USDA Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

COLLABORATIVE FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION PROGRAM

15-YEAR ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT

The Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 ([Public Law 111-11](#)) and reauthorized in the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 ([Public Law 115-334](#)) included the following language on the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program:

Not later than 5 years after the first fiscal year in which funding is made available to carry out ecological restoration projects under the program, and every 5 years thereafter, the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior, shall submit a report on the program, including an assessment of whether, and to what extent, the program is fulfilling the purposes of this title, to: 1) the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate; 2) the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; 3) the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives; and 4) the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

This publication is adapted from a report submitted to Congress in June 2024, which fulfilled these requirements. The projects highlighted in this publication are examples of recent success stories, this is not an exhaustive list of CFLRP project achievements.

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Introduction

The Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) was first authorized by Congress in 2009 to advance collaborative, landscape scale approaches to forest restoration for multiple outcomes—reducing wildfire risk, enhancing forest and watershed health, and providing benefits to local communities. Congress reauthorized the program in the 2018 Farm Bill and the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Public Law 117-58) provided additional funding.

CFLRP project landscapes are selected by the Secretary of Agriculture through a competitive process for 10 years of funding with the possibility of a one-time extension. There have been 31 CFLRP landscapes funded to date; 17 are currently active. Current landscapes range from about 130,000 to 10 million acres and include a mix of ownerships and cross-boundary needs, though CFLRP funds can only be spent on National Forest System (NFS) lands. In the 2018 Farm Bill, Congress reauthorized CFLRP through fiscal year (FY) 2023 and the program is up for reauthorization. In addition to the 17 current CFLRP landscapes, there are 7 project proposals with Secretarial approval for onboarding (pending funding availability).

The CFLRP continues to demonstrate the impact of investing in and encouraging collaborative restoration approaches as well as the value of place-based, multi-year funding in achieving results on the ground and in communities. Over the last 15 years, CFLRP has advanced integrated restoration treatments across 6.7 million acres, an area the size of Massachusetts, to include fuels reduction, tree planting, trail maintenance, stream restoration, invasive plant treatments, and fish passage. These treatments translate into outcomes. When wildfires have interacted with areas previously treated to reduce wildfire risk on CFLRP landscapes, fire suppression staff reported that the treatments help to control or moderate fire behavior 83 percent of the time (2017–2023 data). Since 2011, investments in local economies have helped support an annual average of $213 million in local labor income and 4,900 full- and part-time jobs.

CFLRP opportunities have brought together more than 720 organizations engaged in local collaboratives. Over the life of the program, for every dollar of CFLRP funding spent, partners have contributed $1.66 in funding and in-kind contributions, supporting work on State, Tribal, and private lands.

The last 5 years have marked a transition period in the CFLRP. During that time, 14 landscapes offboarded, 9 were extended, and 8 new landscapes began implementation. The latest cohort of CFLRP landscapes tends to be larger in scale and more cross-boundary than the first cohorts. One third of the 2020 CFLRP proposals included work on Tribal lands within the CFLRP boundaries, using partner or other funding. Most initial CFLRP landscapes included engagement with one collaborative group, now one-quarter of the proposals involve multiple collaboratives working together (Kooistra et al. 2021). See the CFLRP Projects and Activities Map Viewer for a map of CFLRP landscapes.

As one of the first national efforts to encourage collaborative restoration at the landscape scale, CFLRP successes and challenges offer insight and innovations to inform collaborative, landscape scale management activities across the country. The program continues to benefit from long-term learning in terms of collaboration practice, wildfire risk reduction, planning at scale, multiparty monitoring, and leveraging resources. Proactively identifying and sharing lessons learned often leads to a productive cycle of adaptive management for the program, as discussed in this report.

The Four Forest Restoration Initiative Landscape on the Kaibab, Coconino, Apache-Sigreaves, and Tonto National Forests in Arizona. USDA Forest Service photo by Brady Smith.

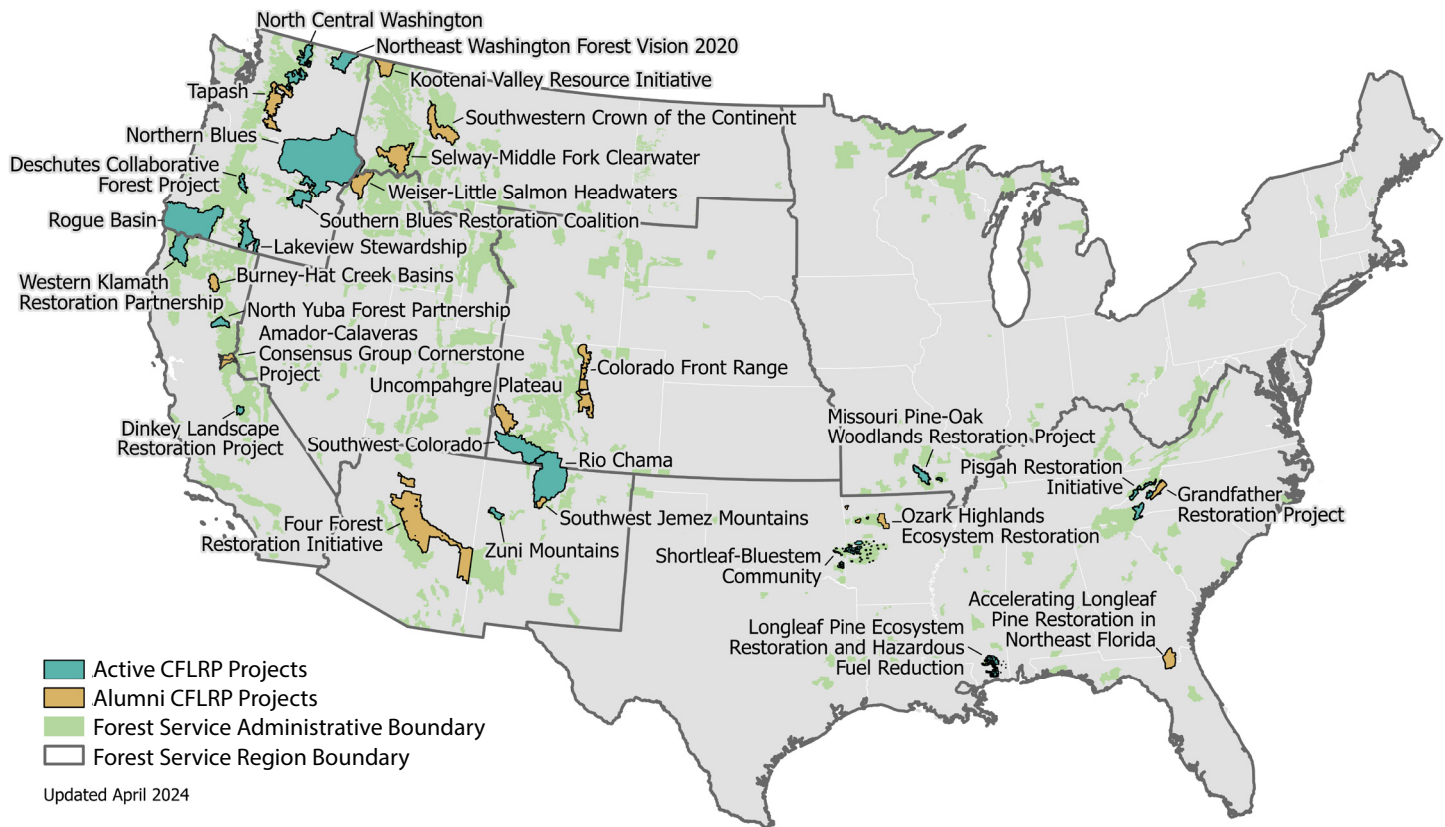# Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program Landscapes

