



DIVISION OF FORESTRY & FIRE PROTECTION

Alaska Forest Stewardship - Private Landowner Support Cost Share Program Information and Guidelines

Introduction

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry & Fire Protection (DFFP) has been awarded funding from the Forest Service as part of a national effort to support sustainable forestland management and conservation. The funding will strengthen Alaska's efforts to improve forest resilience, reduce wildfire risk and support underserved communities.

This cost-share program is designed to support the goals of the 2020 Alaska State Forest Action Plan by strengthening forest resilience, reducing wildfire risk, and promoting adaptive forest management. By offering financial assistance for on-the-ground practices such as thinning, pruning, sanitation harvests, and scarification, the program enables private landowners to actively manage their forestlands. These practices address key challenges including wildfire threats, insect infestations, and maintaining forest health. As Alaska's forests experience increasing stress, they become more vulnerable to pests, disease, and degradation, which can directly affect nearby communities. By encouraging proactive and sustainable forest management, this program plays a vital role in maintaining the ecological integrity, cultural value, and long-term productivity of Alaska's forest landscapes.

Program Eligibility and Limitations

Funding for this cost-share program is available to individual private landowners who own a minimum of five (5) acres. Properties located within the Municipality of Anchorage are not eligible for this cost-share program. While the proposed project may take place on a portion of the property, eligibility is based on total ownership. Large landowners managing multiple administrative units (EX: non-adjacent parcels, separate ownership entities or LLC's) may submit separate project proposals for each unit that meets the minimum acreage requirements. Smaller adjacent units may also be combined to meet the five-acre threshold.

The Alaska Division of Forestry & Fire Protection (DFFP) administers a variety of landowner assistance programs. Interested landowners should contact their regional Stewardship Forester to determine which program best suits their needs.

Contact Information located at: <https://forestry.alaska.gov/stewardship/index>



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This cost-share program does not require a funding match. Reimbursement is based on flat rates outlined in the DFFP Landowner Assistance Cost-Share Rate Sheet (available separately). For eligible landowners, the maximum reimbursement is \$15,000.

To qualify for funding, a DFFP Forest Stewardship Program representative—or their designee—must verify the need for one or more eligible forestry practices. This is typically done through a site visit. In remote areas, projects may be approved without an in-person visit if sufficient documentation is provided. DFFP will determine sufficiency of documentation.

Once eligibility is confirmed, DFFP staff will develop a Forest Stewardship Plan (FSP) for the landowner. The FSP outlines landowner objectives, describes current forest conditions, and recommends management practices to achieve desired outcomes. Approved practices will be listed in the FSP. Specific implementation requirements will be provided in the FSP and "Practice Requirements" worksheet. Landowners must follow these requirements to receive reimbursement. Reimbursement rates are determined on a per-acre basis, subject to program limits.

By accepting cost-share funding, landowners agree to allow periodic site inspections by DFFP staff. Other than the initial inspection, final inspection and possible interim inspections, **no work will be undertaken by the State on non-State lands** within this grant.

Forest land enrolled in this program must remain in forest use for at least five years following project completion. If the land is converted to non-forest use within that period, cost-share funds must be repaid to DFFP.

All approved projects must comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws. Landowners are responsible for securing necessary permits, including those related to the Forest Resources & Practices Act, Alaska Department of Fish and Game regulations for fish-bearing streams, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers requirements under the Clean Water Act (Section 404). Forest practices must support forest regeneration and protect water quality and fish habitat.

Allocation of Alaska Private Landowner Cost-Share Funds

Funding will be allocated to eligible landowners on a first-come, first-served basis through a rolling application process, while funds are available, determined by the date the signed application is received by the DFFP Forest Stewardship Program. If multiple



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applications are submitted on the same day, priority may be given to projects located in areas of high interest to the State.

Project work started prior to official funding approval or completed outside the recommended seasonal timeframe will not be eligible for reimbursement. Formal approval will be issued via email or mailed letter.

Revisions or Cancellations

If unforeseen circumstances require changes to or cancellation of an approved project, the landowner must submit a request to the DFFP Forest Stewardship Program. All modification or cancellation requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Applying for Funding

Funding guidelines and application materials, as well as notification of funding exhaustion, will be documented on the DFFP website at <http://forestry.alaska.gov/stewardship>. The application period begins June 1, 2025, and will continue until funding is exhausted or until October 1, 2028, whichever comes first.

Application materials may be submitted by mail to:

Division of Forestry & Fire Protection
Forest Stewardship Program
550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 1450
Anchorage, AK 99501

Alternatively, application materials may be emailed to your regional Forest Stewardship Forester. Contact information for regional Stewardship Foresters is available on the Forest Stewardship Program website: <https://forestry.alaska.gov/stewardship/index>

Eligible Practices

The following practices are eligible for cost-share when done in accordance with the Practice Requirements. Practices will be approved on a site-specific basis, based on resource conditions and likelihood of effectiveness.

- **Thinning:** Use mechanical thinning in **boreal forests** to modify stand structure and reduce the density of flammable vegetation. In interior black spruce stands, thin to 8x8 ft. spacing; in white spruce/hardwood stands, thin to 10x10 ft.



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spacing. In **coastal temperate forests**, thin young-growth stands (under 35 years old) to a density of 220 trees per acre, or approximately 14x14 ft. spacing.

