



April 19, 2011

## **Position Statement** **Western Forestry Leadership Coalition**

### **Western Landscape-Scale Management: Capitalizing on Existing USDA Forest Service Authorities**

#### **SUMMARY STATEMENT:**

There is increasing consensus that sustaining and enhancing the health of forests in the western U.S. requires a collaborative, landscape-scale approach. Western forests face an increasing host of threats, including climate change, wildland fire, and insect and disease infestations. The one commonality among these threats is that they cross forest boundaries and ownerships. To sustainably manage western forested landscapes and maximize the vital services they provide, including clean air and water, recreational opportunities, and forest products and jobs, it is crucial for all stakeholders to work together. Collaboration among those who have a stake in the future of the forests, both at the national and local levels, is a powerful tool to support and guide management needed to accomplish desired outcomes. Fostered collaborative management serves the values of society and ensures the long-term health and sustainability of western forests.

The position of the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition (WFLC) is to support and promote the use of cross-boundary and collaborative authorities, as well as any other opportunities for work to be successfully completed at a landscape-scale in the western U.S. This position statement presents an extensive and expanding array of authorities available to the WFLC's state and federal forestry membership, with the intention of informing management at all levels of member agencies on the variety of tools available in support of landscape-scale management.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

In both the state and federal forestry arenas, current discussion and policy making provide exceptional opportunities to advance landscape-scale management. From a state forestry standpoint, the recent release of the Statewide Forest Resource Assessments and Strategies (Forest Action Plans) has helped identify the most pressing forest issues in each state, as observed and identified by multiple stakeholder groups across landscapes and ownerships. These plans can help land managers and policy makers make informed decisions about where to target limited resources both within a given state and throughout the West. They provide an opportunity to target resources across all levels to the most pressing locations and in response to the most pressing threats. With regards to federal policy making, the USDA Forest Service (USFS) is in the final stages of developing a new planning rule which proposes to emphasize and integrate collaboration into its long-term planning processes. The establishment of a collaborative way of developing forest and grassland plans, and the requirement for responsible officials to examine management decisions within a landscape-scale context are both key elements of the administration's proposed rule.

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The USFS - stewards of 193 million acres of national forests and grasslands and providers of technical and financial support to state, tribal, and local governments as well as non-profit and private forest owners - is well positioned to play a significant role in moving the West towards a more sustainable and collaborative form of landscape-scale management. In addition, the USFS has one of the premier forestry research organizations in the world. Recognized globally, the USFS Research and Development branch works to provide innovative science and technology to improve the health and use of the Nation’s forests and rangelands. A common understanding about the collaborative tools available to the USFS and its partners is needed to support the development and implementation of collaborative forest management projects across the West. The authorities presented below allow the USFS and its partners to address forest management on a landscape-scale, and it is through federal, state, tribal and private partnerships that the potential of these authorities is maximized. These authorities fall into two broad categories: those that allow cross-boundary work to occur (Table 1), and those that help foster collaboration among forest owners and other stakeholders (Table 2).

Taken together, the full use of these authorities enables a more collaborative form of landscape-scale management across the West.

**Table 1 – Summary of Landscape-Scale Cross-Boundary Management Authorities**

<b>Authority</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>States</b>	<b>Expiration</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Wyden Amendment</a> (4)</li> </ul>	Cooperative agreements for fish, wildlife and watershed work on non-federal lands that impact USFS lands, to restore ecosystem health across multiple ownerships.	All	None
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act</a> (4)</li> </ul>	Federally-funded, state-implemented grant and technical assistance programs in support of private forest conservation, forest health, and fire prevention.	All	None
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Authorities that Foster Collaborative Solutions to Wildland Fire Management</a> (5)</li> </ul>	Mutual aid and interagency agreements that delineate shared wildland fire suppression responsibilities in a given area; Community wildfire protection plans that identify the most critical areas in need of fuels treatment; and a Cohesive Strategy for addressing wildland fire issues across the U.S.	All	None
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Good Neighbor Authority</a> (6)</li> </ul>	Agreements that fund state treatments for watershed restoration, hazardous fuels reduction, and insect and disease treatment on federal lands, to improve forest management across federal/non-federal boundaries.	CO UT	CO – 2013 UT – Currently Expired
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Federal Noxious Weed Act</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Carlson-Foley Act</a> (6)</li> </ul>	Agreements that lead to cooperative management of noxious weeds (including state treatments on USFS lands), the creation of Coordinated Weed Management Areas (CWMAs), and improved forest and grassland health across state/federal boundaries.	All	None

