



REPLANT Act National Summary for Fiscal Years 2023-2025

Directive

The *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* (P.L. 117-58) included the following language:

“Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary of Agriculture shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate and the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives, and make publicly available on the website of the Forest Service, a report that describes, with respect to the preceding year— (1) an evaluation of the degree to which the Secretary has achieved compliance with the requirements contained in the amendments made by this title, including, as a result of those amendments, the number of acres covered by reforestation projects that follow unplanned events (such as wildfires); (2) the total number of acres of land reforested under each authority of the Secretary under which reforestation projects have been carried out; (3) the number of acres of National Forest System land affected by, and the substance of reforestation needs on that land resulting from, unplanned events; and (4) the number of acres in need of reforestation under subsection (e)(1) of section 3 of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1601).”

Executive Summary

The Repairing Existing Public Land by Adding Necessary Trees or REPLANT Act was signed into law as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Public Law 117-58, Title III, Section 70301-70303) on November 15, 2021. The REPLANT Act directs the Forest Service to prioritize unplanned (e.g., post-wildfire) reforestation needs and address the reforestation backlog on National Forest System (NFS) lands, while also attending to newly caused reforestation needs. This report meets the reporting requirements specified in Section 70303 of the REPLANT Act. The annual Reforestation and Stand Improvement Activity Reports appear on the Forest Service website¹. The annual REPLANT Act Reports are published on the FS Budget and Performance website under the congressional directives section².

Background and Context

The goal of reforestation within National Forests is to re-establish and maintain appropriate forest cover to meet the objectives of land management plans in accordance with applicable laws and policies, including the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) as amended by the REPLANT Act. The Forest Service accomplishes this by 1) assessing and tracking whether NFS lands need to be reforested to meet land management plan objectives and 2) what type of

¹ <https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/forest-management/vegetation-management/reforest-tsi>.

² <https://www.fs.usda.gov/about-agency/budget-performance>

reforestation treatment is needed to re-establish forest cover - that is, whether forests need planting or seeding or whether forest cover can be re-established via natural regeneration processes, which leverage remaining seedbanks and seed-tree sources.

It is important to note that when natural regeneration supports reforestation objectives, it is not a hands-off process. It often requires active site preparation and always requires multiple spatial and field assessments and surveys to determine if site conditions are appropriate for the desired tree species to germinate and grow. Natural regeneration also requires certification of reforestation. Certification is determined through multiple in-depth surveys and silviculture verification to confirm that the appropriate tree species, numbers, and distributions have been established and are on a trajectory to grow into a forested stand that meets land management plan objectives. If natural regeneration numbers are not at the desired levels, further site preparation treatments or planting or seeding may be required to ensure the stand is successfully reforested.

In quantifying progress, the Forest Service only counts acres as reforested if one of four specific activities has been completed: planting, seeding, site preparation for natural regeneration, or certification that a site has naturally regenerated to desired levels without site preparation. Multiple activities may be needed at a site before it can be counted as successfully reforested. The first step is to conduct reforestation needs assessments to understand the scale and scope of reforestation needs and make an informed decision to efficiently and effectively reforest the area. If tree planting or seeding are needed, a plan must be made to identify and/or acquire the appropriate seed for the affected location. Seed must be collected, processed, and stored appropriately until it is grown into seedlings. At the planting site, additional site preparation work may be needed, and seedling protection may be installed. Finally following reforestation, surveys and monitoring are required to ensure survival through seedlings' most vulnerable stages and to verify that forest cover was indeed re-established to meet management objectives.

