

## Fiscal Year 2013 Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry Competitive Allocation Request for Proposals

### The Fiscal Year 2013 Competitive Allocation Process

For Fiscal Year (FY) 2013, there will be two categories of projects: “Redesign” and Forest Fire Hazard Mitigation. The Redesign category is the appropriate and sole submission opportunity for forest health management and treatment projects (see next page for excluded projects). A combination of Redesign and Forest Health funds will be used to support forest health-related submissions. If funding for forest health methods development becomes available, a separate request for proposals (RFP) solicitation will be issued.

There is no limit on the number of proposals (single or multistate) any one State may submit. **However, the same proposal may not be submitted under both the Redesign and Forest Fire Hazard Mitigation categories.** The minimum project proposal amount in Federal funding for the Redesign Grants is \$25,000; however, there is no minimum proposal amount for the Forest Fire Hazard Mitigation category. The maximum amount of Federal funding that will be awarded to any one State (state cap) via this competitive process is 15 percent of the total available funding for each RFP category. Multistate or third-party proposals must identify the lead agency and the share of the proposal that will be charged to each State’s cap. A multistate application is provided and should be used for these proposals. Funding available for this RFP does not include, nor does it affect, core program funding. Proposals will be fully funded to the extent possible once the final Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry (NA S&PF) FY 2013 budget is received.

### Eligibility

In FY 2013, State forestry agencies and the District of Columbia are eligible to submit or authorize proposals (pass-through direct to partners) for consideration under this competition. Nonprofit organizations, universities, and other partners must submit proposals through the State Forester where the activity will be conducted. For-profit organizations are not eligible to submit proposals under this competition. State Foresters will collaborate with State agriculture agency directors or other organization directors with State Forest Health program responsibilities who may submit proposals through the State Forester or directly with a letter documenting concurrence from the State Forester.

Additional information:

- Where appropriate, States are encouraged to develop multistate projects in collaboration with other State forestry agencies and partners. Multistate proposals must include letters of concurrence from all affected State Foresters.
- Projects proposed through this process may extend or expand upon other work supported by Federal funds; however, activities and accomplishments must be tracked and reported separately.
- Projects may span up to three years, with full funding committed at the time of award.
- Funds to be passed through as a grant to third-party recipients must be clearly identified with the name of the organization, contact information, and funding amount. Third-party pass-through funding amounts will count towards a State’s total allocation.
- If selected, any project that includes forest health suppression, restoration, or eradication activities may **not** be included under a **consolidated** grant.



## **Excluded from Consideration under this RFP**

- Gypsy moth suppression, eradication, and Slow-the-Spread (STS) projects. These are determined by cooperative surveys or other efforts in cooperation with the STS Foundation.
- Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) Methods Proposals are solicited through a separate process.
- National and cross-regional forest health initiatives such as oak wilt control, Early Detection/Rapid Response (EDRR), Evaluation Monitoring (EM), Forest Service-Pesticide Impact Assessment Program (FSPIAP), and Special Technology Development Projects (STDP). These are run through a separate national process.
- Forest Health methods (applied technology development). These may be solicited separately, depending on the availability of funds.
- Purchase of fire department equipment, including fire weather stations.
- Purchase and installation of dry fire hydrants.
- Small business start-up funding.
- Research and development projects.
- Capital improvements (i.e. facilities and infrastructure).
- Fire preparedness and suppression capacity building.
- Economic Development Projects.

## **Proposal Requirements for All Requests**

FY 2013 NA S&PF Competitive Allocation RFP applications will proceed for ranking **only** if they meet the required elements below:

### **1. Link to Forest Action Plans, national and regional priorities.**

In 2010, each State and the District of Columbia completed a State Forest Resource Assessment and Strategy (now referred to as a Forest Action Plan). These documents outline priority issues or landscapes within each State and are available at <http://www.forestactionplans.org>. The proposed project's goals must address and be clearly linked to resource objectives and/or priorities in the Forest Action Plan. Project deliverables must demonstrate how the project will help the State achieve the desired future condition documented in the Forest Action Plan. For multistate projects, the proposal deliverables must link to the Forest Action Plan of each State involved.

Project goals should be clearly linked to the objectives of one or more of the national S&PF themes: 1) conserve and manage working forest landscapes for multiple values and uses, 2) protect forests from threats, and 3) enhance public benefits from trees and forests.

### **2. Required matching funds (50/50 minimum).**

The match must be met by eligible and allowable costs and is subject to match provisions in grant regulations (see Subpart G at [http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title07/7cfr3015\\_main\\_02.tpl](http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title07/7cfr3015_main_02.tpl)).

