



**TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
DIVISION OF FORESTRY
Ellington Agriculture Center
Box 40627, Melrose Station
Nashville, Tennessee 37204
(615) 837-5539
Email: david.todd@tn.gov**

August 21, 2014

Dear Forest Legacy Ranking Committee, Conservation Partners, Forest Landowners, and others:

It is time for reviewing and ranking tracts to be considered for funding under the Forest Legacy Program for federal FY – 2016. The Forest Legacy Committee (FLC) of the State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee (SFSCC) will convene **on Tuesday, October 7, 2014 @ 10 AM at the Ellington Agricultural Center** to review and rank tracts for which funding are being sought. The Eligible Forest Legacy Watershed areas identified in the 2010 Tennessee Statewide Forest Resource Assessment and Strategy, page 141, Figure 50, will be valid for the FY 2016 (map attached). At this time there is an effort to modify the eligible watershed areas; however, the approval of the modification has not been finalized and may not be until after the project ranking. A copy of the request for proposal submission packet can be viewed or downloaded from the Division of Forestry Forest Legacy Program webpage: <http://www.tn.gov/agriculture/forestry/legacy.shtml> in the Program Materials section. For a tract to be considered for funding at least a portion of it must lie in one of these eligible areas, or lie adjacent to a previously funded Forest Legacy tract. Please be aware that Forest Legacy Program is a 75/25 matching grant and a 25% nonfederal funding match is required.

Those wishing to have tracts considered for funding must have their submissions to David Todd at the above address **by 4:30 PM central time, Friday, September 19, 2014**. The submission packet can and should include information that the submitter feels qualifies the tract for inclusion in the Forest Legacy Program (see attached documents). Please provide 15 copies of all materials in your submission for use by the FLC in evaluating and scoring your project. Also provide us with the landowner's contact information to verify their interest and intent to participate. Any tract owner or representative is welcome to appear at the ranking meeting and submit a project proposal if they notify us in advance (prior to close of business on September 19, 2014), and provide us with 15 complete copies of their submission packet. The FLC will meet on October 7, 2014.

It has been determined that we must require in your packet a **letter of intent** to me or the FLC from the respective landowner before the FLC will consider their tract. A sample is attached. **A letter of intent is not a commitment**, but it does imply that the landowner is familiar with the program and its objectives, and as such intends to participate in the program. We need contact information of the willing seller, including phone number, with each letter of intent. To that end interested landowners will be called before October 7th to discuss the program with them.

For those submitting more than one tract for funding consideration, we ask that you prioritize them in a cover letter in the packet of information you send. Of special interest to you is the attached TENNESSEE RANKING SHEET that the review committee will be using to make ranking decisions.

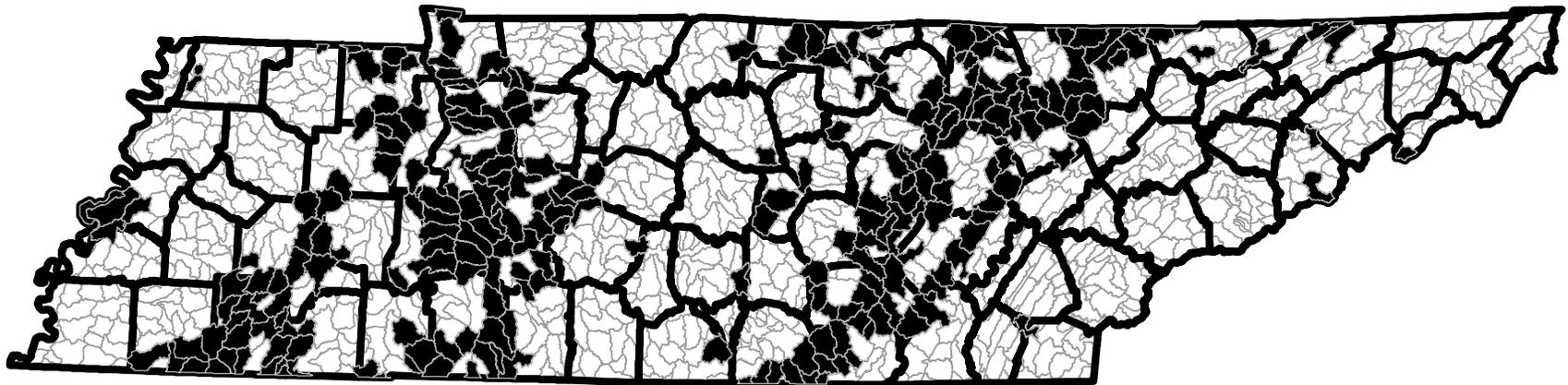
Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or need additional information @ (615) 837-5539 or (615) 218-5532, or by email at david.todd@tn.gov .

