**Section 1537.5 Eligibility**

The Illinois Forestry Development Act creates a voluntary cost-share program.

a) A minimum of 90% of lands designated in the Plan must physically and biologically support forests and timber. Land not supporting forest or growing timber may total up to 10% of Plan acreage if it is a compatible conservation use or important to conservation and timber management and occurs as an integrated, inseparable or adjacent natural resource.

1) Lands used as field windbreaks, commercial nut/fruit orchards, commercial farmland, landscape nurseries, Christmas trees or similar nonforestry uses are not eligible for enrollment.

2) Annual food plots or similar wildlife openings in or adjacent to the forest that are tilled, worked and seeded or planted annually or occasionally may not exceed 2 acres and may not occur at a density greater than 2 total acres of plot per 40 acres. No existing forest may be cleared to create a food plot or wildlife opening.

b) A timber grower must own or operate at least 10 contiguous acres of land that is systematically managed for the production of timber and natural resource conservation. No acre on which a permanent building is located shall be included in calculations of acreage for the purpose of determining eligibility. Once eligibility of the 10 contiguous forest acres is met, additional forested acres one acre in size or larger located on contiguous or adjoining parcels under the same ownership are eligible to be included in the Plan. Non-forested areas adjoining the 10+ qualifying contiguous acres may be included in the Plan for Compatible Forestry Use under subsection (a)(2).

c) The timber grower must agree to implement the Plan and demonstrate progress in completing the required practices of that Plan. Participants must allow field inspections by the IDNR Forester to ensure Plan compliance.

d) All acreage and status changes or Plan modifications must be documented on an original or new Certification Form signed by the IDNR Forester and the timber grower.

e) Grandfathered parcels; Timber growers owning less than 10 acres who were enrolled prior to 2009 and have maintained continuous participation, meeting program requirements, may participate as grandfathered parcels until such time as they withdraw or are cancelled by an IDNR Forester. Those growers may not reduce enrolled acreage. Grandfathered acreage may be re-enrolled and may be transferred to another grower if the grandfathered acreage changes ownership.

(Source: Amended at 41 Ill. Reg. 4306, effective March 31, 2017)