

## DNER REGIONAL OFFICES

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## FOREST SERVICE

State and Private Forestry, Puerto Rico and US Virgin Islands

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United States Department of Agriculture



Forest Service



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## ABOUT

This program is administered by the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (DNER) with the support of the USDA Forest Service, in collaboration with other government agencies, organizations, individuals, and other stakeholders interested in the conservation, recreation and sustainable use of forests and natural resources in private land.



*USDA photo by Yaneris Soto*

## PROGRAM PURPOSE

The program offers non-industrial private forest landowners technical assistance to protect and improve the forest and natural resources within their private land. This is achieved by creating management plans, designed to improve and protect the forest. The Forest Stewardship Program is authorized by the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 2103A.

Possible actions and recommended practices:

- Reforestation and planting
- Establish, maintain, and renovate agroforestry practices

- Habitat improvement for wildlife
- Forest resource management for recreational activities
- Protection and improvement of soil and water resources
- Protection and improvement of wetland and water catchment areas

## PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

- The applicant must be an individual or private entity that owns non-industrial forested land or suitable for planting trees.
- The land must be over 5 acres in size.
- The actions and practices recommended by the management plan should be maintained and protected for a minimum of 10 years.

## HOW IT WORKS

The landowner works with DNER specialists and other collaborating agencies to develop a management plan for their property. The management plan includes:

- Inventory of the natural resources in the area
- Purpose and course of action for the implementation of management practices, which may include wildlife habitat enhancement, soil and water conservation, natural forests management, tree planting, and recreational and aesthetic resources management, among others.

Next, an official certification is issued and an agreement is signed where the landowner commits to voluntarily implement the management plan.

After that, the participating landowner will receive technical advice for the implementation of the management plan.

During the implementation phase, the landowner may be eligible for incentive programs that provide financial assistance to implement management practices for the conservation and improvement of forest and natural resources from agencies such as the USDA Farm Service Agency, US Fish and Wildlife Survey Partners for Wildlife Program and the DNER Auxiliary Forests Program.

Finally, the landowner needs to register with these agencies to participate in their incentive programs.

## DNER AUXILIARY FORESTS PROGRAM

The Forest Law of Puerto Rico (Article 10, Law Number 133 from the 1st of July of 1975) authorizes the Secretary of the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources to designate private forest land, of 5 acres or more, as Auxiliary Forests.

Private land designated as Auxiliary Forests is exempt of property tax. It is also exempt from income tax of forest products that originate in the Auxiliary Forest land.

The tax exemptions only apply while the land is maintained in its forest condition.

More information about this program can be obtained from the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources.