



# USDA Forest Service Landscape Scale Restoration Grant Program Fiscal Year 2023 Request for Proposals for Federally Recognized Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations

Submit proposals to [SM.FS.LSR@usda.gov](mailto:SM.FS.LSR@usda.gov) by December 15, 2022.

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## Introduction

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Authorized by the 2018 Farm Bill (which amended the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act), the purpose of the Landscape Scale Restoration Program is to encourage collaborative, science-based restoration of priority forest landscapes. This competitive grant program supports collaborative high impact projects that lead to measurable outcomes on the landscape, leverage public and private resources, and further priorities identified in a science-based restoration strategy (for example a Tribal Forest Plan, State Forest Action Plan, or other equivalent restoration strategy). Program objectives include reduced wildfire risk; improved fish and wildlife habitats; maintained or improved water quality; and mitigated invasive plants, insects, and disease.

Tribal forest lands exceed 18 million acres that are held in trust by the United States. There are 305 forested Indian reservations located in 24 states.<sup>1</sup> These forests provide valuable social, ecological, and economic benefits to Tribes and Tribal communities. They provide clean air and water, public health benefits, habitats for the fish and wildlife, forest products, and cultural resources. At the same time, all forests face many threats, including wildland fire, invasive species, and pests and disease, and more which may spread across ownerships and jurisdictional boundaries. By working across landownerships at the landscape scale, including Tribal forest land, the Landscape Scale Restoration program aims to address the challenges facing forests.

Recognizing the importance of forest land to Tribal communities, the USDA Forest Service is seeking proposals from Federally Recognized Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations/villages to restore priority forest landscapes on tribal land. Eligible Tribal land includes (1) Tribal trust land held both by Tribes and individuals and (2) Tribally-owned fee lands. Under this solicitation, Federally Recognized Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations/villages are eligible to apply for assistance. A Tribal organization as defined in 25 USC 5304 (l)<sup>2</sup> may also apply at the request of a Federally Recognized Tribe (these require a letter of support).

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<sup>1</sup> Source: [Assessment of Indian Forests and Forest Management in the United States: Executive Summary 2013, Intertribal Timber Council](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Tribal organization](#) means the recognized governing body of any [Indian tribe](#); any legally established organization of [Indians](#) which is controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by such governing body or which is democratically elected by the adult members of the [Indian](#) community to be served by such organization and which includes the maximum participation of [Indians](#) in all phases of its activities: Provided, That in any case where a contract is let or grant made to an organization to perform services benefiting more than one [Indian tribe](#), the approval of each such [Indian tribe](#) shall be a prerequisite to the letting or making of such contract or grant.

## Eligibility

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Projects must conform to laws and authorities in the [Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act](#) (Section 13A. [U.S.C. 2109a] Landscape-Scale Restoration Program).

### Who Can Apply:

For the purposes of this Request for Proposals (RFP), Federally Recognized Tribes, Alaska Native Corporations/villages, and Tribal organizations as defined in [25 USC 5304 \(I\)](#) and operating within the United States, or its territories, are eligible to submit applications.

### Eligible Land/Location of Projects:

Landscape Scale Restoration projects must be conducted on rural non-industrial private forest land, rural State Forest land, and/or Indian trust lands. The USDA Office of General Counsel has determined that Indian trust lands are included within the definition of non-industrial private forest land. Indian trust lands held both by Indian tribes and by individual Indians are eligible for participation in the Landscape Scale Restoration program. Indian trust land held in fee is also eligible. Landscape Scale Restoration funding cannot be used for work on Federal lands such as National Forests and Grasslands.

For the purposes of this program, “rural” is defined as all areas outside Census places with 50,000 or more people according to the latest United States Census. Please use the [LSR Project Planning Tool \(Project Eligibility Tab\)](#) to confirm if your proposed project location is eligible within this definition. Projects which do not take place within this geographic area of eligibility will not be considered.

### Eligible Uses of Funding:

See below for a sample list of eligible and ineligible project activities. Grant funds cannot be used for research projects, construction, and/or land acquisitions. Costs must conform to 2 CFR 200 [Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#).

### Examples of Eligible Project Activities

- Water quality and watershed health improvements, including efforts to improve forest health and resilience, reduce wildfire risk, and restore riparian forests.
- Protecting, maintaining, enhancing, and preserving habitat for wildlife and fish species, including threatened and endangered species.
- Wildfire fuels management including thinning, prescribed burning, multi-resource wildfire planning, and invasive species management.
- Cross-boundary fuels management on Tribal lands, adjacent to National Forest System lands.
- Survey, prioritization, and treatment to control invasive plants in a high-priority landscape.
- Restoration of forests following damaging events (e.g., wildfire, hurricanes) to promote desired future conditions.
- Reforestation with trees and seedlings that are suitable for timber and food production, and other benefits associated with growing trees.
- Development and implementation of agroforestry practices such as alley cropping, shelterbelts, riparian forest buffers, and windbreaks that provide nutritional, environmental, educational, cultural, and other benefits.
- Tree seed collection, propagation, and planting to restore native forests on non-Federal land excluding construction and equipment.

