



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FS-1187h | January 2025

WILDFIRE CRISIS

annual update



CONFRONTING THE WILDFIRE CRISIS

Making a Difference



Salt Lake Valley next to the Wasatch National Forest. As more people and businesses migrate into Utah, housing continues to expand into forested areas, as can be seen here by the Suncrest community nestled on top of the Traverse Mountains in Draper, UT, part of the Wasatch Wildfire Crisis Strategy Landscape. USDA Forest Service photo by Nick Cieslak.

INVESTING IN COMMUNITIES

In January 2022, we—the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Forest Service—announced the [Wildfire Crisis Strategy](#). This strategy provided a science-based roadmap for creating safer and more fire-resilient landscapes and communities, reducing wildfire risk to critical infrastructure and natural resources, and fostering strong collaboration across all lands.

Since then, we have been diligently working alongside partners to implement this strategy. Using the downpayments Congress invested in us through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act, we focused our initial efforts on 21 landscapes spanning 48 million acres across 10 Western States. The communities, critical infrastructure, and natural resources contained within these landscapes represented some of those at highest risk to catastrophic wildfires.

In fiscal year 2024, we invested in the treatment of a record 803,633 acres across the Wildfire Crisis Strategy landscapes, surpassing [fiscal year 2023's accomplishments](#) of 765,450 acres. These treatments include prescribed fire, mechanical treatments, and other techniques to reduce hazardous fuels. We also sold 429,104 million board feet of timber across the landscapes for \$13.25 million in 2024 dollars. In total, we have invested in the treatment of 1.86 million acres across the landscapes since their establishment in [2022](#) and [2023](#).

Harvesting timber and manufacturing wood products is an important fuels reduction tool that is also an economic engine for local economies, especially in rural areas and Tribal communities. Timber harvesting helps reduce tree density—and risk of high-intensity wildfire—on the Mogollon Rim Ranger District of the Coconino National Forest in Arizona. USDA Forest Service photo by Randi Shaffer.

Thanks to this work, the communities, critical infrastructure, and natural resources that Americans rely upon are becoming safer. Using outcome-based performance metrics, researchers estimate that between 2021 and 2023 our work within the 21 landscapes resulted in:

- leveraging a \$1.2 billion investment to reduce wildfire risk to \$700 billion worth of housing and critical infrastructure,
- a 7.8-percent average reduction in wildfire risk to residential housing,
- an 8.2-percent average reduction in wildfire risk to critical infrastructure (high-voltage transmission lines and communication sites),
- an 11.8-percent reduction in wildfire risk to watersheds that supply drinking water, and
- avoiding approximately \$37 million in residential property losses in fiscal year 2023.

