



U.S. Wildland Fire Service

Mission

The new U.S. Wildland Fire Service (USWFS) will reform the Federal approach to Wildland Fire Management (WFM) by creating an integrated, cost-efficient, and operationally more effective organization that meets unified and coordinated response needs and resource and safety objectives. The guiding program principles and priorities are to reduce wildfire risk, create fire-resilient landscapes, promote fire-adapted communities, and safely and effectively respond to wildfires through strong collaboration and empowered Tribal, State, and local communities.

Budget Overview

The 2026 Budget request for the new USWFS Operations account is \$3.70 billion, and the request for the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund account is \$2.85 billion, for a total of \$6.55 billion. The 2026 Budget combines the WFM programs and activities across the U.S. Department of the Interior (Interior) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service (FS) into a single organization. Under the new USWFS, command and appropriations for all WFM activities of Interior and USDA FS will be consolidated to streamline Federal wildfire suppression response, risk mitigation, and coordination with non-Federal partners to address the wildfire crisis. The new USWFS will employ Federal WFM personnel working on lands administered by



Wildland firefighters survey a Wyoming wildfire.

DOI Photo.

Interior and USDA FS, including wildland firefighters, wildfire risk mitigation planners, and support personnel. It also will fund Tribal Nations' WFM personnel. USWFS also will procure and maintain all wildland fire resources and manage Federal wildland fire response policies. Additional operational capacity will be transferred from USDA FS to Interior in the future to ensure effective USWFS mission implementation.

Firefighter Pay Reforms

The 2026 USWFS Budget fully supports the costs of permanent pay reforms for Federal and Tribal wildland firefighters across the United States, as provided for in the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (Public Law 119-4). As wildfires grow larger and more destructive—threatening communities, livelihoods, and infrastructure—wildland fire



- The Administration proposes legislation to establish a new USWFS within the Department of the Interior, consolidating wildland fire programs across DOI and USDA FS into a single unified organization.
- USWFS will manage wildland fire management/protection and wildfire risk reduction responsibilities across more than 693 million acres administered by DOI and USDA FS.

personnel face growing demands. This improved firefighter pay is helping to address this challenge by enabling the Federal Government and Tribes to compete with private employers and to hire and retain top employees in this critical field.

Establishing Authorities

To establish the new unified USWFS, the 2026 Budget also proposes legislation, including appropriations language, to provide authorities for implementation. These authorities include the transfer of budgetary resources to and from USWFS to facilitate the transition to the consolidated USWFS and foster collaborative land management within Interior and between the two Departments.

Suppression Operations

The Budget requests \$1.39 billion for Suppression Operations to support incident management personnel, aviation and operational assets, logistical services, supplies and equipment, and temporary emergency firefighters. In addition to suppressing wildfires that threaten lives and communities, personnel implement emergency stabilization projects to minimize threats to life or property, protect water quality, and reduce the risks of floods, landslides, and erosion following wildfires.

Preparedness

The 2026 Budget supports USWFS firefighting capabilities and maintains readiness to achieve a high initial attack success rate for wildland fire response. The Preparedness program activity provides for an integrated and coordinated framework for wildfire response by funding core Federal and Tribal firefighting resources and assets to protect public health, critical infrastructure, natural and cultural resources, and communities from the detrimental effects of wildfires. Major resources supported by this program activity

include firefighters, engines, and other heavy equipment.

Fuels Management

Fuels Management helps mitigate the risk of catastrophic wildfires and create fire-resilient landscapes through fuels management projects on lands administered by Interior and USDA FS and on some non-Federal lands. Interior and its partners manage vegetation to reduce the intensity, severity, and negative effects of wildfire.

Burned Area Rehabilitation

Burned Area Rehabilitation (BAR) funds efforts by Interior and its partners to repair or improve burned landscapes that are unlikely to recover without human assistance. Working with partners from Tribal Nations, States, and local communities, Interior carries out nonemergency actions that may take up to 5 years to complete.

Facilities Construction and Maintenance

Facilities Construction and Maintenance helps to fund safe, modern facilities that are essential to achieving the WFM mission of protecting lives, property, and resources from wildfires. These facilities include housing for wildland firefighters, fire operations equipment storage, and aerial firefighting support bases. In addition to these resources, Interior may use other available funding for construction and maintenance to meet these important needs.

