



News Release

For Immediate Release

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Unprecedented Interagency Memorandum Signed to Improve Land Stewardship in Colorado

LIMON, Colo. – Four of Colorado’s leading natural resources organizations announced yesterday that they have entered into the first-ever official interagency Memorandum of Understanding to improve forest resource stewardship in Colorado.

The Colorado Joint Forestry memorandum, announced at the State Technical Committee meeting of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, is intended to foster further coordination between the Colorado State Forest Service, Colorado Association of Conservation Districts, Colorado Natural Resources Conservation Service and Rocky Mountain Region of the U.S. Forest Service. In turn, these agencies will leverage each other’s resources to provide landowners with comprehensive assistance to implement conservation practices across all land-ownership and administrative boundaries.

The non-fiscal agreement indicates that the *Colorado Statewide Forest Resource Assessment*, recently published by the Colorado State Forest Service, will be used to identify priority landscapes and values. Like the assessment document, the memorandum emphasizes a landscape-scale approach to address issues that encompass a mosaic of private and public lands, including community and watershed protection from wildfire, landscape fragmentation, forest insects and diseases, invasive species and erodible soils.

The roles of each undersigned organization are as follows:

- The CSFS will have primary leadership responsibility for forestry programs on state and private lands.
- The CACD will provide program delivery from the 76 conservation districts in Colorado.
- The NRCS will coordinate with partners to provide natural resource conservation planning and financial assistance on private lands.
- The USFS will provide federal land management and technical and financial assistance.

Specific objectives identified in the memorandum include enhanced coordination of interagency responses and program delivery; increased engagement of agency partners; recognition of existing programs and efforts to prevent duplication; and an annual interagency review of outcomes to gauge progress of the collaborative approach.

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In 2008, the NRCS, USFS, National Association of State Foresters and National Association of Conservation Districts signed a similar memorandum at the national level.

The Colorado memorandum is effective until 2015, but will be re-evaluated regularly. The next step for the agencies involved is the development of a long-term Colorado Joint Forestry Strategic Plan, followed by focused annual operating plans that identify specific projects and concerns.

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