

The Community Forest Handbook

A Resource Guide from the Northwest Community Forest Coalition



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Cover photo of 2017 Northwest Community Forest Coalition field trip to the Chimacum Ridge Community Forest

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Contents

Northwest Community Forest Coalition Vision Statement.....	5
1. Introduction	7
2. Governance and Ownership.....	9
3. Steps Required	17
4. Funding.....	23
5. State and Federal Programs Supporting Community Forests.....	29
6. Technical Assistance Directory	41
7. Additional References	45

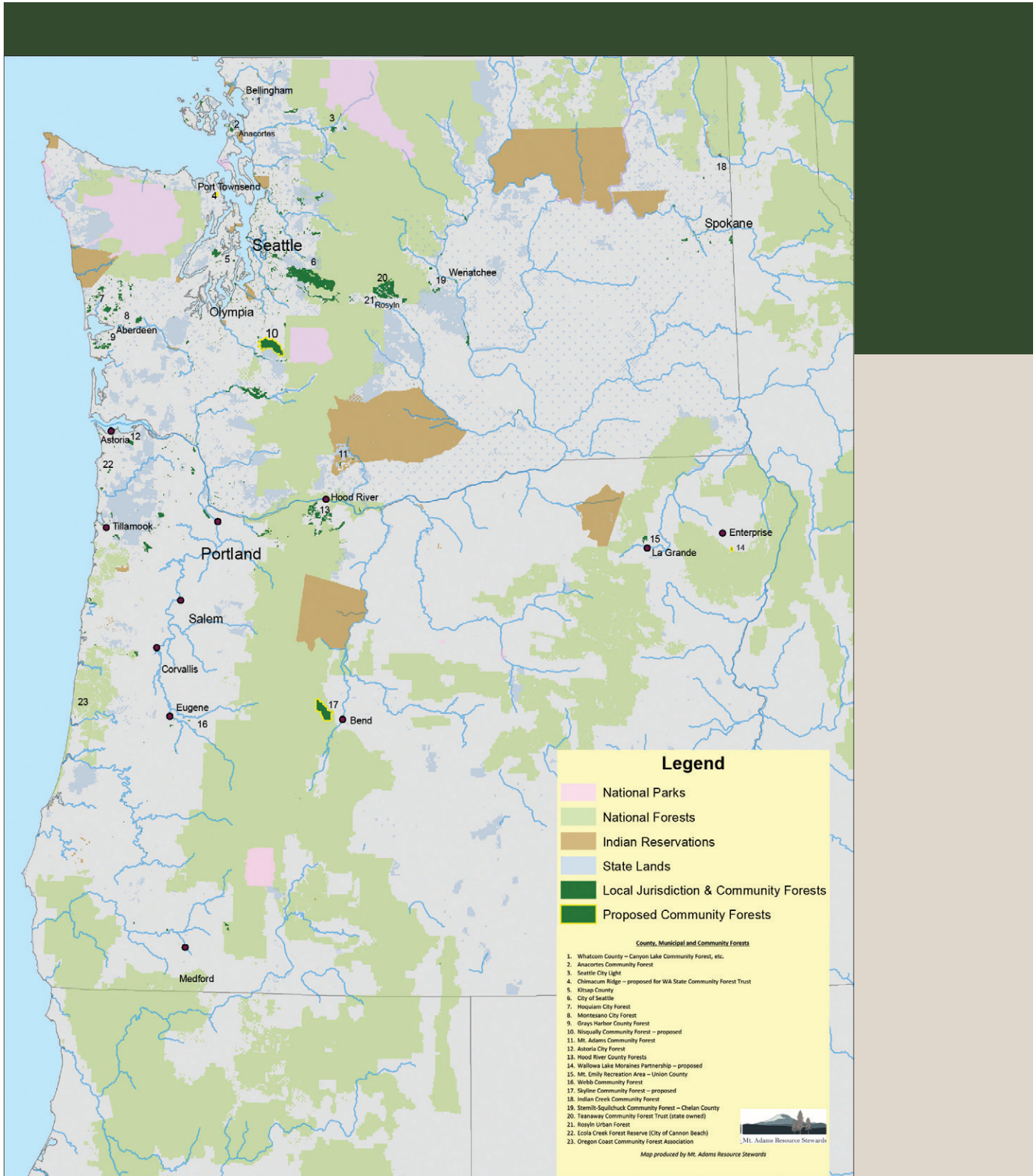


Figure 1: Map of NW Community Forests from the website <http://nwcommunityforests.org/about-the-coalition/>

Northwest Community Forest Coalition Vision Statement

The Northwest Community Forest Coalition believes that long-term, secure community control and tenure of local forests leads to enhanced stewardship and multiple public benefits.

About the Coalition

The Northwest Community Forest Coalition is a network of nonprofit organizations, for-profit companies, local governments, state and federal land management agencies, and Tribes that work together across the region to advance community forest projects. In addition to this guide, the coalition organizes a number of networking and learning opportunities throughout the year. There are quarterly Steering Committee meetings, which are open to the public. There is also an annual Community Forest Field Tour where participants have a chance to get an in-depth look at an existing or proposed community forest. Every other year the Field Tour is combined with a Community Forest Forum, a day-long conference providing updates and in-depth presentations on many of the topics examined in this guide.

For information about community forest-related events, guides, case studies, and other resources visit our website: www.nwcommunityforests.org.



Vision for this Guide

Increasing population, development, and climate-related disturbances are making the task of managing and sustaining forests in the Pacific Northwest ever more challenging and costly. Securing forest tenure and localizing forest governance through the creation of community forests represents an essential part of the solution to stemming forest loss, fragmentation, and degradation.

Community forests provide a way for citizens to participate in the management of forest landscapes that support socioeconomic well-being and the essential life support systems that keep our species and the planet thriving. This guide is meant not only to empower communities to envision local governance of their working forests, but also provide realistic steps and problem-solving advice for achieving that vision.



Photo: Nisqually Community Forest, photo by Jed Moore.

1. Introduction

Forests provide many benefits: clean water, timber products, fish and wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, recreation opportunities and more. Managing for all of these benefits can be challenging and efforts to maximize one often comes at the cost of others. Community forests provide an opportunity for local stakeholders to tackle this challenge by securing ownership of private forestland and implementing management activities that align with their values and needs.

The earliest community forests in the United States were established in New England. The community forest model started gaining ground nationally in the 1990's during a surge of interest in local management of working forests. In 2014 the Northwest Community Forest Coalition was formed to help

nurture this burgeoning movement in the Pacific Northwest.

The purpose of this guide is to provide a road map for anyone interested in establishing a community forest. The first section starts with the basics: What is a community forest? The following sections in this guide address important questions that get at the nuts and bolts of how community forests work:

- **Governance:** Who gets to make decisions?
- **Steps Required:** How do you go from an idea to bringing a community forest into fruition?
- **Finance and Funding:** How do you align the available sources of public and private dollars to buy a forest?
- **State and Federal Programs:** What programs exist that support community acquisition of forestlands?

This resource guide draws on community forest case studies from across the Pacific Northwest. The final section of the guide is a technical assistance directory of community forest practitioners in the Pacific Northwest that readers are encouraged to reach out to with project specific questions.

What is a community forest?

Community Forests are working forests owned and managed by a local government or by a community-based organization on behalf of a community.

- Community forests provide local control over and enjoyment of the monetary and non-monetary benefits offered by local forest resources.

- The acquisition and management structure ensures collaboration and community participation in and responsibility for management decisions.
- The community has secure and reliable access to forest benefits that support and reinforce community priorities.
- Community forests enable permanent protection of conservation values of the forestland ecosystem.

