

Northern Colorado Fireshed Collaborative: 2026 Round 4 Letter of Intent (LOI)

June 2026

Background & Funding Summary:

The following section provides summary info on Round 4 funding opportunities. To find specific details about funding requirements, please read throughout the document.

From 2023-2025, the National Forest Foundation (NFF) in partnership with the Northern Colorado Fireshed Collaborative (NCFC) Steering Committee and Investment Committee released three rounds of funding to support the [goals of the NCFC](#). Over \$2.4 million in funding has been awarded to 16 community connected partners to date, with the purpose of increasing the capacity of community connected partners and enhancing the readiness of the NCFC to increase the pace and scale for forest treatments across the NCFC geography. Investments supported capacity needs, advanced collaborative readiness, and directly supported the planning of specific projects to enhance successful implementation of prescribed fire and other forest treatments.

Building on these past investments, Round 4 funding will focus on implementing strategic forest restoration, hazardous fuels reduction projects, and prescribed fire projects. Round 4, conducted in partnership with non-federal funding partners, will have two distinct funding streams and Focus Areas: 1) Strategic implementation projects; and 2) Strategic prescribed fire focused projects

1) Strategic Implementation Projects

A new funding partner to the NFF and NCFC, Xcel Energy, is contributing a portion of the Round 4 funds. Projects selected to receive this funding will advance both NCFC and Xcel Energy goals, which may include: enhancing forest and community resilience to wildfire, decreasing hazardous fuel accumulation, and improving overall forest conditions in the vicinity of Xcel Energy infrastructure and the communities Xcel Energy serves. Projects must advance the [NCFC Spatial Strategy](#), be located within the NCFC Boundary and Xcel Energy's High and Medium Risk [Wildfire Risk Tiers, and benefit communities with Xcel electric service](#). More information on resources, specific eligibility and considerations can be found below in following sections.

2) Prescribed Fire Projects

Through partnership with and funding from The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Colorado, Round 4 funding will also support readiness for and implementation of prescribed fire treatments. Projects may include capacity, planning, training, or related components and must fall within the [NCFC boundary](#).

NCFC Partners with questions are encouraged to reach out the NCFC Coordinator and NFF Program Manager for discussion prior to completing their Letter of Interest (contact information can be found in the "Key Information" section).

Key Information

Geographic Restrictions	1. <u>Implementation Projects</u>: Must be located within NCFC boundary and also within Xcel Energy's High and Medium Risk Tier (shown here); Project must provide benefit to communities with Xcel Energy Electric Service (shown here). 2. <u>Prescribed Fire Projects</u>: Must be located within the NCFC boundary. <u>Additional Notes</u> • NCFC geography can be found here. • All land ownership types are eligible.
Application Deadline	• Thursday, July 30th, 2026, 5 pm
Funding Type	• Non-federal funds
Eligible Organizations	• Nonprofit organizations, local, state and tribal governments and organizations, and universities • Entities who have received prior funding from the NCFC Fireshed Fund are also eligible to receive Fund 4 funds
Matching Requirements	• Match is not required; however leveraged funding can achieve greater impact and is encouraged, where possible.
Performance Period	• Projects funded in this round will begin in late 2026. The Investment Committee will prioritize selection of projects that are able to initiate and conduct implementation on a portion of the project by the end of FY2027
Applicant Resources	• See NCFC website for more info on: NCFC Goals, NCFC Spatial Strategy: TEALOM ; PODS Dashboard; GTR-373; CFRI Monitoring Handbook.; CO Statewide Prescribed Fire Strategy • We strongly recommend that applicants utilize information from these resources to explain how the proposed project aligns with the NCFC spatial and overall strategy.
Program Contact	• NFF and NCFC staff are available to answer questions about eligibility, project scope or the LOI process. Questions should be provided via email no later than 06/25/2026. • Shayna Jones, NFF Rocky Mountain Region Program Manager: 970-692-9360; sjones@nationalforests.org • Izzy Sofio, NCFC Coordinator, 704-577-2629; izzy.sofio@emberalliance.org

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Eligible Projects

NCFC ROUND 4 FOCUS AREAS & GEOGRAPHIC ELIGIBILITY

Projects must support the NCFC vision, mission, and goals, and must also be in alignment with the NCFC Spatial Strategy. The section below outlines the Focus Areas for Round 4. If you have a project idea that seems to be outside of these focus areas or that combine focus areas, please contact NFF/ NCFC Investment Committee Leads to discuss further before drafting your LOI. Note that the NCFC Investment Committee is committed to supporting priority needs across the NCFC geography, for partners at all stages of collaborative readiness.

