



CWSF
COUNCIL OF WESTERN
STATE FORESTERS

Legislative & Policy Update – June 2021

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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, Associate Policy and Grants Director at dokst@westernforesters.org.

The Administration's full fiscal year (FY) 2022 Budget Request was released on May 28. The request bodes well for the USDA Forest Service (Forest Service) State and Private Forestry programs supporting forestland owners, wildland fire operations, management needs across landscapes in the West, and a myriad of other high priority forestry needs.

The catastrophic fires of last year, the wildfires already raging across the country this year, and President Biden's focus on climate change has all led to a heightened awareness and policy proposals on how best to tackle this issue. Senators, State Foresters, and other natural resource organizations are all spotlighting this issue with the aim of furthering an effective collaborative approach to improve the health of our forests, the safety of citizens, and support the economy.

FY2022 Appropriation

Following the release of the "[skinny budget](#)" in April, President Biden has released his [FY2022 Budget Request](#). The budget calls for \$8.4 billion in discretionary funding for the Forest Service (\$1 billion over FY2021), with \$304.6 million allocated for State and Private Forestry (an increase of \$37.4 million over FY2021). The proposal contains no cuts to any State and Private Forestry Programs. Specifically, the budget requests:

- \$17.9 million for the Forest Stewardship Program (\$6 million increase over FY2021);
- \$21 million for the Landscape Scale Restoration Program (\$7 million increase over FY2021);
- \$31.9 million for Urban and Community Forestry (level funding);
- \$73.4 million for State Fire Assistance (level funding);
- \$19 million for Volunteer Fire Assistance (level funding);
- \$94.3 million for the Forest Legacy Program (level funding).

In addition, \$2.1 billion is requested for wildland fire management and hazardous fuels saw an increase of \$141 million (\$321.4 million requested). \$46 million is earmarked for the Civilian Climate Corps proposal, \$27 million specifically for the Forest Service. Greater details on the budget request for the Forest Service can be found within the [budget justification](#). View State Forester support, as well as a comparison table for priority programs [here](#).

Focus on Wildfire

As wildfires continue to grow in intensity and devastation, particularly for our western states, increased attention is being focused on the need to make investments to increase the pace-and-scale of the important work being done. Given the pressing need to mitigate the impacts of climate change, getting ahead of these major carbon emitting events is critical.

[Senator Joe Manchin \(D-WV\)](#) and Senator John Barrasso (R-WY) drafted a [letter](#) to President Biden emphasizing the need to put proactive forest management policies in place to increase the resilience of forests across the nation. They highlighted the necessity of significantly increasing “practices such as reforestation, hazardous fuels reduction, thinning treatments, and prescribed fire” which support forests, communities, and the job sector. The letter specifically requests direction from the Administration to the Departments of Agriculture and Interior to provide a report of what can be done, identify obstacles, and describe what is required to successfully achieve the goals of significantly reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfires.

Last month, NASF President Joe Fox appeared before the House Agriculture Committee to discuss [opportunities for addressing climate change](#). He emphasized the need for collaboration, enhancing forest resilience, and the overall role of forests in addressing climate change. His full testimony can be found [here](#). In a push for investment in wildfire resilience and forest roads, State Foresters and other natural resource organizations sent a [coalition letter](#) to congressional leaders urging support within an infrastructure package.

Please note, there will not be a policy update in the July newsletter.