



## 2024 Activities Report



Photo: Maggie Kirkland

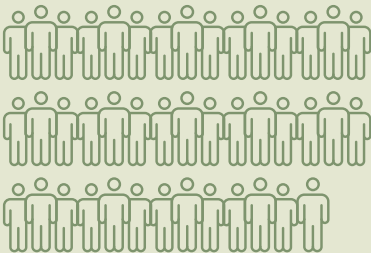
The National Forest Foundation has substantially grown and changed how it operates. As restoration needs on our National Forests continue to grow, so shall the NFF. We are committed to helping our agency partners tackle the challenges they face on a daily basis.

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**OVER  
150 Staff**

located in more than 40 states across the country.



**Covering projects across all 9 USFS Regions**



**AGAIN, in FY24, NFF increased its on-the-ground investments by roughly 50% over the previous year, an amount that is almost 4X what was invested in FY20.**



**NFF Mission**

The National Forest Foundation, chartered by Congress, engages Americans in community-based and national programs that promote the health and public enjoyment of the 193-million-acre National Forest System, and administers private gifts of funds and land for the benefit of the National Forests.



Photo: Adobe Stock

In FY24, the NFF raised over \$22 million for our work on-the-ground from corporate, government, and foundation entities. These nonfederal funds provided crucial match to:

- unlock federal dollars,
- reduce deferred maintenance projects and improve recreation infrastructure across National Forests and Grasslands, and
- address urgent needs including wildfire risk reduction and watershed health for millions of Americans.

With our commitment to partnership alignment and leveraging alternate sources of funding, our work on the ground equated to more than a 1:1 return on federal investment over the last five years.

Looking ahead, the NFF remains focused on building partnerships, connecting communities, and adding needed capacity for the U.S. Forest Service, all for the purpose of benefitting our National Forests and the vital resources we depend on.



# Have you looked at the NFF lately?

## How the NFF is funded

The NFF is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. It leverages federal funding by raising funding from non-federal sources including corporations, foundations, individuals, and state and local governments.

The NFF receives an annual appropriation from the U.S. Forest Service (typically ~\$3M) and project-based funding via partnership-driven agreements and direct grants. Almost all U.S. Forest Service funding is invested directly in on-the-ground projects via grants and contracts.

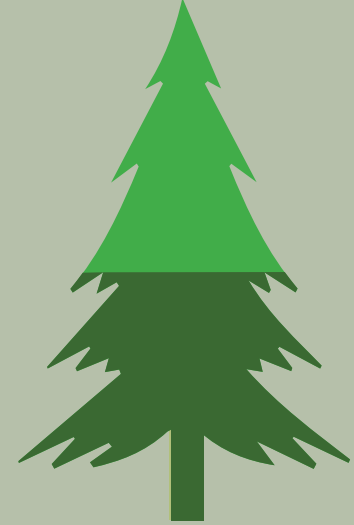
## Direct Implementation of USFS Priority Projects:

Photos clockwise from top left: O Martin, Tim LaBerge, Maggie Kirland, TEENS Inc, Kellon Spencer, NFF



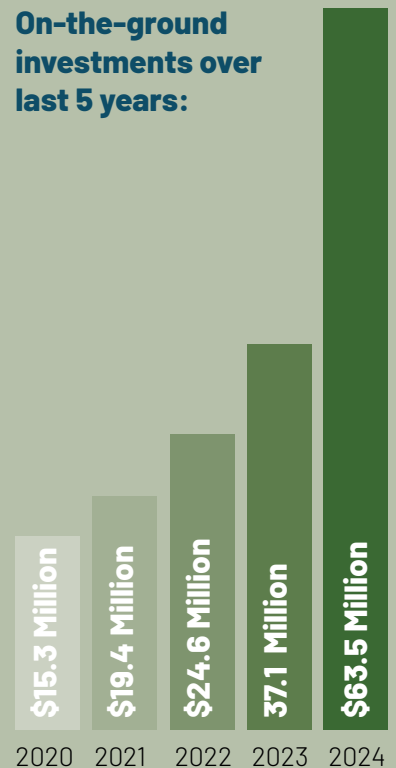
Projects funded and implemented by the National Forest Foundation on our National Forests.

**\$160 Million total on-the-ground investments for FY20-24**



**\$78.9M Federal**  
**\$81.0M Non-federal**

**On-the-ground investments over last 5 years:**



Total value of PROJECTS COMPLETED in FY24:

**\$28.8M**



- 13,396 acres made more resilient from wildfire
- 2,239 miles of trails work completed



- 5,512 youth engaged
- 80,066 hours donated by
- 9,460 volunteers



**5+M trees planted**

**FY25 Projections**

In FY25, the NFF will continue its growth trajectory and will increase its on-the-ground investments. The NFF anticipates making the following on-the-ground investments in FY25:

**Strategic Investments: \$90M**

**Reforestation: \$7M**

**Competitive Grants: \$3M**

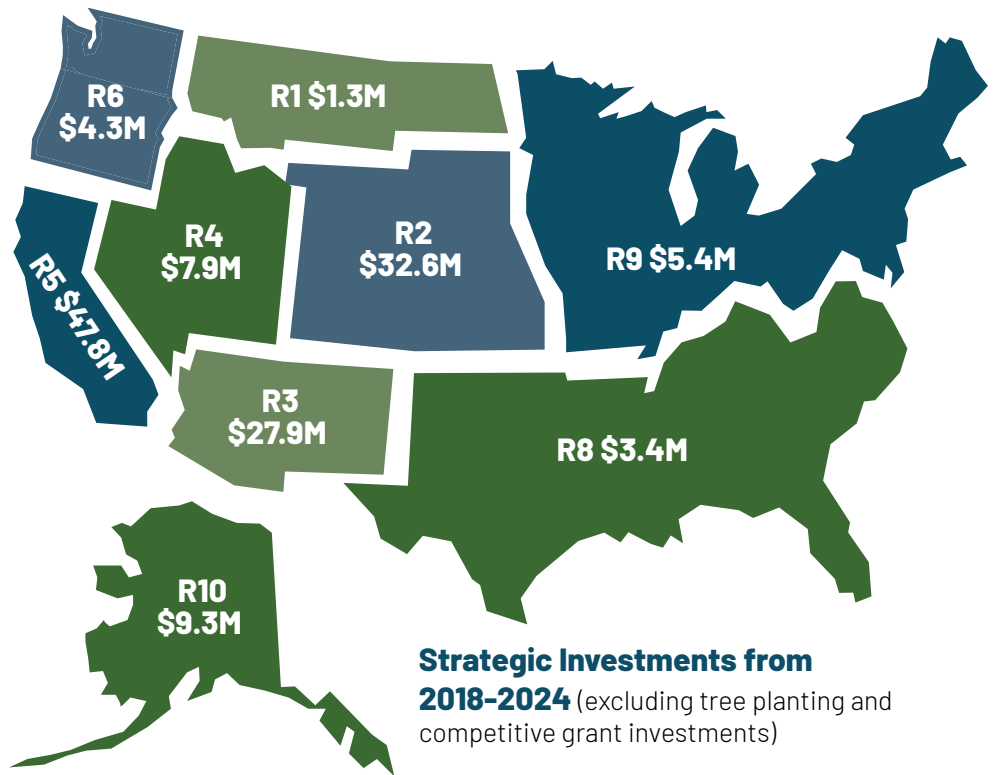
**Total Projected On-the-ground**

**investments in FY24: >\$100 Million**



**Total investments over the last 5 years**

As a project-focused nonprofit organization, the NFF raises funds and invests funds to support specific, strategic projects. As a result, the NFF is able to invest more in those areas where project needs and funding opportunities overlap. This causes geographic variation in investments, displayed in the map below.



**Strategic Investments from 2018-2024** (excluding tree planting and competitive grant investments)



Photo: NFF

# Conservation Awards

As effective and efficient grantmaking and contracting professionals, NFF Conservation Awards staff help enhance the health and resilience of America's National Forests and Grasslands. Providing financial support and fostering partnerships, we promote sustainable forest management, conservation, and community engagement. We achieve these goals working closely with various stakeholders, including nonprofit organizations, local and national businesses, Tribal governments, and universities.

## Competitive Grants

The NFF's two nationwide Competitive Grant programs provide federal funds to support innovative and impactful conservation projects. Grants are awarded through a rigorous evaluation process, ensuring that funded projects align with strategic priorities and deliver measurable benefits to National Forests and Grasslands.

## Responsive Partnerships

The NFF leverages a wide range of partnerships to address emerging conservation needs and opportunities through flexible and adaptive funding mechanisms. The NFF is an efficient and creative fiduciary of the federal and nonfederal funds entrusted to us. By leveraging innovative funding mechanisms and maintaining rigorous financial oversight, we ensure that every dollar is used effectively to advance conservation efforts.



Photo: Carolina Climbers Coalition

## Matching Awards Program (MAP)

MAP is a cornerstone of NFF grantmaking efforts. MAP focuses on in-person engagement and stewardship, aiming to create lasting change and benefit local communities. The program pairs Forest Service federal funds with non-federal funds raised by award recipients, effectively doubling the resources available for conservation projects.

## Collaborative Capacity Program for Forests & Communities (CCP)

CCP aims to build capacity within and across collaborative groups to improve the pace and scale of forest stewardship. Supported with federal funds, CCP supports activities that promote collaboration, and the exchange of best practices to achieve broad scale stewardship outcomes.



Photo: Athens-Wayne Outdoor Asset Development Corporation

## Invited Grants

The NFF awards invited grants to organizations for projects that align closely with our regional and national priorities. Invited grantees are organizations that have strategic and local expertise to deliver impactful conservation outcomes.

