

Annual Report 2023

Forest Forward

 American Forests™

American Forests is the oldest national nonprofit conservation organization in the United States. Our mission is to create healthy and resilient forests, from cities to large natural landscapes, that deliver essential benefits for climate, people, water and wildlife. We advance our mission through forestry innovation, place-based partnerships to plant and restore forests, and movement building.

Learn more at americanforests.org

Dear American Forests supporters,

When you look at the rings of a tree, you quickly understand that not all years are equal in a tree's journey of growth. This is also true of our 149-year journey at American Forests, which experienced an incredible "Forest Forward" leap in 2023.

- Forward to an urban forestry movement that is laser-focused on saving lives and protecting our climate by delivering Tree Equity to communities in America and around the world.
- Forward to rapid climate-resilient reforestation of public and tribal lands that can withstand the climate-fueled threats consuming our forests.
- Forward to a more equitable and inclusive way of growing and caring for our forests that increases resources for everyone, while offering diverse opportunities from volunteerism to new green careers.
- Forward to freely available data and science-driven tools that help everyone prioritize where and how to reforest, and how to quantify our impacts.

All of this momentum is powered by billions of dollars in new federal funding American Forests helped to secure for these exact purposes, matched by increased state and local agency support, and through the generosity of corporate and foundation partners and individual philanthropic contributions. It is mobilized by the innovators, facilitators, forestry and policy experts, and communicators at American Forests, a team that catalyzed this Forest Forward movement and is driving it through diverse and inclusive partnerships.

You played an important role in this monumental year and the years before that led us to this moment. Now more than ever, American Forests is urgently needed to confront historic challenges, and your support fuels our "people power" to be leaders and movement builders. Your investment carries our vision and mission from main streets to mountain tops.

As we look toward our historic 150th Anniversary in 2025, our work has never been more relevant and the same is true of our organization. Thank you for making this possible.

Jad Daley,
President and CEO

Bill Bohnett,
Chair, Board of Directors

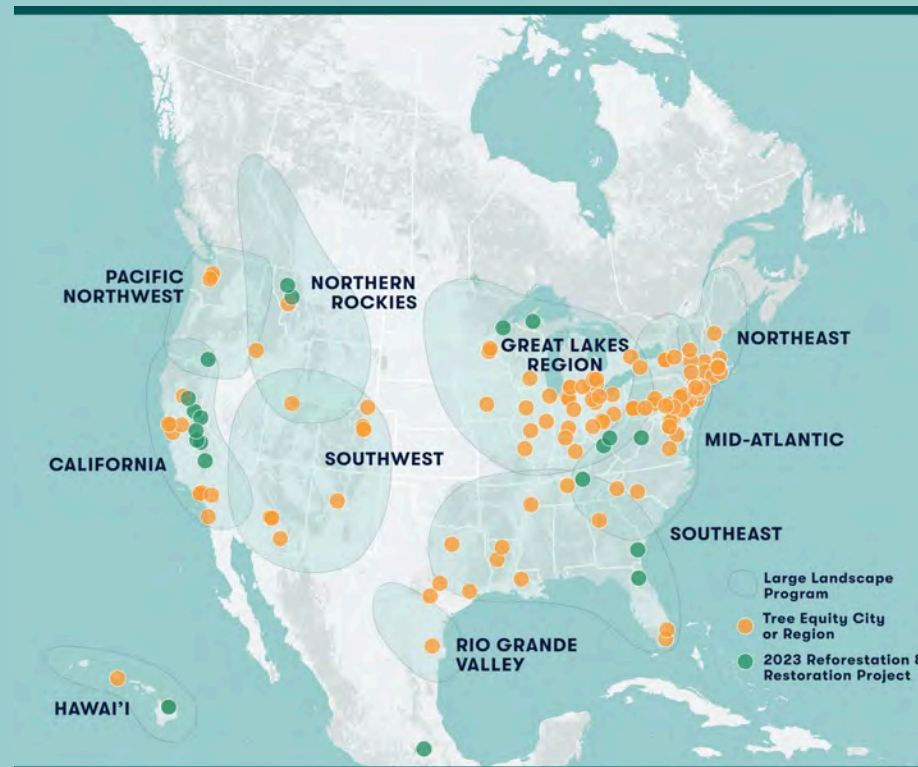


James A. Daley III Bill Bohnett



Powering the Forest Forward movement with: Our Impact

Our Resilient Forests and Tree Equity programs expanded into new locations forming dynamic partnerships that will allow us to create a greater impact locally and nationwide.

