

Climate Stewardship Incentive Program (C-SIP) Expansion Handbook

January 26, 2026

For Family Forest Owners, Land Stewards, Municipalities, and Natural Resource Professionals



C-SIP Expansion is a financial assistance program of the Department of Conservation and Recreation Service Forestry Program and Administered by the Massachusetts Woodlands Institute.

The C-SIP Expansion is funded by the U.S. Forest Service through the 2025 IRA Grant for Landowner Support for Climate Mitigation and Forest Resilience (Grant No. 25-DG-11132544-030). The Massachusetts Woodlands Institute provides administrative support for this grant, while Mass Audubon collaborates with the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Service Forestry on the C-SIP Expansion initiative.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	4
Background:	4
What is the Climate Stewardship Incentive Expansion Program (C-SIP Expansion)?	4
Who is this C-SIP Expansion Handbook For?	4
SECTION 1 - GENERAL C-SIP PROGRAM EXPANSION INFORMATION.....	5
Section 1.1 – Program Overview	5
Section 1.2 – Climate-Focused Stewardship	5
Section 1.3 – Program Goals	5
Section 1.4 – Program Alignment	6
Section 1.5 – Outreach and Equity	6
Section 1.4 – Contact Information	6
Section 1.7 – Estimated Budget Summary	7
SECTION 2 – ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR C-SIP PRACTICES.....	7
2.1 Eligibility and Requirements.....	8
2.1.1 Eligible Entities	8
2.1.2 Priority Admission to C-SIP Expansion	8
2.1.3 Additional Program Requirements	8
2.2 General Policies and Requirements for C-SIP Expansion Practices	9
2.2.1 Forest Management or Stewardship Plan Requirement	9
2.2.2 C-SIP Expansion Spatial Data and Stand Map*	9
2.2.3 Practice Plans	9
2.2.4 Maintenance of Practices	9
2.2.5 Completion Requirement.....	9
2.2.6 Availability of Funds	10
2.2.7 Ineligible Costs	10
2.2.8 Legal Compliance and Permits	10
SECTION 3 – C-SIP EXPANSION PRACTICES	13
3.1 Overview	13
3.2 Practice Plan (Plan Amendment) and Monitoring	13
3.3 Practices for Maintaining and Enhancing Existing Trees	13
3.4 Practices to Promote Future Forest Resilience.....	13
3.5 Soil Protection and Site Productivity	14
3.6 Summary	14
SECTION 4 – C-SIP EXPANSION PRACTICE PLAN, SITE INSPECTION & MONITORING	14

4.1 C-SIP Practice Plan (Plan Amendment)	14
4.1.1 Purpose	14
4.1.2 General Policies.....	15
4.1.3 Cost-Sharing Policies	15
4.2 Monitoring	15
4.2.1 Purpose	15
4.2.2 Overview	16
4.2.3 Monitoring Requirements.....	16
SECTION 5 – C-SIP EXPANSION APPLICATION PROCESS	17
5.1 Application Form	18
5.2 IRS Form W-9	18
5.3 Completing and Submitting the Application	18
5.4 Application Confirmation	18
5.5 Legal Compliance Notice	18
SECTION 6 – C-SIP EXPANSION APPLICATION EVALUATION	18
6.1 Evaluation Process	19
6.2 Eligibility Questions and Criteria	19
1. Proof of Ownership	19
2. Project Size	19
3. Optional Survey	19
4. Climate Stewardship Incentive Practices.....	19
5. C-SIP Practice Plan and C-SIP Monitoring:.....	19
6. Contact Information and Property Information sections of the application	19
7. Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species	Error! Bookmark not defined.
8. Other Funding Sources	19
9. Project Location (Locus and Stand) Maps	20
10. Practice location spatial data*	20
11. Project Timeframe.....	20
12. Field Evaluation Access	20
13. Planning Document	20
14. Long-Term Monitoring & Maintenance	20
SECTION 7 – C-SIP EXPANSION APPLICANT REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS.....	21
7.1 Reimbursement for C-SIP Expansion	21
SECTION 8 – ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DCR SERVICE FORESTRY PROGRAM	21

INTRODUCTION

Background

The Climate Stewardship Incentive Program (C-SIP) was initially established as part of the Healey Administration's Forests as Climate Solutions Initiative. The Program offered financial support to family forest land stewards and municipalities to adopt stewardship practices that preserve soils, sequester carbon, and improve forest resilience during management activities. C-SIP (funded through Forests as Climate Solutions) was a cost-sharing initiative supported by ForestsWork (formerly the Working Forest Initiative) and managed through the Massachusetts Forest Stewardship Program (FSP). The FSP provides both technical and financial assistance to forest land stewards in various ways—through cost-share programs, small reimbursement grants to municipalities, and educational outreach and technical support for land stewards and natural resource professionals.

What is the Climate Stewardship Incentive Expansion Program (C-SIP Expansion)?