### **3. Appropriate and authorized use of Federal funds.**

It is recommended that applicants review *The Principal Laws Relating to USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry Programs*, particularly the sections related to the funding sources for this RFP, which are available at <http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/library/SPF-CF%20handbook.pdf>. **All respective program reporting requirements will apply to any funds disbursed through this grant process.**

### **Project Submission and Selection**

Documentation for submitting proposals under the FY 2013 NA S&PF Competitive Allocation process is available on the NA S&PF Web site at <http://www.na.fs.fed.us/rfp>. Please submit proposals in the appropriate fillable PDF form to the following e-mail inbox: **na-rfp@fs.fed.us**, **no later than close of business on November 8, 2012. Submit proposals under one and only one RFP category.**

**Note:** The proposal submission inbox can accept messages up to 4 MB in size. Multiple messages per proposal may be submitted if necessary. Additional information such as maps, tables, and letters of support may be included in addition to the proposal. For assistance submitting proposals to the inbox, contact Terry James at [trjames@fs.fed.us](mailto:trjames@fs.fed.us) or by calling (610) 557-4107.

Project proposals will be reviewed, evaluated, and prioritized collaboratively by a Competitive Allocation Review Team consisting of an equal number of State representatives and NA S&PF leadership. The number of team members will be determined based on workload. A preliminary review of the proposals will be conducted to identify incomplete applications and assign potential funding eligibility based on the project's scope of work.

The interagency review team will complete the review of proposals and develop a recommended list of projects by December 2012. The recommended list of proposals will be submitted to the NAASF Executive Committee and NA S&PF Director for approval. The NA S&PF Executive Team will then identify the appropriate mix of program funds and compile the FY 2013 grant list with funding sources. Projects ranked but not funded will receive further consideration by the NAASF Executive Committee and the NA S&PF Director should additional funds become available.

---

---

## **Category 1: National State and Private Forestry Competitive Resource Allocation (“Redesign Grants”)**

---

---

“Redesign Grants” are designed to competitively target State and Private Forestry program funds to the highest priority conservation needs within a State. Redesign projects can integrate (mix) program authorities and the funding streams of Urban and Community Forestry, Forest Stewardship, Fire, and Forest Health to meet project objectives.

The delivery of State and Private Forestry programs assumes that our collective efforts are most effective when available resources are focused on issues and landscapes of national importance and are prioritized, using State and regional assessments, on activities that promise meaningful outcomes on the ground. This concept is captured as  $\text{focus} + \text{priority} = \text{outcome}$ . **Competitive allocation** is an effective means of ensuring that Federal S&PF dollars are invested in projects that meet this standard.

Competitive allocation of funds was codified in Section 8007 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (P.L. 110- 246, known as the 2008 U.S. Farm Bill). Section 8007 outlines a process for competitive allocation of funds to State Foresters or equivalent State officials and requires that the Secretary of Agriculture consult with the Federal Advisory Forest Resource Coordinating Committee when determining the competitive allocation of funds.

Beginning in FY 2008, a percentage of the national S&PF allocation was invested in projects selected through a competitive process. The State Foresters and U.S. Forest Service leadership in the Northeast, South, and West jointly administer this process using the national guidance described below. Each geographic region (NE, S, and W, based on National Association of State Forester regions) designs its competitive process to address two groups of issues:

- 1) Geographically significant issues and landscapes now identified in its Forest Action Plans, and
- 2) the broad themes (specifically the national S&PF themes and priorities identified in the Farm Bill) and direction provided at the national level.

### **National FY 2013 Allocation Process**

In FY 2013, 15 percent of the “net available” S&PF allocation will be designated for the Competitive Allocation.

The net available funding will consist of S&PF funds available after national commitments are removed.

- The net available will include funds that are traditionally transferred to State forestry agencies as well as funds that support S&PF capacity in the U.S. Forest Service Regional/Area Offices and the Washington Office. The U.S. Forest Service Regions/Area will engage their State Forester partners in determining any reductions of funds that support U.S. Forest Service S&PF capacity.
- For FY 2013, the net available will include funds in the following programs: 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). The Competitive Allocation will not include funds from Volunteer Fire Assistance, Forest Legacy, and Federal Lands Forest Health Management programs.

- In conjunction with the distribution of initial budget advice to the U.S. Forest Service Regional/Area Offices, each geographic region will be informed of the amount to be available to them for competitive project allocation based on current distribution formulas.