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "S. David Todd". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "S" at the beginning.

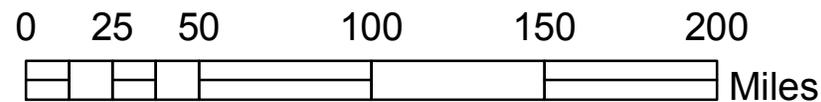
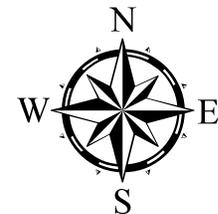
S. David Todd, Assistant State Forester

Eligible Forest Legacy Watersheds Starting Fiscal Year 2016



Legend

-  Proposed New Legacy Areas
-  TN_Counties
-  HUC 12 Watersheds



1 in = 55 miles

Recommendations for the Project Brief Map

The following are observations and recommendation related to maps that are part of a Forest Legacy Program project application. These recommendations are the result of feedback from previous members of the National project selection panel. Following these recommendations on how to improve a map is not a requirement; these are suggestions to help in the development of a competitive application.

- First impressions matter. Many reviewers have indicated that the map was the first item they reviewed on a project brief. If the map was difficult to read, reviewers became confused from the outset about why the project was important, threatened, or strategic.
- It is important to ensure that the project brief content and the map tell the same story and that the story is accurate (e.g. if a proposed tract is being highlighted for its public recreation amenities and none of those amenities are identified on the map, then you make it difficult for reviewers to give you full points for that attribute). Remember if the proximity of features are highlighted in the brief, make sure they also appear on the map.
- The information portrayed on map should be clear, concise, and easy to read. Some map style suggestions are below:
 - The reviewers suggest reserving bright colors for project area and other FLP areas (e.g. highlight the proposed FLP project tracts in red). Other protected lands are easy to spot as saturated earth tones (e.g. gradient shades of green to differentiate federal, state and privately conserved land). The map is easier to analyze if the base map is light gray or a neutral color, so it does not distract from the map message.
 - Do label FLP tracts on the map with the year funded, proposed, or completed.
 - Do not clutter the map with unnecessary labels (e.g. local roads that don't pertain to navigation to the property).
- Scale the project map to show how the project tracts fit into the area's conservation landscape. If the map is too localized, reviewers cannot understand how it ties to other conserved land. Conversely, if the map area is too large, it may be difficult to see what is adjacent to the proposed tracts. Reviewers state that if you are having a hard time finding the map scale sweet spot, you may want to consider developing a regional inset map to show where the project area is located within the state and to highlight conserved lands nearby.

SUGGESTED FORM LETTER OF INTENT

Name and Address of Participant

Re: **LETTER OF INTENT**

Very brief statement of your intended participation.

*(Example: Regarding 235 acres of Forest Land I own
in Jones County, TN)*

Mr. S. David Todd, Assistant State Forester
Interim Forest Legacy Program Manager
State of Tennessee
P. O. Box 40627, Melrose Station
Nashville, TN 37204

Dear Legacy Program Manager or Mr. Todd or David,

This letter is to state my intentions to proceed forward with regard to donating my land fee simple, donating a conservation easement and/or selling a conservation easement to Tennessee's Forest Legacy Program (FLP) subject to approval of the FLP and the US Forest Service.

I understand that a Forest Stewardship Plan, baseline survey, cadastral survey, appraisal and/or other evaluations may be performed for and on my property. The persons who perform this work will advise me in advance of their schedule to do so.

Please note that this letter is intended only to set out in general terms my intentions to participate in the program. It is not intended to obligate me to make a donation nor is it a binding contract with regard to any transaction and should not be concluded by anyone as such a contract. While I fully intend to continue with the process should my tract be accepted for inclusion in the Forest Legacy Program, I remain free to stop the process at any time I choose to do so.

