



Migratory Bird Joint Venture BIL/IRA Funded Projects

Migratory Bird Joint Ventures, using key funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, have capacity to foster value-added approaches in leveraging the Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds to accomplish their missions. With additional JV funding, these efforts will become more widespread and even more beneficial to the American public. Below are a few examples from across the nation.

Building Partner and Landowner Capacity to Create Resilient Forests (Appalachian Mountains JV)



The Inflation Reduction Act provided \$1.3 million to the Appalachian Mountains Joint Venture to improve the health and resiliency of privately owned forests in Central Appalachia. Through cooperative agreements established with NRCS offices in Kentucky, West Virginia, and Virginia, Appalachian Mountains Joint Venture (AMJV) staff are providing a suite of resources intended to increase the capacity of NRCS staff to better deliver sustainable forestry practices to landowners. AMJV will develop a series of in-person and virtual forestry training modules providing a strong basis in silviculture and applying forest management practices to benefit birds while also improving forest climate resiliency. AMJV staff will develop an accompanying field assessment toolkit, providing NRCS conservation planners with a framework to conduct a field assessment of a

producer's forestland. The AMJV will also work with NRCS staff to identify new customers through development of an outreach strategy to increase enrollment in NRCS forestry programs and coordinate with local NRCS staff to deliver outreach materials to a targeted audience through direct mailings, email campaigns, or other appropriate channels. Finally, AMJV staff are developing a process for engaging landowners in the collection of data on species response on their own property. In addition to offering a lower cost option for data collection, involving landowners in the monitoring process is a powerful engagement tool and can lead to continued participation in NRCS programs in the future. *Photo credit: Todd Fearer.*

Nature-based Resiliency in the Lower Mississippi River Valley (Lower Mississippi Valley JV)

The Inflation Reduction Act provided \$20 million in 2023 for nature-based resiliency in the Lower Mississippi River Valley, encompassing parts of Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee. These funds are intended to restore and protect bottomland hardwood forests, wetlands, and coastal floodplain systems in priority catchments in the Lower Mississippi River. In administering these funds, the USFWS is utilizing Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture's (LMJV) priorities for bottomland hardwood afforestation to prioritize projects that ensure optimal wildlife habitat value. The spatially explicit nature of LMJV's Forest



Breeding Bird Decision Support Model allowed scientists to optimize the focus on priority bird habitat values and regions with the most disadvantaged communities. These projects will ultimately help secure and regulate water supplies, support production of forest products, bolster trust species populations, and protect human communities and infrastructure from floods, storm surges, and soil erosion through nature-based approaches. *Photo Credit: Bill Stripling.*

Restore New Mexico (Playa Lakes JV)



The Inflation Reduction Act provided an additional \$8 million to the Roswell Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management to support Lesser Prairie-Chicken conservation in the Mescalero Sands ecological region being conducted as part of the larger Restore New Mexico partnership. These funds will be used to complete additional aerial herbicide applications to kill invasive mesquite and masticate dead standing skeletons. Playa Lakes Joint Venture has been awarded \$1 million of these funds to coordinate partners and landowners in the identified Lesser Prairie-Chicken priority areas, monitor treatment effectiveness for vegetation and grassland birds, and regularly update a widely used mesquite spatial targeting model. The targeting model and its use significantly increases the efficiency of mesquite treatment and its associated cost, and regular

updates to the model will be used to monitor changes in the landscape over time. This project represents a complete cycle of monitoring, planning, and implementation of mesquite removal to benefit grasslands and grassland birds. *Photo credit: Alex Nelson.*

Growing Grassland Cores in Nebraska's Sandhills (Rainwater Basin JV)



Over \$3.3 million in fuels reduction funds appropriated through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Legislation is being leveraged by the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture partners to support removal of Eastern Red Cedar and enhancements of grazing infrastructure on the Sandhills Refuge Complex. Crescent Lake, LaCreek, Valentine, Seir, LaCreek, and North Platte Refuges encompass over 250,000 acres and provide important habitat for grassland nesting birds. These core grasslands are the cornerstones that private lands conservation is being implemented from to provide population strongholds that are less vulnerable to reinfestation by Eastern Red Cedar that would reduce habitat quality and nest success. *Photo credit: Andy Bishop.*

Restoring and Enhancing Grasslands and Streams in the Chihuahuan Desert (Rio Grande JV)

The \$3.5 million project, which is funded through a three-year America the Beautiful Grant, includes partner training, capacity-building, vegetation and bird monitoring, and adaptive management. Key deliverables: 1) restore habitat by treating brush encroachment on 22,500 acres of priority grasslands, 2) enhance riparian habitat and stream processing/floodplain connectivity by installing 30 to 35 brush weirs on 3-5 miles of streams, 3) implement six low-tech process based soil amendment demonstration projects using branch mulch, biochar and other treatments on private lands, and 4) build staff, partner and landowner capacity to continue implementing habitat enhancement projects into the next decade.

Photo credit: Jeff Bennett.

