

# FORESTRY

## Notes

### ANCHORAGE SWCD: CULTIVATING ALASKA'S FUTURE

Oct 26, 2023



In November 2021, the **Anchorage Soil and Water Conservation District** (ASWCD) in Alaska was re-established with a renewed focus on addressing local environmental challenges. The district has swiftly expanded its team, with four experienced employees specializing in natural resource management.

Current initiatives include the Invasive Species Program, Urban Agriculture Program, and Native Plants Program, along with collaborations on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER). ASWCD's Native Plants Program has shown early promise, cultivating thousands of native plant seedlings to aid in local ecosystem restoration. This program also promotes community involvement and collaboration with neighboring Tribal Conservation Districts.

The scarcity of locally adapted native plant materials has been a significant challenge for land managers in Alaska. The Anchorage SWCD recognized this issue and, in partnership with neighboring districts, initiated a project to locally produce native plants suitable for ecological restoration. With support from partners, four native plant nursery sites were established. These nurseries aim to provide regionally adapted native plant species for ecological restoration projects.

#### Forestry News & Resources

[Forest managed by women has little known trail network near Brownville](#)

[St. Louis SWCD Deer Management Strategies](#)

[How a \\$9 million grant will boost Pittsburgh's urban forest](#)

[Learning about the woods](#)

[Harrisonburg Urban Forestry Program leaps forward with fall tree planting](#)

[How healthy forests could prevent larger wildfires and help slow climate change](#)

[Financing Investments in Climate Resilience: A New Approach](#)

[Carbon markets and Indigenous lands: The importance of free, prior and informed consent](#)

#### Society of American Forests Announces Affiliate Membership Opportunity

The Society of American Foresters (SAF) is a professional organization established that focuses on promoting responsible and sustainable forestry and natural



ASWCD has big plans to expand their native plant offerings, which will help land managers in Alaska handle their challenges more effectively. They will also lead an economic feasibility study that's essential given recent conservation investments and the growing need to adapt to climate change. The demand for native plants is on the rise, and various organizations rely on them, but the current supply isn't keeping up. The study aims to assess the opportunities and obstacles to create a local native plant nursery industry. This isn't just about plants, it's about building a sustainable future. Native plants are essential for strong ecosystems as they support biodiversity and are essential in landscape restoration. Local nurseries have a key role to play in meeting the growing demand while reducing the carbon footprint from imports.

The revival of the Anchorage Soil and Water Conservation District reflects the community's commitment to environmental stewardship. The ASWCD Native Plants Program's early success and upcoming projects demonstrate a dedication to building a more sustainable and resilient future, making their mission all the more relevant.



You can learn more about the great work Anchorage Soil and Water Conservation District is leading in their community by visiting their website, <https://anchoragewcd.org/>.

## NEARLY \$50M ANNOUNCED TO STRENGTHEN FOREST PRODUCTS ECONOMY

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Forest Service recently announced it is making nearly \$50 million in grant funding available for proposals that support crucial links between resilient, healthy forests, strong rural economies and jobs in the forestry sector.

The open funding opportunity comes through the Forest Service's three key [grant programs](#) to support the forest products economy: Wood Innovations Grant, Community Wood Grant, and Wood Products Infrastructure Assistance Grant Programs. The agency is seeking proposals that support innovative uses of wood in the construction of low carbon buildings, as a renewable energy source, and in manufacturing and processing products. These programs also provide direct support to expand and retrofit wood energy systems and wood products manufacturing facilities nationwide.

resource management in the United States.

SAF serves as a hub for forestry professionals to collaborate, uphold ethical standards, advocate for sustainable forestry practices, provide educational resources, engage in policy discussions, and promote research and innovation within the field. Its members include a diverse range of forestry and natural resource management experts, and SAF plays a crucial role in advancing the field and ensuring the responsible management of American forests and resources.