## Contracting and Procurement

The NFF uses both nonfederal and federal funds to contract for work that benefits our National Forests and Grasslands. Our contracts and procurement team maintains a close working relationship with on-the-ground staff that helps to maintain conservation priorities and ensure that all procurement activities are conducted effectively, efficiently, and transparently. We also work closely with vendors nationwide to ensure we remain a responsive procurement partner.

# Conservation Connect

Conservation Connect engages people to find shared solutions to our nation's most pressing forest stewardship challenges. We work with communities, tribes, agencies, local businesses, and others to lead, foster, and build capacity for partnerships and collaborative stewardship.



Photos: U.S. Forest Service

Photo: Tiffany Folkers



**Collaborative Capacity** – The NFF launched the new Collaborative Capacity Program for Forests and Communities to provide financial support for Tribal co-stewardship and collaborative forest stewardship. The first round of support will provide close to \$1 million in funding to 10 projects.

**Wildfire Crisis Strategy Landscape Collaboration** – We engaged partners to collectively identify focus areas for forest treatments on four cross-boundary landscapes in Idaho, New Mexico, Colorado, and California. For each landscape, the NFF is facilitating partners and the Forest Service to use modeling and decision support to collectively identify what areas should be treated to reduce wildfire risk.

**Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program – Peer Learning Sessions.** The NFF hosted 10 peer learning sessions for partners and Forest Service managers to build capacity for collaborative forest stewardship. Session highlights included approaches to prescribed fire, adaptive management, and collaborative dynamics.

**Conservation Connect Fellowship Program** – 2024's cohort of 11 outstanding graduate student fellows completed projects for the NFF while growing their skills in collaborative leadership. Fellows analyzed restoration opportunities in the Colorado River Basin, helped redesign the visitor center at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, and assessed the complex cross-boundary landscape of wildfire-prone Southern California, among other projects.

**Southwest Idaho All Lands Partnership** – The NFF led the effort to convene the Southwest Idaho All Lands Partnership to reduce wildfire risk and increase forest resilience in communities in and around the Boise and Payette National Forests. The Partnership will coordinate and build partner capacity for forest health treatments across 2.2 million acres of federal, state, and private lands.

**Partnerships on Every Forest** – We assessed partnership programs on the Wayne and Mt. Hood National Forests and the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area to identify opportunities and challenges for effective partnerships. We also conducted over 100 partner interviews to inform 2025 assessments in Arizona, Minnesota, Missouri, Kentucky, and Tennessee.

**Panhandle Forest Collaborative** – Facilitated by the NFF, the Panhandle Forest Collaborative celebrated their 15th anniversary of bringing together stakeholders to provide consensus-based project recommendations on the Idaho Panhandle National Forest.

**Montana Cross-Boundary Efforts** – The NFF facilitated the Montana Forest Action Council to reflect on successes and challenges of the past five years of the State's Forest Action Plan and plan for the remaining five years. The NFF is facilitating the associated Agency Coordinating Team to improve cross-boundary coordination across agencies, partners, and Tribal communities.

# National Reforestation Program

## 50 MILLION FOR OUR FORESTS

After 2024, we can see the finish line to our 50 Million For Our Forests goal! We planted 5,387,033 trees across more than 32,000 acres of National Forests, bringing the campaign total to more than 38.3 million trees planted. With several projects nearing completion, we are well-placed to successfully plant 50 million trees by the end of 2025.

As the only organization with a reforestation program solely focused on National Forests, we partner directly with the U.S. Forest Service at all levels - National, Regional, and Forest. While the Repairing Existing Public Land by Adding Necessary Trees Replant Act has provided much-needed funding for reforestation, there are still many hurdles.

**To get to the “heart” of reforestation needs, we have expanded into a more holistic program, supporting projects from need to seed to tree and beyond.**

This includes cone collection, nursery support, on-the-ground implementation and contracting, monitoring, and more. Our holistic work touches multiple Regions, with strong emphases in Regions 6, 8, and 9.



Photo: Tim LaBerge

## >38 Million Trees

Total planted on National Forests

## >5.3 Million Trees

Planted in 2024 in 11 States, plus  
14 Holistic Reforestation Projects

### REFORESTATION:

**In 2024, we funded 55 tree planting projects on 32 National Forests across the country.** As always, projects are diverse by Region, yet all fulfill our promise of planting the right species in the right location under the right conditions. Once seedlings are planted, the Forest Service monitors survival to ensure we're not only planting seedlings, but regrowing forests. We work across the country. Read more on our efforts in the next few pages, and in the Regional sections that follow.

Photo: U.S. Forest Service



# 2024 Projects Across 11 States



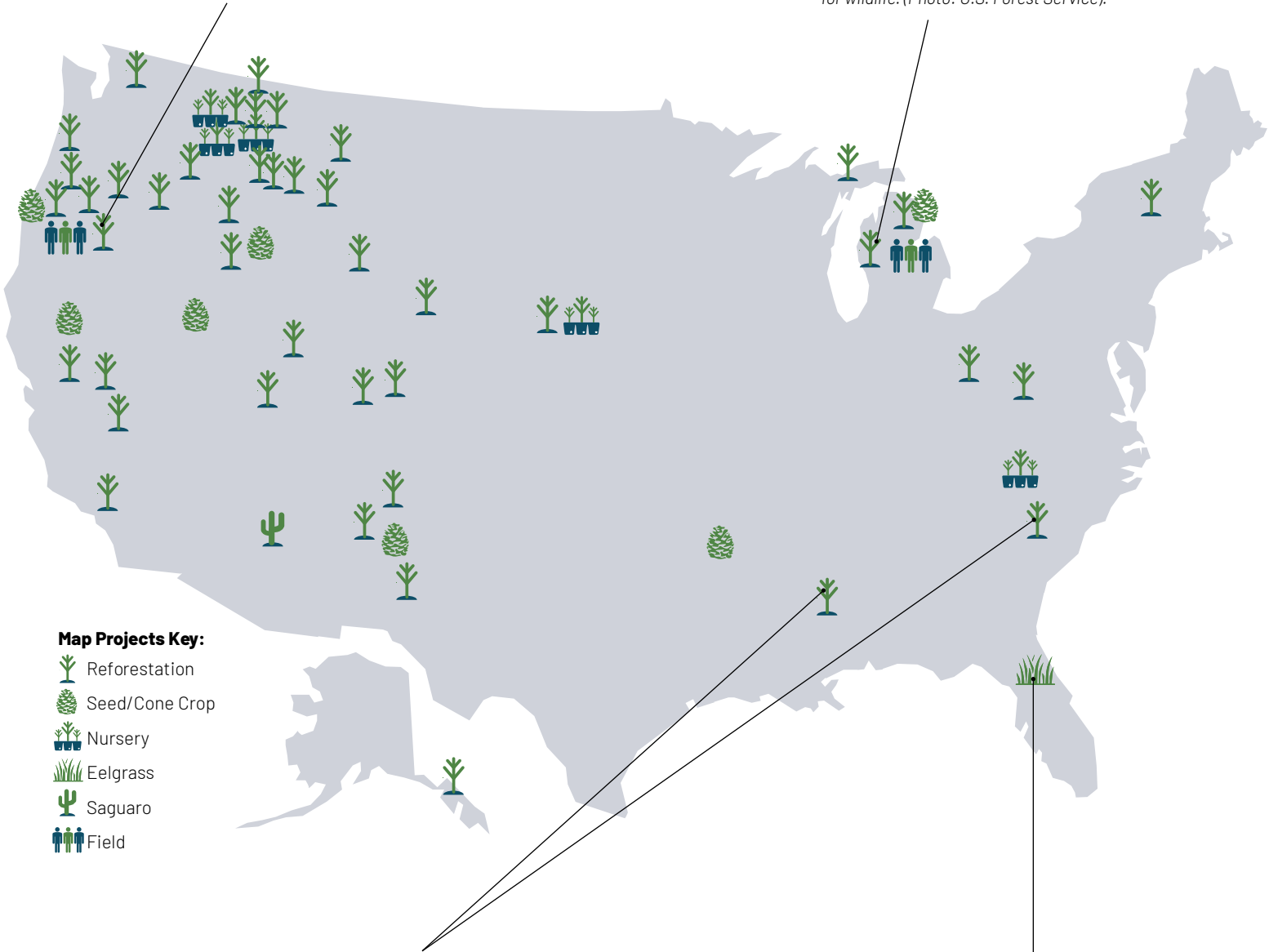
## Fire & Beetle Recovery, Fremont-Winema National Forest, Oregon

A mountain pine beetle outbreak in the mid-2000s left this area dense with dead standing wood, leaving it ripe for devastation when the Watson Creek Fire blazed in 2018. We planted 320,000 ponderosa pine seedlings across 2,565 acres of the burn area to aid ongoing recovery efforts, stabilize soils, and help build a more resilient forest. (Photo: U.S. Forest Service).



## Brittle Fire Recovery, Huron-Manistee National Forest, Michigan

We planted 565,000 red pine and eastern white pine seedlings across 725 acres to help the forest recover after the 2021 Brittle Fire. Prior to planting, the Forest Service observed that only northern pin oak, jack pine, aspen, and cherry seedlings had naturally regenerated. This active replanting will help revive native species and stand diversity, while improving habitat for wildlife. (Photo: U.S. Forest Service).



### Map Projects Key:

-  Reforestation
-  Seed/Cone Crop
-  Nursery
-  Eelgrass
-  Saguaro
-  Field



## Longleaf Pine Expansion, Mississippi and South Carolina

Longleaf pine forests are among the most biologically diverse in the US but inhabit less than 5 percent of their historic native range. That's why we annually partner with The Longleaf Alliance to expand and replant longleaf pine seedlings in the South. In 2024, we planted 892,350 longleaf pine seedlings on nearly 1,500 acres of Mississippi and Francis Marion National Forests. (Photo by NFF).



## Eelgrass Restoration in Salt Springs and Silver Glen Springs, Ocala National Forest, Florida

Eelgrass, a critical component of these springs, provides many ecosystem benefits, including food for wildlife like manatees and turtles, yet it is easily destroyed. This project added nine tanks to the Ocala's existing eelgrass nursery, built a shade structure above the tanks, produced five interpretive signs, and installed aquatic enclosures and transplanted 7,200 eelgrass shoots in 1.5 acres in the springs. (Photo: U.S. Forest Service).





Photos: U.S. Forest Service

*Ponderosa pine cones delivered to Lucky Peak Nursery for future reforestation in the West.*

### Local Impacts:

**Nursery and Seed Supply:** We completed several projects in 2024 that will help strengthen operations and efficiencies for federal nurseries. One project included infrastructure funding at Nebraska's CE Bessey Nursery, which provides seedlings and other plants for restoration projects in the Rocky Mountains and across the country. Once fully operational, the Forest Service estimates that the upgrades can increase seedling production by 1 million seedlings annually!

We also began and completed projects with nurseries and seed orchards in the Eastern (Toumey Nursery), Pacific Northwest (Umpqua Seed Orchard), and Southern Regions (Stuart Genetic Resource Management Area, Ouachita Seed Orchard, Ocala eelgrass nursery), in addition to holding contracts for cone crop forecasting and cone collection in several Regions across the country.



*At Coeur d'Alene Nursery in Idaho, we funded the installation of heaters to improve efficiency and optimize the production of 700,000 seedlings for reforestation in the West!*



Photo: U.S. Forest Service

Scouting for cone crop on Huron-Manistee National Forest

**Adding On-The-Ground Capacity:** In 2024, we hired our first field-based position in partnership with Oregon's Umpqua National Forest. Using federal disaster relief funds, privately matched with seedling donations, we hired Umpqua Reforestation Coordinator Anna Wemple to help the Forest assess, plan, and implement priority projects for wildfire recovery. Our efforts here also include expanding historic native oak habitat and, working with the regional geneticist to look to predict which seedlings will do well on the landscape.

We also made progress in the Great Lakes. In addition to collecting jack pine cones for future Kirtland's warbler habitat, we hired a seasonal reforestation specialist on Michigan's Huron-Manistee National Forests. Here, the specialist assisted the Forest with the cone collection and inspection, tree survival and natural regeneration monitoring, invasive species removal, and much more. This was a unique opportunity to help the Forest with critical reforestation needs while providing a hands-on learning experience to a recent forestry graduate.

**Highlighted Project**

**Wildfire Recovery on Umpqua National Forest, Oregon:** In the spring, our Umpqua Reforestation Coordinator Anna worked with crews to plant native conifers across more than 3,000 acres over the Archie, Thielsen, and Big Hamlin Fire scars. Over the summer, she began work on seed supply—hosting a cone forecasting workshop and implementing thinning and maintenance at the seed orchard. And in the fall, she began selecting species mixes for plantings on the Jack Fire scar, hired a planting crew to plant conifers and oaks, and hosted an oak acorn collection and educational event. Part of the fall planting included a 6-acre Oregon white oak orchard to conserve and restore native oak woodlands.



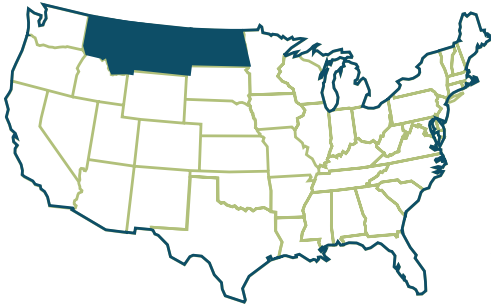
Photo: NFF

Above right: Umpqua staff and Anna's four-legged planting partner, Kenai observe the planting unit.

Right: Conducting invasive species plant surveys on Huron-Manistee National Forests.



Photo: Amanda Whittaker



# Region 1



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## Strategic Focus

In Region 1, the NFF is addressing wildfire risk, engaging youth through workforce development, and helping to heat homes on Montana's reservations with small-diameter, non-saw wood harvested in forest health treatments.

With Keystone Partner agreements, the NFF added two new staff to support fuels mitigation in the Region. These staff are adding capacity for fuels work on Forest Service Wildfire Crisis Strategy landscapes. Staff are working on WCS landscapes and Priority Firesheds and working with local FireSafe groups, the State, counties, and homeowners to reduce the risk of wildfire. We are also focused on our partnerships with Tribes, working closely with the Blackfeet, Crow and Northern Cheyenne through Wood for Life and with the Nez Perce Tribe and Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribe on youth workforce development programs.

## Local Impacts

**Wildfire Crisis Strategy Landscapes, Kootenai & Nez Perce-Clearwater:** In the six months between coming on board in June 2024 and the end of the fiscal year, the team has collectively committed over \$867,000 through contract work and/or RFPs supporting work on these landscapes.

In the Flathead, NFF staff are additionally focusing on private lands to create contiguous fuel breaks across both federal and privately-owned land. We are completing work on private land through an agreement with the DNRC and a recently awarded \$2.5 million grant through the Forest Service Landowner Support program.

One of the byproducts of fuels reduction work is, of course, small-diameter wood. The Wood for Life Program connects Tribally-run wood banks with this non-commercial wood product to be used as fuelwood. In the fall of 2024, the NFF delivered 300 cords to the Blackfeet's Elder Wood Program. We are currently soliciting contractors to make deliveries to the Crow and Northern Cheyenne Reservations.



Photo: NFF

Marlee Ostheimer (middle) stands with Carter Gallineaux (right) of Blackfeet Nation and Zach Bashoor (left) of MT Forest Consultants. The NFF worked with MT Forest Consultants to deliver the wood to the Blackfeet Reservation.



### Highlighted Project

**Indian Youth Service Corps and the Nez Perce Tribe:** In 2024, the NFF entered into an agreement with Region 1 to stand up a new youth workforce development program in partnership with the Nez Perce Tribe and Forest Service units in Regions 1, 4, and 6. Through this agreement, the NFF will make sub-awards to the Nez Perce Tribe and other local partners to recruit and hire four crew members and a crew leader and secure housing, transportation, gear and meals throughout the nine-week duration of the program. Crew members will conduct reforestation activities on the Nez Perce-Clearwater, Payette, and Umatilla National Forests and build their skills in forestry to build a pipeline of future workers for the Tribe and Forest Service. Crew members who work two seasons will be eligible for direct hire through the Public Lands Corp Authority.

The Indian Youth Service Corps is modeled after the NFF's Mission Mountains Youth Crew Program (MMYC), which is now preparing to enter its fifth year and provides a summer job and career exposure opportunities to youth living on the Flathead Reservation in Western Montana.

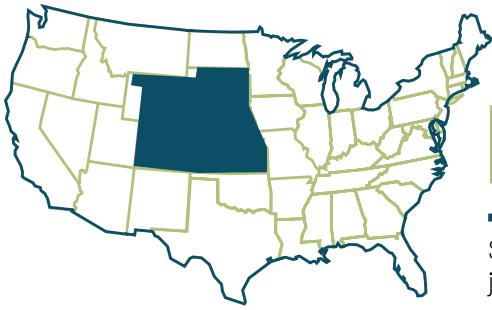
*Left and below: MMYC crew members pull invasive water lilies from Holland Lake in Montana*

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### REFORESTATION:

**1,297,759 trees planted** on over 16,000 acres in 9 National Forests: Beaverhead-Deerlodge, Bitterroot, Custer Gallatin, Flathead, Helena-Lewis and Clark, Idaho Panhandle, Kootenai, Lolo, and Nez Perce-Clearwater.





# Region 2



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## Strategic Focus

The NFF’s program of work in the Rocky Mountains is centered around federal, state, and local land management priorities across Colorado and southern Wyoming. Federal investments for major Forest Service campaigns like the Wildfire Crisis Strategy and Reimagine Recreation have been leveraged with contributions from state and local governments, philanthropic organizations, and corporate partners.

Fuels reduction activities are taking place in priority firesheds in Colorado from the Front Range to the San Juan Mountains and points in-between. Funding sources like the Great American Outdoors Act and the Colorado State Historic Fund are providing major upgrades to campgrounds, trails, informational kiosks and other amenities the public relies on for their recreational experiences. And unique funding models like NFF’s flagship Ski Conservation Fund, the In-Lieu Fee Compensatory Mitigation program, and Northern Colorado Fireshed Fund are extending the NFF’s impact farther than ever before.

*NFF awarded grant funds to the City of Greeley for an innovative low-tech process based restoration project on Roaring Creek in the Cache la Poudre watershed. The city used llamas to transport materials to the project site.*

## Local Impacts

### **Arapaho & Roosevelt National Forest:**

In 2024, the NFF worked closely with the Arapaho & Roosevelt National Forest and community partners on the first year of a large-scale agreement for post-fire recovery and restoration from the historic 2020 fires in northern Colorado. Highlights from 2024 include supporting several priority stream restoration projects in the Cache La Poudre and Big Thompson watersheds, hillslope stabilization via aerial seeding in the Cache La Poudre watershed and participating in a collaborative reforestation strategy that will guide tree planting efforts across the forest in future years.



Photo: City of Greeley



**Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, & Gunnison National Forests:** For mobility device users, knowing the conditions of the trail like cross slope and width can make all the difference in having an enjoyable recreation experience. The NFF teamed with the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests and Dovetail Trail Consulting to learn how to make outdoor spaces accessible to those with disabilities.