Sincerely,

**STATE OF TENNESSEE
FOREST LEGACY PROGRAM
RANKING SHEET
Tuesday, October 7, 2014**

This document provides guidance to the Tennessee Forest Legacy Ranking Committee on how to score individual Forest Legacy Program (FLP) projects, including additional clarification on the core national criteria, project readiness and other evaluation considerations used in this process. This guidance mimics the criteria used by the National Review Panel, who ultimately scores and ranks submissions from the states.

National 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. This criterion reflects the ecological assets and the economic and social values conserved by the project and its level of significance. National significance of a project is demonstrated in two ways: First, a project that solidly represents a majority of the attributes outlined is viewed as nationally significant because of its strong alignment with the purposes and Strategic Direction of the Forest Legacy Program.

Second, national significance can be demonstrated by a project that supports Federal laws, such as Endangered Species Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, and Clean Water Act, contributes to Federal initiatives, or contains or enhances Federal designations such as Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Scenic Byways, National Recreation Trails, and cultural resources of national importance. When determining Federal importance, interstate/international resources (such as migratory species, or trail and waterways that cross state or international boundaries) should also be considered

Scoring consists of evaluating a project for the attributes below and identifying a point score. More points will be given to projects that demonstrate multiple public benefits of significance, or benefits of national significance. Significance of attributes is demonstrated by the quality and scope of the attributes. More points will be given to projects that exemplify a particular attribute or combination of attributes.

Attributes to consider:

Economic Benefits from 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. 0-5 _____

Economic Benefits from Non-timber Products – Provides non-timber revenue to the local or regional economy through activities such as hunting leases, ranching, non-timber forest products (pine straw, ginseng collection, etc.), guided tours (fishing, hunting, birdwatching, etc.), and recreation and tourism (lodging, rentals, bikes, boats, outdoor gear, etc.). 0-5 _____

Threatened or Endangered Species Habitat – The site has documented rare, threatened or endangered plants and animals or designated habitat. Documented occurrence and use of the property 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. 0-5 _____

Fish, Wildlife, Plants, and Unique Forest Communities- The site 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. The importance of habitat to an international initiative to support and sustain migratory species can be viewed as national importance if conserving the property will make a significant contribution. The mere occasional use of the property or a modest contribution to an international initiative does not raise the property to national importance. 0-5 _____

Water Supply and Watershed Protection – (1) Property has a direct relationship with protecting the water supply or watershed, such as provides a buffer to public drinking water supply, contains an aquifer recharge area, or protects an ecologically important aquatic area, and/or (2) the property contains important riparian area, wetlands, shorelines, river systems, or sensitive watershed lands. When allocating points, consideration of the importance of the resource and the scale of the contribution of the project should be considered. Merely being located within an aquifer recharge area or in a water supply area should not be given the same consideration as a project that makes a significant conservation contribution to a high-quality project of high-value. 0-5 _____

Public Access – Protection of the property will maintain or establish access by the public for recreation; however, restrictions on specific use and location of recreational activities may exist. 0-5 _____

Scenic – The site is located within a viewshed of a government designated scenic feature or area (such as trail, river, or highway). Federal designation should be given more consideration than state-only designations when evaluating the significance of this attribute. 0-5 _____

Historic/Cultural/Tribal – The site contains features of historical, cultural, and/or tribal significance, formally-documented by a government or a non-governmental organization. A Federal designation should receive greater consideration. 0 = no sites; 5 = designated sites _____

TOTAL SCORE: Importance (possible maximum of 40 points) _____

THREATENED

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. During the evaluation of threat, a good land steward interested in conserving land should not be penalized. The following will be considered:

- Third Party Ownership - If property has been acquired by a third party with the support of the State, threatened will be evaluated based on the situation prior to the third party acquisition.
- 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.
- Land and Landowners Circumstances – land and landowner circumstances such as property held in an estate, aging landowner, future property retention by heirs is uncertain, property is up for sale or has a sale pending, landowner anticipates owning property for a short duration, landowner has received purchase offers, land has an approved subdivision plan, landowner has sold subdivisions of the property, etc.
- 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.
- Ability to Develop- physical attributes of the property that will facilitate conversion, such as access, buildable ground, zoning, slope, water/sewer, electricity, etc.

Likelihood of conversion to non-forest uses.

