

State and Private Forestry

FY 2012 Western Competitive Resource Allocation

Instructions to Applicants

OVERVIEW

The State and Private Forestry (S&PF) organization of the USDA Forest Service reaches across the boundaries of National Forests to States, Tribes, communities, and non-industrial private landowners. Each State uses the support afforded by S&PF assistance to address forest conservation, protection, and enhancement needs.

The success of S&PF is based on the assumption that the collective efforts of Federal and State agencies, Tribes, organizations, communities, and individuals will be most effective if federal resources are focused on issues and landscapes of national importance and prioritized on activities that promise meaningful outcomes on the ground. This framework for successful natural resource enhancement is captured as **focus + priority = outcome** and is embodied in the Statewide Forest Resource Assessments and Strategies. This competitive grant process involves state forestry agencies in selecting proposals that meet this standard. The process is an effective means of ensuring that federal S&PF dollars are invested in projects that enhance landscapes, address issues of national importance that are identified and supported locally, and provide meaningful, lasting, and measurable outcomes. National guidance and resource documents including draft outcomes, objectives, and performance measures, are available online at <http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/redesign/>.

FY 2012 PROCESS

For FY 2012, 15% of the S&PF Western regional allocation will be dedicated to funding projects selected through this competitive grant process. The net available **will include** funds in the Forest Stewardship, Urban and Community Forestry, Forest Health Management-Cooperative Lands, Forest Health Management-Cooperative Lands (National Fire Plan), State Fire Assistance, and State Fire Assistance (National Fire Plan) programs. The Competitive Resource Allocation **will not include** funds from Volunteer Fire Assistance, Forest Legacy, Economic Action, and Federal Lands Forest Health Management programs.

Project proposals will be submitted by States and then screened and evaluated by the FY 2012 Competitive Grant Team. This team is made up of 6 State members representing different states and resource specialties as well as 6 Federal members representing a variety of programmatic, disciplinary, and geographic areas. Recommendations from this team will be considered by the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition (WFLC) in the process of making final funding recommendations. A list of recommended projects will be forwarded to the USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry Deputy Chief by the WFLC. Final competitive funding allocation will be distributed to States by their respective USDA Forest Service Region.

Projects that engage states outside of the WFLC area will be evaluated in their entirety through one regional process (West, Northeast, or South). Collaboration is encouraged early and often to determine into which process the cross-regional project will go, develop the project, and keep all engaged parties aware of its status. If a cross-regional project is to be evaluated through the WFLC process, it should be submitted by a western State (lead) as a multi-state project. It will be reviewed and scored alongside all other single- and multi-state projects and included in the list of recommended projects forwarded to the Deputy Chief. Final competitive funding allocation will be distributed to States by their respective USDA Forest Service Region.

The following set of instructions create a framework for Western states to identify and articulate how their proposed projects respond to the **focus + priority = outcome** framework as well as one or more of the three State and Private Forestry National Themes.

GENERAL PROJECT ELIGIBILITY AND SIDEBARS

- **STATE FORESTRY AGENCIES ARE THE ONLY ELIGIBLE LEAD APPLICANT.**
- States are limited to submitting 4 single-state project proposals and can serve as lead applicant on only one multi-state project proposal.
- There is no limit to the number of multi-state projects in which a state can participate as co-applicant.
- Each single project proposal (including multi-state projects) will be limited to a \$300,000 request.
- No state will receive more than 15% of the total funds available to the West through this process.
- Projects can indicate a multi-year implementation timeframe, up to three years.
- Projects that include collaboration among multiple entities are encouraged.
- Collaboration and coordination with the USDA Forest Service and other public land management agencies is encouraged; however, grant awards can only be used for work on non-federal (including Tribal) land.

