

California Forest Improvement Program User's Guide



Edition Date

December 3, 2019

Authority

Gavin Newsom, Governor, State of California

Wade Crowfoot, Secretary of Resources, California Natural Resources Agency

Thom Porter, Director, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

Helge Eng, Deputy Director Resource Management, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

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Introduction to the California Forest Improvement Program

Purpose

The California Forest Improvement Program (CFIP) is a forestry incentive program that provides funds to forest landowners for management plans, Registered Professional Forester (RPF) supervision, site preparation, tree planting, thinning, pruning, follow-up, release, land conservation, and improvement of fish and wildlife habitat. CFIP's purpose is to encourage private and public investments in forestlands and resources within the state to ensure adequate future high quality timber supplies, related employment and other economic benefits, and to protect, maintain, and enhance the forest resource for the benefit of present and future generations.

Funding

The source of funds for CFIP projects historically has come from California's Forest Resource Improvement Fund (FRIF). FRIF receives its funding from timber sale revenue from the State's Demonstration Forests. Funding may also be provided from other State sources; e.g. the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund and the Timber Regulation and Forest Restoration Fund.

Funding may also be provided from other State and Federal sources, e.g. Forest Stewardship Program and the Forest Health Management Program.

It is important to note that different funding sources may have different requirements or additional application procedures. Be sure to discuss this with your Forestry Assistance Specialist (FAS) at the CAL FIRE unit in which your project resides, the Regional FAS, or call the CFIP program manager in Sacramento. A list of contacts is provided on the CFIP webpage.

Federal Cost-Share Programs

Your contract may be funded in part by various USDA Forest Service programs such as the Forest Stewardship Program (FSP) or the Forest Health Management Program (FHMP) when such funds are available. The State receives these funds through grants that may expire in shorter time frames than the normal CFIP contract. It may be necessary to accomplish certain activities within the USDA grant period. The use of federal funds will be done on a contract-by-contract basis and will be discussed with the CAL FIRE FAS before approval of the contract. In general, only those activities that can be accomplished during the grant period are funded with USDA funds. Ask your FAS for more information.

Those practices funded by the USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry must be completed within the grant period of 18 months. However, if practices are not completed within that time due to conditions beyond the landowner's control, the FAS may grant an extension for time, not to exceed 12 months, IF the federal grant can also be extended.

This Guidebook

This guidebook is designed to explain the program and application procedures for foresters, forestry consultants, and forestland owners. Contact your local FAS or consulting Registered Professional Forester (RPF) for assistance with the CFIP application process.

The Program

The CFIP can provide eligible landowners with technical and financial assistance for planning, reforestation and resource management investments that improve the quality and value of forestland. Under current State law, CFIP can help with rebuilding forest, soil, water, fish and wildlife resources to meet our future needs for a healthy environment and productive forest and woodlands.

- CFIP is a reimbursement program. To receive reimbursement, documents must show that expenses to be reimbursed have been paid out. The program typically covers up to 75 percent of the cost of your project. A 90% cost share rate may also apply to the following:
 - Lands substantially damaged by fire, insects and disease within ten years prior to the execution of a contract. Substantially damaged timberland means areas of timberland where wildfire, insects, disease, wind, flood, or other blight caused by an act of God occurs after January 1, 1976 and the damage reduced stocking below the requirements of the Forest Practice Act. The minimum stocking levels are 300-point count (site III or better), 150- point count (site IV, V), or measured in basal area 85 ft² (site I or II), 50 ft² (site III, IV, V).
 - 90% cost share rates are available for all Cooperative Forest Management Plans.
 - Ten percent or more of the total cost of the project will be devoted to forest land conservation measures and/or fish and wildlife habitat improvement practices
 - Landowners with less than 500 acres of forestland in California.
- The CFIP program is non-regulatory and participation is voluntary. In some cases, land use zoning may require a land use addendum with a 10-year requirement for maintenance of funded work.
- Landowners decide who to hire, and may do some of the work themselves.

Eligibility

Eligible Landowners

To be eligible for CFIP, landowners must own at least 20 acres of forestland but not more than 5,000 acres of forestland in California. The 20-acre minimum does not apply to forestland zoned timber production zone. As per PRC 4793(e), forest land means land at least 10 percent occupied by trees of any size that are native to California, including native oaks, or formerly having had that tree cover and not currently zoned for uses incompatible with forest resource management.” To determine that at least 10 percent of the property is occupied by trees, average canopy cover of native species across the property shall be used to determine whether the property meets the definition. Developed areas such as structures, landscaping, and gardens shall not be excluded from the 20-acre minimum property size and shall be included in the calculation of average canopy cover.

Eligible landowners include private owners, government agencies, businesses, corporations, and non-federally owned Native American lands.

Eligible Land

The intent of this law is to ensure that investments in timber stand improvement funded by CFIP will yield future marketable forest products and/or improved natural resources. Land must be zoned for uses compatible with forest resource management. Land in Agricultural Preserve (Williamson Act) or Timberland Production Zone (TPZ) qualifies. Properties with conservation easements or zoned for residential and/or commercial development may be eligible, if the easements or zoning place no restriction on forest management practices. If land is not zoned for timber production, the owner must maintain funded practices for at least ten years. A notice to this effect will be filed with the County Recorder. If the land is sold this provision is binding on the new owner or the CFIP grant must be paid back with interest.

Eligible Acreage

Timber related practices including site preparation, planting, precommercial thinning, release, and follow up work shall cover at least a 5-acre project area. Any combination of practices may be used in the 5-acre project area as appropriate to meet the landowner’s objectives.

There is no minimum acreage limit for land conservation or habitat improvement projects.

Qualifying Projects and Commercial Timber Operations

CFIP projects are non-commercial operations typically used to modify sub-merchantable trees or ones with no commercial value. Commercial timber operations require the approval of a timber harvest plan, non-industrial timber management plan, emergency notice or exemption by the Department. CFIP projects may be approved adjacent to commercial operations if they are outside the plan boundaries.

Projects proposed where timber has been harvested pursuant to the Z’berg-Nejedly Forest Practice Act of 1973 (Act) may qualify for CFIP financing if:

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- All conditions imposed by the Act have been satisfied and a completion and stocking report has been approved by CAL FIRE that covers the CFIP project area. Prior to the signing of a completion and stocking report, CFIP practices may begin outside the previous harvest area with FAS approval. When a completion and stocking report is not required by the Act, the FAS will conduct a site inspection to determine that commercial timber operations are complete.
- CFIP practices are not part of the minimal requirements of the Act and will not be used to meet those requirements.

Requirement for a Forest Management Plan

The enabling legislation for the California Forest Improvement Program (CFIP) requires that a Forest Management Plan be prepared and approved prior to a forest resource improvement project being started. An existing non-industrial timber management plan (NTMP), CFIP management plan, or NRCS management plan may be adequate. The FAS will review the current management plan to determine if it meets the requirements of the program. If a new or revised management plan is required, then the program can provide cost share funding for its completion by a private RPF.

CFIP Process Overview

Application Process

Step 1: Contact a FAS. Preconsult with your local FAS to determine the status of funding, current application process, and whether your property and project are eligible for funding.

Step 2: Initial application. Contract the services of a consulting Registered Professional Forester (RPF) to assist in writing the elements of the application package, including the CFIP application and agreement forms, Payee Data Record form, project budget, project description, RPF checklist, copy of the Property Deed or Certificate of Trust, and maps. Additional documentation may be needed to demonstrate property ownership.

