FFR Program Technical Assistance and Science Support (TASS) Funding Decisions

Proposals awarded funding

National Forest Unit, BLM District, or Statewide Project	Project Title / Name	Technical Assistance Provider	Forest Collaborative Beneficiary	FFR Funds Awarded	Project Summary
Statewide	Science brief in support of Oregon forest restoration	University of Oregon	Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative, Blue Mountains Forest Partners, and others	$ 11,531	This project will develop a 5–10 page science brief that addresses two recurring topics raised in administrative appeals and litigation affecting federal forest restoration projects in Oregon. The brief will be shared with forest collaboratives and with USFS/BLM line officers and interdisciplinary teams.
Rogue River-Siskiyou NF and Medford BLM District	Determining the potential for forest restoration treatments to restore open-structure forests in southwestern Oregon and similar mixed conifer forests	Southern Oregon University	Rogue Forest Partners	$ 21,500	This project will evaluate whether current restoration treatments are actually shifting closed-canopy stands into more open-structure seral stages, or whether they are largely "light touch" treatments that reduce fuels without changing stand successional class. The work relies on existing pre- and post-treatment monitoring data and assesses whether observed changes are meaningful at stand, watershed, and broader landscape scales.
Willamette NF	East Oakridge Fire History	University of Oregon	Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative	$ 42,325	This project will develop a crossdated, tree-ring based fire history for key watersheds east of Oakridge to inform fuel reduction planning and strengthen the basis for restoration and community protection work. The products are intended to support project planning and public communication as the Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative and the Forest Service design and advance fuels and restoration projects in this landscape. The work is directly connected to two anticipated Environmental Assessments under the East Oakridge Strategy: Dead Mountain and Aubrey-Kitson.
Deschutes NF	Prescribed Fire and Public Health in Deschutes County	Deschutes County Public Health	Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project	$ 31,070	This project will address the tension between expanding prescribed fire and managing community health impacts from smoke. The project involves integrating Deschutes County Public Health into prescribed fire-related planning and collaborative work, with the intent of improving smoke risk communication, mitigation strategies, and public outreach/education.

Malheur NF	High resolution forest vulnerability and restoration opportunity mapping for the Malheur National Forest	University of Oregon	Blue Mountains Forest Partners	$ 18,574	This project will use existing field datasets, historical reconstructions, and previously developed satellite modeling to produce high-resolution (stand-scale) maps across the Malheur National Forest. Products include maps showing departures from historical conditions (e.g., density, basal area, composition, QMD, old-growth cover, fire frequency/surface fuels) and integrated indices of forest vulnerability and restoration opportunity to support planning, monitoring, and communication.
			Total TASS Award Amount	**$ 125,000**	

Proposals not receiving funding

Willamette NF	Accelerating Biomass Utilization Pathways to Support Federal Forest Restoration in Oregon	Parametrix	Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative	$ -	This proposal would develop practical, NEPA-linked guidance to help forest collaboratives and federal managers understand and communicate biomass utilization opportunities tied to specific planning areas, and to identify policy and permitting barriers that slow implementation. The project is structured around a case study approach on the Middle Fork RD, paired with peer learning and validation through Northeast Oregon partners and BUWG.
Willamette NF	Westside forest restoration monitoring	University of Oregon	Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative	$ -	This proposal would expand existing westside monitoring by measuring plots in young stands that were thinned 2–10 years ago, allowing near-term inference about treatment effects on fuels, fire behavior, and biodiversity. The work is intended to complement prior TASS- and partner-funded monitoring that focused primarily on establishing a network of pre-treatment plots, where treatment timing is uncertain.
Willamette NF	Plantation analysis in support of accelerated restoration of westside forests	University of Oregon	Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative	$ -	The proposal is framed around increased federal direction to expand timber production and anticipated changes to the Northwest Forest Plan, with an emphasis on young managed stands as the primary opportunity area. The project aims to provide definitive, accessible answers about (1) total plantation acreage; (2) plantation distribution by age, composition, volume, slope, road proximity, land allocations, and regulatory constraints; and (3) the realistic, multi-decade timber supply potential under operational and regulatory constraints.
			Total Unmet Need (including unfunded portion of successful projects)	**$ 101,693**	

Technical Assistance and Science Support (TASS) Grant Application Evaluation

Project: Science brief in support of Oregon forest restoration
Technical Assistance Provider: University of Oregon (James Johnston)
Forest Collaborative Beneficiaries: Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative; Blue Mountains Forest Partners; additional collaboratives statewide
Funds Requested: $11,531

Application Summary

Location:
Statewide. The product is intended to be usable across Oregon's national forests and BLM districts.

