



Focusing of Federal Assistance
Forestry Innovation Grants
FY 2005 Request for Proposals



Background

The conservation, restoration, and stewardship of trees and forests in the Northeast are critically important to sustaining the health of our watersheds and communities, and the well being of our citizens. Sustaining the public benefits of forests, while maintaining management options for private landowners, is critical. More and more we are discovering new ways in which trees and forests can help alleviate a broad diversity of environmental and public health concerns and how cooperative forestry programs and the practice of forestry can be used to address these concerns.

Since 1999, the Northeastern Area (NA) and the Northeastern Area Association of State Foresters (NAASF) have worked in partnership to target or “focus” federal assistance to create innovative projects and demonstrate new approaches to forest issues. Funds from a range of cooperative programs have been used to support over 150 projects across all twenty NA States and the District of Columbia. These efforts have brought increased attention to watershed protection and restoration, conservation education, forest health, management of the growing urban/rural interface and the unique needs of communities within inner cities. In addition, States and private partners have demonstrated how to address emerging or persistent forest issues in more holistic or integrated ways. Focusing of federal assistance produces some clear benefits.

- *Shows a clear connection between funding and results*
- *Targets National or Regional Priorities on issues inadequately addressed or needing more attention or emphasis than provided by existing programs*
- *Enables States to Implement Projects that reinforce Cooperative Programs*
- *Expands Partnerships and cross disciplinary projects*
- *Facilitates sharing of Accomplishments*

Grant Themes and Funding

Beginning in FY 2004, NA and NAASF consolidated separate grant solicitations used in the past into a single solicitation in order to reduce grant administration, paperwork and potential confusion for applicants and allow more time for project planning. Greater coordination and integration in the project review and selection process will also help ensure that valuable projects find the funding mix that is most appropriate for successful completion. The Forestry Innovations Grant Program consolidates requests for proposals previously managed separately by Watershed, Focus Funding, and Conservation Education. Conservation Education elements may be incorporated into either of the Theme areas. Total FY 2005 funding for the Forestry Innovation Grants is \$1.2 million, subject to the pending FY 2005 appropriation.

The 2005 Grant Process will solicit project proposals that respond to two primary themes:

- Theme One:** Interdisciplinary Forest Management
Theme Two: Clean Water & Healthy Watersheds

Forestry Innovation Grant Requirements

The following requirements should be considered in developing and submitting a proposal:

- Projects must be located in the 20 Northeastern States or the District of Columbia.
- Projects must identify in which Theme area the applicant wishes their proposal to be considered. In some cases, reviewers may decide to evaluate a highly relevant or integrated proposal in more than one Theme area.
- Projects must address key objectives identified in the appropriate Theme.
- Projects require a 50:50 match from non-federal funding sources. Matching funds can include in-kind services.
- Project timeline is 2 years once a grant is issued.
- Grants require semi-annual progress and final reports.
- Project scope must include providing information for the preparation of Forest Service Project Fact Sheets for public outreach purposes (these will include graphics, maps, and photos) after initial grant award and semiannual updates of progress.
- Proposals must be reviewed first by the State's federal grant coordinator to ensure compliance with OMB regulations.

Who Can Apply?

- ✓ Only the State Foresters may submit project proposals **to NA**. States are strongly encouraged to solicit proposals from other state, local, and private groups and select those to be submitted to NA for consideration.
- ✓ Each State Forester may submit **no more than 2** projects from their respective states **in each Theme Area**. A funding range of \$25,000 to \$100,000 each is anticipated.
- ✓ In addition to submitting two state projects, each State Forester **may also submit or be party to one** multi-state proposal in each Theme area not to exceed \$150,000.
- ✓ State Foresters are encouraged to work with others in their State such as tribes, watershed associations, community organizations, educational institutions, conservation districts, non-profit groups or other partners to identify and develop project proposals.

Funding Decisions

Proposals submitted in each Theme Area will be reviewed and ranked by a Team consisting of specialists from the Forest Service and members or designated representatives of NAASF appropriate for that Theme. In addition to evaluating the quality of the proposals, reviewers will examine the qualifications of the proponent(s) and ensure that the project addresses federal grant eligibility criteria. The review team will use the following criteria to evaluate and rank individual projects.

1. Improves the ability of the State to address a critical forest, watershed, or other environmental issue(s) as identified by State or NA Strategic Plans, EPA Priority Watersheds, or other classification.

2. Provides an approach to conservation, restoration, or stewardship of trees and forests in urban or rural areas that links to on-the-ground environmental results that can be measured, described, and/or predicted as measures of success.
3. Establishes new working relationships with non-traditional partners or significantly enhances existing collaborative projects or relationships.
4. Broadens public understanding of the value of urban and rural forests or advances the use of forestry to solve environmental problems.
5. Generates innovative approaches, tools, and products that can be replicated in other States or Regions.
6. Addresses issues, opportunities, or key objectives identified in Theme Areas.

