



High-Performance Partnership Report

*Second Quarter
FY2014*

*January - March
2014*

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service

May 2014



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	iii
General Partnership Updates	v
Quarterly High-Performance Partnership Headlines	ix
Quarterly High-Performance Partnership Accomplishments and Ongoing Efforts	
<i>Creating Strategic Opportunities in Water and Watershed Management</i>	
National Water Replenishment and Enhancement Initiative.	1
Rocky Mountain Watershed Protection Partnership	3
Wasatch Legacy Project.	5
Western Watershed Enhancement Project	7
<i>Promoting Increased Partnerships in Healthy Forests and Restoration</i>	
America’s Longleaf Restoration Initiative	11
California Ecological Restoration with Power and Water Utilities	13
Carbon Sequestration and Reforestation on National Forests	16
National Forest Foundation’s Treasured Landscapes, Unforgettable Experiences Campaign	17
Western Utilities Fuel Reduction and Fire Protection Partnership .	20
<i>Strengthening and Creating Pathways for Expanded Youth Engagement</i>	
21st Century Conservation Service Corps	23
Youth Engagement in Conservation Initiative	25
<i>Fostering Synergies in Recreation and Volunteerism</i>	
Recreation Restoration, Adaptation, and Ski Area Campaign. . . .	28
<i>Developing Connections in Urban Communities for Forests and Grasslands</i>	
Baltimore Restoration Partnership	31
Urban Waters Federal Partnership	33

INTRODUCTION

Since its inception, the USDA Forest Service (USFS) has maintained a commitment to working with a variety of organizations and interests while fulfilling our motto of ‘caring for the land and serving people.’ As such, the agency accomplishes much of our work through collaboration with a diversity of private, non-profit, and government partners—leveraging significant energy and support towards critical USFS mission activities. Strategic investments in partner-focused efforts allows the agency to accomplish more across broad landscapes and through broader constituencies.

Innovative public-private partnerships, in particular, are increasingly accomplishing goals in the agency’s high-priority focal areas: water, restoration, youth, recreation, and urban environments. These achievements support the USFS’s Public Private Partnership (P3) Strategy, established in 2011 to invite a diverse array of partners and beneficiaries to share in the care of our Nation’s forests and grasslands. The P3 Strategy identified a suite of national-scale public-private partnerships that have become the agency’s high-performance partnerships (HPPs). The HPPs are united by new and innovative features, such as:

- *Scaling* proven smaller scale projects to much larger landscapes;
- *Enabling* the circle of partners to include more diverse and broader number of partners;
- *Expanding* a greater public appreciation of the ecosystem services and benefits that accrue to communities;
- *Developing* new pathways for leveraging partner time, talent, and treasure at a nationally significant scale such as increasing the profile and capitalizing on the fundraising ability of our congressionally chartered foundations – the National Forest Foundation (NFF), the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), and the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF).

The HPPs have been identified and are pursued to their fullest extent in order to emphasize the value of public-private partnerships and promote learning across the agency and its partners. These HPPs have expanded in number as new opportunities have emerged to partner in novel ways, at scale with private companies, service organizations, and other federal, state, and local agencies. The high-priority focal areas for public-private partnerships have also evolved to keep pace with the critical challenges and opportunities facing the USFS and its partners as follows:

- *Creating Strategic Opportunities in Water and Watershed Management* - The USFS is expanding innovative partnerships with water utilities, municipalities, private landowners, other private companies, and nonprofits to promote policies and investments that support watershed restoration and water quality improvement work in priority watersheds, spotlighting the direct connection between healthy forests and clean and consistent supplies of fresh water.
- *Promoting Increased Partnerships in Healthy Forests and Restoration* - Through innovative partnerships, nonprofits, community-based practitioners, committed corporations, foundations priority forest landscapes are being restored. Through collaborative endeavors, the public and private sectors are sharing in the broad benefits of healthy,

- restored forest landscapes, including clean and consistent water supplies, reduced wildfire risk, carbon sequestration, and sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities.
- *Strengthening and Creating Pathways for Expanded Youth Engagement* - The USFS is strengthening existing partnerships and building new relationships to reach a greater percentage of America's youth and engage them in conservation education, service and employment opportunities. Such innovative partnerships across government, nonprofits, corporations, and foundations foster the next generation of land stewards by encouraging youth to spend time in nature, promoting health, and building lasting connections to the land.
 - *Fostering Synergies in Recreation and Volunteerism* - Outdoor recreation builds the agency's constituency, promotes public health, and supports local, national, and international business. The USFS is exploring new partnerships with foundations, non-profits and committed corporations to restore and adapt recreation sites to meet the needs of a diverse American public for dispersed and developed recreation opportunities.
 - *Developing Connections in Urban Communities for Forests and Grasslands* - As a part of expanding its focus on connecting to urban America, the USFS is fostering mutually beneficial conservation partnerships in urban areas with local government, the private sector, universities and nonprofits to connect people to natural resource conservation. These urban natural resource partnerships can support the deployment and utilization of information and tools that enhance the management of urban natural resources.

Partnerships and alliances that tackle these high-priority focal areas are essential to carrying out today's conservation mission, and are designed to capitalize on the mutually beneficial interests of both the USFS and its partners.

The intent of this update is to highlight the accomplishments of these national-scale, public-private partnerships (HPPs). Although each HPP is listed in only one focal area, many of these partnerships, by their nature, are accomplishing objectives that cross or complement multiple focal areas.

Also, there are many partnerships outside of the ones highlighted here that continue to make significant contributions at all levels of the agency. Although too numerous to track in this report, it is important to note that they are equally important in accomplishing and meeting the goals outlined in the P3 Strategy. . In light of this increased attention and use of partnerships, the Chief of the USFS has directed agency leaders to use all available tools to work with government, private, and non-profit partners (through HPPs and beyond) to leverage agency resources and increase the number of organizations engaged in meaningful partnership with the USFS.

GENERAL PARTNERSHIP UPDATES

General

Forest Service's Partnership Virtual Conference – On February 5-6, 2014 the National Partnership Office in cooperation with the National Forest Foundation (NFF), held a virtual partnership conference for agency employees and our partners. Over 100 individuals from across the country participated in an in-depth exploration of the most pressing interests in the partnership community including: rules and ethics and grants and agreements, while also highlighting success stories and lessons learned. Participants took away a better understanding of the growing role of Public-Private Partnerships and also gained insights into how others operate across the country. The conference included recorded peer-learning sessions and interactive elements including group breakouts, guest speakers, and others. [An example of recorded sessions can be viewed by clicking this text.](#)

Expansion of the Service First Authority – Service First is a partnership authority now available to all agencies of the US Department of Agriculture and US Department of the Interior. The Consolidated Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2012 made the Service First authority permanent (Public Law 112-74). In FY 2014, the Consolidated Appropriations Act extended the authority to all bureaus and offices of either Department (Public Law 113-76). Service First is a way for the agencies to explore alternative methods of delivering one-stop customer service to the public, sharing people and resources, and harmonizing similar work. Service First is not an effort to create one agency out of the four agencies. Rather, it creates expectations for working together, as appropriate, to improve customer service and operational efficiency. [For more information click this text.](#)

Permanent Reauthorization for Stewardship Contracting – The Agricultural Act of 2014 (also known as the Farm Bill) contained permanent reauthorization for stewardship contracting. This law is fundamentally the same as the stewardship contracting authority the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the USFS has implemented for the past 10 years. Stewardship contracting is an important tool for implementing the agency's restoration work. Stewardship contracts and agreements allow the agency to support local communities while completing restoration work, such as wildlife habitat enhancement, fuel reduction, and invasive species treatments.

Good Neighbor Authority – For the past decade, implementation of the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) has been limited (by statute) to Utah and Colorado. Each state had slightly different authorities under their version of the good neighbor legislation and each State was successful in implementation of GNA. The Agricultural Act of the 2014 (also known as the Farm Bill) extended the Good Neighbor Authority to all States and Puerto Rico. The Good Neighbor

Authority allows the USFS, via cooperative agreement or contract, to permit the States to perform watershed restoration and forest management services on National Forest System lands. The USFS believes that GNA will provide an additional way for the agency and States to work together successfully over the long term. The USFS is currently coordinating on policy direction to implement the expanded authority.

