



Temporary Bridges for Forestry Crossings Program

Handbook for Program Description and Implementation



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Table of Contents

Historical Efforts Related to Bridgemat Stream Crossing Assistance in North Carolina.....	1
Program Objective	1
Funding Source Details	1
Program Overview	1
Eligibility Requirements	1
Qualifying Cost-Share Practice.....	2
Maximum Cost Share Reimbursement Allowance	2
Program Funds Distributed Among NCFS Regions.....	2
Dates for Program Application Submission	2
Application Form & W-9	2
Applications Selected for Funding by Random Draw.....	3
NCFS Response to Application Submission.....	3
Vendor List	3
Terms and Conditions	3
Program Participant Declines or Withdraws from Program Consideration	3
Bridge Construction	3
Applicant Arranges Purchase and Vendor Payment	3
Size & Newly Constructed Specification	3
Unique Identifier	4
Submission of Zero-balance Invoice for Reimbursement.....	4
Random Inspection	4
Photograph In-Use	4
Turnback Clause	4
Program Contacts	4
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Historical Efforts Related to Bridgemat Stream Crossing Assistance in North Carolina

Since the mid-1990s, the North Carolina Forest Service (NCFS) has provided temporary bridges (bridgemats) to loggers for establishing temporary crossings. In 2003, the NCFS made its first purchase of fabricated steel bridgemats and began recording loan events. This service was titled: Bridgemat Loan & Education Service. As of April 2024, this service continues in select areas of the state with 14 steel bridgemat sets. Summary reports of this service, vendor list, and other related resources are available here:

https://www.ncforestservice.gov/water_quality/bridgemats.htm.

Program Objective

The objective of Temporary Bridges for Forestry Crossings Program is to minimize stream bed and bank disturbance by incentivizing the use of a temporary bridge for crossing streams during forestry operations.

Funding Source Details

The NCFS received funding through a U.S. Department of Agriculture – Forest Service grant titled, “2022 Temporary Bridge Funding Opportunity Program”. This funding was sourced from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, PL 117-58, Section 40804(b)(5). This grant supports the establishment of temporary bridge programs for portable skidder bridges, bridge mats, or other temporary water crossing structures, to minimize stream bed and bank disturbance on non-federal and federal lands.

Program Overview

This is a cost-share program for the purchase of steel or wooden panels to be used during forestry operations for the purpose of temporarily crossing stream channels. Interested program applicants apply within the announced two-month window by submitting requested information in the program application and agreeing to the terms and conditions. NCFS will randomly select from submitted applications and notify each program applicant whether their application was selected for funding. Selected applicants may then purchase a temporary bridge that meets minimum program specifications and submits a bill of sale with a zero balance to the designated NCFS representative. The NCFS will review and determine whether the purchased temporary bridge meets program specifications. Upon confirmation, NCFS will provide cost share reimbursement to the applicant. The applicant must provide one photograph of the bridges in-use within one calendar year of the reimbursement date. NCFS will report program metrics to the US Forest Service grantors. The NCFS will also be available to provide Best Management Practice technical assistance and outreach for temporary bridge installation, use and removal.

Eligibility Requirements

To qualify for this program, the applicant must have a business address in North Carolina and be a forest harvesting operator, wood processing mill, timber buyer, or another primary or secondary forest product operator.

Qualifying Cost-Share Practice

Purchase of one new temporary bridge (usually a set of three individual panels) is the qualifying cost-share practice. The complete set must be a minimum of 12-ft wide by 20-ft long and capable of supporting logging equipment traffic. The temporary bridge may be constructed of steel or wooden/timbers. The temporary bridge must be purchased after confirmation from the NCFS that program funding was allocated to your application. Temporary bridge purchases made prior to NCFS program funding selection notification will not be eligible for reimbursement.

Maximum Cost Share Reimbursement Allowance

Maximum cost-share reimbursement will be based on the invoiced amount associated with bridge construction/fabrication and be the lesser of \$12,500 or 75 percent of the invoice total.

Program Funds Distributed Among NCFS Regions

Program cost share monies will be allocated evenly among the three NCFS regions to the extent feasible.

Nonfunded applications will be kept on record until all funds are depleted or the applicant requests in writing to be removed. Unused or leftover allocations of program funds will be made available for a second random selection. NCFS will contact nonfunded applicants from the first round to confirm continued program interest. Applicants in the first round and still willing to participate in the program will be considered before the agency announces a first come first serve message.

