



Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program

Southern Appalachian Woodland Pine and Oak Restoration

George Washington and Jefferson National Forests, Southern Region

Monongahela National Forest, Eastern Region

Proposal Overview

Working across two Forest Service Regions and two states, the Southern Appalachian Woodland Pine and Oak Restoration (SAWPOR) project proposal outlines a plan to move the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests and the Monongahela National Forest from national forests at risk, to forests that support rural prosperity through a healthy and diverse ecosystem.

This is a landscape restoration collaborative that was formed to: 1) restore and manage healthy, resilient forests; 2) conserve biological diversity; 3) improve watershed health; 4) facilitate the reduction of wildfire through re-establishment of natural fire regimes; and 5) increase capacity by strengthening the collaboration of interested agencies, organizations and communities implementing landscape-scale ecosystem restoration and management.

With the help of over 40 partner organizations, the SAWPOR project would restore healthy ecosystems that can adapt to changes in climatic, environmental and social conditions in priority watersheds within the headwaters of the Potomac River, Greenbriar River, Chesapeake Bay, New River Basin, and Roanoke Basin. This SAWPOR proposal was derived from the desired conditions outlined in the 2014 George Washington National Forest, 2004 Jefferson National Forest and 2006 Monongahela National Forest Revised Land and Resource Management Plans.¹

1) Project Map

Attachment A: The Southern Appalachian Woodland Pine and Oak Restoration (SAWPOR) project proposed boundary includes much of the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests and adjoining landscapes on the Monongahela National Forest. Our landscape-level issues do not stop at political and agency boundaries. The project uses the GIS modeling completed as a part of the Forests to Faucets project to prioritize watersheds that are the most important sources for surface drinking water in the SAWPOR project area. This includes the Chesapeake Bay, which provides clean drinking water to more than 18 million people. The project also addresses climate change stressors identified within the project area such as increased temperatures, more rainfall and less snow residence time.

The increase of precipitation and storm events have direct impacts to road and trail network availability to the public. For example, catastrophic flooding on the Monongahela National Forest resulted in damage to 450 miles of forest roads and 100 miles of trails that are still being repaired. This one-in-one-thousand-year event damaged 11 forest bridges and 32 major culverts.



*Aftermath of catastrophic flooding and a culvert failure
(photo credit: USFS)*

¹ <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/gwj/landmanagement/?cid=stelprd3834544> and https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5330420.pdf

The Terrestrial Condition Assessments' Insect and Pathogen Risk Layer and Vegetation Departure Layer demonstrate our forests are stressed and susceptible to outbreaks of native and non-native insects and diseases and we stand to lose over 25% of live basal area in the next 15 years (Cleland et al. 2017). Vegetation departure represents forest stress including changes in species composition, structural stage and canopy closure.

2 & 3) Landscape Boundaries

The George Washington and Jefferson National Forests is the largest landowner in Virginia, while the Monongahela manages more than half of the publicly available forests and recreation land in West Virginia. These forests contribute to quality of life in the region by protecting watersheds from erosion and sedimentation; providing habitat for wildlife; and contributing to strong rural economies. The SAWPOR project will fully integrate treatments across federal, state and private lands in biologically rich ecosystems and priority watersheds and promote working with other federal, state and non-profit entities and neighboring private landowners. The implementation of these cross-boundary projects will embrace the true meaning of shared stewardship: to build upon partnerships and collaboration to enhance our ability to work with neighbors to reach common goals and increase the pace and scale of restoration activities.

<i>Landscape Boundaries</i>	<i>Acres</i>
Total CFLRP Project Area	3,364,662
GWJ Forest Lands in CFLRP	1,568,634
Mon Forest Lands in CFLRP	260,791
All National Forest Lands in CFLRP	1,829,425
VA State lands in CFLRP	60,051
WV State Lands in CFLRP	33,195
Blue Ridge Parkway in CFLRP	18,341
WV Private lands in CFLRP	149,554
VA Private lands in CFLRP	1,292,437
Total non-NFS in CFLRP	1,535,237

The project area is critical for species migration and a prime climate change corridor in the Appalachians, with its varied elevation, topographic features and species diversity. New climate



As climate change alters habitats, animals will migrate through the Appalachians. source: <https://blog.nature.org/science/2016/08/19/migration-in-motion-visualizing-species-movements-due-to-climate-change>.

change research from The Nature Conservancy predicts the Appalachian migration corridor will be one of the most important refuges on the continent for wildlife species seeking new habitats to complete their lifecycles. In addition, the project area's largely unfragmented Southern Appalachian oak/pine dominated forests sustain some of the greatest biodiversity in North America, with the Central and Southern Appalachians being designated as one of six biodiversity "hotspots" in the country. Key regional species-specific priorities advanced in this area include golden-winged and cerulean warbler conservation, as well as the creation of pollinator habitats for newly discovered populations of the federally-listed rusty-patched bumblebee.

The project proposal directly links to the Virginia Forest Action Plan, Virginia Wildlife Action Plan, West Virginia Forest Action Plan, West Virginia Wildlife Action Plan and Virginia's Hardwood Management Initiative. The proposal includes watershed restoration, forest health protection and supports the state's new emphasis on hardwood restoration. This project will increase utilization of the recently signed Good Neighbor Agreement with the Governor of Virginia and the Secretary of the West Virginia Department of Commerce. The project proposes to treat moderate to very poor landscape conditions characterized by the recent [Terrestrial Condition Assessment](#) (Cleland et al., 2017).

Aging forests with crowded growing conditions are prevalent, increasing the likelihood of insect and disease outbreaks such as gypsy moth, emerald ash borer, oak decline and southern pine beetle. In addition, the lack of natural fires have resulted in mesophication of the forest community and a build-up of hazardous fuels. The growing wildland-urban interface coupled with high recreational usage increases not only wildfire risk but also the abundance of vectors for the spread of invasive species that degrade native ecosystems, displace endemic species, reduce the growth and establishment of tree species and diminish land values and forest productivity.



Gypsy Moth caterpillar (photo credit: USFS Tom Coleman)

Timber harvest can decrease the likelihood and severity of defoliation and death of trees impacted by these invasive species and improve the overall health of forest stands. This will enable forest ecosystems to respond to future insect and disease outbreaks, absorb and recover from natural disturbances and continue to maintain crucial ecosystem processes such as regeneration, support of wildlife, nutrient cycling, and purification of air and water. The recent detection of spotted lanternfly, a non-native invasive insect, in Berkeley County, West Virginia in November 2019 clearly illustrates the need to manage healthy, resilient forests across this landscape.

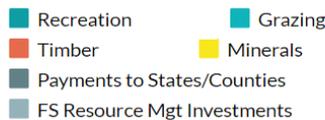
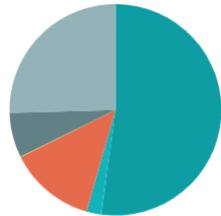
4) Economic, Social, and Ecological Context

The Forest Service is the steward of the largest forest acreage in need of restoration in the SAWPOR project area. The George Washington and Jefferson National Forests and the Monongahela National Forest have taken the lead in developing partnerships to accomplish restoration of forest lands across Virginia and West Virginia. We are seeing the direct economic and social benefits of this collaboration and will multiply these benefits through the SAWPOR project. In Virginia and West Virginia, Stewardship contracts provide jobs not only for timber contractors but also for contractors in new, emerging businesses such as non-native invasive species suppression, aquatic organism passage construction, wetland construction and improved utilization of forest products. In 2016, the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests supported an estimated 1,489 jobs² and around \$64,147,000 of labor income in local

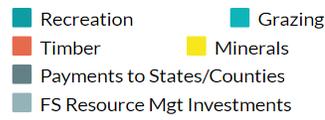
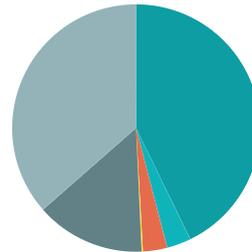
² <https://www.fs.fed.us/emc/economics/at-a-glance/jobs-income.shtml#brochures>

communities. In that year, the Monongahela National Forest supported an estimated 630 jobs and around \$24,237,000 of labor income in local communities.

1,489 Jobs Supported by George Washington and Jefferson NFs (2016)



630 Jobs Supported by Monongahela NF (2016)



Timber sales and stewardship agreements have been packaged to accentuate the small business market in this region. More frequent sales with smaller sizes benefit local owners and operators (3,000-7,000 ccf) building capacity in the industry.

Hazardous fuels management in forests reduces wildfire risk, creates healthier forest conditions and protects local communities and economies, including areas of major interstate commerce in close proximity to the project area, like I-64, I-77 and I-81. Fuels reduction activities limit potential negative smoke impacts to critical infrastructure and the human environment.

Additional benefits include sustained and improved habitat for hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing, and improved outdoor recreation opportunities. These are all important drivers of many rural economies. In addition, the SAWPOR project builds momentum for a sustained commitment to the Civilian Conservation Centers (CCC) and students by increasing collaboration with the Flatwoods Job Corps CCC in Coeburn, Virginia, and the Harpers Ferry Job Corps CCC in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia.

