



A Field Guide to

Natural Resources Democrats' CLIMATE WINS

August 2024
*For the most updated version
of the document, [click here](#).*



During the 117th Congress, House and Senate Democrats worked with President Joe Biden to pass two of the most important legislative packages of our generation – the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), which were signed into law on Nov. 15, 2021, and Aug. 16, 2022, respectively. Together, these bills include the largest investments in climate & clean energy in history.

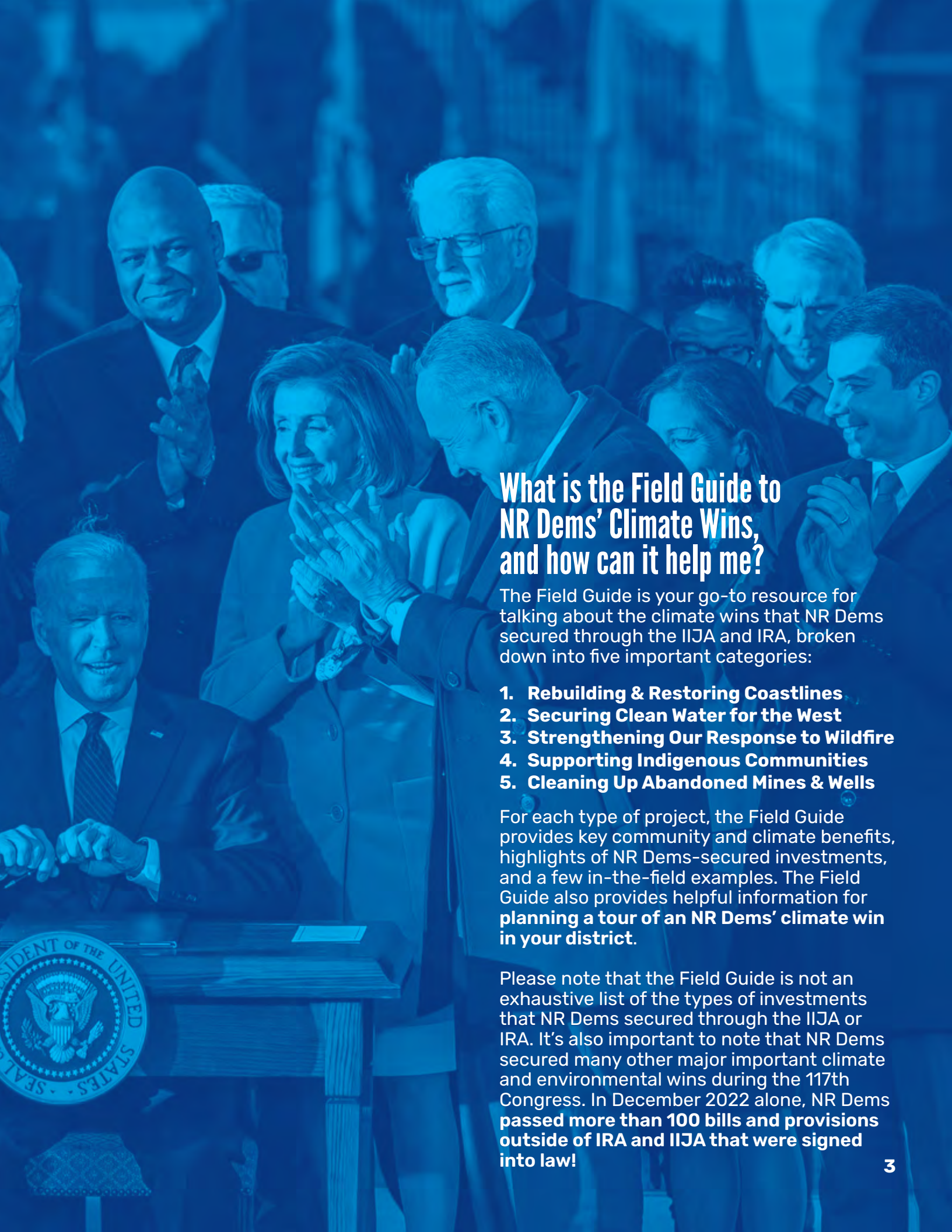
Since becoming law, the Biden-Harris administration has been hard at work putting these historic investments into place as the cornerstone of its game-changing Investing in America agenda. IIJA and IRA projects and programs are being deployed all over the country, where they are creating good-paying jobs, strengthening local economies, investing in communities that have been left behind too long, and building a safer, cleaner, more climate-resilient future for all Americans.

House Natural Resources Committee Democrats (NR Dems) were critical to achieving these wins. Investments passed through the Committee include billions in funding to help communities build their resilience against climate change for a safer, healthier future.

Not surprisingly, trying to keep up with the many groundbreaking climate projects and programs resulting from NR Dems' efforts can be overwhelming.

That's where the Field Guide to NR Dems' Climate Wins comes in!





What is the Field Guide to NR Dems' Climate Wins, and how can it help me?

The Field Guide is your go-to resource for talking about the climate wins that NR Dems secured through the IIJA and IRA, broken down into five important categories:

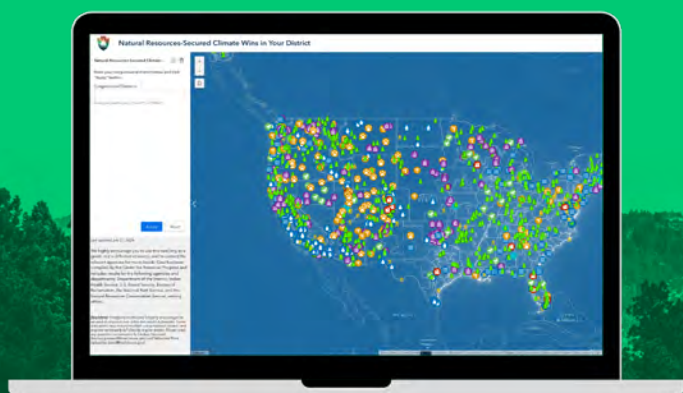
1. **Rebuilding & Restoring Coastlines**
2. **Securing Clean Water for the West**
3. **Strengthening Our Response to Wildfire**
4. **Supporting Indigenous Communities**
5. **Cleaning Up Abandoned Mines & Wells**

For each type of project, the Field Guide provides key community and climate benefits, highlights of NR Dems-secured investments, and a few in-the-field examples. The Field Guide also provides helpful information for **planning a tour of an NR Dems' climate win in your district.**

Please note that the Field Guide is not an exhaustive list of the types of investments that NR Dems secured through the IIJA or IRA. It's also important to note that NR Dems secured many other major important climate and environmental wins during the 117th Congress. In December 2022 alone, NR Dems **passed more than 100 bills and provisions outside of IRA and IIJA that were signed into law!**

Where can I get more information?

To find NR Dems' climate wins in your district, the Field Guide includes **an interactive map of all the IRA and IIJA climate wins within the Natural Resources Committee's agencies of jurisdiction**. This map will continue to be updated as agencies update their data.



For more details on the types of investments not covered here, the White House's **IRA Guidebook** and **IIJA Guidebook** provide plenty of details about the investments in each law. The **2024 SEEC August District Work Period Toolkit** also provides great tips for planning events to celebrate all of the IRA's climate and clean energy wins, including those outside of the Committee's purview.

In addition, there are several interactive maps and investment trackers to help you find climate wins and other projects in your state or district, including the following:

Resource

Laws Included

The White House's Investing in America Map	IRA, IIJA, CHIPS, ARP
U.S. Department of the Interior Project Map	IIJA
Bureau of Reclamation Project Map	IRA
CAP's Biden-Harris Administration Investment Tracker	IRA, IIJA
Climate Action Campaign's Climate Wins Map	IRA, IIJA, CHIPS
RLC's Congressional District Summaries (Enviro & Water tab)	IRA, IIJA
Climate Power's Clean Job Report (as of June 2024)	IRA



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ABBREVIATIONS

IRA - Inflation Reduction Act

IJA - Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (i.e., the Infrastructure Law)

DOI - U.S. Department of the Interior

USFS - U.S. Forest Service

NOAA - National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration



QUICK TIPS FOR TALKING ABOUT CLIMATE WINS

Preferred Terms

Climate change; Climate crisis; Climate emergency

Human-caused climate change

More extreme/severe weather; Flooding, heatwaves, etc.

Pollution; Carbon pollution

Gas; Methane gas

Climate action or wins

Clean energy; Affordable, safe, reliable energy

Climate protections

Talking about job creation, more affordable energy, protecting communities from harm, national security

Reducing pollution

Climate change can be a complicated scientific issue, so it's important for policymakers to talk about it in a way that is accessible and meaningful to constituents. The need to act on climate must feel relatable, locally relevant, and real. The list below provides current guidance on effective messaging based on research and polling, but keep in mind that language is constantly evolving.

Less preferred terms

Global warming; Heating the planet

Anthropogenic climate change

1.5 degrees; Melting icebergs or polar ice caps

Greenhouse gases; Carbon emissions; Carbon footprint

Natural gas

Climate mitigation, adaptation, or resilience planning

Renewable energy; Green energy

Climate regulations

Talking about protecting the planet, slowing down global warming, being green

Getting to net zero

For more information on climate messaging, see pages 29-31 of the [2024 SEEC August District Work Period Toolkit](#).