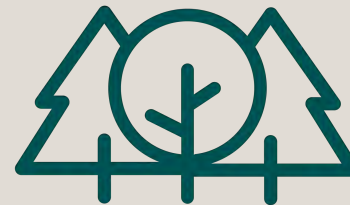


Our Reach

We magnified our impact to reach more cities and large landscapes than ever before.



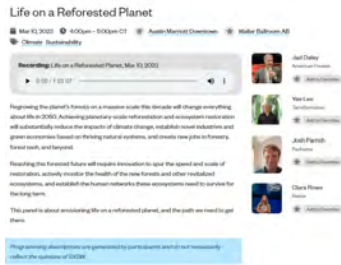
300 cities
engaged with Tree Equity in 2023



17,500+ acres
of forest lands restored in 2023

Our Influence

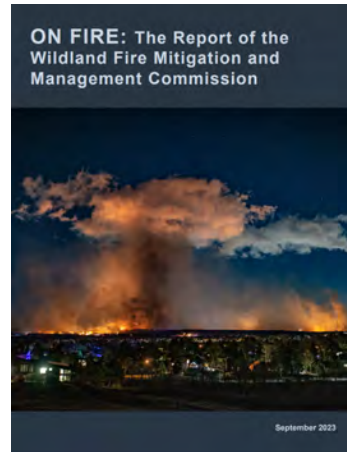
We amplified our influence by more than doubling our media coverage from the previous year.



Jad Daley, president and CEO, spoke on a [panel](#) at South by Southwest (SXSW).



Daley published an [op-ed](#) in Time on scaling Tree Equity in cities.



Brian Kittler, chief program officer, Resilient Forests, served on the [USDA Forest Service Wildfire Commission](#).



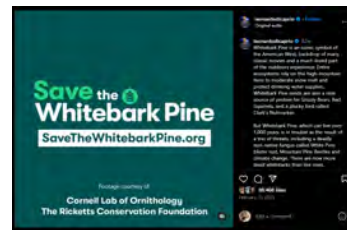
Joel Pannell, vice president of urban forests policy, was quoted in the [Associated Press](#).



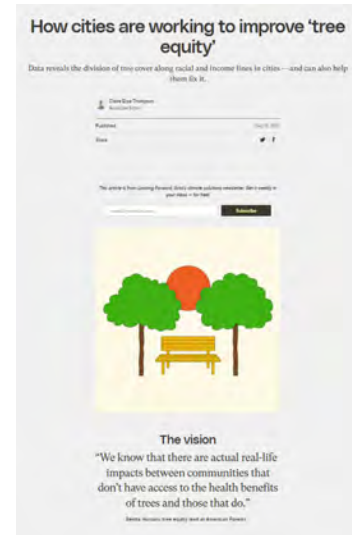
Daley was featured in [Washingtonian's](#) 500 most influential leaders in Washington D.C.



Daley joined many of our corporate partner organizations' leaders for the [GreenBiz](#) sustainability conference.



Actor Leonardo DiCaprio [re-posted](#) our Save the Whitebark Pine campaign video on Instagram, gaining nearly 100,000 likes.



Benita Hussain, chief program officer, Tree Equity, was [featured](#) in Grist.



Tree Equity Score U.K. launched with coverage on [BBC](#), including [live television coverage](#).

We shared our most inspiring stories throughout the year in three new issues of *American Forests Magazine*.



