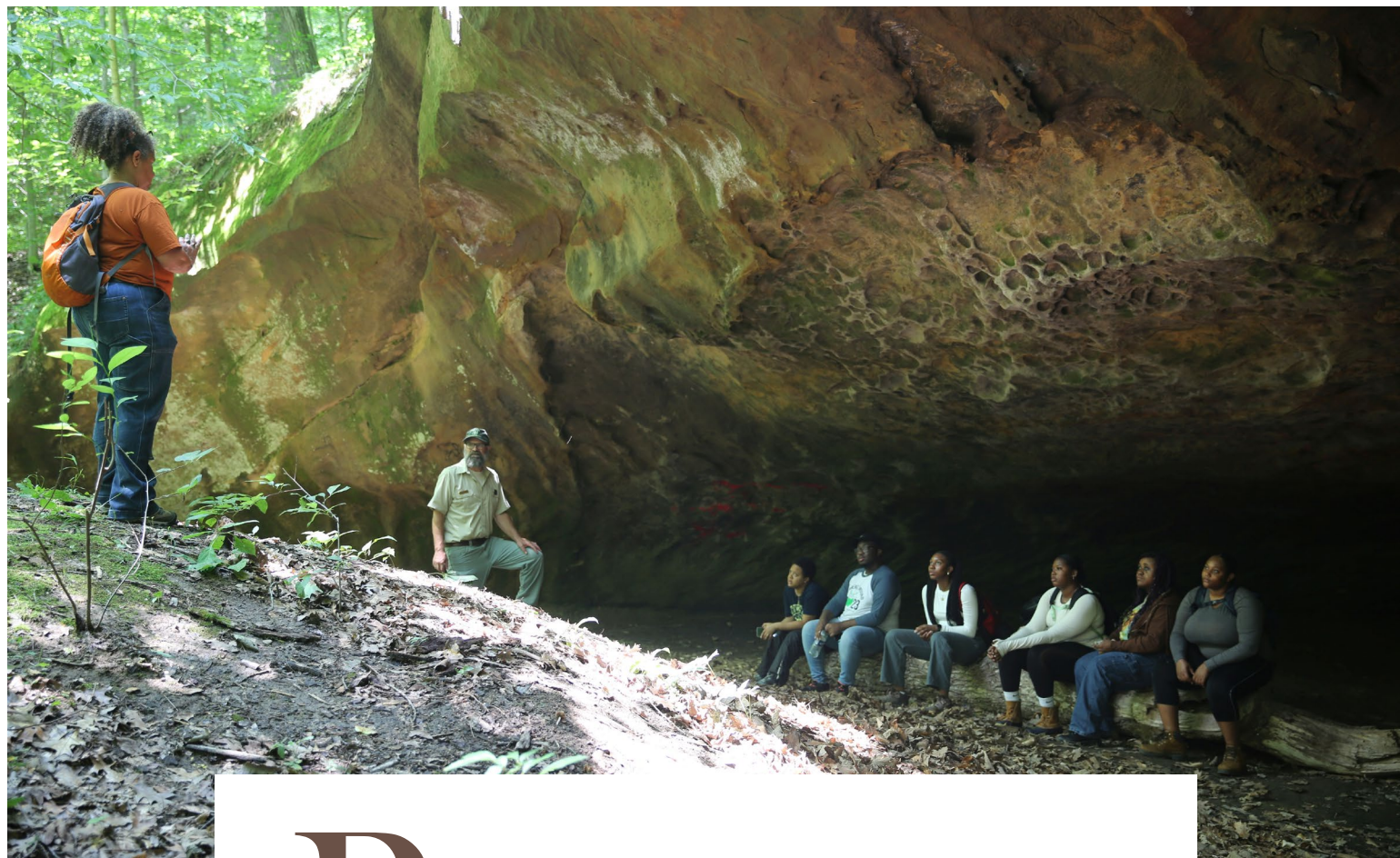




Forest Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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# Preserve America Section 3 Report

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Presented to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation  
in Fulfillment of Section 3 of Executive Order No. 13287

**Cover photo:** Students from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) learn about preserving historic sites during a visit to the Wayne National Forest in Ohio as part of the Cultural Heritage in the Forest educational program. Forest Service archaeologists Margaret Hangan and Andy Tremayne led the discussion at Tinker's Cave, a rock shelter where notorious horse thief Shep Tinker hid his stolen mounts during the mid-1800s. USDA Forest Service photo by Kelly Miller.

Executive Order (E.O.) 13287, "Preserve America," reinforces the role of Federal agencies as stewards of their historic properties and underscores the importance of agency efforts to inventory, protect, and manage these properties. Every 3 years, under Section 3 of E.O. 13287, Federal agencies are to prepare a report on their progress identifying, protecting, and managing historic properties for the public. Each agency submits their report to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP). The ACHP incorporates data received by Federal agencies into a final report for the President on the state of the Federal Government's cultural resources and their contribution to local economic development. This report compiles stories from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service press releases and articles highlighting Heritage Program accomplishments between 2021 and 2023.

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# Integration of Historic Properties and Climate Change

In the past 3 years, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Forest Service has increasingly integrated historic preservation and sustainability/climate resiliency goals in project planning.

## Six Rivers National Forest: The Meaning of Fire: Preserving Cultural Heritage Through Traditional Ecological Knowledge

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In the Klamath River Basin in northern California, the Karuk Tribe developed rich traditions using fire to care for the land by regulating vegetation growth and composition, a practice sometimes referred to as “cultural burning.” However, the cultural importance of fire wasn’t always appreciated. Early settlers outlawed Tribal burning practices, leading to fire exclusion policies that contributed to recent intense wildfire behavior.

The Forest Service now recognizes the importance of cultural burning to moderate wildfire intensity and reduce community risks that have increased due to climate change and decades of fire suppression and exclusion. Some national forests are looking to incorporate Traditional Ecological Knowledge in their prescribed fire methods. In some locations, the Forest Service and Tribal firefighters are working together to implement prescribed/cultural burning practices. Beau Goodwin, a member of the Karuk Tribe and a Forest Service employee, has observed a positive shift in the past 5 years, with Tribes now playing a significant role in managing their ancestral territory.

Goodwin’s unique position illustrates how intimate knowledge of landscape and cultural places can benefit both Tribes and the Forest Service. Together, this expertise is crucial during large-scale fires to protect valuable cultural resources and inform tactics such as fuel breaks and retardant drops. For example, the Six Rivers National Forest now collaborates

with Tribal basket weavers, actively seeking their input on burning practices to ensure the continued availability of quality materials. Such collaborative efforts represent a growing common ground between the Forest Service and Tribes, driven by a shared interest in protecting the land and preserving cultural heritage.

