Program Purpose:
The Landscape Scale Restoration (LSR) program is designed to “encourage collaborative, science-based restoration of priority forest landscapes” that not only focuses on priority landscapes but may include issues identified in the respective States’ Forest Action Plans. According to the 2018 Farm Bill, “the landscape scale restoration program is to support landscape scale restoration and management that results in measurable improvements to public benefits derived from State and private forest lands” as identified in a State-wide assessment or equivalent restoration strategy.

Authority
The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill) codified the Landscape Scale Restoration (LSR) competitive grant program. With that codification came several programmatic changes. All of the programmatic changes within the 2018 Farm Bill are incorporated into the FY 2022 National Guidance and Southern Guidance. Grant proposals must meet requirements of State and Private Forestry (S&PF) Program Authorities and Office of Management and Budget cost principles.

Projects must conform to laws and authorities in the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act.

Allowable authorities for LSR: Forest Stewardship, Rural Forestry Assistance, Urban and Community Forestry, Forest Health Protection, and Community and Private Land Fire Assistance (State Fire Assistance). The authorities for this Request for Assistance (RFA) may be used singly or in combination.

Ineligible authorities for LSR: Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance, Forest Legacy, Community Forest and Open Space, and Federal Lands Forest Health Management.

Timeline Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Call for Proposals</td>
<td>August 4, 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal Abstracts due</td>
<td>September 15, 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee / State &amp; Partner review of abstracts</td>
<td>September 20 to October 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract TEAMS / conference call</td>
<td>October 13, 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full proposals due to States/FS</td>
<td>November 10, 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full proposals submitted in portal</td>
<td>November 17, 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee reviews proposals</td>
<td>November 22 to December 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission of proposals to Headquarters</td>
<td>February 1, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notification of grant awards</td>
<td>Upon Congressional appropriations and FS Headquarters budget approval.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On-the-Ground Outcomes on Rural Lands
Projects must achieve on-the-ground outcomes on rural, non-industrial private forest land and/or rural State or local government forest land. For the purposes of this program, “rural” means any area other than an urbanized area such as a city or town that has a population of greater than 50,000 inhabitants according to the latest census. You may use the LSR Project Planning Tool (Project Eligibility Tab) to confirm if a
city or town is rural according to this definition. Projects proposed through this process may extend or expand upon other work supported by Federal funds; however, activities and accomplishments must be tracked and reported separately. *Note: While projects may include a component of outreach, education, and/or training as a means to achieve the project goals, it should not be the sole outcome. Projects must be able to deliver at least one Quantitative Accomplishment (QA) category and measurable target (see QA table in this document for acceptable categories and measures).*

**Eligibility**
State and territorial forestry agencies or an equivalent state agency, units of local government, Tribes, non-profit organizations (defined as a 501c3), and universities are eligible to submit applications. For-profit entities are not eligible to apply under this competition.

We encourage collaboration between States, Tribes, universities, non-profit organizations and the USDA Forest Service to avoid eligibility issues. Collaboration and coordination with the [Southern Group of State Forester’s Committees](#) and/or the USDA Forest Service is encouraged; however, grant funds can only be used for work on non-federal lands. *Please note federal research entities cannot be a sub-recipient of these funds either.*

**Eligible land and Tribes:** Section 8102 of the Farm Bill identifies land owned by an Indian Tribe in the definition of non-industrial private forest land. Tribal trust land is not eligible. Indian Tribe is defined in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

Tribal entities may route their proposal through the state process outlined above, in which case the proposal would count towards the five applications per state cap along with all other applicants. Alternatively, Tribes may submit applications through the relevant Tribal or LSR official in the USDA Forest Service Southern Region where the Tribe and its project are located. The Southern Region will advance final proposals and will work with SGSF staff to enter Tribal proposals into the grant application portal. Once submitted, Tribal projects will be scored with all other applications. However, applications routed through the USDA Forest Service will not count towards the state cap of five and will instead be limited to two (2) Tribal applications per state. The submission state, for purposes of this limitation, will be determined by the location of the project or, in the case of a project spanning more than one state, the Tribe will work in consultation with the Southern Region to determine the submission state. If a Tribal project is selected for funding through this process, the USDA Forest Service Southern Region will work directly with the Tribe on the grant award.

