CRYSTAL FALLS—Landowners in Iron County have a new forest management resource.

The Forestry Assistance Program (FAP) was created by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to encourage more active management of non-industrial private forest lands. __PUBLIC__

"The program essentially is set up to act as a mediator between the private landowner and professional consultants," according to forester Tyler Wood. "I'm here to provide information for landowners and help them get the right help they need the first time through."

Wood is the last of 13 foresters assigned to cover 23 counties statewide through the Forestry Assistance Program. He covers Iron and Baraga counties from his office in the basement of the Iron County Courthouse in Crystal Falls.

"Our charge with this grant is to act as an information source for landowners" Wood said, "giving them 'forestry' language, program knowledge and management options so that they may then be connected with the appropriate private sector forest professional."

Various programs, including some that provide cost-sharing between landowners and government agencies, are available in Iron County. "The reason this program exists is to help increase non-industrial private forest management, which will enhance wildlife habitat, make a healthier forest and encourage the economic growth associated with forests in Michigan," Woods said.

The Forestry Assistance Program office is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. For more information, call 875-3765 or email Wood at ironcd.org.