

## What or who is a Qualified Forester?

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A recent change to the Qualified Forest Act has made it necessary for landowners who seek the tax exemption granted in the Qualified Forest Program to obtain a forest management plan written by a **Qualified Forester**. Qualified Foresters are forest resource professionals, registered with the Department of Agriculture & Rural Development, that are knowledgeable in forest management practices. The Qualified Forest Program recognizes these four classifications of foresters as Qualified Foresters:

**Technical Service Providers (TSP)** are individuals or businesses that have technical expertise in conservation planning and design for a variety of conservation activities. TSPs are hired by farmers, ranchers, private businesses, nonprofit organizations, or public agencies to provide services on behalf of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Each certified TSP is listed on the NRCS TSP online registry, TechReg. The TSP registration and approval process involves required training and verification of essential education, knowledge, skills and abilities. Information on TSPs, as well as a directory, can be found at [www.techreg.usda.gov](http://www.techreg.usda.gov).

**Registered Foresters (RF)** are regulated by Article 21 of Public Act 299 of 1980, as amended. Article 21 defines a forester as a person who by reason of his or her knowledge of the natural sciences, mathematics and principles of forestry, acquired by forestry education and practical experience, is qualified to engage in the practice of professional forestry. The Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) currently oversees the practice of approximately 226 registered foresters. Information on RFs can be found at [www.Michigan.gov/lara](http://www.Michigan.gov/lara).

The mission of the **Certified Forester (CF)** program is to serve as the competency and credentialing standard for foresters; recognize a forester's education, professional experience, and commitment to the ongoing pursuit of knowledge; promote continuing education in forestry and associated disciplines; and increase public awareness of the forestry professional. The CF program is administered by the Society of American Foresters (SAF). Information on CFs, as well as a directory, can be found at [www.safnet.org](http://www.safnet.org).

The **Forest Stewardship Program (FSP)**, through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, provides financial and technical assistance to Michigan's non-industrial private forestland owners. By providing cost share funds for land management planning, sound management practices are promoted that consider elements important to forest health and vigor: soil, water, wildlife, timber, wetland, and other resources and resource values. Once a stewardship management plan is prepared, the landowner may then qualify for assistance in management implementation through other assistance programs. This information, as well as a directory, can be found at [www.Michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.Michigan.gov/dnr).