1. Implementation of Strategic Forest Restoration and Hazardous Fuels Reduction Projects

Competitive projects will:

- Advance NCFC vision, mission, and goals, as well as the Spatial Strategy
- Be located within Xcel Energy's high and medium [risk tier](#) areas;
- Provide benefit to communities with Xcel Energy [electric service](#)
- Demonstrate tangible improvements to wildfire behavior metrics;
- Serve as an effective showcase project for Northern Colorado Fireshed Collaborative communications and future campaigns; and
- Achieve significant on-the-ground implementation progress by 12/31/2027.

2. **Prescribed Fire Projects**

Additional funding is available for projects that contain a prescribed fire nexus and scope, which may include capacity, planning, workforce training or related activities that help promote increased use of prescribed fire in the NCFC landscape. Applicants should reference the [Colorado Statewide Strategy for Prescribed Fire on Non-Federal Lands](#).

Regardless of the project's Focus Area, all competitive projects will be in alignment with the NCFC Spatial Strategy, described below.

NCFC Spatial Strategy

The [NCFC Spatial Strategy](#) encourages support for projects that establish anchor points for future projects; connect existing projects; tie into past fire footprints/maintain past fuel treatments; and/or integrate fuels treatment with response planning, such as providing expanded tactical opportunities during fire to increase firefighter safety or enhance control opportunities. The NCFC Spatial Strategy also supports projects that articulate or depict linkages between landscape scale and local scale desired outcomes and actions (e.g., through overlap with a CWPP project). More information on the NCFC Spatial Strategy can be found in the Applicant Resources Section.

INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The following are ineligible:

- Implementation of Strategic Projects:
 - Projects that do not demonstrate a benefit to communities with Xcel Energy electric service;
 - Projects with a focus on capacity and planning only, that do not contain an implementation component;
 - If applicants have needs related to materials and equipment to support implementation, please reach out to NFF and NCFC Coordinator to discuss eligibility.

- Prescribed Fire Projects: TBD
 - If applicants have projects that include prescribed fire implementation elements, please reach out to the NFF and NCFC Coordinator to discuss eligibility.

Administrative Considerations

FUNDING & MATCH REQUIREMENTS

Round 4 funds consist of non-federal funds from NCFC Funding Partners. While match funds are not required for Round 4 funding, it is a key priority of the NCFC to show total impact of projects, and leverage, where possible. The Investment Committee will consider projects with greater leveraged funding and overall impact in project selection.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Nonprofit organizations, state, local, or tribal governments and organizations, and universities are eligible to receive NCFC Round 4 funds. If an organization does not meet this eligibility requirement, it must utilize an eligible fiscal sponsor consistent with the NFF Policy on Fiscal Sponsorship. Please contact the NFF contact if you need to discuss this policy. Prior receipt of NCFC funds does not impact eligibility to receive Round 4 funding. All land ownerships are eligible for inclusion in Round 4 if the above applicant entity eligibility can be met.

PROJECT TIMING

Highly competitive proposals will use Round 4 funding by the end of 2027. If applicants have outside funding for additional phases of work beyond 2027, applicants are asked to detail and describe the overall timing in the LOI. If you have questions on timeline specific to your proposed project, please contact the the NFF and NCFC Coordinator to discuss.

AWARD SIZE

There is not an official minimum or maximum award amount for the NCFC Round 4 funding program and successful proposals vary widely in budget size. NFF expects to have approximately \$200,000 available for Focus Area 1 (Strategic Implementation Projects) and approximately \$300,000 available for Focus Area 2 (Prescribed Fire Projects) in Round 4.

LOI Questions and Instructions

Note that applicants must complete the LOI via the [NFF Grant portal](#). A preview of the questions and instructions for each Focus Area are provided below. If you have questions about how best to answer any portion of the LOI questions, please reach out to the NFF and NCFC Coordinator.

