

THE 2021 WILDLAND FIRE YEAR: RESPONDING TO AND MITIGATING THREATS TO COMMUNITIES

HEARING
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY
OF THE
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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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THE 2021 WILDLAND FIRE YEAR: RESPONDING TO AND MITIGATING THREATS TO COMMUNITIES

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2021

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, D.C.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:02 a.m., via Zoom, Hon. Abigail Davis Spanberger [Chair of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Members present: Representatives Spanberger, Pingree, Kuster, O'Halleran, Panetta, Schrier, Costa, LaMalfa, Allen, Johnson, Miller, Moore, and Thompson.

Staff present: Lyron Blum-Evitts, Jacqueline Emanuel, Ross Hettervig, Josh Lobert, Ashley Smith, Paul Babbitt, Parish Braden, John Busovsky, Caleb Crosswhite, Josh Maxwell, Patricia Straughn, and Dana Sandman.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ABIGAIL DAVIS SPANBERGER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM VIRGINIA

The CHAIR. This hearing of the Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry entitled, *The 2021 Wildland Fire Year: Responding to and Mitigating Threats to Communities*, will come to order. Welcome, and thank you for joining today's hearing. After brief opening remarks, Members will receive testimony from our witness today, and then the hearing will be open to questions. Members will be recognized in order of seniority, alternating between Majority and Minority Members, and in order of arrival, for those Members who have joined us after the hearing was called to order. When you are recognized, you will be asked to unmute your microphone, and will have 5 minutes to ask your questions or make a comment. If you are not speaking, I ask that you remain muted in order to minimize background noise. In order to get as many questions as possible the timer will stay consistently visible on your screen.

I want to thank everyone for joining us today for this very important and timely hearing on the 2021 wildfire season. We have all seen the heartbreaking footage of the wildfires that continue to rage in the West, and have been raging in the West so far this year. The fires are terrifying, and I stand ready to do whatever I can as Chair of this Subcommittee to ensure that the Forest Service has the resources, the personnel, and the tools they need to prepare for future fires, and respond to the wildland fires already rag-

ing. It is also imperative that we make sure firefighters on the ground are compensated fairly, and given adequate time away from this intense and dangerous work, and I think I speak for everyone here today when I say that America's firefighters embody our nation's highest ideals of courage, commitment, and selflessness towards their fellow Americans.

Unfortunately, as we head into the heart of wildfire seasons, or, as it has become, wildfire years after years, we are expected to have yet another unprecedeted year of dangerous and deadly wildfires ahead of us. And as we speak, there are currently more than 60 wildfires raging in the United States across 3 million acres of land, and in much of the land represented by some of the Members of this Subcommittee, and certainly Members of the larger Committee. While the volume of wildfires may be unprecedeted, the story before us is a familiar one. In the short time that I have chaired this Subcommittee, I have presided over a wildfire hearing each year that begins with news exactly about what has happened in that year's wildfire season, and each year it is worse than the last.

In fact, it was almost exactly a year ago that we sat here and had a hearing nearly identical as the Rattlesnake, the Creek, the SCU Lightning Complex, and the El Dorado Fires, among others, devastated the western United States. And at that hearing, I compared the situation in the West to another environmental crisis that faced much of the United States in the 1930s, the Dust Bowl. And during that period there was a sense that Congress did not understand the severity of the problems facing America's farmers and families living in the midst of an environmental crisis. And despite demands for action by both the Administration and those impacted by the dust storm, for years Congress failed to act in a comprehensive manner, and it was not until March of 1935 when the dust from the Midwest reached the Capitol steps, and lawmakers were forced to see it and experience it with their own eyes, that a compromise could be reached on what became the first Federal conservation bill, the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act of 1936 (Pub. L. 74-461).

It should not take the ash of these wildfires, or the debris and floodwaters of hurricanes ravaging our coasts, or the severe heat felt by millions across the nation and across the globe on a daily basis—it should not take that reaching the Capitol steps for us, for Congress, to take action on the environmental crisis we are currently facing. Through the House Agriculture Committee section of the proposed Build Back Better Act (H.R. 5376), the Committee is taking action. This bill, marked up by this Committee just a few weeks ago, contains \$14 billion for hazardous fuel treatments on National Forest System lands, \$1 billion for critical vegetation management, \$9 billion in grants for state and private forestry for hazardous fuel treatments, millions of dollars in grants for recovery and rehabilitation of areas affected by wildfires, \$50 million for post-fire recovery plans, and would remove the cap on the Reforestation Trust Fund, building on the REPLANT Act (H.R. 2049), which was introduced by our colleague, Congressman Panetta, who serves on this Subcommittee. And this is a piece of legislation that

I am proud to co-lead, and I know the Ranking Member is also a co-lead of this important legislation.

What is more, this bill squarely takes aim at combating the crisis by investing in clean energy jobs, climate-smart conservation practices at USDA, and the creation of a Civilian Climate Corps, as called for in my bill, the Climate Stewardship Act (H.R. 2534). Of course, climate is not the only factor contributing to the intensity of wildfires in the wildfire seasons. We know that many factors are involved in the current wildfires and are wildfire risks. Encroachment of housing developments on forested wildlands, forest management decisions and resources, fire management, weather events, the actions of people, like the use of pyrotechnic devices, and the list, unfortunately, continues. In addition, there is still more that must be done to protect Americans from wildfires, make impacted communities whole, and ensure the U.S. Forest Service has the tools they need to respond to and combat wildfires, all while combating the climate crisis.

Managing our forests to mitigate future wildfire risk is a steep, but not insurmountable task, and former Forest Service Chief Vicki Christiansen testified recently that we need to treat an additional 20 million acres of forestlands over the next 10 years to make progress in reducing our wildfire risk. I am looking forward to the conversation about how we can make that happen. And, before we begin the discussion, I do want to congratulate Randy Moore on his new role as Chief of the U.S. Forest Service. As a Regional For-ester, Chief Moore has been a leader among his peers on issues relating to conservation, combating the climate crisis, responding to wildfires.

Chief Moore's appointment to this role is historic. He is also the first African American to hold this role in the history of the United States Forest Service. I was excited to have a chance to speak with Chief Moore in advance of this hearing, learn about some of his experiences, the places he has worked throughout the United States, and I look forward to hearing more from him today. I have the utmost confidence in his leadership, and the vision that he brings to the U.S. Forest Service, and I appreciate him joining us today to answer our questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Spanberger follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. ABIGAIL DAVIS SPANBERGER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM VIRGINIA

Thank you all for joining us here today for this important and timely hearing on the 2021 wildfire season.

We've all seen the footage of the wildfires raging in the West already this year. These fires are terrifying, and I stand ready to do whatever I can as Chair of this Subcommittee to ensure that the Forest Service has the resources, the personnel, and the tools they need to prepare for future fires and respond to the wildland fires already raging. It is also imperative that we make sure firefighters on the ground are compensated fairly and given adequate time away from this intense and dangerous work. I think I speak for everyone here today when I say that America's fire-fighters embody our nation's highest ideals of courage, commitment, and selflessness toward their fellow Americans.

Unfortunately, as we head into the heart of the wildfire season, we are expected to have yet another unprecedent year of dangerous and deadly wildfires ahead of us. As we speak, there are currently more than 60 wildfires raging in the United States across 3 million acres of land.

While the volume of wildfires may be unprecedented, the story before us is a familiar one. In the short time that I've chaired this Subcommittee, I have presided over a wildfire hearing each year that begins with news about how that year's wildfire season is worse than the last. In fact, almost exactly a year ago, I sat here and presided over a nearly identical hearing as the SCU Lightning Complex, Rattlesnake, Creek, and El Dorado Fires—among others—devastated the western United States.

At that hearing, I compared the situation in the West to another environmental crisis that faced much of the United States in the 1930s—the Dust Bowl.

During that period, there was a sense that Congress did not understand the severity of the problems facing America's farmers and families living in the midst of an environmental crisis. Despite demands for action by both the Administration and those impacted by the dust storms, for years, Congress failed to act in a comprehensive manner. It was not until March of 1935, when the dust from the Midwest reached the Capitol's steps and lawmakers were forced to see it and experience it with their own eyes, that compromise could be reached on what became the first Federal conservation bill—the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act of 1936.

It should not take the ash of these wildfires, or the debris and flood waters of the hurricanes ravaging our coasts, or the severe heat felt by millions across the nation and across the globe on a daily basis, reaching the Capitol's steps today, for this Congress to take action on the environmental crisis currently facing us.

Through the House Agriculture Committee's section of the proposed *Build Back Better Act*, this Committee is acting. This bill, marked up by this Committee just a few weeks ago, contains \$14 billion for hazardous fuel treatments on National Forest System Lands, \$1 billion for critical vegetation management activities, \$9 billion in grants to state and private forestry for hazardous fuels treatments, millions of dollars in grants for the recovery and rehabilitation of areas affected by wildfires, \$50 million for post-fire recovery plans, and would remove the cap on the Reforestation Trust Fund—building on the REPLANT Act introduced by my colleague Congressman Panetta, who serves on this Subcommittee.

What's more, this bill squarely takes aim at combating the climate crisis by investing in clean energy jobs, climate-smart conservation practices at USDA, and the creation of a Civilian Climate Corps as called for in my bill, the *Climate Stewardship Act*, that I introduced alongside Senator Booker.

Of course, climate is not the only factor contributing to the intensity of wildfire seasons. We know that many factors are involved in the current wildfires and our wildfire risk. That certainly includes encroachment of housing and development on forested wildlands; forest management decisions and resources; fire management; weather events; actions of people, like use of pyrotechnic devices; and the list unfortunately continues.

In addition, there is still more that must be done to protect Americans from wildfires, make impacted communities whole, ensure the U.S. Forest Service has the tools they need to respond to and combat wildfires, all while combating the climate crisis.

Managing our forests to mitigate future wildfire risk is a steep but not insurmountable task. Former Forest Service Chief Vicki Christiansen testified recently that we need to treat an additional 20 million acres of Forest Service lands over the next 10 years to make progress in reducing our wildfire risk. I am looking forward to a discussion on how we can make that happen.

Before we begin, I want to congratulate Randy Moore on his new role as the Chief of the U.S. Forest Service. As a Regional Forester, Chief Moore has been a leader among his peers on issues relating to conservation, combating the climate crisis, and responding to wildfires. Chief Moore's appointment to the role is also historic, as he will be the first African American to hold this role in the history of the U.S. Forest Service. I was excited to have the chance to speak with Chief Moore in advance of this hearing and have the utmost confidence in the leadership and vision he brings to the U.S. Forest Service.

With that, I thank our speakers for joining us today. We look forward to the discussion and I'll recognize the Ranking Member for any remarks he'd like to make.

The CHAIR. With that, I thank our speaker for joining us, I look forward to the discussion, and I will now recognize the Ranking Member for any remarks that he would like to make at the outset of this hearing.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. DOUG LAMALFA, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM CALIFORNIA**

Mr. LAMALFA. Well, thank you, Madam Chair. I greatly appreciate us having this opportunity to have this very important hearing today, and cover the subject, as it greatly needs to be, and on-going. I also appreciate your comments and your statement too about that it took the dust from the Dust Bowl to reach the steps of the Capitol to get action, and we hope that we don't have to deal with the smoke and the ash from this, and yet indeed some of that smoke and ash has already, just from this year, reached back here. Indeed, you would see that there would be health advisory warnings to not go outside and exercise from fires coming from my district, and some of my neighboring district colleagues as well. So, I appreciate that comment, and that sentiment.

So, with that, welcome, Chief Moore, and thanks for being with us on the big screen, although you are on the small screen right now there. Is that Mount Shasta behind you there, perhaps, or—hard to tell from here—

Mr. MOORE. It could very well be Mount Shasta.

Mr. LAMALFA. Okay. So, as we have talked about here a little bit, like so many others who live in the West or near forests, of course, it is an extremely important and personal issue to me, and so many that I represent. So, I want to first recognize our firefighters who have done the hard work on the ground, who risk their lives each day to confront these disasters head on. And there is nothing like when I was up on—visiting the fires myself on—the Dixie Fire, as we know, right near the Town of Greenville, just after Greenville was consumed by one just a few miles up the road.

There is another town called Canyon Dam that—they were gracious enough to take me by, and, as we arrived there, we only had minutes to even view Canyon Dam, as the orange wall of heat and flame was only about a mile down the road, and—as we and the group said, I guess we need to turn around and head back, because—it was incredible. The roar of that fire, the wind that it created, a 50 mile an hour swirl of wind, and just minutes later the Town of Canyon Dam was gone. So, our firefighters are out there having to deal with that, and trying to figure out how to stay out of the way of it at the same time, trying to cut those fire lines, and do what they do. We greatly appreciate the risk, and them putting it all on the line.

These past years have, again, been incredibly difficult for my district, and my neighboring districts too, and for rural forested regions of the West. Last year we saw over 10 million acres burn, over 40 percent of it in California alone. It has been just as difficult, and it may even set greater records by the time 2021 is over with. Even more communities were leveled this year, as I mentioned, than by the last 2 or 3 years. Six of the worst fire seasons on record have occurred over just a 1 year period in 2020 and 2021. This includes the August Complex, the SCU Lightning Fire, Creek, the North Complex Fires in 2020, and including the devastating ones this year, Dixie, Bootleg up in Oregon, Caldor, south of me, near the Tahoe area, the Monument Fire to the west of my area, and my other tragedies ongoing.

We know there are some 63 million acres at medium- to high-risk of wildfire, and at least 80 million acres of Forest Service land that need treatment. I was pleased to hear the Chair's mention of previous Chief Christiansen saying 20 million acres need to be done on a fast-forward basis. Although the challenges before the Forest Service are many, the solutions that we must put into practice to prevent catastrophic wildfire are clear and well-established.

While many continue to blame a changing climate for the increase in acres burned each year, and the greater intensity of recent wildfires, the fact is most of our forests are indeed overgrown and have been overstocked for decades. We aren't doing enough management to reduce these fuel loads that have dramatically intensified the wildfire crisis. They are a national emergency, yet we will not solve this crisis without a fundamental shift on how we manage these lands. We need to increase the pace and scale of landscape projects that reduce hazardous fuel loads. We need to strategically thin the forests where necessary, around communities, of course defensible space around homes, and set up lines of defense, maybe on our ridgetops, or other areas that make sense, so when a fire does occur, and they will occur, that it gives our firefighters a place to make a stand, instead of unknown devastation for unknown distance.

I find it very frustrating that some Members of Congress and outside groups who don't represent National Forests, or areas constantly devastated by wildfire, continue to try to put a stop to what Forest Service and other land managers are trying to do for proactive management that will reduce the threat of wildfire, and encourage healthy forestlands, healthy for the forests themselves, the wildlife, the water quality that is going to be affected by so much ash, and so much erosion of soil. Our forests, they are undergrown—excuse me, they are overgrown and under-managed. We need to be doing more active management immediately to reduce the threat of these fires and save lives. I appreciate today. We need to do more of these hearings on wildfire, and we won't solve the crisis by throwing money at the problem while needlessly, at the same time, hamstringing the Forest Service.

So Chief Moore, again, thank you for being with us today. We are eager to hear your testimony, your ideas. I look forward to working with you, and identifying the ways for Congress to do its part to support the Forest Service and the firefighters on the front line. We need to incentivize them to want to stay there. And so—finally, to make great strides to address the wildfire crisis. Thank you, Madam Chair. I yield back.

The CHAIR. Thank you very much, Mr. LaMalfa. I would now like to recognize Ranking Member Thompson for any opening comments that he would like to make at this time.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. GLENN THOMPSON, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM PENNSYLVANIA**

Mr. THOMPSON. Madam Chair, thank you so much for this hearing, Mr. Ranking Member. I appreciate you both and your leadership in this area, and certainly once again, welcome to Chief Moore. I much appreciate you being here today and having this very timely conversation.

While last year was one of the worst fire seasons on record, 2021 has been another incredibly challenging year for the Forest Service and the communities across the West. This year we have seen roughly 5.8 million acres burned so far in some of the largest single fires, and we are still not even through the season. The fact of the matter is that our forests are overgrown, and in need of more management and proactive treatment. This includes dramatically more hazardous fuels reduction, thinning, post-fire restoration, and landscape scale restoration projects to help reduce the intensity of wildfires.

It also includes increasing timber harvests, where it makes sense, to support both the forest health and rural economies. So, we are still below the target level of harvests, and not getting anywhere close to allowable sales quantity system-wide. Chief Moore, I welcome your input in this hearing on how we can address these pressing issues. In my view, we need a fundamental shift in how we equip the Forest Service and forest managers to restore the land, and do the work necessary to mitigate the wildfire crisis.

Regarding reconciliation, and the \$40 billion for forestry, I would like to echo the comments by Ranking Member LaMalfa. Not only did this Committee mark up the ag portion without the \$28 billion for conservation, there are significant issues with the forestry section that makes that funding unworkable. The forestry provisions don't just miss an opportunity to provide new authorities needed for more management, it is worse, because it restricts the Forest Service's ability to do the restoration necessary on the millions of acres at medium- to high-risk of wildfire.

We can't just throw money at wildfire while limiting the Service, and hope for a different outcome. Continuing to put limited resources into small-scale projects will not restore our forests, or reduce the threat of fire. We need to provide the appropriate level of funding, coupled with workable authorities, to help the agency increase management at the landscape scale. We tried doing this in the farm bill in 2018 with this Committee's version of the farm bill, which contained a variety of authorities to help the Forest Service better manage, and do so on a larger scale. And while the final bill does contain some limited new authorities, Senate Democrats once again refused to even meet with us to discuss the broader reforms necessary during the conference process. Wildfire is an emergency that we can wait no longer to address.

Chief Moore, thank you for your service, and for your leadership, and, again, for being here today, and for this important discussion. We look forward to your testimony and thoughts on how we can support the rural economy, forest health, and efforts to reduce the threats of wildfire. In closing, I also join the Chair and Ranking Member in recognizing our firefighters and wildland responders. We have lost too many of them over the past number of years because of the size and the intensity of these—what I believe are avoidable wildfires, if we are proactive with management.

So, to all of you who serve in those capacities, we say thank you for your support and constant sacrifices. We say thank you to your families, who know that they don't know if you are coming home at the end of the day, or the end of the week, or the end of the month, when they are dispatched and respond to these fires. But

we do appreciate your support and constant sacrifices to protect our forests, our homes, our property, and lives. And with that, Madam Chair, I yield back.

The CHAIR. Thank you very much, Ranking Member Thompson. The Chair would request that other Members submit their opening statements for the record so our witness may begin his testimony, and to ensure that there is ample time for our questions.

I am pleased to welcome to the Committee the Chief of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service, Mr. Randy Moore. Chief Moore, you will have 5 minutes to deliver your testimony. The timer should be visible to you on your screen, and will count down to zero, at which time your time has expired. Chief Moore, please begin whenever you are ready.

**STATEMENT OF RANDY MOORE, CHIEF, U.S. FOREST SERVICE,
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Mr. MOORE. Great. So, Chair Spanberger, Ranking Member LaMalfa, Ranking Member Thompson, and Members of this Committee, it is my honor to testify today for the first time as Chief of the USDA Forest Service. I look forward to working closely with each of you. Today I will focus on the ongoing wildfire crisis. I will talk about what it will take to fight these fires, improve forest health, and also protect communities.

By any other standard, we would be gratified by our 98 percent success rate of putting fires out during initial attack, but when you see the tragic results left by just two percent of the fires, it is not good enough, not nearly. In my 40+ year career, 14 of those being in California, I have witnessed firsthand the devastation of these fires. It is like nothing I have seen before. The record fire year played out as forecasters predicted. Climate change, drought, overgrowth, and fuels created a dire condition that was just right for a severe outbreak. We spent a record number of days at Preparedness Level 5, which is the highest fire risk level. More than 40,000 fires have ravaged 5.5 million acres of forest, consuming 4,000 homes, businesses, and outbuildings. Resources stretched thin, COVID-19 infections spiked, four Federal firefighters sacrificed their lives, and it is not over.

The sobering takeaway, America's forests are in a state of emergency, and it is time to treat them like one. This should be a call to action, and it takes work on two fronts. We, among others, must maintain a stable firefighting force and a modern wildfire management system to ensure that we respond to these fires. But it is equally essential that we employ an active forest treatment program and strategy to put to work right away, and do the right work in the right places at the right scale to improve these forest conditions.

First, we must ensure a stable, resilient firefighting force. That starts with taking care of our brave men and women who fight fires. They deserve better work-life balances and benefits. They deserve a supportive workplace in return for the grueling, hard work they do. At a time of increased stress, suicide, depression, they also need counseling and support services to prevent the tragedies. They deserve better pay above all. Federal wages of firefighters have not kept pace with states'. I have listened to stories of fire-

fighters sleeping in their cars, or neglecting their medical bills. We must work to improve pay, and give them a livable wage. We already made a down payment on this commitment. As the President promised, we raised firefighters' base salary so no one makes less than \$15 an hour. Permanent firefighters receive up to a ten percent incentive. Temporary firefighters got a \$1,000 reward, but this is just the start. We are meeting and working with firefighters, listening to co-create permanent solutions.

We must also modernize our wildland fire management system. This includes improving the use of technology. It also includes upgrading our models and systems for decision-making, and strengthening our cooperative relationships. But we will never have hired enough firefighters, we will never buy enough engines or aircraft to fight these fires. We must actively treat forests. That is what it takes to turn this situation around. We must shift from small-scale treatments, spread out, and landscapes to strategic, science-based treatments across boundaries at the size of the problem. It must start with those places most critically at risk. We must treat 20 million acres over 10 years. Done right, in the right places, treatments make a difference. I saw firsthand the lifesaving results of the Caldor Fire in Lake Tahoe. Forest treatments became a first line of defense. We are seeing more and more examples of success.

Finally, we know we can't do this work alone. It will take partners, industry, states, and Federal agencies working together. I extend my thanks to Congress for what you are doing to pass the infrastructure bill. These investments are essential to getting this groundwork done. We are optimistic, we are working to get ready.

In closing, we have faced this record year with both courage and humility. I am grateful to every firefighter, cooperator, and support personnel. The best way we can honor them, protect citizens, and reduce fire risk is to do this essential work on the ground. It is how we combat climate change. It is how we deliver services. It is how we create jobs, and sustain the healthy, productive forests that Americans deserve. Thank you for this opportunity, and I will be pleased to take any questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Moore follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RANDY MOORE, CHIEF, U.S. FOREST SERVICE, U.S.
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Madam Chair, Ranking Member, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss wildfire management and the 2021 Fire Year. Wildfires threaten urban and rural communities, Tribal Nations and their interests, farm and ranchland, municipal water supplies, timber, recreation sites, and important wildlife habitat.

The Forest Service has a continuing need and responsibility to partner with all communities to prepare for wildfires. The Forest Service does not work alone in managing wildfires across the nation—wildfire requires an all-of-government response, including major contributions from states, Tribes, and local government, contractors, partners, and volunteer organizations. These partnerships have evolved over many years, creating a robust interagency capability to support wildfire suppression across the country.

Early in the year, the National Interagency Fire Center forecast predicted above normal fire potential for much of the West. As a result, the Administration took a number of steps to prepare for this fire year by bolstering firefighter pay, extending temporary firefighters to ensure effective response throughout the fire year, making additional aircraft available, continuing transition to a more permanent firefighting workforce, invoking the Defense Production Act to mitigate a potential shortage of

firehose, and leveraging satellite and emerging technologies to rapidly detect new wildfires.

2021 Fire Year

Our nation is enduring another devastating wildfire year, one that has cut destructive swaths through many states, including California, Oregon, Washington, Montana, Idaho, and Arizona. Complicating our efforts has been managing the effects of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, including the negative impacts on the health and availability of firefighting resources and supply chains. As of September 27, 2021, there have been 45,971 fires that have burned over 5.9 million acres across all jurisdictions. Sadly, we are also mourning the loss of a number of lives throughout the country due to wildfire activity, including four Federal firefighters who made the ultimate sacrifice in protecting our communities. The impact to communities cannot be overstated. While assessments are ongoing, to date, over 4,500 homes, commercial properties, and outbuildings have been destroyed, along with an untold amount of property damage and loss of livelihood for many.

Fire year 2021, like 2017, 2018 and 2020, has been devastating in not only the size and frequency of large wildfires but also in terms of sustained activity. Since early spring, much of the western United States has seen intense fire activity that has not fully abated. Significant drought across the western United States produced conditions ripe for fire from the start of the summer. Substantial lightning events occurred early, and fires began simultaneously across multiple geographic areas. Our ability to mobilize resources was immediately constrained as we had personnel engaged in fighting fires in their home geographic area and could not leave to support other geographic areas as they have traditionally done. Prioritization of critical resources began early, and the demand for resources continues to be high across the system.

Numerous large fires, including the nearly 1 million acre Dixie Fire, have burned in and around communities across Arizona, California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana. Smoke impacts from these fires have been widespread across the western states and have occasionally spread all the way to the East Coast. Resources have been constrained and the interagency wildfire system, of which the Forest Service is a part, has had to make many tough decisions to ensure firefighting resources were prioritized to fires with the greatest threat to public safety.

We entered into National Wildfire Preparedness Level 5 on July 14, 2021, indicating the highest level of fire activity and significant strains on firefighting resources. This is the earliest date in a decade and the second earliest date on record moving to this highest Preparedness Level. We remained at Preparedness Level 5 for 69 days, the longest stretch on record. During this stretch an average of 22,900 firefighters and support personnel were assigned to wildfires each day.

Due to local fire conditions, temporary closure orders have been put in place in some areas to provide for public safety and reduce the potential for new fires, including a temporary closure of national forests in California. Implementing fire restrictions, burn bans, or associated closures is a particularly difficult decision that we do not take lightly. The closures in California helped decrease the potential for new fire starts at a time of extremely limited firefighting resources. They also enhanced firefighter and community safety by limiting exposure that occurs in public evacuation situations, especially as COVID-19 continues to impact human health and strain hospital resources. Closure decisions are not made by the Forest Service in a vacuum. We work with our partners, state agencies, and communities to establish criteria for closing and re-opening our forests as conditions warrant. This risk-informed decision making with our partners led to us reopening California's national forests 2 days earlier than planned.

Response requires a whole of government approach, and I want to personally thank our partners who answered our call for assistance to bolster our capabilities: the Department of Defense who provided active military from Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington, eight C-130 and two RC-26 aircraft, and continued access to critical satellite and other imagery; the Defense Logistics Agency; our international partners in Australia, Canada, and Mexico; and the Fire Department of New York City's All Hazard Incident Management Team. States also received significant assistance from their National Guard units. We are grateful for all of our partners around the country and around the world who continue to pitch in to help our nation through yet another difficult fire year.

Taking Care of Firefighters and Communities

Wildland firefighters are the backbone of our ability to protect communities and vital infrastructure from wildfires. Wildland fire forecasts are consistently predicting fire seasons that start sooner, end later, and are more severe throughout the

nation. Fire seasons have become fire years. With this change in condition, it is imperative to ensure a robust year-round workforce available to respond at any time, that is supported and equitably compensated, has a better work-life balance, and is available to undertake preventive actions like hazardous fuels management treatments during periods of low fire activity. As the complexity of the firefighting environment grows exponentially, our recruitment and retention of firefighters has been further complicated by our inability to offer a set of uniform competitive wages and benefits for permanent and seasonal employees. Federal wages for firefighters have not kept pace with wages offered by state, local and private entities in some areas of the United States. Firefighters must be fairly paid for the grueling work they are willing to take on. Additionally, in difficult fire years such as this one, annual Federal pay cap limitations can make it challenging for agencies to appropriately target compensation to our critical front-line employees and management officials who the U.S. government relies upon to lead our most difficult issues and at times dangerous incidents. We have seen highly trained personnel leave the Forest Service; we have experienced some inability to recruit new employees; and we are in a constant mode of training new employees. In addition, our Federal wildland firefighting workforce is stressed like no time in history. Suicidal ideation, depression, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder affect firefighters at levels far above what is found in general society. The Administration will work with Congress on longer-term much needed compensation, benefit, and work-life balance reforms for Federal wildland firefighters.

