

**MS Forest Legacy Program Application
IRA FUNDING CONSIDERATION**

Application Deadline: December 2, 2024

See the last page for application address and MFC contact information.

ABOUT THE FOREST LEGACY PROGRAM IRA PROPOSALS

The purpose of the Mississippi Forest Legacy Program (FLP) is to identify and protect environmentally important forest areas threatened by conversion to non-forest uses and to promote forestland protection and other conservation opportunities. The U.S. Forest Service provides up to 75% of the funds through a nationally competitive grant program to the state, and the program is managed locally by the Mississippi Forestry Commission. The FLP collaborates with private landowners to acquire perpetual conservation easements that permanently limit property interests and uses to protect forest values. FLP also purchases and accepts donations of forestland in full fee. The FLP only works with willing sellers or donors.

ABOUT IRA FUNDS: The selection process for Forest Legacy Program (FLP) projects funded through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) will run in conjunction with the Forest Legacy proposal process for Land and Water Conservation Funding (LWCF), which occurs annually in the Fall. Projects will be evaluated and scored based on the *Special Emphasis Criteria*. Proposals can be considered under only one of the following project categories:

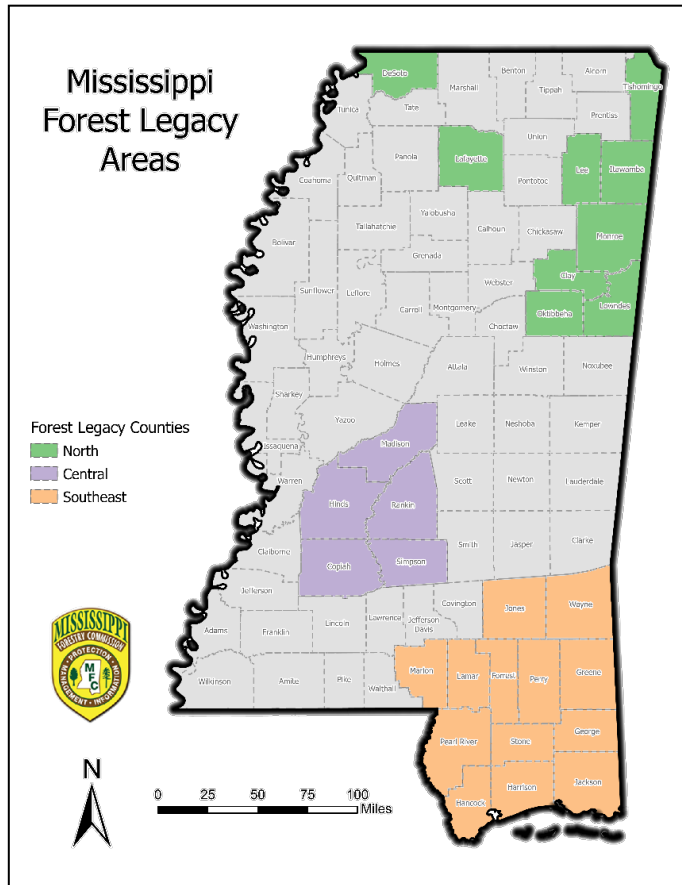
- **Large Landscape Projects – up to \$50 Million/1 project**
- **State-Tribal Partnership Projects – up to \$50 Million/1 project**
- **Strategic Small Tract Projects – Up to \$1.5 Million/1 – 3 projects**

National Scoring Guidance for IRA funds and Special Emphasis Criteria: *Be sure to review the additional Special Emphasis Criteria at this link to learn more about what additional information is required for IRA proposals. Contact the Forest Legacy Program Coordinators on the back page if you have questions.*

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2023-06/FY24%20Project%20Scoring%20Guidance%20-%20IRA.pdf>

Mississippi Forest Legacy Program Application INFLATION REDUCTION ACT (IRA) FUNDS

All IRA Projects must be located in one of the three Mississippi Forest Legacy Areas:



North - Clay, Desoto, Itawamba, Lafayette, Lee, Lowndes, Monroe, Oktibbeha, Tishomingo
Central - Copiah, Hinds, Madison, Rankin, Simpson
Southeast - Forrest, George, Greene, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Jones, Lamar, Marion, Pearl River, Perry, Stone, Wayne

