

**Mapping the South's Protected Forests of the Future Project
Request for Proposals
Opens Immediately and closes on December 30, 2016**

Purpose

The U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities (Endowment) and the USDA Forest Service (USFS) seek proposals from qualified service providers who can undertake a project to:

- Identify programs anticipated to result in protected forest lands in the future;
- Map the extent and location of these forests in at least one and preferably all Southern states;
- Overlay these maps and plans on the currently protected forest estate – both fee and easement;
- Overlay these layers with projections for other factors likely to impact forest extent in the future (as described, for example, in the Southern Forest Futures Report).

The goal of this project is to better visualize the state of protected working forests over the next several decades and to enhance cooperation and coordination among groups with an interest in working forest retention.

Background

Forest loss in the Southern U.S. could be 11 million – 23 million acres by 2060 (Southern Forest Futures Report). Retaining, and protecting from conversion to non-forest uses, those working forests with important economic, cultural, and environmental values, is a priority for many public and private organizations. Several organizations and agencies have programs underway in the South that are predicted to protect large areas of forest over the next several decades. In some cases, these efforts may not be labeled primarily as forest conservation programs, but rather as initiatives focused on other values, such as At-Risk Species conservation, watershed protection, or for open space benefits. Despite their focus, these programs may result in significant working forest retention benefits. These forest retention programs may be undertaken without potentially beneficial collaboration across agencies or organizations. Such collaboration could improve, enhancing coordination, planning, and implementation.

The extent of *currently* protected forest lands is fairly well documented as a result of programs such as the Protected Areas Database U.S. and the National Conservation Easement Database. What is less well known, however, are *projections for the extent and location of working forest retention in the future*, should current conservation initiatives succeed as planned. With this information it will be possible to visualize and quantify where permanently protected forests will be located and to better analyze their economic, cultural, and ecological values. It will also be possible to better understand gaps in forest connectivity and to increase collaboration among partners, which could both reduce costs and accelerate implementation.

The purpose of this Request for Proposals is to identify an organization or consultant to define and map the extent of projected forest retention over the next several decades in at least one and preferably all Southern states. Georgia may be a good candidate state and will be used as an example in the remainder of this document. The consulting organization will be expected to make recommendations for which states are best suited for this pilot project.

Desired Outcome

A concise report and map series that identifies the projected extent and location of forest retention projects over the next several decades layered over currently protected forest areas with management types classified as working forest vs. non-working forest (e.g. park, preserve, etc.), and including the map layers described in the “Purpose” section above. The Steering Committee for this project is expected to further refine map layers and other potential benefits from this exercise.

Specific Objectives to be Included in Proposals

- Establish a small steering committee to include at least one representative each from a federal and state land-holding agency, a forest products entity (either TIMO, REIT or manufacturing operation with landholdings) with landholdings in the state, and a not-for-profit natural resource conservation group with forest conservation expertise;
- Identify states to be included in the project. At least one state must be included, and the ability to include more states, up to and including the entire USDA Forest Service Southern Region (13 states) is one criterion for proposal review ;
- Identify on-going programs with significant (e.g. >2,500 acres in total; TBD by the steering committee) expected forest retention benefits. For example, in Georgia, both Fort Benning and Fort Stewart have Army Compatible Use Buffer Zone projects that will protect tens of thousands of acres of working forest lands over time. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources and partners are implementing the Gopher Tortoise Initiative, which has a forest focus. The Savannah River Clean Water Fund is targeting protection of tens of thousands of acres of working forestland in the watershed over the next 20 years. Individual agencies, such as the USDA Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service, have forest retention programs underway, as do not-for-profit organizations such as The Nature Conservancy and The Conservation Fund. The description for each program should include concise information on the funding and other mechanisms proposed by these organizations for implementing their programs, program duration, and other important parameters;
- Define, for the purposes of this exercise, necessary terms, such as retention, protection, and working forest. It may be desirable to identify more than one class of working forests based on age or other parameters. The consultant is expected to make recommendations to the Endowment on these parameters prior to data collection and map production;
- Map the extent and location of projected forest retention programs both individually and collectively. If possible prepare such maps on five or ten year intervals into the future;
- Map the extent and location of current retained forest lands as a benchmark;
- Interact with Endowment and USDA Forest Service staff regularly to ensure that project expectations are met. This includes providing preliminary maps with partial data for review and discussion.

We understand that there is uncertainty with regard to the success of these ongoing forest retention programs. The purpose of this project is to provide best possible or expected projected values, based on best-available information. Although accuracy is important, we accept a margin of error of +/-10% when mapping the extent and location of retained forests into the future. It is not necessary to map to the parcel-level. The purpose of this project is to provide a general visualization

of where protected forests will be in the future so as to inform planning and decision making at a broad level.

Scope of Work

Proposals should not exceed four pages in length and should include the following sections:

- **Process:** Describe the process by which this analysis would take place, including partners to be included, if any. This section should specifically address the objectives listed above and other insight from the applicant;
- **Budget:** Include the total proposed cost and an itemized budget for major project components;
- **Timeline:** Estimate the timeline necessary to complete the project as described; it is anticipated that the project should require less than six months to complete

Process Schedule

Endowment and USFS staff will review proposals and the Endowment will engage the successful applicant at the earliest possible time. Contracting with the successful applicant should be completed within a month after selection.

- Proposal Deadline: December 30, 2016
- Applicants notified: Week of February 6, 2017

Method of Work Agreement/Funding Source/Funds Available

The services agreement will be by written contract between the Endowment and the successful applicant. Funds for this project are to be one-half federal (USFS) and one-half private. Matching funds are not required but are desirable and could provide a competitive advantage. Up to \$100,000 is available for this project. Please refer to the Endowment's [Indirect Cost Rate Policy](#) to determine allowable indirect cost recovery.

Proposal Evaluation

Endowment and USFS staff will rate proposals on the following criteria:

- i. Relevant work experience
- ii. Quality and breadth of prior work in related areas
- iii. Ability to meet desired timelines
- iv. Proposed methods and products
- v. Ability to complete the project for multiple states
- vi. Total project budget

Contract and Questions

For questions or clarification please contact Peter Stangel (peter@usendowment.org; 404-915-2763).

Proposal Submission

Submit proposals directly to Peter at peter@usendowment.org using this [form](#).