Focus Area 1: Strategic Implementation Projects – Preview of LOI Questions & Guidance

1. NCFC Participation

- a. *Please briefly describe your participation in NCFC and/or any affiliated place-based collaborative.*

2. Project Information Summary Table

- a. *Please complete the following Summary Table and upload the attachment.*

Total Acres to Be Treated	
Elevation	
Forest Type	
Treatment Type	
Communities Affected by the Project	
Highly Valued Resources and Assets Impacted by the Project (QWRA HVRAs include: Infrastructure, Recreation, WUI (buildings), Wildlife, Water, Vegetation)	
Other HVRAs/Values not Listed above	
Xcel Energy Wildfire Risk Tier	
Is this project identified through a Community Wildfire Protection Plan or other planning process/document (WRAPs, etc.)?	If answered CWPP, please provide the name and year of the CWPP, as well as a link to the document: If answered Other, please provide name and year of the document, as well as a link to the document:

3. Project Map and Shapefile

- a. Please upload a map that shows the following at a minimum:
 - Proposed project location(s)
 - Treatment area boundaries
 - Relevant POD boundaries (from PODS Dashboard);
 - If not using PODS dashboard to create your map, please identify the specific POD where your project is located within the Background and Current Conditions narrative below.
 - Relevant HVRAs impacted by the proposed project
 - Xcel Energy Wildfire Risk Tier – Note NCFC Coordinator will provide these files to applicants
 - Relationship with other projects in the vicinity of the proposed project.
- b. Please upload a shapefile for the proposed project and ensure the attribute table includes the following:
 - Project_ID (unique identifier for each project)
 - Treatment_ID (unique identifier for each treatment polygon)
 - Treatment_Type (Hand, Hand + Rx, Mech, Mech + Rx, Mast, Patch, Patch + SM, RxFire)
 - Treatment_Cost (\$) – This is an optional input if the information is available. Otherwise set to 0 and CFRI can calculate it based on their own treatment cost estimation algorithm.

4. Background and Current Conditions

Please describe the project area, including the following:

- a. Current conditions found in the project area;
- b. Overview of the project planning process, including other partners that are collaborating and coordinating with the applicant;
- c. How the project location is strategically located and aligns with the NCFC Spatial Strategy; Please consult the “Applicant Resources” section to help inform this section. Key items to note may include the following, as applicable:
 - i. Describe how this project is a good anchor treatment in a new location, and how it will lead to potential future expansion and additional treatments in this location in the future;
 - ii. Describe other treatments that are aligned with this proposed project and how this project would contribute to larger treatments/connectivity between smaller treatments;
 - iii. Describe why this area was previously treated and how the maintenance treatment and the proposed location aligns with the current criteria for an anchor project.
- d. How the project benefits communities served by Xcel Energy. Responses may include:
 - iv. How the project aligns with [Xcel Energy Wildfire Mitigation Tiers](#)
 - v. How the project benefits known Xcel Energy electric infrastructure present or in proximity to the project;
 - vi. How the project positively impacts communities that receive Xcel Energy [electric service](#);
- e. Project support, including information on the current readiness of private or other properties included in the project area to allow for 2027 implementation.

5. Prescription and Methods

- a. *Describe the desired future conditions and overarching goals in your project area and the how the prescription you will apply to accomplish these desired conditions.*
 - vii. *Please be specific when describing future conditions and forest health and wildfire metrics applicable for this project.*
- b. *How will the prescription modify current forest conditions and wildfire metrics to achieve your goals?*
- c. *What will you monitor and measure to ensure you are modifying these conditions and metrics?*
- d. *How do you plan to manage wood utilization and/or biomass generated as part of the project?*

6. Communications and Public Relations

- a. *Please note that proposed project and partners must be willing to partner with NCFC and Round 4 Funders to highlight the proposed project via NFF, NCF and Funder campaigns.*
- b. *Please describe planned communications with project partners to highlight the project locally and/or regionally.*
- c. *Describe the opportunity to utilize this project as a showcase to highlight tangible impacts and results.*

7. Timeline

Provide an explicit timeline of the proposed work. Please note the following:

- a. *Please provide all the major milestones and proposed activities (including any planned communications, outreach, etc.) that will be complete before December 2027.*
- b. *If you have funding for an additional phase of this project that extends beyond December 2027, please outline associated key milestones.*

8. Budget

Please provide the following budget items:

- a. *Amount Requested from NFF:*
- b. *Total Matching Funds:*
- c. *Total Project Budget:*
- d. *Budget Narrative*
 - viii. *Please outline applicable costs and rationale for estimates*
 - ix. *Please outline matching funds, including source of funds, status of matching funds, etc.*
 - x. *Scalability – Please describe if there is a realistic ability to scale this project and if so, please describe the specific elements that could be modified and how this would impact the project. The Investment Committee would like to preserve intact projects as possible, but this information will help inform committee discussion if there is a scenario with limited funds awarded to this project.*

Focus Area 2: Prescribed Fire Projects – Preview of LOI Questions & Guidance

Partners who have a project with a prescribed fire component should reach out to NFF/ NCFC Investment Committee Leads to confirm project concept eligibility, prior to completing an LOI.