Prior to completing this application, you are strongly encouraged to review the *Mississippi Forest Legacy Program Plan* (<https://www.mfc.ms.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Mississippi-Forest-Legacy-Program-Plan-January-2021-Update.pdf>) for eligibility requirements and program guidance. Only properties located in one of the designated Mississippi FLAs will be considered and must meet the national and state criteria and must have a **completed application submitted by March 1st**. All easements and interests in land acquired through the program are conveyed in perpetuity and must contain such covenants and language to insure perpetuity of FLP easements. **Participation in is strictly voluntary. For applications to be considered for the IRA funding, the deadline for application submittal is DECEMBER 2, 2024. Note there will be additional rounds of funding for 2026 and 2027 for IRA funds.**

All materials submitted with this application become the property of the State of Mississippi and are non-returnable. Disclosure of this information is voluntary. However, failure to provide all of the requested information will substantially decrease the ability of designated persons to carefully review and rank your application and property for participation in the program.

The Mississippi Forestry Commission provides equal employment opportunity and services to all individuals regardless of disability, race, age, religion, color, gender, creed, national origin, or political affiliation.

INSTRUCTIONS TO FLP APPLICANT

1. Download this Microsoft Word™ document; answer all questions completely and save it to submit with attachments. Please submit the application as a Word™ document in 11-point font, single spaced.
2. Answer all questions in all sections completely.
3. Attach all applicable supporting documents, photos, maps, deeds, etc. to this application.
4. **To be considered for IRA funding, submit this completed application and all attachments to the Mississippi Forestry Commission no later than 5 p.m. on December 2nd, via mail, hand delivery or digitally. No faxes will be accepted**

Deadline is December 2, 2024 for IRA Proposals.

5. **For assistance, and address to submit your application and attachments:**
Mississippi Forestry Commission
Attn: **Forest Legacy Coordinator**
Richard McInnis
3139 Highway 468 West
Pearl, MS 39208
Cell (601).927.8484
rmcinnis@mfc.ms.gov
6. **Checklist of Attachments: Attach one (1) clean copy the following items to this application for each contiguous parcel nominated:**
- a. Application: Completed application.
 - b. Owners: Name(s), address(es), phone number and email of all owners of record for this tract(s) and the exact listing(s) of ownership name.
 - c. Location: Central latitude and longitude, County, and map indicating location of property in the county or counties where located.
 - d. Copy of plat or survey map (*if available*) showing property boundary and boundary of nominated parcel(s). (You may email a GIS shape file as well).
 - e. Aerial photo with boundaries of nominated parcel(s) marked (*if available*).
 - f. Deed(s): Copy of all deed(s) showing current ownership. If a title opinion is available, please submit it.
 - g. Improvements: List of existing permanent improvements on the tract, including houses, barns, lakes, ponds, dams, wells, roads and other structures and the total number of acres occupied by improvements.
 - h. Map identifying any dams, dumps, or waste disposal sites on the property (if any).
 - i. Forest management plan: (Multiple-resource or Forest Stewardship Plan) *if available*.
 - j. Appraisal or documentation of the market value of the property (*if available*).
 - k. A list of people, organizations, elected officials, or agencies that support the protection of the property. (If the property is submitted for FLP consideration they will be asked for a letter of support).

SECTION I. APPLICANT INFORMATION

1. LANDOWNER'S LEGAL FULL NAME: _____

2. FULL MAILING ADDRESS (STREET OR P.O. BOX, CITY, STATE, ZIP):

3. DAYTIME PHONE: _____

4. CELL PHONE: _____

5. FAX NUMBER: _____

6. E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

7. LIST ALL CO-OWNERS OF THE PROPERTY (AND THEIR ADDRESS, EMAIL, AND PHONE NUMBER OR ATTACH A LIST):

Box will expand to fit your responses:

8. AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE (IF DIFFERENT THAN THE LANDOWNER): *If applicable, please list name, full mailing address, phone, e-mail for persons authorized to represent you on this application.*

Box will expand to fit your responses:

SECTION II. PROPERTY INFORMATION

1. LOCATION OF PROPOSED TRACT OR MULTIPLE TRACTS:

County(ies): _____

Central GPS Point(s) (latitude and longitude): _____

Township: Range: Section(s): _____

Tax Parcel #s _____

2. PROPERTY SIZE:

Total property acres of nominated tract(s): _____

Total forested acres of nominated tract(s): _____

How much of the total acres above are you nominating to the Forest Legacy Program in this application? _____

3. CONSERVATION EASEMENT OR SALE? ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BEING CONSIDERED FOR: (mark one or both)

A conservation easement, or

Selling all or a portion of the property.