[Winter/Spring 2023 issue](#)



[Summer 2023 issue](#)



[Fall 2023 issue](#)



JANUARY

Save the Whitebark Pine campaign transforms awareness into action



American Forests began 2023 with an urgent, coordinated effort to push forests forward. We launched the Save the Whitebark Pine campaign in December 2022 in response to the species being listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Throughout 2023, the campaign raised awareness around [the need for whitebark pine conservation](#) through digital engagement, earned media and partnerships, and informative and creative events.

We drew crowds of foresters and stakeholders with federal agencies to [our screenings](#) of [“Hope and Restoration”](#) and “The Bird and the Tree,” cinematic films created by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in partnership with American Forests, The Ricketts Conservation Foundation and the Whitebark Pine Ecosystem Foundation.

The campaign inspired people to seek out information and spread the word about whitebark pine. More than 6,500 people visited [SavetheWhitebarkPine.org](https://www.savethewhitebarkpine.org). Meanwhile, 382 articles mentioned American Forests and whitebark pine in The Associated Press, The San Francisco Chronicle and other publications. Actor Leonardo DiCaprio even gave Save the Whitebark Pine a shoutout to his more than 60 million Instagram followers.

These events and engagements helped build momentum throughout the year, resulting in one of our most influential partnerships to date: In September, we signed a five-year agreement with the National Park Service to restore whitebark pine in national parks across its range in the western United States, starting in Yellowstone, Glacier and Grand Teton National Parks. The work is funded by part of the \$44 million that the Inflation Reduction Act dedicated to [increasing climate resilience in national parks](#). We then completed the National Whitebark Pine Restoration Plan — a science-driven collaborative strategy developed with federal, state and tribal partners — to inform



restoration efforts across whitebark pine's range, including our national park efforts. The Save the Whitebark Pine campaign is just one shining example of the way American Forests' awareness efforts have created a chain reaction, resulting in major wins for our forests and their future.



5+ million

seedlings planted by all American Forests' Resilient Forests programs in 2023

JANUARY

Bulleit and American Forests: Compounding momentum toward new goals



A new chapter of partnership unfolded in 2023 between American Forests and [Bulleit Frontier Whiskey](#). Since 2020, Bulleit's support has focused on white oak restoration across Midwest and Eastern U.S. forests, a natural fit for Bulleit, which ages its bourbon in barrels made of white oak. In 2023, Bulleit expanded its impact to include American Forests' work in urban areas, bringing the benefits of trees to communities in Houston, Queens, N.Y., and Detroit. Plantings supported by Bulleit stakeholders were complemented by [Tree Equity murals](#), raising awareness for the critical need for trees in cities. Thanks to great momentum, American Forests and Bulleit quickly met our shared goal of protecting and restoring 1 million trees together. Now, we have our sights set on 2.5 million trees by 2026.

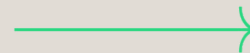


JANUARY

Weyerhaeuser and American Forests: Expanding our reach to less-populated communities

This past year, Weyerhaeuser and American Forests ramped up implementation of a catalytic resource in advancing the Tree Equity movement: the [Tree Equity Curriculum: Exploring Green STEAM Careers](#). This science curriculum for high school teachers, published by American Forests in late 2022 through Weyerhaeuser's support, helped bring Tree Equity to less-populated communities throughout 2023. Weyerhaeuser helped American Forests expand our mission to smaller populations through our holistic model of engaging communities, [implementing our Tree Equity curriculum](#) and supporting tree plantings guided by Tree Equity Score.

In November, high school students from Natchitoches, La., completed lessons from the curriculum and put their knowledge into action by designing and implementing a tree planting alongside Weyerhaeuser employees. "Through our partnership with American Forests, Weyerhaeuser has helped bring Tree Equity tools and resources to an additional 27.5 million people, in particular in less-populated communities," said Ara Erickson, Weyerhaeuser vice president of corporate sustainability and American Forests board member. "It is important to us to catalyze this movement on a national scale while also expanding capacity and resources to areas where our employees live and work."



