

21ST CENTURY CONSERVATION CORPS ACT

SECTION-BY-SECTION SUMMARY

Section 1—Short Title

The 21st Century Conservation Corps Act.

Section 2—Supplemental Appropriations for the Forest Service, the Department of the Interior, and the Department of Labor

This section includes supplemental funding for the following land management accounts designed to increase the pace and scale of forest health and wildfire resiliency projects, reduce smoke risks, and get people back to work.

\$10 billion increase for National Forest System funding, divided as follows:

- **Hazardous Fuels:** The 21st Century Conservation Corps for our Health and our Jobs Act proposes a \$3.5 billion increase in the U.S. Forest Service hazardous fuels account. The legislation requires that the additional funding be prioritized for projects that are shovel ready, the best for fire-risk reduction and have already been environmentally reviewed. Normally, the hazardous fuels program is funded at approximately \$445 million per year and helps restore forest health and reduce wildfire risks. Given increased drought risk and the damaging respiratory effects of COVID-19, there is an urgent need to increase the pace and scale of our restoration projects, and the Hazardous Fuels program is a linchpin in that effort.
- **Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program:** The legislation proposes a \$150 million increase in funding for the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP), a proven model to meet current resource needs like no other program. The competitive program, which is traditionally funded at \$40 million per year, funds large-scale, community-driven restoration projects with the goal of reducing the risk of megafire, supporting jobs in rural communities, and enhancing wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities across the nation.
- **Vegetation and Watershed Management:** The legislation proposes an additional \$300 million for Vegetation and Watershed Management. This program is traditionally funded at roughly \$180 million per year and ensures the productive and sustainable use of National Forest System lands by improving the growth and health of timber stands, reducing the risk of severe flooding and erosion in forests affected by severe fire, and helping keep water clean.

- **Recreation, Heritage and Wilderness - Every Kid Outdoors Program:** The legislation proposes a \$25 million dollar increase for the Every Kid Outdoors Program. This program allows U.S. fourth graders and family members free access to over 2,000 federal lands and waters allowing them educational opportunities to learn about wildlife, resources, and history. Every Kid Outdoors creates crucial connections to public lands and inspires a future generation of stewards for America's public lands.
- **Capital Improvements & Maintenance:** The legislation proposes a \$6 billion increase for the Forest Service Capital Improvements and Maintenance (CIM) program, which is traditionally funded at roughly \$445 million per year. CIM provides for construction, capital improvement, maintenance and acquisition of buildings and other facilities and infrastructure; construction, reconstruction, and decommissioning of roads that are no longer needed, including unauthorized roads that are not part of the transportation system; and maintenance of forest roads and trails. Significant investment in CIM will allow the agency to address an identified \$5.2 billion maintenance backlog and make progress on reducing future maintenance needs.
 - Of this additional funding, the legislation requires that \$300 million is appropriated to the Forest Service Legacy Roads and Trails program. The program directs work towards urgently needed road decommissioning, road and trail repair and maintenance, and removal of fish passage barriers. The program was previously funded at \$40 million per year, but the Forest Service stopped funding the program altogether in 2018. The program emphasizes areas where Forest Service roads may be contributing to water quality problems in streams and water bodies that support threatened, endangered, and sensitive species or community water sources. Investment in this program will result in lower deferred maintenance costs through right-sized road networks.
- **Water Source Protection Program:** The legislation provides \$30 million for the Water Source Protection Program (WSPP), which was established in the 2018 Farm Bill to encourage partnerships between agricultural producers, businesses, cities, and the U.S. Forest Service. These partnerships will improve forest health, benefit downstream communities, and bring in new investments from non-federal partners. However, the program has not yet received dedicated funding. As climate change continues to stress our forests and watersheds, investments in local, collaborative programs like WSPP are critical.

\$600 million increase for State and Private Forestry funding, divided as follows:

- **Landscape Scale Restoration:** \$100 million for the Landscape Scale Restoration Program. The program is traditionally funded at \$14 million annually and is a competitive grant program that funds priority projects identified in State Forest Action

plans. The legislation ensures that \$50 million of the funds are for tribal forest restoration work. Additional funding will help states get ahead of wildfire risk by treating priority acres in the Wildland Urban Interface, ultimately reducing risks and costs associated with wildfire.