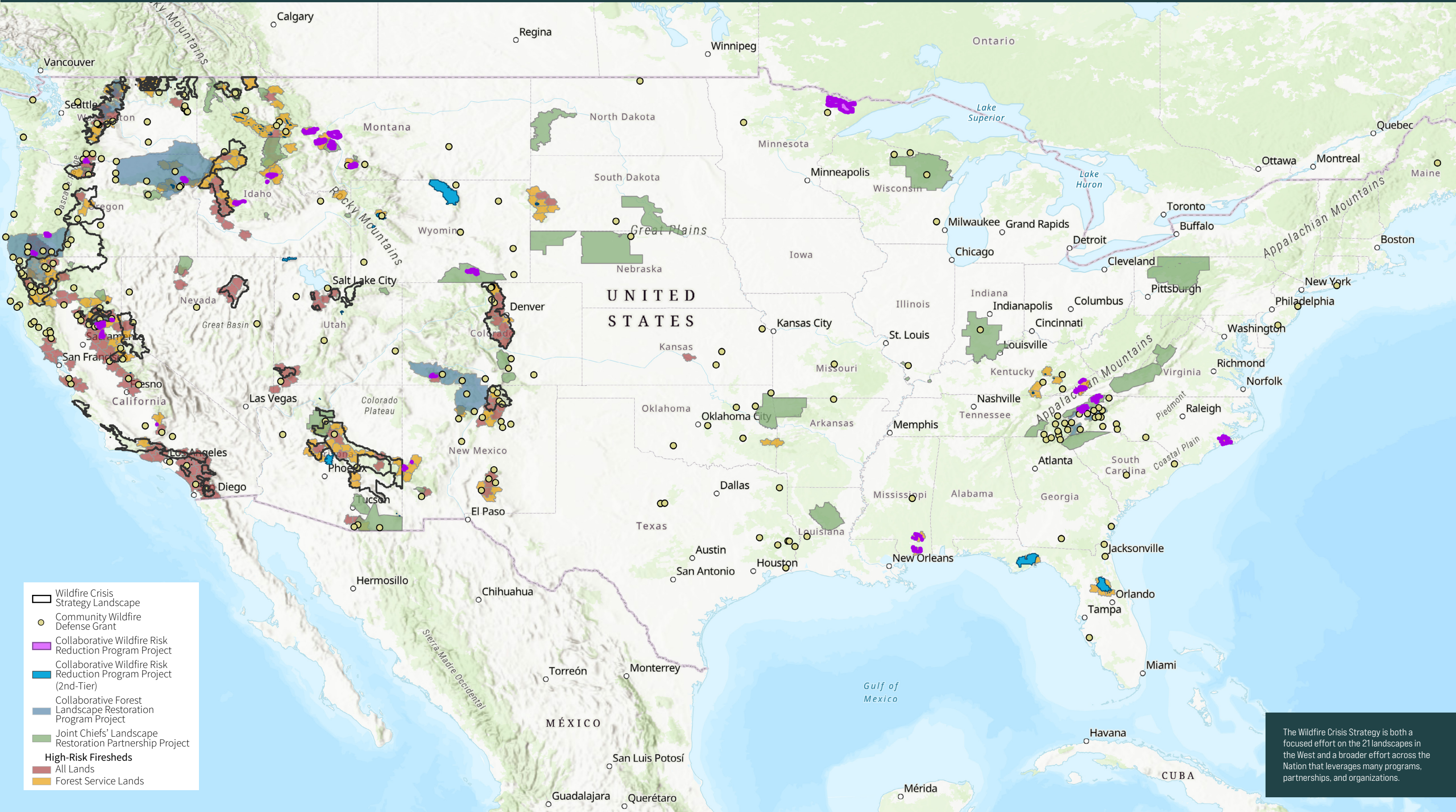
In addition to the statistics are the tangible success stories. For example, in the Southern California Fireshed Risk Reduction Strategy Landscape, we've been reducing wildfire risk around the rural community of Angelus Oaks through thinning and prescribed fire. This work included a [prescribed burn around the community in April and May](#) of 2024. When the Line Fire began just a few months later, it threatened Angelus Oaks. But when the Line Fire approached the areas that had been treated, the fire intensity decreased, [giving firefighters the critical opportunity to contain the wildfire](#) and stop it from entering the community.

High wildfire risk also exists beyond the Wildfire Crisis Strategy landscape boundaries. In addition to our work in the 21 landscapes, we have been working to reduce risk to communities across the country through other programs and partnerships, including the [Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program](#), [Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership](#), [Good Neighbor Authority](#), and the [Tribal Forest Protection Act](#). We are also working with and investing in communities through [community wildfire defense grants](#) and the [Community Navigators](#) program. In 2024, we expanded our efforts under the Wildfire Crisis Strategy through investing in the new [Collaborative Wildfire Risk Reduction Program](#) and five new national keystone partner agreements.

This focused work under the Wildfire Crisis Strategy fits into the broader efforts of the agency to reduce wildfire risk and restore forest health across the Nation. In fiscal year 2024, the agency—along with partners, communities, and Tribes—treated a total of 4.28 million acres of hazardous fuels. This includes a record of nearly 2.2 million acres of prescribed fire, breaking the previous record of 1.95 million acres that was set just the prior fiscal year. Prescribed fires are important both for treatments in high-risk areas to reduce wildfire risk and to maintain areas that are in good condition.



REDUCING WILDFIRE RISK ACROSS THE NATION



The Wildfire Crisis Strategy is both a focused effort on the 21 landscapes in the West and a broader effort across the Nation that leverages many programs, partnerships, and organizations.



LEARNING, ADAPTING, AND EXPANDING

We knew from the onset that to confront the wildfire crisis, we had to make some immediate, strategic changes to our business practices. We also recognized the need to continually invest in learning, adapting to what we’ve learned and expanding our efforts given the resources available.

LEARNING

Using the best available scientific information to help inform our wildfire risk reduction and forest health restoration efforts is a core tenet of the Wildfire Crisis Strategy. To build upon our scientific understanding of the environment, risk, and tools and techniques for reducing risk, we have invested in new research and application projects. These projects will develop new technologies, data, and information that we will use to better implement the Wildfire Crisis Strategy.

