

Agricultural Stewardship Association, American Forests, Appalachian Mountain Club, Bayfield Regional Conservancy, Berks Nature, Blue Mountain Land Trust, Champlain Area Trails, Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts, Columbia Land Conservancy, Inc., Columbia Land Trust, Conservation Northwest, Cornwall Conservation Trust, Deschutes Land Trust, Epic-Environmental Protection Information Center, Great Peninsula Conservancy, Greenbelt Land Trust, Hudson Highlands Land Trust, Jefferson Land Trust, Kaniksu Land Trust, Klamath Forest Alliance, Land Trust Alliance, McKenzie River Trust, Mainspring Conservation Trust, Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy, Monadnock Conservancy, Mt. Adams Resource Stewards, New Hampshire Land Trust Coalition, New Jersey Highlands Coalition, Nisqually Community Forest, Nisqually Land Trust, North Coast Land Conservancy, Open Space Institute, Orange County Land Trust, Oregon Coast Alliance, Oregon Coast Community Forest Alliance, Otsego Land Trust, Rensselaer Plateau Alliance, Roanoke Electric Cooperative and Subsidiaries, Salisbury Association Land Trust, Saratoga PLAN, Sharon Land Trust, Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, Southern Oregon Land Conservancy, Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy, Sustainable Northwest, Tar River Land Conservancy, The Climate Trust, The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy, The Northern Forest Center, The Trust for Public Land, The Wilderness Society, Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation District, Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust, Vermont Land Trust, Vermont Woodlands Association, Wallowa Land Trust, Wallowa Resources, Washington Association of Land Trusts, Westchester Land Trust, Western New York Land Conservancy, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, Wild Rivers Land Trust, Willamalane Park and Recreation District

June 30, 2016

The Honorable Robert Bonnie  
Under Secretary for Natural Resources and  
Environment  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

The Honorable Tom Tidwell  
Chief  
U.S. Forest Service  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Under Secretary Bonnie and Chief Tidwell,

As representatives of a broad coalition of conservation and forestry organizations and municipal agencies, we are writing to express our strong support for the U.S. Forest Service's Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program (CFP). Since its first grant round in FY 2012, CFP has supported nearly three dozen community forest projects across 17 states and territories. However, demand for CFP funding far outstrips its availability, so we urge you to build upon the program's impressive achievements by requesting \$5 million for the program in the agency's Fiscal Year 2018 budget proposal.

CFP is an innovative tool to advance the Administration's goals of supporting local economies, increasing opportunities for Americans to connect with forests in their own communities, and fostering new public-private partnerships. We share the belief that these connections are vital to communities' livability and economic well-being. Since Fiscal Year 2012, CFP has contributed to these important efforts by assisting local communities to secure forests for public recreation, sustainable forestry, for wildlife habitat and water quality preservation, and created jobs in rural communities.

As you know, CFP provides matching funds to help local government entities, Indian tribes, and non-profit organizations purchase forestlands that are threatened with development and manage them as community forests. The program directly addresses the urgent need to prevent the widespread conversion of private forests to non-forest uses. This threat was highlighted in the U.S. Forest Service report *Private Forests, Public Benefits*, which projected that 57 million acres of America's private forests could experience a substantial increase in housing density by 2030.

In its brief history, CFP has made substantial progress in preserving forests by combining federal and non-federal resources. Indeed, through the latest round of CFP grants, project partners leveraged \$10.6 million in federal funds to secure more than \$34.5 million in non-federal support. As a result of these partnerships, more than 15,000 acres of private forestlands have been or soon will be acquired to create new or expand existing community forests. This impressive leveraging ratio demonstrates the willingness of local entities to match federal funding with significant commitments of funding and other resources.

Given the strong interest in the Community Forest Program and its leveraging successes, we urge you to sustain the program's growing momentum by providing greater funding to meet demand. A \$5 million investment in the program as part of the President's FY 2018 budget request will allow the program to benefit even more communities across the nation.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and we hope you will give it the highest possible consideration.

Sincerely,

Kathy DeCoster  
VP and Director of Federal Affairs  
The Trust for Public Land  
Washington, D.C.

Jim Bonesteel  
Executive Director  
Rensselaer Plateau Alliance  
Averill Park, NY

Erika Lang  
Conservation Director  
Bayfield Regional Conservancy  
Bayfield, WI

Bryan David  
Government Relations Specialist  
Land Trust Alliance  
Washington, D.C.

