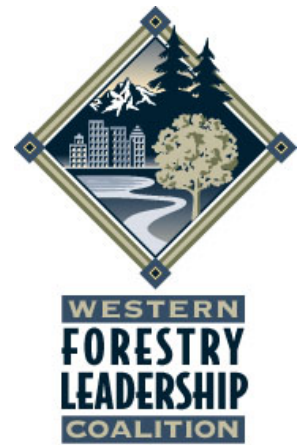



# COUNCIL OF WESTERN STATE FORESTERS 2014 ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT



In Partnership with the  
Western Forestry Leadership Coalition



*Publication date: December, 2014*



## Building on a Strong Foundation: A Message from the Executive Director

In the past three years our organization has undertaken several changes in the way we do business. The Council of Western State Foresters (CWSF) has taken on a new, stronger identity. We reorganized our 501(c)3 structure, moved our office to a downtown Denver, CO location, and became our own fiscal agent and employer. This new structure provides a strong, resilient, sustainable foundation that has re-energized the CWSF and our engagement in the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition (WFLC).

During this time of building, we have become more strategic and focused on our CWSF Implementation Plan and deliverables. This report will explore how we have moved forward; detailing the accomplishments of our CWSF and WFLC members and staff. These examples are by no means an exhaustive list but show the breadth of expertise, engagement and leadership of the CWSF, the WFLC and the benefits of our organizations, including our unique partnership.

We will continue to build on our successes and challenges from the past by providing leadership and engaging as an organization to deliver our mission. These critical years are culminating in the current CWSF strategic business planning process the organization has undertaken. This document, built on the input of our diverse membership, will set the goals for the next five years and provide focus and direction for the CWSF members and staff on engagement and issues to work on into the future.

We are well positioned to build on our reputation as subject matter experts and the 'go-to' organizations for information on forestry and natural resources. I am very excited about the future of the Council of Western State Foresters and the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition. Our members and staff have been key to our recent successes and I look forward to everyone's continued involvement in these important organizations.



Caitlyn Pollihan; Executive Director,  
Council of Western State Foresters and the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition

December, 2014



## *Council of Western State Foresters*

### *2014 Accomplishments Report*

The 2014 Council of Western State Foresters Implementation Plan guided the work of the CWSF over the last year. Many of the actions included in the 2014 CWSF Implementation Plan were intended to inform the work of the CWSF staff and membership in its relationship and agreement with the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition (WFLC). The WFLC is made up of the CWSF membership and the US Forest Service western Regional Foresters, Station Directors and the Forest Products Laboratory Director.

The CWSF works on issues identified in the WFLC Strategic Plan (currently 2012-2016 and based on Forest Action Plans) as well as CWSF-specific issues and duties as described in their implementation plan.


This document highlights the successes of the CWSF and WFLC members and staff in 2014.

The CWSF 2014 Implementation Plan was categorized into four areas: 1) enhancing public benefit from trees and forests, 2) protecting forests from threats, 3) conserving and managing working forest landscapes and 4) organizational success and fiscal responsibility.

**1 - The Council of Western State Foresters seeks to enhance public benefits from trees and forests** by supporting active and sustainable management of trees, forests and watersheds for ecosystem health, economic benefits, and community resilience. The CWSF has served as a respected source of information to support and inform forest policy development.

To this end, in 2014 the Council of Western State Foresters has:

- ✓ Collected success stories of State Fire Assistance (SFA projects from around the West) to include in an information brief and outreach paper. The publication was used by various states and CWSF staff in congressional and public outreach to support funding of the SFA program.  
<http://wflccenter.org/documents/2014/11/state-fire-assistance-building-the-national-response-to-wildfire.pdf>
- ✓ Conducted outreach activities in partnership with the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) in educating Congress and other stakeholders on the importance of programs such as State Fire Assistance, Forest Inventory and Analysis, Urban and Community Forestry, Forest Health and Hazardous Fuels.

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- ✓ Contributed to the successful efforts to enact the 2014 Farm Bill that reauthorized many critical forestry programs, permanently expanded the Good Neighbor Authority and seeks to address insect & disease epidemics on National Forest Systems. The reauthorization also helped to clarify the coordinated response of the US Forest Service to wildland fire and allow for the Agency to retain the receipts received in repayment of fire suppression services rendered.
  - ✓ Shared resources with the Forest Climate Working Group to promote a policy platform for forestry, forest products and forest offsets that influences the President's Climate Action Plan and natural resources agenda.

Through the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition, we have:

- ✓ Partnered with western Forest Service Research to provide support for the International of Forest Research Organizations 24<sup>th</sup> World Congress in Salt Lake City, UT. WFLC staff and members contributed to the communications planning effort and were on hand to participate in discussion and exhibit materials displaying and advancing our western forestry issues.
- ✓ Partnered with western Forest Service Research to contribute to the first Pacific Island Forest Health Report.  
[wflcweb.org/islandforestry/PacificIslandsForestHealthReport2014reduced.pdf](http://wflcweb.org/islandforestry/PacificIslandsForestHealthReport2014reduced.pdf)

**2 - The Council of Western State Foresters seeks to protect forests from threats** by maintaining federal, state and local agency capacity in wildland fire preparedness, prevention and response through the sharing of resources, equipment, and information; training; data collection and technology development; and integration of state, federal and other programs.

