

**Highlights of Forest Landscape Restoration Act  
(Title IV of the Omnibus Lands Act, PL 111-11)  
6 April 2009**

**Purpose**

Encourage collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes through a process that encourages ecological, economic and social sustainability; leverages local resources; facilitates reduction in wildfire management costs; and demonstrates how ecological restoration techniques can achieve objectives and use forest restoration by-products to offset treatment costs.

**Eligibility Criteria**

A collaborative forest landscape restoration proposal shall

- Be based on a *restoration strategy* that is *substantially complete*.
- Identify and prioritize treatments for a *10-year period*.
- Involve a landscape of *at least 50,000 acres*
- Comprise *primarily NFS land*, although BLM, BIA, and other federal, state, tribal and private lands can be included.
- Be *accessible* by existing or proposed wood-processing infrastructure that can use woody biomass or small-diameter wood.
- Incorporate best available *science*.
- Maintain or restore *old growth* stands characteristic of the forest type.
- Reduce *hazardous fuels* by focusing on small-diameter trees, thinning, strategic fire breaks, and fire use to modify fire behavior.
- Maximize retention of *large trees* to the extent this promotes fire-resilient stands.
- Not include establishment of *permanent roads*.
- Decommission all *temporary roads* constructed to carry out the strategy
- Be developed through a *collaborative process* that
  - Includes multiple interested persons representing diverse interests.
  - Is transparent and nonexclusive, *or* meets the requirements for a resource advisory committee under the Secure Rural Schools Act.
- Describe the *collaborative process* through which it was developed, including
  - Participation by state, local and tribal governments
  - Any record of successful collaborative planning and implementation.
- Analyze anticipated *cost savings*, including
  - Reduced wildfire management costs.
  - Decrease in unit costs from implementing restoration treatments over time.
- *Estimate* (a) federal *funding needed* to implement the proposal and (b) new non-federal investment that would be leveraged.
- Benefit *local economies* by providing local employment and training opportunities through contracts, grants or agreements with: local entities (private, non-profit, or cooperative); YCC or related youth-group partnerships; existing or proposed small or

microbusinesses, clusters or incubators; and other entities that will hire or train local people to implement this work.

- Describe plans to:
  - Reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire (including through fire use).
  - Improve fish and wildlife habitat, including for TES species.
  - Maintain or improve water quality and watershed function.
  - Prevent, remediate or control invasions of exotic species.
  - Maintain, decommission and rehabilitate roads and trails.
  - Use woody biomass and small-diameter trees produced by projects.
  - Report annually on performance.
  - Take into account community wildfire protection plans.

### **Documentation**

Each proposal shall

- Include a plan to use federal funds allocated to the Region to carry out treatments that would not be covered by the restoration fund.
- Provide evidence that amounts transferred from the fund during the first two fiscal years following selection would be used to carry out treatments during the same fiscal year they are transferred.
- Include, as appropriate, a plan for other partner agencies to fund actions.
- Provide evidence that private landowners will participate in, and provide funding to carry out, actions in the proposal.

### **Nomination Process**

A proposal shall be submitted to the Regional Forester and, if appropriate, state directors of other agencies for their concurrence. The Regional Forester may nominate to the Secretary any proposals that meet the criteria.

### **Selection Process**

After consulting with the advisory panel, the Secretary shall select proposals that meet the eligibility criteria, giving special consideration to

- Strength of the proposal and strategy.
- Strength of the ecological case.
- Strength of the collaborative process and likelihood of successful collaborative implementation.
- Likelihood of reducing long-term wildfire management costs.
- Potential to reduce costs of treatments through the use of woody biomass and small-diameter trees.
- Level of non-federal investment.

### **Limitations**

The Secretary may not select more than

- Ten proposals to be funded in any fiscal year.
- Two proposals in any one Region in any fiscal year.
- The number of proposals that are likely to receive adequate funding.

### **Advisory Panel**

The Secretary shall establish an advisory panel comprising *not more than* 15 members to provide recommendations on nominated proposals. Membership will be balanced, and include experts in

- Ecological restoration.
- Fire ecology.
- Fire management.
- Rural economic development.
- Strategies for ecological adaptation to climate change.
- Fish and wildlife ecology.
- Woody biomass and small-diameter tree utilization.

### **Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Fund**

Fund will be used to *pay up to* 50 percent of the cost of carrying out and monitoring restoration treatments on *National Forest System land*. The cost may include cancellation and termination costs required to be obligated for contracts to carry out work on *National Forest System land*.

### **Limitations on Expenditures**

Money may not be expended from the fund for any one proposal

- During a period of more than 10 fiscal years.
- In excess of \$4 million in any one fiscal year.

### **Authorization of Appropriations**

*Authorizes* (does not appropriate) *\$40 million for each of the fiscal years 2009 through 2019.*

### **Implementation and Monitoring**

Requires a work plan and budget no later than 180 days of selection, including a description of manner of implementation to achieve ecological and community benefit.

The business plan must address

- Anticipated unit treatment costs reductions over ten years.
- Anticipated costs for infrastructure.
- Projected sustainability of supply of woody biomass and small-diameter trees.
- Projected local economic benefits.

The plan must document sources and uses of non-federal investment, and a plan to decommission any temporary roads.

**Annual Report:** An annual report of accomplishments will be required, including

- A description of all acres treated and restored.
- An evaluation of progress, including performance measures.
- A description of community benefits.
- Results of multi-party monitoring and evaluation.
- A summary of costs of treatments and fire management activities.

**Multi-party monitoring** will assess effects for *not less than 15 years* after project implementation.

An assessment of the project will be submitted every five years to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, the Senate Committee on Appropriations, the House Committee on Natural Resources and the House Committee on Appropriations.