# CFLRP Investments: What are we spending and what is the return on our investment?

CFLRP Projects are a small part of the NFS acreage, but produce outsized results

Taken together, the NFS acreage across the 23 **CFLRP landscapes represent about 11.4% of the total** NFS lands not in wilderness or roadless area designation. CFLR landscape acreage represents priority acres for restoration treatment to produce ecological, economic, and social outcomes and outputs – and areas where there is high capacity in place to support increased returns on investment. While they are only 11.4% of the NFS treatable acreage, these acres provided **20% of the Agency’s total hazardous fuels** reductions accomplishments in 2016, **15% of the timber volume** sold, **16% of the terrestrial habitat** enhanced, and **30% of the forest vegetation improved**. They also contributed 5% of the stream habitat enhanced accomplishments and 5% of trails maintained to standard.

In Region 6, the 5 Forests with CFLRP **increased hazardous fuels treatments by 43% since CFLRP** – over the same time period, the **Region has a whole increased by 10%**. It also increased **timber volume sold by 14%** since CFLRP, while the **Region has a whole increased by 7%**.

USFS investments in CFLRP are commensurate with their footprint

The total 2016 **FS investments** (~$90M, see table below) includes all restoration-related work on that landscape,and **is commensurate with the CFLRP projects’ 11.3 million acre NFS footprint**. Agency-wide, we expended an estimate $1.23 billion for comparable restoration-related work across the 99 million acres of the National Forest System not in wilderness or roadless area designation (~$12.43/acre). For CFLRP, we invested $90 million on 11.3 million acres (~$8.05/acre).

The funds appropriated through CFLRP (CFLN Budget Line Item) deliver significant contributions to Agency-wide accomplishments

The CFLN BLI itself is an important contributor to Agency accomplishments on its own as well. In 2016, expenses in **CFLN contributed to 9% of Agency-wide accomplishments** for both **hazardous fuels reduction** and **timber volume sold**.

CFLR seed money acts as leverage to bring in more resources

The strategic investments in CFLRP projects help to attract and leverage partner dollars: in FY16 alone, the $40 million in CFLN appropriated brought in $18.7 million in partner match on NFS lands and an additional $30 million in investments across the full CFLR landscape boundary. Partnership investments have increased over the course of the CFLR program (see chart below). For Forest Service partnership agency-wide, the goal is to generate between 20% and 50% match from partners. The CFLR program exceeds these standards.

*The CFLRP program helps us manage the land better.*

Scientific input can be strengthened by the CFLR approach

In 2016, the USFS Washington Office visited staff and local partners at 7 of the 23 CFLR projects to validate progress, identify challenges and opportunities to address barriers, capture learning, and gather feedback for the future. One key takeaway was that the CFLR **multi-party monitoring requirement and investment in monitoring provides a platform for building effective working relationships with partners and generates valuable data to improve subsequent projects within and beyond the CFLR boundaries**. Site-specific monitoring of treated areas with partners and the community can promote trust, transparency, and shared ownership. It also allows for learning and making improvements to treatments.

* For the Southern Blues Restoration Coalition, site-specific monitoring data helps the group resolve differences. By going into the field to observe and discuss ongoing and completed treatments **with their science liaisons, the group moves ahead by “following the science.”**
* On the Northeast Washington Forest Vision 2020 project, partners came up with an initial list of 120 possible monitoring questions and then worked together to prioritize 12 key questions. The project brings together the Forest Service, Colville Confederated Tribes, Conservation Northwest, Rocky Mountain Research Station, and others to carry out this monitoring plan. One monitoring component focused on engaging with tribal elders to map plants of social and cultural importance and understand the impacts of treatment activities on those plants. **Data collected regarding goshawks helped to address public concerns in a subsequent project.**
* Colorado Front Range hosts annual “monitoring jam sessions.” These “jam sessions” are a 1 day workshop by members of the CFLRP Leadership Team to **assess monitoring results and determine consistency with desired conditions**. The results of these sessions are ultimately summarized in a report that is presented to the Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership and made available on the web.