**Process**
Non-Tribal entities wishing to apply must contact their State forestry agency regarding submission of an LSR proposal. The State forestry agency will select the five most competitive applications (based on the evaluation criteria) to submit to the Southern competition via the online portal ([forestrygrants.org/southernLSR](http://forestrygrants.org/southernLSR)) for FY 2022. Only those proposals submitted to the grant portal will be considered final and undergo review by the multi-agency LSR grants review panel.

**Proposal Abstract Submission**
The Southern Region begins the process with an abstract submission. The abstract should provide a brief summary of the project that describes its scope, expected deliverables, at least one measurable quantitative accomplishment from the QA table, and an approximate total funding request (see abstract template). The abstracts should be submitted no later than close of business Wednesday, September 15, 2021, via the [google form](#) or the LSR email (SM.FS.LSR_South@usda.gov). The Competitive review team will review abstracts and advise states/Tribes if an eligibility problem appears. The abstracts will be
shared with all states, Forest Service program staff, and applicants. A conference call is scheduled for Tuesday, October 13, 2021 at 10 am eastern, to discuss opportunities for multi-state collaborative projects.

**Full Proposal Requirements**

- All final proposals must be submitted to the appropriate state agency by Wednesday, November 10, 2021, that states may upload into the on-line system at [www.forestrygrants.org](http://www.forestrygrants.org) by Wednesday, November 17, 2021.

- For Tribes, please review the *Eligible Land and Tribes* section of the *General Project Eligibility* document. Tribes may submit to either the Forest Service or the appropriate state agency by Wednesday, November 10, 2021.

- States are limited to submitting five single-state project proposals, including partner proposals that the state is sponsoring. There are no limits to the number of multi-state projects in which a state can participate as co-applicant. Any project proposal that can clearly describe and illustrate accomplishments and benefits in more than one state can be considered a multi-state project, even if all funds are handled by the lead state (all partner states must agree to the application).

- No individual state/Tribe will receive more than 15% of the total funds available to the South through this process. If one state has agreed to manage a multi-state project and will receive all or most of the funding, for the purposes of eligibility, the dollars allocated for that project will be divided equally between all states involved to calculate the 15%, unless otherwise designated by applicants in their proposals.

- Non-state partners must work with a State Forester for agreement and sponsorship of a proposal from the beginning of the process in order to help prioritize the most competitive and needed projects based on priorities set forth in State Forest Action plans or equivalent restoration strategies. It is also highly encouraged that non-state partners collaborate with Southern Group of State Forester committees on proposal ideas. ([https://www.southernforests.org/about/sgsf-committees-task-forces](https://www.southernforests.org/about/sgsf-committees-task-forces))

- Proposals require a 1:1 match and must be met by eligible and allowable costs and are subject to match provisions in grant regulations (see Federal Regulations Title 2 Part 200.306 and Subpart E for Cost Principles). The match can be a part of the consolidated match option for state forestry agencies if the state is receiving a portion of the project grant funds. Exception: per national guidance, The Virgin Islands of the United States are not required to provide 1:1 match for a grant of $200,000 or less.

- Projects should focus on rural forest land which is also considered non-industrial private forest land, Tribal or State forest land. Non-industrial private forest land is land that meets all of the following criteria:
  - 1. Is rural (as defined in [FSM3800](https://www.fs.fed.us/))
  - 2. Has existing tree cover or is suitable for growing trees; and
  - 3. Is owned by:
    - a. Any private individual, group, association, corporation, or other private legal entity, except a landowner or legal entity whose major objective for ownership is commercial timber production, or
b. An Indian Tribe.
   - Tribal land held in trust by the United States is not considered “Indian-owned land.”

- Proposals should advance priorities in State Forest Action Plans or an equivalent restoration strategy that:
  - is complete or substantially complete;
  - is for a multi-year period;
  - covers non-industrial private forest land or state forest land;
  - is accessible by wood processing infrastructure; and
  - is based on the best available science.

