

## FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN CRITERIA

### PRACTICE/ACTIVITY CODE (106) (NO.)

#### 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:

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

#### FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN CRITERIA

This section establishes the minimum criteria to be addressed in the development of Forest Management Plans.

##### A. General Criteria

1. A Forest Management Plan shall be developed by certified technical service providers. In accordance with Section 1240 (A), the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) program provides funding support through contracts with eligible producers to obtain services of certified Technical Service Providers (TSPs) for development of a Forest Management Plan (FMP). The specific criteria required for each type of certification for TSP is located on the following web site: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/technical/tsp>

##### 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 considerations and others

1. Expected income,
2. Forest stand improvement,
3. Wildlife habitat/riparian areas,

Conservation Systems are reviewed periodically, and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this system, contact your Natural Resources Conservation Service [State Office](#), or visit the [Field Office Technical Guide](#).

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 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, pollinator habitat and protection, 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 (i.e., foresters may refer to them as different stands of trees), 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 Conservation – Plug-In or MsWord Document, or the national common forest management plan template developed and accepted by U.S. Forest Service, NRCS, and the American Tree Farm System. It has also been endorsed by the National Association of State Foresters 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:
  - a. Access Control (472) plus site specific specifications or job sheet,
  - b. Forest Stand Improvement (666) plus site specific specifications or job sheet,
  - c. Road/Trail/Landing Closure and Treatment (654) plus site specific specifications or job sheet,
  - d. Forest Trails and Landings (655) plus site specific specifications or job sheet,
  - e. Forest Slash Treatment (384) plus site specific specifications or job sheet,
  - f. Firebreak (394) plus site specific specifications or job sheet,
  - g. Fuel Break (383) plus site specific specifications or job sheet,

- h. Multi-Story Cropping (379) plus site specific specifications or job sheet,
- i. Prescribed Burning (338) plus site specific specifications or job sheet,
- j. Riparian Forest Buffer (391) plus site specific specifications or job sheet,
- k. Silvopasture Establishment (791) plus site specific specifications or job sheet,
- l. Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (490) plus site specific specifications or job sheet,
- m. Tree/Shrub Establishment (612) plus site specific specifications or job sheet,
- n. Tree/Shrub Pruning (660) plus site specific specifications or job sheet,
- o. Alley Cropping (311) plus site specific specifications or job sheet,
- p. Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment (380) plus site specific specifications or job sheet, and
- q. Windbreak/Shelterbelt Renovation (650) plus site specific specifications or job sheet.

The above practices are the primary NRCS forestry and agroforestry practices, but additional conservation practices may be needed to meet all the landowner's objectives. For example, when wildlife is an objective, a suite of wildlife conservation practices may be needed including but not limited to the following:

- a. Early Successional Habitat Development/Management (647)
- b. Restoration and Management of Declining Habitats (643)
- c. Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)
- d. Stream Habitat Improvement and Management (395)

Refer to the Field Office Technical Guide for a complete list of potential conservation practices. Practices beyond the basic forestry/agroforestry practices may be included in a plan but the design and implementation of these will be conducted by an appropriately certified TSP for those practices.

**DELIVERABLES FOR THE CLIENT – A HARDCOPY OF THE PLAN THAT INCLUDES:**

- A. Cover page – name, address, phone of client and TSP, Total Acres of the Plan, signature blocks for the TSP, producer, and a signature block for the NRCS acceptance.
- B. Soils map and appropriate soil descriptions
- C. Resource assessment results (wind and water erosion, water availability, soil fertility, and others that may be needed)
- D. Conservation plan (record of decisions) (Utilizing Conservation – Plug-In or MsWord Document, or the national common forest management plan template developed and accepted by U.S. Forest Service, NRCS, and the American Tree Farm System. It has also been endorsed by the National Association of State Foresters.) to include the planned practice(s), the amounts to be applied, the schedule for implementation

- E. 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.
- F. For engineering/structural practices. The planned practice when it will be applied and extent, and located on the conservation plan map.

#### **DELIVERABLES FOR NRCS FIELD OFFICE:**

- A. Complete Hardcopy and Electronic copy of the client's plan (MsWord copy). Optional: If a Conservation Plug-in version is provided to NRCS a Hardcopy of the plan, conservation plan map and soils map is not required.
- B. Digital Conservation Plan Map with fields, features, and structural practices located.
- C. Digital Soils Map.

#### **COORDINATION WITH STATE FORESTRY AGENCIES AND U.S. FOREST SERVICE**

- A. In accordance with Section 2506 of the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008, NRCS will accept as a qualifying EQIP plan of operations:
  - 1. Forest Stewardship Plan, as described in Section 5 of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978, 16 U.S.C. 2103a, or
  - 2. Another practice plan approved by the state forester, or
  - 3. Another plan determined appropriate by the secretary.

To further enhance the coordination, a national common forest management plan template has been developed and accepted by U.S. Forest Service, NRCS, and the American Tree Farm System. It has also been endorsed by the National Association of State Foresters. The template is attached as an appendix to this criteria.

#### **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).