

Forest Management Plan Criteria Practice/Activity Code (106) (No.)

1. Definition

A forest management plan is a site specific plan developed for a client, which addresses one or more resource concerns on land where forestry-related conservation activities or practices will be planned and applied. These criteria were developed to implement Section 1240 (A) of the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008, which allows for the development of forest management plans as one of the purposes of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

The forest management plan will:

- a) Meet Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) quality criteria for the identified resource concern(s).
- b) Comply with federal, state, tribal, and local laws, regulations, and permit requirements.
- c) Meet the client's objectives.

2. Forest Management Plan Criteria

This section establishes the minimum criteria to be addressed in the development and implementation of forest management plans.

A. General Criteria

- 1. National Environment Policy Act (NEPA) Documentation and other Environmental Compliance Documentation (including National Historic Preservation Act, Endangered Species Act, Environmental Justice, Air Quality compliance)** — see comments below about using the Environmental Evaluation Worksheet (CPA-52) as a checklist and as support documentation. Reasons/justifications for data gaps or planning limitations should be explained and provided in the guide sheets for the CPA-52.

- 2. Cultural Resources and other Resource Concerns and Special Environmental Concerns** — extract information and explanations from the State's current CPA-52 (see National Environmental Compliance Handbook). The CPA-52 includes benchmark conditions for all resource concerns and special environmental concern (e.g. soil, water, air, plants, animals, human (cultural resources, environmental justice, scenic resources and economic and social concerns)). The CPA-52 will highlight the resources potentially impacted and as a result the level of resolution for inventory of these resource concerns may vary depending upon the nature, size, and intensity of possible positive and negative effects to these resources. If any resources are not potentially affected or not analyzed, a short explanation for lack of impact or data gaps should be

explained.

3. In accordance with Section 1240 (A), a forest management plan is developed by NRCS partners such as State forestry agencies, other third party certified foresters, and certified Technical Service Providers (TSP). The specific criteria required for each type of certification for TSP is located on the TSP registry (TechReg) web site at: <http://techreg.usda.gov/>

B. Background and Site Information

1. Landowner information – name, address, operation, size
2. Location and plan map of parcel
3. Documentation of existing practices
4. Past harvest history
5. Identification of resource concerns

C. Client Objectives, which may include these and others

1. Expected income
2. Forest stand improvement
3. Wildlife habitat/riparian areas
4. Recreation
5. Agroforestry

D. Existing Conditions

1. 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.

E. Desired Future Conditions

1. Goals such as stocking, basal area, species composition, wildlife, recreation, etc. for stands where practices/activities are recommended to meet future goals.

F. Forest Management Plan Documentation

1. Forest management plan map – boundaries, fields, scale, north arrow, stand boundaries, appropriate map symbols
2. Soils map – legend, interpretations, suitability index for forest activities
3. A wetland delineation map and associated wetland compliance documentation

(Food Security Act of 1985), if applicable.

4. Conservation plan (record of decisions) (*Utilizing Customer Service Toolkit – Plug-In or MsWord Document*) to include the planned practice(s), the amounts to be applied, the schedule for implementation, and the appropriate site specific specifications and/or job sheet for each practice. A Forest Management Plan may include, but is not limited to, the conservation practices listed below:

- **Access Control** (472) plus site specific specifications or job sheet
- **Forest Stand Improvement** (666) plus site specific specifications or job sheet
- **Road/Trail/Landing Closure and Treatment** (654) plus site specific specifications or job sheet
- **Forest Trails and Landings** (655) plus site specific specifications or job sheet
- **Forest Slash Treatment** (384) plus site specific specifications or job sheet
- **Firebreak** (394) plus site specific specifications or job sheet
- **Fuel Break** (383) plus site specific specifications or job sheet
- **Multi-Story Cropping** (379) plus site specific specifications or job sheet
- **Prescribed Burning** (338) plus site specific specifications or job sheet
- **Riparian Forest Buffer** (391) plus site specific specifications or job sheet
- **Silvopasture Establishment** (791) plus site specific specifications or job sheet
- **Tree/Shrub Site Preparation** (490) plus site specific specifications or job sheet
- **Tree/Shrub Establishment** (612) plus site specific specifications or job sheet
- **Tree/Shrub Pruning** (660) plus site specific specifications or job sheet
- **Alley Cropping** (311) plus site specific specifications or job sheet
- **Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment** (380) plus site specific specifications or job sheet
- **Windbreak/Shelterbelt Renovation** (650) plus site specific specifications or job sheet

3. Coordination with State Forestry Agencies and U.S. Forest Service

In accordance with Section 2506 of the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008, NRCS will accept as a qualifying EQIP plan of operations:

- a) Forest Stewardship Plan, as described in Section 5 of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978, 16 U.S.C. 2103a; or
- b) Another practice plan approved by the State Forester; or
- c) Another plan determined appropriate by the Secretary.

Forest Stewardship Plans

Through the U.S. Forest Service's Forest Stewardship Program, State forestry agencies annually receive financial and technical assistance that allows them to help landowners develop Forest Stewardship Plans (FSP) for their nonindustrial private forest land. FSP are prepared by foresters employed by State forestry agencies or by private consulting foresters under the direction of those State agencies. FSP are developed for the landowner's entire forested ownership and/or any land that will be planted to forest vegetation.

Forest Stewardship Plans will continue to be developed for private landowners by State forestry agencies, with financial and technical assistance provided by the U.S. Forest Service through the Forest Stewardship Program. With the provisions in the new Farm Bill there is an opportunity for NRCS to provide financial assistance through EQIP that increases the planning and application of forestry-related conservation practices. NRCS will coordinate and cooperate with State forestry agencies in the delivery of forestry assistance to private landowners.

Forest Management Plan

To complement the planning assistance provided by State forestry agencies (i.e., Forest Stewardship Plans), NRCS is using a different term to describe the planning assistance that will be provided to clients through EQIP. NRCS will use the term "Forest Management Plan (FMP)". The FMP criteria described above were developed in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service to insure alignment with the national standards for a Forest Stewardship Plan. A few criteria were added to ensure compliance with NRCS requirements (e.g., National Environmental Policy Act). These criteria replace the Prescribed Forestry – 409 National Practice Standard, which will be rescinded and removed from the National Handbook of Conservation Practices (NPCH).