**Source:** “The Meaning of Fire” by Andrew Avitt (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/features/meaning-fire>)

## Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests: Restoring Buckhorn Work Center After Fires, Vandalism

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The Civilian Conservation Corps constructed the Buckhorn Work Center on the Roosevelt National Forest as part of the New Deal during the Great Depression. Completed in 1941, the work center complex originally included the primary ranger dwelling, assistant ranger dwelling, office, and garage, and was designed to be off grid with the use of wind turbines for energy. Since its inception, it has been significantly tied to early Forest Service conservation efforts. Recently, the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland have been working to preserve and continue the tradition of using sustainable energy at the work center following effects from the 2020 Cameron Peak Fire—the largest wildfire in Colorado’s history.

The property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and has been approved for the Recreation Rental Program. The program is under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA), which allows the Forest Service and other agencies to retain recreation fee revenues to supplement appropriations and other funding sources to repair, improve, operate, and maintain recreation sites and other areas to quality standards (including elimination of recreation deferred maintenance), and to enhance the delivery of recreation services to quality standards. The Forest Service has been successful in converting many historic cabins and fire lookout towers into overnight recreation rentals through FLREA.

The Buckhorn Work Center will also house crews working to reduce wildfire risk as part of the





The ranger dwelling is part of the original complex at the Buckhorn Work Center. USDA Forest Service photo by Lawrence Fullenkamp.

Forest Service’s investments in “Confronting the Wildfire Crisis” (Wildfire Crisis Strategy; <https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/wildfire-crisis>) and postfire recovery efforts. Having an established and sustainable housing option at the Buckhorn Work Center for both the public and Forest Service employees plays a crucial role in recouping costs of national forest operations and contributing to climate resiliency goals. The work doesn’t stop here: The Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland are also looking to install an off-grid solar system to power the facilities and restore the historic structures for seasonal use.

Restoration of the Buckhorn Work Center has been underway for many years involving multiple partnerships, forestwide efforts, and community investments. Various organizations including the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Forest Service Office of Sustainability and Climate Change, Colorado State Historical Fund, Colorado Preservation, Inc., and HistoriCorps, as well as local businesses and community members, have contributed time and assistance to the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland to make the Buckhorn Work Center a sustainable facility for years to come. This coordination signifies a commitment to integrating historic properties with modern, sustainable energy solutions and climate change initiatives.

**Source:** “Buckhorn Ranger Station Historic District” by History Colorado (<https://www.historycolorado.org/location/buckhorn-ranger-station-historic-district>)

### Northern Region: Identifying and Managing Historic Properties Vulnerable to Climate Change Impacts

Unusual flooding, larger and more frequent wildfires, expansive drought, and heat waves in the United States may be short-lived events, but their severity can cause great physical damage to historic properties on Federal lands. Moreover, historic properties are nonrenewable and, in many cases, their significance is based on their existing location. In this regard, they are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change because they cannot adapt, they are irreplaceable, and significant site context and integrity are lost if they are altered or moved. Responding to the threat from climate change impacts will demand additional resources that will likely exceed current capacity.

To best prepare for these impacts, the Forest Service Northern Region (Region 1) Heritage Program is developing a management plan based on a risk assessment strategy that will identify and prioritize historic properties with highest exposure and risk to climate change impacts for adaptation measures designed to reduce these impacts. This proactive strategy

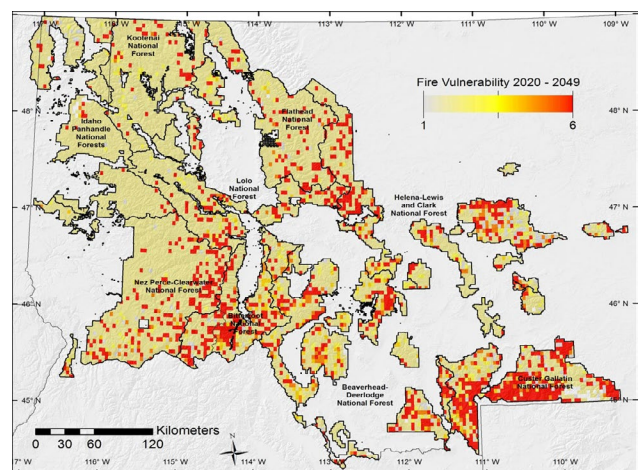
provides Heritage Program managers with time to strategically implement adaptation measures for potential or existing historic properties, with the benefits often exceeding their costs as well as enabling the Forest Service to meet long-term stewardship responsibilities under Federal law.

The Northern Region, which includes north Idaho, Montana, and a sliver of northeastern Washington, plans to follow the framework described in Clark et al. (2022)<sup>1</sup> for identifying level of exposure and risk of historic properties and then implementing various adaptation measures:

1. Use existing resources to identify the likelihood of a hazard occurring.
2. Assess the level of exposure of the historic property to the hazard, with historic properties located in areas of highest likelihood of the hazard having the highest exposure.
3. Assess the vulnerability of the historic property to the hazard.
4. Identify those historic properties with the highest exposure and vulnerability as having the highest risk to the hazard.
5. Consider cultural, scientific, or architectural significance of the historic property in addition to the level of risk before prioritizing for adaptation.
6. Implement adaptation measures that reduce risk by reducing exposure and vulnerability.
7. Reevaluate adaptation measures through iterative risk management that involves an ongoing process of assessment, action, monitoring, and reassessment as new information on wildfire risk becomes available.

These efforts align with the Forest Service's Wildfire Crisis Strategy. Exposure and risk of historic properties to wildfire can be

determined using data on wildfire likelihood that have been developed by the Rocky Mountain Research Station's Missoula Fire Sciences Laboratory ([www.wildfirerisk.org](http://www.wildfirerisk.org)). Climate models that show how hazards will change this century can help identify where the greatest increase in hazards will occur and assist with planning. As an example, the map below shows areas in red where a climate model predicts areas on the ground that have the greatest probability of wildfires over the next couple of decades compared to today; these are called "hazard hotspots." Identifying historic properties that overlay these hazard hotspots and then evaluating which are most highly valued or vulnerable to wildfire can reveal the historic properties most at risk. Through this risk assessment process, Heritage Program specialists can be more proactive about prioritizing at-risk historic properties for management and adaptation. Forests can then take steps to reduce the risk of potential future hazards on historic properties by incorporating the work into existing planning, which can be more cost effective than waiting until the hazard occurs or risking loss of the property entirely.



