



**WESTERN FORESTRY
LEADERSHIP COALITION**



CWSF
COUNCIL OF WESTERN
STATE FORESTERS

2026 [WFLC](#) & [CWSF](#) Spring Meeting

May 12-14, 2026 | Lied Lodge at Arbor Day Farm | Nebraska City, NE

Updated May 8, 2026

Tuesday, May 12 Western Forestry Leadership Coalition Meeting	
<p>Attendees: Western State and Pacific Island Foresters and senior staff, USDA Forest Service WFLC members, and invited partners</p> <p>Attire: Business Casual</p> <p>Room: Rosenow C & D</p>	
7:00 - 7:50 a.m.	<p>Breakfast (Provided, Rosenow A & B)</p> <p>All Attendees</p>
8:00 - 8:30 a.m.	<p>WFLC Meeting Commencement and Introductions</p> <p><i>Jacque Buchanan (USFS, WFLC Co-Lead) and Kelly Norris (WY, WFLC Co-Lead)</i></p>
8:30 - 9:15 a.m.	<p>Arbor Day Welcome</p> <p><i>Dan Lambe (Arbor Day Foundation) and Eric North (Arbor Day Foundation)</i></p> <p>This opening session will welcome attendees to Lied Lodge at Arbor Day Farms and ground participants in the local landscape. The 50th anniversary of Tree City USA offers a timely opportunity to highlight the value of community forestry and collaborative partnerships across the West.</p>
9:15 - 10:15 a.m.	<p>Forestry and Trees of Nebraska</p> <p><i>John Erixson (NE, CWSF Past Chair) and Justin Evertson (Nebraska Forest Service, Green Infrastructure Coordinator)</i></p> <p>Nebraska State Forester John Erixson will provide opening remarks on the history and stewardship that shape the state's landscape, communities, and forestry. Justin Evertson will then introduce the variety of Nebraska's tree species.</p>
10:15 - 10:45 a.m.	<p>Break with Exhibitors (Steinhart C)</p> <p><i>Refreshments Sponsored by National Wild Turkey Federation</i></p>
10:45 - 11:30 a.m.	<p>Policy Update</p> <p><i>Neil Simpson (CWSF/WFLC, Director of Policy)</i></p> <p>This session will provide an overview of key federal forestry policy developments and emerging issues impacting the forestry sector. The briefing will be followed by time for discussion and questions.</p>



<p>11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Planning and Outcome-Based Performance Measures <i>Richard Barhydt (USFS, RMRS Station Director) and Patrick Wright (California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force, Director)</i> Building on previous WFLC discussions, this session will address outcome-based performance metrics efforts in high-risk landscapes across the West. Attendees will hear updates from state and federal agencies and will discuss potential opportunities to adapt and scale metrics to support state-level planning, evaluation, and decision-making.</p>
<p>12:30 - 1:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Lunch (Provided, Rosenow A & B) <i>Sponsored by Technosylva</i> All Attendees</p>
<p>1:30 - 2:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Wildfire Data Initiatives Presentation <i>Lowell Ballard (Timmons Group), Aaron Kimple (Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes), and Kori Blankenship (The Nature Conservancy LANDFIRE Team)</i> Speakers will provide brief overviews of the Grant Accomplishments Reporting Portal (GARP), the Treatment and Wildfire Interagency Geodatabase (TWIG), and LANDFIRE, with the intent to dispel confusion, clarify the distinctions between the tools, and help users understand their effective use.</p>
<p>2:30 - 3:00 p.m.</p>	<p>Regional and National Association Updates Representatives from the National Association of State Foresters and the Northeast-Midwest State Foresters Alliance will provide updates on developments at the national and regional levels.</p>
<p>3:00 - 3:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Break with Exhibitors (Steinhart C)</p>
<p>3:30 - 4:45 p.m.</p>	<p>Shared Stewardship 2.0 Implementation Across the West <i>Ellen Shultzabarger (USFS, Associate Deputy Chief) and Shawn Thomas (USFS, Senior Advisor)</i> As more Western states sign updated or new Shared Stewardship agreements, this session will focus on moving into on-the-ground implementation, including strategies for alignment, coordination, and collaboration, as well as common challenges and potential solutions.</p>
<p>4:45 - 5:00 p.m.</p>	<p>Wrap-up and Day's Adjournment</p>
<p>5:30 - 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Reception (Woodland Grove on Arbor Day Farm property) All Attendees</p>
<p>Evening</p>	<p>Dinner on your own</p>



