

# HELP FAMILY FOREST OWNERS

## REDUCE WILDFIRE RISK AND RECOVER FROM OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS



As climate change dramatically alters environmental conditions, our nation's public and private lands are increasingly vulnerable to catastrophic natural disasters, such as wildfires and hurricanes.

## WILDFIRE IMPACTS ON FAMILY AND PRIVATE LANDOWNERS:

Wildfire seasons continue a frightening trend across the West — they are getting longer, fires are getting larger, and fire suppression costs are increasing. In fact, in 2020 alone, fires incurred \$16.5 billion dollars' worth of costs in the West. This threat is increasing across the U.S. landscape as well due to a variety of factors from drought, lack of management and our changing climate.

- There are **MORE THAN 52 MILLION ACRES** across all forest ownerships in need of highest priority for wildfire resilience activities in order to protect communities and watersheds from wildfire.  
**ONE THIRD OF THESE LANDS ARE PRIVATE AND FAMILY OWNED.**
- AFF estimates a **\$60 BILLION INVESTMENT** over ten years is needed for the highest priority work to reduce wildfire risks and community adaptation across all lands.

## NATURAL DISASTER IMPACTS ON LANDOWNERS:

- In 2020, the U.S. had a **RECORD 22 NATURAL DISASTERS** which amounted to over **\$1 BILLION IN DAMAGES.**
- In 2018, **MORE THAN 17,000 FAMILY FOREST OWNERS WERE IMPACTED AND 5 MILLION ACRES OF FOREST WERE DAMAGED OR DESTROYED** due to Hurricanes Florence and Michael. The magnitude of this timber loss had not been seen since Hurricane Katrina hit the south in 2005.
- Family forest owners **LOST MORE THAN \$2 BILLION IN TIMBER REVENUE** from Hurricane Michael alone.
- **MOST FAMILY FOREST OWNERS CANNOT AFFORD INSURANCE.** While caring for trees is a business for some, much like farming, insurance for trees is extremely cost-prohibitive. Government-backed insurance, such as crop insurance, is not available for forest owners.
- **DOWNED TREES AND PILES OF DEBRIS LEAVE LAND MORE VULNERABLE** to wildfires and invasive species, often catalyzing further damage.



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# RESTORATION AND REPLANTING ON PRIVATE LANDS

## IS IMPERATIVE FOR THE ECONOMY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Helping family forest owners recover after natural disasters will secure the future of America's forests — one of our nation's most important natural climate sinks. Locally, disaster prevention and relief will fortify rural economies, protect at-risk wildlife, and safeguard the clean water supply across the country.

### WILDFIRE POLICY SOLUTIONS:

- **SUPPORT THE OUTDOOR RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP ACT (S. 1248):** This legislation will stimulate federal investment in high-risk wildfire areas, including private lands, to enhance resiliency.
- **INCREASE ACCESS TO TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:** Invest in and strategically utilize public and private forestry technical assistance to ensure that enough foresters, biologists and other professionals are available to support landowners. Lack of capacity is a significant barrier to action on the ground due to lack of these professionals. We must ensure technical assistance for private landowners is available to help carry out needed work.
- **PROVIDE TARGETED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:** Provide significant funding for wildfire risk reduction actions on family-owned forestland, connecting landowners that own small tracts (1-20 acres) with professionals that can help them acquire the resources necessary to implement a fire safety plan.
- **SUPPORT STRONG FOREST PRODUCT MARKETS:** Encouraging both traditional and non-traditional markets, such as carbon markets, provides financial assistance for family forest owners to manage the high costs that come with forest management. These actions also help to keep forests healthy resilient, have significant carbon benefits and support rural economies.

### HURRICANE POLICY SOLUTIONS:

- **SUPPORT THE FOREST RECOVERY ACT:** Currently landowners are only allowed deduct the fair market value of their timber following federally declared disasters, making it difficult to recover and restore the health of their forests. This bill, soon to be reintroduced, would allow private landowners to deduct the fair market value of their timber destroyed in any natural disaster, providing more financial assistance for recovery.
- **INVEST IN THE EMERGENCY FOREST RESTORATION PROGRAM:** This program provides funds to families to replant and restore their forests.
- **FUND STATE AND PRIVATE FORESTRY PROGRAMS:** Supporting relief capacity at the local level helps state forestry agencies expedite recovery.



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