

American Forests (AF) Program Information for SFY 2022-23

Program Funding

In Year 2, \$100,000 has been allotted for “Plant Only” tree planting cost-share practices with the following specifications:

- Afforestation and Reforestation Projects
 - Funding for seedling & tree planting expenses
- Higher landowner reimbursement rates will apply for projects with specific tree species
 - (ex. Longleaf, Shortleaf, White Pine, Wetlands, Hardwoods).
- **Site Preparation is not eligible for cost-share** but encouraged to be conducted by the landowner when applicable.
- Projects will compete for funding Statewide and will be placed within 3 Funding Tiers based on the project description and recommended species.
- Projects will be Randomly Drawn for program funding based on the following priority order:
 - 1. Afforestation projects
 - 2. Reforestation projects - Non-Loblolly Species
 - 3. Reforestation projects – Loblolly pine

Program Eligibility and Requirements

A private individual, group, association, or corporation owning non-industrial private forest land in North Carolina is eligible.

An eligible landowner may receive funds enough to complete needed practices on a **minimum of 5 acres up to 100 acres** at the prevailing cost-share program rates established for 3 NCFS organizational regions (see attached map).

Types of Eligible Ownership

- **Individual Ownership:** A single and clearly identifiable person.
- **Joint Ownership:** Two or more persons to carry on as co-owners. Joint owners are treated as one landowner and entitled to receive cost sharing as one owner. Joint ownership must be clearly identifiable as a distinct entity and may consist of relatives owning property in common, or a partnership in a business for profit.
- **Corporation:** Non-profit corporation intended to have no income; or a corporation for profit or having capital stock which may have been or may be created and organized under the N.C. Business Corporation Act.
- **Association:** The act of several persons in uniting together for some special purpose of business.

Individual landowners who share in a joint ownership are also eligible. Government owned lands, and lands owned by primary processors of forest products are not eligible for cost share.

Application for Cost-share Funding

Approval of the application request for tree planting funds requires verification by a NCFS forester that the project area has an approved forestry plan for the lands on which funds are requested. This plan must contain a description of the present conditions and future courses of action and approved practices that will be followed to assure forest productivity, environmental protection, and follow-up maintenance. This forestry plan must be approved by a designated forester of the NCFS.

Funding may be approved for costs associated with approved tree planting practices only. Site preparation and follow-up maintenance is encouraged but will be at the landowner's expense. If approved, an eligible landowner will be allocated reserved funds to be utilized following completion of the recommended practice at the prevailing rates listed at the time of sign-up.

Planting of Longleaf pine, Shortleaf pine, White pine, hardwoods, and wetland conifer species are cost-shared at the 60% rate while all other tree planting practices are cost-shared at the 40% rate.

AF Program Enrollment Period

- AF "Plant Only" Funding enrollment period will **begin on Thursday, September 1st, 2022 and will close on Friday, October 28th, 2022.**
- Applications should be submitted to their local NCFS offices for review and approval **before Friday, October 21st, 2022** to allow adequate time for processing.
- This AF funding program will utilize a "Random Draw" lottery to award funding to landowners after the enrollment period closes.
- Projects will be randomly drawn from each of the three priority funding tiers.

Required Forms

- All new requests for AF funding must be submitted on the **NCFS Forestry Cost-Share Funding Application (Application Form 4910-3)**.
 - **American Forests (AF)** should be written in the Program Name box.
 - In Box 8) Description of Practices area **must** include the following information:
 - 1) Afforestation (A) or Reforestation (R)
 - 2) Tree Planting Practice and Species (ex. Hand Plant Cont. Pine – Longleaf)
 - 3) Trees per Acre (TPA) to calculate total seedlings planted/project
 - (ex. 544 for species planted on 8 x 10 spacing)
- A current N.C. Substitute W-9 Form is required at the time of project completion along with any associated invoices.

Eligible Tree Planting Practices

- Hand Plant Pine Species
- Hand Plant Hardwoods/Wetland Species
- Hand Plant Containerized Pine Species
- Machine Plant Pine Species
- Machine Plant & Scalp - Pine Species
- Machine Plant Hardwood Species
- Labor Only – Seedlings provided at no cost
- Other Tree Planting Practices

Species to be planted must be recorded to determine the appropriate reimbursement percentage that will be applied. Reimbursement rates will either be 40% or 60% of actual costs up to the prevailing rate whichever is less and dependent on the species or practice.

AF Application Funding Process

- Each application that is received at the NCFS HQ will be assigned a unique request number for tracking purposes and utilized during the funding draw process.
- Project requests will be assigned to the appropriate priority funding tier.
- Applicants will receive funding if their application number is drawn during the lottery process, following the priority funding methodology.
 - Random draw funding will start with projects within the **Afforestation** tier until either all funding is allocated, or all projects have been funded based on requested amounts from projects submitted.
 - If available funding remains, projects will be randomly drawn for funding within the **Reforestation 2 – Non-Loblolly species** priority tier. Funding will continue until all funding is allocated, or all projects have been funded and available funds remain.
 - If available funding remains, projects will be randomly drawn for funding within the **Reforestation 3 – Loblolly species** priority tier. Funding will continue until all available annual funding is fully allocated.
 - The NCFS does not guarantee that all project requests submitted for funding will receive funding.
- All applicants that are awarded funding will receive a formal approval letter from the NCFS State Headquarters to notify recipients of the award amount, project start date, and program funding requirements.
- Any unfunded applications will be returned to their respective NCFS District and a formal letter should be sent to the applicant from the corresponding NCFS District notifying them that their application was not awarded funding and future options available to them.

