

Amendment offered by Rep. DesJarlais

Amendment description

The amendment would establish the White Oak Restoration Initiative Coalition to encourage the Forest Service to work alongside private and state partners at no cost to the taxpayer. The amendment asks the US Forest Service and the Department of the Interior to regenerate white oak through a series of pilot projects on national parks and volunteered private lands. The amendment also allows the Forest Service to enter memorandums of understanding with land grant institutions to conduct much-needed research on white oak

AMENDMENT

OFFERED BY MR. DESJARLAIS OF TENNESSEE

At the end of title VIII, add the following:

1 **Subtitle F—White Oak Resilience**

2 **SEC. 8601. SHORT TITLE.**

3 This subtitle may be cited as the “White Oak Resil-
4 ience Act”.

5 **SEC. 8602. WHITE OAK RESTORATION INITIATIVE COALI-**
6 **TION.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—The White Oak Restoration Ini-
8 tiative Coalition shall be established—

9 (1) as a voluntary collaborative group of Fed-
10 eral, State, Tribal, and local governments and pri-
11 vate and non-governmental organizations to carry
12 out the duties described in subsection (b); and

13 (2) in accordance with the charter titled “White
14 Oak Initiative Coalition Charter” adopted by the
15 White Oak Initiative Board of Directors on March
16 21, 2023 (or any successor charter).

17 (b) DUTIES.—In addition to the duties specified in
18 the charter described in subsection (a)(2), the duties of
19 the White Oak Restoration Initiative Coalition are—

1 (1) to coordinate Federal, State, Tribal, local,
2 private, and non-governmental restoration of white
3 oak in the United States; and

4 (2) to make program and policy recommenda-
5 tions, consistent with applicable forest management
6 plans, with respect to—

7 (A) changes necessary to address Federal
8 and State policies that impede activities to im-
9 prove the health, resiliency, and natural regen-
10 eration of white oak;

11 (B) adopting or modifying Federal and
12 State policies to increase the pace and scale of
13 white oak regeneration and resiliency of white
14 oak;

15 (C) options to enhance communication, co-
16 ordination, and collaboration between forest
17 land owners, particularly for cross-boundary
18 projects, to improve the health, resiliency, and
19 natural regeneration of white oak;

20 (D) research gaps that should be ad-
21 dressed to improve the best available science on
22 white oak;

23 (E) outreach to forest landowners with
24 white oak or white oak regeneration potential;
25 and

1 (F) options and policies necessary to im-
2 prove the quality and quantity of white oak in
3 tree nurseries.

4 (c) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT, TECHNICAL SERV-
5 ICES, AND STAFF SUPPORT.—The Secretary of the Inte-
6 rior and the Secretary shall make such personnel available
7 to the White Oak Restoration Initiative Coalition for ad-
8 ministrative support, technical services, and development
9 and dissemination of educational materials as the Sec-
10 retary of the Interior or the Secretary, as applicable, de-
11 termines necessary to carry out this section.

12 **SEC. 8603. FOREST SERVICE PILOT PROGRAM.**

13 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting through the
14 Chief of the Forest Service, shall establish and carry out
15 5 pilot projects in national forests to restore white oak
16 in such forests through white oak restoration and natural
17 regeneration practices that are consistent with applicable
18 forest management plans.

19 (b) NATIONAL FORESTS RESERVED OR WITHDRAWN
20 FROM PUBLIC DOMAIN.—At least 3 pilot projects re-
21 quired under subsection (a) shall be carried out on na-
22 tional forests reserved or withdrawn from the public do-
23 main.

24 (c) AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO COOPERATIVE
25 AGREEMENTS.—The Secretary may enter into cooperative

1 agreements to carry out the pilot projects required under
2 subsection (a).

3 (d) SUNSET.—The authority under this section shall
4 terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of
5 enactment of this Act.

6 **SEC. 8604. WHITE OAK REGENERATION AND UPLAND OAK**
7 **HABITAT.**

8 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 180 days after
9 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall
10 establish a non-regulatory program to be known as the
11 “White Oak and Upland Oak Habitat Regeneration Pro-
12 gram” (in this section referred to as the “Program”).