The NFF, Forest Service, and local contractors completed the reconstruction of the Deer Lakes Campground on the Gunnison National Forest. Upgrades include replacing double vault pre-cast toilets; resurfacing roads, parking lots, and walkways; upgrading signs, picnic tables, bear boxes, fire rings, and tent pads; and restoring the fishing pier and trails in the day-use area. The NFF also worked to construct new tent pads in the popular Gothic Valley north of Crested Butte.

To reduce the threat of wildfire to the historic community of Tincup, crews from Summit Forests conducted 286 acres of forest thinning on private lands and on the Gunnison National Forest.



Photo: NFF



Photo: NFF

*Before and after images of the reconstruction of Deer Lakes Campground, near Lake City, Colorado*



The historic Alpine Tunnel Palisade Wall was reconstructed in 2024. The wall was originally built in the 1880s as part of the Denver, South Park & Pacific Railway and today serves as a popular access for visitors to the Alpine Tunnel Historic Site and recreation opportunities on the Gunnison National Forest.

**Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest:** The NFF partnered with Rocky Mountain Youth Corps and Wyoming Conservation Corps to complete over 43 miles of disaster recovery trail clearing from the Mullen, Middle Fork, and Morgan Creek fires. Additional project highlights on the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest included trail improvements, campground renovation, hazardous cleanup, and the development of a Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund in Wyoming.

**Pike-San Isabel National Forests:** As part of the Upper Arkansas Forest Fund and the push for cross-boundary wildfire treatments, the NFF and Colorado State Forest Service completed over 100 acres of private land fuels reduction at the base of Mount Princeton in Chaffee County. The NFF also funded the emergency replacement of several beaver dams in the Cottonwood Creek drainage, which supports habitat for Endangered Species Act-listed boreal toads.

**San Juan National Forest:** The NFF partnered with the San Juan National Forest (SJNF) and local partners to re-envision trail infrastructure in the Falls Creek Conservation Area and completed the Cutthroat Trail in the Hermosa Creek Special Management area, the first designated e-bike trail on the SJNF.

The NFF, Navajo Nation, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, and SJNF continued to work together on the San Juan Wood For Life partnership in 2024. This partnership grew in 2024, with NFF managing 4 contracts that delivered 241 loads of logs to 10 community wood banks – the equivalent of around 3,000 cords of firewood.

Stone masons put the finishing touches on the reconstructed Hanging Lake Trail in Glenwood Canyon, Colorado

**White River National Forest:** In 2024, NFF partnered with the White River National Forest (WRNF) to begin trail repairs on the Hanging Lake Trail, one of Colorado’s most iconic hikes that attracts thousands of visitors every year. This multimillion-dollar project involved helicopter transport of materials for rebuilding of 7 bridges and technical rock masonry work to build stone steps along the 1.2-mile trail. Construction will conclude in 2025 with the addition of a revamped trailhead area and waterfall boardwalk at the top of the trail.

Additionally, NFF worked with the WRNF and Vail Resorts to implement 16 projects focused on improving recreation resources, restoring wildlife habitat and watershed health, engaging youth and local community members, and improving access to trails.





The Soda Creek in Lieu Fee Restoration site just days after the initial installations of beaver dam analogues and other instream structures. The structures act as “speed bumps”, causing the water to slow and wet the surrounding riparian habitat.

### Highlighted project

#### **Colorado Western Slope In-Lieu Fee Compensatory Mitigation Program:**

In accordance with Clean Water Act 404 regulations, the NFF acts as Program Sponsor of this innovative conservation finance mechanism active in Colorado. The NFF sells advance credits that leverage funds to support the creation and restoration of wetlands on National Forests.

The NFF’s first project in this program is the 42.5-acre Soda Creek In Lieu Fee Site in Summit County, Colorado. Designed in partnership between NFF, Forest Service, and USACE, it was implemented in the summer of 2024 using low-tech process-based restoration techniques.



**Watershed Program: Colorado River Basin:** The NFF launched our Watershed Restoration Program in FY24, supporting National Forests across R2 and R3 in the planning, design, permitting, and implementation of low-tech, process-based stream restoration projects. Since 2022, we have developed over 20 projects in the Colorado River Basin, restoring over 250 acres of wetland and riparian areas.

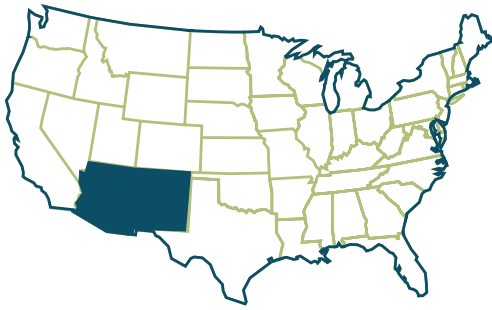
The program aims to increase the pace and scale of watershed restoration through:

- on-the-ground projects,
  - robust monitoring and outcome metrics,
  - training and technical assistance for Forest Service partners in Low-tech Process-Based Restoration,
  - streamlining policy and permitting processes,
  - bolstering communication and storytelling related to water benefits of National Forests, and
  - leveraging a variety of funding sources.
- FY2025 investments will far exceed the \$5M invested to date.

### REFORESTATION:

**355,781 trees planted** on over 1,000 acres in five National Forests: GMUG, Medicine Bow-Routt, Nebraska, Shoshone, and White River.





# Region 3



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## Strategic Focus

The Southwest Team works closely with Forests to collaboratively identify high priority funding and implementation needs, bringing together partners to expand our positive impact. We are pleased to have work underway on nearly every forest in the Region.

Through the Wildfire Crisis Strategy (WCS), we have scaled up our forest restoration work on every priority landscape in the Region, as well as numerous priority firesheds. In 2024 we finalized many new agreements to advance the WCS including three SPAs under our master Keystone. We also focused on restoration of important waters supplies and have rapidly scaled up our low-tech process-based restoration techniques in the Colorado River and Rio Grande basins. Through the Wood for Life partnership, we continue to work with Tribal communities.

Engaging communities and funders is another major focus. Highlights of 2024 included securing a \$500,000 New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Grant for trail restoration in burned landscapes, over \$650,000 in funding from Arizona state agencies, new partnerships with four local breweries, and hosting the 4th annual Highline Hold'em mountain bike trail fundraiser.

*Right: A rider enjoys the Highline Trail at the 4th annual Highline Hold'em mountain bike poker run, benefitting NFF and restoration of the trail.*

*Below: A Ponsse forwarder, equipment specializing in working on steep, challenging terrain, removing logs on the Marshall Hazardous Fuels and Forest Restoration Project, located on the Coconino National Forest. Treatments aim to thin the forest to protect the main water supply for the community of Flagstaff, Arizona.*



Photos: NFF

## Local Impacts

### **Northern Arizona Forest Fund (NAFF):**

The NAFF protects watersheds and forests by providing opportunities for businesses, local governments, and residents of Arizona to invest in the lands they depend on. In 2024, we improved forest health on over 4,000 acres, restored more than 600 acres of habitat, improved 21.7 miles of trail, and invested over \$10.4 million. Enduring partners renewed their commitment to this work, with the Cities of Phoenix and Scottsdale both approving new five-year agreements, leveraging a five-year commitment from the Salt River Project. Our forestry team contracted out 8,250 acres across Northern Arizona, our busiest season yet. Looking ahead to 2025 we anticipate contracting 6,000 additional forested acres, treating about 3,300 acres, and delivering 9,300 cords of firewood to indigenous communities.

**Coconino National Forest:** We began the REPI Marshall Forest Restoration Project, a major multi-year restoration effort. Marshall is implemented via Ponsse equipment and is a pilot for a

unique approach of chipping slash in woods in technical and steep terrain. The work reduces fire risk within the Upper Lake Mary Watershed, a primary water source for Flagstaff, and protects a critical navy observatory. This year on the Flagstaff District, Wood For Life projects generated 3,722 cords of firewood, as well as posts for traditional building while supporting forest restoration, youth, and Tribal and Veteran-owned forestry companies. Through partnership with Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps, restoration efforts take a 'whole tree' approach, finding uses for all material including slash mulched for traditional agriculture purposes.

**Tonto National Forest:** In partnership with the Tonto, the Forest Service Enterprise team, Coca-Cola, and Rare Breed Leasing, we completed Phase 1 of the Little Green Valley Fen Restoration project. This included using a stage zero restoration technique to reset and restore the system; reconnecting the groundwater, extending perennial flow, and replenishing thousands of gallons

of water. In 2025, Phase 2 will span both Forest Service and private land. The NFF also initiated a new South Zone Recreation Agreement that will improve the Tonto's recreation infrastructure bordering the Phoenix metro area.

**Prescott National Forest:** The NFF is partnering on landscape-scale forest restoration efforts within the Bradshaw Mountains near the city of Prescott. In 2024, we treated roughly 910 acres via hand thin and pile methods to reduce fuels within a recent fire scar and prepare the site for future restoration efforts. Next year we anticipate contracting an additional 5,380 acres and treating 2,100 acres.

**Kaibab National Forest:** We began work with the Kaibab National Forest and the Hopi Tribe to advance collaborative springs stewardship in Baaj Nwaavjo l'tak Kukveni National Monument, bringing together resources to support gatherings focused on traditional springs revitalization.

*NFF, Natural Restorations, and other partners replant saguaro cacti in the footprint of the 2020 Bush Fire with 125 volunteers.*



Photo: Cody Van Cleve at CVC Photography. IG: @cvc-photo, FB: Cody Van Cleve, www.cvcphotography.com

## Southern Arizona Forest Fund

**Coronado National Forest:** Throughout 2024 we expanded invasive species treatment in Santa Catalina Mountains, supported watershed restoration in the Pinaleno Mountains, completed comprehensive planning for forest health projects as part of the San Carlos WCS in the Huachuca Mountains, and oversaw a large scope of trail restoration efforts in the Santa Catalina Mountains.