- **Forest Legacy Program:** \$100 million for the Forest Legacy Program (FLP), (traditionally funded at \$64 million annually), which is a conservation program administered by the U.S. Forest Service in partnership with State agencies to encourage the protection of privately owned forest lands through conservation easements or land purchases. Investment in the program will help conserve additional and critical private lands while still allowing for hunting and fishing access and working lands.
- **Urban and Community Forestry Program:** \$100 million for the Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) program (traditionally funded at \$30 million annually), which is delivered in a model of shared stewardship with State forestry agencies and other national and local partners to provide funding and technical assistance for communities to conserve, protect, and enhance trees across jurisdictional boundaries. Urban and community forests can serve as a gateway for invasive pests and diseases. Maintaining the health of these forests protects the Nation's forests, including the national forests.
- **Community Forest and Open Space Program:** \$100 million for the Community Forest and Open Space program (traditionally funded at \$4 million annually). The purpose of CFP is to achieve community benefits through grants to local governments, Tribal governments, and qualified nonprofit organizations to establish community forests by acquiring and protecting forestlands. By creating community forests through land acquisition, communities and Tribes are able to provide public access and recreational opportunities, protect vital water supplies and wildlife habitat, address the effects of a changing climate, provide demonstration sites for private forest landowners, and derive financial and community benefits from sustainable management.
- **National Fire Capacity (previously State Fire Assistance):** \$2 billion for the National Fire Capacity program (traditionally funded at \$56 million), which administers the Firewise program, and helps the Forest Service support and assist State Foresters and local communities in building capacity for the prevention, mitigation, control, and suppression of wildfires on non-Federal lands. The program helps State agencies create more fire-adapted communities by implementing pre-fire prevention and mitigation programs described in State Forest Action Plans.

U.S. Forest Service personal protective equipment purchases - \$100 million, to be used for:

- This legislation provides \$100 million to the U.S. Forest Service to invest in personal protective equipment (PPE) for employees, contractors, and personnel to protect against the COVID-19 virus.
- The legislation also directs the Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator to allocate personal protective equipment and appropriate testing for COVID-19 to Federal and cooperating wildland firefighters and law enforcement personnel from Federal land management agencies.

USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service - \$5.5 billion in supplemental funding, to be used for:

- **Regional Conservation Partnership Program:** This legislation provides an additional \$5.5 billion in funding to USDA's successful Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), to increase on-farm, watershed, and regional conservation work that puts people to work creating water resiliency infrastructure. The bill ensures additional funding will be used to expedite the highest-impact water infrastructure projects, while reserving \$200 million of the additional funding for project planning.

USDA's Community Wood Energy and Wood Innovation Program - \$100 million to be used for:

- The legislation provides an additional \$100 million for the Community Wood Energy and Wood Innovation Program, which provides grants to develop innovative wood products markets that improve forest health, reduce cost of forest management, and promote environmental health of communities.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR - \$6.9 billion in additional funding, divided as follows:

- **BLM: Management of Land and Resources (Hazardous Fuels):** This legislation provides an additional \$2 billion for the BLM's Hazardous Fuels program, which restores forest health and reduces wildfire risks and is traditionally funded at \$1.2 billion. Our nation's ability to protect its forest and grassland resources is now at risk due to drought, the impacts of climate change, increasingly severe wildfires, and uncharacteristically large outbreaks of insects and disease. There is an urgent need to increase the pace and scale of our restoration efforts and the Hazardous Fuels program is a linchpin in that effort. Healthy, resilient landscapes have greater capacity to adapt to and withstand natural disturbances and large scale threats to sustainability.
- **BLM: Every Kid Outdoors Program:** The legislation proposes a \$25 million dollar increase to be used for the Every Kid Outdoors Program. This program allows U.S.

fourth graders and family members free access to over 2,000 federal lands and waters allowing them educational opportunities to learn about wildlife, resources, and history. Every Kid Outdoors creates crucial connections to public lands and inspires a future generation of stewards for America's public lands.