13 (b) DUTIES.—In carrying out the Program, the Sec-
14 retary shall—

15 (1) draw upon the best available science and
16 management plans for species of white oak to iden-
17 tify, prioritize, and implement restoration and con-
18 servation activities that will improve the growth of
19 white oak within the United States;

20 (2) collaborate and coordinate with the White
21 Oak Restoration Initiative Coalition to prioritize
22 white oak restoration initiatives;

23 (3) adopt a white oak restoration strategy
24 that—

1 (A) supports the implementation of a
2 shared set of science-based restoration and con-
3 servation activities developed in accordance with
4 paragraph (1);

5 (B) targets cost effective projects with
6 measurable results; and

7 (C) maximizes restoration outcomes with
8 no net gain of Federal full-time equivalent em-
9 ployees; and

10 (4) establish the voluntary grant and technical
11 assistance programs in accordance with subsection
12 (e).

13 (c) COORDINATION.—In establishing the Program,
14 the Secretary, acting through the Chief of the Forest Serv-
15 ice, shall consult with—

16 (1) the heads of Federal agencies, including—

17 (A) the Director of the United States Fish
18 and Wildlife Service; and

19 (B) the Chief of the Natural Resources
20 Conservation Service; and

21 (2) the Governor of each State in which res-
22 toration efforts will be carried out pursuant to the
23 Program.

24 (d) PURPOSES.—The purposes of the Program in-
25 clude—

1 (1) coordinating restoration and conservation
2 activities among Federal, State, Tribal, and local en-
3 tities and conservation partners to address white oak
4 restoration priorities;

5 (2) improving and regenerating white oak and
6 upland oak forests and the wildlife habitat such for-
7 ests provide;

8 (3) carrying out coordinated restoration and
9 conservation activities that lead to the increased
10 growth of species of white oak in native white oak
11 regions on Federal, State, Tribal, and private land;

12 (4) facilitating strategic planning to maximize
13 the resilience of white oak systems and habitats
14 under changing climate conditions;

15 (5) engaging the public through outreach, edu-
16 cation, and citizen involvement to increase capacity
17 and support for coordinated restoration and con-
18 servation activities for species of white oak; and

19 (6) increasing scientific capacity to support the
20 planning, monitoring, and research activities nec-
21 essary to carry out such coordinated restoration and
22 conservation activities.

23 (e) GRANTS AND ASSISTANCE.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—To the extent that funds are
25 available to carry out this section, the Secretary

1 shall establish a voluntary grant and technical as-
2 sistance program (in this section referred to as the
3 “grant program”) to achieve the purposes of the
4 Program, as described in subsection (d).

5 (2) ADMINISTRATION.—

6 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall
7 enter into a cooperative agreement with the Na-
8 tional Fish and Wildlife Foundation (in this
9 subsection referred to as the “Foundation”) to
10 manage and administer the grant program.

11 (B) FUNDING.—Subject to the availability
12 of appropriations made in advance for such
13 purpose, after the Secretary enters into a coop-
14 erative agreement with the Foundation under
15 subparagraph (A), the Foundation shall for
16 each fiscal year, receive amounts to carry out
17 this subsection in an advance payment of the
18 entire amount on October 1, or as soon as prac-
19 ticable thereafter, of that fiscal year.

20 (3) APPLICATION OF NATIONAL FISH AND
21 WILDLIFE FOUNDATION ESTABLISHMENT ACT.—
22 Amounts received by the Foundation to carry out
23 the grant program shall be subject to the National
24 Fish and Wildlife Foundation Establishment Act (16

1 U.S.C. 3701 et seq.), excluding section 10(a) of that
2 Act (16 U.S.C. 3709(a)).

3 (f) SUNSET.—The authority under this section shall
4 terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of
5 the enactment of this Act.

6 **SEC. 8605. TREE NURSERY SHORTAGES.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the
8 date of the enactment of this section, the Secretary, acting
9 through the Chief of the Forest Service, shall—

10 (1) develop and implement a national strategy
11 to increase the capacity of Federal, State, Tribal,
12 and private tree nurseries to address the nationwide
13 shortage of tree seedlings; and

14 (2) coordinate such strategy with—

15 (A) the national reforestation strategy of
16 the Forest Service; and

17 (B) each regional implementation plan for
18 national forests.

19 (b) ELEMENTS.—The strategy required under sub-
20 section (a) shall—

21 (1) be based on the best available science and
22 data; and

23 (2) identify and address—

24 (A) regional seedling shortages of bareroot
25 and container tree seedlings;

1 (B) regional reforestation opportunities
2 and the seedling supply necessary to fulfill such
3 opportunities;

4 (C) opportunities to enhance seedling di-
5 versity and close gaps in seed inventories; and

6 (D) barriers to expanding, enhancing, or
7 creating new infrastructure to increase nursery
8 capacity.