Unsure

4. IS ANY OF THIS ACREAGE ENROLLED IN THE AMERICAN TREE FARM SYSTEM, SFI, A THIRD-PARTY FOREST CERTIFICATION OR OTHER FOREST MANAGEMENT PROGRAM? If so, please list the program(s) and acres covered.

Box will expand to fit your responses:

5. DO YOU HAVE A WRITTEN FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN OR FOREST STEWARDSHIP PLAN? If so, please attach a copy of it.

Yes

No

6. HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING WITH A FORESTER, LAND MANAGER OR BIOLOGIST WHO COULD PROVIDE TECHNICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR PROPERTY? If so, may we contact him/her? Please provide the full name and a daytime phone number and e-mail.

Box will expand to fit your responses:

SECTION III. LANDOWNER GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

1. **DESCRIBE IN THE SPACE BELOW YOUR LONG-TERM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE NOMINATED PROPERTY.** *Please share with us why the property is important to you and any unique aspects. What would you like to see happen to this property in the future?*

Box will expand to fit your responses:

2. **LANDOWNER SELF EVALUATION:** *Prioritize in order the following reasons why your property should be enrolled in the Forest Legacy Program (1-most important to 10-least important).*

- Prevent conversion/development/fragmentation of an important forest resource
- Protection of scenic resources
- Protect/enhance a watershed or important drinking water supply
- Protect/enhance an important riparian/hydrologic area
- Provide linkage between public properties, protected areas and greenways
- Protect/enhance/restore fish and/or wildlife habitat
- Protect/enhance/restore habitat of rare, threatened, and/or endangered species, plant and/or animals
- Provide for the continuation of traditional forest uses (timber supply, recreation)
- Climate resilience/flood or storm hazard protection
- Provide historical/cultural uniqueness or protection
- Other: _____

SECTION IV. HOW YOUR PROPERTY FITS INTO THE NATIONAL FLP CORE CRITERIA

Nominated properties must compete nationally for FLP funds. They will be scored using three (3) national core criteria (Importance, Threatened and Strategic) AND must demonstrate high readiness and capacity for successful implementation within three years of the grant award. Please describe how your property relates to the core criteria by answering each question below.

- 1. WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR PROPERTY AS IT RELATES TO ANY ECONOMIC, CONSERVATION, ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL OR ECONOMIC PUBLIC BENEFITS THAT WOULD BE GAINED BY PROTECTING AND MANAGING IT? Include answers in the expandable box below. *Helpful hints* – Describe in detail any attributes that are applicable to your property. More points will be given to projects that demonstrate multiple public benefits with national significance. Use the attribute prompts below to help you provide information on the importance of your property. Include any links, references, plans or other details to explain your answers. Please address all attributes applicable to your property in the text box below:**

1.1 Economic Benefits from Timber and Potential Forest Productivity – This category includes three independent components:

- (1) Landowner demonstrates sustainable forest management in accordance with a management plan. Additional points are given to land that is third party certified (such as Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Forest Stewardship Council, and American Tree Farm System).
- (2) Forestry activities contribute to the resource-based economy for a community or region. Please explain.
- (3) The property contains characteristics (such as highly productive soils) to sustain a productive forest over time. Include the site index of soils on your tract.

1.2 Economic Benefits from Non-timber Products and Recreation– Does your property provide non-timber revenue to the local or regional economy through non-timber forest products (e.g., pine straw, native plant collection, etc.); recreation and tourism (local or regional benefits related to lodging, rentals, bikes, boats, outdoor gear, guided tours for fishing, hunting, or birdwatching, etc.); hunting leases; and/or ranching? Please explain.

1.3 Threatened or Endangered Species Habitat – Does your property have documented threatened or endangered plants and animals or designated habitat? Documented occurrence and use of the project is given more consideration than if it is habitat without documented occurrence or use. Federally listed species are given more consideration than state-only listed species. Please list species.

1.4 Fish, Wildlife, Plants, and Unique Forest Communities – Does the property contain unique forest communities and/or important fish or wildlife habitat documented by a formal assessment or wildlife conservation plan or strategy developed by a government or a non-governmental organization? Please provide species, community types and reference plans or assessments. Note: The importance of habitat to an international initiative to support and sustain migratory species can be viewed as national importance if conserving the property will make a significant contribution. Occasional use of the

property or a modest contribution to an international initiative does not raise the property to national importance.

