USDA

United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

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July 22, 2014

To: Doug Decker, State Forester
Oregon Department of Forestry

From: Ronald Alvarado, State Conservationist,
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Re: MOU Between USFS, USDA NRCS, OACD, ODF

Enclosed is the Memorandum of Understanding between USDA Forest Service, USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Oregon Association of Conservation Districts, and the Oregon Department of Forestry regarding delivery of programs and services to non-industrial private forest landowners in Oregon.

The MOU will strengthen cooperation among the Parties allowing them to coordinate, interagency delivery of forestry-related technical and financial conservation assistance to private landowners in order to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of Oregon's non-industrial private forestlands.

The intent of the MOU is to enhance the services provided to non-industrial private forestland owners in Oregon, while complementing the nationwide forestry MOU and supporting state initiatives. It also supports restoration and enhanced resiliency of landscapes spanning multiple ownerships, including national forests, and encourages collaboration at the local and state level on initiatives that promote our shared interests in the economic, social, and environmental health of Oregon.

I look forward to our continued collaborative efforts on behalf of the non-industrial private forests in Oregon.

RON ALVARADO
State Conservationist

cc: Jim Cathcart, Oregon Department of Forestry, Private Lands Division

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MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOREST SERVICE,

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE,

OREGON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS, AND THE

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY

REGARDING

DELIVERY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

TO

NON-INDUSTRIAL PRIVATE FOREST LANDOWNERS

IN

STATE OF OREGON

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is made and entered into by and between the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS); the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) and the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), hereinafter referred to as "the Parties."

I. INTRODUCTION

The Parties agree that the following issues are the premise for this MOU:

- Healthy, working forests which provide environmental, economic, and social benefits are a critical component of Oregon's landscape.
- Over 166,000 non-industrial private forestland owners control the fate of 4,668,000 acres of forest and other associated rural lands, which provide extensive environmental and economic benefits to the state's citizenry.
- Oregon's non-industrial private forests (NIPF) are being threatened by landscape fragmentation, catastrophic wildfires, invasive species, climate change, development and conversion to other non-forest land uses.
- Strong citizen participation and stakeholder partnerships at all scales are fundamental to successful conservation of natural resources.
- The Parties to this memorandum play a significant role in helping landowners to enhance the long-term viability of non-industrial private forest lands.

II. PURPOSE OF MEMORANDUM

The purpose of this MOU is to strengthen cooperation among the Parties to accomplish coordinated, interagency delivery of forestry-related technical and financial conservation assistance to private landowners in order to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of Oregon's non-industrial private forestlands. This MOU provides the framework for partnership by articulating the Roles and Responsibilities of each of the Parties in accomplishing collaborative Goals and Objectives.

This Memorandum is intended to:

- Enhance the services provided to non-industrial private forestland owners in Oregon.
- Complement the nationwide forestry Memorandum of Understanding between the National Association of State Foresters (NASF), National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and USDA Forest Service (USFS) executed September 2008 (as updated and renewed in October 2013).
- Support the 2010 Oregon Forest Action Plan, the 2012 NRCS State Resource Assessment and other statewide strategies such as the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds and the Oregon Conservation Strategy.
- Support restoration and enhanced resiliency of landscapes spanning multiple ownerships, including national forests.
- Encourage collaboration and information-sharing on initiatives that promote our shared interests in the economic, social, and environmental health of Oregon. Contemporary examples of such initiatives include the Cohesive Wildfire Strategy and the USFS-NRCS Chiefs' Joint Landscape Restoration Partnership.

III. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Each of the Parties has authority and responsibility for directly or indirectly providing support for the delivery of programs and services to non-industrial private forest landowners in Oregon. The actions taken under the MOU are expected to enable the Parties to accomplish their individual and collective conservation goals and missions more effectively.