### **Eligible Activities under the Redesign Request for Proposals**

The Category 1 Redesign RFP is designed to allow State Foresters and their partner applicants to “mix” or integrate S&PF programs, authorities, and funding to achieve the priorities and strategies described in their Forest Action Plan. Proposed projects need to address priority issues and threats, produce measureable results, involve collaboration with partners that results in added value, and maximize S&PF funding by using it to leverage contributions from both Federal and non-Federal entities. Successful projects may contain elements of one or more of the S&PF programs identified above.

#### **Examples of eligible projects include these:**

- Landscape restoration, including invasive species management using prescribed fire.
- Wildland-urban interface projects that combine hazard mitigation, urban community outreach, and invasives management through Stewardship project planning.
- Community Wildfire Protection Plan areas, Cooperative Weed Management Areas, and other landscape-scale planning areas.
- Holistic planning and implementation to address Forest Action Plans.
- Conservation education efforts that transcend programs and authorities.
- Ecosystem services projects.
- Tree planting projects in urban and municipal areas that conform to guidelines that address the number of trees to be planted and the species and size of trees.
- Strategic outreach efforts to land managers/owners facing urban sprawl, invasive species, and threats from wildfire.
- Integrated efforts to improve management of nonindustrial private forest lands according to the Forest Action Plan.

**In addition, for FY 2013, forest health management and treatment projects should be submitted under the Redesign category and should address the Redesign project criteria described in this section.**

#### **Eligible forest health management and treatment activities include:**

- Prevention, suppression, and/or eradication of invasive and native damaging agents.
- Restoration of forests following damaging events to promote desired future conditions.
- Enhanced surveys and technical assistance of problems not supported by core FHP funds.
- Activities to enhance the engagement of the public in forest health management.

Interested parties are encouraged to review information pertaining to treatment and management objectives for specific pests at <http://www.na.fs.fed.us/rfp/index.shtm>.

If a proposal involves Forest Health treatment, or has a Forest Health treatment component, a completed form 3400-2 (available at <http://www.na.fs.fed.us/rfp/index.shtm>) is required, including the cost of treatments. In addition, the treatment component should follow these guidelines:

- Show strong potential for meeting project objectives and must be supported by a biological evaluation that substantiates the need for the project and the strategies proposed.
- Be environmentally acceptable and appropriately documented in accordance with appropriate laws.
- In order to be eligible for such assistance, the entity having ownership or jurisdiction over the affected land must:
  - Consent, cooperate, and participate in the project.
  - Contribute directly to the work to be done.
  - Have the legal authority to carry out such projects.
- Treatment projects require the following documentation:
  - Appropriate documentation in accordance with the relevant and required environmental analyses.
  - Biological evaluations, including pre-treatment and post-treatment evaluations.
  - Work, safety, and security plans where appropriate or required.
- Forest Health funds may not be used to cut dead trees or to cut trees that have commercial value.
- Cooperators shall also maintain appropriate records for each project, including the location of areas treated.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** If a proposal involves Forest Fire Hazard Mitigation activities, a completed NFPORS Form (available at <http://www.na.fs.fed.us/rfp/index.shtm>) is required.

### **Criteria for Redesign Proposal Selection**

#### **1. Priority Issues and Threats – Desired Future Condition (25 points)**

Projects will be based on an analysis within the State or region that identifies the issue or landscape being addressed as a priority in its Forest Action Plan.

- Demonstrate a focus on a significant issue or threat in the jurisdiction that will be addressed and how the project will **lead to a desired future condition**.
- Clearly articulate the methods employed, timelines, and resources needed to move the State or region to a desired future condition as articulated in its Forest Action Plan.

#### **2. Measureable Results and Significant On-the-Ground Outcomes (35 points)**

Describe how reaching the goals and achievements of the project will effect positive changes. Projects should prioritize funding and other resources used toward the achievement of the outcomes identified below. List specific measurable results and significant on-the-ground outcomes and milestones as well as the return on investments made.

- ***Conserving and Managing Working Forest Landscapes***
  - Identify high-priority forest ecosystems and landscapes conserved.
  - Demonstrate how forests are actively and sustainably managed.