Step 3: Field inspection. The FAS will schedule a field inspection to review your proposed project in the field.

Step 4: Final application filed and ranked. If the FAS determines that your project meets the requirements of the program, the FAS will provide recommendations for completion of the final application package. All application revisions must be completed before the project is filed. **The final application package will be filed and ranked according to the CFIP ranking form.**

Step 5: Application approved or denied funding. Each project will be assigned a priority rank. This priority ranking will be used for granting project contracts on a quarterly basis where program funding will be allocated into discrete amounts and only the highest-ranking projects will be funded until the program funding allocation is reached. Applications that are not funded in their first opportunity will be forwarded for consideration in the proceeding funding window. If an application is not funded in its second attempt, the application will be returned to the landowner for revision.

Project Implementation & Invoicing Process

Step 1: Management Plan. Complete and submit to CAL FIRE for approval the required ownership-wide Forest Management Plan (FMP) prepared by a RPF, unless an existing plan is in place. The FAS will review and approve the FMP to ensure it meets the requirements of the CFIP. If the CFIP agreement is just for the preparation of a FMP, skip to step 4.

Step 2: CEQA Review. The project must comply with the California Environmental Quality Act and the CFIP Programmatic Environmental Impact Report. The RPF shall complete and submit to CAL FIRE the Environmental Checklist along with all requirements pertaining to the Checklist such as the California Natural Diversity Database results, biological surveys, and archaeological information.

CFIP projects must adhere to the most recent version of the Archaeological Review Procedures for CAL FIRE Projects when completing the CEQA REVIEW phase of project preparation. For the purposes of Native American notification, the project's Registered Professional Forester (RPF) who is supervising the preparation of CEQA review documents, including the Confidential Archaeological Addendum, can perform in the role of CAL FIRE FAS for the sole purpose of Native American Project Notification and Information Gathering, as explained in section "II. Cultural Resource Survey Procedures" found in the Archaeological Review Procedures for CAL FIRE Projects. If you have any questions, please contact your FAS for further guidance.

Step 3: Begin Project. Do not begin any on-ground practices until you have been notified by your FAS that all conditions in 1 and 2 above have been satisfied. Execute the project according to the terms of the agreement. Any changes require official agreement amendments. Project modifications could result in adverse environmental impacts and failure to get reimbursed for project costs.

Step 4: Invoice. Prepare a CFIP invoice and proof of payment(s) as described in the CFIP invoice section. Send the CFIP invoice package to the FAS. On large projects, interim invoices can be submitted if a minimum of 5 acres of a practice is completed. Final invoices are due no later than 45 days after the CFIP agreement expires.

Step 5: Field inspection. The FAS will schedule a field inspection to verify the work is complete as described in the approved CFIP agreement and approve or recommend revisions to the CFIP invoice package.

Step 6: Reimbursement. The FAS forwards the final CFIP invoice package to Sacramento for reimbursement. The Grantee can expect reimbursement in 120 days.

Preparing the CFIP Application and Agreement Package

Contents

Always utilize the most recent edition of each form when preparing the package. Contact your FAS to obtain the most recent forms. A complete CFIP Application and Agreement Package must contain the following documents.

- Two CFIP Agreement forms with original wet signatures in blue ink.

Attached to each Agreement in the following order:

- CFIP application (pages 1-2)
- Project Budget
- Project Description RPF Checklist (if applying for RPF Supervision Practice)
- Project Location Maps

- Payee Data Record with original wet signature in blue ink.

- Copy of the trust, partnership, company ownership record, or notarized letters authorizing Grantee to enter into the CFIP agreement.

Selecting Cost-Share Cap Rates

Cost-share cap rates are established for Program consistency as well as to encourage landowners to develop cost-effective projects. Several practices have multiple allowable rates depending on site conditions. Rates requested must be justified in the Project Description portion of the application. Standard published rates or lesser amounts may be proposed, but may not exceed the heavy rate. **The rates are published on the CFIP website.**

CFIP allows participants to choose between hiring a contractor or doing the work themselves. The CFIP contract will specify either the contractor or self-labor cap for each proposed practice. Self-labor and contract labor may both be used on the same project, but not on the same practice. Changing the labor type for a practice must be discussed with the CAL FIRE FAS before it occurs, and may require amendment of the contract.

Using a Contractor

CFIP projects are not commercial timber harvesting operations and do not require a licensed timber operator (LTO). However, a C-61/D-49 Tree Service specialty license issued by the California Contractors State License Board (CSLB) would be required for tree removal or pruning if the value of the work equals or exceeds \$500 or if trees 15 feet or taller are removed. CAL FIRE does not select a contractor for each CFIP project. The landowner or the landowner's RPF must select a contractor and enter into a contract to complete the project.

Doing the Work Yourself

Landowners who choose to complete the work themselves, including use of their own equipment, must use the lower cost-share cap rates and hourly rates specified for self-labor. Self-labor may be performed by the landowner, their family members, and/or direct employees, and must be explained and justified in the project description. When a landowner elects to perform the work themselves, they must track their hourly rates for their work only. These hourly rates must be recorded and provided to the Forestry Assistance Specialist when invoicing.

If the cost of a project practice exceeds the listed maximum cap rate, the landowner must pay the difference, regardless of the cost-share cap rate chosen.

CFIP participants are allowed to select some practices for self-labor and pay contractors to perform other practices. Participants are not allowed to mix cost-share cap rates within a given practice.

For example: A landowner can perform pruning themselves and pay a contractor to plant trees. In this case, the landowner would use the self-labor cap rate for pruning and the contractor rate for tree planting. A landowner cannot elect to prune some trees and plant some trees themselves, while paying a contractor to do the rest. The project description and CFIP agreement will outline where the contractor or self-labor rates apply. Any deviation from the CFIP agreement must be amended prior to completing the ground activities.

Allowable costs for erosion control or habitat improvement practices will be evaluated for cost-effectiveness based on rates allowed in the Natural Conservation Resources Service (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

Payment Records and Invoice

NOTE: This is a reimbursement program. To receive reimbursement, documents must show that expenses to be reimbursed have been paid out.

Keep records of all paid contractor invoices. For practices approved for self-labor, keep a copy of all cash expenses, as well as contributions in personal labor and materials. When the project is complete, submit the CFIP Invoice form and copies of all your expense records to the FAS. For larger projects, interim invoices can be submitted when at least 5 acres of a practice/project have been completed. The State will reimburse by check. Payment generally takes 120 days from receipt of the invoice in Sacramento.

Appeals

If a project is not approved by the FAS, landowners may ask the Director of the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to reconsider the decision. To make an appeal write the Director at the address below within 10 days of being notified that the application was rejected and state the reasons why a review is in order.

Director, CFIP Appeal

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

P.O. Box 944246

Sacramento, California 94244-2460

A review will be conducted, and the landowner will be notified of the decision within 30 calendar days of receipt of the appeal.

References

CFIP was created by the California Forest Improvement Act of 1978 under Sections 4790-4799.05 of the Public Resources Code (PRC). CAL FIRE has adopted official State guidelines for implementing the act under Articles 1-8, Chapter 9.5, Division 1.5, Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (eff. 8/79). When there is a question about the program, the ultimate reference should be either from one of these two legal documents or from the CFIP Program Manager in Sacramento HQ at (916) 653-8286.

