

Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative—CCPI



New York Fact Sheet

April 2010

Environmental Quality Incentive Program—EQIP

What is the CCPI Forestry Initiative?

The CCPI-EQIP Forestry Initiative is an opportunity for private forestland owners in Greene, Schoharie, Ulster, Dutchess, Westchester, Putnam, Delaware, and Sullivan counties in New York to implement conservation and management practices that will improve health and productivity of their forests and prevent soil erosion. The CCPI Forestry Initiative offers financial and technical assistance to eligible landowner who are willing to address priority environmental issues through EQIP. The CCPI-EQIP Forestry Initiative is a partnership effort between the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service and the New York City Watershed Agricultural Council (WAC).

Am I eligible?

Owners of non-industrial private forestland or land capable of growing trees in the designated counties may apply for the program. For Forest Management practices, the landowner must have a Forest Stewardship Plan developed or approved by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Eligible land is private non-industrial forestland. 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 must include practices that address resource concerns on eligible forestland. Technical assistance for Forest Management applications will be provided by WAC foresters. Examples of eligible practices are:

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

What are funding and payment levels?

EQIP payments are limited to \$300,000 per individual or entity from 2009-2014, regardless of the number of contracts. 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. For more information, visit: www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/SLB_farmer/.

These groups are:

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

What are the contract obligations?

Contract lengths of up to 10 years are permissible under the EQIP program rules. EQIP-Forest Management applications in which the participant agrees to implement all practices in 3 years or less will receive additional ranking points. 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.

What do I need to do to apply?

You need to sign form NRCS-CPA-1200, Conservation Program Application. Forms are available at your local NRCS office. To be considered for 2010 funding, applications must be submitted by April 16, 2010. You will also be required to complete and return an Application Worksheet before your application will be ranked and considered for funding.

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

How can I find out more?

Contact your local USDA-NRCS office, the Watershed Agricultural Council, or visit www.ny.nrcs.usda.gov for more information.