- Imminent/Likely – **16 - 30** points. Multiple conditions exist that make conversion to non-forest uses likely. Circumstances indicate conversion may occur soon or within 5 years. Characteristics include: land has a subdivision plan, landowner has received offers from developers, landowner has sold off subdivisions of the property, land is located in a rapidly developing area, or landowner(s) are aged or nearby comparable land has been recently sold for development.
- Possible – **1 - 15** points. A few conditions exist that make conversion to non-forest uses possible. Circumstances indicate conversion could occur within 5 to 10 years: Characteristics include: land is in an attractive location for development such as waterfront or an outdoor recreation area.
- Unlikely any time soon (beyond 10 years) – **0** points

Note: Individual project scores for threatened will be determined as a committee consensus

TOTAL SCORE: Threatened (maximum of 30 points) _____

STRATEGIC

This criterion reflects the project's relevance or relationship to conservation efforts on a broader perspective. When evaluating strategic, three considerations should be made: 1) the scale of a conservation initiative, strategy, or plan, 2) the scale of the project's contribution to that initiative, strategy, or plan, and 3) the placement of the parcel within the area of the initiative, strategy, or plan. Relevant national or multi-state conservation plan or strategies include but are not limited to the Southern Forest Land Assessment, Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture Study, USFWS Habitat Conservation Plan strategy, Partners in Flight Land Conservation Plan, North American Waterfowl Management Plan, and TNC Ecoregional Conservation Planning strategy. Relevant state conservation strategies include but are not limited to TN Statewide Forest Resource Assessment and Strategy, TN Conservation Heritage Trust Fund Preliminary Assessment of Needs, and TN Statewide Wildlife Action Plan.

Attributes to consider:

Conservation Strategy- How the project fits within a larger conservation plan, strategy, or initiative as designated by either a government or non-governmental entity.

Compliment Protected Lands- How the project is strategically linked to enhance already protect lands including past FLP projects, already protected Federal, State, or non-governmental organization lands, or other Federal land protection programs (NRCS, NOAA, etc).

- **High - 31 - 40** points- The property significantly advances a landscape-scale or watershed-based conservation strategy through infill and/or key linkages and supports previous conservation investments. (Ex. – A **KEY** property in a formally developed national, multi-state, or state conservation effort.)
- **Average -16 - 30** points- The property makes a modest contribution to a conservation effort and is near already protected lands. (Ex. – A **NON-KEY** property in a formally developed national, multi-state, or state conservation effort.)
- **Low - 0 - 15** points- The property is not part of a conservation plan, but will lead to locally-focused conservation effort. (Ex. – Property will compliment or lead to additional conservation action locally.)

TOTAL SCORE: Strategic (maximum of 40 points) _____

TOTAL STATE CORE CRITERIA SCORE (maximum of 110 points):

Importance ____ + **Threat** ____ + **Strategic** ____ = **Total** ____

**2016 Forest Legacy Program
PROJECT SUBMISSION
CHECKLIST**

With your FLP submission, you must include the following:

- ___ Name(s), address(es), telephone, and e-mail address of the owners of the property.
- ___ List of existing permanent improvements on the tract; house, barns, ponds
- ___ Map identifying any dumps or waste disposal sites on the property
- ___ Statement of whether property boundary has been surveyed and marked.
- ___ Have available at ranking meeting a copy of the current deed.
- ___ Listing of any liens, leases, or other restriction on the property.
- ___ Identification of ownership of the minerals estate, and type of minerals present.
- ___ Copy of Forest Stewardship Plan or Forest Management Plan (if available) (required to participate in FLP).
- ___ Estimate of the number of acres to be included in FLP
- ___ Landowner's Letter of Intent (required)
- ___ Estimated market value (in dollars) of property or tract.
- ___ Basis for the estimated market value of property or tract.
- ___ What is the source of the 25% matching funds.
- ___ If a fee simple purchase, what agency will assume management of property.
- ___ Narrative report of 5 pages or less explaining how the proposed tract addresses the elements of the Tennessee Ranking Sheet. Suggested format is 1 page for tract summary (location, history, management, national significance, political and local support, etc.); and 1 page for each ranking element (Importance, Threatened, Strategic, and Readiness).

With your FLP submission, also include the following if possible:

- ___ Copy of large scale map indicating location of property
- ___ Aerial photo, preferably a digitized map showing FLP acreage boundaries
- ___ Proximity to other Forest Legacy tracts and government holdings
- ___ What are the landowner's major forest objectives