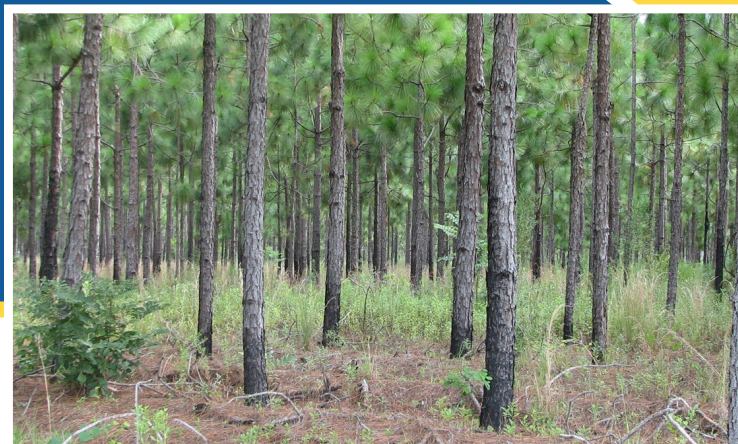


FORESTRY NOTES SPECIAL REPORT



National Association of
Conservation Districts

LRP has had significant impact since launch of program



The Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership (LRP) aims to reduce wildfire threats to communities and landowners, protect water quality and supply, and improve wildlife habitat for at-risk species. LRP is managed by the U.S. Forest Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and represents the spirit behind the "OneUSDA" concept. By leveraging the technical and financial resources of both agencies, as well as a diverse group of partners, this coordinated effort is helping to restore lands at a meaningful scale across land ownerships.

Since the inception of LRP in 2014, there have been 56 projects spanning across 38 states and Puerto Rico. Each project has a three-year life span enabling national forests to work with their partners on longer scale high-priority projects. This multi-year partnership between the Forest Service and NRCS

is the only landscape-level initiative that directly funds the achievement of meaningful outcomes by improving the health and resiliency of forest ecosystems where public and private lands meet across the nation.

In the spirit of recognizing that all lands must be treated to help return the landscape to a more natural condition, LRP provides incentives for private landowners who often lack resources to accomplish restoration work, thus increasing healthy ecosystems on the landscape and reducing wildfire risk. More than 2,000 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contracts have been approved to support private landowners with implementing conservation activities on more than 200,000 acres. Along with providing landowners assistance, projects have supported nearly 460 jobs for small business and non-profit groups.

The Forest Service and NRCS have invested \$207 million in these projects, which focus

on areas where public forests and grasslands intersect with privately-owned lands. Federal, state and local partners have contributed \$32 million in financial and in-kind contributions toward LRP project implementation. Working together with all stakeholders is key to the successful outcome of LRP.

LRP activities on national forests and private lands highlight the important work being done across the nation. Some of these accomplishments include over 300,000 acres of National Forest System lands treated for hazardous fuels, over 29,000 acres of watershed restored, over 200,000 acres of wildlife habitat improved, and 724 miles of streams treated to improve aquatic habitat.

Beginning its sixth year, LRP will continue to collaborate with local communities to reduce wildfire risk, protect clean water, and enhance wildlife habitat across public and private lands.

Districts have proven a strong LRP partner across country



**Steve
Hedstrom**

Since its inception, the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership (LRP) has experienced success in all areas of the country. LRP brings partners together from federal, state and local levels and throughout the conservation community for the greater good of our forests.

In my home state of Montana, the state endures the far-reaching effects of wildfires. LRP is helping western lands manage the impacts of fire and enhance our waters and wildlife habitat. It's a program conservation districts can be proud to support. Of the 56 projects funded by the Forest Service and NRCS since LRP was launched, 20 include a conservation district among the active partners.

The collection of stories contained in this special report highlight those contributions. Conservation districts are helping these LRP projects be successful in a variety of ways. It's proof of our versatility and our commitment to protecting and enhancing our nation's forestlands.

I'm excited to see what the next five years has in store for the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership. I'm confident conservation districts will continue to play a role in states across the country.

Steve Hedstrom
Chair, NACD Forestry Resource Policy Group (RPG)



Conservation districts play a role in 20 of the 56 Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership projects that have been funded during the program's first five years. Here are a few examples of the many ways conservation districts are contributing to these projects.

(to read full stories about these projects visit <http://www.nacdnet.org/category/forestry>)

Trinity County RCD works toward wildfire protection, resource restoration

Three years after intense, widespread wildfires ravaged the area, Trinity County Resource Conservation District (RCD) began working with local and state partners to restore and protect habitat while repairing communities in California.

With assistance from Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership funding, the Trinity County Community Protection Project is using burn practices and other programs to continue building on decades-old work with the support of the Trinity County Collaborative Group.