USDA Economic Diversification in Southeast Alaska - Working Together – U.S. Department of Agriculture agencies (Forest Service, Rural Development, Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Food and Nutrition Service), joined by the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration, are working with business industry leaders, other government agencies, tribes, and non-governmental organizations to create jobs, bolster regional economies, and promote healthy communities in Southeast Alaska. These coordinated efforts help address the unique challenges faced by rural, remote, or underserved residents dealing with a changing economy. For more information see “[USDA Investment Strategy](#).”

Water

Collaborating for a Cleaner Chesapeake – Since 1990, the USFS has coordinated forest restoration and conservation efforts through the Chesapeake Forestry Workgroup to help restore the Nation’s largest estuary—the Chesapeake Bay Working with federal and state agencies in 7 state jurisdictions, all 18,000+ local governments, and countless non-profit organizations and businesses—partners are sharing information, incentives, and direction for increasing forest cover in their piece of the watershed. Since 80% of the watershed is in private ownership, the USFS plays a key role in getting the Bay state governors and all partners to adopt and implement major initiatives that favor forests (for example: urban tree canopy expansion, riparian forest restoration, and forest conservation in priority areas). In the summer of 2014, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), USFS, and Farm Service Agency, will facilitate a Riparian Forest Summit and Task Force to help the Chesapeake states reach new targets for increasing the rate of riparian forest restoration by a factor of 6 (partners have already restored 8,000 miles of riparian forest across the watershed from 1996-2013).

Restoration

NRCS and FS Chiefs’ Joint Landscape Restoration Partnership – On February 6, 2014 USDA Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment announced the NRCS and FS Chiefs’ Joint Landscape Restoration Partnership to improve the health and resiliency of forest ecosystems where public and private lands meet. The USFS and NRCS together will invest \$30 million in 13 projects across the nation to help mitigate wildfire threats to communities and landowners, protect water quality and supply and improve wildlife habitat for at-risk species. These priority projects will build on existing projects with local partnerships already in place. By leveraging technical and financial resources and coordinating activities on adjacent public and private lands, conservation work by the NRCS and USFS will be more efficient and effective in

these watersheds. [For more information click this text.](#)

Appalachian Forest Renewal Initiative – Across Appalachia, historical and current land-use changes, environmental disturbances, poorly reclaimed coal mining sites, and other factors have resulted in the decline of certain species of birds, impaired water quality in many watersheds, and the introduction of invasive plants and destructive forest insects and diseases. The USFS, in cooperation with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), is leading an initiative with the DOI-Office of Surface Mining, the multi-partner Appalachian Mountain Joint Venture, and The American Chestnut Foundation, to restore some of the ecologically important areas in the region. In 2014, the USFS and NFWF are targeting approximately \$700,000 for six on-the-ground pilot restoration projects designed to help reverse past practices and improve the ecology across Appalachia, including wildlife diversity, enhance water quality and support the local wood products industry.

Encouraging Sustainable Forestry Practices in Wisconsin's Driftless Area – Unplanned development and unsustainable logging practices are threatening important forests and other natural areas in southwest Wisconsin's Driftless Area. This rugged physical landscape totaling 2.1 million acres, nearly all of which is privately owned, is rich in wildlife diversity and supports important cold-water fisheries and a variety of forest products. To help reduce the threat to this important resource, a coalition comprised of the USFS, American Forestry Foundation, Aldo Leopold Foundation, Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources and other locally-based partners is targeting communications to local landowners to encourage sustainable forest management practices. This national demonstration project has the potential to significantly impact the ways state natural resource agencies engage private forest landowners.

Restoration of the Rim Fire – The restoration of the Rim Fire has created a tremendous opportunity for collaboration and partnership with a wide variety of agencies and nonprofits. Among the many opportunities being explored, USFS Pacific Southwest Region 5 (R5) has been working with Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) who recently committed \$1 million to Rim Fire Restoration. The Stanislaus National Forest is now beginning work with the Yosemite Stanislaus Collaborative to leverage these funds and utilize this seed money to create larger partnerships and expand restoration efforts.

Landscape Scale Chaparral Restoration Initiative – The forests of Southern California are experiencing a restoration crisis due to the unnatural fire frequency by human caused fires. This phenomenon is resulting in a large-scale type conversion from native chaparral to annual invasive grass. Loss of chaparral is resulting in increased fire risk and the loss of tremendous biodiversity. It also impacts water infrastructure and delivery. To help combat this threat, the USFS R5 is working with the NFF to develop a plan to launch a new Chaparral Initiative. This work will connect the USFS, researchers, project partners, and the general public to increase their interest and support of restoration in southern California Chaparral. Success will be measured by acres of restoration completed and people involved as well as quantifying the benefits from projects that improve ecosystem services.

Youth

The Wings Across the Americas Awards – The Wings Across the Americas is a partnership based USFS program to conserve migratory species: birds, bats, butterflies and dragonflies. The USFS works with a wide range of partners here in the United States and overseas to conserve habitats and populations of birds, bats, butterflies and dragonflies. On March 12, 2014, 61 employees across 19 USFS units and 6 USFS regions, along with partner organizations, received awards to recognize conservation partnerships involving USFS employees and their cooperators. An example of the USFS engagement through the Wings Across the Americas program is the [Monarch Joint Venture](#) which brings fifteen conservation, education, and research partners from across the United States to work together to conserve the monarch migration.

Recreation

Get Outdoors Colorado – In February 2014, the Get Outdoors Colorado Collaborative, in which USFS serves as a lead facilitator, was awarded the 2013 Partner Collaborative of the Year award by Colorado Parks and Wildlife. The partner collaborative is a group of over 175 state-wide partners including Colorado Parks and Recreation Association, US Department of Health and Human Services, Denver Parks and Recreation, Audubon Society, GPRed, the Greenway foundation, Vail Resorts, United Healthcare, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Yonder, and many more.

Urban

Wilderness in Chicago? - You bet! Chicago Wilderness is the name given both to the 200,000 acres of the best remaining examples of eastern tallgrass prairie and oak woodlands in the world and to the unprecedented alliance of 300 nonprofit, corporate and government organizations dedicated to protecting, restoring and managing these systems. The USFS was one of the founding members of the Chicago Wilderness Alliance, provided seed money (in the form of a grant) to jump start the initiative, and continues to provide funding and expertise to the partnership. Chicago Wilderness is dedicated to providing the places and programs for generations of families to connect with nature while at the same time creating awareness for the unique natural ecosystem that exists in the backyards of 8 million people living in the Chicago metropolitan area. Every spring, the Chicago Wilderness Congress provides a venue for over 700 professionals, volunteers, students, business leaders, and foundation representatives to come together to identify opportunities for collaboration, build new partnerships, and make connections to secure a thriving and healthy Chicago region for both people and nature.

HIGH-PERFORMANCE PARTNERSHIP HEADLINES JANUARY THROUGH MARCH 2014

Water and Watershed Management

National Water Replenishment and Enhancement Initiative – The USFS and the National Forest Foundation (NFF) are in promising conversations with Coca-Cola to support three watershed restoration projects at approximately \$280,000. The NFF will provide a 2:1 match for Coca-Cola contributions on Treasured Landscapes sites and a 0.5:1 match on other National Forest sites. Current discussions include watershed restoration projects on the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest, the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, and the Huron-Manistee National Forest.

Rocky Mountain Watershed Protection Partnership – The USFS and partners are implementing projects through current collection agreements with Denver Water, Aurora Water, Colorado Springs Utilities, Pueblo Board of Water Works, and Northern Water. Approximately 3,205 acres of hazardous fuel treatments were completed on-the-ground this reporting period, bringing total partnership accomplishments to 21,190 acres. Another 13,000 acres of treatments are currently planned or underway.

Wasatch Legacy Project – The WLP communication committee has developed a Communication Strategy and several products to be used to raise awareness of this important partnership. In addition, the WLP produced a [YouTube video](#) of the Millcreek Native Fish Restoration project.

Western Watershed Enhancement Partnership – The Boise National Forest is currently focused on proximate mitigation of effects from two large fires adjacent to several Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) managed reservoirs through post-fire Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) work. Trinity Ridge, as a human caused fire, allows the federal government to pursue remedies to recover the fire's suppression and emergency rehabilitation costs as well as assessment of natural resource damages and their value that, if recovered, may be used to support additional restoration work.

Healthy Forests and Restoration

America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative – In February 2014, the Longleaf Partnership Council released the 2013 Range-wide Accomplishment Report, which provides the first comprehensive look at the annual work that is occurring to bring back longleaf pine to the southern landscape. According to the Report, public and private partners involved in the ALRI accomplished 1.38 million acres of longleaf restoration work in 2013.