The focus and investment CFLRP brings to the collaborative process leads to more efficient NEPA analysis at larger scales, reduces objections and litigation and makes projects more successful in resolving objections and litigation when they do occur.

Agency-wide in 2016, completing the NEPA analysis (defined as from Notice of Intent to signed Finding Of No Significant Impact or Record of Decision), took **730** days for Environmental Assessments (**EAs**) and **1,373** days for Environmental Impact Statements (**EISs**).  Preliminary data show CFLR projects completing NEPA analyses in less time:

* In Colorado, the Escalante Landscape Restoration Stewardship **EA** took **192** days
* In Colorado, the Dove Vegetation Management Project **EA** took **615** days
* In Oregon, the Magone **EIS** took **808** days
* In Idaho, the Lost Creek Boulder Creek EIS took 557 days
* CFLR projects report that they can resolve appeals and objections more quickly due to strong community relationships from the CFLR program. The few CFLR projects that have been litigated have had CFLR collaboratives intervene on their behalf in the lawsuit, which they attribute as a major reason for their ultimate success in the litigation.
  + For example, because of the strong and diverse community support for a CFLR project, a federal court recently dismissed a lawsuit on the Lost Creek Boulder Creek (LCBC) project, which is part of the Weiser-Little Salmon CFLR on the Payette National Forest in Idaoh.  The lawsuit was filed by Alliance for Wild Rockies, Native Ecosystem Council, and Idaho Sporting Congress.  This is a great example of a court decision upholding collaborative groups’ recommendations, reaffirming the value of investing in collaborative processes.    This 80,000 acre project will continue full implementation and improve watershed condition class, improve forest resiliency, contribute to habitat improvement for ESA species, and benefit local economies.
* ***Note: The Forest Service is conducting additional analysis of CFLR NEPA, Objections and Litigation trends compared to the rest of the agency and will have those results by early 2017.***

Working at a landscape scale for integrated social, economic, and ecological outcomes produces tangible results

**Fire Risk and Costs**

* **Longleaf Pine Ecosystem Restoration and Hazardous Fuels Reduction (Mississippi)**

“Wildfires occurring within areas that had received fuels treatments within the previous three years are evaluated for the effectiveness of the treatment. **The average size of wildfires occurring within treatment areas, over the last 5 years is consistently less than fires occurring outside of treatment areas.** The average size for fires within treatment areas is less than 10 acres. The overall average size for wildfires on the De Soto Ranger District is 75 acres. Fire behavior and control of the fires were positively affected on every wildfire that occurred within treatment areas.”

* **Accelerating Longleaf Pine Restoration (Florida)**

**Prior to the CFLRP, the Osceola Nation Forest (ONF) prescribe burned an average of 25,000 acres annually. In FY 2016, approximately 33,604 acres were treated** through prescribed burning.

* **Colorado Front Range (Colorado)**

“In 2016, a wildfire began within the Colorado Front Range project treatment area. The Cold Springs Fire was started by an illegal campfire on private land, and burned a total of 606 acres over two days, including 75 acres of NFS lands near Nederland, CO. The area had been manually treated by a USFS contractor in 2015 as part of the CFLR Project. While the slash piles had not yet been burned, this project treated a large amount of heavy fuels, increasing the spacing between residual tree canopies. When the wildfire spread into the unit, fire activity moved from the tree crowns down to the ground vegetation, allowing firefighters to engaged the fire and hold it on two sides of the unit. **Firefighters on the scene believe treatments prevented the fire from causing more spot fires across Boulder Canyon, which would have put thousands more residences in the path of wildfire. Surrounded on all sides by private property, the unit is credited with preventing the destruction of more homes.** While there were hundreds of homes along the fire’s perimeter, the loss was limited to eight residences.”

