

FOREST LANDOWNER TOOLKIT

TOOLS FOR CONSERVING YOUR FOREST

Stewardship & Conservation Incentive Programs

There are numerous technical resources and financial incentive programs available to help landowners manage their woodlands.

This catalog provides Forest Landowners with a **TOOLKIT** for understanding how, when and with whom to implement stewardship and conservation projects on their woodlands and what financial resources may be available to them.

THE TOOLS INCLUDE:

Stewardship and Conservation Incentive Programs Flow Chart

The flow chart directs forest landowners to the programs and funding sources that are the best fit for their forest lands based on the size and characteristics of their woodlands such as the presence of wildlife habitat, wetlands, rivers and streams, as well as adjacent agricultural or pasture lands.

Stewardship and Conservation Incentive Program Summary

This is a concise guide to the highlights of the stewardship and conservation incentive programs for forest landowners.

Agency and Organization Reference Guide

This is a thorough list of agencies and organizations that forest landowners can partner with including contact information, web sites, and other information that can help forest landowners manage woodlands in a way that promotes forest health, maintains high water quality, and protects watersheds and wildlife habitat.

Keeping Your Forest Healthy and Productive

Forests are critical parts of the north woods economy and ecosystem. Forest landowners can take steps to ensure their lands are healthy and remain forested for the long run. Forests are the natural cover for most of the region, providing a sponge which moderates water flow, provides habitat for wildlife, and provides a diversity of products.

One of the region's primary resources is water. Its quality in our rural landscape is often impacted by forest roads, through erosion and increased runoff which landowners can mitigate by employing road management. Along rivers, lakes, and wetlands, forests provide habitat which landowners can conserve or improve. At the landscape level, our forests make up the headwaters of our streams, moderating water flows to lakes and rivers.

Research has documented that rivers can more than double flood volume if over 60% of a watershed's forests are cleared. Where a given forest fits in the overall landscape makes a big difference on the ecological impact on the larger landscape.

Forests are an ecosystem with plants and animals dependent upon landscape and site-specific habitats. **A major change in our forest is increasing fragmentation of ownership as large blocks are broken into parcels.** Landowners today can take steps to see that their land is kept intact for the future with good estate planning or conservation easements. Forest management can reduce fragmentation by restoring forest types, reducing clearcuts, and closing roads.

In many cases, landowners find they can receive financial benefits from managing their forests.

Timber harvests may both meet landowner conservation goals and generate income. Government programs may provide cost sharing for activities which benefit both the landowner and the landscape – such as an improved road crossing of a stream which improves the value of the land and reduces negative impacts on the watershed. Easements or government programs may reduce taxes while allowing continued enjoyment of the property.

Landowners have a range of resources to draw upon to conserve their land and provide good long term

stewardship of the land. This **TOOLKIT** represents the efforts of the Bayfield Regional Conservancy (a non-profit) the Living Forest Coop (a for-profit coop) and the many government agencies providing programs to fund private forestry work.

Stewardship and Conservation Incentive Programs

WHICH ONE WORKS FOR YOU?

Spending time and money on your forest is a long-term investment. **Conservation easements** provide permanent protection for land, meeting a landowner's goals and potentially providing tax benefits. Landowners spending money to plant trees today will not see a financial return on their investment for many years. For this reason and recognizing the value of sustainably managed forests to all of society, a variety of **COST-SHARING** grant programs are offered by federal, state, and local agencies and some private conservation organizations. In addition, **LAND RENT** programs pay a cash rent for taking qualifying, marginal cropland out of production and putting it into conservation practices. Cost-share grants and land rent programs are considered just compensation for landowners, paid for by beneficiaries of sustainably managed forests: the American citizens.

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A flow chart identifies qualifying features that characterize your forest lands and the incentive programs for which you may be eligible. Contact your local land conservation department for additional county-specific programs and your local land trust to discuss conservation easements.

PAGE 4

An agency and organization reference guide of federal and state cost-share programs, and contact information for the government agencies that administer them

PAGES 5-6

A summary of the stewardship and conservation incentive programs for forest landowners

IS MY LAND ELIGIBLE FOR AN INCENTIVE PROGRAM?