01

REBUILDING & RESTORING COASTLINES



As climate change causes rising sea levels and more intense storms and hurricanes, coastal and island communities are feeling the impacts first and worst. Warming ocean temperatures are also damaging coral reefs and disrupting fisheries, posing long-term risks to local coastal economies, biodiversity, and food supply.

Fortunately, NR Dems' climate wins are helping to rebuild and restore healthy, biodiverse coastlines while supporting coastal communities' resilience efforts and improving weather monitoring services that help keep people safe.`

NR Dems-Secured Investments

\$3 BILLION

for NOAA to support vital ecosystems by restoring marsh habitats, protecting corals from climate stress, reopening stream and river passage for fish, and more. (IJA)

\$2.6 BILLION

for NOAA to support coastal resilience and conservation, restoration, and protection of coastal and marine habitat and resources, including fisheries. (IRA)

\$2.6 BILLION

for DOI to support Native Hawaiian climate and resilience programs and \$15.9 MILLION for climate and resilience programs in the U.S. Territories. (IRA)

Community Benefits

Healthy coasts help protect the nearly 130 million Americans – or 40% of the population – who live in coastal counties.

They also protect the more than 3.5 million U.S. citizens and U.S. nationals who live on islands that make up the U.S.-affiliated Insular Areas, including both the U.S. Territories and Freely Associated States. For the Insular Areas, the impacts of climate change are exacerbated by historically unequal access to federal programs, an over-reliance on fossil fuels, and degrading infrastructure.

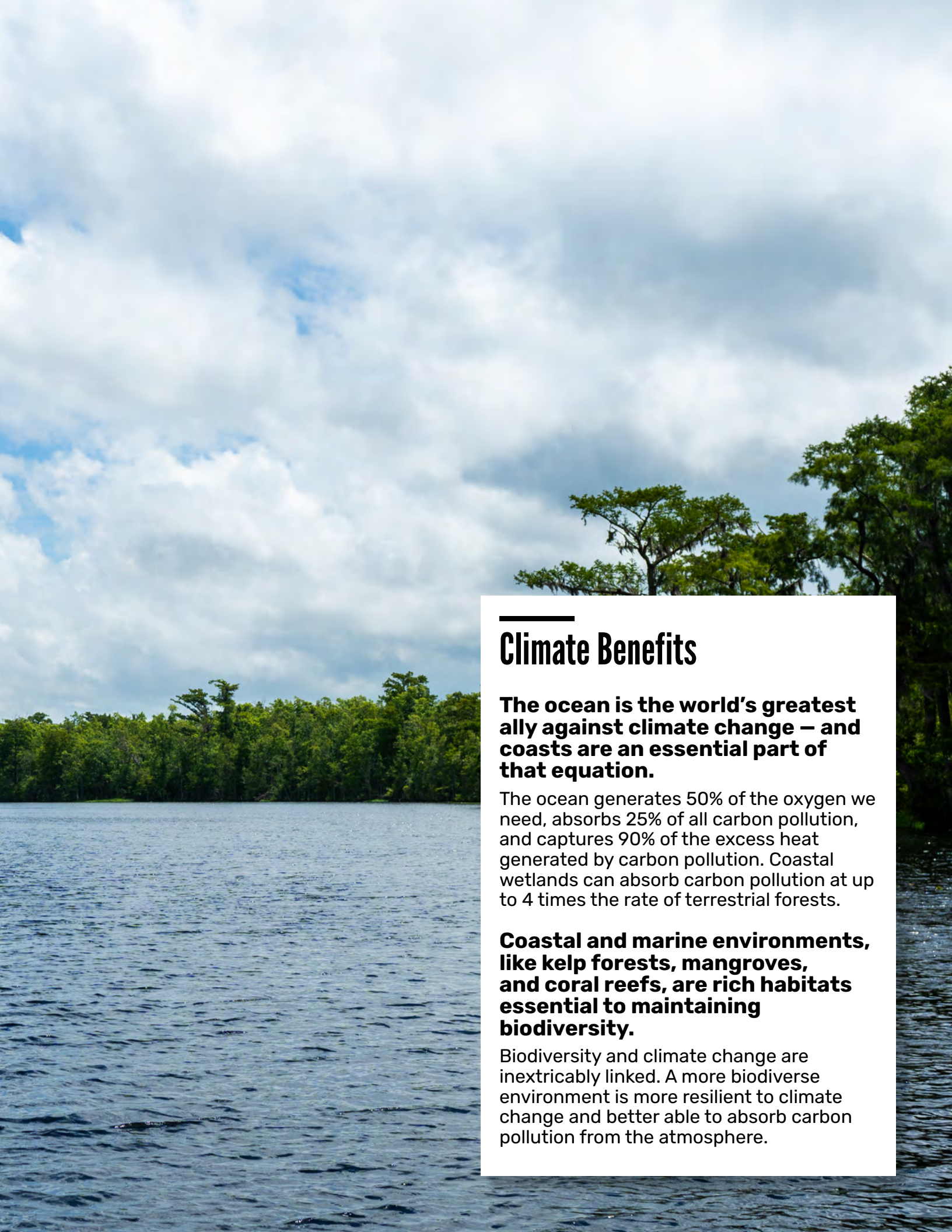
Healthy coasts help keep Americans safe in the face of rising sea levels and more frequent & intense storms.

When coastal wetlands are healthy and robust, they provide a natural physical buffer against storms by absorbing and dispersing rising water levels and helping to diffuse waves as they reach the shore. Healthy wetlands also help prevent erosion and landslides.

Our coasts are essential to local, national, and global economies.

Coastal counties produce more than \$9.5 trillion in goods and services each year and support more than 58 million jobs (fishing, tourism, real estate, defense, and other industries). In addition, ocean-based tourism and recreation **contributes about \$143 billion to the GDP each year while employing nearly 2.5 million people.** The top employers are California, Florida, New York, Hawaii, and New Jersey.





Climate Benefits

The ocean is the world's greatest ally against climate change – and coasts are an essential part of that equation.

The ocean generates 50% of the oxygen we need, absorbs 25% of all carbon pollution, and captures 90% of the excess heat generated by carbon pollution. Coastal wetlands can absorb carbon pollution at up to 4 times the rate of terrestrial forests.

Coastal and marine environments, like kelp forests, mangroves, and coral reefs, are rich habitats essential to maintaining biodiversity.

Biodiversity and climate change are inextricably linked. A more biodiverse environment is more resilient to climate change and better able to absorb carbon pollution from the atmosphere.

Our coasts
generate over

\$9.5 trillion

in goods and services annually and support
over 58 million jobs.



Case Study #01

How Coastal Wetland Protection is Revitalizing the City of Andrews, South Carolina

Project Location

Black River Water Trail & Park Network
in South Carolina

Funded Agency

NOAA, U.S. Department of Commerce

Project Location

Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act

South Carolina's Black River is a 151-mile-long scenic blackwater river that winds through tidal-influenced coastal plain forests and swamps. The river's watershed is rich with unique wildlife and plant species, including endangered species, and its intricate system of forests and floodplains is critical to absorbing and mitigating flooding and other extreme coastal weather.

The Black River's importance as a natural buffer against the rising sea levels and more intense storms caused by climate change cannot be overstated. However, protections for the area have historically been piecemeal, with large portions being privately owned by individuals or clearcut for timber production.

Recreational access to the river has similarly been spotty.

More recently, however, state and local entities have increasingly recognized the ecological importance of the Black River, as well as the region's major draw, as a unique nature-based tourism and recreation destination. These municipalities, along with conservation partners, came together to form the Black River Water Trail & Park Network to protect and provide access points to a 70-mile stretch of the river. Through a community-informed process, including tribal consultation, the Network identified tracts of land for acquisition that would help meet these goals.

IJJA investments were instrumental in the Network's acquisition of the Andrews tract, a large parcel of land owned by the Weyerhaeuser timber company that will connect the city of Andrews, SC, to the Black River and its many recreational opportunities. Andrews is a small historically Black town that has experienced an economic downturn over the past few decades alongside the decline of the textile industry.

The acquisition of the Andrews tract marks the beginning of a new economic future for Andrews. The city has fully embraced this opportunity, dubbing itself the "jewel of the Black River" and drafting a new master plan centered around Black River tourism and recreation. The city has plans to construct the Black River Environmental Career Center, establish the Andrews Nature Preserve, and has even redesigned its logo and branding to include the Black River. As laid out in their new master plan, Andrews intends to serve as a "base camp" for Black River recreation, with outdoor and sporting goods retail, food trucks, and other economic opportunities.









By helping to expand the Black River Water Trail & Park Network and connect it to the city of Andrews,

NR Dems' IIJA investments are protecting the coastal communities of South Carolina from the worst impacts of climate change, protecting the unique and rich biodiversity of the coastal plains and swamplands, and bringing new hope and revitalization to local economies.