* **Uncompahgre Plateau (Colorado)**

“Overall, more than 4,000 acres of fire/fuels specific projects were implemented within the CFLN area in 2016. These acres, coupled with previously treated acres since the inception of the CFLN project, have **substantially modified fuels complexes and potential fire behavior in key locations within the CFLN landscape area**. Though we did not have any 2016 wildfires whose behavior was modified by previous fuels treatments we have model estimates that approximately 50% of the Uncompahgre Plateau is in a condition where natural (managed) fire can play a key role in continuing to maintained that landscape. Future planned fuels work, as well as future wildfire management opportunities, will continue to increase this percentage; the opportunities increase exponentially as increasing amounts of the landscape are treated….Restoration of Fire-Adapted Ecosystems is occurring at a substantial pace with emphasis on dry mixed conifer adjacent to values; this will allow future fuels and fire management opportunities to expand significantly in the future.”

**Supporting Local Economis**

* **Weiser Little Salmon Headwaters (Idaho)**

The Wesier Little Salmon Headwaters CFLRP project on the Payette NF brought **several community benefits from implementation of stewardship contracts**. The projects have generated increased jobs in Adams County and some stability to the timber volume offered each fiscal year.

* + Between 2012 and 2016, the Payette awarded, within the WLSH CFLRP, an average of three stewardship contracts each year, for a total of nine stewardship contracts. There were also three new stewardship contracts from the Lost Creek Boulder Creek EIS awarded in 2016: 4th Rock, Cold Bear, and Lost Butter. Four additional contracts will be advertised in 2017.
  + Six of the stewardship contracts were purchased by Evergreen Forest, the family-owned company that manages the last remaining local sawmill **Thanks to the project area contracts, the mill was able to sustain 35 full time jobs over the past several of years**. This has resulted in total labor income of $6 to $10 million per year. **The mill has now begun to add an additional partial shift, and create even more local positions.**
  + These partnerships created from WLSH CFLRP projects help promote economic growth in surrounding communities.
* **Southern Blues Restoration Coalition (Oregon)**

A 2015 report[[1]](#footnote-1) of socio-economic impacts of CFLRP implementation, commissioned jointly by Blue Mountain Forest Partners and USFS provided the following data regarding social and economic impacts in the local community. Note that restoration work has increased since the study was completed, so there is good reason to believe these trends have held steady or improved.

* + **Businesses located in Grant and Harney Counties captured about 2/3 of the value** of the service contracts for CFLR work, a larger share than in recent years.
  + **Local businesses purchased more than 57% of the timber volume sold** from the Southern Blues Restoration CFLR project.

Additional socioeconomic analysis comparing 2013 and 2016 shows that:

* + **Unemployment numbers in Grant and Harney Counties dropped** from 14% and 11.7% respectively to 8.1% and 6.8% since the stewardship contract began.
  + **Salaries increased along with the increased number of restoration jobs**. The Malheur NF hired 48 permanent employees and scores of seasonal staff. Iron Triangle, Malheur Lumber Company, and other subcontractors hired 50 new employees.
  + **Home sales within Grant County have increased by over 200% since 2012**, when the Stewardship Contract began.
  + **Grant School District #3 has experience a halt to its nearly 15 year decline in enrollment**, and in fact experienced a 4.8% increase.
* **Shortleaf Bluestem (Arkansas and Oklahoma)**

**In 2016**, **according to the TREAT model,** **approximately 33.7%** **of the timber sold off the Ouachita National Forest came off the CFLRP area**. This timber from the CFLRP area is valued at over $1,072,843 on the stump and equates to 56,153 ccf. Sawmills processing that timber hired or steadily employed about 187 employees and had around 79 loggers involved in the cutting of the timber. In FY 2016, all timber sold within the CFLRP areas was bought by purchasers within the impact area.

