

FOREST MANAGEMENT PLANS

Applying for Financial Assistance through the
Environmental Quality Incentives Program



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. Forest Management Plans funded through NRCS must be written by a certified NRCS Technical Service Provider (TSP).



Management plans (including NRCS FMPs, Forest Stewardship Plans, Tree Farm Plans, and others) are an extremely valuable tool for landowners and managers. They provide detailed inventories of forest stand composition and other ecosystem components of the property and surrounding landscape, as well as information on 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.

NRCS categorizes FMPs as one of the following: inventory focused (these are called Conservation Planning Activities aka CPAs), implementation focused (these are called Design and Implementation Activities aka DIAs), or a combination of both (i.e. plans including both CPAs and DIAs).

Once an FMP is completed, you may be eligible for further EQIP financial assistance for the implementation of the conservation practices detailed in the plan.

While foresters may use their own plan format, all FMPs must meet the same criteria. The FMP Criteria can be found in the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG). Go to <https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/#/state/MI/search>. Type "checklist forest management plan" into the Document Search and then download the checklist. Alternatively, you can request a copy of the criteria checklist from your local field office.

When it comes time for you to hire a TSP (Forester), you may wish to inquire about references, rates, etc. to help you choose a provider. 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 provides you a flat rate as follows:

2023 Payment Rates for Forest Management Plans			
Plan for ≤ 20 acres	\$ 1,197 (CPA Only) \$ 315 (DIA Only) \$ 1,512 (CPA + DIA)	Plan for 251 to 500 acres	\$ 4,284 (CPA Only) \$ 1,008 (DIA Only) \$ 5,292 (CPA + DIA)
Plan for 21 to 100 acres	\$ 1,764 (CPA Only) \$ 504 (DIA Only) \$ 2,268 (CPA + DIA)	Plan for 501-1000 acres	\$ 5,229 (CPA Only) \$ 1,197 (DIA Only) \$ 6,426 (CPA + DIA)
Plan for 101 to 250 acres	\$ 2,898 (CPA Only) \$ 756 (DIA Only) \$ 3,654 (CPA + DIA)	Plan for > 1000 acres	\$ 6,804 (CPA Only) \$ 1,449 (DIA Only) \$ 8,253 (CPA + DIA)

Developing a Forest Management Plan using NRCS Cost Share Assistance

Step 1

❑ **Planning:** To get started, contact your local NRCS Field Office. A NRCS representative will discuss your vision, goals, and objectives for your forestland.

Step 2

❑ **Application:** We'll walk you through the Conservation Program Application (Form CPA1200). You will need to provide a valid Tax Identification Number (Social Security Number or Employer Identification Number). If applying as an entity (Corporation, Limited Partnership, Trust, Estate, etc.) or a Joint Operation, we may need additional documentation.

Step 3

❑ **Control of Land Documentation:** NRCS will need proof that you control the property for which you are applying for assistance. This is known as Control of Land Documentation. The documentation will also need to provide a legal description of the property. Most commonly, this documentation takes the form of a deed, lease, or recent tax statement.

Step 4

❑ **Establish Farm Records:** Your application is not considered eligible until farm and tract records have been established in your name with the Farm Service Agency. On your behalf, NRCS will submit the request to the Farm Service Agency to establish farm records (Form AD2047). A copy of this request form will be provided to you for your records.

Step 5

❑ **Eligibility:** In order to be eligible for funding, NRCS will work with you to establish your eligibility. This step will require you to complete: (1) Adjusted Gross Income Certification – Form CCC941 (2) Highly Erodible Land Certification – Form AD1026 (3) Farm Operating Plan - Form CCC902 and (4) Direct Deposit Information - Form 1199A.

Step 6

❑ **Conservation Plan:** NRCS will develop a Conservation Plan and Map that will identify the area the Forest Management Plan will be written for. NRCS will send you a copy of this Map for your review and signature. Signed documents will need to be returned to NRCS

Step 7

❑ **Ranking:** Funding is competitive. NRCS will review eligible applications and rank them according to local resource concerns, the amount of conservation benefits the conservation practice will provide, and the needs of applicants. Whether your application is or is not selected for funding, NRCS will contact you.

Step 8

❑ **Contracting :** If you're selected for funding, NRCS will generate contract documents. You will need to return all contract documents that were sent to you including; (1) the Conservation Program Contract (2) the Conservation Program Contract Appendix , and (3) the Schedule of Operations.

Step 9

Contract Obligation: Once we receive the signed contract documents from you, NRCS will obligate the contract. Do not hire a Forester (Technical Service Provider) until you receive an Obligated Contract with an electronic signature (Signature Box #6 on your Conservation Program Contract) from NRCS.

Step 10

Hire a Consulting Forester : Select and hire a Consulting Forester to develop your Forest Management Plan. If you need assistance, contact your Conservation District Forester, Sara Kelso, at 906-251-3071. As a reminder, NRCS provides a cost-share, not a reimbursement. Regardless of the price to develop the plan, NRCS will provide payment in the amount listed on your contract.

Step 11

Establish Goals and Schedule Field Visit: Your Technical Service Provider will work with you to establish your goals and objectives for your property. Additionally, the technical service provider will need to schedule a field visit to your property.

Step 12

Develop Forest Management Plan: Your Technical Service Provider will develop a Forest Management Plan for your property.

Step 13

Review Plan: Your Consulting Forester will send you a copy of your forest management plan for your review and signature. Remember, your forest management plan should reflect your goals and objectives for your property. Work with your forester if there are changes that you would like to see.

Step 14

NRCS Certification: The Consulting Forester will submit a copy of the plan to NRCS for review. The plan is required to address the items listed on the NRCS Forest Management Plan Criteria Checklist. If any corrections are needed, NRCS will reach out to you and your Consulting Forester. Please allow 30 days for NRCS to review the plan.

Step 15

Field Visit and Next Steps: Once the plan meets the NRCS Forest Management Plan Criteria Checklist, a NRCS representative will meet with you at your property to go over your forest management plan and review the implementation activities and identified resource concerns. The cost share Payment Application paperwork will be either sent to you for your review and signature or can be completed during the field visit.

Step 16

Payment: The Payment Application and Cover Page of the Forest Management Plan will need to be signed and dated to be considered complete. Once these signature pages have been submitted the cost share award will be direct deposited into your bank account.