To this end, in 2014 the Council of Western State Foresters has:

- ✓ Engaged in groups such as the Partner Caucus for Fire Suppression in an effort to work with Federal members and partners to seek new approaches to funding the USDA Forest Service and the Department of Interior's wildfire suppressions efforts that allow the agencies to continue implementation of their key prevention programs without disruption.
- ✓ Supported the Wildland Urban Interface Grants by recommending funding through a competitive process with emphasis on hazard fuel reduction, information and education, and community and homeowner action. This year, the Grants team was able to respond to fluctuations in available funding and adjusted recommendations to meet available funding.




Through the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition, we have:

- ✓ Developed a briefing paper to educate and inform partners, Congress and the public about the Federal Excess Personal Property and Firefighter Protection programs and how they contribute to our nation's successful response to wildfires. Success stories were highlighted from western states. <http://wflccenter.org/info-materials/issue-briefs/>
- ✓ Contributed western issues, engaged at the national level and informed the agenda to help lead the work on the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy.
- ✓ Provided support, funding and expertise to develop website for three Cohesive Strategy Pilot Projects. <http://bluemtnwildfirestrategy.org/> and [islandparkfirecommunity.com](http://islandparkfirecommunity.com) .
- ✓ Facilitated the Western Landscape Scale Restoration Competitive Grant Allocation Process. This year the WFLC worked with a database contractor to create an on-line application and scoring system. The new system is more efficient and allows for data storage on projects that can be used to communicate successes and innovations.
- ✓ Engaged with the State & Private Forestry Board (Board) including providing a member representative to the Board, facilitating the in-person meetings and providing staff assistance for the Board deliverables.

**3 - The Council of Western State Foresters seeks to conserve and manage working forest landscapes** by promoting and sustaining a viable forest products industry that supports resource management and restoration on all lands.

To this end, in 2014 the Council of Western State Foresters has:

- ✓ Demonstrated the need for sufficient levels of funding to annual State & Private Forest programs and priorities that maximize goals and objectives.
- ✓ Partnered with the NASF in educating Congress and partners about the importance of programs such as State Fire Assistance, Forest Inventory and Analysis, Urban and Community Forestry, Forest Health and Hazardous Fuels.
- ✓ Advanced efforts to work with state governors and the Forest Service to effectively designate insect & disease treatment areas as part of Farm Bill Section 8206.
- ✓ Assisted the NASF in developing and gaining support for strategic directive for the Forest Inventory and Analysis program to be included in the 2014 Farm Bill.

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- ✓ Successfully developed processes for distribution of the Western Wildfire Risk Assessment data and the Fire Effects Tool licenses to state forestry agencies.

Through the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition, we have:

- ✓ Established a Forest Management task force to facilitate a member discussion producing tangible actions. Task Force members hosted a successful Spring Meeting session that identified member ideas and priorities to increase forest management across all landscapes. The WFLC membership will utilize these actions to advance western forestry priorities with Congress, partners and the public.
- ✓ Conducted outreach at the Intertribal Timber Council (ITC) National Indian Timber Symposium was held in the West in 2014. With the support of WFLC staff, State member and ID State Forester presented on the issues of western importance and how the WFLC, NASF and ITC can work together.


**4 - The Council of Western State Foresters seeks to maintain organizational success and fiscal sustainability** by ensuring that the business and fiscal processes and procedures of the organization are current and proactively planning for the future. The CWSF Executive Committee identified three emphasis areas for 2014; member engagement, communication and financial sustainability.

Membership Engagement: To this end, in 2014 the Council of Western State Foresters has:

- ✓ Worked with the NASF to ensure western member engagement in NASF committees.
- ✓ Reviewed and revised the bylaws for the organization, adopted important policies and expanded our annual fall business meeting by an extra day each meeting to allow for more time for the membership to discuss key issues and share information.
- ✓ Increased CWSF Executive Committee involvement by meeting on a monthly basis and multiple in-person meetings.
- ✓ Acted as a conduit of information from the CWSF, NASF and WFLC, the CWSF Executive Director met with State Foresters, Regional Foresters and Station Directors in their home states and regions as travel allowed.

Financial Sustainability: To this end, in 2014 the Council of Western State Foresters has:

- ✓ Undertook a Strategic Business Planning Process with the entire membership and staff to create a strategic business plan for 2015 - 2020.
- ✓ Created an operating reserve fund and an associated fiscal plan.

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- ✓ Ensured that the revenue earned from the WFLC Spring Meeting covers the associated meeting planning expenses and secures non-federal dollar amounts to be used to build the operating reserve fund.
  - ✓ Met the goal to increase revenue from the spring meeting to \$5,000 in 2014; this goal was exceeded by \$10,000.
  - ✓ Sponsored a grant management training on the new OMB super circular.
  - ✓ Coordinated a free-of-charge media training for members of the WFLC Leadership and CWSF staff.
  - ✓ Negotiated a beneficial lease and moved office locations to a more central location.

Communications: To this end, in 2014 the Council of Western State Foresters has:

- ✓ Re-organized the website to a content management system (WordPress) to be managed internally by CWSF staff instead of external contractors resulting in a more user-friendly interface and reduced costs to the association.
- ✓ Created a blog “What’s New” with approximate monthly postings.
- ✓ Continued to provide bi-weekly communications to members and partners via the *WFLC Update*.
- ✓ Re-organized a members’ web page for easy access to minutes and meeting information; reorganization continuing into 2015 as we prepare for a refresh of our CWSF brand.
- ✓ Transitioned to a new meeting registration and payment system that is more user friendly and resulted in a decrease to the fees associated with registration and associated staff time.
- ✓ Began the initial stages to build a solid, multi-faceted communications strategy for 2015.

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