

November 16, 2021

Forest Service: FY2022 Appropriations

The Forest Service (FS) is responsible for managing 193 million acres of land in the National Forest System (NFS); conducting forestry research; and providing assistance to state, local, private, and international forest owners. FS is an agency within the Department of Agriculture, but it receives discretionary appropriations through the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

FY2022 Discretionary Appropriations

Budget Request

The Biden Administration requested \$8.405 billion in total FY2022 discretionary appropriations for FS (see **Table 1**). This amount would be an increase of \$981.3 million (13%) from FY2021 enacted appropriations (in P.L. 116-260). The request reflected increases for most FS discretionary accounts. FS's budget justification also estimated \$1.010 billion in mandatory appropriations and transfers for FS for FY2022. These mandatory appropriations are derived from and used for various sources and purposes, including land acquisition funding under the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF; 54 U.S.C. §200301). The LWCF funding had been discretionary through FY2020 but was made mandatory beginning in FY2021 in the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA; P.L. 116-152). GAOA also authorized a mandatory transfer of funding to FS from the National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund (LRF).

Legislative Activity

On July 29, 2021, the House passed H.R. 4502, an omnibus appropriations measure with funding in Division E for Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies (see **Table 1**). H.R. 4502 would provide \$8.355 billion for FS.

On October 18, 2021, the Senate Appropriations Committee released a majority draft bill (later introduced as S. 3034) containing \$8.354 for FS.

Regular FY2022 appropriations were not enacted by the start of the fiscal year, but a continuing resolution provided funding at the FY2021 levels through December 3, 2021 (P.L. 117-43, Division A).

Division B of P.L. 117-43 provided \$1.36 billion in supplemental appropriations for FY2022 to several FS accounts for expenses related to wildfires, hurricanes, and other natural disasters in previous years.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA; P.L. 117-58, Division J, Title VI) provided \$1.67 billion in supplemental appropriations for FY2022 for several FS accounts. **Table 1** reflects \$3.026 billion in combined supplemental appropriations for FY2022 as provided in P.L. 117-43 and IIJA; **Table 2** provides detail on the supplemental appropriations provided in each law.

Table 1. Forest Service (FS) Discretionary Appropriations, by Account (\$ in millions)

Account	FY2021	FY2022			
	Enacted	Requested	H. Passed H.R. 4502	S. Comm. Maj. Draft	Enacted Suppl.
Forest Service Operations (FSO)	\$1,026.2	\$1,074.1	\$1,074.1	\$1,074.1	\$105.0
Forest and Rangeland Research (FRR)	258.8	313.6	363.8	315.0	27.0
State and Private Forestry (SPF)	261.4	298.8	324.9	344.2	355.4
National Forest System (NFS)	1,786.9	2,369.6	2,234.3	2,214.0	1,444.8
Capital Improvement & Maintenance (CIM)	125.4	133.4	135.3	185.9	542.0
Wildland Fire Management (WFM)	1,927.2	2,097.6	2,098.6	2,097.6	552.2
Wildfire Adjustment	2,040.0	2,120.0	2,120.0	2,120.0	—
Total WFM	3,967.2	4,217.6	4,218.6	4,217.6	552.2
Other	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	—
Land Acquisition (LA)	-5.6	-5.6	—	—	—
Total, Without Wildfire Adjustment	5,383.8	6,285.1	6,234.7	6,234.5	3,026.4
Total, with Wildfire Adjustment	7,423.8	8,405.1	8,354.7	8,354.5	—

Sources: CRS, with information from the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations, P.L. 117-43, and P.L. 117-58.

Notes: Figures reflect rescissions, cancellations, and deferrals. S. Comm. Maj. Draft refers to the majority draft bill (dated October 15, 2021) and explanatory statement posted on the website of the Senate Committee on Appropriations. Enacted Suppl. reflects supplemental appropriations provided in P.L. 117-43 and P.L. 117-58; see **Table 2** for more information. Column totals may not add due to rounding.

