

Retaining more carbon in thinnings practice manual

DRAFT 4/26/2020

I. ELIGIBILITY CONDITIONS

- a. The property is within the eligible geography (see map below)
- b. Eligible land tenure and ownership type: Forest stands on private ownerships of greater than or equal to 30 acres and less than or equal to 2,400 acres
- c. Forests originating from natural regeneration (e.g. plantations are ineligible).
- d. Eligible condition status at the time of contract signing:
 - i. land not subject to any existing legal encumbrance (e.g. conservation easement or state/local restrictions) that excludes forest harvest activity (e.g. riparian buffers, designated reserves or no harvest areas) or the actions described in this practice
 - ii. Operable forest harvest conditions, specifically a stand that has is not understocked (must have at least 2,000 board feet / acre and greater than 30% acceptable growing stock, OR consider line on stocking chart) and is not overstocked (at or below the "B line" on stocking chart for this region and forest type) within the project area.

II. PRACTICE DESCRIPTION AND SPECIFICATIONS

- a. General Description – This practice is a thinning practice that produces carbon benefits by removing intermediate and co-dominant trees while increasing the average diameter of the residual stand. This practice retains some large-diameter live trees and down wood during thinning harvests. Forests eligible for this practice are neither understocked (since restoration or allowing the forest to grow would likely be more appropriate in those forests) or overstocked (since a more typical thinning harvest that removes more of the basal area might be more appropriate to give residual trees adequate growing space).
- b. Specifications
 - i. The participating family forest owner will develop and adhere to two property-wide consecutive 10-year forest management plans (i.e. an initial plan with a 10-year update), including detailed site prescriptions and harvest plans for all enrolled stands, over the 20-year contract period. Forest management plans will be prepared in consultation with a professional forester approved by the Family Forest Carbon Program. Existing management plans may be submitted for approval, in which case, the landowner will maintain a series of forest management plans for the property for the duration of the 20-year contract.
 - ii. Tree removals such as timber harvests and non-commercial tree cutting are allowed during the Agreement Term if desired under the following specifications. These specifications may be waived in salvage situations if a waiver is received from FFIF.
 1. If one harvest occurs during the Agreement Term, tree removals will remove no more than 30% (model 20-30% with Caitlin and choose) of

Deleted: a

the current basal area as determined by the most recent forest inventory. The basal area includes both dead and live trees.

2. If multiple harvests occur during the Agreement Term, the cumulative percentage of basal area removed shall not exceed 30% of the basal area existing at the time of enrollment as determined by the initial forest inventory. The basal area includes both dead and live trees.
3. No high-grading (i.e. thin from above) will be conducted during the Agreement Term. High grading is defined here as a reduction in average stand diameter of more than 10% (TEN) from the pre-harvest condition, OR as a reduction of more than 10% in the ratio of acceptable growing stock to unacceptable growing stock as determined by the most recent forest inventory, and over the Agreement Term, as determined by the initial forest inventory.
4. Retention of the largest-diameter trees in the project area. At least 4 trees per acre over 14 inches in diameter should be retained, if available. Retained trees must maintain or increase tree species diversity in the project area.
5. No commercial removal of dead wood from the project area except for where snags or downed logs create a threat to human safety and health. Landowners may remove downed wood for personal use.

III. CONTRACT PERIOD AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE

- a. Timeline to implement practice and commitment period to maintain practice: 20 years, renewable.
- b. Total per acre payment rates based on timber volumes (International ¼ inch) at time of contract based on the most recent forest inventory:

Board Feet per Acre (cubic feet?)	FFCP Per-Acre Payment Rate
2000 – 3500	\$TBD
3501 – 5000	\$TBD
5001 – 7500	\$TBD
7501 +	\$TBD

- c. Incentive/cost-sharing payment amount and schedule:

Project Year	Payment
1	\$TBD for completed management plan and 20% of implementation agreement value
2	3% of implementation agreement value
3	3% of implementation agreement value
4	3% of implementation agreement value
5	3% of implementation agreement value

6	3% of implementation agreement value
7	3% of implementation agreement value
8	3% of implementation agreement value
9	4% of implementation agreement value
10	\$TBD for completed management plan and 4% of implementation agreement value
11	4% of implementation agreement value
12	4% of implementation agreement value
13	4% of implementation agreement value
14	4% of implementation agreement value
15	5% of implementation agreement value
16	5% of implementation agreement value
17	5% of implementation agreement value
18	5% of implementation agreement value
19	5% of implementation agreement value
20	10% of implementation agreement value

IV. MONITORING AND VERIFICATION

- a. Landowner will ensure specific monitoring actions:
 - i. Initial (prior to contract signing) attestation that all eligibility criteria are met
 - ii. Year 1 and year 10: 10-year management plan, and update to management plan, respectively, developed and submitted to FFCP for approval
 - iii. Attestations that all timber harvests and forest management activities are in compliance with approved management plan in effect. In a year in which a commercial timber harvest has taken place, attestations will include for all harvested stands the results of pre- and post-harvest field assessments of basal area stocking and quadratic mean diameter.
- b. Monitoring actions that shall be undertaken by program staff or representatives:
 - i. Initial (prior to contract signing) verification that all eligibility criteria are met.
 - ii. Year 1 and year 10: Review and approval of management plans
 - iii. Review of landowner attestations and cutting plans
 - iv. Potential periodic remote sensing and site-level verification of compliance with approved management plan in effect
- c. Commitment to ongoing program level validation: The landowner will reserve to FFCP staff and representatives the right to access the property to carry out the site level monitoring actions specified above, and to establish long-term monitoring plots on enrolled stands to directly measure and monitor the impacts of the practice to improve FFCP program-level reporting.

V. Eligible Project Areas

