

**THE ROANOKE CENTER
SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY AND AFRICAN AMERICAN LAND RETENTION PROJECT
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ'S)**

- 1. Question-**What is the Sustainable Forestry and African American Land Retention Project?

Answer-This is a program that is designed to address forestry land loss in the African American community. The focus of this project is to demonstrate that through the use of sustainable forest management with the support of governmental and private natural resource agencies and organizations, and the regional timber industry, African American landowners are able to retain their lands, generate income, and maintain healthy and productive forests for generations.

- 2. Question-**Is this program for African Americans only?

Answer-Although the project focus is to reach African American landowners, the project is available to all landowners in Bertie, Gates, Halifax, Hertford, and Northampton Counties, and Roanoke Electric Cooperative members with property in Chowan and Perquimans County.

- 3. Question-**Who administers this program?

Answer-The project is being administered through the Roanoke Center in Rich Square NC, which is a non-profit subsidiary of the Roanoke Electric Cooperative.

- 4. Question-**Where does the money for this project come from?

Answer-This project is funded by grants from the US Endowment for Forestry and Communities and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Supporting partners are the USDA Forest Service, The Conservation Fund, NC Forest Service, NC Department of Agriculture, CoBank, AgCarolina Farm Credit, and AgFirst Farm Credit.

- 5. Question-**What is the benefit to landowners in participating in this project?

Answer-Landowners will gain valuable knowledge on what assistance is available to those who own forestland. Other benefits include:

- Engaging with state, federal, and county agencies to receive technical assistance on forest management.
- Receiving education on private forestry professionals who can assist with timber sales and learning how the use of these private foresters will ensure landowners receive fair market value for their timber products.
- Receiving assistance and guidance from Roanoke Center project staff as landowners move forward with forest management.

- Promotion of forestland, family legacy and healthy and productive forests with many financial, environmental, and social benefits which can be sustained for generations.
- Learning about federal and county property tax reductions due to deferments associated with forest management.
- Being eligible for financial assistance in obtaining legal services from an attorney to clear property title, establish a legal mechanism such as a limited liability company (LLC) or partnership, etc., to manage family-owned property, resolve heirs' property issues and/or create an estate plan to provide for orderly succession or transfer of property upon one's passing.

6. Question-What are the requirements to participate in the project?

Answer-You must be a landowner in Bertie, Gates, Halifax, Hertford, or Northampton Counties or be a Roanoke Electric Cooperative member with property in Chowan and Perquimans County. Your property must contain at least one area with a minimum of 8 acres of forestland.

7. Question-How do I get into the project and is there a cost to participate in the project?

Answer-Landowners can register online at www.roanokecenter.org/forestry or contact The Roanoke Center or Roanoke Electric Cooperative to register at 252-539-4616. There is no project registration fee or fee to participate in the project. However, there are costs associated with forest management for which you may receive partial assistance from various agency funds. Examples are costs to develop forest management plans and reforestation costs to establish the next forest after a tree harvest. These costs are not paid to the project but to an agency or private contractor for services provided.

8. Question-Can I be a participant in the project as an heir's property landowner if the other property heirs don't sign up?

Answer-Yes, one heir may become a project participant without the other heirs. However some of the partner agencies may have different participant requirements to receive their services.

9. Question-What is the Legal Assistance Costs Reimbursement component?

Answer-The Legal Assistance Costs Reimbursement component (LACR) is a part of the Sustainable Forestry and African American Land Retention Project that provides grant funded reimbursement to approved forestry landowners who acquire legal services, as needed, through local attorneys to address land ownership issues and/or to develop estate plans to provide for orderly succession or transfer of property upon one's passing.

10. **Question-**How much financial assistance can I get for my forestry legal needs?

Answer-An individual landowner or a husband and wife or other two person landowner team is eligible for up to \$1000 for approved forestry legal needs. A group of 3 landowners is eligible for up to \$2000 for approved forestry legal needs. A group of 4 or more landowners is eligible for up to \$3000 for approved forestry legal needs. The project staff may adjust these limits based upon extenuating circumstances and the availability of grant funds.

11. **Question-**How can I contact someone to talk about the Sustainable Forestry and African American Land Retention project?

Answer-Refer to FAQ #7.

12. **Question-**Does the Sustainable Forestry Project provide any financial assistance to plant trees?

Answer-The project will guide landowners to apply for financial assistance programs for replanting trees through state and federal agencies. The project also offers financial assistance to project landowners for tree planting and other reforestation practices when funding is available. Landowners can only accept financial assistance from one agency or the project, but not both.

13. **Question-**I own less than 8 acres of forestland; can I participate in the project?

Answer-Landowners with less than 8 acres of forestland cannot participate as full participants but are provided guidance about forest management and may participate in general discussions with project personnel about forestry land succession. Such landowners are referred to available partner agencies for any available assistance.

14. **Question-**Does signing the Memorandum of Agreement in any way subject the landowner to transferring or losing their property ownership to The Roanoke Center or Roanoke Electric Cooperative?

Answer-No, signing the Memorandum of Agreement and participating in the project in no way subjects the landowner to land transfer or land loss to The Roanoke Center or partner agencies.

15. **Question-**If the project ends while I am participating, will I continue to receive assistance?

Answer-Yes, landowners that have been approved for services or financial assistance through the project will receive the designated assistance that has been reserved for them. When the project ends, The Roanoke Center will continue to serve as a regional

resource to provide landowners with information on forestry lands and refer landowners to the appropriate agencies and private forestry businesses for assistance.

- 16. Question-**What is the benefit between landowners in the project and the local timber industry?

Answer-This area has a robust forest industry with several timber companies in the area, along with many commercial and private businesses that support the forestry industry. To sustain this industry there must be a continuous supply of timber. Here in Northeastern North Carolina private forest landowners supply timber to the timber industry. This project enables the timber industry to expand its timber supply through private landowners growing productive forests for the future. The forestry industry and the supporting commercial and private businesses provide jobs and economic growth for the region.