

2010 WFLC / CWSF Business Plan

Providing Resources, Partnerships and Solutions for Western Forestry Challenges

Companion to the WFLC 2008-2010 Strategic Plan, the WFLC / CWSF 2010 Business Plan is designed to guide collective WFLC / CWSF member, task force and staff actions for the coming year. The items contained within this work plan are based on member input throughout the year and from the WFLC / CWSF biannual meetings. They were developed by the staff with oversight by the WFLC / CWSF Executive Board. WFLC / CWSF accomplishments will be measured against the Actions below and presented at our annual fall meeting.

Work of the Coalition

The work of the WFLC / CWSF can be described as falling into three categories:

Communication / Marketing – The success of the Coalition is highly dependent on successful strategic communications and marketing. Efforts are aimed at organizing and providing west-wide information and outreach. Strategically-targeted audiences are identified for each issue and/or objective. To be most effective, messages and tactics are then tailored to those audiences. We primarily focus our outreach towards opinion leaders and decision makers via major western media markets, internal and external stakeholders, governmental entities, and congressional liaisons.

Public Policy / Programs – We seek public policies and programs that serve the values of society and ensure the health and sustainability of western forests and landscapes. The collective WFLC / CWSF (members, committees and staff) expertise, credibility, access and experience can greatly inform and improve the nation's public policy and programs and various levels of government. Our aim is to present a western perspective in dialogues that shape and guide development and delivery of landscape and forest policy and programs.

Partnerships – Essential to achieving our ends is the development of strong and healthy partnerships and coalitions. These may be partnerships with interest groups who support our programs, partnerships with governing bodies or partnerships with other government agencies. Work will be predicated on building champions and strategic alliances among our partners and constituents.

Relationship to USFS and NASF

This Business Plan is designed to complement the activities of both the USFS and the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) at-large. It is important to note that the WFLC and the CWSF are separate and distinct entities from the NASF and the USFS, but seek to build upon our collective success and positively position the forestry community in the national arena. In order to leverage both staff and member work while reducing overlap by complementary organizations, the WFLC/CWSF staff work on behalf of the CWSF and the full WFLC in separate functions.

Work Plan: Issues, Priorities and Actions

The WFLC will pursue internal and external issues couched within the six WFLC Program and Management Strategies outlined in the WFLC 2008-2010 Strategic Plan.

Program and Management Strategies:

- 1) **Inform Public Policy Discourse**
- 2) **Cultivate Partnerships**
- 3) **Coordinate Government Programs**
- 4) **Enhance Membership Relations**
- 5) **Hold Successful Meetings / Events**
- 6) **Improve Business Operations**

A set of five Focus Areas were identified within the “Informing Public Policy Discourse” strategy for 2010. The Actions outlined under each of these Focus Areas will help to guide the WFLC / CWSF work in the coming year. Many of these Actions are left intentionally open-ended. They are designed to provide guidance, while maintaining operational flexibility for members, task forces and staff to adjust to changing circumstances. Opportunities will present themselves throughout the year (both on these identified issues and other timely issues important to our organization) and our intention is to capitalize upon them.

Further, it is worth highlighting the interdependency between the Focus Areas and Actions below. None of these Focus Areas or Actions are mutually exclusive, meaning that while in pursuit of one action under a Focus Area, oftentimes one is working toward Areas. Priorities were expressed at the 2009 WFLC / CWSF annual fall meeting when the membership decided that three (of the five) Focus Areas will most likely need immediate and sustained attention in 2010 and have therefore been labeled “priority” for the coming year.

WORK PLAN:

1) Inform Public Policy Discourse - Develop, package and deliver the collective west-wide message related to our five Focus Areas.

Focus I - Woody Biomass [PRIORITY]

- **Objective:** Promote utilization of woody biomass via traditional and non-traditional avenues for the economic, social and ecologic benefit of communities and forests.
- **WFLC Contributed Outcome:** Policies and programs are designed and implemented that promote woody biomass utilization in the west and result in healthier forestland conditions.
 - **Actions:**
 - a. Sharpen woody biomass utilization message around sustainability, industry infrastructure, supply, landscape management, climate change adaptation and mitigation, renewable energy, etc.
 - b. Assist USFS staff and individual states to strategize partnership development around research, demonstration projects and other promotions of woody biomass utilization.
 - c. Promote use of new and existing federal authorities to develop incentives for the longer-term utilization of woody biomass so as to encourage private sector investment.
 - d. Conduct analysis of State Forest Resource Assessments and Strategies for cross boundary issues and needs to improve biomass utilization in support of western interests.
 - e. Advocate western interest for new federal authorities that would/could promote better biomass utilization across federal, state and private lands.