More Examples in the Press

- > Washington state to receive \$74.4 million in coastal and climate resilience funding**
- > Nearly \$10 million from NOAA is granted for summit-to-sea project to protect Maui reef**
- > Albemarle-Pamlico Sound region to receive \$27.25 million grant for restoration projects**
- > Aquidneck Island coastal resiliency to receive \$2M federal grant**
- > Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development and Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians Announce \$4.85 Million for Oregon Coastal Resilience Conservation Project**

02

A photograph of a concrete bridge spanning a river in a desert landscape. The bridge is a simple beam bridge with a single support pier. The river is green and calm, reflecting the sky. The surrounding landscape is arid, with dry earth, sparse green shrubs, and distant mountains under a clear blue sky. The bridge has a metal guardrail with vertical posts.

SECURING CLEAN WATER FOR THE WEST



The West's water supplies are in dangerous decline. Climate change is worsening the effects of a multigenerational drought, putting the Colorado River System – the primary water source for 40 million Americans across seven states and 30 tribal nations – at historically low and increasingly unsustainable levels.

Fortunately, NR Dems' climate wins are helping communities by implementing nature-based solutions and building more resilient Western water infrastructure for water recycling, water storage, and desalination projects. With these resources, the Biden-Harris administration aims to conserve 3 million acre-feet of water in the Colorado River Basin through the end of 2026.

NR Dems-Secured Investments

\$8.3 BILLION

for Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) to support water infrastructure projects. (IIJA)

\$4 BILLION

for Reclamation to support projects to mitigate drought in the Colorado River Basin and other basins experiencing drought. (IRA)

\$2.5 BILLION

for DOI to fund previously authorized tribal water rights settlements. (IIJA)

\$550 MILLION

for Reclamation to support domestic water supply projects in underserved communities or households without reliable water supply. (IRA)



Community Benefits

Water is life – and essential to public health and safety.

Clean, safe drinking water systems protect us from viruses and bacteria and help us maintain good hygiene and washing practices. In addition, rehabilitating and replacing aging water infrastructure and investing in new, stronger, more climate-resilient infrastructure helps maintain water supplies during extreme weather events when safety can otherwise be at risk. New water infrastructure also helps revitalize communities that have struggled with unreliable water resources for too long, including rural and tribal communities. Tribal communities in particular have long been denied their legal rights to sufficient water.

New water infrastructure projects create jobs and keep prices low for families.

The construction of water recycling and other projects creates technical and highly skilled labor positions. These projects also increase water supplies through conservation, water-use efficiency, and improved water delivery, making it more efficient and affordable for communities over time. Water reuse projects that capture stormwater can also prevent sewers and other infrastructure from being overwhelmed and needing repair.

Recycling water and using water more efficiently conserves groundwater.

All new developments and countless industries, from data centers to manufacturing, require water as either an input, energy source, or cooling agent. Reliable water in the West is also critical to U.S. agriculture; the Colorado River System alone supports about 15% of the country's farmland.



Climate Benefits

Newer, more efficient water infrastructure reduces carbon pollution from our water system.

Globally, water use, storage, and distribution account for **10% of carbon pollution**. In addition, wastewater treatment plants are a **major source of methane**, a pollutant that warms the atmosphere at 80 times the rate of carbon dioxide. Upgrading this infrastructure can effectively reduce methane emissions.

Conserving water and improving water quality in natural environments protects fragile riparian ecosystems and promotes biodiversity.

Biodiversity and climate change are inextricably linked. A more biodiverse environment is both more resilient to climate change and better able to absorb carbon pollution from the atmosphere.

Recycling water and using water more efficiently conserves groundwater.

Water recycling and re-use projects use water more efficiently, which reduces how much groundwater is withdrawn from aquifers. Groundwater is the largest store of fresh water and is less likely to be affected by evaporation, making it a critical water source in times of drought. Groundwater also helps to **maintain cooler temperatures** in surface water bodies, which are being threatened by climate change.



Case Study #02

How Weirs & Wetland Restoration are Protecting the Las Vegas Wash

Project Location

Las Vegas Wash in Nevada

Funded Agency

Bureau of Reclamation, DOI

Project Location

Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act & Inflation Reduction Act

Surprising to many who only think of Las Vegas as an arid desert, the Las Vegas Wash is a 12-mile-long “urban” river that carries more than 200 million gallons of water per day from the Las Vegas Valley to Lake Mead, one of the primary reservoirs of the Colorado River System. The water primarily comes from urban runoff, groundwater, reclaimed water, and stormwater. The Wash’s surrounding wetlands are critical to this system; they act as the wash’s “kidneys,” filtering out toxins before the water arrives to Lake Mead. These wetlands also provide rare habitat for unique desert species and are home to the Clark County Wetlands Park, a beloved walking, biking, and birding destination for Las Vegas residents.

Due to overdevelopment and lack of conservation, the Wash’s wetlands were



decimated in the 1970s and 1980s, sometimes even serving as a dump site for the city. These actions led to significant erosion, subsidence, and groundwater depletion.

To address these issues, the Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee (LVWCC), consisting of 26 federal, state, and local partners, was formed in 1998. The LVWCC developed a comprehensive management plan for the Wash that included the construction of 21 weirs – essentially river “speed bumps” – to slow down water flow, as well as efforts to restore the natural ecology of the wetlands, among other interventions.

IIJA investments are supporting the efforts to restore and protect the Las Vegas Wash by funding a portion (\$20 million) of the construction of one of the 21 weirs. Once

constructed, the weirs will improve water quality by successfully slowing down water flow to decrease erosion and facilitate the growth of healthier, more robust wetlands. The weirs require minimal maintenance, resulting in significant cost savings for the Las Vegas community.

In addition to weir construction, nearly \$1 million in IRA investments are funding the restoration of 13-acres of wetlands directly adjacent to the Wash. This funding will help remove excess material from weir construction, establish a natural riparian environment, and restore important habitats for birds in the area, some of which are endangered.

By helping construct weirs and restore the wetlands of the Las Vegas Wash,

NR Dems' IIJA and IRA investments are improving the quality and quantity of water that flows into one of the Colorado River System's primary reservoirs, helping Nevada meet its water conservation goals, rehabilitating the rare and ecologically significant riparian ecosystem, and boosting the community's outdoor recreation opportunities.

More Examples in the Press

- Feds announce new funding to restore Las Vegas Wash
- Inflation/climate bill includes \$4 billion for buying water to save the Colorado River Basin
- Long-delayed Colorado project included in latest round of federal water funding
- US dedicates \$60 million to saving water along the Rio Grande as flows shrink and demands grow





Wildfires are a natural and important part of many ecosystems. However, as climate change causes hotter temperatures, drought, and invasive species proliferation, wildfires are becoming increasingly dangerous and destructive. Over the last two decades, catastrophic wildfires have threatened thousands of communities, destroyed tens of thousands of homes and structures, caused unhealthy air pollution, and most tragically, claimed human lives. Catastrophic wildfires are also threatening whole ecosystems, degrading soil quality, and making landscapes more vulnerable to erosion and flooding.

Fortunately, NR Dems climate wins are working to keep communities safe by restoring healthy ecosystems, promoting healthy fire through prescribed burns, reducing hazardous fuels that increase the intensity and speed of wildfires, providing resources to at-risk communities for planning, and supporting better pay for wildland firefighters.

NR Dems-Secured Investments

\$8.25 BILLION

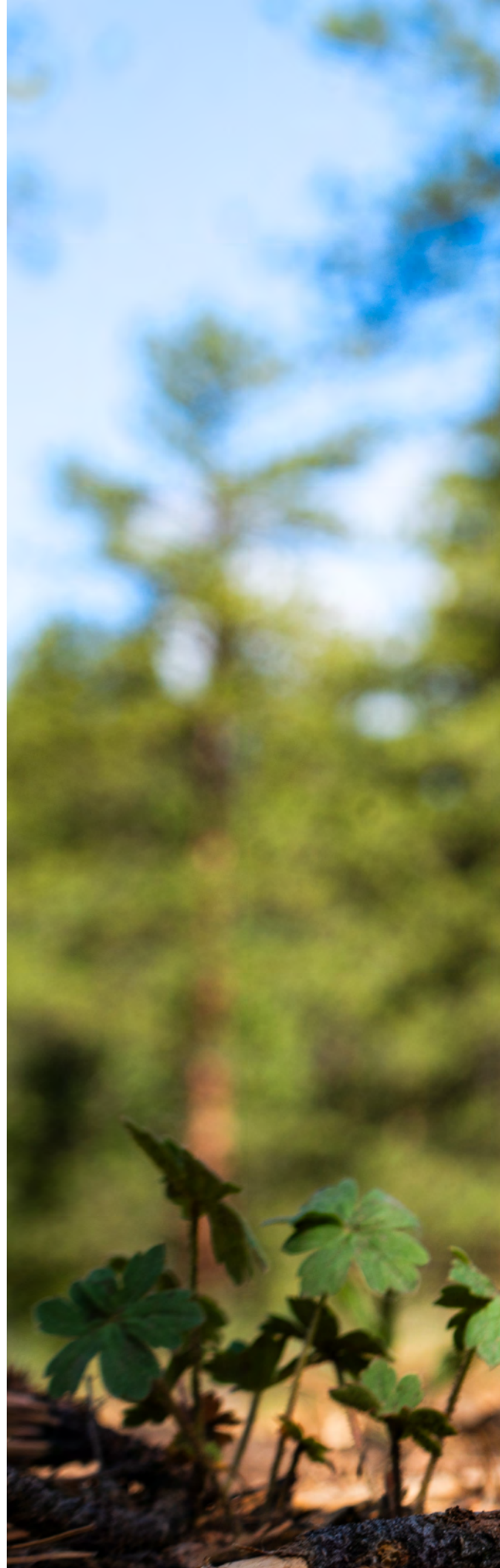
for DOI, USFS, and NOAA to reduce risks from wildfires, detect wildfires, institute wildland firefighter workforce reforms, and build more resilient infrastructure. (IJA)

\$5 BILLION

for USFS for fuels and forest health treatments to protect communities from wildfire and for competitive grants to non-federal forest landowners. (IRA)

\$1.8 BILLION

for USFS to reduce hazardous fuels on national forests within the wildland-urban interface. (IRA)



STRENGTHENING OUR RESPONSE TO WILDFIRE





Community Benefits

A stronger response to wildfire keeps families and communities safe.