It is time for a significant change in our Federal wildland fire system. The Forest Service is partnering with the Department of the Interior, the Office of Personnel Management, and Executive Office of the President to identify policy and legislative solutions to these challenges. As the President committed, permanent firefighting personnel up to the General Schedule (GS)-9 level, were provided a performance award payment equivalent to a ten percent award; temporary firefighters received a \$1,300 award; and permanent and temporary firefighters in a GS-1, GS-2 or GS-3 position were additionally compensated to ensure they make \$15 per hour. Over the last 2 years, the Forest Service has converted 500 firefighting positions from temporary to permanent. The Administration also supports the premium pay cap waiver in the FY 2022 Continuing Resolution that passed the House of Representatives. This provision will ensure that Federal firefighters will be compensated for the work they have and will complete this year. Most critically, going forward the Forest Service is working directly with firefighters and union officials to listen to their concerns and co-create solutions that serve their needs into the future. We look forward to working with Congress to support and modernize the Federal wildland firefighter workforce.

Maintaining the health and safety of all our employees as they move around the country is fundamental to our continued success. Preventing the spread of COVID-19 among our first responders and communities is critical. COVID-19 protocols established in 2020, remain in place again this year. As a result, the Forest Service and our interagency partners have seen success with our COVID-19 prevention and mitigation measures. The learning culture of the wildland fire agencies allows for lessons-learned to be shared in real time across fire incidents.

The Forest Service continues to work with community leaders and local law enforcement to ensure their needs are met, and wildfire threats and capacity are clearly understood when planning firefighting strategies and evacuations.

Smoke from large wildfire events poses significant risks to public health and safety. The Interagency Wildland Fire Air Quality Response Program has developed approaches for early warning of wildfire smoke impacts through efforts at the Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station and partner agencies. Successful outcomes include working with the Environmental Protection Agency to provide fire and smoke information on the popular <https://www.airnow.gov/fires/> website and phone application. Air Resource Advisors provide Smoke Outlooks that inform approximately 21 million people, many in rural and underserved communities. Community preparation for wildfire smoke allows public health officials to be aware and prepare for effects on individuals vulnerable to smoke impacts.

Reducing Fire Risk Across All Lands

Devastating wildfires are the most significant threat to the ability of our forests to sequester carbon, support local economies, and provide clean water and other important resources to communities. About 63 million acres, or 32 percent, of National Forest System lands are at high or very high hazard for wildfires that would be difficult to contain. This is, in part, a result of 110 years of fire overly aggressive suppression policies as well as climate change. Forest Service research has identified hundreds of communities at high risk from wildland fire. To reduce this risk there

is a need to significantly scale up hazardous fuels reduction treatments across landscapes and in partnership with communities in the most at-risk places.

An example of how fuels treatments help protect communities was seen in the Caldor Fire. On August 14, 2021, the Caldor Fire started on the Eldorado National Forest in California. Due to a historically dry season, the fire made unprecedented runs, with growth rates ranging from 10,000 to 40,000 acres per day in the direction of the Lake Tahoe Basin. The fire remained very active day and night. The fire was both fuels and wind driven and exceeded fire growth expectations in areas with significant natural barriers that would normally redirect or stall a fire. Despite the difficulty in managing this fire and the demanding fire environment, there are success stories to be found in the fuels reduction treatments completed around Lake Tahoe and the surrounding communities. As the Caldor Fire moved east, pushed by high winds and dry fuels, it encountered both thinning and prescribed fire treatments (see as green and purple polygons in the map below) that moderated fire behavior, allowed more time for evacuation efforts, and created safer and more conducive conditions for firefighters. There is no doubt homes were saved because of the efforts of firefighters, but those efforts were made safer and more effective due to the thinning and prescribed fire treatments in the wildland-urban interface.

South Tahoe Lake Hazardous Fuels Treatments



The Forest Service carries out approximately 3 million acres of fuels reduction treatments annually. The Department of the Interior, states, Tribes and others also treat about 1 million acres annually. Unfortunately, this is not at the scale necessary to address the problem. Without reconsidering the way we treat hazardous fuels on Federal and non-Federal land, and address the impacts of climate change, we will remain in this current wildfire crisis. Destruction from wildfires will continue to threaten communities across the West. We will work with partners to focus fuels and forest health treatments more strategically and at the scale of the problem, using the best available science as our guide.

To address the highest risk acres at the scale needed, we work collaboratively with states, Tribes, local communities, private landowners, and other stakeholders to:

- Strategically treat 20 million acres on priority National Forest System lands, in the west, over and above our current level of treatments; and
- Strategically treat 30 million acres of other priority Federal, state, Tribal, and private lands, in the West.

Forest Service research and risk based modeling has identified hundreds of communities at high risk, and can inform where and how to place treatments that will truly make a difference. We know that treatments need to be done across jurisdictions to be effective, and there are collaborative frameworks in place to enable cross-boundary treatments, including Cohesive Strategy projects, Joint Chiefs Restoration Partnership projects, Good Neighbor Authority agreements, and Shared Stewardship agreements.

The Biden Administration's American Jobs Plan calls for protecting and restoring "nature-based infrastructure—our lands, forests, wetlands, watersheds, and coastal and ocean resources." As part of the plan, the President has called on Congress "to invest in protection from extreme wildfires." In addition, the USDA Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry Strategy has called for expanding the area of fuels treatments by two to four times nationwide to reduce wildfire risk.

The President has made it clear that reducing the risk of wildfire and creating climate resilient forest landscapes is a top priority including a significant increase of over \$280 million in wildfire risk reduction programs within the FY 2022 President's Budget. Additionally, the Administration supports the new investments within the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal that would enable the Forest Service to treat landscapes in the right places and at the right scale that is commensurate with the wildfire problem our nation faces.

Recovery Post-Wildfire

The Forest Service has a lot of work to do to restore functioning ecosystems following the 2020 and 2021 wildfires. For example, wildfires create over 80% of reforestation needs, including approximately 1 million acres that burned with high severity in 2020 alone. The Forest Service currently addresses only 6% of post-wildfire replanting needs per year, resulting in a rapidly expanding list of reforestation needs. The Agency has plans for the reforestation of over 1.3 million acres of National Forest System land; however these plans only address $\frac{1}{3}$ of National Forest System reforestation needs, estimated to be 4 million acres and growing. As we work to recover from wildfire, the Agency emphasizes planting the right species, in the right place, under the right conditions, so forests will remain healthy and resilient over time.

Employee care and recovery is a critical part of our work. Many national forests sustained destruction of infrastructure as well as significant environmental damage in the 2020 and 2021 wildfires. As a result of the 2020 wildfires alone, 110 Forest Service structures were damaged or destroyed, including: employee housing on the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests in Colorado; ten structures at the Brush Creek Work Center on the Plumas National Forest in California; and government quarters that housed 64 employees in Oregon. In September 2020, the Forest Service stood up a team to aid in the care and recovery of employees, administrative units, communities, and short-term and long-term natural resource needs. Several systems, organizations, and procedures have been developed that have supported employee well-being and employee's needs at work resulting from the 2020 and 2021 wildfires. Some of these include an increase in mental health assistance for employees through peer-to-peer employee resources and contract services provided on incidents, and reimbursement to eligible employees when they were under evacuation orders.

Conclusion

The USDA Forest Service is committed to keeping our communities and firefighters safe as fire seasons grow longer and more severe. The dedication, bravery, and professional integrity of our firefighters and support personnel is second to none. Many have lost their own homes as they helped save their communities. As we work with our many partners to assist communities impacted by wildfires, we are committed, through shared stewardship, to change this trend in the coming years.

The Forest Service looks forward to working with this Subcommittee to take the steps forward needed to pay and support our wildland firefighters, reduce wildfire risk to communities across the western United States, and restore ecosystems and infrastructure affected by wildfires.

The CHAIR. Thank you so very much for your opening statement, Chief Moore. At this time Members will be recognized for questions in order of seniority, alternating between Majority and Minority Members. You will be recognized for 5 minutes each in order to allow us to get to as many questions as possible. Please keep your microphones muted until you are recognized in order to minimize background noise. I will begin by recognizing myself for 5 minutes.

And, Chief Moore, I want to thank you so very much for being here again. I congratulate you on your new position, and I thank you for your opening testimony. You—and so I will get right at my questions. You spoke about the recent pay raises, the announce-

ment of the Biden Administration regarding increased pay for firefighters, and spoke a little bit about that. Could you give us your assessment so far about whether or not you think that the increased pay for firefighters, and what has been done so far, will improve the agency's ability to hire and retain firefighters? Are there other long-term strategies that Congress can work on to address firefighter pay issues or retention issues?

Mr. MOORE. Yes. So, thank you Chair Spanberger. So as Chief, one of the first things I want to do is provide stability in the organization, and that means we have a lot of vacant positions. We also have a lot of detailers in key leadership positions, and what that does is it erodes the quality and the continuity of decisions that need to be made on the ground. And so, in order to provide some stability to address that critical issue within the agency, we need to get those positions filled, and remove the detailers, and put permanent people in there. The other thing, in terms of the focus that I think we need to do, is what I mentioned in my opening statement, is really thinning the forests to reduce fire risk.

The CHAIR. Yes.

Mr. MOORE. We talk a lot about fire suppression, but really we need to spend an equal amount of time talking about the treatments out on the ground, because I think that that is going to have an equal, if more, of a positive effect on how these fires are behaving as they walk across the landscapes. And in terms of the question being directly answered, I think it is a step in the right direction. This is good news. Looking at \$15, no one within the fire-fighting workforce work—makes less than that, I think recognizing the firefighters up to the GS-9 level, with a ten percent award based on their salary, those are good steps to make. But, like I said earlier, it is a good beginning, and I want to work with Congress, as well as the firefighters and the union themselves, to look at how can we co-create an opportunity to go to that next step for our firefighters.

The CHAIR. Yes. And Chief Moore, in your answer you spoke about forest maintenance, and thinning the forests, and earlier this year I introduced a piece of legislation called the Climate Stewardship Act (H.R. 2534), alongside Senator Booker in the Senate. It laid out a framework for some climate-smart Federal investments in forestry and conservation. It also includes funding for a Civilian Climate Corps. Separately, I worked with Congressman Neguse of Colorado to introduce the Civilian Climate Corps Act (H.R. 2241), which counterparts Senators Coons, Heinrich, and Luján have introduced in the Senate. Do you see, and do you have any feedback for us, as we look forward, and continue to try and move these bills forward—do you think that the creation of, or do you have any advice for us related to the creation of a Civilian Climate Corps how that might be helpful in building up the forestry workforce in that forest maintenance, and in the preventative work that you just mentioned?

Mr. MOORE. Yes. Thank you, Chair. So, the Civilian Conservation Corps is a part of our proud history. In fact, a lot of the work that they have done back in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s still stands today. There are a lot of skills that are being developed within that workforce. In terms of a Civilian Climate Corps, this

will put a new, diverse generation of Americans to work that can help conserve and restore public lands and waters, and I think that the investment in restoration, reforestation, reclamation, and other activities that improve the function and form of natural systems will not only bolster our nation's resilience to extreme wildfires, sea level rise, droughts, storms, and all the other climate impact, but they will also create a new pathway to the forestry workforce of the future.

The CHAIR. Thank you very, very much, Chief Moore, for that answer. I have 38 seconds left, so, in the interest of respecting everyone's time, I am actually going to yield back, because I could otherwise spend another 10 minutes asking you many questions. And I am now going to yield to Ranking Member LaMalfa to ask his questions.

Mr. LAMALFA. Thank you again, Madam Chair. Randy, let us talk about—I mean Chief Moore. I mean, I know you as Randy. Anyway, sorry about that Chief Moore, let us talk about the initial attack on new fire starts, which we have seen some controversy about that even this year in California. It is extremely important that, in everybody's view, that an initial attack on a fire while it is small, and containable, or at least theoretically containable, is preferable. So, when we talked about this some months ago, you made a public pledge as well to try and change what the Forest Service pattern is on that, or beef that up, so what changes are you putting into place, and would like to implement for Forest Service to aggressively put out new fires right from the very beginning at the initial source?

Mr. MOORE. So, thank you, Ranking Member LaMalfa, and, as you well know, being in California, particularly in the northern part of the state—and as I mentioned in my opening statement, when you really look at the 45,000 fires that the Forest Service had to respond to this fire year so far to date, and having a 98 percent success rate, initial attack has been very successful. The issue is really—when those fires escape initial attack, then they take on a behavior that we have not seen in our past in our lifetimes. And so what we have to do, we have to talk also about forest treatments on the landscape, because we will never have enough firefighters to put every fire out. As much as we would love to do that, we just simply won't have enough firefighters to do that, so we have to try and level the playing field, and that is with a very strong, and an aggressive approach to forest management. Because I believe that that has just as much of an impact, if not more, than the actual tactics and strategies we are deploying on these fire suppression efforts.

Mr. LAMALFA. I agree with that. That is indeed the only way we are going to be able to play defense on this, is to have the thinning, and have particular zones where you can trap fire as it approaches it in a situation like that. But, there is always much concern out in the field. My office gets many of the calls. It seems like they are monitoring the fire. It seems like they are not attacking it initially. We saw that on the Tamarack there, that—it was an area that was observed for—I think Mr. McClinton could tell us, but probably about over a week, and then—it just felt like it was an area that wouldn't do much, but then a wind came along, and conditions hap-

pened, and it turned into a very large fire. So, will you continue to pursue a strong initial attack? Would you say that the Service will throw all the resources they can at initially keeping the fire small?

Mr. MOORE. Congressman, we are doing that right now, and I appreciate you bringing up the Tamarack Fire, because it is so easy for someone to look in hindsight at what we are doing and second guess the decision, but let me tell you what actually happened on the Tamarack Fire, since you brought that up. It was a single tree fire is how it started. At the time we had 100 large wildfires. We had 27,000 firefighters deployed on fighting the fires, so we didn't have a lot of additional firefighters to put on every fire while trying to put it out. We took the appropriate response. We spiked out a small crew to monitor that fire.

The problem with that fire is the same problem that we are having all across the West, that once that fire broke away from that initial area, it just exploded into a larger fire. But, looking at the priorities of where we spend our firefighting, it is really about protecting life and property first. Our firefighters deploy to protect communities, life, and property, and that fire was in a remote area, and so the best—the only choice we really had was to monitor that fire. And as soon as that fire broke, it was a matter of just reassigning crews to try and attack those larger fires, because all of a sudden it was threatening communities. And so we would have loved to have been able to have enough crews to put on that fire.

And here again, just that example, it lends itself to having the wrong discussion about what we really should be talking about, and that is a very active forest management program, because there will always be situations where you can second guess the decisions that were made. And I can't defend any decision because, in your community, if your community is threatened, then that is what matters. The problem though, is that there are a lot of communities that are threatened, and we are having to make some tough choices.

Mr. LAMALFA. Yes, I get that. It is staffing, it is spread out resources. The Dixie Fire, for example, started because of one tree falling into a power line, and on the Tamarack situation, it is not uncommon, like a fire that happened in Grass Valley just a month ago, they pulled resources off another one in order to pounce on that, and they kept it to within a couple hundred acres right in the middle of a town, and then they put the resources back on a much larger ongoing fire. So, I am not here to second guess you, sir, it is just most of an issue of when we have an opportunity to—and you said the 98 percent. I—that is pretty incredible, but it only takes one to turn into a million acres, like we had with the Dixie Fire. Anyway, I need to yield back. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIR. Thank you, Ranking Member LaMalfa. And certainly I am always happy to let you go a little over time when we are talking wildfires, because I know how impacted your district is. The Chair will now recognize Congresswoman Pingree of Maine.

Ms. PINGREE. Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and thank you so much for holding this important hearing today, and welcome, Chief Moore. I am really looking forward to working with you, and I am very pleased to see you in that position. I really ap-

preciate the fact that you bring so many years of experience and understanding into this job, and I am sure we will be well served by working with you. I also appreciate your opening statement, and the emphasis you have placed on making sure that the employees of the Forest Service are well treated, well paid, and understanding how critical that is to achieving your mission. So, I could ask you probably a million questions today, but I am going to try to just get a couple of them out. And I just want to say my condolences for those communities that have been so dramatically affected by the fires, by the firefighters that fight them, and the huge challenges that are faced out West by districts like Mr. LaMalfa's.

As you know, I come from Maine. We are the most forested state in the nation, but a very different set of circumstances, and I know you know what our forests are like, and some of our challenges. One of the things that I wanted to bring up, which is somewhat of a side issue, I guess, but I think it is critical, is that one of the obstacles, as I see it, to wildfire risk reduction is the lack of markets for small diameter wood, which means it is generally not cost effective to remove it, and we have to understand that forests have to be healthy in the marketplace as well. But innovative wood products, like cross-laminated timber, have the potential to drive demand for this material, reduce the wildfire hazards, and even reduce the carbon footprint of new construction, which I think is an important thing to remember.

In the Build Back Better Act (H.R. 5376) we put \$1 billion in there to Wood Innovation Grants, but it is also been something that I have been anxious to increase the funding for. Could you just talk a little bit about the important role that the Forest Service plays in wood innovation in helping us to develop these new markets? Because I just see that as critical.

Mr. MOORE. Thank you, Congresswoman Pingree, and you are absolutely right. We need to be looking at new markets. So the Forest Service, along with our partners, have been working to expand markets toward innovative wood products and renewable energy for a while now, and some of the specific examples of available programs in the Forest Service include Wood Innovations Program, Community Wood Grant Program, and this includes potential to use wood for advanced biofuel, biochar, heat, and power. And, through our research and development deputy area, the Forest Service is also partnering with other government agencies, small businesses, Tribal communities, and industry collaboratives, and universities that are actually across the world to produce high quality, science-based forest products innovation.

And so our forest products research, in many cases, it is stimulating economic resilience in many areas, including housing, bio-energy, tourism, packaging, and paper. And by promoting the efficient use of forest products, our research also helps protect against natural disturbance. We talk about wildfires, but it is also about invasive species, and a climate change, a change in climate, or climate change, that is creating a lot of these situations out there. We have other wood markets that we are very proud of as well, the CLT industry. In fact, I was scheduled to go and look at the first Forest Service building on the Nez Perce, that was built using CLT products.

So we do think that this is an opportunity to use more of the small logs that we have in clearing the National Forests, and just the whole forested landscape, and I really appreciate you bringing this up, because new markets need to emerge, and the Forest Service, through our research and development branch, is very active in trying to help create and stimulate the economy around some of these new markets.

Ms. PINGREE. Well, thank you, and I look forward to being able to chat with you more about some of the things that you are seeing, and that they are doing at the Wood Products Lab. I am going to run out of time for you to answer this question, but I just want to put it out there, and perhaps we can follow up with a conversation about this another time. But, you have emphasized the importance of this very active Forest Management Program, and I am really interested to see how the Forest Service is looking at this into the future, because I think there are so many complexities involved with increasing the harvests, understanding old growth forests, and what is important to keep for our climate change impacts of carbon sequestration, the impact of these new markets, understanding the role of rebuilding our forests, the challenges with clear cutting, and some of the things we know now about how forests naturally rebuild.

It is way too many things in one sort of pocket, but I know that this is really an important part of the Forest Service vision, about how we manage into the future. I have 9 seconds, so many you can only just say, yes, we could talk about that, anything you want to say.

Mr. MOORE. Yes, Congresswoman, I would love to talk to you to a large extent about this. I have some ideas I would love to share, so I look forward to the opportunity.

Ms. PINGREE. Great, thank you. I look forward to that too. And, again, thank you for taking on this role, and we are here to support you.

The CHAIR. The Chair will now recognize Mr. Allen from Georgia for 5 minutes. Mr. Allen, you are muted, sir.

Mr. ALLEN. All right. I have two hearings going, so sorry. Madam Chair, thank you for having this hearing today. I think it is very important that we talk about this issue, and really get to the truth of the matter. Wildfires, particularly those on Federal lands, are a major safety, public health, and environmental issue for our western states. I was at a meeting out in Jackson Hole, Wyoming over the August work period, and I couldn't believe it. I mean, the smoke—you couldn't even see the Grand Teton Mountains for the amount of smoke in Wyoming that was coming from the wildfires in Oregon and California. Over 70 percent of the nationwide acreage burned by wildfires in 2020 was on Federal land. I mean, shouldn't that tell us something?

So, Chief Moore, I am glad to have you here today on behalf of the USDA Forest Service to try to help us understand what the real problem is. There are several schools of thought on why we are dealing more with wildfires today than ever before, but I believe the elephant in the room is just simply management, and just good care of this which has been given to us, and we have dominion over. Federal regulations which prevent the active management of

our nation's forests, and protects specific species of animals to the detriment of the rest of the world due to increased carbon emissions via wildfire, those are the two biggest enemies which proponents of carbon sequestration will find. These environmental groups, who clog our courts with frivolous lawsuits to stop the active management of our forests, are another enemy of carbon sequestration, and we must work to modernize our environmental regulations to have a more fulsome understanding of environmental health as a concept.

Most concerning for all of the climate control proponents out there in recent years is the carbon emissions from the California wildfires. I mean, why aren't we talking about that? In fact, the carbon emissions of the California wildfires is greater than the amount of carbon emissions that are produced in a year to provide power to the entire State of California. The Forest Service itself estimates that publicly and privately owned forests are offsetting roughly 14 percent of all U.S. carbon emissions, and, in fact, we need those forests to be healthy to provide the ability to deal with a—and to provide oxygen, and use the carbon that they need to survive. I hope we can work together to modernize our Federal regulatory system in a way that will allow us to manage our Federal lands and do this more effectively. Chief, what do you see the main reason for the increase in our wildfires that we have seen in recent years?

Mr. MOORE. So, Congressman, thank you for that question. It has a lot of different tentacles, and so I am just going to choose to go down a couple of them, just for the sake of time. We made decisions back in the early 1900s to put all fires out immediately, and, while that was the right decision at the time, over time we have found out that that may not be the right decision because the consequence is that now we have an overstock, dense forests. And then when you lay climate change on top of that, once a fire gets started in those conditions, they are creating catastrophic events like we have never seen before.

And so now it has caused us to focus on fire suppression alone, but we really have to talk about treating the forests to remove some of that overstock of dense material, because it is lending itself to the fire behavior that we are seeing on the landscape.

Mr. ALLEN. Well, it is obvious, when you look at—compared to our private lands that are actively managed. You are not going to have time to cover this, but we talk about climate change, and how that is causing forest fires. If you have data available, and like I said, I am about out of time, but if you would get that to my office so that I could review that, the science of how climate change causes forest fires, and has created this increase in forest fires, I would certainly appreciate it. And with that, Madam Chair, I yield back. I am out of time.

The CHAIR. Thank you very much, Mr. Allen, and Mr. O'Halleran from Arizona is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Thank you, Madam Chair, and Ranking Member. I would like to thank all the firefighters on the line who have done so much to keep communities across the West safe this summer. The tireless work of those on the line at the Telegraph and Rafael Fires in my district saved communities in Arizona, and I

want to express my gratitude to them. However, I would be remiss if I did not mention the other important lesson from these fires. Areas that were previously treated or burned are less susceptible to severe fire, but more significant is that they become susceptible to flooding, and to nearby communities and streams.

That brings me to the Forest Service's decision to cancel Phase 2 Contract for the Four Forest Restoration Initiative, 4FRI. I am deeply disappointed that after 11 amendments, and nearly 2 years, there is no clear indication when we are going to get Phase 2 off the ground. Chief Moore, I thank you for your willingness to quickly engage on 4FRI, and the conversation we had last week with some of your deputy chiefs. I am hopeful that the Administration is now engaged in the issue, and I expect our offices will stay in close contact over the coming weeks to ensure that this gets done quickly.

We also need to remember that, while the Forest Service has seen decades of diminishing amount of personnel dedicated to management of the forest—I have seen this ongoing now for 21 years of my life in public service, both in the legislature in Arizona and in Congress. Thankfully, in the last 2 years, because of Members on this Committee, we were able to get some changes done, and hopefully we will continue to move in the right direction. But I think it is really—we have to make sure the public fully understands, this is not a 10 year commitment. This can't be a 20 year commitment. This has to be a commitment that we keep both our communities protected during times of fire, but make sure we don't allow fires to get into the catastrophic conditions that they have been in at one time in Arizona.

Wally Covington, a forest expert, world-renowned, actually, Wally said that a fire in Arizona, at 25,000 acres, would be a big fire. Now we almost pray for a 25,000 acre fire. So, with that, Chief, I would like to ask you, and thank you again, what is the timeline for issuing a new RFP for 4FRI?

Mr. MOORE. Thank you, Congressman O'Halleran. I understand that many Arizonans, and the Arizona businesses, were really counting on the award of this large-scale 4FRI Project, and I understand how disappointed they are over it as well. I need you to know that I am disappointed too. I have talked with the Regional Foresters, and I have also talked with the evaluation panel, and understand the decision that they have made, and I think it was the right decision, considering what the potential outcomes could have been. I do want you to know, though, that I am committed to getting this proposal back out very soon, and certainly in a much, much quicker fashion than we did the first time around. So, I will pay personal attention to getting that out ASAP, and I would say that we will be following up with you so that you, as well as all Arizonans, know the status of the proposal.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. I want to thank you for that, Chief Moore. How are you going to be working with the stakeholders in the 4FRI stakeholder group to show that the Forest Service is committed to the success of 4FRI, and to rebuild trust? As a group, we started in the—well, the middle of the last 2 decades ago now to start 4FRI, with the help of the Forest Service, and environmentalists, and ranchers, and farmers, and every one of the stakeholders out

there that moved along over the course of a couple years, and then it hit a brick wall. How are we going to make sure that we are not going to hit that brick wall again, and that stakeholders are going to have input into the process?

Mr. MOORE. Congressman, through disappointment, trust is what erodes, and our word may not be as important or as valuable as our actions. And so I am willing to demonstrate through action that the Forest Service is trustworthy, and we are going to do that by demonstrating that we can get this project done, but we are also going to engage the community in this project so that it becomes ours, not mine, if that makes sense. So, we wanted to do this collaboratively, to the extent that we can, and we are committed to that.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Thank you, Chief, I have to yield now, as my time is up. Thank you.

The CHAIR. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Moore for 5 minutes, from Alabama.

Mr. MOORE of Alabama. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Chief Moore. I appreciate you being here today. We, in Alabama we have a pretty good reputation of managing our forests, and actually my district director has a forestry background, so we are quite familiar with the process. I did have a question, and I guess it is as good as any. Now so, more than ever, I believe this Committee agrees that expedited forest management is needed. In your opinion, what policy changes would free up the good folks on the ground to be able to act quickly and effectively to manage and reduce our fuel loads?

Mr. MOORE. Well, Congressman Moore, thank you for that question. It is one that, I would have to say that I think the legislation that is being considered now would be one of the things that could help us greatly. It gives us an opportunity to do just what we are talking about, and that is to increase our ability to go out on this landscape and do the necessary work that needs to be done.

One thing that we spend a lot of time talking about what happens in the West, but I have to tell you, if the West could mimic what is happening in the South, that would be our endgame. Whereas in the South, it comes to fire, we have done a lot of maintenance burns, prescribed burning. That is the ideal situation. And when you look at the number of acres treated across the whole U.S., and you look at us treating 3 million acres as an agency, over a million and a half of that comes from the southern region, Region 8, and it is because they have the conditions there, they also have the culture, that accepts prescribed burning in a much bigger way than what we do out west. And so I would say that I am hopeful, based on some of the legislation that you all are considering in Congress, and I think that that is going to give us our best opportunity that we have had in quite some time.

Mr. MOORE of Alabama. Thank you, Chief. Actually, that is my experience. I met with Forestry in Alabama a few weeks ago, and that was one of the things that they talked about, was just the control management process, the burns, whatever we have to do to keep those fuel loads down. And I hope that others will follow our lead in that respect, and maybe we can get some of these things under control. But with that, Madam Chair, thank you so much.

I appreciate your time. Thank you, Chief, I appreciate you attending, and being here as a witness today.

The CHAIR. Thank you very much. The Chair recognizes Mr. Panetta from California 5 minutes.

Mr. PANETTA. Outstanding. Thank you, Madam Chair, and of course, Chief Moore, outstanding to have you here. Absolutely thrilled when I found out that you were selected to be the next Chief of the U.S. Forest Service, so congratulations, but also thank you. Let me express my appreciation for all your help, and for all of your work as Regional Forester for the Pacific Southwest Region. I tell you, based on our conversations, based on our work together, I really couldn't think of a better person to lead the Forest Service in what I believe, and I think what we all know, really is an unfortunately more dangerous era of wildfire years, rather than wildfire seasons, is what we are facing.

Now, obviously you have been instrumental in the creation and the formulation of my legislation—I want to thank you as well—in my legislation, the REPLANT Act, the Wildfire Emergency Act (H.R. 3534), and the Save Our Forests Act (H.R. 5341), and I look forward to continuing to talk with you as we continue to push this legislation forward through our process here, but also to ensure that we can implement our shared vision of a safer, healthier, and more sustainable forest across our country.

