

Healthy Woods Start With a Plan

Manage What You Value, with Help from NRCS



Introduction

There are many reasons to enjoy woodlands—beauty, wildlife, hunting, timber, walking trails and much more. Getting all you want out of your land, while facing threats like disease and invasive species is why the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is here to provide assistance. A plan helps landowners to understand what they have and want, while also identifying practices that support unique values.

The plan NRCS offers is called a Forest Management Plan (FMP). It is very similar to other popular plans including the Forest Stewardship, Tree Farm and Forest Plan under the RI Farm, Forest & Open Space Act (FFOS) plans. In fact, these plans may qualify you to receive financial aid from NRCS to develop a FMP.

What is a Forest Management Plan?

A Forest Management Plan is a gateway to understanding your woodlands' health and potential. An FMP is a site-specific plan developed to achieve the landowner's management objectives using the professional expertise of a skilled forester to achieve long-term forest management goals. NRCS helps RI landowners develop an FMP through our Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

Management plans (including NRCS FMPs, Forest Stewardship Plans, Tree Farm Plans and others) are extremely valuable tools 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 FMPs and attempts to fund as many as possible.

The NRCS does not require landowners to perform practices scheduled in FMPs after their plan is completed. However, practices scheduled in FMPs must be followed if the property becomes enrolled in the FFOS program. Therefore, landowners are highly encouraged to actively participate in the planning process with their forester.



FMPs must be written by a forester who is qualified as a Technical Service Provider (TSP) with NRCS in Rhode Island. While TSPs may use their own plan format, all FMPs must meet the same criteria. If the FMP will be used for entry into the Rhode Island FFOS Program, talk with the RIDEM Division of Forest Environment (RIDFE) Forester to discuss the program and its requirements.

Once your FMP is approved, you are ready to apply for forestry practices identified in the plan to meet your objectives. Work with foresters and NRCS planners to apply your forest management plan practices.



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