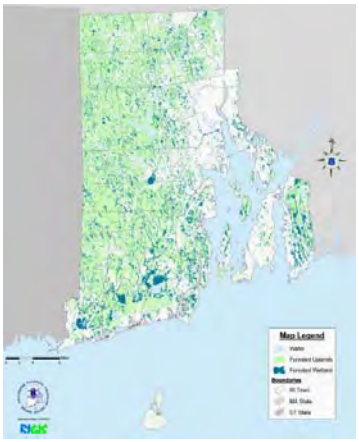
NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service

Woodland Stewardship Opportunities for Private Landowners



Woodland Stewardship and NRCS

The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) offers landowners a mix of financial and technical assistance, as well as providing education to help you better care for your woodlands.

If you are presently a private land woodland owner or private land trust, there is a good chance that you are eligible for technical and financial assistance for many USDA -NRCS practices that can help you implement an overall forest management plan.

This assistance could include, preparing, revising or updating a forest management plan, riparian forest buffer management, early successional wildlife habitat development, forest stand improvement, tree planting, brush management, forest trails and landings, invasive plant species control, among others.

If you are a private land trust that owns or manages lands, sign up now and take advantage of the these programs.

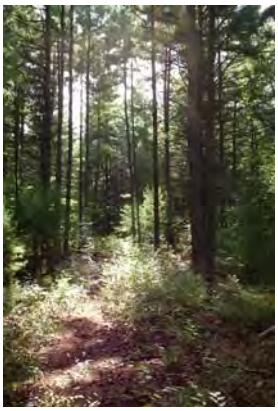
Contacting us by telephone at 401-822-8848, is the best way to decide which programs are right for you.

What follows is a brief description of the available programs.

Forest Management Plans

A forest management plan is a site specific plan, developed for the landowner, which addresses one or more resource concerns on land where forestry-related conservation activities or practices will be planned and applied. The primary purpose of forest management planning is to manage forested areas for forest health, wood and/or fiber, water, recreation, aesthetics, wildlife habitat and plant biodiversity in order to maintain or improve:

- Forest health;
- Soil quality and condition;
- Water quality and quantity;
- Forest productivity;
- Aesthetic and recreational values;
- Wildlife habitat; or to
- Achieve or maintain a desired understory plant community for forest products, grazing, and browsing.



Forest Stand Improvement

The primary purpose of forest stand improvement is to enhance health and vigor of the stands, or to modify stand species composition. Such stands offer more abundant wildlife habitat, more diverse plant communities, and more resilient forests with reduced potential for damage by wildfire, pests, and moisture stress. At the same time, forest stand improvement may also be used to initiate stand regeneration and restore native plant communities, including desired understory plants. Other purposes include improving recreation, aesthetic and open space values, water quality protection, water conservation and yield. Forest stand improvement aids in the management of carbon storage and uptake. Another purpose of this practice is to increase the future quantity and quality of forest products. Harvesting forest products is often a secondary benefit of forest stand improvement.

Helping People Help the Land

Early Successional Habitat Development & Management

The primary purpose of early successional habitat development is to create or manage early plant succession to benefit desired wildlife or natural communities.

Early successional habitat management increases plant community diversity by increasing the vertical and horizontal plant structure and plant species diversity in the landscape. Frequently, these important habitat types are under-represented in the landscape or are managed in such a way that it does not benefit wildlife. Habitat is improved by creating, maintaining or managing grasslands, old fields, shrub lands and young forest land to benefit wildlife. This may consist of adjusting mowing or brush hogging schedules to avoid the primary nesting season for grassland birds (April 15-August 1) or creating openings in the forest to provide young, thick cover and food

Riparian Forest Buffer

A riparian forest buffer is an area of trees and shrubs located adjacent to streams, lakes, ponds, and wetlands.

Riparian forest buffers of sufficient width intercept sediment, nutrients, pesticides, and other materials in surface runoff and reduce nutrients and other pollutants in shallow subsurface water flow. Woody vegetation in buffers provides food and cover for wildlife, helps lower water temperatures by shading a waterbody, slows out-of-bank flood flows, and provides litter fall and large woody debris important to aquatic organisms. Also, the woody roots increase the resistance of streambanks and shorelines to erosion caused by high water flows or waves. Some species established or managed in a riparian forest buffer can be managed to provide timber, wood fiber, and horticultural products.

Forest Trails & Landings

Forest trails and landings are routes, travelways, or cleared areas within a forest to provide access on a periodic basis. Forest trails and landings are used to:

- Provide access to forest stands for management,
- Removal and collection of forest products and recreation, and to
- Minimize on-site and off-site damage to resources during periods of access by controlling erosion during construction, during use, and upon completion of use.

Other Practices

The following is a brief list of other practices that may be useful to private landowners:

Brush Management
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management
Tree Planting
Invasive Species Control
Access Control
Pollinator Habitat

Call USDA-NRCS at 401-822-8848 for more information or visit us on the web @ www.ri.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service • 60 Quaker Lane, Warwick, Rhode Island 02886