



Support State-driven Solutions for our Forests and Communities Fiscal Year 2026 Appropriations Requests

For over a century, state forestry agencies have helped implement national forestry priorities, underpinned by federal resources provided by Congress, to achieve the necessary scale and coordination that is otherwise out of reach. By providing technical assistance to private landowners and directly managing 76 million acres of state-owned forestland, State Foresters conserve, protect, and enhance more than two-thirds of America's forests. In collaboration with local governments and federal agencies, State Foresters also work to advance resilient landscapes and fire-adapted communities and provide safe, effective wildfire response on 1.5 billion acres.

National Wildland Firefighting Capacity

State Foresters are concerned that efficiency efforts at the USDA and DOI agencies will leave agencies unable to meet obligations to prevent and respond to wildfire, manage forests to reduce wildfire risk, and contribute to Interagency Incident Management teams. A variety of USDA and DOI employees beyond those classified as wildland firefighters are required to adequately address the interagency wildland fire system's capacity needs in the ongoing fire season, including those with firefighting as a collateral duty. **We urge Congress to consider these realities as it prepares its FY 2026 appropriations legislation.**

State Fire Assistance and Volunteer Fire Assistance

The State Fire Assistance (SFA) and Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) programs are federal mechanisms for assisting states and local fire departments in responding to wildland fires and conducting management activities to mitigate risk on non-federal lands. **NASF supports funding the SFA Program at \$85 million, a \$9 million increase from the FY 2024 enacted level, and VFA Program at \$25 million, a \$4 million increase from the FY 2024 enacted level, in FY 2026.**

Stevens Money

"Stevens Money" is allocated by Congressional direction to facilitate coordinated fuels reduction on private lands in proximity to National Forest System lands. **NASF supports the Committee increasing the annual Stevens Money cap from \$20 million to "no more than 15 percent" of National Forest System—Hazardous Fuels Management funds.**

Forest Stewardship Program

The Forest Stewardship Program (FSP) equips private forest landowners with unbiased, science-based information to sustainably manage their forests by providing timber, water and habitat for hunting and fishing, helping to keep forests as forests, and is delivered in partnership with state forestry agencies, cooperative extension services, certified foresters, and conservation districts. **NASF supports funding for the FSP at \$22 million, a \$10 million increase from the FY 2024 enacted level and commensurate with the support provided to the program historically.**

Good Neighbor Authority

Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) has been proven as an effective tool for states and the Forest Service to increase the pace and scale of improvements to forests and watersheds, reducing wildfire risks, supporting cross-boundary projects and coordination, and providing job opportunities for rural communities. **NASF recommends that Congress direct the Forest Service to allocate a consistent and stable portion of National Forest System funding to GNA projects to enable States to provide additive forest management accomplishments on federal lands.**



Fiscal Year 2026 Appropriations Request

<u>NASF Priority Programs</u>	FY 2024 Enacted (millions)	FY 2026 NASF Recommendation (millions)
Forest Stewardship	\$12.00	\$22.00
State Fire Assistance	\$76.00	\$85.00
Volunteer Fire Assistance	\$21.00	\$25.00
Urban and Community Forestry	\$36.00	\$36.00
Landscape Scale Restoration	\$14.00	\$14.00
Forest Health on Cooperative Lands	\$32.00	\$32.00
Forest Legacy	\$92.25	\$92.25
Forest Inventory and Analysis	\$31.50	\$39.70
Stevens Money	\$20.00	\$31.00

- ➡ **Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) Program:** FIA is the only comprehensive inventory system in the United States for assessing the health and sustainability of the nation's forests across all ownerships. **NASF supports funding of the Forest Inventory and Analysis program at \$39.7 million in FY 2026 to continue its core program of work. Furthermore, we request the Committee work with the Forest Service to dedicate \$63.4 million for FIA Salaries and Expenses.**
- ➡ **Urban and Community Forestry Program:** In 2024, state forestry agencies provided educational, technical, and financial assistance to 8,158 communities across America to support forests in every community. **NASF supports funding the Urban and Community Forestry Program at \$36 million in FY 2026, level with FY 2024 enacted.**
- ➡ **Landscape Scale Restoration Program:** This program prioritizes flexible funding for projects that reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfires, improve fish and wildlife habitats, maintain or improve water quality and watershed function, as well as mitigate invasive species, insect infestation and disease. **NASF supports funding the Landscape Scale Restoration Program at \$14 million in FY 2026, level with FY 2024 enacted.**
- ➡ **Cooperative Forest Health Management Program:** The Cooperative Forest Health Management program facilitates multi-state collaboration and coordination for the prevention, monitoring, suppression, and eradication of insects, diseases, and plants posing a threat to our forests and the communities they serve. **NASF supports funding the Forest Health—Cooperative Lands Program at \$32.0 million in FY 2026, level with FY 2024 enacted.**
- ➡ **Forest Legacy Program:** The Forest Legacy Program is a key tool for state forestry agencies to keep working forests intact. **For FY 2026, NASF supports the continued allocation of Land and Water Conservation funds for Forest Legacy Program projects in line with FY 2024 enacted levels.**

For Further Information, Please Contact:

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