



WESTERN FORESTRY LEADERSHIP COALITION

FY 2024 Landscape Scale Restoration (LSR) Frequently Asked Questions

Last Updated: 10-02-2023

Q: If I am applying for a Tribal or Alaskan Native Corporation project, where should I apply?

A: There is a separate tribal process available. You can apply through the western process (or other applicable region if in the northeast or south) competing against all other eligible applicants OR you may apply through the tribal specific process. The Request for Proposals for Tribes is available on grants.gov.

Q: What are the applicants' first steps?

A: Look over the guidance documents on the [LSR webpage](#). Contact your state forestry agency, as they may have specific information about their state process. You can email lvsnak@westernforesters.org for contact information on the state forestry agency associated with your project area. They, along with the USDA Forest Service regional LSR contacts, are great resources.

Q: How does the Forest Service provide assistance?

A: The Forest Service helps with outreach efforts, answers questions regarding program authorities, can review application drafts, and acts as the points of contact in Regions to work with tribes opting for the separate tribal process. Post-award the Forest Service has a project oversight role: reviewing progress in regards to deliverables, timing and funding, ensuring compliance with federal regulations and program authorities, and reviewing/approves annual reports and project modifications.

Q: Can federal funds be a match?

A: No, federal funds cannot be used as match. Any federal funding must be designated as non-match leverage funds clearly within the budget and activities.

Q: For multi-state projects: Is it \$300,000 max for the total project request or \$300,000 max request per state/applicant? Would a two-state project be capped at \$300,000 or \$600,000?

A: The cap would be \$300,000 per state/applicant for the multi-state project. So a two-state project could receive \$600,000 across both states (\$300,000 per state) if neither of those states hit the 15% cap.

Q: With an estimated 15% cap of \$600K (depending on total funding for the West), suppose a state/applicant submits 5 proposals that all rank high enough to receive funding. How would the funding be awarded across those projects?

A: If the sum of the 5 projects did not exceed \$600K (or whatever the 15% cap of the total for the West ends up being), the projects would all receive funding. If the projects in total exceed \$600,000 (or whatever the 15% cap ends up being), the top-ranking projects would be funded and projects ranking lower would not receive funding.

Q: Do tribal applications count towards the state's 15% cap, whether they are submitted through the state agency in the western process (as opposed to the separate tribal process in grants.gov)?

A: Yes, tribal applications count towards the 15% per state funding cap. The 15% cap applies to the state as a geographic area and therefore applies to all projects therein in order to ensure funds have a chance to be distributed across landscapes in the West. This is specific to the western process. Please see the tribal process RFP on grants.gov for the guidelines for that process.

Q: How would a project that implements a practice on the ground based on previous findings from ongoing research (but which is NOT research itself) be viewed if the research entity is involved as a partner doing the monitoring using only eligible non-federal, non-match funds?

A: A research entity could be included as a partner, with their contribution included as non-match leverage. Any research items included in a project description MUST explicitly outline their funding source as being from non-federal funds.

Q: What size of landscape is expected for these projects?

A: There is no set geographic size expected.

Q: Do LSR projects have to be forestry-oriented or are other vegetative types okay?

A: If LSR projects are clearly linked to the state Forest Action Plan (or an equivalent state-wide restoration strategy) and to one or more Landscape Objectives, and are in line with the Cooperative Forestry program authorities, then projects could incorporate elements that might be relevant to other vegetation types. Be sure that the project abides by the definitions of “nonindustrial private forest land or State forest land” as outlined in the National LSR Manual.

Q: What tribal land qualifies?

A: There has been a determination from USDA that Tribal trust lands are eligible. Tribal land owned in fee simple are also eligible.

Q: What qualifies as an ‘equivalent state-wide restoration strategy’?

A: As per the National LSR Manual, an equivalent restoration strategy:

- is complete or substantially complete;
- is for a multi-year period;
- covers non-industrial private forest land or state forest land;
- is accessible by wood processing infrastructure; and
- is based on the best available science.

Applications that use an equivalent restoration strategy should address how the strategy is equivalent by addressing these factors within their application.

Q: How should a Tribal entity go about applying through a state agency?

A: Tribal entities should contact the state in which the project is located to run their application through the state agency (total application limit per state is 5). The separate tribal process is also available for those that wish to apply directly to the Forest Service and to only compete against other tribal applications.

Q: Would National Forest staff have any role in developing proposals or administering the grant?

A: National Forest staff can definitely play a role. Communication early can help demonstrate collaboration or other proximate projects that can help strengthen the proposal. Grant administration will happen at the State and Private Forestry Office in your Forest Service Region.

Q: Must Tribes be federally recognized to apply?

A: Only federally recognized Tribes may apply.

Q: What do I do if the login information provided to the state forestry agency appears to not be working?

A: If you are unable to login to the forestrygrants.org portal, a lockout may have occurred. After three failed login attempts, the system security locks the login. Sometimes this happens through no fault of the user trying to login, but merely due to the high security settings of the site. Please contact lvisnak@westernforesters.org if you are having any issues with your grant portal login.

