



PRESS RELEASE

## Biden-Harris Administration Invests More Than \$12 Million In Support of the Tribal Forest Protection Act

Funds from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will help incorporate indigenous knowledge in resilience and restoration projects

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**WASHINGTON, March 10, 2023** – Today, the Biden-Harris Administration announced more than \$12 million from President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will be invested in fiscal year 2023 to complete projects in support of the Tribal Forest Protection Act (TFPA). Projects have been selected to support a range of activities focused on forest and grassland restoration. Work will include vegetation management, hazardous fuels risk reduction, and cultural and ethnobotanical surveys on indigenous landscapes.

These investments come on the heels of the Forest Service’s release of “[Strengthening Tribal Consultations and Nation-to-Nation Relationships: A USDA Forest Service Action Plan.](#)”

The Forest Service recognizes its unique, shared responsibility in ensuring decisions related to federal stewardship of lands, waters and wildlife consider how treaty rights and spiritual, subsistence and cultural interests of American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal Nations are considered. The agency’s tribal action plan provides a framework for advancing existing laws, regulations and policies, and provides steps that can be applied through existing programs and processes based on four focus areas:

- Strengthening Relationships Between Indian Tribes and the USDA Forest Service;
- Fulfilling Trust and Treaty Obligations;
- Enhancing Co-Stewardship of the Nation’s Forests and Grasslands; and

- Advancing Tribal Relations Within the USDA Forest Service.

Announcing these agreements reflects the Forest Service's commitment to put the Tribal Action Plan into action and make investments that support the plan's goals.

This work focuses on improving relationships and working together through co-stewardship, restoring traditionally significant plants, and reducing hazardous fuels while incorporating indigenous knowledge, creating job opportunities for tribal crews and increasing youth engagement.

“Many of these projects will tackle our most pressing issues, including climate change and the wildfire crisis, while creating job opportunities for tribal members with the benefit of incorporating indigenous knowledge into ecological restoration activities,” said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. “This is just one example of how our renewed commitment to work with tribal nations has multiple benefits, including expanding opportunities for tribal youth to pursue land management careers and integrating indigenous traditional ecological knowledge passed through the generations into ongoing co-stewardship activities.”




Those listed in this announcement will work together to plan and implement the following projects:

- **Alaska:** Shaan Seet, a Native Corporation, recently signed a Good Neighbor Agreement with the Tongass National Forest to conduct jointly planned and implemented watershed restoration and silvicultural activities on Prince of Wales Island and adjacent islands.
- **Arkansas:** The Ozark–St. Francis and Ouachita National Forests will work with the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee to add tribal crews to increase the identification and protection of culturally significant heritage sites on national forests.
- **Colorado:** The Forest Service and several collaboratives will invite all 24 affiliated tribes and pueblos to work with the agency to locate and identify ethnobotanical resources and incorporate indigenous traditional ecological knowledge into restoration.
- **California/Oregon:** The Six Rivers and Klamath National Forests will work with the Karuk Tribe on a suite of activities designed to protect, promote and preserve the cultural and natural resources the tribe depends on.
- **Illinois:** The Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie and affiliated Tribes will work to restore grasslands with bison by co-producing knowledge on carbon storage in grasslands, and subsistence programs while integrating indigenous traditional knowledge into present day management.

- **Michigan:**

- The Hiawatha National Forest and the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians is advancing co-stewardship by working together to build health and resilience in the remnant boreal forest ecosystems.
- The Hiawatha National Forest is working with Bay Mills Indian Community fire crews who are restoring forest, rangeland and watershed health, as well as implementing silvicultural work.

- **New Mexico:** The Santa Fe National Forest will work with the Santa Clara Pueblo Tribe to train and employ tribal crews to implement forest and watershed restoration treatments creating future career opportunities.

- **North Carolina:** National Forests in North Carolina will work with the Eastern Band of Cherokee to implement objectives to sustain a healthy ecosystem, connect people to the land, and provide clean and abundant water. 

- **Oregon:**

- The Umpqua National Forest will work with the Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Tribe of Indians to protect cultural resources, reduce hazardous fuels, contribute to the supply of forest products, and promote ecosystem and watershed health.
- The Ochoco National Forest and the Crooked River National Grassland will provide opportunities for Tribal Members to collaborate on Traditional Cultural Property inventory, evaluation and mitigation activities to restore native vegetation. Partners will include the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, Burns Paiute Tribe, Yavapai-Apache Nation, Hopi Tribe, and others.
- The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indians will advance co-stewardship objectives while working to restore important traditional ecological components with the tribe.
- The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest and the Nez Perce Tribe will support a tribal youth crew working alongside Forest Service employees to complete watershed improvements, wildlife and fisheries enhancements and improve recreation sites.

- **South Dakota:**

- The Fort Pierre National Grasslands and the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe will work to restore degraded prairie and riparian habitats. The collaboration will also expand on cooperative work in many areas including grassland bird and pronghorn

research, wildfire suppression, livestock grazing, fish habitat enhancement, wildlife improvement, cooperative conservation work crew and noxious weed control.

- The Black Hills National Forest and the Oglala Sioux Tribe [previously listed as Oglala Sioux Tribe of the Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota]; Rosebud Sioux Tribe of the Rosebud Indian Reservation, South Dakota; and Standing Rock Sioux Tribe of North & South Dakota will build capacity and work toward co-stewardship goals by conducting forest treatments on lands that fall within treaty territories.
- **Texas:** The Caddo-LBJ National Grasslands will work with the Jena Band of Choctaw Indians and the Comanche Nation to support staffing tribal heritage resource crews, adding capacity to accelerate the restoration of native historic prairie and savanna ecosystems.
- **Washington:**
  - The Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest and the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe will manage and improve elk forage habitat while incorporating elk monitoring and traditional indigenous knowledge.
  - The Colville National Forest and the Kalispel Tribe of Indians will work to expand co-stewardship efforts and curate habitat that is critical to the persistence of the threatened bull trout populations.
- **Wisconsin:** The Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest will work with the Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians on projects that address water quality and wildlife habitat in an area that provides wild rice and fish for the tribe.
- **Wyoming:** The Bighorn National Forest and the Northern Arapaho, Northern Cheyenne, Crow, Oglala Lakota, and Shoshone Tribes will work on resiliency and restoration of traditionally significant plants impacted by climate change and site disturbances by incorporating indigenous knowledge into ecological restoration activities.



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