Figure 1—Active and alumni CFLRP projects; the current cohort of 17 CFLRP landscapes tends to be larger in scale and more cross-boundary than the first (alumni) cohorts.

Restoring Ecological Function and Resilience

Restoration is central to the CFLRP legislation, which emphasizes forest resilience and reestablishing natural fire regimes, improving fish and wildlife habitat, and supporting water quality and watershed function. Through CFLRP, restoration is accomplished across scales and ecosystems, from bog and meadow restoration to fish passage and aquatic habitat enhancement. Hundreds of thousands of acres are treated every year on CFLRP landscapes to help maintain and enhance the many benefits healthy ecosystems provide—from clean water to recreation opportunities to reduced risk from disturbances such as uncharacteristic wildfires.

CFLRP Landscapes Are a High Priority for Restoration

The CFLRP is intended to focus on high-priority landscapes for restoration outcomes and proposals must establish a strong case for restoration. Across CFLRP landscapes, climate change continues to drive increases in temperatures, changes in precipitation patterns, and associated ecological effects. For example, the Rio Chama landscape in northern New Mexico is projected to see 12 to 14 more high fire danger days by the middle of this century as compared to the second half of the 20th century.

CFLRP Advances the Scale and Integration of Treatments

To address landscape scale challenges such as wildfire risk and invasive species that cross ownerships and other boundaries, CFLRP emphasizes treatments at scale to increase forest health and resilience. For example, to date:

- CFLRP landscapes have reduced hazardous fuels on about 5 million acres,
- Enhanced wildlife habitat across 4.5 million acres,
- Restored 2,147 miles of stream habitat, and
- Treated more than 300,000 acres for invasive species.

CFLRP landscapes contributed 13 percent of the Forest Service's total hazardous fuels treatments on NFS lands in the wildland urban interface (WUI)—the area where houses meet forests or intermingle with undeveloped wildland vegetation—14 percent of prescribed fire treatments, 11 percent of timber volume sold, and 12 percent of terrestrial wildlife habitat enhanced, while comprising an average of 7 percent of agency restoration-related spending. In FY 2023, NFS lands within the CFLRP project boundaries accounted for 24 percent of the improved, maintained, and recovering acres across all NFS lands, while only accounting for 13 percent of the total area.

In recent surveys of nearly 400 CFLRP participants across 15 landscapes conducted by the Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes (SWERI), a majority of respondents perceived moderate-to-substantial progress on various ecological goals through the program, including reducing fuels hazard (83 percent), improving or maintaining restoration pace and scale (75 percent), improving or maintaining watershed function (72 percent), improving fire use (65 percent), improving habitat (66 percent), restoring old growth (62 percent), and improving invasive species treatment or control (60 percent) (Beeton et al. 2024).

In addition to a focus on landscape scale work, CFLRP landscapes provide a wide range of benefits through integrated outcomes, as **illustrated by the following examples:**

Creating and maintaining wildlife habitat:

- Wildlife habitat improvement work on the **Shortleaf Bluestem Community** in Arkansas and Oklahoma has led to an upward trend in red-cockaded woodpecker activity— including the very first successful red-cockaded woodpecker nesting attempts in Oklahoma.

- The **Dinkey Landscape** on the Sierra National Forest is reducing hazardous fuels in California spotted owl and northern goshawk habitat, tailoring treatments specifically in each area for important habitat elements and hand-thinning to minimize disturbance to wildlife.

Bolstering the resilience of forests to a range of disturbances:

- Long-term monitoring with partners on the **Missouri Pine Oak Woodlands** project demonstrates that treatments of fire and fire-plus-thinning are moving forest stands towards more functional ecosystems. As a result of CFLRP treatments, focal bird and bee species are responding positively, ground cover of native plants has increased, and shortleaf pine and white oak species are growing with less competition, increasing drought and climate change resilience.

Advancing watershed and aquatic habitat restoration:

- The **Western Klamath Restoration Partnership Landscape** in California completed fish passage improvements along 43 streams, making 201 miles accessible to salmon. They collaborated with the Karuk Tribe and Mid Klamath Watershed Council, two main partners in the Western Klamath Restoration Partnership, to restore floodplain connectivity and enhance critical habitat for salmon and other species.

