



2023 Request for Proposals Frequently Asked Questions

Is there a limit to the number of proposals on which an individual can appear as a Co-PI?

There is no limit on the number of proposals on which an individual may be listed as a Co-PI. If a single person is identified as a paid Co-PI on multiple proposals, this may affect decisions about the equitable distribution of funds across the region, institutions, and individuals.

Will there be another Indigenous Forest Knowledge Fund research competition?

The NSRC is committed to advancing practical applications of forest research and to supporting a diverse, equitable, and inclusive research program. We encourage proposals that are relevant to Tribal Nations and Indigenous communities in the region. In addition, a separate RFP for NSRC's 2023 Indigenous Forest Knowledge Fund is forthcoming. (For more information on that program, visit www.nsrcforest.org/indigenous-forest-knowledge-fund).

Institutions

Can researchers from the USDA Forest Service apply?

Participation by USFS personnel in projects is encouraged. Special conditions apply to USFS employees who submit proposals as PIs or Co-PIs. Potential USFS PIs or Co-PIs should speak with the NSRC Federal Coordinator (Daniel Dey at daniel.c.dey@usda.gov) before submitting the letter of intent and when developing the full proposal and budget.

Can collaboration with the Forest Service or other federally funded activities count toward the preference for matching funds?

According to federal cost principles (commonly referred to as [Uniform Guidance](#)), shared costs (matching funds) must be from a non-Federal source, not included as contributions for any other Federal award, and necessary and reasonable for the project. Costs that are necessary and reasonable for the project and that are borne by federal agencies are considered leveraged funds and should be described in the project narrative and letters of commitment as leveraged.

How is collaboration with Forest Service or other federal agency considered in the proposal review?

The NSRC recognizes the importance and value of leveraged involvement of Forest Service and other federally funded researchers in NSRC projects. PIs are encouraged to document planned collaboration with such personnel in project proposals. PIs include Letters of Commitment from the Forest Service or other agencies in proposals. PIs may also submit Letters of Support. NSRC will assure that at least 25% of NSRC-funded research projects show tangible coordination with Forest Service research.

How does the program determine eligible Tribal Nations and Indigenous communities? For example, is there any distinction in federal vs. state-recognized tribes?

Both state and federally recognized tribes are recognized by NSRC.

Must Tribal Nations leading a proposal be located in the Northern Forest?

As with other institutions, the lead Tribal Nation must be based in the NSRC region in the states of Maine, New Hampshire, New York, or Vermont. Research must aim to directly benefit the communities—people, plants, and animals—in the forest of the northern tier of the four states.

What Is Considered “Northern Forest”?

In the context of this RFP, what ecosystems can be considered part of the “Northern Forest”?

The original boundary of the Northern Forest in the context of NSRC was the so-called “Champion Forest Lands” which had holdings throughout the northern tier of the northeastern states. This boundary has expanded to include other forest types and land holdings in the northern tier. [The current approximate boundary map is posted on the NSRC web site.](#) The essential test of applicability is whether the trees in the proposed study site are predominantly the ones you’d find in the areas of this map, but even more importantly, whether the research that is proposed would directly benefit the communities – people, plants, and animals – in the forest of the northern tier of the northeastern states. Whether the site is mountain top or valley riparian area, or natural or fragmented lands are not criteria.

Are forests in the Champlain Valley within the boundary map?

Yes, the Champlain Valley part of the NSRC Northern Forest region.

Can a project extend beyond the northern tier of the four states, to include forests and communities within New England or Canada, as long as communities within the northern forest as defined do directly benefit?

The RFP states, “Participation in this RFP is open to scientists, resource managers, policy makers, and other stakeholders pursuing research relevant to forest lands in the northern tier of New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. Any field research proposed must be conducted in or near the boundaries of the Northern Forest.” If extending beyond the boundaries of the Northern Forest, the federal budget should focus on communities in the four-state Northern Forest to the extent possible.

Research Topics

How were focus areas and priority issues identified for the NSRC RFP?

An External Advisory Committee (EAC) of approximately 16 members was convened to represent the communities, businesses, industries, and agencies in the Northern Forest Region that contribute to and benefit from knowledge generated by research funded via the NSRC. The EAC informs the NSRC about the specific research needs facing forest stakeholders in the Northern Forest region and helps identify focus areas and priority issues for each RFP.

Budget

May I add lines to the budget template for graduate students or undergraduate students?

Please create budget rows for graduate student RAs and undergraduate field assistants for both salary and fringe, if needed. Assistants may be grouped together or separated; just be sure to explain your calculations in the budget narrative. Technical reviewers should be able to see that your project proposal is adequately resourced and that proposed efforts and costs are reasonable.

Will pre-award spending be allowed?

Pre-award spending will be allowed up to 90 days before project start date.

What is a favorable cost-benefit ratio?

If the proposed project has high potential benefit to the Northern Forest and the proposed costs are necessary and reasonable, as determined by reviewers, then the proposal would have a favorable cost-benefit ratio.