Eastern Region State and Private Forestry
Fiscal Year 2022 and 2023 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)
High-Priority Regional Invasive Species Projects Requests for Applications, Instructions for Non-Federal Lands

Submission Date

- Submit the project narrative form, budget spreadsheet, and letter of support (if needed) through Grants.gov opportunity number USDA-FS-BIL-R9-INVASIVES-PROJECTS by 6 p.m. EST, 3 February 2023. These forms are available in Grants.gov for your convenience; however, you may use alternative formats if all the requested information is provided. Additional grant application forms will be requested for selected projects. See the Grant Tips Guide for more information on working with the USDA Forest Service.

Background

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, H.R. 3684 (Public Law No: 117-58), passed the Senate on 10 August, the House on 5 November, and was signed into law by President Biden on 15 November 2021. Also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), the law provides the Forest Service resources to reduce the risk of wildland fire, restore ecosystems, and invest in natural resources-related infrastructure. The BIL provides approximately $5.5 billion, covering FY2022 - 2026, for the Forest Service to work at larger scales with Federal, Tribal, State, and local government partners, as well as all members of the public, to restore ecosystems and reduce wildfire risk to communities. The Ecosystem Restoration section of BIL includes a provision addressing invasive species:

> **Sec. 40804.** ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION
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> *40804(b)(6): $200,000,000 shall be made available for invasive species detection, prevention, and eradication, including conducting research and providing resources to facilitate detection of invasive species at points of entry and awarding grants for eradication of invasive species on non-Federal land and on Federal land, of which—(A) $100,000,000 shall be made available to the Secretary of the Interior; and (B) $100,000,000 shall be made available to the Secretary of Agriculture.*

The Forest Service, Forest Health Protection (FHP), Washington Office staff worked with National Association of State Foresters (NASF) and their Forest Science and Health Committee on a national investment and allocation approach to carry out the non-federal lands portion of the BIL Invasive Species program. Annually, approximately $7 million would be divided equally among the three NASF regions. From regional allocations, States would get 25% to support capacity and implement projects in their state and 75% would be available for high-priority regional projects. The State capacity program is available at Grants.gov opportunity USDA-FS-BIL-R9-INVASIVES-STATE-CAPACITY. The following instructions describe the high-priority regional projects program.

Statement of Need

"More federal agency resources are being devoted to the control of already established invasive species instead of reducing the risk of future invasion." (Reaser et. al. 2020)

As part of BIL's broader ecosystem restoration objective, the non-federal lands portion of the invasive species provision enables the Forest Service, States, and other agencies to strategically sustain the health of forest ecosystems or tree species with high ecological value by taking stronger action in the early phases of the invasion curve at regional or sub-regional scales and at points of entry[1]. Specifically, we aim to work collaboratively to scale-up the implementation of management actions in the field for the prevention of introductions or spread, prevention of damage, early detection of introductions, rapid response and eradication[2] of invasive forest insects, worms, pathogens, and plants[3]. It is expected that new projects will be complementary to existing cooperative and federal forest health protection programs and will sustain high value forest ecosystems or tree species (see, e.g., multi-state priority areas identified in State Forest Action Plans (SFAPs) or Northeast-Midwest State Foresters Alliance, Forest Health Committee (NMSFA FHC) 2021 priority needs document).

BIL Invasive Species Funding Opportunity – High-Priority Regional Projects

The US Forest Service, Eastern Region, FHP expects to administer approximately $1,785,000 in BIL funds annually for the next five years (FY2022 - 2026) to be allocated following standard State and Private Forestry authorities[4] for high-priority regional projects. Approximately $3,570,000 (FY2022 and 2023) is expected to be available for this request for applications. Funding will be awarded to projects based on the statement of need above, and the evaluation criteria below. As stated above, projects submitted in this category should aim to strategically sustain the health of priority forest ecosystems or tree species with high ecological value as described in State Forest Action Plans (or equivalent restoration strategy). Project activities to sustain the health of forest ecosystems or tree species are as follows:

1. Early detection of introductions or spread (e.g., New or expanded surveillance projects for high-risk species or priority pathways, application of emerging eDNA technologies)

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[1] Or other pathways and susceptible forest cover types

[2] Eradication is the removal or destruction of an entire population of invasive species Executive Order 13571. "Eradication" can include suppression activities sufficient to eliminate or postpone the reestablishment of an invasive species for a reasonable amount of time to protect and sustain the ecological and human values the treatments are designed to preserve.

[3] "Introductions" can include already introduced and/or established invasive species and their spread, rapid or otherwise. Invasive species definitions Executive Order 13112:

(f) "Invasive species" means an alien species whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.

(a) "Alien species" means, with respect to a particular ecosystem, any species, including its seeds, eggs, spores, or other biological material capable of propagating that species, that is not native to that ecosystem.

(g) "Native species" means, with respect to a particular ecosystem, a species that, other than as a result of an introduction, historically occurred or currently occurs in that ecosystem.

[4] Basic research is outside scope of State and Private Forestry authorities. The wording in the provision applies to funding to the USFS Northern Research Station, for example.

