



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

OWF POLICY MEMORANDUM 2016-10

To: Director, Bureau of Land Management
Director, National Park Service
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation
Director, U.S. Geological Survey

From: Jim Douglas, Director – Office of Wildland Fire

Subject: Resilient Landscapes Program Request for Pre-Proposals for Fiscal Year 2017

Purpose: This memorandum provides policy for the Department of the Interior's Wildland Fire Resilient Landscapes (RL) program. This memorandum supersedes and replaces OWF Policy Memorandum 2015-004, dated March 23, 2015.

Background: The Department of the Interior supports the implementation of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy including the goal that "Landscapes across all jurisdictions are resilient to wildfire-related disturbances in accordance with land management plan objectives." The FY 2017 President's Budget proposed continuation of the Department's Resilient Landscapes (RL) program, to address broad land-health outcomes in wildfire-adapted ecosystems by conducting treatments across multijurisdictional landscapes that improve the integrity and resilience of forests and rangelands.

The RL program also supports the implementation of Secretarial Order (SO) 3336, Rangeland Fire Prevention, Management and Restoration, signed January 5, 2015, which establishes "protecting, conserving, and restoring the health of the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem and, in particular, greater sage-grouse habitat, while maintaining safe and efficient operations, as a critical fire management priority for the Department."

Scope: This Policy Memorandum provides guidance for submission of FY 2017 RL program pre-proposal funding requests. Pre-proposal applications should be completed in partnership with internal non-fire DOI land and resource management programs and with other external partners, such as other federal, state, county, private, and non-governmental organizations. These submissions will be used to inform formal WFM RL funding requests later this year.

Time Frame: All FY 2017 Wildland Fire Resilient Landscapes Pre-proposals must be submitted by midnight, Eastern Time, June 03, 2016.

Policy: FY 17 Wildland Fire Resilient Landscape pre-proposals must be submitted via the form found at <http://goo.gl/forms/Aj1Mq0DvNB>

Additional detail and explanation of the pre-proposal guidance is included in the attached RL Program Explanation of FY 2017 Request for Pre-Proposal Guidelines.

OWF Policy Memorandum 2015-004, dated March 23, 2015, is rescinded.

Contacts: Please address questions to David Overcast, Fuels and Landscapes Lead, OWF at david_overcast@ios.doi.gov or (202) 606-3206.

Attachments: WFM Resilient Landscapes Program - Explanation of FY 2017 Request for Pre-proposals Guidelines

CC: Interior Fire Executives
Interior Fire Directors

Resilient Landscapes Program Explanation of FY 2017 Request for Pre-proposal Guidelines

Program Overview

Treatments focused on the wildland-urban interface and critical infrastructure alone will not completely resolve the issue of wildfires that threaten key values. A recent scientific publication by the Ecological Restoration Institute (ERI)¹ suggests that although fuels treatments near communities can reduce wildfire risks to homes and people, backcountry fuels treatments are equally important to prevent the "mega" wildfires². The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (Cohesive Strategy) challenges us to strive for creating *"Landscapes across all jurisdictions that are resilient to fire-related disturbances in accordance with management objectives"*³. The Department of the Interior (DOI) recognizes this issue by proactively proposing a new approach that focuses on restoring, maintaining, or attaining desired landscape characteristics (structural, compositional and functional attributes). This requires management at broad spatial scales and across multiple jurisdictions in order to accelerate successfully restoring the ecological role of wildland fire in wildfire-adapted ecosystems.

The Resilient Landscapes (RL) program is an innovative approach to achieving wildfire resiliency goals across landscapes using collaborative efforts as defined by the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (Cohesive Strategy). It is not a stand-alone program, but a collaborative effort supported by the Wildland Fire Management (WFM) and resource management programs of the bureaus. The RL program will place priority on proposals where landscape characteristics are at elevated risk posed by wildfire and where wildfire risk can be mitigated (reduce the risk of large catastrophic wildfires) and re-establish the ecological function of wildfire for enhancing or protecting critical natural resources and watersheds. The RL program activities will be funded at a scale to provide results within five to ten years that will significantly contribute to long-term benefits. Short-term investments should use treatment methodologies that are proven and demonstrate desired landscape characteristics of a for long-term wildfire resilient landscape. These short-term investments should make a significant difference in the landscape characteristics, so that bureaus or tribes' natural resource and wildland fire programs could maintain the landscapes without continued funding from the RL program.

¹"The Efficacy of Fuels Treatments: A Rapid Assessment of the Economic and Ecological Consequences of Alternative Hazardous Fuel Treatments", Northern Arizona University Ecological Restoration Institute, May 2013.