PROJECT PROPOSAL CRITERIA

All project proposals will be screened and evaluated based on the following:

Screening Criteria

Meets the general project eligibility and sidebars	Yes = Eligible	No = Ineligible
Meets the 1:1 non-federal match requirement ¹	Yes = Eligible	No = Ineligible
Clearly addresses one or more of the S&PF National Themes and associated outcomes	Yes = Eligible	No = Ineligible

Evaluation Criteria²

	2 pts – High	1 pts – Medium	0 pts - Absent
<i>Project Abstract</i>	Provides a succinct and relevant overview; could easily be used to communicate critical elements and value of the project.	Summarizes the project but has little communication value.	No project abstract provided.

	6-8 pts – High	4-5 pts – Medium	1-3 pts - Low
<i>Project Description</i>	Clearly describes project need, goals and objectives, all work to be completed, and how grant and leveraged funds are to be used. Provides clear measures of success, defines deliverables, and is not open ended. Clearly contributes to achieving one or more Statewide Strategies and one or more S&PF National Themes.	Goals and objectives are present, but underdeveloped and/or link to Statewide Strategies is unclear. Project activities and how grant and leveraged funds will be used are provided, but may lack detail. Clear project deliverables are provided, though how they are measurable may be less clear.	Little to no information is provided as to why the project is a priority, what work is to be completed using grant and leveraged funds, what the project deliverables are, and/or measures of success.

(1) The allocated grant amount must be matched in full and along program authorities by the recipient using non-federally funded sources, except as authorized for the Insular Areas in 48USC1469a and Amendment of Subsection (d). Matching requirements for dollars awarded through the competitive allocation process may be met through consolidation as currently handled through consolidated payment grants.

(2) Only full point scores will be assigned; no zeroes will be assigned unless a field is left blank. The maximum *total score* any one application

	5 pts – High	3-4 pts – Medium	1-2 pts – Low
Leverage	Project maximizes leveraged resources (financial and in-kind) and outcomes from multiple entities that share the S&PF mission and support state capacity needs. Builds on Box 7 to clearly describe what resources are contributed by whom and what they will be used for.	Project leverages resources and outcomes from other entities. Connection to S&PF mission and state capacity needs is present but not extensive. What each contributor’s leveraged resources consists of or what these will be used for is less clear.	Project has little leveraged support and outcome potential from entities that support S&PF mission or state capacity needs. What each contributor’s leveraged resources consists of or what these will be used for is not described or unclear.
Collaboration	Builds on Box 7 to clearly describe how partners were engaged during project development, and how they will be engaged in achievement of mutual outcomes identified in the State Resource Assessment and Strategy.	Collaboration with partners is identifiable but contribution to project proposal or commitment to achievement of mutual outcomes is limited. Discussion of how partners have been engaged is limited.	Some collaboration appears to exist but is not a meaningful element of the proposal. Discussion of how partners have been engaged is unclear or missing.
Program Integration	Clearly integrates S&PF and/or other programs in a meaningful, complementary, and synergistic way that goes beyond traditional relationships.	Integrates S&PF and/or other programs. The complementary role and contribution of each program is less clear or novel.	Does not appear to integrate S&PF and/or other programs in a complementary or meaningful way (business as usual).
Meaningful Scale	Scale of the project is clearly based on and is appropriate for the outcomes to be achieved; builds on description in Box 7.	Scale of the project appears to be only partially based on or appropriate for the outcomes to be achieved.	Scale of the project does not appear to be based on or appropriate for the outcomes to be achieved.
Sustainability of Outcomes	Project clearly results in skills and enhanced capacity that extend beyond the life of the project itself. The project will be held up as an example, is replicable, and provides value to others beyond common / typical approaches.	Project may result in some limited skills and enhanced capacity building beyond the life of the project. Replicability and/or value to others may be questionable.	Unclear how project will create lasting skills and capacity; would be difficult to replicate elsewhere.

DETAILED PROJECT PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

Proposal Form: All blocks are fill-in enabled and character locked. Applicants must fit all information into the allotted character space. Proposals that have been modified for any reason will be considered ineligible by the review committee. Any attachments or additional documents will not be considered by the review committee. Single- and multi-state proposal forms are available in PDF format online at http://www.wflcweb.org/spf_grants_12/. A current version of Adobe Reader is required to open and complete the proposal form; the software is free and available online at <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>. Proposals may be re-named, saved, and should be submitted via email.

