

USDA Forest Service

Partner with Us A Look at Partnerships Within the USDA Forest Service

San Juan National Forest partnership



*Francis Marion National Forest and
Palmetto Foundation partnership in action*



Canada Forest kids



April 2012



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San Juan Mountains, CO

The U.S. Forest Service, the largest agency within the U.S. Department of Agriculture, has a long and distinguished history of public service and land stewardship. Gifford Pinchot, the first Chief of the Forest Service, said that the agency should always work to provide the greatest good for the greatest number of people in the long run.

As the primary forestry agency in the United States, the Forest Service:

- leads our Nation in natural resource management with 193 million acres of national forests and grasslands;
- works in concert with State and private land owners in the stewardship of more than 500 million acres of non-Federal rural and urban forests;
- serves as the largest natural resource research organization in the world;
- works with partners worldwide to protect global forest resources; and
- employs approximately 30,000 people, many in rural communities.

The needs of the people and of the land have changed in the 21st century and so, too, has the way in which the Forest Service works to achieve its mission. As the complexity surrounding the management of public lands increases, partnerships are becoming an increasingly essential mechanism for achieving social, economic and ecological goals associated with these lands. In fiscal year 2011, partners joined the Forest Service through nearly 8,000 formal grants and agreements with a leveraged value of approximately \$1.3 billion. In addition, Youth Conservation Corps, conservation/public lands corps members, and other volunteers contribute more than 4 million hours annually, valued at nearly \$100 million and equivalent to 2,000 person years on forests and grasslands. Through these strong, enduring partnerships, the agency is able to successfully accomplish more than it could on its own.

The Forest Service works with a fabric of strategic alliances, including our congressionally chartered nonprofit partners—the National Forest Foundation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and National Environmental Education Foundation. These and other non-government organizations are key to the agency’s ability to foster partnerships. Opportunities for partner engagement include not only funding support, but also encouraging significant employee volunteerism across the country in areas where partner and Forest Service interests intersect. Providing wise management of our Nation’s water resources; engaging youth in conservation stewardship; promoting healthy, active lifestyles; and serving communities are goals that contribute to a healthy and vibrant America.



Leeward Haleakala Watershed restoration, Maui, HI



The following illustrates a sampling of the thousands of opportunities available to potential partners to share in the stewardship of our Nation’s forests and grasslands—through vibrant relationships in key focal areas, including:

- Water quality and quantity flowing from our national forests, which accounts for about 20% of our country’s water supply;
- Improvements in forest health and resiliency, as more than 80 million acres of our national forests are impacted by a changing climate and at increased risk of catastrophic wildfire;
- Restoration of our ever-popular recreation sites and facilities; and,
- Reaching the next generation—our youth of today and the natural resource managers of tomorrow.

Water

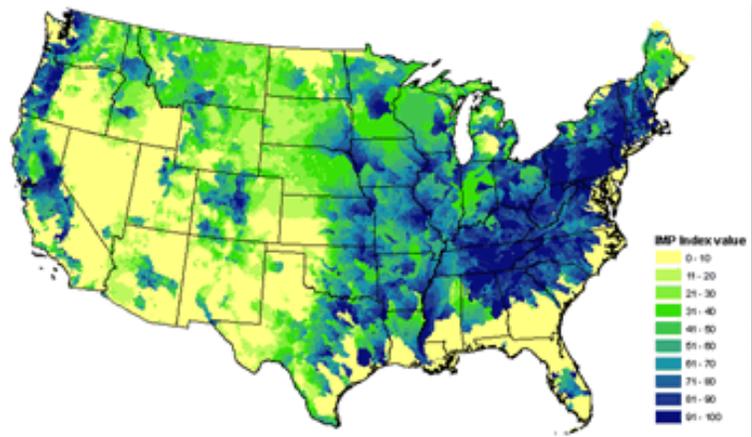


Pacific Northwest Region

Watershed Condition Framework. To be truly effective, watershed-based restoration efforts require the involvement of partners—local, State, tribal, other Federal agencies, interest groups, and citizens. The [Watershed Condition Framework](#)¹ provides ample opportunity for such partner involvement. The Forest Service and its partners recently finished classifying over 15,000 national forest watersheds through a nationally consistent, comparable, and science-based

approach to help prioritize restoration projects. The agency designated 247 priority watersheds and developed 205 watershed restoration action plans. Using a [web-based interactive map](#)², our partners can access this information and use it to strategize and determine where efforts can be combined to do the greatest good. In fact, this is already happening. In Alaska and Idaho, four watersheds were improved in 2011 as a result of on-going cooperation with partners. More similar efforts are expected in 2012.