Project overview:
This project will develop a 5–10 page science brief that addresses two recurring topics raised in administrative appeals and litigation affecting federal forest restoration projects in Oregon. The brief will be shared with forest collaboratives and with USFS/BLM line officers and interdisciplinary teams.

Project need/goals:
Improve the strength and consistency of NEPA documentation by providing a clear, science-based reference that can help address common arguments raised in both administrative appeals and lawsuits:

1. Federal decision makers failed to account for scientific uncertainty about the effects of fuel reduction thinning in managing fire risk and moderating fire behavior.
2. Federal decision makers failed to account for the effects of thinning and other fuel reduction activities on impacts to forest carbon storage.

Proposed tasks/deliverables:

- Draft science brief

- Conduct outreach to gather input

- Finalize and distribute brief

Budget:
Total request: $11,531

- Draft brief: $9,800

- Outreach: $500

- Final revisions: $1,231
  No leveraged funding is identified.

Scalability:
The applicant notes the work could be expanded to include more detailed quantitative analysis (fire behavior and carbon storage). It is not well-suited to scaling down.

Review Team Assessment

Strengths

- Focuses on a major barrier in the restoration pipeline—litigation risk—and proposes a concrete product to help address it.

- Creates a resource intended for both collaborative participants and USFS/BLM staff

- Targets known weak points in NEPA documentation by compiling and translating relevant science into a that can be used during project planning.

- Statewide applicability increases potential return on investment if the brief is adopted broadly.

Concerns

- Not tied to a specific collaborative planning area/project, which may make near-term application and measurable outcomes harder to document.

- Outreach and distribution are described generally; success will depend on uptake by USFS/BLM ID teams and forest collaboratives.

Overall Assessment

This proposal takes a practical approach to a recurring challenge: restoration projects can stall when NEPA documents do not clearly address common arguments that often appear in objections and litigation. A concise, well-developed science brief could help strengthen analyses and improve consistency across Oregon federal units.

The key question is implementation—specifically, how the product will be adopted, used, and referenced in real NEPA work given the statewide scope and lack of a single project anchor.

Review Team Recommendation

Recommendation: Fund
Recommended Amount: $11,531

Technical Assistance and Science Support (TASS) Grant Application Evaluation

Project Name: Determining the potential for forest restoration treatments to restore open-structure forests in southwestern Oregon and similar mixed conifer forests
Technical Assistance Provider: Southern Oregon University (Chhaya M. Werner)
Forest Collaborative Beneficiaries: Rogue Forest Partners; Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative
Funds Requested: $21,500

Application Summary

Location:

Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest and the Medford BLM District.

Project overview:

This project will evaluate whether current restoration treatments are actually shifting closed-canopy stands into more open-structure seral stages, or whether they are largely "light touch" treatments that reduce fuels without changing stand successional class. The work relies on existing pre- and post-treatment monitoring data and assesses whether observed changes are meaningful at stand, watershed, and broader landscape scales.

Project need/goals:

Partners have raised questions about treatment effectiveness for years, but analysis has been limited by capacity. The proposal is timely given observed Douglas-fir and pine mortality and the need to ensure treatments are improving resilience outcomes. Goals include using existing data to identify where regime departures persist after treatment and determining what vegetation management approaches may be needed to achieve a broader distribution of desired successional classes, including open mid- and late-development conditions.

Proposed tasks/deliverables:

Two primary tasks are proposed:

- **Task 1:** Analyze treatment impacts on composition, stand structure, and seral classes, including whether observed shifts are sufficient to advance landscape resilience.

- **Task 2:** Model successional trajectories and evaluate what changes to prescriptions and/or treatment scale may be necessary to move conditions toward desired

conditions (including comparisons to HRV characterizations and/or alternative community classifications).

Deliverables include presentations to the Rogue Forest Partners and partner agencies/collaboratives, a final report, and publication in peer-reviewed and/or public-facing outlets.

Budget:

Total request is $21,500. The application also identifies leveraged support (including university resources and partner contributions) and use of existing CFLRP monitoring data.