Community Forest Core Principles

1. Forests are critical natural-resource assets in the Pacific Northwest, supporting local livelihoods and economic vitality. Forests also provide critical goods and services to local communities, including drinking water, timber products, fuel, recreation, food, wildlife habitat, and cultural uses.
2. Maintaining working forests is fundamental to large-landscape conservation and development of sustainable economies in rural communities in the Pacific Northwest. Fragmentation by conversion to other land uses and large-scale disturbances are the principal threats to the diverse social, economic and ecological benefits forests provide.
3. Community Forests emphasize and deliver meaningful public benefits and rights to local communities.
4. Long-term secure forest tenure combined with meaningful local community participation leads to enhanced forest stewardship.



Photo: Mt. Adams Community Forest

2. Governance and Ownership

Who gets to make management decisions for a community forest? There are two overlapping considerations: ownership and governance. The owner has legal authority over the forest. From municipal ownership to nonprofit land trusts to for-profits that achieve community forest goals in partnership with local residents, there are important trade-offs to consider when choosing an ownership model. There isn't one model that is best for all, rather it is a decision that is impacted by local context such as the people and organizations leading the project, what the primary forest management goals of the forest are, and what resources are available.

Governance is the process through which management decisions are made. For a community forest it is important to have a process for integrating the voices of community members and forestry partners into planning. For participants in existing community forests, the strategy for facilitating community

input is often a more important consideration than which entity formally owns the forestland¹.

Facilitating Community Involvement

Coordinating Community Outreach and Engagement

How do you put the “community” in a community forest? Thoughtful consideration and planning is required to execute a successful public involvement campaign. This process is often iterative and time-consuming, yet essential to building broad support for a community forest project.

There are two formative concepts that may help practitioners think through who to engage in establishing and managing a community forest, *communities of place* and *communities of interest*.

A community of place is a geographically distinct area, such as a town or county. A community of interest is a group of people who share common values and passions, such as berry picking, mushroom collecting, or mountain biking.

The importance of coordination, facilitation, and local leadership cannot be overstated. It is hard to get a project off the ground without someone to champion an effort and manage the day-to-day tasks associated with building community support. This role often falls on a local organization that is both trusted by the forest stakeholders and has the capacity to spend time facilitating community input. In the Pacific Northwest a number of communities have taken advantage of the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program, which provides professional staff time to support project development, planning, and community organizing.

Jay McLaughlin, Mt. Adams Resource Stewards (MARS)

“For Mt. Adams Resource Stewards' Board of Directors, it was important in developing a community forest project that our governance model maintains some distinct differences from how public lands are governed. We wanted streamlined, efficient, locally controlled decision-making processes that would allow us to be responsive to community interests, product markets, forest health crises and other issues that regularly arise in an attempt to manage a forest in “exemplary” fashion. The Board of Directors of MARS, as a community-based forestry non-profit, retains decision-making authority as to community forest management. We strive to hold an annual public meeting at which we invite input from the broader community. MARS' Directors also work to sustain Board representation from a variety of stakeholders in the Mt. Adams Community, to include community leaders, business owners, loggers, environmental, tribal, ranching interests, as well as financial and legal expertise.”

¹ Urgenson et al. 2017: <http://nwcommunityforests.org/2017/04/04/case-study-assessing-community-forest-potential-in-washington-and-montana/>

Ray Entz, Kalispel Tribe

“The Indian Creek Community Forest was envisioned to be a place for outdoor natural resource education opportunities for kindergarten through adult. I am very excited to see the energy around the ongoing community based planning to realize this vision.”

Resource Box

If you need help facilitating community input, designing parks and trails, or building organizational capacity, consider the National Park Service’s Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program. This program matches a specialist in planning and community engagement to your project. For more information about this program, see page 33.

Public input and community engagement has taken many unique forms across the Pacific Northwest region, and outreach is often informed by the local context, culture and customs, and available resources.

Community Governance: Establishing a Community Forest Advisory Committee

How does a diverse set of partners make decisions? What are the land management priorities in the community? It is important to establish a clear and transparent process for ensuring on-going public input in decision-making. In a number of places, a community forest advisory committee is established with appointed members who provide input and direction to the decision-making body. For example, a non-profit community-based

Community Engagement: Check List of Key Questions

The following list of key questions is intended to serve as a guide in assisting practitioners in critically thinking through how, when, and where to engage members of the public in the management and stewardship of a community forest. The list is not exhaustive and is intended to serve as a starting place for planning community conversations.

- ✓ *How does the organization or entity that owns and manages the community forest define “community”?*
- ✓ *What geographic area(s) is served by the community forest? Who currently uses the forest and are there other anticipated or desired user groups?*
- ✓ *Who will have the authority to make decisions about how the community forest will be managed?*
- ✓ *What opportunities will exist for public input and engagement in management planning and the decision-making process? How will community input be used to inform the decision-making process?*
- ✓ *How is the management plan developed, reviewed, and approved?*
- ✓ *How does the entity that owns and manages the community forest plan to weigh and evaluate trade-offs between ecological, sociocultural, and economic values inherent in management planning?*
- ✓ *Who are the local and regional organizations, businesses, and individuals that could assist in the implementation of forest management, restoration and stewardship, and recreational activities?*
- ✓ *How will the effectiveness of restoration and stewardship activities on the community forest be monitored and evaluated over time?*

organization may have a board of directors who approve a community forest management plan, and that board receives feedback from a volunteer advisory committee that is composed of diverse interests in the community. A community forest advisory council is often a venue for dialogue about how to manage trade-offs and competing demands, and serves as an important source of partnerships to leverage different types of grant funding.

Typically, this committee ranges in size from four to twenty people and represents a broad cross section of stakeholder groups that use the forest. Unlike the board of directors of a corporation, the advisory committee does not typically hire or fire the forest manager, but instead provides input on the management plan objectives, stays involved throughout major events such as culvert replacement or timber harvest, and offers deeper engagement in on-the-ground activities.

The powers and responsibilities of the committee should be established during the early stages of planning to set clear expectations and manage any conflict that might arise.

Is the committee’s purpose to advise on acceptable sideboards that encourage good management? Or will the advisory committee have direct decision making authority of financial matters? Does the advisory committee have veto power over forest management activities in the forest? This will likely

Examples of Community Advisory Committees

The Randolph Community Forest (NH) the Forest Commission has members appointed by the elected members of city government. This commission drafts stewardship plans with the aid of professional staff hired for this purpose and oversees hiring of staff to carry out these activities.

The Teanaway Community Forest (WA), the land is owned by the state and the advisory committee makes recommendations that are incorporated into the management plan. This is a less direct form of community control over decision making than the town forest model.

need to get revisited as decisions about ownership, funding, and other considerations enable and constrain decision-making.

Ownership Models

There are a host of ownership options available to communities interested in owning and managing

Figure 2: Example of Decisions made by a Community Forest Advisory Committee

<i>Stage</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
Pre-acquisition	Convene to discuss community values, desired future conditions, and acceptable uses of the property. This results in the drafting of a more detailed vision for the forest.	Engage the community and build support for the project.
At acquisition	Hires a consulting forester to write a management plan that achieves the objectives laid out in the visioning plan.	Set specific targets for harvest, restoration, and the mechanics of forestry.
Post-acquisition	Convene twice yearly to review forestry operations and progress towards the goals laid out in the vision are reflected in the management plan and activities in the field.	Active adaptive management.

forestland. Careful consideration should be given to the ownership structure, in large part, because different legal entities are eligible for different sources of funding and financing, and different corporate structures influence the level of flexibility associated with revenue generated from forest management activities. The ownership information included in this guide should not be considered legal advice and practitioners are encouraged to consult appropriate professionals prior to making a decision (see list Technical Advisory List at end of guide for contacts in the Pacific Northwest region).