The Oak Forests and Woodlands Ecological System Group is the most common ecological system on the Forests and can be viewed as the primary forest in which all other vegetation types occur. Major species include: chestnut oak, northern red oak, black oak, white oak and scarlet oak (USDA Forest Service, 1997). The age class distribution on the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests and Monongahela National Forest follows a pattern common to many other Southern Appalachian Forests, and is skewed toward older-age stands. However, within the SAWPOR project area, this pattern is a little more extreme with over 90% of these community types in a mid-late successional stage.

The southern yellow pine forests historically occupied areas that were subject to natural fire regimes and typically occurred on ridges and slopes with southern exposures (NatureServe, 2002). However, due to a combination of previous land use, fire exclusion, and intensive forestry plantations, many pine species that do not tolerate fire well have expanded beyond

their normal sites. Meanwhile, populations of pine species that benefit from, or depend upon fire, have drastically declined (e.g., table mountain pine).

The SAWPOR project area was identified as being “highest priority for restoration” by the Southern Forest Land Assessment.³ This categorization was based on attributes like site productivity, proximity to federal lands, amount of forested wetlands and contributions to public drinking water, and risks factors like urbanization, fire and insects and disease.

The SAWPOR project will fully integrate treatments across federal, state and private lands in biologically rich ecosystems and priority watersheds. The George Washington and Jefferson National Forests are the largest public landholders in the Chesapeake watershed, which includes the headwaters of the Potomac and James Rivers, and contributes to the drinking water supplies of at least 30 communities including Washington, DC and Richmond. Watershed improvements will continue to support water quality, function and connectivity of streams and full passage of aquatic organisms, including native brook trout and other rare fish and mussel species.

Healthy forests provide for healthy watersheds and clean water. A key driver for the watershed condition classification for the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests was Fire Regime Condition Class (FRCC). Almost the entirety of the Forests was ranked as Impaired Function indicating a predominate percentage of the watersheds had a high departure from the reference fire regime of vegetation characteristics; fuel composition; fire frequency, severity, and pattern; and other associated disturbances. Additionally, all watersheds were Functioning at Risk for “terrestrial invasive species condition indicator,” meaning management intervention will be required to prevent increased level of risk and that integrated treatments must be ongoing just to keep invasive species in check.

Key drivers for the watershed classification on the Monongahela National Forest included modified hydrologic function, identified high rates of soil erosion and stream sedimentation and reduced quality of aquatic ecosystem within the watersheds that are Functioning at Risk. Factors contributing to the Functioning at Risk classification include poorly designed roads, undersized culverts at stream crossings and reduced wood loading along streams and



*Soil erosion reduces the quality of aquatic ecosystems
(photo credit: USFS)*

³ https://www.fs.fed.us/na/sap/regional_assessments/region8/SAP_methodology.pdf

floodplains. Contributing factors such as historic disturbances, vegetation composition and wood loading in streams could be mitigated in this project.

The Southeast Conservation Blueprint (<http://secassoutheast.org/blueprint.html>) highlights the entire SAWPOR project area as one of “high conservation value” that contributes to a connected network of lands and waters that support thriving fish and wildlife populations. Lack of structural diversity because of altered disturbance regimes threatens wildlife habitat across the proposal area. Many game species important to the public rely on habitat found in a multi-age forest and in open areas, as identified in our Forest Plans and conservation initiatives such as the National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative, Ruffed Grouse Critical Conservation Needs, Appalachian Mountains Joint Venture (<http://amjv.org/>), and The National Wild Turkey Federation’s Big Six. Restoring and managing young forest, old field and shrubland habitats is also needed to benefit the rapidly declining golden-winged warbler, American woodcock, prairie warbler and other priority Species of Greatest Conservation Need identified in Virginia and West Virginia’s Wildlife Action Plans (2015).



Healthy streams provide habitat for diverse aquatic organisms (photo credit: USFS)

Restored forest habitat will directly benefit threatened and endangered species such as the Indiana bat, northern long-eared bat and rusty-patched bumblebee. Removing invasive plant species while restoring native plant diversity, including American chestnut, ash species and native pollinator habitat, will implement elements of the National Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators (2015) and the Monarch Joint Venture. The George Washington and Jefferson National Forests are the only forests in the Southern Region with confirmed occurrences of the federally listed rusty-patched bumblebee, with more known populations than any national forest in the country. The SAWPOR project proposes to create the high elevation open woodland habitat that the rusty-patched bumblebee relies on.

Of all the natural disturbances that impact and shape ecosystems in our area, fire is perhaps the one humans have had the most influence over, both in suppressing and causing. Oak and southern yellow pine communities require fire to sustain their populations. Fire suppression, coupled with an array of other disturbances (e.g., logging and chestnut blight), has facilitated the increased dominance of shade-tolerant species such as red maple. Periodic prescribed burning can recreate the ecological role of fire in a controlled manner. The fire program in this proposal includes: determining the response to wildfires (both human- and lightning-caused); using prescribed fire to reduce risk of damaging high-intensity fires; reestablishing historic fire regimes; and restoring native ecosystems along with the plant and animal species those conditions support. Destructive wildfire can cross and affect all lands and resources regardless of jurisdiction and ownership. The SAWPOR area includes a mix of ownerships with residences and personal property, infrastructure and other high value resources within the wildland-urban interface.

Landscape Strategy and Proposed Treatments:

5) Desired Conditions and Strategy

By restoring and maintaining the key characteristics, conditions and functionality of the native ecosystems found in the SAWPOR area, the forests will be able to sustain ecosystem diversity and also provide for the needs of the diverse plant and animal species on the forest. Ecological sustainability in turn supports social and economic sustainability. Ecological systems provide opportunities for recreational activities, such as nature watching, hunting, fishing, wildflower viewing, and support local communities through sustainable forest products.



Open canopy grassland (photo credit USFS)

The landscape restoration treatments in the SAWPOR project area were selected because they complement the goals and objectives outlined in the Virginia and West Virginia

State Wildlife and Forest Action Plans, the Southeast Regional Action Plan of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (2014), and the George Washington and Jefferson and Monongahela Forest Management Plans. Proposed treatments also intersect with the North Shenandoah Joint Chief Restoration Plan, and address habitat needs identified in several Species Conservation Plans and the Appalachian Joint Venture. As part of this proposal, the forests are working collaboratively with The Nature Conservancy to create an academic working group to synthesize a white paper focusing on climate change resiliency. Work also aligns with the National Wild Turkey Federation’s Big Six Conservation Strategy which focuses resources on the top priority conservation needs within this region. This project is expected to increase core accomplishments on National Forest System Lands, as outlined in the table below.

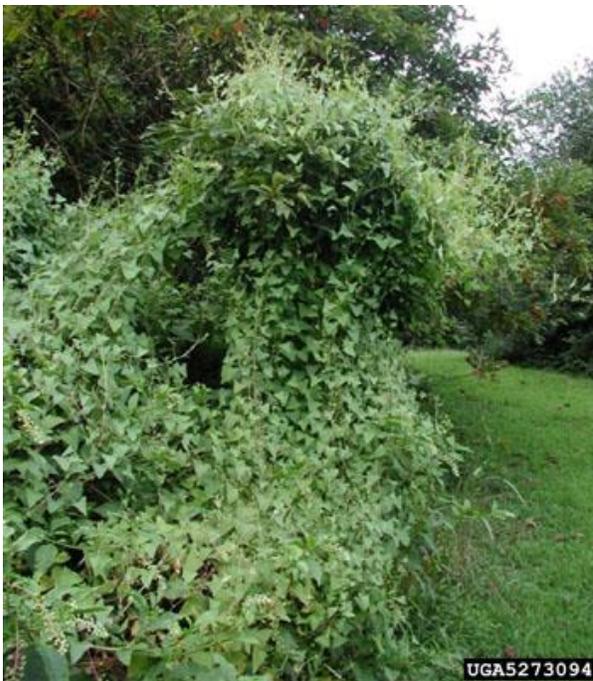
Treatment	Current Average Annual Accomplishment	Additional Accomplishment with CFLRP funding
Hazardous Fuels Reduction	23,555	7,852
Timber Harvest Acres	3,027	1,009
Invasive Species Management	2,625	875
Wildlife Habitat Restoration	26,041	8,680
*Acres are for NFS lands within the project area only (GWJ and Monongahela)		

The landscape included in this proposal is ranked “poor” to “very poor” for the vegetation departure indicator within the Terrestrial Condition Assessment as identified in The Draft Regional Restoration Action Team Report. The greatest stresses and threats to the oak woodlands system are the lack of open conditions needed to establish and maintain oak reproduction and the competition of faster growing species due to the exclusion of fire or

infestations of invasive species such as gypsy moth. Similarly, the greatest stresses and threats to yellow pine systems are lack of disturbance to create regeneration, invasive species including native pine bark beetles (southern pine beetle and engraver beetles), and climate change that could increase the likelihood of short-term, severe droughts and make insect outbreaks more common.

Forest strategies for maintaining and enhancing the oak woodland and yellow pine systems will integrate the use of timber harvest and fire to maintain more open canopy conditions and grassland/shrublands to the levels of structural diversity identified in the Forest Plans. These management tools can occur independently or together on the same acres. Restoration of short-leaf pine by planting would focus on where it historically occurred on the landscape. Given its importance as a food source for many wildlife species, maintaining a high percentage of oak in ages that produce mast is important. Additionally, planting American chestnut that is resistant to the Asian chestnut blight will restore a piece of native biodiversity.