1.5 Water Supply, Aquatic Habitat, and Watershed Protection – Does the property:

(1) Have a direct relationship with protecting the water supply or watershed, such as providing a buffer to public drinking water supply, containing an aquifer recharge area, or protecting an ecologically important aquatic or marine area? and/or (2) Contain an important riparian area, wetlands, shorelines, river systems, or sensitive watershed lands?

Note: Consider the importance of the resource, the scope and scale of the property, magnitude and intensity of the benefits that will result from protection of the property. Merely being located within an aquifer recharge area or in a water supply area will not be given the same consideration as a property that makes a significant conservation contribution to water, riparian, and aquatic resources and habitats.

1.6 Cultural/Tribal/Historic – Does the property contain features of cultural, tribal, and/or historical significance that are documented by a governmental, tribal, or a non- governmental organization? Explain.

Note: A Federal designation should receive greater consideration.

1.7 Public Access – Does protection of the property maintain or establish new/expanded access by the public for recreation (including waterfront access)? Explain.

Note: Restrictions on specific use and location of recreational activities may be allowed. More consideration will be given to projects that expand or provide certainty of public access as a result of the proposed project.

1.8 Scenic – Is the property in a viewshed of a government designated scenic feature or area (such as a trail, river, byway, or highway)? Explain.

Note: Federal designation will be given more consideration than state-only designations when evaluating the significance of this attribute.

1.9 Carbon Sequestration/Climate Resilience, Adaptation to Climate Change* – Will protection result in benefits related to climate resilience and adaptation, and carbon sequestration?

*Note: Many of the elements in **Importance** relate to climate resilience and adaptation. For example, forest productivity, health, rare or unique plant communities where species range is discussed, and water resources. Landscape scale conservation and its impacts on resilience and adaptation are also discussed in **Strategic**. Carbon sequestration and management are important impacts of the FLP program and of land conservation. The potential long term carbon management contributions may be best viewed as optimizing carbon sequestration among the host of values and services from conserved forest rather than a focus on maximization of carbon within a limited span of time. Sustainable carbon management results from effective conservation and management of ecosystems; maintaining, restoring and enhancing health and productivity. Forest Service General Technical Review-GTR WO-95*

Considering Forest and Grassland Carbon in Land Management provides a good discussion and overview of carbon as a consideration in forest management.

(2017https://www.fs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/fs_media/fs_document/wo-95-consideringforestandgrasslandcarboninlandmanagement-508-92517.pdf)

1.10 Local community – How would protecting the property benefit the local community?

Note: Benefits to underserved communities and environmental justice initiatives should be highlighted. For example, benefits can be discussed within economic benefits, water, cultural, public access, or climate resilience. Benefits for underserved communities can also be discussed in the Strategic section.

IMPORTANCE ATTRIBUTES:

Box will expand to fit your responses:

2. EXPLAIN HOW YOUR PROPERTY IS THREATENED BY CONVERSION TO OTHER, NON-FOREST USES. Include answers in the expandable box below. *Helpful Hints: This criterion estimates the likelihood for conversion. Please address the following:*

2.1 Lack of Protection – Describe the lack of temporary or permanent protections (e.g., current zoning, temporary or permanent easements, moratoriums, and encumbrances that limit subdivision or conversion) that currently exists on the property and the likelihood of the threat of conversion to non-forest use (residential, commercial or industrial development, agricultural, energy or mining

2.2 Land and Landowners Circumstances – Describe the land and landowner circumstances (e.g., property held in an estate, age of landowner, interest of ownership and stewardship of property by heirs of current landowners is uncertain, property is for sale or sale pending, landowner anticipates owning the property for a short duration, landowner has received purchase offers, land has an approved subdivision plan, landowner has sold subdivisions of the property, etc.).

2.3 Adjacent Land Use – Describe adjacent land use characteristics such as existing land status, rate of development (e.g., statistics on recent and projected growth in the county and region), growth, and conversion in the immediate area, rate of population growth (percent change) and projections, rate of change in ownership, etc. These attributes are great to illustrate on a map too.

2.4 Ability to Develop – Describe physical attributes that will facilitate conversion, such as access, buildable ground, zoning, slope, water/sewer, electricity, permits, etc. Other types of conversion include agricultural expansion, wind or solar farms, or other uses that substantially remove or fragment forest cover.