Local Government

Local governments, such as a municipality or a county, can buy and manage a community forest. There are many examples of this in the Pacific Northwest, such as the Hood River County Forest, which is primarily managed for timber production and recreation. In New England, municipal-owned community forests have been a part of the landscape since colonial times². The advantages are numerous: local governments have democratically-elected leadership, which connects forest management to the priorities of local citizens. They have authority to tax and issue bonds, which can help to finance community forest acquisition and management. If desired, local governments can dedicate payments from timber or other forest revenues to cover costs of managing a community forest or choose to reinvest in social services.

There are a few potential drawbacks. Public ownership of land comes with many rules, ordinances and statutes that regulate citizen access and permissible use of resources. For example, revenue from forest products often go to a general fund, which can make it difficult to ensure enough of those funds are supporting all the costs of managing for multiple uses of the forest. Additionally, in some communities the local government might not have the expertise, resources, or existing capacity to acquire and manage forestlands for multiple uses.

Non-Profit, Community-Based Organization

Local conservation non-profits often take a leadership role in championing a community forest, so it is of no surprise that they sometimes choose to own and govern community forests. Examples of nonprofit-managed community forests include the Nisqually Community Forest in Western Washington and the Mount Adams Community Forest in South Central Washington. Community involvement can be facilitated through selection of the nonprofit's governing board or through the formation of a special committee. Unlike other private models, they are tax exempt, which can reduce costs. Some nonprofits, however, may choose to pay taxes to support local government.

Non-profits can expand their financing tools by forming or partnering with a for-profit or LLC to carry out business activities. Often, nonprofits rely on grants from foundations or governments. If the organization has earned income, such as revenue from timber products, it should consult a tax attorney regarding IRS review of Unrelated Business Taxable Income (UBTI). Harvest of timber may be tax exempt to the extent that it directly supports conservation.

Private For-Profit Company: LLC and C-Corp

There are different models for incorporating as a private company, such as a limited liability company (LLC), C-Corporation (C-Corp), and a Cooperative (Co-op). An example of this is the Usal Redwood Forest Company, founded by the nonprofit Redwood Forest Foundation Incorporated in Northern California². A private company has greater flexibility to manage revenue streams from forest products

² Community Forest Collaborative 2011: https://northernforest.org/images/resources/community-forests/Needs_and_Resources_for_Creating_and_Managing_Community_Forests_updated_Aug2011.pdf

like timber, which can help pay community forest operating expenses and/or land acquisition loan payments. Like a nonprofit, an LLC or a C-Corp can form a governing board or advisory board to facilitate community involvement in management. A C-Corp, which is a private company that can sell ownership stocks to raise money, can enable interested members of the community to have direct ownership, which provides another avenue for financing forest acquisition as well as community involvement. An important consideration for using a private company is that the revenue generated by the community forest would be taxed. This raises the operating costs of the community forest, but would be beneficial for funding local governments. Additionally, without sufficient transparency and community outreach, for profit management might lead to the perception that management objectives are solely private interests.

Tribal

Tribal governments have a unique status that allows a tremendous amount of flexibility to own and manage forested lands. So far, the only tribal grant recipient of the Forest Service's Community Forest Program is the Indian Creek Community Forest, managed by the Kalispel Tribe in Northeast Washington. The Kalispel Tribe tapped the community forest model to prevent the Indian Creek property from being developed into an RV Park, protecting important habitat for associated wildlife and fisheries. From their prospective, the community forest model would further benefit the tribe and surrounding communities by facilitating strong relationships toward natural resources education and reconnection to the outdoors. The Community Forest Advisory Committee includes representative from the Kalispel Tribe, local school districts, local residents, and local, state, and federal government staff. The property will be used to create natural resource based educational opportunities for both youth and adults.

Mike Lithgow, Kalispel Tribe

“Community forests are wonderful locations for bringing people together. The Kalispel Tribe has decided to make the Indian Creek property a public place where Tribal members, residents, and visitors can learn and explore what our landscape has to offer.”

State-owned (Washington's Community Forest Trust Program)

State-owned community forests are unique to Washington State, and resemble a number of characteristics of community forest ownership models in British Columbia, Canada³. The Community Forest Trust Program is administered by the State of Washington's Department of Natural Resources. A forest is purchased by DNR with a 50% match from the community. There are currently two community forests in the state under this program – Klickitat Canyon Community Forest and Teanaway Community Forests. In the latter case the land purchase was made possible through an appropriation from the Legislature. In the case of Klickitat, the community forest was created with other sources of secured funds. The Washington Community Forest Trust Program requires DNR to establish a community advisory committee that is appointed by the state. The advisory committee includes diverse membership and is staffed by DNR

³ The British Columbia Community Forest Association has a number of guides. While some of the information is specific to the Canadian legal context, there is great information about coalition building and other community forest processes. For more information visit bccfa.ca.

employees. The benefit of this program is that the state may be willing to cover a large portion of the cost of purchasing the land, which is often a significant barrier to securing ownership of a forest. However, just as with local government-owned community forests, public ownership of land comes with many rules that regulate permissible use of resources, the role of community members in land

management planning, and how the public may access the benefits associated with timber and natural resource management. For more information about this program, see the description of the program on page 37 in Chapter 5 *State and Federal Programs Supporting Community Forests*.

Figure 3, shown below, is a high-level overview comparing different governance models.

Figure 3. Comparing Governance Models: Summary

Criteria	Local Government	Non-profit	L.L.C.	C-Corp.	Tribal	State-owned
Transparency around governing documents	✓	✓			✓	✓
Governance structured according to existing government regulations	✓				✓	✓
Inexpensive to form a community forest project	✓		✓			✓
Easy to set up subsidiaries or new projects		✓	✓	✓		
Can own a subsidiary LLC		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Directors elected by the public	✓					
Directors nominated from a limited group		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Wide range of decisions delegated to the head of the unit			✓	✓		
Tax exempt	✓	✓			✓	✓
Local participation in decision making	✓	✓			✓	✓
Ability to separate out timber revenues to a dedicated fund	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Common examples of these community forests occurring throughout the Pacific Northwest	✓	✓			✓	✓

Key: Strong “yes” response marked as a green check-mark, moderate “yes” response marked as an orange check-mark. No check-mark indicates that the criterion often does not apply.

Considering a patchwork of ownership

In some cases, it might be advantageous to have more than one owner who is committed to managing adjacent parcels of land as part of a more non-traditional community forest. One reason for this is practical: with the high price of forestland the entities involved might need to access different sources of funding and financing that cannot be stacked together by one entity alone. Or, for example, there may be different primary purposes associated with ownership of a community forest – with portions of the land focused on watershed protection while another adjacent parcel may be



primarily managed for timber production. As discussed above, different ownership models come with different potential sources of funding for forest acquisition.

In some areas private land is embedded in a checkerboard pattern.⁴ There is a flourishing “all-lands” movement in the western United States that seeks to align multiple landowners, whether public or private, to manage land in a coordinated way to ensure effective stewardship of the landscapes they share. In part, this is driven by increasing recognition that wildfires, insect and disease outbreaks, and other natural disturbances know no boundaries. Forest collaboratives, which have primarily focused on accelerating the pace, scale, and quality of federal forestland management, are one example of this. Community forest landowners may choose to participate in forest collaboratives to coordinate management activities, such as fuel reduction efforts, with their neighbors. For example, the Teanaway Community Forest in Washington works with the Tapash Sustainable Forest Collaborative to coordinate forest health treatments that reduce risk that uncharacteristic wildfires will burn across land ownership boundaries⁵.