KEY to Stewardship and Conservation Incentive Programs

MOST LANDS MAY BE PLACED INTO A CONSERVATION EASEMENT WITH A LAND TRUST.
GO TO PAGES 5-6 FOR FURTHER ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND PROGRAM DETAILS.

| | | | |
|-------------|---|--------------|--|
| CSP | Conservation Stewardship Program | CREP | Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program |
| CE | Conservation Easement | WHIP | Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program |
| MFL | Managed Forest Law | WFLGP | Wisconsin Forest Landowner Grant Program |
| EQIP | Environmental Quality Incentive Program | WRP | Wetland Reserve Program |
| CRP | Conservation Reserve Program | | |

Conservation Projects

Many types of conservation projects may be eligible for cost-sharing grants. A partial listing includes:

- Development of a long-term forest stewardship plan – often the key to receiving additional funding
- Conservation easements
- Timber stand improvement work to encourage growth of valuable timber
- Tree planting to reforest open areas and stream sides
- Planting wildlife food plots and wildlife shrub and grass habitats
- Rehabilitation of eroding forest roads and trails
- Fencing to keep livestock out of forest and streamside areas
- Development of springs and watering holes for wildlife
- Restoration or new construction of wetlands
- Installation of wildlife brush piles and nesting boxes
- Construction of rural windbreaks.
- Other forest, water and wildlife practices

Many cost-share programs have limited funding. Demand for cost-share funding routinely exceeds the amount of money available. **Planning and acting early is essential as landowners may have to wait several years** to get funding for certain types of projects.

Stewardship and Conservation Incentive Programs Summary

Find a comprehensive summary of federal and state cost-share programs and contact information for the government agencies that administer them on pages 5-6.

About Your Land – Reference Guide

The following resources can be used to identify qualifying features if you are uncertain about their presence on your forest lands. Ultimately, the determination of a qualifying feature may be based on the judgement of a program's authorizing agent.

To Find Out if You Have Wetlands

[WDNR LOCATING WETLANDS WEB SITE](http://dnr.wi.gov/wetlands/locating.html)
<http://dnr.wi.gov/wetlands/locating.html>

[WDNR WETLANDS & WETLAND INDICATORS](http://dnrmaps.wisconsin.gov/imf/imf.jsp?site=SurfaceWaterViewer.wetlands)
<http://dnrmaps.wisconsin.gov/imf/imf.jsp?site=SurfaceWaterViewer.wetlands>

View Your Parcels: Useful Interactive Web Maps

[WISCONSIN GIS MAPPING ONLINE LOCATOR](http://adc4gis.com/mapping-online)
<http://adc4gis.com/mapping-online>

[BAYFIELD COUNTY LAND RECORDS DEPARTMENT](http://www.bayfieldcounty.org/landrecords/mapviewer_start.htm)
http://www.bayfieldcounty.org/landrecords/mapviewer_start.htm

Parcels ~ Wetlands ~ Soils ~ Land Cover ~ Aerial Photos

[ASHLAND COUNTY GIS](http://www.ashlandcogis.com/AshlandCoWi/)
<http://www.ashlandcogis.com/AshlandCoWi/>

Parcels ~ Aerial Photos

[DOUGLAS COUNTY GIS](http://douglasco.mapping-online.com/DouglasCoWi/)
<http://douglasco.mapping-online.com/DouglasCoWi/>

Parcels ~ Aerial Photos

[SAWYER COUNTY GIS](http://sawyerwi.mapping-online.com/SawyerCoWi/)
<http://sawyerwi.mapping-online.com/SawyerCoWi/>

Parcels ~ Soils ~ Aerial Photos

To Find Out if You Have Important Wildlife Habitat

[WDNR ENDANGERED RESOURCES WEB SITE](http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/)
<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/>

[ENDANGERED RESOURCES REVIEW PROGRAM](http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/review/)
<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/review/>

[NATURAL HERITAGE INVENTORY COUNTY MAPS](http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/nhi/CountyMaps/)
<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/nhi/CountyMaps/>

[AQUATIC & TERRESTRIAL INTERACTIVE MAP](http://wiatri.net/indexIE.htm)
<http://wiatri.net/indexIE.htm>

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Stewardship and Conservation Incentive Programs

CE (Conservation Easement) Contact: your local land trust

Permanent legal agreement tailored to landowner's interest that restricts the type and amount of development on their lands.

Practices: Voluntary land conservation ☞ Restrict development, parcelization, access ☞ Prescribed forest Management ☞ Preserve working farm/forest lands ☞ Provide public access/right of way

<http://www.ltanet.org/findlandtrust/>

ELIGIBILITY Property with conservation or historic resources. **Acreage:** NA. **Plan required:** Easement agreement.

CONTRACT **Duration:** In perpetuity **Public Access:** Dependant on easement purpose **Compensation:** Varies by land trust and location

CREP (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program) Contact: Farm Service Agency

Land retirement program that provides technical and financial assistance to eligible farmers and ranchers to address soil, water, and related natural resource concerns on their lands in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner.