MARCH

Congressional testimony puts forests front and center



American Forests has always worked to ensure that forests are front and center in appropriate legislation. In March, we had the opportunity to [testify in front of Congress](#) on the 2023 Farm Bill. Patrick Holmes, American Forests' senior policy advisor for Resilient Forests, spoke to the House Agriculture Committee's Subcommittee on Forestry [inaugural hearing](#) to outline how the legislation can benefit forests. "American Forests is committed to ensuring our public, urban and working forest land managers have the tools and resources they need to respond to new threats and to safeguard the many values our forests provide," said Holmes in his testimony. By working with lawmakers to expand policies that support reforestation, nurseries, seed collection and storage, genetic resources, and workforce training, we are serving as a driving force behind the restoration efforts our forests need to thrive into the future.





APRIL

Largest statewide partnership shows future possibilities for Tree Equity



The Tree Equity movement made great strides in 2023, notably with the April launch of the [Washington State Tree Equity Collaborative](#), the largest statewide partnership to commit to Tree Equity led by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources and American Forests. Collaborative members use data and science (including American Forests' Tree Equity Score) to increase tree cover in high-need communities, and to seek the funding and resources to do so. Together, we are developing a collective action plan to measurably improve Tree Equity in the state by 2030. This level of partnership will encourage other states to see the benefits of a [statewide approach](#) to building Tree Equity.



APRIL

Upward Ground summits inspire youth leadership to explore green careers



In April, students at Southern University in Baton Rouge, La., gathered for “Upward Ground: A Nature Equity Experience,” an event and curriculum created by American Forests’ Director of Career Exploration and Development Dr. Eboni Hall, Ph.D. The forest-forward summit was designed to prioritize young voices and active engagement in addressing the climate crisis and environmental injustices.

With guidance and support from the U.S. Forest Service and American Forests, an executive leadership team of students designed the symposium-style program, which integrated digital tools and topics related to workforce opportunities, environmental and climate justice, and equity.

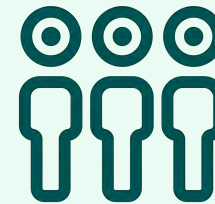
Students interacted with Black urban forestry professionals to establish meaningful mentor-based experiences for career advice, guidance and inspiration. Joshua Simon, senior manager of community engagement at American Forests and Southern University alumnus, participated in a panel discussion to highlight his own career path and opportunities for students at minority-serving institutions to explore.

Then, in October, over 100 high school students in the Columbia Heights community of Southeast Washington, D.C. gathered for a [second Upward Ground summit](#). Activities included an introduction to augmented reality, a game created by the executive leadership team ("Kick 'em out the classroom"), an "Ask me anything" panel hosted by urban forestry professionals, and outdoor activities and exhibitors on-site. Randy Moore, chief of the U.S. Forest Service, spoke to the students about career opportunities, advice for pursuing careers in conservation and other words of wisdom as they prepare to transition into adulthood.

"Upward Ground has left a lasting impact on me in multiple ways," said Zainab Ali, an Upward Ground executive leadership team member who led the D.C. event. "This event not only inspired and

motivated me as a Black woman in the climate field, but also allowed me to actively contribute to introducing Black youth to the realm of green careers."

Building on the [outcomes of these first two events](#), additional summits are in the initial stages of planning to engage more young adults and youth in urban forestry and climate career exploration.



200 youth

engaged through Tree Equity summits in 2023



JUNE

Nespresso and American Forests: Brewing up Tree Equity in Detroit

The name [Nespresso](#) may bring coffee to mind, but this forest-forward company is also brewing up Tree Equity. In June, Nespresso donated 40,000 pounds of coffee ground compost made from recycled capsules to American Forests' [Detroit Tree Equity Partnership](#). The compost fertilized 125 trees that we planted in areas of Detroit most in need of more tree canopy cover based on Detroit's [Tree Equity Score](#). In addition to Detroit, Nespresso dedicates their support to American Forests' most pressing initiatives. They did so throughout 2023 by providing substantial reforestation support to some of our highest priority landscapes, including Hawai'i and Texas' Rio Grande Valley; funding our innovative Seed Collection Corps program; and offering numerous other opportunities for support, including a holiday campaign that benefited Tree Equity in Dallas.