Forest collaboratives are outside the scope of this guide, but you can visit the website Washingtonforestcollaboratives.org for more information about how forest collaboratives provide a local voice in forest management decisions in the state of Washington. The Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition has a resource guide for forest collaboratives titled *Ideas to Action: A Guide to Funding and Authorities for Collaborative Forestry*.⁶

4 Urgenson et al 2017: <http://nwcommunityforests.org/2017/04/04/case-study-assessing-community-forest-potential-in-washington-and-montana/>

5 For more information see the Teanaway Community Forest Management Plan: www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/em_tcf_managementplan.pdf

6 http://www.ruralvoicescoalition.org/s/RVCC-Guidebook_Web.pdf



Photo from the Columbia Land Trust

3. Steps Required

Katie Voelke, North Coast Land Conservancy

“At first it seems impossible that a small community can buy and manage forestry land for community values such as drinking water protection. But once you put the vision out there, and seek partners who share that vision, rather than seeming impossible, it becomes reality.”

This section provides an overview of the process to establish a community forest. A community forest acquisition may take as few as twelve months or upwards of ten years.

Step 1: Community Capacity Building and Facilitation

It takes the tireless work of local champions to build the capacity to create and manage a community forest. Advocates must work with the community to build an understanding of what community forests are, rally support for an acquisition, identify both monetary and nonmonetary resources, and mobilize those resources effectively to overcome barriers and unforeseen obstacles.

While this process is going to be unique for each community, some common steps include:

- Meeting with local citizens’ groups, environmental organizations, and municipal and county entities such as the Water and Sanitation District, Land Board, Mayor’s Office, or other government bodies.

- Convening visioning and planning sessions with local citizens and municipal and county governments.
- Hosting listening sessions to understand public perceptions and “willingness to pay”¹ through a survey or other outreach activities.
- Giving informational presentations at community meetings, tabling at farmer’s markets or events, and serving as the “face” of the project.
- Developing and executing communication strategies like a website and email newsletters.

There are many ways that community partners can offer support. They can help represent their interest in forest management during the planning process. Partners can provide both monetary support and in-kind donations such as staff time. They can help to connect the community forest effort to other partners that might not be on your radar. Most simply, they can be another voice of support for the project.

Step 2: Initial Funding

When discussing funding a community forest, one of the first thoughts that comes to mind is the challenge of raising enough capital to meet the high cost of purchasing forestland. However, funding is also needed for strategic planning, transaction costs, and other coordination well before the land acquisition step. It is important to have resources to ensure an effective and transparent process for pre-acquisition activities such as facilitation, convening, coordination, mapping, legal services, survey work, and inventories. Additionally, even after forestland is acquired, ongoing funding will be needed for forest management, program development, monitoring and long-term stewardship.

¹ “Willingness to Pay” is a variable that is often used in economic studies to quantify the overall level of support for a public good, regardless of whether individuals are ever charged for the provisioning of that good. This is usually done through a survey.

Checklist of potential community forest partners

- Local elected officials
- Community land trust
- Chamber of Commerce
- Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, or other Federal/state land managers
- State departments of forestry/natural resources, fish and wildlife, and environmental quality
- Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Watershed Councils
- Community Health Organization/Hospital
- Environmental nonprofits
- Community development nonprofits
- Community service and civic engagement organizations
- Local schools and other educational organizations
- Water Utility Districts or Companies
- Outdoor recreation businesses and clubs
- Timber companies
- Land Grant University Extension agents
- Private landowners

Step 3: Conservation Planning

How will the community forest management align with community priorities? Developing a robust forest management plan is an essential step for ensuring the community forest is sustainable both ecologically and economically. While conservation planning is an ongoing need that overlaps with

Ben Hayes, Springboard Forestry

“A conservation or management plan, as well as the process through which it is developed, is key both for setting the course for a community forest, and for gaining public input, involvement, and support. This process helps to balance the multitude of values for which community forests are owned, from water quality and carbon sequestration to recreation and jobs, and takes those values from the conceptual all the way to silvicultural prescriptions on the ground. These plans can help to set management policies, as well as annual and monthly goals and practices. From the most conceptual to the most granular management questions, the planning process is essential to the long term success of community forests.”

Step 6. *Stewardship*, in practice this is sometimes performed by two different organizations².

Step 4: Economic Development

Considering the economics of your community forest links the previous steps with later acquisition funding and purchase. The Forest Management Plan (see Step 3, Conservation Planning) serves as the basis for the business case for your community forest, which is in turn a major consideration when evaluating financing options. Stewardship (Step 6) draws on the Forest Management Plan, economic development considerations (Step 4), and any

² Needs & Resources for Creating & Managing Community Forests 2011: https://northernforest.org/images/resources/community-forests/Needs_and_Resources_for_Creating_and_Managing_Community_Forests_updated_Aug2011.pdf

Common components of Forest Management Plans

- Standing timber mapping and measurement
- Harvest planning
- Shallow landslide susceptibility and earthflow locations
- Disturbance history
- Roads locations and conditions, and their impact on riparian and stand conditions (especially on steep slopes)
- Wildlife management planning
- Watershed and other ecosystem service protection and restoration needs
- Recreation access planning
- Cultural and natural resource Inventories

Resources for Conservation Planning

- Planning Committee
 - Coordinating a community process to create the goals, plan and easement.
 - Can help align community forestry with other initiatives such as master planning and land use planning.
 - Can be a vehicle for tapping local expertise.
- Finding technical assistance
 - Land Grant University Extension Services.
 - USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.
 - US Forest Service, Private and State Forests Program.
 - State land management and environmental agencies (e.g. Oregon Departments of Forestry and Environmental Quality, Washington Departments of Natural Resources and Ecology).
 - Hiring external consultants with expertise in sustainable forestry such as Trout Mountain Forestry.
 - Partner Land trusts or other organizations that can lend their in-house expertise in forestry, drafting legal materials, and other needed technical skills.



Phil Chick, Manager, Arch Cape Domestic Water Supply District

“The relationship between community forestry and clean drinking water is something we are going to be hearing about more in the future. It makes good management sense for drinking water providers to develop water source protection strategies at a holistic level - from the headwaters to the tap. Giving the community a voice in the way its forest land is managed offers opportunities for long term watershed protection as well as economic, recreational, and environmental benefits for future generations.”

restrictions or stipulations related to sources of financing (Step 5).

The business case for a community forest

It is important to develop a plan for generating revenue to pay for the ongoing stewardship of the forest, or, if applicable, to pay back the community forest investors. Often, this comes from generating

revenue from forest products, particularly timber. Non-timber forest products, such as hunting and recreation rights, are another potential source of revenue for forest management.

Payments for ecosystem services are an emerging source of revenue for community forests. For example, careful stewardship of forested watersheds that provide local drinking water can help the local water utility avoid paying for additional supplies, maintenance, and expensive water filtration equipment.

Another example of an ecosystem service forests provide is carbon sequestration. Pacific Northwest forests provide a substantial amount of carbon storage, which is an important part of climate change policy. The Bear Creek Watershed, a forest owned by the City of Astoria in Oregon, is going to forego timber harvest in the forest³. In exchange, the city will receive over \$2 million in revenue for the carbon sequestered. In this case, a carbon project makes economic sense because it supports ancillary benefits such as watershed protection while still providing some revenue. The value of carbon is currently less than revenue associated with timber harvests, and the transaction costs associated with a carbon project limit the size of potential projects.

