

TOWN OF WILBRAHAM
240 Springfield Street
Wilbraham, Massachusetts 01095

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Patrick J. Brady
Robert J. Boilard
James E. Thompson
selectmen@wilbraham-ma.gov



TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Robert A. Weitz
Phone: (413) 596-2800
FAX: (413) 596-9256
ta@wilbraham-ma.gov

RESTORATION OF PRIVATE FOREST LAND

The town has received important information for property owners with significant acreage of tree (forest) damage. The United States Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency offers a program for the restoration of private forest land damaged by natural disasters, such as the tornado which affected Wilbraham on June 1.

The local contact asks possibly eligible landowners to contact him and "get on the list" so he may move forward with an inventory of who needs what.

TED SMIAROWSKI, Hadley Office, Farm Service Agency, 413-585-1000 X 100

From the USDA/FSA News Release:

Contact:

Isabel Benemelis (202) 720-7809
isabel.benemelis@wdc.usda.gov

USDA Announces Support for Restoration of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land Damaged by Natural Disasters

WASHINGTON, Nov. 22, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today said that \$18 million will be made available to assist nonindustrial private forest (NIPF) landowners restore lands damaged by natural disasters. The funds are provided through USDA's Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP).

"Restoration activities promote rural resiliency, forest health, and support sustainable economic development. The Obama Administration is committed to helping forest landowners restore property damaged by floods, tornadoes and other natural disasters across the nation," said Vilsack. "Through this new program, USDA will continue to assist landowners in their efforts to improve the health of privately held forest lands."

EFRP participants will use the money to implement emergency forest restoration practices, including emergency measures necessary to address damage caused by a natural disaster to natural resources on NIPF land and restore forest health and forest related resources on the land. The damage from the natural disaster must have occurred on or after January 1, 2010.

The program is administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). To be eligible for EFRP, land must:

- Have existing tree cover (or had tree cover immediately before the natural disaster and is suitable for growing trees); and,
- Be owned by any nonindustrial private individual, group, association, corporation, or other private legal entity that has definitive decision-making authority over the land.
- In addition, the natural disaster must create damage that, if untreated, would:
 - Impair or endanger the natural resources on the land; and,
 - Materially affect future use of the land.

All of the above conditions must be met for EFRP eligibility. FSA county committees determine land eligibility based on on-site damage inspections, taking into account the type and extent of damage.

FSA will use new web-based software developed for the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) to implement the EFRP. This new web-based software will more efficiently process applications and improve payment tracking. County offices will establish signup periods beginning on or after Dec. 6, 2010.

For further information on how to apply and eligibility requirements for EFRP, NIPF landowners may visit the FSA county office where their farm records are maintained or <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov> and www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation. You may also obtain additional information at <http://go.usa.gov/CLI>.

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