Scalability:

The base project is not designed to scale down. It could be expanded to include additional monitoring and analysis of understory community response, with an estimated added cost.

Review Team Assessment

Strengths

- Directly assesses treatment effectiveness, including whether current prescriptions are transitioning stands into open-structure seral stages versus primarily reducing fuels while retaining existing seral class.

- Consistent with adaptive management by using existing monitoring data to generate actionable feedback that can improve future prescriptions, prioritization, and implementation.

- Likely to be useful in shaping future actions to ensure restoration and resilience treatments are achieving intended outcomes across federal forests in the region.

Concerns

- Not tied to a single, defined planning area or decision point. While the proposal lists many in-progress USFS and BLM planning efforts, it is not clear how the analysis will be prioritized and applied to specific near-term planning products or projects.

- Limited detail on how current vegetation management approaches are inadequate beyond the general concern that treatments may be too light to shift successional trajectories.

- The link between this work and the Forest Service's ability to implement more intensive and extensive treatments is not clearly made (e.g., how findings will

translate into concrete prescription changes, increased treatment intensity/extent, or resolution of constraints).

Overall Assessment

This is a strong science support proposal focused on whether current restoration treatments in southwest Oregon are producing meaningful structural change at stand and landscape scales. The project is timely and well-aligned with adaptive management. Its main shortcoming is implementation clarity: the proposal would be stronger with a clearer plan for how results will be integrated into specific agency planning and decision processes, and how findings will directly support more effective treatment intensity and scale.

Review Team Recommendation

Recommendation: Fund
Recommended Amount: $21,500

Technical Assistance and Science Support (TASS) Grant Application Evaluation

Project Name: East Oakridge Fire History
Technical Assistance Provider: University of Oregon (Ecosystem Workforce Program)
Forest Collaborative Beneficiary: Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative
Funds Requested: $65,000

Application Summary

Location:
Willamette National Forest, east of the town of Oakridge. Work is focused on the lower portions of Hills Creek, Salt Creek, Salmon Creek, and the North Fork Middle Fork Willamette River.

Project overview:
This project will develop a crossdated, tree-ring based fire history for key watersheds east of Oakridge to inform fuel reduction planning and strengthen the basis for restoration and community protection work. The products are intended to support project planning and public communication as the Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative and the Forest Service design and advance fuels and restoration projects in this landscape. The work is directly connected to two anticipated Environmental Assessments under the East Oakridge Strategy: Dead Mountain and Aubrey-Kitson.

Project need/goals:
The Oakridge area is at high risk of severe wildfire, and recent evacuations underscore the urgency for effective fuels and restoration work. The proposal identifies a persistent challenge in west-side forest settings: some stakeholders argue that stand-replacing fire is natural and inevitable and that fuels treatments are inappropriate or ineffective in these more productive Douglas-fir forests. The project aims to provide empirical, place-based evidence about historical fire size, frequency, and severity to help set desired-condition targets, support NEPA planning, and strengthen social and legal support for treatments.

Proposed tasks/deliverables:
Coordination with SWFC and agency partners; field sampling; processing and crossdating samples; participation in SWFC and Forest Service ID team processes; outreach (field trips, presentations, briefings, and reports). Tangible deliverables include an EWP working paper, a peer-reviewed publication, and an interactive online database.

Budget:

$65,000 requested. Budget includes a substantial indirect component. No leveraged funding is identified.

Scalability:

Can be scaled up through expanded geographic scope and/or sampling intensity. Can be scaled down by reducing the number of drainages sampled and/or reducing site intensity, with an approximate minimum scaled-down amount of $40,000.

Review Team Assessment

Strengths

- Directly applicable to two EA planning areas, with a clear link to near-term planning needs in the East Oakridge Strategy.

- Tangible deliverables (EWP working paper, peer-reviewed paper, and an interactive online database) that can support planning, communication, and stakeholder engagement.

- Advances science that challenges conventional assumptions about west-side forests and provides place-based evidence to inform treatment design in productive forest types.

- Supported by the Forest Service with specific statements about how the products will help in project planning.

- Focused in an area that has received significant fire activity and faces ongoing wildfire risk, increasing relevance and urgency.

Concerns

- Not novel work; largely applies an established method in a new location.

- NEPA planning is expected to proceed without this work; the project is supportive rather than necessary for completing analysis and decision-making.