Conservation planning should be informed by an economic assessment of the forest resources and available markets. This often includes:

- Standing timber stock, growth potential, and time until possible harvest activity.
- Business plans that address how to capture value from the forest.
- Zoning and land development planning.
- Organizational capacity for forest management, which might include hiring a professional forester.

³ For more information see the article *Astoria keeps close eye on timber in Bear Creek* in the Daily Astorian, August 29, 2017: http://www.dailyastorian.com/Local_News/20170829/astoria-keeps-close-eye-on-timber-in-bear-creek-watershed

- Connection with premium timber markets and/or wood artisans.
- Availability of skilled forest contractors and equipment.
- Landscape liabilities and maintenance and restoration needs (e.g. aging road infrastructure).
- Evaluating potential recreation activities with significant liability.

Step 5: Acquisition and Financing

Financing land acquisition is often the most difficult step when developing a community forest. There are many grants, low interest loans, bridge investments, and other resources available for this, but the process is competitive and they must often be

creatively stacked together. This step is explored more thoroughly in chapters 5 and 6 of this guide.

In addition to directly funding land acquisition, pre-transaction steps must be completed. Creating a funding roadmap includes a market analysis, identifying financing options, conducting a preliminary appraisal (including minerals determination), creating a grant strategy (including Federal, state, and local sources), and establishing a financial strategy for post-purchase stewardship activities. Finally, it is important to access appropriate legal, accounting, and technical expertise for real estate transactions.

Step 6: Stewardship

Once the community forest is in place, it is time to implement the activities outlined in the community forest management plan. The governance



structure that runs the forest will be involved in ongoing implementation of conservation and forest management plans, including an iterative process of implementation, monitoring, and updating management plans accordingly. Management, monitoring, and reporting requirements of grant and other funding sources must be incorporated into the stewardship plan. This is also the time to integrate ideas for community programming related to education, recreation, or citizen science. There might be new revenue streams that can be identified and brought into the fold to make the community forest even more robust.

Goals for social, environmental, and economic outcomes will need to be defined. Goals should have concrete and measurable objectives with milestones so that it is possible to evaluate progress and adapt management strategies as needed. It is often helpful to define metrics for these objectives and then monitor and analyze them as time goes on. For example, if one goal is a more resilient forest structure, then each specific objective (e.g. sufficient tree age and species diversity) must be defined (e.g. >4 species and >3 age classes per

stand) and measured. If the goal is local community interest and involvement, then an objective could be the number of visitors accessing a particular trailhead. By defining objectives and milestones, the community forest managers will be better able to track progress on goals and make corrections when needed.

Forest Management: In-house staff vs. contract management

A community forest needs forestry expertise to make sure that management planning and implementation are grounded in reality. The organization that owns the forest has two options: hire an in-house forester or contract with a forester or forestry firm. This decision is going to be based on the organizational needs of the forest owner. Having clearly articulated goals is often a helpful first step. If only occasional forest planning and evaluation work is needed, a contract forester or firm may be a better option. On the other hand, if frequent evaluation and management planning and actions are needed, an in-house forester might make more sense.



4. Funding

The Challenges

Financing forestland acquisition has been identified as the most pressing challenge for communities interested in acquiring forestlands¹. This section gives a high-level overview of the many reasons for this. These issues are explored in depth by the Northwest Community Forest Coalition in the *Finance and Funding White Paper*².

1. Forestland is expensive. Since the 1980's there has been a dramatic shift in industrial private forest ownership, moving from vertically integrated timber companies to Timber Investment Management Organizations (TIMOs) and Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs). In contrast to the often

¹ According to a survey about working lands conservation in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho conducted by the Washington Environmental Council

² You can find the *Finance and Funding White Paper* on the NW Community Forest Coalition Website: <http://nwcommunityforests.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/NWCFC-2018-Funding-and-Finance-White-Paper.pdf>

locally-based timber companies, TIMOs and REITs are national and international firms whose model for forestland investment relies as much on rising real estate prices as the value of the timber. Additionally, population growth has fueled increasing demand for forest development. Not only does this further run up the real estate costs, but it is a direct threat to the ecological, economic, and social values of working forests. Once a forest is designated for other uses like housing, it is often never converted back.

- Community forest champions have, for now, a limited set of options for financing community forest acquisitions. While there are Federal and State programs that offer grants and low interest loans that can be used for forest acquisition, these must often be creatively combined in order to raise the \$1-20 million it takes to purchase a forest, let alone \$50-\$100 million for a large scale project. This is no small feat because the match requirements, application deadlines, and real estate timelines often fail to align and require significant perseverance, creativity, and strong working relationships with funders and partners.

Hope is not lost! Communities have overcome these challenges and there are experts in the Northwest Community Forest Coalition that are available to help you navigate government programs and financing options.

Developing a Financing Strategy

Whichever combination of funding you use, it is important to be organized, coordinated, and strategic. Your finance strategy should start with the lowest cost source of funding and go from there. There are a number of grants available for forest acquisition. These are sums of money that don't need to be paid back, however there are other requirements, like a match of non-federal money or in-kind services. Grants might also come with land use requirements

that would have to be incorporated into the forest management plan.

Next on the funding list should be low interest loans. While these have to be paid back, their often below-market interest rates make them attractive alternatives to other lending options that require a higher rate of return. Additionally, there can be options for partial loan forgiveness. For an overview of these programs, see Chapter 5 (page 29).

A Community Campaign: Crowdsourcing

Once you have stacked together the low-cost sources of money, there are other options that can help you close the gap between the amount you have raised and the value of the forestland. Whether you are looking to cover some of the transaction costs or directly contribute to the purchase of forestland, a crowdsourcing campaign in the community both raise funds and build awareness and support for your community forest project.

There are a number of crowdsource websites and platforms that can be used to showcase your community forest project. Here are a few tips to consider before embarking on a crowd-funding campaign:

- Visit crowdfunding campaigns and seek out successful examples.
- Create a video and capture image assets that help tell the story of your community forest project.
- Set realistic funding targets.
- Develop creative recognition strategies for prospective supporters.
- Identify your target audience and evaluate who you will reach with a crowdfunding campaign.
- Work with financing experts to evaluate how a crowdfunding campaign may impact your ability to access other sources of funding and financing.

Working with the Seller

Engaging in a productive dialogue and process with the seller is critical to the success of any community forest project. At minimum, the establishment of a community forest requires a willing seller (or sellers). A positive working relationship with the seller will be critical in navigating complex projects, especially off-market sales of forestlands. Private forest owners operate under different constraints and evaluate management activities based on various assumptions and expectations of their investors and company leadership. It is important to support an environment of mutual understanding, and respect the priorities and goals of the existing landowner.

The first step in a productive negotiation is understanding the forest owner: what are their investments, their values, and their motivations to sell? This information is needed for working cooperatively with the landowner to identify a transaction that is mutually beneficial. It is also important for sellers to understand the unique purchasing needs of community forests, which typically use a combination of grants and financing. Therefore, the transaction may require a different approach than some forest owners are accustomed. You may need to hire or engage someone to represent the community's interests while undertaking legal due diligence and managing the negotiation and transaction. Sellers vary in their level of interest in the details of how the financing will come together, but they consistently want assurance that you are a credible buyer.

Here are tips as you begin to engage a seller:

- Learn who legally owns the property and learn who legally represents the property ownership.
- Understand the role of who is representing the property. For example, is it a broker? A staff forester? A company representative? An interested party with no standing in the property ownership?
- Research property records or a title report to understand boundaries, property taxes, legal ownership and encumbrances. For example, are the mining rights owned by someone else and not part of the property ownership?
- Seek to understand the seller's interests to help inform your purchase strategy.

