



Forestry & Agroforestry Assistance

The 2008 Farm Bill features many opportunities for non-industrial private forest (NIPF) landowners. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and its partners, such as State forestry agencies and other Technical Service Providers (TSPs), provide forestry-related assistance to private landowners and Tribes to plan and implement conservation practices and address resource concerns on their forest, woodland, farm, or ranch.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is available to help participants address a wide range of resource concerns on forest land and other land uses.

For example:

- Thin dense stands of trees;
- Control invasive and noxious weeds/brush/trees;
- Develop, protect, or enhance wildlife habitat;
- Reduce the threat of wildfire by treating slash and installing fire breaks;
- Plant trees and other grasses/shrubs to restore forest ecosystems;
- Improve water quality by installing riparian forest buffers; and
- Reduce soil erosion and energy usage by establishing windbreaks/shelterbelts on cropland and building sites.

Before applying for financial assistance through EQIP for your forest or woodland, you should develop a forest management plan. To get started, contact your State forestry agency or local USDA service center to find a forester near you. Your State forestry agency may be able to help you develop a Forest Stewardship Plan (a type of forest management plan). The Forest*A*Syst Web site (www.forestasyst.org) can also help you locate a professional forester, as well as provide valuable information about managing your forest. If you already have a forest management plan, contact your forester or local NRCS office to learn if additional information is needed.

The Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP) helps private landowners restore and enhance forest ecosystems to promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species, improve biodiversity, and enhance carbon sequestration.

Farm and ranch owners may apply to the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) to protect forest land from development. The forested land must contribute to the viability of the agricultural operation and cover up to two-thirds of the land.

Other NRCS programs that may be helpful for private forest landowners include the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP).

For more information, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov.



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