



Forest Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



# **Forest Health Protection Evaluation Monitoring Program Proposal Guidelines**

## Evaluation Monitoring FY 2025 Proposal Guidelines

### New Information: Webinar Announcement

To learn more about the Forest Health Monitoring funding opportunity, please join us at one of two webinars:

- Wednesday, October 2, 2024, at 2:00PM Eastern
- Tuesday, October 8, 2024, at 1:00PM Eastern

For the meeting link, please email us at [SM.FS.FHM@usda.gov](mailto:SM.FS.FHM@usda.gov).

### Priority Focus

Insects and diseases, drought, invasive plants, and other interacting stressors are rapidly influencing the health of America's forests. The uncharacteristic pace and scale of these stressors is straining the ability of forests to provide a host of natural benefits. The Forest Health Monitoring program (FHM) is designed to deliver timely information to regional and national land managers and decision makers to sustain forests and their benefits.

FHM's Evaluation Monitoring program provides funding to regional and national-level projects that advance forest health analysis, data integration, and decision support. For Fiscal Year 2025, FHM is requesting proposals that are designed to develop tools and strategies to help partners holistically evaluate forest health risks to inform federal, state, private, and/or Tribal planning and management. A holistic assessment of forest health risks includes evaluating the suite of abiotic and biotic stressors influencing tree mortality, damage, and forest declines.

Examples of potential projects:

- Develop process or strategy for identifying landscapes where stressors are causing cumulative decline across forest types
- Develop models that assess landscape-scale risks to forest provided benefits (e.g. biodiversity, source water protection)
- Identify locations which are at highest risk to a suite of stressors and could be prioritized for monitoring, prevention, or resilience management.
- Develop tools and guidance to identify common landscape characteristics and climatic factors associated with amplified damage from secondary pests that signify substantial tree vulnerability
- Assess disturbance records to identify locations across a landscape that are at-risk for changes in tree species habitat suitability and for reforestation issues
- Develop models and tools to project how current and future risks may influence forest conditions

Proposed tools and strategies should be designed regionally and communicate how regional forest health risks can inform and prioritize actions (e.g. monitoring and best management practices). There is flexibility in how a regional approach can be defined (e.g. FHM Mega Regions, multiple states, or large landscape conservation priority areas), but proposals must include elements that have potential to scale-up and transfer to different regions.

### Project Ranking Criteria

A National Review Team with representatives from the FHM Regions, FHP Washington DC Office, [Eastern Forest Environmental Threat Assessment Center](#), [Western Wildland Environmental Threat Assessment Center](#), and other Forest Service programs will numerically rate all projects for merit based on the following criteria:

1. **Decision Support.** FHM's mission is to assess the status, trends, and future projections of forest health conditions to better support regional and national level decision-making. Projects will be assessed on their ability to provide forest health information that supports cross-boundary coordination, enhanced monitoring efforts, priority setting for management and restoration, identification of research needs, etc.

2. **Holistic Assessment.** A wide range of stressors are influencing forest health and increasingly interacting with each other. This dynamic nature in the number and severity of stressors can cause uncertainty when conducting regional strategies. Proposals will be ranked on their ability to meet this challenge by cumulatively assessing forest health risks at regional scales.
3. **Methods.** This criterion addresses the degree to which proposed methods are based on sound science. Factors to consider include feasibility of proposed methods, the likelihood that the project will be successfully completed within the proposed timeframe, and the track record of principal investigators.
4. **Budget.** This criterion addresses the cost and economic efficiency of the proposed project. Factors to consider include: the relative cost, economic efficiency, cost-sharing and leveraging of resources, and administrative assessments.
5. **Partnerships.** Projects that engage with a variety of partners in the design, development, or use of the resulting products will be more successful in influencing decisions. Therefore, projects will be assessed on their integration of partners into their methodology. Additionally, forest health challenges can have disproportionate impacts on Tribal Nations and disadvantaged communities. Proposals that can demonstrate substantial involvement or potential positive impact for disadvantaged communities or Tribal Nations in the implementation of their project will be given priority.