Now, we have had a couple conversations, and I spoke with your predecessor, Chief Christiansen, on a number of occasions about chronic staffing shortages in the Forest Service. And as you know, look, 80 percent of wildfires in the U.S., at least based on my numbers, you may have different numbers, but my numbers are 80 percent are caused by humans, and being—and in the urban—or the wildland/urban interface, basically the fastest growing land-use type in this country, that I am sure you are familiar with. At the same time, as you know, the Forest Service suffers from chronic staffing shortages, with several National Forests, including the Los Padres National Forest, in my district, on the Central Coast of California, suffering from insufficient law enforcement and recreation management staff. And that is why I introduced the Save Our Forests Act.

And so I wanted to get your take on what it would be like if we just had one additional recreation management position in each ranger district in the wildland/urban interface? How would that translate, if at all, into reducing the incidents of wildfire and improving the long-term health of our forests?

Mr. MOORE. Thank you, Congressman Panetta, and, to respond to the first part of the question, I am actually humbled to have this opportunity to serve as Chief. I think you are bringing up something that is really important to us as an agency. If I go back 20 years ago, we have lost 38 percent of our non-fire workforce. That 38 percent represents some of those resource areas that you are talking about: recreation, land, special uses, forestry, soil and water. All of those fields, archaeologists, wildlife biologists. So, we have had a lot of vacant positions because of, as the fire has continued to increase, and we have had to be more responsive, from a budget standpoint, to those fires, we have not had the ability to maintain the staff that we have lost.

Now, we have done really well, because we have looked at technology, we have improved efficiencies, and we have done a really good job looking at the outputs, that they are similar to what they have been. But what happened is that we have an overworked workforce. We have a workforce that is tired. They can't continue to work at this pace and scale. We need to fill many of those positions that we have lost over time due to this situation that we are talking about today. So, it would be very helpful.

Mr. PANETTA. Understood, understood. I appreciate that. I appreciate you hitting on the prescribed burns, thank you very much. It is exactly what my legislation, the Wildfire Emergency Act, hits on and expands, at least in regards to permitting for those prescribed burns. And I understand your sentiment about the West mimicking the South. Obviously, we have a little bit more hurdles out in the West, as you know well, for a number of reasons, but hopefully this legislation allows us to get over those hurdles so that we can have more prescribed burns in our forests in order to reduce the chances of wildfire.

Moving on, in regards to reforestation, quickly, I have less than a minute, would lifting the cap on the Reforestation Trust Fund, as outlined in my REPLANT Act, would that help the Forest Service address the backlog of reforestation projects that we have?

Mr. MOORE. The short answer is yes, it would. Right now we are limited by \$30 million. We have 1.3 million acres that need reforestation. We are only able to do about 60,000 acres, at best, with what is funded now, that doesn't even include the fires from the Dixie, and this year's fires. So being able to do that, and develop public-private partnerships, and helping us do some reforestation, that would be a great way to go. So, if that cap was removed, it gives us more flexibility to do these types of things.

Mr. PANETTA. Outstanding. I look forward to working with you, continuing to work with you, and thank you again for your service in not just fire suppression, but fire prevention. Thank you, Chief. I yield back, Madam Chair.

Mr. MOORE. Thank you.

The CHAIR. Thank you very much. The Chair now recognizes the Ranking Member of the full Committee, Ranking Member Thompson.

Mr. THOMPSON. Madam Chair, thank you so much. Chief Moore, thank you again. My first question, Chief, the Forest Service needs to get closer to, or above, preferably, its national timber targets for the coming year. How much timber do you foresee the agency harvesting in 2021 and 2022?

Mr. MOORE. Go back 2 years, and we had a goal of about 4 billion board-feet that we were planning to accomplish this past year, but we are probably going to come in at about 60 percent of that. Part of it is the situation that we have been talking about all morning, that we have had a number of fires that have burned through planned timber sales, planned restoration work, and so we have lost the ability to do that. The other thing is that since we have had so many fires this year, we have had to take a lot of members that support the fire in a support role to support the whole fire suppression efforts that we have had this year. So those are the resources that were not going to be doing this other work that you

are talking about. So different reasons we are not able to accomplish that.

Might I also say at this point, though, that I think if we can get to a point where we talk about what the land needs, I think we will find that we are doing a lot more than what we had planned to do, and I think the outcomes would be greater than what we are planning to do, because it puts the focus on the wrong part of the conversation, and we need to have a broader conversation about landscape work, landscape improvement, and all of the product that comes off of landscape treatment.

Mr. THOMPSON. Very good, thank you for that. Now, the 2018 Farm Bill provided the Forest Service with various authorities intended to help the agency to conduct better management. This includes reauthorization of the insect and disease categorical exclusion, as well as categorical exclusion for the Greater Sage Grouse and mule deer habitat. Has the agency issued guidance, or gone through the rulemaking process to implement these authorities, and if so, has the agency utilized these authorities, and if not, why?

Mr. MOORE. Yes. Thank you, Ranking Member. The answer is yes. We utilized these greatly. Take a look at the Good Neighbor Authority. We continue to grow relationships with state and other partners in the GNA, and this has really allowed us to restore a lot of watersheds and manage forests on National Forests via agreements or contracts. What you might also want to know is that we have a total of about 286 GNA agreements across the U.S., and they cover a variety of restoration activities that are in place in 38 different states, and so we have been using the tools that Congress has allowed us to have.

I think, when I look at timber harvesting for a moment, timber harvesting under the GNA, it continues to grow. We had well over 230 million board-feet that were sold in 2020 under this authority, and this is an increase of about 182 million board-feet from the year before, so we are seeing a continued growth in these areas using some of these types of tools. The other thing that I am really proud of is the CFLRP (Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program), the collaborative. We are actually implementing now to reauthorize CFLRP Program, per Congressional direction in the 2018 Farm Bill. That has been a success because we have had the opportunity to bring the community of people into deciding what needs to happen on that landscape, and then everyone is throwing in their money, so to speak, to make these things happen. These tools are allowing us to operate in a much more collaborative fashion.

And the last thing that I will respond to is that the implementation of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, all of the regions across the U.S. are really developing projects using the insect and disease portion of that, and the wildfire resilience CEs that were contained in the HFRA. And so we are really pleased for the tools that Congress has provided us, and I do want you to know that we are utilizing those to the full extent, and we think that the opportunity continues to grow with these tools.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you, Chief. Obviously, I am a huge supporter of the Forest Service research that is done for many perspectives, the things that we are looking at, and the research on where

specifically the agency needs to perform restoration activities, reduce the threat of wildfire, and we can talk about this offline, I will just tee up the question. I am looking forward to talking with you about how the Forest Service intends to use this research, to be able to prioritize those types of projects. And with that, Madam Chair, I am just about out of time, so I yield back.

The CHAIR. Thank you very much, Ranking Member Thompson. The Chair now recognizes Congresswoman Schrier from Washington State.

Ms. SCHRIER. Thank you, Madam Chair, and welcome, Chief Moore. I am delighted to meet you, and look forward to working closely with you to keep our forests healthy, and our communities safe from wildfire. There have been some very recurrent themes today, so I hope you will have some really good opportunities for a path forward after this discussion.

As I am sure you know, the wildfire outlook in my home State of Washington, and across the whole Pacific Northwest, is getting more dire. Every year we are seeing more fires, earlier fires, a longer fire season, and more money and resources used to suppress those fires. And I wanted to focus on ways to make our forests healthier, which most of us are talking about today, to make them more resilient to wildfire, and sort of the nitty gritty of what we will need to get there. A recent report from the Washington Department of Natural Resources identified 3 million acres of forestlands just in our state alone in need of reforestation. A significant percentage of those acres are in my district, in rural central Washington, including about 700,000 acres in the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests, and the towns here are some of the most at-risk locations for wildfire in the nation.

Our state is doing some incredible work. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources local fire districts, counties, non-profits, private forests are doing this kind of work, and they are conducting the controlled burns and the mechanical thinning that we have all talked about today as much as possible, but they face some really big barriers, and one of those barriers is the need to partner with the Forest Service. And in places like Chelan County, 70 percent of the land is owned by the Forest Service, and so, no matter how good a job our state does, and private forest-holders do, 70 percent is on you.

And to that end, my colleagues and I are working to bolster the Forest Service resources. We got the National Prescribed Fire Act (H.R. 3442) that increases Federal investment with Ranking Member LaMalfa, and we have the National Forest Restoration and Remediation Act (H.R. 4489) to allow the Forest Service to get interest money, and then we have the bipartisan infrastructure bill that puts more money in for forest health. I understand that you and George Geissler, Washington State Forester, go way back, and I would just love to encourage you to continue to work with George, and with our Commissioner of Public Lands, Hilary Franz, and the local fire departments to increase the pace and scale of fuel reduction. They are ready. They are willing, they are excited to work with you, and they just want that relationship to work toward better, and if you could deal kind of with the details.

I know one of those details we have talked about is how do we get more personnel? How can you hire more people, because you do need people that do this work. And we have talked about—I think many of us were surprised that firefighters were not making \$15 an hour. That still seems incredibly low. Local fire departments pay more, and so of course you were losing people. How can you address this issue of staffing and funding? Do you have specific plans to ramp up the number of people you have?

Mr. MOORE. So, thank you, Congresswoman Schrier, I really appreciate that question. I talked about the 38 percent reduction in our resource-related programs from 20 years ago, and so, if we have to replace those positions, our funding needs to reflect that. So, I am hopeful, based on some of the legislation that is currently in Congress, and I think that if that does happen, it gives us our best chance that we have had in a long time to fill some of those necessary vacant positions. George and I talk often, George Geissler, the State Forester there, and we do go back a long ways. And we do have some opportunities to do a lot more than what we are currently doing.

What I am pleased about is the state shared stewardship agreements that we have been signing with the governors. I think we have about 46 of those now. That, coupled with GNA authorities, gives us the opportunity to work across jurisdictional boundaries and landscapes. And so now I think we have some authorities that will allow us to do that, but we need our budgets increased somewhat to hire some of those really needed positions, to spend the time developing those agreements, and to spend the time going out on the ground, working with that local community, and engaging them in how we should go about in making those improvements that protect—

Ms. SCHRIER. They are ready to dive in and get to work, and so whatever barriers are there, if you could work to eliminate those, I think we could make even more progress just relying on state, local, even private, and Ranger work forces. So, thank you. I understand we will have a second round, and I will get to more questions then.

Mr. MOORE. Thank you.

Ms. SCHRIER. I yield back.

The CHAIR. Thank you very much. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Johnson from South Dakota. And, because we are making excellent time, and there is interest in doing a second round, just to let all of the Members know who may be interested, we will do a second round of questions, and thank you for your willingness to stick with us, Chief Moore. Mr. Johnson?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, thanks, Chief Moore. It is great to have you. The Black Hills National Forest is one of the only forests that had had a regular monthly meeting as part of an advisory board. And, as you would expect, the advisory board had representatives from all kinds of user groups. Timber folks, state and local governments, the Norbeck Society, trails, permittees, *et cetera*. And so, way back in June of 2020, the coordinator for this local forest advisory board submitted their charter renewal, a list of new members, everything that was needed, and this was 6 months prior to the deadline for doing so.

Now, since that time, again, June of 2020, there has been no action taken in D.C., and so the forest advisory board hasn't been authorized to meet, either virtually or in person, for the entire year. And, of course, this is at a time when there are a lot of very big issues going on with the Black Hills National Forest, a time when you would think input from this broad group of stakeholders would be valuable to the Forest Service and to the forest. And during that time, our office has reached out a number of times to Forest Service liaisons, and it just seems like we can't get any real communication, we can't get any movement by the regional or national office to renew this forest advisory board. And so I guess my question, Chief Moore, is just, I mean, can we get some sort of a commitment from you to work with us on getting this advisory board reauthorized?

Mr. MOORE. Congressman Johnson, thank you for that question, and this is one that I have actually been personally briefed on. And, after the brief, I agree that the board improved collaborative opportunities, and relationship with individuals, and it hasn't happened yet, but I am pleased to report to you that the package is in the final stages of the clearing process as we speak, so I would look for that to happen fairly soon. But I agree with you wholeheartedly on what has occurred over time.

Mr. JOHNSON. Chief, fairly soon, just kind of give me a ballpark to set expectations. Are we talking days, weeks, months?

Mr. MOORE. Well, I don't think it is, certainly not months, but, we have done everything that we need to do as an agency, so I think the clearing process now has to take place over in the Department, and I know that they are working on that really hard. And while I can't give you a specific time, I can tell you that it is in the final stages of being cleared.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thanks, Chief. Madam Chair, I would just note this as an important part of our oversight responsibility. That is why I want to thank you for this hearing. Deadlines drive achievement, and I think Chief Moore clearly came prepared today, and was ready to address a lot of our questions, and so these hearings do make a difference in how the agencies respond to our needs.

Chief, another one. As you certainly know, in the Black Hills our local volunteer fire departments, they volunteered for the initial attack of these forest fires, and grassland fires, and I think one of the frustrations they have shared with me is this 24 hour rule. So they can be on site with the initial attack, they are getting close to the end of the 24 hour period, they feel like they are on the cusp of having the fire contained. They are pulled off the fire, even though sufficient Forest Service resources are not yet in place for a seamless handoff to close this fire out. And so I just wanted some insight from you, what is the statutory or regulatory—why is this 24 hour rule in place, where does it come from, and is there any flexibility so we can do a better job of closing these fires out?

Mr. MOORE. Yes, thank you, Congressman. Yes, so that usually comes through a mutual aid response—these fires, and I think, as we look at updating the agreements, these are the types of things that I think we need to be documenting so that when we have the opportunity to update the mutual aid in response, that we allow flexibility geographically. One of our biggest challenges is that, and

for good reason, we go out with direction that is national in scope, and what that does sometimes is it doesn't allow flexibility for that local geographic area.

And so we want to find the—really, the sweet spot in these agreements to allow flexibility at that local level, as long as it meets the national intent. And so we are going to be working toward that ideal, and hopefully we will be able to respond to these same issues that you are talking about through the mutual aid agreement. But it doesn't just happen there in South Dakota. This is a common problem in many other locations. And I think that we are taking notes from this hearing that these are some of the things that we think we need to take on to improve the fire service, and how we respond as a collective group. Because I will tell you, the volunteer fire department, the local fire departments, we couldn't do this without them. And so if there are challenges, we need to deal with those directly.

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, Chief, I have a third question, which I don't have time to ask, and so I will submit it for the record, and look forward to getting a response from your team. It deals with the Four Forest Restoration Initiative, and to what extent that effort can be expanded into the Black Hills National Forest and elsewhere. Thank you, sir.

Mr. MOORE. Thank you.

The CHAIR. Thank you, Chief Moore, for your very detailed answers, and I now recognize Congressman Costa from California.

Mr. COSTA. Thank you, Madam Chair, for allowing me to sit in on the Subcommittee here. You and I have had a number of conversations about the importance of the role your Subcommittee plays, and invitation to have you come out to California still stands, as we deal with these challenging issues affecting America's forests.

Chief, we are excited about your participation and your career. It has been long established. By the way, I like that backdrop. Is that Mount Shasta, or where might you be there?

Mr. MOORE. Yes, Mount Shasta is in the background.

Mr. COSTA. Okay. That is part of God's country in California. We want to keep it that way, but we have had horrific fires. Let us stipulate for the record that I think everyone is aware of, that we are in a crisis mode, as it relates to the conditions of American forests caused by not only climate change, but a multitude of factors. Would you agree?

Mr. MOORE. Yes, I would.

Mr. COSTA. And we no longer have a fire season, certainly in California and the West, but we have a fire year, it seems, right?

Mr. MOORE. Right.

Mr. COSTA. Are you satisfied with the *status quo*, Chief?

Mr. MOORE. Congressman, I think you know me well enough to know that I am not. I don't think anyone is.

Mr. COSTA. Good. When is the last time we have updated the U.S. Forest Service Land Management Plan?

Mr. MOORE. So, they generally run anywhere around 10 to 15 years.

Mr. COSTA. That is not adequate, do you believe?

Mr. MOORE. Well, it would be if they were living documents were we make changes—

Mr. COSTA. But they are not?

Mr. MOORE. No. Well, not completely. Some are, but generally—

Mr. COSTA. Would you agree that it is time that we really take the effort to update the forest management plans for all of these forests that are being impacted, not only in the West, but wherever else it is appropriate?

Mr. MOORE. Yes, and we are in the process, Congressman, of about 100 updates, 100 forest plans—

Mr. COSTA. And how much will that cost, to update the forest management plans?

Mr. MOORE. Well, I don't have a number yet on how much that would cost—

Mr. COSTA. Well, we need to know that so we provide you with the resources. And then, once the plans are updated for the forests throughout the country, you need to have the money to implement the plan. I was in a hearing a year ago, and they estimated that, to truly do the work over a period of time that is necessary to provide proper forest management, we are talking about somewhere in the neighborhood of \$2 billion a year for a period of at least 6 to 8 years. Could you check those numbers, and verify, and get back to the Members of the Committee? Because, as we look at the reconciliation effort, as we look at the budget year coming up, the crisis mode that we are in, we need to address this issue. Would you not agree?

Mr. MOORE. Yes. I will certainly look into those numbers, Congressman.

Mr. COSTA. And if we have those numbers, I think we are in a better position to provide you all the forest management tools you need so that we can address the challenges that we face of properly managing our forests. When you look at the monies that we are paying each year for fire suppression, frankly, we spend all the money that we set aside for forest management, and we end up in the billions of dollars spending money for fire suppression. And, frankly, if we continue in this vein, I don't think we are ever going to deal with the crisis, or provide the forests the proper management they deserve. Would you agree?

Mr. MOORE. Yes, I would agree with the majority of that, sir.

Mr. COSTA. We need an updated plan, so then we need the financial resources to give you all the tools in the management toolbox to do the work that provides the certainty that forests in the future, with all the factors we are dealing with, that include climate change, will be there for the next generations of Americans to come, for all the multiple uses that they serve. I mean, is that not the goal?

Mr. MOORE. Absolutely one of the goals.

Mr. COSTA. Let me ask you a little bit about, with all the horrific fires we have had in California and the West, the partnerships between state and Federal. You have been in California for a good time. CAL FIRE, and I know about our California response, and our efforts over the last several years. How would you describe the

partnership between the Forest Service and states like California, and the necessity of continuing to improve and work on them?

Mr. MOORE. Well, keep in mind too, the fire service is much bigger than just CAL FIRE and the Forest Service. And I would say in general, if I was to focus specifically there in California, I think relationships are great. In fact, I think that is why we are having so much success in that state, is because of the fire service in general, and how it is working together. I mean, there are always problems when people work together, but I can assure you that the leadership of those agencies and those local fire departments, they are committed to working through whatever issue that may come up, but the relationship is solid.

Mr. COSTA. Well, my time has expired, and Madam Chair, thank you for allowing me to participate, but I would think it would be helpful, Chief, if you were to provide, if you have not already, a list of areas that you think we need to work on together to allow you to better do your job. And thank you, for myself, thank the firemen and -women, and the people at the U.S. Forest Service for the heroic jobs that you are engaged in here always, and certainly in terms of recent years during these really terrible fire seasons we are dealing with.

Mr. MOORE. Thank you, Congressman Costa.

The CHAIR. Thank you very much, Chief Moore, for your time. We are going to do a second round of questions, for anyone interested. I will continue in the same order, and I will begin by recognizing myself for 5 additional minutes.

Chief Moore, in answers to prior questions you talked about the 38 percent loss in staffing that you have experienced across non-firefighting roles. Could you just give us a little bit more of a background of what those roles are, and what the impact has been on your agency?

Mr. MOORE. Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, the type of positions are those resource positions that actually do a lot of the resource work on the ground. And—whether it is doing NEPA, which the Congressman just mentioned, our forest prioritization but also it is going and putting structures out on the ground for wildlife purposes. It is going out and doing surveys, looking at some of the sensitive species that are taking place. It is also our foresters that go out and look at the landscape and design our silvicultural practices by getting at some of the disturbances that have taken place on the landscape. So, it is those resource-related issues, watershed improvements, whether it is a soil scientist, hydrologists, some of those types of specialty programs where we improve the landscape so that the types of fires that happen, it is not happening in a catastrophic way.

Most of the fires—most of the land out West is developed through fires, and so you have a lot of fire-adapted ecosystems out there. And so fire is a natural part of the landscape, and we need to make sure that fire continues to be a natural part of the landscape, but through controlled conditions. And we just have not been able to spend the necessary amount of time making improvements on the ground that would also make that fire behave differently as it moves across the landscape.

The CHAIR. And, Chief Moore, what I hear you describing is an investment, really, in preventative efforts so that we are preventing those catastrophic fires, so that we are making investments in the personnel who will prepare us, and ensure that the land is not as susceptible to the sorts of catastrophic fire, is that a correct assessment, that it is the preventative?

Mr. MOORE. That is correct, Madam Chair.

The CHAIR. And the types of skillsets that those employees would bring, is there a challenge that you all are facing that, as you have experienced loss of these personnel predominantly related to funding, are you also then challenged by a loss of skillset and knowledge in terms of resiliency in wild forest management?

Mr. MOORE. Yes. We have certainly lost a lot of skills, and we have tried to mitigate that somewhat by partnering with groups and other entities that have those skills.

The CHAIR. Okay.

Mr. MOORE. And so now what you see is a gradual shift in how the Forest Service is being managed. We are working more through others and with others than what we have in the past, and that has been a really positive thing. It is just that we need to have more capacity internally so that we can continue to work in that way, because I think that this is the new generation of natural resource management in this country. But we need to have those critical positions filled that will allow us to do more of this.

The CHAIR. Great. And, Chief Moore, well, we passed the wildfire funding fix last year, and I understand about \$2.7 billion of this funding has already been used thus far this year. Can you talk about how this funding authority impacts your ability to combat the growing number and increasing intensity of wildfires, and how it might overall—how it is useful, or how you all are using it? Any comments on that funding and its value to you?

Mr. MOORE. Yes. First of all, I want to thank Congress for the fire funding fix. It has really stopped the bleeding of these other program areas, and so I think that that is been really good. I think now what we need to do is to be able to build those programs up so that we can do more of the work that I talked about earlier. But certainly the fire funding fix was one of the single most important things I think Congress could have done for the Forest Service in recent years.

The CHAIR. And I hope we will continue to talk about that program into the future, in our oversight function, talk in greater detail about the benefits, challenges, and certainly the way that money has been deployed. In my last 40 seconds, I would just open it up to any other comments that you would like to make before the Committee, focused on your goals or priorities.

Mr. MOORE. I want to thank Congress for their interest in what happens on America's forests and grasslands. And I appreciate the opportunity to work with Congress as we move into this tenure that I am in. I am just so appreciative.

The CHAIR. Thank you very much, Chief Moore. I now recognize Ranking Member LaMalfa for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMALFA. Thank you again, Madam Chair. Let us talk quickly about what we can do on the ground more immediately. We talked before about the BAER, the BAER Response, called the

Burned Area Emergency Response Teams. They are out doing the assessments post-fire of what we have, what we can be doing. Now, I think the Committee has the ability to put on the screen a map we have of what is known as the Feather River Watershed, and illustrate what we are looking at with the immediate response that we really should be trying for.*

If you see on the screen there, the area in red is pretty much all this year, and that represents well over a million acres combined, the Beckwourth Fire, the Dixie Fire, and those surrounding colors are just in the last 4 years of fire, all except for one tiny one that was back in—well, tiny, relatively—I think the Moonlight Fire in 2007, the scar you can still see. What I am looking for Chief Moore, we talk about looking at things in long-term, but that Feather River Watershed is an area that services in the water that is delivered and stored, and ultimately makes its way to Californians. 25 million Californians rely on the water that comes from the state water project that is primarily filled by this area.

So, we talk about restoration, whether it is going to be in one bill form, I had a legislation in a previous bill. We have to pounce on this right now, because we are talking about the erosion, we are talking about the ash and the material that can be washing down the hill in the next couple of large rains we hope to have in the winter, right? It is going to greatly affect the watershed and the water supply situation for our whole state. So, what does the forest need in order to start immediate restoration in a volume, or a pace and scale, so to speak, that can really, really make a difference in a short amount of time? We have a window of time right now, since we are still in September that we could be doing a lot before a rainy season ensues. What could we pounce on right now to be effective on limiting damage from erosion, *et cetera*?

Mr. MOORE. Okay. Thank you, Ranking Member LaMalfa. So the first step that needs to be done are assessments. We need to send teams out to look at what are those emergency types of things that need to take place immediately? And so that is the Burned Area Emergency Response that you had talked about, BAER. So that is taking place now. We have a need—based on this year's fires, we have a need of about 216 assessments that need to be done. We have currently completed about 136. We are currently in the process of looking at the Dixie now. We have already looked at the Beckwourth, and we have—I think we have committed somewhere around—I think about \$430,000–\$440,000, and we are expecting to kick that up to much higher than that, based on the continuous needs that we find.

In terms of the Dixie Fire, I agree with you, that is in a critical watershed. The Feather River Watershed is really critical to the water supply, as you have indicated, and so my immediate goal is to bring just a small team of key leaders in the agency out so that they can get a perspective of the amount of work that needs to be done. We also want to line up working with private partners and others, because this is going to take a lot of us working together to try to get that area done.

*Editor's note: the map referred to is located on p. 42.

Mr. LAMALFA. Chief Moore, I am sorry, time is limited, but we have an immediacy we need to have here. We need to be hauling straw, and we need to be, shaping waterways in some fashion, and not be devastated this year. And I appreciate that you have the teams out there doing that, but we need to take that information and turn it into immediate action, so that is—and I proposed a very large amount of money in a recent amendment to legislation here. It didn't make it, because the size and the cost is going to be huge of what we are looking at.

Mr. MOORE. I agree with that, and just for your information, some of those activities are currently taking place out there, but that was such a large area, it is going to take a little bit of time to do a full assessment of what the needs are out there. But I agree, that is something that is very important to the watershed of the state—

Mr. LAMALFA. Can partnering with private industry help speed this up? The people in the industry, timber industry, can they be a partner to help on this with some of the dead tree removal, and putting something down on the ground that will stop erosion and the habitat damage that is going to happen?

Mr. MOORE. Yes, absolutely they can, Congressman, and I would have an expectation that they would be engaged with us, as well as other members of the community, to get some cover back onto the ground, and get some of these structures in place.

Mr. LAMALFA. Okay. Thank you. I yield back.

The CHAIR. The Chair now recognizes Ranking Member Thompson, if he would like to ask another round of questions.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thanks, Madam Chair. Chief, I am going to circle around and give you an opportunity to respond. I know the Forest Service has, again, done new research on where specifically the agency needs to perform restoration activities to reduce the threat of wildfire. So, the question that we ran out of time on, how does the Forest Service intend to use this research and prioritize such projects?

Mr. MOORE. So thank you, Ranking Member. So, as we indicated before, we have about 66 million acres that need to be treated. Our researchers have been engaging with us, and we feel that if we treat about 20 million acres of those, that we would have a positive impact on the 66 million acres there. I think the key is to have strategically placed landscape treatments across the area. We know we must protect communities, and also the infrastructure that those communities depend on. We also know that we need to protect the wildland as well, but life and property would be our first priorities, and that is where we are focused on now.

Mr. THOMPSON. Very good. And, Chief, I know this is your first public appearance before this Committee, and we really thank you for that, much appreciate you, and your leadership. As you may know, our Committee recently marked up a reconciliation measure that included many policy changes impacting the Forest Service, and some \$40 billion in forest-related investments, and, quite frankly, did that without any public hearings, any Committee discussions. So as Chief of the Forest Service, were you asked to provide input or testimony on those provisions within the budget reconciliation legislation?

Mr. MOORE. I believe that has taken place before I assumed this position, so I have not personally been engaged at that level, to answer your question.

Mr. THOMPSON. Okay. So, to the best of your knowledge, since you came into your position as Forest Service Chief, and we are happy to have you there, there was no request that came from this Committee, or the Senate Committee, or somewhere else for any kind of consultation, or to provide testimony or technical assistance on that bill?

Mr. MOORE. Yes. Well, I am sure there is, at least I hope so, but I am not aware of what that might be at this point, Congressman.