The U.S. Forest Service funds C-SIP Expansion under the 2025 IRA Grant for Land Steward Support for Climate Mitigation and Forest Resilience (Grant No. 25-DG-11132544-030). The Massachusetts Woodlands Institute provides administrative support for this grant, with Mass Audubon collaborating with DCR Service Forestry on the C-SIP Expansion.

Who is this C-SIP Expansion Handbook For?

This *C-SIP Expansion Handbook* serves as a resource for public and private natural resource professionals, including Massachusetts-licensed foresters, who deliver the program to thousands of family forest land stewards and municipalities across the Commonwealth. It outlines the C-SIP Expansion Practices eligible for financial assistance and provides policy guidelines, cost-share rates, and supporting references for each.

Designed with flexibility in mind, the handbook can be updated as new information becomes available, and practices can be added as program revisions are made.

SECTION 1 - GENERAL C-SIP PROGRAM EXPANSION INFORMATION

Welcome to the Climate Stewardship Incentive Expansion Program (C-SIP). The goal of this cost-share opportunity is to assist family forest land stewards, municipalities, and natural resource professionals with costs associated with addressing climate change impacts on forests, forest carbon, and the rural economy.

C-SIP Expansion cost-share funding is for qualifying applicants. Funds are to provide cost-share reimbursement payments to applicants who implement approved C-SIP practice(s).

To better reflect the principles of sustainable forestry and the active care of forest resources, this handbook uses the term “**Land Steward**” instead of “landowner.” A **Land Steward** is defined as an individual, family, leaseholder, or municipality that holds the deed or management rights to a parcel of land and is actively engaged in its responsible stewardship.

Reimbursements under this program are subject to a maximum amount per individual or entity. See the Eligibility section for details.

Section 1.1 – Program Overview

The Climate Stewardship Incentive Program (C-SIP) is a cost-share and technical assistance program administered by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to help land stewards and municipalities implement climate-focused forest management.

Through funding from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), DCR is expanding C-SIP to strengthen climate resilience, broaden participation, and support the long-term vitality of forests across the Commonwealth.

Section 1.2 – Climate-Focused Stewardship

The Climate Forestry Program within [ForestsWork](#) helps land stewards hire licensed foresters to prepare climate-informed stewardship plans. Many land stewards are shifting priorities—from maximizing forest-based products to enhancing forest resilience, habitat, and carbon sequestration and storage.

To meet this evolving need, the DCR Service Forestry Program (with administrative support from MWI) launched C-SIP under the Forests as Climate Solutions Initiative, providing technical guidance and cost-share support for climate-oriented forest management.

C-SIP Expansion will:

- Add new practices that address climate impacts and resilience.
- Strengthen forest structure and species diversity.
- Support long-term carbon stability across public and private forest lands.

Section 1.3 – Program Goals

Developed collaboratively with NIACS, TNC, NEFF, Mass Audubon, and other partners, the expanded C-SIP practices emphasize:

- Increasing forest structural and species diversity at multiple scales.
- Promoting regeneration of climate-adapted species.

- Implementing climate-informed Forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs).
- Preparing forests for disturbances such as drought, pests, and storms.
- Supporting a skilled forestry workforce focused on climate readiness and resilience.

Section 1.4 – Program Alignment

The C-SIP Expansion directly supports the Commonwealth’s strategic conservation goals:

- [Massachusetts Forest Action Plan \(2020\)](#) – Advance Forest resilience and resistance to climate impacts.
- [The Resilient Lands Initiative \(RLI\)](#) – Achieve adoption of resilient conservation practices on 410,000 acres of forest and farmland by 2033.

Verification and Accountability

- All C-SIP practices, with the exception of Practices 1 and 5, require implementation under an active and approved **Forest Management planning document**. Acceptable planning documents include:
 - Forest Management Plans (Current Use Programs)
 - Forest Stewardship Plans (FSPs)
 - Forest Stewardship Climate Plans (FSCPs)
 - Foresters for the Birds Plans (FFTb)

Section 1.5 – Outreach and Equity

The Expansion prioritizes outreach and technical assistance to underserved, small, and first-time forest land stewards, supported by coordinated engagement programs such as:

- Woodlands Connect Program
 - Led by Regenerative Design Group (RDG) and Pocasset Pokanoket Land Trust (PPLT)
 - Funded through a U.S. Forest Service non-competitive IRA grant
 - Focused on equitable engagement and programming
- USDA Equity in Conservation Grant
 - Partnership with the Ohketeau Cultural Center
 - Demonstrates Indigenous food forest practices in urban and rural settings across Western Massachusetts

These initiatives advance trust-building and establish pathways for sustained participation in climate-focused forestry programs.

Section 1.4 – Contact Information

For general information on completing the C-SIP Expansion application and for questions regarding application requirements, eligibility, process, and procedures, contact:

Sara Wisner
Program Analyst, Service Forestry Program
Sara.wisner@mass.gov
(857) 408-4154

For questions regarding implementing C-SIP Expansion practices or to schedule a preliminary site visit, do not hesitate to get in touch with your local DCR Service Forester, DCR Service Forestry Program contact information at mass.gov/dcr/service-forestry.

