC Manual 13-1-C).

Certification: The owner shall certify that the land is used in a planned program of timber management.

Examples:

A Forest Management Plan prepared by a professional forester (this would also include a Stewardship Plan)

or

A signed commitment by owner listing objectives of maintaining the forest. The commitment should include method of soil and water protection and method of resource management (See SLEAC Manual 14-2-B).