Healthy watersheds and aquatic habitats are resilient to disturbances and provide multiple benefits to the ecosystem and its users. To achieve this desired condition, the project proposes improvements on lands that contribute to municipal watersheds, with an emphasis on restoring



Mile-a-minute vine (photo credit: Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org)

ecosystem processes and function in the headwaters of the Chesapeake Bay, New River, Potomac River, Greenbriar River and Roanoke Basin. Specifically, the project proposes to improve stream channel connectivity and reduce sedimentation through road and trail improvements, reconstruction, decommissioning, and culvert upgrades and replacements.

Based on the Watershed Condition Classification, the fire regime condition class was ranked as “Impaired Function” and the invasive species indicators were ranked as “At Risk” for almost all watersheds on the Forests. Restoring the natural fire regime to the fire adapted ecosystems in the project area, in addition to treating invasive plant species outbreaks on federal, state and private lands, will help shift these watersheds to an improved class. Implementing this work will

significantly improve watershed and aquatic health, help maintain and enhance ecosystem benefits and protect lands that provide the greatest benefits.

The SAWPOR project will improve wildlife habitat for declining early successional birds and other priority Species of Greatest Conservation Need in Virginia's and West Virginia's Wildlife Action Plans and identified in the Regional Restoration Action Team Report. Proposed habitat restoration efforts through timber management and prescribed fire will increase shrub diversity, forested vegetation types and openings, which benefit several key regional priority species including monarch butterfly, bobwhite quail, ruffed grouse and golden-winged and cerulean warblers, as well as the federally listed species discussed below.



Golden-winged warbler (photo credit: Fish and Wildlife Service Laura Erickson)

This project will provide indirect benefits to federally endangered Indiana bats and federally threatened northern long-eared bats by improving summer roosting and foraging habitat conditions across the project area. Proposed forest thinning and prescribed burning activities will create optimal foraging habitat with 50-70% canopy closure. More open canopy will increase both flying insect production and bat foraging success. Additionally, activities will promote and retain larger diameter snags with exfoliating bark and increase solar warming of potential roost trees by opening the forest canopy (Cox et al., 2016).



Rusty-patched bumblebee (photo credit: US Fish and Wildlife Service Kim Mitchell)

The federally endangered rusty patched bumble bee has declined in part from habitat loss and degradation associated with intensive agriculture, particularly the destruction of bumble bee nesting and overwintering sites, and pollinator foraging areas (USDI, 2016). The proposed timber harvest, prescribed burning and invasive plant treatments will provide high quality forested habitats with a diverse array of native plant species. This will lead to increases in the amount and diversity of foraging habitat in the spring, provide primary overwintering habitat and provide nesting habitat along managed edges (USDI, 2018b). This mosaic of high-elevation, open-woodland habitat removed from the pressures of agriculture is essential for maintaining connection between bee colonies.

The Nature Conservancy research has shown the need for, and the advantages of, a new strategy to adapt to climate change based on the geologic diversity foundation of biological diversity (Anderson and Ferree, 2010; Anderson et al., 2012; Anderson et al., 2014; Anderson et al., 2016a and 2016b). This CFLRP proposal will be the first to showcase this new strategy. The Nature Conservancy Resilient Sites model is different but complementary to the traditional strategy and is informed by landscape diversity and local connectedness metrics that are derived from multiple landscape characteristics that include geologic settings. The new strategy will be used as one of the criteria to select and prioritize sites for restoration. The

implementation and monitoring of this strategy will be supported through an academic working group.

6) Wildfire Risk Reduction

Wildfires within the project area often grow to large sizes due to above normal fuel loading, a continuous fuel layer, steep and inaccessible terrain, extensive driving time from stations and areas with a large amount of wildland-urban interface. Since 2010, the Virginia Commonwealth experienced 9,376 wildfires that burned nearly 83,000 acres within the Central and Western regions. During this time, the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests experienced 255 wildfires that burned nearly 73,000 acres and the Monongahela National Forest had 65 wildfires that burned 4,085 acres. Of these, 11 wildfires on the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests and two on the Monongahela National Forest exceeded 1,000 acres in size. Four fires on the Monongahela National Forest used either T2 or T3 Incident Management Teams due to complexity. Within the last ten years, complexity of wildfires have significantly increased due to urban sprawl, increased fuel loading and inaccessibility.



Open grassland bordered by mature forest (photo credit: USFS Robbins)

According to Wildfire Risk Assessment Summary Reports of the project area generated by the National Wildfire Risk Assessment and the Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Portals, more than 95% of the people that live within the project area are within the wildland-urban interface (WUI). The Forests and partner agencies are actively working to identify, plan and implement wildfire risk reduction treatments across the landscape. The strong working relationships established through the Virginia Multi-Agency Committee (VMAC), Virginia Prescribed Fire Council, Central Appalachians Fire Learning Network, Good Neighbor Agreement and multiple memoranda of understanding have created the foundation for efficient and effective land management strategies to return fire-adapted communities to desired conditions and mitigate catastrophic wildfire risks. These relationships have allowed for treatments across agency boundaries, provided training and learning opportunities for employees and lead to increased outreach to the public through shared messaging and education.

With regard to the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests, communities at risk have been identified using the Southern Group of State Foresters Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal and via collaboration with the Virginia Department of Forestry. Communities at risk are identified using the Burn Prioritization Model developed by The Nature Conservancy, which highlights ecosystems with highly fire-adapted and fire-dependent vegetation. The communities are prioritized by proximity to the most fire-prone areas, and then fuel breaks, prescribed burn units and mechanical treatments are planned that will mitigate wildfire risks and simultaneously restore a healthy ecosystem. The Monongahela National Forest is also working to identify communities at risk within the proclamation boundary to allow for their

protection. In addition, the forest is supporting the West Virginia Division of Forestry in their efforts to create a fire council for the state. These efforts will open new avenues for mitigating wildfire risks within the wildland-urban interface. All the forests are also utilizing various types of agreements such as Stevens, Wyden, and Good Neighbor to treat at-risk properties that adjoin Forest System lands.

Under current Forest Plan provisions, the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests can treat up to 35,000 acres, and the Monongahela 6,000 acres of Indiana bat habitat with prescribed fire annually. In an effort to increase the pace and scale of restoration throughout the CFLRP project area, managers will work with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to increase acres of prescribed burning across these forests; undertake multi-agency and multi-partner prescribed burn projects; implement agreements and community protection grants incorporating private lands and landscape scale project planning; implement Fire Wise programs within developed recreation sites; and conduct community outreach and education to foster program support.



The purple liatrus flower grows in early successional habitat maintained by controlled burning.

The Eastern Divide Highlands Fire Project, developed collaboratively with the Virginia Department of Forestry and The Nature Conservancy and signed in September 2019, identifies 60,000 acres of new prescribed burn units that are now being prepped for implementation beginning in 2020. The Warm Springs Mountain Restoration Project, a joint project with The Nature Conservancy, has been extremely successful in accomplishing cross-boundary treatments in Bath County, Virginia. The George Washington and Jefferson National Forests are also working with the Monongahela National Forest and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries on a cross-boundary project spanning over 47,000 acres. Additionally, the Forest has been working with The Nature Conservancy on creating a Wildfire Management Plan in the Saint Mary's Wilderness to safely manage natural ignitions within it. Pre-identified fire breaks and strategies will be used to cost effectively manage fires while providing for firefighter and public safety. If successful, this plan will be used as a template to manage natural ignitions across the forests. It is expected that wildfire costs will be reduced significantly with these strategies as fire managers are given the tools to pre-identify and prep fire breaks prior to an ignition.

In 2018, West Virginia amended legislation requiring the Director of the Division of Natural Resources to develop a certification process for prescribed fire managers and prescribed burn courses, thus allowing public landowners to implement prescribed burning on their property once they meet the prescribed fire certification process. The Monongahela National Forest is supporting efforts to develop a fire council in West Virginia for the purposes of optimizing burning opportunities for the benefit of natural ecosystems and wildlife, and to reduce the risk of damage from wildfires via consultations with land agencies. The forest has completed 18,717 acres of prescribed burning since 2010, with 9,755 acres completed since 2017. This represents a significant increase over previous years and is due to larger landscape prescribed

fire projects, increased fire program capacity and a better understanding of how prescribed burning can meet multiple resource objectives. The forest is focused on staffing its engines to align with National Guidelines. The SAWPOR project would assist in increasing firefighter capacity by allowing the sharing of resources across boundaries. To aid in implementation, the forest became home to the regional helicopter manager in 2019.

7) Benefits to Local Communities

Local communities will benefit from the decade-long commitment to a steady supply of timber products. This stability will foster local investments and job creation in diverse economic activities: timber harvest, recreation, tourism, infrastructure, engineering services and contract opportunities.

The socioeconomic goals are: 1) to improve utilization of forest restoration byproducts; 2) to sustain or increase local employment related to restoration and renewable resource management; 3) to provide training and career opportunities for youth, minority group representatives and people from low-income communities; 4) to increase public benefits such as improving wildlife habitat, increasing hunting and fishing opportunities and reducing wildfire hazards; 5) to integrate vegetation management and prescribed burning with community plans to respond to wildfire; and 6) to involve the public in active stewardship of the land and resources.