## Project Activities Not Eligible Under LSR

- Activities in Census places (cities or towns) with greater than 50,000 inhabitants: Refer to the [LSR Project Planning Tool](#) to quickly screen whether a community is eligible based on census data.
- Research: Basic research as defined in 2CFR 422.1, “Systematic study directed toward fuller knowledge or understanding of the fundamental aspects of phenomena and of observable facts without specific applications towards processes or products in mind.” Note: Technical transfer, education, and outreach activities associated with applying research can be included in the application. A research entity can be included as a partner and can contribute research as non-match leverage (not funded with Federal dollars or associated match).
- Construction and capital improvements. Examples of construction include facilities, infrastructure, roads, new buildings, culverts, and boardwalks. However capital improvements may be listed as enhanced or non-match leverage (not part of the S&PF Federal funding or match).
- Purchase of fire department equipment, including fire weather stations and dry fire hydrants.
- Small business start-up funding.
- Cost-share, reimbursement, and other types of payment provided directly to private landowners. However, LSR funding (and match) may be used to perform work on private lands; for example, a Tribe or Tribal organization could pay for consulting services or treatment activities to be performed on private lands with permission of the landowner.
- Land acquisition (conservation easement and fee simple) projects.
- Fencing that is part of a farm or agricultural operation. A fence is an allowable expense if it part of a silvicultural practice. For example, fencing is permissible if it is necessary to exclude ungulates to prevent damage to seedlings.
- Equipment purchases requires prior approval by the Region that will issue the grant award. Equipment is defined as an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit.

## Program Requirements

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The Landscape Scale Restoration Program supports collaborative, high impact projects that lead to measurable outcomes on the landscape, leverage public and private resources, and further priorities identified in a science-based restoration strategy (for example a Tribal Forest Plan, State Forest Action Plan, or other equivalent restoration strategy). Projects contribute to healthy, climate-resilient, rural forests and communities, supporting Agency objectives listed below.

Landscape scale restoration projects:

- Further a science-based restoration strategy such as a Tribal Forest Plan, State Forest Action Plan, or other equivalent restoration strategy.
- Achieve one or more of the following objectives:
  - Reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire
  - Improve fish and wildlife habitats, including for threatened and endangered species
  - Maintain or improve water quality and watershed functions
  - Mitigate invasive species, insect infestation, and disease
  - Improve important forest ecosystems.
  - Measure ecological and economic benefits, including air quality and soil quality and productivity.

## Measurable Outcomes:

Each LSR project must directly accomplish at least one of the on-the-ground national quantitative measures listed below and may include additional specific measurable results that show how the Federal investment

will lead to outcomes on the landscape. Accomplishments should be achieved within the timeframe of the grant. The measures/metrics should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely.

- **Economic benefit (forest products):** Board feet of logs/sawlogs produced that contribute to the forest products industry.
- **Economic benefit (forest products):** Tons of pulpwood or biomass produced that contribute to the forest products industry.
- **Hazardous Fuels Management:** Acres treated to reduce or mitigate hazardous fuels including prescribed fire, thinning, and other actions that reduce hazardous fuels and mitigate fire risk.
- **Invasive Plant/Weed Management:** Infested acres treated for invasive plants including chemical, mechanical, and biological actions that improve forest health conditions. This does not include acres surveyed for invasive plants.
- **Insect and Disease Management:** Acres treated for insects and disease including through chemical, mechanical, and biological actions that improve forest health conditions.
- **Landowner Assistance:** Forest landowners reached through technical assistance and are known to have benefited in some significant and lasting way (e.g., developed or implemented a forest management activity or practice) from the LSR 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.
- **Stewardship/forest management planning:** Acres under a new forest management plan. A forest management plan could include a Tribal forest management plan, Forest Stewardship Plan, CAP 106 plan, Tree Farm plan, tax abatement plan, or equivalent state forest management plan, watershed, 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.
- **Water Quality Enhancement:** Acres of trees and seedlings planted to improve water quality including planting to create riparian buffers, floodplain restoration, and other actions that enhance water quality/quantity.
- **Water Quality Enhancement:** Number of trees, saplings, and/or seedlings planted to improve water quality including riparian buffers, floodplain restoration, and storm water management actions that are non-structural. In the accomplishments narrative section, specify size of trees planted and describe the plan for tree care to maximize survival.
- **Water Quality Enhancement (riparian forests):** Miles of riparian forest treated to improve 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).
- **Wildlife Habitat Enhancement:** Acres of forest treated to improve wildlife and fish habitat. Threatened and endangered species that will benefit from project activities should be included in the narrative accomplishments.
- **Wildlife Habitat Enhancement:** Miles of riparian forest treated to improve wildlife and fish habitat. Threatened and endangered species that will benefit from project activities should be included in the narrative accomplishments.