- **Pruning:** Conduct pruning in **boreal spruce forest types** to remove lower branches and eliminate ladder fuels up to a height of 6 feet. Combine pruning with thinning in **coastal temperate forests**, removing branches up to a height of 6 feet.
- **Scarification:** Implement scarification in targeted sites following timber harvesting or thinning operations to promote fire resistant native hardwood regeneration.
- **Sanitation Harvests:** Physically remove dead and dying trees to reduce fuel loading following increasingly frequent and widespread forest insect caused mortality events.
- **Invasive Species Removal:** Implement mechanical and chemical treatments for invasive species removal focused on *Prunus padus* & *Prunus virginiana* on private lands.

Cost Share Rates: Current rates for cost-share practices can be found on the Stewardship Landowner Support Cost Share Rate Sheet.

Chemical Use Guidelines

Any chemical treatments must:

- Be federally and state registered.
- Be used in compliance with all labeling and regulatory requirements.
- Follow recommendations outlined in the Forest Stewardship Plan and Practice Requirements worksheet.
- Be applied by a licensed pesticide applicator when applying restricted use pesticides or applying any pesticides on property other than their own.

Forest Stewardship Plan Overview

Following a site visit by the Division of Forestry and Fire Protection (DFFP) staff, each landowner will receive a **Forest Stewardship Plan** outlining recommended management practices. These recommendations will also be reviewed in person during the site visit.



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A Forest Stewardship Plan is designed to help landowners achieve their goals for their property, regardless of whether the property qualifies for cost-share funding. Additionally, the plan may include recommendations that are **not currently eligible for reimbursement** under the Alaska Private Landowner Cost-share Program.

At a minimum, each Forest Stewardship Plan will include:

- Landowner name and contact information
- Date of site visit
- Property location description
- Landowner's objectives for the property
- Description of the forest type
- Recommended management practices and their timing
- "Do Nothing" alternative (what may occur if no action is taken)
- Grant Agreement and Practice Requirements (if applicable)

Grant Agreement and Cost-share Eligibility

If the DFFP determines the property qualifies for cost-share funding, the landowner will also receive:

- A **Grant Application** specifying the approved practices, maximum reimbursement amount, and completion date
- A **Practice Requirements** worksheet that must be followed to receive reimbursement

Both documents must be signed and returned to DFFP.

Project Completion Requirements

All projects must be completed by the Completion Date listed in the Grant Application. Under no circumstances may projects be completed after October 1, 2029. Projects not completed by the applicable deadline are not eligible for reimbursement. To certify project completion:

1. The landowner must notify DFFP within 30 days after completing the approved work.



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2. DFFP staff will inspect the site to confirm that the work meets required standards. Verification of completion may take up to 30 days from the date of notification of project completion.
3. Acreage completed will be rounded up to the nearest whole acre, where applicable.
4. Once approved, and upon receipt of all required documentation and receipts, reimbursement will be processed.

Program Deadlines

- Approved work must be completed no later than **October 1, 2029**.
- Requests for reimbursement must be submitted by **November 1, 2029**.
- No reimbursement payments will be issued after **December 1, 2029**.

Reimbursement Details

- Reimbursement is considered **taxable income**. The State will issue an **IRS 1099** form to the landowner.
- No reimbursement will be issued until the work is completed and verified, as defined on the practice worksheet by DFFP staff, and all required forms have been signed and completed.
- Reimbursement may take up to 30 days following approval and verification by DFFP staff.
- Reimbursement requests will not be accepted after November 1, 2029.
- No reimbursements will be issued after December 1, 2029

Required documentation includes:

- A completed and signed cost-share application
- A completed Substitute Form W-9 (if not already on file)
 - Substitute W-9 Form is available here:
http://doa.alaska.gov/dof/forms/resource/sub_form_w9.pdf or can be printed and mailed to the landowner by request.
 - Substitute W-9 Forms must be submitted by cost share recipients to:



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- doa.dof.vendor.helpdesk@alaska.gov
- OR mailed to:
Department of Administration
Division of Finance
P.O. Box 110204 Juneau, AK 99811-0204
- OR faxed to 907 – 465 - 2169

Important Note

Participation in the cost-share program does **not eliminate future fire risks or forest health issues**. Landowners should continue to monitor and manage their property accordingly.

Summary of Steps to Initiate a Project for Private Individual Landowners

1. Schedule a Site Visit

- Contact your regional Stewardship Forester to arrange a site visit and verify your eligibility for the program.

2. Complete Initial Sections of the Grant Application

- Fill out the *Applicant Information* and *Property Location* sections of the Private Landowner Support Cost-Share Grant Application.

3. Forester Completes Remaining Application Sections

- Your DFFP Forester will complete the remaining parts of the application and return a copy for your signature.

4. Sign and Return the Grant Application

- Your DFFP Forester will provide the applicable practice worksheets outlining approved activities and specifications — review these prior to signing.
- Sign the application once you have reviewed and understand the approved practices.
- Return the signed application to your DFFP Forester.
- **Important:** Do not begin any project work until the signed application has



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been returned.

- Note: All work must be completed within one year of the application's signing date.

5. Submit W-9 Form

- Complete and submit the Alternate W-9 Form to the Vendor Support Desk.
- CC your DFFP Forester on the submission to confirm it has been received.

6. Receive Forest Stewardship Plan

- A completed Forest Stewardship Plan will be delivered to you.

7. Notify DFFP Upon Work Completion

- Notify DFFP staff within **30 days** of finishing the work.

8. Work Verification

- DFFP staff will verify that all work aligns with the approved application and worksheets.
- They will complete the *Acres Completed* and *Total Payment* sections of your grant application.

9. Submit for Payment Processing

- You will be notified that the grant agreement has been submitted for final processing and payment through accounting.