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DATE: February 19, 2010

WASHINGTON BULLETIN WA 300-10-14

SUBJECT: Non Industrial Private Forest (NIPF) designation guidance for Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) 2008 applications

Purpose: To issue NIPF designation guidance for CSP 2008 applications in determining specific minimum areas and size limits.

Expiration Date. September 30, 2010

Background. By special rule in the 2008 Farm Bill, NIPF was added as an eligible land use for CSP. Given the general NIPF definition provided by the 2008 Farm Bill, additional guidance is needed to assist in the designation of NIPF land for CSP contract development.

General Land Use Guidance for CSP 2008 is determined as follows:

1. Participants and Tribes will make the selection as to which land use they want to be considered for enrollment into CSP 2008. An acre of land can only have one land use designation applied for ranking, selection and payment purposes. Definition of each eligible land use will be made available to participants to aid them in their land use designation decision.
2. Application of Land Use Descriptions: Land use will be verified as part of the field verification of process. Offered acres that fail to meet the land use description will be considered as being inaccurate information and handled as described on the Conservation Performance Summary Report - Applicant Certification.

NIPF is defined as:

1. A land cover/use category that is at least 10 percent stocked by single-stemmed woody species of any size that will be at least 4 meters (13 feet) tall at maturity. Also included is land bearing evidence of natural regeneration of tree cover (cut over forest or abandoned farmland) and not currently developed for non-forest use. Ten percent stocked, when viewed from a vertical direction, equates to an areal canopy cover of leaves and branches of 25 percent or greater. **The minimum area for classification as forest land will be 20 acres.**

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2. Forest Openings and Incidental Area of Non-Forest Land cover (e.g. wetlands, rock outcrops): Openings within the forest are eligible for inclusions in the NIPF acreage provided any one **opening will not exceed a size limit of 10 acres and not exceed an aggregate 10 percent of the total contract acres.**
3. Wetlands and Other Non-Wooded Areas: Wetlands and non-wooded areas that exceed the size limits designated by states as forest openings should be excluded from the offered acreage unless the participant can provide documentation of forest management activities that have been conducted on these acres within the past 10 years. Documentation could be copies of forest management plans including these areas, timber harvest receipts or similar documents that substantiate forest management activities have taken place.

If you have any questions on this process please contact your local Program Liaison or Jeff Harlow, ASTC-P, at (509) 323-2971.

/s/ Paul Scales, Acting

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State Conservationist