Additional supporting activities may include:

- Reforestation needs assessments after wildfire and other disturbance events. This typically involves a spatial analysis, followed by ground-truthing to further refine needs, and recording in FACTS.
- Project planning and silviculture diagnosis and prescriptions
- Seed planning to ensure that genetically appropriate seed is available
- Seed collection, processing, and storage
- Surveys and mapping to determine the number and distribution of seeds or seedlings needed within project areas (specifically defined in silvicultural prescriptions that tier to Land and Resource Management Plans, as required in NFMA)
- Seedling production at nurseries (which generally takes from one to five years, depending on the species and seedling size/type needed)
- Site preparation to remove or reduce fuels and competing vegetation
- Seedling protection to promote seedling survival (e.g. sun or animal protection)
- Monitoring to ensure that a desired number and distribution of seedlings survive and where indicated, supplemental planting or seeding to ensure adequate seedling survival to meet target densities and distributions

Reporting Element 1 – Evaluation of Compliance

Reforestation Accomplishments from Fiscal Years 2023 to 2025

The Forest Service has achieved compliance with fiscal year (FY) goals for implementing the REPLANT Act by significantly increasing annual reforestation actions after disturbance and making investments that build capacity to address the reforestation backlog. Reforestation is a multi-year process, from collecting seed, to preparing sites, to planting seedlings, to assessing, field verifying, and monitoring natural regeneration and certifying that sites are growing into a future forest. The National Forest System Reforestation Strategy³, released in FY 2022, outlines the goals and objectives necessary for successful reforestation on national forests. The Strategy also broadly guides investments and activities that increase the pace and scale of reforestation to address backlog needs, address future events, and meet the provisions of the REPLANT Act. Increasing on-the-ground reforestation requires sustained investment in foundational activities such as reassessing older burned sites, planning for increased number of post-disturbance projects, ensuring sufficient seed and nursery capacity, and carrying out post-planting activities.

To achieve this ramp up, the Forest Service has increased funding allocations to the field for identified reforestation projects from \$65 million in FY 2022 to \$77 million in FY 2023, \$85 million in FY 2024, and \$100 million in FY 2025. With these current year allocations and prior-year balances, the Forest Service obligated and/or expended \$72.6 million in FY 2023, \$204.1 million in FY 2024, and \$85 million in FY 2025 of Reforestation Trust Funds. The increase in expenditures in FY 2024 largely reflects an increase in Nursery infrastructure investments and other Agency reforestation priorities to support the reforestation ramp up. Between FY 2023 and 2025, the Forest Service accomplished 699,748 acres of reforestation activities and carried out additional supporting activities on 1,147,352 acres. In recent years, reforestation acres have been increasingly accomplished in response to fire (Figure 1). Table 1 provides a list of reforestation activities that contribute to the total acres of reforestation to address unplanned events, and the total for all completed acres of reforestation, which includes reforestation following planned timber harvest. Details on annual accomplishments and milestones are reported below.

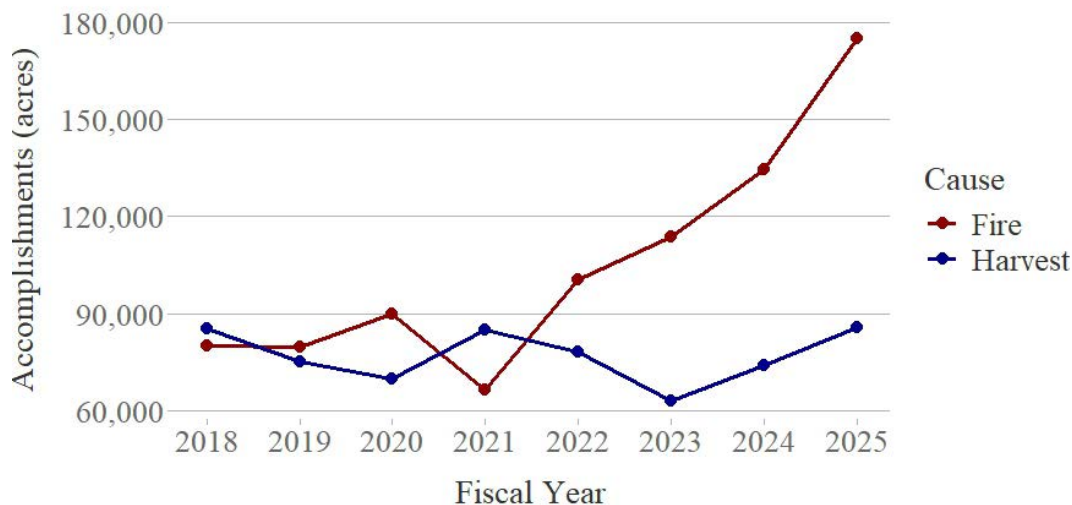
³ <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/reforestation-strategy.pdf>

Table 1: FY 2023-2025 Reforestation accomplishments (acres).