- **BLM: Capital Improvement and Maintenance:** \$2 billion for BLM Capital Improvement and Maintenance for the purposes of improving, maintaining, and restoring infrastructure to increase recreational opportunities on BLM lands.
- **USFWS: Partners for Fish and Wildlife:** The legislation provides an additional \$150 million for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Partners for Fish and Wildlife program, traditionally funded at roughly \$57 million per year. This is a critical habitat conservation program, supporting voluntary, community-based conservation on private working lands along the coasts of the United States. The health of the country's fish and wildlife populations depends on private landowners, who manage more than two-thirds of the country's land.
- **USFWS: North American Waterfowl Management/Joint Ventures:** The legislation provides an additional \$150 million for the North American Waterfowl Management and Joint Ventures program, which is traditionally funded at \$15 million. This program funds species-focused joint ventures to help further the scientific understanding needed to manage specific waterfowl species in compliance with international treaties, but with a regional approach to solutions. These projects not only advance waterfowl conservation, but make substantial contributions toward the conservation of all species dependent on wetlands.
- **Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART program:** The legislation provides \$4.5 billion in supplemental funding for the WaterSMART program, which provides water and energy efficiency grants to farmers and ranchers to build and improve infrastructure that helps reduce drought effects and water use, while promoting important resource conservation efforts.
- **Bureau of Reclamation: Every Kid Outdoors Program:** The legislation provides \$5 million dollars to be used for the Every Kid Outdoors Program. This program allows U.S. fourth graders and family members free access to over 2,000 federal lands and waters allowing them educational opportunities to learn about wildlife, resources, and history. Every Kid Outdoors creates crucial connections to public lands and inspires a future generation of stewards for America's public lands.

- **BIA:** The legislation provides an additional \$500 million for maintenance and repairs to tribal drinking water infrastructure and an additional \$45 million to the Operation of Indian Programs, to be used for tribal forestry projects. Funding provided for Operation of Indian Programs will help advance landscape scale restoration and forest health treatments on reservations and Indian trust land, while also helping to recruit and train the necessary workforce to accomplish projects. Indian Tribes can and should be key partners in restoring the health of public lands and reducing fire risk to communities. The funding will be divided as follows:
 - \$20 million for tribal forestry projects;
 - \$20 million for tribal grants, to be used for large landscape-scale forest health treatments; and
 - \$5 million for a forestry workforce development initiation to help retain forestry professionals on tribal land.

- **BIA: Land and Water Claims Settlements:** This legislation provides \$100 million to be used for Land and Water Claims Settlements. Settlements resolve tribal land and water rights claims and ensure tribes have access to land and water to meet domestic, economic, and cultural needs. Many of the infrastructure projects supported by these agreements improve the health and well-being of tribal members, preserve existing communities, and bring the potential for jobs and economic development.

- **BIA: Construction:** The legislation includes \$50 million in funding to be used for Construction. These funds will help address deferred maintenance projects for public safety and justice facilities, resource management infrastructure such as irrigation projects and dams, and regional and agency offices serving tribal programs and operations in Indian Country.

- **National Park Service: Operations:** This legislation includes \$575 million for the Operation of the National Park Service to be divided as follows:
 - \$25 million for the Every Kid Outdoors Program
 - \$50 million to support programming and partnerships with youth-serving organizations
 - \$500 million for the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Program. This grant program helps urban communities address outdoor recreation deficits by supporting projects in cities that create new outdoor recreation spaces, reinvigorate already existing parks, and form connections between people and the outdoors. ORLP is the only federal program focused exclusively on supporting parks and outdoor recreation opportunities in cities. The program provides grants directly to cities and localities, giving easier access to necessary funding and bypassing the state granting process.

- **National Park Service: Construction and Major Maintenance:** This legislation provides \$6 billion for Construction and Major Maintenance, prioritizing projects which provide stewardship for existing roads and trails, improve water quality, improve and maintain infrastructure for the passage of fish and wildlife, improve visitor services, and improve recreational and educational access to underserved communities.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY - \$100 million in additional funding to be used for:

- **FEMA: Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities:** The legislation provides \$2 billion for FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC), which support states, local communities, tribes and territories, as they undertake hazard mitigation projects reducing the risks they face from disasters and natural hazards. The BRIC program guiding principles are supporting communities through capability- and capacity-building; encouraging and enabling innovation; promoting partnerships; enabling large projects; maintaining flexibility; and providing consistency. Investments in BRIC will ultimately reduce the cost of responses to natural disasters, including wildfire. This program was authorized in 2018.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE - \$2 billion in supplemental funding for coastal resiliency, to be used for:

- **National Coastal Resilience Fund:** The legislation provides \$2 billion for the National Coastal Resilience Fund and Resiliency and Habitat grant program for the purposes of creating jobs, restoring wetlands, dunes, reefs, marshes, kelp forests, and mangroves and other living shorelines to reduce flood risks, create habitat, and restart tourism.