The Role of Easements

Conservation easements are a tool that can complement community forest efforts by helping to ensure the land is protected as forestland into the future. A conservation easement is a voluntary, legally-binding agreement between a private landowner and a government or nonprofit entity which is attached to the property deed. In this agreement, the landowner agrees to certain restrictions on their property, usually in exchange for some kind of compensation. Because these restrictions follow the deed when there is a new property owner, easements can reduce the value of the land relative to similar parcels without conservation easements. This can make purchase more affordable for a community forest buyer. For more information about easements, visit the Land Trust Alliance's website³.

The Role of Bridging Investments

As discussed above, timing can be a challenge when trying to buy forestland. For forests at risk of being sold or managed in a way that undermines the community forest project, one option is to use a bridge buyer. A bridge buyer is an aligned business or organization with capital to buy the forestland and hold it while the entity developing the community forest lines up grants, loans, and other sources of funding. For example, the area presently being

³ <https://www.landtrustalliance.org/what-you-can-do/conserv-your-land/conservation-options>

developed as the Chimacum Ridge Community Forest was bought by EFM, a conservation-oriented TIMO, from a timber company to hold while the Jefferson Land Trust lines up their funding for the community forest⁴. However, it is important to consider the costs of using a bridge buyer. This can complicate the process with an added real estate transaction. Additionally, bridge funds usually require a return, which might result in a price that is higher than if you had negotiated directly with the landowner. Examples of investment firms who are interested in the community forest movement include the nonprofit lending organizations Craft³ and the Conservation Fund⁶, as well as the Timber Investment Management Organization Ecotrust Forest Management (EFM)⁷.

Transaction Costs

There are many steps that must be taken in order to complete the purchase of a community forest. Each of these steps impose costs in addition to the direct value of the forestland itself. In some cases, this is where community partnerships prove to be critical. Local champions can help by donating time and their in-house expertise. To the right is a list of transaction costs that should be considered as you plan your purchase. This is not a universal list, more of an overview of transaction steps that should be considered as you develop your community forest funding strategy.

Upfront Costs

- Option/Purchase and Sale Agreement
- Project development
- Inventory and sample design
- Timber cruise

Potential Costs for Fee and Easement Transactions

- Appraisal
- Boundary Survey
- Baseline Documentation Report
- Legal Fees
- Title Policy
- Accounting Fees
- Environmental Site Assessment
- Funds for Stewardship or Legal Defense
- Closing Costs

Other Technical Experts

- Surveyors
- Appraisers
- Financial advisors
- Fundraising experts
- Natural resource scientists or professionals
- Environmental consultants
- Water rights specialists
- Real estate agents or brokers
- Title insurance agents
- Accountants
- Insurance agents
- Land planners

⁴ <http://www.ecotrustforests.com/press/partnership-provides-jefferson-land-trust-five-year-window-to-protect-chimacum-landmark.html>

⁵ <https://www.craft3.org/>

⁶ <https://www.conservationfund.org/projects/community-forests>

⁷ <http://www.ecotrustforests.com/>

Case Studies: Community Forest funding strategies⁸



MARS runs a stewardship crew that does contract forestry work on the Conboy National Wildlife Refuge, which is immediately adjacent to the Pine Flats Tract of the Mount Adams Community Forest. This not only generates revenue for the nonprofit, it expands their stewardship footprint beyond the land they directly own and creates jobs for local workers.

Mt. Adams Resource Stewards (MARS)

MARS is a community-based nonprofit located in Glenwood, Washington. Established in 2004, MARS formed in response to community concerns about the fragmentation and frequent ownership changes of private industrial forestland in the area.

In 2010 MARS bought their first tract, a 100-acre parcel with second growth forest, wetlands, and an old mill pond. This cost \$50,000, which was affordable in part because the TIMO who owned it, Conservation Forestry LLC, had interests in regional conservation. Also the aging dam that formed the pond was a potential liability. This purchase was accomplished through a community fundraising effort, with over 80 donations ranging from \$50 to \$10,000.

In 2012 MARS attempted to buy the Pine Flats, a 300-acre tract of ponderosa pine, from Conservation Forestry LLC. They were going to use a combination of public funding and philanthropic support – namely a grant from the USDA Forest Service Community Forest Program and individual donations. Unfortunately, the fundraising did not happen fast enough to meet the grant program deadline. Undeterred, MARS tried again the following year and was successful in raising enough money to meet the match requirement. After two years of fundraising they were able to close on Pine Flats in July of 2014.

⁸ For an in-depth look at these case studies see the Finance and Funding White Paper: <http://nwcommunityforests.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/NWCFC-2018-Funding-and-Finance-White-Paper.pdf>



Nisqually Community Forest

Located west of Mt. Rainer in Washington, the Nisqually River watershed provides critical salmon habitat, recreation opportunities and drinking water to Puget Sound’s growing population. In 2011 key stakeholders, including the Nisqually Indian Tribe, Nisqually Land Trust, Nisqually River Foundation, and Northwest Natural Resource Group, convened to discuss the future of the private industrial forestland. In 2014 a formal nonprofit 501(c)3 nonprofit ownership entity, Nisqually Community Forest, was created. The nonprofit and the affiliated organizations acquired 1,920 acres of forestland between 2011 and early 2018.

In 2018 the partners were successful in securing below market-rate loan through the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund, also known as SRF, to expand the community forest. The SRF is Federally-funded program that is administered by individual states. It has been used to fund forest acquisition in other states, but had not yet in Washington. In partnership with researchers at U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Nisqually Community Forest evaluated the impact of different forest management practices on water quality and quantity in the basin. The results of this research served as justification to the Department of Ecology, which administers the SRF program, to invest in the project. For more information on the CWSRLF, see page 37 for Washington and page 39 for Oregon.



Photo credit: Brian Chambers Photography

5. State and Federal Programs Supporting Community Forests

While raising money to purchase forestland is the biggest obstacle facing community forests, there are a number of state and Federal programs that can be leveraged to make the challenge less daunting. These programs cover grants and low interest loans that can be used for the easement or acquisition of forestland. Some of these programs, like the USDA Community Forest and Open Space Conservation program, are specifically for community forests. Other programs have broader goals, like supporting drinking water infrastructure, which may overlap with the aims of a particular community forest.

Programs that support community forests are not limited to those administered by government agencies. There are grants from private foundations

and debt financing options that can complement the timber harvest plans mapped out in your forest management plan. Grants can serve as a foundation

to leverage a wide variety of commercial and debt sources along with private equity to achieve your community forest goals.

Program	Government	Support Type
Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program	Federal	Grant
Forest Legacy Program	Federal	Grant
Healthy Forest Reserve Program	Federal	Grant
Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program	Federal	Technical Assistance
Cooperative Endangered Species Fund	Federal	Grant
North American Wetlands Conservation Fund	Federal	Grant
Department of Defense Buffer Program	Federal	Grant
Environmental Quality Incentives Program	Federal	Payment for sustainable land management practices
New Market Tax Credits	Federal (Administered by Community Development Entities)	Loan
Forestland Preservation Grant Program	Washington	Grant
Community Forest Trust Program	Washington	Grant (land purchased by Dep. of Natural Resources)
Clean Water State Revolving Fund	Washington	Grant and/or Loan
Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program	Washington	Grant
Community Development Block Grants	Washington	Grant
Land Acquisition Grant Program	Oregon	Grant
Safe Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund and Drinking Water Source Protection Fund	Oregon	Grants and/or Loan
Water Project Grants and Loans	Oregon	Grant and/or Loan

1. Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program

Agency: US Forest Service

Type: Grants for forest acquisition (easements are not eligible)

Eligible Projects: Purchase of private forest lands that are at risk of conversion to non-forest use and can provide community benefits. Additionally, lands must be able to provide public access. Lands must be at least 5 acres, 75% forested, and able to sustain natural vegetation.