More than 70,000 communities and 44 million homes are in the wildland-urban interface (WUI) putting them at risk of harm or property destruction. Effectively managing wildfire risk through collaboration and consensus can protect millions of people and save untold costs in property damage. It can also protect communities' water quality by preventing erosion of sediment and ash into waterways.

Better-managed wildfire risk can save communities and taxpayers hundreds of billions.

When combining costs from property damage, health impacts, watershed pollution, income loss, and other harms, the Joint Economic Committee estimates that climate-exacerbated wildfires in the U.S. **cost up to \$893 billion per year**, or around 4% of our GDP.

Pay increases and resources for wildland firefighters promote more sustainable job opportunities and help maintain a well-trained workforce, which is critical to public safety.

Federal wildland firefighters are facing longer, more intense, and increasingly dangerous fire seasons. Increasing pay, providing career advancement opportunities, and supporting mental health and wellness incentivizes more senior, highly skilled firefighters to stay in the federal workforce, rather than leaving for the private sector. Institutional knowledge and experience are critical in a field as high-risk as wildland firefighting.

Climate Benefits

Focusing on conservation, managing wildfire risk, and prescribed burns promotes healthy forests and landscapes, which absorb carbon pollution.

According to USFS, America's terrestrial forests **absorb about 12% of the country's carbon emissions each year**, which is then stored in trees and soils.

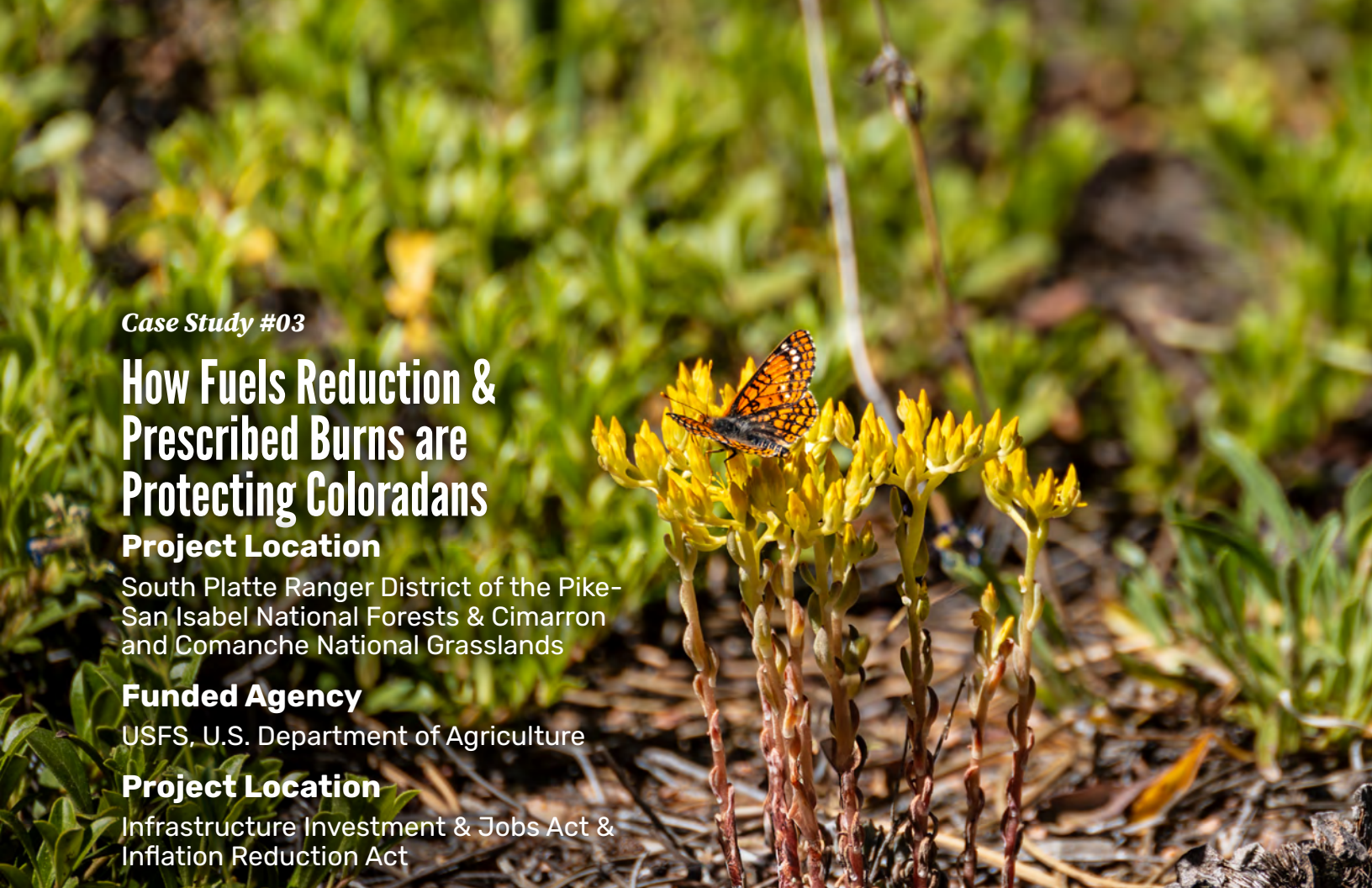
Well-managed wildfire risk protects ecosystem health and promotes biodiversity.

Well-resourced federal agencies can manage wildfires and prescribed burns in a way that supports fire as a natural and necessary part of the ecosystem. More natural ecosystems are inherently more biodiverse, more resilient to climate change, and better able to absorb carbon pollution from the atmosphere.

The Joint Economic Committee estimates
climate-exacerbated wildfires cost up to

\$893 billion
per year,

or around 4% of our entire GDP.



Case Study #03

How Fuels Reduction & Prescribed Burns are Protecting Coloradans

Project Location

South Platte Ranger District of the Pike-San Isabel National Forests & Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands

Funded Agency

USFS, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Project Location

Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act & Inflation Reduction Act

The Pike-San Isabel National Forests & Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands includes nearly three million acres across western Kansas and the Continental Divide region in Colorado. The South Platte Ranger District (SPRD) is east of the Continental Divide, adjacent to the metro areas of Denver, Aurora, and Colorado Springs, and includes important watersheds for the region; 80% of Denver's and Aurora's drinking water comes from the district. For these reasons, SPRD was identified as a priority landscape for restoration in the Wildfire Crisis Strategy.

As climate change brings hotter and drier conditions, the risk of catastrophic wildfire to communities in Colorado has increased substantially over the past couple decades. In the 1990s, the Buffalo Creek fire in Pike National Forest was the largest wildfire at the time, burning around 12,000 acres and impacting a third of Aurora's drinking water. In 2020, by comparison, the Cameron Peak fire became the largest in Colorado history, burning more than 200,000 acres over the span of four months.

IJA and IRA funding have been a game-changer for SPRD's wildfire response.

These investments enabled the hiring of 60 new positions and implement major employing contracts, which has quadrupled the prescribed burns in SPRD and helped launch a major environmental and historic preservation review. Restoration treatments for 2,500 acres of the Miller Gulch, which were expected to take four years, took only one year. And last year, SPRD was able to use this funding to conduct its first summer prescribed burn, which is more aligned with natural fire cycles and generally safer due to calmer winds than in the spring.

Implementing prescribed burns is not only important for keeping the nearby metropolitan areas safe—it also helps the SPRD use its resources more efficiently and effectively. In June 2024, the Interlaken wildfire burned 700 acres over the span of two weeks, requiring 200 wildland firefighters and other personnel, helicopter and airtankers. The first week of the burn alone cost the district \$4.3 million, along with the obvious safety risks. That amount of funding could have been used to treat and restore at least twice that amount of land.

