



**“Qualified Shapefiles” Associated with
Forest Stewardship Plan Program (FSPP) Cost-share Payments**
Updated September 21, 2011

An acceptable “*qualified* shapefile” for Forest Stewardship Plan Program (FSPP) purposes is a record of tract boundary acreage measurement for an FSPP-funded Stewardship Plan that is not created by the landowner or his agent, and does not represent an apparent conflict of interest (N.C. Forest Service Policy and Procedure 4221.7)*. The original source of the measurement should be one of the sources listed below in “Acceptable Original Sources”. It may be modified using any of the sources listed in “Acceptable Sources of Adjustments”. The shapefile measurement may not contain original data or adjustments from any of the sources listed in “Non-Acceptable Original Sources”.

Acceptable Original Sources:

- A third-party source such as the County Tax Office.
- A legally-filed survey shapefile by a registered surveyor.
- Any NCFS or third-party source that conforms to the NCFS measurement standards outlined in NCFS Policy and Procedure 4221, accompanied by the required documentation.

Non-Acceptable Original Sources:

- Any recreational-grade GPS, regardless of the provider.
- Any GPS or survey data provided by the landowner or their agent.
- Any portion of the plan boundary digitized along a feature that cannot be seen clearly on aerial photography.

Acceptable Sources of Adjustments:

- If the FSPP-funded acreage covers only part of the parcel and the rest is in pasture, field or cultivated land, the FSA Office may be an acceptable option for the landowner to acquire shapefiles for those “out areas” and remove those areas from the total parcel shapefile to get the total FSPP stewardship plan shapefile.
- Any NCFS or third-party source that conforms to the NCFS measurement standards outlined in NCFS Policy and Procedure 4221, accompanied by the required documentation, may be used to determine non-FSPP funded acreage and subtract to get the total FSPP plan acreage/shapefile.
- If the boundaries between FSPP plan and non-plan areas are clearly identifiable using aerial photography (ex., orchard, pond, rock outcrop, yard, Christmas tree farm or fallow field not listed on FSA records), the line dividing FSPP stewardship plan areas and non-plan areas may be digitized using rectified aerial photography, and the non-FSPP plan areas removed in order to calculate the FSPP plan acreage in GIS.

NCFS will pay an FSPP landowner a bonus of 5% above the regular cost share rate for an FSPP stewardship plan if they or their agent are able to provide a “*qualified* shapefile”. In that case, the NCFS District will also receive 5% for verifying and managing the shapefile provided by the landowner or their agent. In the event that the landowner or their agent cannot provide a “*qualified* shapefile”, NCFS District staff will create a “*qualified* shapefile” and will be paid a bonus of 10% of the cost share rate for the FSPP plan.

Examples of *qualified* FSPP shapefiles:

Type of File	What need to be done?	Who gets paid and how much?
County tax parcel shapefile provided by landowner or external plan writer covers all the FSPP acreage on the tract	Other than visually verifying that the shapefile corresponds to the FSPP tract in question, no “quality control” required by NCFS personnel.	Landowner - 5% NCFS District - 5%
County tax parcel shapefile provided by landowner or external plan writer covers all the FSPP acreage but some of the area on the parcel is pasture, orchard or other acreage that should not be included in the Forest Stewardship Plan.	FSA Office is an acceptable option to potentially acquire the field acreage and associated shapefile of the area not to be included in the Stewardship Plan. This shapefile could be subtracted from the larger tract shapefile to determine the total area covered under FSP. If this data is not available the tree line may be digitized using rectified aerial photography to acquire the forested acreage covered by the Stewardship Plan. NCFS personnel approving the submitted shapefile information will need to review the shapefile in a GIS program and verify the depicted stewardship tract boundary lines are accurate. Use submitted Stewardship Plan and tract maps to determine this accuracy. If this quality control reveals inaccuracies or discrepancies, the reviewing NCFS personnel should contact the landowner and/or plan writer to correct the problem. Questions about this quality control should be directed to Andrew Bailey, GIS Coordinator or Les Hunter, Forest Stewardship Coordinator. Once the submitted shapefile has been verified, NCFS personnel must insure that the shapefile acreage figure matches up with the acreage on the FSPP application	Landowner -5 % NCFS District - 5%
No shapefile provided from the landowner or their agent.	NCFS District staff will create the shapefile for the Forest Stewardship plan.	NCFS District - 10%

Excerpt from 4221 – Acreage Determination & Documentation – Procedure, January 2002

4221.7 Accepting Measurements from Others – Occasionally DFR is asked to accept measurements from other sources. When this occurs the following guidelines should be used:

- 1) Using Existing Deeds &/or Survey Maps – These legal instruments may be accepted as sufficient documentation of acreage when the *entire area* within the deed or map received the practice or treatment and this can be easily verified (corners and property lines have been maintained). Deductions will be made for portions of the tract that were not treated (house site, roads, power-lines, etc.). If the area that was treated was less than the entire tract, then the treated area will be measured.
- 2) Using Measurements from Private, Third-Party Sources – Measurements may be accepted from private, third party sources when; (a) they are determined by one of the methods listed above and conform to the same standards, and (b) there is no apparent “conflict of interest” associated with the measurements (the source of the measurement is not the contractor, is not representing the contractor, and is not representing the landowner), and (c) the measurement is accompanied with the required information listed in “Acreage Documentation” below.
- 3) Using Aerial Photo Measurements from Government Agencies – Planimetered acreage figures taken from photographs of a known, accurate scale (such as those used by FSA), are acceptable when the entire area to be measured is distinguishable and all boundaries are easily identified (such as a field), provided they are accompanied with the required information listed in “Acreage Documentation” below.

Plan writers may contact Les Hunter or Jennifer Rall to obtain a full copy of Procedure 4221. NCFS can view these policy and procedure documents on the intranet by visiting <https://dfrintranet.nc.gov/p&pindex.asp>