



NEWS RELEASE

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IDAHO AND USDA SIGN HISTORIC AGREEMENT TO IMPROVE FOREST HEALTH

Boise – The State of Idaho and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today entered into a new agreement to improve forest health conditions across Idaho that sets an example of interagency collaboration for other states to follow.

Jim Hubbard, USDA Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment overseeing the Forest Service, joined **Governor C. L. “Butch” Otter** and **Governor-Elect Brad Little** in signing the new “Shared Stewardship Agreement” on Tuesday in Boise.

The strategy, announced publicly in August, is called “*Toward Shared Stewardship across Landscapes: An Outcome-Based Investment Strategy*,” and you can read more about it [here](#).

USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue recently held up Idaho as a prime example of what can be achieved when agencies work together to implement a shared vision of healthy, productive lands that positively contribute to people’s lives.

“By pooling resources, sharing expertise and making decisions together, the State of Idaho and the Forest Service can get more work done in our forests to protect communities and provide jobs,” said Under Secretary Hubbard.

Idaho’s Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) program is a great example of state and federal agencies working together to increase active management and find solutions to challenging natural resource issues. The Shared Stewardship Agreement will take these collaborative efforts to a new level.

“Idaho has proven repeatedly, it is an effective and innovative leader in finding consensus-based, commonsense solutions to complex natural resource issues,” Governor Otter said. “By anchoring to GNA – and keeping our value of stewardship at the forefront of our minds – we are well positioned to implement this shared stewardship plan of action that will get the right results for Idaho.”

"Idaho is leading the nation in implementing new ways to reduce fire risk in our communities and improve the overall health of our public lands," Governor-elect Brad Little said. "The agreement we signed today commits us to working even more closely with our federal partners so together we can make the biggest impact on the land and in the lives of our citizens."

As part of the new strategy, IDL and the Forest Service will:

- Continue to focus on reduction of fuels and wildfire risk to communities, improvement of forest health and watershed conditions and support markets to sustain and create jobs.
- Plan together, invest wisely and create real outcomes at a landscape scale across boundaries while respecting all ownerships values.

Over the next few months IDL and the Forest Service Northern and Intermountain Regions, along with the National Forests in Idaho, will identify two pilot landscapes – one in northern Idaho and one in southern Idaho. A landscape-scale approach will be used to evaluate recent and upcoming forest restoration projects, communities at risk, and what can be done to complement the work already planned in order to do the right work, in the right places at the right scale.

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