Threatened Attributes:

Box will expand to fit your responses:

3. HOW IS THE PROPERTY STRATEGICALLY LINKED TO OTHER PROTECTED AREAS NEARBY? **Include answers in the box below.** *Helpful Hints: This criterion reflects the project’s relevance or relationship to conservation efforts on a broader perspective considering scale, location, and relative contribution to landscape scale conservation goals. Discuss the following three attributes:*

3.1 Conservation Initiative, Strategy, or Plan – How does the project contribute to an existing or new conservation initiative, strategy, or plan? Describe the relative contribution of the property to achieving the conservation goals of the plan, strategy, or initiative considering scale, location, and project attributes. Conservation plans that have been formally designated by a governmental, tribal, or non-governmental entity should be given more consideration. Contributions to a new strategy or a strategy under development may also be discussed. This can be useful if a project would contribute to, or catalyze, a new conservation initiative, strategy, or plan. For new initiatives specific goals should be defined, and potential contributions of how the project advances those goals should be highlighted.

3.2 Complement Protected Lands – How is the project is strategically linked to enhance already protected lands including past Forest Legacy Program projects, already protected Federal, State, or non-governmental organization lands (refuges, parks, national or state forests, military lands, conservation easements, wildlife management areas, parkways, coastal preserves, greenspaces, coastal preserves), or other Federal land protection programs (REPI, NRCS, NAWCA, NOAA, etc.)?

3.3 Other Landscape Scale Goals and Public Benefits – How does the project strategically contribute to the advancement of larger scale conservation goals and public benefits? Examples of larger scale goals and benefits could include but are not limited to climate resilience and mitigation, reduced community impacts from wildfire, floods, invasive species, etc., expanded public access, and protection of critical water supplies. Provide specifics on the project’s contributions to the larger scale goals and benefits. Projects that benefit diverse/socio-economically underserved communities and/or address environmental justice will also receive additional consideration.

Strategic Attributes:

Box will expand to fit your responses:

4.0 SPECIAL EMPHASIS CRITERIA FOR IRA PROPOSALS: Review the Special Emphasis Criteria for the type of project you are proposing (Large Landscape, Tribal or Small Strategic Tract) and explain how the property supports these criteria in the box below. <https://www.fs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2023-06/FY24%20Project%20Scoring%20Guidance%20-%20IRA.pdf>

How does your proposal support the IRA Forest Legacy Program Special Emphasis Criteria?

Text box will expand to fit your responses.

5. IS THE PROPERTY “READY” TO BE A PART OF THE FOREST LEGACY PROGRAM? Helpful Hint: *Please indicate the items that are available and attach them to this application. These are not required to complete the application but will be needed if MFC elects to submit your property for funding through FLP.*

5.1 Do you have a recent appraisal of the property or some other supporting documentation such as a market analysis? If so, please attach.

Yes No

5.2 Do you have a recent title search or title commitment? If so, please attach.

Yes No

5.3 Do you have a written forest stewardship plan or property management plan? If so, please attach.

Yes No

5.4 Do you have a survey of the property? If so, please attach.

Yes No

5.5 Do you have a legal description of the property? If so, please attach.

Yes No

5.6 Do you own the surface rights?

Yes No Not sure

5.7 Do you own the subsurface mineral rights?

Yes No Not sure

SECTION V. OTHER COMMENTS

ADD ANY OTHER COMMENTS ABOUT YOUR FOREST LEGACY APPLICATION OR THE UNIQUENESS OF YOUR PROPERTY.

Other Comments:

Box will expand to fit your responses:

SECTION VI. Confidential Financial Information and Ownership Information

The following financial, deed and lien information shall remain confidential until such time as:

- 1) the application has been approved and all transactions are concluded, or**
- 2) all title holders give written permission to release the information.**

1. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The following estimates are for preliminary use only. Any final offer for conservation easement or fee simple purchase cannot exceed fair market value, as determined by an appraisal meeting the 2016 Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisition (known as Yellowbook Standards).

- a. **What is the estimated total value of this property?** \$ _____
- b. **How was this value determined:** (e.g., appraisal, market analysis, landowner's personal estimate, Realtor, please provide a copy with this application if available): _____
- c. **Are you willing to donate part or all of the appraised value?** (Applies to either conservation easement or fee simple title). Note: FLP grants require a minimum 25% non-federal match.
_____ Yes _____ No _____ Not sure

If yes, what percent value would you be willing to donate? ___%

- d. **State the value of any other contribution you or a partner may make to help make this project successful, either in donated value of in-kind services or financial.** For example: Cash or in kind donations such as land value or conservation easement value of grant or match tracts, management plan, legal and title work, appraisal, survey, minerals remoteness letter, survey, or the value any potential partners may make (please list partners and contribution). Note: Donations may constitute a charitable contribution for income tax purposes, depending on applicable Internal Revenue Service guidelines and regulations.

