

Guidelines for Writing Forest Legacy Project Briefs

Revised August 2010

Suggestions for competitive proposals:

Address National Themes

Identify how your project addresses the three National Themes.

- Conserve working forest landscapes
- Protect forests from harm
- Enhance benefits associated with trees and forests.

Create a High Quality Map

The quality of the map is very important!

- Clear and crisp
- Good detail but not cluttered
- Scale and relationship to other areas. Very important for Strategic rating.

Importance

Identify environmental, social, and economic public benefits gained from the protection and- management of the property.

- Expand to include: Forestry, Threatened or Endangered Species Habitat, Fish, Wildlife, Plants and, Unique Forest Communities, Water Supply Protection, Public Access, Scenic, Historical, Cultural
- Include multiple benefits at the national or multi-state level
 - **Good Example:** *“Protection...will complete an intact block of 1,500 acres of conserved land and over 2.5 miles of riverfront in two states, including the ___ State Park.”*
 - Statement shows that the benefits span across two states
- Identify something that makes the area stand out from much of the rest of the state or territory
 - **Good Example:** *“...is the only one of its kind left in...”; “The most important aspect of this forest is that it is one of the few remaining undisturbed areas where water can percolate into the aquifer, which supplies drinking water...”*
 - **Good Example:** *“The site has a viable population of many medicinal and traditional plants which are currently used by ___ Healers.”*
 - **Good Example:** *“Historical significance markers throughout the area document Civil War troop activities.”*
- Identify Importance based on diverse benefits
 - The top ten projects include benefits from most of the suggested topics on the rubric; explanations were extensive and well-described. The points listed are not repetitive and each point has a purpose.
 - **Good Example:** A top ten project identified (multiple) benefits in each of the following areas: Forestry and Economic, Threatened and Endangered

- Species, Fish, Wildlife, and Biodiversity, Water Supply Protection, Public Access, Scenic, Cultural. Each bullet point was unique and convincing.
- **Good Example:** *“Pre-historic village site, including burial grounds and at least a dozen house pits, sit on the two properties, a rare and important cultural resource. Twelve pre-historic and several historic resource sites are documented.”*
 - This statement not only points out a characteristic which makes the area stand-out, but it also identifies a unique cultural benefit.
 - The bottom ten projects usually include only a few points under their Importance section and the majority of those points are very vague and do not provide much evidence.
 - **Poor Example:** *“Tourism, which is one of the region’s major industries, will be enhanced.”*
 - This statement begins to tell about a recreational benefit but does not expand upon why/how/where tourism will be enhanced.

Threatened

The likelihood for conversion to non-forest uses.

PLEASE NOTE: This section is NOT regarding the threatened ecosystem services. This section should identify the likelihood of the land to be converted to non-forest uses. This section should not contain any mention of the public benefits listed in the above section.

- Current legal protections (zoning/existing easements)
 - **Good Example:** *“Zoning in ___ County generally permits 20 acre parcels.”*
 - **Good Example:** *“With timber zoning at 160 minimums, there is the potential for over 90 separate ownership parcels, not including zoning changes and further subdivision. The threat of conversion to rural residential development is high and imminent.”*
- Landowners circumstances
 - **Good Example:** *“7000 acres of timbered property near the ___ Area ranches was recently purchased for \$18,000,000. Realtors and developers have approached the landowners numerous times in recent years with offers to purchase for development.”*
 - **Poor Example:** *“Landowners are pressured to sell to developers”*
 - When comparing the above two examples, it is clear that the “Good” example includes more information and is much more convincing than the “Poor” example. By providing more details, the reader is better able to understand the urgency and the likely threat of conversion.
- Adjacent land use changes (rate of development/population growth/change of ownership)
 - **Poor Example:** *“Lands adjacent to this river have especially been targeted by developers. This trend is expected to increase”*
 - This statement gives no statistical evidence and does not tell the reader the degree of the threat of conversion.

- **Good Example:** “ ___ County, where eight of the tracts are located, has lost over a third of its farm and orchard acreage over the past 11 years to development.”
- **Good Example:** “The project area’s population has risen over 35% since 1990 and property taxes have increased by 40% in the past two years.”

Strategic

How the project fits into larger conservation strategies.

- Larger conservation plan, strategy, or initiative by a government or non-government entity
 - **Good Example:** “This forest has been identified internationally (included identifying countries and states) as important for long-term preservation due to the unique forest type and resiliency to frequent storms”
 - **Poor Example:** “This project is less than one mile from ___ State Forest”
 - Although this statement presents the projects proximity to other protected lands, it does not provide much insight into how this could be beneficial to the general public or as part of a landscape conservation plan.
 - **Good Example:** “The project assists in meeting goals of reducing nitrogen, phosphorous, and sediment that are outlined in the _____ Strategy and Implementation Plan.”
 - **Good Example:** “The _____ Project Area is within and adjacent to TNC priority eco-portfolio sites, and priority conservation areas as developed by the Save-the-Redwoods League and BLM.
- Fitting into the larger picture
 - **Good Example:** “The _____ Government has agreed to designate this forest as a Special Management Area once the fee title is obtained. This will provide a higher level of protection and future management funding.”
 - **Good Example:** “These ranches provide unique habitat that contributes to a de facto wildlife corridor that stretches nearly 40 miles from the mountainous _____ National Forest to the Pacific Coast (see map).

Ready

Specify what has already been completed to demonstrate project readiness.

PLEASE NOTE: No points will be awarded for this section. Readiness will only be used to break ties.

- Evidence to support cost
 - Cost share commitment
 - **Good Example:** “The landowners of 5 Tracts have committed to offering bargain sales to help provide cost-share to ensure the success of the project. Title work will be completed by February 2008”
- Supportive parties
 - Most of the top ten ranked projects include a section where they list out the (numerous) supporting parties

General Recommendations

- Check spelling and grammar
- Maps are critical and can visually demonstrate the bullets presented.
- Many of the projects which score in the middle range present good facts but fail to elaborate on the implications of development and the benefits that the project area offers. By explaining key statements, the reader is able to see the larger picture of the project and doesn't have to guess what the writer is trying to convey.
- The top ten projects generally have benefits and supporters that cross over many different categories and are very diverse.
- Convincing points should be as extensive as possible, but should not repeat facts or previous statements. Strive for *quality not quantity*.