Year	Forest Vegetation Established (acres)	Fire	Insect or disease	Weather event	Failure to Establish ¹	Other	Unplanned Event Total	Harvest	Grand Total
2023	Planting	36,048	3,356	2,068	2,371	2,136	45,979	17,316	63,295
	Seeding	7,438	0	0	0	0	7,438	51	7,489
	Site Prep for Natural Regen	7,783	579	120	0	3,454	11,936	18,533	30,468
	Certification of Natural Regen (no site prep)	49,538	6,949	0	51	330	56,868	20,647	77,515
	Total	100,807	10,884	2,188	2,422	5,920	122,221	56,547	178,767
2024	Planting	52,398	1,602	747	2,559	2,063	59,368	23,574	82,943
	Seeding	622	36	0	0	0	658	2,005	2,663
	Site Prep for Natural Regen	3,793	3,240	589	0	7,657	15,278	26,236	41,514
	Certification of Natural Regen (no site prep)	76,691	7,340	161	0	1,110	85,302	21,918	107,220
	Total	133,504	12,218	1,497	2,559	10,830	160,606	73,733	234,340
2025	Planting	55,401	1,974	1,130	1,720	2,127	62,353	22,355	84,708
	Seeding	0	0	0	0	0	0	286	286
	Site Prep for Natural Regen	4,934	754	1,101	18	9,062	15,869	29,034	44,902
	Certification of Natural Regen (no site prep)	114,032	8,017	109	7	1,094	123,259	33,486	156,745
	Total	174,367	10,745	2,340	1,745	12,283	201,481	85,161	286,641

¹Failure to Establish represents activities to address areas where initial reforestation activities did not meet management objectives and will need additional treatment.

Figure 1: Trends in reforestation accomplishments (acres) from fiscal years 2018 through 2025 as reported in the FACTS database. The REPLANT Act has resulted in increased post-wildfire reforestation treatments.



Fiscal Year 2023 Accomplishments

Investments focused on increasing reforestation activities, aligning organizational capacity, and expanding strategic partnerships with States, Tribes, and private organizations to address the reforestation backlog and new reforestation needs on NFS lands. In FY 2023, the agency reforested a total of 178,767 acres through planting seedlings, direct seeding, site preparation for natural regeneration, and assessing and certifying natural regeneration (Table 1). In addition to the reforestation acres, supporting activities were conducted on approximately 303,854 acres to assess post-disturbance needs, prepare sites for future reforestation activities, and monitor and steward reforestation treatments.

In late FY 2023, the Agency contracted an external engineering firm to conduct a system-wide Forest Service Nursery System facilities assessment; this generated recommendations for modernizing and improving workflow efficiencies to support increased seed and seedling production needs at the Agency's six nurseries and two stand-alone seed production facilities. Additional actions included filling specialized, hard-to-fill nursery and genetics positions through a FY 2023 national hiring event and expanding partnerships to build additional external workforce capacity.

Fiscal Year 2024 Accomplishments

To increase visibility and accountability, the Forest Service approved a national reforestation target, 210,000 acres, for the first time since 2016. The Agency exceeded this target by reforesting a total of 234,340 acres (Table 1). Driven by the implementation of a formal target and significant investments starting in FY 2022, reforestation efforts on national forests in FY 2024 reached their highest level since 2009. Additional supporting activities were conducted on

approximately 564,564 acres to assess post-disturbance needs, prepare sites for future reforestation activities, and monitor and steward reforestation treatments. The increased number of supporting activities in FY 2024 was largely due to additional analysis of legacy burns, including some of the large impacts from 2020 and 2021 wildfires, to determine reforestation needs.

