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EQIP Cost Share: New for Forest Landowners from NRCS

Apply by January 14, 2011



Chestnut sided warblers and other wildlife species can benefit from habitat improvement practices supported by the EQIP program

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a cost-share program through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that has traditionally been available to farmers who want to address water quality issues, control invasive plants, and reduce soil erosion on their farms. Now, NRCS has expanded the EQIP program to

provide assistance to forest landowners who want to improve forest health and productivity, wildlife habitat, and water quality.

Forest landowners can receive financial assistance through the EQIP program to help cover the cost of creating or updating a forest management plan. In addition, the following forest conservation practices are eligible for cost share funding:

- Forest stand improvement
- Early successional habitat development and management
- Tree and shrub site preparation and establishment
- Upland wildlife habitat management
- Stream crossings

- Riparian forest buffers
- Fish passage and stream habitat improvement and management
- Forest trails, landings, and access roads
- Wetland wildlife habitat management

Some of these practices are ones that you might fold into a commercial timber sale if the opportunity arises. However, often it is not financially viable to implement these practices. Maybe you want to keep a two acre old field that's reverting to forest as early successional habitat – a habitat type that is declining in the region—rather than letting it regenerate into forest. Cutting back two acres of saplings every

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Current Use: Updates and Reminders

Legislative Changes Revived

The Vermont Woodlands Association is leading a group of organizations in reviving the Current Use Tax Coalition (CUTC), which is working to agree on proposed changes to the Current Use program before the legislative session resumes in January. Gov. Jim Douglas vetoed last year's current use bill (H.485), but governor elect Peter

Shumlin voted for the bill, making passage of a current use bill in 2011 more likely. The CUTC will likely focus their efforts on coming to an agreement on the most controversial piece of the legislation: the increase in the land use change penalty (for an explanation of this proposed change and others, see the

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EQIP continued

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ten years can be time and money intensive, which could leave you rethinking the idea. Likewise, unless you love weekend warrior work with your chainsaw, it would likely be cost-prohibitive to pay for a pre-commercial thinning of an overstocked sapling and pole stand in order to favor species such as oak, hickory, black cherry, and yellow birch that will grow into future timber trees while

producing food for wildlife in the meantime.

Fortunately, in many cases, the new EQIP forestry program can help make these management goals and others a reality through sharing the cost of implementing them. Now is the time to apply to meet the **January 14, 2011 deadline** (for conservation practices only). Applications for financial assistance with updating

forest management plans will be accepted on a rolling basis through the year; you may apply at any time.

We're happy to answer any questions you might have about the program, help you decide if it is the right fit for you, and assist you with updating your management plan and completing your application. Give us a call today!



Keep your loved ones safe, warm, and happy as they head outdoors this holiday season.

Woodland Winter Gift Ideas

Winter is a great time to get out to enjoy and work in your woods. If you are looking for gift ideas for family or friends who work and/or play in the woods, here are some of our favorites. From stocking stuffers to larger items that have been on someone's wish list for years, these gifts will keep your loved ones safe, warm, and happy as they head outdoors this holiday season:

- Rite-in-the-Rain field notebooks
- New ear plugs, safety glasses, or hard hat
- Safety orange hat and/or mittens
- Thermos
- Field guides
- Coupon for a couple hours of wood stacking or invasives pulling
- Chainsaw sharpening/tune-up
- Pruning saw
- Snowshoes
- Chainsaw boots
- Historic photos or aerial photos of property
- Tree and shrub seedlings for regeneration projects
- Non-timber forest product starts— i.e. ginseng, mushrooms, elderberry, goldenseal



Scott and his son, Brooks, with the rescued barred owl.

Greenleaf Helps with Barred Owl Rescue in Underhill

While working in Underhill on the Ethan Allen Firing Range in October, Scott came across an injured barred owl. Scott contacted wildlife rehabilitator, Craig Newman, from Outreach for Earth Stewardship, who drove out to pick up the owl. Craig thought that the owl's left wing had been injured, so took her to a vet for x-rays and then planned to

rehabilitate her. What an experience to have such a close encounter with such a stunning animal! We hope that by now the owl is back home in the woods enjoying a winter bounty of mice and voles—and getting ready for nesting season which begins in February.

