

# Environmental Quality Incentives Program

## Private Forestland



### Private Forestland

Even though Michigan is home to three National Forests in addition to state forests, the majority of forestland in the state is not publicly owned. According to the USDA Forest Service, nearly half of Michigan's forestland is owned by families or other private, non-corporate entities.

### Forest Management Plans

With most of the state's forestland privately owned, proper management of this resource is important. No matter how a landowner uses forestland, a forest management plan is essential. A forest management plan helps the landowner protect soil, water and wildlife resources and identifies other threats such as invasive species and disease. A forest management plan is designed to optimize the resources that are important to the landowner be it specific game species, sustainable timber production or general recreation.

NRCS provides financial assistance for forest management plans through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Assistance is provided for plans developed by certified Technical Service Providers. Developing a forest management plan is a requirement for receiving EQIP assistance for implementing forest conservation practices.

### Protecting Soil & Water

Using best management practices allows landowners to utilize forest resources while protecting soil and water resources. Designing access trails that follow the contour of the land helps prevent soil erosion as does selective cutting when

harvesting timber. Proper management is especially important near streams and rivers as activities in these areas greatly impact water quality and aquatic habitat.



*Forest trails and access roads can cause soil erosion if not designed properly.*

### Wildlife Habitat

Virtually all of Michigan's forest land has been significantly altered by human activity. The process of deforestation and subsequent reforestation did not recreate the diverse forest habitat that existed before. EQIP financial assistance is available for practices that improve habitat for a variety of forest species from ruffed grouse to whitetail deer.

Upland birds like ruffed grouse and woodcock require a diverse habitat of both young and mature trees. A mature forest with a closed canopy often lacks the ground cover needed for nesting birds. Creating small forest clearings provides improved habitat for upland bird nesting and mating. Structural practices like nesting boxes or brush piles also can provide habitat for desired species.

### EQIP

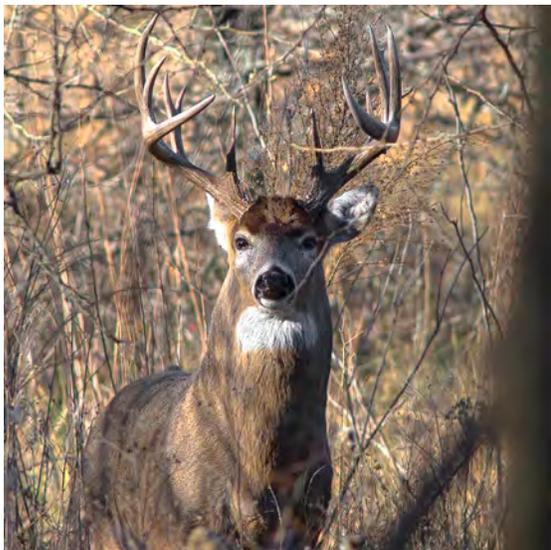
The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides conservation financial assistance for working lands. Rather than take land out of production, EQIP helps farmers maintain or improve production while conserving natural resources.

EQIP assistance is available for all types of agricultural operations, including field crops, specialty crops, organic, confined livestock and grazing, and private non-industrial forest land.

## Sustainable Harvesting

Selective harvesting and utilizing best management practices allows forest owners to harvest trees without degrading the forest. Selective harvesting can also improve the value of the remaining trees over time.

With proper harvesting techniques landowners can change the make up of their land by replacing harvested trees with more desirable species. This is best achieved by consulting a professional forester and following a management plan.



*Landowners can use forest management plans to improve habitat for desired species.*

## When & Where to Apply

Applications for NRCS conservation programs are accepted on a continuous basis at local fields offices. Producers who already receive email correspondence from USDA can also apply online utilizing the Conservation Client Gateway.

## Common EQIP Practices for Forestland

- Forest Management Plan
- Fish and Wildlife Habitat Plan
- Brush Management
- Herbaceous Weed Control
- Riparian Forest Buffer
- Tree/Shrub Establishment
- Forest Trails and Landings
- Forest Stand Improvement
- Firebreak
- Stream Habitat Improvement and Management
- Access Road
- Trails and Walkways
- Upland Wildlife Habitat Management
- Early Successional Habitat Development
- Fuel Break
- Road/Trail/Landiong Closure and Treatment
- Tree Shrub Pruning
- Woody Residue Treatment



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