A significant strategic advancement in FY 2024 was that all nine Forest Service regions developed regional reforestation implementation plans tiered to the National Reforestation Strategy. These plans provide detailed roadmaps for addressing regional reforestation backlog acres and projected new needs to achieve the objectives of REPLANT. The implementation plans and projected costs and capacity needs informed a Forest Service commitment to reforesting 1.8 million acres on NFS lands by 2030, approximately half of the existing backlog at the time REPLANT was passed. The remaining backlog acres will be reassessed for feasibility, cost, and timeframe over the next couple years.

Additionally, as part of the external nursery assessment which began in late FY 2023, contractors conducted a comprehensive and site-specific evaluation of each of the eight Forest Service Nursery System production facilities in FY 2024. The contractor provided initial recommendations to address life and safety needs requiring only minor investments. Additional recommendations to modernize and optimize nursery system facilities and workflow efficiencies were planned for FY 2025.

Fiscal Year 2025 Accomplishments

In FY 2025, the Forest Service set a national reforestation target of 250,000 acres and also set formal regional targets. Building on the momentum of continued investment and prioritization, the Forest Service exceeded the target by completing reforestation on 286,641 acres (Table 1). This is the highest level of reforestation accomplishments on National Forests since 1998. Additional activities were conducted on approximately 278,934 acres to assess post-disturbance needs, prepare for future reforestation accomplishments, and monitor and steward completed reforestation treatments.

The external nursery contractor delivered a final, comprehensive, system-wide nursery facilities master plan, with recommendations for modernizing and optimizing workflows to meet sustainable seedling and seed needs. The Forest Service is utilizing these recommendations to develop a strategic investment plan for the National Nursery System.

Priority List of Reforestation Projects

In FY 2025, the agency developed a list of prioritized reforestation projects. The REPLANT Act directs development:

“of a priority list of reforestation projects that –

- primarily take place on priority land,*
- promote effective reforestation following unplanned events, and*
- may include activities to ensure adequate and appropriate seed availability.”*

As defined by the Act, “priority land” means:

“National Forest System land that, due to an unplanned event –

- does not meet the conditions for appropriate forest cover,*
- requires reforestation to meet the objectives of an applicable land management plan, and*
- is unlikely to experience natural regeneration without assistance.”*

Ranking of projects, as described in the REPLANT Act, is based on:

“1) effective reforestation project plan, 2) the ability to measure the progress and success of the project, and 3) the ability of a project to provide benefits relating to forest function and health, soil health and productivity, wildlife habitat, improved air and water quality, carbon sequestration potential, resilience, job creation, and enhanced recreation opportunities.”

Between FY 2023 – FY 2025, all the reforestation projects met the ranking criteria, and the Forest Service had sufficient funding to support all reforestation projects on priority lands and those from planned events. The Forest Service will continue to assess available outyear funding and additional project ranking and prioritization may be needed. Because all reforestation projects have a project plan/prescription and provide multiple significant benefits, future prioritization will strongly consider the ability of projects to contribute to Forest Service reforestation targets, project implementation success, funding execution, and support for outyear accomplishments (e.g., site preparation for planting in next year).

Reporting Element 2 – Reforestation Authorities

Between FY 2023 – FY 2025, the majority of reforestation (almost 90% of all acres) was accomplished under the primary authority of the National Forest Management Act (NFMA), as amended (Table 2). In addition to the authority provided by NFMA, reforestation may also utilize additional authorities of the Secretary of Agriculture including:

- Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP),
- Joint Chief’s Landscape Restoration Partnership (FSNRC),
- Good Neighbor Authority (GDNBR), and
- Stewardship Projects (STWD).

Table 2: Provides FY 2023-2025 total number of acres of land reforested under various authorities of the Secretary under which reforestation projects have been carried out by type of activity (other authorities are a subset under the primary NFMA authority).