- Projects are encouraged to prioritize funding and other resources towards one or more objectives identified below, hereinafter referred to as “Landscape Objectives.” Successful projects will, in many instances, address multiple objectives. (Source: National Guidance and Section 8102(e) of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018)
  - Reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfires;
  - Improve fish and wildlife habitats, including for threatened and endangered species;
  - Maintain and improve water quality and watershed function;
  - Mitigate invasive species, insect infestation, and disease;
  - Improve important forest ecosystems;
  - Measure ecological and economic benefits including air quality and soil quality and productivity.

- In addition the “Landscape Objectives” above, projects are also encouraged to describe how communities/people that are historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty will be engaged, will benefit, or be supported from the project being proposed and how the project will increase equitable access. This supports Executive Order 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government.

- Projects must have at least one on-the-ground “Quantitative Accomplishment” and target measure. The QA categories, descriptions, and measures are listed in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic benefit</td>
<td>Board feet of timber (e.g. sawlogs or small diameter) produced that contribute to the forest products industry.</td>
<td>Board feet of forest products produced (timber)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Benefit</td>
<td>Tons of biomass produced that contribute to the forest products industry.</td>
<td>Tons of forest products produced (biomass)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazardous Fuels Management</td>
<td>Acres treated to reduce hazardous fuels including prescribed fire, thinning and other actions that reduce hazardous fuels and mitigate fire risk.</td>
<td>Acres treated to reduce hazardous fuels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insect and Disease Management</td>
<td>Acres treated for insects and disease including through chemical, mechanical, and biological actions that improve forest health conditions. This does not include acres surveyed.</td>
<td>Acres treated for insects and disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Invasive Plant / Weed Management</strong></td>
<td>Infested acres treated for invasive plants including chemical, mechanical, and biological actions that improve forest health conditions. This does not include acres surveyed.</td>
<td>Infested acres treated for invasive plants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Landowner Assistance</strong></td>
<td>Private forest landowners reached through technical assistance. Include landowners known to have benefited in some significant and lasting way from the project through more than one interaction. This does not include a landowner who simply attended a technical or training session without any follow-up or were spoken to only once, such as over the phone, with no follow-up.</td>
<td>Private forest landowners reached through technical assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Silviculture (forest management)</strong></td>
<td>Number of acres treated exclusive of other treatments already reported in another accomplishment field such fire and/or water quality treatments. This could include timber/forest stand improvements, reforestation, or afforestation associated with a forest management activity.</td>
<td>Acres of silvicultural practice exclusive of other reported treatments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stewardship / Forest Management Planning</strong></td>
<td>A forest management plan could include a Forest Stewardship Plan; CAP 106 plan, Tree Farm plan, tax abatement plan, equivalent state forest management plan or a landscape plan. If a landscape plan, the plan must focus on discrete/specific geography such as a watershed and does not apply to a state-wide landscape level plan.</td>
<td>Acres under new forest management plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Water Quality Enhancement</strong></td>
<td>Acres of trees and seedlings planted to enhance water quality including riparian buffers, floodplain restoration and other actions that enhance water quality.</td>
<td>Acres of trees and seedlings planted to enhance water quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Water Quality Enhancement</strong></td>
<td>Miles of riparian forest treated to enhance water quality including riparian buffer establishment or maintenance and other actions that enhance water quality. This does not include any structural enhancements or construction (e.g. culverts).</td>
<td>Miles of riparian forest treated to enhance water quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wildlife Habitat Enhancement</strong></td>
<td>Acres of habitat treated to protect, conserve, and enhance wildlife and fish habitat. Threatened and endangered species that will benefit from project activities should be included in the narrative accomplishments.</td>
<td>Acres of habitat treated to enhance wildlife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wildlife Habitat Enhancement</strong></td>
<td>Miles of riparian forest treated to protect, conserve, and enhance wildlife and fish habitat. Threatened and endangered species that will benefit from project activities</td>
<td>Miles of riparian forest treated to enhance wildlife</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
should be included in the narrative accomplishments.

