

Frequently asked questions

How do I know if my surface mined land is eligible?

The primary requirement for a GFW reforestation project is that the land no longer be under any active mining permits or reclamation bonds. Once a property has been "bond released" then it is open for any type of land use change, including deep ripping and tree planting. One small exception is for "Abandoned Mined Lands," a special designation for lands that were mined before the passage of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA) or for cases involving bankruptcy before a mining company had finished reclamation. GFW can work on these lands as well, but they must be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

How can I determine if my surface mined land needs reforestation?



Surface mined lands that need reforestation are typically overgrown with aggressive non-native grasses and shrubs such as fescue, lespedeza, and autumn olive and show little signs of natural succession, as in the photo above. Signs of natural succession include strong native tree regeneration. Sites that are flat to rolling were likely heavily graded during the initial reclamation and would benefit from reforestation. While we can work on steep slopes, we find that the compaction is generally much lower there and more able to sustain tree growth without ripping.

Does it cost me anything?

Although GFW does not require financial contribution from landowners, it is much easier to secure grants and other types of funding if the landowner has some personal investment.

Do I have to sign anything?

It depends on the grant funding the project. Typically, we do not require a contract, but it is expected that the trees will only be removed by sustainable timber harvesting. One of our current grants is operated through the Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), which does require some paperwork. Contact us to learn more.

What do I have to do?

Your level of involvement is optional - you can aid in land management decisions or let GFW take the wheel. Typically, all that is required is identifying buried pipes and utilities, identifying property boundaries, and allowing GFW employees and contractors access to the property, which includes yearly monitoring. For some grants, paperwork may need to be completed at the Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service offices.

What is the procedure?

Our **Approach** page explains this process in more detail, but the general steps include the following:

1. Site Preparation - mitigate compaction and control exotic vegetation.
2. Tree Planting - professionals or volunteers plant trees.
3. Monitoring - GFW employees perform yearly monitoring.

How long does it take?

Typically, the site preparation is performed in the spring or fall, with the planting occurring the following spring. Depending on the severity of the exotic vegetation and other site constraints, the whole process could take as little as 5-6 months or as long as 1-2 years.