Practices: Voluntary land retirement ☞ Agency-identified conservation projects

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=copr&topic=cep>

ELIGIBILITY Area-specific agency identified projects. **Acreage:** NA. **Plan required:** Conservation plan

CONTRACT **Duration:** 10 or 15 years **Public Access:** Not required **Compensation:** Annual rental rate, ≤50% cost-share, sign-up incentive

CRP (Conservation Reserve Program) Contact: Farm Service Agency

Land rental agreement program for farmers to remove land from production to protect environmentally sensitive land, decrease erosion, restore wildlife habitat, and safeguard ground and surface water.

Practices: Voluntary land retirement ☞ Wildlife habitat, wetland, or riparian buffers ☞ Wetland restoration ☞ Shelterbelts ☞ Living snow fences ☞ Shallow water wildlife habitat

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=copr&topic=crp-sp>

ELIGIBILITY Croplands. Marginal pasturelands suitable for riparian buffers or other water quality purposes. **Acreage:** NA. **Plan required:** Conservation plan

CONTRACT **Duration:** 10 or 15 years **Public Access:** Not required

Compensation: Annual rental rate, ≤50% cost-share, sign-up incentive

CSP (Conservation Stewardship Program) Contact: Natural Resources Conservation Service

Cost-share conservation program that encourages producers to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner by: undertaking additional conservation activities; and improving, maintaining, and managing existing conservation activities.

Practices: Road dust control ☞ Patch-burning wildlife habitat enhancement ☞ Prescribed fire

☞ Shallow water wildlife habitat ☞ Riparian buffer ☞ Forest stand improvement ☞ Wildlife corridors

☞ Restoration/management of rare/declining habitats ☞ Hardwood crop tree release ☞ Sustainable management of nontimber forest plants

<http://www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/cstp.html>

ELIGIBILITY Various applicant and land requirements, and stewardship thresholds. **Acreage:** NA. **Plan required:** Conservation Plan

See eligibility checklist: www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/09Wlselfchecklist.pdf.

CONTRACT **Duration:** 5 years **Public Access:** Not required **Compensation:** Annual payments

EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentive Program) Contact: Natural Resources Conservation Service

Cost-share program that provides technical and financial help to landowners for conservation practices that protect soil and water quality.

Practices: Forest management plan ☞ Forest harvest management ☞ Wildlife enhancements ☞ Riparian buffer

☞ County-specific practices available at: <http://www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/eqipconspract10.html>

<http://www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip.html>

ELIGIBILITY Agriculture/livestock producer of livestock or crops on non-industrial private forest land producer. **Acreage:** NA. **Plan required:** Conservation Plan

CONTRACT **Duration:** 1 - 25 years **Public Access:** Not required **Compensation:** Variable based on practice

<ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/WI/eqip/2010/cookbook10a.pdf>

MFL (Managed Forest Law) Contact: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Land management incentive program that encourages sustainable forestry on private woodlands by reducing and/or deferring property taxes.

Practices: Landowner is required to follow their forest management plan

<http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/feeds/faqsFull.asp?s1=ForestTax&s2=MFL-Enrollment&inc=ftax>

ELIGIBILITY Private forest landowners. **Acreage:** ≥10 acres. **Plan required:** Forest management plan

CONTRACT **Duration:** 25 or 50 years **Public Access:** Not required unless ≥160 acres enrolled/municipality **Compensation:** MFL tax rates in lieu of property tax **Additional tax information at:** <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/ftax/taxrates.htm>

WRP (Wetland Reserve Program) Contact: Natural Resources Conservation Service

Land retirement program to restore and protect wetlands on private property.

Practices: Restore or protect wetlands ☞ Restore or protect riparian areas linking wetlands

☞ Voluntary land retirement

<http://www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/wrp.html>

ELIGIBILITY Restorable wetlands and/or suitable for wildlife. **Acreage:** NA. **Plan required:** Wetlands Restoration Plan

CONTRACT **Duration:** 10 years, 30 years, permanent easement **Public Access:** Not required **Compensation:** 10 yr - 75% cost-share of restoration; 30 yr - 75% of permanent easement value & 75% cost-share of restoration; permanent easement - Lesser of agriculture value, \$1,300, or amount offered by landowner and 100% of wetland restoration.

WHIP (Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program) Contact: Natural Resources Conservation Service

Cost-share program to develop and improve wildlife habitat on agricultural land and nonindustrial private forest land.