California Restoration with Power and Water Utilities – The USFS has worked intensively with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) and the State of California to allocate Cap and Trade Investment Funds to forest restoration on both public and private lands in the region. Following a series of field tours and high level multi-stakeholder meetings with state leaders and utility executives, in January 2014 the Governor announced his recommendation to spend \$50 million of the Cap and Trade Investment Fund on Forest Restoration in the coming year through a state partner agency, Calfire.

Carbon Sequestration and Reforestation on National Forests – The NFF has partnered with the USFS and the Salt River Project (SRP) to develop a carbon offset methodology for the restoration of southwestern ponderosa pine ecosystems.

NFF's Treasured Landscapes, Unforgettable Experiences Campaign – On the Tahoe National Forest Treasured Landscapes campaign site, NFF received more than \$300,000 from the SNC for the Sagehen Sensitive Species and Forest Management project. The effort will support forest thinning and prescribed fire to help restore the forest to a more natural condition resulting in reduced risks of large catastrophic fire, improved habitat conditions and a healthier watershed. Additional funds are expected from the State Wildlife Conservation Board.

Western Utilities Fuel Reduction and Fire Protection Partnership – In recent months the USFS and Xcel Energy have developed final drafts of a five-year and annual partnership investment plans. Partnership goals include reducing hazardous fuels on 3,350 acres and around 326 high priority transmission structures on three National Forests (Arapaho-Roosevelt, Pike-San Isabel, and White River). Total 5 year investments are expected to be around \$4.4 million, with approximately \$1.3 million contributed by Xcel Energy.

Youth Engagement

21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) – The USFS is collaborating with the Corporation for National & Community Service to leverage up to \$2 million to support 21CSC AmeriCorps partners serving on forests and grasslands.

Youth Engagement in Conservation Initiative – The USFS conducted an intensive review of the Developing the Next Generation of Conservationists proposals, recommending nine for funding support (\$230,000 of FS funds; matched by \$560,000 in non-federal contributions). USFS project recommendations serve all the Regions.

Recreation and Volunteerism

Recreation Restoration, Adaptation, and Ski Area Campaign – The NFF issued 12 grants to local conservation partners with more than \$456,000 of funding from the Ski Conservation Fund (In-kind match is \$577,968.00; Non Federal (partner) cash match = \$460,614.00; and other Federal Funds contributed to projects = \$197,952). These projects will support trail and recreation infrastructure improvements, enhance wildlife habitat, restore streams and wetlands, protect native wildlife species, and reduce noxious weeds on the nation's most visited National Forest.

Urban Environment

Baltimore Restoration Partnership – USFS scientists continued to provide presentations on the Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) Assessment and Prioritization Tool, garnering real interest from a number of new stakeholders. The Maryland Governor, for example, called for a special Governor's roundtable discussion of UTC and UTC tools, which is scheduled for April 2014.

Urban Waters Federal Partnership – For the second year, a joint USFS-Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) partnership with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) offered \$645,000 in federal support, which will be paired with private funds, to local organizations through the Urban Waters Grant Program. More than 40 proposals were submitted and successful awards will be announced in the early summer 2014.

High-Performance Partnerships

*Quarterly Accomplishments
and Ongoing Efforts*



*Creating Strategic Opportunities
in Water and Watershed
Management*



National Water Replenishment and Enhancement Initiative

In 2011, the USFS through its congressionally chartered non-profit foundations (the National Forest Foundation – NFF; and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation - NFWF) began working with the Coca-Cola Company (Coca-Cola) to restore watersheds and forested lands across the country. The organizations share mutual interest in watershed health: Coca-Cola is pursuing its sustainability and water replenishment goals, while the USFS and its foundations are ensuring an ample, clean drinking water supply and healthy fish/wildlife habitat. Funded projects rely on locally based partners, employees, and community volunteers to improve habitat and functions through the construction of sediment detention basins, rehabilitation of alluvial fans, and filling of deep gullies.

Quarterly Milestones Accomplished from January – March 2014

- During this quarter, the USFS, Coca-Cola and NFF have been working together to finalize 2014 project selection. Seven projects were selected for further analysis, including estimated replenishment values for each project.
- The USFS and Coca-Cola representatives met in March to finalize projects for 2014, based on these estimates. Three watershed restoration projects were identified for final review and possible implementation for 2014 - projects on the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest, the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, and the Huron-Manistee National Forest. Coca-Cola has committed to funding up to \$280,000 in project cost. The NFF is committed to matching these funds 1:1 dollars for projects within Treasured Landscapes and a 0.5:1 match for projects outside of Treasured Landscapes.
- The funding will be finalized and committed next quarter.
- The Coca Cola/NFF partnership supported the removal of 25 acres of invasive Scotch Broom in the Upper Big Tujunga watershed on the Angeles National Forest. This area is within the NFF designated Treasured Landscape in that watershed. The removal of these invasive plants will help to replenish 2.2 million liters of water to the watershed. Also contributes to NFF's Treasured Landscapes, Unforgettable Experiences Campaign HPP.



National Water Replenishment and Enhancement Initiative (continued)

Ongoing Partnership Efforts

- The next quarterly call between the USFS and Coca-Cola is planned for May 2014. This call will focus on finalizing final details surrounding the 2014 projects and begin laying the foundation for next steps.
- The USFS, Coca-Cola, NFF and NFWF plan to hold meetings during the summer of 2014 to develop a three to five year action plan for the expanding partnership.
- Building on the Coca Cola/NFF supported Hayman Restoration Partnership, the local Coca-Cola bottling plant in Denver has now partnered with the NFF to conduct Friends of the Forests volunteer days for their employees to continue watershed restoration work in the Hayman Burn area on the Pike-San Isabel National Forest.





Rocky Mountain Watershed Protection Partnership

The USFS Rocky Mountain Region (R2) has been working with municipal water providers and corporations along the Front Range of Colorado to restore and foster the resiliency of forests within over 40,000 acres of critical watersheds on National Forest System and private lands. The goals are to mitigate the effects of the pine beetle epidemic, reduce the risk of severe impacts from wildfires, maintain water quality, and restore areas burned by past wildfires.

Key partners involved in this initiative include: Denver Water, Aurora Water, Colorado Springs Utilities, Northern Water Conservancy, the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), Pueblo Board of Water Works, the National Forest Foundation (NFF), Coalition for the Upper South Platte, Vail Resorts, Miller Coors, and the Coca-Cola Company (Coca-Cola). Numerous other corporate, philanthropic, and non-profit partners have also been involved over the life of this initiative.

Since 2009, these partners have contributed \$15 million and plan to invest approximately \$13 million more by 2018. Partner funds are being leveraged with federal appropriations to bring the anticipated total 10 year investment (2009-2018) to \$56 million. Comprehensive partnership accomplishments to date include:

- 364,000 trees planted;
- 21,190 acres of hazardous fuels treatments completed;
- 355 acres of wetlands and riparian areas restored;
- 90 acres of invasive species treatments;
- 80 miles of trails and roads restored, constructed or decommissioned;
- 4 miles of stream channels reconstructed;
- 2,685 volunteers engaged with 19,000 volunteer hours; and,
- 1,065 youth employed or engaged.

Quarterly Milestones Accomplished from January – March 2014

R2 continued to implement projects through collection agreements with Denver



Rocky Mountain Watershed Protection Partnership (continued)

Water, Aurora Water, Colorado Springs Utilities, Pueblo Board of Water Works, and Northern Water. Approximately 3,205 acres of hazardous fuel treatments were completed this reporting period, bringing total partnership accomplishments to 21,190 acres. Another 13,000 acres are underway.

Ongoing Partnership Efforts

The Pike-San Isabel and White River National Forests are working with the BOR, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Colorado State Forest Service, NFF, and South East Colorado Water Conservancy to develop a Memorandum of Understanding to formalize the partnership to implement hazardous fuel reduction, post-wildfire mitigation, and forest health treatments in the Frying Pan and Upper Arkansas watersheds. This partnership will work in conjunction with Colorado Springs Utilities, City of Aurora, and Pueblo Water to establish priorities for protecting watershed and forest health, and reduce the likelihood of negative impacts from wildfire. Also contributes to the Western Watershed Enhancement HPP.