SAF recently announced a new opportunity for natural resource professionals that are interested in the field of forestry and natural resources management but do not hold the educational qualifications required by other SAF membership types. This holds new opportunities for engaging with the SAF network and variety of resources they offer as well as connecting with other professionals working in this space.

Learn more and take advantage of this membership opportunity [here](#).

### Reshaping Great Lakes Pine Forests: Adapting to Drought and Climate Change

For many years, scientists and land managers in the Great Lakes region believed that red pine forests were dense, uniform in age, and predominantly composed of a single tree species.

However, recent research reveals that these forests were, in fact, more diverse in terms of species and had a complex structure, often featuring a blend of up to 12 different tree species with varying age groups. In addition, these stands were a lower density prior to when the forests were managed for timber.

These researchers have come to realize that restoring certain characteristics from 100 years ago may be the key to long-term survival of these stands.

The Forest Service is requesting proposals from eligible entities in the private, non-profit, and government sectors including tribes, local and state governments, businesses and for-profit entities, institutions of higher education, as well as public utility, fire, conservation, and school districts, among others.

These investments will support forest management projects to improve forest health and reduce wildfire risk across all land ownerships. Byproducts of these activities, like small diameter timber and woody biomass, have historically been of little market value. Thanks in part to these Forest Service grant programs, funding is available to support the use of this often-unused material in many types of wood products.

The full announcement is available [here](#).

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## CALIFORNIA'S REFORESTATION PIPELINE

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law created the federal Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission in 2021 and charged it with recommending improvements to how federal agencies manage wildfire across the landscape. Co-chaired by the Departments of Agriculture, the Interior and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the commission brought together a rare diversity of backgrounds, experiences, and expertise to address the wildfire crisis.

The commission also solicited, considered and integrated public input in their discussions and recommendations in the reports. Throughout its deliberations, the Commission sought to address the wildfire system holistically, with a goal of creating communities and landscapes that are resilient to wildfire as a natural and integral part of the nation's future.

The 50 commission members were selected from more than 500 applicants, representing federal agencies, state, local, and tribal governments, as well as the private sector. The commission submitted their first report to Congress in February 2023, which recommended strategies to improve aerial firefighting efforts and meet equipment needs through 2030.

The commission's second and [final report](#) (PDF, 5.3 MB) was submitted to Congress on September 27, 2023 and reflects one of the most sweeping and comprehensive reviews of the wildfire system to date.

The report makes 148 recommendations covering seven key themes:

- **Urgent New Approaches** to address the wildfire crisis
- **Supporting Collaboration** to improve partner involvement at every scale
- **Shifting from Reactive to Proactive** in planning for, mitigating and recovering from fire
- **Enabling Beneficial Fire** to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire
- **Supporting and Expanding the Workforce** to hire and retain the wildland firefighting staff needed to address the



You can read the overview of the research [here](#) and see more details on the work [here](#).

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### Great Plain Grasslands Extension Partnership Releases Pocket Guide for Reducing Woody Encroachment

The Great Plains Grasslands Extension Partnership and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension recently released a guide titled "*Reducing Woody Encroachment in Grasslands: A Pocket Guide for Planning & Design*" by Dr. Dirac Twidwell.

The purpose of the guide is to provide an improved planning process for designing grassland ecosystems that are less vulnerable to the threat of woody encroachment.

The guide incorporates the latest scientific approaches and serves as a field-based resource for understanding grassland risk and vulnerability to woody encroachment, detail key steps in the planning process from inventory to decision support and implementation, and to provide a suite of management scenarios and options.

The full guide can be accessed [here](#).

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### Invasive Pests Cost Society more than \$400 Billion a Year, Study Finds

Invasive pests, including plants and animals, cause a lot of damage across the world by destroying crops, spreading pathogens, and driving native plants and animals towards extinction.

A recent landmark assessment by researchers found that more than 3,500 harmful invasive species cost society more than \$423 billion a year, and this cost is only expected to increase as global trade and travel further spread.