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<b>Authority</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>States</b>	<b>Expiration</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Sikes Act</a> (7)</li> </ul>	Cooperative Agreements and program coordination between USDA and DOI agencies and state agencies on conservation and rehabilitation of wildlife, fish and game considered threatened or endangered.	All	None

**Table 2 – Summary of Landscape-Scale Collaborative Management Authorities**

<b>Authority</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>States</b>	<b>Expiration</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Stewardship Contracting Authority</a> (7)</li> </ul>	Collaboratively developed projects that restore USFS landscapes, reduce fire risk, and support local communities through goods for services contracts.	All	2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program</a> (8)</li> </ul>	Collaborative proposals for wildfire management cost reduction and ecological restoration work on landscapes greater than 50,000 acres and primarily National Forest System-based, which compete for funding nationally.	All	2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Tribal Forest Protection Act</a> (8)</li> </ul>	Tribal proposals that address fire and other threats or restoration needs on federal lands which pose an immediate threat to adjacent tribal lands.	All	None
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">NEPA – Cooperating Agency Authority</a> (9)</li> </ul>	Involvement of additional federal, state and local agencies or tribal governments to inform decision making on NEPA documents and effects statements.	All	None
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">National Agriculture Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act</a> (9)</li> </ul>	Research partnerships between USFS Research and Development with outside organizations, individuals and colleges and universities to jointly produce scientific findings, journal articles, technical reports, and other materials to educate and inform managers.	All	None
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Research Act</a> (9)</li> </ul>	Development and delivery of knowledge and innovative technology to improve the health and use of the Nation’s forests and rangelands – both public and private.	All	None
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Service First</a> (10)</li> </ul>	Interagency collaboratives between USFS and DOI that enhance the delivery of landscape-scale management of federal resources to the public.	All	2011

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#### **Cross-Boundary Authorities Toolbox:**

##### Wyden Amendment (Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Agreements)

The Wyden Amendment authority, offered by Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR), was initially authorized within the fiscal year (FY) 1999 Omnibus Appropriations Act (P.L. 105-277), and given permanent authorization in the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (P.L. 111-11). It allows for USFS money (National Forest System (NFS) funds) to be spent on non-federal lands through cooperative agreements with willing state, tribal, and local governments, private and nonprofit entities, and private landowners. The law allows the USFS to partner with other groups on projects that benefit resources on both public and private land with the goal of restoring and enhancing watersheds. Projects must protect, restore, or enhance fish and wildlife habitat and other watershed resources, or reduce the risk of natural disaster where public safety is threatened, to the benefit of the fish, wildlife and other resources on National Forest lands within the project watershed. Examples of work that can be entered into under the Wyden Amendment include: working with a private landowner for stream bank stabilization in areas that are negatively impacting fish habitat on NFS lands, supporting a local non-profit financially to complete a watershed-wide assessment, or coordinating efforts with a state to treat fire-prone brush and trees adjacent to NFS lands.

##### Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act

The Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act (P.L. 95-313) authorizes the USFS to spend funds to work through and in cooperation with State Foresters or equivalent agencies in implementing technical programs affecting non-federal forest lands. It authorizes cooperation and assistance to non-federal forest landowners and communities in forest management, including urban and community forest management, production of timber and other forest resources, insect and disease control, rural fire prevention and control, forest management and planning assistance, and technology implementation. The Act establishes and authorizes the USFS Forest Stewardship, Forest Legacy, Forest Health Management and Urban and Community Forestry programs, among others, which provide invaluable assistance to state and private forestry interests across the West. More recently, the 2008 Farm Bill (P.L. 110-234) amended the Act to create the Community Forest and Open Space program, as well as facilitate the completion of Statewide Forest Resource Assessments and Strategies, which helped identify the greatest threats to forest resources across all ownerships in each state. Great success has been achieved through these federally-funded, state-delivered programs, marked by the ability of the USFS and State Forestry agencies to work together to help private landowners and rural communities care for their forests and strengthen local economies.

