

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

1. Definition

A Forest Management Plan (FMP) 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 FMP will the following:

- a) Meet Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) quality criteria for the identified resource concern(s).
- b) Comply with federal, state, tribal, 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 of FMPs.

A. General Criteria

1. An Environmental Evaluation (EE) (CPA 52) is to be prepared for all activity plans to demonstrate NRCS compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, National Historic Preservation Act, Endangered Species Act, Environmental Justice, Air Quality, and other designated environmental concerns and environmental laws. The environmental effects from the activity plans on environmental resource concerns should be clearly documented on the EE (CPA-52 form). The following is abbreviated guidance for preparation of the EE:
 - a) Planners and Technical Service Providers (TSPs) should follow the EE guidance delineated in the National Environmental Compliance Handbook.
 - b) The EE describes the existing conditions for all applicable resource concerns.
 - c) The EE will assess the resources potentially impacted by the no action, proposed action and any reasonable alternatives.
 - d) Guide sheets will accompany the EE as needed to provide information on how to assess and deal with special environmental concerns.
 - e) The findings section of the EE is to identify whether NRCS has determined based on the analysis of the EE: (1) that a site specific Environmental Assessment (EA) or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) should be prepared based on the significance of potential impacts, or (2) the EE can be tiered to a state, regional, or national programmatic EA or EIS because the proposed effects have been sufficiently analyzed in a state, regional, national programmatic EA or EIS.
 - f) TSP and planners are required to complete NRCS' Level I Environmental Compliance training prior to prepare any EE CPA 52.

2. A FMP shall be developed by a certified TSP. In accordance with Section 1240 (A), the EQIP program provides funding support through contracts with eligible producers to obtain services of certified TSPs in developing a FMP. 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 (see pages 5 through 12 in the Maine Forest Service (MFS) WoodsWise Manual - Section III - Forest Management Plans (http://www.state.me.us/doc/mfs/fpm/wwi/DOCS/pdf_v/wwi_manual/wwi_manual_section3.pdf):
1. Landowner information – name, address, operation, size.
 2. Location and plan (stand type) map of parcel.
 3. Documentation of existing practices.
 4. Past harvest history.
 5. Identification of resource concerns (see eFOTG, in Section III or EE (CPA-52) for a list of resource concerns).
- C. Client Objectives, which may include these considerations and others:
1. Expected income.
 2. Forest Stand Improvement.
 3. Wildlife Habitat/Riparian Areas.
 4. Recreation.
 5. Agroforestry.
 6. Pollinator Habitat and Protection.
- D. Existing Conditions:
1. Identify resource concerns based on an inventory to assess these concerns and an opportunity for treatment. The inventory will typically include forest management unit, 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, habitat elements, noxious and invasive species, water quality, and other important features as applicable. Inventory and plan content will be based on MFS WoodsWise Forest Stewardship Plan standards. See pages 5 through 12 in the MFS WoodsWise Manual, Section III - Forest Management Plans (http://www.state.me.us/doc/mfs/fpm/wwi/DOCS/pdf_v/wwi_manual/wwi_manual_section3.pdf).
- E. Desired Future Conditions:
1. Goals such as stocking, basal area, species composition, wildlife, pollinator habitat and protection, recreation, and etc. for stands where practices/activities

are recommended to meet future goals. See MFS WoodsWise Manual - Section III - page 10 - Prescriptions & Recommendations - Forest Management Plan standard for content requirements.

F. Forest Management Plan Documentation:

1. FMP map – plan and stand boundaries, field (stand) labels and legend including stand type (SAF) and acres, scale, north arrow, and 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 or ROD) (*Utilizing Customer Service Toolkit – Plug-In or MSWord Document*) to include the planned practice(s) and payment rate scenarios, the amounts to be applied, the schedule for implementation, and the appropriate site specific specifications and/or job sheet for each practice. A FMP may include, but is not limited to the conservation practices* listed below:
 - **Access Control** (Code 472) plus site specific specifications or job sheet
 - **Forest Stand Improvement** (Code 666) plus site specific specifications or job sheet and payment scenario narrative identifications
 - **Forest Trails and Landings** (655) plus site specific specifications or job sheet
 - **Firebreak** (394) plus site specific specifications or job sheet
 - **Riparian Forest Buffer** (391) 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
 - **Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment** (380) plus site specific specifications or job sheet

*This list of Conservation Practices is not all inclusive and one, several, all, or some other conservation practices may be recommended depending on the forest management and conservation work needed. **NOTE: Not all recommended practices in a FMP have to be eligible for financial assistance.**

3. Deliverables for the Client – a hardcopy of the plan that includes:

- Cover page – name, address, phone of client and TSP; Total Acres of the Plan, TSP Certification Statement, and signature blocks for the TSP, producer, and a signature block for the NRCS acceptance.
- Soils map and appropriate soil descriptions
- Resource assessment results (wind and water erosion, water availability, soil fertility, stand stocking, and others that may be needed)
- For 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.
- For engineering/structural practices. The planned practice when it will be applied and extent, and located on the conservation plan map.

4. Deliverables for NRCS Field Office:

- Complete Hardcopy and Electronic copy of the client's plan (MsWord copy).
- Digital Conservation Plan Map with fields (stands), features, and structural practices located.
- Digital Soils Map.
- Completed CPA 52 and appropriate guide sheets.

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.

A complete WoodsWISE Stewardship Plan that includes all the items in the Addendum will be considered to meet the specifications for CAP-FMP, Code 106.

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).