

# Regional Report for the Southern Group of State Foresters' Annual Meeting

## June 2024

### Organizational Announcements

#### Communications Intern

The Council of Western State Foresters (CWSF) will be welcoming a Communications Intern for Summer 2024. Thanks to the National Association of State Foresters Foundation for providing funding for this opportunity.

#### 2024 CWSF/WFLC Spring Meeting

The 2024 CWSF/Western Forestry Leadership Coalition (WFLC) Spring Meeting took place May 21-23, 2024, in Fargo, North Dakota.

#### Stories from the West

Stories from AZ, AS, CO, ID, KS, NE, ND, UT, and WA are featured on CWSF's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) webpage - <https://www.westernforesters.org/bil-and-ira-state-forestry-stories>.

Recent stories from CO, ID, MT, SD, and others are featured monthly on WFLC's Good Neighbor Authority information and resources webpage - <https://www.thewflc.org/partnerships/gna-information-and-resources>.

### Grant Updates

- **CWDG** - The final list of awarded projects has been announced and can be found on the USDA Forest Service CWDG webpage at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/fire/grants/cwdg/funded-proposals>. The applications and comments provided by reviewers can be found on the [forestrygrants.org](https://forestrygrants.org) portal. An AAR will be held towards the end of June to gather feedback from Round 2.
- **LSR** - The list of awarded LSR projects for fiscal year (FY) 2024 has been submitted to the Washington Office for approval. Once approved, the award list will be posted to the WFLC LSR webpage at <https://www.thewflc.org/landscape-scale-restoration-competitive-grant-program>.
- **WUI** - The list of awarded WUI projects for FY 2024 has been finalized and is available at <https://www.westernforesters.org/wui-grants>.
- **FY 2024 BIL Invasive Species Western Regional Priority Projects** - The final recommended list of western regional priority projects for funding has been endorsed by the Western Panel and elevated to USDA Forest Service Washington Office Forest Health staff.

### Member Transitions

#### ■ Alaska

Following Helge Eng's departure, Norm McDonald will serve as Acting State Forester and Director for the Alaska Division of Forestry & Fire Protection. Kelly Norris will replace Helge Eng as Treasurer on the CWSF Executive Committee.

#### ■ USDA Forest Service Alaska Region

Chad VanOrmer accepted the position of Regional Forester.

#### ■ USDA Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region

Jacque Buchanan accepted the position of Regional Forester.

#### ■ USDA Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station

Valerie Hipkins accepted the position of Station Director effective July 1.

#### ■ USDA Forest Service Rocky Mountain Region

Kevin Khung accepted the position of Director of State, Private, and Tribal Forestry.

#### ■ USDA Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station

Richard Barhydt accepted the position of Station Director effective July 1.



## Committee Updates

### Western State Fire Managers Meeting

The CWSF Western State Fire Managers (WSFM) convened for their annual in-person meeting during the CMS-Wildland Fire Committee Meeting in January 2024. The committee also met recently for their monthly virtual meeting to further discuss NWCG committees, the upcoming changes for reporting due to NFORS phasing out, and planning for an in-person meeting in October with the Western State Fire Business Managers.

### Western Urban & Community Forestry Meeting

The WFLC Western Urban & Community Forestry meeting took place February 27-29 in Sacramento, CA. The meeting included presentations from western states, the Forest Service, NASF, SGSF, NMSFA, and the Arbor Day Foundation. CAL FIRE hosted a field tour with stops at the UC Davis Arboretum, UC Davis Climate Ready Species Research Site, Sacramento Tree Foundation, and a very green schoolyard at Harper Junior High School.



WUCF Field Tour at UC Davis Arboretum. Photo: Neil Simpson

### Good Neighbor Authority Committee Meeting

The CWSF GNA Committee gathered for their annual meeting in Tucson, AZ, April 2-4. The meeting included a panel discussion featuring State Foresters from AZ, ID, and WA, work sessions about GNA accomplishments reporting and financial plans, and a field tour to discuss upcoming GNA project treatments. Learn more at <https://www.westernforesters.org/blog/2024-gna-committee-annual-meeting>.