Section 1.7 – Estimated Budget Summary

Table 1-1. Estimated Budget Summary for C-SIP Expansion Program (5-Year Period)
(All figures in USD)

5-Year Program	Practices	Administration	Technical Assistance, Outreach & Supplies
\$4,920,000	\$3,936,000	\$885,600	\$98,400

Summary

- Total Grant Request: \$4,920,000
- Total Administration & Technical Expenses: \$984,000
- Total Funds for Practice Implementation: \$3,936,000
- Administration and associated expenses will not exceed 20% of the total grant award.

Explanatory Note

Administration costs, including staff time, program management, and reporting necessary to oversee the grant, average approximately 18% of total program expenditures. Technical assistance, outreach, and supplies cover land steward engagement, educational materials, field support, and other direct resources needed to successfully evaluate and implement practices. These allocations ensure that the majority of grant funds are applied directly to on-the-ground practices, while maintaining accountability, compliance, and effective delivery of program services.

SECTION 2 – ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR C-SIP PRACTICES

The following entities are eligible to apply for the **C-SIP Expansion Cost-Share Program**:

Table 2. Eligibility

Category	Details
Eligible Entities	Individuals, municipalities, partnerships, for-profit entities, NGOs, leaseholders, and NFPs owning in-fee forest land. NFPs must have 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status.
Priority Admission	Land stewards who meet any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning farmers, ranchers, or forest stewards • Farmers or forest land stewards residing in high-poverty areas • Federally or Massachusetts State-recognized Tribes, Alaska Native corporations/villages, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders. • Limited resource producers • Veterans
State Forester Approved Forest Management or Stewardship Plan	All practices <u>except</u> Harvest Layout (1), Log-Reinforced Waterbars (5.1), Seeding for Soil Stabilization and Pollinator Habitat (5.2), BMP Materials (5.3), and Timber Mats (5.4)
Practice Plan	Not required at the time of application. Required for all practices, except for Timber mats (5.4)
Spatial Data	Not required at the time of application. All practices except for BMP Materials(5.3) and Timber Mats(5.4)

Category	Details
Monitoring	Not required at the time of application. Required for all practices, except Timber Mats (5.4)
Forest Cutting Plan	Not required at the time of application, except Timber Mats For C-SIP Practices 1, 2, 3 (as applicable), 5.1-5.3, and 9, eligibility for financial assistance requires an applicant's intent to submit a Forest Cutting Plan that outlines long-term forest management objectives.
Definition of "Intend to Submit Forest Cutting Plan"	Submission of a "Long-Term" plan within 90 days of C-SIP Expansion application submission
Licensed Timber Harvesters	Massachusetts Licensed Timber Harvesters may apply for C-SIP 5 practices.

2.1 Eligibility and Requirements

2.1.1 Eligible Entities

Applicants may include:

1. Individuals
2. Municipalities
3. Partnerships
4. For-profit entities
5. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
6. Leaseholders
7. Not-for-Profit (NFP) entities that:
8. Owns in-fee forest land, and
 - a. Are qualified for tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Federal Internal Revenue Code

2.1.2 Priority Admission to C-SIP Expansion

Land stewards who meet one or more of the criteria below may receive priority admission. This priority focus supports groups who have historically had limited engagement with DCR's Service Forestry programmatic offerings by ensuring they have access to the resources needed for successful land management:

- Beginning farmers, ranchers, or forest stewards
- Farmers or forest land stewards residing in high-poverty areas
- Federally or Massachusetts State-recognized Tribes, Alaska Native corporations/villages, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders.
- Limited resource producers.
- Veterans

2.1.3 Additional Program Requirements

Applicants must also meet one of the following (based on practice):

1. State Forester Approved Forest Management or Forest Stewardship Plan
 - a. All practices except *C-SIP 1, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4*.
2. Forest Cutting Plan (when applicable)
 - a. Approved or submitted plan with long-term forest management objectives indicated
3. Intent to Submit Forest Cutting Plan (when applicable)
 - a. Plan designated "Long-Term" within 90 days of C-SIP application submission
4. C-SIP Practice Plan or Amendment
 - a. Not required at the time of application.

5. Monitoring
 - a. Not required at the time of application.
6. Spatial Data for Practices*
 - a. Not required at the time of application.

**If providing spatial data poses a barrier for applicants, the Service Forester may waive this requirement at their discretion.*

2.1.4 Maximum Reimbursement Amount

A landowner or entity may receive up to \$25,000 in reimbursements per year, with a cumulative maximum of \$50,000 across all years of participation in the program.

2.2 General Policies and Requirements for C-SIP Expansion Practices

2.2.1 Forest Management or Stewardship Plan Requirement

- A State Forester-approved Forest Management or Forest Stewardship Plan is required for all C-SIP practices except for C-SIP 1 and 5.
- C-SIP Expansion cost-share for plan amendment or practice plan must be paired with an on-the-ground C-SIP Practice.
- Plan amendments or practice plans cannot be a standalone practice.

