CALIFORNIA FOREST LEGACY APPLICATION

Federal FY27 Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF)

**(This application is available electronically.)**

**Submit application by August 4, 2025, for consideration for FY27 LWCF**

**Applicants are expected to input project briefs into the Forest Legacy Information System (FLIS) by August 13, 2025**

*The California Forest Legacy Program uses Federal Funds, and non-Federal cost-share funds, to purchase conservation rights through fee title or conservation easements on environmentally important forests in California so these threatened properties remain intact and continue to provide traditional forest benefits.*

**Applicant Information**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Applicant:  |       |
| Address: |       |
| City, State, Zip:  |       |
| Phone:  |       |
| Fax / e-mail: |       |

**Landowner Information Authorized agent for landowner (if different)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Landowner’s name:  |       |  | Agent’s name:  |       |
| Address: |       |  | Address:  |       |
| City, State, Zip:  |       |  | City, State, Zip: |       |
| Phone:  |       |  | Phone:  |       |
| Fax / e-mail: |       |  | Fax / e-mail: |       |
| Please list all co-owners of this property (or any others with interest in it): |       |

#### **Property Information**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. | County: |       | Section: |       | Township: |       | Range: |       | B&M |       |  |  |
|  | Parcel#: |       |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2. | What is the land currently zoned as? |       |
| 3. | What are the current uses of the property? |       |
| 4. | Are there any encumbrances (liens, mortgages, easements, and/or leases) on this property? | Yes [ ]  No [ ]  |
|  | If yes, please list and explain in the Confidential Financial Information Section. |
| 5. | Total property acres: |       | Total acres forest: |       |
| 6. | How much of the total acres above are you nominating for the Forest Legacy Program? |
|  | Forest acres: |       | Open or cleared acres: |       | Acres of water: |       | Total: |       |
| 7. | I am interested in a [ ]  conservation easement, or [ ]  transferring total ownership of the land. Do you have a preference as to what government entity holds title? Yes [ ]  No [ ] If yes, please indicate the entity.      Will there be an endowment for monitoring? Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Do you want CAL FIRE to be responsible for monitoring? Yes [ ]  No [ ] Will subdivision rights be combined and relinquished into a single parcel? Yes [ ]  No [ ]  |
| 8. | Is any of this area Certified Forest or in a Habitat Conservation Program? | Yes[ ]  | No[ ]  |
|  | How many acres? |       |

#### **Landowner Goals and Objectives**

1. Please describe your long term goals and objectives for the nominated property. (It might help to think about – Why is the property important to you? Why did you buy it? What would you like to do on and with this property?) Use as much space as needed
2. Do you have a written forest management plan? Yes [ ]  No [ ]

If yes, please send a copy with your application (Please note that a multi-resource forest management plan is a requirement for inclusion into the program at the time of closing on a conservation easement)

1. Have you been working with a forester or other natural resource professional who could provide technical information about your forest? Yes[ ]  No[ ]

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| May we contact him/her? | Yes [ ]  No [ ]  | Forester’s name: |       |
|  |  | Phone #: |       |  License #: |       |

#### **General Description**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Project Name:  |       |  |

General Description (**maximum 1250 characters. This is the executive summary for the project. Describe the core arguments for why the project is important, strategic, and threatened. The FLIS entry for the general description is limited to a maximum of 1250 characters**)

**Tract Evaluation**

**Projects are ranked on four criteria: (1) IMPORTANCE, (2) THREAT, (3) STRATEGIC VALUE, AND (4) READINESS. Because funds are limited, this information will help establish your preliminary ranking with the other projects submitted for consideration. You may attach extra pages, if needed.**

\* See instructions for definition.

**IMPORTANCE (Maximum of 20 bullet items limited to 300 characters per item)**

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. This criterion reflects the ecological assets as well as the economic and social values conserved by the project and its level of significance.