- The **Zuni Mountains Landscape** in New Mexico is working with the Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps to restore three springs that provide habitat for populations of rare native fish, including the Rio Grande sucker and Rio Grande chub.

Addressing invasive species:

- **Southwest Colorado Landscape** treated 177 acres and 10.4 miles of trails for invasive Canada and musk thistle, improving rangeland condition, big game winter range habitat, and recreation experiences.

- Within the **Rio Chama Landscape** in New Mexico, the Forest Service worked with the Bureau of Land Management to treat noxious weeds, reducing the spread of invasives by focusing treatments along roadways.

Supporting the structure and composition of old-growth stands:

- Restoration activities on the **Zuni Mountains Landscape** in New Mexico are laying the groundwork for a return to a historical fire regime while preparing for the impacts of climate change. The effort supports a large and old tree retention strategy, which retains underrepresented older trees on the landscape while reducing tree density to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic crown fires as well as increasing resilience to drought, pests, and disease.

Building on lessons learned over the first 10 years of CFLRP, landscapes are now implementing a new, common monitoring strategy that provides nationally standardized questions to help track progress across all program goals. By addressing ecological monitoring questions on landscape resiliency, wildlife habitat, watershed health, and invasive species, the Forest Service will continue to enhance our understanding of long-term treatment effectiveness for future years.

The Rio Chama Landscape spans Tribal, State, private, and Forest Service managed lands on the Santa Fe, Carson, Rio Grande, and San Juan National Forests in New Mexico and Colorado. Daniel Denipah, Santa Clara Pueblo Forestry Director, shows Jeremy Marshall, Rio Chama CFLRP coordinator, stream restoration work on upper Santa Clara Creek in New Mexico. USDA Forest Service photo by Preston Keres.

Wildfire Risk Reduction

Re-establishing natural fire regimes and reducing the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire are key purposes of the CFLRP. The program has seen success in increasing the scale of treatment across landscapes to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire through collaborative, partnership-driven approaches that expand capacity, scale, and an all-lands focus for the work. These treatments reduce risk to communities, increase firefighter safety, protect wildlife habitat and water supplies, and maintain desired conditions.

Focus and Scale of Impact

Seventy-five percent of landscapes have more than half of their area in moderate, high, or very-high wildfire hazard potential. Fourteen of the past or present CFLRP landscapes have some degree of overlap with 1 or more of the 21 wildfire crisis strategy landscapes—areas selected to reduce wildfire risk to communities, critical infrastructure, and natural resources from the Nation's wildfire crisis. CFLRP landscapes are selected, in part, because they are high priority areas for treatments to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire; see Confronting the Wildfire Crisis for additional information.

Since inception of the program, CFLRP landscape treatments have reduced wildfire risk across 5 million acres, with over 3 million of those acres in the WUI. CFLRP projects continue to prioritize wildfire risk reduction by placing about two-thirds of their hazardous fuels treatments in such areas.

CFLRP landscapes work to reduce wildfire risk through a range of treatments, including both mechanical thinning and prescribed fire. Prescribed fire is an effective tool for increasing forest resilience to wildfire, and CFLRP participants have implemented nearly 2.7 million acres of prescribed fire since 2010, roughly 14 percent of the agency's total for that period.

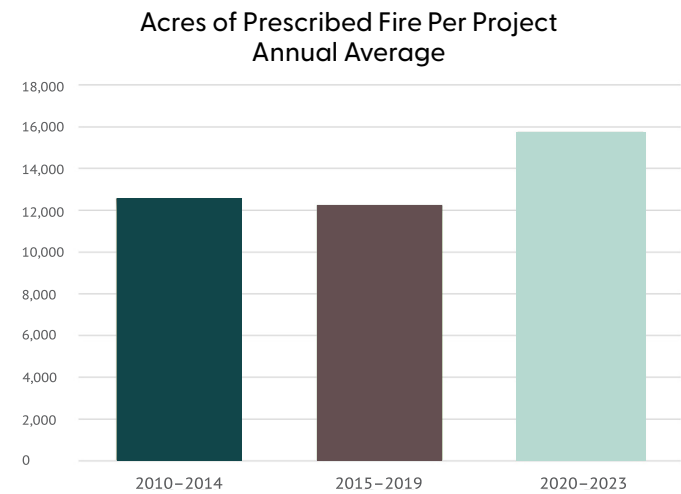## Acres of Prescribed Fire Per Project Annual Average

Figure 2–Annual average of acres of prescribed fire per CFLRP project; CFLRP landscapes are increasing the scale of prescribed fire treatments, implementing more controlled burns in the last 4 years (2020–2023) as compared to the first (2010–2014) and second (2015–2019) 5-year intervals of the program.

Fuels Treatment Effectiveness

Between 2017 and 2023, there were 1,478 recorded interactions between fuels treatments and wildfires on CFLRP landscapes and 83 percent of the time managers observed that the fuels treatment improved control of the fire or moderated fire behavior.
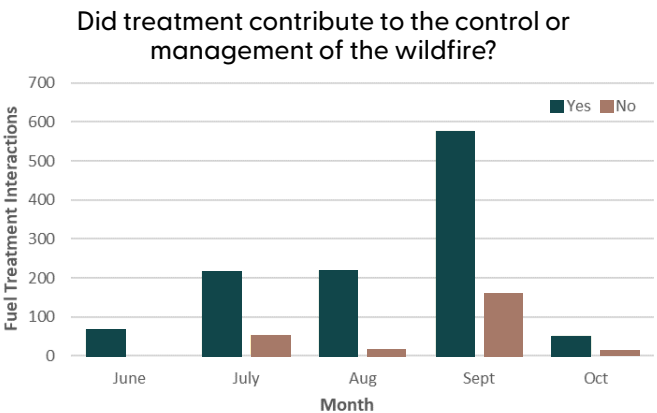
Did treatment contribute to the control or management of the wildfire?

Figure 3–Fuel treatment interactions on CFLRP landscapes as captured in the fuels treatment effectiveness monitoring (FTEM) database. The green bars represent where managers observed that fuel treatments aided in the control and/or management of a wildfire and the brown bars indicate where they did not. Treatments are particularly helpful for managing fires during the summer months, when there is typically the most risk of uncharacteristic wildfire.