We treated over 750 acres of invasive buffelgrass with native seed collection and re-seeding augmenting chemical treatment in Sabino Canyon Recreation Area. The NFF, Forest Service, and key partners were recognized at the Arizona Forward Annual Environmental Excellence Awards. We also partnered with Taproot Collaborative to restore culturally important springs on Mount Graham. This project combines low-impact water retention structures with re-vegetation and innovative inoculation of symbiotic soil fungi, repairing erosion caused by catastrophic fires.

*Right: An Ancestral Lands crew builds water retention structures on Emerald Spring in a degraded meadow, as part of the Sacred Springs Watershed Restoration Project in the Pinaleno Mountains.*

*Below: Crew members from Cordova Logging, Inc. taking a break from limbing logs slated for woodbanks part of New Mexico's Wood For Life Program.*



Photo: John Garof



Photo: Jack Buscher

## Northern New Mexico Forest Fund

**Santa Fe National Forest:** On the Santa Fe National Forest, we began our first forest restoration activities through Wood for Life (WFL), treating 70 acres of dry mixed conifer treatments which provided over 30 loads of wood to three Tribal wood banks. The Jemez Ranger District and Rio Chama CFLRP also dedicated over 1,000 acres for WFL treatments in 2025. We continued to support riparian restoration work in the Rio Guadalupe Headwaters, tributaries of the Rio Grande. In the Hermit's Peak Calf Canyon we supported invasive

species survey and treatment across 400 miles of handlines and dozer lines, as well as the initial implementation of trail clearing and restoration.

**Carson National Forest:** The NFF's Wildfire Resilience Team partnered with Vibrant Planet to develop a cross-boundary wildfire resilience mapping platform to help partners coordinate action in the Enchanted Circle WCS. The NFF worked with the Carson and local partners to ensure the tool reflects local priorities. On the ground, our water improvement project in the Rio de los Pinos in the

Rio Chama CFLRP removed three decommissioned toilets, vastly improving the water quality and fish habitat of the river.

**Cibola National Forest:** We began our first projects on the Cibola, focusing on expanding community firewood access by partnering with four wood banks, who received over 200 loads of logs from treatments in the Zuni Mountains CFLRP. We also partnered with Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps to protect riparian areas through exclosure construction.

## Southern New Mexico

**Gila National Forest:** The NFF is implementing an ambitious scope of recovery work in the Black Fire footprint and growing our forest and watershed health activities across the forest. We are partnering with the Gila Resources Information Project to develop a WRAP for Bear Creek watershed in the Silver City RRD. We also kicked off our work in the Northern Gila Priority Landscape.

**Lincoln National Forest:** We finalized a new agreement for thousands of acres of cultural and biological surveys and forest restoration activities, and look forward to kicking off on-the-ground activities in 2025.



Photo: Natural Curiosity



Photo right: CCNM, Photo below center: RMYC

### Highlighted Project

#### **Post Fire Trail Restoration in the Black Fire footprint on the Gila National Forest.**

During the first year of NFF-supported trail work in the Black Fire Recovery Area, we built a collaborative foundation with the Forest Service and other key organizations. With over 300 miles of impacted trail within the burn scar falling almost entirely within the Aldo Leopold Wilderness, there were significant logistical complexities. We engaged numerous partners in the trail restoration efforts, making special effort to ensure that the youth corps had meaningful and consistent training and support from partners that had local expertise. Through the work, twelve new cross-cut sawyers were certified, and New Mexican youth learned the basics of working with pack animals in the Wilderness, supporting development of our regional outdoor recreation workforce. The successful completion of 30 hitches, 40 miles of trail, and over \$300,000 of nonfederal funds raised, speaks to the power of partnership on the Gila National Forest.



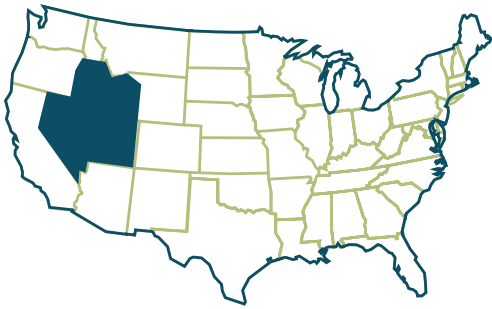
Above: NFF's project partner, Natural Curiosity, packs in a youth crew to do backcountry trail work in the Black Fire Recovery Area in the Gila National Forest.

Far Left: Conservation Corps New Mexico (CCNM) crew member does tread work on priority trails in the Black Fire footprint.

Left: Rocky Mountain Youth Corps crew member gives USFS pack stock a well-deserved treat after the Gila National Forest's Black Range Ranger District packed in tools and water for the crew.

### REFORESTATION:

**80,186 trees and saguaros planted** on four National Forests: Lincoln, Santa Fe, Cibola, and Tonto.



# Region 4



Staff Contact: Josh Rodriguez, Intermountain Region Program Manager  
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## Strategic Focus

In Region 4 we are continuing to work with partners to reduce wildfire risk, improve forest health, and improve recreation opportunities.

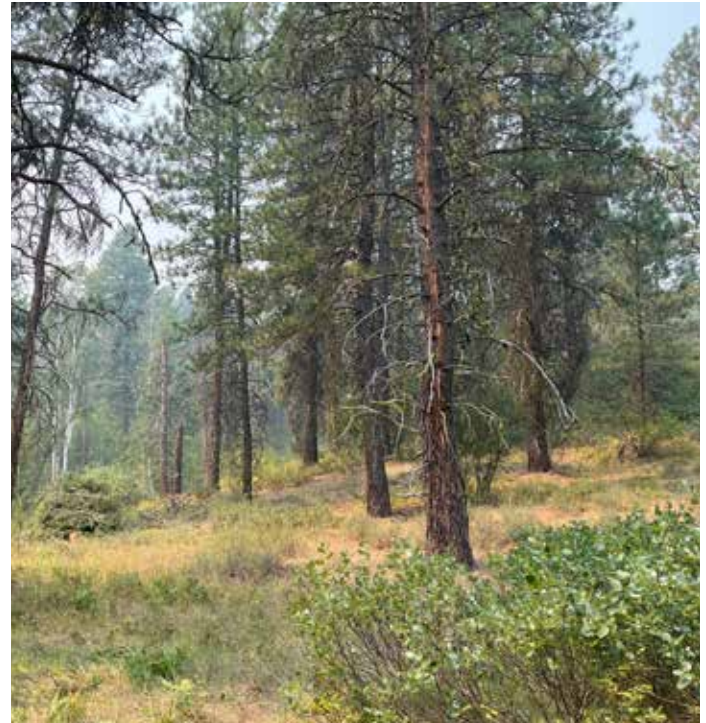
The Forest Service Wildfire Crisis Strategy identified the Southwest Idaho Landscape as a top ten national priority and the WUI represents significant risks for catastrophic fire. The NFF, along with state and federal agency partners, recognize an opportunity to employ a shared stewardship model to help address the risk. We addressed forest health on the Sawtooth National Forest where the NFF continued its multi-year program of work on Bald Mountain. We grew our program of work on National Forests in Utah to improve recreational opportunities and expand our Wood For Life program.

## Local Impacts

**The Southwest Idaho Wildfire Crisis Landscape:** The NFF continued to raise money, implement projects on the ground, and build consensus around a strategy to address the Wildfire Crisis Strategy on the Boise and Payette National Forests and adjacent state and private lands. Our strategy centers around reducing wildfire across administrative boundaries on the landscape at a large scale.

On the Payette National Forest, we focused on building relationships throughout the Forest and its surrounding communities and planning for an increase of acres treated in 2025 and beyond. The NFF helped the Payette closeout existing fuels reduction projects during an all-hands-on-deck fire season. Following the intense local fire season, we worked with the Forest to prepare for big projects in 2025 that will reduce wildland fire fuel across over 2,500 acres of National Forest. Future work is planned to reduce hazardous fuels on private lands in local communities.

In 2024 we continued on-the-ground work to support the Wildfire Crisis Strategy near the community of Clear Creek, Idaho. The area is a mix of federal and private land and is recognized as high-priority for treatment in the WUI. We treated an additional 381 acres in the Johnson Fork thinning project, bringing the total acres treated to 1,086. In 2025 we will continue to treat high-priority lands within the area to reduce fire hazard.



Forest thinning for fuels reduction just north of Boise, Idaho. This work addresses high fire risk acreage near the wildland urban interface.



Photo: Dave Walsh

Landowner Jerry Holloway reviews the non-commercial thinning work performed on his land adjacent to National Forest boundary. Sawyers thinned out trees 8 inches or smaller across a 75-acre parcel above Johnson Creek east of Bogus Basin ski area. Through the combination of federal, state and county funding, National Forest Foundation forester Mike Dwyer coordinated funding for the thinning work in late October.

**Utah National Forests:** In 2024, the Utah program experienced a tremendous amount of growth. We continued our work with the Ashley National Forest and installed three new kiosks and signs on the Little Hole National Trail along the Green River. Our scope of work will continue to grow in 2025 as we begin replacing two yurts and doing some work on marinas on the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area. Our work also expanded to the Dixie National Forest where we will be working on campground reconstruction, dispersed camping sites, and interpretation at a visitor center.

## Highlighted Project

### **Bald Mountain Stewardship on the Sawtooth National Forest:**

In 2024 we continued our efforts to improve forest health and reduce fire risk on Bald Mountain, the home of Sun Valley Ski Resort and the centerpiece of the communities of Ketchum and Hailey, Idaho. We treated 99 acres on the mountain and doubled the volume of firewood transported to communities on the Shoshone-Bannock and Shoshone-Paiute reservations as part of the NFF's Wood For Life program. Planning is underway for 2025 to continue forest health improvement and fire risk reduction projects on the mountain.



