

FORESTER'S GUIDE TO NRCS' TECHNICAL SERVICE PROVIDER (TSP) PROGRAM

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The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is implementing a new program to offer technical assistance to small woodlot owners through their Technical Service Provider (TSP) program. A Forester's Guide has been developed to increase awareness of this program to private consulting foresters and assist them in the registration process.

In the past, NRCS was unable to assist woodlot owners with technical forestry questions due to their limited number of forestry personnel. The TSP Program was developed to augment our technical assistance delivery capabilities. NRCS has always provided funds for financial assistance in implementing forestry practices within several of our cost-share programs, including the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) and Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP). However, these programs did not provide funds to the landowner for the technical assistance provided by foresters, including marking trees for forest stand improvement and tree pruning.

The Forester's Guide includes a general overview of the TSP program and some brief examples of how this program compliments various NRCS and other USDA cost-share (financial assistance) programs. A major focus of the guide is the step-by-step instructions on how to get on the TSP register. Other topics discussed include how landowners select a TSP forester and what qualifications are required. The most current state-by-state "not-to-exceed" technical assistance rates for typical conservation practices in New England are included as well.