- High indirect costs relative to work products

Overall Assessment

This proposal offers a practical, place-based contribution to restoration planning in a high-risk wildfire landscape. It is well aligned with two upcoming EAs and provides clear, tangible deliverables that can inform planning and help build public understanding and support. The primary drawbacks are that the work is not particularly novel and is not essential to completing NEPA, and the indirect rate results in a comparatively high overhead share. Overall, the project is likely to add value to planning and implementation in a landscape where community protection and treatment effectiveness are urgent priorities.

Review Team Recommendation

Recommendation: Fund
Recommended Amount: $42,325

Technical Assistance and Science Support (TASS) Grant Application Evaluation

Project Name: Prescribed Fire and Public Health in Deschutes County
Technical Assistance Provider: Deschutes County Public Health (Sarah Worthington)
Forest Collaborative Beneficiary: Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project (DCFP)
Funds Requested: $31,070

Application Summary

Location:
Deschutes National Forest. The proposal is tied to the Fuels Maintenance EA area.

Project overview:
This project will address the tension between expanding prescribed fire and managing community health impacts from smoke. The project involves integrating Deschutes County Public Health into prescribed fire-related planning and collaborative work, with the intent of improving smoke risk communication, mitigation strategies, and public outreach/education.

Project need/goals:
The proposal is grounded in growing community concern over smoke exposure and argues that improved coordination between public health professionals and land managers is needed to sustain social support for prescribed fire. The stated goal is to support prescribed fire implementation while reducing negative public health impacts through improved planning input, risk communication, and preparedness tools.

Proposed tasks/deliverables:

- Support integration of smoke exposure mitigation concepts into Fuels Maintenance EA work (deliverable identified as a DCFP comment letter).

- Support integration of public health considerations into prescribed fire Zones of Agreement work (deliverable identified as finalized Zones of Agreement).

- Develop "public outreach and education materials" (deliverables described generally as messaging/content and outreach strategies).

- Update the Bend Community Smoke Response Plan (deliverable identified as an updated plan and documentation of stakeholder engagement).

Budget:
$31,070 requested. The proposal does not provide task-level budget detail, which limits the

ability to evaluate whether the funding request aligns with the specific tasks and deliverables.

Scalability:
Not identified as scalable.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- Addresses a real and persistent tension: the need to increase prescribed fire while managing public health and smoke impacts.

- Clear set of tasks and sequencing, with an identified public health partner positioned to contribute to planning and communication.

Concerns

- Deliverables for "public outreach and education materials" are vague and do not specify concrete products (type, quantity, intended audiences, deployment plan, or how effectiveness will be measured).

- Disconnect between the funding request and the described work because costs are not broken out by task and the scope is difficult to evaluate relative to the requested amount.

- Zones of Agreement support is not clearly relevant to TASS and appears more aligned with ZOA-specific assistance.

- Burn window limitations are primarily an implementation issue rather than a planning constraint.

Overall Assessment

This proposal addresses an important issue for Central Oregon: increasing prescribed fire while minimizing smoke impacts and maintaining social support. The project is timely and the task list is clearly sequenced. However, concerns include undefined outreach deliverables, an unclear budget-to-scope match, questionable fit of Zones of Agreement work under TASS, and a focus on burn-window constraints that are primarily implementation rather than planning issues.

Review Team Recommendation

Recommendation: Fund
Recommended Amount: $31,070

Technical Assistance and Science Support (TASS) Grant Application Evaluation

Project Name: High resolution forest vulnerability and restoration opportunity mapping for the Malheur National Forest
Technical Assistance Provider: University of Oregon (James Johnston)
Forest Collaborative Beneficiary: Blue Mountains Forest Partners
Funds Requested: $21,174

Application Summary

Location:
Malheur National Forest.

Project overview:
This project will use existing field datasets, historical reconstructions, and previously developed satellite modeling to produce high-resolution (stand-scale) maps across the Malheur National Forest. Products include maps showing departures from historical conditions (e.g., density, basal area, composition, QMD, old-growth cover, fire frequency/surface fuels) and integrated indices of forest vulnerability and restoration opportunity to support planning, monitoring, and communication.

Project need/goals:
The applicant notes that prior restoration-need mapping products are too coarse for stand-scale planning and tracking. The proposal is positioned as timely because the Malheur is initiating a forest-wide, condition-based NEPA effort intended to provide long-term planning coverage and is also revising its forest plan. Goals include informing resilient forest restoration and old-tree conservation, supporting condition-based NEPA and future project-level NEPA, strengthening analytical capacity for planning and environmental analysis, and enabling ongoing tracking of change and cumulative effects.