2.2.2 C-SIP Expansion Spatial Data and Stand Map*

- Spatial Data is required for all C-SIP Practices except BMP Materials (5.3) and Timber Mats (5.4).
- Spatial data may include one of the following: KML, GPX, ESRI shapefile, or other DCR Service Forester-approved methodology.
- Not required at the time of application.

**If providing spatial data presents a barrier for applicants, this requirement may be waived at the discretion of the Service Forester.*

2.2.3 Practice Plans

Required for all C-SIP Expansion Practices, except Timber Mats (5.4). Not required at the time of application.

2.2.4 Maintenance of Practices

1. General Requirement: Land stewards or owners must maintain and sustain all approved and implemented C-SIP practices for the duration of the Forest Management or Stewardship Plan.
2. C-SIP 5.1-5.3:
 - a. Practices must be maintained for the duration of the harvest or until issuance of a Final Report.
3. Licensed Timber Harvesters (C-SIP 5):
 - a. Must maintain all practice components for the duration of the harvest or until a Final Report is issued.
4. C-SIP 5.4 (Timber Mats):
 - a. Mats must be located on site of the Forest Cutting Plan before reimbursement documents can be submitted.

2.2.5 Completion Requirement

- All C-SIP practices must be completed, financially closed out, and all required

documentation submitted to the DCR Service Forestry Program by October 31, 2029, or by the specific deadline stated in the approval documents.

- Failure to complete approved practices and submit all financial closeout documentation by the deadline specified in the approval documents may result in forfeiture of funding.
- Applicants may submit a written request to the DCR Service Forestry Program for an extension of an approved practice deadline.
- Deadline extensions may be granted at the discretion of the DCR Service Forester and will be communicated in writing.

Please note that the October 31, 2029, deadline is subject to change in accordance with U.S. Forest Service grant requirements. The DCR Service Forestry Program will communicate any modifications to the completion requirement.

2.2.6 Availability of Funds

Applications will not be approved unless sufficient cost-share funds are available.

2.2.7 Ineligible Costs

No C-SIP funds will be disbursed for:

1. Costs or expenses incurred before application approval.
2. Costs or expenses that have been applied for or reimbursed through USDA, NRCS or other state or federal programs when such funding would cause total cost-share support to exceed 100% of the actual implementation costs.
3. Costs for repairs or routine maintenance, unless specifically allowed.
4. Repetition of the same practices on the same acres within 5 years, except for:
 - a. Failure of a prior C-SIP practice without fault of the applicant
 - b. Repeated invasive plant treatments are necessary to achieve long-term control (C-SIP 4).
 - c. C-SIP 5 practices

2.2.8 Legal Compliance and Permits

- Applicants are responsible for obtaining all required permits before initiating C-SIP activities.
- All applicants, contractors, and participating entities are responsible for complying with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations when implementing C-SIP practices.

Appeals

Applicants aggrieved by a DCR Service Forester's decision may appeal in writing to the *Outreach Coordinator, Service Forestry & Forest Stewardship Programs (or designee)* within 30 days of disapproval. The *Coordinator* will make recommendations to the State Forester (or designee) within 30 days, and the State Forester (or designee) will issue a final determination within 10 days of receiving the recommendation.

Table 2-3. Summary of Planning and Documentation Requirements for C-SIP Practices

Practice	Forest Management or Stewardship Plan Required?	C-SIP Practice Plan Required?	Spatial Data Required?	Forest Cutting Plan Required?	Notes
C-SIP Practice Plan or Plan Amendment	Yes	N/A	N/A	No	APPLICATION PERIOD OPEN Not a standalone practice Required for C-SIP 1 through 9 The applicant can use cost-share to amend an existing plan or develop a "Practice Plan." Not required for Timber Mats
C-SIP Monitoring	Yes	N/A	N/A	Practice dependent	APPLICATION PERIOD OPEN Not a standalone practice Required for C-SIP 1 through 9 Not required for Timber Mats
C-SIP-1 Harvest Layout	No	Yes	Yes	Not required at the time of application. Intent to submit a cutting plan is required.	APPLICATION PERIOD OPEN
C-SIP-2 Legacy Tree Retention	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	APPLICATION PERIOD OPEN
C-SIP-4 Invasive Plant Species Control	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	APPLICATION PERIOD OPEN
C-SIP-5.1 Log-reinforced waterbars	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	APPLICATION PERIOD OPEN
C-SIP 5.2 Seeding for soil stabilization and pollinator habitat	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	APPLICATION PERIOD OPEN
C-SIP-5.3 BMP Materials	No	Yes	No	Yes	APPLICATION PERIOD OPEN
C-SIP-5.4 Timber Mats	No	No	No	Yes	APPLICATION PERIOD OPEN
C-SIP-6 Temporary Barriers to Animal Browse	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	APPLICATION PERIOD OPEN

