



## Legislative & Policy Update – May 2022

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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.

Federal and state agencies are continuing their efforts to coordinate the strategic implementation of the massive investments enacted within the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). To help navigate the numerous opportunities available for rural communities, the White House has published a BIL Rural Playbook. Applications are now being accepted for the America the Beautiful Challenge for voluntary conservation and restoration projects.

### **U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) BIL Implementation** **Ecosystem Restoration Projects**

As part of the BIL, the DOI received \$1.4 billion for investments in ecosystem restoration efforts over the next five years. For fiscal year 2022, \$68.4 million is being put towards 125 ecosystem restoration projects in over 20 states, Tribes, and territories. Some of this work is being done through [Good Neighbor Agreements](#) to assist with fuels management, water management, and habitat protection in Wyoming, California, Oregon, Utah, Nevada, Alaska, Washington, New Mexico, and Hawaii. Funding is also supporting the national seed strategy and coordinating an early detection and rapid response framework for invasive species. A comprehensive list of the announced projects to be funded can be found on the [BIL Supports Ecosystem Restoration page](#).

### **Invasive Species Prevention Grant Opportunity**

\$1.8 million is available for grants to support projects to prevent the introduction or spread of invasive species. This [opportunity is available](#) through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and proposals are due by June 22, 2022. Proposals are requested that advance strategic, ecologically-based, landscape-level prevention measures which focus on prohibiting the entry of potentially invasive species into the U.S. or stopping those already in the U.S. from spreading to new watersheds or geographic areas.

### **Draft Guidance for Abandoned Mine Land Grant Program**

BIL provided a total of \$11.3 billion in funding to DOI available for reclaiming abandoned mine lands and eliminating dangerous environmental hazards over 15 years. \$725 million will be available for eligible states and the Navajo Nation in the first year of funding. Projects may include environmental benefits such as reforestation and the re-establishment of species' habitats. Comments on the [draft guidance](#) should be submitted by June 13, 2022 to help inform any programmatic changes.

### **BIL Rural Playbook**

The [White House](#) has developed a resource to assist rural areas in identifying potential funding opportunities within the BIL that meet their community needs. The [BIL Rural Playbook](#) outlines funding sources, available match waivers, application pages, deadlines, etc. for key programs focused on rural and disadvantaged communities. Rural fact sheets for specific federal agencies have been published for reference as well. Those focused on forestry or wildfire resilience are highlighted below:

- [DOI](#);
- [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#); and
- [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#).

### **2022 America the Beautiful Challenge**

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation has announced the launch of the America the Beautiful Challenge 2022 Request for Proposals. They anticipate \$85 million to be awarded nationwide for projects on public lands, Tribal lands, and private lands. The funding is provided through cooperative agreements with DOI, Department of Defense, and the USDA Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service. Year one projects will be aimed at:

- Conserving and restoring rivers, coasts, wetlands, and watersheds;
- Conserving and restoring forests, grasslands, and other important ecosystems that serve as carbon sinks;
- Connecting and reconnecting wildlife corridors, large landscapes, watersheds, and seascapes;
- Improving ecosystem and community resilience to flooding, drought, and other climate-related threats;
- Expanding access to the outdoors, particularly in underserved communities

Proposals are due July 21, 2022 and more information is available [here](#).