



# NATIONAL SEED STRATEGY KEYSTONE INITIATIVE



Native plant communities across the United States are disappearing every day due to habitat loss made worse by climate change-related impacts – such as longer and more severe wildfire seasons and extreme weather events. As these plant populations are lost, so too are the ecosystem services they provide, increasing the risk of erosion, the establishment of non-native and invasive species and additional ecological damage. Actions to conserve and restore native plant communities are important strategic components of increasing landscape resilience and strengthening ecosystem biodiversity. Ensuring a robust native seed supply chain is the critical foundation for these efforts.

Private landowners and public land managers work together to restore landscapes following intense fires or other events causing significant damage. Success depends on an adequate supply of locally adapted native seed. As the frequency and scale of restoration needs has increased, the supply of native seeds available for replanting has become strained. According to a recent study from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, “the insufficient supply of seeds from native plants is a major barrier to ecological restoration and other revegetation projects across the U.S.”

In 2021, the Department of the Interior embarked on an ambitious path to invest in the infrastructure, tools and labor needed for ecosystem restoration and resilience. Part of that comprehensive agenda is carrying out the goals in the [National Seed Strategy for Rehabilitation and Restoration](#), which calls for increasing the supply and availability of native seeds by investing in seed production and collection, ecoregional coordination, and engaging Tribal partnerships in this work. This work – which furthers the goals of the Department’s [Restoration and Resilience Framework](#)– is coordinated through the National Seed Strategy Keystone Initiative, one of two cross-cutting initiatives under this framework which supports the fundamental needs of the other keystone initiatives. Through collaboration across our agencies and partners, the Interior Department is focused on funding foundational seed infrastructure and botanical capacity critical to ensuring the native seed supply chain works for all agencies.

To further these goals, the Department has invested in:

- Updating and expanding Tribal greenhouse facilities;
- Assisting local farmers in transitioning from high-water crops to low-water native plant crops;
- Engaging youth in native seed collection via the Seeds of Success program; and
- Increasing seed production capacity at three Midwest facilities that service regional plant needs and localized seed collaboratives.

With investments from President Biden’s Investing in America agenda to implement the National Seed Strategy, the Department is advancing the Biden-Harris administration’s priority initiative, [America the Beautiful](#), a nationwide effort to conserve, connect and restore the lands, waters, and wildlife upon which we all depend.

## THE NATIONAL SEED STRATEGY KEYSTONE INITIATIVE INVESTS IN:



### Interagency Coordination

This Keystone Initiative brings together experts from across the Department to collaborate and share knowledge. Over \$1 million in initial funding has been directed towards strategic planning for a National Interagency Seed and Restoration Center, which will serve as the scientific, logistical and support center for the nation’s restoration and seed needs. Additionally, this Center will support interagency ecoregional native plant programs and warehouses.



### Improving Native Seed Supply Chain Infrastructure

There are many steps involved in developing a stable crop from wild-collected native seeds. These steps include seed collection, cleaning, testing, production, storage and more. Over \$50 million in investments through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act are improving the expansion of pieces of this supply chain, including more seed collections teams and seed cleaning partnerships. The Keystone Initiative will also initiate an assessment of interagency seed needs and seed storage capacity.



### Ecoregional and Tribal Partnerships:

Native plant populations transcend jurisdictional boundaries, which is why the Keystone Initiative has made immediate investments in projects with Tribal communities and at the ecoregional level. Tribal and ecoregional partners hold the Indigenous and technical knowledge that is key to implementing ecological restoration using locally adapted native seed and plant materials. Already over \$20 million through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is advancing projects in partnerships with Tribes to restore lands and waters and advance seed restoration.