List potential contributions toward the non-federal match:

Box will expand to fit your responses:

2. LIENS AND ENCUMBRANCES

Please list any and all liens and encumbrances on the property. Examples: Mortgages, conservation easements, utility easements, public rights of way, water flow or water use restrictions, septic systems or water easements, deeded ingress/egress, deed restrictions or covenants, mineral extraction rights (gas, oil, coal, sand and gravel, stone, etc.), tax liens, dump sites, underground fuel tanks, other environmental hazards, active enrollment in government programs (such as USDA conservation programs), selling of carbon credits, etc.

Existing Liens and Encumbrances:

Box will expand to fit your responses:

SECTION VII. PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION OF RIGHTS TO BE RETAINED AND SOLD (CONSERVATION EASEMENTS ONLY)

CAREFULLY AND FULLY COMPLETE IF YOU WANT TO BE CONSIDERED FOR A CONSERVATION EASEMENT. IF YOU ARE OFFERING YOUR PROPERTY FOR FEE TITLE ACQUISITION, SKIP THIS SECTION VII. The information you provide will directly affect the desirability of your property for the Forest Legacy Program. If you are considering a conservation easement, indicate which uses, rights or interests you may wish to **keep (K) and which uses or interests you may wish to **sell (S)** as part of the conservation easement. If you are unsure, mark **U** and if not applicable, mark **NA**. Note: Checking **sell** or **keep** does not commit you to anything at this time, it merely assists MFC when inspecting, prioritizing and evaluating your parcel.**

K = Keep, S = Sell, U = Unsure, NA = Not applicable to your property

- _____ Commercial, residential or industrial development
 - _____ The right to manage and harvest timber
 - _____ The right to subdivide the property
 - _____ The right to hunt, fish or trap (commercial).
 - _____ The right to hunt, fish or trap (non-commercial/private only).
 - _____ Mining for sand/gravel (or other minerals)*
 - _____ Right to limit or control public access to your property
 - _____ The right to graze open areas (acres _____)
 - _____ The right to farm open areas for profit (acres _____)
 - _____ The right to build or rebuild roads (other than forest management/protection roads)
 - _____ Ownership of existing buildings and other improvements.
 - _____ Other recreational activities such as camping, hiking, cycling, horseback riding.
 - _____ Motorized access
 - _____ Expansion of existing improvements (buildings).
 - _____ Others? *Please specify below in Comment box.*
- * *Retention of unrestricted mineral or oil/gas rights will exclude that portion or all of your property from consideration in the Mississippi FLP.*

Other Comments:

Box will expand to fit your responses:

SECTION VIII. LANDOWNER TESTIMONY AND PERMISSION

Please read, sign and date before submitting this application.

The information in this application is true to the best of my knowledge and belief. I, as the landowner or landowner’s authorized representative (proof of authorization must accompany the application), agree to allow any needed inspection, appraisal and survey of the property being offered for consideration under the Mississippi Forest Legacy Program. I agree to allow members of the MFC, the Mississippi Forest Legacy committee or their designee to inspect my property at any reasonable time for the purposes of this application. I understand I shall be notified in advance of all inspection visits.

I also understand that the resource values identified by me in this application for protection will be used by the Mississippi Forestry Commission to rank the proposal. Therefore, future protection and management of these resources are implied in the application and will be required in the easement (if applicable) and subsequent management plans. Substantial modifications of the intent set forth in this application by me or my representative will necessitate a review of the project and may jeopardize its selection and possible funding. I also understand that this property (i.e., conservation easement or fee simple title) will not be purchased if negotiations do not reach an amicable agreement, or if the property does not meet the needs or qualifications of the Mississippi Forest Legacy Program or if funding is unavailable. I understand that conservation easements or fee simple title will only be purchased from willing sellers.

I have read the application and understand that all Forest Legacy projects will be reviewed by the MFC for their suitability to the Mississippi Forest Legacy Program. Furthermore, that the Forest Legacy agreement is voluntary and subject to the availability of funds and the willingness of the State of Mississippi to accept the easement as negotiated.

Print name of each title holder

Signature

Date

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Mail or Email completed IRA application by December 2, 2024 to:

Mississippi Forestry Commission
Attn: **Forest Legacy Coordinator, Richard McInnis**
3139 Highway 468 West
Pearl, MS 39208
Cell (601).927.8484
rmcinnis@mfc.ms.gov
<http://www.mfc.ms.gov/forest-legacy>