By helping SPRD implement fuels reduction and prescribed burns more proactively, NR Dems' IIJA and IRA investments are helping to keep the nearby major metropolitan areas safe, restore the health of Colorado's forests – a top recreation destination in the U.S. – and create new good-paying community jobs for wildland firefighting and forest restoration work.

More Examples in the Press

- How \$500M in federal infrastructure money is being spent in Colorado
- Klamath River Basin is largest new federal wildfire landscape protection area
- Project protecting Denver water supply receives federal funding
- Bureau of Land Management investing \$12 million in Nevada land restoration
- Forest Service awards more than \$16 million to Lake County to reduce wildfire risk and invest in wood innovations projects



PROJECT LAYOUT
Trees are marked with paint to leave (orange). Wherever areas, and the paint will fade



RESTORATION IN PROGRESS

Thinning projects help return the forest and watershed to a healthier state and reduce the risk of severe fire! Expect to see exciting changes!

2-4 Months)

to designate either the trees to be cut (blue) or those to be left. If possible, crews face the marks away from high traffic areas in a few years.

ACTIVE THINNING (1-5 Years)

A variety of tree species are removed to create a forest environment that resembles historic conditions with grassy interspaces. Remaining slash is masticated, lopped and scattered and product other than lumber is going to local markets as firewood.



The forest will look very different immediately after thinning. It may be shocking at first, but...

Cultural and environmental preservation efforts protect and sustain the traditional teachings and ways of life that strengthen Indigenous communities, promote tribal self-determination, and provide education and economic development opportunities. However, decades of chronic underinvestment, the federal government's failure to deliver on its trust and treaty responsibilities, and, now, climate change **has threatened the livelihoods, economies, and cultural identities of tribal communities.** Tribal communities have also been overburdened by the oil, gas, mining, and other polluting industries' worst messes.

Fortunately, NR Dems' climate wins are providing funds directly to native communities to support Indigenous-led climate action and community-driven relocation for tribes whose lands are irreparably threatened by climate change. These investments also include historic-level funding to deliver long-denied water resources to tribes, especially in the West.

NR Dems-Secured Investments

\$2.5 BILLION

for DOI to fund previously authorized tribal water rights settlements. (IIGA)

\$235 MILLION

for DOI to support tribal climate resilience efforts, including fish hatcheries, and \$25 million for Native Hawaiian climate and resilience programs. (IRA)

\$216 MILLION

for DOI to support tribal climate adaptation efforts and community relocation and \$200 MILLION to improve the safety of dams, water sanitation, and other facilities. (IIGA)

\$216 MILLION

for DOI to provide emergency drought relief for tribes. (IRA)



SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES





Community Benefits

Investing in Indian Country supports a moral, ethical, and legal obligation to honor tribal sovereignty and advance tribal self-determination.

The country's long history of settler colonialism and broken promises compels the federal government to take bold action to deliver on its trust and treaty responsibilities through directed investments and to strengthen nation-to-nation relationships through meaningful tribal consultation.

As of July 2024, the IRA has created more than 312,900 good-paying clean energy jobs in communities across the country, including tribes.

By delivering funding directly to tribes, these investments ensure that tribal communities reap the benefits of new infrastructure and energy projects, including workforce training, new jobs, and economic revitalization.

More resilient and reliable sources of water and energy help lower costs and improve public health.

As climate change causes increasingly extreme temperatures and weather events, power outages are more frequent, and access to clean drinking water is more inconsistent, putting wellbeing at risk, especially in rural, underserved tribal communities. By modernizing and building new infrastructure, these investments create more stability and affordability for tribes.

Climate Benefits

The most sustainable climate solutions are those that are informed and led by the most impacted communities, including tribes.

Tribes are disproportionately on the frontlines of climate change, so they must have the opportunity to inform climate solutions if we want those solutions to have lasting change. Providing direct funding to tribes for climate programs in their communities is imperative.

Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge (ITEK) is an invaluable body of science that can promote a more sustainable relationship between humans and the environment.

ITEK is the body of knowledge, practices, and beliefs gained through the stewardship of the environment that has been passed down from generation to generation. Tribally led projects that incorporate ITEK can be effective in promoting more natural, biodiverse ecosystems that are more resilient to climate change.

Tribal water rights settlements create more certainty for all water users, which helps facilitate smarter water management in the face of drought.

Tribal water rights settlements provide access to water for tribal communities that have historically been deprived of adequate water. This is especially important in the West, where climate change is drying up already scarce water resources, and litigation over water rights can delay and complicate water negotiations and conservation. Managing water sustainably is a critical piece of our climate response.



Case Study #04

How Solar Panels on Canals are Powering Gila River Indian Community

Project Location

Gila River Indian Community Reservation in Arizona

Funded Agency

Bureau of Reclamation, DOI

Project Location

Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act & Inflation Reduction Act

The Gila River Indian Community is a federally recognized tribe in Arizona, whose reservation is made up of about 580 square miles along the Gila River south of Phoenix. Since time immemorial, the Gila River has been considered the lifeblood for the Gila River Indian Community. The Tribe has historically relied on the Gila River to build an intricate system of hundreds of miles of canals that supported trading and agriculture in the arid desert conditions.

With the expansion of western settlement and the California Gold Rush in the late 1800s, non-Native farmers began diverting and damming the Gila River upstream of the Tribe, largely cutting off the Tribe's water supply for their irrigation system, causing widespread starvation among its people. Since then, the Gila River Indian Community's tireless advocacy has secured water delivery infrastructure and a successful tribal water rights settlement in 2004. The IIJA is supporting the settlement by funding the construction of a nearly 20-mile reclaimed water pipeline to ensure reliable water for the Tribe's farms, namely Gila River Farms, a significant employer for the Tribe.

The Gila River Indian Community's ingenuity in water conservation continues

today; the Tribe obtained funding through IRA for a demonstration project to install solar panels over nearly 3,000 feet of its Casa Blanca Canal. Similar projects have been carried out in India, but this is the first of its kind in the United States.

Using a conservative estimate of six hours of sunlight a day, the solar panels in the project's current phase are expected to generate 1.3 megawatts of clean energy for the Tribe, valued at about \$200,000 annually. If implemented fully, the Tribe's proposed design would save over \$5.5 million annually. The solar panels will also help reduce evaporation in the canals, which can be significant; one California study estimated that covering 4,000 miles of canals could save 63 billion gallons of water from evaporation.

The demonstration project will also aim to determine whether the cooling effect of the water in the canals makes the solar panels more efficient or whether the shading from the solar panels results in fewer algal blooms in the canal. And finally, placing solar panels over the canals means less physical disturbance of the land, limiting impacts to cultural resources and sacred sites.

By supporting the Gila River Indian Community's buildout of innovative water delivery infrastructure and clean energy development, NR Dems' IRA and IIJA investments are supporting the Tribe's economic development and self-determination, helping to honor the federal government's trust and treaty responsibilities, creating tribal-led employment opportunities, and helping ensure water certainty for all users in the drought-stricken West.

More Examples in the Press

- 3 tribes dealing with the toll of climate change get \$75 million to relocate
- More than \$32M coming to WA tribes to adapt to climate change
- Gun Lake Tribe gets \$4M to add electric vehicles, install solar arrays
- Return to the River: The Upper Mattaponi Tribe reclaim their ancestral lands



PROJECT



DESIGNER
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ANAL

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PROJECT FUNDED BY

**President Joe Biden's
Inflation Reduction Act**

**INVESTING IN
AMERICA**



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION



05

CLEANING UP ABANDONED MINES & WELLS



Across the country, oil, gas, and mining companies have abandoned hundreds of thousands of mines and wells that now litter the landscape, while also leaking, seeping, or emitting toxic pollutants, including methane, into the environment. These sites, which are disproportionately located in communities that have already been overburdened by industry pollution for decades, pose serious safety and environmental risks.

Fortunately, NR Dems' climate wins are helping to clean up these abandoned mines and wells across public, private, and tribal lands. These investments are also creating good-paying jobs in communities that polluting industries have left behind.

NR Dems-Secured Investments

\$11.3 BILLION

for DOI to reclaim abandoned mine lands, plus \$25 MILLION for DOI to help states update their abandoned mine land inventories. (IIGA)

\$4.7 BILLION

for DOI to establish new well plugging, remediation, and reclamation programs on federal, state, tribal, and private lands. (IIGA)

Community Benefits

Cleaning up abandoned wells and mines improves public health and environmental health.

Millions of Americans live within a mile of an abandoned mine or well. When improperly plugged or reclaimed, these sites emit harmful gases or leach toxins into soil and groundwater. In fact, as many as **10% of abandoned mines have released toxic heavy metals, acidity, and radioactivity into waterways**. In addition, when groundwater flows into open pit mining sites or mine waste tailings, it creates acid mine drainage, which can wipe out wildlife and contaminate drinking water. Cleaning up mines and wells can restore soil and water quality to their original conditions.

Cleaning up abandoned mines and wells makes communities safer.

