

NSW Forest Stewardship Pilot

Guidelines



Forest Stewardship Pilot

What is the NSW Forest Stewardship Pilot?

The **NSW Forest Stewardship Pilot** offers expert advice and incentives to landholders to:

- improve environmental, cultural, social and productive outcomes of private forests
- diversify the productive value of land and sustainable development of the timber industry
- foster Aboriginal forest values, practices and engagement
- collaborate with forest managers and engage in partnerships with the private and public sector
- use active and adaptive management for continual improvement and long-term forest stewardship
- improve understanding of private forests in NSW through monitoring, research, innovation and investment.

The Pilot aligns with the NSW Forest Management Framework which establishes a comprehensive system for delivering ecologically, culturally and socially sustainable forest management.

These guidelines describe forest stewardship and how landholders can participate in the Pilot.

What is forest stewardship?

Many landowners want their forests to be healthy and managed effectively but are unsure of the best approach. Forest stewardship is the long-term management of forests for multiple values and opportunities such as biodiversity, tourism and recreation, cultural values, wood and non-wood products, soil and water conservation, and carbon storage.

Stewardship practices can support multiple uses over the long-term and do not need to be expensive or complex to be beneficial. In fact, many landowners already practice good stewardship in many of their day-to-day land management activities.

What are the benefits of forest stewardship?

Forest stewardship is known to achieve a range of outcomes and public benefits including to:

- protect and improve water and soil quality
- improve wildlife habitat and connectivity
- manage and protect threatened plants and animals
- protect and enhance Aboriginal values and practices
- support tourism and recreational activities
- enhance forest health and resilience
- diversify the productive value of land and farms
- offer carbon storage and renewable energy opportunities
- connect people to forests, nature and stewardship activities
- help mitigate risks of climate change and natural disasters.

Why is a Pilot needed?

Landholders interested in managing their forests for multiple outcomes can find it difficult to resource and find independent advice and support. The Pilot assists landholders to design their own plan for forest stewardship which is matched with incentives that meet their needs. These incentives can include advice, technical assistance, and funding for forest management activities.

The Pilot provides an opportunity to learn about what works and what doesn't from landholders' perspectives. The findings from the Pilot will be used to guide future investment and support for managing private forests in NSW.

Who can participate in the Pilot?

The Pilot assists forest owners where good stewardship will support multiple forest uses and enhance long-term forest health.

Aboriginal forest owners and managers are encouraged to apply, including Local Aboriginal Land Councils, Aboriginal Corporations, Ranger Groups and joint managers.

We also encourage participation from landholders who are new to forest management and people experiencing challenges in managing their forests, including following significant events such as wildfire and flooding.

Landholders will need to meet the following **eligibility criteria** to participate:

- a forest area that is at least 10 hectares in size
- an existing Private Native Forestry Plan (PNF Plan) or is willing to obtain a PNF Plan for a period of up to 15 years
- clear and achievable forest management objectives
- ability and willingness to undertake forest management for environmental, cultural, social and/or productive outcomes
- willingness to consider partnerships, collaboration, or co-contributions.

How can the Pilot help me?

If your application is successful, you will have ready access to expert advice which can help to:

- evaluate the range of possible values and uses of your forest
- focus your objectives so that they are compatible with resources, skills and experience, and circumstances
- plan out achievable forest management activities as part of a longer-term, whole-of-property plan
- understand effective forest stewardship practices, including rules and regulations, to ensure healthy and resilient forests
- recognise and plan for risks including natural disasters
- identify needs for training, advice, education and resources
- connect with other forest managers and partners.

Incentives will be provided to support and recognise your achievements. These could include on-ground advice in forest planning and management, technical assistance, and shared-cost or area-based financial incentives (up to a cap of \$60,000 per participant). These will be developed in consultation with landholders and tailored to their needs.

How will it work?

The Pilot will be delivered by Local Land Services and overseen by an independent Farm Forestry Expert Panel of forest scientists and natural resource management experts.

Local Land Services will provide expert technical staff to support delivery, including a dedicated Aboriginal Forest Management team.

The Panel provides independent advice on a range of issues such as best-practice forest management, research and monitoring, Aboriginal forest management, fire management and climate change resilience.

The Panel will work with successful applicants in developing forest stewardship agreements to provide targeted advice where needed.

The Panel will also make recommendations to NSW Government based on the findings of the Pilot to guide future investment and support for private forests.

Pilot overview

Step 1: Expressions of Interest

Landholders are invited to submit Expressions of Interest (EOI) to be part of the Forest Stewardship Pilot to ffp@lls.nsw.gov.au or Local Land Services, 117 Bull Street, Newcastle West 2302.

EOIs open on Tuesday, 4 October 2022 and close Tuesday, 15 November 2022 at 5pm.

To participate, landholders will need to meet the key eligibility criteria.

Eligible landholders will have the opportunity to seek advice from Local Land Services and the Panel on their application during the assessment process.

Step 2: Assessment of applications

Applications are assessed by the Panel and Local Land Services against key assessment criteria to ensure they meet the objectives of the Pilot, include clear forest management and monitoring actions, and have the potential to achieve effective stewardship outcomes.

Applications will be ranked based on this assessment and Local Land Services will decide on the successful applicants and provide notification of the outcomes of the assessment on the [Local Land Services](#) website and [NSW Government Grants and Funding](#) website.

Step 3: Finalise agreements

Successful applicants will develop and sign a Forest Stewardship Agreement with Local Land Services. The Agreement will include an action-based schedule of work that is compatible with the landholder's objectives, resources and capability. The schedule will be matched with financial and other incentives (up to \$60,000 a cap) to support the planned actions.

The terms of the Agreement will need to be met over the life of the Pilot to receive incentives and payments. Landowners may also agree to longer-term forest management and monitoring activities.

Step 4: Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

Landholders monitor their planned actions under the Agreement and include this information in annual reports back to Local Land Services. Monitoring can be tailored to landholders' capacity and objectives, and undertaken by the landholder, forest manager or a suitable expert. The results can be used to inform an adaptive management approach that allows the Agreement to be updated where needed.

Local Land Services will also work closely with landholders to undertake a range of monitoring surveys of biodiversity, forest health, and participant experiences throughout the Pilot. Local Land Services want to better understand what works well (and what doesn't) when it comes to managing private forests.

Step 5: Recommendations

The Panel will use the results from monitoring, surveys, and landholder feedback to develop recommendations to NSW Government to help inform future support for private forest landholders in NSW.

If you have any questions about the pilot, EOI process or require further assistance please contact:

E: pnf.info@lls.nsw.gov.au

P: 1300 795 299