Wednesday, May 13 Western Forestry Leadership Coalition Meeting	
Attendees: Western State and Pacific Island Foresters and senior staff, USDA Forest Service WFLC members, and invited partners	
Attire: Field Tour Attire	
Room: Rosenow C & D	
7:00 - 7:50 a.m.	Breakfast (Provided, Rosenow A & B) All Attendees
8:00 - 8:05 a.m.	Welcome <i>Jacque Buchanan (USFS, WFLC Co-Lead) and Kelly Norris (WY, WFLC Co-Lead)</i>
8:05 - 9:25 a.m.	WFLC Member Discussion Discussion of current priorities and changes affecting the USDA Forest Service, state partners, and the coalition's composition.
9:25 - 9:30 a.m.	WFLC Meeting Wrap-up and Field Tour Instructions <i>Jacque Buchanan (USFS, WFLC Co-Lead) and Kelly Norris (WY, WFLC Co-Lead)</i>
9:30 - 10:00 a.m.	Break with Exhibitors (Steinhart C) <i>Refreshments Sponsored by Mule Deer Foundation</i>
10:00 - 11:30 a.m.	Guided Walking Tour of Arbor Lodge: Trees, Stewardship, and the Living Landscape <i>Mark Canney (Arbor Day Farm, Director of Horticulture and Landscape) and Ben Heusinkvelt (Arbor Day Farm, Orchard and Grounds Manager)</i> Explore the historic landscape of Arbor Lodge State Historical Park, where more than 150 years of tree planting, design, and stewardship have shaped one of the earliest private arboretums on the Great Plains. This guided tour highlights the legacy of J. Sterling Morton and the origins of Arbor Day, while showcasing champion trees, diverse plantings, and modern approaches to landscape care, restoration, and long-term forest stewardship.
11:30 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.	Lunch (Provided, Porter's) All Attendees <i>Note that the guided tour will conclude with lunch at Porter's on Arbor Day Farm property.</i>
12:45 - 1:00 p.m.	Board Bus and Depart for Field Tour <i>Note that attendees will board the field tour bus from the Porter's lunch location.</i>



1:00 - 5:30 p.m.	<p>Stop 1: Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium <i>Dakota Wagner (Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium, Browse Program Supervisor)</i></p> <p>This tour highlights the innovative link between forest restoration and wildlife. Following the 2011 Missouri River flood, the Nebraska Forest Service planted thousands of native trees, including willows, cottonwoods, and sycamores, to restore the landscape. Attendees will see how a partnership with Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium uses harvested willow branches for animal enrichment, and witness firsthand how Nebraska restoration projects support both ecosystems and wildlife.</p> <p>Stop 2: Horning State Farm Demonstration Forest <i>Aaron Clare (Nebraska Forest Service, Conservation Forester) and Jay Seaton (Nebraska Forest Service, Forester)</i></p> <p>Horning State Farm is a living laboratory where forest management, conservation education, and ecological research come together. Field tour attendees will have the opportunity to explore a working forest landscape, examine innovative management practices, and discuss how similar approaches might translate to their own states.</p>
5:30 p.m.	Return to Lied Lodge
Evening	Dinner on your own



<p>Thursday, May 14 Council of Western State Foresters Meeting and separate Western Forest Service Leaders Meeting</p> <p>Attire: Business Casual</p>		
7:00 - 7:50 a.m.	<p>Breakfast (Provided, Rosenow A & B) All Attendees</p>	
	<p>CWSF Meeting <i>Room: Rosenow C & D</i></p> <p>Attendees: Western State and Pacific Island Foresters and senior staff; State Forester associations' staff and representatives; and invited partners</p>	<p>Western Forest Service Leaders Meeting <i>Room: Steinhart A</i></p> <p>Attendees: USDA Forest Service</p>
8:00 - 8:15 a.m.	<p>Morning Welcome and Agenda Overview <i>Kelly Norris (WY, CWSF Chair)</i></p>	<p>USDA Forest Service business/meeting with WFLC Executive Director</p>
8:15 - 9:00 a.m.	<p><u>Ponderosa Pine Utilization Summit: Outcomes and Actions</u> <i>Kim Slezak (NE, CWSF Forest Products Committee Chair)</i></p> <p>Attendees will be provided a brief overview of the <u>Ponderosa Pine Action Plan</u>, discuss planned next steps, and identify collaborative opportunities to move these recommendations forward by both members and partners.</p>	
9:00 - 10:00 a.m.	<p>Post-Disaster Funding <i>Aaron Lumley (USFS, Natural Resources Specialist)</i></p> <p>Participants will receive an overview of current post-disaster programs and processes, followed by a discussion on state-level needs, with the goal of identifying opportunities to improve coordination and better align available resources and those needs.</p>	
10:00 - 10:30 a.m.	<p>Break (Steinhart C) All Attendees</p>	



10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	Business Session (State Foresters Only) State Foresters and CWSF staff to discuss member business. Several session items will require formal approval by a vote of the membership.	USDA Forest Service business
12:30 - 1:30 p.m.	Lunch (Provided, Rosenow A & B) All Attendees	
1:30 - 2:45 p.m.	Business Session Continued	USDA Forest Service business (end early for travel or other meetings)
2:45 - 3:00 p.m.	Wrap-up and Meeting Adjournment <i>Kelly Norris (WY, CWSF Chair) and Danielle Okst (CWSF/WFLC, Executive Director)</i>	
3:00 - 3:30 p.m.	Meeting Follow-Ups and Networking (Prefunction Area) All Attendees	