# Updated FY2016 Budget Justification Table

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | **FY 2015** | **FY 2016 (Projected)** | **FY 2016 (Actual)** | **FY 2017 (Projected)** |
|  | **Expenditures On NFS Lands** | | | | |
| CFLRP Appropriation[[2]](#footnote-2)[1] | | $40,000,000 | $40,000,000 | $40,000,000 | $40,000,000 |
| *CFLR Appropriation Expenditures****[[3]](#footnote-3)[2]*** | | *$27,627,280* | *$28,000,000* | *$29,800,759* | *$28,000,000* |
| Total FS Investments in Restoration-Related Work[[4]](#footnote-4)[3] | | $60,382,180 | $60,000,000 | $90,782,952 | $60,000,000 |
| Partner Match | | $15,225,920 | $18,000,000 | $18,686,186 | $20,000,000 |
| Estimated Goods for Services[[5]](#footnote-5)[4] | | $5,917,780 | $6,000,000 | $12,199,779 | $12,000,000 |
|  | **Additional Funding Invested and Generated** | | | | |
| Leveraged Funds[[6]](#footnote-6)[5] | | $62,166,490 | $63,000,000 | $29,966,964 | $63,000,000 |
| **Estimated Local Labor Income Generated[[7]](#footnote-7)[6]** | | $264,866,300 | $265,000,000 | $295,173,495 | $265,000,000 |

***\*See appendix for additional data and methodology***

### Why is the FY2016 “Total FS Investments” level higher than the FY2015 level (and higher than projected)?

The ~$90 Million total FS investments includes additional NFRR provided (about $1.5 million) and $10 million WFHF (that S&PF provided) to support a 169% increase in footprint accomplishment acres on the Four Forest Restoration Initiative project. Regions have discretion to allocate appropriated funding to support priority treatments and landscapes. Higher investment levels from FY2015 for 14 of the 23 projects supported increased overall accomplishments levels in FY2016:

**Why is the “leverage” total lower than projected?**

The Waldo Canyon Recovery Funds and Colorado State Funds received by the Colorado Front Range Project represented ~$25 Million of the FY15 leverage, and these funding streams ended in FY2016. However, the project expects new leverage opportunities through the Denver Water Partnership moving forward. This water provider funding may be key to consistency.

# What have we learned from CFLR?

* **Through its community-driven approach to restoration and shared stewardship for multiple benefits, CFLRP has taught us important lessons** about how to work collaboratively at the landscape-scale to achieve forest restoration goals and build sustainable, thriving rural communities.
* **Several elements of CFLRP have been highly effective** at promoting healthy forests, reducing fire risk and building strong local economies.
  + **10-year funding commitment with accountability and requirement for partner match** –10-year funding enables projects to leverage partner dollars and work at the needed scale to make an impact. We would keep the requirement for partner match and also add performance benchmarks for continued funding.
  + **Collaboratively developed and implemented projects** – Bringing business, environmental, state, tribal and local government interests to project design leads to a durable project. It also enables us to leverage partner resources and expertise.
  + **Multi-party monitoring** – Dedicated funding and requirements for multi-party monitoring are critical to ensure projects are on track to meet their goals and make adjustments when needed.
  + **Investing in ecological, economic, and social sustainability (you need all three)** – A major strength of CFLR is that it invests in restoration for the resilience of landscapes **and** communities, including the goods and services that communities value for economic and social well-being, such as a sustainable supply of wood products, job training and youth engagement opportunities, and investing in social capacity, i.e. building collaboratives. We can build on this further by expanding the scope to recreation and tourism.

# Appendix

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **NFS Footprint within CFLR Boundary (Acres)** | **NFS "Treatable Acres" Footprint (Acres)** | **Percent of Total NFS Acreage Comprised of CFLRP NFS Lands** |
| **11,280,551** | **99,217,485** | **11.4%** |

These acres were calculated using the Albers Equal Area Projection (commonly used on a national scale. Analysis clipped the CFLR boundary to the NFS boundary and removed roadless areas, wilderness areas, and major water bodies.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Performance Measure** | **FY2016 CFLR Accomplishments** | **FY2016 Agency Accomplishments** | **% Contribution to National FY2016 Haz Fuels** |
| **Hazardous Fuels (WUI and non-WUI) (Acres)** | 640,451 | 3,228,330 | **20%** |
| **Timber Volume Sold (CCF)** | 854,492 | 5,515,561 | **15%** |
| **Terrestrial Habitat Enhanced (Acres)** | 461,434 | 2,883,803 | **16%** |
| **Forest Vegetation Improved (Acres)** | 67,118 | 226,516 | **30%** |
| **Stream Habitat Improved (Miles)** | 184 | 3,832 | **5%** |
| **Trails Maintained to Standard (Miles)** | 2,735 | 56,459 | **5%** |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total FS Investments on CFLRP for restoration-related work in FY2016** | **Total FS Investments Agency-wide for restoration-related work in FY2016** |
| **Dollar investment** | **$90,782,952** | **$1,233,306,542** |
| **Dollar investment/acre** | **8.05** | **12.43** |
| **2016 FS investments in CFLR as % of 2016 agency total restoration investment** | **7%** | |

