



Press Release

Western Forestry Leadership Coalition

Delivering Resources, Partnerships, and Solutions for Western Forestry Challenges

Western State and Federal Coalition Applaud Authorization of Forest Restoration Tools With passage of new Farm Bill

February 24, 2014 (Denver, CO) — Western State and Federal forest managers applaud the passage of a new 5-year bipartisan Farm Bill, and are encouraged by the inclusion of key forestry provisions such as the permanent reauthorization of the Stewardship Contracting Authority, and the expansion of the Good Neighbor Authority. The USDA Forest Service (Forest Service) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) utilize these tools on state, private, and federal lands in the West to improve forest health, stimulate forest-based economies, and increase collaborative project development among diverse constituencies. The Western Forestry Leadership Coalition (WFLC) has been supportive of Stewardship Contracting and the Good Neighbor Authority, and believes their inclusion in the new Farm Bill will continue to help improve and sustain healthy western forests now and into the future.

Stewardship contracting offers forest managers in the West another method to achieve forest management objectives, increase job opportunities, and extend work seasons. Contracts help assist industry capacity in areas that have been hit by the decline in the forest products industry and help keep skilled employees working. The expansion of the Good Neighbor Authority to any state with a national forest will foster increased partnerships between state forestry agencies, the Forest Service and the BLM while reducing hazardous fuels, mitigating insect outbreaks, and improving watershed resiliency. The tool authorizes the Forest Service and the BLM to enter into agreements with state forestry agencies to conduct critical watershed improvements on federal lands while conducting similar activities on adjacent state or private land.

WFLC member and USFS Northern Regional Forester, Faye Krueger states, “This gives us more tools to improve forest restoration on private, state and federal lands and address the increase in catastrophic wildfires, better serving our land and communities.” Without these authorizations in the Farm Bill, the stewardship contracting authority would have expired at the end of fiscal year 2014, and the Good Neighbor Authority at the end of 2018.

This press release is posted at www.wflcweb.org. For more information, photos and success stories on utilizing stewardship contracts in the West please see www.wflcweb.org/info-materials/issue-briefs/.

The WFLC comprises 34 members from across the West: 23 western State and Pacific Island forestry agency directors, and 11 U.S. Forest Service members, which include 7 western USFS Regional Foresters, 3 western USFS Research Station Directors, and the USFS Forest Products Laboratory Director. A four-member staff based in Denver helps to deliver the goals and objectives of the Coalition. 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.