JULY

New Tree Equity Alliance supports cities on their Tree Equity journey



In July, American Forests joined with GreenLatinos, Groundwork USA and One Tree Planted to form the [Tree Equity Alliance](#), a new partnership that will advance efforts to achieve equitable tree canopy in communities across the country using \$1.5 billion in newly dedicated funding from the USDA Forest Service as part of the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022. GreenLatinos and Groundwork USA each received \$15 million and \$10 million respectively from the Forest Service's Urban and Community Forestry funding. [Working together](#), the Alliance will share promising practices and lessons learned from Forest Service awards to communities across the country, helping ensure that this funding is leveraging the full power of Tree Equity to help address the needs of communities that need trees most. It also provides a unified voice to advocate for filling critical funding gaps, shaping future policies to sustain Tree Equity for the long haul, and uses the power of communications to connect the dots between the power of trees and gains in public health, climate resilience and other key areas.



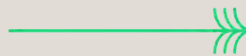
JULY

Tree Equity Score introduces new features and wider reach

American Forests launched the [second generation of its Tree Equity Score](#) tool in July, providing increased functionality and more accurate, granular data to guide Tree Equity decision-making. These improvements to the tool that makes our Tree Equity work possible will help to accelerate efforts moving forward. We also launched a marketing campaign to expand the reach of the updated tool and Tree Equity movement to new audiences. The campaign included a [short documentary film](#), featuring one of our partners, Groundwork Rhode Island, showcasing the power and promise of Tree Equity for positively impacting communities.



80% of the U.S.
received Tree Equity Score coverage in 2023





#TreeEquity

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provides

opportunities

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SEPTEMBER

Tree Equity Catalyst Initiative and Fund receives transformative grant to supercharge Tree Equity movement



For years, American Forests' efforts to build a Tree Equity movement have generated momentum toward this very moment: In September, the USDA Forest Service [awarded](#) American Forests a transformative \$50 million grant to support our [Tree Equity Catalyst Initiative and Fund](#) — the largest-possible award under the Forest Service's Urban and Community Forestry Program. The historic \$1.5 billion Urban and Community Forestry Program, the largest-ever investment in urban forestry

and one which American Forests spearheaded, was created by the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, which included an unprecedented congressional investment in climate change mitigation and environmental justice, including through the restoration and expansion of forests.

"Thanks to this visionary federal investment in American Forests' Catalyst Fund, underinvested neighborhoods across the U.S. will receive the health, employment and climate-resiliency benefits of trees and ensure that we build an inclusive Tree Equity movement," said Benita Hussain, American Forests' chief program officer for Tree Equity. "The investment is allowing cities and community groups that would not be able to advance Tree Equity otherwise to do so, creating a more inclusive and impactful movement for years to come."

The Tree Equity Catalyst Initiative and Fund is a cornerstone of American Forests' work to ensure at least 100 cities make meaningful progress on Tree Equity by 2030. The Forest Service award will help us [rapidly advance progress](#) toward Tree Equity by broadening the field of communities and local actors with capacity to address systemic tree inequities through learning opportunities, technical assistance and equitable funding.

The Catalyst Initiative will identify and engage municipal and community groups, including faith-based and frontline environmental justice organizations, that face barriers to involvement with the Tree Equity movement and offer them no-cost technical assistance, including guidance, assistance with coalition-building, and access to American Forests' groundbreaking [Tree Equity Score](#) and workforce development programming. The Tree Equity Catalyst Fund will provide cash grants to help these pioneers

make progress in Tree Equity in their cities. Over the next five years, in partnership with the Forest Service, we will be closely supporting at least 50 projects, with a first round including small and mid-size cities in the Great Lakes to Mid-Atlantic region launching in early 2024.

We are thrilled not only to receive support for the Tree Equity Catalyst Initiative and Fund, but also to support other grant recipients that are working to create a more equitable tree canopy throughout U.S. cities. Urban and Community Forestry Program awards were also announced to support cities that have taken the lead in Tree Equity, such as Phoenix, Detroit, Seattle and Providence, R.I.

