



## Legislative & Policy Update – June 2022

Published June 22, 2022

The [Council of Western State Foresters](#) (CWSF) Legislative & Policy Update provides information on issues of importance to CWSF. Policy and legislative updates are found on the CWSF webpage [here](#). Please note that the items highlighted in these updates are only a selection of the issues CWSF and the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition (WFLC) are monitoring. Keep an eye out for our monthly newsletter that will provide summaries on other key legislative and programmatic issues. If you have not yet subscribed, you can do so [here](#). For more information, please contact [Danielle Okst](#), Director of Policy.

The Recovering America's Wildlife Act of 2021 moves to the Senate after passage in the House this month. Implementation of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) continues as the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) provides an update on programs to support wildland firefighters and to increase efforts to reduce wildfire risk. The Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership, codified in the BIL and administered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and USDA Forest Service (Forest Service), began the fiscal year (FY) 2023 proposal process.

### **The Recovering America's Wildlife Act of 2021**

The House passed the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) of 2021 ([H.R. 2773](#)) on June 14 by a vote of 231-190. RAWA would amend the 1937 Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act and dedicate \$1.3 billion annually for the implementation of state fish and wildlife agencies' wildlife action plans and \$97.5 million annually for tribal agencies to work on at-risk species recovery. It would also put 10% of dedicated annual funds towards the implementation of a competitive grants program aimed at fostering regional cooperation among states. Funding would come from fees and fines collected for environmental violations.

### **BIL Implementation at DOI**

Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland [announced](#) the establishment of an interagency wildland firefighter health and well-being program and the allocation of \$103 million for FY 2022 for wildfire risk reduction efforts as part of the implementation of the BIL. The Wildland Firefighter Mental Wellness Program is a joint program with DOI and USDA which aims to address mental health needs for permanent, temporary, seasonal, and year-round wildland firefighters. Coordination of the creation of a new system of trauma support services, which will emphasize early intervention, will occur through the Office of Wildland Fire.

\$80.9 million of the investments announced will go to accelerating the pace and scale of fuels management work, with a plan to increase treatments by 30% over last year. \$19.4 million will support post-wildfire recovery through Burned Area Rehabilitation. Additional information on DOI BIL investments can be found [here](#).

### **Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership**

USDA's NRCS and Forest Service are currently seeking proposals for the FY 2023 [Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership](#). The program was codified in section 40808 of the BIL and aims to improve the

health and resilience of forest landscapes across federal, state, tribal, and private land. In reviewing project proposals, priority will be based on:

- Clear descriptions with goals and objectives, deliverables, timeline, and measurable desired outcomes.
- Reduction of wildfire risk in a municipal watershed or the wildland-urban interface.
- Development of the proposal through a collaborative process with participation from diverse stakeholders.
- Increase of forest workforce capacity or forest business infrastructure and development.
- Leveraging existing authorities and non-federal funding contributions from partners.
- Support of established state, Tribal, and regional priorities. Proposals should describe how the eligible activities were prioritized across the landscape and the source of the state or regional priorities.
- Alignment with USDA priorities and the Justice40 initiative, including benefits to historically underserved communities and climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.
- Partner participation in proposal development or project implementation.
- Coordination with individual landowners within the proposal footprint.
- The geographic distribution of individual project activities across the landscape demonstrates a focus on resource conditions and a balance between land ownerships.
- Education and outreach to local communities about the project.

Proposals are due by August 5 and you can view projects from previous years, along with program contact information, [here](#). NRCS and the Forest Service plan to evaluate proposals and announce the selections in late fall 2022.