- f. Ensure biomass utilization options are included in public land management planning documents and State Forest Resource Assessments and Strategies.
- g. Support implementation of the 2008 Farm Bill and recent Energy Bills, and ARRA projects and programs that encourage woody biomass utilization and bioenergy, specifically BCAP, Community Wood Energy, Biomass Research and Development and Woody Biomass Utilization Grants.

Focus II - Forest Health: Invasive and Non-Invasive Species [PRIORITY]

- **Objective:** Reduce negative impacts from invasive and non-invasive species threats on forest and rangeland health.
- **WFLC Contributed Outcome:** Broader recognition by decision makers and the public of the value of active management in addressing forest health issues.
 - **Actions:**
 - a. Contribute to the implementation of the 10-year Strategy and the Healthy Forests Initiative / HFRA.
 - b. Emphasize importance of adequate and consistent funding for FIA.
 - c. Foster alliances to promote cross-boundary cooperative groups that address insect and disease outbreaks (e.g. bark beetle) and engage in groups such as the Continental Dialogue on Invasive Species.
 - d. Promote research that develops info and tools related to forest health issues and continue to develop partnerships.
 - e. In the policy and program context, prepare and respond to exotic and invasive insect and disease threats (such as Emerald Ash Borer).
 - f. Develop and implement an invasive species strategy (prevention, early-detection, rapid response) for the West building on the work done by the Great Plains Initiative.
 - g. Seek tools and resources that maintain and nurture forest industry infrastructure (mills, jobs, expertise, etc.) that supports healthy forests.
 - h. Promote woody biomass utilization through demonstration projects and promotion of long-term contracting in order to reduce forest health management project costs.
 - i. Inform U.S. Congressional dialogue on energy and other legislation and subsequent rule development relating to forest health and other WFLC priority issues. Explore opportunities and authorities that result in rapid action on these issues.
 - j. Build upon the success of *2007 Western Bark Beetle Assessment* and the *2009 Update of the Western Bark Beetle Assessment*.

Focus III - Keeping Working Forestlands Forested: Forest Products Infrastructure [PRIORITY]

- **Objective:** Provide a sound western policy and action framework for pro-actively addressing private and public forest land management issues.
- **WFLC Contributed Outcome:** Resources and tools are available to actively manage urban and rural forests and to maintain forest industry infrastructure and improve forest health.
 - **Actions:**
 - a. Seek and develop (research and development) tools and resources, new (ecosystem services markets) and value-added (wood products / biomass utilization), that maintain forest industry infrastructure and improve forest health.
 - b. Improve working relationships with NRCS as private lands forestry and conservation work are implemented under Forest Stewardship, EQIP and other Farm Bill programs.

- c. Tell the story about the loss of and changes in actively managed forested landscapes and linkages between these changes and declines in the forest products industry (land use conversion, owners' ability to manage their land, jobs, regulatory environment, profitability, sustainability, etc.).
 - Market (editorial board visits, conference presentations, hill briefings, etc.) the *Threats to Western Private Forests* report.
 - Act on recommendations included in the *Threats to Western Private Forests* report, including exploration of tax law / policy opportunities to influence retention of working forest landscapes.
- d. Work to instill the importance of urban and rural forest resources with federal, state and local governments, land use planning officials, stakeholders and others by telling the story of urban trees and forests in the west (energy conservation, water, jobs, green infrastructure, connecting people to nature, etc.)
- e. Utilize strategic communication tools to make overt connections between the forest products industry and forest health (ecological), as well as economic and social well-being.
- f. Promote policies that provide cross-boundary management that leads to healthy forests, such as landscape scale stewardship contracting and a national good neighbor authority.

Focus IV - Wildfire

- **Objective:** Reduce wildfire risk to communities and mitigate wildfire impacts across the landscape, on both forests and rangelands, while being mindful of firefighter and public safety.
- **WFLC Contributed Outcome:** Broader recognition by decision makers and the public of the value of active, cross-boundary wildfire and land management in addressing wildfire issues.
 - **Actions:**
 - a. Foster collaborative wildfire planning by communicating the value of Community Wildfire Protection Planning, state-level collaborative bodies and promoting the need for clear roles and responsibilities.
 - b. Contribute to the continued implementation of the 10-year Strategy and the implementation of the FLAME Act.
 - c. Ensure treated acres are maintained over time.
 - Continue investment of time and resources in the WFLC West Wide Wildfire Assessment.
 - d. Elevate the discussion of the drivers behind rising fire costs and suppression spending.
 - e. Reinforce that wildfire solutions need to be cross-boundary, multi-stakeholder and maintained through time. Engage in the crafting of the Cohesive Strategy for Wildland Fire Management required by Congress.