A map showing areas with a high probability of wildfire on national forests in northern Idaho and Montana (Clark et al. 2022); red areas show where historic properties have the greatest vulnerability.

<sup>1</sup> Clark, J.; Littell, J.S.; Alder, J.R.; Teats, N. 2022. Exposure of cultural resources to 21st-century climate change: towards a risk management plan. *Climate Risk Management*. 35: 100385. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.crm.2021.100385>.



# Contribution of Heritage to Local Economies

In the past 3 years, the Forest Service has continued to manage historic properties in ways that contribute to local communities and their economies.

## Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests: Restoring Corral Park Cabin

The Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland, located in north-central Colorado and covering 1.6 million acres, rank among the top five most visited national forests in the United States. The land's history is demonstrated by many infrastructure assets over 50 years old, reflecting both a rich heritage and extensive deferred maintenance needs. One such asset is the Corral Park Cabin, initially constructed in 1916 by early range permittees who ran cattle in the area. A new cabin built in 1951 replaced the original but retained historic windows etched with the builder's name. Over the years, the cabin fell into disrepair, but various restorations and enhancements by partners such as HistoriCorps, volunteers, Forest Service staff, and contractors have preserved this historic structure for decades of future use.

The Corral Park Cabin was identified as a potential operations and overnight

headquarters for the Poudre Headwaters Project, a significant conservation effort by the Forest Service to restore native greenback cutthroat trout habitat. Given its high elevation and remote backcountry location, the cabin has been vital in providing a place to rest and prepare for conservation work. It has hosted Forest Service staff, Trout Unlimited volunteers, and college students, contributing to shared stewardship and greenback cutthroat trout conservation. This ongoing involvement in conservation emphasizes the cabin's contribution to ecological sustainability and the local economy.

Going forward, the Corral Park Cabin will continue to be a focal point for organizing project operations and hosting overnight stays, strengthening its role in both heritage preservation and local economic development. Additionally, the cabin is part of a current fee proposal to add it to the Recreation Rental Program along with seven other cabins on the Canyon Lakes Ranger District. By turning historic structures into rental opportunities, the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland enhance tourism appeal, support community engagement, and provide a sustainable source of revenue, further emphasizing the vital role of heritage in local economies.

**Source:** "Corral Park Cabin Restoration" (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r2/home/?cid=fseprd1086450>)



A HistoriCorps volunteer glazes windows as part of the restoration of Corral Park Cabin. USDA Forest Service photo by Erica Bradley.

# Digital Information Sharing

In the past 3 years, the Forest Service has continued to integrate digital information management into the management of historic properties.

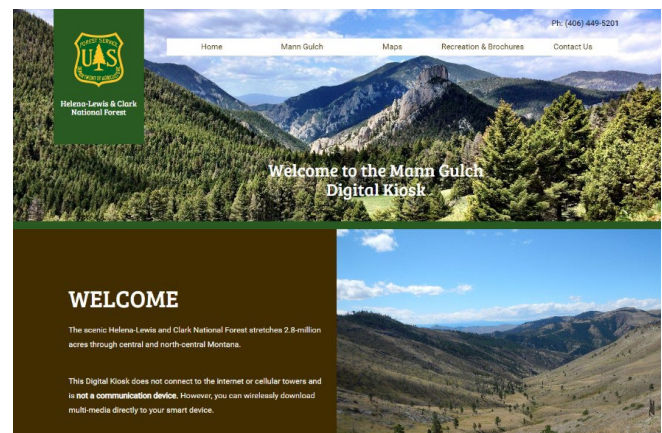
## Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest: Reflecting and Learning at the Mann Gulch Wildfire Historic District Solar Kiosk

On August 5, 1949, the devastating wildfire in the Gates of the Mountains Wild Area in Montana led to the tragic loss of 16 firefighters. The repercussions of the Mann Gulch Fire were not only felt in the Northern Rocky Mountain region but also catalyzed nationwide improvements in firefighting. The tragedy led to a reevaluation of Forest Service firefighting strategies and resulted in extensive changes, including more intensive training, improved safety procedures, better equipment, and systematic consideration of fire behavior in wildland firefighting.

The Mann Gulch Wildfire Historic District, associated with this event, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1999. In preparation for the 75th anniversary of the Mann Gulch tragedy, the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest is embracing technology to enhance public access to information related

to this historic event. Following the purchase of a solar-powered kiosk and the development of a website, visitors to Mann Gulch will be able to download historical information, even in the absence of cellular service. This innovative digital kiosk functions as a one-way, multimedia delivery system, using a solar-powered router to deliver content to visitors' smart devices without requiring an internet connection. By implementing this self-contained system, the Forest Service will have broadened heritage tourism in the area and leveraged modern technology to ensure public accessibility to significant historic sites.

**Source:** Arian Randall, Deputy Forest Archaeologist, Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest, [arian.randall@usda.gov](mailto:arian.randall@usda.gov)



The home page on the Mann Gulch solar-powered digital kiosk invites visitors to wirelessly download multimedia content to their smart devices.



An example of a solar power source similar to what will be installed at Mann Gulch. USDA Forest Service photos by Chrysann Jaeger.



# Partnerships

In the past 3 years, the Forest Service has continued to employ partnerships in the identification and management of historic properties.

## Superior National Forest: Creating New Opportunities Through a Section 111 Lease of Halfway Ranger Station

In 2021, the Forest Service entered a lease agreement with Northern Bedrock Historic Preservation Corps (NBHPC) for Halfway Ranger Station, also referred to as Kawishiwi Field Laboratory or K-lab, a listed historic district on the National Register of Historic Places since 2012. Modeled after camping-based conservation corps, NBHPC is a one-of-a-kind statewide program with a mission to develop enduring workforce and life skills through service learning in historic preservation and community stewardship.

The Forest Service's 50-year lease, which falls under Section 111 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, allows NBHPC to establish a formal base of operations, facilitate long-term investments, and create a preservation training center at the Halfway Ranger Station Historic District near Ely, MN. Increased activity and public engagement at this historic property will benefit the local communities and the rural economy. The lease opportunity will also provide experiential training opportunities for partners and the next generation of preservation professionals alike.



The Halfway Ranger Station, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, will serve as a base of operations for the Northern Bedrock Historic Preservation Corps. USDA Forest Service photo by Doug Stephens.

