



## Legislative & Policy Update – August 2024

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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 [Neil Simpson](#), Director of Policy.

This month's policy update covers:

- USDA Forest Service (Forest Service) National Old-Growth Amendment
- How State Foresters are connecting with their delegations during the summer recess
- Key updates on the Farm Bill
- Senate and House appropriations plans for the fiscal year (FY) 2025 Budget

### Forest Service National Old-Growth Amendment

The deadline to comment on the Forest Service [Draft Environmental Impact Statement](#) (DEIS) to amend all forest plans to include “consistent direction to conserve and steward existing and recruit future old-growth forest conditions” is September 20, 2024.

The National Association of State Foresters [submitted comments](#) during the scoping phase of this project, voicing concern that a national-level amendment could reduce the Forest Service's ability to effectively carry out well-planned, science-based management necessary to meet the needs of the wildfire crisis strategy.

### State Foresters Engage with Their Delegations During the Summer Recess

Congress' annual summer recess leaves little hope that FY 25 appropriations or a Farm Bill will be passed before their expiration on September 30, 2024. However, as the two examples below highlight, the recess does provide State Foresters with an opportunity to engage with their delegation on important forestry issues.

In Kansas, Senator Marshall (R-KS) and State Forester Jason Hartman will tour the recent updates and future plans for Kansas Forest Service Fire Excess Property shop, Conservation Tree Nursery, and other facilities critical to meeting the needs of the Kansas State Forest Action Plan.

In Idaho, Senator James Risch's (R-ID) Washington D.C. staff and State Natural Resources Director accompanied Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) Director Dustin Miller, State Forester Craig Foss, IDL field staff, and representatives from the Forest Service on visits to the Incident Command Post for the Middlefork Fire Complex, the Flat Fire, and two Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) timber sales.



*Pictured: GNA timber sale visit with Sen. Risch's staff. Photo: Dustin Miller*

## Farm Bill

Little movement has happened on the Farm Bill since the deep dive in the [June 2024 Newsletter](#). The Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2024 ([H.R. 8467](#)) has passed out of the House Committee on Agriculture, but it remains unknown when it will go to the House floor for debate or a vote. In the Senate, the Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee, chaired by Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), released a [detailed framework](#), and Ranking Member Senator John Boozman (R-AR) answered with a [Republican framework](#). The committee has yet to release bill text.

The current Farm Bill expires on September 30, 2024. It is unlikely Congress will be able to pass a bill before the current bill expires and an extension will likely be necessary to avoid a lapse in programs.

## Fiscal Year 2025 Appropriations:

On July 24, 2024, the House of Representatives passed [H.R.8998](#) - Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2025, by a vote of 210 to 205. In the Senate, [S.4802](#) - Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2025, has been passed out of committee, but it has yet to be debated or voted on by the full Senate.

Both bills contain increases to the overall Forest Service budget and several other similarities. However, H.R. 8998 contains significant cuts to other agencies and policy riders opposed by Democrats. Increases to the Forest Service Budget are primarily geared toward permanently increasing wildland firefighter pay, and details on select budget line items can be found below.

Congress will return from summer recess on September 9, leaving only limited time to reconcile the differences in the House and Senate bills and pass an appropriations package prior to the September 30 deadline. If a full appropriations bill is not passed a continuing resolution would be needed to avoid a government shutdown.

## USDA Forest Service Budget Highlights Fiscal Year 2025

Compiled By the  
Council of Western State Foresters/Western Forestry Leadership Coalition

This is not meant to be a comprehensive list of all the USDA Forest Service programs and budget line items.