At landscape scale, fuels treatments completed through CFLRP allow for more efficient and effective wildfire suppression when needed—and wildfire management where appropriate. Through a collaborative, scaled approach, CFLRP expands the pace, scale, and quality of treatments that reduce risk to communities and enhance forest health, as **illustrated by the following examples:**

- Monitoring done within the **Colorado Front Range** footprint suggested prefire forest treatments will likely moderate fire intensity and mitigate severe burn effects, particularly in areas where surface fuels were reduced. By doing so, treatments can contribute to increased tree survivorship, lessen erosion, reduce sediment into critical water supplies, aid suppression efforts, and promote firefighter safety (Vorster et al. 2023).

- The **Lakeview Stewardship Landscape** in Oregon found that previous prescribed fire treatments helped reduce suppression difficulty on the northern and eastern flanks of the 2023 Morgan fire. Fewer resources were needed to effectively control that portion of the fire, allowing managers to concentrate on areas with a higher suppression difficulty.

- The **Pisgah Restoration Initiative Project** in North Carolina noted that previous prescribed fire activities and wildfires led to low intensity fire behavior on the 2023 Dobson Knob 2 fire. Fine fuels readily burned with low intensity and as the fire approached the edges of the past entries of fire, shade from the closed canopy significantly reduced or outright stopped fire progression.

The Shortleaf Bluestem Community project focuses work on the Ouachita National Forest in Arkansas and Oklahoma. Gabe de Jong of The Nature Conservancy and Virginia McDaniel with the Forest Service Southern Research Station take herbaceous plant plot measurements for multiparty vegetation monitoring. Courtesy photo by McRee Anderson.

- The **Southern Blues Restoration Coalition** in Oregon found that fire suppression costs for the 2021 Black Butte fire may have been twice as much if fuels treatments had not been completed through CFLRP. In the few areas where fuels treatments were not finished, costs and fire suppression efforts were greater.

With CFLRP landscapes ongoing for 10 or more years, the Forest Service can now see the benefits of long-term, strategic implementation of treatments over time.

- On the **Southern Blues Restoration Coalition Landscape**, fuels treatments have become more and more continuous, creating larger areas for managing natural ignitions and improving decision space under the appropriate environmental conditions.
- For the **Shortleaf Bluestem** in Arkansas and Oklahoma, the number of acres of prescribed fire implemented per year has increased over time. As treatments are implemented across the landscape, managers can use more prescribed fire resulting in wildfires that are more effectively managed or suppressed.

CFLRP landscapes work cooperatively to reduce hazardous fuels across NFS, State, Tribal, private, and other land ownerships. Partners include Federal and State land management agencies, Tribal governments and agencies, county and city governments, fire departments and districts, nongovernmental organizations, and private entities. These partnerships provide the implementation capacity, knowledge, and community relationships that make all-lands work possible.

- Within the **Southwest Colorado Landscape**, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe is working with Mancos Conservation District in partnership with the Colorado State Forest Service and Colorado Forest Restoration Institute to implement and monitor efforts to achieve common goals, including a 90-acre fuel break and forest restoration treatments on Tribal land. These efforts advance relationships between partners while also improving on the ground conditions.
- **Northern Blues** in Oregon worked with the Natural Resource Conservation Service and Oregon State University Extension to develop and host training modules, increasing workforce and technical capacity over the past year for implementing prescribed burns across all lands.

New efforts are underway to model fire behavior outcomes at programmatic scales, quantifying the impact of CFLRP treatments on wildfire hazard. Many CFLRP landscapes are using landscape-level prioritization tools to plan and implement treatments to reduce fire risk while achieving ecological and socioeconomic outcomes.

Economic and Social Impacts

CFLRP encourages socioeconomic sustainability—leveraging the use of restoration byproducts to help offset treatment costs and provide benefits to local and rural communities through localized employment and training opportunities.

The benefits CFLRP projects provide local communities include restoration treatments (e.g., those that help reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire and protect communities and infrastructure), programs to sustain clean air and water, and efforts to support conservation and other cultural values. A 2023 spatial assessment shows that 49 percent of treatments are located within disadvantaged census tracts (Council on Environmental Quality 2024).

Current CFLRP landscapes emphasize a range of socioeconomic goals, including expanding local wood product industries; emphasizing Tribal benefits; increasing community outreach, youth education, and local employment opportunities; expanding partnerships with private landowners; enhancing recreation opportunities; and increasing localized prescribed fire capacity.

CFLRP landscapes provide a wide range of benefits through integrated outcomes, as **illustrated by the following examples:**

- Collaborative planning on the **Western Klamath Restoration Partnership** in California identifies Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Indigenous Knowledge to be incorporated into implementation and monitoring. This includes identification of culturally relevant "focal species" that each project is designed to support, such as salmonids, salamander, elk, western pond turtle, black oak, tanoak, other legacy trees, huckleberry, acorns, willow, and manzanita.
- For the **Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project** in Oregon, healthy forests are the backdrop for a significant outdoor recreation and tourism industry, contributing to the more than $1 billion in annual tourism benefits in Deschutes County.

Benefits also include expanding community inclusion and engagement in restoration efforts and the management of public lands.

- The **North Central Washington Landscape** effort worked with the Wenatchee Community for the Advancement of Family Education (CAFE), a local Hispanic service organization, to increase engagement and outreach with Spanish-speaking community members.
- The **Northern Blues Landscape** in Oregon hosted 47 workshops, trainings, talks, and webinars with private landowners and the public in 2023 to promote community engagement around natural resource management.

The Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project Landscape on the Deschutes National Forest in Oregon. USDA Forest Service photo.

In response to recent surveys of CFLRP participants, a majority of respondents perceived moderate to substantial progress on various socioeconomic goals, including reducing community wildfire risk (65 percent) and supporting local employment or training (66 percent). Just over half perceived moderate to substantial progress on offsetting treatment costs via byproducts and accomplishing more work on adjacent lands, indicating opportunities for improvement for these collaborative goals (Beeton et al. 2024).