Practices: Protect and restore wildlife habitat ☞ In-stream structures ☞ Restoring prairies and Oak savannas

☞ Brush management ☞ Invasive species control

<http://www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/whip.html>

ELIGIBILITY Non-industrial private forest land suitable for fish and wildlife habitat development projects. **Acreage:** NA. **Plan required:** Forest management plan, WHIP plan of operations

CONTRACT **Duration:** 5 - 10 years **Public Access:** Not required **Compensation:** ≤ 75% cost-share of practice not to exceed \$50,000/year

WFLGP (Wisconsin Forest Landowner Grant Program) Contact: Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources

Cost-share program that provides assistance to protect and enhance their forested lands, prairies, and waters.

Practices: Plan development ☞ Tree planting ☞ Timber stand improvement ☞ Soil and water protection

☞ Stream and wetland protection ☞ Rare species, natural community protection ☞ Wildlife habitat improvement

<http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/private/financial/wflgp.htm>

ELIGIBILITY Non-industrial private forest land. Suitable for fish and wildlife habitat development projects. **Acreage:** 10 - 500 acres.

Plan required: Forest stewardship plan

CONTRACT **Duration:** NA **Public Access:** Not required **Compensation:** ≤ 50% cost-share of non-commercial practice, \$200 - \$10,000

Continued from page 4

Agency and Organization Reference Guide

Many agencies and organizations provide technical assistance and administer incentive programs that promote woodland conservation. Also, the internet has expanded forest landowner resources. **The main problem in the future will not be a lack of information, but sorting through an overwhelming abundance of information.** This Guide can help forest landowners find contact information and useful web sites in one easy-to-use location.

County Conservation Departments

ASHLAND COUNTY LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT

315 Sanborn Ave. #100, Ashland, Wisconsin 54806
715-682-7187
<http://www.co.ashland.wi.us/departments/land-and-water-conservation>

BAYFIELD COUNTY LAND & WATER CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 126
Physical Location: 615 2nd Avenue East
Washburn, Wisconsin 54891
715-373-6153
<http://www.bayfieldcounty.org/miss-hist.asp>

DOUGLAS COUNTY LAND CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT

Courthouse Building, Room 260
1313 Belknap Street, Superior, Wisconsin 54880
715-395-1266
<http://www.douglascountywi.org/countydepartments/landconservation/landconservation.htm>

SAWYER COUNTY LAND & WATER CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 89
Physical Address: 10610 Main Street
Hayward, Wisconsin 54843
715-634-6463
<http://www.sawyercountygov.org/CountyDepartment/LandWaterConservation/tabid/108/Default.aspx>

State

OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

“TIES TO THE LAND:
YOUR FAMILY FOREST HERITAGE”
<http://www.familybusinessonline.org/>

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA – EXTENSION

<http://www.myminesotawoods.umn.edu/>

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

<http://dnr.wi.gov/>

WDNR OFFICE LOCATOR

<http://dnr.wi.gov/contact/>

WDNR DIVISION OF FORESTRY – FOR PRIVATE LANDOWNERS

<http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/LP-private.htm>

WDNR PRIVATE FORESTRY WEB SITE

<http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/private/>

WDNR FORESTER LOCATOR WEB SITE

<http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/private/assist/coopforesters/>

WDNR 2010 DIRECTORY OF FORESTERS

http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/publications/pdf/current_foresters_directory.pdf

WDNR WISCONSIN FOREST MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

<http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/Publications/Guidelines/toc.htm>

Ashland and Bayfield County DNR

2501 Golf Course Road, Ashland, WI 54806
715-685-2900

Douglas County DNR

6250 S. Ranger Road, Brule WI 54820
715-392-7988

Sawyer County DNR

10220 N. Highway 27
Box 2003, Hayward, WI 54843
715-634-2688

Federal

FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PROGRAMS FOR NON-INDUSTRIAL PRIVATE FOREST OWNERS

<http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/econ/data/forestincentives/index.htm>

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and USDA Farm Service Agency

NRCS WISCONSIN OFFICE LOCATOR

http://www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/office_search.html

NRCS WISCONSIN WEB SITE

<http://www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov/>

FSA WISCONSIN OFFICE LOCATOR

<http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=wi&agency=fsa>

FSA WISCONSIN WEB SITE

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/stateoffapp?mystate=wi&area=home&subject=landing&topic=landing>

ASHLAND SERVICE CENTER

Ashland, Bayfield, Douglas, Iron Counties
2014 3rd Street West, Ashland, Wisconsin 54806
715-682-9117

LADYSMITH SERVICE CENTER – RUSK AND SAWYER COUNTIES

1120 West Lake Avenue, P.O. Box 349
Ladysmith, Wisconsin 54848
715-532-7629

USDA Forest Service

“ESTATE PLANNING FOR FORES LANDOWNERS”