Abandoned mines and wells are a safety hazard – ones that can become more dangerous over time as sites or old equipment degrades. People or wildlife can fall into open mine shafts or water-filled pits and quarries. From 2000–2013, abandoned mines **killed 381 people and injured 152 more**. Abandoned wells often have degraded, dangerous equipment and can create sinkholes and flooding. They have even **caused blowouts and explosions in nearby neighborhoods**.

Abandoned mine and well cleanup programs create jobs and revitalize recreation economies.

Jobs created through cleanup programs are especially critical in communities that fossil fuel or other polluting industries have abandoned. In addition, many abandoned mines and wells are located on public lands that can be rehabilitated for recreational use, helping to support the ever-growing recreation economy. These lands can also be used for clean energy development.

Climate Benefits

Abandoned oil and gas wells often emit methane, a pollutant that warms the climate at 80 times the rate of carbon dioxide.

They also often emit other climate harming gases, like benzene and hydrogen sulfide. Depending on the type and structure of mine, abandoned mines can also emit methane and other climate-harming gases. Cleaning up abandoned mines and wells can effectively eliminate these harmful sources of climate pollution.

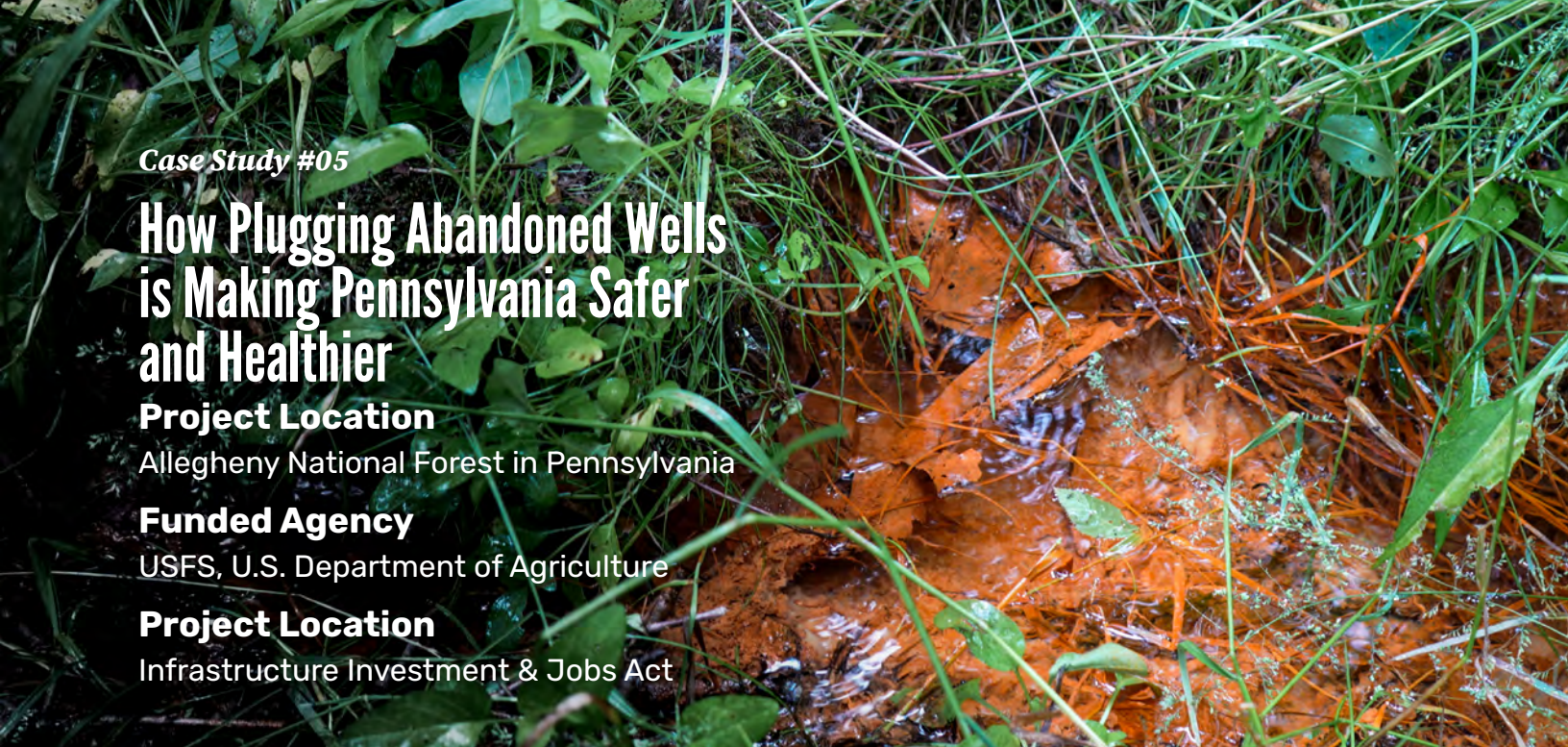
Cleaning up abandoned mines and wells can promote biodiversity by restoring wildlife habitats and water sources.

Biodiversity and climate change are inextricably linked. A more biodiverse environment is both more resilient to climate change and better able to absorb carbon pollution from the atmosphere.



Millions

of Americans live within a mile
of an abandoned mine or well.



Case Study #05

How Plugging Abandoned Wells is Making Pennsylvania Safer and Healthier

Project Location

Allegheny National Forest in Pennsylvania

Funded Agency

USFS, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Project Location

Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act

Established in 1923, Allegheny National Forest (ANF) sits on more than 550,000 acres of public land, about 100 miles north of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The forest is surrounded by several small town and cities, many of which have a deep history of oil and gas dating back to the 1800s. The country's first oil well, drilled by Edwin Drake, is in the region.

ANF exists in the context of this history. Like all national forests, ANF has authority over the forest's timber and surface rights, but it does not maintain any regulatory authority over the subsurface, where oil is drilled. ANF can consult on access roads and other surface activities, but it cannot deny anyone's access to their subsurface rights or require bonds for cleanup. A staggering 93% of the subsurface in ANF is privately owned by individuals or oil companies — ranging from mom-and-pop operations to oil giants, like Shell Appalachia. These entities have a right to access their minerals or oil when they choose, so when oil prices go up, the demand on ANF to provide access skyrockets. This leads to unpredictable ebbs and flows of drilling activity happening all over the forest, yet ANF has no authority and does not receive any royalties.

Given global oil market volatility, it is not uncommon for oil companies to set up shop in ANF, start drilling, run out of money, and then abandon the operation when investors come calling. The result is hundreds of abandoned wells and equipment scattered all over the forest, leaving American taxpayers on the hook for the cleanup. Pennsylvania

has registered 1200 orphaned and abandoned wells in the state, but the actual number is likely closer to 20,000.

Until IJIA, the only mechanism for plugging these abandoned wells was a good neighbor agreement with the state; otherwise, there was no funding. Meanwhile, ANF has been inundated with over a century worth of old, rusted equipment that leaks untold amounts of methane and other gases, bubbles and “burps” oil and other materials, interrupts stream and groundwater flows, gets in the way of forest projects, and causes numerous safety hazards for people and wildlife, ranging from long powerhouse lines that are tripped over to old drill pits that have become filled with sludge.

The IJIA funding is giving ANF much-needed resources to finally hire contractors, many of which employ nearby community residents, to clean up these hazards. However, plugging these wells is neither simple nor standardized; the wells range from antique to modern and each one poses unique complications. For example, some wells were drilled next to, or even in, stream beds, while others may have been crudely plugged with cannonballs or tree stumps. And for most wells, the built-up pressure inside is unpredictable.

Fortunately, IJIA investments are helping ANF plug these abandoned wells in a way that is safe, consistent, and permanent. IJIA is also funding a methane monitoring program, which will help ANF determine whether plugging is successful.





By helping ANF plug abandoned wells, NR Dems' IIJA investments are restoring the landscape, revitalizing the forest's recreational opportunities, keeping methane out of our atmosphere, creating good-paying jobs for nearby communities, and enabling local operators to continue operating on these lands in a more balanced way.



Case Study #06

How Mine Reclamation is Keeping Visitors and Wildlife Safe in Saguaro National Park

Project Location

Saguaro National Park in Arizona

Funded Agency

National Park Service, DOI

Project Location

Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act & Inflation Reduction Act

Established in 1994, Saguaro National Park (SNP) encompasses about 92,000 acres of public land, divided on either side of Tucson, Arizona. The park is an important recreational and tourism hub for Tucson, and home to the iconic saguaro cacti. In the late 1800s, however, the region was part of the mining boom in the West; there are 149 mining excavations in the western portion of the park alone.

Remnants of this mining history remain in SNP, including open mine shafts, piles of material that were dug out to create the shaft, mining equipment, and old mining roads, many of which are now trails. Vertical mine shafts, like the more than 300-foot-deep Gould Mine, are a major safety hazard



for humans and wildlife. Sonoran Desert tortoises, bobcats, and curious tourists have fallen in. In addition, the soil, rocks, and other material that were removed from the mine shaft acidified over time (giving it an orange hue), which has disturbed the ecosystem and caused dangerous erosion.

