

Work set to begin on Idaho Good Neighbor Authority projects

June 1, 2017

(BOISE) - **Good Neighbor Authority (GNA)** forest health efforts in Idaho are **beginning to transition from start-up to implementation** with timber harvesting set to begin in the coming weeks.

Timber harvesting and watershed restoration work on the Wapiti Timber Sale on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests will start as soon as the ground begins to dry out.

Most of the work associated with GNA in Idaho so far has been focused on securing commitments from partners, preparing projects at the local level, and signing agreements so that GNA projects can move forward. Preparation of new GNA projects will be ongoing.

GNA work is under way on four national forests in Idaho. The following is a summary of recent and upcoming successes tied to GNA efforts in Idaho.

What is Good Neighbor Authority?

Federal, state and private lands are intermingled in Idaho, so management practices on federal lands inevitably affect neighboring state and private lands.

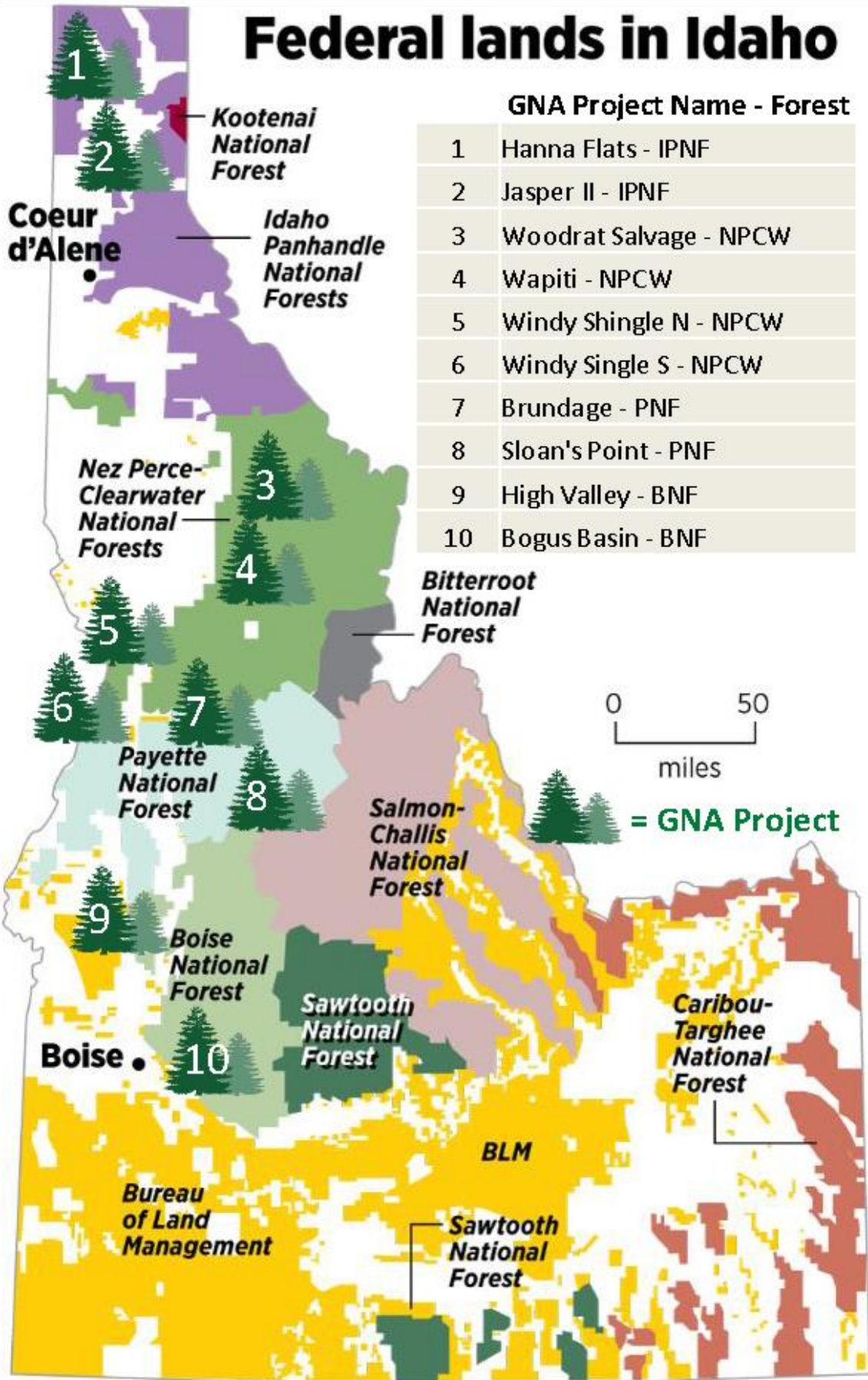
Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) is a federal law that enables the U.S. Forest Service to partner with the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) to achieve restoration and resilient landscape objectives across ownership boundaries in Idaho. GNA was expanded to all states under the 2014 Farm Bill.

