

FOREST MANAGEMENT PLANS

Applying for Financial Assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program



Introduction

A Forest Management Plan (FMP) is a site-specific plan that is developed based on the landowner's management objectives and the professional expertise of a skilled forester to achieve long-term forest management goals. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) has funding available to support the development of these plans in Michigan.

Management plans (including NRCS FMP's, Forest Stewardship Plans, Tree Farm Plans, and others) are an extremely valuable tool for land owners and managers: they provide detailed information about species composition, potential harmful pests and 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 the 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. FMP's written by qualified foresters according to NRCS standards can also be utilized for Michigan tax-incentive programs such as the Qualified Forest and Commercial Forest Programs, as well as for Tree Farm certification.

The NRCS **does not** require landowners to perform practices that are 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 Qualified Forest or Commercial Forest 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 with the Michigan NRCS. 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 <http://www.mi.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/forestry.html>.

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 Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) at your local USDA Service Center to establish eligibility and farm records. Local NRCS service centers are listed below (*next page*):

Kingsford Field Office (Dickinson/Iron/Gogebic Counties): (906) 774-1550
Tom Berndt (District Conservationist): ext. 108 Paul Tikusis (Soil Conservation Technician): ext.107

Marquette Field Office (Marquette/Alger Counties): (906) 226-9460

Baraga Field Office (Baraga/Houghton/Keweenaw/Ontonagon Counties): (906) 353-8225

Stephenson Field Office (Menominee County): (906) 753-6921

Gladstone Field Office (Delta, Luce, western Mackinac, Schoolcraft Counties): (906) 428-4076

Sault Ste. Marie Field Office (Chippewa & eastern Mackinac Counties): (906) 632-7051

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 if you are not listed as the owner in a plat book.
- 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.). If not already in the Farm Service Agency records system, each individual must complete an **AD-2047 (SCIMS Record Change) form**.

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

- a. **Form AD-1026, Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation Determination**
- b. **Form CCC-933, Average Adjusted Gross Income Statement** (to be eligible for NRCS programs, the applicant must meet certain AGI requirements.)
- c. **Form CCC-901, Member's Information for Entities and Joint Operations**. Only required for establishing farm records for an entity. *Note: All members of an entity must be listed on the CCC-901 and complete a CCC-933 reflecting their personal AGI.*

The forms are available online at <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 **NRCS-CPA-1200, Conservation Program Application**.
- c. Review and sign a **NRCS-CPA-1202-CPC (Conservation Program Contract Appendix)** 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> A System for Award Management account can be obtained at: <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/#1>
- e. Complete a **Direct Deposit (SF-1199A) Form**. 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:

- a. Sign a **NRCS-CPA-1202, Conservation Program Contract**. **IMPORTANT:** Do not start any work, i.e., hiring a TSP, until you have signed the Conservation Program Contract.

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

In many Michigan counties, you may be able to contact your local Conservation District Forestry Assistance Program (FAP) forester to generate a referral for your Forest Management Plan practice, which will result in qualified foresters contacting you if they would like to write your plan. Local FAP Contacts listed below:

Forester	District Office	Contact	Counties
AJ Campbell	Dickinson CD	774-1550	Dickinson, Menominee
Celie Borndal	Iron CD	875-3765	Iron, Baraga
Matt Watkeys	Marquette CD	226-2461	Marquette, Alger
<i>Vacant</i>	Chippewa-Luce-Mackinac CD	635-1278	Chippewa, Luce, Mackinac
Rory Mattson	Delta CD	553-7700	Delta, Schoolcraft

However, if you wish to hire a forester without the assistance of the FAP program, follow the process described below:

- 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. **Regardless of what the TSP charges, NRCS reimburses you a flat rate as follows:**

EQIP Payment Rates for Forest Management Plans:

(2014 rates, Subject to change each year)

Forested Acreage	Cost-Share Rate
≤ 50	\$676.98
51-100	\$959.05
101-200	\$1,466.79
201-400	\$2,200.19
401-600	\$3,102.82
601-1000	\$4,005.47
>1000	\$4,795.27



The TSP will develop the plan, and following the clients 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
 - a. 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
 - a. Goals 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
 - a. Forest management plan map – boundaries, fields, scale, north arrow, stand boundaries, appropriate map symbols
 - b. 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)