Wasatch Legacy Project

The Wasatch Legacy Project (WLP) is a partnership with a vision of sustainable recreation and improved watershed management along the Wasatch Front outside of Salt Lake City. The WLP is framed by an over-arching Memorandum of Understanding which was signed in late 2013 by all members of the partnership and multiple Cost Share and Participating Agreements to execute projects in the watersheds above Salt Lake City. For the past three years, the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest has contributed approximately \$500,000 annually towards WLP projects. This contribution has been matched nearly 1:1 by partner contributions.

The WLP includes partners with state and local municipalities, ski resorts, non-profit organizations, and outdoor retailers, including: Alta Ski Lifts, Brighton Ski Resort, Cottonwood Canyons Foundation, Friends of Alta, Salt Lake City Corporation, Salt Lake Climber's Alliance, Salt Lake County, Save Our Canyons, Snowbird Ski and Summer Resort, Solitude Ski Resort, State of Utah, Department of Natural Resources, Town of Alta, and the Wasatch Front Regional Council. In 2013, the WLP joined forces with the National Forest Foundation and became part of NFF's "Treasured Landscape Campaign".

The WLP has a 3-year action plan with annual projects such as trail restoration and maintenance, invasive species management, and youth conservation education.

Annually WLP partners complete:

- Approximately 150 miles of trail maintenance and restoration
- 10,000 hours of conservation education programming
- 200 acres of invasive species management

Quarterly Milestones Accomplished from January – March 2014

- During the first quarter of 2014, the WLP project area has been covered with snow. Several partnership meetings, facilitated by NFF staff, have been undertaken leading to redefined governance roles and improved the operating guidelines for the partnership.



Wasatch Legacy Project (continued)

- The Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest personnel have worked on funding, project design, and environmental analysis for the Millcreek Fish Restoration, Grit Mill, and Silver Lake boardwalk proposals.
- The WLP communication committee has developed a Communication Strategy and several products to be used to raise awareness of the partnership. In addition, the WLP produced a [YouTube video](#) of the Millcreek Native Fish Restoration project.

Ongoing Partnership Efforts

- In addition to the annual projects, the WLP has four large-scale restoration projects that are in various stages of planning and implementation:
 - › The Millcreek Native Fish Restoration Project
 - › The Silver Lake Visitors Center and Boardwalk Project.
 - › The Grit Mill Project
 - › The Columbia/Rexall Mine Reclamation
- The WLP is looking for interns to assist with development of a website to raise awareness of the partnership and provide better information. This website will include a calendar of events which the WLP is in the process of developing. In addition to volunteer days and the annual work other large projects are planned.
- In summer of 2014, the USFS is working with one of the WLP partners to survey visitors to three canyons in the partnership area. This survey will help the WLP better understand how visitors utilize the area and what they are looking for in their recreational experience. This survey will be done using the Utah Conservation Corps and volunteers.





Western Watershed Enhancement Project

By filtering rain and snowmelt and regulating runoff and soil erosion, healthy forests provide a supply of water for critical environmental functions and drinking water for millions of people. Managing water resources for drinking water supplies, agricultural production, flood control, hydroelectric power generation and holistic ecosystem benefits requires national cooperation in water conservation activities. The increasing magnitude of environmental and economic stressors affecting water supplies necessitates a collaborative, common and integrated approach to identifying opportunities to work together as partners in the stewardship of key water resources across the national landscape.

In support of the Western Watershed Enhancement Project, the US Departments of Agriculture and Interior have established Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), signed on July 19, 2013, to accomplish common goals and interests in water supply, quality, conservation, and watershed function. Additionally, related common interests will be addressed to improve wildlife habitat, restore wildfire-damaged resources, and reduce the risk of uncharacteristically severe wildfire. Through this MOU the USFS and the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) have begun a new chapter of Federal cooperation, beginning with six pilot projects in the Northern, Rocky Mountain, Southwestern, Intermountain, Pacific Southwest, and Pacific Northwest USFS Regions. These pilots are designed to improve watershed functions and reduce the risk of uncharacteristically severe wildfire across jurisdictional boundaries. This effort will also benefit water supply, irrigation, and hydroelectric customers over the long term. Working collaboratively with water users, the pilots will develop an avoided-cost approach, leveraging other USFS investments with partner contributions to support site-specific treatments.

- Rocky Mountain Region (R2) Pilot: For the Colorado-Big Thompson Partnership (CBT), a MOU was established in December 2012 including the BOR, Northern Water Conservancy, and the Colorado State Forest Service. An initial partner investment of \$190,000 in 2013, through an interagency agreement and other direct partner expenditures, is helping support hazardous fuel treatments on 150 acres of private land. The project is currently under contract and is being implemented.
- Southwestern Region (R3) Pilot: This partnership also includes the Salt River Project and the City of Payson, AZ around the development of the CC Cragin Reservoir,



Western Watershed Enhancement Project (continued)

- which is scheduled for completion in 2017. The reservoir will supply the drinking water for the City of Payson. Focus is also on restoring lands severely burned by the Rodeo-Chideski and the Walden Fires.
- Intermountain Region (R4) Pilot: This partnership is focused on watersheds adjacent to BOR's Boise Project--four reservoirs across southwestern Idaho that provide irrigation water as their primary purposes. The most likely areas of focus had been lands adjacent to the Arrowrock and Anderson Ranch Reservoirs. Large fires adjacent to these reservoirs in 2012 and 2013 have shifted the USFS focus to fire recovery and restoration in the short- and mid-term related to the Trinity Ridge (2012) and Elk Complex (2013) fires.
 - Pacific Southwest Region (R5) Pilot: This partnership started around two fire recovery efforts and basin study plans. Currently work is focused on engaging BOR in their "WaterSmart Basin Plans", a large scale planning effort in five key California watersheds: the Truckee River Basin, the Sacramento/San Joaquin Basin, the Klamath Basin, the Santa Ana Basin, and the Los Angeles River.
 - Pacific Northwest Region (R6) Pilot – This partnership is part of a larger effort around the Yakima Integrated Plan, which is focused on increasing water storage on existing BOR reservoirs within the Yakima Basin. BOR manages five reservoirs that surround the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. BOR and the Washington Department of Ecology launched the Yakama Basin Integrated Plan in 2013. The Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest is listed as a 'Cooperating Agency'. Proposed actions under the plan include habitat and watershed protection projects.

Quarterly Milestones Accomplished from January – March 2014

- R2: For the CBT partnership, the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest held several key meetings with the BOR, Northern Water Conservancy, and the Colorado State Forest Service to continue evaluating project opportunities in priority watersheds. Also contributes to the Rocky Mountain Watershed HPP.
- R3: Additional efforts are underway to include National Forest System lands within this partnership under the second Environmental Impact Study associated with the Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI) Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration (CFLR) program. The Forests are currently partnering with the Salt River Project, City of Payson, AZ and the National Forest Foundation (NFF) on this effort and is pursuing an MOU and securing the necessary planning funding.
- R4: The Boise National Forest is currently focused on proximate mitigation of effects from both fires through post-fire Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) work. Trinity Ridge, as a human caused fire, allows the federal government to pursue remedies to recover the fire's suppression and emergency rehabilitation costs as well as assessment of natural resource damages and their value that, if recovered, may be used to support additional restoration work.



Western Watershed Enhancement Project (continued)

- R5: The first phase of the Truckee/Carson and Sacramento/San Joaquin plans are progressing and forest, Region and key partners are engaged.
- R6: Washington State appropriated \$132 million for the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project (YRBWEP) with a 50-50 cost-share requirement and communicated an allocation of \$25 million for the YRBWEP through their WaterSMART program. Efforts are currently underway to find federal funds to support a variety of projects that were identified in the Record of Decision (ROD).

Ongoing Partnership Efforts

Prospecting and coordination continues between the USFS and BOR (headquarters and field offices), as outlined through the MOU. Discussions continue to develop a multi-year action plan that outlines areas for increased partnership opportunities and greater collaboration and coordination at all levels.



*Promoting Increased Partnerships
in Healthy Forests and
Restoration*



America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative

The longleaf pine ecosystem once covered approximately 90 million acres in the Southern United States—but, by the early 1990s, 97 percent of this ecosystem had been lost. Diverse public and private partners began working in earnest in the 1980s and are continuing today to restore longleaf pine forests back to the southern landscape. In 2007, the USFS, Department of Defense, and US Fish and Wildlife Service harnessed a growing, multi-state interest in longleaf restoration. Alongside a Regional Working Group, these partners developed a Range-wide Conservation Plan for Longleaf Pine. The America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative (ALRI) is facilitated and managed collaboratively through the 33-member Regional Longleaf Partnership Council (LPC), a Federal Coordinating Committee, numerous state and local implementation teams, and several technical teams.