Department of Labor Appropriations - \$9 billion in supplemental funding for job creation, to be used for:

- **Civilian Conservation Corps Program:** The legislation provides \$9 billion for the Civilian Conservation Corps Program in Section 5. In addition to providing funds for the program, the bill directs relevant Secretaries to carry out, to the maximum extent practicable, projects that engage with historically underrepresented or disenfranchised communities.

IN GENERAL: This section ensures the U.S. Forest Service projects are carried out by local workers to the maximum extent possible, waives existing cost-share requirements, and makes sure that priority is given to cost-effective environmental projects.

Section 3—OUTFITTERS AND GUIDES RELIEF PROGRAM

This section establishes a \$2 billion Outfitter & Guide Relief Program, which will make direct payments to outfitters and guides who are suffering season closures due to COVID-related emergencies. This fund reimburses outfitters and guides for operating expenses and payroll costs, but requires the funding be used to continue business operations and employ workers. Outfitters and guides must have valid outfitter and guide permits, and can apply for funding every three months for an 18-month period. The Outfitter & Guide Grant Program will help support businesses who are likely to miss out on an entire season of work due to the closure of public lands in response to COVID-19 and requisite social distancing. Outfitting and guiding businesses have largely been unable to access other forms of emergency bridging funding during the pandemic and represent an important component of the outdoor economy, particularly in rural communities.

Section 4: Every Kid Outdoors Program

This legislation expands the Every Kid Outdoors program to include fourth, fifth, and sixth grader, or home-schooled learner 10-12 years of age in the United States, including any territory or possession of the United States.

Section 5: Forest Service Legacy Roads and Trails Program

The legislation formally authorizes the U.S. Forest Service's Legacy Roads and Trails program.

Section 6: Civilian Conservation Corps

This section creates a fund for the \$9 billion of Department of Labor appropriations for qualified land and conservation corps, to increase job training and hiring specifically for resources management jobs. The funding will help restore public lands and address this rise in unemployment due to COVID-19. By scaling up the existing network of Service and Conservation Corps, this program will help employ hundreds of thousands of young Americans and completing necessary project work on public lands and in communities across the country.

Section 7: Temporary Waiver of Ski Area Permit Fees

This section provides a one-year waiver of ski area permit fees for the period of March 13, 2020 through June 1, 2021. This waiver will provide desperately needed economic relief for the ski areas and the communities that rely on them for a term of one year.

Section 8: Temporary Waiver of Outdoor Recreation Land Use Permit Fees

This section provides a temporary waiver of land use fees to provide economic relief for the outdoor recreation industry, including guides and outfitters, for a period of March 13, 2020 through December 31, 2021.

Section 9: Workforce Training

This section directs the Secretaries of Agriculture, the Interior, Homeland Security, Commerce, and Labor to collaborate with institutions of higher education, the Corps Network, the outdoor recreation business community, and public land stewardship and outdoor recreation organizations. The coordination will support institutions of higher education in developing, coordinating, and carrying out nationally consistent and standardized training for all qualified youth or conservation corps participants.

Section 10: Reforestation

This legislation directs and funds the U.S. Forest Service and the Department of Interior to use the best available science to conduct reforestation projects across the country. It requires all reforestation to employ ecologically based practices that are informed by climate change science and that enhance forest health, resilience, and biodiversity. It also dedicates funding through the Bureau of Indian Affairs for reforestation on Indian trust lands.

The bill provides cost share grants to states, tribes, local governments, and nonprofits to carry out their reforestation projects and dedicates funding to plant 100 million trees by 2030 in urban neighborhoods most in need of tree canopy cover, prioritizing communities of color and low-income communities. It requires prevailing wages be paid for all grant funded reforestation.

Section 11: Conservation Stewardship Program

This legislation makes climate stewardship practices eligible for new supplemental funding under the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) without changing existing CSP programs and funding. It would support voluntary climate stewardship practices on over 100 million acres of farmland by providing tens of billions of dollars of supplemental funding for USDA working lands conservation programs, with new funding dedicated to stewardship practices such as rotational grazing, improved fertilizer efficiency, and planting tens of millions of new acres of cover crops.

Section 12: Emergency Declaration

This section waives the pay-go requirements of the Budget Act.