

Reviewers' Comments for Fiscal Year 2020 Landscape Scale Restoration Request for Applications

1. **12951012-MI: Integrating Forest Management and Bird Habitat in Michigan**
 - Liked everything about this proposal. Very well done; would hold this up as an example to parties interested in preparing an application in future rounds of funding.
 - Very well-written proposal.
 - Similar to other bird programs, looks to build on a good model.

2. **12952291-PA: Restoring Pennsylvania’s Forests through Technology-Efficient Outreach and a Market-Based Approach**
 - Innovative technique. Moving into a new area for forest management; however, it is not clear from pilot work if interest will be there for full implementation.
 - Good effort in metrics to demonstrate outcome rather than quantification of widgets, though expensive.
 - Unclear whether the incentives to landowners are to come from project funds/match.
 - Lacks explanation of the \$350 match listed as "Other."
 - No mention of coordination across the landscape with the Allegheny National Forest.

3. **12951775-ME: Mapping, Prioritizing, and Controlling Invasive Plants in Maine Woodlands**
 - Strong descriptions of Priority Issues and Outcomes (although some outcomes seem a little overstated).
 - This project aligns well with priorities in the State Forest Action Plan.
 - Leverage allows a high percentage of funding to be applied to treatments and incentives.
 - Acronym overload.
 - Ambitious plan for 14,000 acres.

4. **12951964-MD-PA: Building Woodland Stewardship Networks across the Mason Dixon**
 - Strategic approach to expand forestry opportunities with the Woodland Stewardship Network approach.
 - Good concept; like the idea of the “keystone” landowner and voucher for implementation work; not necessarily restoration, but stewardship through an innovative lens.

5. **12951527-MN: Protecting Minnesota’s Forested Watersheds for Loons, Lunkers, and Logs**
 - Well-thought-out plan and clear deliverables and expectations. Intent was clear.
 - Project has great potential for long-term benefits through purchase of easements and land. Proactive and targeted outreach ensures work will be completed where it will have the greatest impact.
 - Watershed-based landscape stewardship represents about half of the funding (\$155,500) and will cover 6,411,451 acres (five plans) but no details are included as to what the plans (average of 1.28 million acres) will include at an average cost of \$31,100 each.

6. **12951620-VT: Healthy Forests, Healthy Sugarbushes BMPs: A Collaborative Approach to Sustainable Sap Production**
 - Excellent proposal to be ahead of the maple syrup production curve.
 - Well written and explained.
 - A more direct crosswalk between the illustrative issues and State Forest Action Plan-specific goal would have been even more compelling.

7. 12951294-WI: Catalyzing Regional Forest and Wildlife Habitat Management through Cooperative Management and Landowner Engagement in Central Wisconsin

- Description of outcomes is particularly strong; wide range of elements from landowner cooperative to demonstration sites and habitat enhancement.
- Dense application.
- Incentive is higher level of assistance if adjacent landowners band together. They have a landscape focus and identified the particular message to obtain the landscape-scale outcome. Leverage Federal, State Forest, and wildlife management programs.

8. 12952302-IA-MN-WI: Restoring Adaptive Capacity in Driftless Area Forests

- All good forest management strategies (invasive species removal, thinning, and planting).
- Adaptive management in the short term for tangible threats is certainly a worthwhile strategy. However, planting tree species "chosen with attention to projected suitability to future climate conditions given the latest available information including climate modeling and expert opinion" is risky at best. Predictions of future climate over the last 30 years or so using "science-based" models and "expert" opinions have been mostly inaccurate.
- Proposal has an integrated, regional approach that can affect broad landscapes.
- Proposal is forward looking with a focus on resilience.
- Particularly strong description of Collaboration and Integrated Delivery and Enhanced Leverage.

9. 12951804-OH: Ohio Call Before You Cut 2.0: Expanded Outreach and Modernization

- Endorsement from other Call Before You Cut States would have shown greater collaboration.
- Conservative budget: good cost benefit.
- Good connection made to State Forest Action Plan priority area and goals with project activities.
- Specific examples of how project activities would address "so many problems" (relative to desired future condition) would further improve narrative.
- Metrics reasonable, but lack demonstration of landscape outcome, like reduction of non-native invasive species or sedimentation.

10. 12951599-WI: PlayCleanGo® Outreach Campaign Expansion

- Feels like, in large part, that this proposal is buying [a] product.
- Focus on prevention using tested and validated method of information transfer.
- Would add 25 partner organizations in Wisconsin. Program has been shown to be effective in Minnesota.