There has never been a more exciting time for urban forestry and for working to advance the vital cause of Tree Equity. The federal government is joining us in pushing forests forward.



\$50 million

**for the Tree Equity Catalyst Initiative & Fund to help
100 cities reach Tree Equity by 2030**





OCTOBER

Historic new partnership with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service scales up thornforest conservation efforts



In October, American Forests announced a \$10 million partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to scale up our efforts to restore thornforests in [Texas' Rio Grande Valley](#). The partnership, enabled through a contract with the Fish and Wildlife Service, will allow us to restore approximately 800 acres of this disappearing habitat within national wildlife refuges throughout the Rio Grande Valley to help recover the irreplaceable biodiversity of this border region. The partnership

will also support our research into restoration methodologies and help us reach the surrounding community and raise awareness about thornforests and opportunities to steward these critical ecosystems.

The [Thornforest Conservation Plan](#), a blueprint for restoration that was created in 2018 by a coalition of stakeholders, is guiding American Forests' work under this partnership. Our efforts will include hosting Rio Reforestation, an annual community planting event that we helped revive in 2023 after a three-year hiatus. The [2023 event](#) drew more than 700 participants — the largest attendance ever — and gave local residents a chance to plant more than 32 tree species alongside us.

Thornforests are some of the most biodiverse ecosystems in North America. They provide habitat to thousands of plants and animals, including 45 threatened or endangered species, and benefit local communities in many ways, such as by cleaning water, mitigating

floods and enabling ecotourism. Despite thornforests' vital importance, less than 10% of the thornforests that blanketed the Valley 100 years ago remain.

Awareness of the dire need to restore this ecosystem in the Rio Grande Valley has increased in recent years, with science-based conservation and community involvement on the rise. With this partnership, American Forests has expanded capacity and hired four dedicated staff. As we continue to grow our efforts in the Valley, the strength of our partnerships with the Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as local universities and other nonprofits, will enable us to ramp up restoration like never before.



NOVEMBER

Cinematic storytelling brings attention to California reforestation efforts



American Forests leaned into video storytelling in a big way in 2023. Of particular note, in November, we released "[Restoring California After Wildfire](#)," detailing our reforestation efforts across the [Golden State](#). Massive, high-severity wildfires have devastated many of California's ecosystems, including the iconic native habitat of the giant sequoia. There are [numerous challenges](#) to restoring the approximately 1.5 million burned acres in need of restoration across the state, from seed shortages to a shrinking forestry workforce. The film uses artful footage and poignant interviews to show how American Forests, the U.S. Forest Service and CAL FIRE are working together to overcome these hurdles to accelerate restoration.



NOVEMBER

The National Symphony Orchestra's commitment to forests is music to our ears

When The National Symphony Orchestra began planning its 2024 European tour — its first since 2016 — the venerable institution came to American Forests to help [reduce the climate impact](#) of its travel. Through a [new partnership announced](#) in November, the Orchestra is helping American Forests restore 660 acres of Oregon forest burned by the Beachie Creek wildfire — one of several fires that raged through Western Oregon over Labor Day weekend in 2020, destroying over a million acres of forest. By growing the climate-adapted forests of tomorrow, [American Forests and the Orchestra](#) are returning one of our best nature-based defenses against climate change to the landscape. We're also bringing biodiverse habitat, clean waterways and outdoor recreation back to the communities that depend on these resources.



DECEMBER

Tree Equity Score UK launches with publicity from the BBC, reaching 40 million people



American Forests capped off an exciting year of forest-forward progress by taking [Tree Equity Score global](#). American Forests partnered with The Woodland Trust and The Centre for Sustainable Healthcare to launch Tree Equity Score in the United Kingdom. The tool aims to help [communities across the U.K.](#) learn how they can work to distribute urban tree canopy more equitably. Such intervention is critically important, as the U.K.'s average urban tree cover is 17%, and 80% of its population is

urban. The December launch included events in Belfast, London and Sheffield and received coverage in print, radio and television, including two primetime news [stories on the BBC](#). Our combined media and public relations efforts helped reach over 40 million people across the U.K. with [our Tree Equity message](#). This level of recognition for a wider international audience primes our Tree Equity efforts to move forward with even greater impact in the future.





