

# Funding

Reforestation costs a lot. Learn about why it's expensive, what to expect, and some of the different funding options that may be available.

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Image credit: Mast Reforestation

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## Cost to reforest

**Reforestation is expensive, upwards of tens of thousands of dollars. Costs will be driven by regional differences in species, planting density, project size, site preparation, and other factors.**

According to a 2021 study, reforestation can cost upwards of \$1,000 - \$1,700 per acre.

Read more: [Challenges to the Reforestation Pipeline](#)

Although financial returns can take several years to decades, ensuring successful forest recovery will lead to long term viability and productivity of the forests. However, due to economies of scale, smaller properties will likely need to rely on government assistance and cost share programs.

Funding options, such as grants, may be available, but these often require expertise and time, and sometimes require existing funds. This can lead landowners to take no action, as shown in a 2018 study that found one-third of those interviewed would not have reforested if it were not for a specific program through their county's Resource Conservation District ([Waks et al. 2018](#)).

## Making an investment

Reforestation is a significant investment because it is so much more than just planting trees. These costs are driven primarily by the size of the site and how challenging it is to access and work in. Costs should include preparing the site for planting, cost of seedlings, labor, monitoring, and other contracting services.

### Site Preparation:

Prior to replanting, the land may require activities such as debris removal and brush clearing. The cost can vary depending on the extent of work needed and method (examples are mechanical equipment or herbicide). However, these activities help create suitable conditions for tree establishment and growth.

### Seedlings:

The cost per seedling can range from a few cents to a few dollars, depending on species selected, size, and age.

While costs can be significant, they are essential investments for the long-term health and productivity of your forest. Reforestation not only restores the ecological functions of the forest but can also provide future economic returns through timber production or carbon sequestration.

### Planting Labor:

This can be a labor-intensive task, especially on larger scales.

### Maintenance and Monitoring:

Replanted seedlings require ongoing maintenance and monitoring to ensure their survival and growth. This includes activities like weed control, watering, fertilization, and protection from browsing animals.

### Consulting Services:

Hourly fees for professional services associated with their expertise and assistance.



Image credit: Mast Reforestation

## Funding your project

How projects are financed will be highly dependent on the landowner. It's worth considering potential future returns. There are options for financial assistance when it comes to post-fire reforestation. These will vary in amount and timeframe. They can include government assistance, as well as additional mechanisms such as carbon removal projects.

Consulting foresters will help secure financial assistance for landowners, and in some cases the funding assistance provided may require working with a registered professional forester (RPF).

### Options for funding can include:

**Grants or government assistance**

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**

EQIP provides fixed payments, usually covering 50-75% of the costs, though post-wildfire rates can be higher. This program requires a forest management plan, which can be financed through the NRCS Conservation Plan assistance.

**California Forest Improvement Program (CFIP)**

Financial assistance for CA landowners through CAL FIRE. Cost-share assistance is provided to private and public landowners with 20-5,000 acres. Working with a Registered Professional Forester (RPF) is required.

**Farm Services Agency - Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP)**

This USDA program helps non-industrial landowners restore forests damaged from natural disasters. This program may fund up to 75% of implementation costs. You must be a non-industrial landowner that previously had tree cover to apply.

**Conservation Districts** are county-level organizations that often provide technical and financial assistance or cost-share agreements.

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**Non-profit agency assistance**      Organizations like the National Forest Foundation and One Tree Planted offer financial assistance specifically for post-fire reforestation projects

Some states (like CA) have local Fire Safe Councils that help with both the preparation and recovery from wildfire.

**Carbon Removal**      Industrial and non-industrial landowners are using carbon removal as a means to pay for reforestation and forestry-related projects.

**Sheep Creek Ranch (5.5 min watch)**  
Mast Reforestation is partnering with a consulting forester to reforest a non-industrial landowner’s property, using carbon offsets to pay for it [Video player](#)

**Yakama Tribal Nation: Thunder Dance and Cougar Creek Wildfire Restoration**  
Project listed under Climate Action Reserve to restore over 4,000 acres severely burned forest

**American Forest Foundation: Family Forest Carbon Program**  
Although not geared toward replanting after wildfire, this program opens up carbon financing to family forest owners



Image credit: Mast Reforestation

### Additional Resources

**Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP)** - USDA Farm Services Agency program that helps owners of non-industrial private forests, with cost-share up to 75% of implementation

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy (CA)** - CA state agency that helps restore natural resources, including considerable grant funding. They also have a funding newsletter.

**California Forest Improvement Program (CA Only)** and **Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)** through the Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS) - Programs that provide eligible landowners with technical and financial assistance

**A multi-benefit framework for funding forest management in fire-driven ecosystems across the Western U.S. (Quesnel Seipp et al)** - Peer reviewed literature with proposed framework to engage various stakeholders in sharing project costs

**One Tree Planted Forest Fire Recovery Program** and **National Forest Foundation**