Local Jobs, Labor Income, and Workforce Development

Between FY 2019 and FY 2023, CFLRP supported an estimated yearly average of 3,830 full- and part-time jobs and $196 million in local labor income. On average, the percent of funding invested within the local area has increased over time, from 37 percent in FY 2019 to 67 percent in FY 2023, with a high of 72 percent in FY 2022.

The Treatments for Restoration Economic Analysis Tool (TREAT) is a modeling tool used to estimate the economic effects (jobs and labor income) of restoration activities tied to CFLRP. A commercial economic impact analysis program (IMPLAN) is used to build a model for each unique CFLRP landscape, and the results are imported into TREAT and combined with user data by Forest Service economists annually. See the TREAT User Guide for access instructions and additional information on these programs.
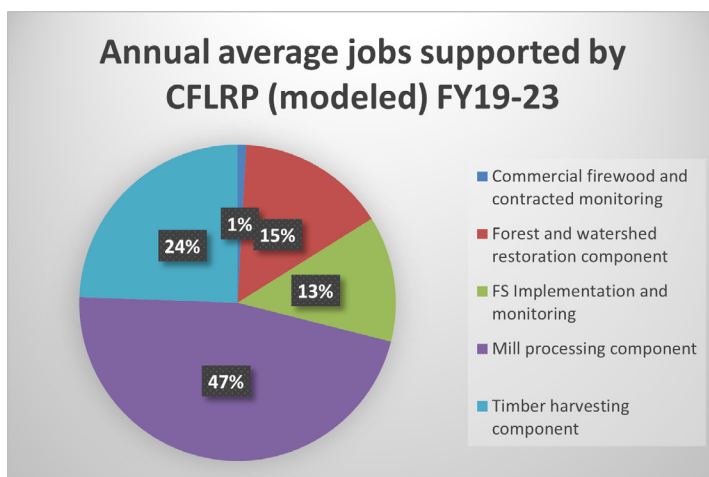

Figure 4—This pie chart depicts annual average jobs supported by CFLRP projects for FY 2019 to FY 2023. Most of the jobs were supported by mill processing and timber harvesting, followed by jobs supported by forest and watershed restoration, and agency implementation and monitoring. The remaining 1 percent of jobs supported were in commercial firewood and contracted monitoring. Over the last 3 years, most of the modeled jobs have been linked to labor-intensive work (33 percent), followed by equipment-intensive work (31 percent).

Across the 17 current CFLRP landscapes, 68 percent of the boundaries include disadvantaged communities. In their most recent annual reports, CFLRP landscapes provided information about beneficiaries of CFLRP funds in these areas as well as efforts emphasizing youth engagement, workforce development, and local job opportunities.

- The **Rio Chama Landscape** in New Mexico reported that 56 percent of the contracts were awarded to minority-owned businesses.

- On the **Southwest Colorado Landscape**, 86 percent of contracts went to self-certified small, disadvantaged businesses.

- The **Rogue Basin Landscape** in Oregon partners with the Lomakatsi Restoration Project to support workforce training and employment programs serving Tribal and multicultural youth and young adults. In 2022, Lomakatsi launched an expanded version of their Tribal Ecological Forestry Training Program. A crew of 10 Tribal youth from Klamath County gained professional certifications in wildland fire, chainsaw operation, cultural monitoring, and first aid/CPR and spent the next year supporting landscape scale forest and watershed restoration projects in the Rogue Basin and in their ancestral homelands.

  - In 2023, the Lomakatsi Restoration Project launched a second Tribal Ecological Forestry Training Program cohort serving 10 multicultural youth and a third cohort serving 12 Tribal young adults.
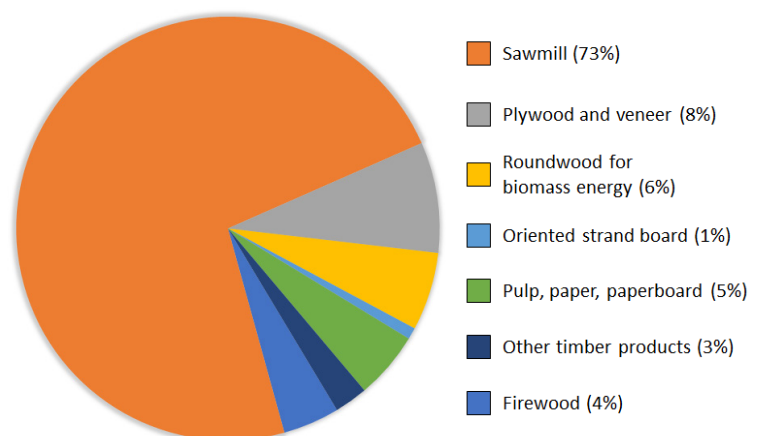

Figure 5—Most of the wood products harvested in FY 2023 (73 percent) were for sawmill use (e.g., creation of lumber, bolts, woodchips, pallets, and pressure and creosote treated lumber); followed by plywood and veneer (8 percent); and roundwood for biomass energy plants (6 percent—nearly double the amount in FY 2022). Firewood (commercial and home use) made up 4 percent of the total.

Over time, CFLRP landscapes have helped to maintain, and in some cases expand, existing industry, including wood products.

- In the **Southern Blues Restoration Coalition** area in Oregon, local wood processing companies have invested heavily in upgrades and new infrastructure to utilize small diameter wood, adding jobs to the community. These companies have used the leverage of CFLRP funds, along with the expectation of continued contracting with a focus on local benefits, to help secure investments. These partnerships continue to place an emphasis on benefits to local communities.

- On the **Zuni Mountains Landscape** in New Mexico, CFLRP funding has played an important role in stabilizing a local business named Forest Fitness and supported important investments in the development of horizontally integrated partner businesses—Armstrong Conservation and Rocky Mountain Ecology. Both new businesses work in close partnership with Forest Fitness and provide an additional 10 full-time jobs, including secondary economic benefits. Forest Fitness has invested in new equipment that will support it in years to come—the owner attributed this growth to the stabilizing effect of CFLRP and the relationship with National Wild Turkey Federation that have led to new contracts.