CFIP Practices Eligible for Cost-Sharing

A Project Description explains the forest improvement, fuels management, or conservation practices for which funding is requested and must be attached to the CFIP Application. It should provide enough detail to allow the landowner, RPF, CAL FIRE inspector, and any forestry workers hired to implement the project to have a clear understanding of where, when and how the CFIP project will be accomplished. The CFIP applicant should propose work that can be completed within the contract period. Applicants with large properties or projects may need to enter into sequential contracts to complete work in phases.

Preparation of a Forest Management Plan by a RPF

A long-term forest Management Plan must be prepared for applicant's total ownership including all non-forest acres. The intent of this requirement is to help the landowner develop personal land management objectives and feasible projects, based on a professional analysis of the property's potential and available opportunities. CFIP can fund preparation of a new plan, as well as revision of an existing plan, such as a Stewardship Incentives Program (SIP), NRCS funded management plan, or Non-Industrial Timber Management Plan (NTMP).

The Management Plan must be prepared by a Registered Professional Forester (RPF). RPF's are licensed professionals who are familiar with all aspects of forest management, and have a working knowledge of applicable State and local regulations. (The FAS can provide a list of RPF consultants.)

New Management Plans shall be written using the California Cooperative Forest Management Plan Template.

The Management Plan shall be based primarily on the participant's objectives. The plan shall provide sufficient historical and resource baseline data to formulate alternatives for forest improvement. It must compare alternatives and provide a recommended course of action to optimize forest health.

Various alternatives shall be proposed involving analysis of factors such as economics, watershed improvement, wildlife habitat, fire suppression, natural and man-made impacts to the property and surrounding ownerships, and other concerns.

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Each CFIP plan will be unique. Plans for large acreage ownerships are expected to contain more information than small ownerships because of greater diversity in soil types, vegetation, wildlife habitat and participant objectives.

RPFs developing a full plan or a Mini Plan on their own property will only be paid at the Mini Plan rate. RPFs developing full plans on their own property will be allowed to negotiate above the Mini Plan rate if negotiations are supported by cost estimates for paying employees who are working on plan development. CFIP Invoices for reimbursement must be supported by proof of payments to employees.

A California Cooperative Forest Management plan template can be obtained from the FAS.

Preparation of a Mini Management Plan by an RPF

The Mini Plan format is available for use for all authorized CFIP forest improvement projects for landowners:

1. Who own less than 50 acres of forest land contiguous with their project
2. For ownerships with less than 5,000 acres and projects addressing substantially damaged forest lands with conditions described in the Forest Practice Rules in 14 CCR 895.1. For substantially damaged land in need of immediate restoration, the plan would be for the project area only.

Costs of the Mini Plan are to be based on complexity of the plan and size of the ownership. Cost may be negotiated lower but not more than the maximum Mini Plan cap rate.

Cost share payment to a landowner who uses the Mini Plan to satisfy CFIP requirements is normally a one-time occurrence. If the Mini Plan is used on a property, and paid for with CFIP cost-share funding, any future updates or a conversion to a California Cooperative Forest Management Plan template will be negotiated with the FAS. In most cases, the allowable rate will be the current Forest Management Plan rate minus the previous Mini Plan cost. If the plan is older than 10 years, full cost share funding shall apply.

RPFs and landowners who elect to prepare a Mini Plan shall use the Mini Plan template. A template can be obtained from your FAS.

Upon recommendation from the Northern or Southern Resource Management Forestry and Fire Protection Administrator, the Mini Plan format may be used for projects/landowners who do not meet the criteria above. However, this is on a case by case basis and must be explained and justified as well as accompanied by a budget and approved by the Deputy Director of Resource Management. All other limitations of a mini plan will apply as per above.

Management Plan Addendums

The Department recognizes that some management plans or projects require additional funding for environmental review. When revisions to existing management plans or NTMPs are required, the Mini Plan rate shall be used, unless explained and justified by the RPF, and approved by the FAS. Examples of plan addendums may include archaeology surveys, biological surveys, geologic reports, etc. Plan addendums will only be allowed where ground practices are proposed and CEQA review determines that additional information is required. For archaeological surveys, they shall include a current < 5-year old records check, survey of

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the proposed project area, and complete confidential archaeological addendum (CAA). Cost share payment will be authorized once the CAL FIRE archaeologist approves the CAA.

RPF Supervision

Supervision of your project by an RPF is a requirement eligible for CFIP funding. Landowners who are new to forestry work or the CFIP program are particularly encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity to work with an experienced professional to ensure that their project is implemented efficiently and cost effectively. Due to workload and program demand, the local FAS is typically not available to provide supervision and a consulting RPF must be hired.

RPF supervision shall be calculated based on the total number of practice acres. Multiple practices on the same acreage only count once unless the practices take place in a separate time period (e.g., Mechanical release and Follow-up herbicide treatment). Projects with high RPF supervision costs will need to be negotiated with the FAS and will be subject to approval on a case by case basis. Additionally, any proposed combination must be explained and justified by the RPF in the project description.

Combinations of practices where RPF supervision calculations shall only account for practice acres once include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Hand thinning/release and pruning
- Release or site prep treatments and slash disposal using a masticator or other machinery where both the removal and slash piling or mastication/chipping occur simultaneously.
- Planting and seedling protection such as vexar tubing.

The higher RPF Supervision rate applies to the first twenty (20) acres of work. Work on the remaining acres is eligible for the lower rate. (See the Cost Share Cap rates page for details).

RPF Supervision is the on-the-ground over-sight and direction an RPF provides the sub-contractor who is working on a forest improvement practice.

Site Supervision is the on-the-ground oversight and direction provided by an RPF's designee in absence of the RPF when such supervision is approved by the FAS. Site supervision should be explained and justified in the Project Description.

NOTE TO RPFs: RPFs are not eligible for reimbursement for supervising work performed on their own property. However, if another RPF is hired to do the work of supervision then reimbursement for that cost (not to exceed actual cost or cap rate) may be allowable.

Reforestation

Site Preparation

Site preparation is the removal of vegetation competing or potentially competing with planted trees. The distinction must be made that site preparation is used when trees are to be planted, either manually or naturally, after clearing activities. Methods include using heavy machinery

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such as bulldozers, mastication, cutting and removing vegetation with chainsaws, scalping the soil with hand tools, and/or chemical treatments of the competing vegetation prior to planting.

- Light site preparation includes practices that exceed typical hand grubbing and scalping in a 12" diameter circle around a planting spot, which is included in the tree planting practice. The light rate applies to level areas with light slash and competing vegetation, such as scalping off grass in forest openings, applying pre-emergent herbicide, manually reducing slash and competing vegetation with a chainsaw and/or weed eater. The slash and competing vegetation is typically grubbed out of a 3' x 3' area to expose bare soil.
- Moderate site preparation includes reducing slash and competing vegetation on moderate slopes where the proposed practices exceed the light cap rates. Examples may include mastication of light vegetation, brush raking level to moderate slopes, or herbicide application where competing vegetation is already taller than the seedlings.
- Heavy rates are appropriate for sites where site preparation will be the most labor intensive, such as those with heavy slash, dense competing vegetation, and/or on steep slopes where the moderate site preparation rate is inadequate. Examples may include mastication of heavy slash and vegetation or manually reducing slash and competing vegetation on steep slopes. Slash is either grubbed out of a 3' x 3' area to expose bare soil or is shredded to an extent so that hand planting tools can easily clear a planting site.