Table 2. Forest Service FY2022 Supplemental Appropriations, by Account (\$ in millions)

Account	P.L. 117-43	P.L. 117-58
FSO	\$105.0	—
FRR	25.0	2.0
SPF	50.0	305.4
NFS	710.0	734.8
CIM	470.0	72.0
WFM	—	552.2
Total	1,360.0	1,666.4

Sources: P.L. 117-43 and P.L. 117-58.

Forest Service Appropriation Accounts

FS has several discretionary appropriations accounts, discussed below, generally in order of decreasing funding.

Wildland Fire Management

The largest share of FS appropriations generally goes to the Wildland Fire Management (WFM) account. In addition to salaries and expenses, the WFM appropriation funds two programs: preparedness and suppression. Appropriations for preparedness are used to support efforts that assist with fire prevention and detection, equipment, and training. Appropriations for suppression are used primarily for wildfire response, which includes aviation asset operations, incident support functions, and resources for post-fire analysis and recovery.

Wildfire Adjustment/Wildfire Funding Fix

Starting in FY2020, additional funds for suppression operations are available to FS (and the Department of the Interior) pursuant to the wildfire adjustment, a budgetary mechanism established in P.L. 115-141 (Division O, §102(a)), commonly referred to as the *wildfire funding fix*. This mechanism allows Congress to provide additional funding above a specified baseline for wildfire suppression through an adjustment to the limit on total discretionary spending. The baseline is the 10-year suppression obligation average, as reported in FY2015 (\$1.011 billion for FS). The maximum amount available pursuant to the adjustment is \$2.120 billion for FS in FY2022 and will increase annually. The wildfire adjustment is available annually through FY2027.

National Forest System

The National Forest System (NFS) account funds activities related to the management of national forests and grasslands. These activities include planning, recreation, grazing, timber production, watershed, wildlife, and law enforcement, among other activities.

Forest Service Operations

Established in FY2021, the Forest Service Operations (FSO) account funds certain fixed costs and administrative expenses related to facilities maintenance and leasing, information technology, and other agency-wide

organizational services. Prior to FY2021, many of these activities were funded through FS's practice of using *cost pools* from the other accounts.

State and Private Forestry

The State and Private Forestry (SPF) account funds programs that provide assistance to nonfederal forest owners to protect forests from wildfires, insects, diseases, and invasive plants. In FY2020 and previous years, SPF included funding for the Forest Legacy Program (FLP), a cost-share grant program that received discretionary appropriations from the LWCF. Because the GAOA made the LWCF mandatory spending, the Biden Administration did not request discretionary funding for FLP in FY2022.

Forest and Rangeland Research

The Forest and Rangeland Research (FRR) account funds research and development efforts to provide scientific information and new technologies to support sustainable forest and rangeland management. FRR funds the Forest Inventory and Analysis program, which is a continuous census of forest resources throughout the United States.

Capital Improvement and Maintenance

The Capital Improvement and Maintenance (CIM) account funds FS efforts to provide and maintain facilities, roads, trails, and other infrastructure needs across the National Forest System. It includes funding to address a backlog of deferred maintenance (DM). Starting in FY2021, FS received additional funding to address DM through mandatory transfers from the LRF.

Other

"Other" includes several smaller appropriations accounts for the Range Betterment Fund; gifts, donations, and bequests for research; management of national forest lands for subsistence uses; and administration of communication site authorizations. This category also includes funding to complete land acquisitions and exchanges as authorized by specified laws, referred to as *special acts*.

Land Acquisition

Because the authority in the GAOA made funding for FS land acquisition mandatory, Congress did not provide discretionary funding for land acquisition in FY2021 and rescinded funding from unobligated balances. The Biden Administration requested the rescission of additional land acquisition funding for FY2022.

Budgetary Changes

FY2022 reflects the second year of the FS budgetary restructuring established in the FY2021 appropriations law. The restructuring came in response to congressional direction to improve FS accounting, budgeting, and management practices. FY2022 also reflects the second year of GAOA mandatory funding. Together, these budgetary changes have altered how FS funding is provided and reported.

Katie Hoover, Specialist in Natural Resources Policy

Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS's institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.