

Frequently Asked Questions
Eastern Region State and Private Forestry
Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Invasive Species Programs (Non-federal lands)

10 November 2022 (V. 1)

1. What activities are prohibited for forest pest management funds (including BIL Invasive Species Non-Federal Lands program funds)?

According to the Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 6509.11g – Service-wide Appropriation Use Handbook, Chapter 20 - State and Private Forestry (22.3 – Prohibited Uses of Forest Health Management Funds):

Tree felling and removal. Do not use funds to pay for felling and removing dead or dying trees unless it is determined necessary to prevent the spread of a major insect infestation or disease epidemic severely affecting trees.

Compensation for property damage. Do not use funds to compensate for the value of property injured, damaged, or destroyed by any cause.

Nuisance Insects. Do not use funds to finance the suppression of insects that are primarily a nuisance to people and do not damage trees, forests, wood products, stored wood, or wood-in-use. Nuisance insects include pests such as: flies, mosquitoes, gnats, yellow jackets, and black flies.

Rangeland Insects and Diseases. Do not use funds to finance the prevention or suppression of insects or diseases affecting rangeland plants.

Research. Do not use funds to conduct research.

Road Construction or Maintenance. Do not use funds to construct or maintain roads included or to be included in the transportation system.

Routine Maintenance Activities. Do not use funds to finance recurring maintenance measures such as regular applications of pesticides to prevent insect or disease attacks, as in seed orchards and nurseries.

Timber Stand Improvement. Do not finance timber stand improvement work with funds when the primary management objective is to increase the growth and quality of timber, even though such work may accomplish varying degrees of insect and disease prevention as a result of such work.

Pesticide Storage Facilities. Do not construct or maintain pesticide storage buildings with funds. Use Facility Capital Improvement and Maintenance (CMFC) funds instead.

2. What is basic research?

Basic research is systematic study directed toward greater knowledge or understanding of the fundamental aspects of phenomena and of observable facts without specific applications towards processes or products in mind. State and Private Forestry Forest Health Protection funds cannot be used to conduct basic research, so these types of projects are not eligible for the BIL Invasive Species Non-Federal Lands program. See also FAQ about activities prohibited for forest health management funds.

3. Is applied research or methods development allowed?

Yes. According to the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978, “Development of applied technology and pilot tests of research results prior to the full-scale application of such technology in affected forests” is allowed.

4. How many years can the capacity grants and high-priority projects be implemented?

Up to five years from the date of execution of the grant.

5. Is a matching contribution from the cooperator required? If so, what is the matching requirement?

The standard FHP 1:1 match applies for BIL Invasive Species projects on Non-Federal lands but may be waived upon request. See the Grants.gov “related documents tab” for the BIL match waiver request form.

6. Will there be a call for applications for projects again in each of FY24, FY25 and FY26?

Yes.

State Capacity Program

7. Can capacity grants be bundled together if applied for all 5 years?

Yes

8. Can equipment be purchased?

Equipment is eligible for funding. Any equipment over \$5,000 purchased with any level of Federal funds is subject to significant tracking and reporting requirements that may extend well beyond the life of the grant. If the project is funded all entities must complete a Grant Equipment Justification and Certification Statement which is approved by the Forest Service program monitor. This is not required as part of the application package but would be required if funded.

Tracking requirements depend on whether the partner is a State or non-profit entity:

- States may follow State tracking and disposal procedures.
- Non-profit equipment purchases encounter a complex set of procedures, including tracking requirements, reporting, and maintenance plans.

High-Priority Regional Projects Program

9. How can groups from multiple States apply for one BIL High-Priority Regional Project grant?

Groups or organizations that would like to submit a multistate application should coordinate to:

- Decide if all the funds would go to one organization or agency to implement the project (that grantee can then administer the project and can also subgrant funding to the other organizations/agencies). Federal funds can also go directly to multiple agencies and/or organizations, as indicated in the budget spreadsheet and outlined in the project components (the approach used can be specified on the application form).
- Decide which organization or agency will be the lead to submit the application in grants.gov.

Also refer to the additional questions and answers for multistate projects below.

10. For a multistate project, should one application be submitted?

Applications for multistate projects should be prepared, written, and submitted as a single application although federal funds can go directly to multiple agencies and/or organizations (see above).

11. How do we specify the budget for multistate applications?

In the budget spreadsheet, complete the information in separate columns for each State/partner receiving Federal funds directly and/or contributing match. In some cases, the funds are passed from the lead applicant to other States or partner organizations. Explain details like that in the “description” section (column B) of the budget spreadsheet. Information provided in the budget spreadsheet is intended to inform reviewers about which partner is doing what type of work and how much it will cost. There may be cases where work is initially undertaken by one partner and contracted to another partner. It is acceptable to either break this down into separate columns in the budget spreadsheet (if sufficient

detail is known) or present it at a more consolidated level. Note: Reviewers prefer to see strong budget details because that indicates a well-thought-out project and transparency in transactions.

12. Are multistate projects favored over single-State sponsored projects?

Proposals will be evaluated based on the Evaluation Criteria for the High-Priority Regional Project program. While reviewers will not give an explicit advantage to multistate projects over single-State projects, evaluation criteria promote projects that align with the program priorities; foster collaboration among states, other partners, and underserved communities; potential economic or ecological impact if not addressed; and the probability of success.

13. What are underserved communities? How does this RFA support Executive Order 13985: Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government?

This [Executive Order](#) established the policy of the Federal Government to, “pursue a comprehensive approach to advancing equity for all, including people of color and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality.” Equity is defined as, “the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to **underserved communities** that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.”

14. Are we requiring all applications to have the FHP sponsor (will projects be rejected without one)?

Yes.

15. If my forest health project doesn't fit this program's priorities, are there other opportunities?

Yes, additional opportunities for forest health project funding include:

- **Eastern Region Forest Pest Management Funding Requests:** The call letter for this regionally managed program is generally sent to State forest health partners in late summer, with a reply due in October or November. Treatment requests may include invasive plant management and forest insect and disease prevention, eradication, suppression, or restoration of damage on non-federal public and private lands.
- **National Forest Health Protection (FHP) Special Projects Request for Proposals:** The call letter for the nationally-managed [FHP Special Projects program](#) can vary from year to year, but is generally issued in late summer with a reply due in October. Program areas include:
 - Forest Health Monitoring Program, Evaluation Monitoring (EM)
 - Special Technology Development Program (STDP)
 - Biological Control of Invasive Forest Pests (BCIFP)
 - Forest Service-Pesticide Impact Assessment Program (FS-PIAP)
 - Emerging Pest Program (EP)
 - Gene Conservation, Resistance, and Restoration Program (GCRR)
- Landscape Scale Restoration Program: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/private-land/landscape-scale-restoration>
- Great Lakes Restoration Initiative: [Great Lakes Restoration Initiative | Great Lakes Restoration Initiative \(glri.us\)](#)