



FORESTS IN THE FARM BILL

2023 FARM BILL

SUMMARIZED RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are concisely summarized recommendations organized by Farm Bill titles. The below recommendations are not listed in any priority order. Additional information on each recommendation, including justification of need and policy solutions, can be found in FIFB Recommendations and Policy Solutions.

FORESTRY

- Incentivize ways to have USDA use the tools and funds Congress previously provided to increase the pace and scale of forest restoration, and on public and cross-boundary lands to reduce risks posed by wildfire.
- Expand and encourage the use of controlled burning and its enabling conditions as an essential tool in fuels management and ecological restoration to build forest resilience and address wildfire challenges.
- Advance the role of forests and forest products as a natural climate solution — promote more nursery capacity and enable access to voluntary carbon market dollars for forests and harvested wood products through USDA loan and bond guarantees.
- Elevate urban and community forests and drive more equitable and just outcomes in the wildland-urban interface by enhancing the Landscape Scale Restoration Program.
- Enhance the Good Neighbor Authority to expand the ability of the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management to partner with states, tribes, and counties on federal forest restoration and management projects.
- Encourage 20-year Stewardship Contracts nationwide to create stability for forestry infrastructure and markets and allow for long-term forest management to reach optimal ecosystem conditions.
- Expand and amplify the USFS Wood Innovations Grants Program to further recognize embodied carbon in wood products, reduce current match requirements, and support innovations with the highest impact and greatest commercialization potential.
- Direct the Secretary to ensure that all Inventory, Monitoring, and Assessment Research undertaken by the Forest Service within the FIA program, for Resources Planning Act reporting, and for other agency reporting and publications utilizes clearly defined terminology, assumptions, data, and analysis with the goal of transparent reporting on forest area estimates.
- Direct the USFS Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program to annually publish its programmatic cost elements and prioritization in its annual budget justification and business report, and a detailed progress report on the implementation of its strategic plan, including how FIA leverages new technology, improves, and standardizes collection protocols, and increases workforce capacity.

- Authorize FIA to create an externally facing office to facilitate sector-wide requests for complex data sets.
- Establish a Wood Design and Build Educational Grant and Accelerator Program within the U.S. Forest Service State and Private Forestry division.
- Amend the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Research Act of 1978 to explicitly incorporate forest carbon data collection and analysis in FIA's mandate.
- For the Watershed Condition Framework, authorize appropriations up to \$20 million to increase Forest Service capacity to implement the program across all regions and include criteria supporting conservation of priority watersheds.
- Strengthen the Water Source Protection Program (WSPP) authority by reducing barriers to utilize the program, make the program more end-users driven, and implementation focused, prioritize integrated source water restoration and conservation with a focus on aquatic ecosystems, and increase the authorization to \$50 million.

CONSERVATION

- Remove re-enrollment limitations for forested stands in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) that have undergone mid-contract management and restore cost-share funding for those activities.
- Amend CRP policy to allow for CRP-enrolled loblolly pine stands to be harvested and replanted with conservation priority species without being considered as “destroying the conservation cover.”
- Support the creation of the Forest Conservation Easement Program (FCEP) while protecting the investments of other longstanding conservation easement programs.
- Improve Post-Disaster Landowner Assistance through the Emergency Forest Restoration Program.
- Exempt forest landowners from the requirement to have an Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Number.
- Amend 2018 Farm Bill language directing “10% of conservation program funding to be used for practices that protect source water for drinking water” to ensure higher priority on surface water/forests (as opposed to groundwater).
- Enhance the accessibility and utility of the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) by building upon and expanding a grant funding model, increasing streamlining, reducing counter-productive funding limitations, creating flexibility in partner contribution, match, and cost-share requirements, and improving technical assistance and planning support.
- Increase forest production, drought resilience and climate resilience within key NRCS programs.
- Enhance investments in forest health including both emergency response to new pest introductions and funding for long-term solutions such as resistance breeding. Explore organizational changes to improve prioritization and coordination of invasive species management within USDA.
- Reauthorize and strengthen programs that support increased workforce capacity within Federal Agencies and partnerships serving the natural resources and conservation community.
- Expand NRCS use of financial support to State Forestry agencies, private consulting foresters, and other entities to serve as Technical Service Providers (TSPs) for NRCS programs.
- In addition to existing set-asides, establish a 10% forestry allocation at the national level, including language that directs state offices/technical committees to assess and establish priority forestry practices, in The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

