

NEWS

GRANT PROGRAM OPENS TO ADDRESS NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM CHALLENGES THROUGH INNOVATIVE FINANCE

Deadline for proposal submission is March 6, 2023

U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, Greenville, SC

For IMMEDIATE RELEASE (November 21, 2022)

The *Innovative Finance for National Forests (IFNF)* grant program announces the opening of its next round of solicitations for program funding. The IFNF grant program supports the development and implementation of innovative finance models that leverage private and public capital other than U.S. Forest System (USFS) annual appropriations to enhance the resilience of the National Forest System (NFS). The grants are funded and administered by the USDA Forest Service National Partnership Office (NPO) and the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities (Endowment).

National Forests provide social, environmental, and economic benefits to communities across the United States including clean drinking water, recreational opportunities, forest products, rural jobs, and more. However, with increased wildfires, impacts of climate change, and deferred maintenance backlogs, USFS is experiencing stewardship needs that exceed the agency's annual appropriations. To address this need, the IFNF grant program provides grants for the development and implementation of innovative financing projects in the areas of wildfire resilience and recovery, watershed health, and sustainable recreation infrastructure and access. Feasibility, pilot, and scaling projects will be considered for IFNF funds.

"Through the Innovative Finance for National Forests program the Forest Service is investing in creative, locally-driven public-private partnership models to address landscape-scale challenges around wildfire risk, forest and watershed health, and recreation infrastructure. The program offers an exciting opportunity for partners and communities to work with the Forest Service to explore, pilot, and scale new ways of leveraging agency funds to take on our biggest stewardship needs at a quicker pace and larger scale," said Chris French, Deputy Chief at the U.S. Forest Service.

"The Innovative Finance for National Forests grant program supports development of new and effective sources of funding for pressing natural resource challenges such as forest health. Tapping into the creativity of local partners will give us another tool to finance the work required to keep our forests and forest rich communities healthy and resilient. We are grateful to the Forest Service for their leadership on this program," said Pete Madden, President and CEO at the Endowment.

The IFNF team will be hosting informational webinars on November 30th at 3p EST/Noon PST and December 7th at 1p EST/10a PST. For more information on the program and to review the Request for Proposal (RFP), please visit www.usendowment.org/ifnf.

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The USDA Forest Service **National Partnership Office** (NPO) Conservation Finance Program leads the way in positioning the Forest Service to leverage sources of capital other than agency appropriations to support priority projects through public-private partnership models.

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The **U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities** (the Endowment) is a not-for-profit public charity working collaboratively with partners in the public and private sectors to advance systemic, transformative, and sustainable change for the health and vitality of the nation's working forests and forest-reliant communities – www.usendowment.org