Quick Overview

• Purpose is to create community forests that provide community benefits.
• Requires a 50% non-federal funding match.
• Requires public access.
• Involves the community in establishing and managing the community forest.
• Fee acquisitions only
Definition

- Community forest. Forest land owned in fee-simple by an eligible entity that provides public access and is managed to provide community benefits pursuant to a community forest plan.

-Federal Register /Vol. 76, No. 203 /Thursday, October 20, 2011 /Rules and Regulations 65121
Eligible Entities

- **Local governments**
  - Any municipal government, county government, or other local government with jurisdiction over local land use decisions.

- **Indian tribes**
  - Federally recognized Indian tribes and Alaska Native Corporations.

- **Qualified nonprofit organizations**
  - An organization that is described in Section 170(h)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
Eligible Land

• Private forest lands that:
  – Are threatened by conversion to nonforest uses
  – Are not lands held in trust by the United States, and
  – Can provide defined community benefits and provide public access.

• Forest lands:
  – Lands that are at least five acres in size, suitable to sustain natural vegetation, and at least 75 percent forested.
  – Forests are determined both by the presence of trees and the absence of nonforest uses.
Community Benefits

Focuses on community benefits, including

- Financial benefits from timber and non-timber resource management
- Recreational benefits secured with public access
- Natural resource protection
- Forest-based experiential learning
- Replicable models of effective forest stewardship
Funding History

- FY2012 - $3,500,000 - 10 projects
- FY2013 - $1,892,000 - 3 projects
- FY2014 - $2,000,000 - 8 projects
- FY2015 - $2,000,000 - 6 projects
- FY2016 - $2,000,000 - Projects not yet announced
Program Applications

FY 2012 & 2013
• 49 Applications; $14.5 million
• 13 Awards; $5.2 million

FY 2014
• 21 Applications; $5.9 million
• 7 Awards; $2.1 million

FY 2015
• 23 Applications; $7.09 million
• 6 Awards; $2 million

FY 2016
• 21 Applications; $6.1 million
Applications

Community Forest Program Status
Application Process

• A national request for applications is issued
  – Applications for local government and nonprofit entities go to the State Forester.
  – Tribal applications go to the equivalent Tribal Governments official.

• State Foresters and Tribal officials forward all applications to the Forest Service and, as time and resources allow:
  Provide a review of each application to help the Forest Service determine:
Project Evaluation Criteria

1. Type and extent of community benefits provided.
2. Extent and nature of community engagement in the establishment and long-term management.
3. Extent to which the community forest contributes to a landscape conservation initiative.
4. Likelihood that, unprotected, the property would be converted to nonforest uses.
5. Amount of cost share leveraged.
6. Extent of due diligence completed on the project.
Project Acquisition

1. Must complete a Yellowbook appraisal and appraisal review.
2. Prior to closing, must notify the landowner in writing of the appraised value and that the sale is voluntary.
3. Purchase all surface and subsurface mineral rights, whenever possible, or meet remoteness test.
4. Ensure that title does of any kind that would be contrary to the purpose of the CFP.
5. Record a Notice of Grant Requirement and a number for other requirements in deed.
Post Acquisition Requirements

• Complete the final community forest plan within 120 days.
• Provide appropriate public access.
• Submit every 5 years a self-certifying statement that the property has not been sold or converted.
• Be subject to a spot check conducted by the Forest Service to verify that property acquired has not been sold or converted and is managed consistent with the Community Forest Plan.
Rule Update

• Grant forms
• Draft Community Forest Plan
• Conveyance with approval of FS
• Other interests
Questions?