11. 12950508-IL: Preserving Oak Ecosystems for the Future: Public and Private Partnerships

- About two-thirds of the funding is for contractual expenses related to a handful of personnel. Certainly a worthwhile project that "will be used to replicate successes broadly in the Oak Ecosystem Recovery Plan (OERP) area and other parts of the state and region." But a very expensive project, nearly twice the cost of the average funded FY19 project. Can the proposed work be completed at half the cost on a smaller scale and still have the same effect when replicated elsewhere?
- Project is part of a larger effort for OERP but is only impacting 434 acres and associated private lands. Scope seemed small. Project is a standard project lacking innovation.
- Follows multistate Oak Ecosystem Recovery Plan. Addresses four threats of State Forest Action Plan.

12. 12951728-MO: Heart of the Ozarks

- Excellent example of using multiple treatment methods to restore a fire-adapted landscape. Cost per acre is high. Future proposals with larger scale prescribed burns, possibly with other cooperators/land ownership, would enhance match leverage and reduce overall cost per acre due to the larger burn units.
- This project is a great example of how S&PF-funded projects are helping the U.S. Forest Service reach our fuels treatment objectives in a cross-boundary manner. Keep up the good work!
- Expensive grant request.

13. 12952093-IA: Regenerating Iowa's White Pine Population in the Driftless Area

- Innovative project idea!
- Details were lacking, making it difficult to rank this project. For instance, it wasn't clear how this project would "promote the use of prescribed fire" as identified in the State Forest Action Plan.
- In addition, the budget included a White Pine Management Guide, but it wasn't clear in the rest of the project proposal how it would be developed.

14. 12952019-IA: Tree-mendous Growth; 3 Million Iowans for 3 Million Trees

- Ambitious goal beyond the grant.
- Very good outreach plan. The cover analysis provides a strategic approach in deciding where investments are made.
- There is a heavy assumption that the Missouri Gravel Bed method will increase tree planting; however, it wasn't clear if that was a limiting factor in tree planting.

15. 12951389-NY: Eradication of New York State's Invasive Giant Hogweed in Rural Forested Sites on Public and Private Land

- Quantifies Knowledge and Tech Transfer very effectively.
- An admirable goal and good progress so far; the State should have a lead role in eradication. But more support, especially on private lands, should come directly from local sources that are locally impacted.
- Budget description in narrative could have listed the projected costs even though they are listed in the attached budget sheet.
- Definition of "site"?

16. 12950550-MI: Engaging Youth and Communities to Protect and Restore Forest Landscapes in Michigan's Upper Peninsula

- It wasn't clear from the project description how the objectives would be achieved.
- Great project to educate students but limited restoration treatment on the ground.

17. 12952261-NY: Amplifying the Creation of Dynamic, Diverse, and Resilient Forests through a Forester Endorsement Program

- Innovative approach. Not clear on mechanics of maintaining or ensuring ANY endorsed foresters are meeting standards.
- More explanation needed in State Forest Action Plan priorities and enhanced leverage section to aid in scoring.
- Nicely written project overview. No outcomes per se, just outputs. Illustrative examples of how it would get to desired future condition would have been good as well as criteria/indication of priority areas other than the Demo sites.
- Letter of support from Northern Institute for Applied Climate Science (NIACS) but no non-government letters.

18. 12952181-RI: Improving Fire Risk Mapping and Communication in Rhode Island

- While the proposal does a good job of describing how areas with high wildfire risk will be identified, it does not clearly address how this risk of such wildfires will be reduced.
- Proposal seems more focused on preparedness than on reduction.
- Good leverage of Northeast Forest Fire Protection Compact expertise and staff.
- Quantitative risk assessment is one of the foundational steps to implementing all three of the Cohesive Strategy objectives; good project!
- Focusing more on the mortality from gypsy moth and the potential for increased fire behavior and complexity, including fire examples from nearby areas with this mortality, would have helped highlight the need/urgency for this type of assessment work.

19. 12951985-VT: Playing Well with Others: An Innovative Approach to Recreation Planning on Vermont's State Forests

- Good set of examples and innovative methods.
- Measurable outcomes could have been stronger.
- The narrative does not clearly define how the project will achieve the stated objectives.

20. 12951462-IL: Let the Sun Shine In! Oak Forest Ecosystem Restoration in Southern Illinois

- Expensive grant request with majority going to staffing.
- Previous work has laid a good foundation for the proposal to succeed.
- Good strategy for prioritizing where work will occur.