Mr. THOMPSON. I would certainly hope so too, but if you are not aware in your position, and, again, I reinforce we really appreciate you having you there. It is kind of sad, this is what we get when they don't allow this Committee, the Agriculture Committee, to do its job. It is like throwing money at a wall. In my opening statement I identified the fact, the lacking of authorities, just how flawed that is. Congress should not just throw money at—we know wildfires are an issue. We know having healthy forests are so important, but that is why we have an Agriculture Committee, so that we can have hearings, we can have debate, we can have delivered a process. And this bill that is going to be voted on, and it was shoved through this Committee, is just alarming, absolutely alarming. I don't think we want the leadership of either party writing our farm bills, including the forestry title.

Now, can you shed, just changing gears with the time remaining, can you shed any light on the working relationship between the Forest Service and CAL FIRE? I have been hearing reports of issues, and now, with the *60 Minutes* report that response to the Caldor Fire was delayed due to conflict, it seems like this needs to be addressed.

Mr. MOORE. I think I have different information than you do, Congressman. I am not aware of any problems between the Forest Service and CAL FIRE. As I indicated earlier, that relationship is really solid, so I am not aware of anything that might be going on.

Mr. THOMPSON. All right. And I certainly don't take credible references from the media, so I am glad to—certainly work with Mr. LaMalfa. I yield to Mr. LaMalfa.

Mr. LAMALFA. Would gentleman yield? I ran out of time on previous thoughts, but indeed there is a lot on the ground that needs to be looked at, Chief Moore, on the relationship there, people that will come up to me off the record and tell me that the philosophy between the two entities on how to attack fire, deal with fire, who is going to be in charge, there are big problems. And yes, whether it is *60 Minutes*, or what have you, there are people on the ground that—been feeling like regular firefighters that approached *60 Minutes* about this, or were approached, that feel very strongly about this. So, we have a lot of patching to do on that relationship with the strain that is been on, and the different philosophies on fighting fire.

The bottom line is—the American people, the public, they don't care what color the fire truck is that shows up to their fire, whether it is light green, or red, or yellow, or what have you. They just

want action. They want their community safe, and that. So I thank Mr. Thompson for yielding to me.

The CHAIR. Thank you very much to the Ranking Members. The Chair now recognizes Mr. O'Halleran for 5 minutes.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Thank you, Madam Chair. I am just going to have a couple of comments based on what I heard, and a couple of questions. My district has all of six National Forests. Some of them are in direct—bordering on the Grand Canyon, which is in my district. And, first of all, let me thank the Administration for putting it up to \$15 an hour, but that is a ridiculous number. These firefighters are away from their families for an extended period of time. I have been to a large amount of Type 1 and Type 2 incidents, where I have seen these young people coming off the line exhausted, going into small tents and sleeping for a short period of time, and then getting back up, and going out and risking their lives to save communities and our natural resources. And that is \$15 an hour. I don't know where that number came from, but let us hope that we in Congress can do a lot better than that. And I know a lot of the firefighters that come from local jurisdictions that are side by side with them, and working very hard also, but making a lot more money than they are, and risking the same amount of life.

The other thing is the 38 percent loss of workforce. As you indicated, Chief, that was over a number of years. That was something that was said time, and time, and time again. I have said it the entire time I was in the legislature. I asked Congress to do something. Since I have been in Congress, we have tried to find ways to address that issue. Some of it has been addressed, but the timeline is too short to be able to get it to where we need it to be. But the idea that we just said, well, we will just fight these fires, and cut the workforce down. And, of course, NEPA, and all those people are taken off the lines. Our Type 1 people come right from the Forest Service. Our firefighters, they come right from the Forest Service. I see the offices when they can't be as productive because they are out fighting fires.

And Mr. Panetta talked about law enforcement. Red Rock Ranger District, in my district, has millions of visitors every year. They have two law enforcement officers. I am a former law enforcement officer, and I know that those officers are hardly out there because of days off, because of sickness, because of court time, because of paperwork. There is no law enforcement in the Red Rock Ranger District, or, for that matter, in the million plus acres of the Coconino National Forest, or many other National Forests around this country. Again, Congress has been not willing to put the money forward, and I am glad to hear people start to talk about landscapes' work.

Now, we just had a couple of fires up in the district—well, actually, a lot of them, 14 in one weekend, but the uncharacteristic fire severity is causing more post-fire flooding. Northern Arizonans know all too well. This summer, those living in Flagstaff neighborhoods below the Museum Fire from 2019 that the burn area is continuing to face severe flooding in areas that never flooded before. And then when, as you know Chief, when this stuff comes out of those mountains, it not only brings a ton of stuff down, but at the

speeds it comes down those mountains, it just moves right into neighborhoods, and just rips people apart. And the intense fire behavior jeopardizes the long-term watershed health and water quality. What is your opinion on what we can do? I heard you say 60,000 acres of funding. Well, that is near ridiculous, as far as why haven't we moved, as fires have increased, up to the higher levels?

Mr. MOORE. Thank you, Congressman O'Halleran. I think you stated the problem very well. I just want you to know that we are doing everything we can with what we have, and if we have more, we will do more. But, that is for you all to decide, in terms of what more looks like. I can assure you, though, we are committed to the job that you all have given us as Federal employees, and we are also committed to working with people in the communities, and our neighbors to look at landscape-type treatments, rather than just jurisdictional boundaries only.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Thanks, Chief. I just have to say that the BAER issue is huge, the idea that we also have the law enforcement issue, and you and I will talk about that later at some time. And Madam Chair, I will be sending in more questions for follow-up, and also documentation for the record.

The CHAIR. Thank you very much. And the Chair now recognizes Congresswoman Schrier from Washington for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCHRIER. Thank you, Madam Chair. And, I wanted to continue. We were talking about the importance of thinning forests, and one of the solutions is having mills, and in Washington State we have very little mill infrastructure left. And before harvesting and milling was done in a very irresponsible way. Now we know how to do it really responsibly, and support an industry, and make our forests healthier at the same time. And right now, without a mill nearby, it just doesn't pencil out. Public and private land-owners have to truck logs 150 miles away to the nearest mills, high cost, they end up losing money. And so, locating a mill in Chelan County, where there is, again, 70 percent of the forest land is Forest Service land would be such a huge win-win situation. It would bring a ton of money to the Forest Service, so you would raise wages and benefits, and pay people more, and get more employees in. It would support more affordable housing, it would make us less reliant on foreign steel, because we could build with cross-laminated timber, and it would create a ton of family-wage jobs.

And so I have been in touch with our Regional Forester, Glenn Casamassa, about this, and just would welcome the opportunity to talk with you both more about whether we could have reliable dependence on Forest Service logs. Can you talk a little bit about that, who could go in and do the logging if you don't have the personnel to do it? Like, how can we make this work?

Mr. MOORE. So, Congresswoman, I would first suggest that maybe we need to sit down and talk about what the opportunities are, and then we could land on what the appropriate tool would be to do that. It is so very hard to answer that question in just a minute or so, but I would love to be able to sit down with you and Glenn, and others that may need to be involved, to talk about this very issue, because the same applies in so many other locations.

Ms. SCHRIER. I have even better. You are invited, and I will send you a formal invitation, to come out to Washington State and lay

eyes on areas of forest that have been appropriately managed, and what happened there when a fire came through, areas that haven't and what happened there, and truly just the tremendous potential for a big win-win. So please come to Washington State.

I also wanted to highlight one particular landscape restoration project that is really important in my district. And I don't think you are going to have answers to these questions now, but I will throw them out there, and you can just reply later. Maybe you can even reply when you come out to Washington State. This one is the Upper Wenatchee Pilot Project, and I will be following up, as I mentioned, with your team, but I wanted to know when an environmental assessment will be available for the public to review. Also, when we can expect the final NEPA decision, and when we might be able to see work actually starting on the ground? Because while this project is stalled, land within the treatment area is currently burning as we speak.

Mr. MOORE. So, Congresswoman, I did get a briefing on this, very brief, but what I can tell you, though, is that the expectation is that NEPA should be out in spring or early summer. I think, looking at the purpose and needs for that project, I think it was really solid, it was really laid out well, and so now it is just a matter of working through the process. But I will look more into this, and we can have a follow-up conversation on some specifics.

Ms. SCHRIER. That would be fantastic. Obviously the earlier the better. Fire season starts early, so if we get that going in spring, that would help us with the next season. I think I will leave it there, and yield back the rest of my time. Thank you again for coming today, and facing some of these really big challenges. We understand how big they are, and how much work you have cut out for you, and also how important it is. Thanks. I yield back.

The CHAIR. Before we adjourn today, I invite the Ranking Member to share any closing comments that he may have.

Mr. LAMALFA. Well, thank you, Madam Chair, I will be brief on the close here. And I appreciate the comments by Ms. Schrier, what she was saying there, we are going to need a place for this material to go, and we have a massive amount of material, so we do need to inspire those that want to invest in the infrastructure to process wood. Whether we are going to make chips, whether we are going to be able to salvage some saw logs, whatever we can turn this material into. Biochar, something that needs to be explored more. So I appreciate that. We have to have people that invest, they need to have confidence that they can be, over a 30 year period that they will have a steady supply that we can guarantee from Federal land, so that is extremely important.

Also, a lot of good, positive comments and thoughts in Committee here today. I was working with Jimmy P. there, or Mr. Panetta, on the legislation we are working on together, along with our Chair, with part of it being prescribed fire. Now, prescribed fire is not going to be popular, maybe, at all times, but when you do a comparison of a controlled situation there, and how we are going to reduce the fuel load we have, when we do it wisely, the right time of year, the right atmospheric conditions, it can be extremely effective, and very minimal on annoyance, so that it all goes together.

I appreciate Mr. Costa bringing up that the forest plan needing an update for many years. I also would caution that we also move very quickly on the ground, as we can, with executive actions or what have you, in order to do what we can to offset the problems we have had with current fire, and the salvage needs to be done. An update of a plan, Chief Moore, I don't know if that might take 3 or 4 years or what, but we obviously, in my view, really need to move quickly and adeptly on where we need to go for the immediate cleanup, and what we can do to get ahead of the curve on setting fire breaks, and other things that help defend communities and more forestland.

And also Ms. Pingree, she has been very kind in this Committee, and other previous ones, on looking at the situation, and I know she wants to be a partner as well, with that, I think we had a really good start today on this discussion during this 2021 fire season of where we can go. So, Madam Chair, I really appreciate your diligence, and for making this time for us today. Thank you again, Chief Moore, for your time, and let us continue to work together, and get all this together, and get CAL FIRE and U.S. Forest Service thing ironed out too. We will have more to follow up with you on that as well. Anyway, thanks a lot, and I yield back.

The CHAIR. Thank you very much, Mr. LaMalfa. Again, I want to thank you, Chief Moore, for joining us today, for taking the time to answer our questions, to engage with this Committee. I hope that it is the beginning of a very productive conversation and relationship as you continue to grow in your role. Again, congratulations on the role that you have assumed.

I think the conversations of today have been pretty broad, everything from the pay of firefighters to the stability of the workforce, the challenges that the Forest Service is facing, that you are facing in hiring and retention. Those are things that need to be at the forefront of our mind. The conversations related to science-based treatments, prevention, and forest maintenance certainly is something that we talk about in this Committee, and so it was great to have you bring your perspective of what is currently happening, and what more needs to happen. Conversations related to lack of mill infrastructure throughout the United States, and what that actually means when we are looking at some of our prevention intentions. My colleague from Maine, who spoke about cross-laminated timber, and some of the forest product research that is happening within the Forest Service I think is really bringing a fulsome discussion to the work that your agency does, and, frankly, the focus that we, as a Subcommittee, do have on the beginning to the end discussion related to how not only are we fighting the forest fires, but, frankly, how are we preventing them, and what are some of the hindrances and challenges that you and your colleagues face?

And certainly the threat of wildfire continues to increase every year, and we have heard some of the real challenges faced back home in the districts of so many of the Members on this Committee. So, I appreciate you listening to the very specific stories and impact that it has had on the communities represented by this Committee. I do look forward to our continued work together. Certainly the task moving forward continues to be daunting, but I

hope that we will be a partner in ensuring that the United States Congress is doing all that we can do to prevent forest fires, to prevent the economic and land devastation, and certainly to be supportive of the men and women on the front lines of that.

And so, as we close out this hearing, I just want to convey my appreciation to your entire workforce, and particularly the fire-fighters who are risking their lives to keep our communities safe, and certainly we are so grateful for their service, and we will continue to work with you on issues of oversight and issues of engagement to ensure that the work that they are performing is optimized, and that we are as supportive as we can, because certainly we are grateful.

Under the Rules of the Committee, the record of today's hearing will remain open for 10 calendar days to receive additional material and supplementary written responses from the witness to any question posed by a Member. This hearing of the Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:58 a.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

[Material submitted for inclusion in the record follows:]

SUBMITTED LETTER BY HON. ABIGAIL DAVIS SPANBERGER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM VIRGINIA; ON BEHALF OF JESSICA TURNER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OUTDOOR RECREATION ROUNDTABLE

<p>Hon. ABIGAIL DAVIS SPANBERGER, <i>Chair</i>, Subcommittee on Conservation and For- estry, House Agriculture Committee, Washington, D.C.;</p>	<p>Hon. DOUG LAMALFA <i>Ranking Minority Member</i>, Subcommittee on Conservation and For- estry, House Agriculture Committee, Washington, D.C.</p>
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Dear Chair Spanberger, Ranking Member LaMalfa, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable (ORR), thank you for bringing attention to the impact of this year's extreme wildfire activity on communities around the United States through last week's hearing on strategies to respond to and mitigate wildfire threats. As representatives for the \$788 billion outdoor recreation industry, we have watched closely as fires forced closures of cherished recreation areas and forced cutbacks in many of the businesses that sustain our industry. Because of outdoor recreation's notable economic, environmental, and public health benefits, we have vested interest in policies that help improve both management of and resilience towards wildfire risk on our public lands and waters.

ORR is the nation's leading coalition of outdoor recreation trade associations—made up of 34 national members, as well as other nonprofit organizations and business entities—serving more than 110,000 businesses. According to the most recent data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis released last year, the recreation industry generated \$788 billion in economic output, accounted for 2.1 percent of GDP and 5.2 million American jobs, and was growing faster than the economy as a whole in every indicator.

CÓVID-19 and the desire for safe, family-friendly activities during the pandemic made 2020 the biggest year for outdoor recreation participation and sales in American history. A survey published in May 2020 found that 81 percent of Americans had already spent time outside at that point in the pandemic, with 32.5 percent turning to outdoor recreation for the first time. 8.1 million more Americans hiked in 2020 *vs.* 2019 (a 16.3 percent increase), and the total percentage of Americans who participate in outdoor recreation rose from the previous 10 years. Many sectors within the industry saw record participation numbers in the past year: freshwater fishing added 3.4 million participants in 2020, shipments of RVs reached an all-time high in the first quarter of 2021, new model powersports sales increased 40 percent in 2020 over 2019 levels, and retail unit sales of new powerboats in the U.S. increased by 12 percent in 2020 over 2019. These figures capture our nation's recognition over the past year that outdoor recreation provides significant physical health, mental health, and community benefits. Importantly, new participants in outdoor recreation are younger, predominantly female, and more diverse.

Despite this inspiring tailwind for outdoor recreation participation, this year's wildfires have severely impacted the outdoor recreation economy's ability to function at its fullest potential, particularly across western states. To ensure safety for the public, land management agencies took unprecedented steps to close wide regions within national forests and parks, including the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in the Superior National Forest, Kings Canyon, Lassen Volcanic, and Sequoia National Parks, or all 18 of California's National Forests. Each of these closures has a ripple effect, impacting the gateway communities and small businesses that benefit from these treasured public lands and waters. For example, Sierra Mountain Center, a 40 year old guiding company based in Bishop, CA, was hit hard by USFS closures in both 2020 and 2021, putting guides out of work and disappointing guests who traveled from thousands of miles after being forced to close for 3 weeks in 2021 with just 36 hours' notice. And it is not only the communities and businesses that are impacted by wildfire, but the consumers they serve: Air Quality Index (AQI) readings across the West surpassed healthy levels for much of the summer as smoke impacted iconic outdoor recreation destinations, forcing cutbacks in recreational habits and visitation.

We share the concerns of the Committee about the unavoidable role of wildfire in communities around the United States and are prepared to work closely on strategies to reduce future wildfire risk and increase resilience to wildfires that occur. We are particularly focused on a few climate initiatives across the industry, including:

- Efficient implementation of the Great American Outdoors Act, which offers unprecedented levels of Federal funding to create new and protect existing outdoor recreation infrastructure with benefits of both conservation and carbon sequestration
- Invest in climate resilient recreation infrastructure and natural ways to mitigate the impacts of climate change on outdoor recreation businesses and the communities that rely on them
- Expansion of EV charging networks across public lands and waters to reduce emissions from the transportation sector
- Creation of a Civilian Climate Corps, which would put America's youth and veterans to work on green infrastructure projects that can increase climate resilience and expand outdoor recreation access.

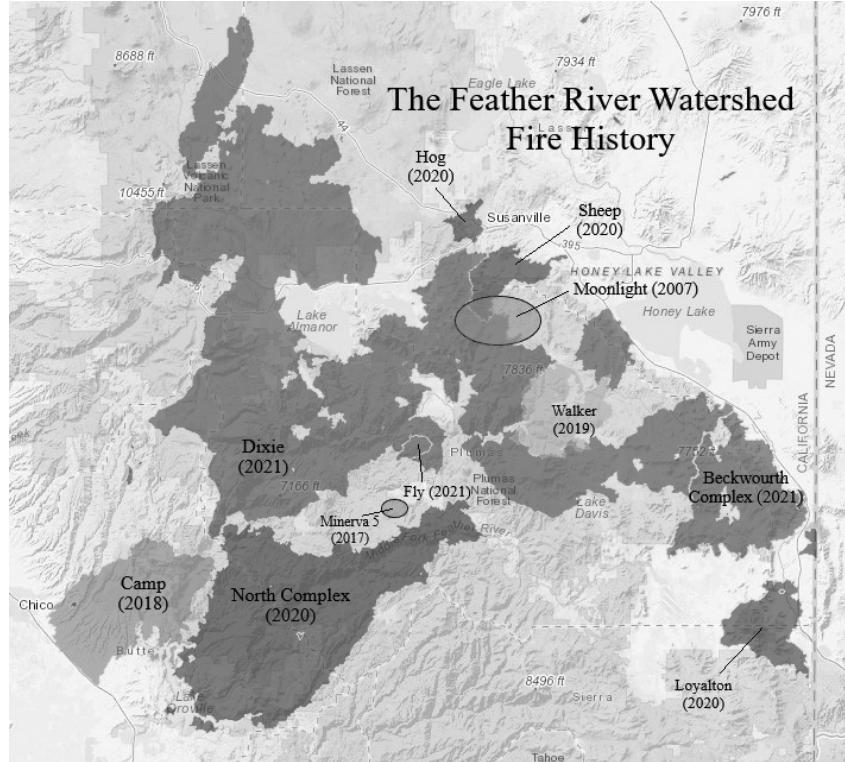
We hope the House Agriculture Committee in the 117th Congress will see us as a key partner in identifying more opportunities to address risks and opportunities posed by wildfire in the future.

Sincerely,



JESSICA TURNER,
Executive Director,
Outdoor Recreation Roundtable.

SUBMITTED MAP BY HON. DOUG LAMALFA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM CALIFORNIA



SUBMITTED QUESTIONS

Response from Randy Moore, Chief, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Questions Submitted by Hon. Tom O'Halleran, a Representative in Congress from Arizona

Question 1. The Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) program is designed to address damage to the land following intense wildfire. The objective of the BAER program's goal is to determine the need for and to prescribe and implement emergency treatments on Federal Lands to minimize threats to life or property resulting from the effects of a fire and to prevent unacceptable degradation to natural and cultural resources. What is the backlog on BAER projects?? What other Congressional actions are needed to improve the program?

Answer. The Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) program addresses post-fire emergency conditions on National Forest System (NFS) lands. There is not a backlog of BAER projects. All projects that meet the intent and guidelines in BAER program direction are funded through wildfire suppression appropriations. Due to the post-fire emergency requirements of the program, BAER projects are accomplished within 1 year of fire containment. Longer-term rehabilitation and restoration needs are separate post-fire recovery efforts that need to occur over a longer time frame after the wildfire and are referred to as Burned Area Rehabilitation (BAR) needs. BAR activity examples include reforestation and revegetation, invasive species treatments, rangeland infrastructure repairs, and watershed improvements.

Rehabilitation, as defined by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG), is the action undertaken within 3 years of a wildland fire to repair or improve fire-damaged lands unlikely to recover to management-approved conditions, or to repair or replace minor facilities damaged by fire. The Forest Service had consistent Burned Area Rehabilitation (BAR) funding from 2002–2011. While the BAR program did not fully fund all post-fire rehabilitation needs during that time frame, it did support the completion of a subset of the needed work. With its end, the backlog of projects has expanded and has subsequently been exacerbated by the increasing scale of fire impacts to NFS lands and infrastructure. The current backlog of post-fire (post-BAER) rehabilitation and restoration projects exceeds \$2 billion, including 4 million acres in potential need of reforestation.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act provides \$100 million to the Forest Service for burned area rehabilitation activities that must be implemented within 3 years of containment of a wildland fire. Division J includes \$45 million each of Fiscal Years 2022–2026 for post-fire recovery as well. These funds are being focused on the repair or improvement of lands unlikely to recover naturally to a management-approved condition and to repair and replace minor infrastructure and facilities damaged by the fire.

We are happy to work with the Congressman's office regarding ways to improve the program.

Question 2. It is my understanding that the Wildland Fire Management program provides sufficient funding to protect, treat, and prevent forest fires on 20 million acres of forest service land. I also believe that there are at least 66 million acres where treatment is needed. What is the timetable to address the other 46 million acres? What additional resources are necessary for this? Are staffing levels sufficient to complete this work or are additional staffing needed? If so, how much? Are additional authorities needed?

Answer. There are 63 million acres of National Forest System lands at high or very high risk of wildfire that would be difficult to contain. While funding through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will allow us to pick up the pace and scale of our work, it will not fully fund the work necessary to treat the 20 million acres that pose the highest risk to communities. That said, we now have the science and tools we need to size and place treatments in a way that will truly make a difference. We will focus on key "firesheds"—large, forested landscapes with a high likelihood that an ignition could expose homes, communities, infrastructure, and natural resources to wildfire. Firesheds, typically about 250,000 acres in size, are mapped to match the scale of building exposure to wildfire.

Under the 10 year Strategy to confront the wildfire crisis, we are working with our partners to:

- Treat an additional 20 million acres on National Forest System lands.
- Treat an additional 30 million acres of other Federal, state, Tribal, and private lands.
- Develop a plan for long-term maintenance beyond the 10 years.

Our new management paradigm builds on the *National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy*.¹ The nation already has collaborative strategies in place for cross-boundary treatments, including Cohesive Strategy projects and Shared Stewardship agreements. We will work collaboratively through shared stewardship with states, Tribes, local communities, private landowners, and other stakeholders to adapt lessons learned into a coordinated and effective program of work.

The Forest Service has set up a Wildfire Risk Reduction Infrastructure Team to build on new and existing capacity in carrying out projects under the 10 year Strategy. Together with our partners, we will plan project areas while building the needed workforce capacity and public support. We will treat the highest priority firesheds first. Then we will move on to other western firesheds, accelerating our treatments over 10 years. Next steps will include building our workforce capacity in the Forest Service and with our partners to accomplish the work at the scale needed while establishing the large multi-jurisdictional coalition needed to support the work.

The Agency recognizes that it will need to increase overall staffing to successfully reduce the risk of wildfires. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act provides funds to help increase capacity. The Agency is still developing comprehensive staffing plans and will be increasing workforce capacity, not only in field personnel to complete the work, but also key administrative positions like contracting officers, grants and agreements specialists, partnership coordinators, and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) professionals who act as force multipliers. The Agency also recognizes that achieving the desired pace and scale of land treatments will require the support of states, Tribes, local communities, non-government organizations, and private contractors.

Question 3. While I appreciate the decision to increase the level of pay for temporary firefighters to \$15 an hour, this is clearly inadequate. These Federal firefighters sleep in tents away from their families and risk their lives to protect communities, people, and property from wildfire. How was the decision reached to pay these individuals \$15 an hour? Are discussions on going to increase that rate of pay so it is commensurate with the intensity and difficulty of the work? Do you anticipate that an increase in pay will result in better retention of firefighters throughout the extended fire seasons?

Answer. The Forest Service is partnering with the Department of the Interior, the Office of Personnel Management, and Executive of the President to identify policy and administrative actions needed to implement appropriate workforce management and compensation reforms.

In September 2021, the Forest Service provided retention incentives to approximately 11,300 firefighters. This is in addition to a monetary incentive for approximately 1,100 firefighters (permanent and temporary) earning less than \$15 per hour. These incentives provided temporary relief through the end of the calendar year to cover the gap for those earning less than \$15 per hour.

On November 9, 2021, the Forest Service established a minimum pay standard for all firefighters to make \$15 per hour or more. The new pay scale settings represent the absolute minimum pay these employees would receive at grades GS-02, GS-03, and GS-04.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act authorizes the development of a distinct "wildland firefighter" occupational series, appropriates \$480 million to convert seasonal wildland firefighters to permanent full-time wildland firefighters, and increases the base salary of Federal wildland firefighters in hard to fill areas by \$20,000 or 50%, whichever is less. These provisions are expected to help improve recruitment and retention of wildland firefighters in the Forest Service.

Question 4. In the last 20 years, the forest service has lost 38 percent of its workforce. This has resulted increased NEPA delays, reduced forest management, and backlogs for projects to be completed. What are the real numbers in non-fire staffing now *versus* 2000? How much of this reduction in workforce has been due to the hiring of additional temporary firefighters for more intense and longer fire season? What other factors contribute to staffing declines?

Answer. The Forest Service has lost more than 40% of its non-fire positions over the past 15 years. This significantly limits our ability to meet the Administration's current priorities. Losses have been especially great in lands and realty management resources (land line, realty, cadastral services) in support of wildland fuels reduction, forest restoration, and road infrastructure, as well as in recreation resources (planning, engineering, patrol and service technicians, grants and agreements, and contracting specialists) needed to support the Great American Outdoors

¹ <https://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/strategy/>. [Attachment 1].

Act and portions of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act that target trail and recreation infrastructure. Other areas with noted reductions in staffing include heritage, minerals and geology, special uses, land management planning, and vegetation and wildlife management. Declines in non-fire staffing reflect the increased proportion of the budget that has gone to wildland fire.

Given updates to agency personnel systems and changes to the definition of wildland firefighter and associated position descriptions, the Forest Service is able to provide reliable personnel data for the past 5 years.

Total Permanent Positions Onboard at the end of September						
Fiscal Year	Sep. FY16	Sep. FY17	Sep. FY18	Sep. FY19	Sep. FY20	Sep. FY21
Count	28,193	27,955	27,562	27,446	28,971	28,772
Fire Permanent Positions Onboard at the end of September						
Fiscal Year	Sep. FY16	Sep. FY17	Sep. FY18	Sep. FY19	Sep. FY20	Sep. FY21
Count	6,985	7,214	7,411	7,558	8,581	8,453
Non-Fire Permanent Positions Onboard at the end of September						
Fiscal Year	Sep. FY16	Sep. FY17	Sep. FY18	Sep. FY19	Sep. FY20	Sep. FY21
Count	21,208	20,741	20,151	19,888	20,390	20,319
Total Temporary Positions Onboard (Peak Timeframe—Pay Period 14)						
Fiscal Year	Jul. FY16	Jul. FY17	Jul. FY18	Jul. FY19	Jul. FY20	Jul. FY21
Count	11,649	11,541	10,990	10,367	9,970	9,201
Fire Temporary Positions Onboard (Peak Timeframe—Pay Period 14)						
Fiscal Year	Jul. FY16	Jul. FY17	Jul. FY18	Jul. FY19	Jul. FY20	Jul. FY21
Count	5,235	5,163	4,968	4,756	4,584	4,163
Non-Fire Temporary Positions Onboard (Peak Timeframe—Pay Period 14)						
Fiscal Year	Jul. FY16	Jul. FY17	Jul. FY18	Jul. FY19	Jul. FY20	Jul. FY21
Count	6,414	6,378	6,022	5,611	5,386	5,038

As illustrated, there is a slight decrease in overall permanent onboard strength from FY16–FY19; onboard strength begins to increase again in FY20. The overall non-fire permanent workforce decreased in FY17, FY18, and FY19, but began to increase in FY20. There has been a steady increase of the overall fire permanent workforce year after year, with a 21% increase in permanent fire numbers when comparing FY16 to FY21.