Trees and Planting

This practice includes the purchase of tree seedlings or seeds, the costs of transporting and storage of seedlings, and the planting costs. The Department no longer requires landowners to plant a minimum number of trees based solely on site index. However, the number of trees per acre shall not exceed 300 on any site, except where explained and justified by the RPF. Interplanting requires less trees to be planted however it requires more time and effort on the part of planting crews to select appropriate site selection for individual trees. For this reason, interplanting projects will receive the same level of cost share as full planting sites. Each proposed project description shall provide approximate spacing, method of planting, number of trees per acre, planting standards, seed zone(s), species, and timing. Forestry Assistance Specialists will evaluate the proposed planting density against site specific conditions and will negotiate the cap rate for projects on an individual basis, not to exceed the heavy rate.

Slope, access and planting difficulty are the most appropriate metrics for evaluating the appropriate cost share level.

Access and planting difficulty factors are distance to site, road conditions, amount of slash, and amount of competing brush. Light includes good access to the unit by road and good site preparation. Moderate includes some challenging access or poor site preparation. Heavy includes both challenging access and poor site preparation. Hard or rocky soils can affect productivity of planting crews. If soils are identified as a limiting factor for productivity, the cost share level selected from the above matrix shall be increased to the next higher level, not to exceed the amount available in the heavy cost share category.

Use the following as a guide:

- For a slope \leq 30%:

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- with easy access and planting difficulty, use the Light rate
- with medium access and planting difficulty use the Light rate
- with hard access and planting difficulty use the Moderate rate
- For a slope 31-50%:
 - with easy access and planting difficulty, use the Light rate
 - with medium access and planting difficulty use the Moderate rate
 - with hard access and planting difficulty use the Heavy rate
- For a slope > 50%:
 - with easy access and planting difficulty, use the Moderate rate
 - with medium access and planting difficulty use the Heavy rate
 - with hard access and planting difficulty use the Heavy rate

§ 1545.7. Species Selection.

Commercial tree species shall be used for reforestation projects consisting of site preparation and planting practices except that up to 10% of the area may be planted with other species in the interest of maintaining species diversity and wildlife habitat. Non-commercial species may be used in projects consisting of forest land conservation measures and fish and wildlife habitat improvement practices.

Tree Shelters

The cost of VEXAR® or tree shelters needed to protect seedlings from browse damage.

Timber Stand Improvement (TSI) / Fuels Reduction

Pre-commercial thinning, release and pruning practices qualify for cost-share assistance. Note that Pre-commercial thinning and release treatments cannot be used together on the same acreage. Site prep is also normally a stand-alone practice that cannot be paired with release or pre-commercial thinning.

Pre-Commercial Thinning and Mechanical Release

Precommercial thinning means reducing the number of stems of small commercial tree species to a predetermined spacing to improve growth and/or to reduce fuel loads. Mechanical release involves removal of non-commercial tree species, shrubs/brush or grasses that are competing with previously planted or existing commercial tree species. Mechanical thinning and release typically cost the same with the only difference being the species targeted for removal and retention.

- Light thinning and release applies to areas with level to moderate slopes less than 35%, good access, and tree density of less than 500 TPA. The stands are typically young stands less than 30 years old with young, non-merchantable trees, and light competing vegetation. The thinning or release is typically carried out by a hand crew with chainsaws.
- Moderate thinning and release applies to areas that exceed some of the factors for light thinning and release due to financial and logistical factors. A typical stand may be located on slopes greater than 35% and have trees density of 300-500 TPA. Another example, a site meets the light thinning factors but has trees greater than 500 TPA.

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These operations are typically carried out by a hand crew with chainsaws but may be completed by masticators on favorable slopes.

- Heavy rates are appropriate for sites where slopes are greater than 35% and tree density is greater than 500 TPA or competing vegetation is very dense and tall. Heavy rates may also be appropriate on slopes less than 35% where trees are greater than 500 TPA and there is heavy competing vegetation. These operations are typically carried out by a hand crew with chainsaws on steep slopes and by masticators on favorable slopes.

Pruning

Pruning is the cutting of lower branches of trees to reduce vertical continuity of fuels and improve wood quality of future crop trees. Pruning may be funded in conjunction with thinning or release. Rates increase based on the minimum number of trees pruned per acre. Pruning all branches within ten feet of the ground, combined with thinning and the removal of flammable shrubs and ladder fuels, is also recommended to reduce the likelihood that a ground fire burning through the stand would move up into the trees. Pruning provides other benefits as well, including increased exposure to sunlight to aid regeneration, improved aesthetics, and greater resistance to insect and disease problems.

Follow-Up / Slash Disposal

Follow-up is work necessary to promote the survival of seed or seedlings or for protection to or enhancement of other completed practices (e.g. fuels reduction). Follow-up must be undertaken within 36 months of completion of the original practice. Follow-up covers three types of project categories:

The first pertains to any work performed within 36 months of a planting project to promote the survival of the seedlings. In most cases, insect, disease, rodent, weed, or brush control work will qualify for funding. Application of fertilizer or shade cards also falls in this category.

The second category is Follow-up work undertaken as a continuation of a prior project. This category typically includes work, such as controlling re-growth from Thinning or Release practices that occur within five years of the original project.

The third category is slash disposal. This category can include mastication, chipping, or piling and burning of slash generated from Site Preparation, Thinning, Release, or Pruning practices. Slash generated by commercial operations is not eligible, even if that slash was exempt from the need for further treatment.

Lopping and scattering of slash to a height less than 30 inches from the ground is the minimum requirement for slash disposal on CFIP projects. The cost of lopping and scattering slash are covered by the cap rates allowed for the CFIP practice that generated the slash and are not eligible for Follow-up funding.

On the Rate Sheet light rates apply to easier projects on level ground, or inexpensive practices such as re-scalping and chemical treatments. Heavy rates apply to more difficult projects on steeper slopes, and to more labor-intensive and/or expensive practices, such as chipping or use of a masticator. Follow-up practices vary and will be negotiated with the FAS.

Forestland Conservation Practices / Fish & Wildlife Habitat Improvement

Forestland conservation practices include erosion control projects, road repair, stabilization of abandoned roadbeds, and improvement of drainage facilities to reduce soil erosion and sedimentation of streams, as well as a variety of projects to improve habitat for fish or wildlife species.

Several kinds of erosion control projects may be eligible for cost-sharing. Many practices are directed toward the control of erosion from privately-owned rural roads. Road repair or closure projects funded by CFIP must provide a downstream benefit to a fish-bearing stream. A line-item budget must be submitted to document anticipated costs of conservation practices. The CFIP program does not establish cap rates for conservation practices, but uses the rates of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) as a guide.