1. Economic Benefits: Timber and Potential Forest Productivity – This category includes three independent components: (1) Landowner demonstrates sustainable forest management in accordance with a management plan. Additional points should be given to land that is third party certified (such as Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Forest Stewardship Council, and American Tree Farm System). (2) Forestry activities contribute to the resource-based economy for a community or region. (3) The property contains characteristics (such as highly productive soils) to sustain a productive forest over time.
2. Economic Benefits: Non-timber Products and Recreation – Provides non-timber revenue to the local or regional economy through non-timber forest products (maple syrup, pine straw, ginseng collection, etc.); recreation and tourism (local or regional benefits related to lodging, rentals, bikes, boats, outdoor gear, guided tours for fishing, hunting, or birdwatching, etc.); hunting leases; and/or ranching.
3. Public Access: Protection of the property will legally secure existing access, expand access, or establish new access by the public for recreation (including waterfront access); however, restrictions on specific use and location of recreational activities may be allowed. More consideration should be given to projects that expand or provide certainty of public access as a result of the proposed project.
4. Wildlife Habitat: Threatened or Endangered Species – The property has documented threatened or endangered plants and animals or designated habitat. Documented occurrence and use of the project area should be given more consideration in point allocation than if it is habitat without documented occurrence or use. Federally listed species should be given more consideration than state-only listed species when evaluating the significance of this attribute.
5. Water Supply, Aquatic Habitat, and Watershed Protection – (1) The property has a direct relationship with protecting the water supply or watershed, such as providing a buffer to public drinking water supply, containing an aquifer recharge area, or protecting an ecologically important aquatic or marine area, and/or (2) the property contains important riparian area, wetlands, shorelines, river systems, or sensitive watershed lands. When allocating points consider the importance of the resource, the scope and scale of the property, magnitude and intensity of the benefits that will result from protection of the property. Merely being located within an aquifer recharge area or in a water supply area should not be given the same consideration as a property that makes a significant conservation contribution to water, riparian, and aquatic resources and habitats.
6. Wildlife Habitat: Fish, Wildlife, Plants, and Unique Forest Communities – The property contains unique forest communities and/or important fish or wildlife habitat as documented by a formal assessment or wildlife conservation plan or strategy developed by a government or a non- governmental organization. Contributions to international initiatives to support and sustain migratory species can be considered here if the property will make a significant contribution, e.g. the target species has been documented to regularly use the property during seasonal migration.
7. Cultural/Historic – The property contains features of cultural and/or historical significance that are documented by a governmental or a non-governmental organization. A Federal designation should receive greater consideration
8. Tribal – The property provides meaningful benefits to Tribal and other indigenous communities, contains features or resources of cultural significance, and/or utilizes management techniques significant to Tribes (traditional ecological knowledge). Greater consideration should be given to projects that have been developed with active involvement and partnership with a Tribe, or where a Tribal organization has documented the importance of the property for cultural practices, resources, and benefits.
9. Scenic – The property is located within a viewshed of a government designated scenic feature or area (such as a trail, river, or highway). Federal designation should be given more consideration than state-only designations when evaluating the significance of this attribute.

**THREATENED (Maximum of 10 bullet items limited to 300 characters per item)**

This criterion estimates the likelihood for conversion. More points will be given to projects that demonstrate multiple conditions; however, a project need not have all the conditions listed to receive maximum points for this category.

1. **Lack of Protection** - The lack of temporary or permanent protections (e.g. current zoning, temporary or permanent easements, moratoriums, and encumbrances that limit subdivision or conversion) that currently exists on the property and the likelihood of the threat of conversion.
2. **Land and Landowners Circumstances** - Land and landowner circumstances such as property held in an estate, age of landowner, interest of ownership and stewardship of property by heirs of current landowners is uncertain, property is for sale or has a sale pending, landowner anticipates owning the property for a short duration, landowner has received purchase offers, land has an approved subdivision plan, landowner has sold subdivisions of the property, etc.
3. **Adjacent Land Use** - Adjacent land use characteristics such as existing land status, rate of development growth and conversion, rate of population growth (percent change), rate of change in ownership, etc.
4. **Ability to Develop** - Physical attributes of the property that will facilitate conversion, such as access, buildable ground, zoning, slope, water/sewer, electricity, etc.

