

# Want a Healthy Woods? More Wildlife? Timber?

Get more of what *you* value – with financial help from us.

There are many reasons to enjoy woodlands – beauty, wildlife, hunting, timber, walking trails, or maybe, all of the above.

**Getting all you want** and **facing threats** like disease and invasive species is why we can help.

We know you're ready to get your hands dirty. But doing what? Where? Why? **Healthy woods start with a plan.**

## Plans Provide:

- **Perspective** – Understand what you have and want, while also identifying practices that support your values.
- **Priority** – Know where to start and not waste precious time.
- **Payment** – The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides competitive financial assistance for plan writing and all practices.

*The woodland plan we offer is called a Forest Management Plan (FMP). It is very similar to other popular plans including, Forest Stewardship, Tree Farm, and Managed Forest Law. In fact, these plans may qualify you to receive financial assistance through us!*

## Introduction

A Forest Management Plan (FMP) is a gateway to understanding your woodlands health and potential. The FMP is a site-specific plan developed based on the landowner's management objectives and the professional expertise of a skilled forester to achieve long-term forest management goals. The NRCS administers the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), which provides support for the development of FMP's in Wisconsin.

Management plans (including NRCS FMP's, Forest Stewardship Plans, Tree Farm Plans, and others) are an extremely valuable tool for landowners and managers. They provide detailed information about species composition, potential harmful pests, other ecosystem components of the property and surrounding landscape, and related opportunities and limitations. They provide a "road map" to achieve the landowner's goals in a cost-effective and strategic way, while protecting and enhancing wildlife habitat and other forest resources.

Additionally, by having a FMP, you may be eligible for further EQIP financial assistance for the implementation of conservation practices detailed in the plan. NRCS recognizes the value of Forest Management Plans and has placed a high priority on funding them through EQIP.



The NRCS does not require landowners to perform practices scheduled in Forest Management Plans after their plan is completed. However, practices scheduled in Forest Management Plans must be followed if the property becomes enrolled in the Managed Forest Law (MFL) program. Therefore, landowners are highly encouraged to actively participate in the planning process with their forester.

FMP's must be written by a forester who is qualified as a Technical Service Provider (TSP) with NRCS-WI. While TSPs may use their own plan format, all FMPs must meet the same criteria. The FMP Criteria can be found under "Resources for Technical Service Providers" at [www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/wi/technical/landuse/forestry/](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/wi/technical/landuse/forestry/). If the FMP will be used for entry into the Wisconsin MFL program talk with the DNR Forester for the county to discuss the program and its requirements. Find DNR Foresters on the WDNR website ([dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov); keywords *Forestry Assistance Locator*).



## Application Process

The following is a step-by-step guide detailing the process to apply for EQIP funding to have a Forest Management Plan developed:

### (1) Establishing Eligibility for USDA Programs

If this is the first time you have participated in USDA programs, you will need to make an appointment with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) or NRCS at your local USDA Service Center to establish eligibility and farm records.

*Be ready to provide the following documentation:*

- a. **Control of the Land** you wish to enroll – provide a lease or copy of the deed to the property.
- b. **Identity** – If applying as an individual, please provide your Social Security Number and contact information. If applying as an entity or joint operation (ie. LLC, Corporation, etc), please provide documents that describe the entity or partnership, and establish signature authority (e.g., articles of incorporation, bylaws, partnership paperwork, etc.).

*In order to apply for NRCS programs, individuals must complete eligibility requirements:*

- a. **Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation Determination**, Form AD-1026
- b. **Average Adjusted Gross Income Statement**, Form CCC-941 (to be eligible for NRCS programs, the applicant must meet certain AGI requirements.)
- c. **Member's Information for Entities and Joint Operations**, Form CCC-901. Only required for establishing farm records for an entity, not needed for individuals. Note: All

members of an entity must be listed on the CCC-901 and complete a CCC-941 reflecting their personal AGI.