Because the mines in SNP have long been abandoned, American taxpayers are responsible for the cleanup and reclamation of the land. Fortunately, IJJA investments are helping to make that happen in a way that is long-lasting, safe, and environmentally sound. At the Gould Mine, for example, IRA funding allowed SNP to helicopter in the 5,000 pounds of steel that were needed to safely cover the mine shaft for good,

while creating minimal disturbance to the fragile desert ecosystem. This is especially important in SNP, where saguaro cacti provide critical habitat for desert species and are considered sacred to nearby tribes.

In addition to mine reclamation, IJJA and IRA funding at SNP is helping to control invasive buffelgrass and bullfrog populations, rehabilitate and restore fire-burned areas with native seeds, and make other improvements that will improve the landscape's resiliency to climate change-induced hotter and drier conditions in Arizona.

By helping SNP reclaim abandoned mines and institute nature-based climate solutions, NR Dems' IRA and IIJA investments are restoring the fragile natural ecology of the Sonoran Desert, keeping wildlife and visitors safe, and protecting a beloved piece of Tucson's community and economy.

More Examples in the Press

- **Through President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, 24 States Set to Begin Plugging Over 10,000 Orphaned Wells**
- **Pay and Plug: Federal Funds Spur Cleanup of Lost Oil Wells**
- **Orphaned Wells To Be Plugged In Ohio River Islands Wildlife Refuge**
- **Michigan hopes to clean up all 450 of its abandoned oil and gas wells in the next 2 years**
- **Colorado is plugging away at abandoned oil and gas wells, officials say**







BONUS: ADDITIONAL NR DEMS CLIMATE WINS

ENHANCING PERMITTING FOR CLEAN ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

A clean energy future requires the buildout of new energy infrastructure and transmission lines, which entails federal permitting, public input, and environmental review processes. These processes, which inform communities and give them a say in the permitting process, are critical to preventing the environmental injustices of the past. However, when historically underfunded federal agencies lack the appropriate staff training and capacity, these processes can be delayed. Contrary to Republican and industry talking points, the permitting requirements themselves are not a significant source of delay.

Fortunately, NR Dems secured more than \$1 BILLION in the IRA to support additional staff and resources in various federal agency permitting offices. This funding is expected to shrink environmental review timelines by years.

SUPPORTING NATIONAL PARKS AND PUBLIC LANDS

With nearly a quarter of our country's carbon pollution **coming from fossil fuel development on our public lands**, we cannot ignore the importance of including public lands in our climate solutions. Increasing both conservation and clean energy development on our public lands can support a more sustainable and climate-resilient environment. Fortunately, NR Dems secured

\$500 MILLION in the IRA for resiliency and ecosystem projects in our national parks and other public lands. This funding helps support the Biden-Harris administration's successful America the Beautiful initiative and goal to conserve 30% of America's public lands and waters by 2030.

NR Dems also secured \$500 MILLION to hire additional National Park Service employees, as well as \$200 MILLION for deferred maintenance projects in the IRA. These investments are especially crucial as national parks and outdoor recreation become increasingly popular and an even more significant contributor to our economy. Currently, outdoor recreation supports 5 million jobs and makes up 2.2% of the GDP annually.

ENSURING A FAIRER RETURN FOR TAXPAYERS FROM BIG OIL

NR Dems secured several reforms to our oil and gas leasing program in the IRA to save taxpayer dollars and make the climate-causing oil and gas industries pay their fair share for drilling on our federal public lands and waters:

- For onshore drilling, the IRA raises the royalty rate from 12.5% to 16.66%, increases the minimum bid, raises the annual rental fee, charges industry an acreage fee to nominate lands for leasing, and eliminates noncompetitive leasing.
- For offshore drilling, the IRA raises the royalty rate from 12.5% to 16.66%.
- In addition, the IRA charges royalties for all gas extracted from public lands and waters, including that lost by venting, flaring, or negligent releases.

TOUR ONE OF THE NR DEMS' CLIMATE WINS

Visiting an NR Dems' climate win in your district can be a great opportunity to see firsthand how critical IRA and IIJA investments have been, to speak with agency and community experts about how these

projects were developed, and to learn more about the community and climate benefits to your district specifically. As a bonus, these projects are often located in picturesque natural environments that can serve as ideal settings for celebratory community or press events.

FINDING A CLIMATE WIN NEAR YOU

The map and resources at the beginning of the Field Guide are the best starting point for finding NR Dems' climate wins in your state or district. However, keep in mind that projects are in varying stages, from initial funding distribution to end-stage construction.

To best identify projects that would be suitable to visit, working with the federal



agency responsible for implementing or awarding the funding for the project is recommended. Federal agency staff can advise you on project phase, accessibility, opportunities for press, and more.

To contact the federal agencies listed in this Field Guide, reach out to the congressional affairs contacts listed below:

U.S. Department of the Interior

paniz_rezaeero@ios.doi.gov

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

meredith.cameron@noaa.gov

**U.S. Department of Agriculture
(includes the U.S. Forest Service)**

ocr@usda.gov

*****Note: These contacts are current as of August 2024. If you need an updated contact, please visit <https://www.crs.gov/Resources/LiaisonOffices>.***

TELLING THE PRESS ABOUT YOUR VISIT

The Appendix includes sample press releases for each type of NR Dem climate win described in this Field Guide. Of course, each visit will have its own unique climate and community benefits, but these materials can provide a useful starting point.



WAIT... WHAT ARE NATURAL RESOURCES REPUBLICANS DOING ON CLIMATE?

In short, nothing.

Since the beginning of the 118th Congress, the Republican majority of the Natural Resources Committee has yet to hold a single hearing or introduce a single bill to address climate change or help communities impacted by climate.

Instead, Natural Resources Republicans have introduced bill after bill to give even more handouts and corporate subsidies to their fossil fuel industry allies or to gut our most fundamental environmental laws. The most obvious example is H.R. 1, the Polluters Over People Act, but there have been plenty more bills that mirror specific provisions of H.R. 1 or are somehow even more extreme.

Republicans' willful ignorance of climate change is unfortunately not surprising. Their policy agenda is clearly laid out in Trump's Project 2025, a policy blueprint for an extreme MAGA takeover of our federal government, courtesy of the former president's industry billionaire allies. In fact, many of Natural Resources Republicans' legislative and oversight efforts align nearly identically with provisions in Project 2025, as you can see [HERE](#). As that analysis also shows, Republicans invited witnesses who were affiliated with Project 2025 to testify before the Committee on 14 separate occasions.



Project 2025's Dirtiest Top Ten proposals in the Natural Resources jurisdiction include:

1 Undo hard-fought progress on climate action by immediately rescinding President Biden's Executive Order on climate change (and corresponding Secretarial Orders) and reinstating Trump-era orders that prioritize polluter profits over health, safety, and a clean energy future for the American people.

2 Restart the federal coal leasing program, despite the myriad environmental and public health harms, as well as the economic decline of the industry.

3 Open up special and sacred areas to mining, including the pristine Boundary Waters area and the area immediately surrounding Chaco Canyon, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

4 Threaten Alaska Native subsistence resources by unleashing major oil and gas development in the ecologically significant and fragile Arctic, including expanding the widely opposed Willow Project and reversing critical protections for the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge and most of the NPR-A.

5 Seek to repeal the Antiquities Act and initiate a review of existing national monuments to determine the feasibility of downsizing them in a way that is defensible before SCOTUS.

6 Reinstatement of the widely unpopular Trump-era National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations, which ignored the climate crisis and drastically gutted public input in order to fast-track polluter projects.

7 Strip endangered species protections for the iconic grizzly bear and gray wolf, while also reinstating Trump-era regulations to hamstring the Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act.

8 Eliminate the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) by doing away with many of its functions entirely, while privatizing others or ceding them to the states.

9 In a shameless attack on tribal sovereignty, advance oil, gas, and mineral development on tribal lands as part of the political crusade to end "the war on fossil fuels."

10 Prioritize dwindling Western water supplies for industry, not local communities or tribes who are already suffering the impacts of climate-change induced drought.

The Dirtiest Top Ten is also available as a one-pager.







A FINAL WORD

Climate change is the existential crisis of our time. Every day we are seeing, feeling, hearing about—and paying for—the impacts of a warming climate across so many aspects of our lives. It can feel overwhelming and discouraging, especially when House Republicans are systematically blocking any action to address the climate crisis or help communities that are already hurting.

That's why it's more important than ever for NR Dems to get out and talk to their constituents about the historic investments they secured and the real, meaningful solutions they are working with the Biden-Harris administration to put in place. The climate wins described in this Field Guide will not only show that NR Dems are listening to the **majority of Americans who want climate action**, they can also provide hope that our climate future is not yet written in stone.

There's no question that more work is needed, but NR Dems are up for the charge. The IRA and IIJA were historic investments in a safer, healthier, more affordable, and more just future for all Americans. By continuing to keep the climate action conversation and momentum going, NR Dems can show that they stand ready to make history again.

APPENDIX

- **APPENDIX A**
Sample release for Rebuilding & Restoring Coastlines site visit
- **APPENDIX B**
Sample release for Securing Clean Water for the West site visit
- **APPENDIX C**
Sample release for Strengthening Our Response to Wildfire site visit
- **APPENDIX D**
Sample release for Supporting Indigenous Communities site visit
- **APPENDIX E**
Sample release for Cleaning Up Abandoned Mines & Wells site visit

Sample press releases [available as downloadable Word versions](#).

