



## FACT SHEET

Program Year 2009

# EQIP-Forestry Initiative

Environmental Quality Incentive Program

## Natural Resources Conservation Service

### What is EQIP-Forestry Initiative?

The EQIP Forestry Initiative is an opportunity for private forestland owners in NY to implement conservation and management practices that will improve health and productivity of their forests, prevent soil erosion and improve habitat for at-risk wildlife species. The EQIP Forestry Initiative is a subset of the EQIP. EQIP is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to eligible private forestland owners who are willing to address priority environmental issues by implementing conservation practices. The EQIP Forestry Initiative is a partnership effort between the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Division of Land and Forests.

### Am I eligible?

Owners of non-industrial private forestland or land capable of growing trees may apply for the program. For Forest Management practices, the landowner must have a Forest Stewardship Plan developed or approved by DEC. Eligible land includes cropland, pasture, private non-industrial forestland and other farmland as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture. Applicants must meet eligibility for Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) certification and be in compliance with the Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation Provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985 as amended.

### What are the eligible practices?

EQIP-Forestry applications will address resource concerns in **2 focus areas; Forest Management and Forest Wildlife**. Technical assistance for Forest Management applications will be provided by NYS DEC and technical assistance for Forest Wildlife applications will be provided by NRCS.

Examples of eligible practices are:

#### Forest Management:

- Forest Health Thinning
- Crop Tree Release
- Forest Trails and Landings

#### Forest Wildlife:

- Wildlife Forest Openings
- Wildlife Tree Pruning
- Forest Trails and Landings
- Tree/Shrub Establishment

### What is the funding?

EQIP payments are limited to \$300,000 per individual or entity from 2009-2014, regardless of the number of contracts.

### How are payment levels determined?

Each eligible conservation practice has a Practice Payment Rate (PPR) which is a fixed amount based on a percentage of the state average cost of a typical installation of that practice.

### Are there options for "Historically Underserved" farmers?

The 2008 Farm Bill offers program opportunities for "Historically Underserved" individuals and groups. The Practice Payment Rate for the "Historically Underserved" is higher than the general rate.

These groups are:

- Socially Disadvantaged Groups
- Limited Resource Farmers and Ranchers
- Beginning Farmers and Ranchers
- Indian Tribes

For more information, visit:

[www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/SLB\\_farmer/](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/SLB_farmer/)

### What are the contract obligations?

EQIP-Forest Management contracts are limited to a maximum of three years in length. EQIP-Forest Wildlife contracts are limited to a maximum of six years in length. At least one practice from the contract must be started in the first twelve months, and no practices may be scheduled in the last year of the contract. Participants can be held financially liable for unfulfilled contracts.



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### What do I need to do to apply?

You need to sign form NRCS-CPA-1200, Conservation Program Application. Applications for 2009 for the EQIP-Forest Management or EQIP-Forest Wildlife must be received at your local NRCS office by **May 15, 2009**. Applicants can only apply to **one** of the focus areas. Forms are available from the local NRCS office, the local DEC Forester or at [www.nrcs.usda.gov/PROGRAMS/EQIP/PDFs/Blank\\_EQIP-CCC1200.pdf](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/PROGRAMS/EQIP/PDFs/Blank_EQIP-CCC1200.pdf).

### What do I do next?

After applying at your local NRCS office, an NRCS conservationist or DEC Forester will help you finalize a conservation plan, including selecting conservation practices. Your application will be ranked based upon national and state ranking criteria. You will be notified once funding decisions have been made.

### How can I find out more?

Contact your local USDA-NRCS office, your local DEC Forester or visit [www.ny.nrcs.usda.gov/](http://www.ny.nrcs.usda.gov/) or [www.dec.ny.gov](http://www.dec.ny.gov) for more information.