Timeline

RFP Released: 8/23/04
 Proposals due to State Foresters: 10/28/04
 Proposals due to NA: 11/16/04
 Projects selected: 12/17/04
 Final Announcement of Project Selections Pending FY 2005 Appropriations

Preparing a Proposal

Proposals in excess of 6 pages will not be considered. Proposals may include attachments such as background information, maps, or other information if essential for evaluation purposes. Attachments may not exceed 2 pages. Applicants should consider the evaluation criteria in the development of proposal objectives. If desired, we encourage you to contact NA Specialists or other personnel in Field Offices for assistance in development of these proposals. The submitted proposal must be reviewed prior to submission by a State’s federal grant coordinator to ensure that it meets standard grant and cost-share regulations.

All proposals should include the following:

- Project Title:** An appropriate **brief** title for future reference to the project. This must be the same title used on the Application for Federal Financial Assistance.
- Theme:** Identify one Grant Theme in which the proposal will be evaluated.
- Abstract:** A short summary of the project, limited to 50 words.
- Scope of Work:** A detailed description of the issue/problem to be addressed, objectives of the project, who will be involved, the means by which the objectives will be accomplished, what the project will achieve, how outcomes will be measured, and who will benefit. If appropriate, describe how the project links assessment or education work to on-the-ground improvements or if a product will be produced, describe the deliverable and how it will be distributed to the intended audience.

- Project Location:** Proposals should identify the watershed (s), community, or other appropriate geographic area to which project activities will be targeted and why the area was selected. For watersheds, please include the 8-digit (4th code) or 10 digit (5th Code) number. Please include the Congressional Districts within which activities may be focused. Describe activities that will take place on private vs. public lands.
- Project Applicant:** Identify the entity responsible for conducting the fiscal and performance accountability of the project. The project applicant is the grant recipient.
- Project Lead:** Provide the name(s) and contact information (address, phone, fax, email) of the grant administrator and the staff member who will serve as principal contact(s) for the project.
- Partners:** List and/or describe any significant partners who will be involved and their level of commitment. Do not list partners who will not have a material involvement in the project.
- Time line:** Provide a brief, approximate schedule showing intermediate steps and major milestones. Please indicate if a specific start date is critical.
- Outcomes:** Describe specific indicators that will be used to determine project success and how formal monitoring will be conducted after the life of the grant.
- Budget:** Provide a proposed budget using the attached template. Show primary budgeted activities and matching funds. 50:50 non-federal matching funds are required and can include in-kind contributions of partners in the areas of staff time, work performed, materials and services donated, etc. States may choose to provide Grant funds to other local groups to assist in project accomplishment.
- Recipient:** Specify the name, address, phone number, fax and email of the recipient(s).

Submitting a Proposal

Submit proposals in hard copy by November 16, 2004 to:

Kathryn Maloney, Area Director
 ATTN: Forestry Innovation Grants
 USDA Forest Service
 Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry
 11 Campus Boulevard, Suite 200
 Newtown Square, PA 19073
 FAX: 610-557-4177

OR mwick@fs.fed.us (in Microsoft Word format)

Sample Budget Format

Cost Category	Cost/Unit & Quantity	Federal Request	Cash Match <i>Applicant only</i>	In-kind Match	Total Cost
Personnel:	\$/hour * hours				
Professional:					
Technical					
Clerical:					
Volunteer Labor (value)					
<i>Subtotal</i>					
Fringe Benefits:					
Travel:					
Equipment:	(>\$5,000)				
Supplies:	\$/unit * # units				
Contractual:	Hourly or fixed				
Consultants/Partner Personnel					
Equipment Rental					
<i>Subtotal:</i>					
Indirect Costs:					
TOTAL COSTS:					

(Please translate in-kind contributions to a dollar amount. All costs must be direct costs, where hours and fees can be tracked and charged directly to the project. Indirect cost rates must be certified by federal agency.)



Theme One: Interdisciplinary Forest Management

This theme provides an opportunity to develop and implement projects that enhance or expand the capability of traditional cooperative forestry programs through integration across programmatic boundaries or through addressing a strategic forest need or area. Projects link natural resources management issues in the state with NA & NAASF strategic priorities

Interdisciplinary Forest Management Issues and Opportunities

The following list of issues and opportunities are only intended to provide guidance and generate ideas for the preparation of proposals. These key issues were identified by State Foresters and within program emphasis areas coordinated by the Northeastern Area.