Forests to Faucet Project. The [Forests to Faucets project](#)³ and its findings serve as an education tool for non-profit organizations, State governments, citizens, and many other partners, illustrating the critical link between forests and public water supplies. The project uses a geographic information system to model and map



Blue indicates U.S. land areas most important to surface drinking water



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the United States land areas most important to surface drinking water, the role forests play in protecting these areas, and the extent to which these forests are threatened by development, insects and disease, and wildland fire. The assessment can be used to identify natural areas which should be better protected—providing data to be used in broad-scale environmental planning efforts.

Rocky Mountain Watershed Protection Partnership. Four major river systems and the water supply of over 4 million people on the Front Range of Colorado and southern Wyoming are under duress from climate change and a history of aggressive fire suppression. This partnership, with coordination and support from the National Forest Foundation (NFF), invests public and private funds in the watershed restoration projects necessary to protect these resources. Partner funding and support for this partnership is broad and comes from many sources, such as Denver Water, Aurora Water, Vail Resorts, MillerCoors, and Gates Family Foundation. One example that highlights this support is Denver Water: the utility is matching \$16.5 million in Forest Service contributions with its own contribution of \$16.5 million, through an average residential ratepayer contribution of \$27 over 5 years.



Salt Lake City, UT

Wasatch Watershed Legacy Partnership. Urban growth, increased recreation use, climate change, and invasive species are threatening the watersheds of the Wasatch Front and the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache (UWC) National Forest. Since these natural systems are the drinking water source for a half-million Salt Lake City residents and a backyard playground for millions more, the UWC and Salt Lake City believe these ecosystems' restoration is paramount. The UWC has invested \$40,000 for leverage by Cottonwoods Canyons Foundation into over \$400,000 toward trail maintenance, ecological

restoration, and conservation education. And a 20-year partnership with Salt Lake County generates over \$350,000 to manage recreation sites and water resources. As part of the Wasatch Watershed Legacy Partnership, the UWC and Salt Lake City are continuing to work toward more restoration, land protection, and recreational improvements. They are also expanding long-standing collaborative efforts to include numerous public and private partners from across the Wasatch Front, including ski resorts, private industry, and non-profit organizations.

California Ecological Restoration with Power and Water Utilities Initiative. Half of all surface water in California originates on national forest watersheds, with downstream consumers realizing an estimated value of nearly \$10 billion every year. But there are significant threats to these valuable watersheds. This partnership brings beneficiaries of the watersheds together to overcome



Folchi Creek Watershed in CA



resource challenges, forming relationships with major utilities and encouraging restoration work in key ecosystems. The initiative has secured \$1.5 million in watershed restoration funds to be used for reliable water supplies and flood control projects; fuel treatments are being jointly funded via a \$200,000 contribution from the Transmission Agency of Northern California; and Sierra Nevada Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, Sustainable Conservation, and Environmental Defense Fund are supporting an avoided cost analysis. The agency is continuing to work with other stakeholders and partners—such as PG&E, Southern California Edison, Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority, and East Bay Municipal Utility District—to identify mutual interests, mutual threats, and targeted work to protect the valued water resource. The agency will also continue its work with the state of California and others to maintain and expand biomass infrastructure, better enabling increased restoration work that will maintain the health of forests and watersheds.

Urban Waters Federal Partnership. Many of our Nation's urban rivers, streams, lakes, forests, and wetlands are polluted, degraded or inaccessible. Research demonstrates that a clean, safe, accessible, urban environment—including urban forests, gardens, parks, lakes, aquifers, and rivers—is directly linked to improved public health, stronger local economies, and lower crime rates. Through the Urban Waters Federal Partnership, the Forest Service is revitalizing urban waters and transforming overlooked assets into treasured centerpieces and drivers of urban revival. In 2012, the agency is collaborating with its partners on seven pilot projects across the country, seeking new investments in urban waters and community revitalization.



Portland, OR, waterfront

Watershed Investment Program. Carpe Diem West's Healthy Headwaters Group, a vibrant partnership consisting of leaders from water supply utilities, municipalities, Federal agencies, and the NGO community, is working collaboratively to develop comprehensive watershed investment programs to ensure downstream water supplies. In a [recent report](#)⁴ outlining these efforts, Carpe Diem West highlights the critical role Forest Service partnerships play in protecting public water supplies across the West and ensuring watershed investment programs and projects are successfully implemented.



Escalante Headwaters

Healthy Forests

Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration (CFLR) Program. In 2009, the Secretary of Agriculture articulated his vision for America's Forests, underscoring the importance of forest restoration and pursuing collaborative solutions through landscape-scale operations. Following these announcements, the bipartisan CFLR program was established, with an aim of fostering collabora-



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tive, science-based restoration on priority forest landscapes across the United States. Since then, a total of 23 projects have been selected for Federal funding, with substantial partner investment—nearly \$110 million from FY 2012 through FY 2019. The projects these partner investments help enable are stretched across every corner of the country, and their goals are diverse and worthwhile: reducing mega-fire risk, improving oak and pine regeneration, restoring water channels and jobs, and more.