*The forms are available online at [www.ocio.usda.gov/forms/index.html](http://www.ocio.usda.gov/forms/index.html), or at your local service center. It takes time for the paperwork to be processed and additional information may be needed. Please start the process early to ensure your records and eligibility are current prior to any program sign-up cut-off dates.*

### (2) Applying for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program

*Prior to program signup cutoff dates you will need to:*

- a. Ensure your eligibility is up-to-date with the FSA office and you are listed as “owner” or “operator” on lands that you farm or manage.
- b. Complete and sign a **Conservation Program Application**, NRCS-CPA-1200.
- c. Review and sign a **Conservation Program Contract Appendix**, NRCS-CPA-1202-CPC which explains the terms and conditions of NRCS program contracts.
- d. If applying as an entity with an Employee Tax ID Number (EIN), the entity must obtain a **DUNS Identification Number**, and a System for Award Management account. A DUNS identification number can be attained at: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> and a **System for Award Management** account can be obtained at: [www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/#1](http://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/#1).
- e. Complete a **Direct Deposit Form** (SF-1199A). All NRCS program payments are made via direct deposit.

### (3) Completing the Program Application and Contracting Process

Conservation Planners with the NRCS will guide you with the completion of the final application documents:

- a. Conservation Plan
- b. Conservation Plan/Schedule of Operations
- c. Application Ranking Summary

If your application is selected for funding, you will need to sign a **Conservation Program Contract**, NRCS-CPA-1202. **IMPORTANT:** Do not start any work until you have signed the Conservation Program Contract.

### (4) Hiring a Technical Service Provider (TSP) to Prepare the Plan

To locate a qualified forester to write your Forest Management Plan, either contact the local NRCS office or search on the NRCS Tech Reg website:

- a. Visit <http://techreg.usda.gov/> and click “Find a TSP” in the “I want to...” box on the right side of the screen.
- b. From there, click on your state and county to generate a list of TSPs that service that area.

- c. From the “Select Category” drop down list, select “CAP– Forest Management Plan (106).”
- d. You can click the “Résumé” button next to any of the names to find out more about a TSP.
- e. When you contact a TSP, you may wish to inquire about references, rates, etc., to help you make a decision. Note: the cost of a plan can vary considerably, depending on the TSP’s required travel, the condition and type of forestland you have, and other factors. Incentive payments under this program are not intended to cover 100% of the cost. Regardless of what the TSP charges, NRCS reimburses you a flat rate as follows:

**Environmental Quality Incentives Program Rates for Forest Management Plans (FY2016 rates; subject to change each year)**

Forested Acreage	Payment Rate
< 20	\$1,065.90
21–100	\$1,346.40
101–250	\$2,412.30
251–500	\$3,478.20
501–1,000	\$4,039.20
>1,000	\$5,049.00

The TSP will develop the plan, and following the participants approval, submit it to the local NRCS office for review. **IMPORTANT:** Once the plan has been completed by the TSP, submitted to the NRCS for review, and certified as meeting the FMP criteria, the NRCS will issue payment to the participant. FMP’s must be completed within 12 months of signing the CPA-1202 (Conservation Program Contract).

## NRCS Forest Management Plan Criteria and Client Deliverables

### (1) Forest Management Plan Primary Objectives

The forest management plan will:

- a. Meet the client’s objectives.
- b. Meet Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) quality criteria for the identified resource concern(s).
- c. Provide recommendations that comply with federal, state, tribal, and local laws, regulations

### (2) Deliverables for the Client – a hardcopy of the plan that includes:

- a. Cover page

- b. Soils map and appropriate soil descriptions
- c. Resource assessment results
- d. Description of Forest management practices. The planned practices and the site specific specifications on how each practice will be applied; when the practice will be applied, and the extent (acres or number) that will be applied.

### (3) Forest Management Plan Criteria

- a. Landowner information – name, address, operation, size
- b. Location and plan map of parcel
- c. Documentation of existing practices
- d. Past harvest history
- e. Identification of resource concerns
- f. Client Objectives
- g. Existing Conditions

Identify resource concerns based on an inventory to assess these concerns and opportunity for treatment. The inventory will typically include forest management unit and stand boundaries, site index, basal area, species, size class, wood product potential, soil conditions, slopes, topography, aspect, natural and cultural features, roads, wildfire risk (surface and crown fires), risk of insect and disease infestation, fish and wildlife species and habitat elements, noxious and invasive species, water quality and other important features as applicable.

#### h. Desired Future Conditions

Targets such as stocking, basal area, species composition, wildlife, pollinator habitat and protection, recreation, etc. for stands where practices/activities are recommended to meet future goals.

#### i. Forest Management Plan Documentation

Forest management plan map – boundaries, fields, scale, north arrow, stand boundaries, appropriate map symbols

Soils map – legend, interpretations, suitability index for forest activities

Additional Information Regarding NRCS Forest Management Plans” adapted from: Forest Management Plan Criteria Practice/Activity Code (106) (rev. 8/2012)