- ❑ **Forest parcelization and fragmentation** (land use change) causing loss of commercial forest acreage and ecosystem integrity.
- ❑ **Protecting and managing critical tree covered landscapes** under pressure for development within the rural-urban intermix, including fire protection and management.
- ❑ **Public understanding and awareness of forestry.**
- ❑ **Exotic invasive forest pests** including outreach and awareness efforts, surveys, inventories, and economic impacts on rural and urban forest resources.
- ❑ **Homeland security issues** such as alternative wood-based energy supplies derived from forest management activities and/or recycling efforts; forest health aerial reconnaissance; and emergency response and recovery capability.

Key Objectives for Interdisciplinary Forest Management Projects

- ❑ To implement cross-functional projects that address emerging forest management issues
- ❑ To link natural resource management issues to innovative solutions
- ❑ To expand partnerships, information networks and program delivery methods

NA Contacts

For questions regarding proposals in Interdisciplinary Forest Management, please contact:

Director of Information Management and Analysis

Susan Lacy: Newtown Square Area Office, 610-557-4134 slacy@fs.fed.us

NA Field Office Representatives

Karen Mollander, Durham Field Office, (New England and New York), 603-868-7694, or E-mail: kmollander@fs.fed.us

John Hazel, Morgantown Field Office, (Mid-Atlantic), 304-285-1540 or E-mail: jhazel@fs.fed.us

Mike Prouty, St. Paul Field Office, (Midwest), 651-649-5276 or E-mail: mprouty@fs.fed.us



Theme Two: **Clean Water & Healthy Watersheds**

Forests are essential to sustaining and restoring watershed health in the Northeastern Area and Clean water is one of our most important forest products. Forests contribute to watershed resilience through water storage, nutrient buffering and filtering sediment and other pollutants. Streamside forests are essential to rivers and shorelines and the fish and wildlife that depend on them. Trees can often serve a critical role in solving watershed problems or protecting water resources in agricultural and urban areas as well. Water is important to people, and addressing watershed problems through cooperative forestry creates opportunities to build new partners from the urban center to the rural landscape.

Watershed Issues and Opportunities

Increasing the ability of forest managers, landowners and citizens to address forest-related water issues and to manage, protect and enhance forests for water supply, water quality and watershed health is essential. The decisions made by individual landowners and communities will affect our ability to sustain the health of our forests and our watersheds in the future. Watersheds also provide an effective context for delivering programs and building partnerships with other agencies and groups. Some of the watershed issues and opportunities that can be addressed include:

- ❑ Clean and safe drinking water is one of the most valued forest commodities. Forest protection, restoration, and stewardship are critical to the sustainability of future drinking water supplies.
- ❑ Watershed health in developing areas is seriously threatened by increasing storm runoff, fragmentation and loss of forests, and a lack of local resource or watershed-based planning. Trees and forests can be integrated in smart-growth strategies and storm water management.
- ❑ Riparian forest buffers and forested wetlands are cost-effective tools for reducing non-point pollution and restoring stream health in agricultural areas.
- ❑ Forest management activities are often evaluated by how well water quality and watershed conditions are protected. Proper use of BMP's to ensure protection of water quality during timber harvests and documenting BMP implementation and performance is critical.
- ❑ Communities and local governments want to be involved in land use decisions and are concerned about the quality of life and sense of place provided by forests and healthy streams.
- ❑ Better understanding and communication of the role of forests in water quality and supply is needed.

Key Objectives for Clean Water & Healthy Watersheds

The overall goal of this Theme is to promote watershed health and restoration through the establishment, restoration and sound stewardship of trees and forests. The Theme encourages taking a targeted watershed approach to assessment, planning, education, and demonstration projects that reduce storm water or flooding, improve air quality, protect water quality, restore aquatic habitat, and reduce pollution. Primary objectives are:

- ❑ To protect and improve drinking water supplies and the management of source water watersheds.
- ❑ To protect and enhance the health of urbanizing watersheds.
- ❑ To use forestry to enhance water quality and restore streams, wetlands, and aquatic habitats in agricultural landscapes.
- ❑ To enhance the quality application of Forestry BMP's and the measurement of their success in protecting water quality.
- ❑ To better understand and communicate the value of trees and forests in protecting and restoring watershed health, reducing pollution, and protecting wildlife and fish habitat.
- ❑ To expand partnerships between States and watershed or conservation organizations.

NA Contacts

For questions regarding preparation and processing of proposals for the Clean Water & Healthy Watersheds Theme, please contact:

Watershed Program Leader

Albert H. Todd: 410-267-5705, FAX: 410-267-5777 or E-mail: atodd@fs.fed.us.

NA Field Office Watershed Specialists:

Dave Welsch, Durham Field Office (New England and New York), 603-868-7616, or E-mail: dwelsch@fs.fed.us

Karen Sykes, Morgantown Field Office (Mid-Atlantic), 304-285-1532, or E-mail: ksykes@fs.fed.us

Mike Majeski, St. Paul Field Office (Midwest), 651-649-5240, or E-mail: mmajeski@fs.fed.us