APPENDIX A

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: NAME // PHONE // EMAIL

Rep. [INSERT] Visits [PROJECT SITE] to Highlight Coastal Restoration Efforts

House Democrats Support Our Rebuilding & Restoring Our Coastal Communities

[DATELINE] – Today, Representative [INSERT] visited [PROJECT SITE] to witness firsthand the progress made in rebuilding and restoring our coastlines. This project, made possible by the [Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) OR Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)] passed by House Democrats in [2021 OR 2022], aims to protect coastal communities from erosion, storms, and rising sea levels while enhancing natural habitats.

“Investing in the resilience of our coastlines is crucial for the safety and prosperity of our coastal communities,” said Rep. [INSERT]. “Thanks to the historic investments made by House Democrats and the Biden-Harris administration, we are not only protecting our community/[DISTRICT] from the worst impacts of the climate crisis but also boosting our local economy and creating jobs.”

[INSERT PROJECT-SPECIFIC DETAILS]

Nearly 130 million Americans — or 40% of the population — live in coastal counties. Our coasts generate over \$9.5 trillion in goods and services annually and support more than 58 million jobs. Healthy and vibrant wetlands and coastlines are essential, acting as natural shields that protect these communities from the worst impacts of climate change by absorbing and dispersing rising water levels. By preserving and restoring these crucial ecosystems, we are safeguarding our families and economies against the threats of a changing climate.

Our coasts will be vital in the fight against climate change, which is why congressional Democrats worked with the Biden-Harris administration during the 117th Congress to pass two of the most important legislative packages of our generation — the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act, which were signed into law on Nov. 15, 2021, and Aug. 16, 2022, respectively. Together, these bills include the largest investments in climate, clean energy, and resilient communities in history. The Biden-Harris administration has been hard at work putting these historic investments into place as the cornerstone of its Investing in America agenda.

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APPENDIX B

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: NAME // PHONE // EMAIL

Rep. [INSERT] Highlights Water Security Efforts at [PROJECT SITE]

House Democrats Support Securing Clean Water for Western Communities

[DATELINE] – Representative [INSERT] visited [PROJECT SITE] today to underscore the importance of securing clean water for the West. This project, made possible by the [Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) OR Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)] passed by House Democrats in [2021 OR 2022], is crucial in addressing the multigenerational drought across the western United States that has been exacerbated by climate change.

“Ensuring access to clean, reliable water sources and resilient water infrastructure is a top priority for our communities,” said Rep. [INSERT]. “Without a reliable water supply, our communities, small businesses, and farmers cannot thrive. This project is a testament to our commitment to sustainable water management, and the protection of this precious resource. Through the transformative leadership of House Democrats and the Biden-Harris administration, we are turning the tide on water scarcity with innovative solutions that will keep prices low for families and help supply the West’s water needs for generations to come.”

[INSERT PROJECT-SPECIFIC DETAILS]

The Colorado River System is the primary water source for over 40 million Americans across seven states and 30 tribal nations. Investments secured by House Democrats in the [IRA or IIJA] are helping communities by implementing nature-based solutions and building more resilient Western water infrastructure for water recycling, water storage, and desalination projects.

During the 117th Congress, congressional Democrats worked with the Biden-Harris administration to pass two of the most important legislative packages of our generation — the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act, which were signed into law on Nov. 15, 2021, and Aug. 16, 2022, respectively. Together, these bills include the largest investments in climate, clean energy, and resilient communities in history. The Biden-Harris administration has been hard at work putting these historic investments into place as the cornerstone of its Investing in America agenda.

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APPENDIX C

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: NAME // PHONE // EMAIL

Rep. [INSERT] Champions Wildfire Safety Initiatives Secured by House Democrats at [PROJECT SITE]

House Democrats are Working to Strengthen Our Response to Wildfires

[DATELINE] – Today, Representative [INSERT] visited [PROJECT SITE] to promote initiatives aimed at keeping communities safe from wildfires. The project, made possible by the [Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) OR Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)] passed by House Democrats in [2021 OR 2022], includes measures such as fuel reduction, controlled burns, and community preparedness programs.

“As wildfires become more frequent and severe, we must take proactive steps to protect our communities,” said Rep. [INSERT]. “House Democrats are committed to fighting catastrophic wildfires that threaten our families and communities. By investing in these proactive measures, we are not only saving lives and property, but also keeping our forests and natural resources healthy for generations to come.”

[INSERT PROJECT-SPECIFIC DETAILS]

Over 70,000 communities and 44 million homes are at risk of harm or property damage across the country from wildfires. A recent congressional study estimates that climate-exacerbated wildfires in the U.S. cost up to \$893 billion per year, or around 4% of our GDP.

During the 117th Congress, congressional Democrats worked with the Biden-Harris administration to pass two of the most important legislative packages of our generation — the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act, which were signed into law on Nov. 15, 2021, and Aug. 16, 2022, respectively. Together, these bills include the largest investments in climate, clean energy, and resilient communities in history. The Biden-Harris administration has been hard at work putting these historic investments into place as the cornerstone of its Investing in America agenda.

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APPENDIX D

Note: When visiting Indigenous or tribal communities, it is imperative to work with them on any press materials. Please don't hesitate to reach out to NR Dems committee staff for assistance.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
CONTACT: NAME // PHONE // EMAIL

Rep. [INSERT] Visits [PROJECT SITE] in [COMMUNITY NAME], Highlights Climate Action

House Democrats are Investing in our Commitments to [Tribal Nations or Tribal/Indigenous Communities]

[DATELINE] – Today, Representative [INSERT] visited [PROJECT SITE] to highlight transformative initiatives passed by House Democrats to support [tribe/community name]. This project, made possible by the [Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) or Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)] passed by House Democrats in [2021 OR 2022], focuses on enhancing infrastructure, cultural preservation, and economic development for [tribe/community name].

“[Insert sentence specific to tribe/community],” said Rep. [INSERT]. “Thanks to the investments secured by House Democrats and carried out by the Biden-Harris administration, we are empowering tribal nations with the resources they need to thrive and sustain their cultural legacy as they face the worst impacts of the climate crisis.”

[INSERT PROJECT-SPECIFIC DETAILS]

[OPTIONAL:] Investing in Indian Country supports a moral, ethical, and legal obligation to honor tribal sovereignty and advance tribal self-determination. By delivering funding directly to tribes and supporting community-led efforts, these investments ensure that tribal communities reap the benefits of new infrastructure and energy projects, including workforce training, new jobs, and economic revitalization.

During the 117th Congress, congressional Democrats worked with the Biden-Harris administration to pass two of the most important legislative packages of our generation — the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act, which were signed into law on Nov. 15, 2021, and Aug. 16, 2022, respectively. Together, these bills include the largest investments in climate, clean energy, and resilient communities in history. The Biden-Harris administration has been hard at work putting these historic investments into place as the cornerstone of its Investing in America agenda.

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APPENDIX E

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
CONTACT: NAME // PHONE // EMAIL

Rep. [INSERT] Visits [PROJECT SITE], Highlights Democrats’ Efforts to Clean Up Abandoned [Mines OR Wells]

*House Democrats are Creating Good-Paying Jobs and Keeping Our Communities Safe while
Tackling the Climate Crisis*

[DATELINE] – Representative [INSERT] visited [PROJECT SITE] today to highlight the critical efforts underway to clean up abandoned [mines OR wells] in [DISTRICT]. This project made possible by the [Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) or Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)] passed by House Democrats in [2021 OR 2022], aims to address the environmental hazards posed by abandoned [mines OR wells] and restore these lands for safe community use.

“Cleaning up abandoned [mines OR wells] is crucial for protecting our environment and public health,” said Rep. [INSERT]. “For too long, they’ve been left to rot and rust across our communities, leaking dangerous pollutants into our ground and waterways. House Democrats secured investments to clean up these areas and keep communities safe. We’re creating good-paying jobs, strengthening local economies, and investing in communities that have been left behind too long.”

[INSERT PROJECT-SPECIFIC DETAILS]

Millions of Americans live within a mile of an abandoned [mine OR well], many of which emit toxic gases or leach harmful substances into the soil and groundwater. By addressing these issues, the [PROJECT SITE] project ensures cleaner air and water, contributing to a healthier environment for all.

During the 117th Congress, congressional Democrats worked with the Biden-Harris administration to pass two of the most important legislative packages of our generation — the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act, which were signed into law on Nov. 15, 2021, and Aug. 16, 2022, respectively. Together, these bills include the largest investments in climate, clean energy, and resilient communities in history. The Biden-Harris administration has been hard at work putting these historic investments into place as the cornerstone of its Investing in America agenda.

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NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMITTEE
DEMOCRATS
RANKING MEMBER RAÚL M. GRIJALVA

This Field Guide has been prepared by staff of the House Natural Resources Committee. It has not been reviewed by Democratic members and may not necessarily reflect the views of all members.