**STRATEGIC VALUE (Maximum of 10 bullet items limited to 400 characters per item)**

This criterion reflects the project's relevance or relationship to conservation efforts on a broader perspective. When evaluating strategic, four considerations should be made: l) the scale of a conservation initiative, strategy, or plan; 2) the scale of the project's contribution to that initiative, strategy, or plan; 3) the placement of the parcel within the area of the initiative, strategy, or plan; and 4) how the project complements protected lands.

1. **Conservation Initiative, Strategy, or Plan** - How the project contributes to either an existing or new conservation initiative, strategy, or plan. Describe the relative contribution of the property to achieving the conservation goals of the plan, strategy, or initiative considering scale, location, and project attributes. Conservation plans that have been formally designated by a governmental, tribal, or non-governmental entity should be given more consideration. Contributions to a new strategy or a strategy under development may also be discussed. This can be useful if a project would contribute to, or catalyze, a new conservation initiative, strategy, or plan. For new initiatives, specific goals should be defined and potential contributions of how the project advances those goals should be highlighted.
2. **Complement Protected Lands** - How the project is strategically linked to or enhances already protected lands, including past FLP projects, public lands (Federal, State, or local), or private lands conserved through permanent easements. Provide specifics on how the proposed tracts connect to and maintain landscape-scale benefits, e.g. ecological resilience, wildlife migration, watershed function, and scenic viewshed integrity.
3. **Other Landscape Scale Goals and Public Benefits** – How the project strategically contributes to the advancement of larger scale conservation goals and public benefits. Examples could include but are not limited to: Forest health and resilience;
	* Reduced community impacts from wildfire, floods, invasive species;
	* Expanded public access; and
	* Protection of critical water supplies.

Provide specifics on the project’s contributions to the larger scale goals and benefits.

**READINESS**

Project Readiness is defined as the degree of due diligence completed. To demonstrate project readiness, completed items need to be specified (including completion date) in FLIS and credit will only be given to those items completed (One tally for each completed item, with a maximum tally of 5).

1. Landowner and State have agreement on conservation easement or fee acquisition conditions.

2. Cost Share commitment has been obtained from a specified source(s) and documented through funding commitment letters, bargain sale agreement with landowner, etc.

1. A signed option or purchase agreement is held by the State or at the request of the State, or at the request of the State, fee title has been pre-acquired by a third party.

1. Title search has been completed and reviewed, including identifying any temporary or permanent protections and reviewing whether existing encumbrances impact project eligibility.

1. Mineral rights have been evaluated through a title search and/or other research AND if rights are severed, then a minerals assessment and determination of remoteness has been completed.

**Additional Tract Information**

1. List existing permanent improvements on the tract, including houses, barns, reservoirs, man-made ponds, dams, wells, roads, and other structures, and total number of acres occupied by improvements.

1. Identify all knowns dumps or waste disposal sites on the property.

1. Is there an existing carbon project on the property or a carbon project in development? Provide the date of registration, scope of the project relative to the property, and protocol/registry used.

1. Is the property located within Federal boundaries of a national forest, national park, national wildlife refuges or other federal government boundaries? If yes, a letter of concurrence from the top official of the Federal agency (such as the National Forest supervisor, National Park administrator, or National Wildlife Refuge manager) must be provided. The letter of concurrence letter must include the name of the FLP project and a statement that the Federal agency agrees with the acquisition of the land or interests in land through the State grant option.

**Landowner’s Comments Section**

Supporting Parties (if supporting parties are provided, written letters of support are needed from supporting parties)

Other comments you may wish to add about your Forest Legacy Nomination or property uniqueness.