Project Implementation and Certification

Since the AF funding is time limited, projects submitted for funding should be “shovel ready”. Landowners will have 1-year to complete practices following cost-share approval. No extensions will be granted for plant only funded projects.

For certification of practice completion, the landowner or their consultant/agent must notify NCFS personnel by phone prior to the contractor starting any work (tree planting projects). Failure to notify NCFS County personnel to verify practice performance standards may result in a delay or cancellation of the cost-share payment. Cost-share payment for unsatisfactorily completed practices may be denied if performance standards are not met.

Project certification includes the completion of any required quality control and site inspections during practice implementation and an acreage measurement that verifies the actual established practice acres that are completed along with the location for documentation.

Quality control (QC) inspections will be made by NCFS personnel to certify cost-shared tree planting practices. Tree Planting Quality control inspections will be recorded on NCFS Tree Planting Quality Control Form 4204-2. All tree planting practices should follow the performance standards as outlined in the “NCFS Tree Planting Pocket Guide”.

Invoices and acres certified as completed must correspond. However, invoices do not have to include acres - only costs). The acres certified by NCFS personnel as completed will suffice when no conflicting acreage figures are shown elsewhere.

AF Reimbursement Payment Process

Following completion and certification of projects, landowners and/or their agents should submit all invoices for work completed along with a completed N.C. Substitute W-9 Form to the local NCFS office for approval consideration and to begin the reimbursement payment process.

A NCFS representative will complete the performance section on Form 4910-3. The NCFS representative certifies performance and acreage following project measurement certification and verifies that NCFS silvicultural and environmental standards have been met.

This form, along with the paid private contractor’s invoice and the W-9 Form should be sent to the NCFS Headquarters for processing of payment from the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Payment will be made following approval of all required forms and associated invoices that have been paid in full for completed practices.

Payment will be made by applying the cost-share percentage rate in effect at the time of sign-up to the approved prevailing rate or actual cost, whichever is less. Payment will not exceed the total amount approved by sub-practices. The maximum cost-sharing rate shall not exceed 60% of any actual cost or the prevailing rate for any approved practice.

Recapture clause

Landowners who accept program funding are required to maintain those acres in forestland for a period of ten (10) years and to comply with the provisions in their approved forest management plan.

Landowners will be required to repay all or part of the funds paid to them if they, (a) destroy the installed practice(s) during the maintenance period, (b) fail to maintain the practice(s) as stated in the approved forest management plan, or (c) voluntarily relinquish control or title to the land on which the installed practice has been established and the new owner or operator of the land does not agree, in writing, to properly maintain the practice(s) for the remainder of the maintenance period.

Recapture of program funds will not be pursued when the practice(s) is destroyed due to an “act of God” or for actions beyond the landowner’s control (such as condemnation).

Program Prevailing Rates

- NCFS Regional prevailing rates will be utilized for this cost-share program, and have been posted on the NC Forest Service webpage at http://ncforestservice.gov/Managing_your_forest/fdp.htm

AF Plant Only Funding Program Contacts

- If you have specific questions about this memo, please contact:
 - Jaimee Cappelletti – FDP Administrator at 919-857-4832 (Jaimee.Cappelletti@ncagr.gov)
 - Ron Myers – Forest Management Branch Head at 919-857-4811 (Ron.Myers@ncagr.gov.)
- Information about American Forests organization can be found at the following weblink <https://www.americanforests.org/>



American Forests Plant Only Funding NCFS Regional Prevailing Rates, FY 22-23



Tree Planting Practices	Mountain Region, R3			Piedmont Region, R2			Coastal Plain Region, R1		
	NCFS Districts (1, 2, 9, 12)			NCFS Districts (3, 5, 6, 10, 11)			NCFS Districts (4, 7, 8, 13)		
	Low	Med	High	Low	Med	High	Low	Med	High
Hand Plant Pine, Loblolly (40%)	\$ 105.00		\$ 115.00	\$ 105.00		\$ 115.00	\$ 105.00		\$ 115.00
Hand Plant, Hardwood/Wetland (60%)	\$ 200.00		\$ 280.00	\$ 200.00		\$ 280.00	\$ 200.00		\$ 280.00
Hand Plant Pine, Shortleaf/Longleaf/White Pine (60%)		\$ 115.00			\$ 115.00			\$ 115.00	
Hand Plant Containerized Pine, Loblolly (40%)	\$ 140.00		\$ 160.00	\$ 140.00		\$ 160.00	\$ 140.00		\$ 160.00
Hand Plant Containerized Pine, Shortleaf/Longleaf/White Pine (60%)	\$ 140.00		\$ 160.00	\$ 140.00		\$ 160.00	\$ 140.00		\$ 160.00
Machine Plant Pine, Loblolly (40%)	\$ 90.00		\$ 135.00	\$ 90.00		\$ 135.00	\$ 90.00		\$ 135.00
Machine Plant Pine, Shortleaf/Longleaf/White Pine (60%)	\$ 90.00		\$ 135.00	\$ 90.00		\$ 135.00	\$ 90.00		\$ 135.00
Machine Plant, Scalp, Loblolly (40%)	\$ 100.00		\$ 140.00	\$ 100.00		\$ 140.00	\$ 100.00		\$ 140.00
Machine Plant, Scalp, Shortleaf/Longleaf/White Pine (60%)	\$ 100.00		\$ 140.00	\$ 100.00		\$ 140.00	\$ 100.00		\$ 140.00
Machine Plant, Hardwoods (60%)	\$ 200.00		\$ 280.00	\$ 200.00		\$ 280.00	\$ 200.00		\$ 280.00
Labor Only		\$ 50.00			\$ 50.00			\$ 50.00	
Other - TP, ARF Approval for (H) rate	\$ 100.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 200.00

