

Conservation Practices & Programs for **Forest Land** in Rhode Island

Why are healthy forests important?

As a Rhode Island forest land owner, you can help promote healthy, sustainable forests and protect rare ecosystems and rare species habitat in the Ocean State.

Healthy forests are a critical part of our landscape. Forest lands provide clean air, carbon sequestration, climate change buffering, flood protection, wildlife habitat, recreation and aesthetic enjoyment.

Our forests work to keep us healthy by storing and filtering the water that we drink. Forests and forest products also provide important economic and energy benefits.

Privately owned forests make up a substantial share of our forest resource base, but are increasingly being divided into smaller parcels and are facing increasing threats from changes in climate, population and land use.

Wildfires, insects and disease, and invasive species can damage the ability of forests to do their important work.

Can I get help protecting my forest?

Rhode Island NRCS is working with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management to provide technical assistance to enhance the health and diversity of forest land and wildlife habitat in forests.

We can help you develop and implement a sustainable forest management plan. Technical and financial assistance is offered through the federal **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**, the **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)**, and the **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)**.



Conservation practices eligible for financial assistance

Below is a partial list of forestry-related conservation practices eligible for financial compensation through EQIP. To be eligible for financial assistance, conservation practices must be part of your forest management plan.

For a complete list of eligible practices and payment rates, please visit us online or call your local NRCS field office.

- Forest management plan preparation
- Forest stand improvement
- Forest trails and landings
- Early successional habitat development
- Invasive species control
- Tree and shrub planting, pruning and site preparation
- Firebreaks
- Riparian forest buffers
- Woody residue treatment



Contact us

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Rhode Island

**Natural
Resources
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Service**

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Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP helps promote farm and forest production by enhancing the environmental quality of soil, water, air, plants and animals.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

CSP helps farm and forest land owners maintain and improve existing conservation systems and adopt new conservation activities.



Who can apply?

Private forestland or woodland owners who have forest management plans can apply for NRCS forestry assistance.

- ➔ In Rhode Island, forest stewardship plans as well as most forest management plans under the Farm, Forest and Open Space Act will fulfill this requirement.
- ➔ All forest management plans will be reviewed individually by NRCS to ensure that conservation principles have been addressed to NRCS standards.
- ➔ If you need a forest management plan, NRCS funding may be available to help.

There is no minimum acreage requirement to apply for EQIP or CSP, however, projects with more significant resource concerns are more likely to receive funding.

How and when do I apply?

Applications may be submitted anytime. All applications are evaluated periodically in a competitive ranking process as funding becomes available. Ranking criteria is available on our website.

To apply, you will need to file the following forms (also on our website):

- ➔ Conservation Program Application (CPA-1200)
- ➔ Adjusted Gross Income Certification (CCC-926)
- ➔ Highly Erodible Land & Wetland Conservation Certification (AD-1026)
- ➔ Customer Data Worksheet (AD-2047)

If your application is funded, you will be required to install and maintain your conservation practices according to NRCS standards.

Conservation Plans & Conservation Activity Plans

Your program application must be supported by an NRCS approved conservation plan, which provides documentation of the practices that could be used to address your natural resource concerns. We will work with you to develop an approved conservation plan.

You may also apply for financial assistance to hire Technical Service Providers (TSP) to develop a specialty plans called Conservation Planning Activities (CPAs) to address certain land use activities or specific resource needs on your land.

Call your local NRCS field office or Conservation District office or visit us online for details.

About NRCS

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service is a federal agency that helps America's farmers, ranchers and forest landowners conserve the nation's soil, water, air, plants, animals, and other natural resources.

NRCS conservationists provide technical expertise and conservation planning for landowners who want to make conservation improvements to their land.

The agency offers financial assistance through programs authorized under the federal Farm Bill. All programs are voluntary and offer science-based solutions that benefit both the landowner and the environment.

We work with local conservation districts and other partners to serve Rhode Island farmers and landowners.