##### Confidential Financial Information Section

The following financial, deed, and lien information shall remain confidential until such time as:

1. the application has been approved and all transactions are concluded, **or**
2. all title-holders give written permission to release the information.

###### Financial Information

The following estimates are for preliminary use only. Any final offer cannot exceed fair market value, as determined by an appraisal meeting federal and/or state appraisal standards.

1. What is the estimated total value of this property?
2. What is the estimated value of the interests (see page 3) proposed to be transferred by conservation easement to California’s Forest Legacy Program?
3. How was this value determined? (Examples: landowner’s personal estimate, licensed appraiser, realtor, written legal appraisal).

If appraised, date of the appraisal:

1. Are you willing to donate part of the easement value? Yes [ ]  No [ ]
* What percentage are you willing to donate?
* What is your approximate asking price for the interest being offered?
1. Do you have another source such as a Land Trust or another federal or state agency willing to fund part of the purchase price? Yes [ ]  No [ ]
* If yes, who is the partner and what is the relationship?
* How much are they willing to contribute to the cost of the easement?

**NOTE:** *Donations may constitute a charitable contribution for income tax purposes, depending on applicable Internal Revenue Service guidelines and regulations.*

**Comments:**

###### Liens and Encumbrances

Please list any and all liens and encumbrances on the property proposed for enrolment in California’s Forest Legacy Program. Examples of liens and/or encumbrances include: mortgages, utility easements, public rights of way, water flow or water use restrictions, septic systems or water easements, deed restrictions or covenants, mineral extraction rights (gas, oil, coal, stone, etc.), tax liens, dump sites, underground fuel tanks, other environmental hazards, etc.

Preliminary Identification of Rights to be Retained

It is important the following section be carefully and fully completed. The information you provide will directly affect the desirability of the parcel, appraised value, and its priority as a Forest Legacy parcel. Please, indicate which of the following uses or interests you wish to **retain** as part of the conservation easement.

**Note:** Checking **YES or NO** does not commit you to anything at this time, it merely assists the State Forest Legacy Committee when inspecting, prioritizing, and evaluating your parcel. Also, note that development rights are the minimum rights purchased on Forest Legacy Tracts and therefore are not included on the list below.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| YES |  | NO |  | UNSURE |  | Forest use or interest |
|       |  |       |  |       |  | Will you retain the right to commercially harvest timber? |
|       |  |       |  |       |  | Will you wish to retain unrestricted access to minerals (e.g. coal, gravel, etc.)?\* |
|       |  |       |  |       |  | Will you wish to retain restricted surface occupancy mineral rights?\*\* |
|       |  |       |  |       |  | Will you wish to retain unrestricted access with oil and gas?\* |
|       |  |       |  |       |  | Will you wish to retain restricted surface occupancy oil and gas rights?\*\* |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|       |  |       |  |       |  | Will you wish to limit or control public access to your property? Public access is not a requirement of the Forest Legacy Program. |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|       |  |       |  |       |  | Will you wish to retain rights to graze open areas? (     acres) |
|       |  |       |  |       |  | Will you wish to retain right to farm open areas? (     acres) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|       |  |       |  |       |  | Will you wish to retain the right to build or rebuild roads (other than forest management/protection roads)? |
|       |  |       |  |       |  | Do you wish to sell or transfer the entire property to the legacy program? |
|       |  |       |  |       |  | Other. Please specify:       |

\* Retention of unrestricted mineral or oil/gas rights will exclude that portion of your property from consideration in California’s Forest Legacy Program.

\*\* Retention of restricted mineral or oil/gas rights which allows less than 10% surface disturbance may be consistent with California’s Forest Legacy Program.