LOI Questions for this focus area will include the following:

1. NCFC Participation

- a. *Please briefly describe your participation in the NCFC and/or any affiliated place-based collaborative*

2. Overall Project Summary

Please provide the following information on the proposed project:

- a. Describe how the project incorporates prescribed fire specifically;*
- b. Outline key partner roles and partnership to accomplish the prescribed fire scope;*
- c. Describe any anticipated challenges or obstacles for project success as well as how the project will overcome those challenges or obstacles;*
- d. Describe how the project will position partners involved for implementation of prescribed fire treatments in the future.*

3. Timeline

Provide an explicit timeline of the proposed work. Please note the following:

- a. Please provide all of the major milestones and proposed activities (including any planned communications, outreach, etc.) that will be complete before December 2027.*
- b. If you have funding for an additional phase of this project that extends beyond December 2027, please outline associated key milestones.*

4. Budget

Please provide the following budget items:

- a. Amount Requested from NFF:*
- b. Total Matching Funds:*
- c. Total Project Budget:*
- d. Budget Narrative*
 - i. Please outline applicable costs and rationale for estimates*
 - ii. Please outline matching funds, including source of funds, status of matching funds, etc.*
 - iii. Scalability – Please describe if there is a realistic ability to scale this project and if so, please describe the specific elements that could be modified and how this would impact the project. The Investment Committee would like to preserve intact projects as possible, but this information will help inform committee discussion if there is a scenario with limited funds awarded to this project.*

LOI Review Process

The NCFC Investment Committee includes representatives from a range of NCFC organizations. As described in the [NCFC Charter](#), the Investment Committee will make recommendations to the NFF Board of Directors for NCFC Fund investments based on LOI proposals received from NCFC partners. LOI requests may be scaled to partially fund a proposal as determined by the Investment Committee and funding partners. Recommendations are typically made within two months of receipt of LOIs. Following approval by the NFF Board of Directors, the NFF will invite a full proposal from LOI leads. If the full proposal is received and approved, a grant agreement will be issued.

New for Round 4, the NCFC Investment Committee will work closely with CFRI to review LOIs received using the Treatment Evaluation and Landscape-scale Outcomes Monitoring (TEALOM) tool to assess potential impact of proposed projects. Applicants are asked to submit a shapefile to allow for this testing of the TEALOM tool. If you need assistance in creating a shapefile, please reach out to the NFF and NCFC Coordinator. Investment Committee may share information obtained from this pilot test review process with applicants for their proposed project.

For more information on the Investment Committee Recommendation Process, including criteria used to inform project selection recommendations, please see the [NCFC Investment Committee Operating Guidelines document](#).

How to Submit an LOI

Applicants complete and submit NCFC LOIs through an online application platform. Refer to this LOI guidance document as you complete the online form.

HOW TO START A NEW LOI

Contact the NFF and NCFC Coordinator to discuss your initial project ideas, ensure project eligibility, and to receive an access code and instructions to allow you to initiate an application.

HOW TO RETURN TO THE LOI YOU STARTED

If you have already initiated an LOI, you can return to the LOI form by following these steps:

1. Go to the LOI login page at <https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=nationalforests>
2. Log in with your existing account
3. Click "Edit Application" to the right of the name of your saved application

Applicant Resources

PERTINENT POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

Prior to developing a NCFC LOI, applicants should review the following policies:

- [NFF Indirect Cost Rate Policy](#)

NCFC RESOURCES

- [NCFC website](#)
- [NCFC Spatial Strategy](#);
- [TEALOM](#) ;
- [GTR-373](#);
- [CFRI Monitoring Handbook](#).
- [Colorado Statewide Strategy for Prescribed Fire on Non-Federal Lands](#)
- <https://nocofireshed.org/geospatial-tools/> (both the PODS dashboard and the Common Operating Protocol are found here)
- [CFRI PODS Treatment Planning Dashboard](#)
- [NCFC QWRA](#)
- [CSFS Forest Atlas](#)
- We strongly recommend that applicants utilize information from these resources to explain how the proposed project aligns with the NCFC Spatial Strategy.