## George Washington and Jefferson National Forests: Restoring Access to Green Pastures Recreation Area Through a Section 111 Lease

Green Pastures Recreation Area, established in 1936 on the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests and later renamed "Longdale Recreation Area," holds historical significance as a recreation space for African Americans during the segregation era. President Franklin D. Roosevelt directed the Forest Service to designate this site in response to a request from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Popular among African American communities, the recreation area was equipped with various amenities and served as a communal area. After the Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed segregation, the recreation area continued to function as a public site until it closed in 2017. Local efforts from community preservation groups, such as the Alleghany Historical Society, aimed to restore and preserve this culturally significant place leading to it being listed as one of Virginia's Most Endangered Historic Places in 2018.



After World War II, Green Pastures Recreation Area was restored and reopened as an integrated public site. In 1963, it was renamed "Longdale Recreation Area" after the surrounding community. USDA Forest Service photo by Jennifer Queen.

In September 2021, USDA and the Commonwealth of Virginia signed a historic Shared Stewardship Agreement, marking a significant step towards the reopening of the Longdale Recreation Area under its historic

name, Green Pastures. The Commonwealth of Virginia also announced plans to work with the Forest Service to restore and reopen the area as an outpost of Douthat State Park. This partnership agreement demonstrated a commitment to preserving the historic and cultural value of the site.

As part of the partnership agreement, the Forest Service and Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) entered into a 30-year Section 111 lease for the Green Pastures Recreation Area. Under the agreement, the DCR will preserve, maintain, and operate 133 acres as a satellite of Douthat State Park. Restoration work is underway, with plans to provide opportunities once again for visitors to connect with the outdoors while learning about the park's significant role in history. Both agencies are committed to interpreting the complicated history of segregation in the South and the impact on Virginia State Parks, reflecting the mission to protect and restore natural and cultural treasures.

**Source:** "The Segregationist Past of the 'Green Pastures' Recreation Site" by Jennifer Queen (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/features/segregationist-past-green-pastures-recreation-site>)

## Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest: Engaging Students in Cultural Preservation

In 2021, the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest collaborated with Preserve Montana to launch a pilot project aimed at engaging young people in historic preservation. This initiative focused on several core objectives: engaging youth in cultural resources, training new professionals in heritage stewardship, strengthening partnerships, addressing cultural needs in accordance with Sections 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and contributing to the Heritage Program's Managed to Standard performance measures. Funding for this 2-year program was a \$39,860 grant from the Missouri River Resource Advisory Committee for a Title II project (i.e., a project on Federal lands) through the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act. In 2022, the

Students in Cultural Preservation pilot project took place over 9 weeks. A Ph.D. student and a field instructor conducted archaeological fieldwork and historical research across the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest. Specific tasks included monitoring sites near the Trout Creek area, performing archaeological site surveys, excavating a known site for soil samples for environmental DNA (eDNA) testing, investigating stone alignments in the Big Belt Mountains, and researching content for the Explore Montana App (a virtual map of historic sites) in partnership with Preserve Montana.

In 2023, the program continued with two college students, a field instructor, and a Preserve Montana employee working for 5 weeks on the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest. Activities included test excavations at cultural sites, performing archaeological site surveys, attempting to relocate resources recorded in the 1970s, and analyzing artifacts recovered from a wildfire site. The success of the pilot project was made possible through the Missouri River Resource Advisory Committee grant and partnership with Preserve Montana, providing college students the chance to learn about cultural resource management and preservation efforts.

## Supporting Partnerships With the Great American Outdoors Act

Enacted into law on August 4, 2020, the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) continues to provide new opportunities for the Forest Service to deliver benefits to the American public through major investments in infrastructure, recreation facilities, public lands access, and land and water conservation. Between 2021 and 2023, the Forest Service leveraged GAOA funds towards fostering collaboration and partnerships in restoring and maintaining recreational historic properties.

With assistance from the Forest Service Heritage Program and GAOA funding, a partnership formed between HistoriCorps, Forest Service Job Corps, and Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center students. Through the partnership, HistoriCorps facilitated students' work to address critical maintenance needs of historic



properties such as the Tepee Work Center on the Black Hills National Forest in South Dakota, Santiam Pass Ski Lodge on the Willamette National Forest in Oregon, and the International Order of Odd Fellows Cabins on the Deschutes National Forest in Oregon in the summer of 2021.

The HistoriCorps' partnership with the Job Corps Program is more than a restoration endeavor; it's a gateway to engaging the next generation of stewards. By working on these historic sites, students gain hands-on experience in preservation skills and exposure to Forest Service lands, many for the first time. Participants not only learn about historic recreational facilities on public lands but also earn a Historic Preservation Training



The district ranger residence at the Tepee Work Center on the Black Hills National Forest is shown on June 1, 2021, prior to the restoration efforts of HistoriCorps and Boxelder and Pine Ridge Job Corps students. USDA Forest Service photo by Cris Newton.



Videographers capture the progress of Boxelder and Pine Ridge Job Corps facilities maintenance, painting, and carpentry students as they restore structures at the Tepee Work Center on the Black Hills National Forest. The students repaired siding and shutters; removed deteriorated, oil-based coatings from the wooden structures; and, to prevent further deterioration, recoated the wood with a Heritage Natural Finish. USDA Forest Service photo by Scott Jacobson.



Certificate from Bucks Community College. This unique blend of construction trade training, coursework, and real-world experience sets them on a career path in historic preservation, strengthening the professional capacity in this critical field. This multifaceted approach showcases how Forest Service Job Corps students contribute to enhancing public lands and supporting local economies, while simultaneously preserving the Nation's forests and grasslands.

**Source:** "Partnership Brings History, Tepee Work Center Back to Life" (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/inside-fs/delivering-mission/sustain/partnership-brings-history-tepee-work-center-back-life>)

## Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests: Restoring Hessie Cabin

In 2021, the Forest Service undertook the restoration of the 19th-century Hessie Cabin on Roosevelt National Forest in Colorado with funding from the GAOA. As part of the restoration, Forest Service Archaeologist Dan

Snyder led a team, including HistoriCorps volunteers, in a 2-month project to dismantle and rebuild the cabin. Eight volunteers from the Mile High Youth Corps joined the project and assisted with daubing between the logs. The project not only preserved a part of the local mining history but also maintained the unique character of the landscape.

During the restoration, the team made an unexpected discovery beneath the cabin's floorboards: a cache of rough ore, contained within a deteriorated dynamite box, presumably left by miners in the mid-1800s. Snyder noted that the discovery and successful restoration of Hessie Cabin has led to increased interest and potential collaboration opportunities within the community for similar mining cabins. The project represents a positive step forward for historic preservation and highlights the value of partnerships in managing cultural resources.