The SAWPOR project would serve to connect the agency mission with the Flatwoods Job Corps CCC in Coeburn, Virginia and the Harpers Ferry Job Corps CCC in West Virginia. The Monongahela National Forest has been providing Job Corps students over the last five years with training so that students can receive their wildland firefighter qualifications. Students who achieve these qualifications are given the opportunity to gain real-world experience on prescribed burning projects and wildfires on the forest. The students are also available to respond to both prescribed and wildfires across the United States. The hands-on experiences make the students highly competitive when they enter the work force. Partnering with Job Corps has allowed us to increase our firefighting capacity while providing training and career opportunities for students.

In addition, based on the science, technology, engineering and math used to design and implement restoration activities, SAWPOR will create the first “STEM in the woods” program.

The newly hired Outreach Recruitment Coordinator at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) will provide critical support in enhancing opportunities for multi-cultural diversity in forest management within several of our SAWPOR key partner organizations.

Key Metrics:

Enhance community sustainability:

Maintain or increase:

- number of workers employed by the project area each year
- number and/or type of training opportunities for youth

Improve or maintain quality of life:

Maintain or increase:

- tourism employment and income related to recreation visits
- number of visitor days open for locals to recreate

Enhance community sustainability:

- number and diversity of wood products that can be processed locally
- number and/or size of contracts offered each year to do restoration work
- number of youth, minority group representatives, or people from low-income communities hired to work on the project
- percentage of contracts awarded that go to local contractors

Improve or maintain quality of life:

- acceptance of frequent, low intensity wildfire or prescribed fire
- acres protected from fire through creation of defensible space, fuel breaks, and other fuels reduction projects
- fuels reduction acres in relation to areas considered to be at highest risk from wildfire

8) Utilization of Forest Restoration Byproducts

Direct timber harvest is one of the main restoration tools used on the forests. By removing unwanted species and funding reforestation, timber harvests are instrumental in the restoration of historically occurring species such as short leaf pine, and in improving wildlife habitat for early successional species. Using integrated resource timber contracts, like Stewardship contracts, allows timber value to pay for restoration activities not directly associated with timber removal. Treating non-native invasive plant species and installing aquatic organism passage structures are just a couple of examples. In all cases where timber harvests are used for restoration, being able to sell timber products is key to the project's success. In addition, forest products support existing infrastructure and workforce that processes sawtimber, pulpwood and biomass.

In general, timber from the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests is approximately 60 percent pulpwood and 40 percent sawtimber, and that from the Monongahela National Forest is approximately 75 percent sawtimber/veneer and 25 percent pulpwood. For the Monongahela National Forest, there are a least 55 mills positioned to receive hardwood sawtimber (19 of which can also take pine sawtimber) and five fiber mills that can take pulpwood.

Because pulpwood makes up such a large portion of available timber in Virginia, it is important that the forests overcome challenges that reduce their ability to sell timber contracts. The forests in general have more harvest restrictions than other sources of timber, affecting the buyers' ability to log during winter months and adverse conditions. Consequently, as the forests are not the provider of first choice for timber buyers, they are more greatly impacted by market and price fluctuations. One of the strategies used to combat these challenges is to increase the amount of time required to fulfill timber contracts to allow for markets to increase, and to reduce the value of pulpwood down to minimum rates. Additionally, the use of stewardship contracts and agreements could allow sawtimber value to offset the low value of pulpwood, making it more likely to sell.

Biomass consists of the un-merchantable portions of the sawtimber and pulpwood, but due to limitations in the Forest Plans, biomass comprises less than 1 percent of the current yearly offerings. There is currently no biomass market for the Monongahela National Forest although two of the nearby fiber mills can take biomass. The George Washington and Jefferson National Forests also have the potential for biomass utilization. On sales where biomass has been

offered in the past, the closest fiber mill has always wanted the product. In order to increase the amount of biomass being offered for sale, the forest has partnered with Virginia Tech to study the potential effects that biomass removal has on soil nutrient levels. The goal is to identify the amount of vegetative material that needs to be left onsite for soil nutrition so that material above those levels can be removed. Increasing the amount of biomass offered would help support the current biomass market, which consists mainly of burning biomass for energy. A steady supply could create new markets by not only increasing the number of businesses burning biomass for energy, but also providing material to niche markets such as pellet manufacturers.

9) Collaboration

The collaborative process on the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests is built upon strong relationships that have developed among a diverse set of public stakeholders during the recent revision of the George Washington National Forest's Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) in 2014. On the Monongahela National Forest, strong collaborative relationships have been developed through multiple Joint Chiefs projects and the development of the Mon Forest Towns Partnership.

The forests have initiated multiple collaborative restoration projects, including transformational landscape-scale integrated planning processes that consist of over 40 organizations and hundreds of individuals who participate in open houses, public workshops and field tours since 2013. Successful collaborative projects include the Lower Cowpasture Restoration and Management Project, North Shenandoah Restoration and Management Project, Highlands Project, Mower Tract and Sharps Knob Red Spruce and Mine Land Projects, Upper Greenbriar Watershed Restoration Project and the Panther Ridge Wildlife Habitat Enhancement. These integrated actions will advance the goals of the Southeast Regional Action Plan of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (2013) and align with Fire Learning Network efforts to build a Fire Adapted Community network in western Virginia.

The SAWPOR project will continue the success of the collaborative planning process by bringing together entities with diverse interests and perspectives to plan across the landscape. Members will include representatives from state agencies, non-profit organizations, forest industry, academia, research and local stakeholder

Some of our recent partners and collaborators include:

- The Nature Conservancy
- Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
- West Virginia Division of Wildlife
- West Virginia Division of Forestry
- Ruffed Grouse Society
- National Turkey Federation
- Trout Unlimited
- Cowpasture River Preservation Association
- Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
- Central Appalachians Fire Learning Network
- The Potomac Highlands Cooperative Weed and Pest Management Area
- Rivers and Gorges Cooperative Weed and Pest Management Area
- National Park Service
- Virginia Tech
- Dabney Lancaster Community College's Forestry Technology Program

groups. These SAWPOR members will come together to address environmental issues that transcend jurisdictional boundaries by leveraging their funding, staff and resources to implement cost-effective, on-the-ground management and restoration. Using tools such as the Good Neighbor Authority and Farm Bill Categorical Exclusion Authorities, we will work together to build a powerful vision for improving forest conditions across fire-prone landscapes that provides a foundation for building even stronger relationships.



Partners and stakeholders meet to discuss forest projects (photo credit: USFS Robbins)

10) Multi-party Monitoring

Two of the most important aspects of implementing the Forest Plans are monitoring and evaluation because they provide information to determine whether programs and projects are meeting forest plan direction and whether plans should be revised. Monitoring of project actions (i.e., implementation monitoring) also occurs to ensure that various aspects of the project adhere to the standards of the Forest Plans, the applicable State Best Management Practices and project-specific mitigation measures.

The George Washington and Jefferson National Forests will continue to engage in a multi-party monitoring program which began in 2009 as part of the Central Appalachians Fire Learning Network. The Monongahela National Forest started a similar program in 2019 using the same protocol to allow for collected data to be combined with the Central Appalachians Fire Learning Network's dataset. To date, only a few plots have been established on the forest, but the SAWPOR project would increase the ability to collaborate with local universities to assist with data collection. Photopoints have been established in all prescribed burn areas since 2017. Monitoring has been focused on the impacts of prescribed burning but could be expanded to include the impacts of silviculture and climate change, and quantify watershed restoration goals.



Vegetation plot (photo credit: USFS L. Curtin)

The George Washington and Jefferson National Forests' monitoring team established a network of over 400 permanent plots across Fire Learning Network landscape, which includes lands managed by the forests, The Nature Conservancy and several state agencies. This network has provided information about forest structure and composition after prescribed burning to help answer specific questions about oak regeneration success and the creation of desired forest structure. The results have been used to shape future projects and have been through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

A canopy gap analysis was completed by The Nature Conservancy and forest staff using GIS data to assess dozens of burn units on the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests. The Monongahela National

Forest conducted a canopy gap analysis to determine the effectiveness of prescribed fire. Songbird populations have also been monitored by The Nature Conservancy on some plots, with analysis focused on the George Washington Forest Plan's Management Indicator Species. These data have been used by the forest to track Plan implementation and to directly address high-level, quantifiable Plan goals such as the amount of woodlands created. The work has been published (Lorber et al., 2018), and plans to replicate the methodology for newer burns are underway. A second publication, designed to help managers predict fire severity, could be completed if funding were available. All reports are available at [Conservationgateway.org](https://www.conservationgateway.org).

Efforts of the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's Natural Heritage Program can be enhanced to compliment and support activities planned in this proposal. There are over 1,500 element occurrences of known rare, threatened, and endangered plant and animal species that occur within the project area. Many of these occurrences have not been revisited since the time they were first found due to a lack of funding and personnel. If this project is selected, it will allow many sites to be resurveyed. This information is critical for better assessing species status, updating population estimates and identifying new threats to better protect and manage these species. This may also provide an opportunity to survey for new rare, threatened, and endangered species within the project area using habitat suitability models developed by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation which better refine and identify areas where these species may likely occur. Several of these models have been tested within the project area and have successfully predicted occurrences of federally listed species, like the rusty-patched bumblebee and northeastern bulrush. This information helps inform future management decisions for the Forest Service and our partners.

