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PRESS RELEASE

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Financial Assistance Available for Tornado Damaged Forest Land

Landowners impacted by recent tornadoes may be eligible to receive financial assistance for reforestation efforts through the Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP). The purpose of the EFRP is to make payments available to owners of non-industrial private forest (NIPF) land who are approved for program participation and carry out measures to restore land that is damaged by natural disasters. Program sign-up began April 18, 2011, and will continue thru May 20, 2011. A landowner qualifying for EFRP assistance may receive financial assistance levels not to exceed 75 percent of the eligible cost of restoration measures. Individual or cumulative requests for financial assistance of \$50,000 or less per person or entity, per disaster are approved. Financial assistance over \$50,000 may be approved.

The measures must restore forest health and forest-related resources. The following types of measures to be completed or already completed may be eligible: removing debris; site preparation; seeding establishing; and restoring conservation structures and other similar installations. Before any more work is completed, landowners must file an application and allow the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to conduct an on-site inspection of the damaged area.

The FSA determines land eligibility using on-site damage inspections that assess the type and extent of damage. To be eligible for EFRP, NIPF land must have existing tree cover (or had tree cover immediately before the natural disaster occurred and is suitable for growing trees) and be owned by any non-industrial 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 have resulted in damage that if untreated would impair or endanger the natural resources on the land and materially affect future use of the land. Additional information on the EFRP is available at FSA offices and on the FSA's website at <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov> and www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation.

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