Advancing Tribal co-stewardship of the land is critical to restoring forest health and reducing wildfire risk. In 2024, we continued our partnership with the Intertribal Timber Council and the Udall Foundation’s National Center for Environmental Conflict Resolution to better understand how the Forest Service is working with Tribes to implement the Wildfire Crisis Strategy. Building on themes and recommendations heard in previous Tribal engagements, these partners released

an assessment that evaluated how Indigenous knowledge and Tribal priorities are being incorporated into wildfire risk reduction efforts, gathered lessons learned for effective implementation, and identified additional capacity and workforce considerations to address with Tribes.

The Wildfire Crisis Strategy tells us we must work in the right places in the right ways to have the greatest good for both people and the environment. Outcome-based performance metrics allow us to measure the benefits of our work. They also allow us to communicate the value of our work to the American people by showing them how their tax dollars are translating to benefits.

These performance metrics show us the benefits from the \$1.2 billion invested in the 21 Wildfire Crisis Strategy landscapes between 2021 and 2023. That investment has reduced wildfire risk to \$700 billion worth of housing and critical infrastructure within the landscapes. This includes approximately 550 at-risk communities, 2,500 miles of high-voltage transmission lines, and 1,800 watersheds that provide drinking water, as well as many other values that people depend on and care about.

These outcomes are based on analyses of only the first 18 months¹ of our work, and they will continue to grow as our investments and work continue. To date, we have invested \$2.6 billion² in the Wildfire Crisis Strategy, enabling extensive work that is directly translating to meaningful benefits.

To assess fiscal year 2024 outcomes, we are expanding outcome-based performance metrics to reflect 10 pillars of wildfire resilience: fire-adapted communities, social and cultural well-being, economic diversity, air quality, watersheds, infrastructure, forest resilience, biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and fire dynamics. These analyses will be conducted in early 2025, and the outcomes data will be available soon after.

ADAPTING

As we continue implementing the Wildfire Crisis Strategy, it’s important that we remain nimble and adaptive.

We have significantly improved our data systems to better inform planning efforts and monitor progress. Of particular note was our effort to create a comprehensive national dataset for the wildland-urban interface on National Forest System lands as defined by the [Healthy Forests Restoration Act](#). While individual sets of these data existed and were independently maintained, there was not a single authoritative version the agency could use. This new national dataset is crucial in planning national efforts and programs.

We have been using all authorities available to us to increase the pace and scale of our wildfire risk reduction efforts, including new authorities granted in recent years. For example, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law established a new categorical exclusion for fuel breaks. As of the end of fiscal year 2024, there are 84 projects using this categorical exclusion authority. We have completed 40 projects, treating a total of 83,541 acres. These fuel break projects will help reduce wildfire risk to communities and critical infrastructure. Using emergency authorities granted by the Secretary of Agriculture, we have also expedited the treatment of over 1 million acres as of the end of fiscal year 2024.

EXPANDING

In 2024, we took an important step in expanding our focused work under the Wildfire Crisis Strategy. We established the new [Collaborative Wildfire Risk Reduction Program](#), which enables

national forests—in collaboration with Tribes, communities, and partners—to reduce wildfire risk to communities, critical infrastructure, and natural resources.

The program is a one-time investment of Inflation Reduction Act funds in projects that are (1) on National Forest System lands, (2) outside of the existing Wildfire Crisis Strategy landscapes, (3) within the wildland-urban interface, and (4) in areas with either very high wildfire hazard potential or within a high-risk fireshed.

Through this program, we invested in 21 projects across 14 States. Several of these States are in the East, in recognition that wildfire risk exists and is increasing beyond the West. The projects funded through this new program will be implemented with the help of partners. In addition to supporting on-the-ground work, such as mechanical thinning and prescribed fire, the projects also support surveying, workforce development, and public engagement that enable future wildfire risk reduction efforts.

In the 2024 fiscal year, we also invested in five new national keystone agreements. These keystone agreements allow us to implement projects quickly and efficiently with the partners. These partners are new to working with the Forest Service, and the skillsets and capacity they bring to the table will help support the increased pace and scale of wildfire risk reduction efforts in the years to come.



Members of the Rio Fernando Collaborative have partnered with the USDA Forest Service to reduce wildfire risk and improve water availability in the Taos, NM, region. USDA Forest Service photo by Preston Keres.

OUTPUTS VERSUS OUTCOMES

We track our work through a variety of metrics. Many of these metrics track outputs, such as how many acres we removed hazardous fuels from or how many board feet of timber we sell and harvest. Tracking outputs is important, but not all outputs are equal in terms of the outcomes—the positive impacts to communities, infrastructure, and natural resources. Consider the following two scenarios.

SCENARIO ONE

We treated 500 acres using prescribed fire deep in the forest with no buildings or infrastructure nearby.