These collective inventory and monitoring efforts may be used to kick-start a robust Citizen Science program that will benefit both the forest and our publics. Opportunities for members of the public to help us with monitoring can lead to greater support of management efforts through a sense of ownership in the resource. This is also a natural extension of the idea of "STEM in the Woods," providing a path for direct engagement in the management process. Data collection protocols can be written with a Citizen Science program in mind and include a process to implement quality assurance procedures.

11) Readiness to Implement Strategy

Thirty-three decisions have been signed that cover 151,532 acres for prescribed burn treatments on the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests, including the recent Eastern Divide Highlands and Lee District-Wide Prescribed Fire projects. There is also a cross-boundary prescribed burn project with the Monongahela National Forest covering over 45,000 acres. Eight NEPA projects have been signed supporting mechanical vegetation treatments on roughly 3,000 acres, with eight additional projects planned for signature in 2020, including the large landscape North Shenandoah Mountain project. Combined, these projects total 6,115 acres of commercial hardwood and southern yellow pine treatments. Seventeen additional vegetation management projects are in preliminary planning phases for out-year NEPA projects through to 2026.

The Monongahela National Forest has established an "Order of Entry" schedule to guide project planning at the 5th level watershed. This will allow the forest to take a strategic approach to

project planning and allow stakeholders to track where future projects will occur. Currently, 17 signed decisions cover 31,000 acres of prescribed burn treatments on the Greenbrier and Marlinton-White Sulphur Ranger Districts. Six NEPA projects are signed supporting mechanical vegetation treatments on about 4,500 acres, with three additional projects planned for signature in 2020 (including the large Panther Ridge Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Project). All these projects are focused on improving the health of forest stands, oak-hickory restoration, wildlife habitat enhancement, fuels reduction, watershed restoration and reduction of nonnative invasive species.



Firefighter lights a controlled burn

The suite of tools supporting the implementation strategy include:

- increased NEPA, timber and fire staff on the forests;
- a new CFLRP coordinator (who would focus on monitoring, public and partner engagement and reporting);
- use of Good Neighbor Authority and Stewardship contracting; expansion of partnership agreements (e.g., The Nature Conservancy, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation; West Virginia Division of Forestry);
- incorporation of the Southern Research Station experimental trials into timber harvest blocks to better define acceptable methods of long-term uneven-aged oak management in the Southern Appalachians;
- expansion of existing implementation contract mechanisms (invasive plant treatments, site prep, crop tree release, soil and water improvements);
- expansion of existing participating agreements (e.g., the one with the National Wild Turkey Federation);
- increased use of Healthy Forests Restoration Act and Farm Bill CE Authorities;
- expansion of Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contracts to complete archeology and botanical surveys;
- Joint Chief's application for the North Shenandoah Mountain Management and Restoration Project;
- existing Enterprise Work Orders that support monitoring;
- pending DuPont settlement grant that would result in an interagency contract with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;
- Federal Highways Administration funding; and
- Virginia Recreation Trails program grant funding.

12) Unit Capacity and Project Funding

A project manager will be hired to coordinate efforts moving forward. The Forest District Rangers, Fire Management Officers, Timber Management Assistants and integrated-resource group Staff Officer will be integral in the collaboration and execution of the on-the-ground treatments. The Project Manager will be responsible for tracking the budget execution, keeping the project on timelines, ensuring accomplishment reporting is completed and tracking implementation of the monitoring plan. The Project Manager together with the Volunteer and Service Specialist will also help facilitate communication with partners.

The Lower Cowpasture Restoration Project, West Virginia Restoration Venture and the Appalachian Ecosystem Restoration Initiative Joint Chiefs projects have proven the forests' capabilities for implementing large-scale restoration projects. The George Washington and Jefferson National Forests have recently increased timber output to 50,000 ccf and have also been increasing fuels treatments. The Monongahela National forest has also increase timber output to 34,000 ccf forest wide with approximately 14,500 ccf from the project area. Staffing levels are being increased to fill out the recently approved organizational chart, which adds timber and silviculture positions as well as NEPA positions and a partnership coordinator in both Virginia and West Virginia.

In order to successfully implement and maintain the land management strategies identified, appropriate funding and resource capacity must be in place. Along with filling all vacant fire management positions, we propose creating three or four multi-agency 10-person modules to provide staffing needed to prep, burn and safely manage treatments. It is essential that burn windows are utilized by multiple zones across the entire landscape to treat acres and meet management goals.

To increase efficiency, the forests are focusing on "right-sizing" NEPA by integrating new technology, sharing resources and embracing new techniques. The National Environmental Analysis and Decision Making strategy is one example. The forests are also exploring marking and cruising techniques to increase efficiencies. Many agreements have been established with partners to expand capacity for biological surveys, monitoring and implementation.

It is anticipated that stewardship retained receipts will be generated from projects to reinvest into the SAWPOR project boundary. In addition, some sales will allow us to collect CWKV funds to be used both inside and outside the sale area for restoration efforts. Both of these mechanisms will reinvest timber sale receipts back into other priority projects across the landscape. Where Good Neighbor Authority is used, those revenues will be re-invested by the state to complete additional work.

Non-federal investments include: The Nature Conservancy matching funds up to \$750,000 in Virginia and \$50,000 in West Virginia; in-kind contributions from the Virginia Department of Forestry, Ruffed Grouse Society, National Wild Turkey Federation, WV Division of Natural Resources and WV Division of Forestry; revenue from Good Neighbor Agreements to be reinvested; and stewardship retained receipts to be reinvested. The Nature Conservancy and Ruffed Grouse Society have active stewardship agreements that cut timber and reinvest the timber value into on the ground projects. While work may be scaled back a bit when the CFLRP expires, the collaborative relationships will continue and be used to implement the post-

treatment monitoring. Other funding opportunities, such as through Joint Chiefs or grants, will be pursued, and revenues generated over the life of the CFLRP project are expected to sustain a higher level of available CWKV dollars and stewardship retained receipts than was present prior to project.

To ensure seamless restoration across the landscape and better work with our state and private partners, it will be critical to develop a platform to share data efficiently. We will need to invest in capacity to do this. We will continue to extend our work beyond Forest Service boundaries using stewardship agreements, various partnership authorities and the Good Neighbor Authority through agreements signed by Virginia Governor Northam with the entire Commonwealth of Virginia and the West Virginia Secretary of Commerce for the Division of Natural Resources, West Virginia Division of Forestry and West Virginia Department of Tourism.

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Attachments

ATTACHMENT A: Project map.

ATTACHMENT B: Planned Treatments.

ATTACHMENT C: Utilization of Forest Restoration Byproducts.

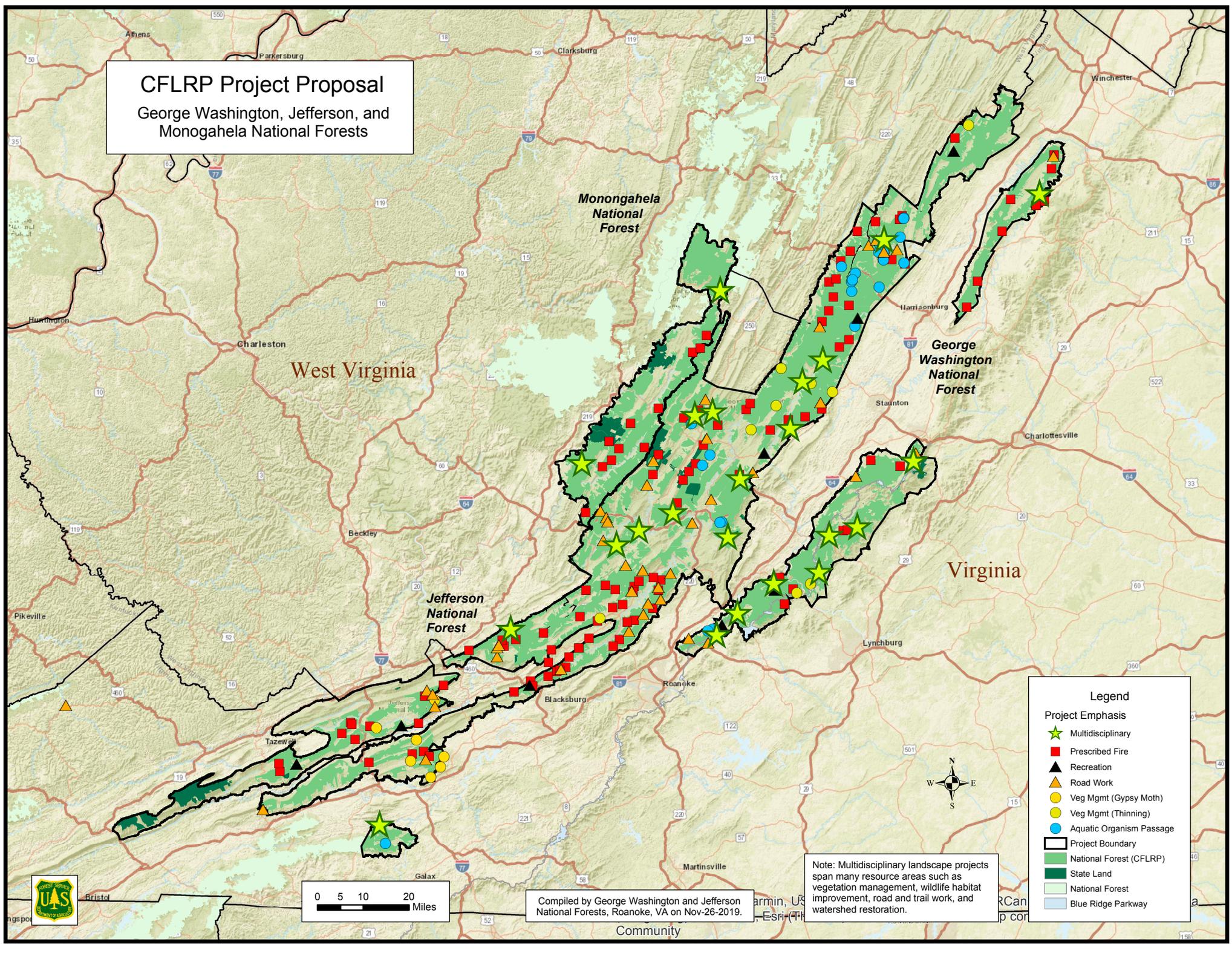
ATTACHMENT D: Collaborative membership.

