



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE TRUST LANDS
RESOLUTION 2021-04
CONCERNING ONGOING WILDFIRE APPROPRIATIONS**

Whereas, the National Association of State Trust Lands (NASTL) and its member states manage over 500 million acres of trust lands, minerals, and waterways that are interspersed with federal lands; and

Whereas, members of NASTL have state constitutional mandates to manage millions of acres of lands for public education, economic development, conservation, recreation, and other public purposes provided by state law; and

Whereas, members of NASTL manage forested state trust lands surrounded by or near National Forest System lands; and

Whereas, state trust lands are managed to maximize revenue for beneficiaries, primarily K-12 public education, through economic development, active forest management, and other management practices including conservation, recreation, and other public purposes provided by state law; and

Whereas, forested state trust lands provide a dependable source of timber accounting for nearly 1 billion board feet of harvested volume annually; an amount that represents nearly ten percent of annual housing starts; and

Whereas, timber harvest from forested state trust lands contributes to public education in the United States by returning hundreds of millions of dollars each year to state trust land beneficiaries; and

Whereas, forest fires on National Forest System lands may threaten the value of forested state trust land resources particularly in instances where federal resources are underfunded; and

Whereas, the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 accommodates appropriations for wildfire suppression operations in the Wildland Fire Management Accounts at the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior and has come under extreme pressure given the severity of past wildfire seasons; and

Whereas, the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy represents a collaborative effort by Federal, state, local, and tribal governments, non-governmental partners, and public stakeholders to manage for resilient landscapes, create fire adapted communities, and provide for safe and effective wildfire response; and

Whereas, the 2021 fire season, combined with severe drought throughout the West, is likely to be one of the worst fire seasons on record and likely to cause record levels of damage to trust lands; and

Whereas, in 2018 Congress provided much needed increased funding as part of the “Fire Funding Fix” to ensure sufficient funds are available for wildfire suppression; and

Whereas, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program which provides funding to rehabilitate non-federal lands due to wildfire is funded only on an emergency basis and is currently out of funds to assist in recovery of fire damaged state trust lands; and

Whereas, the U.S. Forest Service does not effectively provide funding or restoration efforts to protect downstream state or private lands from flooding, debris flows, water quality damage, or reseeded efforts:

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT:

1. The NASTL urges Congress to provide annual appropriations to the Emergency Watershed Protection Program to ensure fire rehabilitation funding is available to state trust managers; and
2. The NASTL urges the United States Departments of Agriculture and Interior to effectuate the three tenets of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy to manage for:
 - a. resilient landscapes
 - b. fire adaptive communities, and
 - c. safe and effective wildfire response
3. The NASTL urges the U.S. Forest Service and the Department of Interior to include in their budget requests to Congress sufficient funding to carry out appropriate fire management and fire recovery activities; and

4. The NASTL urges the United States Department of Agriculture to maximize the Good Neighbor Authority granted by Congress to enter into agreement and contracts to reduce hazardous fuels, treat insect and disease and improve forest health.

Adopted this 21st day of September, 2021.



President, NASTL



Secretary, NASTL

*This Resolution will remain in effect through July 31, 2023
unless otherwise terminated, amended, or replaced by the Association.*