

Idaho Shared Stewardship Advisory Group (SSAG) Meeting

IDL Director's Office in Boise and via Teams Online Conferencing

11/19/25

Meeting Notes by Ara Andrea, IDL Statewide Shared Stewardship Coordinator

Members and Members' Proxies attending in Boise IDL Office

- Dustin Miller (**member**, IDL Director, Acting Chair of Meeting)
- Ara Andrea (**member**, Idaho Shared Stewardship Coordinator)
- Tim Gilloon, (**member**, IPNF Forest Supervisor, USFS Region 1)
- Danny McBride (**member**, Director of SP&TF, USFS Region 4)
- Representative Mark Sauter (**member**, District 1, Idaho House of Representatives)
- Tim Christopherson (**member**, Associated Logging Contractors)
- Andrew Stockwell (**member**, Stimson Lumber Co., Large Forest Manufacturing)
- Knute Sandahl (**member**, State Fire Marshal, Idaho Lands Resource Coordinating Council)
- Matthew Ward (**member**, The Nature Conservancy, Idaho Forest Restoration Partnership)
- Misty Beals (**member**, State Resource Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service)
- John Robison (**member**, Idaho Conservation League, Conservation NGO)

IDL Staff and Key Partners attending in Boise IDL Office

- Julia Lauch (State Forester, IDL)
- Jeff Lau (North Idaho Shared Stewardship Coordinator, Idaho Panhandle National Forests and IDL)
- Brian Davis (South Idaho Shared Stewardship Coordinator, Payette National Forest and IDL)
- Jon Songster (Good Neighbor Authority Bureau Chief, IDL)
- Tyre Holfeltz (IDL Fire-Risk Mitigation Program Manager, IDL)
- Casey Attebery (Sen. Crapo's Office)
- Peter Stegner (Riley, Stegner and Associates)

Members attending Online via Zoom

- Molly Pitts (**member proxy** for Kurt Dyroff, National Wild Turkey Federation, Conservation NGO)
- Wade Semeliss (**member proxy** for Anna Torma, PotlatchDeltic, Industrial Forest Landowner)
- Sherry Maupin (**member**, Valley County Commissioner, Idaho Counties)

IDL Staff and Key Partners attending via Zoom

- Dennis Becker (Dean, College of Natural Resources, University of Idaho)
- Dirk Mendive (Rep. Fulcher's Office)
- Jane Kreller (Communications Manager, IDL)
- Sharla Arledge (Public Information Officer, IDL)

Members Not Present:

- Darren Damon (**member**, Idaho Governor's Office, delegated Chair of SSAG)
- Brett Bennett (**member**, Bennett Lumber, Small Forest Manufacturing)
- Gary Aitken, Jr. (**member**, Council Vice Chair-Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, Tribal Representative)
- Senator Doug Okuniewicz (**member**, District 3, Idaho Senate)
- David Easley (**member**, Idaho Forest Owners Association, Family Forest Landowner)

Notes:

- In the absence of the SSAG Chair, Darren Damon, IDL Director Dustin Miller chaired this meeting. Dustin welcomed everyone and hosted round-robin introductions of participants—then gave a summary overview of Shared Stewardship and Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) progress and successes.
- Governor Little sent a videoed address to SSAG members, expressing his regrets of not being able to meet with them in person—and his ongoing support of increased targets of harvest volumes and wildfire-resiliency treatments on the national forests and on adjacent private lands.
- Ara Andrea, Jeff Lau, and Brian Davis presented slides and handouts to give members an overview of statewide cross-boundary project accomplishments (*presentation attached to this email*), ending with an informational landowner-outreach video that featured participating landowners touting the protective and aesthetic benefits from their completed forest-management and fuels-reduction projects in the Southern Idaho Shared Stewardship Priority Landscape—showing operations completed in cross-boundary project areas in Adams, Valley and Boise Counties.
- Summary of Shared Stewardship Highlights from 2025 include:
 - *USFS Chief Schultz, Governor Little and IDL Director Miller are scheduled to sign a new 2025 Idaho Shared Stewardship Agreement on Friday, December 5, 2025.*
 - *In alignment with President Trump’s timber-enhancing EO and with Governor Little’s corresponding EO (the Make Forests Healthy Again Act), IDL’s GNA foresters are increasing timber-harvest targets over the next few years in cooperation with the national forests.*
 - *An influx of Infrastructure funding, federal funding pauses, and new funding opportunities have resulted in a roller-coaster effect of treatments implemented on private lands over 2024 into 2025.*
 - *FFY25 resulted in over \$12.9 million awarded to the participating seven counties in our North and South Priority Landscapes to implement fuel-reduction projects on private forestlands.*
 - *Cross-Boundary Teams are now established and implementing projects in Valley and Shoshone Counties.*
 - *New County-IDL Shared Stewardship Agreements with Boundary, Latah, Idaho and Shoshone counties have been executed to assist Counties with progression towards full County-USFS GNA Agreements.*
- Molly Pitts requested that accomplished work on National Forests be more categorized (broken out) in reporting of types of work accomplished,
- Sherry Maupin commented that the National Association of Counties (NACO) can be a strong advocate nationally for State, Private and Tribal Forestry (SPTF) programs and grant opportunities. Also, Valley County’s efforts to build infrastructure in their wildfire-mitigation program (primarily hiring an in-house

mitigation specialist) have been successful in growing their program and treating more acres—and while in Valley County, there seem to be increasing amounts of contractors (to do the mitigation/mastication work), most counties need more operators.

- Discussions occurred among members regarding large Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG) awards (about \$40 million) being distributed over 3 states (WA, ID, MT) along the I-90 corridor. In Idaho, Shoshone County was awarded \$7.5 million.
- SSAG members discussed the mutual-commitment terms of the 2025 Idaho Shared Stewardship Agreement. (This agreement was signed by Governor Little, USFS Chief Schultz and IDL Director Miller on 12/5/25.)
- Tim Gilloon, in reference to the Agreement term that commits IDL and the USFS to increase an annual sustainable timber sale volume of up to 100 million board feet within 5 years through GNA projects, stated that the Idaho Panhandle National Forests (IPNF) is scheduled to harvest 30 million board feet over the next 5 years in accordance with this term.
- Dustin Miller pointed out that this increased GNA timber-harvest target term in the new Idaho Shared Stewardship Agreement is widely supported (politically)—and that GNA projects have been supported by the Idaho Legislature.
- Andy Stockwell pointed out that it's critical, in Idaho's thriving mill infrastructure, that future log supplies fill in the "volume gap"—and that Stimson Lumber Company appreciates attention to these details, and supports the ambitious goals set forth in this Agreement.
- Julia Lauch stated that there will be a meeting of IDL and USFS leadership on January 21st and 22nd and that leaders' intent, strategies and paths forward will be jointly developed to better define how both agencies will meet the targets described in the new Agreement.
- Tim Gilloon pointed out that transparency, teamwork, trust and accountability were critical elements to the success of this advisory group—and that the IPNF needed partners to help "fill in the gaps" with their plans to grow and increase targets. It is beyond the national forest's capacity to get solutions to issues like:
 - How can the national forest enlist more GNA help with "regular" USFS projects?
 - How can we use more new tools, under newer categorical exclusions (CEs) or under fuelbreak implementation in Emergency Situation Determination areas, to reach these ambitious harvesting and vegetation-management targets?
 - How can we convey to the publics that the work defined in this new Agreement anchors back to the USFS's core tenets—including partnership with county and locally led solutions and projects?
- Discussion among members focused on the benefits and challenges of sharing resources. For example, the need is present for IDL to have the flexibility to use GNA project revenues from a highly productive national forest (closer to mills) to

help subsidize timber moving from south-Idaho national forests to a mill—to best optimize all national forests in Idaho meeting the aggressive timber-harvest targets. Currently, there are no incentives for one national forest to share resources (or GNA project revenues) with less-productive national forests that are located further from mills. Also, the pace of revised USFS roles (e.g., new Regional Foresters over combined USFS Regions) is moving at a lightening pace.

