

Agenda Item No.:	5
Work Plan Title:	Special Report
Title:	Update from the USDA Regional Forester, PNW Research Station Director, and Oregon State Forester
Presentation Title:	Update on Ongoing Partnership
Date of Presentation:	April 21, 2018
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**SUMMARY**

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide an update on the ongoing partnership between the USDA Forest Service (USFS) and the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF). This update will focus on the 2017 fire season close out and fire season preparedness, moving forward on Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) projects, and joint research topics.

**CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND**

The USFS and ODF have a long-standing relationship in implementing programs authorized by the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act, Public Law 95-313, as amended. The Pacific Northwest Region, State and Private Forestry program administers programs under this act and provides grants to ODF for providing forestry assistance. Program areas include Cooperative Forest Health Program, Urban and Community Forestry, Forest Stewardship, State Fire Assistance, Western State Fire Managers, Western Competitive Redesign, Forest Legacy Program, Forest Health Monitoring, Western Bark Beetle, Volunteer Fire Assistance, and Community Assistance. In federal fiscal year 2016, the USFS provided \$8,954,177 in grant funds to ODF.

The USFS, ODF, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, and the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding delivery of programs and services to non-industrial private forest landowners in State of Oregon. This partnership has help established a five-year, statewide agreement with the NRCS for \$1,000,000 to provide technical assistance to family forestland owners. The relationship has also helped Oregon receive five Joint Chiefs’ Landscape Restoration Partnership grants for over \$7,000,000, four of which implement the intergovernmental direction within National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy.

The USFS and ODF cooperate on fire protection under a Master Cooperative Wildland Fire Management Agreement, which documents our commitment to improve efficiency

by facilitating the coordination and exchange of personnel, equipment, supplies, services, and funds. Lands protected by ODF are intermingled or adjacent in some areas to USFS lands, and wildland fires on these intermingled or adjacent lands may present a threat to the lands of the other, most notably in the wildland urban interface. This agreement establishes cooperative mechanisms including the Pacific Northwest Wildfire Coordinating Group (PNWCG), which provides coordination and recommendations for all interagency Fire Management Activities in Oregon. The agreement recognizes the goal to achieve common standards within the agencies' best interest, recognizing differing agency missions and mandates. Each agency to this Agreement recognizes that other agency standards are reasonable, prudent, and acceptable.

GNA, authorized under the 2014 Farm Bill, allows the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior to enter into agreements with state agencies to accomplish forest restoration on Federal lands. ODF and the USFS have been developing project-level agreements across Oregon since March of 2016, when Governor Kate Brown signed a Master Good Neighbor Agreement. ODF implements GNA through its Federal Forest Restoration Program (FFR), which received permanent funding as part of ODF's budget. The GNA provides a tool for agencies to collaborate on project implementation to efficiently complete work. The FFR Program has district coordinators who work with local USFS staff to develop local projects with mutual benefits to both agencies.

ODF has a long history of working with the Pacific Northwest (PNW) Research Station across all of our programs. ODF and Station researchers are currently collaborating to understand the risk and frequency of wildfire transmissions across jurisdictions and ownerships. ODF values all areas of fire research and related tools that PNW scientists have been working on: Fire behavior, effects on the environment, fire in the wildland urban interface, fuel treatments, smoke management, and effects of climate change. ODF and USFS staff have worked on several projects related to water quality and impacts of forest practices on habitat and water including RipStream, Trask Paired Watershed Study, and State Forests' Systematic Evidence Review on large wood. The USFS Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program and the Resource Monitoring and Assessment (RMA) team that collects, analyzes, and reports the inventories of Oregon's forests continues to be extremely valuable to ODF in a variety of ways. The data has been used for ODF's land use land change reports (Forest, Farms and People), in assessing the characteristics of Oregon's forestland and forest sector for indicators and reports to our Board and the Oregon Legislature, and in conducting other analyses such as changes in Oregon's riparian rules. The RMA team has also worked closely with ODF for several years on modeling and mapping forest vegetation and changes caused by fire, harvest, and other disturbances across all types of forests in Oregon.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

This agenda item is for information only.