Intelligence and Technology

The Intelligence and Technology activity supports wildland fire information technology (IT), research, and science, including the current Joint Fire Science Program the two Departments administer together. In the future, this new activity will consolidate Interior and USDA FS wildland fire IT investments



The Ruby Mountain Hotshots dig a fireline on a forested slope during the Dixie Fire.

BLM Photo.

and transfers for wildland fire research from USDA FS to Interior.

Grants and Partnerships

The Grants and Partnerships program activity supports targeted rural fire assistance. The funding level reflects the fact that States and localities have a central role in funding wildfire preparedness and are best positioned to execute this core function without unnecessary Federal constraints.

Wildfire Suppression Operation Reserve Fund

In accordance with Division O of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (Public Law 115–141), which provides additional new budget authority for wildfire suppression operations through 2027, the Budget funds the Wildfire Suppression

Operations Reserve Fund (Reserve Fund) with \$2.85 billion. This funding, combined with the USWFS Operations account's Suppression Operations funding, ensures adequate budget resources to respond promptly and effectively to wildfires even during the most severe periods of wildfire activity. The 2026 Budget also requests an adjustment to the current Reserve Fund authority to direct this funding to the new USWFS.

Workforce Restructuring

The 2026 Budget supports the Administration's priority to streamline government and will continue efforts to unify and optimize administrative services across the Department to increase effectiveness and efficiency for the benefit of American taxpayers.

SUMMARY OF BUREAU APPROPRIATIONS

(dollar amounts in thousands)

Comparison of 2026 Request with 2025 CR

	2025 CR ^{1/}	2026 Request ^{2/}
Current		
Wildland Fire Service Operations	1,147,171	3,702,107
Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund	360,000	2,850,000
Total, Current	1,507,171	6,552,107
Current, 2026 Supplementals		
Wildland Fire Service Operations		
Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58)		262,600
Transfer from USDA FS (P.L. 117-58)		530,488
Transfer to OIG (P.L. 117-58)		-1,313
Total, Current, 2026 Supplementals		791,775

^{1/} The 2025 CR amount shows funding for the Department of the Interior's current Wildland Fire Management and Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund accounts. The President reserves his authority under the "Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025" (P.L. 119-4) to revise spending within the amounts provided by Congress.

^{2/} The 2026 Request column shows amounts for the new U.S. Wildland Fire Service to be established in the Department of the Interior through consolidation of Interior's current wildland fire management program with the wildland fire management activities and resources of the USDA FS. The Administration will transfer additional operational capacity and budgetary resources supporting wildland fire management from USDA FS to Interior in the future.

HIGHLIGHTS OF BUDGET CHANGES

By Appropriation Activity/Subactivity

APPROPRIATION: Wildland Fire Service Operations

	2024 Actual ^{1/}	2025 Notional ^{2/}	2026 Request ^{3/}
Preparedness	492,364	512,364	1,496,100
Suppression Operations	383,657	383,657	1,394,657
Fuels Management	214,450	228,150	770,050
Other Operations			
Burned Area Rehabilitation	10,000	10,000	5,000
Facilities Construction and Maintenance	10,000	10,000	5,000
Joint Fire Science Program	3,000	3,000	0
Intelligence and Technology	0	0	28,500
Grants and Partnerships	0	0	2,800
Subtotal, Other Operations	23,000	23,000	41,300
TOTAL APPROPRIATION	1,113,471	1,147,171	3,702,107

^{1/} The 2024 Actual amount shows funding for the Department of the Interior's current Wildland Fire Management account.

^{2/} The 2025 Notional amount shows funding for the Department of the Interior's current Wildland Fire Management account. The President reserves his authority under the "Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025" (P.L. 119-4) to revise spending within the amounts provided by Congress.

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APPROPRIATION: Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund

	2024 Actual ^{1/}	2025 Notional ^{2/}	2026 Request ^{3/}
TOTAL APPROPRIATION	350,000	360,000	2,850,000

^{1/} The 2024 Actual amount shows funding for the Department of the Interior's current Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund account.

^{2/} The 2025 Notional amount shows funding for the Department of the Interior's current Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund account. The President reserves his authority under the "Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025" (P.L. 119-4) to revise spending within the amounts provided by Congress.

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