Photo: Matthew Podolinsky

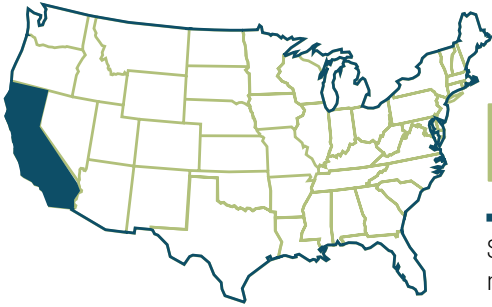
## REFORESTATION:

**599,602 trees planted** on over 3,900 acres across four National Forests: Boise, Fishlake, Sawtooth, and Uinta-Wasatch-Cache.

*Forest health project on Bald Mountain in Sun Valley reduces the impact of forest pests and fire risk while opening up stands for improved skier experience.*

Photo: Carolyn Bucknall





# Region 5



Staff Contact: Matt Millar, Sierra Nevada Program Director  
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## Strategic Focus

The NFF's Sierra Nevada Program includes nine National Forests in the Sierra Nevada ecoregion. The four most pressing initiatives that the NFF is addressing in this area are: forest and watershed health, resilience to wildfire, community protection, and sustainable recreation.

## Local Impacts

**Plumas National Forest:** During the first year of work for the Plumas National Forest, we contracted three groups of forestry consultants to develop project areas within the NFF agreement area. This investment produced preliminary recommendations for 9,722 acres on both the Beckwourth and Feather River Ranger Districts. We await the finalization of the required Decision Notice before moving to implementation.

During 2024, NFF also contracted for mastication maintenance treatments on 694 acres. In coordination with Vibrant Planet and our Wildfire Resilience team, we have begun identifying local stakeholders that have an interest in working collaboratively to implement cross-boundary fuel reduction work. Based on stakeholder input, Vibrant Planet will produce a model that can be used to inform managers of the most effective and cost-efficient placement for treatment and may hold potential as a tool to secure grant funding for collaborative fuels work.



Photo: Anthony Caputo

Goats and sheep snack on hazardous fuels during the Big Jack Targeted Grazing Project in Truckee, CA.

**Tahoe National Forest:** Across the Forest, the NFF had 11 active projects, expending over \$6.6 million to complete approximately 4,600 acres of restoration treatments aimed at enhancing forest health, protecting communities, and building resilience against wildfire, drought, and disease. Additionally, the NFF supported approximately 6,000 acres of environmental planning and over 6,400 acres of layout for future projects. During 2024, the NFF also secured an additional \$11.25 million for hazardous fuels reduction treatments to protect the rural communities of Camptonville and Downieville.

**Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit:** Work on the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) accelerated in 2024 with the start of several new projects including the Liberty Resilience Corridor - South Shore Mechanical Project, Caldor Fire Hazard Tree Hand Thinning Project, and multiple resource projection fencing projects. In 2024, the NFF secured an additional \$6.2 million in funding for future project work on the LTBMU, enabling us to continue growing our impact with additional forest health, wildlife habitat, and recreation projects.

**Eldorado National Forest:** In 2024, the NFF initiated its first stewardship agreement with the Eldorado National Forest (ENF) and has since begun on-the-ground work on the first project. This initial project is a log deck removal and campground restoration project working to reopen a campground significantly impacted by the 2021 Caldor Fire. The NFF is working closely with the ENF to identify additional priority projects and align key funding sources to increase the pace of our work in 2025 and beyond.



Photo: Blue Forest

**Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest:** The NFF has extended the West Fork Carson CDFW and SNC projects to expand the treatment area by over 350 acres. Additional aspen restoration and fuels reduction will take place over the 2025 and 2026 field seasons bringing more contracted work to the Hope Valley and Monitor Pass regions. The NFF also worked with the Washoe Cultural Department throughout 2024 to produce a video sharing the Washoe Tribe's long connection to Hope Valley and the importance of bringing the original stewards back to the land as part of today's restoration efforts.

**Inyo National Forest:** In 2024, the NFF completed a 560-acre logging and fuels reduction project on the Inyo in the Owens River headwaters that serves public drinking water to the city of Los Angeles.

Material produced from the project:

- went to the Tahoe Forest Products sawmill out of Carson City, Nevada,
- supported a new Wood for Life relationship with the Bishop Paiute Tribe, and
- trialed a pilot project with Charm Industrial pyrolyzing biomass with innovative carbon sequestration technology.

The Inyo and NFF continue to work together raising funds to grow the next round of landscape-scale forest restoration projects in 2025 and beyond. Funding partners have supported this work including CALFIRE, Bonneville Environmental Foundation, and Southern California Edison.

**Sierra National Forest:** The NFF launched several new projects on the Sierra National Forest, including receiving \$8 million grant for a Forest Restoration and Reforestation Project, which will focus on treating approximately 1,170 acres on the Bass Lake Ranger District. The NFF led the Bungalow Resilience and Fuels Reduction Planning Project, focusing on wildfire risk reduction and forest resilience across 44,000 acres of the Forest. The NFF also focused on a fuels reduction project on the High Sierra Ranger District, securing funding from Unilever, an international agribusiness that is prevalent throughout central



*Herman Fillmore, Culture and Language Resource Director, Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California.*

California. We'll operationalize watershed restoration projects by working with our Forest Service partners and NFF's growing Conservation Finance team to measure and share the ecological benefits of upstream reforestation on Central California agriculture.

**Stanislaus National Forest:** In partnership with Google and BEF, the NFF is focused on completing the final phase of a restoration project within the Tuolumne River watershed. This initiative is designed to enhance water benefits to the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir, a key water source for the San Francisco Bay Area, ensuring long-term water sustainability for the region. The NFF is

leading the effort to complete the Cal Fire Forest Health Grant application for 2025 on the Groveland Ranger District.

**Sequoia National Forest:** In 2024, the NFF teamed up with American Forests to secure a \$6.5 million Cal Fire grant, aimed at restoring and protecting up to 3,800 acres within the Sierra Nevada Windy Fire footprint. This critical funding will focus on enhancing the carbon storage capacity of Giant Sequoias, while also reducing wildfire fuels to safeguard mature trees and promote the growth of future generations.





NFF's Central Sierra Program Coordinator, Anne Graham, watches as timber from the Cabin Creek Forest Health Project is sorted and prepared for transport to a lumber mill.

### Highlighted Project

**Middle Truckee River Watershed Forest Partnership (MTRWFP):** This important watershed located just outside of the Lake Tahoe basin, provides over 80 percent of the drinking water for Reno and Sparks, Nevada and supports millions of dollars in recreation tourism activity annually. In 2023, the MTRWFP co-developed a 10-year vegetation management plan that aims to restore 60,000 acres of National Forest System lands within the watershed. In 2024, the first full year of the 10-year plan, the partnership implemented:

- over 2,800 acres of hazardous fuel reduction treatments,
- 2,500 acres of forest health improvement treatments, and
- 6,800 acres of environmental planning for outyear projects.

These accomplishments represent a major expansion in the pace and scale of forest restoration occurring within this watershed and demonstrate the power of collaboration in forest stewardship.

**REFORESTATION:**  
**24,225 trees planted** on three National Forests: Humboldt-Toiyabe, Inyo, and Stanislaus.



# Region 5



Staff Contact: Dania Gutierrez, Southern California Program Director  
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## Strategic Focus

The Los Padres, Angeles, San Bernardino, and Cleveland National Forests are some of the most heavily utilized public lands in the country with over 20 million people living within an hour's drive of a National Forest. The proximity of the National Forests to urban areas is valuable but creates its own set of needs and challenges. In order to address Southern California's unique challenges, the NFF's work focuses on four main areas: wildfire resilience, forest health, sustainable recreation, and youth engagement and workforce development.



Photo: Douglas Craft



Photo: Felipe Lepe

Demolition of the Clear Creek Information Station on the Angeles National Forest.

## Local Impacts

**Angeles National Forest:** The Clear Creek Information Station, a small building located at a very convenient intersection, enables visitors to obtain information and purchase passes. The building has fallen into disrepair and been closed for over a decade. The NFF has been working with Kim Rosado of the Angeles National Forest to remove the structure and install a new building with updated restroom facilities, an improved sewage system, and a repainted parking lot to open the station back up for public use.

**San Bernardino National Forest:** To help tackle the spread of invasive garlic mustard, the NFF is actively managing Early Detection and Rapid Response Invasive Weed funding from the Infrastructure, Investment, and Jobs Act. In June 2024, with help from Joseph Esparza of the San Bernardino National Forest, the NFF hired a contractor to remove garlic mustard along 2.5 miles of Hook Creek and conduct surveys for future treatments. Rapid containment and eradication is essential to prevent further infestations and reduce management costs.



Cha' chaany Hamuk Trailhead grand opening event.

**Cleveland National Forest:** In May, the NFF and Cleveland National Forest hosted a grand opening event for the Cha'chaany Hamuk Trailhead Improvement Project which consisted of grading a new parking area, installing restrooms, picnic tables, shade structures, and trash receptacles at a popular local trailhead. The project also added vital infrastructure for emergency services. Funding for this project was provided by the Wildlife Conservation Board and the San Diego River Conservancy. The NFF also worked on implementation projects from the Wildfire Crisis Strategy Keystone Agreement. We completed 223 acres of fuel reduction services for the Oak Woodland Prescribed Burn Preparation project with the help of Forest Service Staff Jamie Rickard.

**Los Padres National Forest:** As part of the Wildfire Crisis Strategy Keystone Agreement, the NFF contracted fuel reduction work and invasive species management in the Camino Cielo area near Santa Barbara. This work began in November with the help of Forest Service staffers Seth Mitchell and Rodolfo Uribe. This particular project is critical for community safety, especially in light of the Lake Fire, which burned over 38,000 acres in 2024.