<http://www.srs.fs.fed.us/pubs/31987>

US Fish and Wildlife Service – Wisconsin Partners for Fish and Wildlife

4511 Helgesen Drive, Madison, Wisconsin 53718
608-221-1206 ext. 14
<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/WisconsinPartners/>

NPS St. Croix National Scenic Riverway

401 North Hamilton Street
Saint Croix Falls, Wisconsin 54024
715-483-2274
<http://www.nps.gov/sacn/>

Non-Governmental Assistance

Land Trusts

GATHERING WATERS CONSERVANCY

211 S. Paterson St. #270, Madison, Wisconsin 53703
608-251-9131
info@gatheringwaters.org

BAYFIELD REGIONAL CONSERVANCY – ASHLAND, SAWYER, BAYFIELD AND DOUGLAS COUNTIES

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 410
Physical Location: 33 North 1st Street
Bayfield, Wisconsin 54814
715-779-5263
<http://www.brcland.org/>

COUDERAY WATERS REGIONAL LAND TRUST

P.O. Box 13097, Hayward, Wisconsin 54843
715-634-3618
<http://www.cwrlt.org/>

WEST WISCONSIN LAND TRUST

500 East Main St., Suite 307
Menomonie, Wisconsin 54751
715-235-8850
<http://www.wvlt.org/>

Selected Conservation Organizations

WISCONSIN WETLANDS ASSOCIATION

222 S. Hamilton St. #1, Madison, Wisconsin 53703
608-250-9971

<http://www.wisconsinwetlands.org/>

RIVER ALLIANCE OF WISCONSIN

306 East Wilson Street, Suite #2W
Madison, Wisconsin 53703
608-257-2424

<http://wisconsinrivers.org/>

BAD RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

101 West Main Street Suite 353
P.O. Box 875, Ashland, Wisconsin 54806
715-682-2003

<http://www.badriverwatershed.org/>

ST. LOUIS RIVER ALLIANCE

394 Lake Ave. South, Suite 321
Duluth, Minnesota 55802
218-733-9520

<http://www.stlouisriver.org/>

FRIENDS OF THE BRULE

P.O. Box 146, Brule, Wisconsin 54820

<http://www.friendsofthebrule.com/>

FRIENDS OF THE ST. CROIX HEADWATERS

P.O. Box 276, Gordon, Wisconsin 54838

<http://www.fotsch.org/>

Private Forestry

NATIONAL TIMBER TAX WEBSITE

<http://www.timbertax.org>

PRIVATE FORESTRY CONSULTANTS

WDNR Forester Locator Web Site

<http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/private/assist/coopforesters/>

WISCONSIN WOODLAND OWNERS ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 285, Stevens Point, Wisconsin 54481
715-346-4798

<http://www.wisconsinwoodlands.org/>

THE FOREST LANDOWNER TOOLKIT WAS CREATED BY THESE ORGANIZATIONS



The Bayfield Regional Conservancy (“BRC”)

The Bayfield Regional Conservancy is a membership-based, non-profit, regional land trust serving Ashland, Bayfield, Douglas and Sawyer counties in northwest Wisconsin, where they have preserved over 2,500 acres. Founded in 1996, BRC works with private landowners on a voluntary basis to protect natural lands, waters, forests, farms, and places of scenic, historic and spiritual value. Their achievements include protection of Mt. Ashwabay and the Nourse Sugarbush, the Brownstone Trail, Corny Beach, White River, Bayfield Farmland Preservation Program, and protection of private inland and Lake Superior shorelines.

Bayfield, Wisconsin: 715-779-5263 www.brcland.org



Living Forest Cooperative

The Living Forest Cooperative is a regional forest management and marketing enterprise based in Northwest Wisconsin. Incorporated in the spring of 2000, our current membership owns over 13,000 acres of forest land and consists of resident and non-resident landowners. Conventional modern forest management often favors short-term economic gain over long term forest health and profitability. Our vision is to restore forest ecosystems while producing high quality, value-added wood products; strengthening the community with a sustainable natural resource business.

Ashland, Wisconsin: 715-682-0007 www.livingforestcoop.com



Wisconsin Environmental Education Board (“WEEB”)

The Wisconsin Environmental Education Board was established in 1989. In addition to operating an environmental grants program, the Board is recognized as a consensus-building group on environmental education issues. WEEB's stated mission is to provide leadership in the development of learning opportunities that empower Wisconsin citizens with the knowledge and skills needed to make wise environmental decisions and take responsible actions in their personal lives, workplaces and communities.

Stevens Point, Wisconsin: 715-346-3805 www.uwsp.edu/cnr/weeb/index.htm