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October 16, 2009

NEW MEXICO BULLETIN 440-10-2

SUBJECT: PGM-CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM (CSP) AND NON-INDUSTRIAL PRIVATE FOREST (NIPF)

Purpose: To issue New Mexico NIPF designation guidance and establish State-specific minimum areas and size limits for NIPF designation.

Expiration Date: September 30, 2010.

Effective Date: This bulletin is effective upon receipt.

Background: By special rule in the 2008 Farm Bill, NIPF was added as an eligible land use for CSP. Given the general NIPF definition provided by the 2008 Farm Bill, additional guidance is needed to assist in the designation of NIPF for CSP.

The following guidance is provided to assist in the designation of NIPF for CSP.

General Land Use Guidance:

Participants will designate the use for which they want their land to be considered for enrollment into the CSP. An acre of land can only have one land use designation applied for application and contracting purposes.

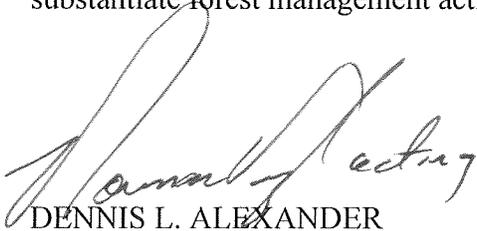
Land use will be verified for pre-approved applicants as part of the field verification process. Offered acres that fail to meet the land use description will be considered to be inaccurate information and handled as described in the Conservation Performance Summary Report from the Conservation Measurement Tool.

NIPF Designation Guidance:

NIPF is a Land cover/use category that is at least 10 percent stocked by single-stemmed woody species of any size that will be at least 4 meters (13 feet) tall at maturity. Also, included is land bearing evidence of natural regeneration of tree cover (cut over forest or abandoned farmland) and not currently developed for non-forest use. Ten percent stocked, when viewed from a vertical direction, equates to an areal canopy cover of leaves and branches of 25 percent or greater. **The minimum area for classification as forest land and which is considered a viable forest management unit in New Mexico will be 25 acres.** Management units of 25 acres or less may request a waiver from the State Conservationist to be eligible for CSP.

Forest openings and incidental areas of non-forestland cover (e.g., wetlands, rock outcrops, or meadows) within the forest are eligible for inclusions in the NIPF acreage provided any one opening **does not exceed 3 acres in size.**

Wetlands and non-wooded areas that exceed the size limits will be excluded from the offered acreage unless the participant can provide documentation of forest management activities that have been conducted on these acres within the past 10 years. Documentation could be copies of forest management plans including these areas, timber harvest receipts or similar documents that substantiate forest management activities have taken place.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dennis L. Alexander".

DENNIS L. ALEXANDER
State Conservationist