SCENARIO TWO

We treated 500 acres using prescribed fire right next to a town facing high wildfire risk.

Through the lens of output-based metrics only, these two scenarios are the same: 500 acres were treated. But the outcomes of the scenarios differ greatly. In the first scenario, we have done work to restore forest health and reduce wildfire risk to a remote section of forest. In the second scenario, not only have we done work to restore forest health and reduce wildfire risk to a section of forest, but we also reduce wildfire risk to all the homes, businesses, and other vital infrastructure in that town. The work in the second scenario achieves more and better outcomes, which is only made evident when we measure those outcomes in addition to the outputs.

¹ The analyses we conduct for outcome-based performance metrics look at individual fiscal years, which run from October 1 to September 30. The datasets we use to conduct the analyses are updated to reflect the previous fiscal year in the several months after each fiscal year ends. Because of this, our outcome-based performance metrics results have a lag between the time period they measure and when we can compute and release them. We can compute any given fiscal year’s results approximately 5 to 6 months after that fiscal year ends.

² This includes but is not limited to the 21 landscape investments, the Collaborative Wildfire Risk Reduction Program, and the new keystone partners.

Much of the North Yuba landscape is dense and steep: a harsh environment that allows wildfire to quickly spread while limiting human accessibility. Prescribed burns decrease fire hazard and can reduce the impact of future wildfires. Other benefits include enhancing wildlife habitat and reintroducing fire into a fire-adapted ecosystem. USDA Forest Service by Julia Bonney.

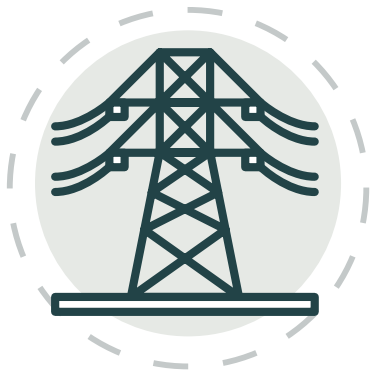
LANDSCAPE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The 21 Wildfire Crisis Strategy landscapes span 135 high-risk fireheds across 10 States in the West. These landscapes represent some of the areas with the highest wildfire risk and most vulnerable communities and critical infrastructure. Each landscape includes a mix of land jurisdictions, including National Forest System lands, other Federal lands, Tribal lands, State lands, municipal lands, and privately owned lands.

Although our landscape investments are multijurisdictional, the following updates include accomplishments on National Forest System lands during fiscal year 2024 only.



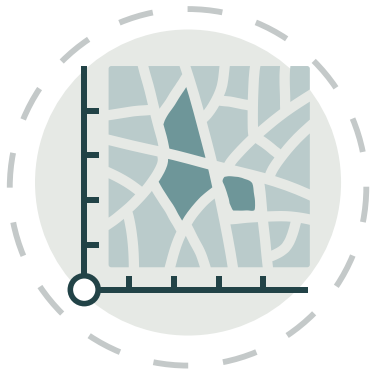
AT-RISK COMMUNITIES
At-risk communities as identified by wildfirerisk.org.



MILES OF TRANSMISSION LINES
Transmission lines are lines 345 volts or over from datasets managed by U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Homeland Infrastructure Foundation-Level Data (HIFLD).








NUMBER OF WATERSHEDS
Municipal supply watersheds data from the Forest Service Southern Research Station.



ACRES TREATED
Acreage is for fiscal year 2024 only; landscapes also had work completed in prior fiscal years.

The Forest Service is investing both within and beyond these landscapes, in all corners of the country. Every State, along with Puerto Rico, has received funding from the agency to reduce wildfire risk and improve local economies and communities. Visit the agency's "[Confronting the Wildfire Crisis](#)" web page for a State-by-State breakdown of these investments.

