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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Danielle Okst Selected as Executive Director for the Council of Western State Foresters and Western Forestry Leadership Coalition

DENVER, CO – The Council of Western State Foresters (CWSF) and Western Forestry Leadership Coalition (WFLC) is pleased to announce Danielle Okst as the new Executive Director.

Okst joined CWSF and WFLC in January 2019. Most recently, Okst served as the Director of Policy and previously served as the Associate Policy and Grants Director. As Director of Policy, Okst played an integral role in facilitating the region's competitive grant processes and worked closely with members and partners to advance forestry issues across the West.

Prior to joining CWSF and WFLC, Okst worked as a Campaign Director during the 2018 election in Colorado. Okst's career highlights include a detail with the Legislative Affairs Team at the USDA Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station, serving as a Program Director and Development Specialist for Americas for Conservation and the Arts, and experience working with several law firms carrying out contract review, legal research, and ensuring effective representation for underserved clients.

"Danielle's commitment to this organization has been evident during her time as our Director of Policy," said Jason Hartman, State Forester for the Kansas Forest Service and Chair of the CWSF Executive Committee. "We look forward to working with her in a new capacity and supporting her as she takes on this leadership role."

Okst holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University at Buffalo and a Juris Doctor degree from the State University of New York, Buffalo Law School. Okst is a licensed attorney in Colorado and New York.

"Danielle's vast understanding of the complexities surrounding forest policy and competitive grant processes makes her well positioned to step into this role," said Frank Beum, Regional Forester for the USDA Forest Service Rocky Mountain Region and Co-Chair of the WFLC Executive Board. "Her knowledge of key legislation, such as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act, will be an asset to state forestry agencies and Forest Service regions across the West."

March 2 marked Laura Schweitzer's last day with CWSF and WFLC. Schweitzer joined the CWSF/WFLC staff in 2017 and served as Executive Director for over five years. Schweitzer transitioned into a new role as Deputy Regional Forester for the USDA Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region.

To learn more about the Council of Western State Foresters, visit www.westernforesters.org. To learn more about the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition, visit www.thewflc.org.

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About the Council of Western State Foresters

The Council of Western State Foresters (CWSF) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit membership organization comprised of 17 western State Foresters and six U.S.-Affiliated Pacific Island Foresters.

About the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition

The Western Forestry Leadership Coalition (WFLC) is a partnership between western State Foresters and USDA Forest Service (Forest Service) leaders. The WFLC membership includes the 23 CWSF members, as well as 11 individuals from the Forest Service western leadership.