- ***Protect Forests from Threats***
  - Identify fire-adapted lands that will be restored and how the risk of wildfire impacts is reduced.
  - Identify the threats to forest and ecosystem health and how they are managed and reduced.
- ***Enhance Public Benefits from Private Forests***
  - Describe how water quality and quantity are protected and enhanced.
  - Show how air quality is improved and energy is conserved.
  - Identify how communities plan for and reduce their risks from wildfire.
  - Describe the economic benefits and values of trees and forests that are maintained and enhanced.
  - Demonstrate how wildlife and fish habitat is protected, conserved, and enhanced.
  - Show how people are connected to trees and forests and engaged in environmental stewardship activities.
  - Describe how trees and forests are managed and restored to help mitigate and adapt to global climate change.
  - Describe measures likely to better equip and enable forest landowner to address forest health threats.

### **3. Collaboration and Integrated Delivery that Influence Positive Change (20 points)**

Projects should identify partners that have demonstrated a commitment and add value towards project planning and implementation. Projects should seek to improve the delivery of public benefits from forest management by coordinating with complementary State and Federal programs. Collaboration may be qualitative in nature, and the contribution of the partners may be more important than the number of partners involved in the projects. Multistate collaboration and integration of projects is encouraged. Projects should:

- Describe results and outcomes that are produced at a scale and cost appropriate to the project purpose.
- Demonstrate residual positive benefits related to capacity, skills, knowledge, infrastructure, or a replicable approach, among others.
- Include a component of outreach, training, lessons learned, or related opportunities so that implementing the project results in skills and capability that extend beyond the life of the project itself.

### **4. Leverage (20 points)**

Projects should maximize S&PF funding by using it to leverage contributions from both Federal and non-Federal entities. Project applications need to clearly identify Competitive Allocation requested funds and associated non-Federal contributions, and separately document leveraged contributions. Projects shall seek to:

- Maximize return on investment and leverage resources.
- Provide a reasonable balance between administration and technical assistance.
- Use effective approaches to sustainable forest resource conservation, protection, and/or enhancement.
- Improve the delivery of public benefits from forest management by coordinating with complementary State and Federal programs when possible.

---

## **Category 2: Forest Fire Hazard Mitigation**

---

The Forest Fire Hazard Mitigation category is designed to protect people and communities from wildfire. It does this by increasing wildfire awareness and education, providing assistance to local fire departments, reestablishing ecosystems after wildfires, reducing excessive fuel accumulations in and around communities, establishing community wildfire protection plans (CWPPs), and developing Firewise programming in communities at risk for wildfire.

In agreement with the Northeastern Area Association of State Foresters (NAASF), the NA S&PF limits the amount of funding available for this RFP to 35 percent of the net available of the State Fire Assistance – National Fire Plan SPS2 funding. Through this competitive grant process, projects are focused on hazardous fuels reduction, development of CWPPs, information and education, planning, and hazard mitigation for homeowners.

Three categories of activities have been identified to ensure that funds are used to mitigate or reduce hazard and risk in the wildland-urban interface.

### **1. Hazardous fuels reduction.**

Funding recipients may carry out mitigating hazardous fuels treatments in or adjacent to identified fire-prone communities to reduce the threat of wildfire within the community. Fuel reduction and vegetation management projects, including project-level planning emphasizing interagency/multijurisdictional cooperation that has been identified as a means of mitigating wildfire hazards, can be conducted across jurisdictional boundaries, on adjoining private lands, or within the respective communities. This should include all components necessary to plan and implement the project.

### **2. Information and education targeting prevention and mitigation in the wildland-urban interface.**

Homeowners and local government bear much of the responsibility for improving the defensibility of homes in the wildland-urban interface. States can provide the leadership to coordinate, develop, and distribute educational programs in association with insurance companies, communities, and local government agencies. Informational and educational programs must target prevention and mitigation of loss. Programs should lead to use or establishment of one or more fire program elements such as fire safety codes, development/implementation of Community Wildfire Protection Plans, implementation of Firewise safety practices, fuel treatments within fire-prone communities, or community planning to define fire-safe structures suited to local fire-adapted communities.

### **3. Risk reduction and hazard mitigation for homeowners and their communities.**

Creating conditions in and around individual structures that will limit the transmission of fire from wildland to structures is fundamental to reducing the fire hazard in the interface. This is the responsibility of homeowners and communities. States can facilitate projects that focus on reducing the risk of ignition and loss, developing Community Wildfire Protection Plans, implementing Firewise concepts, and conducting risk reduction demonstration projects in fire-adapted communities.

These project categories are complementary to one another. States are encouraged to be creative in identifying and developing proposals that address local needs through a multifaceted approach that integrates activities from all three project categories.