There are decreases in all temporary hiring numbers from FY16–FY21, regardless of whether the position is fire or non-fire.

Question 5. There are significant issues related to lack of law enforcement personnel in our national forests. Please share the breakdown of law enforcement personnel assigned by the USFS for every ranger district and every national forest along with the number of square miles for every national forest and ranger district.

Answer. See Appendix A with requested information.

Question 6. The USFS often engages in agreements with local police departments in communities where there is not sufficient law enforcement to provide that service. In your mind, how successful have these agreements been? What improvements are needed?

Answer. Forest Service Law Enforcement and Investigations (LEI) routinely engages in agreements with state, county, and local law enforcement partners under the authority of the Cooperative Law Enforcement Act. These agreements are generally for 5 years and often include a fixed yearly funding level of reimbursement for services rendered or equipment used/purchased related to services performed on National Forest Systems (NFS) lands. The level of funding varies per agreement and no existing agreements offer total reimbursement for all services performed. In FY 2021, Forest Service LEI had 478 Cooperative Law Enforcement (CLE) Agreements totaling \$5.2 million.

These agreements are vital to management of NFS lands and our state, county, and local cooperators are key partners in protecting the resources and providing public safety. The agreements are most commonly used for additional patrol services on NFS lands. Many agreements may specify certain patrol activities or areas for reimbursement like a busy campground, recreation area, or a specific area where FS law enforcement coverage is lacking. Some agreements may just be general patrol agreements or other services like dispatch services. Some agreements are also used to purchase equipment such as off-road vehicles for patrol or search and rescue on NFS lands.

The agreements are also often used as a vehicle for state, county, and local partners to confer state authority on FS LEI staff. This additional authority allows FS LEI staff to enforce state, county, and local law in many areas the same as local law enforcement do. These enforcement actions utilize the same state/local laws and courts as our partners and help the FS LEI staff become a vital member of the local law enforcement community. This authority commonly assists our partners as well. In many cases, a FS LEI officer can take an enforcement action to resolve an issue rather than requiring a local officer or deputy to respond in an area (often remote) on NFS lands.

CLE funding levels have been flat and can impact adequate reimbursement for services. This issue has been further stressed with a decrease in Forest Service Law Enforcement staffing and the significant increase in visitation on public lands, including during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Question 7. Coconino National Forest currently is seeing significant environmental degradation because of Off-Highway-Vehicle usage. This is causing local trees and vegetation to suffer, increases dust in the air, increases air pollution, and makes the forest more dangerous for other users. What additional resources are needed by the forest service to prevent people from engaging in dangerous OHV usage and to limit the environmental degradation? What solutions exist to protect the forest's health and prevent the ongoing significant environmental degradation we have seen? I have attached photos and links to videos to show the level of destruction caused by OHVs in the area.

Photos: Red Rock Ranger District National Forest





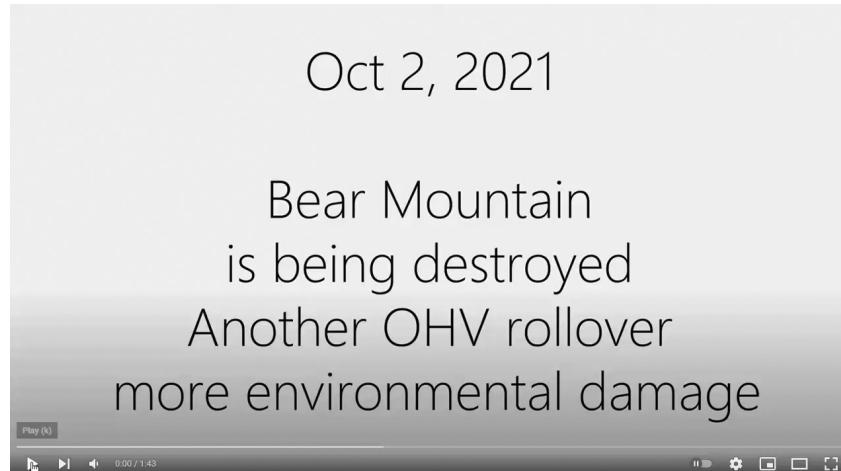


Links to Showing Environmental Degradation from OHVs:
3 OHV rollovers in 3 days



* **Editor's note:** the videos are retained in Committee file.

Oct. 2, 2021, OHV rollover, doughnuts, reckless driving, dust, abuse, *etc.*



OHVs are so out of control, there were two major rollovers with four people going to the hospital



Sept. 26 29, 2021, mud doughnuts and comments from jeep tour driver

Have you ever wondered
what OHVs do
after it rains?

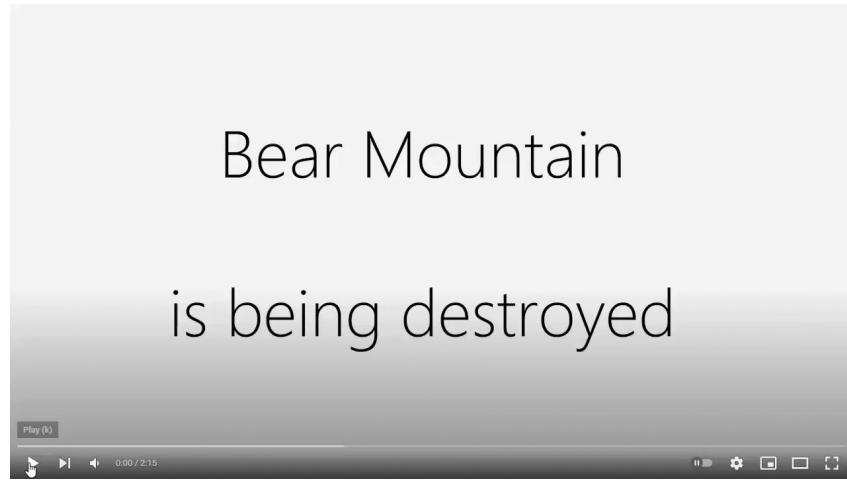
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8zBL40Gq-Y>

Sept. 25, 2021, OHV rollover, reckless driving, speeds, environmental damage

Bear Mountain
is being destroyed

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NVQXhZyaknk&t=35s>

Sept 24, 2021, OHV abuse, speeds, reckless driving, environmental damage



Answer. Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) recreation opportunities on the Red Rock Ranger District (District) are relatively concentrated and visitors often travel a limited road network to access the same destinations. While there is some road/trail widening and use of unauthorized routes, most OHV use in the area is legal and does not create resource damage. The Coconino Forest (Forest) does not currently have any limitation on the number of OHVs that can operate, except in the Soldiers Pass area, and does not have posted speed limits on National Forest System Roads. A 2018 Engineering Road Use Study conducted found that 85% of motor vehicles traveled under 30 MPH, including OHVs. Results of this study found that drivers are properly regulating their speeds for the conditions (partially due to the road condition and dust), and a speed limit is not currently warranted.

The District operates a large, motorized recreation special use permit program comprised largely of guided jeep tours. Additionally, over the last 5 years the number of OHV rental businesses (OHV and jeeps) has increased in the cities of Sedona, Cottonwood, and Cornville; similar to car rentals, these businesses are not required to hold a recreation special use permit, thus allowing private individuals to operate their equipment on the Forest. Arizona State law prohibits the Forest from prohibiting street-legal OHVs on open roads.

National Forest System Roads (NFSR) 525 and 152c connect a series of four designated OHV routes (29.5 miles). The OHV routes are utilized by Jeep and ATV guiding permittees and are very popular with the public renting OHVs in Sedona and Cottonwood. NFSR 525 and NFSR 152c are the primary access for visitors of this national and international tourist destination.

Two Forest Service Law Enforcement Officers (LEOs) and approximately six field-going Forest Protection Officers (FPOs), provide education and enforcement duties on the Coconino National Forest. Existing cooperative partnerships with local, County (Coconino and Yavapai County Sheriff's Offices), and state agencies (Arizona Department of Game and Fish), provide additional enforcement during peak visitation periods, including saturation enforcement and citations for violations of state law. The State of Arizona regulates use of motor vehicles and OHVs on open roads, including NFSRs. While most visitor accidents and injuries that occur in the area are heat related illnesses, the Forest Service is working with cooperators to address visitor accidents and injuries.

Collaborative Efforts:

- The District served on a working group convened by Yavapai County Supervisor Michaels related to dispersed camping and OHV use west of Sedona, attending eight meetings to date. The Forest Service intends to replicate a similar facilitated OHV working group in 2022 to continue addressing concerns in the Sedona area.

- The District initiated monthly cooperator meetings with local law enforcement and emergency responders to enhance relationships, share information, and accurately track safety incidents.
- The Forest participates on the Diablo Trust Recreation Working Group, a collaborative group that addresses recreation issues (including OHV use), to find balanced solutions for all stakeholders.
- In June 2021, the Coconino Forest Supervisor issued a letter to OHV rental businesses in Sedona and Cottonwood inviting the companies to engage with forest officials to address user conflicts and prevent resource damage. As a result, the Sedona Chamber of Commerce announced the formation of the Red Rock OHV Conservation Crew (RROCC), a coalition of more than a dozen private OHV industry partners. In partnership with *TreadLightly!*, the RROCC is addressing effects from increased OHV visitation.
- In September 2021, RROCC companies began dedicating 1% of sales to land preservation and rider education, a commitment that could achieve \$350,000 in annual contributions to be used as matching funds in the 2022 Arizona State OHV grant program. Funds will be used for education and patrol rangers, road/trail maintenance, restoration projects and public engagement.
- The Forest responded to a November 1, 2021, letter from the City of Sedona requesting limited OHV entry points on to the forest.

The district will seek funding for projects through the Arizona State OHV Grant program, a competitive process for funding opportunities specific to motorized recreation. Road engineers have conducted a Road Use Study for forest road 152c and a section of 525 (with finalization expected in early 2022). Results of the study will enhance management and maintenance efforts. The Forest Service is also considering other non-engineering actions to improve conditions and visitor experience, such as improved portal entrance and various educational signs along 152C. The District is developing a comprehensive signing plan that will be educational and enforceable to keep visitors on designated routes.

With RROCC assistance, a multi-year program of work will be developed and transparent to local stakeholders, identifying outcomes and funding streams. Financial assistance through the RROCC 1% program is anticipated.

Question 8. What is the timeline for the update of each of the forest management plans in Arizona's first Congressional district?

Answer. Each of the Forest Land Management Plan revisions in Arizona Congressional District One occurred recently:

- Kaibab National Forest Land Management Plan, revised in 2014.
- Prescott National Forest Land Management Plan, revised in 2015.
- Apache-Sitgreaves National Land Management Plan, revised in 2015.
- Coconino National Forest Land Management Plan, revised in 2018.
- Tonto National Forest Land Management Plan, final decision on revised plan expected in Fiscal Year 2022.

In general, we plan to update our forest plans every 15 years, but often the timeline is longer due to resource availability.

Questions Submitted by Hon. Kim Schrier, a Representative in Congress from Washington

Question 1. Can you address the issue of staffing and capacity at the Forest Service to accomplish large-scale forest treatments? I hear from folks in my district that hiring limitations and salary constraints within the agency are a major problem and are stalling desperately needed work.

Answer. We recognize the need to increase overall staffing to successfully reduce the risk of wildfires. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act provides funds to help increase capacity. The Agency is still developing comprehensive staffing plans and will be increasing capacity in not only field personnel to complete the work, but also key administrative positions like contracting officers, grants and agreements specialists, partnership coordinators, and NEPA professionals who act as force multipliers. The Agency also recognizes that achieving the desired pace and scale of land treatments will require the support of states, Tribes, local, non-government organizations, and private contractors.

Question 2. Since we know the scale of wildfire and forest health risks is too massive for the Forest Service to take on alone, and we need an all-hands-on-deck mentality, what are your plans to provide more local authority, funding and flexibility

to allow ranger districts to more effectively utilize local partners to help with planning and implementation?

Answer. We are taking a cross Deputy area approach to ensure we are developing maximum flexibilities while abiding by all regulations, policy and laws. We continue to look for and implement efficiencies in our execution of agreements. An example would be the development of master agreements with our national level partners. This allows local units to develop supplemental agreements much quicker. Also, we are aggressively working with our national level partners to gain efficiencies in our program execution.

The Forest Service is committed to using all the authorities we have at our disposal, such as stewardship contracts and agreements, and Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) agreements. We have a long history of consistently working with partners at all levels of the Agency. Most Ranger Districts engage partners where available to help with planning and implementation of a variety of Forest Service activities. No significant additional local authority or flexibility is needed. The main barriers to more Ranger Districts effectively utilizing partners for planning and implementation are staffing shortages, rapid employee turnover, and shifts in program of work as forests must respond to wildfires and other competing priorities.

Additionally, by using funding and authorities under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to increase our staffing in contracting, grants and agreements, and other key areas, the Forest Service will be able to more effectively work with partners to reduce fuels under our 10 year Strategy to combat the wildfire crisis in this country.

Question 3. There's one particular landscape restoration project of great importance in my district: The Upper Wenatchee Pilot Project. I don't expect you to have these answers today, but I will be following up with your team to learn more about the status of that project, to learn (1) when an Environmental Assessment will be available for the public to review, (2) when we can expect the final NEPA decision, and (3) when we will see work starting on the ground. While this project remains stalled, land within its treatment area is burning in a wildfire as we speak.

Answer. The Okanogan Wenatchee National Forest has mostly completed the environmental assessment (EA) for the Upper Wenatchee Pilot Project, and we are working through the regulatory consultation processes that are required before we issue a decision. Fortunately, this planning effort was not impacted by fires this year. Our current schedule is to release the Final EA and Draft Decision Notice for public review in spring of 2022. A final decision is anticipated late fall of 2022, and after that we could initiate implementation.

Questions Submitted by Hon. Doug LaMalfa, a Representative in Congress from California

Question 1. As the wildfire season lengthens throughout the west and fires become larger and more frequent, how does the USFS plan to limit Unable to Fill (UTF) rates related to requests for aerial firefighting support?

Answer. To meet wildfire support needs in 2021, the Forest Service contracted for 23 airtankers. The States of California, Colorado, and Oregon contracted for five airtankers total for their own use. Though committed to those states, these airtankers provided additional airtanker support, reducing the need in some cases to send Forest Service contracted airtankers to those states. The Forest Service also used all eight National Guard and Air Force Reserve Modular Airborne Firefighting System C-130s for a substantial part of the summer fire season. Through our international agreement with Australia, the Agency also ordered and received an Australian airtanker that remained operational in the United States for nearly 60 days, contributing significantly to the interagency airtanker response and capability.

Unable to fill orders occur for many reasons. Airtanker and Type 1 and Type 2 helicopters are national assets intended to be mobile to meet needs as they arise around the country. As the fire year intensifies, so does the demand for aviation assets. During high fire occurrence or predicted fire weather, these resources are frequently prepositioned to areas of highest concern to provide for rapid initial attack response. At National Preparedness Levels 4 and 5 (https://www.nifc.gov/sites/default/files/2020-09/National_Preparedness_Levels.pdf [Attachment 2]), the National Multi-Agency Coordination group prioritizes fire needs and airtanker deployments accordingly to ensure maximized fleet use in the most critical areas in the country. As fire priorities change throughout the day, aircraft usage is reassessed, and aircraft continue to be reassigned as they accomplish their designated missions. All incidents must submit their incident management needs nightly and are subject to this prioritization process. During simultaneous wildfire events, the result may end in unable-to-fill orders until higher priorities are met.

Question 2. As the Forest Service looks for additional resources to fight wildfires, has the Forest Service considered Containerized Aerial Firefighting Systems (CAFFS) technology?

Answer. Testing, evaluation, and approval of retardant delivery systems are conducted under the authority of the National Interagency Aviation Committee in accordance with methods and standards established by the Interagency Airtanker Board. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service does not perform testing at the request of companies unless a member agency, Federal or state, identifies an operational need through the National Interagency Aviation Committee.

In recent years the Forest Service has been approached by a number of companies with Containerized Aerial Firefighting Systems (CAFFS) technology proposals. The Agency has completed an assessment of our retardant delivery requirements in conjunction with current industry science, technology, and best practices. At this time, our current capabilities align very well with our requirements and modernization strategy, and we are not seeking any additional capabilities, including containerized delivery systems.

While this system received a favorable evaluation by the Air National Guard, the Air National Guard Air Force Reserve Command Test Center only evaluated the suitability of the Container Aerial Fire Fighting System according to standard containerized delivery systems rigging, loading, and release guidance and procedures. There was no evaluation of the system's firefighting effectiveness. Their evaluation stated that "using containerized delivery systems as a method of firefighting presents a number of safety concerns that would need to be addressed prior to operations." One notable concern is "there is no method to emergency jettison the bulk of the weight when it is in containerized delivery systems format. Unlike the emergency jettison of the modular airborne firefighting system, containerized delivery systems are reliant on the load to gravity extract from the aircraft, which can take significant time."

Question 3. How does the Forest Service decide between "best value" and "Lowest Price Technically Acceptable" contracting with regards to aerial firefighting assets?

Answer. Lowest Price Technically Acceptable (LPTA) is a competitive negotiation source selection process where the non-price factors of a proposal are evaluated to determine which proposals are 'technically acceptable' and award is made to the offeror of the technically acceptable proposal with the lowest price. FAR 15.101-2(a) states that this process is appropriate when Best Value is expected to result from the use of this process. Thus, the 'best value' decision is made in planning the procurement, not in evaluating the proposals (as in the Tradeoff Process). In the lowest price technically acceptable process, the non-price factors are all evaluated on an acceptable/unacceptable basis with no gradations or scores for higher levels of achievement. Thus, no tradeoffs are made in the source selection decision.

Question 3a. What safety concerns does the Forest Service evaluate before deciding to go with LPTA contracts for aerial assets?

Answer. The safety factors evaluated in the solicitation include not only Aviation Safety Management System implementation and effectiveness in the contractor's company, but improved aircraft performance margins defined in the categories, additional radios for improved communication with other aerial resources and ground resources, flight data monitoring systems to provide aircraft preventative and post mishap aircraft data, air traffic advisory systems to help deconflict the airspace, and many other aircraft, company and personnel safety enhancements. Promotion of appropriate oversight and maintenance by the contractor and the Forest Service is required resulting in a higher level of safety. All vendors must meet the safety and technical standards to receive a contract award. They then can compete for task orders to fill fire helicopter orders.

Questions Submitted by Hon. Glenn Thompson, a Representative in Congress from Pennsylvania

Question 1. Does the Forest Service have specific recommendations for what Congress can do to help the agency perform more landscape-scale management projects?

Answer. The Agency recognizes that we will need to increase overall staffing to successfully reduce the risk of wildfires. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act provides funds to help increase capacity. The Agency is still developing comprehensive staffing plans and will be increasing capacity in not only field personnel to complete the work, but also key administrative positions like contracting officers, grants and agreements specialists, partnership coordinators, and NEPA professionals who act as force multipliers. The Agency also recognizes that achieving the desired pace and scale of land treatments will require the support of states, Tribes, local, non-government organizations, and private contractors.

The Agency is grateful for the authorities provided in the 2018 Omnibus and subsequent legislation such as increasing the ability to use Good Neighbor Authority to increase the pace and scale of our work. The Agency greatly appreciates the support provided through the IIJA and the numerous pieces of legislation that have been introduced.

Question 1a. What are the barriers that hinder the Forest Service from undertaking new partnerships and larger-scale restoration?

Answer. The Forest Service has lost more than 40% of its non-fire positions over the past 15 years. This significantly limits our ability to meet the Administration's current priorities. Losses have been especially great in lands and realty management resources (land line, realty, cadastral services) in support of wildland fuels reduction, forest restoration, and road infrastructure, as well as in recreation resources (planning, engineering, patrol and service technicians, grants and agreements, and contracting specialists) needed to support the Great American Outdoors Act and portions of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act that target trail and recreation infrastructure. Capacity to carry out administration and oversight of agreements is the largest barrier. Partner capacity and expertise in hazardous fuels reduction work is also a common barrier.

The Forest Service greatly appreciates the funding provided through the IIJA to conduct much needed restoration and fuels reduction work. These investments will help the agency increase the pace and scale of our work with partners to carry out these projects.

Question 2. In response to the fatally flawed 2015 *Cottonwood* decision, the Obama Administration filed a *petition of certiorari* that stated this new precedent had the potential to "cripple forest management." And that has certainly been the case, as whole forests have been shut down and hundreds of projects implicated as a result. In some instances, project areas have burned in wildfire while being delayed in the courts over this very issue. Furthermore, limited Agency resources are diverted to this procedural requirement and responding to frivolous lawsuits instead of getting more work done on the ground.

Chief Moore, how has the *Cottonwood* decision made western communities more vulnerable to wildfires?

The past four Chiefs of the Forest Service testified in support of finding a solution to reversing this decision. Do you support fixing this issue once and for all?

Answer. The Ninth Circuit's decision in *Cottonwood Environmental Law Center v. United States Forest Service*, 789 F.3d 1075 (9th Cir. 2015), in which the court found the Forest Service retains discretionary involvement or control over a forest plan after its approval.

The *Cottonwood Decision* remains a source of litigation and continues to be an issue of concern for the Agency. We are committed to finding a collaborative, science-based approach to conserving wildlife and managing our public lands and forests, and we will continue to work with the Department of the Interior towards a solution.

Question 3. It appears to me that much of the funding provided by the agriculture portion of the pending reconciliation package will never get on the ground to do the management activities necessary because the bill, as drafted, text contains many restrictions and limitations, and emphasizes noncommercial projects.

Does the Forest Service have concerns with the restrictions on commercial projects, as well as the lack of emphasis on thinning and landscape scale restoration?

Does the Forest Service have any comment on which provisions may trigger guidance or rulemaking?

If so, how long would such rulemaking and processes take before projects could begin?

Answer. The Forest Service stands ready to fully implement the forestry title of the reconciliation bill if enacted. We have not conducted an assessment of which provisions will involve rulemaking at this point.

Question 4. The Forest Service has a long practice of assigning annual timber sale volume targets to individual forests based on the funding they are allocated by the Washington Office. These volume targets are critical to the agency's partners in the forest products industry, which must plan on how to secure needed raw materials and consider potential business investments or changes in operations. The targets also help encourage accountability and incentivize efficiency in unit costs with funds allocated by the Washington office.

Some regions and forests are signaling a shift away from specific timber sale targets.

Will the Forest Service continue to assign annual timber sale targets at the national, regional, and forest level?

Answer. The Forest Service is adjusting their approach to the setting of timber targets this year. We are looking at what the Forests can produce instead of setting targets based on past performance. This is particularly necessary in the western U.S. where there have been significant changes in the amount of timber available for harvest and the condition of the timber that has been previously sold. We will still maintain a national target of 3.4 billion board feet and will work to set the goals for each Forest based on the proposed budget and other factors. In addition, the units recognize the importance of maintaining the viability of critical timber infrastructure and intend to offer volume at levels to sustain it.

Question 5. Following a wildfire, hazard trees along Forest Service roads pose a significant threat to restoration and reforestation efforts, as well as access for emergency response, wildfiresuppression, commercial or administrative purposes, and the public.

What guidance is the agency providing to its regions and forests on a consistent, uniform approach for addressing roadside hazard trees following a catastrophic event to get agency roads safely reopened as soon as possible?

Answer. Forest Service policy speaks to hazard identification (all hazards) and correction including danger tree Hazards in FSH 7709.59 chapter 40. The policy directs qualified staff to mitigate high risk areas as soon as practicable.

Question 6. Does your current roadside salvage CE provide the Forest Service with the ability to adequately address roadside hazards? It's my understanding that a court case in the Northwest has limited the use of this CE to one tree length on either side of the road.

Does that provide adequate clearance for safe access?

Answer. The Forest Service does not have a categorical exclusion (CE) specifically for the purpose of salvage harvest along roadsides. The Agency does have a general salvage CE though it is limited to no more than 250 acres. Historically, we have used our road maintenance CE, 36 CFR 220.6(d)(4) to remove hazard trees along roads. A recent ruling in the 9th Circuit (*EPIC v. Carlson*) limited the application of this category for trees greater than one tree length from the road edge. Subsequent rulings have limited use of this category for hazard tree removal activities over a large spatial area. The Agency has reduced use of this CE and its activities in response to the court rulings, including scaling back the degree to which units propose treatment, considering other environmental analysis processes, and closing roads until any identified hazards are mitigated. The recently enacted Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act does provide a statutory CE for the creation of fuel breaks along constructed linear features such as roads. Within certain conditions, this CE could have some applicability in post-fire salvage where there is sufficient fuel remaining to warrant a fuel break.

Question 7. President Biden issued an Executive Order on September 9 requiring COVID-19 vaccinations for all Federal contractors, including subcontractors and small businesses. Based on guidance issued by a Federal task force and approved by OMB on September 24, the vaccine mandate will take effect on December 8.

What potential impact could this mandate have on the Forest Service workforce and the Forest Service's ability to implement critical forest health treatments, fire suppression, and replanting activities on Federal lands through the many small, family-owned contractors that provide these services in very rural areas of the country?

Answer. The U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Georgia has temporarily halted the COVID-19 vaccine mandate for Federal contractors nationwide.

Question 8. The Forest Service recently indicated that it must increase forest management and restoration 2-4 times over current treatment levels if it hopes to get ahead of the forest health and wildfire crisis.

What additional staffing numbers will be required for the Forest Service to increase treatment levels by 2-4 times, assuming that current analysis requirements remain unchanged?

What other authorities or contracting mechanisms are available for the Forest Service to perform these functions within current staffing levels?

Answer. The Agency recognizes that we will need to increase overall staffing to successfully reduce the risk of wildfires. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act provides funds to help increase capacity. The Agency is still developing comprehensive staffing plans and will be increasing capacity in not only field personnel to complete the work but also key administrative positions like contracting officers, grants and agreements specialists, partnership coordinators, and NEPA professionals who act as force multipliers.

The goal to increase treatment levels by 2–4 times will require 20% to 30% additional staffing in key areas, in particular at the key GS–12 and GS–13 grade levels (senior contracting officers with the knowledge and experience to form and administer competent contracts beyond the simplified acquisition threshold). It is highly likely that the increases in treatments will require larger, landscape scale contracts and agreements, in particular construction, architecture/engineering and stewardship timber contracts. These areas require specific expertise.

The agency also recognizes that achieving the desired pace and scale of land treatments will require the support of states, Tribes, local, non-government organizations, and private contractors. The Forest Service utilizes a multitude of grant and agreement authorities to engage with Federal, state and local governments as well as Tribal, nonprofit and private entities to carry out forest management projects. The Agency also uses the authorities like the Good Neighbor Authority to increase the pace and scale of our work.

Question 9. Hazardous fuels reduction has two main components: prescribed fire and silvicultural treatments, such as “thinning.” Both activities have a beneficial impact on mitigating wildfire emissions by reducing combustible material in our forests and wildlands. Following a harvest treatment, prescribed fire can be an important tool to maintaining the investment of a more healthy and resilient forest and minimizing the risk of catastrophic wildfire.

What is your vision to increase the pace and scale of these critical hazardous fuel reduction practices to help reduce the wildfire threat on National Forest lands?

Answer. The Agency recognizes that we will need to increase overall staffing to successfully reduce the risk of wildfires. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act provides funds to help increase capacity. The Agency is still developing comprehensive staffing plans and will be increasing capacity in not only field personnel to complete the work but also key administrative positions like contracting officers, grants and agreements specialists, partnership coordinators, and NEPA professionals who act as force multipliers. The agency also recognizes that achieving the desired pace and scale of land treatments will require the support of states, Tribes, local, non-government organizations, and private contractors.

We now have the science and tools we need to size and place treatments in a way that will truly make a difference. We will focus on key “firesheds”—large, forested landscapes with a high likelihood that an ignition could expose homes, communities, infrastructure, and natural resources to wildfire. Firesheds, typically about 250,000 acres in size, are mapped to match the scale of building exposure to wildfire.

Under the 10 year Strategy, we will work with partners to:

- Treat an additional 20 million acres on National Forest System lands.
- Treat an additional 30 million acres of other Federal, state, Tribal, and private lands.
- Develop a plan for long-term maintenance beyond the 10 years.

Our new management paradigm builds on the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. The nation already has collaborative strategies in place for cross-boundary treatments, including Cohesive Strategy projects and Shared Stewardship agreements. We will work collaboratively through shared stewardship with states, Tribes, local communities, private landowners, and other stakeholders to adapt lessons learned into a coordinated and effective program of work.

