



About NRCS

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) works to protect and conserve natural resources on our nation's private lands.

A part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, NRCS administers conservation programs funded primarily through the 2008 Farm Bill. Conservation programs in Vermont focus on improvement to natural resources including water quality, soil conservation, fish and wildlife habitat, forest management, and local agriculture.

In addition to addressing a broad range of environmental goals, the 2008 Farm Bill includes increased financial assistance for new, limited resource and socially disadvantaged farmers.

Contact NRCS:



Vermont

USDA Service Centers

Berlin:	802-828-4493
Brattleboro:	802-254-9766
Middlebury:	802-388-6748
Morrisville:	802-888-4935
Newport:	802-334-6090
Rutland:	802-775-8034
St. Albans:	802-524-6505
St. Johnsbury:	802-748-2641
White River Jct.:	802-295-7942
Williston	802-865-7895

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is offering a special initiative for New England and New York forestry operators to improve forest stewardship.

In Vermont, NRCS offers payment to private forestland operators for implementing a variety of practices that will improve their forests and benefit fish and wildlife. In addition, NRCS can also assist private forestland operators in addressing soil erosion concerns within the forest.

Conservation Practices Eligible for Financial Assistance

The goal of the New England / New York Forestry Initiative is to expand stewardship opportunities within NRCS programs for private forest lands (lands with existing tree cover or that is suitable for growing trees) through forest land planning. Conservation practices that improve wildlife habitat, forest health and productivity, and water quality are offered through this initiative. Basic practices to address soil erosion on existing forest skid roads are also offered. Private forestland operators need to have a Forest Management Plan in place prior to completing forestland practices.

Vermont NRCS works closely with the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife and Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation to help private forest landowners improve their forest land and meet their goals.



Forest Stand Improvement – May be used for crop-mast tree release, pre-commercial thinning of pole sized stands and to improve habitat for forest birds.



Forest Trails and Landings – On parcels under forest management to address soil erosion and water quality concerns on existing forest skid trails.



Invasive Plant Control – May be used to control invasive plants to improve wildlife habitat, forest health, etc.

Upland Habitat Management – Focused upon apple tree release and often used in tandem with a tree pruning practice.

Early Successional Habitat Mgt. - Focused upon non-commercial stands and forest types (e.g. aspen-birch)

Why are healthy forests important?

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

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

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

Smaller parcels and changes in land use also fragment wildlife habitats and make forest management less likely.

NRCS and partner organizations will assist you to develop and implement sustainable forest management plans that will help sustain our forest lands.



Natural Resources Conservation Service

Providing leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment

Who can apply?

- Private forestland operators who's forest operation has existing tree cover or is suitable for growing trees and is owned by any nonindustrial private individual or legal entity that has definitive decision making authority over the land.

How do I apply?

- Contact your local USDA Service Center to speak to one of our conservation professionals to begin the program application process.
- You will need to file several forms to ensure that you are eligible for federal programs.
 - Information and an application checklist are available on our website.
- Conducting a resource inventory with NRCS and developing a conservation plan is one of the first steps in the process.

A conservation plan will:

- Identify immediate or potential problems that will result in resource degradation and lower production.
- Facilitate restoration or management of fish and wildlife habitat, forest health and productivity while protecting soil and water quality.

When should I apply?

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

Please call your local NRCS office or visit us online for more information.