Table 2-3.1 Summary of Planning and Documentation Requirements for C-SIP Practices Being Rolled Out at a Later Date

Practice	Forest Management or Stewardship Plan Required?	C-SIP Practice Plan Required?	Spatial Data Required?	Forest Cutting Plan Required?	Notes
C-SIP-3.1 Marking for Commercial Thinning	Yes	Yes	Yes	M.G.L. c. 132 volume threshold dependent	Practice Rollout in Summer 2026
C-SIP-3.2 Marking: Group selection	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Practice Rollout in Summer 2026
C-SIP-3.3 Leave Tree Marking: Patch cut / Shelterwood	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Practice Rollout in Summer 2026
C-SIP-7 Tree Planting	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Practice Rollout in Summer 2026
C-SIP-8 Inoculate Trees	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Practice Rollout TBD
C-SIP-9 Non-commercial tending	Yes	Yes	Yes	M.G.L. c. 132 volume threshold dependent	Practice Rollout TBD

SECTION 3 – C-SIP EXPANSION PRACTICES

3.1 Overview

The practices included in the C-SIP Expansion Program are designed to increase forest resilience, ensure rapid response to disturbances, and maintain long-term carbon stability. These practices are listed in the Cost-Share Practices Table, with numbers in brackets corresponding to the table.

3.2 Practice Plan (Plan Amendment) and Monitoring

Thoughtful planning before practice implementation and monitoring after implementation helps ensure that practices have the intended impact of improving resilience and stabilizing carbon stocks. Therefore, cost-share is available for these supporting practices, which are required for all C-SIP Practices, except: C-SIP 5.4 Timber Mat projects:

- C-SIP Practice Plan (Plan Amendment) **[N/A]**
- C-SIP Monitoring (Annual Monitoring) **[N/A]**

Key elements include:

- Describing vulnerabilities to pests, pathogens, storms, drought, and other disturbances
- Mapping access and operational features (roads, trails, water crossings, BMPs)
- Mapping locations for recommended mitigation and resilience practices
- Documenting costs and operational details for planned practices

Support for land stewards and foresters:

- Training for planning and monitoring
- Annual monitoring checklist and form
- Cost-share for time spent on monitoring activities

3.3 Practices for Maintaining and Enhancing Existing Trees

These practices improve structural and compositional diversity while protecting long-lived carbon stocks:

- Inoculating trees **(C-SIP 8)**
- Marking healthy, climate-adapted legacy trees to retain permanently **(C-SIP 2)**
- Tending seedlings and saplings to release target species **(C-SIP 9)**
- Thinning canopy trees to enhance crop tree growth **(C-SIP 3.1)**

Benefits:

- Maintains carbon on site
- Increases the growth rate of long-lived trees
- Supports climate-adapted forest structure

3.4 Practices to Promote Future Forest Resilience

These practices ensure abundant, vigorous, climate-adapted trees for the next generation:

- Treating competing invasive plants **(C-SIP 4)**
- Protecting regeneration from animal browse **(C-SIP 6)**
- Planting trees to reforest or enrich species composition **(C-SIP 7)**

- Implementing regeneration harvests: group selection, patch, and shelterwood (**C-SIP 3.2, 3.3**)

Benefits:

- Fills canopy gaps after disturbance
- Maintains carbon sequestration capacity
- Stabilizes long-term carbon stocks

3.5 Soil Protection and Site Productivity

Maintaining soil health increases forest resilience and carbon sequestration. Practices include:

- Harvest layout planning (**C-SIP 1**)
- Log-reinforced water bars on skid trails (**C-SIP 5.1**)
- Site stabilization using seed and pollinator mixes (**C-SIP 5.2**)
- BMP Materials (**C-SIP 5.3**)
- Timber mats (**C-SIP 5.4**)

These practices prevent erosion, maintain long-term site productivity, and protect carbon stored in soils. Certain practices are incentivized to encourage implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) beyond minimum standards in the Massachusetts Forestry BMP Manual.

3.6 Summary

C-SIP Expansion practices, combined with purposeful outreach, aim to:

- Increase forest resilience to climate and disturbance
- Stabilize long-term carbon stocks
- Engage new and underserved land stewards in active stewardship
- Promote climate-informed forestry and agroforestry practices
- Strengthening the technical capacity of foresters and land stewards

SECTION 4 – C-SIP EXPANSION PRACTICE PLAN, SITE INSPECTION & MONITORING

4.1 C-SIP Practice Plan (Plan Amendment)

The C-SIP Practice Plan (Plan Amendment) can be an Amendment to Forest Management and Forest Stewardship Plans.

4.1.1 Purpose

The C-SIP Practice Plan prepares land stewards and foresters to respond rapidly to disturbance events, stabilize carbon stocks following canopy loss, and maintain long-term forest resilience.

