



Welcome to May. As we step into a new month, we're reminded that May brings a sense of renewal, longer days, warmer weather, and more opportunities to reconnect with the land and with ourselves.

We're glad you're here with us as we continue to share stories, resources, and opportunities across the SFLR Network. Let's dive in 🌱



Grounded in May

May is *Mental Health Awareness Month*, a time to reflect on the importance of caring for our well-being.

For me, one of the first things I do when I start to feel overwhelmed is step outside and spend time in nature. There's something about being on the land—the quiet, the fresh air, the stillness—that helps me reset and feel grounded again.

Research has long supported this connection. In Japan, the practice of “forest bathing” highlights how time spent in nature can reduce stress and improve overall mental health. It's a powerful reminder that sometimes the best thing we can do is simply step outside and be present.

As a network, we're fortunate to be surrounded by nature in our everyday work. It's not something we should take for granted. The land doesn't just provide for us—it also has the ability to restore us.

This month, I encourage you to take a moment for yourself. Step outside, breathe deeply, and reconnect.

Warmly,
Bethaney



Roots to Resilience Empowering Land Legacies

Request for Applications: Forest Landowner Stewardship and Community Resilience Fund

We are thrilled to share that we are now accepting applications for a new grant opportunity designed to support organizations working to strengthen land retention, expand access to sustainable forestry services, and build long-term economic resilience for historically underserved landowners.

SFLR aims to fund 6–8 organizations with strong potential to deliver impactful, community-centered forestry and land tenure services.

Application Deadline: May 18 by 5:00 PM ET.

Purpose & Goals

- Increase land retention and reduce involuntary land loss
- Improve access to sustainable forestry services
- Strengthen landowner capacity through education and technical assistance
- Increase participation in forestry programs

Funding Details

- Total Funding Available: \$1,200,000
- Award Range per Site: \$50,000 – \$200,000
- Project Period: June 2026 – May 2027
- Service Area: Preference given to the Southeast Region

Funding structures may vary based on capacity, readiness, and scope of work. **For eligibility and to learn more about this opportunity, please [click here](#).**

[Click Here to Apply](#)



Policy Perspectives

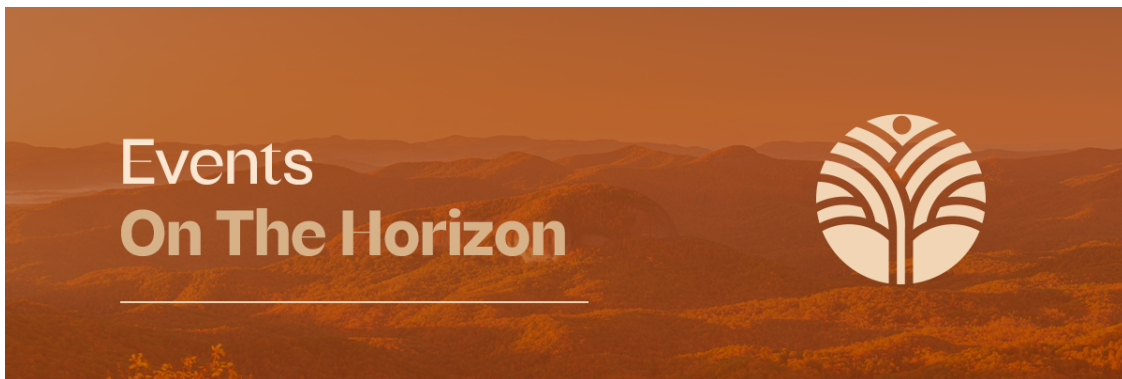
Forest Service Reorganization

The **U.S. Forest Service** is undergoing a major reorganization that could change how decisions are made across the country. While some see it as a way to help projects move faster, others are concerned it could weaken the science and research capacity, conservation safeguards, and community input that help keep forests healthy over time.

For our Network, this matters because changes to research and land management directly impact the rural communities we work alongside every day.

This is why our advocacy work is so important. We support policies that help small landowners access reliable technical assistance and fair markets, so they can build income from timber and ecosystem services while staying on their land and keeping forests healthy for future generations.

As this unfolds, we will continue to monitor it closely and uplift the voices of those who live and work on the land. **In the meantime, you can find out more about the reorganization by [clicking here](#).**



AFFC's Forest Farming Office Hours

Join the **Appalachian Forest Farmer Coalition** and **NC State University Extension** for a space dedicated to Q&A, resources, and conversation around forest farming. All regions and experience levels are welcome.

Next Session: Friday, May 8

Time: 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM EST

Location: Zoom



[Learn more here](#)



Celebrating Impact: Leaders in Land Conservation

SFLR partner site, the **Black Family Land Trust (BFLT)**, recently teamed up with farmland conservationists **Margaret and Bryant Harrison**, who were honored with the *Tommy Wyche Land Conservation Champion Award* at the **2026 ForeverGreen Luncheon**.



Named after conservationist Tommy Wyche, this award recognizes a business, organization, or individual who has made a significant contribution to the protection of farmlands, forest lands, natural areas, and other special places in the Upstate.

For their leadership in farmland conservation, community service, and advancing equity for farmers in Greenville County and beyond, Margaret and Bryant Harrison were recognized for their lasting impact and commitment to the land.



Closing Reflections

Thank you for being part of this work. If this newsletter resonates with you, we encourage you to share it with your network and help us expand the reach of resources that strengthen land legacies.

With gratitude,
The SFLR Team



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