DECEMBER

American Forests leads on post-wildfire restoration on national forest lands through keystone agreement



To cap a hallmark year for forest-forward momentum, we ended 2023 on one of our organization's highest notes in history. In December, American Forests and the USDA Forest Service signed a [\\$20 million keystone agreement](#) to scale up reforestation across national forests over the next five years. The agreement dedicates funds from [the REPLANT Act](#), passed in 2021, toward increasing

reforestation capacity to address the restoration backlog of approximately 4 million acres of damaged forests. Without the REPLANT Act, the Forest Service would only have the capacity to annually restore 6% of this existing backlog.

American Forests was instrumental in the passage of the REPLANT Act, part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021. The REPLANT Act gives the Forest Service access to a permanent Reforestation Trust Fund that offers a ten-fold increase over prior funding levels. This funding is essential because reforestation efforts simply can't keep up with the need at previous levels of support. The backlog of forest acres needing restoration more than doubled between 2020 and 2021, when 2.5 million acres of new burn scars in national forests were added to the 1.5 million acres already awaiting attention. With wildfires raging at unprecedented scales and severity, forests are struggling to naturally regenerate. Without help, at least 4 million acres of national forests could be lost permanently.

"We can't afford to lose our forests, because with that we also lose forests' ability to provide clean water, wildlife habitat and carbon removal capacity," said Brian Kittler, American Forests' chief program officer for Resilient Forests. "By acting now and creating climate-smart plans to restore our national forests in regions across the U.S., we can collectively change the trajectory of America's forests."

Losing these forestlands would be devastating on a number of levels. Not only do these forests provide recreational opportunities, clean air and water, and extensive wildlife habitat, but every year America's forests and forest products sequester an average of 16.7% of U.S. carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels. The faster we restore our national forestlands, the faster they can help us reduce the worst effects of climate change.

This agreement between the Forest Service and American Forests represents the [largest post-wildfire restoration effort](#) on national

forest lands in the modern era.

Under this novel keystone agreement, American Forests will act like a co-pilot for the Forest Service's reforestation program. Specifically, we are funded and authorized to play three roles:

1. Planning and organizing collaborative reforestation across all our national forests.
2. Writing science-based prescriptions so we can reforest for climate resilience.
3. Helping deliver "supply chain solutions" in national forests all across the country, from ramping up seed collection to doing planting and after care.

It is our goal to ensure there's a place for everyone in this exciting effort, setting up success for a new generation. Corporate partners, including The Coca-Cola Foundation, AES, Eddie Bauer and Clif Bar, have already joined American Forests as REPLANT initiative partners to help create climate-adapted forests for the future.

We couldn't be prouder to be playing such a pivotal role to restore our forests to create a safer, more climate-friendly tomorrow.



16 new Resilient Forests agreements in 2023, totaling

\$16+ million





The people power behind the Forest Forward movement

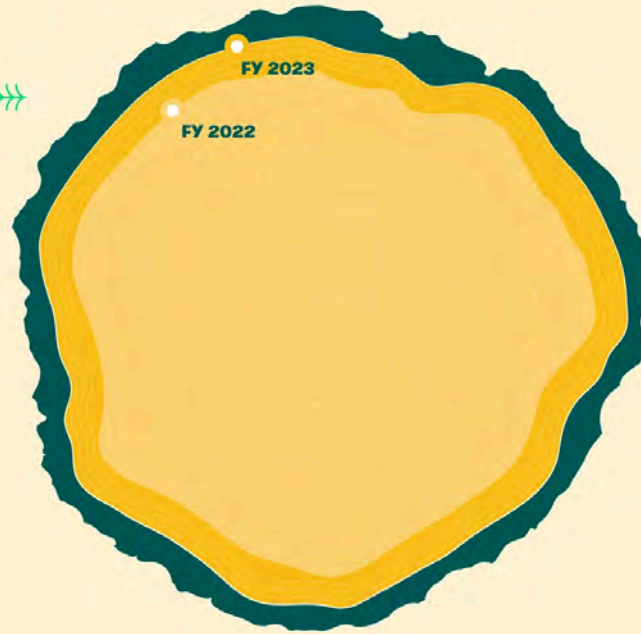
American Forests' staff members worked from all across the country to propel our mission and deliver impact nationwide.