Focus V - Climate Change

- **Objective:** Apply science based forest management to improve forest ecosystem resilience in the face of a changing climate and to ensure that forests are recognized contributors to climate change solutions.

- **WFLC Contributed Outcome:** Western forestry interests are reflected in state, regional, national and international public policy discussions around climate change.
- **Actions:**
 - a. Ensure that the Western Climate Initiative and other groups include western forests as part of the ‘climate change solution’.
 - b. Inform U.S. Congressional and Executive branch dialogue on climate change legislation and subsequent rule development.
 - c. Support coalition work related to “managed” and urban forests and climate, which includes contributing to development of common forest carbon credit protocols.
 - d. Provide western focus through issue papers and WFLC policy statements, including addressing water issues related to climate change.
 - e. Support enhanced research/development in USFS and with partners (e.g., universities) to get the science we need.

2) Cultivate Partnerships - Leverage resources with partners with overlapping or complimentary missions.

- **Actions:**
 - a. Increase organizational capacity by seeking out individuals, partners and organizations with similar strategic focus to strengthen and leverage public policy outreach opportunities and increase the scope and impact of WFLC deliverables.
 - b. Cultivate working relationships with the western forestry school Deans, InterTribal Timber Council, Western Governors’ Association, NRCS, BLM, DOI and other partners.
 - c. Engage at a higher level with underserved member partners, notably partner groups in the Pacific Islands. The CWSF leader (State Forester or Executive Director) will attend the annual Pacific Islands Committee meeting to facilitate dialogue and engagement. Build participation of key island representatives in WFLC / CWSF and NASF.

3) Coordinate Government Programs - Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of federal government, and related state government, forestry related programs.

- **Actions:**
 - a. **S&PF Programs** – Pursue national reporting, with regional detail, of S&PF contributions, impacts, and successes.
 - b. **S&PF Redesign** – Support nationwide and western efforts related to the S&PF Redesign while ensuring S&PF Redesign components / elements meet the needs of all WFLC members.
 - i. **Coordinated Technical Assistance:** Facilitate communication and information sharing during the development of State Forest Resource Assessments and Strategies.
 - ii. **Competitive Grant Management:** Provide management of the grant evaluation team, competitive process and transmittal of recommendations to the USFS WO. Conduct a yearly examination of the competitive process and develop changes to address needs and concerns.
 - iii. **Western Snapshot:** Examine western State Forest Resource Assessments and Strategies to identify data gaps, common issues and themes, opportunities for multi-state projects, and to position the western states to undertake the next round of document updates.

- c. **Program Delivery** – Introduce a west-wide voice, where possible and appropriate, into federal government forestry related program activities such as:
 - Grant Allocations
 - Rule writing
 - Policy development

4) Enhance Membership Relations – Create an association culture which cultivates member engagement and volunteerism.

- **Actions:**
 - a. Provide clear, consistent venues for internal and external communication (*weekly, website, legislative updates, roundup*).
 - b. Welcome and orient new members and partners.
 - c. Engage membership by fostering strong Task Forces and Working Groups and building leaders through engagement in the organization.
 - d. Support the NASF ‘staff lead’ issue approach and coordination among regional executive directors, government affairs, policy and communications staff to leverage member and staff engagement.
 - e. Focus on member needs, including information on return on dues investment, in this tough budget climate.

5) Hold Successful Meetings / Events – create comfortable and productive space for members and partners to exchange views and dialogue on forestry and other related matters.

- **Actions:**
 - a. Conduct successful spring and fall meetings of the WFLC and CWSF being responsive to member input on meeting format and delivery.
 - b. Facilitate the successful meeting of the WFLC and CWSF task forces and committees, including the Pacific Islands Committee.
 - c. Build partner involvement and interest in WFLC / CWSF meetings consistent with the strategic plan.

6) Improve Business Operations – review and update WFLC business operations to ensure clarity and consistency.

- **Actions:**
 - a. Review business operations to ensure clear and efficient WFLC program delivery.
 - b. Update CWSF bylaws and agency MOUs and intra-agency agreements to address current business and operating procedures.
 - c. Revise and update the WFLC Operating Guidelines document for internal use, new staff and member orientation.
 - d. Continue to ensure members receive value-added products and services for their investment.
 - e. Support and promote the WFLC’s engagement and participation in the Presidential Management Fellow program, use of USFS position detail positions and CWSF Internship opportunities to efficiently respond to temporary extra capacity needs of the association utilizing identified available expertise.
 - f. Review internal staff processes and policies and draft WFLC staff handbook.