



Across the Western Landscape: Priority Issues and Strategies for Western Forests

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



About the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition

The Western Forestry Leadership Coalition (WFLC) is a State and Federal government partnership. The members of the coalition include: the 23 State and Pacific Island Foresters of the West and the 7 western Regional Foresters, 3 western Research Station Directors, and Forest Products Lab Director of the USDA Forest Service. This partnership creates a clear voice on western forestry, strengthening our ability to address pertinent issues and help meet the needs of society.

The mission of the WFLC is to promote science-based forest management that serves the values of society and ensures the health and sustainability of western forests.

The forests of the West contain an incredible assemblage of resources. They cover approximately 365 million acres, 49 percent of the nation's total forested area, and are managed by a diverse set of owners. Threats facing western forests affect all lands and all people, compromising the basic assets we need and often take for granted such as: clean air, abundant water, safe communities, open spaces, and economic opportunities.

Cooperation and coordination across jurisdictional boundaries are needed to address these threats. The Western Forestry Leadership Coalition (WFLC) represents a unique partnership between state and federal government forestry leaders and supports a collaborative approach to sustainable forest management.

All U.S. states and Affiliated Islands have completed assessments of their forest resources and developed strategies for the conservation, protection, and enhancement of those resources. These Statewide Forest Resource Assessments and Strategies (Forest Action Plans) provide a long-term roadmap for forest restoration and management. *Across the Western Landscape: Priority Issues and Strategies for Western Forests* is a 23-page publication providing the highlights from a synthesis of the western states' and Pacific Islands' Forest Action Plans. These highlights — summarized here — include priority issues, strategies to address them, and a Six-Point Plan for the future.

Wildland Fire and the Wildland-Urban Interface: reduce wildfire risk to communities and mitigate wildfire impacts.

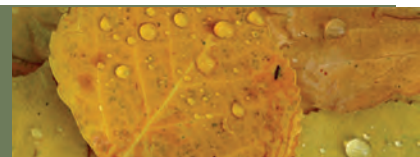
Water Quality and Quantity: secure clean and sustainable flows of water through forest management.

Forest Health & Invasive Species: reduce impacts to forest health from insect, disease, and invasive species threats.

Climate Change, Carbon Sequestration, and Biomass Energy: improve forest ecosystem resilience in the face of a changing climate and ensure that forests are recognized contributors to climate change solutions.

Sustainable Communities and Economies: support new and existing forest-based industries and programs that provide for the economic, social, and environmental needs of society.

These priorities and strategies to address them are the foundation upon which the WFLC members focus energy and resources. *Across the Western Landscape: Priority Issues and Strategies for Western Forests* can be found at <http://www.wflcweb.org/>



The Way Forward – A Six-Point Plan

Looking across all 23 state and Pacific Island Forest Action Plans, a Six-Point Plan for successful implementation emerges and defines the way forward. Behind each of these ideas is the recognition that the Forest Action Plans build on decades of successful partnerships among state forestry agencies, the U.S. Forest Service, and others, working toward common goals. Successful implementation of the Six-Point Plan across landscapes by all responsible agencies, landowners, and stakeholders holds promise for healthy and sustainable western forests.

<p>1</p> <p>Strengthen partnerships and collaborative approaches</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Build adequate and flexible capacity and funding</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Capitalize on “co-benefits”</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Actively manage all forestlands</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Support research to inform science-based decision making</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Gain support through effective engagement</p>
<p>Effective collaboration allows partners to make the most of available funding, capacity, resources, and information.</p>	<p>Shared priority strategies offer compelling arguments to support capacity (staff, skills, training, equipment, data, etc.) and funding to accomplish base-level work, as well as to undertake new initiatives.</p>	<p>Focus on opportunities to meet multiple objectives with one management action, e.g., fuel reduction projects that maintain watershed benefits and/or support local economies through the production of biomass energy and other forest products. This will result in the most efficient implementation efforts.</p>	<p>With such a complex patchwork of ownership and management responsibilities, coordinated work across jurisdictional boundaries and on all lands is critical. It is only through a landscape-scale approach that major threats to western forests can be mitigated and managed, and benefits can be provided to citizens and communities.</p>	<p>To support effective implementation of priority strategies and to prepare for future needs, research and the best available science must be part of an ongoing, collaborative effort to define and act upon the forestry issues of the West.</p>	<p>Successful strategy implementation will only occur if citizens — collectively and individually — understand, accept, and support the principles, strategies, and actions envisioned in the Forest Action Plans. Without public support, accomplishments will fall short — with it, the management needed to ensure healthy and sustainable western forests can be successfully implemented.</p>

