Tongass Retained Receipts Review Committee

Vision for the Retained Receipts Program

05.09.17

The overarching purpose of the stewardship contracting authority, including the use of retained and pooled receipts, is to improve watershed conditions. Priority projects for the Retained Receipts Funding Program are those that **clearly restore, maintain, and/or enhance habitat, ecological function, water quality, soil productivity, forest health, and/or watershed condition.**

If the primary objective of your proposal is not improving watershed health, the retained receipts program is not the appropriate source of funding. For example, projects with the primary goal of improving recreational opportunities and facilities will not be funded. Likewise, projects that seek to maintain/restore roads in order to maintain access will generally not be funded. While worthy projects, recreation projects and general road maintenance are not a good fit for funding from the retained receipts program, and need to be funded through other sources.

If your project clearly meets the above condition, there are a number of additional criteria that the Review Committee is using to prioritize projects. In general, these criteria have been selected because they facilitate the “Tongass Transition” to: *“…develop a new integrated program of work focused on young growth, ecological restoration, and forest stewardship that protects and restores the Forest’s extraordinary fish and wildlife habitat… while sustaining deep-rooted community and cultural ties to the land and providing jobs in the woods” (SECRETARY’S MEMORANDUM 1044-009, July 2013).*

1. **Community Engagement and Partnerships:** Two key objectives of the Retained Receipts program are to facilitate community engagement with natural resource management and develop partnerships to implement on the ground projects. Priority projects are those that show a strong degree of collaboration with local communities and relevant organizations, as well as those that support partnerships through a thoughtful approach to scheduling, contracts, agreements, implementation and monitoring.
2. **Capacity Building**: Another core objective of the Retained Receipts program is to build the capacity of agencies, private landowners, city and tribal governments, and communities to participate in natural resource management. Priority projects are those that include a thoughtful approach to agency, partner organization and workforce capacity development for assessment, prioritization, implementation and monitoring.
3. **Local Economic Development**: Another core objective of the Retained Receipts program is creating local business opportunities and local jobs. Priority projects are those that carefully consider project work as one component of a larger program of work aimed at creating long-term local employment.
4. **“Shovel-Ready”**: The Stewardship Authority allows for retained receipts to be used in the implementation of projects: not the planning or inventory phases. Priority projects are those that are NEPA- cleared, fully designed, and ready to be implemented. Funding may be requested for projects that are not currently NEPA cleared if they already have funding secured for NEPA work and are expected to be cleared within six months of proposal submission. NEPA is required for all projects, and state and/or federal permits are required also if applicable.
5. **Best Use of Funding**: Any entity operating in Southeast Alaska, including: Tongass National Forest Districts, City Governments, Tribal Governments, NGOs, ANCSA Corporations, private landholders, and State and Federal agencies. Additionally, priority projects are those that: align with Tongass National Forest priorities (priority watersheds, stewardship areas, etc.) present a reasonable budget, present a reasonable schedule for project work, are creative and carefully thought out, and have a high likelihood of success.