²Mega-fires are a situation as much as they are an incident. Emotions run high when they occur. They are not defined in absolute terms, using physical measures (e.g. acres burned). Instead, these are the "headline" wildfires where operational limitations, public anxieties, media scrutiny, and political pressures collide. (The Mega-Fire Phenomenon: Toward a More Effective Management Tool, Brookings Institute, 2005)

³<https://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/strategy/documents/strategy/CSPPhaseIIINationalStrategyApr2014.pdf>
Site accessed 04/26/2016

Definitions:

- **Wildfire Resiliency** – is the ability of a landscape to absorb the effects of wildfire by regaining, maintaining, or attaining the desired characteristic structural, compositional, and functional attributes. The amount of resilience a landscape possesses is proportional to the magnitude of wildfire effects required to fundamentally change the system (Cohesive Strategy National Science Team Summary Report, 2012).
- **Resilient Landscape Collaborative** – A funded Resilient Landscapes proposal comprised of federal, tribal, state, non-governmental organization, and other stakeholder partners through a lead tribe or DOI land management agency.
- **Place Based** – An approach most simply defined as stakeholders engaging in a collaborative process to address issues as they are experienced within a geographic space, be it a neighborhood, a region, or an ecosystem. These approaches have a common set of characteristics that challenge traditional notions of evaluation (Coote et al, 2004; Federal Family, 2008; PRI, 2010b; RGI, 2010).

Funding is through a Place Based approach using Collaboration and Partnerships –

The RL program aims at creating landscape characteristics that are resilient to wildfire and to accelerate treatments that reduce wildfire risks and support the ecological role of wildfire in ecosystems through a place-based approach, i.e., a discrete landscape, regardless of ownership. Funding will be provided to Collaboratives comprised of federal, tribal, state, non-governmental organization, and other stakeholder partners through a lead DOI land management agency.

The priority for FY 2017 projects is to capitalize on existing partnerships, effective treatments, collaborators' support, initiatives, established processes, and existing assessments, data, and prioritization at the national, regional, and local scales.

Investments for Long-Term Benefits – Resilient Landscapes Collaboratives will be funded at a scale to provide results in five to ten years that will significantly contribute to long-term outcomes. Short-term outputs should use treatment methodologies that have been proven successful through monitoring and demonstrate a trajectory for the desired landscape characteristics for long-term wildfire resilient outcomes. These short-term investments, with sufficient investment by all partners over 5-10 years, should make a significant difference in the landscape characteristics so that natural resource and wildland fire programs of bureaus or tribes can maintain those landscapes without continued funding from the RL program. For example, a wildfire resilient landscape meets management objectives with reduced management interaction and damage to natural resources during a wildfire.

Matching Funds and Cost Sharing – The RL program is a new approach demonstrating collaborative implementation supported by the WFM and natural resource management programs with the intent to improve wildfire resiliency and to accelerate treatments across landscapes. The RL program is coordinated with and supported by bureaus or tribes’ natural resource management programs and funding (personnel, in-kind services, direct funding or a combination). There is a required match, but no required minimum, from the lead bureaus or tribes natural resource programs; however, similar proposals with a higher match will be more competitive.

Matching funds – Matching funds means the portion of proposal costs paid for by bureaus or tribes natural resource programs. Matching funds can be in the form of funds, in-kind services, labor, or a combination. Bureau or tribal funds from the WFM program (fuels, preparedness, burned area rehabilitation, etc.) ***are not*** allowed to be counted as part of the specific bureau or tribe’s natural resource program match but can still contribute towards success of the Collaborative goals (see cost sharing below).

Cost Sharing – Cost sharing means the portion of proposal costs paid for by bureaus or tribes wildland fire management (WFM) program. Bureau or tribal funds from the WFM program (fuels, preparedness, burned area rehabilitation, etc.) ***are*** allowed to be considered as part of the cost sharing funding.

Partnership or Contributed funds – Partnership funds mean the portion of proposal costs accounted for outside of BIA, BLM, FWS, NPS or tribal funds. For example, prominent partners may include Forest Service, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Landscape Conservation Cooperatives, state agencies, universities, and non-governmental organizations. Partnerships funds can be in the form of direct, in-kind services, labor, or a combination. Contributed funds could be direct funding or other donated services or labor or a combination.

Process and Timeline – All proposals will follow the FY 2017 Wildland Fire Resilient Landscapes Guidance for Pre-proposals form (<http://goo.gl/forms/Aj1Mq0DvNB>) and be submitted by the established due date and procedures. In FY 2017, it is expected that pre-proposals will complete a more detailed application to compete for funding based on approval of the President’s budget request.

Proposal Content – Pre-proposals will include the following sections:

- Name of Collaborative
- Partners and Collaborators
- Size of the Collaborative (i.e., acres)
- Estimated Resilient Landscapes Funding Request (i.e., 2017, 2018, and 2019)
- Estimated Resource Funding Match
- Short-term Outcome
- Long-term Outcome
- Support of the Tribal Chairman or Line Officer