### **Minimum and Maximum Funding:**

The program offers several tiers of support to accommodate a range of project scales and administrative capacity considerations. The minimum funding request per project for all applicants is \$50,000 and the maximum is \$300,000. Cross-boundary projects that span more than one Tribe with corresponding restoration activities on more than one Tribal ownership may be considered for up to \$600,000 per project.

### **Matching Requirements:**

While match is encouraged, the Forest Service will consider a match waiver or reduced match from Federally Recognized Tribes and Alaska Native Corporation/villages applicants. Match may include cash or in-kind contributions of goods, property, services. Match for the LSR grant program must be met by eligible and allowable costs and is subject to match provisions in grant regulations (see Federal Regulations Title 2 Part 200.306 and Subpart E for Cost Principles).

### **Leverage:**

A project proposal should maximize LSR Federal funds by using it to leverage contributions from both Federal (e.g., Bureau of Indian Affairs, Environmental Protection Agency, US Fish and Wildlife Service) and non-Federal entities. Projects that leverage funding from multiple entities will be given priority. All contributions should be clearly identified as to their third-party source and whether the contribution is match or (non-match) leverage funds.

### **Reporting:**

All grant recipients are required to provide an annual report of accomplishments through the Landscape Scale Restoration (also known as [LaSR](#)) database. Accomplishments are also recorded spatially by identifying discrete areas where on the ground implementation will occur during the life of the project. This reporting is in addition to financial and performance reporting required by the grant or cooperative agreement.

### **Additional Information**

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Detailed information about the program and proposal requirements can be found in section 13A [16 USC 2019a] State and Private Forest Landscape-Scale Restoration Program and the Project Narrative Form available on the [Forest Service Landscape Scale Restoration Website](#). Applicants are encouraged to contact the appropriate Forest Service Regional Office during project development to ensure the project aligns with the program purpose, eligibility, and other criteria. See list of [Forest Service regional Contacts](#).

### **Available Funding:**

The Landscape Scale Restoration Grant Program Request for Proposals for Federally Recognized Tribes and Alaska Native Corporation anticipates approximately \$2 million will be made available for projects in FY23, pending appropriations from Congress.

### **Grant Time Frame:**

Grants or agreements should be completed within 3 years from when the grant is awarded.

### **Registration in System for Award Management (SAM):**

Please allow at least two (2) weeks to process a new registration or renew an existing registration in SAM. All prospective awardees must be registered in SAM: <https://sam.gov/content/home>.

### **Informational Webinar:**

The Forest Service will host an informational webinar **Thursday, September 8, 2022**. Please visit the [Forest Service Landscape Scale Restoration Website](#) for more details.

## Proposal Submission and Review:

Tribes are strongly encouraged to contact and work with a Forest Service Region (e.g., Tribal Relations Program Manager/Liaison/Analyst and LSR Program Manager) during the application process and before submission. Regional staff can assist with navigating LSR program authorities, eligible activities, allowable costs and match, and other federal financial assistance questions. A list of Forest Service regional staff is included below under [Contacts](#).

All proposals must be submitted to the following email address: [SM.FS.LSR@usda.gov](mailto:SM.FS.LSR@usda.gov) by **December 15, 2022**, along with a cc to the appropriate Forest Service regional staff (Tribal Relations Program Manager/Liaison/Analyst or LSR Program Manager).

To ensure the grant review process is transparent and fair, the Forest Service will establish a national review panel that consists of Forest Service representatives from the Washington Office and the Regions.

## Submission Dates for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023:

- We encourage applicants to contact and request technical assistance from a Forest Service staff person before proposal submission. This includes an optional review of your proposal narrative. Those interested in an optional review would submit a draft proposal to the relevant Forest Service regional contact by **October 30, 2022**. Regional staff can assist with navigating LSR program authorities, eligible activities, allowable costs and match, and other federal financial assistance questions.
- Final applications must be submitted to the LSR program email address [SM.FS.LSR@usda.gov](mailto:SM.FS.LSR@usda.gov) by 6 p.m. **Eastern, December 15, 2022**, with a copy provided to the regional Forest Service staff e.g., Regional Tribal Program Manager/Liaison/Analyst Liaisons and LSR Program Manager listed below.