- Encourage collaboratively developed, landscape-scale conservation projects and build community-based capacity to enable such work through reauthorizations of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program and the Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Partnership with the inclusion of program design elements that support community-based and collaborative partners and groups.
- Improve equitable accessibility by making program and authority modifications that better serve historically underserved landowners and organizations.

RESEARCH EXTENSION AND RELATED MATTERS

- Create a single USDA-sponsored platform with multiple user-friendly tools to provide forest and cradle-to-grave wood product data to measure and monitor forest carbon.
- Direct USDA to report to Congress on efforts to align forestry-focused research efforts with stakeholder needs and sector-wide efforts to make investment decisions efficiently, operate transparently, and obtain and leverage multiple public and private funding sources for R&D.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

- Create a pilot program within the U.S. Forest Service, with technical assistance and resource support from the Office of Rural Development, Rural Housing Service, to provide competitive funding opportunities to integrate U.S. produced wood and tall mass timber products into single-family and multi-family affordable housing at the state and local level.
- Establish regional, forest industry workforce training hubs to support rural, forest-based economies through creating high school and immersive career pathways that lead to immediate job placement.

TRADE

- Support inclusion of the bipartisan Supporting Market Access to Reinvigorate Trade Act of 2022 (SMART Act) in the 2023 Farm Bill.
- Discourage illegal deforestation driven by commodities produced in violation of existing laws in the countries of production which unfairly threatens the competitive position of US farmers and take steps to ensure US trade does not contribute to illegal deforestation.

For additional information on recommendations, please contact Maya Solomon at msolomon@forestfoundation.org.

SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

Aldo Leopold Foundation
American Forests
American Wood Council
Appalachian Mountain Club
Arkansas Forestry Association
Assoc. of Consulting Foresters
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Connecticut Forest and Parks Association
Conservation Resources
Drax
Empire State Forest Products Association
Enviva
Forest Landowners Association
Forest Stewards Guild
Forest Resources Association
Forestry Association of South Carolina
Georgia Forestry Association
Land Trust Alliance
LP Building Solutions
Massachusetts Forest Association
Mule Deer Foundation
National Alliance of Forest Owners
National Assoc. of Conservation Districts
National Assoc. of Counties
National Assoc. of University Forest
Resource Programs
National Wooden Pallet & Container Assoc.
National Woodland Owner Assoc.
New England Forestry Foundation
New Mexico Assoc. of Conservation Districts
Northern Forest Center
Pellet Fuels Initiative
Pheasants Forever
PotlatchDeltic
Quail Forever
Rayonier
Resource Management Service, LLC.
Rocky Mountain Youth Corps
Ruffed Grouse Society & American Woodcock Society
Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition
Sustainable Forestry & African American Land Retention Network, Roanoke Electric Coop.
Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests
Society of American Foresters
Southeastern Lumber Manufacturers Assoc.
Southern Oregon Forest Reforestation Collaborative
Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative
Sustainable Forestry Initiative
Sustainable Northwest
Taos Soil & Water Conservation District
The American Chestnut Foundation
The Conservation Fund
The Hardwood Federation
The Lyme Timber Company
The Walnut Council
The Hardwood Federation
The Westervelt Company
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Treated Wood Council
U.S. Industrial Pellet Association
Vermont Woodlands Association
Village of Ruidoso Forestry Department
Virginia Forestry Association
Watershed Research & Training Center
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
Weyerhaeuser
White Oak Initiative
Wildlife Mississippi

STEERING COMMITTEE ORGANIZATIONS

American Forest Foundation
National Association of State Foresters
National Wild Turkey Federation



**American
Forest
Foundation**



**National
Wild Turkey
Federation**