



## CWSF FOREST HEALTH COMMITTEE 2023 Annual Report and 2024 Work Plan

### LEADERSHIP OVERVIEW

#### COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP

The Forest Health Committee leadership team beginning at inception in 2023 and continuing for 2024 includes:

- Aly McAlexander (AZ), Chair
- Ryan Rastock (KS), Vice-Chair
- Past Chair, Vacant until 2024/2025
- Harrison Brookes (WY), Secretary
- Marcus Warnke (SD), State Forester Advisor
- Kelsey Delaney, CWSF/WFLC Staff Liason

#### MISSION STATEMENT AND PURPOSE

**Mission:** The Forest Health Committee (FHC) establishes a platform for communication and collaboration between western states, the USDA Forest Service, and forestry partners. The FHC creates opportunities to leverage and share resources, expand the transfer of technology, and cooperate on shared goals and initiatives, including multi-state competitive grant applications.

**Purpose:** The FHC was formed with the permission and support of the Council of Western State Foresters (CWSF) to serve as a forum to share information, cooperate on program delivery, and advance forest health in the western United States and Pacific Islands. It provides a structure for ongoing communication between western states and between states and partners. The FHC creates opportunities to leverage and share resources, expand technical transfer, and cooperate on common goals and other efforts such as multi-state competitive grant applications.

This FHC is prepared to address emerging and ongoing forest health issues at the state, regional, and national levels and to serve as an expert resource for CWSF and the National Association of State Foresters (NASF). Bringing together the skills, talents, experience, and passion of western forestry professionals strengthens every state and helps them better serve the public.

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### 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM 2023

- The FHC hosted its first meeting in Fall 2023.
- Leadership led efforts to craft and finalize the committee mission, purpose, and the FHC charter.
- Conducted a FHC membership survey to seek recommendations for topics/issues to explore in 2023.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION BY STATE FORESTERS**

- Recommendation for State Foresters to approve the FHC 2024 Work Plan.

## **2024 WORK PLAN**

### **MEETING(S) AND CALLS PLANNED FOR 2024**

- The second Tuesday of every other month at 3:30 p.m. MT in the following months: February, April, June, August, October, and December.
- In-Person Annual Meeting, October 2023, in Phoenix, AZ, to support networking, information sharing, and field tours identifying best practices for forest health projects.

### **METHOD OF COMMUNICATION**

- In addition to Zoom meetings, the FHC members communicate via phone calls and email.
- FHC uses Google Drive to store by-laws, working groups' documents, and meeting agenda/notes.

### **KEY ACTIVITIES, DELIVERABLES, AND OUTCOMES PLANNED FOR 2024**

- Coordinate and collaborate with USDA Forest Service Forest Health Program staff, the National Association of State Foresters, Tribes, state agriculture agencies, and others on mutual forest health priorities.
  - Examine topics and recommendations received in the FHC membership survey, including but not limited to USDA Forest Service Timber Pilot Transport, invasive species, reporting metrics, and forest health program changes.
  - Share information, lessons learned, and develop a strong peer network and helpful resources on forest health topics impacting western state forestry agencies.
  - Where opportunities arise, invite forest health subject matter experts from state forestry, USDA Forest Service, Tribes, state agriculture agencies, and other partners to Zoom meetings and the first annual meeting.
  - Discuss issues and brainstorm impacts relative to emerging federal funding opportunities for forest health, and share information and feedback on matters of importance or impacts to state programs as a result of funding opportunities.
  - Explore opportunities to integrate private forest land forest health issues and coordinate with other CWSF/WFLC committees on relevant forest health topics.
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