The Forest Service has set up a Wildfire Risk Reduction Infrastructure Team to build on new and existing capacity in carrying out projects under the 10 year strategy. Together with our partners, we will plan project areas while building the needed workforce capacity and public support. We will treat the highest priority firesheds first. Then we will move on to other western firesheds, accelerating our treatments over 10 years.

Forest Service research and risk-based modeling has identified hundreds of communities at high risk that can inform where and how to place treatments that will truly make a difference. We will provide a focused investment to these high priority areas to reduce wildfire risk. This will require treating about 20–40% of these landscapes with a combination of mechanical treatments and prescribed fire. We know that treatments need to be done across jurisdictions to be effective, and there are collaborative frameworks in place to enable cross-boundary treatments, including Cohesive Strategy projects, Joint Chiefs Restoration Partnership projects, Good Neighbor Authority agreements, and Shared Stewardship agreements.

Question 10. The scale of wildfires and their community impacts far outpace current efforts to prevent them and mitigate the damage they cause. Substantial increases in active forest management and fuel treatments along with community

planning and resiliency efforts across all landscapes, ownership boundaries and communities are needed in the areas at greatest risk for unwanted wildfire.

What do you see as your number one goal within the USFS to reduce this growing threat of wildfire to our communities and our landscapes?

Answer. To address the highest risk acres at the scale needed, we need to work collaboratively with states, Tribes, local communities, private landowners, and other stakeholders to strategically treat 20 million acres on priority National Forest System lands and 30 million acres of other priority Federal, state, Tribal, and private lands, in the west, over and above our current level of treatments.

Question 11. As you know, the 2015 *Cottonwood* decision has had negative impacts on the USFS management activities. Since January 2016, it has been reported that close to 30 lawsuits and 50 notices of intent (NOIs) to sue the Forest Service involving ESA new information claims have been initiated, challenging both plan-level and project-level decisions.

Can you provide us with an updated and accurate accounting of these lawsuits and related management impacts? More specifically, since the 2015 *Cottonwood* decision to current date, how many lawsuits have been filed against the Forest Service involving ESA new information claims?

How many notices of intent (NOIs) to sue the Forest Service involving ESA new information claims have occurred since the decision?

Answer. Since January 2016, there have been at least 27 lawsuits, in twelve states, and 49 NOIs to sue involving ESA new information claims, challenging both programmatic-level and project-level decisions. Of the 49 NOIs received with new information claims, 26 are project specific, 11 challenge programmatic decisions, and 12 have both project specific and programmatic-level claims.

- Three programmatic actions were enjoined or vacated due to litigation associated with NOIs with new information claims.
- Two project specific actions were enjoined due to litigation associated with NOIs with new information claims.

Question 11a. Who are the Plaintiffs for each of these lawsuits?

Who are the claimants for each of these NOIs?

What is the status of each of the lawsuits?

Categorized by USFS Region and type of activity, how many USFS projects are enjoined or under threat of being enjoined due to the lawsuits?

Answer. Claimants and plaintiffs are primarily local or national environmental advocacy non-governmental organizations. These cases are in various stages within the judicial process. Claimants have issued Notices of Intent (NOI) and plaintiffs have filed lawsuits against the Forest Service in all regions except the Southern Region and the Alaska Region. At this time five agency actions have been enjoined by court order.

Question 11b. Categorized by USFS Region, what is the scope of USFS lands (in acreage) impacted by the lawsuits?

What percentage of these acres impacted or enjoined are categorized as a part of the 63 million acres of USFS lands designated as high or very high hazard for wildfire?

Answer. Our electronic data systems do not currently track acres affected by the various stages of litigation.

Question 12. As you know, our Committee recently marked up a reconciliation measure that included many policy changes impacting the agency and some \$40 billion in forest-related investments.

As the Chief of the Forest Service, were you asked to provide input on this legislation? If so, did that request come from this Committee or the Senate Agriculture Committee?

If you weren't consulted or weren't officially in your position as Chief at the time, was anyone at the Agency been asked to provide testimony or technical assistance on the bill? If so, can you provide to us that testimony?

Answer. USDA provided testimony before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee on June 24, 2021. A copy of the testimony can be found at: www.energy.senate.gov. [See Attachment 3]. Technical assistance requests from Congressional Members and committees are treated as confidential by the agency.

Question Submitted by Hon. Dusty Johnson, a Representative in Congress from South Dakota

Question. To what extent can the Four Forest Restoration Initiative be expanded into the Black Hills National Forest?

Answer. The Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI) is a landscape-level effort to restore 2.4 million acres of Ponderosa pine forests on the Apache-Sitgreaves, Coconino, Kaibab, and Tonto National Forests in Northern Arizona. The Initiative has been active for the last 10 years, and the agency plans to continue addressing restoration needs over the next twenty years. The current 4FRI restoration approach is working to address the most critical restoration needs, support existing forest industry, and attract new industry across the landscape through a variety of partnerships and investment strategies.

Some applicable lessons learned from the 4FRI that could apply to other regions and National Forests such as the Black Hills include developing a diverse and collaborative group of stakeholders to identify and use best available science, mitigate potential litigation, and leverage local, national and private resources. The use of the authorities such as stewardship contracting, Good Neighbor Authority (GNA), and 638 contracts with Tribes allow for the development of projects beyond traditional timber sales. These authorities allow for flexibility to use appropriated funds, ability to cover the costs of harvesting through service work, and the ability to use our external partners to assist in developing and implementing projects.

APPENDIX A

USDA Forest Service Law Enforcement and Investigations Field Staff by Region, Forest, District with Acres and Square Miles

As of November 1, 2021

Total LEI Sworn Field Staffing				
Region	LEO's	Captain	Special Agent	Total
1	29	4	5	38
2	26	4	3	33
3	29	5	5	39
4	29	5	4	38
5	66	16	17	99
6	51	7	6	64
8	71	10	12	93
9	41	5	7	53
10	13	2	1	16
Total	355	58	60	473

USDA Forest Service Region 1 LEI Field Staffing and Forest/District Size

November 1, 2021

National Forest	District	Acres	Sq. Miles	LEO	CPT	SA
Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest	Supervisors Office—North East Zone					
Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest	Butte Ranger District	675,794.092	1,055.928159			
Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest	Pintler Ranger District	731,233.201	1,142.551757	1		
Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest	Madison Ranger District	751,356.604	1,173.994572	1		
Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest	Dillon Ranger District	579,820.221	905.9690015	1		
Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest	Wisdom Ranger District	875,879.975	1,368.562318			
Total		3614,084	5,647			
Bitterroot National Forest	Supervisors Office—South Central Zone					
Bitterroot National Forest	Sula Ranger District	248,532.299	388.3316769			
Bitterroot National Forest	Stevensville Ranger District	251,432.345	392.8629975	1		
Bitterroot National Forest	West Fork Ranger District	793,460.223	1,239.781469			
Bitterroot National Forest	Darby Ranger District	371,027.402	579.7302552	1		
Total		1,664,452	2,600			
Custer Gallatin National Forest	Supervisors Office—South East Zone				1	1
Custer Gallatin National Forest	Sioux Ranger District	176,981.829	276.5340793			
Custer Gallatin National Forest	Ashland Ranger District	501,821.078	784.0953521			
Custer Gallatin National Forest	Bozeman Ranger District	560,154.972	875.242053	1		
Custer Gallatin National Forest	Gardiner Ranger District	419,554.913	655.5544828	1		
Custer Gallatin National Forest	Helgen Lake Ranger District	355,699.128	555.7798296	1		

USDA Forest Service Region 1—Continued
LEI Field Staffing and Forest/District Size

November 1, 2021

National Forest	District	Acres	Sq. Miles	LEO	CPT	SA
Custer Gallatin National Forest	Yellowstone Ranger District	794,292.372	1,241.081702	1		
	Beartooth Ranger District	603,732.391	943.3317622	1		
		3,412,236	5,331			
Dakota Prairie National Forest	Supervisors Office—South East Zone					
Dakota Prairie Grasslands	Medora Ranger District	1,237,515.937	1,933.618449	1		
	McKenzie Ranger District	846,089.526	1,322.014747			
	Sheyenne Ranger District	136,912.863	213.9263263			
	Grand River Ranger District	448,306.602	700.4789925			
Total		2,668,824	4170			
Flathead National Forest	Supervisors Office—North Central Zone			1	1	1
Flathead National Forest	Hungry Horse Ranger District	453,086.81	707.9480663	1		
	Spotted Bear Ranger District	1,037,183.432	1,620.598943			
	Tally Lake Ranger District	299,450.614	467.8915362	1		
Flathead National Forest	Glacier View Ranger District	343,791.395	537.1739991			
	Swan Lake Ranger District	518,181.093	809.6578729	1		
		2,651,693	4,143			
Total	Supervisors Office—North East Zone			1	1	1
Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest	Belt Creek-White Sulphur Springs Ranger District	654,431.118	1,022.548515			
	Judith-Musselshell Ranger District	564,105.723	881.4151006	1		
	Rocky Mountain Ranger District	783,923.209	1,224.879886	1		
	Helena Ranger District	454,532.926	710.2076221	1		
	Townsend Ranger District	372,748.424	582.4193521	1		
	Lincoln Ranger District	347,958.058	543.6844088			
		3,177,699	4,965			
	Supervisors Office—West Zone			1	1	1
Idaho Panhandle National Forest	St. Joe Ranger District	870,590.026	1,360.296774			
	Priest Lake Ranger District	382,556.158	597.7439349			
	Sandpoint Ranger District	393,661.546	615.0961017	1		
	Bonners Ferry Ranger District	488,801.073	763.7515963	1		
	Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District	807,892.136	1,262.331331	1		
Total		2,943,500	4,599			
Kootenai National Forest	Supervisors Office—North Central Zone					
Kootenai National Forest	Three Rivers Ranger District	663,494.042	1,036.709333			
	Fortine Ranger District	281,616.217	440.0252929	1		
	Libby Ranger District	877,077.248	1,370.433057	1		
	Rexford Ranger District	331,384.722	517.7885737			
	Cabinet Ranger District	468,542.274	732.0972266			
Total		2,622,114	4,097			
Lolo National Forest	Supervisors Office—South Central Zone			1	1	1
Lolo National Forest	Missoula Ranger District	622,593.238	972.8018332	1		
	Seeley Lake Ranger District	438,907.581	685.7930238	1		
	Superior Ranger District	517,194.741	808.1166988			
	Plains/Thompson Falls Ranger District	575,201.183	898.751755			
	Ninemile Ranger District	471,618.152	736.903286			
Total		262,5514	4,102			

USDA Forest Service Region 1—Continued
LEI Field Staffing and Forest/District Size
November 1, 2021

National Forest	District	Acres	Sq. Miles	LEO	CPT	SA
Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest	Supervisors Office—West Zone			1		
Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest	Palouse Ranger District	206,306.137	322.3533062	1		
Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest	North Fork Ranger District	777,996.793	1,215.619862			
Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest	Red River Ranger District	781,579.117	1,221.217242			
Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest	Moose Creek Ranger District	822,617.024	1,285.338966			
Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest	Salmon River Ranger District	532,828.401	832.5442901	1		
Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest	Lochsa/Powell Ranger District	951,467.68	1,486.668095	1		
Total		4,072,795	6,363			
Total for Region		29,452,916	46,020	29	5	5

USDA Forest Service Region 2
LEI Field Staffing and Forest/District Size
November 1, 2021

National Forest	District	Acres	Sq. Miles	LEO	CPT	SA
Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forest	Supervisors Office—Central Zone					
Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forest	Boulder Ranger District	246,023.064	384.4109967	1		
Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forest	Clear Creek Ranger District	203,540.046	318.031288	1		
Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forest	Canyon Lakes Ranger District	839,116.047	1,311.118687	1		
Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forest	Sulphur Ranger District	434,938.617	679.5915182	1		
Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forest	Pawnee Ranger District	768,181.308	1,200.283169			
Total		2,491,799	3,893	4	0	0
Bighorn National Forest	Supervisors Office—Northern Zone				1	
Bighorn National Forest	Powder River Ranger District	334,338.557	522.4039414	1		
Bighorn National Forest	Medicine Wheel Ranger District	364,531.511	569.5804262			
Bighorn National Forest	Tongue Ranger District	413,999.193	646.8736714	1		
Total		1,112,869	1,738	2	1	0
Black Hills National Forest	Supervisors Office—Northern Zone					
Black Hills National Forest	Hell Canyon Ranger District	601,669.09	940.1078552	1		
Black Hills National Forest	Bearlodge Ranger District	202,625.501	316.6023117			
Black Hills National Forest	Mystic Ranger District	357,436.171	558.4939592	1		1
Black Hills National Forest	Northern Hills Ranger District	375,747.212	587.1049583	1		
Total		1,537,477	2,402	3	0	1
Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forest	Supervisors Office—Southwest Zone				1	1
Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests	Ouray Ranger District	364,348.11	569.2938623	1		
Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forest	Grand Valley Ranger District	557,621.761	871.2839115	1		
Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests	Paonia Ranger District	479,991.893	749.9872551			
Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests	Gunnison Ranger District	1,357,830.94	2,121.610622	1		
Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests	Norwood Ranger District	393,437.672	614.7462991			
Total		3,153,230	4,926	3	1	1
Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest	Supervisors Office—Central Zone				1	1
Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest	Brush Creek-Hayden Ranger District	580,315.38	906.7426874	1		
Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest	Yampa Ranger District	394,695.695	616.7119588			

USDA Forest Service Region 2—Continued
LEI Field Staffing and Forest/District Size

November 1, 2021

National Forest	District	Acres	Sq. Miles	LEO	CPT	SA
Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest	Hahns Peak-Bears Ears Ranger District	500,034.678	781.304103	1		
Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest	Parks Ranger District	489,062.726	764.1604304			
Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest	Douglas Ranger District/ Thunder Basin National Grassland	2,258,381.233	3,528.720309			
Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest	Laramie Ranger District	370,367.717	578.6994973	1		
Total		4,592,857	7,176	3	1	1
Nebraska National Forest	Supervisors Office—Northern Zone					
Nebraska National Forest	Ft. Pierre Ranger District	209,044.225	326.6315672			
Nebraska National Forest	Besssey Ranger District	206,784.05	323.1000438			
Nebraska National Forest	Pine Ridge Ranger District	355,082.906	554.816983			
Nebraska National Forest	Fall River Ranger District	806,962.411	1,260.878635			
Nebraska National Forest	Wall Ranger District	486,993.076	760.9266025			
Total		2,064,866	3,226	0	0	0
Pike and San Isabel National Forest	Supervisors Office—Southeast Zone					
Pike and San Isabel National Forests	Comanche Ranger District	1,122,279.791	1,753.56199			
Pike and San Isabel National Forests	San Carlos Ranger District	422,072.698	659.4885215	1		
Pike and San Isabel National Forests	Pikes Peak Ranger District	282,996.078	442.1813256	1		
Pike and San Isabel National Forests	Salida Ranger District	504,269.308	787.9207122	1		
Pike and San Isabel National Forests	Leadville Ranger District	304,779.674	476.2181917	1		
Pike and San Isabel National Forests	South Platte Ranger District	450,225.879	703.4778625			
Pike and San Isabel National Forests	South Park Ranger District	540,709.353	844.8582762			
Pike and San Isabel National Forests	Cimarron Ranger District	341,728.55	533.9508031			
Total		3,969,061	6,201	4	0	0
Rio Grande National Forest	Supervisors Office—Southeast Zone				1	
Rio Grande National Forest	Divide Ranger District	1,010,662.796	1,579.160455		1	
Rio Grande National Forest	Saguache Ranger District	528,013.921	825.0216658			
Rio Grande National Forest	Conejos Peak Ranger District	398,614.196	622.8346167	1		
Total		1,937,290	3,027	2	1	
San Juan National Forest	Supervisors Office—Southwest Zone					
San Juan National Forest	Pagosa Ranger District	698,223.174	1,090.973595			
San Juan National Forest	Columbine Ranger District	763,669.445	1,193.233384	1		
San Juan National Forest	Mancos/Dolores Ranger District	632,767.363	988.6989017	1		
Total		2,094,659	3,272	2	0	0
Shoshone National Forest	Supervisors Office—Northern Zone					
Shoshone National Forest	Wapiti Ranger District	785,014.473	1,226.584986	1		
Shoshone National Forest	Washakie Ranger District	320,076.121	500.1188874	1		
Shoshone National Forest	Wind River Ranger District	546,636.824	854.1199484			
Shoshone National Forest	Greybull Ranger District	310,929.44	485.8271999			
Shoshone National Forest	Clarks Fork Ranger District	506,591.215	791.5486903			
Total		2,469,248	3,858	2	0	0
White River National Forest	Supervisors Office—Southeast Zone					
White River National Forest	Dillon Ranger District	389,954.25	609.3034523			
White River National Forest	Blanco Ranger District	366,166.116	572.1344958			
White River National Forest	Aspen Ranger District	274,937.841	429.5903317			
White River National Forest	Rifle Ranger District	313,945.948	490.5404926			
White River National Forest	Eagle Ranger District	321,654.275	502.5847522			
White River National Forest	Sopris Ranger District	433,146.383	676.7911526			
White River National Forest	Holy Cross Ranger District	382,909.647	598.2962613			
Total		2,482,714	3,879	1	0	0
Total for Region		27,906,075	43,603	26	4	3

USDA Forest Service Region 3
LEI Field Staffing and Forest/District Size
November 1, 2021

National Forest	District	Acres	Sq. Miles	LEO	CPT	SA
Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest	Supervisors Office—Northern Arizona Zone					
Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests	Black Mesa Ranger District	616,541.499	963.3459917	1		
Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests	Springerville Ranger District	273,662.17	427.5970961			
Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests	Lakeside Ranger District	270,459.087	422.5922798	1		
Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests	Clifton Ranger District	500,626.659	782.2290727			
Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests	Alpine Ranger District	449,398.469	702.1850353	1		
	Southern New Mexico Zone					
Total		2,110,687	3,297	3		
Carson National Forest	Supervisors Office—Northern New Mexico Zone					
Carson National Forest	Camino Real Ranger District	339,460.069	530.4063018			
Carson National Forest	El Rio Ranger District	280,471.37	438.2364705			
Carson National Forest	Tres Piedras Ranger District	387,716.828	605.8074809	1		
Carson National Forest	Canjilon Ranger District	150,657.454	235.4022476			
Carson National Forest	Jicarilla Ranger District	157,892.421	246.7068822			
Carson National Forest	Questa Ranger District	276,275.915	431.6810723	1		
Total		1,592,474	2,488	2		
Cibola National Forest	Supervisors Office—Northern New Mexico Zone				1	
Cibola National Forest	Mount Taylor Ranger District	653,687.095	1,021.38598			
Cibola National Forest	Sandia Ranger District	121,609.824	190.0153301			
Cibola National Forest	Mountainair Ranger District	255,680.068	399.5000643	2		
Cibola National Forest	Kiowa/Rita Blanca National Grasslands	863,345.686	1,348.977494			
Cibola National Forest	Black Kettle National Grassland	244,456.075	381.9625778			
Cibola National Forest	Magdalena Ranger District	1,076,878.544	1,682.622549			
Total		3,215,657	5,024	2	1	
Coconino National Forest	Supervisors Office—Northern Arizona Zone				1	1
Coconino National Forest	Flagstaff Ranger District	945,954.916	1,478.054402			
Coconino National Forest	Mogollon Rim Ranger District	517,763.706	809.0057067	2		
Coconino National Forest	Red Rock Ranger District	537,216.785	839.4011383	2		
Total		2,000,935	3,126	4	1	1
Coronado National Forest	Supervisors Office—Southern Arizona Zone				1	1
Coronado National Forest	Sierra Vista Ranger District	321,532.476	502.3944418			
Coronado National Forest	Douglas Ranger District	433,953.616	678.052455			
Coronado National Forest	Nogales Ranger District	352,562.921	550.8795073	1		
Coronado National Forest	Santa Catalina Ranger District	265,840.793	415.3761963	2		
Coronado National Forest	Safford Ranger District	411,205.774	642.5089555			
Total		1,785,095	2,789	5	1	1
Gila National Forest	Supervisors Office—Southern New Mexico Zone				1	1
Gila National Forest	Wilderness Ranger District	685,129.041	1,070.514015			
Gila National Forest	Black Range Ranger District	556,756.742	869.9323182	1		
Gila National Forest	Reserve Ranger District	61,2876.15	957.6188845			
Gila National Forest	Silver City Ranger District	405,764.778	634.007399			
Gila National Forest	Glenwood Ranger District	525,643.052	821.3171828			
Gila National Forest	Quemado Ranger District	603,228.699	942.5447432			
Total		3,389,398	5,295	2	1	1
Kaibab National Forest	Supervisors Office—Northern Arizona Zone					
Kaibab National Forest	Tusayan Ranger District	331,598.85	518.123149			
Kaibab National Forest	North Kaibab Ranger District	655,892.19	1,024.83144			
Kaibab National Forest	Williams Ranger District	593,897.441	927.9646543	1		
Total		1,581,388	2,470	1		

USDA Forest Service Region 3—Continued
LEI Field Staffing and Forest/District Size
November 1, 2021

National Forest	District	Acres	Sq. Miles	LEO	CPT	SA
Lincoln National Forest	Supervisors Office—Southern New Mexico Zone					
Lincoln National Forest	Sacramento Ranger District	549,067.408	857.9177357			
Lincoln National Forest	Smokey Bear Ranger District	423,758.577	662.122707	1		
Lincoln National Forest	Guadalupe Ranger District	289,126.404	451.7599584			
Total		1,261,952	1,971	1		
Prescott National Forest	Supervisors Office—Central Arizona Zone					
Prescott National Forest	Verde Ranger District	327,243.298	511.3175998			
Prescott National Forest	Chino Valley Ranger District	646,077.645	1,009.496215	1		
Prescott National Forest	Bradshaw Ranger District	438,229.096	684.732891			
Total		1,411,550	2,205	1		
Santa Fe National Forest	Supervisors Office—Northern New Mexico Zone					1
Santa Fe National Forest	Coyote Ranger District	268,307.077	419.2297638			
Santa Fe National Forest	Espanola Ranger District	366,235.263	572.2425581			
Santa Fe National Forest	Jemez Ranger District	245,636.817	383.8074868	1		
Santa Fe National Forest	Cuba Ranger District	254,630.763	397.860526			
Santa Fe National Forest	Peos-Las Vegas Ranger District	546,995.192	854.6798977	1		
Total		1,681,805	2,627	2		1
Tonto National Forest	Supervisors Office—Central Arizona Zone				1	1
Tonto National Forest	Cave Creek Ranger District	611,250.751	955.0791984			
Tonto National Forest	Globe Ranger District	471,080.481	736.0631742	1		
Tonto National Forest	Mesa Ranger District	444,806.104	695.0094646	3		
Tonto National Forest	Payson Ranger District	463,372.801	724.0199259	1		
Tonto National Forest	Pleasant Valley Ranger District	437,190.565	683.1101862			
Tonto National Forest	Tonto Basin Ranger District	538,716.444	841.7443565	1		
Total		2,966,417	4,635	6	1	1
Total for Region		22,997,361	35,933	29	5	5

USDA Forest Service Region 4
LEI Field Staffing and Forest/District Size
November 1, 2021

National Forest	District	Acres	Sq. Miles	LEO	CPT	SA
Ashley	Supervisors Office: Southern Utah Zone					
Ashley	Vernal Ranger District	341,243.295	533.1925925	1		
Ashley	Duchesne Ranger District	365,908.74	571.732346			
Ashley	Flaming Gorge Ranger District	354,282.467	553.5662966	1		
Ashley	Roosevelt Ranger District	339,843.917	531.0060642			
Total		1,401,278	2,185	2	0	0
Dixie	Supervisors Office: Southern Utah Zone				1	
Dixie	Pine Valley Ranger District	480,979.935	751.53107	1		
Dixie	Powell Ranger District	388,877.841	607.6215629			
Dixie	Cedar City Ranger District	404,452.468	631.9569154	1		
Dixie	Escalante Ranger District	436,975.068	682.7734731			
Total		1,711,285	2,673	2	1	0
Fishlake	Supervisors Office: Southern Utah Zone					
Fishlake	Beaver Ranger District	313,238.312	489.434812			
Fishlake	Fillmore Ranger District	493,436.615	770.9946312			
Fishlake	Richfield Ranger District	460,428.16	719.4189258			
Fishlake	Fremont River Ranger District	521,160.942	814.313887	1		

USDA Forest Service Region 4—Continued
LEI Field Staffing and Forest/District Size
November 1, 2021

National Forest	District	Acres	Sq. Miles	LEO	CPT	SA
Total		1,788,264	2,794	1	0	0
Manti-La Sal						
Manti-La Sal	Supervisors Office: Southern Utah Zone					
Manti-La Sal	Moab Ranger District	174,410.273	272.5160228	1		
Manti-La Sal	Monticello Ranger District	368,658.381	576.0286604			
Manti-La Sal	Sanpete Ranger District	259,406.045	405.3219037	1		
Manti-La Sal	Price Ranger District	278,497.125	435.1517128			
Manti-La Sal	Ferron Ranger District	333,253.279	520.7081943			
Total		1,414,225	2,209	2	0	0
Uinta-Wasatch-Cache						
Uinta-Wasatch-Cache	Supervisors Office: Northern Utah Zone					
Uinta-Wasatch-Cache	Ogden Ranger District	584,697.682	913.5900334	1		
Uinta-Wasatch-Cache	Salt Lake Ranger District	288,041.538	450.0648556	1		
Uinta-Wasatch-Cache	Evanston-Mt. View Ranger District	494,504.776	772.6636325	1		
Uinta-Wasatch-Cache	Heber-Kamas Ranger District	536,932.688	838.957237	1		
Uinta-Wasatch-Cache	Logan Ranger District	368,948.827	576.4824817	1		
Uinta-Wasatch-Cache	Pleasant Grove Ranger District	150,637.619	235.3712545			
Uinta-Wasatch-Cache	Spanish Fork Ranger District	489,193.069	764.3640913	1		
Total		2,912,956	4,551	6	1	1
Boise						
Boise	Supervisors Office: Western Idaho Zone					
Boise	Mountain Home Ranger District	734,791.741	1,148.111975	1		
Boise	Emmett Ranger District	353,824.782	552.851165			
Boise	Idaho City Ranger District	568,017.047	887.5265434	1		
Boise	Lowman Ranger District	468,938.635	732.7165408			
Boise	Cascade Ranger District	401,299.862	627.0309684	1		
Total		2,526,872	3,948	3	0	1
Payette						
Payette	Supervisors Office: Western Idaho Zone					
Payette	Council Ranger District	375,483.134	586.6923354	1		
Payette	McCall Ranger District	557,061.766	870.4089181			
Payette	Weiser Ranger District	121,902.543	190.4727043			
Payette	New Meadows Ranger District	287,112.72	448.6135787			
Payette	Krassel Ranger District	1,065,746.279	1,665.228387			
Total		2,407,306	3,761	1	0	0
Sawtooth						
Sawtooth	Supervisors Office: Western Idaho Zone					
Sawtooth	Sawtooth National Recreation Area	812,157.725	1,268.996313			
Sawtooth	Ketchum Ranger District	329,683.021	515.1296663			
Sawtooth	Minidoka Ranger District	632,639.528	988.4991599	1		
Sawtooth	Fairfield Ranger District	415,658.203	649.4658743			
Total		2,190,138	3,422	1	1	0
Bridger-Teton						
Bridger-Teton	Supervisors Office: Idaho/Wyoming Zone					
Bridger-Teton	Big Piney Ranger District	449,856.202	702.9002423			
Bridger-Teton	Kemmerer Ranger District	286,027.094	446.9172881			
Bridger-Teton	Greys River Ranger District	485,101.506	757.9710237			
Bridger-Teton	Blackrock Ranger District	722,458.846	1,128.841829			
Bridger-Teton	Jackson Ranger District	695,025.412	1,085.977094	1		
Bridger-Teton	Pinedale Ranger District	827,879.068	1,293.560909	1		
Total		3,466,348	5,416	2	0	0
Caribou-Targhee						
Caribou-Targhee	Supervisors Office: Idaho/Wyoming Zone					
Caribou-Targhee	Westside Ranger District	416,464.192	650.7252315	1		
Caribou-Targhee	Soda Springs Ranger District	365,373.927	570.8967011			
Caribou-Targhee	Montpelier Ranger District	428,045.876	668.8216121			
Caribou-Targhee	Dubois Ranger District	458,070.499	715.7350796			
Caribou-Targhee	Ashton/Island Park Ranger District	668,823.661	1,045.036861	1		
Caribou-Targhee	Teton Basin Ranger District	267,704.074	418.2875721			

