

Recommendations and Best Practices for the Project Brief Map

The following are observations and recommendations related to maps that are part of a Forest Legacy Program project application. These recommendations are the result of feedback from previous members of the National Project Review panel over multiple years. Following these recommendations on how to improve a map is not a requirement; these are suggestions to help in the development of a competitive application.

- **First impressions matter:** Many reviewers have indicated that the map was the first item they reviewed on a project brief. If the map was difficult to read, reviewers became confused from the outset about why the project was important, threatened, or strategic.
- **Tell the same story:** It is important to ensure that the project brief content and the map tell the same story and that the story is accurate (e.g., if a proposed tract is being highlighted for its public recreation amenities and none of those amenities are identified on the map, then it is difficult for reviewers to give you full points for that attribute).
- **Style suggestions:** The information portrayed on map should be clear, concise, and easy to read. Some map style suggestions are below:
 - Reserve bright colors for project area and other FLP areas (e.g., highlight the proposed FLP project tracts in a color that stands out).
 - Other projected lands are easy to spot as saturated earth tones (e.g., gradient shades of green to differentiate federal, state, and privately conserved land).
 - The map is easier to analyze if the base map is light gray or a neutral color, so it does not distract from the map message.
 - Label FLP tracts on the map with the year funded, proposed, or completed.
 - Do not clutter the map with unnecessary labels (e.g., local roads that don't pertain to navigation to the property or a landmark).
 - Be consistent with tract names/labeling. The map should use the same tract labels as they appear in the table on the first page of the project brief and/or referenced in the text.
 - Scale the project map to show how the project tracts fit into the area's conservation landscape. If the map is too localized, reviewers cannot understand how it ties to other conserved land. Conversely, if the map area is too large, it may be difficult to see what is adjacent to the proposed tract. Consider including a regional inset map to show where the project area is located within the state and to highlight conserved land nearby.