The public and private partners involved in the ALRI accomplished 1.38 million acres of longleaf restoration work in 2013 according to a report released in February by the LPC. The 2013 Range-wide Accomplishment Report provides the first comprehensive look at the annual work that is occurring to bring back longleaf pine to the southern landscape. Some findings from the report include:

- 1.1 million acres of prescribed burning accomplished, mostly on public lands with NFS lands and military installations being the primary sites.
- 156,000 acres of newly established longleaf pine, mostly on private lands, with 26% of these accomplishments a result of Farm Bill programs.
- 77% of the overall accomplishments occurred on public lands
- 70% of the overall accomplishments occurred within the designated Significant Geographic Areas (SGAs) for longleaf pine.

All the findings and recommendations of the full report can be found on the [ALRI partnership website](#).



America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative (continued)

Quarterly Milestones Accomplished from January – March 2014

- The LPC recently formed the Gulf Recovery Team which has convened several conference calls during this quarter to help coordinate partner organizations and collectively make the case that longleaf pine restoration can help with overall gulf recovery.
- An Economics Workshop was held on the Joseph W. Jones Ecological Research Center in January 2014. The workshop included representatives from private corporations, Federal agencies, and nonprofits. The workshop focused on the economic perspectives of large-acreage landowners relative to establishment and management of longleaf pine.
- Two new local implementation teams have formed in 2014 – the Southern Low Country/ACE Longleaf Partnership (SC) and the Northern Louisiana SGA Local Implementation Team. This brings the total number of local teams to 17.

Ongoing Partnership Efforts

- This year marks the 5-Year Anniversary of release of the ALRI Range-wide Conservation Plan. Initial planning is underway for possible national anniversary events in Washington DC. In addition, the LPC will hold a 5-Year Anniversary event in October 2014 in association with the Longleaf Alliance Biennial Conference and LPC meeting in Mobile, Alabama. The events will celebrate the partnership's successes and point to the future in maintaining the momentum to achieve the 8 million acre restoration goal.
- A total of 19 grant proposals totaling \$4.5 million have been submitted for the 2014 Longleaf Stewardship Fund, which is managed by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). According to the NFWF, there is \$3.3 million of grant funds available and work is underway to review/recommend the final projects for funding. The grant awards will be announced in early summer 2014. In addition, some grant proposals will be considered for funding through the Forestland Stewardship Initiative sponsored by International Paper.
- The work is near complete to map and prioritize range-wide land acquisition priorities for longleaf pine conservation. The Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Fund, and the Trust for Public Lands have been leading this effort and are working with federal partners and local implementation teams in pulling together the land priorities. The report will be presented to the LPC in April 2014.





California Ecological Restoration with Power and Water Utilities

Half of all surface water in California originates from national forest watersheds, with downstream consumers realizing an estimated value of nearly \$10 billion every year. This partnership brings beneficiaries of these watersheds together to overcome resource challenges, including: (1) finding support for ecological restoration and reduce wildfire threat in critical headwaters and near key utility transmission lines; and (2) maintaining and expanding the biomass infrastructure needed to increase the pace and scale of restoration activities in California's forests. The overarching aim is to increase restoration work from 250,000 acres/year to 500,000 acres/year over the next 15-20 years. Partners in this initiative include: the USFS, the State of California, Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA), Transmission Agency of Northern California, Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC), the Nature Conservancy (TNC), Environmental Defense Fund, Sustainable Conservation, the National Forest Foundation (NFF), the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), Coca-Cola, Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), Southern California Edison, the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), and the East Bay Municipal Utility District.

The guiding document for this work is the [USFS Region 5 \(R5\) Leadership Intent for Ecological Restoration](#) which is supported by a diverse array of employees, partners and communities across the region. A companion document, a draft Ecological Restoration Implementation Plan, can be [accessed here](#).

A suite of agreements, ranging in total length from one to five years, have been established to further implementation. In total \$2.5 million committed agency dollars have leveraged an additional \$6.5 million in partner dollars committed through length of all agreements.

Quarterly Milestones Accomplished from January – March 2014

- The San Bernardino National Forest has established a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in June 2011 with Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority



California Ecological Restoration with Power and Water Utilities (continued)

- (SAWPA) to explore joint interests and investments in the Santa Ana River Watershed. This project is a partnership between Western Municipal Water District, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District (SAWPA member water districts), and the USFS. The Forest utilized this partnership to apply for and receive \$1,000,000 in California Proposition 84 funds, which will support fuels reduction and road work (e.g., base and drainage post-fuels work, and/or crossing improvements) on the Bluff Mesa and Santa Ana fuel break projects. SAWPA and the USFS have developed the “Forest First” program, which is a collaborative venture between the USFS and downstream stakeholders aimed at developing methods to ensure that the national forests within the Santa Ana watershed are kept as healthy as possible and continue to provide high quality water to the valleys below. A March 25, 2014 meeting of the Forest First program focused on developing methods towards that objective.
- The Mokelumne River is source of 90% of the water used by the East Bay of San Francisco communities. The water is captured and delivered by East Bay Municipal Utility District (MUD) to their 1.5 million customers. PG&E also utilizes this water for hydroelectric production. As a follow-up to two East Bay Business Water Forums held in 2013, NFF launched the “Mokelumne Fund” so that interested businesses and NGOs can easily contribute to their watersheds protection and restoration.
 - In January 2014, the Governor of CA announced a recommendation to spend \$50 million of the Cap and Trade Investment Fund on Forest Restoration in the coming year through Calfire. R5 has worked intensively with SNC and the State of California to orient Cap and Trade Investment Funds to forest restoration on both public and private lands as well as for support of biomass haul and infrastructure. As part of this effort the Region helped conduct the third in a series of field tours at UC Berkeley Blodgett Forest Research Station to inform key state leaders and utility executives on the condition of California’s forests, management approaches, needs and consequences and the relationship between energy, climate and resource management policies practices and programs. Building on this momentum, the USFS organized a meeting in October 2013 with the Governor’s key advisors on renewable energy and climate change policy and engaged key partners of the coalition in discussions which helped lead to the Governors announcement.

Ongoing Partnership Efforts

- Over the next several months, R5 will be engaging employees, partners, tribes and communities in updating the draft Ecological Restoration Implementation Plan. Engaging partners and public beneficiaries is an important strategy of the Plan and



California Ecological Restoration with Power and Water Utilities (continued)

- will help increase the pace and scale of the Region's restoration work.
- In FY2013 a new 5-year Collection Agreement was signed between the Modoc National Forest, the Shasta Trinity National Forest, and the Transmission Agency of Northern CA (TANC) to support fuels treatments and increased staffing for fire preparedness towards protecting high priority transmission lines. TANC is contributing \$2.4 million over 5 years to this new agreement, which almost doubles TANC's previous yearly contributions. The Forests received \$421,000 in year one (FY13), increasing each year to \$518,000 in year five. The forests are completing planning for this year's work.
 - In 2012, the Sierra National Forest worked with their local Integrated Regional Watershed Management (IRWMP) group to apply for and receive \$1.5 million in California Proposition 84 Funds to complete fuels treatments for watershed restoration. The project will treat 4,000 acres over 4-5 years in upper portions of a watershed. Madera county and associated water districts will use their share of funds to complete restoration work on private lands.
 - The Mokelumne River "Avoided Cost Analysis" partnership analyzed and quantified future risks and costs utilities, ratepayers and tax payers may incur from large-scale disturbance. It also looked at investments that could be taken to avoid these costs. Partners in the effort included: East Bay MUD, PG&E, SNC, TNC, communities and other NGOs. The analysis is complete and will be rolled out to the public, FS leadership, other key agencies and legislators the first week of April. Likewise, follow-up discussions to the East Bay Business Water Forums are planned with the City of Berkeley, Oakland and San Francisco. These cities are working on sustainability plans and this includes their water supply.
 - R5 over the last two years has been working closely with State policy leaders to improve market conditions for both existing and future biomass facilities. In 2010, R5 helped support the formation of a diverse and well-connected California Biomass Working Group (BWG). Since then the group has been successfully educating and advocating for more favorable State biomass energy policy. The BWG meets monthly and has identified numerous actions, proceedings and policymakers that could positively influence biomass market conditions. Key NGOs, including Hayfork Watershed Center, associated with the BWG applied for and received a USFS grant to lead and manage the group but also to help implement SB 1122 on the ground. SB 1122 requires investor owned utilities to buy a set amount of electricity from less than 3 MW biomass plants. The NGOs and BWG are working directly with communities to site and develop new small community-based biomass facilities.
 - The Stanislaus National Forest working through their local IRWMP and in partnership with local water agencies will receive \$350,000 for watershed restoration from Proposition 84 State Water Bond Funds.