Thomas D. Saunders  
President and CEO  
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy  
Pittsburgh, PA

Matt Leahy  
Public Policy Manager  
Society for the Protection of NH Forests  
Concord, NH

Lori J. Ensinger  
President  
Westchester Land Trust  
Bedford Hills, NY

Jay McLaughlin  
Executive Director  
Mt. Adams Resource Stewards  
Glenwood, WA

Curtis Wynn  
President and CEO  
Roanoke Electric Cooperative and Subsidiaries  
Ahoskie, NC

Kimberly Baker  
Executive Director  
Klamath Forest Alliance  
Orleans, CA

Natalynne DeLapp  
Executive Director  
Epic-Environmental Protection Information Ctr.  
Arcata, CA

Sharon Fouts Taylor  
Executive Director  
Mainspring Conservation Trust  
Franklin, NC

Cherie Kearney  
Forest Conservation Director  
Columbia Land Trust  
Vancouver, WA

Andrew Spaeth  
Forest Program Director  
Sustainable Northwest  
Portland, OR

Kelly Reed  
Vice President, Government Relations  
The Conservation Fund  
Arlington, VA

Sarah Spaeth  
Executive Director  
Jefferson Land Trust  
Port Townsend, WA

Ryan Owens  
Executive Director  
Monadnock Conservancy  
Keene, NH

Sandra Staples-Bortner  
Executive Director  
Great Peninsula Conservancy  
Bremerton, WA

Michael Manzulli  
President  
Oregon Coast Alliance  
Astoria, OR

Bryan Bowden  
President  
Nisqually Community Forest  
Olympia, WA

Mikailah McKee  
Senior Project Analyst, Forestry  
The Climate Trust  
Portland, OR

Don Andre  
Vice President  
Oregon Coast Community Forest Alliance  
Newport, OR

Joe Moll  
Executive Director  
McKenzie River Trust  
Eugene, OR

Julia Somers  
Executive Director  
New Jersey Highlands Coalition  
Boontown, NJ

Nancy Smith  
Executive Director  
Western New York Land Conservancy  
East Aurora, NY

Kelley Beamer  
Executive Director  
Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts  
Portland, OR

Ryan Owens  
President  
New Hampshire Land Trust Coalition  
Concord, NH

Katie Voelke  
Executive Director  
North Coast Land Conservancy  
Seaside, OR

Joe Kane  
Executive Director  
Nisqually Land Trust  
Olympia, WA

Brad Chalfant  
Executive Director  
Deschutes Land Trust  
Bend, OR

Dave Werntz  
Science and Conservation Director  
Conservation Northwest  
Bellingham, WA

Jim Delaune  
Executive Director  
Orange County Land Trust  
Sugar Loaf, NY

Teri Ptacek  
Executive Director  
Agricultural Stewardship Association  
Greenwich, NY

Eric Grace  
Executive Director  
Kaniksu Land Trust  
Sandpoint, ID

Bob Keefer  
Superintendent  
Willamalane Park and Recreation District  
Springfield, OR

Michael Pope  
Executive Director  
Greenbelt Land Trust  
Corvallis, OR

Peter D. Ter Louw  
President and Executive Director  
Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy  
Galesburg, MI

Putnam W. Blodgett  
President  
Vermont Woodlands Association  
Rutland, VT

Larry Lloyd  
Senior Ecologist  
Berks Nature  
Reading, PA

Gil Livingston  
President  
Vermont Land Trust  
Montpelier, VT

Cecilia Clavet  
Sr. Policy Advisor, Fire & Forest Restoration  
The Nature Conservancy  
Arlington, VA

Maria Trabka  
Executive Director  
Saratoga PLAN  
Saratoga Springs, NY

Nils Christoffersen  
Executive Director  
Wallowa Resources  
Enterprise, OR

Tim Copeland  
Executive Director  
Blue Mountain Land Trust  
Walla Walla, WA

Derek Halberg  
Executive Director  
Tar River Land Conservancy  
Louisburg, NC

Rebecca Turner  
Senior Director of Programs and Policy  
American Forests  
Washington, D.C.

Linda M. Garrett  
Executive Director  
Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust  
Watertown, NY

Peter R. Paden  
Executive Director  
Columbia Land Conservancy, Inc.  
Chatham, NY

Christopher J. Elliman  
President and CEO  
Open Space Institute  
New York, NY

Rob Riley  
President  
The Northern Forest Center  
Concord, NH

Jerry Becker  
Conservation Director  
Wild Rivers Land Trust  
Port Orford, OR

Kathleen Ackley  
Executive Director  
Wallowa Land Trust  
Enterprise, OR

Doug Menke  
General Manager  
Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation District  
Beaverton, OR

Chris Maron  
Executive Director  
Champlain Area Trails  
Westport, NY

John Winter  
Executive Director  
Otsego Land Trust  
Cooperstown, NY

Mark King  
Executive Director  
Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy  
Delmar, NY

Harry White  
Conservation Director  
Cornwall Conservation Trust, Salisbury  
Association Land Trust, Sharon Land Trust, CT

Alan Rowsome  
Senior Dir. of Government Relations for Lands  
The Wilderness Society  
Washington, D.C.

Michelle Smith  
Executive Director  
Hudson Highlands Land Trust  
Garrison, NY

Heather Clish  
Director of Conservation and Recreation Policy  
Appalachian Mountain Club  
Boston, MA

Hannah Clark  
Executive Director  
Washington Association of Land Trusts  
Seattle, WA

Diane Garcia  
Executive Director  
Southern Oregon Land Conservancy  
Ashland, OR