



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Superior National Forest

Forest Service News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Collaborative Wildfire Risk Reduction Program invests \$10 Million in Two projects on the Superior NF to Expand Work to Confront the Wildfire Crisis as part of Investing in America Agenda

Biden-Harris Administration Invests \$100 Million in 21 projects, in 14 states and 18 national forests are part of the \$3.2 billion made possible through President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Duluth, MN, September 10, 2024 - Today, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the Biden-Harris Administration is investing \$100 million in 21 new projects to expand work on the USDA Forest Service's [Wildfire Crisis Strategy](#) to reduce the threat of wildfire in high-risk areas across the country. The Superior National Forest (Superior NF) has been awarded \$10 million in Collaborative Wildfire Risk Reduction Program (CWRRP) funds for two projects located in LaCroix and Kawishiwi Ranger Districts (Cook and Ely, MN) to restore forest health and reduce wildfire risk.

"The Superior National Forest has a long history of working in partnership with our communities, non-government organizations, local and state governments, and tribal governments to mitigate wildfire risk and rehabilitate areas impacted by wildfire. We look forward to additional opportunities to partner with a broad range of stakeholders to do this essential work," said Superior Forest Supervisor Tom Hall.

During the national press conference today, Dale MacDougall founder of Patriot Restoration Ops said, "We are excited for the Kawishiwi Project, benefiting the Superior National Forest landscape, wildlife, and the public by addressing fuels reduction, community safety, and wildlife habitat. In addition, this project expands capacity of PROPS in the region to provide capacity building to the Forest and to their partners to implement these projects over the next decade."

The **LaCroix Collaborative Fuels Reduction Project** has been awarded **\$5 million in CWRRP** funding. The primary desired outcomes for the LaCroix Collaborative Fuels Reduction Project are to complete shaded fuel breaks in critical ingress and egress corridors, providing more defensible potential operational delineations (PODs), and maintaining fire dependent native Oak Blueberry plant communities through collaboration with Bois Forte Band of Chippewa. The project includes reducing hazardous fuels through mechanical and prescribed fire treatments, creating strategic fuel breaks, and improving access.

The **Kawishiwi Collaborative Fuels Reduction Project** has been awarded **\$5 million in CWRFP** funding. This project will restore forest health and reduce wildfire risk in overly dense forests with high wildfire risk in areas of limited access. The project includes reducing hazardous fuels through mechanical and prescribed fire treatments, creating strategic fuel breaks, improving access, and bolstering planning efforts.

Much of the work for both projects will be completed through partners, including [Dovetail Partners](#), [The Nature Conservancy \(TNC\)](#), and [Patriot Restoration Ops \(PROPS\)](#), and through collaboration with local Bands.

The new projects announced by Secretary Vilsack span 14 states and 18 national forests and are part of the \$3.2 billion investment in this comprehensive strategy made possible through President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

"The challenging wildfires of this year have underscored the urgent need to continue to protect our communities and infrastructure by restoring forest health across the country," said Secretary Vilsack. "We have already made incredible progress, but there is still much to be done. Today's investment represents an important expansion of our Wildfire Crisis Strategy work to new areas and states."

The [Collaborative Wildfire Risk Reduction Program](#) uses hazardous fuels funds from the Inflation Reduction Act to treat additional areas of high wildfire risk where national forests and grasslands meet homes and communities, known as the Wildland-Urban Interface. The program allows national forests, in collaboration with Tribes, communities and partners in qualifying states to build local capacity for projects to reduce wildfire risk and improve forest health.

"There are 24 states that meet the criteria for this program, including 13 states in the South, Midwest and East, said Forest Service Chief Randy Moore. "The internal competitive process and collaborative design of these projects allows National Forests and partners to demonstrate their ability to move forward quickly on wildfire risk reduction actions to protect lives and livelihoods across vast, shared landscapes."

A full list of projects and qualifying states can be found on the [program webpage](#).

This announcement is part of President Biden's Investing in America agenda to increase the resilience of lands facing the threat of catastrophic wildland fires and to better support federal wildland firefighters. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law included \$1.4 billion for the USDA Forest Service in wildfire risk reduction funds. The Inflation Reduction Act provided an additional \$1.8 billion to reduce the risk of wildfire to neighborhoods, infrastructure, watersheds, and the many other benefits forests provide. Together these investments will help strengthen long-term fire preparedness, reduce catastrophic wildland fire risk across states, and invest in supporting the wildland firefighter workforce.

In January 2022, the Forest Service [launched the Wildfire Crisis Strategy](#) with the goal of safeguarding communities and the resources they depend on by increasing hazardous fuels treatments to reduce wildfire risk. This work includes the treatment of more than 1.5 million acres across the 21 Wildfire Crisis Strategy priority landscapes that is beginning to reduce wildfire risk for some 550 communities, 2,500 miles of high-voltage power lines, and 1,800 watersheds that supply drinking water to millions of Americans.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law also created the [Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission](#), charged with making recommendations to improve federal policies related to the mitigation, suppression, and management of wildland fires in the United States. In September 2023, the Commission released a [comprehensive report](#) outlining 148 recommendations to improve the nation's relationship with wildfire. Today's funding advances many of those recommendations.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate-smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.

Related Superior NF Press Releases:

- [March 12, 2024 – USEC visit to the Superior NF to discuss wildfire mitigation efforts.](#)

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The Superior National Forest is managed in Five (5) districts, with a Supervisor's Office:

- *Supervisor's Office, Duluth: 218-626-4300*
- *Gunflint District Office, Grand Marais: 218-387-1750*
- *Kawishiwi District Office, Ely: 218-365-7600*
- *LaCroix District Office, Cook: 218-666-0020*
- *Laurentian District Office, Aurora: 218-453-8650*
- *Tofte District Office, Tofte: 218-663-8060*