



Texas Forest Legacy Program *Application Guide for Landowners*

Program Description

The Forest Legacy Program (FLP) is a federal program that partners with states to support state efforts to protect forestlands that are threatened by conversion to non-forest uses. In Texas, the Forest Legacy Program primarily focuses on supporting efforts to acquire working forest conservation easements from willing private landowners. Conservation easements are legally binding agreements transferring a negotiated set of property rights from one party to another without removing the property from private ownership. Most Forest Legacy Program conservation easements restrict development, require sustainable forestry practices, and protect other values. Qualifying projects may be funded up to 75% by the federal government, with 25% coming from the landowner or a third party conservation organization. More information about the Forest Legacy Program can be found at <http://txforestservation.tamu.edu/forestlegacy>, or by contacting Gretchen Riley at 979-458-7373.

Project Submission Process

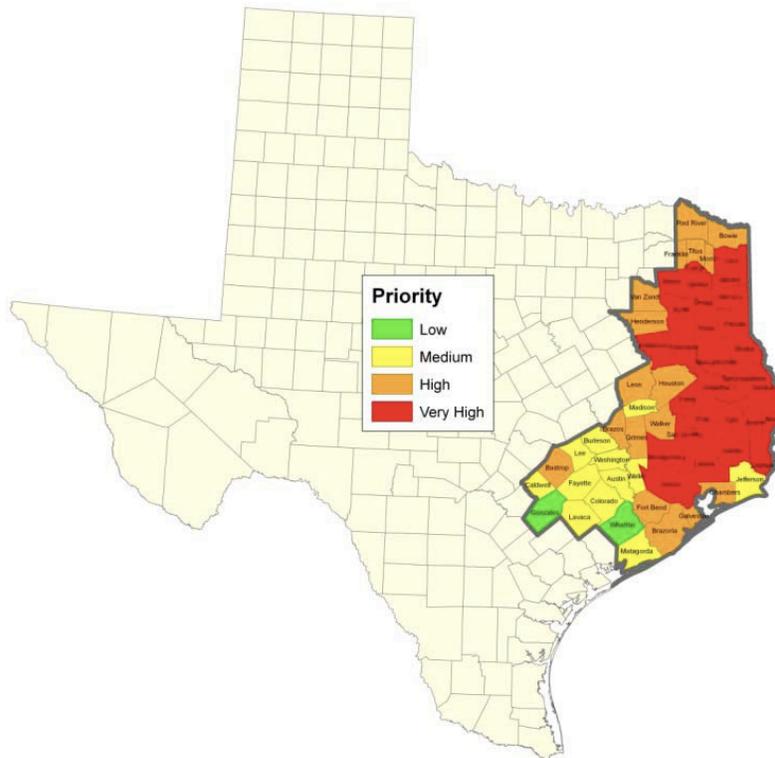
Landowners interested in submitting an application should carefully read this application guide and complete the companion application. Applications should be submitted no later than August 31st of each year. Upon receipt of the application, the Texas Forest Legacy Committee (TFLC) will review all project submissions and evaluate the proposed projects based on the four core criteria outlined in the application guide. Once the TFLC has selected projects of priority for Texas, the committee members and/or other natural resource professionals will work with the landowners to prepare the projects to be submitted to the United States Forest Service Region 8 in Atlanta, Georgia, where they will again be evaluated based upon the core criteria. In December of each year, the regional office will submit its project recommendations to the USFS Washington, DC office, where projects will again be evaluated nationally against all other projects and the top ones will be submitted to the President for funding consideration.

Qualification Requirements

In order for projects to qualify for the Forest Legacy Program, all of the following requirements must be met:

- Landowner must be a willing seller of the rights determined in the conservation easement
- Landowner must have clear title to the land
- Landowner must identify the source of the 25% matching funds that are available
- Proposed project must be within the Forest Legacy Area shown on the map below
- Proposed project must meet the core criteria described below
- Landowner must be willing to allow the Texas Forest Service and/or a FLP committee member to make an on-site visit to the property by appointment

Texas Forest Legacy Area



Core Criteria

Successful submissions to the FLP will align with the United States Forest Service National Outcomes and Objectives as well as the Texas Forest Service Statewide Forest Resources Strategy. For this, applications should clearly illustrate how the project meets the following core criteria:

Importance – This criterion focuses on the attributes of the property and the environmental, social, and economic public benefits gained from the protection and management of the property and its resources. Examples of how the proposed projects illustrate the following attributes should be listed in the spaces provided on the application in the “Importance” section.

Priority will be given those properties that are likely to have:

- significant forest resource economic benefits
- direct and indirect scenic and/or outdoor recreation benefits
- significant water quality and watershed protection benefits
- significant ecological, cultural, and environmental education benefits

Threatened – This criterion estimates the likelihood for conversion to non-forest uses. Examples of how the proposed projects illustrate the following attributes should be listed in the spaces provided on the application in the “Threatened” section.

Priority will be given to projects that have proof of a high degree of threat of development or parcelization.

Strategic – This criterion reflects the project’s relevance or relationship to conversion efforts on a broader perspective. Examples of how the proposed projects illustrate the following attributes should be listed in the spaces provided on the application in the “Strategic” section.

Priority will be given to projects that:

- are in counties with “high” and “very high” priority ratings as identified in the Statewide Forest Assessment (shown on Texas Forest Legacy Area map)
- fit within a larger conservation plan, strategy, or initiative, and connect or lead to additional conservation investments in the region

Readiness – This criterion is defined as the degree of due diligence applied to the project and the certainty of a successful FLP project. Examples of how the proposed projects illustrate the following attributes should be listed in the spaces provided on the application in the “Readiness” section.

Priority will be given to projects that have community support, identified matching funds, and partnership involvement.

Additional Materials

The application also provides a space to include supporting parties. Landowners are encouraged to include as many supporting parties as possible to illustrate the strategic and readiness benefits of the project. In addition to the application, landowners should also provide the following:

- Electronic copy of a detailed map or aerial photo of the property with delineation of the project area, permanent structures, and improvements along with a GIS shape file**
- Directions to the property and locator map**
- Copy of forest management plan
- Photo of a unique feature on the property (i.e. scenic view or photo depicting nearness of property to development, etc.)
- Warranty deed or other proof of ownership
- Letters documenting the landowner’s or an organization’s financial commitment to the non-federal 25% (or more) matching contribution
- Letters of support from government, private, nonprofit, or other organizations interested in supporting the project

*** Maps and aerial photos are often available at your local Farm Services Agency or Natural Resources Conservation Service office. Photos may also be available from the county tax appraisal office.*

All submitted materials become property of the State of Texas and are non-returnable. If you have any questions related to the application process please contact the Texas Forest Legacy Program Coordinator, Gretchen Riley, at 979-458-7373. Please submit your application by August 31 to:

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