

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

June 2026

Organizational Announcements

2026 CWSF/WFLC Spring Meeting Recap

The Council of Western State Foresters (CWSF) and Western Forestry Leadership Coalition (WFLC) held their Spring Meeting in Nebraska City, NE, from May 12–14, 2026. The meeting featured discussions on federal forestry policy, shared stewardship implementation, outcome-based performance metrics, wildfire data initiatives, and post-disaster coordination. [Learn more about the meeting.](#)

Impact Reports

CWSF and WFLC committees, in collaboration with CWSF/WFLC staff, have created a series of reports to showcase the impact of forestry funding on state and private lands. These reports highlight program achievements and demonstrate how investments are advancing forestry priorities across the West. Reports include: [Forest Health](#), [Forest Stewardship](#), [Urban and Community Forestry](#), and [Wildfire](#). Updated reports will be produced in late 2026.

USDA Forest Service Reorganization Webpage

CWSF has developed a [webpage](#) as a resource for ongoing information related to the Forest Service reorganization.

Communications Intern

CWSF recently interviewed candidates for a communications internship. The application window closed on April 17, and the selected candidate will begin in mid-June. This internship is made possible with support from the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) Foundation.

Policy Updates

- Director of Policy Neil Simpson continues to work closely with NASF, the Northeast-Midwest State Foresters Alliance, and the Southern Group of State Foresters to monitor developments related to Forest Service restructuring, the creation and unification with the U.S. Wildland Fire Service, and federal legislation affecting wildfire management and forestry.
- In coordination with Western State Foresters and the NASF Policy Team, Neil has provided detailed analysis and feedback on the new USDA and Forest Service General Terms and Conditions.
- Neil provides regular updates to CWSF and WFLC members on emerging legislation, fiscal year (FY) 26 budget apportionment, the FY 27 appropriations process, and other developments in Washington, D.C. that may impact wildfire and forestry priorities.
- CWSF is organizing a Western state forestry policy network comprised of State Foresters and/or staff with policy-related responsibilities. The network will provide opportunities for information sharing on state and federal forestry legislation and policy.

MEMBER TRANSITIONS

■ CNMI

Charles Aiseam is serving as the Acting Director of the Division of Agriculture for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Department of Lands and Natural Resources. Jack Ogumoro has moved into a new role as Director of Administrative Services.

■ Nevada

[Ryan Shane](#) has been appointed as Nevada's State Forester Firewarden and Administrator of the Nevada Division of Forestry.

■ Oregon

Oregon Governor Tina Kotek [appointed Kacey KC](#) as the new State Forester and Director of the Oregon Department of Forestry.



Photo: Joel Prince



Committee Highlights

Forest Landowner Support

This spring, CWSF established a Forest Landowner Assistance workgroup within the Forest Stewardship and Landowner Assistance Committee. This workgroup will undertake efforts to support western state forestry agencies in the implementation and/or engagement of the Inflation Reduction Act Forest Landowner Support Programs. Among other tasks, the workgroup will conduct peer learning, create an information resource repository, and craft an internal roadmap of actions for 2026 to 2030.

WSFM Health & Wellness Webpage

To support the well-being of wildland firefighters and their families, the Western State Fire Managers (WSFM) Health & Wellness Subcommittee developed a [webpage](#) serving as a central hub for western states. The site includes Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) contacts for peer support and Critical Incident Response, national health and wellness resources, a document library for state agencies to share materials, and a training calendar featuring upcoming opportunities.

GNA letter

CWSF, on behalf of the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) Committee, submitted [a letter](#) to the Secretary of the Interior, Doug Burgum, outlining key state forestry agency recommendations to improve GNA planning and implementation with the Bureau of Land Management.

PONDEROSA PINE ACTION PLAN

Building on insights from the November 2025 Ponderosa Pine Utilization Summit, the Forest Stewards Guild and Hardigg Consulting, with input from the CWSF Forest Products Committee (FPC), developed the [Ponderosa Pine Utilization Summit: Outcomes and Actions](#). The resulting Ponderosa Pine Action Plan outlines key challenges, solutions, and opportunities for action and highlights the need for continued collaboration to advance recommendations around supply, infrastructure and mills, markets and innovation, and workforce. The FPC will undertake efforts in 2026 and beyond to advance actions found within the Ponderosa Pine Action Plan.




Photo: Zander Evans



Committee Highlights Continued

2026 CWSF/WFLC Committee Leadership and Work Plans

Each CWSF and WFLC committee is guided by a leadership team, including a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Past Chair, and State Forester Advisor. Below are the Chairs, State Forester Advisors, and Staff Liaisons for 2026. To view each committee’s work plan, visit their individual webpages hyperlinked below.

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| <p><u>CWSF Forest Health Committee</u> Chair: Jason Moan (AK) State Forester Advisor: Marcus Warnke (SD) Staff Liaison: Kelsey Delaney Annual Meeting: Sept. 29-Oct. 1, 2026 Anchorage, AK</p> | <p><u>CWSF Forest Products Committee</u> Chair: Kim Slezak (NE) State Forester Advisor: Jeremy Douse (AK) Staff Liaison: Kelsey Delaney Annual Meeting: TBD</p> | <p><u>CWSF Forest Stewardship/Landowner Assistance Committee</u> Chair: Trevor Dobell-Carlson (AK) State Forester Advisor: Kelly Norris (WY) Staff Liaison: Neil Simpson Annual Meeting: Sept. 29-Oct. 1, 2026 Anchorage, AK</p> | <p><u>CWSF Good Neighbor Authority Committee</u> Chair: Kyle Sullivan (OR) State Forester Advisor: Tom Torres (AZ) Staff Liaison: Kelsey Delaney Annual Meeting: Aug. 4-6, 2026 Dillon, CO</p> |
| <p><u>CWSF Western State Fire Managers Committee</u> Chair: Bill Waln (KS) State Forester Advisor: Jamie Barnes (UT) Staff Liaison: Halie Miyazawa Annual Meeting: Oct. 6-8, 2026 (Meeting will be combined with the Western State Fire Business Managers)</p> | <p><u>WFLC Pacific Island Forestry Committee</u> Chair: Jenny Grimm (HI) Staff Liaison: Sara Goodwin Annual Meeting: Week of Oct. 19, 2026 (TBD)</p> | <p><u>WFLC Western Urban and Community Forestry Committee</u> Chair: Madeline Burton (AZ) State Forester Advisor: Tom Claeys (ND) Staff Liaison: Neil Simpson Annual Meeting: Mar. 24-26, 2026 Virtual</p> | <p>LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR COMMITTEES</p>  |

» A Look Ahead

GNA Synthesis - The CWSF GNA Committee will develop a 2027 GNA Accomplishments Report.

Impact Reports - Building on the 2025 reports, CWSF staff and committees will develop Impact Reports for Forest Health, Forest Stewardship, Urban and Community Forestry, and Wildfire.

📅 Upcoming Member Meeting

2026 CWSF/WFLC Fall Meeting
December 2-4, Washington, D.C.

CWSF Meetings: View [calendar](#) of CWSF meetings.

WFLC Meetings: View [calendar](#) of WFLC meetings.