If any regional funds remain unallocated 6 months after program funding notification, they may be re-allocated to cover non-funded applications within the same region using additional rounds of random selections. This will occur until all applicants within a respective region have been offered a chance to participate or funds are depleted.

The shifting of unallocated money from region to region will be determined by the NCFS Water Resources Branch Program Head.

Dates for Program Application Submission

NCFS staff will communicate with potential program participants and advertise program submission period. Application submission windows are anticipated to be two months. The random draw process will follow shortly thereafter.

Application Form & W-9

The Temporary Bridge for Forestry Stream Crossing program application is a fillable PDF. The applicant must provide an answer for all fields/blanks/questions then, sign & date the application in the "Signatures" section, and email the application to NCFS.Water@ncagr.gov.

The forms may be filled out in pen, then scanned and emailed. All handwritten submissions must be legible. The forms may be filled out electronically with electronic signatures. Electronic signatures must be date and time stamped. Adobe Acrobat Reader is an example of a widely used software that can be used for electronic signatures (<https://acrobat.adobe.com/us/en/acrobat/pdf-reader.html>). NCFS does not endorse Adobe Software products; this is for informational purposes only.

Both the application and W-9 forms are available at:

https://www.ncforestservation.gov/Managing_your_forest/managing_your_forest/temporarybridges.htm

Applicant agrees to the written terms and conditions contained within this document upon submission of the Application Form via email to NCFS.Water@ncagr.gov.

Applications Selected for Funding by Random Draw

If requested funds from the applications exceed available program funds, the NCFS will conduct a random selection among program participants within their respective region. The NCFS will assign each application a unique identification number, then randomly select projects using a random number generator.

NCFS Response to Application Submission

Incomplete applications will not be considered for program funding. NCFS will make the applicant aware of a complete or incomplete application within 7 days of submission. NCFS reserves the right to exclude incomplete applications from any random draw.

Vendor List

The agency has a list of vendors who have requested that their information be posted on the agency website. This listing is not exhaustive nor a list that must be used. The agency does not guarantee the vendors' products, and no recommendation or sponsorship of any single firm is implied.

Terms and Conditions

To remain eligible, receive reimbursement, and maintain ownership of cost-shared temporary bridges, program participants must meet the terms and conditions below.

Program Participant Declines or Withdraws from Program Consideration

Before or after funding program allocation decisions, all applicants requesting withdrawal from the program for any reason must immediately notify NCFS via email (NCFS.Water@ncagr.gov) so that funds may be released for another project.

Bridge Construction

Applicant Arranges Purchase and Vendor Payment

It is the responsibility of the applicant to identify and arrange construction of the bridge(s) that will meet program requirements. The applicant must pay the vendor invoice in full prior to requesting reimbursement.

Size & Newly Constructed Specification

The bridges must meet minimum program specifications (at least 12-ft wide and 20-ft long) and be newly constructed by a vendor.

Unique Identifier

All bridge panels must have a permanently attached unique identifier or serial number of the applicant or vendor choosing (see photo examples below). Bead welds on the side of each steel panel or router or burned etching on the side of each assembled timber panel where it is unlikely to be worn are good options, but others may be acceptable.



Submission of Zero-balance Invoice for Reimbursement

The zero-balance invoice for temporary bridge construction must be submitted within 120 days of program funding notification. A request for an extension must be communicated in writing to the NCFS Water Resources Branch Program Head (email acceptable NCFS.Water@ncagr.gov). NCFS may grant one 60-day extension in the event of extenuating circumstances.

Random Inspection

Upon written request from the Water Resources Branch Head, program participants agree to allow a NCFS representative(s) to observe the temporary bridges in use. Such written requests may be made for up to 5 years after the date program funds were allocated to the participant.

Photograph In-Use

The funded applicants agree to provide one photograph of the cost-shared bridges properly installed within one year of the date of reimbursement. Photograph should be shared via email NCFS.Water@ncagr.gov or another arranged method.

Turnback Clause

Within the first 5 years of program funding notification, it is the responsibility of the applicant to notify NCFS of scenarios where the temporary bridge is no longer being used or the bridge needs to be sold or transferred to another. The use of the funded bridge is to be used in forestry operations only. Should the use of the funded bridges not meet program objectives, the applicant agrees to surrender the bridges to the NCFS and deliver the bridges back to a site determined by the Water Resources Branch Program Head.

Program Contacts

Programmatic contact: A.J. Lang; aj.lang@ncagr.gov

Administrative contact: Mandy Tallman Marty; mandy.tallman.marty@ncagr.gov