Other Requirements: 50% non-federal match, which may include both monetary and in-kind contributions. Perpetual management as forestland, documented through deed restrictions at closing.

Application Process: After the Forest Service issues a Request for Proposals (RFP), local governments and nonprofits must send their application to the State Forester. Tribal entities must send their application directly to the Forest Service.

Contact:

Brad Siemens
U.S. Forest Service
503-808-2353
btsiemens@fs.fed.us

Notes: This program was created by the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008.

Links:

- [Forest Service Website](#)
- [Comparison of Community Forest Program and Forest Legacy Program](#)

2. Forest Legacy Program

Agency: US Forest Service

Type: Grant for land easement or acquisition

Eligible Organizations: State or local government entities

Eligible Projects: Purchase of private forest lands that are at risk of conversion to non-forest use and can provide community benefits. Priority will be given to projects that contribute to a larger conservation strategy and contain lands with important ecological, economic, and social benefits. Lands must be at least 5 acres and 75% forested.

Other Requirements: 25% nonfederal match, which may include both monetary and in-kind contributions. Perpetual management as forestland, documented through deed restrictions or conservation easement at closing.



Photo: NNRG/Matt Freeman-Gleason

Forest Legacy Program Requirements

Forest Legacy Program Scoring Criteria	
Importance	
	Economic Benefits from Timber and Potential Forest Productivity
	Economic Benefits from Non-timber Products
	Threatened or Endangered Species Habitat
	Fish, Wildlife, Plants, and Unique Forest Communities
	Water Supply, Aquatic Habitat, and Watershed Protection
	Public Access
	Scenic
	Historical/Cultural/Tribal
Threatened	<i>e.g. development plans, permits, or lot line adjustments, threat of parcelization, Lack of protection</i>
	Land and landowner circumstances
	Adjacent land use and Ability to develop
Strategic	<i>e.g. Oregon Conservation Strategy</i>
	Proximate forestlands of conservation significance
Readiness	
	Cost Estimate Based on Completed Market Analysis or Preliminary Appraisal
	Conceptual Agreement with Landowner on Acquisition or Easement Terms
	The Amount of Secured Non-Federal Cost Share Funding
	Signed Option or Purchase and Sale Agreement
	Title Search is Completed
	Minerals Determination Completed
	Forest Stewardship Plan (or Equivalent) Completed

Application Process: Apply with your state forestry agency.

Contacts:

Oregon

Amy Singh
 Oregon Department of Forestry,
 (971) 718-1054
 amy.s.singh@oregon.gov

Washington

Julie Armbruster
 Washington Department of Natural Resources
 360-902-1636
 julie.armbruster@dnr.wa.gov

Notes: This program was created by the 1990 Farm Bill.

Links:

- [Oregon \(See Forest Legacy Program\)](#)
- [Washington](#)
- [Comparison of Community Forest Program and Forest Legacy Program](#)

3. Healthy Forest Reserve Program

Agency: National Resources Conservation Service

Purpose: Grant for conservation easement

Eligible Organizations: Tribal or private landowners

Eligible Projects: Projects which help protect endangered species, improve biodiversity, and/or enhance carbon sequestration.

Other Requirements: There are tiered levels of enrollment, with longer periods of easement commitment corresponding to increased monetary compensation.

Application Process: Apply directly through the NRCS.

Contacts:

Oregon

Bari Williams
Easement Program Specialist
Oregon NRCS
1201 NE Lloyd Blvd
Suite 900
Portland, Oregon 97217
Phone (503) 414-3226

Washington

Dave Kreft
ACEP Coordinator
316 W. Boone, Ste. 450
Spokane, WA 99201-2348
Phone: 509-332-2911
Email: dave.kreft@wa.usda.gov

Notes: Landowners who enroll in the program are eligible for exemption from certain regulations under the Endangered Species Act. This program was created by the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 and amended by the 2008 Farm Bill. Presently, Oregon has funding for this program but Washington does not.

Links:

- [NRCS Website](#)
- [Oregon](#)
- [Washington](#)

4. Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program

Agency: National Park Service

Purpose: Grant for planning assistance, typically for 1-3 years (non-monetary grant)

Eligible Organizations: community groups, non-profit organizations, tribes, and state and local government agencies

Eligible Projects:

- Build healthy communities through parks, trails, and outdoor opportunities
- Conserve natural lands, rivers, and watersheds
- Engage youth in outdoor recreation and stewardship
- Strengthen the organizational capacity of project partners

Other Requirements: letters of commitment from project partners

Application Process:

- Review the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) [application](#).
- Consult with community partners to build a broad base of support for your project idea.
- Please [contact us](#) as early as possible before the June 30 application deadline.
- By June 30, send completed application package via email to your National Park Service [Regional Program Manager](#).

Contact:

Barbara Rice, Program Manager
pwr_rtca@nps.gov
California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon,
Washington, American Samoa, Guam

Notes: The National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program supports community-led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation [projects across the nation](#).

Links:

- [Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program Website](#)

5. Cooperative Endangered Species Fund

Agency: Fish and Wildlife Service

Purpose: Grants for conservation of endangered species' habitat on private land.

Eligible Organizations: This program directly supports state agencies with cooperative agreements with the Department of Interior. State agencies can then identify suitable sub-grantees.

Eligible Projects: Projects must involve voluntary conservation in the United States.

Other Requirements: A proposal must include a minimum 25 percent non-Federal cost share.

Application Process:

Contact: Fish and Wildlife Service Region 1: David Leonard, (503) 231-2372; Colleen Henson, (503) 231-6283

Notes: The Recovery Land Acquisition grants are specifically for land acquisition.

Links:

- [Program Website](#)

6. North American Wetlands Conservation Fund

Agency: Fish and Wildlife Service

Purpose: To provide matching grants to wetlands conservation projects.

Eligible Organizations:

Eligible Projects: Projects must involve long-term protection, restoration, and/or enhancement of wetlands and associated uplands habitats.

Other Requirements: There is a 1:1 match requirement.

Application Process: Depends on grant type.

Contact: Stacy Sanchez, stacy_sanchez@fws.gov, (703) 358-2017.

Links:

- [Program website](#)

7. Department of Defense Buffer Program

Agency: Department of Defense

Purpose: This program has two purposes: 1) To limit any development or use that is incompatible with the mission of the installation; 2) To preserve habitat to relieve current or anticipated restrictions on military activities.

Eligible Organizations: State government, local government, and conservation nonprofit organizations.

Eligible Projects: This can be through “easements or other interests in land to prevent land use changes from impacting operations.”

Other Requirements: Requirements vary depending on military branch and local installation needs.

Application Process: Contact your local military installation.

Contact:

REPI Program Outreach Coordinator
Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of
Defense
(571) 969-6774

Links:

- [Program Website](#)

8. Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Agency: Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

Purpose: To offer payments for benefits land conservation practices.

Eligible Organizations: Private landowners.

Eligible Projects: There are a wide variety of eligible projects aimed at improving environmental quality outcomes on working lands.

Other Requirements: Project types are regionally dependent.

Application Process: Get in touch with your local NRCS representative for more information.

Contact:

[How to find your field office](#)

9. New Market Tax Credits

Agency: Treasury Department

Purpose: Increase the flow of private investment to low income communities.

Eligibility: “Qualified active low-income businesses” (QALICBs)

Other Requirements: This program is administered by Community Development Entities (CDEs). CDEs are investment organizations whose purpose is economic development. CDEs can be nonprofit, for profit, or government. CDEs use the earnings from selling tax credits to investors to make low rate loans to projects that improve economic development in communities. Job creation is a primary goal of the program. Minimum project size is \$5 million. Investments in manufacturing and wood processing can be competitive.