**Source:** "Hessie Cabin: Dynamite, Mines and Trap Doors" (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/inside-fs/delivering-mission/sustain/hessie-cabin-dynamite-mines-and-trap-doors>)



Built in 1874, the Hessie Cabin has been an icon of mining culture, but 150 years of sinking floor joists have made it more of a hazard than an accurate representation of the area. USDA Forest Service photo by Daniel Snyder.





The Hessie Cabin restoration team had no idea they were looking at the remnants of a buried dynamite box until they discovered what was inside. USDA Forest Service photo by Daniel Snyder.



The Hessie Cabin restoration is now almost complete, awaiting a heating system and plans for future use, possibly as an interpretive site. USDA Forest Service photo by Daniel Snyder.

## Pike-San Isabel National Forests and Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands: Restoring Manitou Lake Pavilion

The Manitou Lake Pavilion, located near Woodland Park, CO, has been a place for people to gather for picnics for nearly a century. Built by the Civilian Conservation Corps and Works Progress Administration in 1935, the structure's condition had deteriorated to the point where significant repair was needed.

With funding from the GAOA, a partnership formed between the Pike-San Isabel National Forests, Cimarron National Grassland, Comanche National Grassland, and HistoriCorps to restore the Manitou Lake Pavilion. The restoration work began in July 2022 and lasted for 5 weeks, involving the replacement of logs, repair of sealant between the logs, and installation of hail-resistant shingles.



HistoriCorps provided evaluations, cost estimates, and expertise, and coordinated volunteer recruitment. Five separate volunteer groups participated in the project, following a plan to maintain the shelter's historic character.

The partnership emphasized education, with field staff instructing volunteers in a structured learning environment. HistoriCorps continues to recruit volunteers nationwide for restoration projects and collaborates with public land managers for various preservation tasks. The restored Manitou Lake Pavilion remains available for public enjoyment at the Manitou Park Recreation Area, reflecting the successful partnership's effort to address maintenance needs and preserve the site's historic components.

**Source:** "HistoriCorps Partnership Helps Preserve Colorado History" (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/inside-fs/delivering-mission/deliver/historiccorps-partnership-helps-preserve-colorado-history>)

## Advancing Tribal Co-Stewardship of National Forests Through New Agreements

The Forest Service manages over 193 million acres of land and waters containing sacred sites, wildlife habitats, and sources of Indigenous food and medicine. Many of these lands are located where Tribes retain rights to hunt, fish, gather, and practice traditional ceremonies based on ratified treaties with the Federal Government.

The Forest Service has signed 11 co-stewardship agreements with 13 Tribes, advancing the agency's commitment to protect the Tribal interests in lands significant to their culture and history. This action is in response to Joint Secretarial Order 3403, directing agencies under the USDA and the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) to meet trust obligations with federally recognized Tribes. In addition to the announced agreements, 60 more are in various stages of review, involving 45 Tribes. The agreements aim to manage national forests and grasslands in a manner that safeguards treaty, religious, subsistence, and cultural interests. They encompass a wide range of Tribal

concerns, including forest and watershed health, ecosystem restoration, integration of Traditional Ecological Knowledge into land management, and protection of cultural resources and treaty rights. The 11 signed co-stewardship agreements represent a snapshot of USDA's co-stewardship commitments and include:

- **Bears Ears National Monument:** USDA and DOI signed a landmark joint Intergovernmental Cooperative Agreement between the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management and the five member Tribes of the Bears Ears Commission: Hopi Tribe, Navajo Nation, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation, and the Pueblo of Zuni. The agreement seeks coordination on land use planning and implementation, development of long-term resource management and programmatic goals, collaborative and robust outreach to Tribal Nations, and more effective mechanisms for Tribal Government coordination.
- **Tongass National Forest (three agreements):** The Tongass National Forest in Alaska signed three separate co-stewardship agreements that include sharing Traditional Ecological Knowledge, enabling workforce development, and protecting culturally significant places. The co-stewardship agreements are with:
  - o The Hoonah Indian Association for forest thinning work that contributes to the long-standing Hoonah Native Forest Partnership.
  - o The Organized Village of Kake for youth stewardship projects that protect burial sites while providing training and leadership development.
  - o The Organized Village of Kasaan for a framework to sustain culturally critical resources and forest products.
- **Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest:** The Nez Perce Tribe and the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests in Idaho continued their long-standing collaboration in fiscal year 2022 with a Master Participating Agreement for stream and floodplain restoration and the continuation of interpreting history. The Tribe is leading this stream habitat restoration in the Crooked River Valley to protect steelhead and Chinook salmon.



- Sequoia National Forest: The Tule River Indian Tribe of California and the Sequoia National Forest in California developed a co-stewardship memorandum of understanding to establish a framework to better protect ceremonial and traditional activities and food sovereignty, as well as to preserve and integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge into Forest Service land management decisions. The agreement provides an opportunity to learn from the Tribe and understand their thousands of years' worth of knowledge, perspective, and land management values while sharing implementation responsibilities.
- The Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests (two agreements): The Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests in North Carolina and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians entered into an historic Tribal Forest Protection Act agreement—the first ever signed in the Forest Service's Southern Region. Coupled with the signed Good Neighbor Agreement, the collective work integrates cultural and Traditional Ecological Knowledge with silviculture and fire management to inform best management practices for basket-quality white oak trees and other culturally important forest products. This work also reduces fire risk, restores oak forests, improves wildlife habitat, creates early successional habitat, promotes cultural tourism and recreation, and reduces risk to Tribal trust lands.
- Six Rivers National Forest: The Karuk Tribe, the Six Rivers National Forest in California, and other partners built on previous relationships to supplement a Master Stewardship Agreement for the Western Klamath Restoration Partnership Planning Area. This agreement addresses fuels reduction and forest health through collaboration and project monitoring, including strategic wildfire control features, integrated landscape-scale fuels reduction, and restorative prescribed fire treatments in the Tribal community of Orleans. The planning area provides critical cultural, ecological, social, and economic resources that are essential for sustaining communities and ecosystems.
- Umpqua National Forest (two agreements): The Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians and the Umpqua National Forest in Oregon signed one of the largest Forest Service Tribal Forest Protection Act proposals and the largest Forest Service self-determination agreements to date. The work will create shaded fuels breaks over 37 miles of strategically important areas of national forest that border Tribal lands, the wildland-urban interface, and private property. This work will simultaneously reduce fuel concentrations enough to enable firefighters to use treatment areas as potential control lines in the event of future wildfires. The work also is expected to reduce the severity and intensity of fire through the treated areas.