Proposed tasks/deliverables:

- Develop downscaled climate water deficit mapping as an indicator of drought stress potential.

- Impute historical forest structure/composition and historical fire frequency across the forest.

- Train satellite imagery using existing vegetation datasets to map current structure and composition.

- Calculate departures between historical and current conditions at ~30m resolution and integrate with drought stress indicators.

- Publish spatial layers and make them accessible via BMFP's webpage and outreach/presentations.

- Produce a peer-reviewed paper describing methods and results.

Budget:
$21,174 total. Budget includes personnel, fringe, and indirect. Task-level costs are provided (largest cost category tied to satellite model training and mapping). No leveraged funds are identified.

Scalability:
The proposal states it is not easily scalable down; however, the applicant indicates maps could be completed without the peer-reviewed paper at a reduced cost (minimum scaled-down amount of $18,574). Scaling up would involve expanding the approach to a larger geography (eastern Oregon or statewide), with significant added cost.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- Applicable to a forest-wide, condition-based EA and to the Malheur forest plan revision, with potential relevance across multiple planning efforts over time.

- Builds on prior mapping and research, but improves utility by delivering results at finer spatial scales more suitable for stand-scale planning and tracking.

- Provides a structured analytical framework that could support monitoring, cumulative effects analysis, and communication about restoration need and treatment progress.

Concerns

- The proposal appears potentially redundant with existing work, and it is not clear what new decision-relevant insight will be gained beyond refining resolution.

- Unclear why the Forest Service cannot perform or commission this work internally using existing datasets, prior TASS products, and available research capacity.

- The application does not clearly identify the specific disagreement this work is meant to resolve, nor how the project will actively foster agreement (as opposed to producing additional spatial products).

- The Forest Service letter of support does not clearly describe how deliverables will be used in planning workflows (e.g., how indices/maps will be integrated into the condition-based EA analysis, design criteria, prioritization, or plan revision components).

Overall Assessment

This proposal offers a technically sound approach to producing stand-scale departure and restoration opportunity mapping that could be useful in a forest-wide condition-based EA and forest plan revision. Concerns are not whether the products could be helpful, but whether they are sufficiently distinct from existing tools and whether the Forest Service and partners have a clear plan to apply them in specific planning decisions.

Review Team Recommendation

Recommendation: Fund
Recommended Amount: $18,574

Technical Assistance and Science Support (TASS) Grant Application Evaluation

Project Name: Accelerating Biomass Utilization Pathways to Support Federal Forest Restoration in Oregon
Technical Assistance Provider: Justin Overdevest, Senior Advisor, Climate and Sustainability Management, Parametrix
Forest Collaborative Beneficiary: Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative (SWFC)
Funds Requested: $30,000

Application Summary

Location:
Primary focus is the Middle Fork Ranger District (Middle Fork RD) on the Willamette National Forest, with comparative learning and validation informed by work on the Wallowa-Whitman and Umatilla National Forests and statewide peer learning through the Oregon Biomass Utilization Working Group (BUWG).

Project overview:
This proposal would develop practical, NEPA-linked guidance to help forest collaboratives and federal managers understand and communicate biomass utilization opportunities tied to specific planning areas, and to identify policy and permitting barriers that slow implementation. The project is structured around a case study approach on the Middle Fork RD, paired with peer learning and validation through Northeast Oregon partners and BUWG.

Project need/goals:
The application argues this is a critical moment to integrate biomass utilization considerations into restoration planning while multiple NEPA efforts are underway. Stated goals include:

- Packaging project-specific biomass supply and market information into decision-support products for NEPA-tied planning on the Middle Fork RD.

- Identifying high-leverage policy, permitting, contracting, and infrastructure barriers and actionable solutions.

- Testing and adapting lessons across forest types and market contexts (Willamette NF to Northeast Oregon).

- Validating findings through statewide peer learning and producing a transferable case study for other collaboratives.