The plan:

- Identifies vulnerabilities to climate-driven disturbances
- Maps access, operational constraints, and sensitive areas
- Prioritizes mitigation and resilience treatments
- Supports rapid carbon-recovery actions
- Engages land stewards in proactive stewardship

Planning reduces secondary impacts (e.g., invasive plants, deer browse, soil disturbance) and enables a timely, coordinated response as disturbances increase in frequency and severity.

4.1.2 General Policies

Required Participation

All applicants implementing C-SIP Practices must complete a C-SIP Practice Plan before implementing the practice.

*Except Timber Mats

Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Hold a current FSP/FSCP/FMP or be eligible for one
- Intend to maintain the land in forest use for at least 10 years
- Participate in C-SIP Monitoring

A written statement of intent may be required if long-term forest use is unclear.

Timing

Reimbursement for C-SIP practices will not be issued until the Practice Plan is complete.

Submission Requirements

- Completed Practice Plan form
- Plan amendment (if not submitting a Practice Plan)
- Required spatial data or waiver from DCR Service Forester

4.1.3 Cost-Sharing Policies

Authorized Activities

Cost-share is available for time spent by a Massachusetts Licensed Forester to:

- Prepare the C-SIP Practice Plan
 - Assess disturbance risks
 - Map vulnerabilities and operational features
 - Identify recommended mitigation/resilience treatments
 - Develop budgets and timelines
 - Prepare spatial data

Not Authorized

Work related to development or land-use conversion is not authorized.

Rate

- Flat Rate: \$500 per completed plan
- Limit: Each application shall include only one Practice Plan or amendment. For the same property, any subsequent C-SIP applications must document that previously approved practices have been implemented before receiving approval for additional financial assistance for new practice plans or amendments.

4.2 Monitoring

4.2.1 Purpose

Monitoring is a fundamental component of the C-SIP expansion. It ensures that enrolled properties are managed to enhance forest resilience, maintain carbon stability, and enable rapid recovery following disturbance. Regular monitoring supports adaptive management, verifies the implementation of practices, and informs timely updates to management or stewardship plans.

4.2.2 Overview

C-SIP Expansion annual monitoring helps land stewards and foresters evaluate forest conditions, track progress toward their goals, and identify emerging threats such as pest outbreaks, invasive species, or storm damage. Through consistent observation and documentation, monitoring provides an early warning system for disturbance events and enables swift and well-coordinated management responses.

Each applicant approved for C-SIP Expansion funding is required to conduct at least one (1) monitoring report as part of participation in C-SIP Expansion*. This requirement complements the C-SIP Expansion Practice Plan (aka C-SIP Practice Plan) and other practices listed in the Cost-Share Practices Table.

**Excluding Timber Mats*

4.2.3 Monitoring Requirements

Monitoring Frequency

- Land stewards, or their designated foresters or agents, must prepare and submit at least one monitoring report within one (1) year of completing the practice.
- Monitoring may occur more frequently if conditions warrant (e.g., after severe weather events, pest outbreaks, or timber operations).
- The DCR Service Forestry Program will provide a Monitoring Checklist and Documentation Form.
- Key elements of the checklist will include:
 - Evidence of implemented practices and maintenance needs
 - Observations of forest health and regeneration
 - Signs of pests, pathogens, storm damage, or other disturbances
 - Updates to mapped features (roads, trails, crossings, BMPs, and sensitive areas)
 - Identification of areas where corrective or follow-up actions are needed

Integration with Management or Stewardship Plans

- Monitoring results should inform plan updates and adaptive management decisions.
- Observations may be used to revise goals, schedules, or management of prescriptions in Forest Management or Stewardship Plans (FSPs).

Mapping and Spatial Data

- Monitoring should include review and update of mapped information (when applicable) related to:
 - Access and operational considerations (e.g., roads, trails, BMP locations)
 - Implementation areas for recommended or cost-shared practices
- Updated maps may be generated using GIS tools or simple, annotated field maps, depending on the land steward's capacity.

Training and Support

- The DCR Service Forestry Program and Mass Audubon will provide periodic training on monitoring for land stewards and foresters.
- Cost-share assistance will be available for time spent conducting monitoring or compiling required documentation at the following rates:

Table 4.1 Monitoring cost-share rates for C-SIP Expansion

Practice Acres	Rate
1 to 20 acres	\$400
21 to 50 acres	\$600
>51 acres	\$800

Monitoring Outcomes

Monitoring results contribute to the Program's broader goals of:

- Maintaining and enhancing forest resilience to disturbance.
- Ensuring rapid and informed management response following a disturbance.
- Preserving and stabilizing forest carbon stocks through proactive management.

Supporting long-term sustainability and adaptive learning across C-SIP properties.

SECTION 5 – C-SIP EXPANSION APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants are encouraged to consult with a tax professional regarding any potential implications for income, property, or other taxes related to accepting cost-share funds, project completion, and reimbursement payments.

