



CWSF Good Neighbor Authority Committee 2026 Annual Meeting

August 4-6, 2026 | Comfort Suites Summit County | Dillon, CO

Tuesday, August 4, 2026, and Wednesday, August 5, 2026 (Field Tour) Meeting Attendees: Western state forestry agency Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) leads, State Foresters, CWSF staff, and invited USDA Forest Service representatives and other partners

Wednesday, August 5, 2026 (afternoon) and Thursday, August 6, 2026 Meeting Attendees: Western state forestry agency GNA leads, State Foresters, and CWSF staff

Tuesday, August 4 Meeting: Comfort Suites Summit County, 276 Dillon Ridge Rd, Dillon, CO 80435 Columbine Room Attire: Business casual	
9:30 - 9:50 a.m.	Welcome, Agenda Overview, and Introductions <i>Kyle Sullivan (OR, Chair), Everitt Merritt (CO, Vice Chair)</i> The GNA Committee Chair and Vice Chair will open the meeting by outlining the week's primary goals and previewing the schedule. This session includes introductions for all attendees and sets the stage for the collaborative discussions focused on the future of GNA implementation.
9:50 - 10:30 a.m.	Colorado Welcome <i>Matt McCombs (CO State Forester), Nina Waters (Summit County Commissioner - District 3), Troy Heithecker (USDA Forest Service Regional Forester)</i> This opening session will frame the current landscape of forest management in Colorado, focusing on how GNA is being used to address large-scale challenges, such as the Mountain Pine Beetle response on the Front Range and the protection of critical municipal water supplies. Speakers will highlight Summit County as a model for innovation, specifically discussing how local funding, utility partnerships, and creative cross-boundary agreements are sustaining industry capacity and project pace.
10:30 - 10:40 a.m.	Break
10:40 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	State Forester Panel <i>Matt McCombs (CO), Tom Torres (AZ), Kelly Norris (WY)</i> <i>Facilitator: Christine Mares (AZ, Past Chair)</i> State Foresters will discuss high-level GNA strategic goals, focusing on how state-federal partnerships are evolving to address shared priorities.



12:00 - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch (provided)
1:00 - 2:30 p.m.	USDA Forest Service Leadership Updates on Organizational and Operational Changes <i>Troy Heithecker (USDA Forest Service Regional Forester), Shawn Thomas (USDA Forest Service Washington Office)</i> Forest Service leadership representatives will provide a national perspective on GNA direction, Shared Stewardship 2.0, budget outlooks, and the latest guidance regarding the transition to the new state-based organizational model. Group Q&A to follow.
2:30 - 2:50 p.m.	USDA Forest Service GNA Program Updates <i>Rob Barnhart (USDA Forest Service Washington Office)</i> The Forest Service national GNA coordinator will share GNA program updates with meeting attendees. Topics may include changes occurring from the updated USDA General Terms and Conditions, the transition of GNA agreements to the 1500-100 template, and the Forest Service's proposed rule to redefine manuals and handbooks.
2:50 - 3:05 p.m.	Break
3:05 - 3:45 p.m.	Policy Update <i>Neil Simpson (CWSF Policy Director)</i> The CWSF Policy Director will provide updates on recent GNA policy and legislative actions. A group Q&A will follow.
3:45 - 4:55 p.m.	Summit County Spotlight: Leveraging Resources and Prioritizing Funding <i>Madelene McDonald (Denver Water), Dan Schroder (Summit County), Zach Wehr (Colorado State Forest Service), Kat Gray (White River National Forest)</i> <i>Facilitator: Everitt Merritt (CO, Vice Chair)</i> Panelists will detail how state, federal, and local partners determine project priorities and pool diverse funding sources to address critical watershed needs in Summit County. The discussion will focus on the mechanics of leveraging federal and non-federal investments and the lessons learned from aligning different institutional priorities to achieve landscape-scale results.
4:55 - 5:00 p.m.	Reflections and Day's Adjournment <i>Kyle Sullivan (OR, Chair), Everitt Merritt (CO, Vice Chair)</i> CWSF GNA Committee members will share brief reflections from the day's topics and hear logistics for Wednesday morning's field tour.