21. 12951720-MO: Invasive Plant Mapping, Outreach, Education for Control in Priority Forest Areas

- Low cost but with the potential for large impact on invasive plant species control.
- Commitments and roles of partners in project delivery unclear (Collaboration/Integrated Delivery).
- Knowledge and Tech Transfer section simply restates project actions.
- Strong match, plus separate Scenic Rivers Invasive Species Partnership-funded Invasive Species Coordinator.
- The measurable outcomes were not clearly defined in the proposal.

22. 12951706-MI: Loggers for Landowners

- I like this proposal to try and standardize logger curriculum.
- Cost concerns.
- Novel approach, but how does the proposed training to SFI Standards for loggers get plans done or restore/protect the landscape? Measurable outcomes are not directly tied to the project; question loggers' interest in training in this format.

23. 12951895-VT: Developing a Workforce through Habitat Enhancement

- Building strong partnerships and involving students is a great combination. The project will get a multiplier effect simply by expanding a collaboration with Vermont Technical Education programs.
- Twenty-five percent match from third parties. Good breadth of participating partners.
- Project not well pulled together; much of the collaboration is speculative.
- Demonstrated need, but low outputs. How will landowners be engaged to hire newly trained individuals?

24. 12951346-VT: Bringing Forestry to the Rural Roadside

- Actual outcomes unclear.
- Innovative focus. Address threats from wildland-urban interface.
- Reasonable metrics included, but no indication of outcome/impact on resources, i.e., non-native invasive species.
- Nice narrative description of the "what" and sequencing and reinforcement of outreach.
- Less written about the behavior/management. For example, might Agency of Transportation data show gauge movement? Estimate of stormwater interception?

25. 12951937-MA: Launching the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership Forest Conservation and Economic Development Initiative

- Broad engagement from municipalities to Federal agencies.
- Innovative, grass-roots approach coupled with good, forward planning give the benefits of this proposal a high likelihood of continuing beyond the grant period.
- All funding is for staff; little shown how the coordinator will impact on-the-ground efforts or help landowners keep forest as forest.

26. 12951844-WI: Resilient Roads and Crossings

- For the funds requested, the potential outcomes and impacts on forest resources could be enormous.
- Great mix of partners spanning government entities, private individuals, industry, and non-governmental organizations.
- Define your acronyms the first time you use them (e.g., SRI, TU).

27. 12952017-MD-DE: Forestry for Declining Species on Delmarva

- Is this the best restoration solution for this threatened aquatic species?
- Missing Supplemental 1-Partner Budget for Delaware who submitted "sponsor" letter. Not clear if they will receive funds or only accrue deliverable. Difficult to locate the information for #4 rating.

28. 12949296-NY-ME-NH: Northeast Silviculture Institute for Foresters in New York and New England

- A solid, worthwhile project, but measurable outcomes regarding forest impacts will take years to come to fruition; a worthwhile investment.
- Serves a critical need but limited applicability to Society of American Foresters as explained in application.
- Due to the nature of the project, it's difficult to provide measurable outcomes; perhaps look at pre and post knowledge of attendees.
- Proposal has limited details and is pretty vague; makes it difficult to assess how well it meets LSR criteria.
- Vermont is one of the four New England Forestry Association States but was not mentioned under the priority issues in the State Forest Action Plan section.
- Nice contribution and leveraging of Federal funds. Are tribal foresters included?
- Nice table and write up for the Outcomes section, though neither measurable nor specific and not linked per se to State Forest Action Plans regarding the impacts on the landscape; no examples of impacts on particular resources.
- Landscape vegetation types identified, though significance not explained nor why this is a priority other than wildland-urban interface.
- No Letters about collaborative relationship from the National Forest or the Northern Research Station.

29. 12951793-IA: One Tank Forestry: Empowering Landowners to Actively Manage Woodlands

- Wouldn't the measurable outcomes be a regular part of the duties for three to four State Department of Natural Resource District Foresters over the 3-year period?
- Seems to be core program delivery.
- New partnership; women, food, and agricultural network.