USDA Forest Service Region 4—Continued
LEI Field Staffing and Forest/District Size

November 1, 2021

National Forest	District	Acres	Sq. Miles	LEO	CPT	SA
Caribou-Targhee	Palisades Ranger District	472,994.294	739.0535076			
Total		3,077,476	4,808	2	1	1
Salmon-Challis	Supervisors Office: Idaho/Wyoming Zone					
Salmon-Challis	North Fork Ranger District	775,711.035	1,212.048366			
Salmon-Challis	Lost River Ranger District	814,856.994	1,273.213921			
Salmon-Challis	Salmon-Cobalt Ranger District	642,333.138	1,003.645423	1		
Salmon-Challis	Middle Fork Ranger District	1,031,514.734	1,611.741604			
Salmon-Challis	Challis-Yankee Fork Ranger District	802,906.788	1,254.541726	1		
Salmon-Challis	Leadore Ranger District	328,967.012	514.0109025			
Total		4,396,289	6,869	2	0	0
Humboldt-Toiyabe	Supervisors Office: Nevada Zone					
Humboldt-Toiyabe	Santa Rosa Ranger District	300,733.997	469.8968218			
Humboldt-Toiyabe	Ely Ranger District	1,024,430.663	1,600.672744	1		
Humboldt-Toiyabe	Carson Ranger District	601,511.531	939.8616685	1		
Humboldt-Toiyabe	Spring Mountains National Recreation Area	322,198.476	503.435066	2		1
Humboldt-Toiyabe	Austin-Tonopah Ranger District	2,136,574.262	3,338.396937			
Humboldt-Toiyabe	Mountain City-Ruby Mountains-Jarbridge Ranger District	1,201,311.924	1,877.049685			
Humboldt-Toiyabe	Bridgeport Ranger District	1,117,357.653	1,745.87115			
Total		6,704,118	10,475	5	1	1
Grand Total for Region		33,996,558	53,119	29	5	4

USDA Forest Service Region 5
LEI Field Staffing and Forest/District Size

November 1, 2021

National Forest	District	Acres	Sq. Miles	LEO	CPT	SA
Angeles National Forest	Supervisors Office—South Zone				1	1
Total		706,715	1,104	6	1	1
Cleveland National Forest	Supervisors Office—South Zone				1	
Cleveland National Forest	Trabuco Ranger District	160,639.476	250.9991552		3	
Cleveland National Forest	Palomar Ranger District	186,336.932	291.1514253		1	
Cleveland National Forest	Descanso Ranger District	214,840.005	335.6874726			
Total		561,816	877	4	1	
Eldorado National Forest	Supervisors Office—Central Zone				1	2
Eldorado National Forest	Pacific Ranger District	199,660.132	311.9689236		1	
Eldorado National Forest	Placerville Ranger District	205,504.264	321.1003786		2	
Eldorado National Forest	Georgetown Ranger District	193,082.902	301.6920026		1	
Eldorado National Forest	Amador Ranger District	195,405.308	305.3207612			
Total		793,652	1,240	4	1	2
Inyo National Forest	Supervisors Office—South Zone				1	
Inyo National Forest	Mt. Whitney Ranger District	594,693.306	929.2081935		1	
Inyo National Forest	Mammoth Ranger District	167,275.265	261.3675743		2	
Inyo National Forest	Mono Lake Ranger District	484,973.3	757.770702			
Inyo National Forest	White Mountain Ranger District	849,963.807	1,328.06831			

USDA Forest Service Region 5—Continued
LEI Field Staffing and Forest/District Size

November 1, 2021

National Forest	District	Acres	Sq. Miles	LEO	CPT	SA
Total		2,096,905	3,276	3	1	
Klamath National Forest					1	1
Klamath National Forest						
Salmon River Ranger District	371,773.336	580.8957763		1		
Oak Knoll Ranger District	335,238.595	523.81025		1		
Happy Camp Ranger District	359,549.495	561.7960278		1		
Ukonom Ranger District	190,355.51	297.4304535		1		
Goosenest Ranger District	361,460.835	564.7824955		1		
Scott River Ranger District	277,428.094	433.4813515				
Total	1,895,805	2,962		5	1	1
Lake Tahoe Basin				2		
[Total]				2		
Lassen National Forest					1	1
Lassen National Forest						
Supervisors Office—North Zone						
Hat Creek Ranger District	541,876.456	846.6818738		1		
Almanor Ranger District	549,816.542	859.0882572		2		
Eagle Lake Ranger District	397,018.986	620.3421003		1		
Total	1,488,711	2,326		4	1	1
Los Padres National Forest					1	
Los Padres National Forest						
Supervisors Office—South Zone						
Mt. Pinos Ranger District	493,625.377	771.2895711		1		
Monterey Ranger District	333,703.014	521.4109047		1		
Ojai Ranger District	323,861.482	506.0335136		1		
Santa Lucia Ranger District	514,028.633	803.1696555		1		2
Santa Barbara Ranger District	305,051.648	476.6431506				
Total	1,970,270	3,078		4	1	2
Mendocino National Forest					1	1
Mendocino National Forest						
Supervisors Office—North Zone						
Grindstone Ranger District	534,154.737	834.6166892		1		
Upper Lake Ranger District	312,110.887	487.6732102		2		
Covelo Ranger District	227,019.158	354.7173979				
Total	1,073,284	1,677		3	1	1
Modoc National Forest						
Modoc National Forest						
Supervisors Office—North Zone						
Devils Garden Ranger District	596,525.506	932.0710064		1		
Big Valley Ranger District	495,241.585	773.8148958				
Warner Mountain Ranger District	361,422.456	564.7225286				
Doublehead Ranger District	569,835.487	890.3678553				
Total	2,023,025	3,160		1		
Plumas National Forest					1	
Plumas National Forest						
Supervisors Office—Central Zone						
Feather River Ranger District	392,504.844	613.2887552		1		1
Beckwourth Ranger District	492,556.063	769.6187679		1		
Mt. Hough Ranger District	546,739.06	854.2796929		1		
Total	1,431,799	2,237		3	1	1
San Bernardino National Forest					1	1
San Bernardino National Forest						
Supervisors Office—South Zone						
Mountaintop Ranger District	285,393.382	445.9271135		1		
Front Country Ranger District	270,913.954	423.3030096		2		
San Jacinto Ranger District	249,175.377	389.3364858		2		
Total	805,482	1,258		5	1	1
Sequoia National Forest					1	1

USDA Forest Service Region 5—Continued
LEI Field Staffing and Forest/District Size
November 1, 2021

National Forest	District	Acres	Sq. Miles	LEO	CPT	SA
Sequoia National Forest	Kern River Ranger District Western Divide Ranger District Hume Lake Ranger District	663,351.396	1,036.486448	2		
Sequoia National Forest		337,715.415	527.680281	1		
Sequoia National Forest		183,462.992	286.6608949	1		
Total		1,184,529	1,850	4	1	1
Shasta-Trinity National Forest	Supervisors Office—North Zone				1	2
Shasta-Trinity National Forest	Hayfork Ranger District	356,869.7	557.6088484	1		
Shasta-Trinity National Forest	Yolla Bolla Ranger District	239,483.664	374.193186	1		
Shasta-Trinity National Forest	Big Bar Ranger District	444,415.519	694.3991758	1		
Shasta-Trinity National Forest	Weaverville Ranger District	435,074.817	679.8043311	1		
Shasta-Trinity National Forest	Shasta Lake Ranger District	435,936.848	681.1512533	2		
Shasta-Trinity National Forest	Mt. Shasta Ranger District	383,605.57	599.3836411	1		
Shasta-Trinity National Forest	McCloud Ranger District	420,114.313	656.4285458	1		
Total		2,715,500	4,242	5	1	2
Sierra National Forest	Supervisors Office—Central Zone				1	1
Sierra National Forest	Bass Lake Ranger District High Sierra Ranger District	482,227.063	753.4797075	2		
Sierra National Forest		912,076.034	1,425.118654	2		
Total		1,394,303	2,178	4	1	1
Six Rivers National Forest	Supervisors Office—North Zone				2	1
Six Rivers National Forest	Lower Trinity Ranger District Gasquet Ranger District Orleans Ranger District Mad River Ranger District	225,251.129	351.9548523	1		
Six Rivers National Forest		358,968.124	560.8876356	1		
Six Rivers National Forest		219,101.375	342.3458635	1		
Six Rivers National Forest		280,272.721	437.9260815	1		
Total		1,083,593	1,693	4	1	
Stanislaus National Forest	Supervisors Office—Central Zone				1	1
Stanislaus National Forest	Calaveras Ranger District Summit Ranger District Mi-Wok Ranger District Groveland Ranger District	329,506.565	514.8539549	2		
Stanislaus National Forest		308,933.844	482.7090808			
Stanislaus National Forest		209,918.127	327.9970386			
Stanislaus National Forest		241,995.661	378.1181815	1		
Total		1,090,354	1,703	3	1	1
Tahoe National Forest	Supervisors Office—Central Zone				1	2
Tahoe National Forest	Truckee Ranger District American River Ranger District Yuba River Ranger District Sierraville Ranger District	247,235.479	386.3053955	1		
Tahoe National Forest		235,338.636	367.7165807			
Tahoe National Forest		465,732.37	727.7067522			
Tahoe National Forest		231,171.682	361.2057152	1		
Total		1,179,478	1,842	3	1	2
Total for Region		2,349,5230	36,711	66	16	17

USDA Forest Service Region 6
LEI Field Staffing and Forest/District Size
November 1, 2021

National Forest	District	Acres	Sq. Miles	LEO	CPT	SA
Colville National Forest	Supervisors Office: North Central Washington Zone			1		
Colville National Forest	Republic Ranger District	244,492.445	382.0194049			
Colville National Forest	Newport Ranger District	257,738.558	402.716455			
Colville National Forest	Sullivan Lake Ranger District	304,257.868	475.4028691			
Colville National Forest	Three Rivers Ranger District	547,875.5	856.0553801			
Total		1,354,364	2,116	2		

USDA Forest Service Region 6—Continued
LEI Field Staffing and Forest/District Size

November 1, 2021

National Forest	District	Acres	Sq. Miles	LEO	CPT	SA
Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area		292,500.0	457.03125	1		
Total		292,500.0	457.03125	1		
Deschutes National Forest	Supervisors Office: Central Oregon Zone				1	
Deschutes National Forest	Crescent Ranger District	410,536.964	641.4639392	1		
Deschutes National Forest	Bend/Fort Rock Ranger District	1,061,746.112	1,658.978127	1		
Deschutes National Forest	Sisters Ranger District	397,832.939	621.6139017	1		
Total		1,870,116	2,922	3	1	
Fremont-Winema National Forest	Supervisors Office: Central Oregon Zone					1
Fremont-Winema National Forest	Lakeview Ranger District	443,737.617	693.3399536	1		
Fremont-Winema National Forest	Silver Lake Ranger District	443,202.799	692.5043011			
Fremont-Winema National Forest	Chemult Ranger District	422,191.889	659.6747571			
Fremont-Winema National Forest	Klamath Ranger District	203,475.186	317.9299454	1		
Fremont-Winema National Forest	Chiloquin Ranger District	475,550.886	743.0481827			
Fremont-Winema National Forest	Paisley Ranger District	323,464.915	505.4138769			
Fremont-Winema National Forest	Bly Ranger District	504,323.71	788.0057143			
Total		2,815,947	4,399	2		1
Gifford Pinchot National Forest	Supervisors Office: Southwest Oregon Zone				1	
Gifford Pinchot National Forest	Mt. Adams Ranger District	710,549.6	1,110.233635	1		
Gifford Pinchot National Forest	Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument	132,561.073	207.1266554	1		
Gifford Pinchot National Forest	Cowlitz Valley District	292,500	457.03125	1		
Total		1,496,966	2,339	3	1	
Malheur National Forest	Supervisors Office: Northeast Oregon Zone			1		
Malheur National Forest	Blue Mountain Ranger District	744,118.577	1,162.685155			
Malheur National Forest	Emigrant Creek Ranger District	651,936.334	1,018.650415			
Malheur National Forest	Prairie City Ranger District	390,486.212	610.1346421			
Total		1,786,541	2,791	1		
Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest	Supervisors Office: Northwest Oregon Zone				1	
Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest	Mt. Baker Ranger District	556,067.449	868.8552981	1		
Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest	Darrington Ranger District	565,321.013	883.313991	1		
Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest	Snoqualmie Ranger District	536,774.313	888.7097772	2		
Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest	Skykomish Ranger District	367,399.942	574.06235	1		
Total		2,025,562	3,164	5	1	
Mt. Hood National Forest	Supervisors Office:			2	1	1
Mt. Hood National Forest	Barlow Ranger District	178,500.588	278.9071396	1		
Mt. Hood National Forest	Zigzag Ranger District	266,679.211	416.6862232	1		
Mt. Hood National Forest	Clackamas River Ranger District	407,078.558	636.0601806			
Mt. Hood National Forest	Hood River Ranger District	207,901.605	324.8462246	1		
Total		1,060,159	1,656	5	1	1
Ochoco National Forest	Supervisors Office: Central Oregon Zone			1		
Ochoco National Forest	Paulina Ranger District	383,582.797	599.3480577			
Ochoco National Forest	Crooked River National Grassland	173,645.752	271.3214591	1		
Ochoco National Forest	Lookout Mountain Ranger District	355,546.464	555.5412914			
Total		912,775	1,426	2		
Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest	Supervisors Office: North Central Washington Zone				1	1
Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest	Naches Ranger District	560,541.671	875.8462692	1		
Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest	Entiat Ranger District	276,563.781	432.130862			
Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest	Cle Elum Ranger District	477,292.668	745.7697162	2		

USDA Forest Service Region 6—Continued
LEI Field Staffing and Forest/District Size

November 1, 2021

National Forest	District	Acres	Sq. Miles	LEO	CPT	SA
Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest	Wenatchee River Ranger District	795,896.628	1,243.588352	1		
Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest	Methow Valley Ranger District	1,334,630.525	2,085.359978	1		
Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest	Tomasket Ranger District	398,630.248	622.8596977			
Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest	Chelan Ranger District	412,358.027	644.3093499			
Total		4,255,913	6,649	5	1	1
Olympic National Forest	Supervisors Office: Northwest Oregon Zone					
Olympic National Forest	Hood Canal Ranger District/Quilcene	157,090.127	245.4532973			
Olympic National Forest	Hood Canal Ranger District/Hoodsport	227,473.748	355.4276942	1		
Olympic National Forest	Pacific Ranger District/Forks	165,823.041	259.0984739			
Olympic National Forest	Pacific Ranger District/Quinault	147,023.649	229.724427	1		
Total		697,410	1,089	2	1	1
Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest	Supervisors Office: Southwest Oregon Zone					
Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forests	Siskiyou Mountains Ranger District	231,330.912	361.4545129	1		
Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forests	High Cascades Ranger District	459,259.701	717.5932088	1		
Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forests	Powers Ranger District	162,340.066	253.6563265			
Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forests	Gold Beach Ranger District	490,521.69	766.4400605	1		
Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forests	Wild Rivers Ranger District	509,254.026	795.7093325	1		
Total		1,852,706	2,894	4	1	1
Siuslaw National Forest	Supervisors Office: Northeast Oregon Zone1					
Siuslaw National Forest	Hebo Ranger District	179,722.853	280.8169282	1		
Siuslaw National Forest	Central Coast Ranger District—ODNRA	655,885.777	1,024.821419	1		
Total		835,608	1,305	3		
Umatilla National Forest	Supervisors Office: Northeast Oregon Zone					
Umatilla National Forest	Walla Walla Ranger District	408,273.007	637.9265068	1		
Umatilla National Forest	North Fork John Day Ranger District	512,458.491	800.7163082			
Umatilla National Forest	Pomeroy Ranger District	347,550.626	543.0477971			
Umatilla National Forest	Heppner Ranger District	229,818.381	359.0911833			
Total		1,498,100	2,340	1	1	1
Umpqua National Forest	Supervisors Office: Southwest Oregon Zone					
Umpqua National Forest	Cottage Grove Ranger District	88,730.257	138.6410127	1		
Umpqua National Forest	Diamond Lake Ranger District	316,631.984	494.7374227			
Umpqua National Forest	Tiller Ranger District	362,434.89	566.3044571			
Umpqua National Forest	North Umpqua Ranger District	268,045.44	418.8209571	1		
Total		1,035,842	1,618	3		
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest	Supervisors Office: Northeast Oregon Zone					
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest	Hells Canyon National Recreation Area	25,115.873	39.24354739			
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest	Hells Canyon National Recreation Area	114,989.505	179.6710833			
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest	Eagle Cap Ranger District	391,530.927	611.767009			
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest	La Grande Ranger District	459,055.435	717.2740429	1		
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest	Hells Canyon National Recreation Area	510,611.642	797.8306072	1		
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest	Wallowa Valley Ranger District	356,707.568	557.3555167	1		
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest	Whitman Ranger District	667,191.625	1,042.486806	1		
Total		2,525,202	3,945	4		

USDA Forest Service Region 6—Continued
LEI Field Staffing and Forest/District Size
November 1, 2021

National Forest	District	Acres	Sq. Miles	LEO	CPT	SA
Willamette National Forest	Supervisors Office: Central Oregon Zone					1
Willamette National Forest	Middle Fork Ranger District	725,799.32	1,134.06132	1		
Willamette National Forest	Detroit Ranger District	323,869.189	506.0455543	1		
Willamette National Forest	McKenzie River Ranger District	520,794.207	813.7408636	1		
Willamette National Forest	Sweet Home Ranger District	230,829.262	360.6706844	1		
Total		1,801,291	2,814	4		1
Total for Region		27,824,935	43,475	51	7	6

USDA Forest Service Region 8
LEI Field Staffing and Forest/District Size
November 1, 2021

National Forest	District	Acres	Sq. Miles	LEO	CPT	SA
Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest	Supervisors Office: (CPT) (Chattahoochee/Francis Marion); (SA) (Chattahoochee/Francis Marion)				1	1
Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest	Chattooga River Ranger District	452,013.464	706.2709642			
Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest	Blue Ridge Ranger District: LEO; LEO	583,696.312	912.0253922	2		
Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest	Comasauga Ranger District	484,335.157	756.7736034			
Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest	Oconee Ranger District: LEO	276,261.735	431.6589164	1		
Total		1,796,306	2,806	3	1	1
Cherokee National Forest	Supervisors Office: (CPT) (NF in Alabama/Cherokee NF); (SA)					1
Cherokee National Forest	Unaka Ranger District: LEO	342,490.036	535.1406255	1		
Cherokee National Forest	Tellico Ranger District: LEO/FTO	216,849.617	338.8274905	1		
Cherokee National Forest	Ocree Ranger District: LEO	240,193.532	375.3023539	1		
Cherokee National Forest	Watauga Ranger District: LEO	428,755.686	669.9306896	1		
Total		1,228,288	1,919	4		1
Daniel Boone National Forest	Supervisors Office: (CPT)				1	
Daniel Boone National Forest	Cumberland Ranger District: LEO; LEO; LEO; (SA) (Daniel Boone NF/LBL)	473,612.902	740.0200825	3		1
Daniel Boone National Forest	Stearns Ranger District: LEO	379,998.15	593.7470472	1		
Daniel Boone National Forest	London Ranger District: LEO; LEO; (SA) (Daniel Boone NF/LBL)	507,308.506	792.6694577	2		1
Daniel Boone National Forest	Redbird Ranger District: (SA) (Daniel Boone NF/LBL)	682,149.695	1,065.858788			1
Total		2,043,069	3,192	6	1	3
El Yunque National Forest	Supervisors Office: (CPT)—(Vacant currently filled with Detainer); (SA) (NF in Florida/El Yunque)					
El Yunque National Forest	Catalina Field Office: LEO; LEO	55,829.81	87.23406857	2		
Total		55,829	87	2		
Francis Marion and Sumter National Forest	Supervisors Office: (CPT) (Chattahoochee/Francis Marion); (SA) (Chattahoochee/Francis Marion)					
Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests	Enoree Ranger District: LEO	396,057.024	618.8390362	1		
Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests	Long Cane Ranger District: LEO	424,273.558	662.9273645	1		
Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests	Andrew Pickens Ranger District: LEO	140,435.805	219.4309222	1		

USDA Forest Service Region 8—Continued
LEI Field Staffing and Forest/District Size

November 1, 2021

National Forest	District	Acres	Sq. Miles	LEO	CPT	SA
Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests	Francis Marion Ranger District: LEO	420,401.751	656.8776669	1		
Total		1,381,168	2,158	4		
George Washington and Jefferson National Forest	Supervisors Office: (CPT); (SA) Vacant at this time					1
George Washington and Jefferson National Forest	Clinch Ranger District: LEO	319,084.203	498.5690147	1		
	Warm Springs Ranger District: Vacant	316,979.924	495.2810792			
	Glenwood and Pedlar Ranger Districts: Vacant	446,753.988	698.0530333			
	Mount Rogers National Recreation Area: LEO	424,125.884	662.6966244	1		
	James River Ranger District: LEO	359,368.973	561.513961	1		
	Eastern Divide Ranger District: LEO	776,693.667	1,213.583728	1		
	Lee Ranger District: LEO	301,836.862	471.620048	1		
	North River Ranger District: Vacant	543,120.036	848.6249683			
Total		3,487,963	5,449	5	1	
Kisatchie National Forest	Supervisors Office: (CPT) (NF in Texas/Kisatchie NF); (SA) (NF in Texas/Kisatchie NF)					
Kisatchie National Forest	Catahoula Ranger District: LEO	188,377.981	294.3405642	1		
	Caney Ranger District: LEO	59,462.128	92.90956563	1		
	Kisatchie Ranger District: LEO	175,685.477	274.5085295	1		
	Calcasieu Ranger District: LEO	312,685.528	488.5710861	1		
	Winn Ranger District: LEO	326,815.507	510.649176	1		
Total		1,063,026	1,660	5		
Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area	Supervisors Office: (CPT) Vacant; LEO; LEO; LEO; (SA) (Daniel Boone NF/LBL); (SA) (Daniel Boone NF/LBL); (SA) (Daniel Boone NF/LBL)					
Total		170,000	267	3		
National Forests in Alabama	Supervisors Office: (CPT) (NF in Alabama/Cherokee NF); (SA)					1 1
National Forests in Alabama	Talladega Ranger District: LEO	247,902.82	387.3481158	1		
	Bankhead Ranger District: LEO	348,735.861	544.8997261	1		
	Conecuh Ranger District: LEO	171,329.656	267.7025597	1		
	Tuskegee Ranger District: Vacant	15,649.837	24.45286764			
	Oakmulgee Ranger District: LEO	329,347.264	514.6050465	1		
	Shoal Creek Ranger District: Vacant	176,550.779	275.8605635			
Total		1,289,516	2,014	4	1	1
National Forests in Florida	Supervisors Office: (CPT); (SA) (NF in Florida/El Yunque)					1 1
National Forests in Florida	Osceola Ranger District: LEO; RLEO	337,981.867	528.0966129	1 & (1) 2		
	Seminole Ranger District: LEO; LEO	210,273.081	328.5516546			
	Lake George Ranger District: LEO; LEO	232,923.967	363.9436601	2		
	Apalachicola Ranger District: LEO	314,236.081	490.9938262	1		
	Wakulla Ranger District: Vacant	327,796.289	512.1816487			
Total		1,423,211	2,223	7	1	1
National Forests in Mississippi	Supervisors Office: (CPT); (SA)					1 1

USDA Forest Service Region 8—Continued
LEI Field Staffing and Forest/District Size

November 1, 2021

National Forest	District	Acres	Sq. Miles	LEO	CPT	SA
National Forests in Mississippi	Homochitto Ranger District: LEO	380,642.161	594.7533143	1		
National Forests in Mississippi	Holly Springs Ranger District: LEO; RLEO	529,166.081	826.821915	1 & (1)		
National Forests in Mississippi	Bienville Ranger District: LEO	388,448.533	606.9507689	1		
National Forests in Mississippi	Tombigbee Ranger District: LEO	119,671.372	186.9864987	1		
National Forests in Mississippi	Delta Ranger District: RLEO	120,747.749	188.6683374	(1)		
National Forests in Mississippi	Chickasawhay Ranger District: LEO	193,951.557	303.0492769	1		
National Forests in Mississippi	De Soto Ranger District: LEO	640,678.532	1,001.060102	1		
Total		2,373,305	3,708	8	1	1
National Forests in North Carolina	Supervisors Office: (CPT); (SA)				1	1
National Forests in North Carolina	Tusquitzee Ranger District: LEO	397,612.931	621.2701406	1		
National Forests in North Carolina	Cheoah Ranger District: LEO	205,349.027	320.8578213	1		
National Forests in North Carolina	Nantahala Ranger District: LEO	691,398.924	1,080.310707	1		
National Forests in North Carolina	Cratatan Ranger District: LEO/FTO	307,599.781	480.6246085	1		
National Forests in North Carolina	Grandfather Ranger District: Vacant	429,209.075	670.6391101			
National Forests in North Carolina	Pisgah Ranger District: Vacant	311,086.809	486.0730891			
National Forests in North Carolina	Appalachian Ranger District: Vacant	464,261.716	725.4088562			
National Forests in North Carolina	Uwharrie Ranger District: LEO	219,721.745	343.3151901	1		
Total		3,026,240	4,728	5	1	1
National Forests in Texas	Supervisors Office: (CPT) (NF in Texas/Kisatchie NF); (SA) (NF in Texas/Kisatchie NF)				1	1
National Forests in Texas	Angelina Ranger District: LEO	398,146.476	622.1038045	1		
National Forests in Texas	Caddo—Lyndon B. Johnson National Grasslands: LEO	183,888.085	287.3251021	1		
National Forests in Texas	Davy Crockett Ranger District: LEO	389,609.015	608.7640226	1		
National Forests in Texas	Sabine Ranger District: LEO	454,542.489	710.222565	1		
National Forests in Texas	Sam Houston Ranger District: LEO; LEO	495,315.845	773.9309274	2		
Total		1,921,501	3,002	6	1	1
Ouachita National Forest	Supervisors Office: (CPT); (SA)				1	1
Ouachita National Forest	Cold Springs Ranger District: Vacant	192,550.649	300.860358			
Ouachita National Forest	Kiamichi Ranger District: LEO (Kiamichi and Choctaw are combined)	126,353.337	197.4270678	1		
Ouachita National Forest	Choctaw Ranger District	138,918.461	217.0600732			
Ouachita National Forest	Poteau Ranger District: Combined with Cold Springs	241,949.877	378.0466428			
Ouachita National Forest	Winona Ranger District: LEO DAVID CADLE	158,864.261	248.2253826	1		
Ouachita National Forest	Oden Ranger District: combined with Mena	226,999.245	354.6862828			
Ouachita National Forest	Jessieville Ranger District: LEO GREG BURDEN	248,905.44	388.9147095	1		
Ouachita National Forest	Tiak Ranger District: LEO JOSH COLLINS	444,936.429	695.213098	1		
Ouachita National Forest	Mena Ranger District: LEO JOE LILES	246,863.451	385.7241026	1		
Ouachita National Forest	Womble Ranger District: LEO CHRIS JOHNSON	248,260.859	387.9075517	1		
Ouachita National Forest	Fourche Ranger District: Combined with Jessieville/Winona.	196,852.112	307.5813928			

USDA Forest Service Region 8—Continued
LEI Field Staffing and Forest/District Size

November 1, 2021

National Forest	District	Acres	Sq. Miles	LEO	CPT	SA
Ouachita National Forest	Caddo Ranger District: Combined with Womble	252,966.382	395.2599314			
Total		2,724,420	4,256	6	1	1
Ozark-St. Francis National Forest	Supervisors Office: (CPT); (SA)				1	1
Ozark-St. Francis National Forest	St. Francis Ranger Dis- trict: Vacant	31,135.214	48.64876617			
Ozark-St. Francis National Forest	Magazine Mountain Rang- er District: Vacant	132,417.669	206.9025857			
Ozark-St. Francis National Forest	Bayou Ranger District: Vacant	301,006.578	470.3227298			
Ozark-St. Francis National Forest	Buffalo Ranger District: Vacant	315,733.622	493.3337334			
Ozark-St. Francis National Forest	Boston Mountain Ranger District: Vacant	308,968.379	482.7630412			
Ozark-St. Francis National Forest	Sylamore Ranger District: LEO	171,622.466	268.1600745	1		
Ozark-St. Francis National Forest	Big Piney Ranger District: LEO	1				
Ozark-St. Francis National Forest	Pleasant Hill Ranger Dis- trict: LEO	272,012.545	425.0195579	1		
Total		1,532,896	2,395	3	1	1
Total for Region		25,516,745	39,871	71	10	1