Application Process:

Coordinate with a CDE who is interested in community forestry as a vehicle for rural economic development.

Contacts:

Ecotrust, Craft3, CDFI Fund

Links:

- [About CDFI Certification](#)

10. Forestland Preservation Grant Program

Agency: Washington Recreation and Conservation Office

Purpose: Grant for either purchase or permanent easement of forestland.

Eligible Organizations: Cities, Counties, Nonprofit conservation organizations, and the Washington State Conservation Commission.

Eligible Projects: Eligible forestland includes industrial, private community, tribal, and publically owned forests. Forests must be primarily devoted to timber production and must be enrolled in a county’s open space or forestland property tax program. Forests must be at risk of development.

Other Requirements: Purchasers (except the Conservation Commission) must provide a 50% match. This match can include both monetary and in-kind contributions.

Application Process: Apply directly to the Recreation and Conservation Office.

Contact:

Washington Recreation and Conservation Office
(360) 902-3000

Links:

- [Program Overview](#)
- [Program Fact Sheet](#)
- [Application Information](#)

11. Washington Community Forest Trust Program

Agency: Washington Department of Natural Resources

Purpose: Grants to protect forestland from conversion to non-forest uses.

Eligible Organizations: Organizations with demonstrated strong community support and the ability to match 50% of the cost.

Eligible Projects: Private forestland or state land trust forestland.

Other Requirements: Priority consideration will be given to projects which: a) permanently protect working forests at risk of conversion; b) have sound management plans which incorporate community input; c) main lands in a working status; d) generate revenue sufficient to cover forest management costs' e) provide community benefits such as recreation access, local timber jobs, carbon storage, fish and wildlife habitat; f) provide educational opportunities.

Application Process: Submit a nomination form during an open nomination period

Contact:

Dan Stonington
Policy Director
Office of the Commissioner of Public Lands
Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
360-791-1040
dan.stonington@dnr.wa.gov

Links:

- [Program Overview](#)
- [Forest Trust Nomination Requirements](#)

12. Clean Water State Revolving Fund

Agency: Washington Department of Ecology

Purpose: To provide low interest loans and grants for water quality improvement projects.

Eligibility: Local governments and tribes.

Nonprofits can also apply for through this program for funding from the Environmental Program's Clean Water Act Section 319 program.

Application Process: There is a single application for all Department of Ecology water quality funding (including this program and other water related grants and loans).

Contacts:

Daniel Thompson
Water Quality Combined Funding Cycle
Coordinator
daniel.thompson@ecy.wa.gov
360-407-6510

Max Webster
Washington Environmental Council
max@wecprotects.org

Links:

- [Program Website](#)

13. Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP)

Agency: Washington Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO)

Purpose: Grants to acquire valuable recreation and habitat lands before they were lost to other uses and develop recreation areas for a growing population.

Eligibility: Local government, special districts, tribes, and state agencies are eligible for all categories of funding. Nonprofits and salmon recovery lead entities are eligible for certain categories. Land acquisition is an eligible project, along with development and restoration of land that has already been purchased.

Other Requirements: There are 12 categories of funding ranging from critical habitat to forest-land preservation. Except for state agencies, all applying entities must provide at least a 50 percent match. 10 percent of the total project cost must be from non-state, non-federal contributions.

Application Process: Grants are accepted during even-numbered years.

Contacts:
Recreation and Conservation Office
PO Box 40917
Olympia WA 98504-0917
Telephone: (360) 902-3000
TTY: (360) 902-1996
E-mail: info@rco.wa.gov
Web: www.rco.wa.gov

Links:

- [Program Website](#)

14. Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

Agency: Department of Commerce

Purpose: To improve the economic, social, and physical environment of eligible rural cities and counties in order to enhance the quality of life of low and moderate income residents.

Eligibility: Small, rural cities/towns and counties. Activates must principally benefit low and moderate income residents (defined as 80% of the county median income).

Other Requirements Must not be eligible for to directly apply to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant program. Cities and towns must have a population of 50,000 or less, counties must have a population of 200,000 or less.

Application Process: You can apply directly through the Washington Department of Commerce’s website. There are different dates depending on the different categories of grants (Public Services, Economic Opportunity, General Purpose, and Housing Enhancement).

Contacts:

Kaaren Roe, Section Manager
Kaaren.Roe@commerce.wa.gov
Phone: 360-725-3018

Jacquie Andresen, Project Manager
Jacquie.Andresen@commerce.wa.gov
Phone: 360-725-3017

Links:

- [Program Website](#)

15. Land Acquisition Grant Program

Agency: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

Purpose: Grants for purchasing land for the purpose of maintaining or enhancing watersheds.

Eligible Organizations: Local, state and federal agencies, tribes, not-for-profit land conservation organizations and trusts, state institutions of higher education, and independent not-for-profit institutions of higher education.

Eligible Projects: Projects must demonstrate that they have ecological value.

Other Requirements: Purchasing organization must provide a 25% match in funds or “efforts necessary to complete the purchase”.

Application Process: Apply directly to OWEB.

Contact:

Miriam Hulst
(503) 986-0026
miriam.hulst@oregon.gov

Links:

- [Program Overview](#)

16. Safe Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund and Drinking Water Source Protection Fund

Agency: Business Oregon (State of Oregon), along with the Oregon Health Authority

Purpose: Loans to fund purchase or easement of land in watersheds that provide drinking water.

Eligible Organizations: Organizations owning water systems that service at least 25 year round residents or systems that have 15 or more connections or a nonprofit with 25 or more regular users. Organizations can be a nonprofit, private party or municipality, but systems cannot be federally owned or operated.

Eligible Projects: Money can be used for acquisition or easement of property.

Other Requirements: A funded project must solve an existing or potential health hazard or non-compliance issue under federal/state water quality standards.

Application Process: Submit a letter of interest to Business Oregon.

Contact:

Jon Unger
Business Oregon
503-507-7107

Adam DeSemples
Oregon Health Authority
971-673-0422

Notes: The Safe Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund (SDWRLF) is designed for collection, treatment, distribution and related infrastructure projects. The Drinking Water Source Protection Fund (DWSPF) is designed for the protection of drinking water sources.

Links:

- [Program Overview](#)
- [Letter of Interest Information](#)

17. Water Project Grants and Loans

Agency: Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD)

Purpose: To provide loans and grants for water development projects that have economic, environmental and social/cultural benefits.

Eligible Organizations: Organizations owning water systems that service at least 25 year round residents or systems that have 15 or more connections or a nonprofit with 25 or more regular users. Organizations can be a nonprofit, private party or municipality, but systems cannot be federally owned or operated.

Eligible Projects: Conservation, reuse, above-ground storage, below-ground storage, **streamflow protection or restoration**, water distribution, conveyance, or delivery systems in connection with newly developed or existing water; other

water resource development projects that result in economic, environmental, and social/cultural public benefits.

Other Requirements:

Application Process: Applications are accepted year round but are reviewed annually. The solicitation period for the current cycle of funding will close on April 25th, 2018.

Contact:

Jon Unger
waterprojects@wrd.state.or.us
503.986.0869

Notes: While this grant category does not explicitly mention forest conservation, it may be possible to apply under the “Other” category and score highly based on multiple-benefit criteria.

Links:

- [Program Overview](#)



6. Technical Assistance Directory

Land Trusts, Community-Based Organizations, and Community Forests

Don Andre

Vice President
Oregon Coast Community Forest
info@occfa.net
(541) 265-5870

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