Q: Can LSR funds or match funds be used for meeting costs for collaboratives?

A: Post award meetings for the parties that will be performing the work to plan/coordinate can be covered by LSR or match funds. The meeting space and facilitation are acceptable covered costs, but not lunch. If counting payroll or time towards match, you must make sure this time/cost is well documented. There must be outcomes outside of the meeting itself, meaning that the collaborative meetings are not the sole focus or purpose of the proposal.

- Non-match leverage funds can be used for any other meeting costs (such as lunch).

Q: Can cost-share or landowner reimbursement be done under LSR?

A: The State and Private Forestry authorities for this program are: Forest Stewardship, Rural Forestry Assistance, Urban and Community Forestry, Forest Health, and Cooperative Fire; all as included in the [Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act](#). Under the Rural Forestry Assistance program, Federal funds (and the match for those funds) may be used to carry out a range of conservation practices (listed in the CFAA) on private forest land; for partners or contractors to carry out the work on private forest lands.

- The Federal funds (and associated match) cannot go directly to the private landowner, e.g., the funds cannot be used to cost-share individual forest management practices with individual landowners; and cannot be paid to, reimbursed, or granted directly to the private landowners. All 1:1 match for the Federal funds must meet these same requirements.
 - Note: There is additional information about eligible activities for Forest Stewardship and Rural Forestry assistance (which includes State Forestry Assistance) in the [Forest Stewardship Program National Standards and Guidelines](#).
- If you were planning to pay the landowners directly, then that is not allowable under LSR authorities. Here are a few options to consider:
 - Revise the project application so that, instead of funding going to landowners, funding goes to partners/contractors to carry out the work on private forest lands OR
 - Pay for that component of the project with some other funding source (funding beyond the 1:1 required match, such as additional non-match leveraged funds) OR
 - Remove that component, and associated administrative, travel, and other expenses for the sub-grants, from the project application.

Q: Could a commitment of certain volunteer hours satisfy match hours alone as in-kind, or does there need to be a certain amount of cash match as well?

A: While the source of match and non-match leveraged funds should be specified, and costs should be well detailed, there is no minimum cash match required. With the exception of the Pacific Islands, the LSR statute and proposed National LSR Manual specifies, “a grant recipient shall be required to match the Federal grant funds 1:1 from non-Federal sources with funds or in-kind contributions.” An in-kind match may be in the form of services, supplies, real property, and equipment. The value of the service may be used for the matching requirements, if the services are necessary, reasonable, and allowable.

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](#)).

Q: How do you verify the rural eligibility requirement of a project?

A: Projects must achieve on-the-ground outcomes on rural forest land, which is also considered nonindustrial private forest land or State forest land. To check if your project matches the rural eligibility requirement, please check this [website](#).

Q: Are the requirements for procurement, contracting, and reporting less strict in the LSR grant process than the Community Wildfire Defense Program (CWDG)?

A: This program, like CWDG is governed by the CFR, and while it does not have the quarterly reporting requirements that CWDG has, LSR does require an annual report of accomplishments through the LSR database, known as LaSR. Equipment requires pre-approval by the awarding agency office (Forest Service Region) and specific tracking requirements for any planned equipment purchases of \$5,000 or more. Applicants will need to mention this approval within the application, which will later be verified. Purchase of equipment less than \$5,000 is allowable without prior approval by the awarding agency office and equipment approvals are only granted on equipment associated with the restoration of landscapes. The LSR program is not designed to upgrade/replace equipment that is outdated unless associated with a new restoration-based project.

Q: Is there a recommended project time frame? Can you have a multi-year project

A: While LSR projects are fully funded in a single year, the fiscal year in which the project was submitted, the applicants have a multi year timeline with a three year limit to complete their project.

Q: Is the number of years from when the grant is awarded or when the money is received?

A: The LSR application process is a one-year cycle. Applicants will receive funding within the fiscal year they applied to. After an application is approved by the Washington Office to receive funding you will be asked to fill out further grant paperwork. Once that is complete, the final grant agreement will specify the exact end date.

Q: If an applicant is awarded funds in one year, does that limit opportunities to receive funding in future years?

A: No. Being awarded in one year would not preclude future year applications if the capacity exists to take on additional projects. Projects can also be built upon in future years by

applying for phase 2 of the project to expand the impact on the landscape. Please indicate in the application if phase 2 of a previously awarded project is being applied for.

Q: What is the role of SPF authorities? Is this who designates the State Forestry Contact?

A: LSR projects must abide by the State and Private Forestry authorities: Forest Stewardship, Rural Forestry Assistance, Urban and Community Forestry, Forest Health Protection, and Community and Private Land Fire Assistance (State Fire Assistance). These, along with grants and agreements rules within the CFR, dictate which types of activities are allowed under LSR. The State Forester generally designates who among their staff is the LSR point of contact.

REMINDER!

Please be sure to consult your USDA Forest Service Region and WFLC staff early and often in the proposal process to ensure that your project meets all the requirements (before submitting applications through the online portal).

Please see the Forest Service [LSR webpage](#) or Western Forestry Leadership Coalition [LSR webpage](#).