Examples of eligible practices include:

- Erosion control projects
- Forest road repair and upgrading *
- Stabilization of abandoned roadbeds*
- Improvement of drainage facilities to reduce soil erosion and sedimentation of streams
- Planting native oaks
- Oak woodland restoration
- Building nest boxes or platforms
- Fencing to protect sensitive wildlife habitat such as wet meadow sites, riparian areas and streams from livestock
- Planting streamside vegetation **
- Planting or reshaping eroding stream banks or gullies **
- Installing logs, rocks or other structures in streams to improve fish habitat **
- Design and installation of fords, rolling dips, or culvert crossings.*
- Replacement or repair of failed or undersized culverts.*
- Correction of road drainage problems, including rocking, out sloping, berm removal, waterbar installation, and ditch repair.*
- Reshaping, vegetating and mulching of cut banks, fills, and gullies.*
- Abandonment of eroding roads or skid trails that are no longer used.*
- Remedial work for stabilizing landslides (requires analysis and design by a Certified Engineering Geologist or Geotechnical Engineer).*
- Development of a road assessment plan identifying: *
 - Sources of erosion, including stream crossings and damaged or undersized culverts
 - Recommended repair projects
 - Prioritizing of projects, based on a cost/benefit analysis that identifies both the costs and the estimated reduction of sediment.

* Note: Funding of forest road repair and upgrading is only allowed if it protects, maintains, or enhances fish and wildlife habitat.

** Note: Projects involving work on stream channels or banks may require permits from the California Department of Fish and Game or other agencies.

Practices Not Eligible for CFIP Cost-Sharing Programs

Minor road upgrading such as road rocking or installing rolling dips unless needed to protect an existing or replacement structure or where needed to prevent erosion to a watercourse. If there is no hydrologic connectivity, minor road upgrading will normally not be eligible.

- Work required for compliance with the Forest Practice Act and Rules.
- Construction of new roads or bridges.
- Fencing to protect stands from livestock.
- Planting of Christmas trees and greenery.
- Costs of land, water, irrigation, or purchase of tools or equipment.
- Projects designed solely for the production of fuelwood.
- Fees associated with permit requirements are not eligible for cost-sharing. All permits required to complete approved forestland conservation projects must be obtained by the Grantee independent of the CFIP agreement.

Instructions for Preparing the CFIP Project Description

A CFIP Project Description explains the forest improvement, fuels management, or conservation activity for which funding is requested. It should provide enough detail to allow the landowner, RPF, CAL FIRE inspector, and any forestry workers hired to implement the project to have a clear understanding of where, when and how the CFIP Project will be accomplished. The funding rate requested must be explained and justified in the Project Description. Failure to adequately describe the project could result in delays or denial of approval.

The CFIP applicant will propose work that can be completed within the contract period. Applicants with large properties or projects may enter into sequential contracts to complete additional work.

Due to contractual requirements, the following components are considered necessary for all project descriptions for CFIP.

1. Name of Grantee.
2. Name of Project Description author.
3. Location including:
 - a. Assessor parcel number(s)
 - b. latitude/longitude
 - c. CALWATER 2.2 watershed identifier. For the watershed identifier go the [CAL FIRE Watershed Mapper webpage](#) and follow the directions.
4. A description of the forest stand history.
5. A description of the current forest stand conditions.
6. Specific description to be carried out under CFIP. Each of the principal headings denoted below should have a separate statement addressing specific methods to be utilized and mitigation measures to be employed in accordance with CFIP Regulations and Environmental Checklist. ALL DESCRIPTIONS FOR PRACTICES WITH MULTIPLE (HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW) RATES MUST INCLUDE A JUSTIFICATION FOR THE RATE REQUESTED. Address CFIP Practices as follows:
 - a. Supervision by a Registered Professional Forester (RPF):
 - i. Fill out the RPF Checklist indicating the specific responsibilities the RPF accepts for each proposed practice.
 - b. Site Preparation
 - i. Method, target, procedures and standards. Also include clearance distances, degree of vegetation treatment/removal, equipment, erosion control, hazard reduction, locations, restrictions, and timing.
 - ii. Additional treatments such as disking/ripping along contours, broadcast burning, burning of piles/windrows.
 - iii. Mitigation measures.
 - c. Planting:
 - i. Approximate spacing, method of planting, number of trees per acre, planting standards, seed zone(s), species, and timing.
 - ii. Mitigation measures.
 - d. Tree Shelters:
 - i. Type, method of installation
 - e. Follow-up:

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- i. Type, purpose, method, standards, and timing.
 - ii. For follow-up slash treatment, explain and justify the size of material to be treated, the percent of area to be treated, and the final depth of treated material.
 - iii. Mitigation measures.
7. Release:
 - a. Objective, method, standards, and target. Also include disease prevention needs, equipment, numbers of trees prior/post treatment, pesticide prescription, slash treatment, spacing, timing, and treatment diameters.
 - b. Slash treatment (lopping/pile and burn), include fuel loading and treatment objectives, standards and timing.
 - c. Additional treatment(s) recommended.
 - d. Mitigation measures.
8. Pre-commercial Thinning:
 - a. Objective, method, and standards. Include diameter limit, disease prevention needs, spacing standards or basal area, slash treatment, timing and method.
 - b. Additional treatment(s) recommended.
 - c. Mitigation measures.
9. Pruning:
 - a. Objective and method.
 - b. Number of trees per acre to be prune
 - c. Height to which trees will be pruned (the minimum requirement is ten feet.)
10. Slash treatment.
 - a. Mitigation measures.
11. Land Conservation – Erosion Control or Habitat Improvement Project:
 - a. What improvements are intended and how they will be physically accomplished.
 - b. Each element of work must be broken down with an estimated cost based on the rates allowed under EQIP.
12. Map(s)
 - a. A property location map.
 - i. The property must be shown in relation to a local landmark. This map must be of sufficient quality to meet CEQA notification standards for agency review.
 - ii. Map must reference range, township, and section #s (or other identifying method, such as assessor parcel number, if the area has not been surveyed).
 - iii. Map will contain a north arrow.
 - b. A project map.
 - i. Map must reference range, township, and section #s (or other identifying method, such as assessor parcel number, if the area has not been surveyed).
 - ii. Map will contain a north arrow.
 - iii. Topographic map scale will be at least 4 inches = 1 mile.
13. Necessary Field Work:
 - a. Layout project in the field with flagging or marked by readily identifiable existing physical feature, such as roads.
 - b. Estimate the approximate net acreage of each practice and explain how the acreage was determined.

14. Pest Control Recommendation – If chemicals are going to be used for site preparation, follow-up or release or any other activity proposed in the application, include a statement that a CAL FIRE approved form (RM 30) completed by a licensed Pest Control Advisor will be submitted to the appropriate CAL FIRE Unit prior to commencement of any chemical application(s).

Appendix A - CFIP Advancement Agreement Guidelines

Eligible Practices

- RPF Supervision (must be associated with one or more of the on-the-ground practices identified below)
- Site Preparation
- Trees and Planting
- Tree Shelters
- Pre-commercial Thinning
- Pruning
- Release
- Follow-up/Slash Disposal
- Forest Land Conservation Measures: Includes erosion control and road rehabilitation
- Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat Improvement Projects

Proposition 68 Funds

CFIP Contracts utilizing Proposition 68 Funds, Advancement shall only be allowed where the project is located within and provides direct benefits to a disadvantaged community (DAC) or severely disadvantaged community (SDAC). For grants awarded for projects that serve a disadvantaged community, the administering entity may provide advance payments in the amount of 25 percent of the grant award to the recipient to initiate the project in a timely manner. The following two resources can be utilized for locating projects in disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged areas as defined by the bond:

- [Parks for California Community FactFinder](#)
- The Department of Water Resources also created a tool for Proposition 84 and Proposition 1 that uses the same definitions for DAC and SDAC. It can be found at the [DAC Mapping Tool webpage](#) .

