

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS****Reply Due: September 3, 2004****INTRODUCTION**

At a regional workshop held in November 2003, the Southern Roundtable on Sustainable Forests (SRSF), a regional multi-stakeholder group dedicated to the goal of sustainable forests, identified several areas of concern. While the SRSF plans to continue dialogue on the full suite of forest sustainability issues, it proposes to form working groups to focus on three specific areas: The Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley, The Southern Appalachians and incentives for private landowners. The working groups will provide information and support a meaningful dialogue at the SRSF 2005 Workshop, as well as encourage local action to support sustainable forests in the South. The models and lessons learned from these working groups can serve as case studies for other subregions or issues related to sustainable forests.

The SRSF is requesting proposals from organizations to form and lead working groups in the following four areas:

**1. Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley (LMAV):**

The LMAV was identified as a “hot spot” at the November workshop of the SRSF. As a “hot spot” this subregion is faced with challenges relating to water quality, soil fragility, a declining agriculture sector, and the continual abandonment of marginal agricultural lands. There are numerous opportunities to convert marginal agricultural lands into forested areas, benefiting both the natural environment and local economies.

**2. Southern Appalachians:**

The Southern Appalachians have long been noted for their rich biological diversity and unique habitats. While the area has been a favorite destination for vacationers for more than a century, in recent years has become a preferred living environment for young families and retirees, leading to increased development pressures in the urban-wildland interface. In addition, a declining forestry and manufacturing industry has led to economic problems in many of these areas. The intersection of the population growth, economic downturn, expanding urban areas, and sensitive ecosystems has provided an interesting challenge for the subregion.

**3. Non-Industrial Private Landowners and Incentives:**

Over 79 percent of forested land in the Southern US is owned and managed by non-industrial private landowners. Land management practices vary on these privately owned forests and trends have shown positive benefits for forests can be achieved through both market and policy landowner incentives for specific forest management practices. When funding is available, landowners will manage for various forest stewardship benefits (e.g. wildlife, water), and will often work in collaboration with adjacent property owners for positive results. One prevailing question is what type of incentives and/or assistance do landowners need to manage their forest lands more sustainably?

**4. Tribal Lands:**

The Tribal Nations in the South manage significant amounts of forested land and have always managed them with sustainability being a major objective. Cultural values and traditional ecological knowledge play a large role in their management frameworks, and these two inputs are not currently enumerated in any valuation processes, nor is the impact they have on forest management. The Intertribal Timber Council is supporting the development of a task force at the national level to define sustainability on Tribal lands and there are ample opportunities to parallel and build on these efforts with Tribes in the South. What are the specific challenges facing these Nation's to continue sustainable management of their natural resources?

**OBJECTIVES**

For each working group there are many objectives with an end goal of sustainable forest resource management. What they can accomplish with the limited budget provided here will depend on the participants and the way they determine to proceed. However, there are five desired objectives the SRSF would like the working groups to make progress towards. These objectives will initiate the development of an action-based strategy for each working group at the 2005 Workshop.

1. Build a list of stakeholders-
  - a. Lists should include (*when appropriate*): environmental conservation organizations; communities; forestry professionals; Federal agencies (including local field units); local, Tribal and State governments; industry; private landowners, extension and education personnel, and; researchers, etc.
2. Develop an outreach strategy to encourage participation.
3. Engage the stakeholders in a dialogue to:
  - a. Develop a process that will maintain engagement, expand the stakeholder participant group, and transfer information
  - b. Identify important challenges to forest sustainability
  - c. Identify areas of success
  - d. Identify areas for mutually-beneficial collaboration
  - e. Develop consensus about future threats to forest sustainability
4. Provide the SRSF with feedback on the working group and suggest alternative approaches to this process if/when needed.
5. Prepare a report (format to be determined) and complete a presentation on the results of the working group at the 2005 Workshop of the SRSF.

**TIMEFRAME/FUNDING**

Eight months/\$12,000 (per working group)

The process and reports must be completed by the time of the 2005 Workshop.

*The initiation of dialogue around these issues may involve more resources than currently allotted. Matching funds are not expected, but are encouraged if available. The SRSF encourages organizations to be specific about any resources (in-kind and/or financial) they can contribute to these working groups. Working groups can propose additional projects/funding needs for their topic area as they proceed. These requests will be considered based on circumstance and ability to produce results.*

**REQUIREMENTS- Proposals must be received by September 3, 2004 at 5pm**

Please prepare a proposal that specifies in 5 pages or less:

- Working Group of Interest
- Contact Information (including name and affiliation)
- Qualifications (history of forming partnerships/coalitions, projects that relate to the working groups geographic area or scope, etc)
- List of your organization's current partners
- A work plan defining activities and responsibilities
- Why is this topic important to you
- Any resources your organization can contribute

**Please send all proposals to:** USDA Forest Service-Southern Research Station  
c/o Susan Fox  
200 WT Weaver Blvd.  
Asheville, NC 28804

**SELECTION CRITERIA**

Proposals will be reviewed and awarded by the steering committee of the SRSF. Selection will be based on, but not limited to: your organizations history of forming and/or working with coalitions, experience and recognition related to the specified issue, and the ability of your organization to contribute supporting funds for your proposal.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

For more information on specific working groups and proposal submission, please contact the appropriate USDA Forest Service facilitator:

- Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley- Steverson Moffat: 504.589.7133, [smoffat@fs.fed.us](mailto:smoffat@fs.fed.us)
- Southern Appalachians- Charles Van Sickle: 828.665.2422, [cvans1@juno.com](mailto:cvans1@juno.com)
- Private Landowners and Incentives- Jennifer Moore Myers: 919.515.9497, [jmooremyers@fs.fed.us](mailto:jmooremyers@fs.fed.us)
- Tribal Lands- Susan Fox: 828.257.4305, [sfox@fs.fed.us](mailto:sfox@fs.fed.us)

These contacts will be available to the working group leads to provide technical advice, act in an administrative capacity, and to serve in a facilitative role.

For general information please contact Jennifer Hayes ([jenniferhayes@fs.fed.us](mailto:jenniferhayes@fs.fed.us)) or Susan Fox ([sfox@fs.fed.us](mailto:sfox@fs.fed.us)).