Carbon Sequestration and Reforestation on National Forests

This initiative is designed to support reforestation projects on National Forest lands, while also helping organizations achieve greenhouse gas emission reductions through biological carbon sequestration. These actions are incentivized through the voluntary marketplace with an innovative program of the National Forest Foundation (NFF)—the Carbon Capital Fund. Since 2008, the NFF has facilitated eight carbon sequestration projects that cover 5,239 acres of national forest lands, involve planting 1,329,500 seedlings, and are anticipated to offset more than 700,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents. These projects directly improve wildlife habitat and water quality, while mitigating the effects of climate change. Select projects supported by the Carbon Capital Fund are registered on the American Carbon Registry (ACR). Nearly \$5 million in partner contributions have been raised to fund this initiative to date. Corporate partners to the NFF on this effort include the Walt Disney Company, the Southcoast Air Quality Management District in California, El Paso Corporation, and Chevrolet.

Quarterly Milestones Accomplished from January – March 2014

The NFF has partnered with USFS Region 3 (R3) and the Salt River Project (SRP) to develop a carbon offset methodology for the restoration of southwestern ponderosa pine ecosystems. This quarter, the NFF has contracted with Spatial Informatics Group (SIG) to begin work on the methodology. The NFF and SIG are currently in the process of collected and preparing data necessary for developing a methodology framework. If deemed valid, the methodology will be ready for review by the American Carbon Registry in the fall of 2014.

Ongoing Partnership Efforts

Ongoing planning between USFS and NFF continues to host “lessons learned” meetings with key program and project personnel, the next tentatively planned for first week in June 2014. These meetings are designed to promote increased sharing and learning among project managers and to help participants better understand challenges and successes from the last five years of carbon demonstration projects.





NFF's Treasured Landscapes, Unforgettable Experiences Campaign

The National Forest Foundation (NFF) launched its Treasured Landscapes Campaign in 2008 to address two critical challenges: millions of forested acres in need of restoration and millions of people unaware of how National Forests enrich their lives. Five and a half years later, more than 1.7 million acres are now targeted for restoration and community engagement activities through work on fourteen keystone Treasured Landscapes sites. A large portion of the Campaign is centered upon keystone sites that are carefully selected based upon conservation needs and ecological values. Currently, there are 19 grants open with approximately \$1.7 million of work being actively accomplished on nine sites.

The Campaign has targeted the following sites:

- Angeles National Forest, CA
- Coconino National Forest, AZ
- Deschutes National Forest, OR
- Idaho Panhandle National Forest, ID
- Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, IL
- Ocala National Forest, FL
- Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, WA
- Ozark National Forest, AR
- Pike National Forest, CO
- Tahoe National Forest, CA
- Tongass National Forest, AK
- Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest, UT
- White Mountain National Forest, NH
- White River National Forest, CO

NFF's Treasured Landscapes, Unforgettable Experiences Campaign (continued)

Quarterly Milestones Accomplished from January – March 2014

- NFF staff facilitated six in-person meetings of the Idaho Panhandle Collaborative in support of the NFF's Idaho Panhandle National Forest Treasured Landscapes campaign site. These meetings are for a formal collaborative on the IPNF. While the NFF facilitation is part of NFF campaign site objectives, the collaborative is not working directly on the campaign site projects, but working rather to find consensus on IPNF projects generally.
- NFF staff facilitated one in-person and two teleconference meetings of the Silver Glen Springs Working Group, part of the Ocala National Forest Treasured Landscapes campaign site. This is a working group to find consensus on Silver Glen Springs management on the Ocala. This is part of the NFF campaign site goals.
- On the Angeles National Forest Treasured Landscapes Campaign site, staff held the 3rd Big Tujunga Coordinating Council Meeting to discuss next steps for the group including funding for weed removal and Sustainable Recreation Projects. Staff also led the 7th "Friends of the Angeles" meeting.
- On the Tahoe National Forest Treasured Landscapes campaign site, NFF received more than \$300,000 from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy for the Sagehen Sensitive Species and Forest Management project. The project will support forest thinning and use of prescribed fire to help restore the forest to a more natural condition, thereby reducing the risks of large catastrophic fire, improving wildlife habitat conditions and supporting healthier watershed conditions. Additional funds are anticipated from the State Wildlife Conservation Board.
- NFF met with the new USFS staff on the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest to brief them on the NFF and the Majestic Methow Treasured Landscapes Campaign site progress. Treasured Landscapes funding for this site has been used to support beaver re-introduction in ecologically significant locations in the Methow watershed.
- NFF convened and facilitated one full stakeholder meeting in March for the White River National Forest Treasured Landscapes site. In this meeting, the stakeholder group reached consensus on a shared vision for the restoration and future management of Camp Hale a significant project area on the site. The stakeholder group is now working to develop a master plan document for the site. NFF also continued discussions with the USFS, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency about the establishment of an In-Lieu Fee Program that would provide a significant funding source for restoration activities at the White River National Forest campaign site.



NFF's Treasured Landscapes, Unforgettable Experiences Campaign (continued)

- NFF facilitated one Midewin Stakeholder Committee meeting at the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie Treasured Landscapes site. The purpose of this group is to improve partner coordination on restoration at Midewin.
- NFF facilitated two Wasatch Legacy Project (WLP) meetings, where the group finalized operating guidelines for partnerships. Facilitation of the WLP is part of the NFF's Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest Treasured Landscapes site. Also contributes to the Wasatch Legacy Project HPP.
- NFF organized and led a Local Coordinating Council meeting on the White Mountain National Forest Treasured Landscapes site that was focused on community outreach and summer project plans.

Ongoing Partnership Efforts

- Promotions and marketing activities are underway for the 5th Annual Ride for Two Rivers, which will be hosted and managed by the Sisters Area Chamber of Commerce is on June 7, 2014 in support of the Deschutes National Forest Treasured Landscapes site.
- The current timeline for bison reintroduction at the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie Treasured Landscapes site is projected to occur around November 2014.





Western Utilities Partnership

Wildfire has impacted electric transmission lines and corridors at both the local community level and national scale through direct wildfire damage to established lines and surrounding National Forest System lands. Some of these fires have included considerable loss of and impact on natural resources critical to human and biological populations. The USFS and Western Utilities Group (WUG) are working together in this new partnership to increase vegetation management efforts adjacent to transmission right-of-ways to protect public resources and utility infrastructure. Through cooperative efforts and investments, these two organizations are developing means to reduce the shared threats and expenses of severe wildfire, while mitigating resource, service, and land-access losses.

Quarterly Milestones Accomplished from January – March 2014

- The Rocky Mountain Region (R2) and Xcel Energy have developed final drafts of a five-year and annual partnership investment plans. Total 5 year investments are expected to be around \$4.4 million, which includes approximately \$1.3 million contributions from t Xcel. Goals associated with this partnership include reducing hazardous fuels on 3,350 acres and around 326 high priority transmission structures on three National Forests (Arapaho-Roosevelt, Pike-San Isabel, and White River).
- The Southwestern Region (R3) continues to work with the Salt River Project and its partners around reforestation efforts to protect watersheds around the CC Cragin reservoir.
- The Intermountain Region (R4) is working with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to analyze two proposed multi-region/multi-forest transmission line corridors and related restoration/management needs. Included in this analysis is a risk assessment looking at the increased fire risk due to new transmission lines. While the findings are still preliminary, it does appear that there is a definite increase in mitigated fire risk should vegetation treatment projects occur in and adjacent to the transmission line right of way.
- The Pacific Northwest Region (R6) met with Portland General Electric's (PGE) Boardman power plant and other partners to discuss opportunities for transitioning

Western Utilities Partnership (continued)

- coal fired plants to torrefied biomass in the generation of electricity. PGE is in the process of building a new torrefaction unit to accomplish test burns that will produce 2-4 tons per hour. It was noted that such a transition would greatly help the Region's hazardous fuels reduction by providing a viable market for biomass in PGEs combustion mix.
- The Agency released a national desk guide on vegetation management in February 2014 to assist FS staffs and utilities in developing vegetation plans that will provide consistent effective control of vegetation in power line Rights of Way.