In fiscal year 2022, the Forest Service invested nearly \$20 million in co-stewardship. Forest Service Chief Randy Moore has emphasized the agency's dedication to building trust and upholding treaty responsibilities with federally recognized Tribes through concrete actions. The Forest Service acknowledges its unique role at this moment in history to enhance relationships with Tribal Nations across the country, expressing a commitment to continuous progress in embedding these values within the organizational culture.

**Source:** "USDA Forest Service Signs 11 New Agreements to Advance Tribal Co-Stewardship of National Forests" (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/news/releases/new-agreements-advance-tribal-co-stewardship>)



Akilah Jaramogi, Merikin descendant and Chief Executive Officer of the Merikin Heritage Foundation in Trinidad, honors her ancestors and those who lost their lives at the Apalachicola River by intoning their names and acknowledging their struggles while throwing cowrie shells into the water at the Prospect Bluff archaeological site. USDA Forest Service photo.

## Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

### Apalachicola National Forest: Collaborating to Tell the Story of Merikins

While assessing the aftermath of 2018's Hurricane Michael, personnel on the Apalachicola National Forest in Florida discovered a unique and powerful thread of American history: a site connected to the Merikins community in Southern Trinidad, founded by people who had escaped American enslavement and fought for the British during the War of 1812. The Forest Service, in partnership with Trinidad and Tobago's

Government, is exploring this site, emphasizing the importance of preserving diverse cultural heritage. Modern advances in the use of radar technology permit imaging of artifacts still in the ground, allowing archeologists from the Forest Service, DOI National Park Service, and universities to better tell the story of the Merikins living in the shadow of slavery in the early 1800s. Findings reveal a rich history that intertwines Caribbean, African, American, and British cultural influences.

The project not only focuses on archaeological discovery but also on ensuring equity and access by involving local and traditionally underserved communities in the process. Collaboration with local experts and community members helps in uncovering the site's history and interpreting these historic artifacts in an authentic and inclusive manner. The engagement emphasizes the shared ownership of cultural heritage and the consideration of different perspectives.



The commitment to involve the local communities in the archaeological activities symbolizes a larger effort towards inclusiveness and recognition of the cultural importance of the Merikins community. By connecting the past with the present and involving those directly linked to the history, the project fosters a deeper connection to a shared cultural legacy. This approach showcases a model for other cultural preservation efforts, emphasizing the core values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility and the importance of engaging with underserved communities.

**Source:** “Musket Balls and Merikins” by Meredith Hollowell (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/features/musket-balls-and-merikins>)



Archeologists Jeffrey Shanks (National Park Service) and Dawn Lawrence (Forest Service) discuss the Prospect Bluff archaeological site with Merikin descendants visiting from Trinidad. USDA Forest Service photo.

## National Forests and Grasslands in Texas: Connecting Tribal Teens to the Forest Service Through Hands-On Experience

The Tribal Youth Conservation Corps, in partnership with the National Forests and Grasslands in Texas and American Youthworks, provides educational opportunities and hands-on work experience to young Tribal members, ages 16–18. Launched in 2022, the program emphasizes learning about various forestry disciplines such as fire management, wildlife, timber, and recreation management, while

also connecting participants with the natural resources that have sustained their Tribal traditions and beliefs. Krista Langley, a citizen of the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas and Forest Service regional volunteer specialist, has been instrumental in fostering this partnership, aiming to inspire future stewards of public lands and those who will manage these valuable resources.

A significant aspect of Tribal Youth Conservation Corps is its focus on strengthening the connection between the Forest Service and the Tribe, as well as promoting cultural relevance. The teenagers involved in the program have the opportunity to learn about the restoration of longleaf pine, a culturally significant tree to the



Tribal Youth Conservation Corps participants learn about various forestry disciplines, including fire management, wildlife, timber, and recreation management. Courtesy photo by Ina Bullock, American Youthworks, Youth Conservation Corps.

Alabama-Coushatta people. They gain skills, such as using an increment borer to determine a tree’s age, and apply forestry practices that can be shared with their Tribal communities. This experience builds a deeper connection to the land, broadens awareness of what the Forest Service does, and could also encourage some participants to pursue an education or career in forestry.

The program also focuses on trail maintenance and recreation site refurbishments that benefit visitors, improve visitor safety, increase visitation to recreation sites, and bolster local economies near the national forests. Kimpton



Cooper, Forest Supervisor of the National Forests and Grasslands in Texas, emphasizes that hosting the Tribal Youth Conservation Corps crews has created a new model that has been mutually beneficial and community oriented, helping the national forest prioritize the identification and management of cultural resources.

**Source:** “Tribal Teens Gain Hands-On Experience” by Greg Deimel and Alan Abernethy (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/features/tribal-teens-gain-hands-on-forest-experience>)



Tribal Youth Conservation Corps participants learn how to use an increment borer, a coring tool to determine a tree’s age, on the National Forests and Grasslands in Texas, summer 2022. Courtesy photo by Ina Bullock, American Youthworks, Youth Conservation Corps.

## Chippewa National Forest: Documenting Fire History on Star Island (Windigoominis)

Star Island (Windigoominis) is a historically significant 980-acre island in Cass Lake (Gaa-miskwaawaakokaag), MN. It has been a recreational destination and contains both public and private lands managed by the Forest Service. The island is also part of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Reservation. While the island’s history includes ecological studies and summer homes for seasonal residents, the Leech Lake Anishinaabe community’s deep connection to the land extends back thousands of years, encompassing cultural heritage intertwined with ecological knowledge.

The Star Island Partnership is a collaborative effort aimed at developing an inclusive and respectful historical narrative about the ecological role of the Ojibwe in shaping the forest landscapes of northern Minnesota. Supported by a grant from the Minnesota Historical Society’s Heritage Partnership Program and funding from the Chippewa National Forest, this partnership merges scientific perspectives with Indigenous Knowledge or Traditional Ecological Knowledge to provide a more comprehensive understanding of forest community dynamics. One of the primary goals is to reinterpret cultural history through ecological records, leading to the protection, enhancement, and restoration of Tribal ecocultural resources.

The partnership focuses on fire history and fostering skill development, particularly in tree-ring analysis, among community members, including students from Leech Lake Tribal College. The direct involvement of multiple stakeholders, students, and community discussions has been a vehicle for developing shared commitments. This creates opportunities for various perspectives, fostering understanding, and retelling the story of the ecological and cultural landscape around Star Island and the Leech Lake Ojibwe community. It leads to a model of cooperative engagement, bridging gaps between local groups and subject experts, centered around mutually essential goals.



A fire-scarred red pine remnant is assigned tree ID STR16F during field sampling. Courtesy photo by Kurt Kipfmueller, University of Minnesota.

