



Good Neighbor Authority in Idaho

Frequently Asked Questions ~ September 2017

What is the Good Neighbor Authority?

A partnership between the Forest Service and Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) to accomplish authorized forest restoration projects across land jurisdictions. Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) was authorized by Congress in the 2014 Farm Bill. More information about GNA is available at: <https://www.fs.fed.us/managing-land/farm-bill/gna>

What are the goals of GNA in Idaho?

To contribute to healthy forests by increasing the pace and scale of forest and watershed restoration

To provide additional fiber to Idaho markets

To develop a self-sustaining program in 3-5 years

What is the benefit to the Forest Service for the State to complete work on its behalf?

Good Neighbor Authority (among other things):

- Provides the ability to work across jurisdictional boundaries and treat the landscape in a mixed ownership setting
- Fosters a collaborative approach to address land management challenges
- Provides the ability to leverage state resources and efficiencies to increase capacity to accomplish work on National Forest System lands
- Provides the opportunity to strengthen the Federal/State partnership

What is the benefit to the State to enter into this type of agreement?

- Adding capacity helps restore our national forests and improves forest and watershed resilience and contributes to the strength of the forest products industry infrastructure and vitality in Idaho.
- Improving forest health may result in reduced risk of insects and diseases and wildfire impacts on state endowment and private forestlands.
- More activity on national forest lands will have added economic benefits to local economies and communities, especially Idaho's rural communities

What authorities and responsibilities does the Forest Service retain?

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance, project decisions, and approval of silvicultural prescriptions and marking guides continue to be the responsibility of the local National Forest manager. Essentially, the Forest Service retains its stewardship authorities and responsibilities. The State acts as a "trusted agent" to implement restoration projects by agreement.

Will IDL follow federal laws while helping to implement GNA projects?

Yes. Projects proposed for completion under a GNA agreement will be in accordance with requirements of:

- Forest Land Management Plan and NEPA decisions
- Other applicable laws including Endangered Species Act and National Historic Preservation Act
- State procedures will be in compliance with federal laws to achieve the described outcome

What is "program income?"

The revenue above the costs for project implementation (i.e. the sold value of the timber that exceeds the adjusted minimum rate less project costs)

How can program income be used?

- Program income may be reinvested into future restoration projects. This determination will be made in a collaborative fashion between IDL and the Forest Service.
- IDL may use a portion of the program income to defray program costs.

Are any monies in these federal/state transactions subject to “payments to counties”?

The monies payed to the Forest Service by IDL for forest products are subject to the county payment program. Program income is not subject to county payments.

How might the GNA initiative impact the primary mission for endowment land management?

We anticipate minimal impact to the endowment mission. With legislative approval, IDL will add capacity to correspond with anticipated GNA program work.

Could IDL administering the federal projects to federal standards impact how we administer the Forest Practices Act and manage the resources of the endowment lands?

There will be no adverse impacts from IDL administering Forest Service requirements on federal land. We will continue to follow the State Forest Practices Act on endowment and private lands as in the past.

What is the road reconstruction barrier and what is the fix?

Road reconstruction was omitted from the 2014 Farm Bill GNA authority. It was authorized in the 2014 Appropriations Act, however, program income funds from Farm Bill authorized projects may not be used to conduct road reconstruction under the Appropriations Act authority. This prohibition effectively excludes many projects from consideration as GNA projects. Congressional action including road reconstruction as an authorized restoration activity with Farm Bill GNA projects would fix this barrier and would require a simple change in the law.

Will Forest Service employees be displaced by IDL employees?

No. IDL adds external capacity to augment Forest Service capacity, not to replace it. The intention is to treat more lands as an addition to the regular Forest Service program.

Is GNA an attempt to “takeover federal lands”?

No. The intent is to work as partners to increase the pace and scale of forest restoration.

How is GNA being funded?

Seed monies have been provided by the Forest Service, cooperators from within the forest products industry, and from the Idaho Legislature.

When program income becomes available, those funds will pay for operating costs. It is anticipated that GNA could be a self-sustaining program in 3 to 5 years on several national forests. Some national forests will also contribute federal appropriated funds for work provided by IDL and contractors when there is no revenue to be generated from timber sales.

Will program income be used for State endowment purposes?

No. Program income will be used to sustain the GNA program and will be reinvested in additional planning and implementation of restoration projects. IDL does not make financial profit or gains from the GNA program, but program costs will be covered.

How is IDL helping with the Forest Service NEPA decision making process?

If requested, IDL supplies senior foresters to provide forestry, silvicultural and transportation/logging planning expertise in partnership with local FS experts in an interdisciplinary team environment.