ATTACHMENT E: Letter of commitment developed and signed by all collaborative members

ATTACHMENT F: Project funding.

ATTACHMENT G: Letter of commitment signed by Forest leadership, indicating understanding and commitment to meeting the eligibility requirements of CFLRP, as described in the CFLRP Proposal Process and Selection Criteria document.

CFLRP Project Proposal
 George Washington, Jefferson, and
 Monongahela National Forests



Compiled by George Washington and Jefferson National Forests, Roanoke, VA on Nov-26-2019.

Note: Multidisciplinary landscape projects span many resource areas such as vegetation management, wildlife habitat improvement, road and trail work, and watershed restoration.

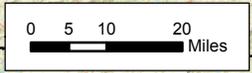
Legend

Project Emphasis

- ★ Multidisciplinary
- Prescribed Fire
- ▲ Recreation
- ▲ Road Work
- Veg Mgmt (Gypsy Moth)
- Veg Mgmt (Thinning)
- Aquatic Organism Passage

Land Types

- ▭ Project Boundary
- National Forest (CFLRP)
- State Land
- National Forest
- Blue Ridge Parkway



Core Restoration Treatment Types	Please briefly fill in additional background information for the prompts below	Total Year 1	Total Year 2	Total Year 3	Total Year 4	Total Years 5-10	TOTAL	Key treatment objectives	Estimated % accomplished on NFS lands (across all ten years)	Other landownership types (other federal, tribal, state, private, etc.) where treatments will occur
Hazardous Fuels Reduction (acres)	Summation of Lines 5, 6, and 7	42,729	48,351	52,088	56,760	244,020	443,948		77.0%	Other federal, state and private
Mechanical Thinning (acres)	Includes commercial thinning activities.	3,246	3,336	3,419	3,813	25,260	39,074	Desired future conditions and fuels reduction	72.6%	State and private
Prescribed Fire (acres)		22,360	27,042	31,342	35,320	141,780	257,844	Fire return interval	96.5%	Other federal, state and private
Other (acres)	Includes prescribed grazed and mechanical treatments.	17,123	17,973	17,327	17,627	76,980	147,030	Fuels reduction	44.0%	State and private
Wildfire Risk Mitigation Outcomes - Acres treated to mitigate wildfire risk	The vast majority of prescribed burns treatments result in reduced fuels and mitigated wildfire risk.	27,113	32,207	35,687	39,547	162,104	296,659		97.2%	State and private
Wildfire Risk Mitigation Outcomes - WUI acres	WUI designations based on spatial analysis. https://www.southernwildfirerisk.com/	15,270	18,032	19,757	22,740	83,835	159,633		95.7%	State and private
Invasive Species Management (acres)	Includes woody, shrubby and herbaceous invasive species spanning roadsides, open fields and pastures. Examples include treatments for things like Gypsy moth and other insect pests.	16,139	15,607	6,154	5,085	46,849	89,834	Controlling NNIS	26.4%	State and private
Native Pest Management (acres)	Includes management of non-desirable species regenerating in forest stands and undesirable weedy species on pastures, road sides and open areas. Examples include treatment for Southern Pine Beetle and other native insect pests.	2,368	2,500	2,750	3,257	11,718	22,593	Managing for desired species composition	15.2%	State and private
Wildlife Habitat Restoration (acres)	Includes the continued restoration of open habitats, enhancement of pollinator habitat, creation and maintenance of early successional habitats and the creation and maintenance of open woodland conditions.	36,598	41,315	46,755	48,983	317,286	490,937	Desired future conditions	95.8%	State and private
Crossing Improvements (number)	Includes reinforced fords, bottomless arches and culvert replacements to improve aquatic organism passage.	30	30	20	18	105	203	Improve aquatic species habitat	49.3%	State and private
In-Stream Fisheries Improvement (miles)	These improvements include fencing of livestock from live waters and the removal or decommissioning of poorly placed roads and trails.	129	55	52	59	376	671	Improve stream habitat	52.7%	State and private
Riparian Area Improvements (acres)	Includes fencing cattle from riparian resources, plant trees within riparian buffers,	337	770	767	3,208	5,590	10,672	Improve riparian area conditions.	6.7%	State and private
Soil and Watershed resources enhanced or maintained (acres)	Includes stabilization, control of access, nutrient management, intensive prescribed grazing and pasture planting restoration.	26,629	24,896	3,398	8,073	69,248	132,244	Sediment reduction	0.4%	State and private

Stand Improvement (acres)	Includes crop tree release, timber stand improvement, and site preparation activities.	5,481	1,732	1,910	2,016	12,323	23,462	Desired future conditions	62.5%	State and private
Reforestation and revegetation (acres)	Includes planting of pine species, natural hardwood regeneration and planting of hardwoods in riparian areas.	960	1,250	1,270	1,198	3,870	8,548	Desired future conditions	65.4%	State and private
Timber Harvest (acres)*	GW-Jeff - 95% ground based; 5% cable. Monongahela - 50% ground based; 20% cable; 30% helicopter.	10,703	10,600	11,100	11,750	55,179	99,332	Desired future conditions	54.6%	State and private
Rangeland Vegetation Improvement (acres)	Includes prescribed grazing treatments, forage harvest management, and structural improvements to move the vegetative community toward desired ecological condition.	26,129	25,109	22,879	15,901	87,422	177,440	Improve grazing habitat	16.4%	Private landowners
Other - American Chestnut restoration	Chestnut Ridge Natural Area Preserve that is owned and managed by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation will have a chesutnut restoration effort focused on this preserve.	10	160	160	150	760	1,240	American Chestnut restoration	3.2%	State

*Note that timber volume produced from the treatment is estimated in a separate attachment - Attachment C.

CFRLP Proposal Attachment C: Utilization of Forest Restoration Byproducts

*Note that acres treated includes all acres treated within the CFLRP boundary. However, the projected annual harvested volume is only for NFS lands.

Fiscal Year	Estimate of acres treated annually that will generate restoration byproducts	Total projected annual harvested volume (ccf) from NFS lands (GW-Jeff)	Total projected annual harvested volume (ccf) from NFS lands (Monongahela)	Expected percentage commercially utilized* from NFS lands
2020	3071	42000	23430	100
2021	3221	43050	25560	100
2022	3371	44126	27526	100
2023	3523	45229	29820	100
2024	3409	46360	26460	100
2025	3463	47519	25560	100
2026	3518	48707	25770	100
2027	3575	49924	25980	100
2028	3634	51172	26190	100
2029	3694	52452	26400	100
TOTALS:	34479	470539	262696	100
	<i>Estimated % of TOTAL acres accomplished on NFS lands:</i>	70		
	<i>Estimated % of TOTAL acres accomplished on other landownerships within the CFLRP boundary:</i>	30		

*Commercially utilized refers to the volume you expect to sell across all product classes (sawtimber, biomass, firewood, etc.)