Through focusing on the history of fire, the partnership explores the impacts of Ojibwe land tending on forest patterns and the deep connection with the forest environment. Reconstructions based on tree ring analysis, archaeological investigations, and Traditional Ecological Knowledge help in understanding these forests' development. Evidence of Ojibwe presence and land use is vital in reflecting the long history of fire use on Star Island. This collaboration presents a unique opportunity to respectfully share knowledge to develop a better understanding of both culture and ecology, giving voice to a rich history and insights into the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe's ancestral lands.

**Source:** "Fire History on Star Island (Windigoominis): A Starting Point for Conversations on Resource Stewardship and Cultural Exchange" (<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/dcd66a0ed5eb42beaec348c95a893206>)

## Launching the Cultural Heritage in the Forest Educational Program

In 2022, the Forest Service and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), in partnership with the White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity through Historically Black Colleges and Universities, launched a pilot educational program called Cultural Heritage in the Forest (CHIF).

The program aims to connect students from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) with historic preservation and the work of the Forest Service's Heritage Program with a primary goal of creating possibilities for these students to move into careers in the Forest Service. Other goals of the program include bringing more diversity into historic preservation-related fields, exposing students to new career opportunities and a wide range of networking opportunities, and raising awareness of the rich, cultural legacy of HBCUs and their historic campuses.

In 2022, the inaugural CHIF Program hosted four students from Lincoln University (Pennsylvania) from various backgrounds. In 2023, the CHIF Program became available to all HBCUs and hosted nine students studying history, architecture, and other related subjects from six universities: Howard University (Washington, DC), Hampton University (Virginia), Lincoln University (Pennsylvania), Claflin University



Cultural Heritage in the Forest students prepare to conduct a condition assessment on a historic building nestled in the Monongahela National Forest. Advisory Council on Historic Preservation photo by Lynne Richmond.



(South Carolina), Elizabeth State University (North Carolina), and University of Central Missouri (Missouri). During both years, the Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia and the Wayne National Forest in Ohio hosted the students. Heritage Program staff at the national forests facilitated the students' learning of introductory archaeological methods, historic building condition assessment, and the Forest Service's stewardship responsibilities. During both years, the students also traveled to Washington, DC, where the ACHP facilitated their learning of Federal historic preservation programs and introduced them to ACHP and Forest Service leadership. Following the completion of the program, students from both years have expressed interest in applying to Forest Service positions and furthering their experiences in historic preservation.

## Suppressing Fire While Protecting History

The Southwest, especially Arizona and New Mexico, is rich in historic and cultural sites, bearing marks from the Apache, Navajo, and Pueblo Tribes, as well as from Spanish explorers and settlers. The recent declaration of the Baaj

Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni—Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument emphasizes the value and importance of safeguarding these cultural resources.

Jason Nez, a fire archaeologist, and Michael Terlep, a district archaeologist, stress the significance of fire management in the context of preserving cultural artifacts. While wildfires can threaten historic sites, the tactics used to contain these fires, such as bulldozing, can pose even more risk to artifacts by disturbing the ground. To mitigate potential damage, resource advisors like Nez and Terlep, who are often embedded with firefighting crews, guide protective measures and survey lands in advance of firefighting activities. These professionals have become more integral in recent times as the emphasis on protecting cultural sites has grown. Both archaeologists highlight the importance of proactive preservation, asserting that the protection and enhancement of these landscapes is crucial for maintaining the diversity of national and cultural identity.

**Source:** “History and Fire: Suppressing Fire While Protecting History” by Andrew Avitt (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/features/history-and-fire>)



Michael Terlep and Jason Nez work the Rafael Fire at Honanki Heritage Site on the Coconino National Forest in Arizona (Red Rock District). USDA Forest Service photo by Paul Dawson.





A cracked boulder within the Kane Fire footprint shows how extreme heat can damage rock structures and art. USDA Forest Service photo by Andrew Avitt.

# Program Alternatives

## Advancing Projects While Considering Historic Properties With the Phasing National Programmatic Agreement (NPA)

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Public Law 117–58, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law) authorized funds that, combined with the Forest Service’s annual appropriations, provided the agency with an unprecedented opportunity to invest in significant new landscape-level restoration efforts to support resilient forest ecosystems and forest-adjacent communities. Without appropriate tools, such multiyear projects that address landscape-scale issues can pose a challenge to timely compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The NHPA requires agencies to consider the effects of their proposed actions on historic properties, including properties of traditional religious and cultural significance to Indian Tribes, prior to making decisions. The Phasing

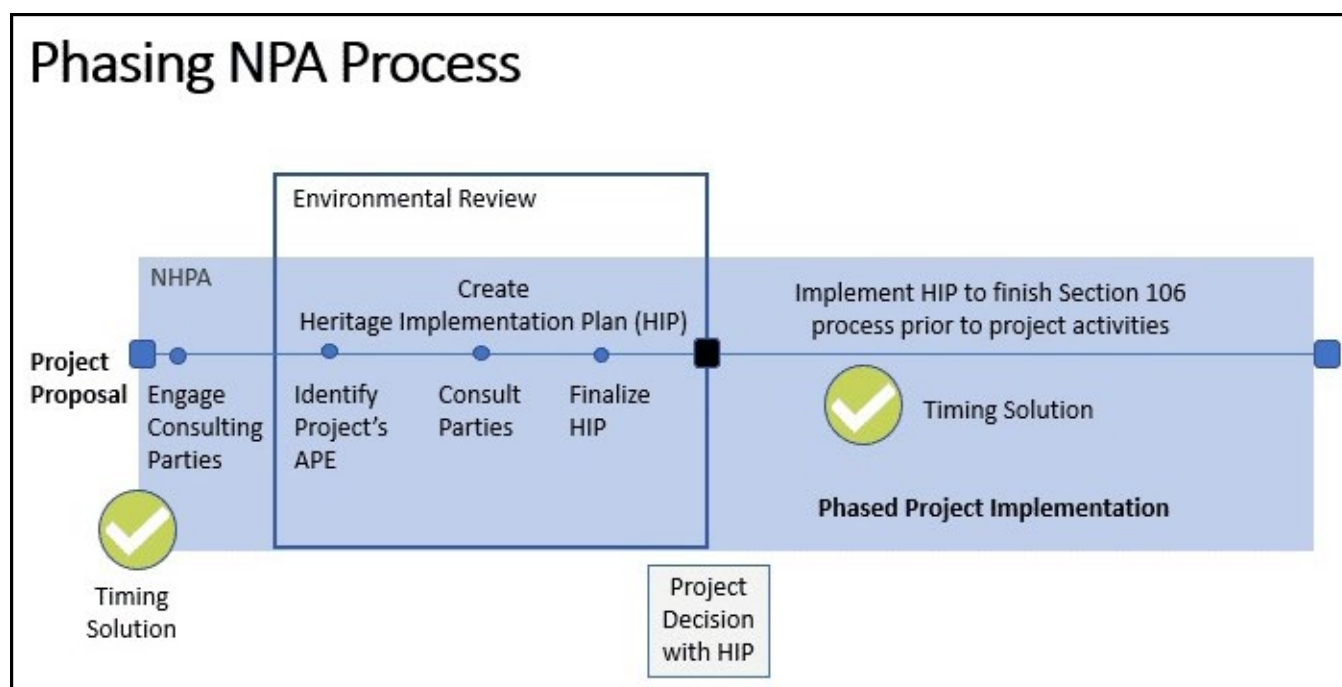
National Programmatic Agreement (Phasing NPA), executed on December 6th, 2021, provides an effective way to advance with such types of important projects while considering historic properties per the NHPA.

