



Chair Chellie Pingree
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Request for the United States Forest Service Hearing
April 27, 2022

As Prepared

I'd like to welcome to the subcommittee the 20th Chief of the USDA Forest Service, Randy Moore. We are so pleased to talk with you today and hear your thoughts on the fiscal year 2023 budget request for the Forest Service. Joining the Chief today is Andria Weeks, Acting Director of Strategic Planning, Budget, and Accountability.

Our hearing today will address the President's 2023 budget request for the USDA Forest Service. I am pleased to see investments included for climate science and the promotion of healthy forests. The budget request includes items such as:

- \$321 million for hazardous fuels projects, an increase of \$134 million over the 2022 enacted level;
- \$2.18 billion for the National Forest System, an increase of \$314 million over the 2022 enacted level;
- And \$76 million for research and development programs, an increase of \$26 million over enacted.

These investments will build upon the fiscal year 2022 investments this subcommittee secured, including:

- A significant increase for wildland fire management funding to allow for the implementation of the new federal \$15 per hour minimum wage for firefighters.
- A historic investment of \$28 million in the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program, doubling the funding for this program, to promote collaboration and foster local investment in our forest communities across the country.
- A increase of \$35 million for Forest and Rangeland Research both to fuel essential research that underpins all the Service's work, and for staff for inventory and analysis work, which provides the framework necessary for carbon accounting on National Forest land.
- And the reinstatement of the Legacy Roads and Trails line item to emphasize the importance of roads and trails remediation work that helps threatened species and improves water quality.



From creating economic development in rural communities to reducing extreme heat in urban areas, healthy forests are essential to our nation. Moreover, forests across the country are a crucial part of our fight against climate change.

One of the largest obstacles to healthy forests and increased carbon sequestration is the increase of high-intensity wildfires which are affecting our landscapes. I am concerned to see that this year looks to be another severe year for wildfires. The Committee has provided significant investments to prevent, combat, and recover from these wildfires in recent years. While the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act has further provided supplementary funding for these activities, I know more needs to be done. I look forward to discussing the impact these investments will have and where any gaps in our response may still remain.

I would now like to yield to our Ranking Member, Mr. Joyce, for his opening remarks.