Forest Service staff representative(s) working with collaborative: (Please provide list of key staff):

Joby Timm, GWJeff Forest Supervisor; Shawn Cochran, Monongahela Forest Supervisor; Troy Morris, GWJeff IRM Staff Officer

Collaborative Member/Partner Name	Organizational Affiliation (if applicable)	Was this person involved in proposal development?	Primary Issue Category	Second Issue Category	Third Issue Category	If "other," briefly describe
Blair Smyth	The Nature Conservancy	Yes	Environmental	Watershed	Fire Ecology	
Rob Farrell	Virginia Department of Forestry	Yes	State	Fire Management	Forest Products	
Ryan Brown	Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries	No	State	Wildlife	Watershed	
Stephen McDaniel	West Virginia Division of Natural Resources	Yes	State	Wildlife	Other	Recreation
Clyde Cristman	Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation	Yes	State	Tourism	Other	Recreation
Brett Glymph	Virginia Outdoors Foundation	No	State	Environmental	Watershed	
John Magruder	Virginia Forestry Association	Yes	Forest Products	Other		Economic
Rob Farrell	Virginia State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee	No	State	Forest Products	Watershed	
John Bricker	Natural Resource Conservation Service	Yes	Federal	Watershed		
Cindy Schulz	US Fish and Wildlife Service	No	Federal	Wildlife	Watershed	
Wayne Thacker	Virginia Wildlife Habitat Coalition	No	Wildlife	Fire Ecology	Watershed	
Patrick McCurdy	National Wild Turkey Federation	No	Wildlife			
Robert Doudrick	Southern Research Station	No	Federal	Research		
Paul Winistorfer	Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University	Yes	College/University	Research	Community Development	
Barry Cook	West Virginia Division of Forestry	Yes	State	Forest Products	Watershed	

Attachment D: Letter of Commitment (LOC)

George Washington, Jefferson and Monongahela National Forests Southern Appalachian Woodland Pine and Oak Restoration Collaborative

The undersigned participants pledge their support to ecological restoration of National Forest Lands on the George Washington, Jefferson and Monongahela National Forests and surrounding conservation lands. The participants are committed to collaboratively:

- enhancing the health and resilience of the land, waters, forests, human communities, and economy within and surrounding the project area;
- using the best available science and monitoring to inform recommendations, decision-making, and feedback regarding restoration activities;
- recommending and making necessary adaptive management corrections; and
- striving for respectful and effective communication with participants and other individuals and entities encountered as part of this effort.

Nothing in this LOC shall bind any participant to the expenditure of funds. Any awarding or contracting for the expenditure of funds shall be pursuant to appropriate separate written agreements.

Nothing in this LOC shall affect or interfere with the fulfillment of the obligations or exercise of authority by any participant, or the taking of actions by any participant to individually further the goals of this LOC.

As partners with the George Washington, Jefferson and Monongahela National Forests and members of this collaborative team, we support the goals and actions proposed in the Southern Appalachian Woodland Pine and Oak Restoration Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project proposal and are committed to provide insight, project review, and guidance for reaching restoration goals. We recognize the importance of this proposal and the potential for thousands of acres of ecosystem restoration and monitoring. We are committed to partnering in the implementation of the project.

We, therefore, commit ourselves to work together towards restoring the ecosystems within this Landscape, by providing whatever information and resources that are appropriate to facilitate the planning and implementation of the treatments. We also commit to work collaboratively to develop a multi-party monitoring framework that will continually assess the effectiveness of the restoration activities.

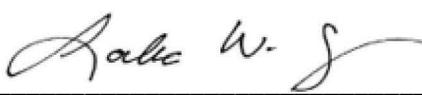
Effective this 6th day of December, 2019.



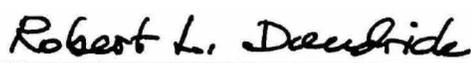
JOHN A. BRICKER
State Conservationist
Natural Resources Conservation Service



PATRICK C. MCCURDY
District Biologist
National Wild Turkey Federation



LOCKE OGENS
State Director, Virginia
The Nature Conservancy



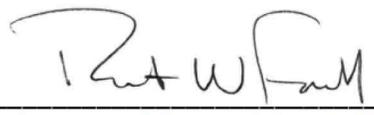
ROBERT L. DOUDRICK
Station Director, Southern Research Station
USDA Forest Service



CLYDE CRISTMAN
Director
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation



CINDY SCHULZ
Field Supervisor, Virginia Ecological Services
US Fish & Wildlife Service



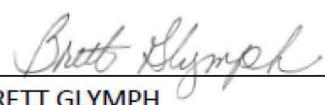
ROB FARRELL
State Forester
Virginia Department of Forestry
and on behalf of the Virginia Forest Stewardship
Coordinating Committee



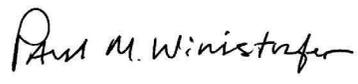
RYAN BROWN
Executive Director
Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries



JOHN MAGRUDER
President
Virginia Forestry Association



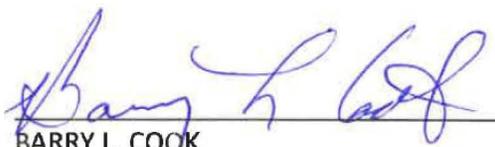
BRETT GLYMPH
Executive Director
Virginia Outdoors Foundation



PAUL M. WINISTORFER
Dean, College of Natural Resources and Environment
Virginia Tech



WAYNE THACKER
Chair
Virginia Wildlife Habitat Coalition



BARRY L. COOK
Director/State Forester
West Virginia Division of Forestry



STEPHEN S. MCDANIEL
Director
West Virginia Division of Natural Resources

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

COMMITTEE ON
FOREIGN RELATIONS

COMMITTEE ON
THE BUDGET

COMMITTEE ON
HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,
AND PENSIONS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4607

November 26, 2019

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave SW Stop 1800
Washington, DC 20250-1800

Dear Secretary Perdue:

I write to express support for the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests, applicants for grant funding from the Cooperative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) at the U.S. Department of Agriculture for its Southern Appalachian Woodland Pine and Oak Restoration Project. The purpose of the CFLRP is to encourage the collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes.

Under this program, managers can improve lands on the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests and surrounding conservation lands by:

- restoring rare natural communities and associated plant and animal species;
- increasing the number of watersheds in fully functional hydrologic condition;
- providing high-quality outdoor road and trail experiences;
- reducing the effects of invasive species;
- reducing risks of unwanted, landscape level wildland fires;
- increasing the resilience of the forested landscape to insect and disease epidemics;
- protecting and enhancing wildlife habitat; and
- providing the opportunity for the utilization of a variety of wood products.

Please give full and fair consideration to Southern Appalachian Woodland Pine and Oak Restoration Project. Should you have any questions regarding my letter, please contact Gwen_Mason@kaine.senate.gov. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Tim Kaine

Joe Manchin III
WEST VIRGINIA



United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC

December 05, 2019

United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service, CFLRP Advisory Panel
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program Panel,

RE: Letter of Support for the Monongahela, George Washington, and Jefferson National Forests application for the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP), the Southern Appalachian Woodland Oak and Pine Restoration (SAWPOR) proposal.

I am writing today in support of the joint application from the Monongahela National Forest and the George Washington-Jefferson National Forest, whose proposed collaborative efforts from over 40 organizations would restore hundreds of thousands of acres of National Forest System lands in need of restoration. This project would be a bright spot in the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program. Though many applications for this program are the fruit of years of collaborative work with partner organizations, this application is unique because outside groups, such as The Nature Conservancy, have already committed to providing match funding for this project if chosen. Moreover, the required environmental analysis for this project is already complete and restoration work could get started immediately.

These National Forests provide a great variety of outdoor recreation, diverse landscapes, and natural beauty that all contribute to the “wild and wonderful” way of life that West Virginian’s are accustomed to. The Monongahela National Forest comprises over 50% of the public land in our state. In West Virginia, we are proud of our natural beauty and want to keep it healthy for years to come. The SAWPOR proposal would reduce hazard fuels, and one of the primary tools it will employ is cutting timber. It will, at the same time, improve habitat and restore watersheds. Unfortunately, a few years ago, wildfires ravished nearby Tennessee showing everyone the fire hazard that exists in many of our oak forests and yellow pine forests.

Lastly, as I am sure you are aware, the description for the CFLRP states that this program has proven to be an “an effective tool for... growing rural economies.” In West Virginia, rural communities are the heart, soul, and backbone of the state. Any project that can boost the economies of our communities that have been hurt by the decline in the use of coal and the opioid epidemic is a project that should be invested in. I have complete faith in this project will excel in meeting the goals that this program was designed to do.

With warmest regards,


Joe Manchin III
United States Senator

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 6, 2019

United States Forest Service
Advisory Panel
Cooperative Forest Landscape Restoration Program
1400 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC, 20250

Dear Members of the Advisory Panel for the Cooperative Forest Landscape Restoration Program,

I write in support of the selection of the Monongahela, George Washington, and Jefferson National Forests, and surrounding conservation lands, for the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP).

Through participation in the CFLRP, these National Forests will be afforded additional resources necessary to restore and preserve ecosystems home to a wide array of plant and animal species. These investments will increase the number of fully functional watersheds, improve road and trail infrastructure, and reduce the presence of invasive species. In addition, the program will allow them to mitigate the risk of wildfires and ultimately improve the resiliency of the forests.

The CFLRP would be a great opportunity for these three National Forests to collaborate and enhance the forests of Appalachia for generations to come.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this worthy project proposal.

