



WoodsWISE



Incentives to Stewardship Enhancement

Landowner Instructions – Forest Management Plans (all types):

Contact a [Stewardship Forester](#) about preparing one of the Forest Management Plan (FMP) options from the [WoodsWISE Planning Menu](#). The terms and arrangements for doing this are strictly between you and your Stewardship Forester.

Complete, sign, and submit a [WoodsWISE Application Form](#) to the Maine Forest Service (MFS). Please make sure your Stewardship Forester does not start working on the FMP before you receive an Approval letter from the Maine Forest Service. Your Stewardship Forester should also receive a copy of the Approval letter. Approval letters are sent electronically to the e-mail address provided on the Application, and to the e-mail that the Stewardship Forester has listed with MFS. As indicated in the Approval letter, your Stewardship Forester has 12 months to complete the FMP, with an optional 3-month extension available on request.

Once you have received the completed FMP from your Stewardship Forester, please:

1. Read the Plan
 - a. Do you understand it? If not, ask your Stewardship Forester to clarify.
 - b. Does it accurately state your objectives?
 - c. Do the recommendations meet your goals and needs?
2. Sign the Landowner Stewardship Pledge included in the Plan, which affirms that you accept the Plan provided by the Stewardship Forester, and agree to implement its recommendations for at least 10 years.
3. Pay the Stewardship Forester.
4. Provide the Stewardship Forester with all the paperwork needed to submit your Claim for Payment:
 - a. A completed Claim for Payment form. Make sure you sign it and include your correct address, and your Social Security or tax identification number.
 - b. Proof of Payment. This may be copy of the cancelled check(s), or other acceptable written documentation. Your Stewardship Forester can supply an Affidavit for you to sign that will be acceptable in lieu of Proof of Payment. *See page 2 for more details.*
 - c. A copy of the signed Landowner Stewardship Pledge.

Make sure you keep a copy of all documents/records for your files. **If you use the Affidavit, you must be able to produce a cancelled check(s) or appropriate bank documents upon request from the Maine Forest Service.**

5. Your Stewardship Forester will supply the remaining information:
 - a. A copy of the Forester's bill or invoice, marked "paid" and **initialed or signed** by the Forester.
 - b. A copy of the Plan for review by the Maine Forest Service.
 - c. If you use the Affidavit in lieu of Proof of Payment, your **Stewardship Forester must sign** it in the space provided.
6. Your Stewardship Forester will submit all the required information to your local Maine Forest Service District Forester. Upon determining that the Plan meets the applicable WoodsWISE program standards and specifications, the District Forester will approve the Claim for Payment.
7. Once the Claim for Payment is approved by the Maine Forest Service District Forester, the paperwork travels through the State of Maine accounting system. It may take approximately 6-8 weeks from the time the plan is submitted for you to receive your payment.

Proof of Payment for Forest Management Plans

Proof of payment for cost share reimbursement for all types of Forest Management Plans under Maine Forest Service programs consists of:

- a copy of the cancelled check (both sides), or
- a similar written record generated by the bank that clearly shows that funds in a given amount have been transferred.

An Affidavit may be submitted in lieu of the above documents **if they are not readily obtainable**. Check number(s) are required information. If this Affidavit is submitted, landowner must be able to show actual proof of payment upon request from the Maine Forest Service.

If payment is made in a form other than a check, a notarized statement signed by the forester asserting that payment has been received, and identifying the type and dollar value of payment, may substitute as proof of payment.

In all cases, MFS reserves the right to request additional documentation.

Note: A copy of the original bill(s) or invoice(s), marked "paid" and initialed by the consulting forester, is still required in addition to the above forms of proof.

**Questions? Please call the Maine Forest Service Landowner
Outreach Forester at (207) 287-8430.**