Additionally, those projects that advance environmental justice will be given priority. To identify locations or populations to integrate into work that advance this goal, please use either of the following tools:

- [Social Vulnerability Index](#)—Higher vulnerability scores receive more weight
- [U.S. EPA Environmental Justice Screening Tool](#): Proposals that meet one or more of the following indicators receive more weight:
  - >50% people of color
  - Low-income rate of >25%
  - Linguistically Isolated ratio >15%

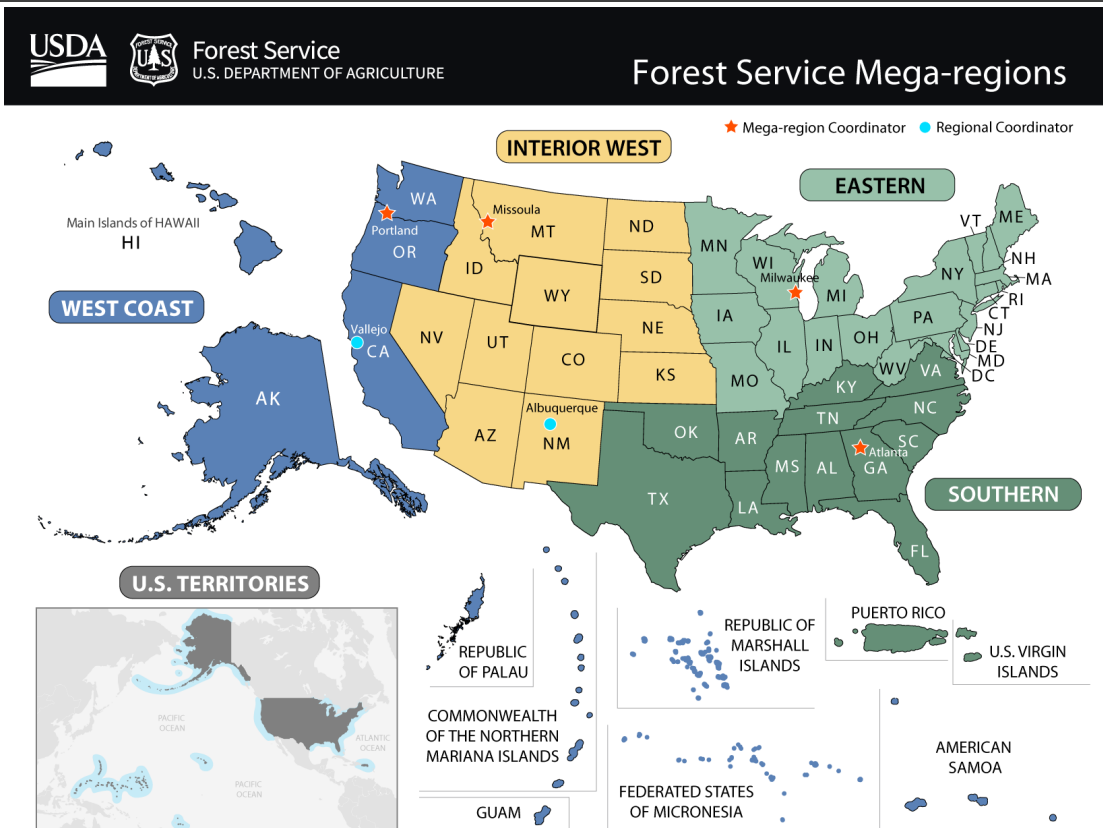
## General Requirements

### Proposal Submission

New Project Proposals, Progress Reports and Final Reports must be submitted by using the forms found on the [Forest Health Protection Funding Opportunities website](#). Project proposals for *new projects* should be submitted by **November 1, 2024**, to Eric Sprague, FHM National Program Lead ([eric.sprague@usda.gov](mailto:eric.sprague@usda.gov)).