The Parties recognize the unique and complementary role that each brings to the partnership:

- Oregon Department of Forestry has the leadership role and responsibility for delivery of forestry programs on state and private lands.
- The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service has primary responsibility for Farm Bill conservation programs which provide financial and technical assistance to working land owners.
- Oregon Association of Conservation Districts and its Soil and Water Conservation Districts implement natural resource management activities at the local level and act as a liaison between private landowners and government assistance programs.
- The USDA Forest Service is responsible for providing forestry-related expertise, technology, and financial assistance to federal, state and local resource managers.

IV. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Parties will work to address NIPF landowner needs through the following joint and individual actions.

Goal: Facilitate sharing of information, resources, technology, and expertise.

Objectives: Local-level

- Conduct information-sharing sessions to educate each other about our respective organizations programs, authorities, and processes.
- Encourage ODF employees to attend NRCS and Conservation District training programs.
- Encourage NRCS and Conservation District employees to attend forestry-related trainings.
- Share forest resource information and data among agencies to assist in focusing resources for developing and implementing conservation agreements or strategies.
- Recognize the contributions of other Parties in publicly distributed information and materials.

Objectives: State-level

- When appropriate, invite Parties to respective Regional and National Leadership Meetings.
- Participate in respective Parties' Statewide Committees
    - State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee
    - Oregon Technical Advisory Committee (OTAC)

Goal: Maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of program delivery and reduce the potential for redundant, competing, or conflicting efforts.

Objectives:

- Coordinate strategic planning, identification of priorities, and focus of NIPF landowner assistance resources through the five-year updates of Oregon's Forest Action Plan.
- Integrate Oregon's Forest Action Plan into local Conservation Implementation Strategies through Local Workgroups.
- Align and integrate USFS and ODF Forest Stewardship Plans/processes with NRCS Conservation Plans/processes using Oregon's Forest Management Planning System.
- Explore opportunities to coordinate complementary financial incentive programs amongst the Parties.
- Enter into formal contractual agreements to coordinate the delivery of forestry assistance programs.
- Consider opportunities for co-location of personnel, or mutual use of facilities and office space, by the Parties.

Goal: Improve knowledge and skills of non-industrial private landowners and increase their readiness for financial and technical assistance programs.

Objectives:

- Cooperate and coordinate the delivery of forestry assistance to private landowners.
- Refer landowners to the Party that has the most appropriate expertise, or access to the most appropriate program and resources so as to meet landowner needs.
- Collaborate to provide joint landowner training opportunities to improve landowner technical skills and assistance opportunities.
- Inform landowners of the nature and availability of non-governmental forestry programs including professional forestry and natural resource consulting services and expertise outside the scope of services provided by the Parties so as to meet landowner needs.
- Work with partners including, but not limited to, Oregon State University Extension, Oregon Forest Resources Institute, the Oregon Small Woodland Association, the Oregon Tree Farm System and the Association of Consulting Foresters to help Parties design and deliver effective assistance programs to non-industrial private forest landowners.

Goal: Promote the long-term retention, health, and sustainable management of non-industrial private forest lands to enhance their environmental, social and economic contributions to society.

Objectives:

- Explore partnership opportunities to pursue program implementation at the watershed and landscape scale including those that aggregate non-industrial private forest lands in a specific geographic area for such purposes as wood products certification, focused delivery of incentives and coordinated resource management.
- Facilitate a coordinated response to landowner assistance needs following significant natural disaster events.
- Explore opportunities to increase the success of conservation easement programs such as the USFS Forest Legacy Program, the NRCS Healthy Forest Reserve Program and the NRCS Agricultural Conservation Easement Program.
- Work in partnership on promotion, funding, plan development, monitoring and enforcement of conservation easements that keep forests, mixed-forest and range and mixed forest and agricultural lands healthy and working.

Goal: Continue to enhance existing partnership programs and develop new opportunities for supporting the needs of non-industrial private forest lands.

