

**Rachel Carson State Office Building**  
**P.O. Box 8552**  
**Harrisburg, PA 17105-8552**  
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**Bureau of Forestry**

717-787-2703  
Fax: 717-783-5109

Stewardship Plan writer  
Address  
Address

Dear Stewardship Plan Writer/Professional Forester:

As you are probably aware, the DCNR Bureau of Forestry and the USDA, PA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to provide technical assistance and facilitate cost-share funding to forest landowners interested in acquiring a forest management plan and/or implementing forest practices on their lands. The cost-sharing of forest planning is a new element available under Code 106 of the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) starting in the Federal fiscal year 2011. In order for a landowner to receive payment for a forest management plan under EQIP, the plan must be written by a qualified natural resource professional that is listed as a Technical Service Provider (TSP) in the NRCS system. Pennsylvania is currently ramping up its efforts to provide funding for forestland planning purposes and both agencies are interested in facilitating the sign-up of plan-writing TSPs.

If you are interested in becoming a TSP qualified to write plans, we encourage you to sign up within the NRCS system to enable forest stewardship to continue to move forward. DCNR Service Foresters and NRCS field personnel will continue working diligently to encourage forest landowners to develop forest management plans and potentially implement practices through various NRCS cost-share programs.

The minimum standards for the Code 106 Forest Management Plan under NRCS have been elevated to reflect American Tree Farm Certification, Forest Stewardship, and NRCS TSP certification. A sample Code 106 Forest Management Plan format is enclosed for your reference (also available at NRCS's web site: <http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov//references/public/PA/PennsylvaniaForestManagementPlan106.pdf>) The NRCS Code 106 Forest Management Plan is the only plan of its type where cost-share funding is available for the development of the plan.

Many of you have worked with the Forest Stewardship Program in the past to create Stewardship Plans. Participation in both the Forest Stewardship and American Tree Farm Programs provides valuable benefits for forest landowners, however, by NRCS policy, landowners are not required to participate in these programs. If the landowner elects to have the Code 106 Forest Management Plan meet the standards of the Forest Stewardship and Tree Farm programs, they will be eligible for full program benefits including program recognition signs for the property. You are free to use the same marketing tools to promote Stewardship Plans and fund them through EQIP Code 106, as long as the Stewardship Plan in question meets the minimum requirements set for 106 plan cost-share funding. Traditional Forest Stewardship Plan Writing may continue for landowners who do not wish to utilize any cost-share funding for writing their plan. In this case, the minimum standards for Forest Stewardship

Plans remain the same as in previous years. Keep in mind that some forest landowners may not qualify for the NRCS Cost Sharing for EQIP Code 106 Plans or practice implementation due to annual income restrictions after analysis by the Farm Service Agency. In these cases, landowners can choose to have a Forest Stewardship or Tree Farm Plan written at their expense.

Consultants must meet a set of criteria to qualify as a TSP under NRCS. Two options exist for consultant qualifications, training, education, and experience. One option requires Certified Forester® status with the Society of American Foresters (SAF), or full membership in the Association of Consulting Foresters (ACF). The second option essentially requires more professional documentation in the form of Forestry or Natural Resource related B.S degree or higher, record of 5 years of experience or more, and forestry references. These options are explained in the enclosed document labeled "TSP Criteria."

If you meet the general criteria for becoming a TSP, and are interested in taking the online training to be registered, then you can move forward by registering on the NRCS TechReg website, <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov/eauthCreateAccount.html>. To gain access to this website, you must first obtain an eAuthentication login and password. Once you have completed this step online, you may proceed at your own pace with the remainder of the online training. Detailed descriptions of the steps for eAuthentication and completion of the TechReg profile and related training for Plan 106 are enclosed.

If you have any questions, please contact the Bureau of Forestry's Private Forestland Stewardship Coordinator, Andrew Duncan at 717-787-6460 or [aduncan@state.pa.us](mailto:aduncan@state.pa.us). We thank you for your continued efforts in the stewardship of the Commonwealth's private forestlands.

Sincerely,

Daniel A. Devlin  
State Forester  
DCNR Bureau of Forestry



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Denise Coleman  
State Conservationist  
PA NRCS



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Enclosures