

Subpart A—Stewardship Incentive Program

§ 230.1 Purpose and scope.

(a) The regulations in this subpart govern the operation of the Stewardship Incentive Program as provided in section 6 of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act, as amended by title XII of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (16 U.S.C. 2101, *et seq.*). This subpart sets forth the rules and procedures by which the Stewardship Incentive Program will be administered by the Forest Service to establish forest stewardship practices on nonindustrial private forest land.

(b) The cost-share assistance provided under the Stewardship Incentive Program shall complement rather than replace or duplicate the existing Agricultural Conservation Program and Forestry Incentives Program. Tree planting and improvement and other State priorities for program activities and practices funded under the Stewardship Incentive Program shall be designed to provide multiple resource benefits not available through other cost-share programs.

§ 230.2 Definitions.

As used in this subpart, the following terms shall mean:

Act means the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act as amended (16 U.S.C. 2101, *et seq.*).

Assignee means any person, corporation, government agency, or other legal entity to whom a landowner transfers legal rights to receive all or part of federal cost-share payments.

Chief means the Chief of the Forest Service.

Committee means the State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee established pursuant to section 19(b)(1) of the Act.

Fiscal year means the fiscal year of the United States Government which is October 1 through September 30.

Landowner means any private individual, group, association, corporation, Indian tribe or other native group, or other private legal entity, excluding corporations whose stocks are publicly traded or legal entities principally engaged in the production of wood products.

Nonindustrial private forest land means rural lands with existing tree cover or which are suitable for growing trees and owned by any landowner as defined in this subpart.

Practice means a stewardship activity or conservation measure consistent with the landowner plan to accomplish the landowner's desired management objectives.

Program means the Stewardship Incentive Program.

Regional Forester means the Forest Service official charged with the administration of a Region of the National Forest System as described in 36 CFR 200.2, except that with reference to the States covered by the Eastern Region, such term shall mean the Area Director for States and Private Forestry, Northeastern Area (36 CFR 200.2);

Resource Management Professional means any person who is recognized by the State Forester as having the knowledge and skills to develop landowner plans for managing the biological, economic, and environmental interrelationship of forest resources and to identify appropriate activities to manage, protect, or enhance forest resources including, but not limited to, an employee of a State forestry agency, other State resource agency, the Soil Conservation Service, a consulting forester, or wildlife biologist.

Service Representative means a resource management professional designated by the State Forester to perform any or all of the following technical assistance functions: Review and approval of landowner plans, determination of need and feasibility of practices, establishment of site specific practice specifications, certification of completion of practices and performance of compliance checks pursuant to this subpart.

State means any one of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands of the United States, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the North Marianas Islands, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and the Territories and possessions of the United States.

State Forester means the employee of a State responsible for administration

Forest Service, USDA

§ 230.4

and delivery of forestry and assistance within such State.

USDA means the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

§ 230.3 National program administration.

(a) The Chief shall develop and oversee all Program policy and procedure and monitor the implementation of such policy and procedure over the life of the Program.

(b) The Chief shall annually distribute among the States such cost-share funds as may be available for the Program after addressing the public benefit incidental to such distribution and after giving appropriate consideration to the following: The total acreage of nonindustrial private forest land in each State, the potential productivity of such land, the number of owners eligible for cost sharing in each State, the need for reforestation in each State, the opportunities to enhance nontimber resources on such forest lands, and the anticipated demand for timber and nontimber resources in each State. In making distributions under this paragraph, the Chief shall consult with a group of not less than five State Foresters selected by a majority of the State foresters.

(c) Tree planting, tree maintenance, and tree improvement are national priorities for cost-share practices under the Programs. In addition to these practices, the Chief, in consultation with the State Foresters, may develop other national priorities for practices to be cost shared under the Program and shall communicate such priorities to guide administration of the Program.

(d) The Chief shall review and determine approval of State plans, including any revisions of such plans.

(e) The Chief, in consultation with the State Foresters, shall annually reevaluate and set the percentage of Program funding to be made available for landowner forest stewardship plan development (§230.7(a)(1) of this subpart).

(f) The Chief may enter into such agreements with any other USDA agency as are necessary to administer the Program. These agreements may include provisions authorizing the col-

lection of Program participant information, the management of accounting ledgers, and the disbursement of payment to participants.

(g) The Chief shall retain final authority to resolve all issues which may arise in the administration of the Program.

§ 230.4 State program administration.

(a) In each State participating in the Program, the Secretary of Agriculture, in consultation with the State Forester, shall establish a State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee whose composition meets the requirements of section 19(b) of the Act. The Committee shall be chaired by the State Forester, or the designee thereof.

(b) In each State participating in the Program, the Committee shall recommend to the State Forester for approval:

(1) Stewardship Incentive Program needs within the State;

(2) The minimum contiguous acreage of eligible nonindustrial private forest land, consistent with §230.5(c) of this subpart;

(3) Those nationally approved practices that will be eligible for cost-share assistance within the State;

(4) Those nationally approved technical practices and minimum specifications to be used in implementing practices;

(5) The cost-share levels, by practice, which will encourage tree planting, maintenance, and improvement, and other high priority practices within the State that will result in multiple resource benefits;

(6) The fixed rate or reimbursement or designated percentage of total cost for practice components;

(7) The distribution mechanism for the allocation of cost-share funds within the State;

(8) The assignment of technical responsibility, by type of Program practice, to the appropriate Service Representative;

(9) Guidelines for establishing annual priorities for the approval of landowner applications;

(10) The mechanisms for ensuring landowner compliance with practice specification;