Additional tools will be shared as they become available.

The CFIP Amendment Form

The CFIP Amendment Form shall be utilized to facilitate a request for an Advancement of an approved CFIP contract. The process by which a Participant requests an Advancement is as follows:

- New Agreement: New Agreements shall include the Advancement Agreement language/provisions within the approved CFIP contract. Therefore, the Participant requesting an advancement will only have to complete the CFIP Amendment Form and include the required CFIP Advancement Agreement Supporting Documentation that is identified below.
- Existing Approved Contracts: For CFIP contracts that have been approved and do not include the Advancement Agreement language/provisions the Participant shall include the Advancement Agreement language/provisions within the CFIP Amendment. As with “New Agreements”, the Participant shall include the required CFIP Advancement Agreement Supporting Documentation that is identified below.

For an Advancement request, the Participant shall check the Item #2(E) “box” on the CFIP Amendment Form and include the required CFIP Advancement Agreement Supporting Documentation.

If the Advancement request is found to be incomplete in a material way or the proposed request is not eligible, the Participant/Grantee will be informed that the request is ineligible. Only when an Advancement request application package is complete will the Forestry Assistant Specialist (FAS) recommend approval and submit to the Stewardship Forester/Grants Management Unit for final approval.

CFIP Advancement Agreement Supporting Documentation

The following supporting documentation is required to be included within the participants request for an advance:

1. CFIP Project Budget (RM-6): Identify the requested advance amount for each proposed practice. The advance amount must correspond to the acreage/rate that is identified within the CFIP Advance Project Description and the acreage/rate that is identified within the approved CFIP contract.
2. CFIP Advance Invoice: A CFIP Advance Invoice must be completed by the participant. The advance invoice must correspond to the RM-6, the advance project description, and the acreage/rate that is identified within the approved CFIP contract.
3. CFIP Advance Description: The participant shall complete a project description identifying how the funds shall be utilized over the six-month period. The project description must correspond to what is identified within the approved RM-6 along with what is identified within the approved CFIP Agreement/Application Project Description. To ensure enforceability of the Advancement Agreement, the project description shall provide detailed information regarding how the treatments associated with the advance

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request shall be accomplished. Information contained within the project description is not limited to, but shall contain the following items:

- a. In-order for the Grant Manager/FAS to effectively monitor the advancement requirements, specifically the time constraints, the project description shall state that the Grantee/Participant or RPF of record shall notify the Grant Manager/FAS of the commencement of operations.
 - b. Identify the treatment along with the acres and cost per acre. Treatment area shall be clearly shown on the Advancement Treatment Area Map.
 - c. For each treatment associated with the Advancement, detailed information shall be included regarding how the treatments associated with the advance request shall be accomplished. Information shall include, but is not limited to:
 - i. Specific method of slash disposal;
 - ii. Tree spacing and trees per acre targets for both planting or pre-commercial thinning treatments;
 - iii. Timing of planting associated with reforestation projects. In addition, approximates species mix and statement that seedlings shall be sources from the appropriate seed zone.
 - iv. Herbicides to be applied along with timing of herbicide application.
4. Map of Advancement Treatment Area: On titled USGS (if available) or equivalent topographic maps of a scale not less than 2" to the mile, the advance treatment area shall be clearly shown. A legend shall be included indicating the meaning of the symbols used, the scale, location (Township/Range/Section), and North arrow.
 5. Approval Letter for CFIP FMP: The participant shall include a copy of the approved CAL FIRE CFIP Management Plan Certification Page.
 6. Approval Letter for Environmental Clearance: The participant shall include a copy of the approved CAL FIRE FAS environmental clearance letter.
 7. Archaeological Clearance Letter: The participant shall include a copy of the approved CAL FIRE archaeological clearance letter from the archaeologist.
 8. CFIP Pest Control Recommendation: If herbicide application is associated with the advance, the participant shall include the completed CFIP Pest Control Recommendation Form.
 9. Completed Land Use Addendum: The participant shall include the completed Land Use Addendum.
 10. Contractor Verification: The participant shall include verification that a contractor has been secured to complete the treatments associated with the advance within the six-month time-period.
 11. RPF Verification: The participant shall include verification that an RPF of record has been secured to provide RPF supervision.

Advance Payment Request Modification

Pursuant to Item “f” and Item “h” of the Advancement Agreement the participant may request an Advance Payment Request modification. **Approval of the Advance Payment Request modification is at the discretion of the Forestry Assistant Specialist and subject to STATE approval.** The CFIP Amendment Form shall be utilized to facilitate this modification request.

The notice of an advancement extension shall be provided to the Department not sooner than 30 days, but at least 10 days, prior to the expiration date of the Advancement Agreement. The notice shall include the circumstances that prevented a timely completion of the Advancement Agreement. A request to extend the Advancement Agreement expiration date shall not be granted if operations associated with the Advancement Agreement have not commenced. A CFIP Inspection Report shall be included within the request to verify that advancement operations have commenced. Additionally, an advancement extension shall not be granted to a request for an additional six-months.

Advancement Budget Adjustment

It is acceptable to request an adjustment to the Advancement Budget. Two acceptable Advancement Budget Adjustments are as follows:

- Substantially Damaging Event: If the area is substantially damaged by an event such as a fire, the Advance Budget can be adjusted to reflect the event. In this scenario, all Advancement supporting documentation would also have to be updated to reflect the event. In addition, an amendment would also have to be completed for the approved CFIP contract. The expiration date of the Advancement would remain the same unless the amendment also requested an extension.
- Under Budget: In the event that a proposed treatment(s) associated with the Advancement has been completed to the advancement project description specifications and the completed treatment(s) came under budget then the remaining funds associated with the treatment(s) can be reallocated to liquidate the advancement. In this instance, the participant would be allowed to reallocate the funds to an approved treatment (including the cost per acre) identified within the approved CFIP Contract rather than returning the funds in-order to obtain another advancement (entire advancement must be liquidated or returned before an additional advancement can be requested or additional invoices submitted that are not associated with an advancement). In this scenario, not only would the advancement project description/budget need to be revised, but also an amendment would have to be completed for the approved CFIP contract. The expiration date of the Advancement would remain the same unless the amendment also requested an extension.

Advancement Budget Adjustments shall not be allowed for a decrease in the treatment acreage when the advancement amount associated with the treatment is unchanged. An increase in the Advancement shall not be allowed. An Advancement Budget Adjustment is at the discretion of the Forestry Assistant Specialist and subject to STATE approval.

Advancement Expiration Extension Request

The Participant may only request an extension of the Advancement expiration date if operations associated with the Advancement Agreement have commenced or the acreage associated with the Advancement Agreement has been substantially damaged by an event such as a fire. Acceptable extension requests are as follows:

- The Forestry Assistant Specialist (FAS) is unable to inspect/approve the final Advancement Agreement invoice due to an assignment associated with a State emergency or the FAS is not unavailable to inspect the final invoice in a timely manner.
- The acreage associated with the Advancement Agreement has been substantially damaged by fire and the scope of the project has significantly changed.
- Verification from the nursery that delivery of the seedlings was delayed.

An Advancement expiration extension request shall not be granted for pile burning. An Advancement expiration extension request is at the discretion of the Forestry Assistant Specialist and subject to STATE approval.