Ongoing Partnership Efforts

- The Northern Region (R1) will meet with Northwestern Energy Corporation's Vice President for Transmission and his staff on April 15 to build executive relationship and share information on common areas of interest around transmission infrastructure. Potential project sites, recommended priority landscapes under the 2014 Farm Bill, will be presented in the discussion.
- The Pacific Southwest Region (R5) Mokelumne Avoided Cost Analysis Advisory Group will provide briefings on its findings in DC April 1-3. Following these briefings, R5 and partners will work with key beneficiaries to increase understanding and awareness of the analysis and explore further investments in the watershed.
- The Agency has hired Maury Galbraith from the Oregon Public Utilities Commission, on a part-time basis to conduct a national analysis of the impact on large wildfires on transmission system reliability. The work will be a two-phased approach. Phase 1 will include work to quantify the cost and reliability risk that severe wildfire place on transmission power system operations. The information gained in phase 1 will inform phase 2, which includes research and data analysis to answer specific questions related to project location, risk, and types of treatments needed. This will help determine where to partner on treatments.



*Strengthening and Creating
Pathways for Expanded
Youth Engagement*



21st Century Conservation Service Corps

In 2010, President Obama launched the America's Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative to develop a 21st century conservation and recreation agenda. Recommendations within AGO included "to catalyze the establishment of a 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) to engage young Americans in public lands and water restoration." The 21CSC is a national effort to put America's youth and veterans to work protecting, restoring and enhancing the nation's natural resources. As part of the 21CSC, public and private partners work together to support young adults and veterans on projects that contribute to the restoration of forest lands while providing career development to participants. Partnerships are designed to: 1) Develop a generation of skilled workers, educated and active citizens, future leaders, and stewards of natural and cultural resources, communities, and the nation; and 2) Provide service, training, education, and employment opportunities for thousands of young Americans and veterans, including low income, disadvantaged youth and other youth with limited access to outdoor work opportunities.

Currently, 124 non-profit organizations have stepped forward in announcing alignment with the 21CSC framework and are ready to engage and assist in developing new skills and career pathways for Americans, including youth, under-served and veteran populations. These 21CSC member organizations are identified based on a review by 21CSC Working Group members review of responses submitted by organizations in a Letter of Interest regarding their alignment with eight 21CSC principles that focus on population served, participant eligibility, diversity and inclusion, term of service, organization of work, type of work, participant outcomes and leveraged investment.

The 21CSC is coordinated by a National Council of representatives from Federal agencies that formalized their mission through the signing a Memorandum of Understanding in January 2013. National Council membership includes leadership from the Departments of the Army, Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, and Labor, Environmental Protection Agency, the President's Council on Environmental Quality, and the Corporation for National and Community Service. The National Council works to: support program expansion, including by matching natural resource management needs with 21CSC opportunities and identifying potential sources of funding and



21st Century Conservation Service Corps (continued)

other resources; remove barriers and streamline processes for supporting 21CSC programs; support participant pathways to careers; facilitate technical assistance; develop and support partnerships; coordinate messaging; and ensure national representation. The working group are staff from the Federal agencies represented on the National Council charged with carrying out their agreements and actions.

Quarterly Milestones Accomplished from January – March 2014

- The National Council accepted the Working Group's recommendation of 24 member organizations, bringing the total number of 21CSC membership organizations to 124.
- USFS leadership held a special session on April 10, 2014 with Regions, Stations, and Area representatives requesting 21CSC implementation plans by April 30, 2014. These plans will include goal management and operations, program challenges, training requirements, and reporting and accountability measures.
- USFS now has two employees hired under the Public Land Corp hiring authority.

Ongoing Partnership Efforts

- The USFS committed \$250,000 to fund the Developing the Next Generation of Conservation Stewards Program managed by NFWF.
- The USFS allocated \$350,000 to 19 units across all 9 regions to expand YCC employment opportunities for hundreds of youth.
- The USFS is collaborating with the Corporation for National & Community Service to leverage up to \$2 million to support 21CSC AmeriCorps partners serving on forests and grasslands.
- Active dialogue and activities to implement the 21CSC effort continue with potential partners and the USFS' congressionally chartered foundations.





Youth Engagement in Conservation Initiative

The Youth Engagement in Conservation Initiative has expanded the existing relationship between the USFS and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). In 2012, the USFS and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) joined forces to engage youth in the care and management of public lands. The Initiative has been implemented through two granting programs that support innovative, partnership-based youth engagement projects:

1. **America's Great Outdoors (AGO): Developing the Next Generation of Conservationists.** With \$3.1 million provided by a diversity of federal and non-federal partners the focus of this program is on providing avenues for youth employment in resource related jobs. There is a target of 500 youth reached and employed. During first year of implementation, partners (federal and non-federal) leveraged USFS investment six-fold, contributing \$3.1 million. In FY13, BLM committed \$1 million; Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) \$250-500K; and Wells Fargo has committed to funding for five years (~\$250K/yr).

Currently the USFS is collaborating with NFWF, BLM, US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) in the Developing the Next Generation of Conservationists (Next Generation) grants program. The focus this year is to support innovative partnerships in conservation employment for young people (15-25 years old), especially targeting urban, minority and tribal youth. Collectively, the initiative provides \$1.75 million in federal funds to be leveraged at least 1:1 with non-federal contributions. The FS funds (\$250K) are focused on supporting 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) organizations.

2. **AGO: Connecting Youth with Nature: Bringing diverse federal and non-federal partners together will more than triple the USFS investment, providing more than \$500,000 in partner contributions.** The focus of this program was on engaging youth through partnerships that integrate outdoor recreation, conservation education and conservation stewardship. The Connecting Youth with Nature project was led by the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) through a sub-grant relationship with NFWF.



Youth Engagement in Conservation Initiative (continued)

Quarterly Milestones Accomplished from January – March 2014

Significant progress has been made in the implementation of the 2014 Next Generation granting program. The Request for Proposals was launched in mid-November 2013, and NFWF received more than 90 solid proposals – more than one-half of which had a USFS nexus. The USFS conducted an intensive review of the USFS proposals, recommending nine for funding support (\$230,000 of the USFS funds; matched by \$560,000 in non-federal contributions). The USFS project recommendations serve all Regions of the USFS.

Ongoing Partnership Efforts

- The NFWF is finalizing the roster of funded projects now for the Next Generation grants program with announcements expected by May 15, 2014.
- The NFWF is preparing a final report of accomplishments from the 2012 Next Generation grants, and the summary report will be available by May 15, 2014.
- The NFWF is exploring additional corporate sponsorship opportunities to support Next Generation granting efforts.
- The Connecting Youth with Nature program has concluded and a final report will be available soon.
- The USFS leadership values the critical role that NFWF has played in advancing agency youth employment priorities, and has invited them to participate in several important leadership discussions about partnerships.



*Fostering Synergies in
Recreation and Volunteerism*



Recreation Restoration, Adaptation, and Ski Area Campaign

Since 2006, the National Forest Foundation (NFF) has collaborated with major ski areas throughout the country in various campaigns including the Ski Conservation Fund, NFF Summit Fund and Colorado Statewide Ski Conservation Fund.

The Ski Conservation Fund helps support projects focused on improvements in recreational infrastructure, wildlife habitat, watershed health, and community forestry. Currently, the Fund includes six major Colorado ski resorts --Arapaho Basin, Copper Mountain, Keystone, Breckenridge, Vail, and Beaver Creek and raises monies through voluntary contributions from lodging guests, skiers, snowboarders, ski school participants and other National Forest recreationalists. To date, the Fund has generated \$4.1 million in support of improvement projects on National Forests with participating partners.

The NFF Summit Fund will provide an opportunity for Summit County visitors to stay, play, and give back to the National Forest they enjoy. Through the Summit Fund, the NFF will partner with Summit County businesses to collect small, voluntary donations from visitors – giving guests the option of adding a dollar donation to their meal ticket or hotel stay. Funds will be used to support projects that enhance wildlife habitat, improve streams, restore native plants, and repair trails on the surrounding Dillon Ranger District. Additionally, through the NFF’s partnerships with local conservation and stewardship groups, these funds help create jobs and provide volunteer opportunities in the local communities.

The NFF Statewide Ski Conservation Fund builds on the success of the White River National Forest Ski Conservation Fund to expand the model to over a dozen other ski resorts located on Colorado’s National Forest. Through this program the NFF hopes to give all Colorado skiers the opportunity to invest in the lands they love. Contributions collected by participating resorts across the State will be pooled by the NFF and granted to local nonprofits to conduct on-the-ground conservation projects. The granted funds will rotate around all of Colorado’s National Forests containing participating resorts on a three-year cycle.