Equipment
- Purchase of special purpose (technical) equipment greater than $5,000 is allowable with prior approval by the awarding agency office (Forest Service Region). Purchase of supplies valued at less than $5,000 is allowable without prior approval by the awarding agency office.
- Equipment approvals will be only granted on equipment associated with the restoration of landscapes. The LSR program is not designed to upgrade equipment or to replace equipment that is outdated unless associate with a new restoration-based project.

Non-Eligible Activities
- Research-related activities as defined in 2CFR422.1 are not allowable costs. Research involves testing a new theory or hypothesis. The end product may be a new model that the researcher will be publishing. Monitoring, technical transfer, education, and outreach activities can be included in the proposal, and a research entity could be included as a partner, with their contribution leveraged in the larger project proposal, but not within the S&PF funded component (federal dollars and associated cost share). If any research items are included in a project description, please outline their funding source as being non-federal funds.
- Construction is not an allowable cost (grant or match) under current S&PF Program Authorities or cost principles. Projects that involve requests for funds and/or provides match for construction of new buildings or roads are not eligible. Construction activities completed by private companies and/or state agencies may apply as leverage (not S&PF component or match).
- Purchasing of land is not an allowable cost with grant funds or the use of partner purchase of land as match.
- Cash and in-kind contributions for project elements that do not fall within S&PF program authorities included in the LSR competitive allocation may not be used as match. Other “nonmatch” leveraged funds do not need to meet the same standards.
- Activities in cities or towns with greater than 50,000 inhabitants are not eligible. Refer to the LSR Project Planning Tool.

Timeline
Projects can indicate a multi-year implementation timeframe, up to three (3) years with full funding committed at the time of award. Please note: For grants managed/issued by the USFS, the start dates can be either October 1, 2021 or July 1, 2022. Start dates for grants managed by state forestry agencies will be negotiated directly with them.

Evaluation
All projects are evaluated on a 100-point scale using the R8 Competitive Grant Criteria Guidance document.
- State Foresters can assign priority points to 5 projects as follows: Priority 1 – 8 points, Priority 2-6 points, Priority 3- 4 points, Priority 4- 2 points and Priority 5 – 1 point.
- A state forester may only assign a priority to a multi-state project if it is one in which they are designated as the lead state.

Reporting
State or lead applicants are required to submit project accomplishments for all participating states in the Landscape Scale Restoration Project (LaSR) database. Accomplishments will be reported annually with a due date of October 13, 2021 for this year, in order for the USFS Region to review and meet the national deadline of October 28, 2021. Reporting deadlines may vary slightly in subsequent years.

**Modifications**
All efforts should be made to ensure the project is implemented according to the original application and within the requested timeframes. Modification requests should come from the entity that needs to make the change. When requesting modifications, please submit your request through the Forest Service mailbox SM.FS.r8_cpg@usda.gov. It will be directed to the appropriate program manager to get their approval or denial.

The Federal awarding agency may, at its option, restrict the transfer of funds among direct cost categories or programs, functions and activities for Federal awards in which the Federal share of the project exceeds the Simplified Acquisition Threshold (currently $250,000) and the cumulative amount of such transfers exceeds or is expected to exceed 10 percent of the total budget as last approved by the Federal awarding agency. (See 2 CFR 200.308)

**Ranking and Recommendations**
The proposals will be reviewed and ranked by a team of ten members, five representing the Forest Service and five representing the State Forestry Agencies. The list of ranked projects and recommendations will be submitted to the Regional Forester for approval prior to forwarding to the USDA Forest Service Washington Office for final approval. Once the Region has received their allocation of Landscape Scale Restoration funding, the finalized list will be shared with applicants.

For more specific information on the evaluation process, please review the attached *Southern Region and International Institute of Tropical Forestry - Landscape Scale Restoration Grant Evaluation* document.

This document includes a summary of parts of the National Guidance. It is NOT meant to substitute the National Guidance. All applicants should also read the National Guidance, which can be found at: https://www.fs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2021-05/FSM-3800-LSR-Final-20201112.pdf