Proposal Instructions by Box Number:

- **Filename.** Enter the single keyword that will be used in the proposal filename to identify the project. The state abbreviation will be automatically generated by information entry in the applicant information box.
- **Box 1- Applicant Information.** Enter the State Forestry Agency applicant (and co-applicants in the multi-state form) contact information.
- **Box 2-Project Information.** Enter a descriptive title (sufficient to identify the location and nature of work being proposed); partnering agencies/organizations (eligible entities include other State Forestry Agencies, nonprofit

organizations, academic institutions, Tribal Governments, Local Governments, other federal agencies³, individuals, and private businesses if not excluded by law, regulation, or policy); and project location (states, counties, Congressional districts, and Forest Service Regions in which the project will occur). Entering names of counties and congressional districts within which work will occur is optional.

- **Box 3-Project Duration.** Applicants are encouraged to submit projects that are designed, implemented, and monitored over a time frame that suits the project need, up to a maximum of three years.
- **Box 4-National Relevance.** Check one or more boxes indicating which of the three S&PF National Themes will be addressed through this project.
- **Box 5- Project Abstract.** Clearly summarize the proposed project in 1,000 characters or less.
- **Box 6- Project Budget.** Enter all project expenses by funding source (grant request, applicant and co-applicant, non-federal contributor, other contributor). All qualifying match and additional resources (leverage) should be included. The totals will calculate automatically. Totals for 'funds requested' and 'match' at the top of Page 1 will also calculate automatically based on what is entered here. States have the option of matching through consolidation with non-project funds. Doing so will not affect the score of the application.
- **Box 7-Project Description.** Provide a clear and detailed description of the project, including background information, need (issue/problem statement), goals and objectives, all work to be completed (how grant and leveraged funds are to be used), and measures of success. **Directly relate the project to relevant Statewide Forest Resource Assessments and Strategies.**
- **Box 8- Leverage.** Enter all project partners (applicant, co-applicants, federal, and non-federal) and their respective contribution (financial or in-kind) to the project. The total will calculate automatically. Do not include non-project-related applicant contributions (e.g., CPG match) or grant funds requested. Total leverage may exceed qualifying match identified in the project budget, but no new funds should be entered here that are not included in the project budget. In the narrative space allowed, describe how the project will leverage resources and outcomes from entities that share the S&PF mission and support state capacity needs as identified in relevant **Statewide Forest Resource Assessments and Strategies.**
- **Box 9-Collaboration.** Describe the contributions each partner has made toward project development and will make during the life of the proposed project, and their depth of commitment to the achievement of mutual outcomes as identified in relevant **Statewide Forest Resource Assessments and Strategies.**
- **Box 10- Program Integration.** Describe how the project integrates S&PF and/or other programs in a meaningful and complementary way that goes beyond traditional relationships to achieve project outcomes as identified in relevant **Statewide Forest Resource Assessments and Strategies.**
- **Box 11- Meaningful Scale.** Describe how the scale of the project is appropriate for and will facilitate the achievement of the desired outcomes as identified in relevant **Statewide Forest Resource Assessments and Strategies.**
- **Box 12- Sustainability of Outcomes.** Describe how the project will result in skills and capabilities that will extend beyond the life of the project itself as well as how the project will or could be replicated in other areas.

DEADLINES AND IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- All project proposals must be received by 5:00 p.m., PST on **August 26, 2011.**
- It may be very helpful for applicants to read the reviews of last years grants and read successful proposals from 2011. For more information see http://www.wflcweb.org/spf_grants_11/
- For additional information see:
http://www.wflcenter.org/spf_grants_12/webinar1.pdf
- Send electronic versions as pdf files to:
John Melvin: john.melvin@fire.ca.gov if Urban & Community Forestry
Jeff Calvert: jeff.calvert@fire.ca.gov for Forest Stewardship
Tom Smith: tom.smith@fire.ca.gov if Forest Health

(3) Collaboration with other federal agencies is allowable and resources may be leveraged, but contributions do not count towards required match.