



**New England Forestry Foundation  
Large Commercial Forest Landowner Incentive Program  
Request for Proposals for Anticipated Funding Source**

**Introduction**

Through this RFP, NEFF seeks preliminary proposals from commercial forest landowners in the project region (New England states) with 5000 or more acres under management to participate in the anticipated USDA Advancing Markets for Producers (AMP) program to enhance timber productivity and forest health on their lands.

NEFF is in the process of applying to re-allocate funds remaining from its \$32 million Climate Smart Commodities grant to the new AMP program, as proposed by USDA. Applicants should know that these funds have not yet been fully secured, but NEFF is sufficiently confident of their receipt to launch this RFP.

This program is anticipated to provide approximately \$21.28 million in forestry incentives on forestlands across the region. These funds will be awarded based on 2 rounds of projects: those already selected under a previous RFP conducted in 2024 (7 commercial landowners) and those selected under this RFP. Please note that landowners who were accepted under the 2024 RFP will *not* need to reapply under this RFP.

This RFP is designed primarily to engage commercial landowners with 5000 or more acres. If you are a landowner with a smaller land base but you are interested in participation, you may reach out to NEFF Commercial Lands Forester Dan Hohl at [dhohl@newenglandforestry.org](mailto:dhohl@newenglandforestry.org)

Application Deadline: July 15, 2025

Submit applications to: Catrina Vear, at [cvear@newenglandforestry.org](mailto:cvear@newenglandforestry.org) with the email heading "NEFF AMP Application\_(your organization name)"

RFP information session: Monday, June 30<sup>th</sup> at 11:00-12:00 <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84319056315>

**Project Context & Background**

In April 2024, USDA announced that the Advancing Markets for Producers (AMP) program would replace the Climate Smart Commodities (CSC) program initiated in 2023. NEFF was informed that it may re-orient its \$32 million CSC grant towards the goals of AMP, which include increasing productivity of commodity production and improving markets for those commodities. NEFF had already engaged 7 commercial landowners (5000+ acres) through an RFP in 2024 to conduct timber stand improvement practices on their lands. Under NEFF's application for AMP it will increase incentives available from the project budget for timber stand improvement and hence is seeking additional commercial landowner partners through this RFP.

The goals of this program include the following:

1. Implement forest management practices that accelerate the development of high-quality wood products.
2. Build markets for the full range of forest products (including low-grade material) so that such practices will eventually be self-sustaining and economically viable.

The project will realize nationally significant wood supply benefits from New England, expand forest products markets, and benefit economically distressed rural communities. A climate-smart supply chain will deliver:

- Economic benefits at the stump and in commodity wood markets
- Improved forest ecosystem health and timber productivity
- Growth of more merchantable and better-quality wood for New England’s value-added wood processing enterprises
- Benefits to people in urban and suburban areas through using locally grown building materials to help meet the growing demand for affordable housing and other commercial and residential construction

### **Round 2 RFP –**

Through this RFP, NEFF seeks preliminary proposals from large commercial forest landowners (at least 5000 acres of total ownership) in the project region (New England states) to participate in our incentive program for conducting timber stand improvement. Potential Round 2 projects will be selected based on these preliminary proposals. Detailed project specifics will be developed collaboratively by NEFF and the landowners involved as part of the project. Preliminary proposals should address at the conceptual level:

1. **Practices & Forest Types:** All practices included in Appendix I are eligible and may be implemented in all native forest types of New England.
  - Note: Activities funded through this project will be subject to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, which requires consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to determine the impacts of proposed activities on Threatened and Endangered Species. NEFF will facilitate this process to the extent possible. Based on current guidance related to the endangered Northern Long-eared Bat, we expect that any cutting of trees greater than 4” dbh will be prohibited during the months of June and July for landowners implementing practices in Maine and March – September in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont, but this guidance could change in the future.
2. **Measurement, Monitoring, Reporting and Verification:** The following elements of MMRV will be required, and landowners should express their willingness to participate in and/or facilitate the following:
  - Quantification of timber growth and forest health benefits using models, direct measurements of biomass, and/or remote sensing.
  - Confirmation that the practice has been implemented.
  - Documenting and sharing monitoring and measurement results.
  - Independent verification that measurement, monitoring and reporting information is complete, accurate and reliable.

### **Project selection criteria**

1. Commercial forestland owners holding more than 5,000 acres located in the New England region.
2. Projects involving approximately 500-5000 acres of land.
3. Projects that are additional to the level of timber stand improvement already being practiced by the landowner, i.e. above and beyond their typical acreage treated using an average from the last three years.
4. Projects that are ready to go within a short time frame (ideally within several months) once the RFP process is complete.

5. Projects that offer a high degree of transparency, including with respect to direct and opportunity costs and long-term financial benefits.
6. Projects that include willingness to share information about the wood harvested in the course of the incentivized practices.
7. Note: Enrolled landowners will need to apply for a USDA Farm Services Agency number by filling out [form CCC-901](#). Commercial landowners enrolled in this program are exempt from the adjusted gross income limits typically applicable to USDA cost-share programs. Practices implemented through this program are required to address issues as laid out in the [NRCS Environmental Evaluation CPA-52 worksheet](#).
8. Landowners who complete form CCC-901 and are identified as a “foreign person” by USDA and not eligible to receive funding under Advancing Markets for Producers. Sovereign Tribal Nations are welcome to apply.