CFLRP landscapes often report a lack of infrastructure and markets for low-value wood products as a continuing challenge. Several CFLRP landscapes worked to assess new opportunities and technologies to expand markets and infrastructure, including new products and processing approaches.

- For example, on the **Pisgah Restoration Initiative in North Carolina**, the area's timber markets were severely impacted by a paper mill closure in 2023. A nearly immediate trickle-down effect was the five chip mills serving the area shutting down operations. In response, the Forest Service set up service contracts to dispose of pulpwood at chip facilities to incentivize the use of these low-value timber products and encourage chip mills to continue operations as well as court new markets. They began partnering with the Southern Research Station and North Carolina State University to help better understand contracting options and the impacts of this market loss on mixed hardwood forests.

Jobs totals include direct, indirect, and induced jobs, thereby capturing the ripple effect of investments to other industries. **Timber harvesting**: effects from logging of commercial timber volume; **mill processing**: effects from mills that process commercial timber volume; **forest and watershed restoration**: effects related to contract/agreement funds spent on restoration work and related services; **Forest Service implementation and monitoring**: effects from salary and other agency expenditures; and **commercial firewood and contracted monitoring**: effects from any reported commercial fuelwood sales and contracted monitoring services.

- **Labor-intensive** work includes physically challenging, simple mechanical treatments such as thinning with chainsaws, hand piling, prescribed burning, tree planting, etc.
- **Equipment-intensive** work includes chipping in the woods, equipment intensive logging operations, and mechanical treatments such as mastication, grapple piling, excavator work, etc.
- **Material-intensive** work includes road work, culvert replacement, in-stream restoration, fence construction, some trail work, etc.
- **Technical services** work includes stand exams, marking, layout, biological surveys, cultural surveys, invasive weed spraying, etc.
- **Professional services** work includes studies completed by scientists, engineering design, acquisition or analysis of remotely sensed data, scientific modeling, etc.

Leveraging Public and Private Resources

CFLRP leverages resources nationally and locally, publicly and privately, to advance our work collectively. The funding authorized for CFLRP can be used to pay up to 50 percent of the costs of carrying out and monitoring treatments. The long-term Federal investment provided by CFLRP helps the agency and partners attract additional funding and resources for work across that landscape.

Over the life of the program, for every dollar of CFLRP funding spent, partners contributed $1.66 in in-kind and leveraged contributions. In FY 2023 alone, CFLRP landscapes reported more than 110 unique partner cash contributions totaling roughly $40 million. Contributions come from a wide range of collaborative partners, including other Federal agencies; State agencies; Tribal governments; cities and counties; local, regional, and national nonprofits; private landowners; youth corps; water agencies; trails associations; soil and water conservation districts; businesses; and universities.

The Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group Cornerstone Project brings partners together on the Eldorado and Stanislaus National Forests in California. Partners participate in field trips to learn about the progress of ongoing work. USDA Forest Service photo.

CFLRP Landscape Expenditures by Category (FY19-23)

- 27% — CFLRP Program Funding (CFLN or CFIX)
- 33% — USDA Forest Service Funding (Discretionary and Salary & Expense)
- 34% — Partner Contributions (In-Kind and Funding)
- 6% — Goods for Services (generated through stewardship contracts/agreements or as Good Neighbor Authority program income)

Figure 6–This pie chart depicts CFLRP landscape expenditures by four categories for FY 2019 to FY 2023: Forest Service funding; partner contributions; CFLRP program funding; and goods for services.

Partner contributions play a critical role in advancing work on parts of the CFLRP landscape that are adjacent to NFS lands, including State, private, and Tribal lands as well as other Federal lands. Since FY 2019, 43 percent of partner contributions advanced work across other land ownerships to help knit together the landscape as a whole and achieve outcomes at scale.

- In FY 2023, the **Lakeview Stewardship Landscape** in Oregon benefited from the Lake County Umbrella Watershed Council, which contributed a range of work valued at $1.1 million as part of the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP project—including 760 acres of forest health and fuels reduction treatments on private lands and postfire restoration with beaver dam analogs along 10 miles of streams.
- On the **Northern Blues Landscape** in Oregon, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation Tribes invested more than $750,000 for watershed health, forest health, and fire resiliency on 1,370 acres and for managing invasive and noxious weeds on 505 acres.
- The **Rio Chama Landscape** in New Mexico partnered with the Forest Stewards Guild to provide opportunities to several Youth Corps crews that resulted in on the ground work (contributions to conservation projects from fuel reduction work to trails to stream projects) and economic and educational opportunities for the participants (i.e., a paycheck and college credit).

The Collaborative Approach

The collaborative process—bringing together people with diverse interests in a transparent and inclusive way to share knowledge, ideas, and resources towards a common purpose—is the foundation of CFLRP. The authorizing legislation requires that the restoration strategies used by the program to accomplish work be developed and implemented through a collaborative process. Over the life of the program, the 31 CFLRP landscapes funded to date have worked with 720 unique organizations, businesses, governments, and others.

Collaborative Participation and Impacts

Through 15 years of CFLRP implementation, the Forest Service has seen that working in collaboration with partners and stakeholders enables the agency to plan, implement, and monitor at more integrated and broader scales. It increases the durability and support for management decisions and creates conditions for innovation.

