



CWSF
COUNCIL OF WESTERN
STATE FORESTERS

Legislative & Policy Update – January 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.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) is continuing to work towards implementation, with federal agencies working to complete the spending plans required to Congress by the February deadline. The USDA Forest Service (Forest Service) released a 10-year strategy aimed at addressing the escalating wildfire crisis. This provides a framework for the IIJA and other funds to strategically target areas of high risk across landscapes. Utilizing this strategic framework, funding included within the last Continuing Resolution (CR) will target post-fire and hurricane recovery efforts and new projects were selected under the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

The Forest Service is working diligently on spending plans and guidance for the new IIJA forestry-related programs. CWSF has developed a [briefing paper](#) on our [publications page](#) which highlights provisions of interest and some considerations around timing for this funding. The Forest Service is working closely with states and other partners on opportunities to further discuss this law and the wildfire strategy in the coming months.

Forest Service 10-Year Strategy Announcement

This month, USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack and Forest Service Chief Randy Moore [launched](#) a response strategy to [confront the wildfire crisis](#) facing our nation, particularly devastating western communities. [Confronting the Wildfire Crisis: A Strategy for Protecting Communities and Improving Resilience in America's Forests](#) outlines the need to significantly increase fuels and forest health treatments. The strategy calls for the Forest Service to treat up to an additional 20 million acres on national forests and grasslands and to support treatment of up to an additional 30 million acres of other federal, state, Tribal, and private lands. Under this plan, 5 million acres per year over 10 years will require treatment, in addition to the 2-3 million acres currently treated annually. A press release from our partners at the National Association of State Foresters on this effort can be viewed [here](#).

Disaster Relief Funding

The CR currently funding the federal government at fiscal year (FY) 2021 levels until FY 2022 appropriations are passed expires on February 18. Disaster relief funding for post-fire and hurricane recovery was included as part of that CR. \$1.36 billion in relief funds for the Forest Service was [announced](#) and will support "hazardous material cleanup, reforestation, watershed restoration, and infrastructure repair including for

trails, roads, bridges and facilities.” This funding will be utilized to increase nursery production, provide tree seedlings and technical assistance to landowners, as well as support projects for hurricane recovery.

\$48 million is being invested by the Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service through the Joint Chiefs’ Landscape Restoration Partnership this year. The program was recently codified within the IJJA. They will invest in 41 projects, including 17 new projects, that will “mitigate wildfire risk, protect water quality, improve wildlife habitat, restore forest ecosystems and ultimately contribute to USDA’s efforts to combat climate change.” \$15.3 million will be put into those 17 new projects. Among those 17 new projects announced are numerous western projects, including:

- Arizona:
 - Northern Arizona Habitat Restoration and Wildfire Risk Reduction
 - Catalina-Rincon Restoration and Fuels Mitigation
- California:
 - Big Flat Community Protection
 - Butte Valley South Landscape Restoration
- Colorado:
 - Southern Front Range Watershed
- Idaho:
 - Wood River Valley Forest Health & Wildfire Resilience
 - Scattered Lands Hazardous Fuels
- Hawaii:
 - Hawaii Island Wildfire Mitigation and Support
- Montana:
 - Connecting Fuels Treatments in the Salish Mountains and Whitefish Range
 - Fire Adapted Bitterroot
 - Gallatin Valley Resiliency and Watershed Health
 - Libby Surround Stewardship
- New Mexico:
 - Bear Creek to Signal Peak
- Nevada:
 - Santa Rosa-Paradise Restoration
- Wyoming:
 - Valleys and Headwaters Restoration