CFIP Advancement Invoicing

The Participant/Grantee shall complete a *CFIP Completion Report Form* that identifies the acreage that has been completed along with the total actual cost. Supporting documentation shall include proof of payment of all costs including State and landowner cost share through submittal of cancelled checks, contractor invoices reflecting "\$0" balance (must be signed by the contractor), or other proof of payment. A contractor invoice alone is not sufficient proof of payment. A map shall be included within the supporting documentation identifying the completed area associated with the completion report (map shall comply with the mapping requirements identified within "*CFIP Advancement Agreement Supporting Documentation*").

The Participant/Grantee shall submit the completed *CFIP Completion Report Form* package to the FAS. The FAS shall verify that the Report is complete and accurate per the Advancement Agreement. If the Report is accurate/complete the FAS will complete an invoice for the Participant/Grantee to sign. The FAS will then submit the invoice to the Stewardship Forester for approval.

Pursuant to Item "c" of the Advancement Agreement, all work under a previous advance payment must be fully liquidated via an invoice (including supporting documentation) which fully documents expenses and landowner cost share amount, completed to the STATE's satisfaction before further invoices can be paid or another advance payment requested.

Returning of Unspent Advancement Funds

Pursuant to Item "f" of the Advancement Agreement, the advance payment shall be spent on eligible costs within six months of advance payment receipt. Pursuant to Item "h" of the Advancement Agreement, any advance payment received by a participant and not used for project eligible costs shall be returned to CAL FIRE within 30 days of expiration of the contract date. The Participant/Grantee shall utilize the CFIP Return of Unspent Advancement Funds

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Form to document Advancement Funds being returned to the approved contract. Supporting documentation to be attached to the form shall include:

- Copy of the approved invoice utilized for granting the advancement.
- Copy of the approved final invoice along with all other approved invoices if applicable.
- If operations associated with the Advancement did not commence, a letter shall be included identifying the circumstances that prevented commencement of operations. This justification letter shall be utilized to determine if not only future Advancements shall be allowed, but also, the termination of the CFIP Agreement.
- Check payable to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

The Participant/Grantee shall submit the package to the FAS. The FAS will ensure all information is accurate and complete and then submit the package to the Stewardship Forester/Grants Management Unit for approval and processing. As a note, no reimbursements for an invoice shall be approved until the Advancement is liquidated, either through approved invoices or the returning of unspent advancement funds.

Loss of Funding

The following are examples of actions that may result in a Grantee's/Participants loss of funding:

- Grantee/Participant withdraws from the Program (withdraw/terminates contract).
- Grantee/Participant fails to complete the funded project scope of work.
- Grantee/Participant fails to submit all documentation within the time periods specified in the Agreement.
- Grantee/Participant fails to comply with all CEQA requirements.
- Grantee/Participant fails to comply with all Archaeological requirements.
- Grantee/Participant changes the project scope or budget without concurrence of the State.
- Grantee/Participant fails to comply with the terms of the Agreement unless such failure was due to no fault of the grantee, hereunder discretion of the State.

Appendix B - CFIP 2019-2020 Proposition 68 Additional Grant Guidelines

Introduction

This appendix includes information for the use of funds provided by Proposition 68 (Prop 68), the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018 as administered by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). CAL FIRE expects to award at least \$8.2 million of Prop 68 funding for the California Forest Improvement Program (CFIP) in fiscal year 2019-2020.

This appendix is intended to serve as additional information that is specific to the Prop 68 fund. Several elements of the grants process are specifically not included in this appendix because they are included in the preceding CFIP User's Guide. The User's Guide establishes the process and general requirements and criteria that will be used to solicit applications, evaluate applications, and award grants of Proposition 68 funds through CAL FIRE's California Forest Improvement Program. Please refer to the body of the User's Guide for any specific information regarding eligibility, project selection, invoicing and other program requirements.

14 CCR § 1525 California Forest Improvement Act of 1978 PRC sections 4790 - 4799.05

CAL FIRE's California Forest Improvement Program provides an important resource to nonindustrial forestland owners. California's forests are facing serious challenges due to climate change and the increased severity of pest and wildfire events. The CFIP is a successful, existing Program for the Department that provides financial and technical assistance to nonindustrial landowners throughout the State. It is important for the Program to maximize benefits to the public, run efficiently, and make effective and quantifiable progress to improve the management and health of nonindustrial forestland.

The purpose of CFIP is to encourage private and public investment in, and improved management of, California forest lands and resources. This focus is to ensure adequate high quality timber supplies, related employment and other economic benefits, and the protection, maintenance, and enhancement of a productive and stable forest resource system for the benefit of present and future generations.

The program scope includes the improvement of all forest resources including fish and wildlife habitat, and soil and water quality. Cost-share assistance is provided to private and public ownerships containing 20 to 5,000 acres of forest land.

The following provisions are applicable to this funding opportunity

DIVISION 45. California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018 CHAPTER 1. General Provisions

80001

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(b) It is the intent of the people of California that all of the following shall occur in the implementation of this division:

(1) The investment of public funds pursuant to this division will result in public benefits that address the most critical statewide needs and priorities for public funding.

(2) In the appropriation and expenditure of funding authorized by this division, priority will be given to projects that leverage private, federal, or local funding or produce the greatest public benefit.

(3) To the extent practicable, a project that receives moneys pursuant to this division will include signage informing the public that the project received funds from the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018.

(4) To the extent practicable, when developing program guidelines for urban recreation projects and habitat protection or restoration projects, administering entities are encouraged to give favorable consideration to projects that provide urban recreation and protect or restore natural resources.

(5) To the extent practicable, a project that receives moneys pursuant to this division will provide workforce education and training, contractor, and job opportunities for disadvantaged communities.

In accordance with Public Resources Code section 80010(b), the Department will post draft guidelines on its website for 30 days and hold at least three public meetings to consider comments prior to finalizing the guidelines. The California Natural Resources Agency will post the final guidelines on the bond accountability website.

80016.

To the extent feasible, a project whose application includes the use of services of the California Conservation Corps or certified community conservation corps, as defined in Section 14507.5, shall be given preference for receipt of a grant under this division.

80020.

Moneys allocated pursuant to this division shall not be used to fulfill any mitigation requirements imposed by law.

Disadvantaged and Severely Disadvantaged Communities

The statute requires that at least 15% of the funds available shall be allocated for projects serving severely disadvantaged communities.

The bond statute defines disadvantaged communities (DAC) and severely disadvantaged communities (SDAC) as follows:

“Disadvantaged community” means a community with a median household income less than 80 percent of the statewide average.

“Severely disadvantaged community” means a community with a median household income less than 60 percent of the statewide average.

The statute requires that at least 15 percent of the funds available pursuant to each chapter shall be allocated for projects serving severely disadvantaged communities.

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For locating DAC and SDAC areas, please use the following mapping tool:

[Parks for California Community FactFinder](#)

Funding Priorities

Projects funded under the CFIP program must result in ecological forest restoration and forest management practices that promote forest resilience to severe wildfire, climate change, and other disturbances.