Objectives:

- Proactively work to accommodate changing forest landowner needs, due to changes in ecological and social factors that affect forest use.
- Look for opportunities to pilot or lead new national and regional programs that would add benefits to Oregon's non-industrial private forest landowners.
- Utilize Oregon's Partnership for Forestry Education to provide education about forestry and natural resources to non-industrial private forest landowners including jointly

planned and delivered educational programs, use of the Know Your Forests website, and joint outreach mailings.

V. AGENCY BACKGROUND INFOMRAITON

USDA Forest Service

The USDA Forest Service (USFS), through its State and Private Forestry (S&PF) mission area, provides expert advice, technology, and financial assistance to help landowners and resource managers sustain the Nation's forests and protect communities and the environment from wildland fires.

The Forest Service works in cooperation with the Oregon Department of Forestry and other partners to deliver landowner assistance programs throughout the state of Oregon. The Forest Service provides federal authority, programmatic guidance and standards, fiscal and technical support, and oversight and accountability to administer three S&PF "umbrella" program areas that receive annual federal appropriations: Forest Health Management; Cooperative Fire Protection; and Cooperative Forestry.

Forest Health Management assistance includes conducting survey, suppression, prevention, and management activities on native and non-native forest insect, disease, and invasive plant pests.

Cooperative Fire Protection programs focus on the need to reduce the threat of wildland fires in wildland-urban interface areas. Assistance is provided to complete Community Wildfire Protection Plans and to implement high priority hazard mitigation projects indentified in those plans, including those on non-industrial private forestlands.

Cooperative Forestry programs provide technical and financial assistance to help landowners manage their forestlands, including the development and implementation of long-term, multi-resource Forest Stewardship Plans. Through the Forest Legacy and Community Forest Programs, the Forest Service provides opportunities for working forests to be conserved in perpetuity through conservation easements or fee acquisitions.

The Forest Service also operates a system of Forest and Range Experiment stations which conduct research to assist land owners and managers.

Additionally, the Forest Service manages the federal lands in the National Forest System. These lands often border, or are located in close proximity to, non-industrial private forestlands, thereby providing the potential opportunity for management practices which have benefits beyond ownership boundaries. Through an "all lands" approach, the Forest Service collaborates with federal, state and local agencies and private landowners to pursue landscape restoration objectives across administrative boundaries.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has primary responsibility for USDA Farm Bill conservation programs which provide financial and technical assistance to help landowners implement resource conservation and improvement practices. NRCS provides this

technical and financial assistance to farmers, ranchers, and non-industrial private forest landowners through its local field offices and service centers found throughout the state. Direct technical assistance is provided to these landowners utilizing the NRCS conservation planning process. Through this planning process, NRCS works to identify the landowner's objectives and the resource concerns and develop a plan which schedules the implementation of appropriate conservation practices to address those objectives and resource concerns. In addition, NRCS is a source of interdisciplinary expertise for forestry and natural resource conservation.

NRCS works in close cooperation with county Conservation Districts, providing technical expertise to support local work group conservation priorities. NRCS and Conservation District offices are co-located in many localities.

NRCS also administers competitive grant programs which can provide financial support to other entities, including those which assist non-industrial private forest landowners. Other NRCS programs include the Soil Survey which provides information on forest soils necessary for both planning and practice implementation. The agency also operates Plant Materials Centers which develop technical guides on species selection and use for conservation purposes. Finally, NRCS provides snowpack and water supply forecasting services through its Snotel Program.

Oregon Association of Conservation Districts

The Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) is an independent association of the state's 45 individual Conservation Districts. Individual Conservation Districts identify local resource conservation needs and provide technical assistance to farm, ranch, and non-industrial private forest landowners. Districts partner with the NRCS to provide advice and technical assistance to address these resource conservation needs. Districts also partner with agencies and other entities to develop and implement planning and implementation activities at the watershed and/or landscape scale.

Oregon Department of Forestry

The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) serves the people of Oregon by protecting, managing, and promoting stewardship of Oregon's forests to enhance environmental, economic, and community sustainability.

