



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY
BUREAU OF PARKS AND LANDS
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AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333

JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

AMANDA E. BEAL
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March 24, 2023

Dear Maine Landowner or Land Conservation Organization:

The State of Maine is currently accepting applications to the Maine Forest Legacy Program from interested forest landowners. Interested parties should contact the Bureau by May 1st to discuss proposed projects and receive application details.

What is the Forest Legacy Program? The Forest Legacy Program is a federal program established to ensure that economically important forest lands are protected from conversion to non-forest uses, and remain available to contribute to a sustainable flow of wood products and provide an array of public benefits. It was created by Congress in 1990 to help landowners, state and local governments, and private land trusts identify and protect environmentally important forest lands that are threatened by conversion to non-forest uses. This federally supported program funds up to 75 percent of the costs for the acquisition of lands or conservation easements from willing landowners. The program requires that the State hold right, title or interest (through fee or conservation easement ownership) in any lands protected with Forest Legacy Program funds.

Federal- and State-recognized tribes can participate in the program in partnership with the Bureau. Only nontrust tribal allotment lands qualify. FLP acquisition funds can only be granted to the Bureau, and the purchased land, or interests in land, must be held by one of the Eligible Governmental Entities listed beginning on page 7 of Maine's Assessment of Need.

The Forest Legacy Program operates on a competitive basis, nationwide. Maine projects, selected through an evaluation process by an established Maine Forest Legacy Committee, are ultimately evaluated by a national panel against projects in 48 other states and territories. The program solicits proposals on an annual cycle. **To be eligible for FY2025 funding, applicants must first contact the Bureau by May 1st to discuss the proposed project. Full application details will be provided following this initial contact.**

Maine's Forest Legacy Program: Each state has established a program within this general umbrella program. Maine's Forest Legacy Program aims to prevent the conversion of Maine's forest to non-forest uses, thereby protecting an array of traditional forest uses and a wide range of public values that Maine's forest provides. Public values include the production of timber, fiber and other forest products; economic benefits from non-timber resources; public recreation opportunities, including tourism activities; high environmental value plant and animal habitat as

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identified by state, regional, or federal programs; habitat for rare, threatened or endangered plant or animal species; rare or exemplary natural communities; water supply and watershed protection, and/or important riparian areas, wetlands, shorelines, or river systems; scenic resources; and historic/cultural/tribal resources of significance. Traditional forest uses can include, but are not limited to public access, timber harvesting, hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking, camping, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, horseback riding, picnicking, boating, swimming, bicycling, snowmobiling, foraging, outdoor education and nature study including scientific and archeological research, and nature observation.

Since 1994, Maine has received more than \$79 million through the Forest Legacy Program and has permanently protected by fee or easement the public values and traditional forest uses of over 759,000 acres of Maine's forest. This has been accomplished through the completion of thirty-one projects located from York County to Aroostook County and ranging in size from 72 acres (a small inholding lot on Seboomook Lake) to 328,364 acres (the West Branch project).

How to Apply: You are being contacted because you hold a significant amount of forestland or work with forest landowners within the area designated in Maine as eligible for Forest Legacy Funding. To find out more about how to apply, please see the guiding document for Maine's Forest Legacy program, titled "February 2020 Final Modified Assessment of Need" which is available on the Maine Forest Legacy Program website: <http://www.maine.gov/dacf/forestlegacycommittee>

Please review this document in its entirety; application guidelines and evaluation criteria are found on page 9. Funding requests may not exceed \$20 million. **Applicants must contact the Bureau by May 1st to discuss proposed projects and receive further application details.**

All applications will be evaluated by Maine's Forest Legacy Committee in order to develop a list of priority projects to forward to the U.S. Forest Service for consideration for fiscal year 2025 Program funding. Maine's projects must be submitted to the U.S. Forest Service by mid-September 2023. **This letter serves only as a call for projects that will be funded through the traditional, Forest Legacy FY25 funding process. Later this year the Bureau will announce additional opportunities to apply for Forest Legacy funding, made possible through Inflation Reduction Act funds.**

The Bureau is available to answer questions about the application process any time prior to the application deadline. Applicants will be invited to give a brief presentation about their project to the Maine Forest Legacy Committee at its summer meeting. To discuss proposed projects, or for any questions about this call for projects or the Forest Legacy Program, please contact Jo D. Saffair, Special Assistant to the Commissioner, at JoD.Saffair@maine.gov. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Andy Cutko
Director, Bureau of Parks and Lands