Year	Forest Vegetation Established (acres)	CFLRP	FSNRC	GDNBR	STWD	Other Authorities Total	NFMA Authority Total	Grand Total
2023	Planting	2,664	475	2,156	1,573	6,868	56,427	63,295
	Seeding	108	0	0	0	108	7,381	7,489
	Site Prep for Natural Regen	3,020	338	649	1,468	5,475	24,994	30,468
	Certification of Natural Regen (no site prep)	5,215	283	228	443	6,169	71,346	77,515
	Total	11,007	1,096	3,033	3,484	18,620	160,148	178,767
2024	Planting	10,915	1,025	1,691	1,993	15,624	67,318	82,943
	Seeding	0	0	0	0	0	2,663	2,663
	Site Prep for Natural Regen	913	508	1,500	1,665	4,586	36,929	41,514
	Certification of Natural Regen (no site prep)	12,311	0	468	555	13,334	93,886	107,220
	Total	24,139	1,533	3,659	4,213	33,544	200,796	234,340
2025	Planting	4,549	398	3,088	1,205	9,240	75,468	84,708
	Seeding	0	0	0	46	46	240	286
	Site Prep for Natural Regen	2,442	4,967	1,024	1,609	10,042	34,860	44,902
	Certification of Natural Regen (no site prep)	10,104	1,637	476	561	12,778	143,966	156,745
	Total	17,095	7,002	4,588	3,421	32,106	254,534	286,641

Reporting Elements 3 and 4 – Reforestation Needs from Unplanned Events and Total Reforestation Need

At the close of FY 2025, there were 3,660,617 total acres of reforestation needs on NFS lands. Unplanned events such as wildfire caused 95 percent of these needs, while 5 percent are a result of harvest (Table 3).

Of the 3,660,617 total acres of reforestation needs on NFS lands at the end of FY 2025, there were 623,659 acres of new needs and 3,036,958 acres of backlog needs (Figure 2). The Forest Service considers reforestation needs (unplanned or planned) that were generated after the REPLANT Act was passed (FY 2022 to the present) to be new needs, and needs from events prior to REPLANT Act as backlog needs (FY 2021 and earlier). The Forest Service has addressed 673,782 acres of reforestation backlog over the last four years since REPLANT was passed (FY 2022 – FY 2025). As new acres of reforestation needs are identified and acres of

reforestation are completed, the total acres of needs will shift. Note that the most recent wildfire and hurricane damage is still being assessed and is not fully included in the current needs.

Table 3: Acres of reforestation needs on NFS land and the substance of the reforestation needs from unplanned events and harvest.

Year	Forest Vegetation Needs (acres)	Fire	Insect or disease	Weather event	Failure to Establish	Other	Unplanned Event Total	Harvest Total	Total Needs
2023	Planting	1,758,416	21,673	3,411	18,545	21,736	1,823,781	53,950	1,877,731
	Seeding	9,700	0	11	551	537	10,799	3,043	13,841
	Site Prep for Natural Regen	30,576	5,652	1,878	897	27,044	66,046	42,271	108,318
	Certification of Natural Regen (no site prep)	1,096,543	31,726	4,374	221	9,524	1,142,387	80,453	1,222,840
	Total	2,895,235	59,051	9,674	20,214	58,841	3,043,013	179,717	3,222,730
2024	Planting	1,834,691	23,644	2,448	19,368	18,467	1,898,619	49,045	1,947,663
	Seeding	14,155	30	11	551	537	15,284	4,363	19,646
	Site Prep for Natural Regen	22,756	6,298	1,457	837	32,817	64,164	41,309	105,473
	Certification of Natural Regen (no site prep)	1,301,522	34,123	4,033	172	8,113	1,347,963	92,097	1,440,060
	Total	3,173,124	64,095	7,949	20,928	59,934	3,326,030	186,814	3,512,842
2025	Planting	1,885,155	25,305	1,809	16,506	18,695	1,947,470	50,546	1,998,016
	Seeding	14,126	0	11	443	414	14,994	4,039	19,033
	Site Prep for Natural Regen	33,952	7,004	6,808	2,774	23,968	74,506	40,664	115,170
	Certification of Natural Regen (no site prep)	1,400,371	23,708	4,132	250	8,264	1,436,725	91,673	1,528,398
	Total	3,333,605	56,017	12,760	19,973	51,341	3,473,695	186,922	3,660,617

Figure 2. Total accumulated reforestation needs by proportion of backlog acres and new needs by NFS lands within state boundaries (outlined in black) as reported in the FACTS database.