### Summary of Phasing NPA

The Phasing NPA requires the agency to consult at the earliest stages of project consideration and design to develop a Heritage Implementation Plan (HIP). The HIP outlines the procedures and standards that fulfill Section 106 compliance and may include activities that enhance cultural resources or historic properties. The Forest Service finalizes the HIP before or concurrent with the project decision and implements the HIP after the project decision, throughout the life of the project.

### Application of Phasing NPA

Within its first year (2021–2022), the Forest Service applied the Phasing NPA to 10 projects aiming to restore forests after a wildfire, reduce the chance of severe wildfire, and increase the ability to control wildfires within the wildland-urban interface. In certain cases, the Forest Service has applied the Phasing NPA for projects in some of the 250 high-risk fireheds identified in the West, where the Secretary of Agriculture

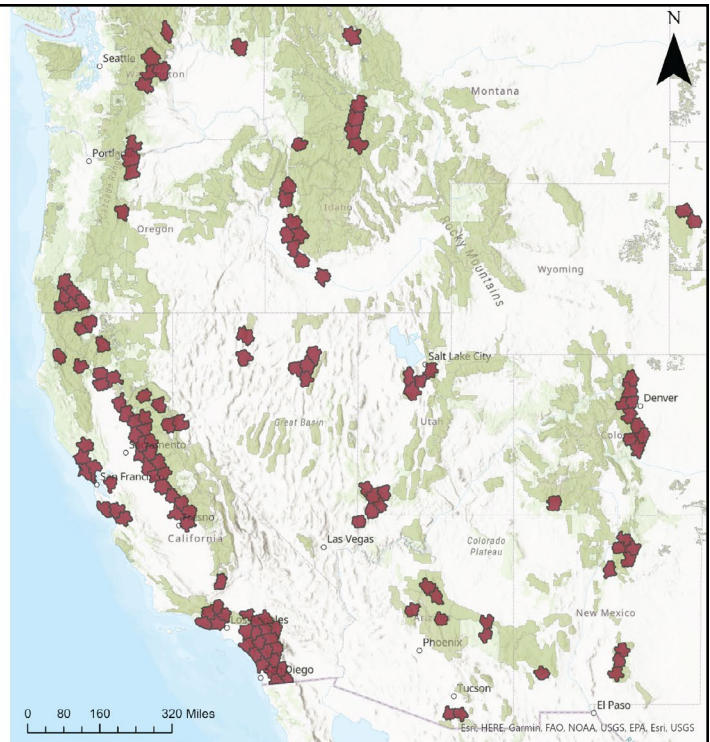
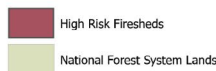


This diagram shows the suggested timing for each of the stages when planning projects using the Phasing National Programmatic Agreement.



# HIGH-RISK FIRESHEDS

Community exposure is a central factor in the strategy to confront the wildfire crisis. Other factors include Tribal and State plans, watersheds, equity, climate forecasts, and partner priorities.



A map identifies high-risk firesheds in “Confronting the Wildfire Crisis: Implementation Plan,” one in a series of Forest Service publications about the agency’s Wildfire Crisis Strategy.

has invoked emergency authority (Western Fireshed Emergency Action) under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (Section 40807) to take swift action to reduce wildfire risk as part of the agency’s broader strategy to protect communities, critical infrastructure, and forest resources from catastrophic wildfire. Use of the Phasing NPA in California, Montana, and Oregon provided an effective way to advance multiyear, large-scale projects while considering historic properties prior to project implementation. These included:

- **Bitterroot National Forest:** The Bitterroot National Forest in Montana contains five of the highest risk firesheds in the Nation, four of which are in the Bitterroot Front Project area (150,000 acres). The project aims to reduce the threat of large-scale fires within the wildland-urban interface, improve forest conditions, and provide commercial timber products through a variety of fuel reduction treatment options.
- **Plumas National Forest:** The Plumas National Forest in California has applied the Phasing NPA for the Plumas Community Protection Projects Landscape Project, which focuses on

community zones across the national forest with very high, high, or moderate wildfire hazard potential. The project will address approximately 1.0 million acres within the national forest administrative boundaries and 284,912 acres in five high-risk firesheds.

- **Deschutes National Forest:** The Deschutes National Forest in Oregon has applied the Phasing NPA for the Deschutes Fuels Maintenance project. Over the next 20 years, the project will implement fire and nonfire treatments including mechanized and nonmechanized thinning, prescribed fire, and necessary associated fireline construction and road maintenance. This will bring previously treated areas to the national forest’s desired condition on over 100,000 acres in the wildland-urban interface and fire-dependent ecosystems.

## Continued Improvements

As part of the execution of the Phasing NPA, the Forest Service committed to monitor the effectiveness of the NPA and welcomed input from consulting parties on how to improve its implementation. During the monitoring period, the Forest Service, in partnership with

the agreement's signatories, identified minor areas where the agreement can be improved: widening its applicability to certain projects, clarifying how Tribes may join the agreement, and providing more effective ways of accepting consulting parties' responses during the early phases of applying the agreement.

Additionally, the Forest Service, in partnership with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, is providing advice for how to effectively consider historic properties in

emergency situations, including situations that require application of Section 106 emergency provisions. This includes the development of on-demand training for Section 106 emergency provisions, highlighting applicability of those provisions and options available to expedite Section 106 compliance. The Forest Service Heritage Program continues to provide guidance for how national forests may effectively consider historic properties while swiftly addressing and mitigating wildfire risk in Western Fireshed Emergency Action areas.

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