

Sonny Perdue  
Secretary, Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Vicki Christiansen  
Chief, U.S. Forest Service  
1400 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

July 8, 2020

Dear Secretary Perdue and Chief Christiansen:

The Federal Advisory Committee for the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) met virtually June 22-25 to evaluate, support, and provide recommendations on each nominated CFLRP project to the Secretary of Agriculture for final selections. We are pleased to report that the Committee came to consensus on a set of recommendations.

The Committee's charter asked members to evaluate project proposals using key criteria including the strength of the ecological approach, likelihood of reducing the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire, the strength of the collaborative process, benefit to local economies, and alignment with a shared stewardship approach, among others. Each committee member scored the proposals individually using these criteria in preparation for our meeting. During the meeting, we sorted and ranked the proposals using these criteria. Our discussions included broad themes such as whether a forest previously had a CFLRP project; regional diversity; leveraged investments from partners; the balance of prescribed fire, managed fire, and mechanical treatments; Forest Service capacity; and, overall likelihood of success.

Based on these considerations, we unanimously recommend funding one project in FY20, ten additional projects in FY21 as funding is available, and extending two of the original projects from 2010. We also support three alternate proposals, and do not recommend CFLRP funding for one extension and five other projects.

The Committee sorted the ten new projects into three tiers, reflecting their relative strength and readiness. We did not rank the two extensions in comparison to the new projects because we felt it was most appropriate to keep them in a category of their own. It is worth noting that all but one of the projects in Tier 2, and the project we recommend funding in FY20, are in landscapes that have not previously had a CFLRP. We believe this diversity in landscapes and proposals reflects the clear interest and continued need for the Program.

### **Funding Recommendations**

<b><u>Region</u></b>	<b><u>State</u></b>	<b><u>CFLRP Proposal</u></b>	<b><u>Year 1 Request</u></b>	<b><u>Recommendation</u></b>
<b>TIER 1 Project</b>				
<b>6</b>	<b>Oregon</b>	<b>Northern Blues Forest Restoration</b>	<b>\$3,000,000</b> (\$2.7M available)	<b>Fund in FY20</b>

<u>Region</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>CFLRP Proposal</u>	<u>Year 1 Request</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
<b>TIER 2 Projects</b>				
2 and 3	New Mexico & Colorado	Rio Chama	\$4,000,000	Top tier for FY21 if funding available
2	Colorado	Southwest Colorado Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative	\$4,000,000	Top tier for FY21 if funding available
5	California	Western Klamath Mountains Forest and Fire Resiliency Project	\$4,000,000	Top tier for FY21 if funding available
6	Washington	North Central Washington - Reducing risk and increasing resiliency in Washington's East Cascades	\$1,500,000	Top tier for FY21 if funding available
5	California	North Yuba Forest Partnership	\$4,000,000	Top tier for FY21 if funding available
<b>TIER 3 Projects</b>				
6	Oregon	Rogue Basin Landscape Restoration Project	\$2,994,600	Second tier for FY21 if funding available
8	North Carolina	Pisgah Restoration Initiative	\$1,100,000	Second tier for FY21 if funding available
4	Idaho	Western Central Idaho Initiative	\$4,000,000	Second tier for FY21 if funding available
1	Idaho	Idaho Panhandle National Forests Joint Collaboratives Forest Landscape Restoration Proposal	\$1,500,000	Second tier for FY21 if funding available
8	Arkansas	Restoring Resiliency of the Interior Highlands and Coastal Plain of Arkansas	\$2,917,706	Second tier for FY21 if funding available
1	Montana	<i>Ravalli Roots</i>	<i>\$1,457,300</i>	<i>Alternate for FY21 if funding available</i>
2	Colorado	<i>Colorado Front Range Landscape Restoration</i>	<i>\$3,000,000</i>	<i>Alternate for FY21 if funding available</i>
6	Washington	<i>Northeast Washington Selkirks</i>	<i>\$465,000</i>	<i>Alternate for FY21 if funding available</i>

**Extensions Recommended for Funding**

6	Oregon	Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project (Extension)	\$2,259,090	Recommended for FY21 if funding available
5	California	Dinkey Collaborative (Extension)	\$1,738,688	Recommended for FY21 if funding available

In addition, we do not recommend extending CFLRP funding for the 4FRI project in Region 3, or funding the following new proposals: Montana’s Big Elk Divide Initiative (Region 1), Oak Ecosystem Restoration in Southern Illinois (Region 9), Utah Shared Stewardship Landscape Restoration (Region 4), Somerset Integrated Resource Project (Region 9), and Southern Appalachian Woodland Oak Pine (Regions 8 and 9). We recognize that there is important restoration work to do on these landscapes, but we think the project proposals need further refinement before they can be solid investments of limited CFLRP funds. The Committee is dedicated to offering feedback to the project proponents, with the expectation that the projects can reapply if there is a call for new proposals.

Since its enactment in 2009, CFLRP has a proven track record of success and bipartisan support. It has brought collaboration to our forests to increase forest health, mitigate wildfires, and support rural economies and local voices. The 2018 Farm Bill (Public Law 115-334) doubled the size of funding authorization from \$40 million to \$80 million, and Congress appropriated \$40 million in FY20. However, between the 13 active CFLRP proposals, two extensions, FY20 project, Tier 2 and Tier 3 new proposals, and alternate projects, the total funding needed is more than \$70 million in FY21, and \$50 million in FY22. The fact that demand exceeds available funding highlights the importance of fully funding the program, which this Committee strongly endorses.

As the Forest Service and its partners embark on a new era of CFLRP projects, we believe continued engagement with members of this Committee would benefit both the agency and the existing and new CFLRP projects. Committee members have a wealth of expertise and deep experience in implementing, studying, and supporting CFLRP, and are collectively invested in the success of the Program and future projects. We encourage the Forest Service to utilize our expertise and continue to engage us in an advisory role as needed.

In closing, we want to thank the Forest Service and the staff for their hard work in organizing and standing up the Committee, and their dedication to the Program’s success. We greatly appreciated the opportunity to provide advice regarding new CFLRP projects.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,



Karen Hardigg

*Committee Chair*