



PRESS RELEASE

Biden-Harris Administration Announces Nearly \$66M for Conservation Work with States, Tribes, Private Landowners as Part of Investing in America Agenda
USDA also signs agreement with Western Governors to strengthen shared efforts to protect communities and resources

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USDA is investing nearly \$66 million for projects to reduce wildfire risk, protect water quality and improve forest health across the nation as part of President Biden's Investing in America agenda.

[en español](#)

OLYMPIC VALLEY, Calif., June 11, 2024 – During a meeting of the Western Governors Association today, Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Xochitl Torres Small announced that USDA is investing nearly \$66 million for projects to reduce wildfire risk, protect water quality and improve forest health across the nation as part of President Biden’s Investing in America agenda.

Deputy Secretary Torres Small also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Western Governors’ Association, reestablishing the framework for cooperatively responding to the many challenges faced across western landscapes. The MOU, signed on behalf of the USDA alongside Governors Brad Little of Idaho, Joe Lombardo of Nevada, Michelle Lujan Grisham of New Mexico, Doug Burgum of North Dakota, and Mark Gordon of Wyoming, amplifies the scale of shared stewardship work between participating states and the USDA. It also fosters better integration of forest and rangeland health and wildfire risk reduction projects across different land ownerships.

“People across rural America face growing wildfire threats to their homes, business, infrastructure, and resources,” said Deputy Secretary Torres Small. “Through the investments announced today, President Biden is investing in state and local governments, Tribal partners, and private landowners to ensure our landscapes are healthy, our infrastructure is strong, and our communities stay safe.”

Of the total investment announced, \$12 million is being provided through the USDA Forest Service’s [Good Neighbor Authority](#), allowing the agency to collaborate with state forestry agencies, Tribes and counties to mitigate wildfire risk and enhance forest, rangeland and watershed health. This funding will support 22 projects across 13 states, thanks to funding from President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Nearly \$9 million of the total funding will be allocated to support projects in several states that are part of the Western Governors Association member states, including Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

The Department is also investing nearly \$55 million of the total funding to reduce wildfire risk, and improve water quality and forest health through the [Joint Chiefs’ Landscape Restoration Partnership](#). This collaborative effort between USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Forest Service aims to work with private, state, and Tribal landowners to conserve forests and agricultural lands alongside federally managed lands while safeguarding communities. The \$55 million investment will support 41 projects --including 10 new projects --across 11 states.

This program advances President Biden’s [Justice40 Initiative](#) ^{en}, which sets a 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.

The NRCS and Forest Service are also [now accepting proposals](#) for Joint Chiefs’ Landscape Restoration Partnership projects for fiscal year 2025 projects. Applications are due on September 13, 2024.

“These projects are indicative of a growing movement of cooperation around natural resource issues for the betterment of us all,” said Forest Service Chief Randy Moore. “A keystone of the Joint Chiefs’ projects is the people and the understanding that the healthier our forests, the healthier our nation.”

“The Joint Chiefs’ Landscape Restoration Partnership enables NRCS and the Forest Service to collaborate with agricultural producers and forest landowners to invest in conservation and restoration at a big enough scale to make a difference in their communities,” said NRCS Chief Terry Cosby. “Working with federal, state and local agencies at this scale, helps reduce wildfire threats, protect

water quality and supply, improve wildlife habitat for at-risk species, and ultimately combat climate change.”

Today’s announcements also build on Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack’s [announcement last week](#) of \$18 million for 23 new [Tribal Forest Protection Act](#) projects.

Background

Joint Chiefs’ Restoration Partnership

Since 2014, USDA has invested more than \$423 million in 134 projects in 42 states as well as Guam and Puerto Rico through the Joint Chiefs’ Landscape Restoration Partnership. This program focuses on areas where national forests and grasslands intersect with privately-owned lands.

Good Neighbor Authority

Established by Congress in 2014, Good Neighbor Authority provides the Forest Service a straightforward way to enter into management agreements with states, Tribes and counties. The Good Neighbor Authority pools federal, state, Tribal, and county resources to complete more forest, rangeland, and watershed restoration work on national forests and grasslands. President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law authorizes \$160 million over five years for states and Tribes to implement restoration projects on federally managed lands through the Good Neighbor Authority and the [Tribal Forest Protection Act](#).

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is transforming America’s food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America and committing to equity across the department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit usda.gov.


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