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#### Authorities that Foster Collaborative Solutions to Wildland Fire Management

A range of different authorities and resources exist to support collaborative planning, decision-making, and response on wildland fire. The Reciprocal Fire Protection Act (P.L. 84-46), as well as other authorities, confers the general authority to federal agencies to enter into cooperative agreements, including mutual aid agreements that allow for federal, state, tribal and local governments to share fire suppression responsibilities in a given area. These agreements have become an essential tool in delineating responsibilities for jointly managing fire across lands of all ownerships in the West. They improve efficiency by facilitating the coordination and exchange of personnel, equipment, supplies, services, and funds to sustain wildland fire management activities, such as prevention, preparedness, communication and education, fuels treatment and hazard mitigation, fire planning, response strategies, tactics and alternatives, suppression and post-fire rehabilitation and restoration. These agreements can address, in advance of a fire, issues such as liability, reimbursement of costs, and jurisdiction so that when a wildland fire does occur, the response is as seamless and cooperative as possible.

Additional cooperative coordination of fire preparedness and suppression response activities is provided through the National Wildfire Coordination Group (NWCG) and the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC). In the West, there are also nine Geographic Area Coordination Centers (GACCs) established through individual interagency agreements. These GACCs serve as centers of logistical support and mobilization of resources for federal, state and local agencies in a given geographic area. The national and regional coordination of firefighting agencies to share resources allows for the most cost-effective use of fire suppression resources across agencies boundaries and jurisdictions in the western U.S.

Another important set of tools in managing fire across landscapes are community wildfire protection plans (CWPPs). Authorized under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) (P.L. 108-148) the creation of CWPPs involves collaboration between federal and state agencies and local communities. CWPPs enable communities to develop plans on how to reduce their risk from wildland fire and target priority fuels reduction treatments in and around communities with a focus on priority areas that may cross multiple ownership boundaries. Under the HFRA authority, the USFS and BLM can then target treatments on agency lands identified as priority areas under a CWPP.

In addition to restructuring the way the federal government funds fire suppression, the Federal Land Assistance, Management and Enhancement Act (FLAME Act), passed in 2009, directed the responsible agencies to develop a Cohesive Strategy for Wildland Fire consistent with the recommendations from the Government Accountability Office report on Wildland Fire Management in 2007. Efforts are currently underway to develop a National Cohesive Strategy for Wildland Fire to collaboratively address growing wildfire problems in the United States. This national landscape-scale approach is important as federal, state, local and tribal governments and non-governmental organizations need to work together to reduce wildfire risk, restore and maintain resilient landscapes, create and maintain fire adapted communities, and provide efficient and safe response to wildfire.

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#### Good Neighbor Authority

The Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) was originally authorized by language included in the FY 2001 Interior Appropriations Act (P.L. 106-291) as a pilot program in the State of Colorado through the year 2004. The FY 2005 Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 108-447) extended the pilot until 2009 and expanded it to include all Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands in addition to USFS lands. This amendment also created a separate pilot program in the State of Utah. The FY 2010 Interior Appropriations Act (P.L. 111-88) extended the Colorado pilot until 2013. The Utah pilot expired in 2010; however, there are currently efforts within the annual USFS budget process to get the authority reinstated. There have been discussions of making the GNA authority permanent, as well as expanding the GNA to apply throughout the West, including support in Congress from western legislators (Sen. Barrasso - WY, Sen. Udall - CO).

The GNA allows for state agencies to act as an agent for federal agencies to complete watershed and other restoration treatments on federal lands. Additionally, the Colorado GNA authority requires that similar or complimentary treatments also occur on adjacent non-federal (state or private lands) to maximize cross-boundary effectiveness. The state agencies have typically taken the lead on using the GNA and the agreements are oftentimes driven by projects on state, local and private lands, not federal lands. State agencies follow all applicable state requirements with respect to contracting, hiring, and labor laws for projects carried out under the GNA. This authority helps to leverage limited resources, and has proved particularly useful in supporting forest, rangeland and watershed restoration and protection; insect treatments; and hazardous fuels activities to decrease fire risk. Project work can include project design, layout, marking and selling of timber, service contracts, and project administration.