Reforestation Collection Agreements. The Forest Service actively works with numerous non-governmental partners—such as NFF, The Arbor Day Foundation, and American Forest Foundation—to ensure robust reforestation efforts. The agency has established collection agreements with our partners and, in FY 2011, they contributed nearly \$3 million toward reforestation initiatives across 15,000 acres of the National Forest System.

Sequestering Carbon by Reforesting National Forests. Designed to sequester carbon and mitigate the effects of climate change through the voluntary marketplace via reforestation efforts, [this initiative](#)⁵ will also improve wildlife habitat and water quality—but not without the help of partners. Since 2008, NFF has facilitated six carbon sequestration projects that cover more than 4,000 acres of National Forest lands, and 528,000 metric tons of carbon will be captured and sequestered over the life of these projects. Disney and the Southcoast



Station Fire restoration

Air Quality Management District in California alone contributed over \$2 million, while El Paso Corporation and Chevrolet have also played a crucial role funding this initiative.



Longleaf pine 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% of this ecosystem had been lost, stressing the nearly 30 threatened and endangered species that live there. Since then, the Forest Service and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) have worked with numerous partners to successfully restore longleaf pine forests throughout the Southeast. The America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative, which engages Federal and State agencies, non-profit organizations, local collaboratives, universities, private enterprises, and private landowners, will provide support for continuing this critical, cooperative conservation work. The initiative has created

a public-private Longleaf Stewardship Fund which will award \$3 million in 2012 for longleaf restoration and stewardship.

Treasured Landscapes, Unforgettable Experiences Conservation Campaign. NFF launched this 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. Four years later, well over 800,000 acres are now targeted for restoration and community engagement activities through work on fourteen keystone sites, restoring our damaged forests and Americans' connection to these public lands. More than \$5 million has already been raised to support the ongoing campaign work and will be matched 1:1 by the Forest Service.

Recreation

Recreation Restoration, Adaptation, and Ski Area Campaign. Since 2006, NFF has collaborated with 16 ski areas through the Ski Conservation Fund. Dedicated to conservation and recreation improvement projects on public lands, contributions totaling more than \$3 million have been raised via donations from lodging guests, skiers, snowboarders, ski school participants, and golfers. The Ski Conservation Fund and its contribution mechanisms are being expanded not only to more ski areas, but also to many additional partners, such as outdoor retailers and reservation systems, to ensure that the landscapes that visitors enjoy are restored and maintained.



Hayman Fire restoration begins



Juneau cruise ships

Alaska Cruise Line Conservation Campaign. Nearly one million people visit Alaska via cruises every year, and the majority of opportunities for land excursions are on national forests. The Forest Service is working with NFF and Alaska Geographic to enlist the cruise industry in a campaign to support critical community and visitor services, collaborative stewardship projects, and experiences for next generation youth explorers.

Youth

Youth Engagement and Employment Initiative. Empowering youth for active citizenship and preparing them for effective stewardship of our Nation's resources are among America's highest priorities for the 21st century. This new initiative, developed in collaboration with NFWF and the Bureau of Land Management, will support both youth conservation employment opportunities and conservation education and outreach outcomes. The Forest Service is working with a broad array of Federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, and others to support partnerships that build an understanding of conservation and develop service opportunities, quality jobs, and career pathways for America's youth—especially those who are often underserved.



Hawaii Year of the Forest



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Through this initiative, diverse youth will be engaged in meaningful conservation work and programs that not only make a difference on the ground, but also develop work skills and experience for future careers in natural resources.

Children's Grants Programs. In 2011, the agency sustained its national strategic investment of \$1 million, leveraged one-to-one through partnerships in two programs: More Kids in the Woods and Children's Forests. More than 20 More Kids in the Woods projects received funding in FY 2011, initiatives that emphasize hands-on learning and recreational opportunities for children. Funding for the vibrant network of Children's Forests that stretches from coast to coast provides local community children a chance to experience the great outdoors, learn about nature, and build a lasting commitment to conservation and land stewardship.



Father and son experience the wonders of the great outdoors

Related Links

¹<http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/>

²<http://apps.fs.usda.gov/WCFmapviewer/>

³http://www.fs.fed.us/ecosystems-services/FS_Efforts/forests2faucets.shtml

⁴<http://www.carpediemwest.org/reports/policy-briefs>

⁵<http://www.nationalforests.org/conserve/carbon/carboncapitalfund>

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We invite you to join us in the stewardship of our Nation's forests and grasslands. For ideas and information about collaboration and partnerships, please visit us at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/prc>.

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