In 2014, this Campaign will continue expanding the Ski Conservation Fund to more ski areas and lodges with a focus on the NFF’s Treasured Landscapes campaign sites.



Recreation Restoration, Adaptation, and Ski Area Campaign (continued)

Quarterly Milestones Accomplished from January – March 2014

- In January 2014, the NFF's new Summit Fund, a Colorado-based Stewardship Fund, entered into its first partnership with Breckenridge Grand Vacations Resort.
- In March 2014, the NFF entered into a new partnership with the Omni Mount Washington Resort in New Hampshire.
- The NFF continued discussions with several Colorado ski resorts about the development of a statewide Ski Conservation Fund.
- The NFF issued 12 grants to local conservation partners with more than \$456,000 of funding from the Ski Conservation Fund (In-kind match is \$577,968.00; Non Federal (partner) cash match = \$460,614.00; and other Federal Funds contributed to projects = \$197,952). These projects will support trail and recreation infrastructure improvements, enhance wildlife habitat, restore streams and wetlands, protect native wildlife species, and reduce noxious weeds on the nation's most visited National Forest.

Ongoing Partnership Efforts

The NFF Summit Fund – By summer of 2014, the NFF hopes to have twenty different hotels, lodges, and resorts in Summit County participating in the Summit Fund.



*Developing Connections
in Urban Communities for
Forests and Grasslands*



Baltimore Restoration Partnership

For over 15 years, the USFS has been working in the City of Baltimore and a host of locally based partners, to improve the natural environment and the well-being of Baltimore residents. The Baltimore Restoration Partnership is a new commitment between the USFS and the City of Baltimore, providing focused efforts on sustainability and the social and ecological restoration of inner city neighborhoods. The partnership brings together a number of USFS projects and initiatives in Baltimore, including the Baltimore Ecosystem Study, the Baltimore Wood Project, the Urban Waters Federal Partnership, and a new wildlife habitat initiative with the National Wildlife Federation.

- The Baltimore Ecosystem Study (BES) is a Long-Term Ecological Research site that conducts research on metropolitan Baltimore as an ecological system. Since 1997, with leadership and support from the USFS, the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies, and the University of Maryland-Baltimore, BES has conducted critical socio-ecological research, education, and community engagement.
- The Baltimore Wood Project is a comprehensive demonstration project delivering USFS science and new technologies to help the City and its residents sustainably restore neighborhoods by reusing and recycling deconstructed building materials and urban wood waste, and rebuilding with a minimal carbon footprint using wood, a green building material. The aim of this project is to provide a restoration blueprint that can be replicated by other cities across the country.
- The Urban Waters Federal Partnership is a partnership of over 10 Federal agencies, coordinated by the White House Council on Environmental Quality and White House Domestic Policy Council, that seeks to connect economically distressed communities to their waterways, with a focus on local partners and action. Baltimore is one of 18 Urban Waters pilot locations (See the Urban Federal Waters HPP for more information).
- The National Wildlife Foundation (NWF) is taking its Certified Wildlife Habitat™ program to Baltimore, showcasing how urban residents, schools, and businesses can be recognized for being wildlife friendly. The USFS and the NWF are collaborating on a priority list of tree and plant species that not only contribute to local biodiversity but help to make our cities more resilient to climate change.



Baltimore Restoration Partnership (continued)

Quarterly Milestones Accomplished from January – March 2014

- The Urban Waters Federal Partnership’s Baltimore pilot held its quarterly meeting on March 5, 2014 and continues to bring a broad and diverse group of partners together around local environmental goals and projects. The USFS funds Baltimore’s “Urban Waters Ambassador,” who serves as the coordinator for the Baltimore pilot and primary point-of-contact for the US Environmental Protection Agency.
- Baltimore Field Station scientists continued to provide presentations on the USFS’ Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) Assessment and Prioritization Tool to key partners include the State of Maryland, garnering real interest from a number of new stakeholders. Maryland Governor Martin O’Malley, for example, called for a special Governor’s roundtable discussion of UTC and UTC tools, scheduled for April.
- The USFS organized a session on agroforestry at the 2014 USDA Agricultural Outlook Forum in February 2014 that featured the Director of the Baltimore Orchard Project, Nina Beth Cardin. The Baltimore Orchard Project is one of the USFS’ many partners in Baltimore. Ms. Cardin spoke about the growing food forest movement in Baltimore, food security, environmental justice, and neighborhood revitalization.
- The USFS worked with the Baltimore Office of Sustainability to finalize plans for the final printing of the Green Pattern Book, a signature project of both the Urban Waters Federal Partnership’s Baltimore Pilot and the Baltimore Wood Project. The USFS has been a key supporter of the development of the Green Pattern Book and will be speaking at the launch event in May (see below).

Ongoing Partnership Efforts

- Over the next 3-6 months, the USFS plans to finalize and sign a new partnership agreement (MOU) with the City of Baltimore, finalize the Baltimore Wood Project Interim report, and launch the partnership website for the Baltimore Wood Project.
- In May 2014, the city of Baltimore will hold a celebration event for its Growing Green initiative, including the initial launch of The Green Pattern Book: Using Vacant Land to Create Greener Neighborhoods. The USFS is helping the City of Baltimore and a number of partners create a blueprint for planning and implementing green infrastructure. The Green Pattern Book is a guide for greening vacant land, and sets forth a common language of definitions, guidelines, permits, and resources for City agencies, nonprofits, community-based organizations, and residents. It is a signature product for the Project LEARN as well as the Federal Urban Waters Partnership’s Baltimore pilot project.





Urban Waters Federal Partnership

Urban waters are being revitalized, local partnerships are better supported, forest resources are being restored, and community engagement is being fostered in urban watersheds across the United States through a unique union of fourteen federal agencies. Led by cooperating agencies and coordinated by the White House Council on Environmental Quality and White House Domestic Policy Council, the Urban Waters Federal Partnership closely aligns with and advances the work of various White House place-based efforts (e.g., the Partnership for Sustainable Communities and the Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative) to revitalize communities, create jobs and improve the quality of life in cities and towns across the Nation.

In total there are 18 Urban Waters Federal Partnership sites. Staff from across the USFS support work at all 18 of the pilot locations. Executive staff also supports the partnership on national coordination efforts. USFS Research and Development staff serves as lead in five of the sites: Seattle, Denver, Northwest Indiana, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. USFS commits staff time, provides leadership and contributes some funding support toward pilot activities. [For more information click this text.](#)

Quarterly Milestones Accomplished from January – March 2014

- For the second year, a joint USFS-Environmental Protection Agency partnership with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) offered \$645,000 in federal support to local organizations through the Urban Waters Grant Program. More than 40 proposals were submitted and successful awards will be announced in the early summer 2014.
- The Partnership's Workgroup has initiated a National Urban Waters Federal Partnership Work Plan for 2014.
- Another application for a new partner site was received by the UWFP working group and is under review by the signatory agencies.
- Updates and improvements to content continue on the [UWFP](#) website. This site serves as a clearinghouse for information on this initiative.



Urban Waters Federal Partnership (continued)

- Urban waters are being revitalized, local partnerships are better supported, forest resources are being restored, and community engagement is being fostered in urban watersheds across the United States through a unique union of fourteen federal agencies. Led by cooperating agencies and coordinated by the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and Domestic Policy Council, the Urban Waters Federal Partnership closely aligns with and advances the work of various White House place-based efforts (e.g., the Partnership for Sustainable Communities and the Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative) to revitalize communities, create jobs and improve the quality of life in cities and towns across the Nation.
- Advancements and developments continued at all 18 Urban Waters pilot sites:
 - › Northwest Indiana held their quarterly Partner's Meeting in March 2014. Five Federal Agencies, including the USFS attended, in addition to many non-government organizations, municipalities, regional planning commissions and several state agencies. They refined their work plan for 2014 and reviewed accomplishments from 2013.
 - › Urban Waters Ambassadors, who serve as project managers, facilitators, and conveners, were retained for at least another 6 months at all USFS-led sites
 - › Baltimore/Patapsco River conducted a tour of potential projects site to engage industrial partners (See Baltimore Restoration Partnership HPP for more information).

Ongoing Partnership Efforts

The Partnership continues to explore opportunities to include additional Federal Agencies. The US Federal Reserve has expressed interest and further discussions continue.