### WSFM Health & Wellness Webpage

The CWSF WSFM Mental Health & Wellness Subcommittee developed a new webpage focused on resources to support wildland firefighters and their families. This webpage will serve as a resource hub displaying a training calendar, a document library, and a contact list to reach CISM-trained professionals. View the webpage at <https://www.westernforesters.org/western-state-fire-managers-health-and-wellness-subcommittee>.

### Pacific Islands Forestry Committee Communications

WFLC recently worked with the Pacific Islands to develop communication products. This project was supported by the Forest Service and focused on using content from State Fact Sheets to build products and increase communications capacity for the islands. View the materials at [https://bit.ly/pifc\\_comms](https://bit.ly/pifc_comms).

GNA Committee Meeting. Photo: Kelsey Delaney

### Forest Products Committee Meeting

The CWSF Forest Products Committee Annual Meeting took place April 9-11, in Coeur d'Alene, ID. The meeting included presentations about the University of Idaho's new associate degree programs and primary education outreach, and the Idaho Forest Products Commission's efforts to promote Idaho's forest products industry. Learn more at <https://www.westernforesters.org/blog/2024-forest-products-committee-meeting>.



Testing out the University of Idaho's Simulators during FPC Field Tour. Photo: Halie Miyazawa.

### Forest Stewardship and Landowner Assistance Committee

The CWSF Forest Stewardship and Landowner Assistance Committee will meet June 4-6 in Folsom, CA. This will be the committee's first in-person meeting since its formation last year. Attendees will share successes and challenges from their states. The host state of California has a field trip planned that will examine recent fires and the reforestation and restoration taking place in and around those fires.

## Policy Updates

Kelly Norris, along with representatives from the water utilities, the timber industry, USDA, and the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI), testified at the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Hearing to “Examine the Findings and Recommendations of the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission.” Kelly highlighted the importance of cross-boundary management, strong partnerships, and the successful use of GNA in Wyoming. Kelly noted that “states are contributing to the restoration of federal forests at an unprecedented scale.” Wyoming State Forestry Division has partnered with the Forest Service and DOI Bureau of Land Management to treat over 11,000 acres and sell approximately 32 million board feet of timber under GNA.



Photo: Senator Mitt Romney Staff

Jamie Barnes, along with four other state and federal officials, testified at the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee hearing titled “A Nation on Fire: Responding to the Increasing Wildfire Threat.” Jamie highlighted the importance of bringing partners and stakeholders together in a Shared Stewardship approach to do the “right work, in the right place and at the right scale.” The Utah Shared Stewardship program has treated over 80,000 acres utilizing this approach.

In preparation for the Senate Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee hearing on the FY 2025 Forest Service Budget Proposal, CWSF and NASF staff worked with Nebraska State Forester John Erixson to provide information to Senator Fischer (R-NE) on State Forester Priorities.

## A Look Ahead

CWSF/WFLC staff will be working with the WUCF Committee to develop a publication centered around projects and programs made possible with BIL & IRA funding.

CWSF/WFLC staff will also be working with the GNA Committee on an update to the GNA Activities & Accomplishments report.

## Upcoming Meetings

- CWSF Forest Stewardship/Landowner Assistance Committee Annual Meeting, June 4-6, 2024, Folsom, CA
- 2024 National Forest Legacy Program Summit, June 11-13, 2024, Kalispell, MT
- CWSF Forest Health Committee Annual Meeting, October 1-3, 2024, Phoenix, Arizona
- CWSF Western State Fire Managers Committee & Western State Fire Business Managers Subcommittee Annual Meetings, October 8-10, 2024 (TBC), Spokane, WA
- WFLC Pacific Islands Forestry Committee Executive Committee Annual Meeting, October 2024, TBD
- CWSF/WFLC Fall Meeting, November 5-7, 2024, Missoula, MT

See full calendar of events at [www.westernforesters.org/events](http://www.westernforesters.org/events) and [www.thewflc.org/events](http://www.thewflc.org/events).