"It's allowed us to implement more projects than what we otherwise would have done," Kelly Sheen, district manager for Trinity County Resource RCD, said. "Because of our role with the partners, it's making a difference."

The project aims to restore lands across property boundaries by taking a broad landscape approach regardless of ownership, reducing wildfire threats and enhancing habitat for at-risk species like the Coho salmon.

Oregon SWCD funding provides major boost for all-lands project

Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District contributed \$32,000 annually for three years of a Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership that was a catalyst in the ability to implement a multi-million dollar, all-lands approach to forest restoration and fuel reduction treatment in and around the Ashland Creek Watershed in Jackson County. The county consistently experiences one of the highest occurrences of wildfire in Oregon and has suffered devastating losses to quality of life, property, natural resources and community infrastructure.

More than 8,000 acres of landscape-scale fuels reduction has been completed and more than 50 jobs have directly resulted from the partnership.

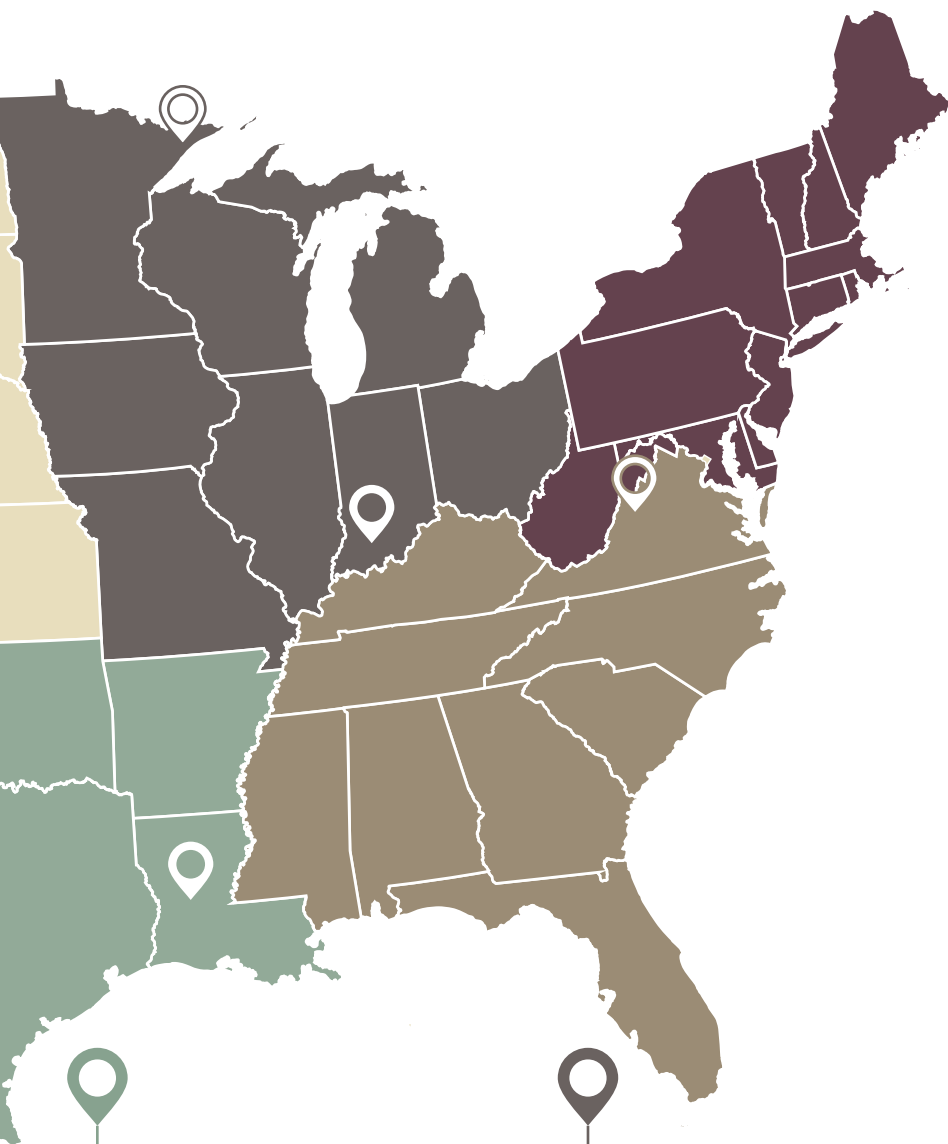
"Public and community buy-in has been key," NRCS District Conservationist Erin Kurtz said. "The partnerships and collaboration are critical in accomplishing this important work, and we'd like to replicate the model in other areas."

