



**Briefing: Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration (CFLR) Budget  
Transparency in U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region**

The Sierra Cascades All Lands Enhancement (SCALE) effort is a partnership among the three federally funded Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration (CFLR) projects in U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region: Dinkey Collaborative on the Sierra National Forest, the Burney Hat Creek Community Forestry and Watershed Group on the Lassen National Forest, and the Amador Calaveras Consensus Group on the Eldorado and Stanislaus National Forests. One of the key issues that the SCALE participants identified in early meetings was a lack of understanding of how CFLR budgets reflect proposed collaborative work and the role of the collaborative groups in the budget planning process. This briefing is a product of conversations among Sierra Institute staff, U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region, and the three collaborative groups; it provides an overview of findings from Sierra Institute research into CFLR budgeting. The purpose of this document is to provide a foundation of understanding for collaborative groups to engage the Forest Service in a more informed conversation about the landscape restoration projects being implemented and how the budget accounts for that work.

According to the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009, which authorized the CFLR program, “[t]here is authorized to be appropriated to the Fund \$40,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2009 through 2019, to remain available until expended.” This authorizing legislation means that funds appropriated by congress in the annual appropriations bill are available until spent. This does not mean new funds will be made available beyond FY19, including for those projects that started in 2012, unless Congress funds subsequent years. The table below illustrates the funding by fiscal year for each of the CFLR projects in Pacific Southwest Region as identified in approved project proposals.

*Table 1: USFS Pacific Southwest Region CFLRP Proposed Project Budgets by Fiscal Year*

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Dinkey	1,365,139	768,778	1,757,509	955,740	1,409,835	1,255,019	1,480,865	1,238,463	702,393	571,231
ACCG	-	-	730,000	1,046,539	2,062,536	1,613,394	1,657,339	2,513,880	1,590,568	2,511,165
Burney	-	-	604,629	1,254,598	940,950	1,411,310	1,704,761	1,021,792	976,385	1,907,261

Federal appropriations to the Forest Service are susceptible to budget reductions; however, the Chief of the Forest Service has, on numerous occasions, made a commitment to fully support the CFLR Program. Additionally, there is support from the Pacific Southwest Regional Office to ensure that the level of support provided to collaborative projects aligns with the proposed CFLR budgets over the life of the program. As such, agency staff and collaborative groups should plan accordingly and expect that the proposed budget will be made available to implement collaborative

restoration projects in future fiscal years. The aggregate budget for each of these three CFLR projects for FY2009 and FY2019 are shown in Table 2.

*Table 2: Total Project Budget for FY09-FY19 by CFLRP in USFS Pacific Southwest Region*

<b>CFLRP Group</b>	<b>Total Project</b>
Dinkey	\$12,954,373
ACCG	\$14,455,728
Burney-Hat Creek	\$10,426,315

The Burney Hat-Creek and the Amador Calaveras Consensus Group CFLR proposals call for funding in fiscal year 2020 and fiscal years 2020 and 2021, respectively. Burney-Hat Creek proposed spending \$960,993 in FY20 and ACCG aimed to spend \$1,501,030 in FY20 and \$1,427,399 in FY21. The funding requests for fiscal years after 2019 are not included in the CFLR legislation and therefore may not be funded. That being said, projects success will likely be important to ensure continued interest and investments.

### **Role of Collaborative Groups in CFLR Budget Making**

There are two main types of funds that are accounted for in the CLFR budgets. These include what are referred to as “core” funds, or the federally appropriated dollars used to pay for implementation of landscape restoration work as identified in the authorizing language, and “matching” funds, which include federally appropriated funds, partner funds and in-kind support generated to implement landscape restoration projects. Within “core” and “matching” there are various job codes that can be used to account for the funds. The most common “core” job code that supports CFLR work is “CFLN.”

Non-federal collaborative participants should work closely with the Forest Service make sure the CFLR “core and match” dollars are being spent and that match requirements are being tracked. The budget is a reflection of the priorities for the Forest, and if the budget does not align with the collaborative groups’ priorities, then steps should be taken to ensure that the dollars better align with collaboratively developed landscape restoration goals. Match is, in large part, an obligation of the collaborative to share in the cost of implementing landscape restoration projects. The collaborative therefore should be engaged in planning how the match obligations will be met.

An outcome of conversations among Sierra Institute staff, U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region, and the three CFLR collaborative groups is the opportunity to have, at minimum, quarterly budget updates from the Forest Service staff to the respective CFLRs. Quarterly updates will include a narrative that outlines and explains the budget as well as an update on match to date. It is important to note that the budget is not spent at a consistent rate throughout the fiscal year and collaborative group should anticipate that funding levels will not coincide exactly with the amount of time elapsed in a given fiscal year. Match is tracked and will be included in the regular budget updates. This is important because match over and above a given fiscal year requirement will be carried over to the next year and can be accrued to meet overall CFLR project match obligations. Again, this requirement extends for the life of the program FY09 to FY19.

Establishing regular check-ins and a process through which the collaborative and Forest Service communicate about the budget will help to ensure transparency and address questions or concerns before they become larger issues. Ultimately, increased transparency will work to create efficiencies by helping to inform conversations about future landscape restoration work and how the financial resources align with collaborative priorities. Regional Budget Coordinator, Erica Nevins, will continue to provide regular budget updates to each of the respective forests with CFLR projects.

For more information about the Forest Service Budget contact Erica at [enevins@fs.fed.us](mailto:enevins@fs.fed.us) or by phone at 707.562.8978 or Sheri Elliott at [selliott@fs.fed.us](mailto:selliott@fs.fed.us) or 707.562.9028. If you are interested in learning more about the SCALE effort please contact Jonathan Kusel, Executive Director of the Sierra Institute for Community and Environment, at [jkusel@sierrainstitute.us](mailto:jkusel@sierrainstitute.us) or by phone at 530.284.1022.