During the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress in 2010, legislation was introduced that would have created a permanent GNA and expanded the authority to additional western states (the National Forest Insect and Disease Emergency Act, S. 2798). The language of S.2798, as amended and approved by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, made substantial changes to contracting and subcontracting provisions of the GNA when compared to the authority as it currently exists in Colorado. The Council of Western State Foresters has expressed concern that these changes could effectively prevent states from utilizing the GNA. In the current Congress, Senator Barrasso (WY) introduced S. 375, the Good Neighbor Forestry Act, which would establish a permanent, west-wide GNA based closely on the existing authority in Colorado.

#### The Federal Noxious Weed Act and The Carlson-Foley Act

The long-standing Carlson-Foley Act of 1968 (P.L. 90-583) permits agency heads, including the Chief of the USFS, to allow appropriate state agencies onto federal lands for the control of noxious plants. Additionally, The Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-629), as amended by the 1990 Farm Bill (P.L. 101-624) requires that federal land management agencies enter into cooperative agreements to coordinate the management of undesirable plant species on federal lands where similar programs are being implemented on state and private lands in the same area. These are important authorities that, in concert with a host of other management

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authorities, have fostered the creation of Coordinated Weed Management Areas (CWMAs) and facilitated landscape-scale treatment of invasive and noxious plants, improving the health of western forests and grasslands. CWMAs are local organizations that exist throughout the West to integrate noxious weed management across jurisdictional boundaries and maximize treatment effectiveness. For example, the North Rim Landscape CWMA in western Colorado coordinates treatment efforts on yellow star thistle, leafy spurge, yellow toadflax and other invasives across USFS, BLM, National Park Service, state, county and private lands. In another example, the BLM has worked with two local CWMAs in New Mexico to have aerial treatment of salt cedar expanded onto BLM-managed public lands.

#### The Sikes Act

The Sikes Act (P.L. 86-797), passed in 1960 and amended multiple times since, provides authority for USDA and Department of the Interior (DOI) agencies to develop plans in cooperation with state agencies for conservation and rehabilitation programs targeted at threatened or endangered wildlife, fish and game. The Act authorizes state agencies to enter into cooperative agreements with the federal agencies as needed to provide for fish and wildlife habitat improvements or modifications; provide for range rehabilitation where necessary for support of wildlife; or require the control of off-road vehicle traffic. The Sikes Act authority has been used successfully throughout the West to develop cost share agreements between the USFS, DOI, and state agencies for the restoration of fish and wildlife habitat on a variety public lands. Project activities have included noxious weed control, prescribed burning, culvert replacement, and silvicultural treatments.

#### **Collaboration Authorities Toolbox:**

##### Stewardship Contracting Authority

The stewardship contracting authority for the USFS was first received through the FY 1999 Omnibus Appropriations Act (P.L. 105-277) as a pilot authority. The FY 2000 Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 106-113) expanded the authority to allow the use of agreements in addition to contracts. The FY 2003 Consolidated Appropriations Resolution (P.L. 108-7) expanded the authority to include the BLM, and extended the authorization until 2013. There has been support for establishment of permanent authorization by western members of Congress (Sen. Udall - CO, Rep. Lummis - WY), and the introduction of stewardship contracting legislation in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress is possible.

The goal of the authority is to establish contracts to improve forest and rangeland health through the development of sustainable rural communities, restore and maintain healthy forest ecosystems, and provide a continuing source of local income and employment. Stewardship contracting allows for the exchange of goods for services and facilitates land restoration and enhancement efforts by using the value of traded goods to complete and complement important work on the ground and across boundaries. The USFS and BLM can contract for pre-commercial thinning, trail maintenance and fuel reduction work by offsetting the costs through

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the value of the vegetative material removed in the course of the work, and applying excess receipts to future stewardship contracts. The contracts are awarded through “best value contracting” and can last up to 10 years, which assists contractors in qualifying for loans and capital-intensive equipment purchases. Stewardship contracting can reduce management costs through goods for services exchanges and engages local organizations through a collaborative process to create jobs and improve environmental conditions. The authority has been used throughout the West, with notable successful long term projects established in Arizona (White Mountain Stewardship Contract) and Colorado (Front Range Stewardship Contract).

#### Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program

The Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (P.L. 111-11) established the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) to encourage the collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes. The Act authorizes up to \$40 million per year for this program through 2019. In FY 2010 Congress appropriated \$10 million to this fund. While FY 2011 appropriations have yet to be received from Congress, the FY 2011 and 2012 President’s Budget request was for the full \$40 million.

The authorization creates a program through which USFS units, in collaboration with states and interested stakeholders, submit project proposals for funding. In 2010, the Secretary of Agriculture appointed a diverse 15 member advisory committee charged with evaluating CFLRP proposals and making funding recommendations. If selected, CFLRP funding supports 50% of project costs, with the other 50% being borne by USFS units and partner contributions. Projects must be comprised primarily of forested National Forest System land, but may also include land under the jurisdiction of the BLM or the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) as well as any other federal, state, tribal, or private land. The program aims to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire by implementing collaboratively developed projects across large landscapes (greater than 50,000 acres). The primary focus of projects should be the reduction of wildfire management costs by re-establishing natural fire regimes. The program also emphasizes ecological restoration to achieve ecological and watershed health objectives and utilization of forest restoration by-products to offset treatment costs within these landscapes to benefit local economies. In the first year of funding (FY 2010), western proposals were selected from Idaho, Montana, Colorado (2), Arizona, New Mexico, California, Oregon, and Washington.

#### Tribal Forest Protection Act

The Tribal Forest Protection Act (TFPA) (P.L. 108-278) authorizes the USFS and the BLM to give priority consideration to tribal proposals to conduct management activities on federal lands adjoining or adjacent to Indian trust lands with the aim of reducing the risk from wildfire and other forest threats. The authority provides a tool for tribes to propose work and enter into contracts and agreements with federal agencies to reduce fire and/or other threats (i.e., disease infestation) posed by USFS or BLM lands to Indian trust resources, such as forests, grasslands, or tribal communities. The authority also applies to land restoration activities, such as post-fire rehabilitation. After a project is proposed in writing to the USFS or BLM, the agency must

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respond within 120 days and either proceed toward a project agreement or decline the proposal. The Act anticipates that most threat reduction activities on adjoining or adjacent USFS or BLM land will be conducted by tribes under stewardship contracts, but any other eligible authorities are also available. Between 2003 and 2009, the authority was used across the West for 11 contacts involving nine different tribes: Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Mescalero Apache Tribe, White Mountain Apache Tribe, Hoopa Valley Tribe, Ramona Band of Cahuilla Indians, Tule River Tribe, Viejas Tribe, Quinault Indian Nation, and the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation.

#### The National Environmental Policy Act – Cooperating Agency Authority

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (P.L. 91-190) and associated regulations released by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) establishes a mechanism for federal, state, and local agencies and tribes to cooperate on NEPA projects and environmental effects statements related to proposed federal activities. On these projects, the established lead federal agency can declare another federal agency, a state or local agency, or a tribe as a "cooperating agency" if the cooperating agency has jurisdiction by law, or has special expertise related to the project. The participation of cooperating agencies in the NEPA process can be a useful tool in engaging all governmental stakeholders in a project and making sure decision-makers have the technical support and environmental information necessary to make informed and timely decisions.

#### National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act

The National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (P.L. 95-113), subsequently amended by the Food Security Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-198) and by P.L. 105-198, provides authority for USFS Research and Development to enter into joint venture agreements with organizations or individuals performing research and with colleges or universities for a broad suite of teaching activities. USFS Research and Development uses this authority extensively to collaborate with public and private research institutions to address research questions related to a broad range of western issues such as wildland fire, terrestrial ecosystems, water quantity and quality, and the social and economic dimensions of urbanization. These joint ventures produce scientific findings, journal articles, technical reports, syntheses, consultations, and contribute to the education of the public and natural resource managers in federal, state and local organizations to inform decision making related to landscape-scale forest management in the West.

#### Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Research Act

The Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Research Act of 1978, as amended (P.L. 95-307), authorizes renewable resources research activities on national forests and rangelands. The Act provides the underpinnings of the USFS Research and Development program and its mission to develop and deliver knowledge and innovative technology to improve the health and use of the Nation's forests and rangelands – both public and private. The Act allows the USFS to

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operate forest and rangeland research facilities and further allows the USFS Research and Development program to accept funds from international, federal, state, and other governmental and nongovernmental organizations. Under this authority, the USFS Research and Development program conducts a broad suite of forest and rangeland research activities focused on western issues such as the feasibility of biomass energy technologies, best practice to provide for water quantity and quality, fuel treatments across landscapes, capacity of species and populations to adapt to changes in climate regimes and many other topics.

A key component of this Act also includes direction for the national Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program to maintain a comprehensive inventory and analysis of the forest and range lands of the U. S. The FIA program, the nation's census for forests, conducts resource inventories, periodic assessments and develops quantitative tools and techniques for analysis. FIA is used extensively in the western U.S. by States, resource managers, land owners, private industry, consultants and others as a source for data, reports and maps, as well as assistance in developing analytical tools for identifying risks, trends and emerging issues on forests and rangelands.

#### Service First

The Department of Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2001 (P.L. 106-291), as amended by the Appropriations Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-54), gives authority to the USFS, BLM, National Park Service (NPS), and Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to jointly establish pilot programs that better manage the land and better serve the public. The core principle of the Service First program is collaboration between agencies; a direct response to the need for a more integrated approach to land management and budget execution. Methodologies that have been used to enhance collaboration under this authority include shared positions between agencies, supervisory and line officer roles that cut across multiple agencies, combined training programs, shared facility space, and the creation of multi-agency integrated resource teams. The Service First authority has been successfully used to bolster collaborative efforts throughout the West, including the San Luis Valley Public Lands Center in Colorado (USFS and BLM) and the Southern Nevada Agency Partnership (USFS, BLM, NPS and FWS). The authority is currently set to expire on September 30, 2011; however, the administration has proposed permanent reauthorization in the FY 2012 President's Budget.

#### **Conclusion:**

Cross-boundary collaboration is especially important in the western U.S. due to the scale of forest health threats, the significant number of forest-dependent communities and the large amount of intermingled public and private forest lands. Having the ability to work across boundaries and ownerships will become even more important as threats to western private forests increase (*see* WFLC Threats to Western Private Forests report: [http://www.wflccenter.org/news\\_pdf/359\\_pdf.pdf](http://www.wflccenter.org/news_pdf/359_pdf.pdf)), climate change continues to exacerbate the detrimental effects of fire and insect and disease outbreaks on western forests (*see* CWSF Recommendations and Guidance for Addressing Climate Change:

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[http://www.wflccenter.org/news\\_pdf/363\\_pdf.pdf](http://www.wflccenter.org/news_pdf/363_pdf.pdf)), and budgets for forest management face increasing pressures as the nation recovers from recession. These threats to western forests do not stop at jurisdictional boundaries, nor should forest management treatments.

Collaboration across land ownerships, government agencies and communities is the key to success on the ground. The cross-boundary and collaborative authorities discussed herein are proven tools that spur action leading to successes in collaborative forest management. With the recent release of the Forest Action Plans and the ongoing development of a new USFS Planning Rule for Nation Forest System lands, there are opportunities to pair the use of these authorities with targeted recommendations on where collaborative resource management is most needed. Land managers at all levels need to look to these authorities as essential tools to be used in moving forward on implementing the recommendations contained in the Forest Action Plans and fulfilling the objectives of a new USFS land management planning process. These efforts will improve the health and condition of western forests and sustain the goods and services those forests provide to the American people.

As decision makers look to a landscape-scale approach to western forest management, the WFLC urges that the above tools and authorities are considered, applied and adjusted as needed to achieve healthy, sustainable forests in the West. Land managers at all levels, both within and outside of the WFLC membership, benefit from working together to manage the common forest resources of the West. This includes the use of existing authorities, emerging tools, and increased flexibility and opportunities for collaboration. The WFLC supports the use of cross-boundary and collaborative authorities, as well as any other opportunities for work to be successfully completed at a landscape-scale in the western U.S.