- Mark Sauter, in reference to issues regarding expansion of partnerships and garnering political support, said that he was taking notes to generate an attention-grabbing—but still a “Readers Digest”—version of this shared-stewardship story to share with his fellow legislators. Also, a primary concern to his constituents (in north Idaho) is the increasing discontinuation of homeowners’ property insurance. If there is any proposed legislation that relates to this aspect of wildfire-mitigation work, he asked that this be conveyed to him right away (well before January 1st).
- Dustin Miller pointed out that our need is to focus on “telling the story” effectively—to maximize support and win over influential elected officials.
- Sherry Maupin described Valley County’s efforts to invite insurance companies to meet with local county officials in a “Community Summit on Wildfire.” SSAG members and partners were invited to join this summit. Education is key to the county’s success—and for Valley County, accomplishments can continue if the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) funds are re-established through Congressional reauthorization of the act.
- Matthew Ward conveyed that The Nature Conservancy (TNC), through a USFS Keystone Agreement, was able to utilize private funds to enhance work on the Payette National Forest.
- Danny McBride shared that, to his knowledge, the Nevada Division of Forestry was the only state agency to get state-appropriated funds for Shared Stewardship (in Region 4 of the USFS).
- Molly Pitts noted that the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTFF) helped sponsor (forest-resilience) work in the Southwest Idaho Landscape and is now working on a larger supplemental project agreement (SPA) that encourages the USFS to think more broadly (e.g., project areas broader than just one Forest).
- Discussion occurred among members regarding the sharing of GNA revenues to support fuel-reduction projects on private lands adjacent to national forest projects through the authorities in the 2025 EXPLORE Act—although this act focuses primarily on recreation projects.
- Members recommended incorporating the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) more into soliciting help or support for fuel-mitigation work—and utilizing more support from the major utilities (e.g., Avista and Idaho Power).
- Members also discussed the potential for the USFS to borrow or utilize biologists from NGOs and other keystone partners (to more efficiently carry out the increase in requisite NEPA analyses that will be needed to meet these new targets).

- Members requested any information regarding successful building or initiation of biomass-utilization operations—or biochar-production facilities. Several proposed or investigative efforts were discussed—but no new built or working facilities were reported in Idaho.
- Sherry Maupin noted that Valley County won a \$250,000 grant to treat biomass by creating small chipping operations that scatter wood chips back out on the forest floor as well as selling the chips for various utilizations. The county is now seeking wood-innovation grants to expand this market. Members agreed that we should help other counties duplicate Valley County's "bring it, don't burn it" program. Danny McBride added that Chris Clark is still the wood-innovations contact at the USFS to provide help on these types of wood-utilization projects.
- Dennis Becker pointed out that several research projects in the University of Idaho College of Natural Resources (CNR) focus on biomass utilization or energy production—and the CNR can be a resource for us to tap into while exploring the myriad of small-scale things our cross-boundary partners can do in this realm.
- Danny McBride offered to follow up on (smaller scale biomass-utilization) projects being supported by the USFS—and bring some project examples to the January 21st IDL-USFS meeting in Boise.
- Jon Songster contributed that IDL GNA foresters have an existing Hazardous Fuels Transportation grant award—but because of the extreme need for transportation subsidization of merchantable timber throughout the southern areas of the state, third-party funds are badly needed to help get these logs to a mill. In these interests, Jon recommended that GNA agreements (with the national forests) should be changed to share resources Region-wide. This would better even out the needed support to get the most merchantable logs from each national forest to mills. This also would optimize the total number of merchantable logs sold and the total acres receiving fuel-reduction treatments across the state.
- Andy Stockwell noted that shifting some GNA funding to agreements to help serve economically challenged GNA projects Region-wide (i.e., the productive national forests with good proximity to mills sharing revenues with other productive national forests with no proximity to mills) had some merits, but it's important to prioritize. The GNA projects in northern Idaho are the ones that fill the financial coffers, and the volume they provide is vital to sustaining the current sawmill infrastructure.
- Tim Gilloon stated that this kind of Region-wide GNA agreement, to be successful, would require a conversation with all National Forest Supervisors (in Idaho)—with mutual agreement to look at a sustainable long-term view of benefits to all of their Forests.
- Ara will send out meeting notes and a copy of the PowerPoint presentation.
- Meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.