USDA Forest Service
Programs Supporting Creation of Community Forests

Brad Siemens
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Background on Forest Legacy & Community Forest Programs

- **Forest Legacy Program**
  - Established in 1990 Farm Bill; Implemented through States; Fee Title or Conservation Easement acquisitions; 75/25 federal to non-federal cost share; $7m max. project

- **Community Forest Program**
  - Established in 2008 Farm Bill; Implemented through local and tribal governments and non-profits; Fee Title acquisitions only; 50/50 federal to non-federal cost share; $400k max. project
National Forest Legacy Program Performance

- Since program inception, 46 States & Territories have protected 2,377,568 acres through $635,292,184 in federal grants

- Currently 54 States & Territories enrolled in the program
What are my chances in the Forest Legacy Program?

State Process
• Each State allowed 3 applications annually
• Individual project maximum $7 million; State maximum $10 million

National Process
• Approximately $50-60 million available annually
• Approximately 65 applications annually
• Approximately 12-15 funded applications annually
Historic Northwest Performance in Forest Legacy Program

- Since inception, nearly 42,000 acres conserved across Oregon & Washington
- FY 2013: $4.5 million grants to OR to support ~26,000 acres of acquisitions
- FY 2014: $6.975 million grants to WA to support ~10,000 acres of acquisitions
- FY 2015: $7 million awards to OR & WA if FLP appropriation is $51.5 million or above
National Community Forest Program Performance

FY 2012 & 2013

- 49 Applications; $14.5 million; 14,300 acres
- 15 Awards; $5.2 million; 9,700 acres

FY 2014

- 21 Applications; $5.9 million; 5,300 acres
- 7 Awards; $2.1 million; 2,600 acres
Historic Northwest Performance in Community Forest Program

Active & successful in the FY 2012/2013 CFP Cycle
- 9 total applications (1/5 of national applications)
- 5 total awards (1/3 of national awards)
- $1.8 million awarded (1/3 of national $ awarded)

Less Active in the FY 2014 CFP Cycle
- 2 total applications (1/10 of national applications)

What happened????
Successful Applications:
• Ongoing public involvement in development & management
• Multiple community benefits demonstrated
• Immediate threat of conversion
• Connection to local or regional conservation initiatives

Unsuccessful Applications:
• Incomplete information related to RFP requirements
• Future community involvement without track record
• Inclusion of ineligible costs in budget
• Short applications (less than half of allotted pages)
Community Forest Program Definitions

*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.

No Definition of *Community*
Community Forest Program Definitions

*Community benefits:*

(1) Economic benefits such as timber and non-timber products resulting from sustainable forest management and tourism;

(2) Environmental benefits, including clean air and water, stormwater management, and wildlife habitat;

(3) Benefits from forest-based experiential learning;

(4) Benefits from serving as replicable models of effective forest stewardship for private landowners;

(5) Recreational benefits such as hiking, hunting and fishing secured with public access.
Community Forest Program Future Opportunities

Community Forest Plan Requirement

• Required within 120 days of acquisition
• “Community Involvement” required
• Eligible for technical assistance funds
• Broad flexibility to engage community and define involvement
Community Forest Program Future Opportunities

Program Advocacy

• From “Not In My Backyard” to “Only In My Backyard” to “In Everybody’s Backyard”

• Field trips, phone calls, letters to USDA & Forest Service leaders, US Reps & Senators, describing the importance of the Community Forest Program