The goal of ODF's largest program, Fire Protection, is to devise and use environmentally sound and economically efficient strategies which minimize the total cost to protect Oregon's timber and other forest values from loss caused by wildland fire.

The Private Forests Program helps forest landowners manage their lands to meet objectives through technical assistance, financial incentives, education, regulation, survey and monitoring and other tools. Responsibilities include implementation of the Oregon Forest Practices Act, delivery of technical and financial assistance to non-industrial private forest landowners, and the surveying and monitoring of forest health conditions in support of early detection, rapid response and management/control of unwanted insects, diseases and invasive species.

The State Forests Program manages 818,800 acres of state-owned forestland in Oregon. The forests are managed sustainably to produce a broad range of benefits. These include timber harvest, revenue to local governments and schools, protection of wildlife habitat and other environmental values, and opportunities for recreation and learning.

The Urban and Community Forests Program helps Oregon communities to plant, care for and manage urban forests, and works to foster public awareness of the contribution of urban forest ecosystems to quality of life, environmental and economic well-being in Oregon cities. This awareness in turn can help strengthen urban Oregonians' connections to Oregon's broader forest resources and issues.

The Resources Planning Program provides information, research, analysis and planning services to assist the Board of Forestry and ODF. These services support the implementation, monitoring and revision of the Forestry Program for Oregon, the Forest Action Plan and help to coordinate forest policy across ODFs various programs.

VI. AUTHORITIES OF THE PARTIES

Each of the Parties has specific legal authorities related to forest landowner assistance as identified in federal or state statute, organizational policy, or executive order:

1. The Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994, Public Law 103-354, 7 USC 6901-7014
2. Secretary's Memorandum 1010-1, Reorganization of the Department of Agriculture, dated October 20, 1994
3. Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978, Public Law 95-313, 16 USC 2101-2114 (As amended through Public Law 171-108, June 16, 2002 and Public Law 110-246, June 18, 2008)
4. The Wyden Amendment (Public Law 105-277, Section 323 as amended by Public Law 109-54, Section 434) authorizing the Forest Service to spend funds on private lands for activities that benefit the National Forest System lands and overall forest health.
5. Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act, Public Law 74-46, 16 USC 590a-f; Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977, Public Law 95-192 16 USC 2001-2009
6. National Association of State Foresters By Laws and Constitution
7. National Association of Conservation Districts By Laws
8. Facilitation of Cooperative Conservation, Presidential Executive Order 13352 of August 26, 2001
9. USDA Department Regulation, 5600-003, USDA Roles in Market –Based Environmental Stewardship, dated December 20, 2006.
10. Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008.
11. Extension at 1890 Land Grant Colleges… Sec. 1444 7 USC 3221
12. National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, Public Law 95-113.

13. Renewable Resources Extension Act of 1978, Public Law 95-306

14. Oregon Woodland Management Act of 1979 (Nonindustrial Private Landowner Assistance), ORS 526.425-490.

15. Oregon Urban and Community Forestry, ORS 526.500-515.

16. Oregon Forest Resource Trust, ORS 526.695-775.

17. State Authorizing Legislation for Conservation Districts.

This document identifies areas of mutual interest, understanding, agreement, and intent; however, no contractual or financial obligation shall be incurred by any of the Parties signatory hereto. This memorandum becomes effective upon the date of the last signatory and remains in effect indefinitely until amended, terminated, or replaced by the Parties.

VII. APPROVAL SIGNATURES

Peggy A. Polichio — 4.21.14

Peggy Polichio, Director — Date
State and Private Forestry, USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region

Ron Alvarado — 04/28/14

Ron Alvarado, State Conservationist — Date
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Mark Raelens — 6/27/14

Mark Saelens, President — Date
Oregon Association of Conservation Districts

5-1-14

Doug Decker, State Forester — Date
Oregon Department of Forestry