USDA Forest Service Region 9
LEI Field Staffing and Forest/District Size

November 1, 2021

National Forest	District	Acres	Sq. Miles	LEO	CPT	SA
Allegheny National Forest	Supervisors Office—South East Zone					1
Allegheny National Forest	Marienville Ranger Dis- trict	367,113.051	573.6140831	1		
Allegheny National Forest	Bradford Ranger District	373,766.939	584.0107807	1		
Total		740,879	1,157	2		1
Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest	Supervisors Office—North West Zone					1
Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest	Washburn Ranger District	235,235.987	367.5561918			
Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest	Medford-Park Falls Rang- er District	346,779.01	541.8421462	1		
Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest	Great Divide Ranger Dis- trict	457,570.639	714.9540484	1		
Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest	Eagle River-Florence Ranger District	429292.201	670.7689942			
Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest	Lakewood-Laona Ranger District	536,465.272	838.2268997	1		
Total		2,005,343	3,133	3		1
Chippewa National Forest	Supervisors Office—North West Zone					
Chippewa National Forest	Blackduck Ranger District	458,601.328	716.5645009			
Chippewa National Forest	Deer River Ranger District	660,671.695	1,032.299415	1		
Chippewa National Forest	Walker Ranger District	478,866.021	748.2280799	1		
Total		1,598,139	2,497	2		
Green Mountain and Finger Lakes Na- tional Forests	Supervisors Office—North East Zone				1	1
Green Mountain and Finger Lakes Na- tional Forests	Manchester Ranger Dis- trict	600,709.2	938.6080278	1		
Green Mountain and Finger Lakes Na- tional Forests	Hector Ranger District	16,811.219	26.26752666			
Green Mountain and Finger Lakes Na- tional Forests	Middlebury Ranger Dis- trict	117,113.996	182.9905991			
Green Mountain and Finger Lakes Na- tional Forests	Rochester Ranger District	119,267.066	186.3547712	1		
Total		853,901	1,334	2	1	1
Hiawatha National Forest	Supervisors Office—North Central Zone					1

USDA Forest Service Region 9—Continued
LEI Field Staffing and Forest/District Size

November 1, 2021

National Forest	District	Acres	Sq. Miles	LEO	CPT	SA
Hiawatha National Forest	Rapid River Ranger District	295,604.204	461.8815201	1		
Hiawatha National Forest	Manistique Ranger District	198,266.808	309.7918555			
Hiawatha National Forest	Munising Ranger District	303,625.207	474.4143364			
Hiawatha National Forest	Sault Ste. Marie Ranger District	303,206.228	473.7596821			
Hiawatha National Forest	St. Ignace Ranger District	199,624.021	311.9125008	1		
Total		1,300,326	2,031	2	1	
Hoosier National Forest	Supervisors Office—South Central Zone					
Hoosier National Forest	Tell City Ranger District	364,656.443	569.7756324	1		
Hoosier National Forest	Brownstown Ranger District	282,292.399	441.0818279	1		
Total		646,948	1,010	2		
Supervisors Office—North Central Zone						
Huron-Manistee National Forest	Baldwin Ranger District	377,372.18	589.643968	1		
Huron-Manistee National Forest	Cadillac Ranger District	217,031.039	339.1109636	1		
Huron-Manistee National Forest	Huron Shores Ranger District	270,845.197	423.1955769	1		
Huron-Manistee National Forest	Manistee Ranger District	244,667.312	382.2926346	1		
Huron-Manistee National Forest	White Cloud Ranger District	493,953.803	771.8027371	1		
Huron-Manistee National Forest	Tawas Ranger District	198,792.072	310.6125798	1		
Huron-Manistee National Forest	Mio Ranger District	225,546.533	352.4164212	1		
Total		2,028,208	3,169	4		1
Supervisors Office—South West Zone						
Mark Twain National Forest	Potosi/Fredericktown Ranger District	605,865.429	946.6646346	1		
Mark Twain National Forest	Salem Ranger District	309,564.541	483.6945451	1		
Mark Twain National Forest	Ava/Cassville/Willow Springs Ranger District	732,308.05	1,144.231209	1		
Mark Twain National Forest	Houston/Rolla/Cedar Creek Ranger District	579,156.931	904.9326106	1		
Mark Twain National Forest	Poplar Bluff Ranger District	339,182.211	529.9721495	1		
Mark Twain National Forest	Domiphan/Eleven Point Ranger District	505,402.169	789.690807	1		
Total		3,071,479	4,799	6	1	1
Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie	South Central Zone	8,094	28.271875	1		
Total		18,094	28.271875	1		
Supervisors Office—South East Zone						
Monongahela National Forest	Gauley Ranger District	293,583.508	458.7241839	1		
Monongahela National Forest	Cheat Ranger District/Potomac Ranger District	257,581.018	402.4702988	1		
Monongahela National Forest	Marlinton Ranger District/White Sulphur Ranger District	311,249.399	486.3271357	1		
Monongahela National Forest	Greenbrier Ranger District	402,327.545	628.6367234			
Total		1,703,694	2,662	4		1
Supervisors Office—North Central Zone						
Ottawa National Forest	Bergland Ranger District	268,259.981	419.156176			
Ottawa National Forest	Watersmeet Ranger District/Iron River Ranger District	261,339.148	408.3423764	1		
Ottawa National Forest	Bessemer Ranger District	358,846.298	560.6972822			
Ottawa National Forest	Kenton Ranger District	264,042.827	412.5668741			
Ottawa National Forest	Iron River Ranger District	227,134.894	354.8982346			
Ottawa National Forest	Ontonagon Ranger District	182,803.747	285.630825	1		
Total		1,562,462	2,441	2		
Supervisors Office—South Central Zone						
Shawnee National Forest	Hidden Springs Ranger District	556,396.607	869.3696075	2		

USDA Forest Service Region 9—Continued
LEI Field Staffing and Forest/District Size

November 1, 2021

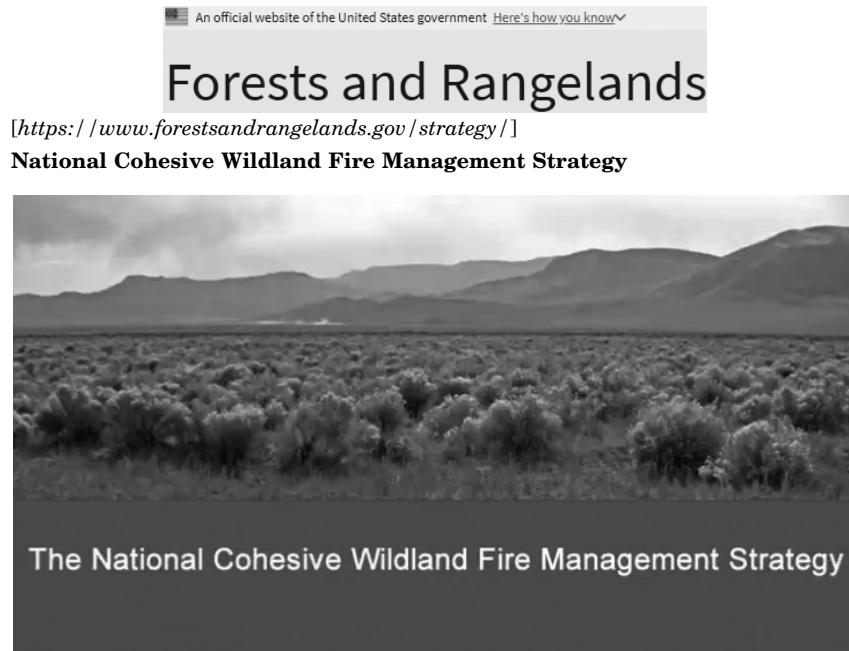
National Forest	District	Acres	Sq. Miles	LEO	CPT	SA
Shawnee National Forest	Mississippi Bluffs Ranger District	373,630.965	583.7983216	1		
Total		930,027	1,453	4	1	
Superior National Forest	Supervisors Office—North West Zone				1	1
Superior National Forest						
Superior National Forest	Laurentian Ranger District	751,115.442	1,173.617756	1		
Superior National Forest	Lacroix Ranger District	1,035,050.412	1,617.266099	1		
Superior National Forest	Gunflint Ranger District	644,051.342	1,006.330117	1		
Superior National Forest	Kawishiwi Ranger District	718,380.285	1,122.469078			
Superior National Forest	Tofte Ranger District	739,307.99	1,155.168614			
Total		3,887,905	6,074	3	1	1
Wayne National Forest	Supervisors Office—South East Zone				1	1
Wayne National Forest						
Wayne National Forest (Wayne National Forest)	Athens Ranger District	539,178.652	842.4665566			
	Ironton Ranger District	316,982.265	495.2847367	1		
Total		856,160	1,337	3	1	1
White Mountain National Forest	Supervisors Office—North East Zone					
White Mountain National Forest						
White Mountain National Forest	Massabesic Experimental Forest	11,790.618	18.42283985			
White Mountain National Forest	Saco Ranger District	283,321.891	442.690407	1		
White Mountain National Forest	Androscoggin Ranger District	239,236.341	373.8067434	1		
White Mountain National Forest	Pemigewasset Ranger District	412,965.848	645.2590702	2		
Total		947,314	1,480	4		
Total for Region		22,132,756	34,582	44	6	8
58 total positions						

USDA Forest Service Region 10
LEI Field Staffing and Forest/District Size

November 1, 2021

National Forest	District	Acres	Sq. Miles	LEO	CPT	SA
Chugach National Forest	Supervisors Office—North Zone				1	1
Chugach National Forest						
Chugach National Forest	Glacier Ranger District	2,600,495.976	4,063.273947	2		
Chugach National Forest	Cordova Ranger District	2,776,136.787	4,337.673193	1		
Chugach National Forest	Seward Ranger District	868,071.225	1,356.361648	2		
Total		6,244,703	9,757	5	1	1
Tongass National Forest	Supervisors Office—South Zone				1	
Tongass National Forest						
Tongass National Forest	Yakutat Ranger District	1,255,372.161	1,961.518198			
Tongass National Forest	Tongass National Forest/Petersburg Ranger District	1,942,532.97	3,035.207467	1		
Tongass National Forest	Wrangell Ranger District	1,737,306.921	2,714.541516	1		
Tongass National Forest	Ketchikan—Misty Ranger District	3,328,718.695	5,201.121958	1		
Tongass National Forest	Thorne Bay Ranger District	1,021,659.879	1,596.343472	1		
Tongass National Forest	Craig Ranger District	1,288,078.366	2,012.622158	1		
Tongass National Forest	Sitka Ranger District	1,926,141.142	3,009.595201	1		
Tongass National Forest	Hoonah Ranger District	673,051.995	1,051.643629			
Tongass National Forest	Juneau Ranger District	3,498,555.692	5,466.491118	2		
Tongass National Forest	Admiralty National Monument	1,019,255.04	1,592.58585			
Total		17,690,672	27,641	8	1	
Total for Region		23,935,376	37,398	13	2	1

[ATTACHMENT 1]



Editor's note: the image above is an animation. A video of this animation has been retained in Committee file.

Cohesive Strategy News

*Cohesive Strategy Crosswalk and Strategic Alignment*¹

The *Cohesive Strategy Crosswalk and Strategic Alignment* report represents a deeper evaluation undertaken to ascertain national progress made in implementing the Cohesive Strategy, identify gaps in implementation, and attempt to reaffirm the Cohesive Strategy's goals as the pathway to achieving its vision.

*Read more about and see the [Cohesive Strategy Crosswalk and Strategic Alignment](#) report.*²

*Western Regional Strategy Committee eNewsletters*³

Check out the latest and archived Western Regional Strategy Committee eNewsletters on their [website](#),⁴ as well other information related to the Western Region and the Cohesive Strategy.

*Cohesive Strategy News Archive.*⁵

Follow Us

*Follow us on Twitter @US_Wildfire.*⁶

*Follow the Cohesive Strategy on Facebook.*⁷

¹ **Editor's note:** the report and its appendices have been retained in Committee file.

² <https://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/strategy/thestrategy.shtml#alignment>.

³ <http://westerncohesivestrategynewsarchive.blogspot.com/>.

⁴ <http://wildfireinthewest.org/>.

⁵ <https://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/strategy/newsarchive.shtml>.

⁶ https://twitter.com/US_Wildfire.

⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Cohesive-Wildland-Fire-Management-Strategy/169360363246751>.

[ATTACHMENT 2]

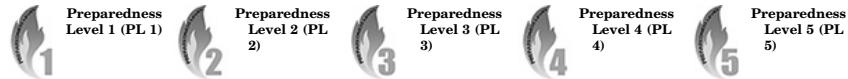
National Wildland Fire Preparedness Levels

A Summary of the Nation's Wildfire Response Stages

The National Multi-Agency Coordination Group (NMAC), composed of wildland fire representatives from each wildland fire agency based at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC), establishes Preparedness Levels throughout the calendar year to ensure suppression resource availability for emerging incidents across the country. Preparedness Levels are dictated by fuel and weather conditions, fire activity, and fire suppression resource availability throughout the country.

The five Preparedness Levels range from the lowest (1) to the highest (5). Each Preparedness Level includes specific management actions and involves increasing levels of interagency resource commitments. As Preparedness Levels rise, so does the need for Incident Management Teams (IMTs) and suppression resources, which include wildland fire crews, engines, helicopters, airtankers and other aircraft, and specialized heavy equipment, such as bulldozers. Many of these resources and teams are Federal and state employees.

IMTs are specialized teams of experienced, interagency wildland fire personnel who manage large, complex wildland fire incidents. IMTs manage wildland fires so that local units can free up their resources to focus on new and emerging incidents.



During this time, fire personnel are able to suppress wildfires in their respective geographic areas without requesting additional wildland fire resources from other areas or from the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC), based at the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho. Fire activity is typically below normal at this level.

At this stage, several geographic areas are experiencing high to extreme fire danger, though they are able to manage fire activity without requesting many wildland fire suppression resources from other areas. Few of the country's IMTs are assigned to wildland fire incidents.

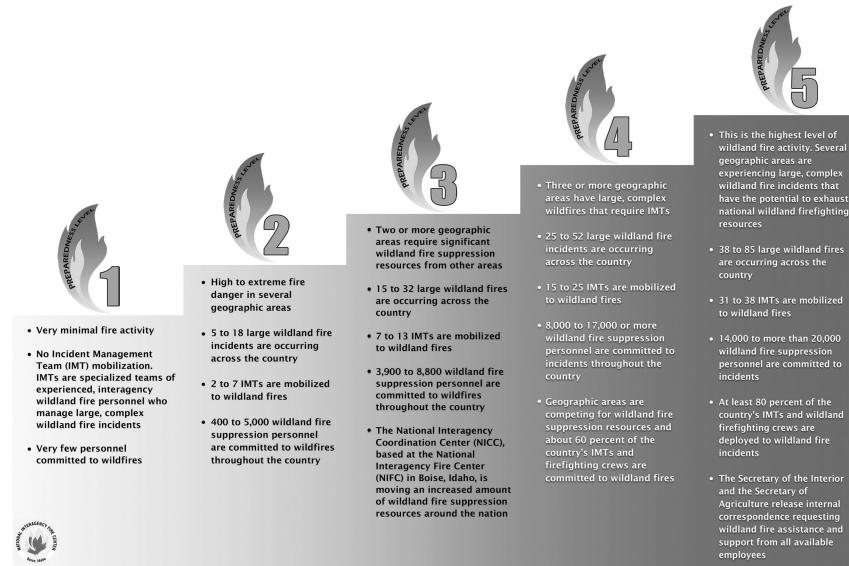
This stage typically involves two or more geographic areas requiring significant amounts of wildland fire suppression resources from other areas. At this point, NICC is moving an increased amount of wildland fire suppression resources around the country, including IMTs.

This level involves three or more geographic areas experiencing large, complex wildfires requiring IMTs. Geographic areas are competing for wildland fire suppression resources and about 60 percent of the country's IMTs and wildland firefighting personnel are committed to wildland fire incidents.

This is the highest level of wildland fire activity. Several geographic areas are experiencing large, complex wildland fire incidents, which have the potential to exhaust national wildland firefighting resources. At least 80 percent of the country's IMTs and wildland firefighting personnel are committed to wildland fire incidents. At this level, all fire-qualified Federal employees become available for wildfire response.



National Wildland Fire Preparedness Levels



[ATTACHMENT 3]

TESTIMONY OF CHRISTOPHER FRENCH, DEPUTY CHIEF, NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM, U.S. FOREST SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

The Infrastructure Needs of the U.S. Energy Sector, Western Water and Public Lands, and Consideration of a Legislative Proposal

Chairman Manchin, Ranking Member Barrasso, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the discussion draft of the Energy Infrastructure Act (EIA). My testimony today will discuss the role of forests as nature-based infrastructure, the threat wildfire poses to maintaining this infrastructure, and funding provided by the EIA to improve forest conditions and other natural resource-based infrastructure.

Forests as Nature-based Infrastructure

The USDA Forest Service manages over 193 million acres of national forests and grasslands across 44 states and territories. These lands amount to approximately 30 percent of all federally managed lands and comprise approximately eight percent of the land area in the United States. Infrastructure forms a physical link between Americans and their National Forest System (NFS) lands, strengthening communities by providing safe access to the many ecological, economic, and social amenities NFS lands provide. Infrastructure on NFS lands affords access to ranching, farming, logging, outdoor recreation, tourism, and energy production, all of which support thriving small businesses, particularly in rural communities. In addition, people depend on the Forest Service road network to get to schools, stores, hospitals, and their homes.

NFS lands are themselves critical infrastructure supporting the nation's drinking water supply. Approximately 20 percent of the nation's fresh water originates on national forests and grasslands. An estimated 180 million people in over 68,000 communities rely on these lands to capture and filter their drinking water. Major U.S. cities that may seem distant from forests also rely on water flowing from NFS lands. Los Angeles, Portland, Denver, and Atlanta all receive a significant portion of their water supply from national forests.

National Forests are also part of the nation's network of public and private forests that serve as the most efficient carbon capture infrastructure mitigating the effects of climate change. Taken together, the nation's forests and harvested wood products capture the equivalent of more than 14 percent of economy-wide CO₂ emissions in the United States annually.

Wildland Fire Threat to Forests

Devastating wildfires are the most critical threat to the ability of our forests to sequester carbon, support local economies, and provide clean water and other important resources upon which we rely. In the United States, there are over a billion acres at risk of wildland fire. This is, in part, a result of 110 years of fire suppression policies that have led to unhealthy forests. Forest Service research has identified hundreds of communities at high risk of wildland fire.

About 63 million acres, or 32 percent, of the NFS lands are at high or very high hazard for wildfires that would be difficult to contain. The Forest Service carries out approximately 3 million acres of fuels treatments annually. Unfortunately, this is not at the scale necessary to address the problem. Without a paradigm shift in the way we treat hazardous fuels on Federal and non-Federal land, and addressing the impacts of climate change, we will remain in this current wildfire crisis and destruction from wildfires will continue to threaten communities across the West.

Forest Service research indicates we need to dramatically increase the extent and impact of fuels treatments such as thinning, harvesting, planting, and prescribed burning across all landscapes. To make progress, we estimate that two to four times more acres than are currently treated each year need to undergo fuels reduction treatments. Our scientists have developed scenario planning tools to help target fuels treatments in strategic locations that will reduce fire size and severity. Our estimates suggest approximately 20 million acres of NFS land and 30 million acres of other Federal, state, Tribal and private lands in the West need treatment over the next 10 years in order to significantly reduce wildfire exposure to communities. USDA included these estimates among recommendations for decreasing the risk of severe wildfire in the Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry Strategy provided in response to *Executive Order 14008: Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*.

President Biden's *American Jobs Plan* calls for restoring nature-based infrastructure to increase resilience and reduce the risks associated with extreme wildfires. USDA supports additional investments in wildfire risk reduction and ecosystem restoration. We believe such investments will help make significant progress in reducing the threat of wildland fire to communities across the West.

Section 8003: Wildfire Risk Reduction

Section 8003 of the EIA would provide \$3.5 billion to USDA and the Department of the Interior (DOI) for activities that involve responding to and mitigating the threat of wildland fire. These provisions include increased funding for: salaries and expenses of hardworking and dedicated Federal wildland firefighters; mapping hazardous fuels treatments and their relation to wildfires; technology related to detecting and managing wildfires; the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (16 U.S.C. 7303); mechanical thinning and timber harvesting focused on small diameter trees; community wildfire defense grants; increasing use of prescribed fire and implementation of fuel breaks; modifying and removing flammable vegetation on Federal land; post-fire restoration; and other important provisions that would greatly assist Federal agencies, states, and local communities in reducing the threat of wildland fire. If funding through these provisions is not obligated within 5 years of enactment it would be returned to the Treasury. USDA supports additional investments in each of these areas and would like to work with the Committee on technical suggestions related to this section.

This section also directs USDA and DOI, in coordination with the Office of Personnel Management, to establish a new "wildland fire manager" occupational series. The new series would not affect hazardous duty differential pay and would provide current wildland firefighters with the option to either remain in their current occupational series or convert to the new "wildland fire manager" series. Starting in Fiscal Year 2022, USDA and DOI will seek to convert no fewer than 1,000 seasonal wildland firefighters to permanent, full-time, and year-round wildland fire managers who hold responsibilities for reducing hazardous fuels on Federal land. Section 8003 also increases the base salary of wildland firefighters and wildland fire managers in cases where their hourly pay is below the state minimum wage or their position is in a location where recruitment or retention is difficult. The Forest Service shares the Committee's concerns about ensuring competitive pay for wildland firefighters. We are engaging with the Office of Personnel Management and the wildland firefighter community in seeking solutions that address this need.

Section 8003(c) provides an additional \$100 million for implementing Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) projects established under 16 U.S.C. 7303. Section 8003(e) requires USDA to solicit new proposals, allows planning costs to be included, discontinues funding of any proposal selected prior to September 2018, and creates new selection criteria for projects, including consideration

of acres in the wildland-urban interface or a public drinking water source area and costs per acre to be treated. USDA supports additional funding for the CFLRP. We would like to work with the Committee, as the new criteria would likely affect projects that have been submitted and approved for funding, projects that were eligible for extension under the 2018 Farm Bill provision, and the types and locations of projects eligible for future CFLRP funding.

USDA supports the concept of a Community Wildfire Defense Grant Program, however we would like to work with the Committee to ensure that we don't have duplicative and competing programs for community defense. Implementing community defense projects consistent with Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP), in areas with high or very high hazard potential, that are low-income, or in a community impacted by a severe disaster is an important component of a national effort to reduce risk to life and property from wildfire.

Section 8003(g) amends Section 10 of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act (16 U.S.C. 2106) by limiting funding to any city, town, or unincorporated area that has a population of not more than 10,000 inhabitants. Further, this section changes eligibility for assistance by requiring states to seek to improve fire data submitted to the National Fire Incident Reporting System and requiring a county in which a volunteer fire department is located to adopt an ordinance or regulation that requires the construction of new roofs on buildings before State Fire Assistance or Volunteer Fire Assistance funds can be disbursed. USDA would like to work with the Committee to ensure there are no unintended consequences to existing program delivery should these provisions be enacted.

Section 8004: Ecosystem Restoration

Section 8004 provides \$2 billion to USDA and DOI for various activities designed to improve ecosystem health. If the funding is not obligated within 5 years of enactment it would be returned to the Treasury. Of the funding provided to USDA, this section would be used to:

- Enter into landscape-scale contracts, including stewardship contracts, to restore ecological health on Federal land;
- Provide funds to states for implementing restoration projects on Federal land through the Good Neighbor Authority (16 U.S.C. 2113a);
- Provide financial assistance to establish or improve sawmills and wood processing facilities that process byproducts from restoration projects;
- Award grants to states to establish rental programs for portable skidder bridges that minimize stream bed disturbance on Federal and non-Federal land;
- Detect, prevent and eradicate invasive species at points of entry and grants for eradication of invasive species on non-Federal land and on Federal land;
- Restore, prepare or adapt recreation sites that have or may likely experience use beyond their carrying capacity;
- Restore native vegetation and mitigate environmental hazards on Federal and non-Federal previously mined land; and
- Establish a collaborative-based, landscape scale restoration program to restore water quality or fish passage on Federal land.

USDA supports additional investments in each of these areas. We would like to work with the Committee on technical suggestions related to this section, and look forward to working with the Committee to explore other areas where further investment is warranted.

Other Natural Resources-Related Provisions

There are several other provisions in the EIA that relate to natural resources managed by the USDA Forest Service including:

Civilian Climate Corps

Section 8003(c)(15) of the EIA provides \$200 million for removing flammable vegetation on Federal land and, to the extent practicable, producing biochar through the use of the Civilian Climate Corps established pursuant to E.O. 14008. USDA supports the use of the Civilian Climate Corps under this provision, and also would like to work with the Committee to make further investments that will mobilize the next generation of new, diverse conservation and resilience workers in restoring our public lands as proposed in the American Jobs Plan.

Legacy Roads and Trails Program

Section 8001 would require the Secretary to establish the Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation Program. This program supports restoring fish passages, road

decommissioning, preparing roads for long-term storage, relocating National Forest System roads, and converting NFS roads to trails. If enacted, the program will require the Forest Service to establish an annual process for selecting long-term storage and road and trail decommissioning projects, and to solicit public comment on these projects. The program prioritizes projects that: protect or improve water quality; restore habitat of threatened, endangered, or sensitive species; and maintain future access for the public, permittees and firefighters. In implementing the program, the Forest Service is required to ensure that the system of roads and trails is adequate to meet any increasing demands, provides for multiple use and sustained yield of products and services, does not damage adjacent resources, and reflects long-term funding expectations. USDA supports reestablishment of the Legacy Roads and Trails program.

Orphaned Well Site Plugging, Remediation, and Restoration Program

Section 6001 of the EIA includes the “Revive Economic Growth and Reclaim Orphaned Wells Act of 2021” (S. 1076). USDA provided written testimony to the Committee on S. 1076 on June 16, 2021. USDA appreciates the Committee’s attention to this important issue and supports the goal of S. 1076, the “Revive Economic Growth and Reclaim Orphaned Wells Act of 2021,” to remediate the thousands of orphaned oil and gas wells on Federal and non-Federal lands.

S. 1076 directs the Secretary of the Interior in cooperation with the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a program to identify and permanently plug and remediate orphaned wells located on Federal lands. Additionally, the bill requires the DOI to establish a Tribal grant program administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and a state program administered by the DOI that would enable qualifying Tribes and states to undertake the same type of activities.

As noted in USDA’s June 16th testimony, most orphaned wells on NFS lands originated in areas of split estate and non-Federal development before the Federal Government acquired the land. S. 1076 does not specifically address the issue of split estate and how non-Federal development before the Federal Government acquired the land would be addressed under the Federal program or under the state grant programs. If the intent is to manage these wells under the Federal program, we would welcome the opportunity to work with the Committee to clarify the definition of Federal land and the mechanisms for addressing these wells under the bill. In addition, the Administration supports the strengthening of Federal bonding regulations to ensure that proper financial assurances are in place before development occurs to avoid exacerbating the issue of orphaned wells in the future.

Tree Planting

Tree planting is a critical component of ecosystem restoration given its role in mitigating climate change, increasing carbon storage in forests, providing resilience in the face of invasive pests, and creating and maintaining ecological services vital to this nation. The National Forest System has planned reforestation activities on over 1.3 million acres of forestlands. These plans represent only about $\frac{1}{3}$ of NFS reforestation needs, which are estimated at 4 million acres. Wildfires create over 80 percent of reforestation needs, including approximately 1 million acres that burned with high severity in 2020 alone. The Forest Service currently addresses only six percent of post-wildfire replanting needs per year, resulting in a rapidly expanding list of reforestation needs from wildfire and other natural disturbances. To meet this challenge, we must dramatically increase the rate of reforestation on the national forests. Current funding, provided through the Reforestation Trust Fund, is capped at \$30 million per year. Therefore, USDA recommends adding a provision to eliminate the cap on the Reforestation Trust Fund, as has been proposed in the RE-PLANT Act. This additional provision would close the funding gap and enable national forests to address reforestation needs now and into the future.

This concludes my testimony. I welcome any questions the Committee may have.

