**Shared Stewardship Interagency Strategic Communications Plan**

*July 2020*

*Purpose*: This plan was created to encourage coordination between the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL), the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the Governor’s Shared Stewardship Advisory Group, other agencies, and private partners on external communications related to Idaho’s Shared Stewardship Initiative. Providing the public accurate, timely information on its progress and objectives is critical to garnering the support needed from various stakeholder groups to ensure program success. The contents of the plan are meant to provide flexible guidelines for coordination between the agencies and private partners, identification of target audiences, key messages, and effective methods for information dissemination. Agencies and partners are encouraged to keep each other apprised of potential changes in policy that may affect key messages related to Shared Stewardship.

This plan should be reviewed annually.

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| Forest Health and Landscape Concerns |

* Managers and owners of forest land in Idaho face the challenges of wildfire, invasive species, insects and disease.
* 6.1 million acres of National Forest System lands near communities in Idaho are experiencing a combination of high wildfire hazard, above-normal levels of insect and disease mortality, and other restoration treatment needs.
* 94% of endowment timberlands are adjacent to forest service lands.
* Increased forest management of forest service lands can help reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires in and near our communities.
* Agencies and private partners working together are better positioned to yield the most resilient landscapes.

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| Overall Shared Stewardship Objectives |

* To reduce wildfire risk, improve range, watershed and forest health, and support family-wage jobs through coordinated active land management projects.
* To contribute to healthy forests and watersheds by working across state, federal, and private boundaries to increase the pace and scale of forest restoration on larger landscapes and watersheds in Idaho.
* To coordinate with willing private landowners to define and implement cross-boundary projects.
* To build a holistic approach to reducing threats of wildfires and improve the health of Idaho’s forests, rangelands and watersheds through various restoration activities, including prescribed fire, fuel reduction, harvesting, thinning treatments, weeds projects, and stream work.
* To double the number of acres treated on National Forest System lands in Idaho by 2025, focusing treatment on the 6.1 million acres impacted by insect and disease infestation.

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| Communications Objectives |
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* Build Shared Stewardship program and project awareness among diverse and defined audiences.
* Work to secure key stakeholder support and input through appropriate channels.
* Develop relationships with policymakers to influence key policies and issues affecting Shared Stewardship.
* Incorporate emergent information from the Advisory Groups’ Principles, Opportunities, and Metrics subcommittees in Shared Stewardship communications.
* Anticipate and address program and project criticism in advance of the opposition.
* Be proactive in responding to factually incorrect media related to Shared Stewardship

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| Key Messages |

* The agreement for Shared Stewardship between the State of Idaho and the USDA Forest Service Northern and Intermountain Regions was signed on December 18, 2018.
  + Under the agreement, the State and Forest Service have agreed to reduce wildfire risk, improve forest health, and support jobs through additional, coordinated active land management projects.
  + Using a baseline of 50,000 acres, a specific goal is to double the number of acres treated on National Forest System lands in Idaho by 2025, focusing treatment on the 6.1 million acres impacted by insect and disease infestation near communities.
* Shared stewardship emphasizes doing the right work, in the right places, at the right scale, at the right time.
  + At this time, two priority landscapes have been identified, one in northern Idaho and one in southern Idaho, where initial Shared Stewardship investments will be focused.
* Shared Stewardship is about protecting communities and the places where people love to recreate, hunt, fish, and camp.
* Working towards landscapes that are resilient to fire, insects and disease will take an integrated approach across boundaries.
  + By addressing the forest health crisis, we protect our clean air and water, reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire, combat insect and disease infestation, and contribute fiber to forest product markets.
  + Fires, insect outbreaks, and other disturbances don’t recognize jurisdictional boundaries.
* Rural economies will be strengthened with additional forest management and restoration projects on federal, state, and private lands.
  + The harvesting of forest products in Idaho creates 13 industry and 11 supporting jobs for every million board feet harvested with average industry earnings of $45,333.
  + Shared Stewardship projects work to protect communities and the places where people recreate, hunt, fish and camp.
* Shared Stewardship builds on the success and partnerships established through Idaho’s Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) program, state and private forestry programs, and Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration projects and National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)/USFS Joint Chiefs’ Landscape Restoration program.
  + Shared stewardship pushes us to go bigger and bolder with these partnerships and authorities.
  + IDL and the Forest Service will also collaborate with willing private landowners to define and implement cross-boundary projects.
* IDL can increase the pace and scale of forest and watershed restoration projects on federal lands by adding capacity through IDL staff and contracted services utilizing Idaho’s GNA program.
* Together, we will use a holistic approach to reduce threats of wildfires and improve the health of Idaho’s forests, rangelands and watersheds. These include mechanical treatments and prescribed burning.
* To meet market demand for forest products while improving forest conditions, the Forest Service is revising policies and procedures to make timber sale contracts more flexible.

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| Channels of Communication Available |

*Earned media (requiring no funds beyond staff time) will be the focus of interagency external communication efforts. Publications to increase public awareness or knowledge about Shared Stewardship will be produced in-house at minimal cost.*

**Written:**

**News releases and guest opinions** by IDL and USFS officials, the governor, members of the Governor’s Shared Stewardship Advisory Group, or other partners to highlight program milestones and generate positive media coverage of Shared Stewardship. News releases and guest opinions should convey elements of newsworthy stories rather than just provide regular updates.

**Media Interviews:**

**TV, radio, and phone/in-person interviews** with members of the press to increase media exposure on Shared Stewardship.

**Online:**

**IDL Shared Stewardship website**: provides access to a variety of Shared Stewardship communication materials such as fact sheets, presentations, news articles and program contact information. This website is the repository for legacy documents and the ARC-GIS interactive maps and platform.

**USFS Shared Stewardship website:** provides access to a variety of Shared Stewardship communication materials such as fact sheets, presentations, news articles and program contact information.

**Social media accounts**: IDL, Forest Service, and other partner social media accounts provide a means to reach wider audiences directly

**Print:**

**Fact sheets, FAQs, brochures** and other informational materials can be created in-house

**Radio and TV ads:**

Funds are required for production and placement of ads. Paid advertising and PSAs will not be utilized unless it can be leveraged with financial support from non-agency groups seeking to promote Shared Stewardship and its benefits.

**Site tours:**

Project tours with members of the media, elected officials and other stakeholders can be arranged

**Direct Engagement:**

IDL and USFS staff, Advisory Group members and partners can engage with stakeholders through informational presentations and meetings

* Federal Timber Purchasers meeting
* Intermountain Logging Conference
* Idaho Forest Group - Contractor meeting
* Associated Logging Contractors
* American Forest Resource Council
* National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy Workshop
* Various Forest Collaborative meetings
* Idaho Forest Restoration Partnership
* Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition
* Western Governors Association
* Pacific NW Economic Region Summit
* Family Forest Landowners & Managers Conference; Idaho Forest Owners Association quarterly newsletter

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| ***Forest Industry & Landowners*** | ***Policy Makers*** | ***Conservation Community*** | ***Sportsman / Recreation Groups*** |
| American Forest Resource Council | Idaho Legislature | Idaho Forest Restoration Partnership | Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation |
| Associated Logging contractors | Idaho Congressional Delegation | The Lands Council | Trout Unlimited |
| Idaho Forest Products Commission | County Commissioners | Idaho Conservation League | National Wild Turkey Federation |
| Idaho Forest Owners Association |  | The Nature Conservancy | Blue Ribbon Coalition |
| Rangeland groups |  |  | Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association |
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