

# keeping your Forest Health

*just got a little easier.*



## Questions and answers about the Conservation Stewardship Program for private forest landowners

### What is the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)?

CSP is a voluntary program designed to encourage private, non-industrial forest landowners to address the nation's natural resource management concerns by implementing additional conservation practices on their lands and improving or maintaining existing stewardship practices that help to reach these goals.

### Who administers the program?

CSP is administered by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) which provides financial and technical assistance to help identify, plan and implement stewardship practices that will help conserve and enhance soil, water, air, plant, wildlife habitat and related natural resources on your land.

### How does the program work for private forest landowners?

CSP encourages non-industrial private forest landowners to improve conservation systems by undertaking additional conservation activities and improving, maintaining, and managing existing conservation activities.

### What payments could I expect to receive?

Forest landowners may be eligible to receive payments averaging approximately \$10 per acre for five years—depending on enhancements implemented and (or) stewardship practices maintained. However, landowners need to provide documentation of implemented practices to determine eligibility and ranking. CSP is competitive and provides payments to landowners who are willing and able to make significant contributions to USDA's natural resource conservation goals.

### Who can participate?

To participate in CSP you must be able to prove clear ownership of the land you wish to enroll; land must be enrolled in the Farm Service Agency (FSA) record system; and your average, adjusted non-farm income must be less than \$1 million.

### What if I do not have a "Farm Number" for my property?

If you do not currently have a "Farm Number" for your property, you can apply for one at your local FSA office.

### Are there land eligibility requirements?

Yes, but the land eligibility requirements are quite simple for forest landowners:

1. Your land must meet the definition of privately owned non-industrial forest land – most commonly described as family owned forest land.
2. You must enroll your entire property. You cannot selectively choose to enroll acres that desperately need help and exclude land that is in good condition.
3. You cannot enroll lands that are already enrolled in one of USDA's conservation programs including but not limited to the Conservation Reserve Program, Wetlands Reserve Program, Grassland Reserve Program or Conservation Security Program.

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## Questions and answers (continued)

### What are the “Stewardship Threshold Requirements?”

To be eligible for CSP a forest landowner must meet at least two of the following conditions:

1. Forestland must be enrolled in a forest certification scheme. USDA recognizes the American Tree Farm System, Forest Stewardship Council, and Sustainable Forestry Initiative as acceptable schemes for eligibility.
2. Completed one or more management practices according to a written forest management or stewardship plan in the last ten years. Examples of improvements include prescribed thinning, tree planting, establishing a firebreak, etc. Plans must be prepared by a certified/licensed natural resource professional.
3. Forestlands must meet minimum stocking level and trees species must be native to the area.
4. Soils must be stabilized with no apparent erosion on harvested or burned areas, roads, skid trails, and landings.
5. Wildfire risk (in wildfire-prone areas) is minimized by strategically placed narrow firebreaks and wider fuel breaks (which may include roads, streams, riparian areas, and other areas managed to slow fire spread).

### What additional documentation is required?

Landowners are required to provide documentation of conservation activities to verify the accuracy of application information before contracts are approved.

### Who do I contact to move forward?

If you think you meet the applicant, land, and stewardship eligibility requirements and are interested in the CSP, contact your local NRCS office to move forward in the application process. To find an NRCS office near you, go to [www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov).