



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES
CHAIRMAN BRUCE WESTERMAN

To: Subcommittee on Federal Lands Republican Members
From: Subcommittee on Federal Lands Staff: Aniela Butler (Aniela@mail.house.gov),
Brandon Miller (Brandon.Miller@mail.house.gov), and Hannah Devereaux
(Hannah.Devereaux@mail.house.gov); x6-7736
Date: Monday, June 1, 2026
Subject: Oversight Hearing on “*The State of Our Nation’s Federal Forests and Outlook
for the 2026 Wildfire Year*”

The Subcommittee on Federal Lands will hold an oversight hearing on “*The State of Our Nation’s Federal Forests and Outlook for the 2026 Wildfire Year*” on **Thursday, June 4, 2026, at 10:15 a.m., in room 1324 Longworth House Office Building**. Member offices are requested to notify Brandon Miller (Brandon.Miller@mail.house.gov) by 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 3, 2026, if their Member intends to participate in the hearing.

I. KEY MESSAGES

- Historic drought, low snowpack, and high accumulations of dry, hazardous fuels have turned federal forests into a ticking timebomb. On the eve of what many are predicting to be the worst wildfire year on record, it’s time for the Senate to pass the bipartisan Fix Our Forests Act (FOFA) and send that legislation to President Donald Trump’s desk.
- Under the leadership of President Trump, Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins, Under Secretary Michael Boren and Chief of the Forest Service Tom Schultz, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has returned to its core mission of managing our forests, strengthening wildfire response, and supporting rural communities through multiple use.
- House Committee on Natural Resources (Committee) Republicans stand in lockstep with the administration in making our forests more resilient to wildfires, insects, drought, and disease. Through the passage of the Working Families Tax Cut Act, Committee Republicans have already codified several of President Trump’s initiatives related to wildland fire and forest health—making our forests and communities healthier and more resilient.

II. WITNESS

Panel I (Administration Witnesses)

- **Mr. Tom Schultz**, Chief, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.

III. BACKGROUND

The State of Our Nation’s Federal Forests

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) manages roughly 193 million acres of land, including the 154 national forests and 20 national grasslands comprising the National Forest System (NFS).¹ Alarming, nearly half of this land is now “considered to be at ‘high risk’ for wildfire” due to a century of fire suppression,

State ▲	Total Acreage (millions)	Share of Land Managed by USFS	Share of USFS Acres at High Wildfire Risk	Share of USFS Acres Burned (2010-2020)	Share of USFS Acres Treated (2013-2023)
Arizona	73	16	63	23	10
California	105	23	57	24	3
Colorado	67	26	19	6	2
Idaho	54	41	47	14	2
Montana	94	20	49	7	2
Nevada	71	9	27	6	1
New Mexico	78	13	54	13	5
Oregon	63	28	49	11	7
Total	766	21	44	13	4
Utah	54	17	36	8	5
Washington	46	23	39	10	2
Wyoming	63	17	19	6	1

Data from the Property and Environment Research Center highlighting the disparity between federal forest acres at high-risk of wildfire versus the paltry pace of fuels reduction treatments. **Source:** PERC, 2025.

combined with a lack of thinning, prescribed burns, and mechanical treatments.² As a result, approximately 80 million acres of NFS lands, or an area roughly the size of New Mexico, are subject to some “combination of high wildfire hazard, above-normal levels of insect and disease mortality, and other restoration treatment needs.”³ This precipitous decline in forest health is a result of overstocking, which makes forests less resilient by increasing competition among trees for the water, minerals, and sunlight necessary to sustain a healthy forest.⁴ In fact, across the West, “tree densities on average increased by six to seven-fold,” while the average tree size was reduced by half over the past century.⁵ For example, from 1867 to 1883, Colorado’s Front Range supported an average of 425 trees per acre; in the 21st Century, that number has more than tripled to 1,289 per acre.⁶ Similarly, before European settlement, forests in South Dakota’s Black Hills

¹ Anne Riddle, “National Forest System Management: Overview and Issues for Congress,” Congressional Research Service, May 18, 2023, <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R43872>.

² Sutherland, et al., “PERC Wildfire Risk Map,” February 25, 2025, Property and Environment Research Center, <https://www.perc.org/2025/02/25/perc-wildfire-risk-map/>.

³ U.S. Forest Service, “Shared Stewardship Questions and Answers,” <https://www.fs.usda.gov/working-with-us/shared-stewardship/faq>.

⁴ North, et al., “Operational resilience in western US frequent-fire forests,” Forest Ecology and Management, 2022, <https://research.fs.usda.gov/download/treesearch/63734.pdf>.

⁵ *Id.* Time period being measured in 1911-2011.

⁶ Hanberry, et al., “Exploring Tree Density Increases after Fire Exclusion in the Northern Front Range and Great Plains, Colorado, USA,” Fire 2024, March 22, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.3390/fire7040103>. Note: data converted from hectares to acres.

held between 163 to 400 trees per acre.⁷ These same forests now have approximately 768 trees per acre, a “two- to more than four-fold” increase.⁸

There is a direct correlation between the decline in forest health and resiliency and the increase in the severity and frequency of wildland fires. Over the last decade, the country lost an average of 7 million acres annually to catastrophic wildfires, more than double the average seen during the 1990s.⁹ Between 2000 and 2025, more than 179.4 million acres burned in wildland fires, an area roughly five times the size of Illinois.¹⁰ Prior to 2015, the U.S. never burned more than 10 million acres in a single year. In the past decade, however, the country hit that ominous mark three times (2015, 2017, and 2020).¹¹ These troubling statistics are driven by mismanaged federal lands, as “approximately 60 percent of the area burned by wildfires over the past two decades” occurred on federal land in the Western U.S.¹²

Outlook for the 2026 Wildfire Year

Unprecedented drought facing the American West has further weakened overgrown national forests, leaving them vulnerable to wildfire. For the past several decades, the Western U.S. has experienced a “megadrought,” reaching its driest conditions in 1,200 years.¹³ These conditions are being compounded by “dire,” “alarming,” “unprecedented,” and “utterly dismal” low snowpack levels across the West.¹⁴ Snowpack measurements, which scientists began tracking in 1935, were at their lowest recorded levels this spring across the West, with 65 percent of snowpack

Snowpack feeding the Colorado River reaches historic lows

25 inches of snow-water equivalent

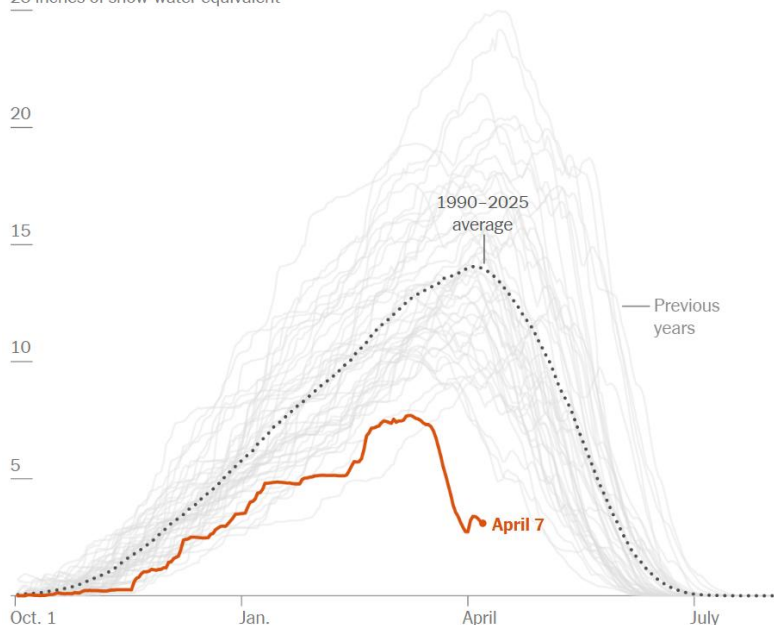


Chart visualizing the historically low snowpack affecting states in the Colorado River Basin. **Source:** USDA, 2026.

⁷ Tatina, et al., “Historical forests of the Black Hills, South Dakota, USA, determined using General Land Office surveys,” *Silva Fennica*, Vol. 56 No. 3, <https://doi.org/10.14214/sf.10754>. Note: data converted from hectares to acres.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Katie Hoover, “Wildfire Statistics,” Congressional Research Service, June 1, 2023, <https://www.crs.gov/Reports/IF10244?source=search&guid=b82a4d954677449b918a65ece823396f&index=0>.

¹⁰ National Interagency Fire Center, “Wildfires and Acres,” <https://www.nifc.gov/fire-information/statistics/wildfires>.

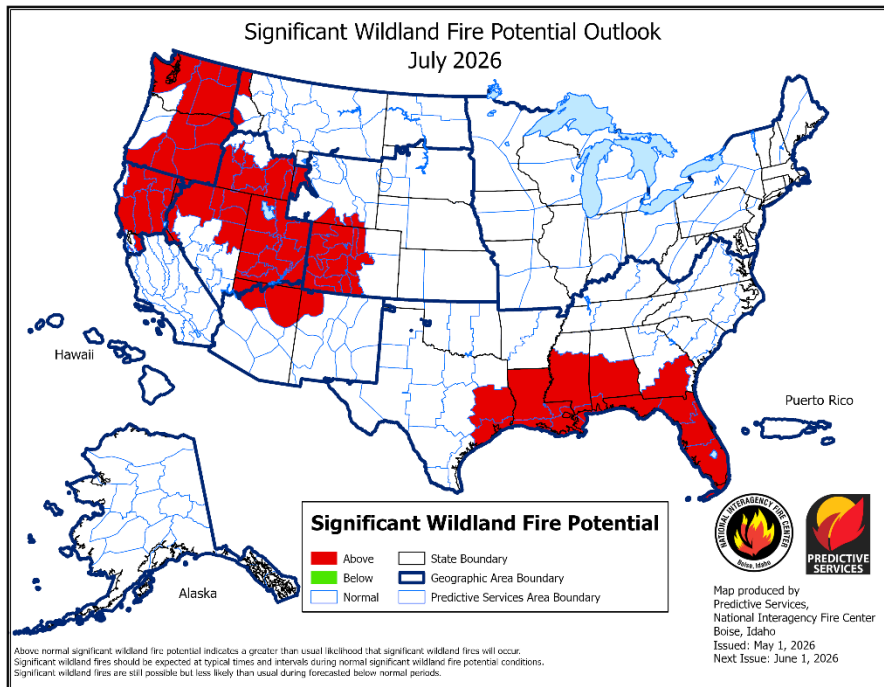
¹¹ *Id.*

¹² Sutherland, et al., “PERC Wildfire Risk Map,” February 25, 2025, Property and Environment Research Center, <https://www.perc.org/2025/02/25/perc-wildfire-risk-map/>.

¹³ Williams, et al., “Rapid intensification of the emerging southwestern North American megadrought in 2020–2021,” *Nat. Clim. Chang.* 12, 232–234 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-022-01290-z>.

¹⁴ Andrea Thompson, “April 1 is supposed to be peak snow. But this year’s western snowpack is utterly dismal,” *Scientific American*, April 1, 2026, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/april-1-snowpack-this-year-is-utterly-dismal/>.

measurements at or tying record low values.¹⁵ Similarly, NASA recorded its lowest snowpack levels “since satellite monitoring began in 2001.”¹⁶ In total, 38 states are currently experiencing Severe (D2) to Exceptional (D4) Drought across the nation.¹⁷



Recent research based on 35 years of recorded data has found that “low-snow winters with early snowmelt may prime forested watersheds to dry, burn, and experience high severity fire.”¹⁸ These conditions have led to “elevated fire dangers across the [Western] region, including in much of Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, Wyoming and Montana.”¹⁹ With more than 1.9 million acres already burned, nearly double the 10-year

Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook: July 2026. Source: NIFC, 2026.

average for this time of year, 2026 is potentially shaping up to be a historically catastrophic fire year.²⁰ Already in 2026, “in southern Georgia, fast-moving flames destroyed a record number of homes; across the Plains in Nebraska, the largest fire in state history killed one person and wiped out more than 600,000 acres of cattle country; and outside Los Angeles, an unusually early blaze spurred evacuation alerts for thousands.”²¹ Perhaps most ominously, the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) is not predicting that any American region will experience below-average fire potential as the peak season of the wildfire year approaches.²²

Under the leadership of Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins Under Secretary Michael Boren and USFS Chief Tom Schultz, USFS has instituted aggressive wildfire suppression strategies in

¹⁵ NRCS, “Record Low April 1 Snowpack across Western U.S. Means Impending Water Shortages,” April 21, 2026, <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/state-offices/colorado/news/record-low-april-1-snowpack-across-western-us-means-impending-water>.

¹⁶ Emily Mae Czachor, “After the West’s historic snow drought, spring could bring water shortages and wildfires,” CBS News, March 21, 2026, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/west-historic-snow-spring-water-shortages-wildfires/>.

¹⁷ National Integrated Drought Information System, “National Drought Status,” May 7, 2026, <https://www.drought.gov/national>.

¹⁸ Balik, et al., “Snowpack decline kindles more severe fire in the western United States,” 2026 Environ. Res. Lett. 21 064010, <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/ae4e4a>.

¹⁹ Dance, et al., “Heat Wipes Out Western Snowpack, Raising Fears of Drought, Wildfire,” New York Times, April 8, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/04/08/climate/heat-snow-drought-west.html>.

²⁰ National Interagency Fire Center, “National Fire News” <https://www.nifc.gov/fire-information/nfn>.

²¹ Kasha Patel, “Wildfire season is off to a historic start and it could get worse,” CNN, May 23, 2026, <https://www.cnn.com/2026/05/23/weather/wildfire-season-historic-start-climate>.

²² National Interagency Fire Center, “National Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook?” May 1, 2026, chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.nifc.gov/nicc-files/predictive/outlooks/monthly_seasonal_outlook.pdf.

anticipation of these catastrophic conditions. In 2025, despite witnessing the highest number of wildfire starts on NFS lands since 2016, USFS held the total acres burned to nearly half of the 10-year average.²³ Building on this, USFS plans to enter “the 2026 fire season with the strongest and most coordinated wildland firefighting capability in the world.”²⁴ The agency has the capacity to “mobilize more than 28,000 wildfire responders and over 22,000 contracted resources across 2,500 vendors,” ensuring aggressive initial attacks.²⁵ Further, in her letter to agency leadership outlining directives for the 2026 wildfire year, Secretary Rollins shared the following update:

“We recently announced a realignment and reorganization of the U.S. Forest Service, that drives our commitment to be vigilant and proactive when addressing the threat of catastrophic wildfire. While we expect many positive outcomes from our reorganization, I want to be absolutely clear: this reorganization does not affect our wildland fire leadership, operations, or resources. Fire management—including preparedness, response, and suppression—will continue without interruption or degradation. Our firefighters, incident management teams, and support partners remain fully empowered and equipped to act decisively.”²⁶

President Trump’s FY 2027 Budget Request and Initiatives on Wildfire and Forest Health

President Trump’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 budget requests \$6.9 billion in discretionary appropriations for forest health and wildland fire programs and activities, consistent with FY 2026 enacted levels.²⁷ The budget also requests \$2.95 billion for the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund, an increase over FY 2026 enacted levels.²⁸ In total, this equates to approximately \$9.9 billion for forest management and wildfire suppression at USFS and the Department of the Interior (DOI), a significant increase over the previous year’s funding levels.²⁹ This request reflects the Trump administration’s continued efforts to return USFS to its core mission to sustain the health, productivity, and multiple uses of our nation’s forests and grasslands. Key priorities include timber production, recreation access, energy development, and livestock grazing.³⁰

U.S. Wildland Fire Service (USWFS)—The President’s FY 2027 budget proposes a “strategic unification of the wildland fire programs” at DOI and USFS by consolidating these programs into a single, unified entity at DOI, the U.S. Wildland Fire Service (USWFS).³¹ USWFS’s

²³ U.S. Forest Service, “2026 fire letter of intent,” Chief Tom Schultz, April 30, 2026, <https://www.fs.usda.gov/inside-fs/leadership/2026-fire-letter-intent>.

²⁴ U.S. Department of Agriculture, “Secretary of Agriculture Issues 2026 Wildfire Readiness Memorandum Ahead of Active Fire Season,” April 29, 2026, <https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2026/04/29/secretary-agriculture-issues-2026-wildfire-readiness-memorandum-ahead-active-fire-season>.

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Letter from Secretary Rollins, “2026 Direction to Wildland Fire Leadership,” April 28, 2026, <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/direction-wildland-fire-leadership-2026.pdf>.

²⁷ U.S. Forest Service, FY 2027 Budget Justification, April 2026, <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/FY-2027-Chapter-29a-FS.pdf>. See USWFS Budget here: <https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2026-04/fy2027greenbookuswfs.pdf>.

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ U.S. Forest Service, FY 2027 Budget Justification, April 2026, <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/FY-2027-Chapter-29a-FS.pdf>.

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ U.S. Department of the Interior, Budget Justifications and Performance Information Fiscal Year 2027. U.S. Wildland Fire Service, April 2026, <https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2026-04/fy2027greenbookuswfs.pdf>.

mission is “to create an integrated and operationally more effective organization that streamlines Federal wildfire suppression response, risk mitigation, and coordination with non-Federal partners, including States, Tribes, and local communities.”³² According to Chief Schultz, the new USWFS will “allow [USFS] to focus on its core mission of delivering critical outputs and services from NFS lands”³³ The budget request includes \$834 million for hazardous fuels management, an increase of \$620 million over the enacted level in FY 2026.³⁴ The budget also fully funds a permanent pay increase for federal and Tribal wildland firefighters, along with requesting a permanent extension of the premium pay cap waiver for wildland fire personnel.³⁵ Most recently, USFS and DOI released a request for quotes for an “independent, non-partisan research organization to conduct a feasibility study on the consolidation of federal wildland fire management operations, as outlined in the President’s budget” and directed by the FY 2026 Interior Appropriations bill.³⁶ This study must be completed before any administrative consolidation efforts can begin.

Executive and Secretarial Orders—During both his first and second terms in office, President Trump has elevated active forest management and wildfire response to major priorities within USFS and DOI. Executive Order (E.O.) 14225, “Immediate Expansion of American Timber Production,” for example, directed federal land managers to increase timber harvests by streamlining burdensome regulations and developing new tools to boost production.³⁷ Relatedly, E.O. 14308, “Empowering Commonsense Wildfire Prevention and Response,” set clear expectations for land management agencies to streamline wildfire response efforts, improve coordination, and accelerate forest management activities.³⁸ At the Department level, Secretary Rollins announced plans to rescind the 2001 Roadless Rule, which would restore access and active management to approximately 44.7 million acres of fire-prone, overgrown federal lands.³⁹ Additionally, in April 2025, Secretary Rollins issued an emergency situation determination for more than 112 million acres of NFS lands, empowering USFS “to expedite work on the ground and carry out authorized emergency actions to reduce wildfire risk and save American lives and communities.”⁴⁰ In totality, this strong leadership has created clear direction for prioritizing active forest management, aggressive fire suppression and response, and robust support to rural, Western economies.

³² U.S. Department of the Interior, Fiscal Year 2027 The Interior Budget in Brief, April 2026, <https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2026-04/2027birentire-book508.pdf>.

³³ Tom Schultz, Chief, U.S. Forest Service, Statement before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Regarding: President’s Fiscal Year 2027 Proposed Budget for the USDA Forest Service, May 13, 2026, <https://www.energy.senate.gov/services/files/B9AB2996-D8B9-4C93-A16A-E30A05E8D6C0>.

³⁴ *Id.*

³⁵ *Id.*

³⁶ P.L. 119-74.

³⁷ Exec. Order No. 14225, 90 Fed. Reg. 11365 (Mar. 1, 2025).

³⁸ Exec. Order No. 14308, 90 Fed. Reg. 26175 (June 12, 2025).

³⁹ U.S. Department of Agriculture, “Secretary Rollins Rescinds Roadless Rule, Eliminating Impediment to Responsible Forest Management,” June 23, 2025, <https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2025/06/23/secretary-rollins-rescinds-roadless-rule-eliminating-impediment-responsible-forest-management>.

⁴⁰ U.S. Department of Agriculture, “Secretary Rollins Announces Sweeping Reforms to Protect National Forests and Boost Domestic Timber Production,” April 4, 2025, <https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2025/04/04/secretary-rollins-announces-sweeping-reforms-protect-national-forests-and-boost-domestic-timber>.

Forest Products—The FY 2027 budget proposes \$175 million for forest products, an increase of \$136 million over the FY 2026 enacted level of \$39 million.⁴¹ USFS launched a strategy to increase the annual volume of timber harvested on NFS lands by at least 25 percent, with a goal of selling 4 billion board feet by 2028, a number USFS has not hit since 1993.⁴² To hit this timber target, which was codified in H.R. 1, the Working Families Tax Cuts Act (WFTC),⁴³ USFS plans to streamline environmental reviews, increase the use of long-term contracts and agreements, and bolster partnerships with states, Tribes, counties, and other local partners.⁴⁴ USFS is also planning to increasingly use more efficient silviculture tools, such as designation by prescription or description and virtual boundaries, to reduce timber-marking costs and increase the volume of timber available for sale.⁴⁵ Finally, USFS plans to continue utilizing tools such as Good Neighbor Authority, Stewardship Contracting, and long-term contracts authorized under the WFTC to continue promoting new markets for forest products and harvesting timber from federal lands.⁴⁶

USFS Reorganization—As part of a broader effort to improve efficiency and strengthen forest management, USFS recently announced plans to realign its organizational structure by moving leadership and decision-making closer to the forests and communities they serve.⁴⁷ Under the proposal, USFS would transition from its current structure of nine regional offices reporting to Washington, D.C., to a new model with 15 state-based offices and a new headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah.⁴⁸ This reorganization would also include stand-up centralized service centers to handle administrative, technical, and enabling support for new state offices, allowing the agency to focus on actual forest management.⁴⁹ As part of this effort, USFS is also working to consolidate multiple stations into a unified research and development organization headquartered in Fort Collins, Colorado.⁵⁰ USFS is also planning to co-locate, where appropriate, research facilities.⁵¹

Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) Reauthorization—The USFS FY 2027 budget proposes reauthorizing the Great American Outdoors Act’s (GAOA) Legacy Restoration Fund, originally signed into law in 2020 by President Trump.⁵² GAOA represented a historic investment in our national forests, aimed at ensuring that these national treasures remain a source of pride and enjoyment for future generations. Reauthorizing GAOA would continue to provide USFS with up to \$285 million annually to address the deferred maintenance backlog across the NFS.⁵³

⁴¹ *Id.*

⁴² U.S. Forest Service, “2025 Forest Service Accomplishments,” <https://www.fs.usda.gov/about-agency/accomplishments>

⁴³ H.R. 1, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/1>.

⁴⁴ U.S. Forest Service, National Active Forest Management Strategy, May 2025, <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/national-active-forest-management-strategy.pdf>.

⁴⁵ *Id.*

⁴⁶ U.S. Forest Service, “FY 2027 Budget Justification,” April 2026, <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/FY-2027-Chapter-29a-FS.pdf>.

⁴⁷ U.S. Forest Service, “Forest Service Reorganization,” <https://www.fs.usda.gov/about-agency/reorganization>.

⁴⁸ *Id.*

⁴⁹ U.S. Forest Service, “Organization Realignment,” <https://www.fs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/organizational-realignment-factsheet.pdf>.

⁵⁰ *Id.*

⁵¹ *Id.*

⁵² *Id.*

⁵³ *Id.*

USFS intends to use GAOA to reduce deferred maintenance, improve outdoor recreation opportunities, and increase visitor capacity.⁵⁴

Livestock Grazing—The FY27 budget places a renewed emphasis on livestock grazing as a core component of its multiple use mission.⁵⁵ Roughly 92 million acres (close to 50 percent) of NFS lands are available for livestock grazing.⁵⁶ USFS is committed to working with DOI to reopening vacant grazing allotments with the goal of helping to “offset feed shortages and expand opportunities for ranchers to build herds without compromising resource stewardship.”⁵⁷ In addition to supporting rural economies, livestock grazing is a key vegetation management tool to help reduce fine, hazardous fuels that frequently ignite wildland fires.

