

Contact Information:

Western Forestry Leadership Coalition

Sara Goodwin

307-389-9484

sgoodwin@wflcweb.org

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Western Leaders Gather to Discuss Future of Forestry

SAN FRANCISCO, CA – Today the [Western Forestry Leadership Coalition](#) (WFLC), in partnership with the Council of Western State Foresters (CWSF) concluded their 2015 Spring Meeting hosted by the [California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection](#) (CAL FIRE). This event brought together leaders on Western forestry issues to learn about the future of forestry in a changing climate.

The two-day event attracted nearly 100 attendees from across the United States for a welcome by John Laird, California Secretary for Natural Resources and an opening keynote by Robert Bonnie, USDA Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment.

“The Western Forestry Leadership Coalition consistently brings together thought leaders and practitioners to discuss issues of the day,” said Under Secretary Bonnie. “This meeting was focused on fixing how wildfire suppression activities are funded, the priorities of the USDA and the Forest Service, and opportunities for collaboration to advance the goals of the Cohesive Strategy for Wildland Fire Management.”

During the 2015 Spring Meeting, attendees had an opportunity to participate in a field tour to Tilden Park, Grizzly Peak Road Scenic Overlook and a short visit to Oakland, CA to meet with community leaders working on urban forestry projects including representatives from California Urban ReLeaf. CAL FIRE representatives helped to facilitate the tour and educate attendees on the complexities of wildland fire.

“With over 33 million acres of forestland, California is the perfect place to host a gathering of the leadership dealing with the resource management challenges we are collectively facing across the Western United States,” said Chief Ken Pimlott, California’s state forester. “The meeting provided an invaluable opportunity to exchange experiences and gain fresh perspective on critical fire and forest management issues.”

Key topics of the WFLC Spring Meeting included wildland fire, natural resources policy in the United States and USDA Forest Service priorities in the Western United States. Other notable speakers included Jay Jensen, Associate Director for Land & Water Ecosystems, White House Council on Environmental Quality; Jim Ogsbury, Executive Director, Western Governors’ Association and representatives from key partner organizations.

“Holding the WFLC Spring Meeting in California allowed participants to discuss the impacts of the complex issues facing our Western forests,” said Alex Friend, WFLC co-lead and Director of the Pacific Southwest Research Station headquartered in Albany. “Now and in the years ahead, rigorous science will play a key role in helping land managers address these issues and restore resilience in forests across the West.”

The meeting concluded with a panel highlighting Western forestry priorities, initiatives and partnerships. Panelists included Rebecca Barnard, National Wild Turkey Federation; Tom Fry, American Forest Foundation; Nadine Block, Sustainable Forestry Initiative; and Mike Beacom, National Association of Conservation Districts.

To learn more about the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition and the Council of Western State Foresters, please visit www.wflccenter.org.

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About the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition

Formally established in 2000, the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition (WFLC) represents a unique partnership between the Council of Western State Foresters and federal government forestry leaders. WFLC is comprised of 34 members from across the federal and state agencies of the West which include: 23 state members (also known as the Council of Western State Foresters) which include State, Territorial, and Commonwealth Foresters of the West and American-affiliated islands of the Pacific; and 11 USDA Forest Service members, which include: seven Western Regional Foresters, three Western USFS Research Station Directors, and one USFS Forest Products Lab Director.

About the Council of Western State Foresters

The Council of Western State Foresters (CWSF) is a nonpartisan organization of state, territorial, and commonwealth foresters of the Western United States and Pacific Islands. State Foresters are charged with providing forest management assistance to landowners, managing state trust lands, and supplying wildfire and forest health protection services. CWSF staff and members participate in the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition with Western members of the U.S. Forest Service leadership. CWSF cultivates partnerships, raises awareness and takes action on the most important issues affecting forests in the Western United States and Pacific Islands.