The goal of GNA in Idaho is to increase the pace and scale of forest and watershed restoration activities on federal forests. GNA projects in Idaho are intended to be additive, meaning they augment existing management activities on federal lands.

GNA restoration projects may generate program income through the sale of forest products that can be reinvested on the national forest as vegetation treatments, habitat improvements, road maintenance, monitoring, or planning for future projects. Program income also will be used to offset state costs incurred under GNA.

Idaho's GNA efforts are supported by the Forest Service, the State of Idaho (through IDL), industry, local collaborative organizations, and other forest partners. The GNA cooperative efforts can help improve forest health, reduce fuels and threats to communities and watersheds from catastrophic wildfires, and create more jobs and such economic benefits as providing more fiber to Idaho forest products markets.

Federal lands in Idaho



Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests

- Timber harvesting on the **Wapiti Timber Sale** will begin in the coming weeks, as soon as ground conditions permit. The sale will treat 216 acres to improve forest health and reduce fuels. The Wapiti Timber Sale was the first GNA timber sale to be auctioned in Idaho, and it generates more than \$1.4 million in program revenue.
- The Forest Service has completed all National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) planning and sale preparation work for the **Woodrat Salvage Sale**. The Woodrat Salvage Sale auction is tentatively set for June 16 at the IDL Maggie Creek Supervisory Area Office in Kamiah. The Woodrat Salvage Sale will treat 378 acres by removing dead and dying burned timber and planting new trees. The purpose and need for the project is fuel reduction, economic recovery, and ecosystem restoration following the fires of 2015. It will generate 7.6 million board feet of timber and approximately \$1.5 million in program income. Timber harvesting on the Woodrat Salvage Sale could start in the weeks following the auction.
- The Forest Service is working through NEPA planning on the **Windy Shingle project**. The project will treat more than 2,800 acres to reduce fuels and improve forest health.
- Approximately \$5 million in program income will be generated by the four sales on the Nez

Perce-Clearwater National Forests, which will be used for watershed restoration projects on-the-ground as well as data collection, analysis and monitoring for future projects. The Forest's focus for use of potential income is to expand capacity to increase the pace and scale of forest and watershed restoration activities by utilizing the efficiencies in IDL processes, including contracting of NEPA support, data collection, and other restoration activities.

Idaho Panhandle National Forests

- The Forest Service and IDL are modifying an agreement to add the [Jasper Mountain Timber Sale](#) to the list of GNA projects. The Jasper Mountain project lies entirely within the wildland urban interface and was crafted utilizing a collaborative process that included multiple people representing diverse interests. The project will help restore 825 acres of forested lands, increasing its resilience to insect and disease infestations and reducing the risk of wildfire to the local communities and surrounding federal lands. The timber sale is expected to generate \$2 million in program income and produce approximately 13 million board feet of timber, supporting local economies.
 - The [Hanna Flats Timber Sale](#) will treat approximately 2,000 acres of forested federal lands through thinning, prescribed burning, and replanting. A public fieldtrip is scheduled for June 3 to review restoration and fuels reduction options.
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Boise National Forest

- The signing of a local agreement between the Forest Service and IDL is expected in June. After the agreement is in place, two GNA projects can move forward - the [Bogus Basin Forest Health Project](#) and the [High Valley Restoration Project](#). NEPA planning on both projects has been completed. The Bogus Basin Forest Health Project will improve forest resiliency to wildfire and insect and disease infestations by treating vegetation on approximately 1,400 acres. The High Valley Restoration Project would restore healthy vegetation on more than 700 acres by reducing fuels through commercial saw log removal and prescribed burning.
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Payette National Forest

- The Forest Service and IDL are modifying agreements for procurement of environmental planning services associated with the **Sloan's Point project**. The project is in its preliminary stages but is expected to treat approximately 1,500 acres to improve forest and watershed health and fish and wildlife habitat.
 - The **Brundage project**, also in its preliminary stages, would improve forest resiliency to wildfire and insect and disease infestations by thinning and restoring whitebark pine on approximately 180 acres.
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Statewide

- At the request of Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter, the Idaho Legislature appropriated \$250,000 in general funds to support the State of Idaho's GNA efforts in Fiscal Year 2018, which begins July 1, 2017. The money will be used to hire additional full time IDL staff to support the expanding GNA workload.
- IDL recently awarded five contracts to environmental firms to complete data collection and analysis on federal lands under Idaho's GNA agreements, and to provide professional staff skills as requested by the Forest Service. Contracts were awarded based on knowledge of the geographic area, specialized expertise and past performance, and professional qualifications. The Forest Service will retain all final NEPA decision authority related to the contracts.

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