***Total FS Investment methodology:*** *We used a conservative approach to estimate the total FS Agency-wide investments in restoration-related work that is comparable to implementation and monitoring conducted through CFLRP. We pulled together the list of BLI’s that are consistent with the intent of the CFLR Act and the CFLR project description and landscape restoration strategy. We then took FY2016 enacted levels of these BLI’s, as reflected in the Budget Overview, to determine a conservative total amount spent on relevant restoration work across all NFS lands. BLI list: BDBD, CMLG, CMRD, CMTL, CWFS, CWKV, CWK2, NFTM, NFVW, NFWF, PEPE, RBRB, RTRT, SSSS, SPFH, SPS4, SSCC, WFHF. For CMRD we estimated that 50% of CMRD funds were spent on road maintenance and improvement equivalent equivalent to the roads work happening on CFLR projects. NFRR funds were not included because those funds are reprsented in the originating BLIs before the transfer to NFRR is made. The average FS cost pool rate was applied to the total to derive an estimate of total dollars spent on the ground.*

| **BLI** | **FY16 National Appropriation** |
| --- | --- |
| BDBD | 11,801,000 |
| CMLG | 40,000,000 |
| CMRD\* | 86,047,000 |
| CMTL | 77,530,000 |
| CWFS | 43,744,000 |
| CWKV | 58,154,000 |
| NFTM | 359,805,000 |
| NFVW | 184,716,000 |
| NFWF | 140,466,000 |
| PEPE | 532,000 |
| RBRB | 2,320,000 |
| RTRT | 31,769,000 |
| SPFH | 58,922,000 |
| SPS4 | 78,000,000 |
| SSCC | 12,511,000 |
| SSSS | 26,994,000 |
| WFHF | 375,000,000 |
| **Total** | **1,530,157,000** |
| **Adjusted Total\*\*** | **1,233,306,542** |

*\*Estimated that 50% of CMRD funding is used on restoration related work.*

*\*\*Reduced by total FY16 agency cost pool rate of 19.4%*

*CFLRP projects report all expenditures by BLI in their annual reports, available on the USFS external website at:* [*https://www.fs.fed.us/restoration/CFLRP/results.shtml*](https://www.fs.fed.us/restoration/CFLRP/results.shtml)

1. The study was completed by researchers with the Ecosystem Workforce Program at Oregon State University [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [1] CFLRP appropriation refers to funds authorized by the 2009 Omnibus Public Land Management Act (Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Fund). Totals do not include cost pool deductions. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [2] CFLR expenditures are lower than the full $40 million appropriation due to cost pool deductions [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [3] Includes Agency appropriated, permanent, and trust funds used for restoration implementation and monitoring on NFS lands that was not appropriated through the Collaboration Forest Landscape Restoration Fund. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [4] Goods for Services represents the value of goods traded for services in stewardship contracts expended to implement treatments and monitor a CFLRP project on NFS lands. ***Note that the FY16 and FY17 actual/estimated totals reflect the total credit limit for goods for services traded through contracts awarded in that Fiscal Year (the 2015 total and 2016 estimate only counted specific credits charged in the Fiscal Year for all previous contracts)*** [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. [5] Leverage includes funds or in-kind services that help projects achieve proposed objectives within the CFLRP landscape but do not meet match qualifications, such as implementation and monitoring on private, State, and other Federal lands within the CFLRP landscape, but not on NFS lands.  [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. [6] Labor income estimated from Treatment for Restoration Economic Analysis Tool, a standard interface designed for CFLRP that generates project impacts from proposed restoration activities within the counties where activities occur. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)