Evening	Optional Networking Event (offsite, all meeting attendees are welcome) Cala Pub & Restaurant
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Wednesday, August 5 Meeting: Comfort Suites Summit County, 276 Dillon Ridge Rd, Dillon, CO 80435 Columbine Room Attire: Field attire (comfortable walking shoes, rain jacket)	
8:00 - 8:10 a.m.	Welcome and Agenda Overview <i>Kyle Sullivan (OR, Chair), Everitt Merritt (CO, Vice Chair)</i>
8:10 - 8:20 a.m.	Depart for Field Tour Meeting participants will depart from Comfort Suites Summit County. Attendees will need to arrive at the meeting prepared to depart for the field tour.
8:20 - 9:00 a.m.	Travel to Blue River, CO
9:00 - 9:50 a.m.	Blue River GNA: Successes, Challenges, and Lessons Learned in Cross-Boundary Management <i>Bill Wolf and Francisco Murphy-Garcia (CSFS)</i> Local project leads will walk through the realities of managing forest health across federal, state, and private lines. The group will discuss specific examples from the Blue River area, focusing on how they balanced different agency requirements to get work done on the ground. Discussion will include lodgepole pine management and silviculture, building trust with private landowners and other partners, private homeowners insurance dynamics, and utilization challenges.
9:50 - 10:05 a.m.	Drive from Blue River to White Cloud
10:05 - 11:00 a.m.	White Cloud GNA: Successes, Challenges, and Lessons Learned in Cross-Boundary Management <i>Bill Wolf and Francisco Murphy-Garcia (CSFS)</i> Local project leads will walk through the White Cloud GNA Project. Discussion will include road access in the WUI across private land to the National Forest, utilization successes and market dynamics, and balancing multiple objectives to promote resilient forests and communities.
11:00 - 11:45 a.m.	Drive to Sapphire Point Overlook for Lunch
12:00 - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch at Sapphire Point Overlook (provided)



1:00 - 2:00 p.m.	Frisco Backyard - Integration of Recreation and Forest Management, and Creative Funding Mechanisms <i>Kat Gray (USDA Forest Service), Francisco Murphy-Garcia (CSFS)</i> At Sapphire Point Overlook, partners will discuss the "Frisco Backyard" project, which will integrate forest, fuels, water, and recreation management. The conversation will cover creative funding solutions, leveraging non-federal funding on federal lands, and challenges and successes with planning and implementing high-public-visibility projects.
2:00 - 2:30 p.m.	Return from Field Tour to Comfort Suites This concludes the partner portion of the GNA Committee meeting.
2:30 - 3:15 p.m.	New Mexico Alternative to Retained Receipts in GNA <i>Jacob Pederson (NM, Secretary)</i> New Mexico has developed an approach to GNA projects involving the removal of forest products from national forest lands without retaining sale receipts from timber operators. Instead, operators will offer service rate discounts to the state in exchange for the right to remove forest products from project areas. Jacob will describe this approach, present on procurement activities backing it, and explain its benefits to the state, national forests, and contractors.
3:15 - 4:00 p.m.	USDA Forest Service GNA Timber Data Request <i>Shawn Thomas (USDA Forest Service Washington Office)</i> The GNA Committee will review the USDA Forest Service GNA timber data request and discuss feedback to send to the Washington Office.
4:00 - 4:15 p.m.	Break
4:15 - 4:30 p.m.	USDA Forest Service GNA Timber Data Request cont. <i>(USDA Forest Service Washington Office)</i>
4:30 - 4:45 p.m.	2026 Work Plan Updates: BLM Improvements Workgroup <i>Jon Fitch (CA)</i> Discuss status and any next steps on the effort to elevate GNA Committee recommendations to improve BLM GNA planning and implementation.
4:45 - 5:00 p.m.	Reflections, Ideas for Action, and Day's Adjournment <i>Kyle Sullivan (OR, Chair), Everitt Merritt (CO, Vice Chair)</i> CWSF GNA Committee members will share reflections from the day's conversations and any action items.



Evening	Optional Networking Event (offsite, all meeting attendees are welcome) Dam Brewery
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Thursday, August 6 Meeting: Comfort Suites Summit County, 276 Dillon Ridge Rd, Dillon, CO 80435 Columbine Room Attire: Business casual	
8:00 - 8:10 a.m.	Welcome and Agenda Overview <i>Kyle Sullivan (OR, Chair), Everitt Merritt (CO, Vice Chair)</i>
8:10 - 8:25 a.m.	2026 Work Plan: Website Materials Workgroup <i>Amanda Morrison (SD)</i> Workgroup members will provide a progress update to the GNA Committee on their task to update internal and external GNA resources on the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition GNA webpage. Workgroup members will request input and review of draft resources as needed.
8:25 - 10:00 a.m.	Reorganization and Impacts to GNA Planning and Implementation <i>Kyle Sullivan (OR, Chair), Everitt Merritt (CO, Vice Chair), Jacob Pederson (NM, Secretary), Christine Mares (AZ, Past Chair)</i> This GNA Committee group discussion aims to examine how a new USDA Forest Service organizational structure might alter the administration, communication, and overall efficiency of GNA planning and implementation.
10:00 - 10:15 a.m.	Break
10:15 - 11:15 a.m.	2027 GNA Committee Business: Work Plan Tasks and Volunteers <i>Everitt Merritt (CO, Vice Chair)</i> Members will identify and prioritize emerging focus areas, actionable tasks, and volunteers for 2027 to ensure the committee's work plan remains responsive to shifting federal policies and state implementation needs.
11:15 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Meeting Reflections, Action Items, and Closing Remarks <i>Kyle Sullivan (OR, Chair), Everitt Merritt (CO, Vice Chair)</i>