30. 12952067-NH: Landscape Scale Invasive Plant Management: Piloting an Invasive Plant Network in New Hampshire

- A statewide network designed to collaborate on the management and control of invasive species is an admirable goal and will increase efficiency. However, the bulk of the funding (for personnel costs) goes directly to University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension. Wouldn't this type of outreach work be important enough to be a normal part of the staff members' jobs?
- Statewide plan, but limited prescriptions.
- Doesn't really explain why this cooperative network would work when two Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas didn't work.
- Good linkage to State Forest Action Plan and explanation of need and how project will address.
- Examples of the species and threats would have added to narrative.
- Landscape based.
- A little confusing about whether this project is paying for data on existing conditions and projects or whether implementing, i.e., metrics A-D.
- Forest health treatment form included, but no treatment proposed in narrative.
- Seems more like a stewardship project rather than a forest health project.
- SF-424A Section B missing match.

31. 12951526-MN-WI: Finding Locally Sourced Wood for Effective Service Delivery for Family Forest Owners in the Driftless Area

- Long-term institution enhancement.
- Proposal doesn't effectively explain how the project will implement State Forest Action Plan strategies or lead to outcomes on the landscape. No specific partner commitments identified; plans for Knowledge/Tech Transfer unclear.

32. 12951952-NY: Hemlock Seed Collection in New York for ex situ Conservation and Restoration Efforts

- Interesting project with a solid case study to follow.
- Nice incorporation of volunteers and non-governmental organizations.
- Positive use of volunteers.
- Budget not clearly explained quantitatively. Supplemental Budget table not included.

33. 12951128-NY-CT-VT: A Climate-Smart Forest Products Supply Chain Guide for the Northeastern United States

- Smartphone app is an innovative approach; however, it was unclear what the app would entail.
- Decent metrics, but the measurable outcomes section lacked information on quantities of deliverables, i.e., how many guides? No resource impact measure.
- Doesn't describe partners' commitments, other than to say they'll be invited to participate.
- Precise linkages with State Forest Action Plans and the issues.
- If the budget was more clearly explained regarding match, this would have gotten a higher rating. Not well developed in that section, but sprinkled throughout proposal, e.g., NIACS. Unclear how State salary is being counted; only one budget category.

34. 12951724-OH: Camp Joy and Camp Friedlander Invasive Plant Control

- A pricey project on a per-acre basis. However, the potential number of people reached, especially youth, is impressive; a couple success stories with these two camps can then be used to encourage replication elsewhere. Job training and workforce development is a plus, especially when you connect people with nature.
- It was unclear from the application how the project tied to the State Forest Action Plan.
- The application lacked detail, making it difficult to rank.
- Limited in scope; less than 550 acres on camp property only. High treatment/project cost.

35. 12951863-MA-ME-NH: Understanding the Potential of Forest Restoration to Mitigate Climate Change

- Aren't there studies in the public domain that describe or model the reduction in carbon emissions resulting from various forest management practices? If the end goal is a healthy, vigorous forest simply because such forests offer the most benefits, including those related to carbon (sequestration and storage), why spend so much LSR funding on this project?
- Borderline research.
- Connection to State Forest Action Plan not very strong.
- Confusing budget information on SF-424, as separated out by years.
- Narrative a bit confusing; a little formatting would have made understanding the “what” and “where” easier.
- Impressive number and variety of letters of support.
- Enhanced leverage section is too vague to recognize tangible leverage.

36. 12951746-MO: Magnificent Missouri River Forest Recovery

- A little short on details on how to move this grant forward.
- Need to take care which version of the narrative is uploaded to Grants.gov because there were two versions submitted; the one with the most recent date had some text that appeared to be cut off in some sections of the narrative.

37. 12951912-OH: Expanding Prescribed Fire Collaboration and a Cross-Partner Fire Module

- Great partner leverage with The Nature Conservancy, a proven cooperater in prescribed fire and hazardous fuels reduction.
- Acreage predicted to be treated is low. This is a great project but it isn't showing in regard to how much acreage the prescribed fire would help treat over the years. There are a number of days the crew would work but not an estimate of the acreage potentially treated across the landscape.

38. 12951710-MA: Planting Trees to Enhance Bird Habitat and Reduce Climate Impacts in Rural, Low-Income Massachusetts Villages

- Proposal was not clear regarding how the work will reduce fragmentation.
- Good integration with i-Tree and other resources. Innovative approach with a new focus.
- Lacked explanation of planting sites; also need assurance of long-term maintenance for trees planted Note: Please see [guidance for preparing project proposals for Landscape Tree Planting](#).

39. 12951764-MO: Middle Meramec Watershed Initiative

- The measurable outcomes narrative states that the work will give people tools to conserve watersheds but does not identify the tools or how they would be impactful.
- Given the priority of this watershed, the grant appears to be requesting funding for work/projects that should be foundational agency planning and partnership building before specific projects are requested through LSR.