The expansion of invasives is the main cause of the ongoing biodiversity crisis as invasive

crisis

- **Modernizing Tools for Informed Decision-making** to better leverage available technology and information
- **Investing in Resilience** through increased spending now to reduce costs in the long run

These recommendations and action items were provided to Congress. While Congress and its legislative authority were the focus of the report, the report also has relevance for state, local, tribal, territorial governments, non-profit, private, and academic sectors, and the public as well.

The final report can be accessed [here](#).

## FORESTRY FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### USDA \$188M Investment in Forestry Legacy Program

The USDA Forest Legacy Program (FLP) will invest \$188 million dollars towards conserving some of the nation's most economically and ecologically significant forestlands. The FLP, administered by USFS in coordination with state forestry agencies, protects environmentally significant forest areas that are otherwise threatened by conversion to non-forest use. By helping to prevent the loss and fragmentation of working forests, the program encourages sustainable forest management and supports sustainable markets for forest products.

The FLP has two funding sources, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) allocated by Congress, and funding that has been made available through the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). As a result, there are now two separate annual application cycles for LWCF and IRA funding.

To learn more about the FLP program and access the funding announcements click [here](#). For a complete list of FY23 projects, or to learn how states can apply for FY24 funding, click [here](#).

### Forest Service Community Wildfire Defense Grant Program

The Forest Service is now accepting applications for funding through the Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG) program (second round) from units of local governments, tribes, non-profit organizations, state forestry agencies, and Alaska native corporations. The program is authorized by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and prioritizes at-risk communities in an area identified as having high or very high wildfire hazard potential, are low-income or have been impacted by a severe disaster that affects the risk of wildfire.

The program provides funding to communities for two primary purposes: to develop and revise Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP) and implement projects described in a CWPP that are less than ten years old. To apply, follow the instructions in the Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and use the grant opportunity number specific to your notice by finding the specific NOFO [here](#). Interested parties are encouraged to visit the [CWDG Dashboard](#) for more information and links on the datasets used to determine whether the community is eligible or gets priority for this funding. Applicants must register on the [System for Award Management](#) which will generate a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). Creating a SAM registration may take several weeks or more to complete. Therefore, ensure application for SAM registration is done promptly.

Webinar recordings to assist the application process are available on the [CWDG webpage](#). Applications will be accepted until

pests are involved in 60% of extinctions. A report written by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), a body made up of more than 140 countries that provide policymakers with scientific assessments to help protect Earth's biodiversity and prevent extinctions, was recently released summarizing the findings of the impact of invasive species on society with full chapters to be published later this year.

To learn more about the impact and spread of invasive species and its effects, click [here](#).

### CALENDAR

**Oct. 25-28, 2023** [National Association of American Foresters Convention](#) | Sacramento, CA

**Nov. 6-10, 2023** [6th National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy Workshop](#) | Santa Fe, NM

**Dec 4-8, 2023** [10th International Fire Conference](#) | Monterey, CA

**Feb 6-8, 2023** [SAF Rising Professionals Conference](#) | Baton Rouge, LA

**Feb 10-14, 2024** [NACD Annual Meeting](#) | San Diego, CA

**Feb 20-22, 2024** [18th North American Agroforestry Conference \(NAAC\)](#) | Turrialba, Costa Rica

< > This Month June 2023 -

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	1

[Submit an event](#)

Add your conservation district's tree sale, state association meeting, field day or celebration

**October 31, 2023.** To learn more about this funding opportunity, click [here](#).

**\$150 million available through Inflation Reduction Act for Forest Landowner Support**

[Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced](#) that USFS is making \$150 million from the IRA available to support participation of underserved and small acreage forest landowners in emerging markets for climate mitigation and forest resilience. The application package has been [published on Grants.gov \(Opportunity #USDA-FS-2023-IRA-FLS-01\)](#).

To access this funding opportunity, visit [grants.gov](#). For more information, including an FAQ document that will be updated regularly, and links to webinar recordings, [please visit the Forest Service website](#).

to NACD's calendar!

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