**Next Steps:** New England Forestry Foundation staff will review each application submitted. Landowners selected to participate in New England Forestry Foundation’s Advancing Markets for Producers incentive program will be asked to schedule a meeting with staff to go over the readiness checklist, assign a staff person to be the main point of contact for the project, discuss reporting requirements and other details

*This RFP is issued based upon work supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, as part of the anticipated Advancing Markets for Producers Partnership project under agreement number NR233A750004G017. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.*

## **Application – Advancing Markets for Producers**

Please complete the form below to submit your application. Responses can be brief, and detailed project specifics are not expected at this time. Project specifics will be developed once selected. Please simply expand the boxes below as needed to provide requested information. Please use additional pages as needed to complete the template below.

Proposals need not include all details on specific locations of stands targeted for practice x, but rather an estimate of the acreages involved for each practice – further details and project specifics will be worked out after preliminary selections. The most important element is the landowner’s commitment to work with NEFF in sorting through the issues involved in program design – this will require a substantial commitment of time from the landowner staff.

<b>Practices &amp; Forest Types</b>
<p>Using the list of qualifying forest practices please indicate which practices, which forest types and stand conditions, proposed locations and acreages are proposed for incentives through this project round, and the ideal timing for practice implementation.</p>
<p><b>PRACTICE #1</b></p> <p>Qualifying Forest Practice:</p> <p>Forest Type:</p> <p>Stand Condition:</p> <p>List General Proposed Location(s):</p> <p>Total Acreage:</p> <p>Preferred on-the-ground implementation (month/year):</p> <p>Using a three-year average from 2022, 2023 and 2024, is the proposed acreage additional to your typical acreage treated with this practice?</p>
<p><b>PRACTICE #2</b></p> <p>Qualifying Forest Practice:</p>

Forest Type:

Stand Condition:

List General Proposed Location(s):

Total Acreage:

Preferred on-the-ground implementation (month/year):

Using a three-year average from 2022, 2023 and 2024, is the proposed acreage additional to your typical acreage treated with this practice?

**PRACTICE #3**

Qualifying Forest Practice:

Forest Type:

Stand Condition:

List General Proposed Location(s):

Total Acreage:

Preferred on-the-ground implementation (month/year):

Using a three-year average from 2022, 2023 and 2024, is the proposed acreage additional to your typical acreage treated with this practice?

**Modeling**

Landowners are asked to provide pre-practice and post-practice inventory data to facilitate modeling of silvicultural outcomes for practices incentivized by this project. Landowners will be compensated for this time when calculating the total cost of practice.

Does the landowner have staff capacity to provide inventory data to NEFF's staff?

If the landowner does not have in-house capacity, can they contract this service to a consulting forester?

Is the landowner willing to provide digital plot data and digital summarized stand data for both pre-practice and post-practice inventories?

**MMRV**

Measurement, Monitoring, Reporting and Verification are central activities to this award. USDA is in the process of finalizing these requirements. Landowners who receive incentives will be asked to provide information about any merchantable wood harvested via incentivized practices.

Please clarify whether you will be able to provide harvest data by species, volume and product.

**Marketing Data Collection & Reporting**

USDA is in the process of finalizing reporting requirements. Landowners may be asked to provide information on the marketing of merchantable wood harvested from stands where incentivized practices took place. Please describe your ability to provide marketing data for potential reporting requirements.



## New England Advancing Markets for Producers Partnership Forest Practices List

NEFF CSF Practice Name	Method(s)	Purpose(s)
<b>1. Planting for restoration/adaptation</b>	Potential methods under this practice: Direct seeding hardwood Planting conifer seedling Planting mixed hardwood and softwood Planting hardwood bareroot	Planting to improve species composition to favor to increase timber productivity, including but not limited to current non-forested areas and forest areas clear-cut to replace unproductive or understocked stands with species best suited to the site
<b>2. Pre-commercial thinning (PCT)</b> — includes thinning in stands less than poletimber size and thinning in poletimber-sized stands where no wood is removed as product	Potential methods under this practice include chop and drop, girdling, and herbicide treatment (e.g., basal stem treatment). PCT is conducted manually without the use of logging equipment.	Pre-commercial thinning (PCT) for a variety of purposes including but not limited to favoring species composition best suited to the site, improving growth rates, improving future forest health or stand conditions, etc.
<b>3. Early commercial thinning (ECT)</b> — includes uneconomic thinning where some wood is removed as product	Potential methods under this practice can include harvesting trees, chop and drop. ECT is conducted with the use of logging equipment	Early commercial thinning (ECT) to improve timber production and/or to improve forest health conditions
<b>4. Crop Tree Release</b>	Potential methods under this practice can include harvesting trees, girdling, or use of herbicides including but not limited to Basal Stem Treatment	Crop tree release to favor individuals of species with commercial value and which are resilient to pests and pathogens

<b>5. Exotic Insect and Disease Control</b>	Methods can include use of insecticides, fungicides, or other recommended strategies to manage insect and/or disease outbreaks. For example, chemical treatment of native ash species against emerald ash borer	Maintain genetic resources of tree species threatened by exotic insect or disease outbreaks
<b>6. Controlling undesirable tree species</b>	Potential methods under this practice can include harvesting trees, girdling, or use of herbicides including but not limited to Basal Stem Treatment. For example, mechanical or chemical control of beech in the mid- and understory	Improve timber production by liberating growing space for commercially valuable species from undesirable species in various canopy layers.
<b>7. Implementing irregular shelterwood harvest</b>	Transition from even-aged harvesting methods to irregular shelterwood prescription	Improve forest health and resilience, develop uneven-aged stands and favor commercially valuable species in stands that presently have sub-optimal composition and age class structure.

<p><b>8. Retain legacy trees</b></p>	<p>Retain trees with exceptional genetic and biodiversity value during timber harvests.</p>	<p>Maintain ideal seed sources for natural regeneration and/or trees of critical value for maintaining biodiversity in managed forests (i.e. super-canopy trees, trees with large crowns suitable for raptor nesting, large cavity trees, key mast trees, etc.)</p>
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