



# USDA Forest Service invests \$15M to help underserved and small-acreage landowners access climate markets

## USDA Press Release

**WASHINGTON, August 28, 2024** - The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service is investing \$15 million to connect underserved and small-acreage forest landowners with emerging climate markets. This funding is thanks to forest landowner support provisions in President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act. In total, nine proposals across 14 states were selected to receive funding.

The announcement comes in addition to a \$145 million investment from the Inflation Reduction Act [announced in March of this year](#) , which also aims to help landowners access climate markets.

Forests are powerful tools in the fight against climate change, and emerging voluntary private-sector markets are now creating economic incentives to keep forests healthy and productive through reforestation, improved forest management, and other sustainable practices. However, high acreage requirements and prohibitive start-up costs have caused many private forest owners to be left behind.

“The investments announced today will expand access to markets that were previously out-of-reach,” said Forest Service Chief Randy Moore. “As private forest landowners face increasing pressures to convert their forests to other uses, we are helping underserved and small-acreage landowners to access new economic opportunities to keep working forest working.”

Without these financial incentives, forest landowners may not have the resources to manage forests for long-term health and resilience. Without proper management, forests are more susceptible to pests, diseases, catastrophic wildfires, loss of habitat, and reduced water quality for downstream users. These Forest Service investments allow underserved and small-acreage forest landowners to address climate change while also supporting economies in their communities, maintaining land ownership for future generations, and protecting private forestlands from increasing development pressure.

### **Funded projects:**

- Appalachian Carbon Exchange – \$1,998,270 (Kentucky, West Virginia)
- Bonneville Environmental Foundation – \$1,905,797 (Oregon, Washington)
- Collaborative Earth Institute – \$2,000,000 (Texas)
- Croatan Institute – \$1,920,019 (North Carolina, Tennessee)

- National Wildlife Federation – \$1,938,771 (Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina)
- Prairie View A&M University – \$1,516,449 (Texas)
- Shelterwood Collective – \$1,944,837 (California)
- South Carolina Rural Water Association – \$102,285 (South Carolina)
- Urban Forest Carbon Registry – \$1,763,109 (Georgia, Illinois, Ohio)

This announcement complements ongoing efforts at USDA to facilitate farmer, rancher, and private forest landowner participation in voluntary carbon markets, including implementing the [Growing Climate Solutions Act](#). In addition, these efforts contribute to advancing the Biden-Harris Administration’s commitment to its [Principles for Responsible Participation in Voluntary Carbon Markets](#), aimed at informing robust standards for carbon credit supply and demand; improving market functioning; ensuring fair and equitable treatment of all participants and advancing environmental justice, including fair distribution of revenue; and instilling market confidence.

This announcement also advances the Justice40 Initiative, which sets the goal that 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal climate, clean energy, and other investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution, including tribes, rural areas, and urban communities. These investments also support the America the Beautiful initiative, which is supporting voluntary, locally led conservation efforts across the country.

The Forest Service also recently made \$20 million available for tribes and Alaska Native corporations and villages to better access climate markets. More information on that opportunity is available at [Grants.gov](#).

For more information on the proposals that received funding as part of this announcement, visit [Forest Landowner Support Funded Projects | US Forest Service \(usda.gov\)](#).

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