LANDSCAPE

		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT				
Four Forest Restoration Initiative	AZ	AZ-1 & 3	58	572	124	211,400
Greater Prescott Area Wildfire Protection and Restoration	AZ	AZ-4	13	40	23	21,249
San Carlos Apache Tribal Forest Protection	AZ	AZ-1,2, & 6	20	129	27	21,847
Klamath River Basin	CA, OR	CA-1 & 2, OR-2	22	362	160	176,282
North Yuba	CA	CA-1	6	0	29	2,159
Plumas Community Protection	CA	CA-1	31	0	52	5,444
Sierra and Elko Fronts	CA, NV	CA-3, NV-2 & 4	54	51	72	21,599
Southern California Fireshed Risk Reduction Strategy	CA	CA-18-20, 23-31, 33, 39-41, 48-50	75	220	231	21,169
Stanislaus	CA	CA-4	18	0	20	14,285
Trinity Forest Health and Fire-Resilient Rural Communities	CA	CA-1 & 2	15	0	48	24,836
Colorado Front Range	CO	CO-2-7	80	9	155	23,316
Nez Perce-Clearwater-Lower Salmon	ID	ID-1	4	0	45	6,243
Kootenai Complex	ID, MT	MT-at-large, ID-1	14	0	42	19,239
Southwest Idaho	ID	ID-1 & 2	10	0	62	43,754
Enchanted Circle	NM	NM-3	20	6	38	9,977
Central Oregon	OR	OR-2	15	228	53	62,645
Mount Hood Forest Health and Fire-Resilient Communities	OR	OR-2, 3, & 5	16	138	40	10,479
Pine Valley	UT	UT-2	7	72	18	5,986
Wasatch	UT	UT-1-4	31	3	69	15,257
Central Washington Initiative	WA	WA-4 & 8	22	393	186	35,540
Colville Northeast Washington Vision	WA	WA-4 & 5	6	0	140	50,927

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

While the 2024 fiscal year was marked by success, there were also challenges that we and our partners faced. We are looking for the opportunities to overcome these challenges when and where possible.

Confronting the wildfire crisis means doing work at unprecedented levels. As we've invested in ramping up the pace and scale of our efforts both internally and externally—such as through contractors and partners—we have reached maximum capacity in some areas. There is a finite level of on-the-ground practitioners available to do work across the landscapes, and in some areas there is more work to do than workforce capacity currently available to do that work.

To respond, we have been investing in building capacity. Various grant programs—such as the [Community Wildfire Defense Grant Program](#)—are helping support and expand capacity. We've also been expanding our circle of partners, as each new partner brings additional capacity.

We are also approaching the end of the special funding that has enabled the accelerated work under the Wildfire Crisis Strategy. Most of the remaining Inflation Reduction Act funds were invested in the 2024 fiscal year. Annual funds from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will continue through fiscal year 2026.

Both the Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law were critical downpayments in the Wildfire Crisis Strategy. However, fully realizing the vision laid out by the Wildfire Crisis Strategy will require further, sustained investments. As funding from these two pieces of legislation come to an end, we will continue to implement the Wildfire Crisis Strategy as fully as possible with the resources available.

A contractor operates a masticator to break apart brush and small trees into smaller pieces, reducing the density of fuels within the Four Forest Restoration Initiative landscape on the Tonto National Forest. USDA Forest Service photo by Madeline Bautista.





NEXT STEPS

The Wildfire Crisis Strategy remains the Forest Service’s top priority. We will continue to build on the successes of the work accomplished so far. This work has made America’s communities, critical infrastructure, and natural resources safer—but there is still much work to be done.

To date, we have invested \$2.6 billion in the work under the Wildfire Crisis Strategy. While additional funds available for us to invest through the Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law are waning, there is still funding yet to be spent that will continue to enable our work in 2025 and beyond. These funds and the work they enable will directly translate to continued, meaningful outcomes for several years.

In 2025, we will continue to reduce wildfire risk and restore forest health across the Wildfire Crisis Strategy landscapes. We will continue using all authorities available to us, making use of all funding sources, and changing business practices to better enable this work. We will also implement the Collaborative Wildfire Risk Reduction Program projects, expanding our focused work to new areas across the Nation that are facing high wildfire risk. We will continue working with and expanding our circle of partners, as well as engaging and working alongside Tribes. We will also continue investing in community resilience, innovative research, and industry capacity.

The wildfire crisis is a daunting, complex challenge. If America is to fully confront this challenge, we know it will require additional investments of time, energy, and capital. But we also know that the work the Forest Service and our partners have achieved so far under the Wildfire Crisis Strategy is truly making a difference for Americans, the communities they live in, and the forests that they rely on for recreation and sustainment. While there is still a lot of work to accomplish to fully achieve the vision laid out by the Wildfire Crisis Strategy, we have shown that this agency, our partners, and the American people are up to the challenge.

A prescribed fire on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests reduces fuels, making it easier for firefighters to manage future wildfires. USDA Forest Service photo by T. Peterson.

WILDFIRE CRISIS s t r a t e g y

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the State or local Agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Cover photo: The Tonto National Forest is part of the Four Forest Restoration Initiative where the Forest Service is targeting investments to reduce wildfire risk across multiple Wildfire Crisis Strategy landscapes. This partnership has already treated hundreds of thousands of acres in central Arizona, setting fire managers up to capitalize on opportunities with naturally caused wildfires. USDA Forest Service photo by Preston Keres.