All proposals must be developed in close consultation with and sponsored by FHM, Western Wildland Environmental Threat Assessment Center, or Eastern Forest Environmental Threat Assessment Center staff. The sponsor must be designated on the new proposal form. To express your interest in the program, please reach out to one of the following contacts:

- Rachel Reyna, Eastern FHM Region ([rachel.reyna@usda.gov](mailto:rachel.reyna@usda.gov)),
- Chris Asaro, Southern FHM Region ([christopher.asaro@usda.gov](mailto:christopher.asaro@usda.gov)),
- Joel Egan, Interior West FHM Region ([joel.egan@usda.gov](mailto:joel.egan@usda.gov)),
- Karen Ripley, West Coast FHM Region ([karen.ripley@usda.gov](mailto:karen.ripley@usda.gov)),
- Jessica Halofsky, Western Wildland Environmental Threat Assessment Center ([jessica.halofsky@usda.gov](mailto:jessica.halofsky@usda.gov)), or
- Frank Koch, Eastern Forest Environmental Threat Assessment Center ([frank.h.koch@usda.gov](mailto:frank.h.koch@usda.gov)).



Any projects requiring access to Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) plot coordinates should be discussed with Regional FIA work units or Tom Thompson ([thomas.g.thompson@usda.gov](mailto:thomas.g.thompson@usda.gov)) from the Spatial Data Services of FIA prior to submission of proposals.

All Continuing Project Proposals (i.e., progress reports) and final reports should also be submitted by **November 1, 2024**, to your FHM Regional Manager (see contacts above).

### Eligibility

A variety of public and private entities are eligible for funding including Federal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations, private companies, Tribal Nations, and universities.

### Budget and Match

Total funding available for FY2025 is not yet known and will depend on annual Federal appropriations. We do anticipate funding around four projects nationally. Each proposal should request no more than \$200,000 from the Evaluation Monitoring grant program.

The presented budget must include all overhead or other indirect costs requested. Projects on non-federal lands need to show non-federal contributions of 50% of the total project costs (i.e., a 1:1 match), but in certain circumstances and on a case-by-case basis, match may be reduced or waived by the Deputy Chief for State and Private Forestry.

### Project Period

For FY25, FHM will be issuing one-year of funding that can be spread over a maximum of three years. In the budget tables, please distribute the requested funding over each year of the project.

For more information on general requirements, please review the [Forest Health Protection Grants Funding Information](#).

## Continuing Proposals

In addition to new projects, FHM will accept Continuing Proposals from previously funded, multi-year proposals. Continuing Proposals will be given priority if the investigators have reported sufficient progress by submitting annual requests for continuation by **November 1, 2024**.

Proposals for continued funding of multi-year projects should include a progress statement by submitting the completed EM Continuing Project Report form found on the [Forest Health Protection Funding Opportunities website](#). The budget requested for continuing years must not exceed that approved in the original proposal.

## Reporting Requirements

Final reporting of project results is to be presented in three formats: 1) Project details including final budget information are to be submitted by using the EM Final Report form found on the [Forest Health Protection Funding Opportunities webpage](#), 2) The FHM Management Team requires that results and progress reports for all national competition EM projects are summarized in posters presented at the biennial FHM Working Group meeting or posted on the FHM website, 3) Upon project completion, investigators will submit to the respective FHM Regional Managers a detailed final report, and a 2-5 page executive summary to be published as a component of the annual [Forest Health Monitoring: National Status, Trends and Analysis Report](#).

Any publications resulting from these projects should acknowledge funding provided by the Forest Service Forest Health Monitoring program. Regardless of format, all Web content or communications materials produced, including text, audio, or video - must conform to applicable Section 508 standards to allow federal employees and members of the public with disabilities to access information that is comparable to information provided to persons without disabilities. See <https://www.section508.gov/> for more information. Please note that the FHM program is currently developing procedures for archiving data generated by EM projects.

## Contact

For more information about the Evaluation Monitoring program, please contact Eric Sprague, FHM National Program Lead, at [eric.sprague@usda.gov](mailto:eric.sprague@usda.gov).