Wyoming collaborative effort is increasing forest health

Sublette County Conservation District is reducing wildfire risk, restoring forest species, improving wildlife habitat in the Bridger-Teton National Forest, and protecting drinking water through funding from the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership (LRP).

The LRP funding is one of several grants the district is chasing to implement on-the-ground projects. The Sublette County Forest Collaborative: Working Together for Forest Health (Bridger-Teton National Forest) includes a Skyline wildland urban interface project and the Monument Ridge project, targeted this first year by the Forest Service.

"The Joint Chiefs' Partnership is just a small piece of the pie to get projects on the ground," Michael Henn, district manager for Sublette County Conservation District, said.



Virginia districts implement practices to restore wildlife habitat

Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is partnering with other agencies and implementing practices that are restoring wildlife habitat and improving water quality.

The effort is a large piece of the Lower Cowpasture Restoration Project, a Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership (LRP) project for George Washington and Jefferson National Forests. The project includes integrating treatments across federal, state and private lands in a priority watershed with the goal of restoring forests and rare plants, decreasing wildfire, improving wildlife habitat and water quality.

"A lot of the projects that have been initiated are still in the works," Chris Swecker, conservation specialist for Mountain SWCD, said. "There are erosion and water quality issues we are addressing with rotational grazing, watering troughs and cover crops."

Cattle and prescribed burns are restoring Louisiana longleaf ecosystem

Louisiana soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) are using a multi-practice approach and funding from the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership to restore longleaf pine and its diverse ecosystem on non-industrial private forestlands that are located within the historic range.

"The soil and water conservation districts that operate within Louisiana's historic longleaf pine range are the grassroots funding vessels for NRCS programs," Corby Moore, the district conservationist with Calcasieu SWCD, said.

The Louisiana Longleaf Pine Partnership aims to collaboratively increase restoration of longleaf pine and other native ecosystems within a six-parish area anchored by Fort Polk and the Kisatchie National Forest. According to NRCS forester Rick Williams, project involvement has jumped 20 to 25 percent through the partnership efforts and district outreach.

District cost-share assistance helps complete Minnesota restoration projects

Lake and Cook County Soil and Water Conservation Districts combined boots-on-the-ground efforts with cost-sharing to ensure conservation projects designed to help restore the North Shore Forest as part of a Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership.

"Forestry assistance for private landowners has been more difficult for people in this area to gain access to," Sarah Poznanovic of the U.S. Forest Service in Superior National Forest, Tofte Ranger District, said.

The Lake Superior North Shore Coastal Forest Restoration Project worked to expand restoration efforts of the North Shore Forest Collaborative to protect the water quality of Lake Superior, provide critical wildlife habitat and develop a resilient ecosystem for the future. That included tree planting projects and cages used to deter herbivore browse, and restoration of long-lived conifers that promote forest resilience, habitat and a healthy watershed.

Indiana erases boundaries in forest management practices

The Hoosier Hills and Highlands Oak Community Restoration Partnership project runs across 18 counties of the most heavily forested and diverse forest systems in the Central Hardwoods Region.

"This partnership helps ensure a more successful oak forest by using management activities that cover a wider area," Judi Brown, executive director of DuBois County Soil and Water Conservation District, said. "Properly managing for oak regeneration, coupled with aggressive invasive species management, is a recipe for large areas of healthy forests across south central Indiana."

The project area of the Central Hardwoods Region provides habitat for declining wildlife species such as bats, birds and other cave-dwelling species, and also contains watersheds that provide drinking water to several communities.



Launched in 2014 by the U.S. Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership (LRP) program has funded 56 projects to date.



The agencies estimate that 2018 LRP projects will total an additional \$12 million through financial and in-kind contributions made by partners over the three-year project cycle.



LRP has impacted 38 states, and this year a project was approved for Puerto Rico.



In 2018, the Forest Service and NRCS contributed \$2.9 million to fund seven new LRP projects, and \$29 million to fund 21 existing LRP projects.



LRP projects have supported more than 450 jobs for small business and non-profit groups.

Additional Materials Related To LRP



Submit proposals now for FY2019 Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership

The U.S. Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) are accepting submissions for fiscal year 2019 Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership projects. The deadline is October 19. Interested parties can visit the website for submission guidelines.

www.fs.fed.us/inside-fs/oneusda-approach-collaboration-joint-chiefs-landscape-restoration-partnership



The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has a web page dedicated to the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership (LRP). The section includes projects descriptions and funding contributions broken down by year and state.

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/> (search 'Joint Chiefs')



The national Joint Forestry Team (JFT) makes recommendations that result in coordinated interagency delivery of forestry and conservation assistance for working forests, farms and ranches. NACD is one of four partners along with the Forest Service, NRCS and the National Association of State Foresters (NASF).

www.jointforestryteam.org