The ideas, knowledge, creativity, and capacity that is generated collectively allows the agency to accomplish work that simply would not be possible otherwise. While it takes an investment to bring people together and build effective working relationships, the investment pays dividends as **illustrated by the following examples:**

- On the **Southern Blues Restoration Coalition Landscape** in Oregon, the Blue Mountains Forest Partners collaborative group was crucial in helping plan and monitor project treatments affected by wildfire and their Upland Forest Restoration Zones of Agreement influenced project design. The safety corridor identified in the community wildfire protection plan helped the agency expedite additional planning efforts and focus treatments on the right place.
- On the **Southwest Colorado Landscape**, the agency and partners carried out a variety of treatments across multiple jurisdictions to restore fire-adapted landscapes and reduce hazardous fuels. Collectively, cooperators accomplished 27,666 acres of all-lands hazardous fuels reduction on the landscape in FY 2023.
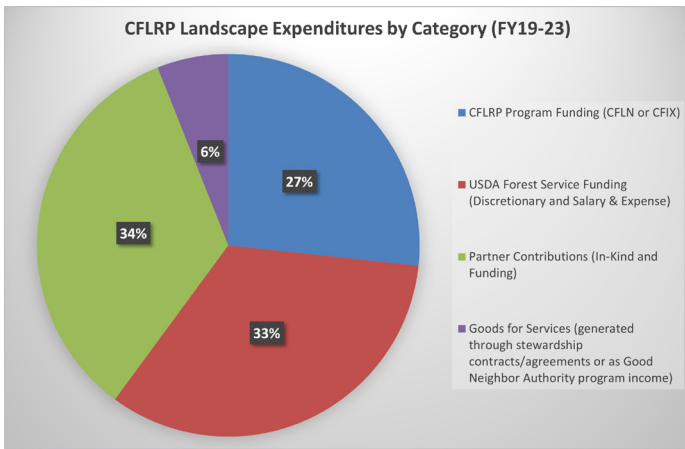
The Amador–Calaveras Consensus Group Cornerstone Project Landscape on the Eldorado and Stanislaus National Forests in California. USDA Forest Service photo.

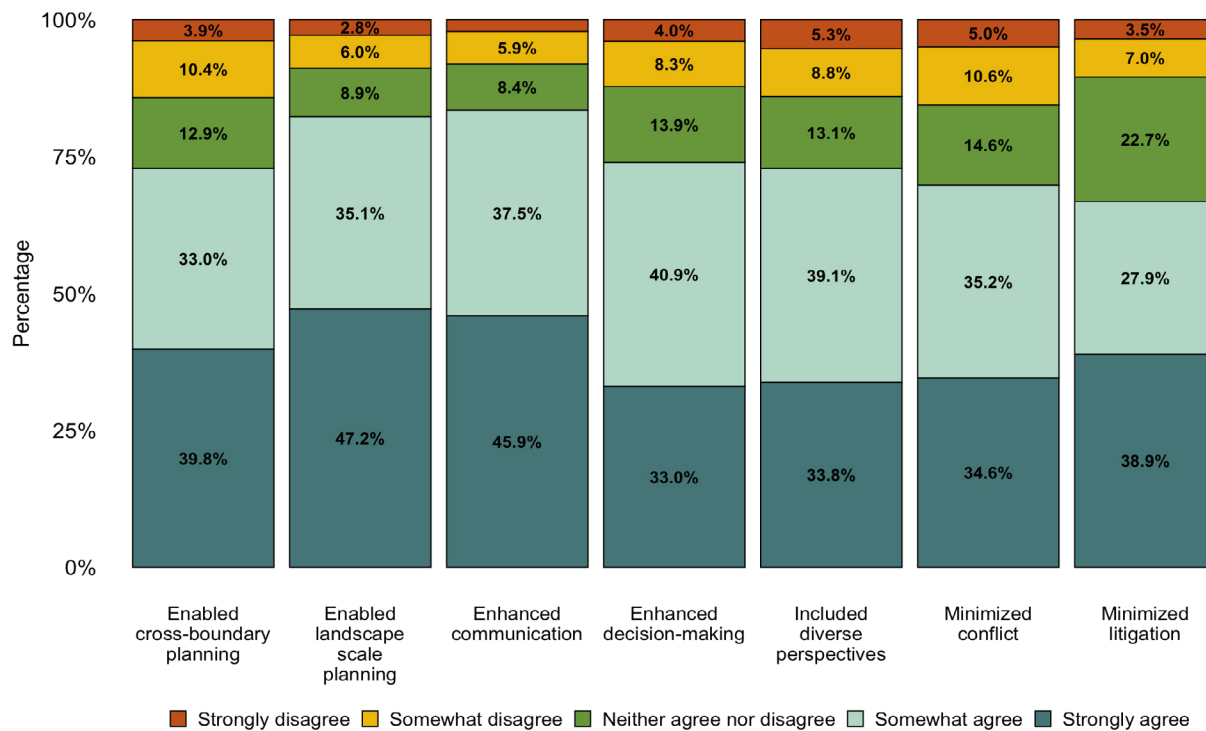## Perceived Outcomes: Collaborative Process

Figure 7– Nearly 400 CFLRP participants across 15 CFLRP landscapes were recently surveyed and respondents reported several positive outcomes related to the collaborative process. The participants generally felt that a representative cross-section of partners was included in their CFLRP effort and that they worked together to identify shared interests and concerns.

As part of the CFLRP Common Monitoring Strategy, program partners were invited to participate in governance assessments administered by the SWERI between 2021 and 2023. More than half of the responses came from non-governmental organizations and USDA Forest Service staff; initial lessons learned include:

- Early and frequent engagement is necessary to build trust and shared understanding, help participants understand how and when to inform decisions, and articulate what decisions are made and why.

- Collaboration benefits from inclusion of diverse perspectives and interests and there are many factors that determine whether an entity engages. Inclusivity should be managed based on local context, collaborative history, current and expected needs, and objectives.

- The most common limiting factors for collaboration are sufficient time and funding.

- Supporting a culture of collaboration, where Forest Service staff have the capacity, training, direction, and incentive to commit to the collaborative process, can help sustain collaboration over time.

Partnerships With Tribes

Representation from Tribal entities in CFLRP collaboratives has increased by 81 percent as compared to the first 10 years of the program. Agency staff and partners are increasingly working with Tribes, within or outside of the collaborative structure, to support meaningful working relationships and advance Forest Service and Tribal goals in their communities.