2. Rapid response and eradication of introduced species (e.g., Interagency collaboration or partner coalitions to respond to priority invasive forest pests and weeds)
3. Prevention of introductions or spread or damage (e.g., Move from disconnected to more coordinated preventative approaches, silvicultural treatments to prevent damage)

Eligibilities and Other Requirements

- Who can apply: All Eastern Region State forestry departments or equivalent State agencies that have a responsibility for forest health are eligible. Universities and nonprofit organizations are eligible, but the application must also include a letter of support from the State Forester(s) or appropriate State forest health agency lead.
- The standard FHP 1:1 match applies for projects on non-federal lands. See the quick links for the *Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Supplement to the Financial Advice to States* document for information about possible match waivers.
- BIL grants must be tracked and reported on separately, so BIL funds cannot be combined with grants using regular Forest Service appropriated funds. Most BIL program funds also cannot be combined in grants with funding from other BIL programs.
- BIL grants to States should not be redirected (sometimes called "Pass through Grants") to third parties. States may subgrant BIL funds to third parties.
- We request that all BIL grant applications have a 5-year time frame. It is critically important that all grants are completed within no more than five years of the award date. Grants cannot be extended beyond five years.
- Quarterly financial and progress reports will be required for successful projects (Deadlines: April 30, July 30, October 30, and January 30). Additional direction on reporting requirements, if any, will be provided in future updates to the *BIL Supplement to the Financial Advice to States* document. Spatial data will be requested with the final report, if applicable.
- Funding amounts should be a minimum of $30,000 per project per year. There is no maximum funding amount for project applications.
- A Forest Service FHP partner is required to be consulted with before application submission.
- Optional: Webinars and sub-regional workshops will be held to help potential applicants to understand the BIL programs, develop cross-boundary and novel projects.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by a review team made up of the NMSFA FHC (leadership team and State Forester Advisor), Eastern Region FHP (Director, regional entomologist, pathologist, and invasive plant specialist), Northern Research Station (NRS) scientist, and Eastern Region National Forest System staff specialist. In addition, staff from APHIS, Tribes, and other partner entities may be asked to review selected projects for strategic alignment with existing and new programs.

- Evaluation criteria – Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria

a. Alignment with the priorities: Early detection, rapid response and eradication, and prevention activities that sustain the health of priority forest ecosystems or tree species with high ecological value.

b. Collaboration: Interagency projects at regional or sub-regional scales. Projects that clearly foster collaboration between states, USFS, external partners, and underserved communities will be ranked more highly. If this is not necessary or possible, explain why.

c. Impact: The potential ecological or economic impact to forest ecosystems or tree species if not addressed.

d. The probability of success: The outcomes and deliverables expected from the project.

Timeline, Submission, and Selection Process

- **24 October 2022:** Eastern Region opens funding opportunity for high-priority regional projects (FY22-23) on Grants.gov.
- **3 February 2023:** Proposals due through Grants.gov. Submit the project narrative form, budget spreadsheet, and letter of support (if needed) through Grants.gov opportunity number USDA-FS-BIL-R9-INVASIVES-PROJECTS by 6 p.m. EST, 3 February 2023.
- **Week of 20 February 2023:** Evaluation review team meets to discuss proposals with Field Office group leaders. Additional meetings scheduled as needed.
- **Week of 20 March 2023:** Project selections finalized. Project announcements to be made by the Eastern Region, Regional Forester.
- **20 May 2023 (tentative):** Complete grant application packages for successful projects due.

Contacts for Further Information

Applicants are encouraged to contact their respective Eastern Region S&PF Forest Health Program Field Office group leader for assistance and additional information:

- **Eastern Region S&PF, Director of Forest Health and Forest Markets**: Susan Ellsworth, 414-297-3021, susan.ellsworth@usda.gov
- **New England States and New York** (CT, MA, MA, NH, NY, RI, VT): Mike Bohne, 603-868-7708, michael.bohne@usda.gov
- **Mid-Atlantic States** (DC, DE, MD, NJ, OH, PA, WV): Rick Turcotte, 304-285-1544, richard.m.turcotte@usda.gov
- **Midwest States** (IA, IL, IN, MI, MN, MO, WI): Kara Costanza, 406-360-7263, Kara.Costanza@usda.gov

Key Points

- Target is invasive species during the early phases of the invasion curve at regional or sub-regional scales and at points of entry[5].
- Produce measurable outcomes or impacts.
- Webinars and sub-regional workshops will be held to assist in the development of collaborative projects to support the principles of shared stewardship and cross-boundary implementation, where possible.
- Be mindful of underserved communities.

[5] Or other pathways and susceptible forest cover types

Examples of BIL Invasive Species Projects

Priority	Goal	Threats	Needs
1. EDRR	Identify and respond quickly to threats to increase likelihood of success[6]	New introductions of potential invasive species that establish and spread under the radar	Support new early detection projects: eDNA metabarcoding for invasive spp. detection, utilization of pest interception data to drive new surveys and trapping, arboreta surveillance near points of entry[1], taxonomy training/support, education/outreach: increase citizen science/arborist/firewood producer participation, remote sensing
2. Eradication	Maintain healthy oak forests in the northeast[6]	Oak wilt: Delay in detection reduces the chance for successful control	Survey and control funding to find oak wilt when outbreaks are small
2. Eradication	Maintain healthy maple forests[6]	ALB: Delay in detection allows spread	Detection surveys, related public awareness, and eradication activities so infestations are detected early and acted on decisively. Increased attention on detection with guidance to States on methods for detection appropriate to the State
2. Eradication	Maintain healthy conifer forests[6]	Red pine scale in the mid-west, BWA in the mid-west, HWA in WI, etc.	Preparedness and response plans
3. Prevention	Reduce the introduction, spread, or damage of invasive species	Invasive plant regulations vary among States, some invasive pests' damage can be mitigated by silvicultural treatments	Harmonized invasive plant regulations, thinning treatments to reduce damage from invasives in an IPM framework

[6] Modified from the Northeast-Midwest State Foresters Alliance, Forest Health Committee (NMSFA FHC) 2021 priority needs document.