

Steps for Using EQIP – FA incentive to fund Forest Management Plan (FMP) Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) development using client-hired State of Maine or Maine Forest Service (MFS) as their Technical Service Provider (TSP)

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 “State of Maine” aka Maine Forest Service (MFS) as their 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 they will not be eligible for another CAP-FMP on that same tract of forestland for a minimum of five years.
 - d. NRCS 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 CAP-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 properly trained Stewardship Forester under the umbrella of the MFS TSP certification for a CAP-FMP.
 - 3) NRCS field staff will notify client that the contracted payment rate may not cover the total cost charged by the Stewardship Forester for preparing the CAP-FMP, and client will be responsible for remainder due to the Stewardship Forester 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.

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- 3) Provide Landowner copy of the “Forest Management Plan Criteria/Activity Code (106) (No.)” document from Section III of eFOTG at:
http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/references/public/ME/ME450-10-7-Attachment_FMP_Criteria.pdf , which lists required deliverables.
 - 4) Notify client that they need to contact Andy Shultz, Landowner Outreach Forester for the Maine Forest Service at: 207-287-8430 or email Andrew.H.Shultz@maine.gov to obtain information on the procedure to use a Stewardship Forester, and they need to select a properly trained Stewardship Forester from a list located on the MFS WoodsWISE web page at:
http://www.maine.gov/doc/mfs/fpm/wwi/DOCS/Stew_Foresters_web.pdf .
 - 5) Notify client that they may provide property information to MFS and/or Stewardship Forester directly, or may grant permission for release of information to MFS and/or Stewardship Forester 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 Maine Forest Service and Stewardship Forester names and the MFS TechReg ID Number TSP-B-10-876. Place original signed copy in file and provide two copies to client and one each for MFS and their Stewardship Forester.
 - b. Provide client and/or Stewardship Forester with signed permission, copies of Common Land Units (CLU) and At-Risk Wildlife Maps covering CLUs.
2. **(Client, MFS, Stewardship Forester, and Field Office)** - Client contacts MFS Landowner Outreach Forester, Andy Shultz @ 207-287-8430 or Andrew.H.Shultz@maine.gov and selects a properly trained Stewardship Forester from the list (“star” by name). After contacting Andy, client will need to complete an Agreement and an Assignment of Payment and mail to MFS. (Agreement may be obtained from:
http://www.maine.gov/doc/mfs/fpm/wwi/DOCS/pdf_v/lo_mfs_tsp_agreement.pdf .
The MFS mailing address is 22 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333.
- a. Client and MFS and Stewardship Forester, separately, agree on terms and assignment of payments.
 1. **MFS requires that client sign an Agreement with them and sign an assignment of payment (CCC-36, dated 09-09-09) for \$100.00 first, before Stewardship Forester starts work.**
 2. NRCS staff suggest that client have a contract with the Stewardship Forester that refers to the “FMP Criteria CAP, Plan Code

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106” which details the deliverables and provides a cost for CAP development.

b. If client agrees to the Assignment of Payment:

1) NRCS helps client fill out Assignment of Payment form

(<http://forms.sc.usda.gov/efcommon/eFileServices/eForms/CCC36.PDF>):

2) NRCS completes blocks 8, 9, 10, and 11 on the “Assignment of Payment” CCC-36 Form. In Item 11, Reference Number is CAP-FMP Contract Number.

a. For MFS, amount of \$100.00 is entered in block 10.

b. For Stewardship Forester (SF), (optional, up to Landowner) amount of NRCS funds agreed on with SF for contracted CAP, not to exceed the contracted payment rate, is entered in block 10.

3) The client completes items 1, 3, 12A, 12B, and 12C, and gives to MFS and possibly Stewardship Forester, on separate forms, to complete.

4) MFS, and possibly Stewardship Forester, completes, on separate forms, items 2, 4, 13A, 13B, and 13C.

a. Stewardship Forester must also provide SF-1199 Form - Direct Deposit Information (<http://www.fms.treas.gov/eft/1199a.pdf>)

5) Landowner gives to NRCS the completed original CCC-36(s) to file in case file and load into Protracts. Copies also are provided to the client and to the assignee(s) (MFS and possibly Stewardship Forester).

3. **(Stewardship Forester)** – Stewardship Forester will visit property.

a. Stewardship Forester 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).

b. Stewardship Forester completes necessary inventory of forestland and gathers other information to complete the CAP.

4. **(MFS and Stewardship Forester)** – Stewardship Forester completes the CAP and MFS reviews the CAP.

5. **(Stewardship Forester/MFS/Client)** – MFS signs the certification statement on cover sheet of CAP

a. MFS and/or Stewardship Forester, per deliverables, produce two hard copies of CAP and review it with the client. MFS and/or Stewardship Forester obtains client’s signature on the cover page of both copies, signs

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the certification statement on the cover page, and leaves both copies with the client.

- b. MFS requires a copy of both the signed Agreement and signed Assignment of Payment (CCC-36) **before** they will sign the certification on the Cover Page.
- c. MFS and/or Stewardship Forester, per deliverables, also produce two digital copies of CAP and leave both copies with client.
- d. Stewardship Forester provides invoice to client for CAP.

6. (Client) – Delivers CAP-FMP to FO:

- a. Client delivers one hard and one electronic copy of CAP-FMP (previously provided to clients by TSP) with signatures to NRCS. Signatories should include: client, Stewardship Forester, and Keith Kanoti, MFS Certified TSP 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 payment.
- d. FO staff processes CCC-36, Assignment of Payment, for MFS and possibly Stewardship Forester

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.