- On the **Northern Blues Landscape** in Oregon, "first foods" monitoring is occurring with the Nez Perce Tribe and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation on the reservation, NFS, private, and The Nature Conservancy lands, with 41 plots and 30 site assessments completed. "First foods" is an effort to reintroduce a Native diet and food staples similar to that from five or six generations ago, that change with the seasons and restore bodily, cultural, and spiritual health. 2023 was the first year that first foods monitoring was done in partnership with the Nez Perce Tribe, which expanded Tribal representation and increased the geographic range of sampling.

- The **North Central Washington Landscape** worked with Mid-Columbia Fisheries, Cascade Fisheries, Cascadia Conservation District, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and Yakama Nation Fisheries to improve fish habitat complexity, restore floodplain connectivity, and restore fish passage. The partnership advanced larger scale, essential aquatic projects in 2023. The Mad River Pine Flats restoration project involved more than 5 miles of river habitat and associated floodplain restoration, with treatment sites selected through partnership-led stream surveys and collaborative strategies. These actions will have meaningful improvements to critical fish habitat and better prepare key watersheds for a changing climate.

FY2023 Collaborative Participants
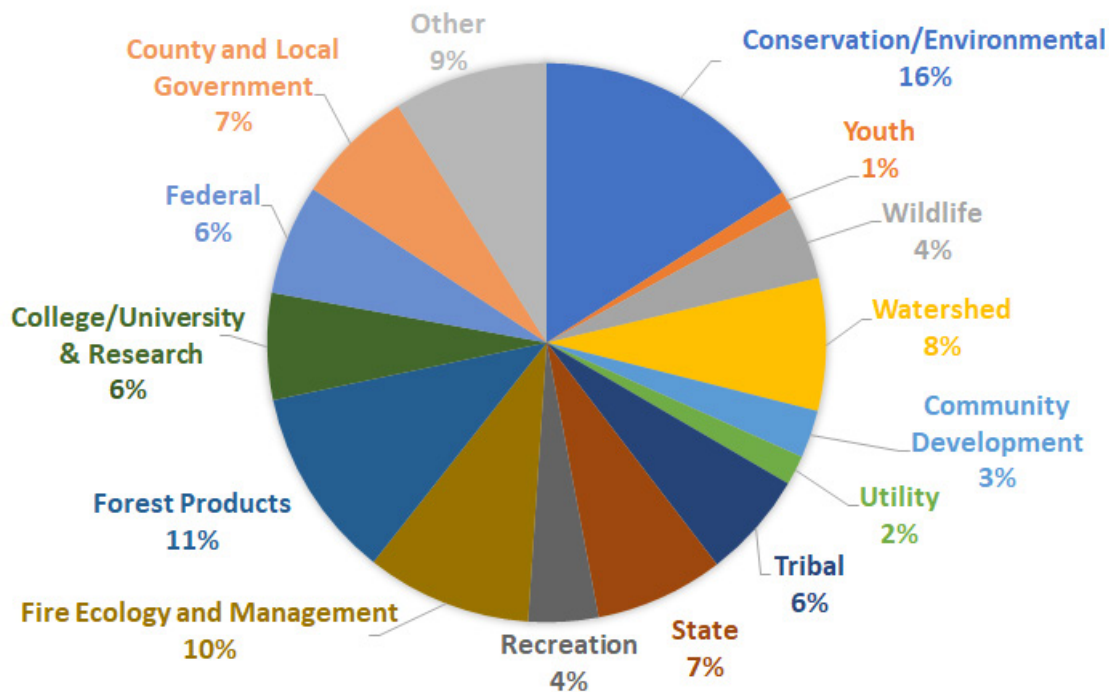## (Unique Organizations)

Figure 8–This pie chart depicts the diversity of collaborative participants and interests associated with CFLRP landscapes in FY 2023. Conservation/Environmental, Forest Products, and Fire Ecology and Management interests accounted for little more than a third.

Conclusion

Through 15 years of CFLRP implementation, Forest Service and CFLRP participants have advanced our collective knowledge about approaches to collaborative landscape restoration—highlighting both best practices and areas for continued focus.

- **Investing in collaboration.** The requirement to collaborate allows for local variability and creates durable outcomes. Fifteen years of CFLRP implementation has led to a greater understanding of collaboration best practices and resources. We continue to learn about sharing ownership and risk, working towards greater inclusion, and building resilience to change over time.

- **Supporting success with multiparty monitoring.** The multiparty monitoring approach both builds trust and accountability across collaborators and allows for innovation and adaptive management over time. Leveraging learning from the first 15 years, a new CFLRP Common Monitoring Strategy initiated in 2022 provides greater consistency and capacity for monitoring at landscape scale.

- **Working at scale for integrated outcomes.** When multiple interests come together to identify opportunities across the landscape, they can achieve cross-cutting results. Learning about tools and approaches for collaborative planning at these scales can help evaluate tradeoffs and treat the right acres, at the right time, at the right scale.

- **Accelerating results while navigating challenges and change.** Collaboratives expanded the scale of prescribed burns to reduce uncharacteristic wildfire risk and continue to work to achieve the desired scale of impact. While some CFLRP landscapes benefited from more robust local forest products infrastructure, all CFLRP efforts highlight the importance of sustaining infrastructure and markets for restoration byproducts.

- **Multiyear, place based funding.** Long-term commitments attract partners to leverage resources and enable effective cross-boundary work.

What's Next?

In the 2018 Farm Bill, Congress reauthorized CFLRP through FY 2023 and the program is up for reauthorization. In addition to the 17 current CFLRP landscapes, there are 7 project proposals with Secretarial approval for onboarding (pending funding availability).

Moving forward, the USDA Forest Service will continue to work with partners to apply lessons learned to existing and future CFLRP landscapes, and to its other priority work. Through collaborative approaches to addressing landscape scale needs, the agency can share risks and successes, overcome setbacks, and advance the shared stewardship of our public lands.

The Rio Chama project convenes partners from rural areas in Colorado and New Mexico and operates on the Santa Fe, Carson, Rio Grande, and San Juan National Forests and connected lands. Partners discuss the interplay of fire and human history, wildlife migration, and watershed restoration work on a field trip near Chama, NM. USDA Forest Service photo by Preston Keres.

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