

Forest Stewardship Education Initiative

University of California
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Forest Stewardship Education Initiative is a CAL FIRE funded contract (8CA04547), awarded July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2021, to help landowners learn about and develop forest management plans.

Background: Private non-corporate forest lands make up about 25% of the 33 million acres of forests in California. About 9 million acres are privately owned by individuals, of which 90% own less than 50 acres of forest land. Many of these landowners would like to do more to manage their landscape for resiliency against the threat of high severity wildfire and massive tree mortality. However, the operational environment for small forest landowners is challenging. Regulatory reform, new markets for wood utilization, and increased human capital and workforce are needed to increase forest management. An additional vital need is outreach and education. Active engagement with educational programs allows landowners to identify management goals and challenges, learn from experts and each other, identify resources, develop a community of practice, and more effectively manage their forest over time.

The Forest Stewardship Education Initiative is an educational program for private forest landowners in California to increase capacity to manage forests for resilience from wildfire, insect outbreaks and other disturbances. The program will provide education on forest restoration, fuels reduction project development, permitting, and cost-share opportunities. The program will include development of curriculum on forest stewardship, dissemination by multiple electronic formats, and in person stewardship workshops.



Funds will provide for a full-time project coordinator who will convene and host meetings of the steering committee, coordinate adaptation of existing stewardship curriculum, organize educational workshops, organize site visits by professionals to verify stewardship plans and track project performance. Funds will also be used to pay for stipends and honoraria for professionals including Registered Professional Foresters to be involved in workshop instruction and site visits.

Steering Committee: The steering committee will give input on workshop format, curriculum, locations, and goals and feedback for continuous improvement. Potential members of the steering committee include representatives from: CAL FIRE, UCCE, Forest Landowners of California, NRCS, USFS R5, CalForests, Society of American Foresters, American Forest Foundation, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts, the California Licensed Forester Association and other experts.

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Curriculum: Forest stewardship curriculum will be adapted from what has already been developed by many collaborating agencies for use in in-person forest stewardship workshops. This will include curriculum, educational handouts and other materials for workshops and for dissemination through other electronic means including websites, webinars, and social media.



Educational workshops: The goal of the three-day in person educational workshops will be to assist forest landowners to develop forest management plans and implement stewardship projects. Instructors will include personnel from UC Cooperative Extension, CAL FIRE, collaborating California agencies, Resource Conservation Districts, as well as Registered Professional Foresters (RPF) and other consultants. Five to ten workshops will be held across the forested regions of California during the two year period.

The workshop will provide instruction in practical and ecological aspects of forest management, including: • *Stewardship*: desired future conditions, ownership objectives, laws and regulations, economics, technical and financial assistance, and professional assistance; • *Ecological topics*: forest ecology, history, tree growth and competition, vegetation management, regeneration, wildlife, streams, soil, TES plants, fuels management, pests and diseases, climate change; • *Skills*: aerial photos and maps, field equipment, compasses and pacing, inventory, interpreting stewardship inventory information, summarizing existing conditions on the property, and plan writing; • *Permitting*: process for fuel reduction and forest health projects, various permitting options, permitting agencies, and licensed professionals available to help landowners design, permit and implement projects; and • *Grants and cost-share opportunities*: State and federal assistance to conduct fuel reduction and forest health projects included in their Forest Stewardship Plan.

Technical Assistance: Workshops participants will receive site visits by a Stewardship Advisor/RPF for review and verify their stewardship plan review and verification.

Expected outcomes: We expect this project to increase the knowledge of forest management goals and practices, as well as the number of forest stewardship plans and management projects completed by participating forest landowners.

