



The North Central Wisconsin Young Forest Initiative The Wisconsin Young Forest Partnership

What is Young Forest?

Any forest that has had most of its older, mature trees removed and has young trees sprouting. In Northern Wisconsin, aspen (popple) and alder are two common examples of valuable young forest species. They are highly productive, fast growing, and intolerant of shade.

How can I increase the amount of wildlife using my property?

Many wildlife species benefit from a landscape that contains forests of different ages and compositions. If your woods are all one age, and have clear visibility and little plant growth beneath a closed leaf canopy, you may not be getting use by a broad spectrum of wildlife. Adding well-planned timber harvests and young forest in appropriate sizes and locations adds openings, food, and cover that will in turn attract a great variety of wildlife.

What wildlife uses young forest?

Ruffed grouse, rabbit, fox, turkey, bobcat, deer, and bear all use young forest in part of their life cycle. Flycatchers, warblers, towhees, vireos, sparrows, and juncos rely heavily on young forest. In addition, some of our most imperiled bird species, what we call Species of Greatest Conservation Need, are dependent on young forests, including Golden-winged Warbler (and seven other kinds of warblers), Whip-poor-will, American Woodcock, Brown Thrasher, Veery, and cuckoos.

Which areas are best managed for young forest?

It is important for a landowner/manager to know what kind of soils, topography, and conditions exist on their land, and which kind of forest management is best applied in those circumstances. In Northern Wisconsin, many locations are well suited for aspen or alder, and just need some well-planned management to improve them. If you are unsure, DNR staff can help you better determine your property's suitability.

Is financial aid available?

Yes! State and Federal natural resource agencies have identified young forest management as a priority for many species of birds and animals, and are making funds available to assist landowners interested in managing their property to benefit wildlife.

Where are these funds coming from?

The funds from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) are routed through the Farm Bill into EQIP (environmental quality incentives program). The funds from the USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife are dedicated funds from the US Department of the Interior to improve wildlife habitat on private lands.

If I express interest in forest management funds, am I obligated?

No. We want the information about habitat improvement to get out, and are providing it free of charge. At any time, you can decide this is not for you, and there will be no cost. We will get you an accurate estimate on what you can expect your cost to be on a proposed activity, and if



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you choose to proceed, you would work with Natural Resources Conservation Service or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to schedule and complete the work.

If I accept forest management funds, does my land have to be open to public hunting? No. These funds are available through NRCS and USFWS, neither of which have any public access requirements for funding.

What will it cost me? Both programs are designed to provide financial assistance to complete work on your property. The amount of assistance you receive and the amount that you would be your obligation would depend on which practice(s) you select and which program best fits your needs. You would have a very accurate estimate of your share before any work was started.

My land is enrolled in MFL. Is that a problem? No. We can work with DNR Forestry staff to modify your MFL plan. Furthermore, if you have an existing management plan for your property, it could expedite the application process and get you ranked as a higher priority for some project funds.

My land is not enrolled in MFL. Is that a problem? No. There are many different options for forest landowners. There may be funds available to help pay a plan writer to develop a forest management plan. Otherwise, we can help you sort through what is important for you on your property, and work with you to develop a kind of stewardship plan you are comfortable with.

What is the next step? If you are interested in learning more about young forest management, we will schedule an onsite meeting, or send you information depending on what works best for you. We will just need a little more information, then we will get back to you in short order once we have our list of interested landowners. Due to the volume of calls, this may take a couple of weeks, but this is a high priority and we will get back in touch ASAP.

How much money will I be able to get?

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a conservation program, offered by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); EQIP offers flat-rate, financial assistance for a variety of conservation practices, including Brush Management, Early Successional Habitat Development and Management, and Forest Stand Improvement (i.e. timber sale to regenerate aspen). Payment rates vary, based upon the planned activity, and are designed to pay 50% of the average cost of the project, for general applicants; 90% for Beginning Farmers, Limited Resource Farmers, Socially Disadvantaged Farmers, and Veteran Farmers; NRCS includes forest owners as farmers. For more information, go to <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/wi/programs/financial/eqip/>

The USFWS Partners in Fish and Wildlife program has a fairly similar, but far less structured setup. They have a dollar amount they are able to pay that is determined by the practice, or kind of habitat work, and we would need to talk a bit more about what kind of work to determine how many dollars would be available to each individual landowner.



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Q: Will the DNR be coming on to my property to do the work?

A: It is possible that a DNR employee may be involved in the planning or supervision of implementation of projects, with the permission of the EQIP participant/landowner. It is also possible that a property owner could work with their professional forester, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) conservationists, private contractors, etc. to complete a project, without DNR assistance. However, DNR staff people may have unique natural resources knowledge and may know of potential contractors for such work.

Q: If I'm scheduling the work, how do I know who will come out and do the work?

A: The selection of a contractor is the responsibility of the contract participant, if participating in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). The NRCS or DNR or other natural resources specialists, including professional foresters, may have knowledge of available contractors. Ultimately, USDA is providing financial assistance for implementation of the conservation practices that are included in an EQIP contract; it does not matter who is performing the work, as long as the work is completed in accordance with NRCS standards and specifications.

Q: Can I do the work myself and still get a check?

An EQIP contract participant may opt to complete the work, using the participant's own labor, equipment, etc., as long as the work is completed in accordance with NRCS standards and specifications.

Q: We like to hunt on our land during the fall. When do I have to do the work?

A financially assisted practice must be significantly started within 12 months of contract obligation. Contracts are unlikely to be obligated before August 2014. So, work should not interfere with fall hunting, provided that the work may be performed at other times of the year.

Q: What if I sign up and then change my mind? Is there a penalty?

Potential applicants are encouraged to work all the way through the planning process, with NRCS, DNR, or other natural resource professional, such as their private forester. If you decide at that time not to proceed, there is no penalty.

Q: If you call for timber harvest, do I get the money from the sale AND the grant money for doing it?

A: Yes, an EQIP participant would be entitled to both the proceeds from a timber sale and the financial assistance for the implementation of Forest Stand Improvement, due to its potential to benefit wildlife. Not all even-aged harvests are eligible; there must be a resource concern, such as insufficient feed or brood-rearing habitat for woodcock, for NRCS to include a timber harvest in an EQIP contract. It is recommended that an applicant discuss such a project with their forester or another natural resource professional.