

Federal Lands Task Force Working Group
Overview of Report to Land Board
"Breaking the Gridlock: Federal Lands Pilot Projects in Idaho"

Objective of the Project

The Federal Lands Task Force, appointed by the Land Board in 1996, was charged with examining federal land management issues in Idaho and analyzing alternative management ideas. The Working Group, an outgrowth of the Task Force, was appointed by the Land Board in 1999 to develop pilot projects to test different types of management approaches.

History and Make Up of Working Group

The Working Group has developed five pilot projects across Idaho to test a new way of thinking about public land management. Working Group members were appointed by the Land Board to represent a wide variety of viewpoints, experience, and geographical balance.

Core Principles

- Local control and extensive public involvement
- A balanced, workable, ecosystem-based approach to environmental management that follows every environmental law
- And genuine partnership with federal agencies like the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management
- No state, local or private ownership takeover of federal lands

Pilot Projects

The Working Group recommends five projects encompassing just under 11 million acres of federal land in Idaho, most of which is managed by the U.S. Forest Service. The projects are:

Central Idaho Ecosystem Trust:

- Location – All of Boise National Forest and parts of the Payette, Sawtooth and Salmon-Challis Forests.
- Model - “trust law” management framework
- Goal - to restore vegetation to desired ecological conditions, while meeting social needs.

Clearwater Basin Stewardship Collaboration:

- Location - Covers parts of the Clearwater and Nez Perce Forests
- Model - “collaborative group” of stakeholders
- Goal - Restore elk habitat and other indicator species consistent with social objectives and historical conditions.

Priest Lake Basin Cooperative:

- Location - The Priest Lake District of the Panhandle National Forest
- Model – memorandum of agreement involving the Forest Service, Departments of Lands and Park and Recreation
- Goal - to restore and enhance ecological conditions and improve resource management for wildlife, recreation and balanced economic uses.

St. Joe Ecosystem Stewardship Project:

- Location - The St. Joe District of the Panhandle National Forest
- Model – the “stewardship” contract approach, similar to those authorized by Congress in 1999.
- Goal - to restore and enhance ecological conditions.

Twin Falls/Cassia Resource Enhancement Trust:

- Location - Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands in the Sawtooth National Forest and the Burley and Twin Falls management areas
- Model - a “trust management” approach
- Goal – to provide sustainable economic activity and enhanced ecological conditions.

Next Steps

30 Day Public Comment period followed by Land Board decision to refer to Congress.

For More Information

The entire report – Breaking the Gridlock: Federal Land Pilot Projects in Idaho – will be available at the Idaho Department of Lands website – www2.state.id.us/lands.