Angelus Oaks area in the San Bernardino National Forest.



## Highlighted Project

### Fuels Management Protecting Communities:

The 2024 Bridge Fire burned over 55,000 acres of the Angeles and San Bernardino National Forests. Fortunately, the NFF completed the nearby Big Pines Fuel Reduction Project earlier in the year with support from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, funded by the State of California Budget Act of 2020. Forest Service staff indicated that the 849 acres treated helped to slow the fire's spread, limiting the damage to the Big Pines and Wrightwood communities.

Similarly, the Line Fire in the San Bernardino National Forest burned over 43,000 acres and threatened the community of Angelus Oaks. The NFF successfully treated approximately 177 acres of fuels treatments as part of the Angelus Oaks Wildfire Resilience Project in 2021 and 2022 which helped the Forest Service protect the community. Funding for the project was provided by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, as part of the California Climate Investments Program.

**Wildfire Resilience Team:** Conservation Connect Fellow Julia Cavalli worked with the Wildfire Resilience Team to explore cross-boundary opportunities that could strategically enhance wildfire resilience in Southern California. As part of her work, Julia completed a comprehensive spatial analysis to identify key communities of private landowners best positioned to meaningfully contribute to landscape resilience. Julia's work was packaged into a webmap and storymap that provided the team with useful guidance for further exploring and planning for cross-boundary work in Southern California.

## REFORESTATION:

**11,320 seedlings were planted** on over 50 acres of Angeles National Forest.



# Region 6



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## Strategic Focus

With multiple wildfires burning and closing important recreation areas over the last few years, the NFF is helping to reopen these areas to safely allow public access once again. The NFF has hired local contractors and engaged volunteer groups to replace clear trails, trail bridges and rebuild campgrounds, allowing people to visit closed areas for the first time in years. The National Forests with focused attention include the Mt. Hood, Umpqua, Willamette and the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

Additionally, the NFF is partnering with the Forest Service to reduce the risk of wildlife and its impacts to communities and resources. Last year the NFF conducted its first fuels reduction projects in the region on the Mt. Hood and Willamette National Forests. These projects will strategically reduce fuels along important access roads and in the WUI. Additionally, work is planned on the Umpqua National Forests in 2025.

## Local Impacts

**Mt. Baker Snoqualmie National Forest:** The Mountain Loop Highway on the Darrington District is a popular destination for recreation seekers in the greater Seattle metro area and experiences a higher-than-average amount of rainfall. The result is trail conditions that are difficult to maintain. The NFF partnered with the Forest Service to restore to popular trails, Lake 22 and Heather Lake. Both of these trails need considerable improvements and the NFF is contracting out design and re-construction work to bring back safe and enjoyable trails for the public to use.



A new puncheon boardwalk on the Lake 22 Trail on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest.

**Mt. Hood National Forest:** Following the success of helping to reopen the Riverside Trail and Rainbow Campgrounds along the Clackamas River, the NFF is partnering with the Forest Service to redesign seven campgrounds that were impacted by the Riverside Fire in 2020. The NFF hired a local design firm to create new campground designs that will create inviting, accessible campgrounds for people to use in years to come. Reconstruction of the campgrounds will begin as soon as the design process is complete.

**Umpqua National Forest:** The NFF has been working with the Forest Service on multiple recreation projects that were impacted by the numerous wildfires that have occurred over recent years. Some highlights include our work felling trees and installing fire rings and picnic tables at the Diamond Lake Campgrounds allowing them to be reopened. We developed a preliminary design for the very popular Fall Creek Falls trailhead to make it more accessible and add more parking and amenities. We also continue to plan for more improvements for the North Umpqua Trail including the installation of numerous bridges and trail improvements to provide access again for people to take in views of the iconic river.

Photo: U.S. Forest Service



Above: A new bridge constructed on the Riverside Trail.  
 Left: New directional sign install after wildfires on the Mt. Hood National Forest.



### Highlighted Project

Following the 2020 Riverside Fire, many popular trails, campgrounds, and other facilities closed along the Clackamas River on the Mt. Hood National Forest. To aid recovery efforts, the NFF worked alongside the Forest Service to reconstruct the Riverside Trail, rebuilding almost four miles of trail and installing five new bridges. The NFF also made significant improvements to the Rainbow Campground, by installing new tables and fire rings, repainting the bathroom, and making sites more accessible.

## REFORESTATION

**1,164,900 trees planted** on 6,471 acres on nine National Forests: Colville, Deschutes, Fremont-Winema, Malheur, Mt. Hood, Ochoco, Okanogan-Wenatchee, Umpqua, and Willamette.



# Region 8



Staff Contact: Laura Belleville, Sr. Director of Conservation Programs, [lbelleville@nationalforests.org](mailto:lbelleville@nationalforests.org) ~ 540-618-4923

## Strategic Focus

Storms, insect outbreaks, and centuries of harvest and land-use changes have impacted longleaf and shortleaf pine, high elevation red spruce, and freshwater ecosystems across the Southern Region. Restoration of these ecosystems supports habitat for numerous endangered and threatened species, such as red-cockaded woodpeckers and native trout. The NFF is working to restore these ecosystems to their historic ranges, benefiting species and declining watershed health.

Demand for quality trails, campgrounds, fishing, and water-based recreation is increasing across the Southern Region. With limited resources to improve existing recreation infrastructure and advance new projects, there is significant opportunity for the NFF to team with the Forest Service. Our collaborative work will leverage private investments to improve a variety of recreation experiences.

Photo: NFF



Photo: Liam Sullivan

*A red spruce seedling.*

## Local Impactss

**Southern Appalachian Sub-Region:** Partnering with the Forest Service and local organizations, the NFF worked with the Southern Highlands Reserve to complete a nursery expansion in 2024. Seedlings from this nursery are the primary supply for restoration and will enable partners to scale up efforts. The nursery will produce 50,000 red spruce seedlings annually.

The NFF is continuing to support several aquatic organism passage projects (AOP) in the SAS. These projects will improve habitat for several species, including native brook trout. Hurrican Helene in late 2024 demonstrated how important these AOP projects are to ensure greater resiliency to major storm events. The NFF looks forward to continuing our close collaboration with National Forests to implement these priority projects.



**Ocala National Forest:** Longleaf Pine (LLP) supports over 100 bird species, including the red cockaded woodpecker (RCW), a federally listed threatened species. In 2024, the NFF mechanically treated 553 acres of oak scrub to improve RCW habitat and to prepare for 2025 LLP planting through NFF's reforestation program.

**National Forests of North Carolina:** Since the Forest Service acquired access to Catawba Falls, plans have been in motion to get visitors safely from the trailhead to the Upper Falls. The NFF worked with the Forest to complete projects that improved access and trail signage and expanded parking at this very popular trail.

*Below: Viewing platform at Catawba Falls. The trail and boardwalk were damaged by Hurricane Helene and the NFF remains committed to the recovery of this and many recreation sites on the Forest.*



**Kisatchie National Forest:** The NFF worked with the Kisatchie National Forest and Region 8 Geneticist Marcus Warwell to develop an in-depth orchard health improvement plan for the Stuart Orchard, located on the Calcasieu Ranger District outside of Alexandria, Louisiana. It contains the future stock of Longleaf Pine for Texas and Louisiana National Forests. The improvement plan aims to improve orchard health, treat invasive species, and ensure the availability of Longleaf Pine for the Region. Work is slated to begin in mid-2025 and continue into 2026.

**Ozark-St. Francis National Forests:** The Mulberry River - Washita Creek, a National Wild and Scenic River known for its smallmouth bass fishing and outstanding recreation opportunities, has been identified by the Forest Service as a priority watershed for restoration. In 2024, the NFF entered into an agreement with the Forests to restore streambank stability, fish habitat, and water quality.

**Scotts Ridge Boat Ramp:** The NFF continued its partnership with the Sam Houston Ranger District for further safety improvements by replacing safety lighting at this frequently visited site.



## National Forests and Grasslands in Texas

**Caddo/LBJ National Grasslands - Cottonwood Creek Restoration:** Streams within the Cottonwood Creek watershed are degraded and have been deeply incised. Conservation finance partners are contributing payment for watershed services, leveraging over \$250,000 in nonfederal and \$500,000 in federal investments towards restoration efforts. In 2024, the NFF removed over 150 acres of invasive cedar to allow for greater water availability. We also reconstructed one headcut location to prevent further erosion and improve water quality and availability.

**Sam Houston National Forest:** Kelly's Pond Trail Restoration Project: Partnering with the Sam Houston Trails Coalition, the NFF is working to restore the Kelly's Pond segment of an 85-mile trail. In 2024, we continued to support partners through grant funding to continue the trail restoration work.

Photo: Jelly Cocanougher



Crews removed Eastern Red Cedar and other encroaching vegetation which will increase the amount of water in the environment and improve the health of the whole ecosystem at the LBJ Grassland in Texas.

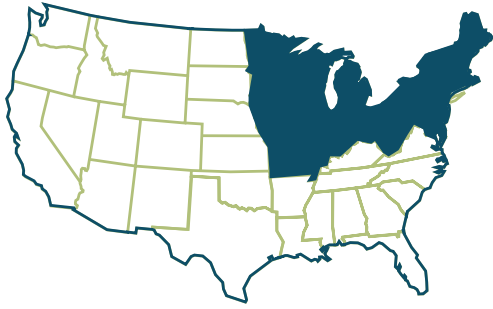
### Highlighted Project

**Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area:** As the NFF continues to expand its scope of work in the Southern Region, we were excited to take on a new and innovative project to support major renovations of the Woodlands Nature Station and to improve signage at the very popular Elk and Bison Prairie visitor area. These projects aim to engage a broader audience, including school groups and visitors from nearby urban areas. Phase one kicked off in 2024 with contracting for the Woodlands Nature Station landscape master plan.