Projects under CFIP are only eligible if they include one or more of the following activities:

- Preparation of a Forest Management Plan by a Registered Professional Forester (RPF)
- RPF Supervision of the following:
 - Reforestation
 - Site Preparation
 - Trees and Planting
 - Tree Shelters
 - Stand Improvement
 - Pre-commercial Thinning or Release
 - Pruning
 - Follow-up (includes mechanical, herbicide and/or slash disposal follow-up)
- Forestland conservation practices / fish and wildlife habitat improvement

Please see the CFIP User's Guide for a complete listing of eligible and ineligible activities.

Project Ranking

Projects will be funded based on the score achieved through the priority ranking process as established in CFIP regulation.

14 CCR § 1533. Ranking and Approval of Filed Applications

The Director shall periodically rank all filed applications for cost sharing agreements according to the following priority rating table. The Director may then approve filed applications in order of priority, giving consideration to administrative constraints such as seasonal variations in applications and the availability of funds that might apply to different types of projects. The Director may give preference to proposed projects which consist only of forest land conservation practices and fish and wildlife habitat improvement practices to the extent necessary to comply with PRC 4794(c).

This CFIP Ranking form (below) and associated questions are established to meet the requirements of both the California Forest Improvement Program and for the specific requirements under the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68). Specifically, items 14 and 15 are

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designated to add higher scores to those projects that meet those required elements under Prop 68. In evaluating projects, scores from the priority ranking process are used to determine initial rankings. To achieve equitable distribution of funds, the State may consider other factors including, but not limited to, geographic distribution of existing projects, previous project performance, disadvantaged community status and percentage of the project that is devoted to direct improvements to forest resources.

CFIP Ranking Form

Introduction

Authority for this ranking form comes from:

14 CCR § 1533. Ranking and Approval of Filed Applications

The Director shall periodically rank all filed applications for cost sharing agreements according to the following priority rating table. The Director may then approve filed applications in order of priority, giving consideration to administrative constraints such as seasonal variations in applications and the availability of funds that might apply to different types of projects. The Director may give preference to proposed projects which consist only of forest land conservation practices and fish and wildlife habitat improvement practices to the extent necessary to comply with Public Resources Code 4794(c).

Project Information

Date Application Received:

CFIP #:

Date Application Filed:

Consulting Registered Professional Forester (RPF):

Maximum Contract Cost:

Instructions

Each project will be ranked considering the 16 factors below. This priority ranking will be used for granting project contracts on a quarterly basis where program funding will be allocated into discrete amounts and only the highest-ranking projects will be funded until the program funding allocation is reached. Applications that are not funded in their first opportunity will be forwarded for consideration in the proceeding funding window. If an application is not funded in its second attempt, the application will be returned to the landowner for revision.

1. Site Productivity. Timber site classification will be determined in the management plan according to 14 CCR 1060. Rating shall reflect a weighted average of all sites on the project area.
 - Site I – 10 points
 - Site II – 8 points
 - Site III – 6 points
 - Site IV – 4 points
 - Site V – 1 point
2. Proposed project cost as a percentage of maximum prevailing cost of project.
 - Less than 50% – 5 points
 - 51-60% – 4 points
 - 61-70% – 3 points
 - 71-80% – 2 points
 - 81-90% – 1 point

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3. Management plan as percentage of total project cost.
 - 10% or less – 5 points
 - 11-20% – 3 points
 - 21% or greater – 1 point
4. Zoning of Project Area.
 - Timberland Production Zone – 5 points
 - Open Space General (20 acre minimum) – 3 points
 - Other – 1 point
5. Project area timberland substantially damaged by fire, insects, disease or other natural causes within 36 months. As per 14 CCR 895.1, “substantially damaged timberlands” means areas of timberland where wildfire, insects, disease, wind, flood, or other blight caused by an act of God occurs after January 1, 1976 and the damage reduced stocking below the requirements of PRC 4561 or other higher minimum stocking requirements that may be applicable under Articles 3 and 11 of Subchapter 4, Article 3 of Subchapter 5, and Articles 3 and 11 of Subchapter 6.
 - Yes – 5 points
 - No – 0 points
6. Percent of the cost that will be devoted to forest land conservation practices or fish and wildlife habitat improvement practices.
 - 10% or more – 5 points
 - 5-10% – 3 points
 - 1-5% – 1 point
7. The landowner owns less than 500 acres (202.350 ha) of forest land in California.
 - Yes – 5 points
 - No – 0 points
8. The landowner agrees to offer recreational opportunities for the public.
 - Yes – 1 point
 - No – 0 points
9. A small business will carry out the project. As per PRC 4793(q), a “small business entity” means a business enterprise, including a landowner, with five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) or less annual gross revenue.
 - Yes – 1 point
 - No – 0 points
10. The project involves follow-up work that is necessary to protect investments of a previous project.
 - Yes – 1 point
 - No – 0 points
11. The project is located in a county of high unemployment. As per PRC 4793(a), “a county with high unemployment” means a county with an annual unemployment rate, as reported by the Employment Development Department, higher than the mean annual unemployment rate of “rate adjustment counties” as defined pursuant to the Timber Yield Tax Law (Part 18.5 (commencing with Section 38101) of Division 2 of the Revenue and Taxation Code). “Rate adjustment county” means the following counties: Alpine, Del Norte, El Dorado, Glenn, Humboldt, Lassen, Mendocino, Modoc, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Tehama, Trinity, and Yuba. 2018 annual unemployment rate for rate adjustment counties equals 5.25%.
 - Yes – 3 points

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- No – 0 points
12. The project offers relatively more employment opportunities. A project shall offer relatively more employment opportunities if the product of the number of man-hours per dollar of project cost and the proportion of the project devoted to wages and salaries is greater than the average of the same product for all projects being considered at the same time. Man-hours and reimbursements relative to RPF services shall be excluded from the calculation.
- Yes – 1 point
 - No – 0 points
13. The project will be carried out by persons living in the county or in a county adjacent to the county where the project will take place.
- Yes – 1 point
 - No – 0 points
14. The project is adjacent to or within an existing/planned community wildfire protection plan or project or within a CAL FIRE Unit forest management project and clearly demonstrates that it would provide co-benefits to the larger community or watershed beyond the project footprint. Applicants must provide evidence to support claiming this element.
- Yes – 5 points
 - No – 0 points
15. The project is located in a severely disadvantaged community. The statute requires that at least 15 percent of the funds available pursuant to each chapter shall be allocated for projects serving severely disadvantaged communities. For locating projects, the ABCRS maps have been updated to include the SDAC layer. The mapping layers are the same used in the tool: Community FactFinder, which is a good resource for locating projects in disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged areas as defined by the bond. [Parks For California Community FactFinder](#)
- Yes – 10 points
 - No – 0 points
16. The project is located in a county that has had historically lower CFIP project participation in the past calendar year. Evaluation of this scoring element will be made by the CFIP program coordinator and will be based on review of recent contract locations by county in order to achieve geographic balance with the moneys allocated to CFIP contracts. Projects will be scored based on the number of existing contracts in the county where the project is located.
- Project county has 0-1 existing contracts – 8 points
 - Project county has 2-5 existing contracts – 4 points
 - Project county has over 6 existing contracts – 0 points

Advance Payments

For grants awarded for projects that serve a disadvantaged community, the administering entity may provide advanced payments in the amount of 25 percent of the grant award to the recipient to initiate the project in a timely manner. CAL Fire has adopted advance payment policies for use with CFIP projects, however the provisions contained in Prop 68 shall supersede any CAL FIRE policy on advance payments. Please see Appendix A for Advance Payment information.