Testimony and Permission

 The information in this application is true to the best of my knowledge and belief. I (we), as the landowner(s) or landowner’s authorized agent (proof of authorization must accompany the application) agree to allow inspection, appraisal, and survey of my property being offered for consideration under California’s Forest Legacy Program. I agree to allow members of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, California’s Forest Legacy committee or their designated staff to inspect my property at any mutually agreeable time for the purposes of this application. I understand I shall be notified in advance of all inspection visits.

 I also understand that this property will not be purchased if negotiations do not reach an amicable agreement or if the property does not meet the needs or qualifications of California’s Forest Legacy Program. Conservation easements will only be purchased from willing sellers.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Signature(s) of landowner(s) or legal agent** |  | Date |  |
|  |  |       |  |
|  |  |       |  |
|  |  |       |  |

**Email the completed application to:** forestlegacy@fire.ca.gov

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

Attn: Kevin Kiniery, Forest Legacy Program Coordinator

1234 East Shaw Avenue

Fresno, CA 93710

Email: Kevin.kiniery@fire.ca.gov

Phone: 559-281-8479

**APPLICATION PACKET CHECKLIST:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ]  | Thoroughly completed and signed application form |
| [ ]  | Copy of road map indicating location of the property |
| [ ]  | Aerial photo (or high quality copy) of the property, if available (this is not necessary for initial application). Please outline property |
| [ ]  | The boundaries of the project on a USGS quadrangle or equivalent topographic map.  |
| [ ]  | Any written comments you wish to provide in addition to the application |
| [ ]  | Readiness documentation  |

# CALIFORNIA FOREST LEGACY CONSERVATION VALUES

* CAL FIRE’s Forest Legacy Program (FLP) does not support subdividing, parcellation or fragmenting project areas following establishment of the conservation easement. Projects funded by CAL FIRE’s FLP and projects CAL FIRE will support which are funded by the Federal FLP shall combine and relinquish all subdivision rights into a single parcel in perpetuity.
* Forest Management – the FLP only requires that forest management on conservation easements follow the Forest Practice Act and Rules (FPR’s). We will negotiate values on forest management practices intended to provide higher standards than the FPR’s. The FLP does not automatically provide value for enhanced forest management practices.
* The primary goal of the Forest Legacy Program is to conserve working forest landscapes, not preserved landscapes. Generally, no more than 10% of the ownership within the conservation easement will be preserved landscapes with no commercial forest management activities allowed.
* Designated Improvement Areas (DIAs) – the FLP allows a limited number and acreage of specified envelopes for residential, agricultural or commercial improvements. All structures not identified as small-scale improvements must be contained in a DIA. Hunting cabins and other livable structures with 4 walls and a roof will not be considered small-scale improvements. The exact number of envelopes and total acreage will be determined on a case-by-case basis, but generally the total acreage shall be somewhere between 0 and 2 percent of the overall property acreage. The FLP does not support floating DIAs but does support designating numerous potential DIAs, all of which must be mapped in the Baseline Report. DIA’s should be 20 acres or less.
* FLP does not support the following Incompatible Uses within the project area:
	+ - Large commercial developments such as residential subdivisions, office buildings, commercial parking lots, hotels, casinos, and resort developments
		- Surface mining (with exception of gravel pits for onsite rock use)
		- Sports fields
		- Commercial signage
		- Unmanaged or commercial off-road vehicle use
		- Aircraft runways
		- Dumps
		- Retail and commercial energy generation
		- Intensive agriculture outside of development envelopes

Note: A landowner may have an Incompatible Use on the property so long as the acreage impacted by the Incompatible Use is taken out of the easement area and there will not be negative impacts on other portions of the property covered by the easement.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION INPUT REQUIRED FOR THE FLIS BRIEF**

* Supporting Parties. A written letter of support is needed from supporting parties.
* Photos: 4 photos for the FLIS brief. The photos need to include a caption which is limited to 80-charaters and photo credit.
* Project Map: 2 maps
* Tract Name
* Acreage
* Tract Boundary Shapefile
* FLP Funding Request and Cost-Share Amount
* Public Access Type
* Tract Readiness