Proposed tasks/deliverables:

- **Task 1 (Feb–May 2026):** Middle Fork RD biomass supply and market case study (1–2 focus sessions).
  Deliverable: MFRD Biomass Utilization Case Study (graphic brief + slide deck)

- **Task 2 (Mar–Jun 2026):** Northeast Oregon biomass collaboration support (joint sessions with partners).
  Deliverable: Northeast Oregon Biomass Opportunities Memo

- **Task 3 (Apr–Jul 2026):** Policy barrier synthesis and tri-state coordination.
  Deliverable: 3–4 page Policy and Permitting Barriers Synthesis Brief

- **Task 4 (Jun–Jul 2026):** Transferable case study + peer learning.
  Deliverables: Biomass Utilization Case Study + peer-learning webinar materials

Budget:
$30,000 total (contractual). Task-level costs are provided:

- Task 1: $15,000

- Task 2: $8,000

- Task 3: $5,000

- Task 4: $3,000
  Proposal notes scalability (minimum $15,000 focusing on one planning area). The application also describes leveraging related work and investments (e.g., BUWG technical assistance and an IFNF biomass feasibility study).

Scalability:
Yes. The proposal states it can scale down to $15,000 (single high-priority planning area) or scale up to add additional case studies, deeper facilitation, expanded market analysis, and additional peer-learning.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- Strong support from the forest collaborative and the Forest Service, with the project framed as useful to ongoing planning discussions.

- Directly applicable to current project planning and analysis on the Middle Fork Ranger District, with deliverables intended to support NEPA-tied conversations and decision-making.

Concerns

- It is unclear whether there is meaningful controversy or dispute about biomass utilization and associated markets that this proposal would help resolve (i.e., where the disagreement is and what agreement-seeking problem this work addresses).

- The proposal does not clearly show how this biomass analysis will lead to increased agreement and, more importantly, to expansion of forest treatments (pace and scale).

- The connection between biomass utilization analysis and what is necessary or appropriate for project planning and NEPA is not clearly established; it is unclear why this work needs to be integrated into NEPA versus treated as an implementation/market consideration that can occur alongside or after NEPA.

Concluding Analysis

This proposal is well-supported and aims to provide practical guidance that could be used during active planning conversations, particularly on the Middle Fork Ranger District. However, the application does not clearly demonstrate that biomass utilization is a planning constraint that is preventing NEPA decisions or collaborative alignment, nor does it make a clear case that the proposed work will meaningfully change treatment outcomes beyond what will occur through existing planning processes. Given these gaps, the review team did not identify sufficient justification for funding under TASS.

Review Team Recommendation

Recommendation: Do Not Fund
Recommended Amount: $0

Technical Assistance and Science Support (TASS) Grant Application Evaluation

Project Name: Westside forest restoration monitoring
Technical Assistance Provider: University of Oregon (Ecosystem Workforce Program)
Forest Collaborative Beneficiary: Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative (SWFC)
Funds Requested: $24,488

Application Summary

Location/Focus:
Willamette National Forest (potentially expanding beyond current work on the Detroit and Middle Fork Ranger Districts).

Project overview:
This proposal would expand existing westside monitoring by measuring plots in young stands that were thinned 2–10 years ago, allowing near-term inference about treatment effects on fuels, fire behavior, and biodiversity. The work is intended to complement prior TASS- and partner-funded monitoring that focused primarily on establishing a network of pre-treatment plots, where treatment timing is uncertain.

Project need/goals:
The proposal states that monitoring is needed to build legal and social support for westside thinning and to inform adaptive management, particularly given stakeholder debate about whether thinning in moist, productive westside forests reduces fire risk or could exacerbate it. The project's stated goals are to (1) respond to stakeholder information needs without being constrained by uncertain treatment schedules and (2) generate quicker inference about treatment effects over time by sampling already treated stands.

Proposed tasks/deliverables:

- Stratify past young stand thinning projects on the Willamette NF by district, forest type, and time since treatment.

- Work with Forest Service and collaborative stakeholders to identify information needs and sampling targets.

- Collect field data in approximately 20–30 plots across 5–10 stands during summer 2026.

- Manage data and prepare summary reports for the Forest Service and stakeholders.

- Produce one EWP-branded working paper summarizing fuel loading and understory diversity in treated stands across forest types and time since treatment.

Budget:

$24,488 total. The majority of costs are associated with field data collection. Task-level costs are provided in the application. The proposal indicates it can scale down to approximately $18,000 by reducing the number of plots and/or removing the EWP working paper.