Table 5-1. Timetable of Key Events

Event	Date
Application Period Opens	January 2026
C-SIP Application Deadline	Applications accepted until funds are exhausted or <u>OCTOBER 31, 2029</u> (whichever comes first)
Cost-Share Awards Announced	Rolling

Submission Options

Applications may be submitted by email to:

DCR.Forestry@mass.gov

or mailed to:

MA Forest Stewardship Program

355 West Boylston Street

Clinton, MA 01510

Do not submit your W-9 to DCR.Forestry@mass.gov

Applicants must complete all steps outlined below to meet program requirements. The information in this section is intended as a summary; for additional details, contact the program representative:

Sara Wisner

Program Analyst – Service Forestry Program

sara.wisner@mass.gov

857-408-4154 (cell)

5.1 Application Form

The C-SIP Expansion Application Form can be downloaded from the DCR Service Forestry Cost-Share website. Please click [here](#) to visit us online.

5.2 IRS Form W-9

All approved C-SIP applicants must submit to the Massachusetts Woodlands Institute (MWI) a current [IRS Form W-9 \(Rev. March 2024\)](#), completed and signed by the applicant within thirty (30) days of cost-share approval.

Please submit completed IRS Form W-9 to:

Massachusetts Woodlands Institute

c/o Emily Boss

P.O. Box 450

5 Mechanic Street

Shelburne Falls, MA 01370

Office: (413) 625-9151 ext. 104

Email: emily@masswoodlands.org

[Click here to visit the Mass Woodlands Institute website.](#)

5.3 Completing and Submitting the Application

Applicants must complete all required fields and submit electronically or by mail.

Minimum Application Requirements:

- Applicant affirms that they meet eligibility requirements.
- Identify all proposed C-SIP practice types on the application.
- Engage licensed professionals where applicable.
- Agree to a DCR Service Forester field evaluation of the proposed project site.

5.4 Application Confirmation

Applicants will receive an email confirmation upon submission.

If the application meets eligibility requirements, a DCR Service Forestry Program will contact the applicant.

5.5 Legal Compliance Notice

All applicants and contractors participating in C-SIP practices are required to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws. Non-compliance may result in the loss of cost-share funding or the obligation to repay any funds received.

SECTION 6 – C-SIP EXPANSION APPLICATION EVALUATION

All applications will be reviewed and evaluated by the DCR Service Forestry Program in accordance with the criteria outlined in this handbook.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to review this section carefully before submitting their application. All applications are assessed on a pass/fail basis to determine both the applicant's and the project's eligibility. Any application that does not meet one or more eligibility criteria will be rejected. Following the review process, which may include a field visit, applicants will be issued an Approved or Not Approved determination.

6.1 Evaluation Process

- Applications are reviewed in the order received, based on the email timestamp or postmarked date, until C-SIP Expansion funds are exhausted or OCTOBER 31, 2029 (whichever comes first).
- Eligibility is determined using Pass/Fail criteria.
- Applicants receiving an Approved determination will be notified of approval within 20 business days of DCR's receipt of the application.
- Applicants receiving a Not Approved determination will be notified within 20 business days by their assigned DCR Service Forester or Sara Wisner.

6.2 Eligibility Questions and Criteria

Applications will be evaluated using the following Pass/Fail questions.
(Yes = Pass | No = Fail)

1. Proof of Ownership

Do you certify that you are the legal owner of the property and have the authority to implement C-SIP Expansion practices under a State Forester Approved Forest Management or Stewardship Plan and/or “long-term” designated Forest Cutting Plan?

2. Project Size

Does the project include at least one (1) acre of eligible practices?

3. Optional Survey

Completed the optional survey.

4. Climate Stewardship Incentive Practices

Identify which practices are proposed for implementation.

5. C-SIP Practice Plan and C-SIP Monitoring:

These practices must include another C-SIP Expansion practice.
They cannot be a “standalone” practice(s)

6. Contact Information and Property Information sections of the application

Complete all the requested information in these sections

7. Other Funding Sources

Applicant confirms that another assistance program for identical work does not exceed 100% of the proposed project implementation costs. Costs or expenses that have been applied for or reimbursed through USDA, NRCS or other state or federal programs when such funding would cause total cost-share support to exceed 100% of the actual implementation costs are not eligible for C-SIP

Expansion funding.

8. Project Location (Locus and Stand) Maps

Not required at the time of application.

Applicants must provide a Locus and Stand Map as part of the C-SIP Practice Plan. These maps shall clearly delineate the property location and project location, including:

- Property boundaries and practice locations
- Applicant's name and project title
- Acreage of both property and practice areas
- All practices proposed under the C-SIP application

Maps allow the DCR Service Forestry Program to identify project boundaries and key features easily.

9. Practice location spatial data*

Not required at the time of application.

Applicants must provide practice location data in a KML, GPX, ESRI shapefile format, or other.

** If providing spatial data presents a barrier for applicants, this requirement may be waived at the discretion of the Service Forester.*

10. Project Timeframe

All C-SIP practices must be completed, financially closed out, and all required documentation submitted to the DCR Service Forestry Program by October 31, 2029, or by the specific deadline stated in the approval documents. Failure to complete approved practices and submit all financial closeout documentation by the deadline specified in the approval documents may result in forfeiture of funding.