Barred owls—as well as some other large birds, such as pileated

woodpeckers—nest in cavities in large-diameter trees. If possible, try to leave some large-diameter (24+ inches dbh) cavity trees and snags in your woods for these species—and plan on recruiting some new ones for the future. You can also erect owl nesting boxes that will meet their needs.

If you'd like to receive The Green Leaf by email instead, please let us know by emailing us at GLForestry@aol.com

Current Use *continued*

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Summer 2010 Green Leaf). Other groups involved in the CUTC meetings include the Vermont Farm Bureau, Vermont Land Trust, Vermont Forest Products Association, Vermont Natural Resources Council, Vermont Association of Snow Travelers, the Vermont Association of Assessors and Listers (VALA), and the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT).

Forest Management Activity Reports

If you cut any significant amount of timber on your land this past year, please remember to submit a Forest Management Activity Report to your County Forester by **February 1, 2011**. Give us a call if you have any questions or need assistance; we'll be happy to help.

Forest Management Plan Updates

Remember that your Current Use forest management plans must be **updated every 10 years**. If our records show that you are due for an update in 2011, we've put a brightly colored sticker on the back page of your newsletter. If you are overdue for an update, look for two stickers. Give us a call ASAP.

Forest Health Update: December 1st Wind Damage

Sustained, high winds – greater than hurricane force in some areas – tore along the western slopes of the Green Mountains up to the Canadian boarder in Chittenden and Franklin Counties on December 1st. The high winds caught the needles in the tops of conifers like sails – particularly pines on exposed upland sites—snapping trunks and uprooting stems. Trees in a stand help to stabilize each other during high winds, so once some trees started to fall, others became more vulnerable leading to a domino effect; patches ranging in size from a few trees to 25 acres were toppled. Intense damage was localized to certain areas, like East Hill Road in Richmond and

Williston, and Dean Road in Underhill among many other areas.

Seeing this level of damage in your woods is distressing. If your property was affected and you are concerned about the health of your forest, know that you don't necessarily have to do anything to clean up the "mess;" infrequent, large-scale wind events are part of the natural disturbance system with which our forests have evolved. Downed logs and limbs will provide new cover for wildlife, and openings will likely be flush with new regeneration in several years.

However, salvage logging is a

viable option if you want to recoup some of your financial investment, clean up blocked access and trails, and remove hazard trees. Greenleaf is already working in coordination with the County Foresters and Burlington Electric to implement clean up and salvage operations on 30 properties in the area. If you are enrolled in Current Use, we can help you plan a salvage harvest, and file the necessary amended plan, map, and new signature pages with your County Forester. If you are a sugarmaker with significant damage, contact FSA prior to starting your clean up to see if you are eligible for financial assistance.



High winds toppled forest stands like this pine plantation at the Hinesburg Town Forest throughout Chittenden and Franklin Counties on December 1st.

Photo courtesy of Michael Snyder

Greenleaf Welcomes New Forester: Addison Kasmarek

Addison Kasmarek joined the Greenleaf team this fall. Addison grew up in southeastern Massachusetts and came to Vermont to study at UVM where she graduated with a degree in forestry in 2010. She has a

concentration in forest health and has worked with landowners on invasive species control. She also worked in southeast Alaska for the U.S. Park Service on exotic plant management and occasionally fished for halibut.

When not working, Addison can be found outside chopping wood, off-roading, or training for triathlons.



Greenleaf's new forester, Addison Kasmarek



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Is it time to update your Current Use plan?

If you are enrolled in the Current Use program, remember that your forest management plan needs to be **updated every ten years**.

Look in the box to the far right on this page for a brightly colored dot(s):

No dot = Our records show that your update has already been submitted or is in process, or that you do not need an update until 2013 or later.

1 Dot = Plan update due by April 1, 2012. You may receive a letter from your County Forester requesting that your plan be submitted by December 31, 2011.

2 Dots = Plan update due by April 1, 2011. Please contact us soon.

3 Dots = Plan is overdue for an update. If you do not update your forest management plan, you are at risk for being disqualified for the program. Please contact us ASAP!

Look for dots here!

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