### USDA Forest Service Budget Highlights [in Millions]

Program	FY 22 Enacted	FY 23 Enacted	FY 24 Enacted Consolidated Approp. Act (enacted)	FY 25 USFS Budget Request	FY 25 House Report	FY 25 Senate Report
<b>Forest Service Operations</b>	<b>\$1,069.09</b>	<b>\$1,152.74</b>	<b>\$1,150.00</b>	<b>\$1,187.07</b>	<b>\$1,035.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,207.13</b>
salaries & expenses^	\$363.00	\$389.41	\$389.00	\$399.23	\$0.00	\$ 399.23
<b>Forest and Rangeland Research</b>	<b>\$296.62</b>	<b>\$307.27</b>	<b>\$300.00</b>	<b>\$315.62</b>	<b>\$299.76</b>	<b>\$ 319.12</b>
salaries & expenses	\$210.08	\$215.58	\$212.00	\$221.43	\$207.76	\$ 221.43
Forest Inventory and Analysis*	\$22.20	\$32.20	\$31.50	\$33.70	\$32.00	\$ 33.70
<b>State, Private, and Tribal Forestry</b>	<b>\$315.20</b>	<b>\$337.76</b>	<b>\$303.31</b>	<b>\$305.41</b>	<b>\$282.96</b>	<b>\$ 314.48</b>
salaries & expenses	\$57.74	\$65.09	\$52.00	\$62.91	\$50.96	\$ 62.91
Landscape Scale Restoration	\$14.00	\$17.00	\$14.00	\$17.00	\$15.00	\$ 14.00
Forest Health Management - Cooperative Lands	\$32.00	\$33.00	\$32.00	\$33.00	\$30.00	\$ 32.00
State Fire Assistance	\$75.00	\$76.00	\$76.00	\$76.00	\$78.00	\$ 78.00
Volunteer Fire Assistance	\$20.00	\$21.00	\$21.00	\$21.00	\$23.00	\$ 22.00
Forest Stewardship	\$12.00	\$12.50	\$12.00	\$12.50	\$12.00	\$ 12.50
Forest Legacy Program**	\$88.88	\$77.94	\$92.25	\$94.23	\$94.25	\$ 94.26
Urban and Community Forestry	\$36.00	\$40.00	\$36.00	\$40.00	\$33.00	\$ 36.00
<b>National Forest System</b>	<b>\$1,866.55</b>	<b>\$1,974.39</b>	<b>\$1,863.56</b>	<b>\$2,007.15</b>	<b>\$ 1,866.47</b>	<b>\$ 2,009.70</b>
salaries & expenses	\$1.45	\$1,519.08	\$1,459.35	\$1,541.34	\$ 1,430.17	\$ 1,541.34
Hazardous Fuels+	\$187.39	\$207.00	\$175.45	\$ 207.00	\$ 202.00	\$ 208.55
Forest Products	\$38.00	\$40.00	\$39.00	\$ 41.00	\$ 43.00	\$ 42.00
<b>Wildland Fire Management</b>	<b>\$2,005.11</b>	<b>\$2,116.96</b>	<b>\$2,312.65</b>	<b>\$2,550.44</b>	<b>\$2,407.74</b>	<b>\$ 2,438.61</b>
Salaries and Expenses	\$822.11	\$913.96	\$1,109.65	\$1,334.94	\$1,204.74	\$ 1,223.11
Preparedness	\$172.00	\$192.00	\$192.00	\$204.50	\$192.00	\$ 204.50
Suppression	\$1,011.00	\$1,386.00	\$1,011.00	\$1,011.00	\$1,011.00	\$ 1,011.00
<b>Total Appropriations for USFS</b>	<b>\$10,846.60</b>	<b>\$10,075.00</b>	<b>\$8,373.32</b>	<b>\$8,919.37</b>	<b>\$ 8,426.60</b>	<b>\$ 8,846.42</b>

^FY 25 House bill does not allocate specific amounts to any budget line items within Forest Service Operations  
 \*NASF continues to request a salaries and expense BLI within Forest Inventory and Analysis  
 \*\*Forest Legacy is funded by the Land and Water Conservation Fund.  
 + Neither the House or Senate Bill transfers the Hazardous Fuels Management funding to Wildland Fire