### REFORESTATION:

**892,350 longleaf pine seedlings planted** on 1,459 acres, on two National Forests: Mississippi (Desoto, Homochitto, Bienville) and Francis Marion.





# Region 9



**Staff Contacts:**

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## Strategic Focus

The NFF is strengthening its impact across Region 9, with a focus in 2024 on a growing number of priorities: investing in recreation infrastructure, advancing youth engagement and workforce development opportunities, and launching into innovative reforestation efforts from seed to tree.

In a region where urban and rural settings intersect, the NFF is working to connect city dwellers with the outdoors. Efforts center on engaging young people from cities and population centers, providing opportunities for travel to green spaces, learning, hands-on experiences, and cultivating a desire to seek careers in the outdoors.



Photo: NFF



Photo: Fawn Langeman

A member of the GroundWork Rhode Island Crew at Rumney Rocks.

## Local Impacts:

**Midwin National Tallgrass Prairie:** In 2024, the NFF collaborated with the Forest Service and partners, to secure funds and begin implementation plans to restore nearly 2,000 acres and address essential projects as outlined in the Forest Service Watershed Restoration Action Plan. Additionally, the NFF continued to facilitate the Midwin Stakeholders Group, comprised of 15 of the Chicagoland's top conservation organizations. We hosted the 2024 cohort of Midwin Youth Corps, providing Chicago high school students with conservation stewardship and career pathway opportunities.

The NFF managed a partnership between National Park Service, Purdue University, and the Forest Service to create conceptual designs for an enhanced experience around many cultural and historical sites, as well as the bison viewing area. The NFF is also overseeing a prairie-wide sustainable trail design to intentionally connect people to the landscape. Lastly, a Conservation Connect Fellow created a comprehensive report detailing improvement opportunities to the Midwin Visitor Center.

**New England:** On the White Mountain National Forest, the NFF partnered with the Randolph Mountain Club to restore part of the historic Lowes Path. At the Lincoln Woods Visitor Center, we completed the first phase of a three-phase project and facilitated chimney repairs and the installation of a new woodstove in the historic cabin. The second phase of the project will be to upgrade the current solar power infrastructure to take place in spring of 2025.

The NFF also supported work on the Green Mountain National Forest in 2024, helping to secure funding to continue work on the Stagecoach Trail. Additionally, NFF staff visited multiple project sites and met with numerous existing partners in the Green Mountain and Finger Lakes National Forests to continue building our relationship with these Forests. As a result, the NFF has a better understanding of how to best support the work on the ground moving forward.

*Left: 2024 Midwin Youth Corps crew members and leaders with Forest Service staff.*

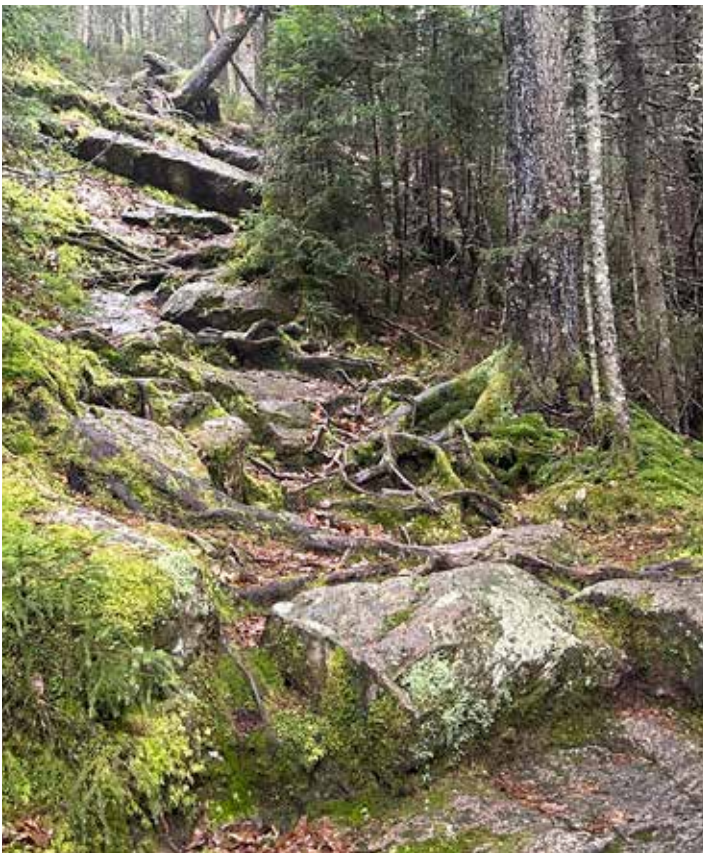
*Bottom left: Tread area that will be addressed as part of phase 2 of the restoration of historic Lowes Path.*

*Bottom right: 16+ granite staircase completed as part of the first phase of the restoration of historic Lowes Path.*

Photo: U.S. Forest Service



Photos: NFF



**Great Lakes:** In a one-of-a-kind effort, the NFF launched a Great Lakes-wide partner mapping initiative that when complete will allow Forests to review, plan, and coordinate partner efforts and leverage opportunities to accomplish priority landscape needs. While still in progress, efforts are underway to convene Forest leadership, collect partner data, consider how to connect Forest data sets, and develop sustainable GIS based systems for continued operations. We are also launching a Great Lakes-wide story telling effort to connect to the Region's approach in Ecosystem Integrity, Species Conservation, Human Health and Wellbeing, and Cultural Integrity. We are excited to continue this work in 2025, growing NFFs impact supporting the Forest, partners, and local communities.

### Highlighted Project

#### Seed Collection on the Huron-Manistee National Forest and across Michigan.

The NFF launched an innovative approach to test methods to collect 400 bushels of jack pine cones for long-term improvement of Kirtland's warbler habitat. This approach has led to new opportunities for other priority tree species that are also lacking in long-term sustainable supplies.

In partnership with the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan and the Forest Service, we are launching a Climate Adaptation Seed Collection Network to support assisted migration of key species on Michigan National Forests. The development of this Network will support long-term reforestation and climate adaptation goals, while building the seed supply and enhancing opportunities for growing Tribal workforce.

**Nursery Modernization: Increasing Seedling Production.** J.W. Toumey Nursery (est. 1935) the only Forest Service nursery in the eastern U.S., provides seedlings and seed to all 14 National Forests in the Region. The agency has finalized an extensive modernization plan to increase production from 5 million seedlings to an estimated 20 million seedlings annually. The NFF is supplying horticultural programming for critical planning and operations analysis and a 30' by 130' greenhouse. Our efforts will ensure targets are met and the nursery can meet production goals during the transition.

Jack pine cone collection on the Huron-Manistee National Forest.

Photo: U.S. Forest Service



### REFORESTATION:

**959,885 trees planted** on over 1,400 acres on five National Forests: Green Mountain, Hiawatha, Huron-Manistee, Monongahela, and Wayne.

Photo: NFF





# Region 10



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Photo: U.S. Forest Service



## Strategic Focus

The NFF is actively working on both the Chugach and Tongass National Forests to restore habitat and create new recreational opportunities for locals and visitors. The NFF continues to partner with the Region and Forests on the Alaska Cabins Project, a joint effort to build 25 new public use cabins and repair seven existing cabins. Leveraging Infrastructure, Investment, and Jobs Act funding, the NFF is raising matching funds and hiring local contractors. In addition, a goal of the project is to incorporate local wood into the construction of these cabins.

The NFF is also working with agency staff to plan and implement river restoration projects on both National Forests that will improve in-stream habitat for salmon and other aquatic species. Resurrection Creek on the Chugach National Forest is the largest river restoration project the NFF has partnered with the agency on, jointly investing over \$7 million over five years.

## Local Impacts

**Chugach National Forest:** In addition to building a new cabin at the Porcupine Campground and restoring meanders and bends back into Resurrection Creek, the NFF worked with the Forest Service to design new segments of the Iditarod National Historic Trail. The Southern Trek of the trail runs from Seward to Girdwood, almost entirely on National Forests. This trail has been primarily a winter route, used by dog sleds historically. This multi-year project will create a new, connected trail that will allow hikers, backpackers, mountain bikers, skiers and others to use year-round to explore a beautiful area of the Kenai Peninsula. Last year, the NFF signed two contracts worth \$3.3 million with local companies to design 7.8 miles of new trail, which will be constructed in 2025 and 2026.

**Tongass National Forest:** The Alaska Cabins Project kicked off in earnest on the Tongass last year with three new cabins being designed and construction completed or initiated. The NFF worked with Forest Service staff and contractors to develop designs for the 1.5 story cabins that incorporate lessons learned from existing cabins and located in easily accessible areas. The new cabins are Anan Bay (near Wrangell), El Capitan (Prince of Wales Island) and Signal Creek Campground (Ketchikan).

## Highlighted Project

The Resurrection Creek restoration project is the largest river restoration project the NFF has worked on. The \$7 million project is restoring 2.2 miles of the river that was severely impacted by early gold rush mining. The project is reconnecting the historic floodplain, constructing new pools and ponds, and installing logs and root-wads in new stream channels. The project will also revegetate the adjacent wetlands and recreate 74 acres of riparian habitat. Last year, the NFF contracted with a company that spent over 12,000 equipment hours creating a new path for the river and important characteristics suitable for salmon. The work is paying off. Salmon have been spotted in pools created this year leaving a lasting impact on the river and ecosystem.

An excavator creates a new channel in Resurrection Creek.



Photo: Janessa Anderson

## REFORESTATION:

**1,025 trees planted** on Tongass National Forest.



Photo: Maggie Kirkland



**National Forest  
Foundation**

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# For more information

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