Additional requirements for the development of forest fire hazard mitigation proposals include:

- No more than 25 percent of the project budget can be used for planning purposes.
- No more than 25 percent of the project budget can be used to hire personnel.
- Project activities should be focused in high-risk wildland-urban interface communities as identified by the State's Fire Protection Assessment component of its Forest Action Plan.
- If it is necessary to purchase equipment worth more than \$5,000 to complete the hazard mitigation project, the proposal must include a statement that specifically identifies the need and steps taken to identify alternatives to the purchase.
- **IMPORTANT NOTE:** If a proposal involves Forest Fire Hazard Mitigation activities, a completed NFPORS Form (available at <http://www.na.fs.fed.us/rfp/index.shtm>) is required.

States are encouraged to explore utilizing third-party, nonprofit opportunities within their respective State.

### **Examples of Activities for Projects that Qualify (not all inclusive)**

#### **Hazardous Fuels Reduction Projects:**

- Use of prescribed fire.
- Use of mechanical means (i.e. chippers, brush hog mowers, plows for dozers).
- Small-diameter utilization of wood (biomass).
- Vegetation management (i.e. pruning, mowing, chemical, grazing).
- Shaded fuel breaks.
- Defensible space around homes and structures.
- Removal of slash.

#### **Information and Education in the Wildland-Urban Interface:**

- Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) or equivalent.
- Firewise/defensible space programming.
- Pamphlets, brochures, and handouts that focus on prescribed fire, hazardous fuels treatments, CWPPs, and/or Firewise-related efforts.
- Inspecting fire-prone property.
- Videos, PSAs, newspaper inserts.

#### **Risk Reduction and Hazard Mitigation for Homeowners and Their Communities:**

- Homeowner/Association-sponsored fuels reduction projects.
- Community fire protection plans or equivalent.
- Municipal, fire district, county, and community coordination of slash disposal.
- Multijurisdictional hazard reduction projects.
- Community projects that focus on reducing the risk of ignition or loss.

### **Examples of Activities for Projects that Do Not Qualify (not all inclusive)**

- Purchase of fire department equipment, including fire weather stations.
- Purchase and installation of dry fire hydrants.
- Small business start-up funding.
- Research and development projects.
- Capital improvements (i.e. facilities).
- Fire preparedness and suppression capacity building.

## **Criteria for Forest Fire Hazard Mitigation Proposal Selection**

### **1. Project Objectives Address Forest Fire Hazard Mitigation (25 points)**

- Show that a new project/initiative not previously funded contributes to forest fire hazard mitigation priorities in the Forest Action Plan.
- Show how the hazardous wildland fuels treatment activities are tied to a CWPP.
- How does the Community/Homeowner Education Targeting Risk, Prevention, and Mitigation objective relate to a priority area of the Forest Action Plan?
- How does the mitigation activity reduce the risk and consequences of wildfire in the wildland-urban interface?
- Show how Community Wildfire Protection Planning and Assessments reduce forest fire hazards.

### **2. Measures of Success that Relate to Strategic Priorities of the State Forest Action Plan and Identify Client Benefit (25 points)**

- Show how the number of high-risk communities assisted is tied to the Forest Action Plan goals.
- How do hazardous wildland fuels treatment activities within the wildland-urban interface advance the priorities in the Forest Action Plan?
- How is the number of homeowners served related to the State's strategic priorities?
- Demonstrate where the Community Wildfire Protection Plans prepared and implemented fit within the Forest Action Plan.
- Show how Firewise Programming advances the Forest Action Plan.

### **3. Partnerships and Collaboration (20 points)**

- What do partners identified as sharing in the implementation of this project contribute toward a successful outcome?
- If the project is tied to a high-risk community(ies)/project(s) adjacent to or near Federal lands, how are the Federal partners engaged?
- Demonstrate how the project is tied to other targeted program areas identified within the National Fire Plan, 10-year Comprehensive Strategy, and/or the Healthy Forest Initiative or Forest Action Plan.

### **4. Expected Outcomes or Products that Demonstrate an Innovative Approach (20 points)**

- How does the project use an innovative approach to raise awareness about the benefits of Community Wildfire Protection Plans?
- Demonstrate how hazardous fuels treatment activities are innovative.
- Describe the innovative approach to pilot/regional/statewide prescription burn programs in high-risk communities.
- How will innovative pilot Firewise Community workshop(s) be carried out in communities identified in the Forest Action Plan?
- How are community residents informed and educated about using an innovative approach?

### **5. Capacity for Replication (10 points)**

- Indicate whether the project has the capacity to be initiated in other communities or geographic areas within the State and/or in other States.