Scalability:

Yes. The project can scale up by adding more plots or scale down by reducing plot count and/or removing the working paper component (minimum stated scaled-down amount: ~$18,000).

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- Builds on and expands previous monitoring work by adding measurements in stands treated 2–10 years ago, allowing more immediate inference about treatment effects rather than waiting for uncertain treatment timing in the existing pre-treatment plot network.

- Expands monitoring potential across additional ranger districts and forest types, improving the ability to compare outcomes across space and time and strengthening the overall monitoring foundation supporting westside restoration work.

Concerns

- No letter of support was provided, limiting confidence in agency commitment to use the results and integrate the monitoring into planning or decision processes.

- The proposal is not tied to a specific, identified planning area or decision timeline; sampling locations and planning connections are described in general terms and are not yet developed, which makes near-term applicability to active planning less clear.

Overall Assessment

This proposal is a logical extension of prior westside monitoring investments and would likely generate useful near-term information by sampling already treated stands across a range of forest types and time-since-treatment intervals. However, the absence of a letter of support and the lack of a clearly defined planning-area linkage reduce confidence that results will be applied to specific planning needs or decision points in the near term. Given these gaps, the proposal was not funded.

Review Team Recommendation

Recommendation: Do Not Fund
Recommended Amount: $0

Technical Assistance and Science Support (TASS) Grant Application Evaluation

Project Name: Plantation analysis in support of accelerated restoration of westside forests
Technical Assistance Provider: University of Oregon (Ecosystem Workforce Program)
Forest Collaborative Beneficiary: Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative (SWFC)
Funds Requested: $21,930

Application Summary

Location/Focus:
Western Oregon federal forests (intended to be useful to every national forest and BLM district in western Oregon).

Project overview:
This proposal would develop a detailed map, inventory, and summary statistics describing the location, extent, and characteristics of plantation thinning opportunities on western Oregon federal lands. The applicant proposes producing new geospatial files, an EWP-branded working report, and web-based outreach products.

Project need/goals:
The proposal is framed around increased federal direction to expand timber production and anticipated changes to the Northwest Forest Plan, with an emphasis on young managed stands as the primary opportunity area. The project aims to provide definitive, accessible answers about (1) total plantation acreage; (2) plantation distribution by age, composition, volume, slope, road proximity, land allocations, and regulatory constraints; and (3) the realistic, multi-decade timber supply potential under operational and regulatory constraints.

Proposed tasks/deliverables:

- **Task 1:** Outreach to federal and community partners to refine analysis questions and desired products.

- **Task 2:** Spatial analysis using existing USFS/BLM harvest unit databases, modeling/validation of plantation extent, and integration with LEMMA GNN and other spatial datasets to produce maps and summaries (including regulatory overlays and long-term timber flow scenarios).

- **Task 3:** EWP-branded working paper, presentations, and web-based outreach materials for SWFC and other groups.

Budget:
$21,930 total. Task costs are provided: Task 1 ($800), Task 2 ($19,639), Task 3 ($1,500). No leveraged funding is identified.

Scalability:
Yes. The proposal states a minimum scaled-down amount of approximately $20,000. It could be scaled up by expanding geography (e.g., Washington) and/or adding additional analyses (e.g., landscape-scale fire modeling or longer-term scenarios including regeneration harvest).

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- Highly applicable and relevant to planning and management across western Oregon federal forests, with products intended to inform NEPA planning broadly and provide an accessible "big picture" inventory of plantation thinning opportunity.

- Builds on existing datasets and prior work to generate decision-support mapping and summary statistics that could be useful for collaborative discussions, planning prioritization, and communication.

Concerns

- No letter of support was provided, limiting confidence in agency commitment and clarity on how deliverables will be used in planning workflows.

- The analysis appears like work the Forest Service could reasonably conduct internally using existing databases, spatial capacity, and prior research products; the proposal does not clearly justify why external TASS investment is necessary.

Concluding Analysis

This proposal offers products that could be broadly useful for understanding plantation thinning opportunities and constraints across western Oregon federal lands. However, the application does not demonstrate clear agency uptake or an established pathway for integrating outputs into planning processes, and the absence of a letter of support weakens the case for near-term application. In addition, the work appears to overlap with analyses that could be performed by the Forest Service using existing datasets and internal capacity. For these reasons, the project was not funded.

Review Team Recommendation

Recommendation: Do Not Fund
Recommended Amount: $0