



USDA Forest Service Landscape Scale Restoration Grant Program Fiscal Year 2024 Request for Proposals for Federally Recognized Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations

Submit proposals to SM.FS.LSR@usda.gov by December 15, 2023.

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Introduction

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 trust forested lands in the United States exceed 19 million acres.¹ 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, 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

¹ Source: [Assessment of Indian Forests and Forest Management in the United States: Executive Summary 2023, Intertribal Timber Council](#)

in 25 USC 5304 (l)² may also apply at the request of a Federally Recognized Tribe (these require a letter of support from the relevant Tribe).

Eligibility

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 by the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act 25 USC 5304 and operating within the United States, or its territories, are eligible to submit proposals.

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. 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 forest 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 Code of Federal Regulations (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.

² [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.

- Wildfire fuels management including thinning, cultural 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 construction and 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.
- Note: Equipment purchases require 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

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.

Amount of Awards:

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.

Match:

All Federal grant funds are to be matched at least equally (dollar for dollar) with non-Federal match which may include allowable and allocable in-kind contributions (i.e., personnel salary, fringe, and indirect costs; services, materials, supplies, equipment donations; and volunteer assistance), and private and public (non-Federal) monetary contributions.

Cash match is from the applicant's budget, such as personnel salary, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, and supplies, or cash provided by another party. The source of the cash match cannot be derived from another Federal award or grant. In-kind match is a non-cash contribution of value.

A non-Federal entity's in-kind match must meet the following criteria:

- Verifiable from the non-Federal entity's records
- Not included as contributions for any other Federal award.
- Necessary and reasonable for accomplishment of project or program objectives.
- Allowable under subpart E of 2 CFR 200.
- Not paid by the Federal Government under another Federal award, except where the Federal statute authorizing a program specifically provides that Federal funds made available for such program can be applied to matching or cost sharing requirements of other Federal programs.
- Provided for in the approved budget when required by the Federal awarding agency; and

- Conform to other provisions of 2 CFR 200, as applicable.

Matching funds must be derived entirely from non-Federal sources unless expressly authorized in law by the other Federal program. For example, BIA (not Forest Service) 638 funds may be used as match.

Leverage:

A project proposal should maximize Landscape Scale Restoration 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. Non match leverage includes construction, research, or other activities not allowable under the Landscape Scale Restoration authority and/or funded by a different source that does not meet the Federal match requirement of 1-to-1 but contributes to the project objectives.

Reporting:

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 occurring during the life of the project.

This reporting is in addition to financial and performance reporting required by the grant or cooperative agreement. Financial and performance reports may be submitted quarterly, semi-annually, or annually. Reports are due 30 days from the period end.

Additional Information

Detailed information about the program can be found in section 13A [16 USC 2019a] State and Private Forest Landscape-Scale Restoration Program. For proposal requirements and scoring criteria, see the [Proposal Evaluation section](#) of this document and the Project Narrative fillable pdf 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 Contacts section of this document](#).

Available Funding:

The Federal Government's obligation under this program is contingent upon the availability of funds.

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):

All grantees must have an active registration at sam.gov and maintain active registration throughout the life of the award. Please allow at least two (2) weeks to process a new registration or renew an existing registration in [SAM: https://sam.gov](https://sam.gov).

Informational Webinar:

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

Key Submission Dates for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024:

- 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: Please submit a draft proposal to the relevant Forest Service regional contact by **October 30, 2023**. Regional staff can assist with navigating LSR program authorities, eligible activities, allowable costs and match, and other federal financial assistance questions. See list of [Forest Service regional Contacts](#).
- Final applications must be submitted to the LSR program email address SM.FS.LSR@usda.gov by **6 p.m. Eastern, December 15, 2023**, with a copy provided to the regional Forest Service staff e.g., Regional Tribal Relations Program Manager and LSR Program Manager listed below.

Proposal Submission and Review:

Tribes are strongly encouraged to contact and work with the relevant Forest Service Region (e.g., Tribal Relations Program Manager 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](#).

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.

Proposal Evaluation:

Projects will be evaluated by a Federal team of Forest Service representatives based on the following evaluation criteria (100 points). You may use the LSR project narrative fillable pdf or another format that includes sections for the following:

- 10 Points: Landscape natural resource values of importance (environmental, social, and economic) and how to which the project contributes to one or more of the 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

- [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-2024-LSR-National-Tribal
- [The Principal Laws Relating to USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry Programs](#)
- [LSR Project Planning Tool](#)

Contacts for Further Information

National LSR Email Inbox: 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, LSR Program Lead: 603-742-6712, sherri.j.wormstead@usda.gov
- Paul Cloutier, Tribal Relations Program Manager, with focus on CT, DC, DE, IA, Southern IL, IN, MA, MD, ME, MO, NH, NJ, NY, OH, PA, RI, VT, and WV: 970-792-5300, gene.cloutier@usda.gov
- Kira Kaufmann, Tribal Relations Program Manager, with focus on Northern IL, MI, MN, and WI: 715-401-2610, kira.kaufmann@usda.gov

Intermountain Regions (ID, NV, UT)

- Jennifer Hensiek, LSR Program Lead: 406-529-8159, jennifer.hensiek@usda.gov

Northern Region (MT, ND)

- Jennifer Hensiek, LSR Program Lead: 406-529-8159, jennifer.hensiek@usda.gov
- Christine Bradbury, Tribal Relations Program Manager: 208-476-8227, christine.bradbury@usda.gov
- John Kinsner, Tribal Relations Program Manager: 406-253-0699, john.kinsner@usda.gov

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

- Amie Anderton, LSR Program Lead: 208-484-8774, amie.anderton@usda.gov
- Jon Vladimirtsev, Tribal Relations Program Manager: 307-713-3000, jon.vladimirtsev@usda.gov

Southwestern Region (AZ, NM)

- Loren Ingalls, LSR Program Lead: 541-523-1305, loren.ingalls@usda.gov

- Laura Moser, Cooperative Forestry Program Manager: 928-607-6040, laura.moser@usda.gov
- Elizabeth Bigelow, Tribal Relations Program Manager: elizabeth.e.bigelow@usda.gov

Pacific Southwest Region (CA, HI)

- Stacey Clark, LSR Program Lead: 707-562-8916, stacey.clark@usda.gov
- Rowena Yeahquo, Tribal Relations Program Manager: 707-980-0390, rowena.yeahquo@usda.gov

Pacific Northwest (OR, WA)

- Lisa Romano, LSR Program Lead: 541-207-6815, lisa.romano@usda.gov
- Kristi Harper, Regional Tribal Relations Program Manager: kristine.harper@usda.gov

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

- Paul Gellerstedt, LSR Program Lead: 470-585-9154, paul.gellerstedt@usda.gov
- Lexie Rue-Harris, Tribal Relations Program Manager: 479-508-7553, lexie.rue-harris@usda.gov

Alaska Region

- Michael Shephard, LSR Program Lead: 907-743-9451, michael.shephard@usda.gov
- Kevin Hood, Tribal Relations Program Manager: 907-586-7829, kevin.e.hood@usda.gov

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