Fix Our Forests Act

On the “eve of the worst wildfire season ever,” the urgency has never been greater to pass bipartisan, comprehensive forest management and wildland fire prevention legislation: the Fix Our Forests Act (FOFA).⁵⁸ Recent studies have “found overwhelming evidence” that forest treatments like mechanical thinning and prescribed burning reduce wildfire severity by as much as 72 percent compared to untreated areas.⁵⁹ As wildfire suppression costs continue to rise—tripling from \$728 million at the beginning of the 1990s to \$2.5 billion in 2020—actively managing forests is a proven solution to drive down costs and right-size budgets.⁶⁰ In fact, 2026 has seen studies published that show, conservatively, that “five to six dollars are saved in suppression costs for every dollar spent on fuel treatments.”⁶¹ Further research released this year examining nearly 300 Western wildfires found that “treatments, such as forest thinning and prescribed burns, prevented \$2.8 billion in losses, reduced wildfire spread and fire severity.”⁶²

Given the clear correlation between budgetary savings and active forest management, it should come as no surprise that the President’s budget request closely aligns with FOFA.⁶³ In particular, the budget proposes establishing a new Wildland Fire Intelligence Center, as codified by FOFA’s Section 102.⁶⁴ This Center will “strengthen interagency and interdisciplinary coordination across

⁵⁴ *Id.*

⁵⁵ U.S. Forest Service, “FY 2027 Budget Justification,” April 2026, <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/FY-2027-Chapter-29a-FS.pdf>.

⁵⁶ Congressional Research Service, “Livestock Grazing on Lands Managed by the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service: Frequently Asked Questions,” January 22, 2026, <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R48806>.

⁵⁷ U.S. Forest Service, FY 2027 Budget Justification, April 2026, <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/FY-2027-Chapter-29a-FS.pdf>.

⁵⁸ Zoe Goldstein, “‘Eve of the worst wildfire season ever’: Eagle County’s wildfire team prepares for summer 2026,” KUNC, March 21, 2026, <https://www.kunc.org/2026-03-21/eve-of-the-worst-wildfire-season-ever-eagle-countys-wildfire-team-prepares-for-summer-2026>.

⁵⁹ Davis, et al., “Tamm review: A meta-analysis of thinning, prescribed fire, and wildfire effects on subsequent wildfire severity in conifer dominated forests of the Western US,” *Forest Ecology and Management* Volume 561, June 1, 2024, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S037811272400197X>.

⁶⁰ Congressional Budget Office, “Wildfires,” 2022, <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/58212>.

⁶¹ Strabo & Reimer, “Before the burn: The economic benefits of fuel-reduction treatments in wildfire-prone forests,” *The Economic Journal*, March 25, 2026, <https://academic.oup.com/ej/advance-article-abstract/doi/10.1093/ej/ueag037/8540259?redirectedFrom=fulltext&login=false>.

⁶² Amy Quinton, “Forest Fuel Treatments Reduce Wildfire Spread, Prevent \$2.8 Billion in Damage,” U.C. Davis, May 7, 2026, <https://www.ucdavis.edu/climate/news/forest-fuel-treatments-reduce-wildfire-spread-prevent-28-billion-damage>.

⁶³ H.R. 471, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/471>.

⁶⁴ U.S. Wildland Fire Service, Budget Justifications and Performance Information Fiscal Year 2027, <https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2026-04/fy2027greenbookuswfs.pdf>.



It's time to send FOFA to President Trump's desk. **Source:** Getty Images, 2022.

the country's wildland fire system, support implementation of EO 14308, and serve as a central hub for delivering integrated fire intelligence services.”⁶⁵ Additionally, the budget recommends raising the acreage limitation on existing statutory categorical exclusions (CEs)

to 10,000 acres and expanding the use of those CE in high-priority areas, consistent with Section 106 of FOFA.⁶⁶ These provisions “would increase the speed of implementation” of critical forest management projects, leading to “a decrease in administrative work” and “an increase in fuels management work in these targeted areas commensurate with the higher values at risk.”⁶⁷ Further, the Bureau of Land Management’s FY 2027 budget proposes codifying the use of emergency authorities and having DOI adopt the existing USFS insect and disease and wildfire resilience CEs—all consistent with FOFA.⁶⁸ FOFA passed the House last year with strong bipartisan support and is awaiting floor action in the Senate.

⁶⁵ *Id.*

⁶⁶ *Id.*

⁶⁷ *Id.*

⁶⁸ Bureau of Land Management, “Budget Justifications and Performance Information Fiscal Year 2027,” <https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2026-04/fy2027greenbookblm0.pdf>.