Sincerely,



Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senator

County of Alleghany

Alleghany County Governmental Complex • 9212 Winterberry Avenue • Covington, VA 24426

Administration
540/863-6600
Fax: 540/863-6606

Central Accounting
540/863-6610
Fax: 540/863-6611



Parks & Recreation
540/863-6622
Fax: 540/863-6620

Public Works
540/863-6650
Fax: 540-863-6655

Partner Contact Information: Jonathan A. Lanford, County Administrator; 540.863.6600

Date: 02 December 2019

Subject: Southern Appalachian Woodland Pine and Oak Restoration (SAWPOR)

To: Advisory Panel for the Cooperative Forest Landscape Restoration Proposals

Dear Panel:

Please accept this letter of strong support for the Southern Appalachian Woodland Pine and Oak Restoration (SAWPOR) proposal. We support ecological restoration of National Forest Lands on the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests and surrounding conservation lands. There is immense potential across the landscape for this project to: restore rare natural communities and the associated plant and animal species; increase the number of watersheds that are in fully functional hydrologic condition; provide high-quality outdoor road and trail experiences; reduce the impacts from invasive species; reduce the risk of unwanted wildland fire on the landscape; increase the resilience of the forested landscape to insect and disease epidemics; protect and enhance wildlife habitat; and provide the opportunity for the utilization of a variety of wood products.

This proposal is an excellent opportunity to work together to restore ecosystems, enhance habitats, reduce hazardous fuels by altering fire regimes and effectively monitor the landscape. We also understand it will allow for the following initiatives to move forward as well: road maintenance and reconstruction; trail maintenance and reconstruction; bridge and culvert replacements; watershed restoration; and increasing the pace and scale of restoration including timber harvest.

On behalf of our organization, we whole-heartedly support this proposal and are excited to be a part of this important restoration initiative.

Jonathan A. Lanford
County Administrator

Jonathan A. Lanford, County Administrator

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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Boiling Springs District

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Falling Spring District

Stephen A. Bennett
Jackson River District

Cletus W. Nicely
Sharon District



Forest Service

Flatwoods Job Corps Civilian
Conservation Center

2803 Dungannon Road
Coeburn VA 24230
276-395-3384/276-395-2043

File Code: 1850

Date: December 13, 2019

Subject: Southern Appalachian Woodland Pine and Oak Restoration (SAWPOR)

To: Advisory Panel for the Cooperative Forest Landscape Restoration Proposals

Dear Panel:

This letter is in support for the Southern Appalachian Woodland Pine and Oak Restoration (SAWPOR) proposal. We support ecological restoration of National Forest Lands on the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests and surrounding conservation lands. There is immense potential across the landscape for this project to: restore rare natural communities and the associated plant and animal species; increase the number of watersheds that are in fully functional hydrologic condition; provide high-quality outdoor road and trail experiences; reduce the impacts from invasive species; reduce the risk of unwanted wildland fire on the landscape; increase the resilience of the forested landscape to insect and disease epidemics; protect and enhance wildlife habitat; and provide the opportunity for the utilization of a variety of wood products.

I am also excited about the possibility of Flatwoods Job Corps being involved in this project. Fire students at Flatwoods have skills, and may obtain further skills from being involved, that may assist in this endeavor. This proposal is an excellent opportunity to work together to restore ecosystems, enhance habitats, reduce hazardous fuels by altering fire regimes and effectively monitor the landscape.

It is important to me that the landscape is healthy and it important to the community to have high-quality outdoor road and trail experiences. On behalf of Flatwoods Job Corps, we whole-heartedly support this proposal and are excited to be a part of this important restoration initiative.

Sincerely,

David M. Scholes
Center Director





We work with the people who work the land. P.O. Box 310, Warm Springs, VA 24484; 540-839-4616

November 20, 2019

TO: Advisory Panel for the Cooperative Forest landscape Restoration Proposals

FROM: Mountain Soil & Water Conservation District

SUBJECT: Southern Appalachian Woodland Pine and Oak Restoration (SAWPOR)

Please accept this memorandum of strong support for the Southern Appalachian Woodland Oak and Pine Restoration (SAWPOR) proposal. We continue to support ecological restoration of National Forest Lands on the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests and surrounding conservation lands. There is immense potential across the landscape for this project to continue to: restore rare natural communities and the associated plant and animal species; increase the number of watersheds that are in fully functional hydrologic condition; provide high-quality outdoor road and trail experiences; reduce the impacts from invasive species; reduce the risk of unwanted wildland fire on the landscape; increase the resilience of the forested landscape to insect and disease epidemics; protect and enhance wildlife habitat; and provide the opportunity for the utilization of a variety of wood products.

This proposal is an excellent opportunity to continue to work together to restore ecosystems, enhance habitats, reduce hazardous fuels by altering fire regimes and effectively monitor the landscape.

On behalf of our organization, we whole-heartedly support this proposal and are excited to be a part of this important restoration initiative.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ellen Ford".

Ellen Ford, Chair
Mountain SWCD

Complete the table below and respond to the question at the bottom of the tab.

For 2010 Project extensions, fill in the annual funding request for the number of years requested for the extension (up to 10)

Fiscal Year 1*	Funding Planned/Requested
Partner fund contributions on NFS lands	\$40,000
Partner in-kind contributions on NFS lands	\$100,000
Goods for Services or Revenue from GNA to be applied within CFLRP landscape	\$40,000
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on NFS lands	\$1,170,264
Total non-CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$1,350,264
CFLRP Funding Request	\$2,650,000
Total CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$2,650,000
Partner fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$530,000
Partner in-kind contributions on non-NFS lands	\$3,019,529
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$1,000,000
Total non-CFLRP funding for non-NFS lands	\$4,549,529

***Assume funding requested for Year 1 will be allocated in February 2020 at the earliest**

Fiscal Year 2	Funding Planned/Requested
Partner fund contributions on NFS lands	\$50,000
Partner in-kind contributions on NFS lands	\$150,000
Goods for Services or Revenue from GNA to be applied within CFLRP landscape	\$50,000
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on NFS lands	\$1,304,572
Total non-CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$1,554,572
CFLRP Funding Request	\$2,700,000
Total CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$2,700,000
Partner fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$700,000
Partner in-kind contributions on non-NFS lands	\$2,417,305
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$1,200,000
Total non-CFLRP funding for non-NFS lands	\$4,317,305

Fiscal Year 3	Funding Planned/Requested
Partner fund contributions on NFS lands	\$55,000
Partner in-kind contributions on NFS lands	\$175,000
Goods for Services or Revenue from GNA to be applied within CFLRP landscape	\$80,000
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on NFS lands	\$1,464,923
Total non-CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$1,774,923
CFLRP Funding Request	\$2,700,000
Total CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$2,700,000
Partner fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$700,000
Partner in-kind contributions on non-NFS lands	\$1,016,210

USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$800,000
Total non-CFLRP funding for non-NFS lands	\$2,516,210

Fiscal Year 4	Funding Planned/Requested
Partner fund contributions on NFS lands	\$50,000
Partner in-kind contributions on NFS lands	\$180,000
Goods for Services or Revenue from GNA to be applied within CFLRP landscape	\$85,000
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on NFS lands	\$1,434,156
Total non-CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$1,749,156
CFLRP Funding Request	\$2,700,000
Total CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$2,700,000
Partner fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$750,000
Partner in-kind contributions on non-NFS lands	\$1,278,235
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$850,000
Total non-CFLRP funding for non-NFS lands	\$2,878,235

Fiscal Years 5-10	Funding Planned/Requested
Partner fund contributions on NFS lands	\$350,000
Partner in-kind contributions on NFS lands	\$900,000
Goods for Services or Revenue from GNA to be applied within CFLRP landscape	\$540,000
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on NFS lands	\$3,247,310
Total non-CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$5,037,310
CFLRP Funding Request	\$16,100,000
Total CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$16,100,000
Partner fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$3,500,000
Partner in-kind contributions on non-NFS lands	\$4,951,169
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$4,800,000
Total non-CFLRP funding for non-NFS lands	\$13,251,169

Please provide an **estimate of any funding needed for NEPA and environmental compliance** in support of the CFLRP Project. You may copy/paste the response to the Tier 1 template and/or elaborate with additional details as needed. *NOTE: CFLN can only be used for implementation and monitoring (not planning).*

\$3,200,000



Forest Service

George Washington and Jefferson
National Forests

5162 Valleypointe Parkway
Roanoke, VA 24019
540-265-5100

File Code: 1300
Route To:

Date: December 16, 2019

Subject: ATTACHMENT G – Forest Leadership Letter of Commitment

To: CFLRP Selection Committee

As Forest Service leadership with responsibilities for managing the Monongahela National Forest and the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests, we welcome the opportunity to underscore our firm commitment for the Southern Appalachian Woodland Pine and Oak Restoration (SAWPOR) project proposal. This proposal is consistent with the visions we have for our Forests, which include an awareness that our landscape level issues do not stop at agency boundaries. We know that from an ecological standpoint it makes sense to implement management activities across administrative boundaries to approach the scale necessary to make a difference in habitat improvement, restoration and maintenance.

We both take pride in the fact that our SAWPOR project proposal was collaboratively developed. This effort is energizing the already strong ties between our staffs, and we intend to carry out this effort with an emphasis on team involvement, effective listening, and clear and timely communication.

Our signatures below reflect our awareness of the eligibility, implementation, and monitoring requirements for the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP), as described in the Application Process Overview and Criteria for Tier 2 document. We recognize the importance of leadership intent and support for CFLRP strategy implementation and are committed to continued collaboration through project implementation and monitoring.

SHAWN M. COCHRAN
Forest Supervisor, Monongahela NF

JOBY P. TIMM
Forest Supervisor, George Washington & Jefferson NF