## Proposal Evaluation:

Projects will be evaluated by a Federal team of Forest Service representatives based on the extent to which the project proposal contributes to the following criteria:

- 10 Points: Landscape natural resource values of importance (environmental, social, and economic) and extent to which the project contributes to national program objectives described in the law as:
  - Reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire
  - Improve fish and wildlife habitats, including for threatened and endangered species
  - Maintain or improve water quality and watershed function
  - Mitigate invasive species, insect infestation, and disease
  - Improve important forest ecosystems
  - Measure ecological and economic benefit including air quality and soil quality and productivity.
- 20 Points: Priorities identified in a science-based restoration strategy (e.g., Tribal Forest Plan).
- 20 Points: Cross boundary collaboration and complementary landscape restoration initiatives, strategies, and plans and/or contributes to restoration efforts on adjacent or adjoining ownerships.
- 20 Points: Proposed activities and amount of funding or other resources leveraged by Federal (e.g., BIA, EPA, FWS) and non-Federal entities. Projects that leverage resources from multiple entities will be given priority.
- 20 Points: Measurable outcomes on the landscape (e.g., acres treated to reduce or mitigate hazardous fuels, acres treated to improve wildlife and fish habitat).
- 10 Points: Sustainability of outcomes, including the extent to which project positions the applicant to achieve longer term restoration goals and/or results in skills and capabilities that extend beyond the life of the project.

## Resources

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- [USDA Forest Service Landscape Scale Restoration Website](#)
- [Code of Federal Regulations Part 200—Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#)
- [Grants.gov Opportunity USDA-FS-2023-LSR-Tribes](#)
- [The Principal Laws Relating to USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry Programs](#)
- [LSR Project Planning Tools](#)

## Contacts

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**National LSR Email Inbox:** [SM.FS.LSR@usda.gov](mailto:SM.FS.LSR@usda.gov)

**Eastern Region** (CT, DC, DE, IA, IL, IN, MA, MD, ME, MI, MN, MO, NH, NJ, NY, OH, PA, RI, VT, WI, WV)

- Sherri Wormstead, Eastern Region S&PF LSR Program Lead: 603-742-6712, [sherri.j.wormstead@usda.gov](mailto:sherri.j.wormstead@usda.gov)
- Sierra Dawkins, Acting Tribal Relations Program Lead: 708-373-6259, [sierra.dawkins@usda.gov](mailto:sierra.dawkins@usda.gov)

**Intermountain Regions** (ID, NV, UT)

- Jennifer Hensiek, Northern and Intermountain Regions LSR Program Lead: 406-529-8159, [jennifer.hensiek@usda.gov](mailto:jennifer.hensiek@usda.gov)
- Barbara Long, Intermountain Tribal Relations Program Manager: [barbara.long2@usda.gov](mailto:barbara.long2@usda.gov)

**Northern Region** (MT, ND)

- Jennifer Hensiek, Northern and Intermountain Regions LSR Program Lead: 406-529-8159, [jennifer.hensiek@usda.gov](mailto:jennifer.hensiek@usda.gov)

**Rocky Mountain Region** (CO, KS, NE, SD, WY)

- Laura Wolf, Rocky Mountain Region LSR Program Lead: 720-830-6407, [laura.wolf@usda.gov](mailto:laura.wolf@usda.gov)
- Sylvia Bierman, Director S&PF Cooperative Forestry and Tribal Relations: 303-304-0948, [sylvia.bierman@usda.gov](mailto:sylvia.bierman@usda.gov)

**Southwestern Region** (AZ, NM)

- Laura Moser, Southwestern Region LSR Program Lead: 928-607-6040, [laura.moser@usda.gov](mailto:laura.moser@usda.gov)

**Pacific Southwest Region** (CA, HI)

- Stacey Clark, LSR Program Lead: 707-562-8916, [stacey.clark@usda.gov](mailto:stacey.clark@usda.gov)
- Rowena Yeahquo, Tribal Relations Specialist: 707-980-0390, [rowena.yeahquo@usda.gov](mailto:rowena.yeahquo@usda.gov)

**Pacific Northwest** (OR, WA)

- Karl Dalla Rosa, LSR Program Contact (Tribal and S&PF Point of Contact): 971-804-3626, [karl.dallarosa@usda.gov](mailto:karl.dallarosa@usda.gov)

**Southern Region** (AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, OK, PR, SC, TN, TX, VA)

- Paul Gellerstedt, Southern Region LSR Program Lead: 470-585-9154, [paul.gellerstedt@usda.gov](mailto:paul.gellerstedt@usda.gov)
- Lexie Rue-Harris, Tribal Relations Program, 479-508-7553, [lexie.rue-harris@usda.gov](mailto:lexie.rue-harris@usda.gov)

**Alaska Region**

- Priscilla Morris, LSR Program Lead: 252-725-7524, [priscilla.morris@usda.gov](mailto:priscilla.morris@usda.gov)
- Kevin Hood, Acting Tribal Relations Program Manager: 907-586-7829, [kevin.e.hood@usda.gov](mailto:kevin.e.hood@usda.gov)