Applicants may submit a written request to the DCR Service Forestry Program for an extension of an approved practice deadline. Deadline extensions may be granted at the discretion of the DCR Service Forester and will be communicated in writing.

Please note that the October 31, 2029, deadline is subject to change in accordance with U.S. Forest Service grant requirements. The DCR Service Forestry Program will communicate any modifications to the completion requirement.

11. Field Evaluation Access

Applicants must confirm that DCR Service Foresters are granted access to project areas for site inspections.

12. Planning Document

All applicants for C-SIP Expansion practices (except timber mats and harvest layout) require an active and approved Forest Management or Stewardship Plan.

All C-SIP Expansion practices must be explicitly included in the relevant planning document or, when applicable, the C-SIP Practice Plan (not required at time of application).

13. Long-Term Monitoring & Maintenance

A DCR-provided Monitoring Checklist and Documentation Form will be made available.

SECTION 7 – C-SIP EXPANSION APPLICANT REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS

7.1 Reimbursement for C-SIP Expansion

Please note that, given the varied nature of eligible entities and project activities, reimbursement specifications will be finalized and released at a later date. Program staff will work with applicants to support compliance and facilitate a smooth reimbursement process. However, the following is a general outline of what can be expected from the reimbursement process:

1. Applicants must notify their local DCR Service Forester that they are submitting the C-SIP Expansion Reimbursement Form and all supporting documentation, *including itemized contractor invoices*.
2. The DCR Service Forestry Program conducts a financial review of the reimbursement request.
3. DCR Service Forester schedules and conducts a site visit to review completed practice(s). *Photos may be submitted for 5.4 Timber Mats*.
4. DCR Service Forester completes and signs the C-SIP Reimbursement Form.
5. The reimbursement form and accompanying financial documentation, once signed by the DCR Service Forester, are submitted to the Massachusetts Woodlands Institute (MWI) for payment authorization.
6. MWI issues payment to the applicant after receiving and processing all approved materials from the DCR Service Forestry Program. Payments will only be issued to approved applicants with an IRS Form W-9 on file with MWI.
7. MWI issues an IRS Form 1099-MISC to the cost-share recipient for tax reporting purposes.

7.1.1 Valuation of a Landowner's Labor on Their Own Land

When estimating the value of volunteer time or in-kind services for C-SIP reimbursement invoicing purposes, applicants may use commonly published volunteer hourly rates from sources like Value of Volunteer Time - Independent Sector. Please click [here](#) to visit the Value of Volunteer Time site and [here](#) to access the specific resource listing state-by-state rates.

There may be instances where a natural resource professional conducts work on their own property. In such cases, reimbursement rates may align with the individual's professional hourly rate.

Natural resource professionals performing work on their own land should contact Sara Wisner for instructions on proper invoicing.

In-kind services for C-SIP are non-cash contributions provided by the applicant. These contributions represent the value of services that directly benefit the project and can be specifically identified and documented.

SECTION 8 – ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DCR SERVICE FORESTRY PROGRAM

The DCR Service Forestry Program is responsible for administering the Program, evaluating applications, C-SIP practice compliance, and authorizing cost-share payments.

DCR Service Forestry Program staff or designated representatives may access participating C-SIP Expansion properties to inspect C-SIP practices during and after installation.

DCR reserves the right to:

- Approve or adjust cost-share reimbursement amounts based on practices or work completed.
- Withhold reimbursement for ineligible costs, incomplete practices, or when cumulative*

- financial assistance exceeds 100% of the implementation cost.
- Monitor and verify project implementation and maintenance.
- DCR reserves the right to withdraw funding for projects that fail to meet the deadlines outlined in the applicant's approval documentation.
- Deny or revoke applications not meeting C-SIP eligibility or practice standards.
- Ensure consistency with applicable statutes and regulations, including:
 - M.G.L. Chapter 61 / 61A / 61B
 - M.G.L. Chapter 132 (Forest Cutting Practices)
- Request clarification or additional information from applicants or land stewards to evaluate project proposals.
- DCR reserves the right to contact other funding sources to verify whether a C-SIP applicant is receiving support from any state or federal financial assistance programs.

**Cumulative means: Projects that are already receiving, or have been approved to receive, funding from other state or federal cost-share programs (e.g., NRCS EQIP) for the same activities are not eligible for C-SIP funding if total financial assistance would exceed 100% of the implementation cost.*

8.1 Relevant Documentation

Documentation listed below can be found online on the C-SIP Cost-Share website, which can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

1. C-SIP Expansion Application
2. C-SIP Expansion Practice Standards
3. C-SIP Practice Plan Form
4. C-SIP Practice Plan Instructions
5. C-SIP Monitoring Form

Alternatively, you may request these documents via email: DCR.Forestry@mass.gov