Our Financials

Revenue Growth

10.4%

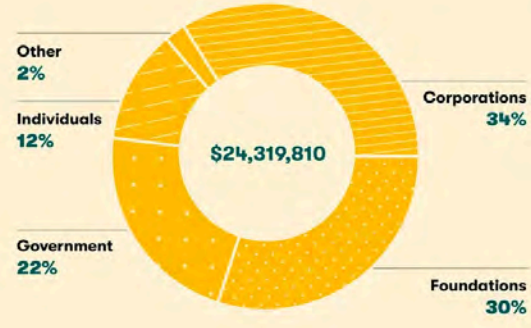
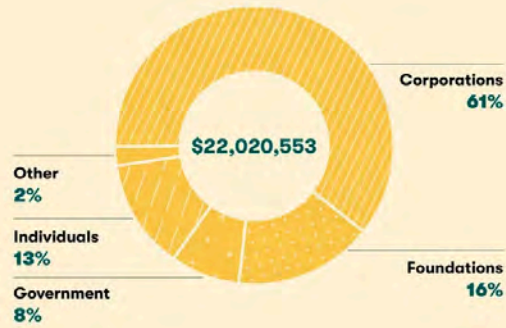


Total Revenue

FY 2022

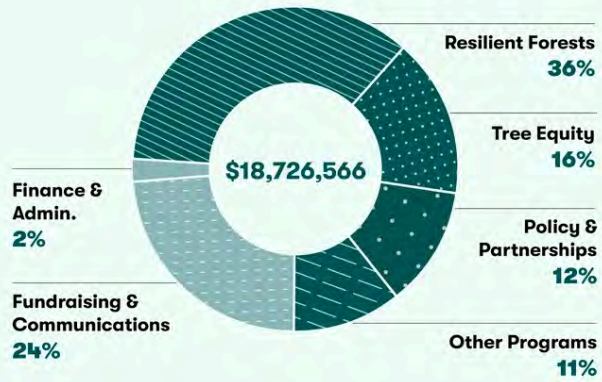


FY 2023



Total Expenses

FY 2022



FY 2023



See our full 2023 financial reports

[FY2023 Audit Report](#)

[FY2023 IRS Form 990 & 990T](#)

**Updated FY22 financial information as of May 2024.*

Return to americanforests.org

American Forests' transformative work throughout 2023 was made possible by thousands of donors, including our government and institutional partners, generous members of our [Sequoia Circle](#) with annual gifts of \$1,000 or more, and loyal supporters who have chosen to make forests part of their legacy for future generations through our [Evergreen Society](#).

Thank you for your invaluable support!

The strength of our corporate partnerships propelled our mission forward in 2023 like never before. Thank you for your loyal support!

DTE Foundation
Bulleit Frontier Whiskey
TAZO
Travelers
Google.org
Deloitte US
Takeda
Tribute Store
Carhartt
Microsoft

Norfolk Southern
Eddie Bauer
Clif Bar
Weyerhaeuser
Nespresso
American Tower Corporation
Arconic Foundation
NicePak
ZYRTEC®
Timberland

LightStream
Arhaus
Salesforce
CubeSmart
REI Co-op
Uncommon Goods
QTS Data Centers
Crystal Geyser Alpine Spring Water
Manulife Investment Management
Prudential Financial Inc.

Sunday Lawn and Garden
Lemonade Inc
Equity LifeStyle Properties
Chubb
Shaklee Corporation
Landscape Structures Inc.
Carlisle TyrFil
AMOUR VERT
Melitta USA
SFE Energy, Inc



Join the Forest Forward
movement in 2024.

[Give Today](#)