

**Steps for Using EQIP – FA incentive to fund Forest Management Plan (FMP)
Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) development using client-hired TechReg
Technical Service Providers (TSPs)**

February 9, 2010

1. **(Field Office)** - A producer is interested in EQIP-FA initiative to fund CAP-FMP (program practice code 106) development using producer-hired TechReg TSP, and completes application for program participation (CCC-1200).
 - a. NRCS field staff will notify the client that anyone receiving EQIP incentive payments for a FMP would not be able to receive WoodsWise payments for a Stewardship Plan on those same acres and vice versa. NRCS field staff will then determine that the acres to be planned are not already enrolled in the Maine Forest Service (MFS) Stewardship Assistance program by checking with the MFS District Forester or Landowner Outreach Forester.
 - b. NRCS field staff will notify client that the planning unit (acres) does not have to include all the contiguous forested acres owned, (but must include the forest stand or stands that have similar treatment needs and planned management - i.e. the same definition as “planning unit” in the National Planning Procedure Handbook (NPPH)). The planning unit shall have definite boundaries, such as property lines, fence, drainage, vegetation (stand type boundary lines), topography, or soil boundary lines that can be located in the field.
 - c. NRCS field staff will notify client that in cases where they have chosen to develop a CAP-FMP for something less than an entire tract of woodland, they will not be eligible for another CAP-FMP on that same tract of forestland for a minimum of five years.
 - d. NRCS field staff will notify client that if they are participating in the Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP) that they are not eligible for CAP-FMP on those acres covered by the BCAP.
 - e. NRCS field staff completes all program eligibility determinations. If client is eligible for program participation, then proceed to the following steps:
 - 1) Determine payment rate for acres of forestland that will be covered by the FMP from the Program Payment Schedule.
 - 2) Review with producer the FMP payment rate and the TSP hiring process that she/he must use to hire a TSP certified in “TechReg” for a CAP-FMP.
 - 3) NRCS field staff will notify client that contracted payment rate may not cover the total cost charged by the TSP for preparing the CAP-FMP, and client will be responsible for any remainder due to the TSP over and above the contract payment amount.
 - f. If the producer wishes to proceed, the Field Office (FO) will:
 - 1) Email a request for EQIP funds to Programs at the State Office.
 - 2) Develop EQIP CAP-FMP (program practice code 106 only) contract for producer.
 - 3) Provide Landowner copy of the “Forest Management Plan Criteria/Activity Code (106) (No.)” document from Section III of eFOTG at:

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http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/references/public/ME/ME450-10-7-Attachment_FMP_Criteria.pdf , which lists required deliverables.

- 4) Notify client to hire TSP certified in Maine for “CAP-Forest Management Plan (FMP) (106)” from TechReg at:
<http://techreg.usda.gov/CustLocateTSP.aspx>
- 5) Notify client that they may provide property information to TSP directly, or may grant permission for release of information to TSP by NRCS.
 - a. If client agrees to release information, assist client to fill out and sign Authorization and Release of Information (see ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/ME/GMAmendments/GM120_ME-11_408_C.pdf). On the form, print TSP name and their TechReg ID Number TSP-X-XX-XXX. Place original signed copy in file and provide two copies to client and one for TSP.
 - b. Provide client and/or TSP with signed permission copies of Common Land Units (CLU) and At-Risk Wildlife Maps covering CLUs.

2. (Client, TSP and Field Office) - Client contacts TSP and considers using the Assignment of Payment.

- a. Client and TSP agree on terms.
 1. NRCS staff suggest that client have a contract with the TSP that refers to the “FMP Criteria CAP, Plan Code 106” which details the deliverables and provides a cost for CAP development.
- b. If client agrees to the Assignment of Payment:
 - 1) NRCS completes blocks 8, 9, 10, and 11 on the “Assignment of Payment” CCC-36 Form (<http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/efcommon/eFileServices/eForms/CCC36.PDF>)
 - a. The sum of the payment due, not to exceed the contracted payment rate for CAP, is entered in block 10.
 - 2) The client completes items 1, 3, 12A, 12B, and 12C.
 - 3) TSP completes items 2, 4, 13A, 13B, and 13C.
 - a. TSP must also provide SF-1199 Form - Direct Deposit Information (<http://www.fms.treas.gov/ef/1199a.pdf>)
 - 4) NRCS files completed original CCC-36 in case file and loads into Protracts. Copies also are provided to the client and to the assignee.

3. (TSP) – TSP will visit property.

- a. TSP will make landowner visit, and get their own individual contract with the landowner signed, and a copy of the “Authorization and Release of Information” from step 1(f)(5).

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- b. TSP completes necessary inventory of forestland and gathers other information to complete the CAP.
4. **(TSP)** – TSP completes the CAP.
5. **(TSP/Client)** – TSP signs certification statement on cover sheet of CAP
 - a. TSP, per deliverables, produces two hard copies of CAP and reviews it with the client. TSP obtains client's signature on the cover page of both copies, signs the certification statement, and leaves both copies with the client.
 - b. TSP, per deliverables, also produces two digital copies of CAP and leaves both copies with producer.
 - c. TSP provides invoice to client for CAP.
6. **(Client)** – Delivers CAP-FMPs to FO:
 - a. Client delivers one hard and one electronic copy of CAP-FMP (previously provided to clients by TSPs) with signatures. Signatories should include: client and TSP certified for CAP-FMP.
7. **(Client and Field Office)** – Payment request.
 - a. The client completes their portion of CPA-1245 Form, Request for Payment.
 - b. NRCS employee reviews deliverables. If acceptable, signs acceptance line on cover of CAP.
 - c. FO staff prepares NRCS-CPA-1245 and processes payments, including CCC-36, if applicable.
8. **(Field Office)** – CAP-FMP filing and reporting for Q&A.
 - a. One hard copy of the signed CAP is placed in NRCS/SWCD official files.
 - b. The Toolkit customer folder is checked out from the NCP Database and the FMP digital file is placed into C:/Customer Files Toolkit/Customer File/CAP-FMP
 - c. District Conservationist informs ASTC for Operations that CAP has been delivered and may need a Quality Assurance check.
9. **(State Office)** – Performs Quality Assurance on reported CAP per policy.