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State and Private Forestry Efforts Conserve, Protect and Enhance Forests Across the U.S.

Joint report highlights 124 projects nationwide that identify the greatest threats to forest sustainability and pursue meaningful change in high priority areas.

Washington, DC, March 27, 2009 – From California to Connecticut, state forestry agencies are tackling threats to the nation’s forests through a new multi-stage process within the U.S. Forest Service. Dubbed “Redesign,” this strategic approach effectively and proactively invests federal, state, local and private resources in a way that makes a meaningful impact on the ground. A component of this strategy sets aside a portion of Forest Service funds allocated for state and private forestry efforts and distributes it based on priority landscapes in order to target threats such as insect and disease infestations, wildfire, and the loss of critical forestlands to development. A new publication jointly published by the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) and the Forest Service—the “Redesign Report Card”—provides a summary of the first wave of projects in this process, which in 2008 leveraged nearly \$23 million in matching funding from state agencies and partner organizations to augment \$19.5 million in federal funding.

The State and Private Forestry mission area of the Forest Service helps state forestry agencies manage and protect the two-thirds of the nation’s forestland that is held in private or non-federal public ownership. Launched in 2007, the Redesign effort incorporates a competitive grant process to help stimulate innovative projects that target the greatest threats to forest sustainability. The process also dovetails with new language in the 2008 Farm Bill that requires states to develop assessments of their trees and forests and employ resource strategies that outline the approach they will take in solving the most critical issues on those lands.

A core element in the development of these projects is the trio of national themes that guide the delivery of State and Private Forestry programs: 1) Protect Forests from Harm, 2) Conserve Working Forest Landscapes, and 3) Enhance Public Benefits from Trees and Forests. Three regionally focused projects are showcased in the Report Card to provide examples of how State and Private Forestry projects are targeting these three goals:

- The Great Plains Tree and Forest Invasives Initiative, which is implementing strategies against the westward spread of the emerald ash borer
- Longleaf Pine Ecosystem Recovery Corridor project, which is addressing forest fragmentation and restoring working lands in the South
- Forest Infrastructure Tools for Urban Communities, which is piloting the use of green infrastructure to reduce stormwater and sewage overflows in the Northeast

“State and Private Forestry programs leverage the capacity of state agencies to provide vital assistance to forest landowners and communities to manage, maintain, and improve their forests and green spaces,” said Leah W. MacSwords, NASF President and State Forester of Kentucky. “From assessments of each state’s forest resource to strategies for addressing the challenges in the highest priority areas, Redesign has brought a number of innovations to our work.”

“As partners with the National Association of State Foresters, we are seeing the results of landscape-scale planning and projects,” said Jim Hubbard, Deputy Chief, State & Private Forestry, U.S. Forest Service. “Our collaboration is demonstrating results across boundaries and delivering meaningful outcomes for our nation’s forest resource.”

To download an electronic version of the Redesign Report Card, visit:

http://www.stateforesters.org/2008_Redesign_Report_Card

About NASF

The National Association of State Foresters is comprised of the directors of forestry agencies from the fifty states, eight U.S. territories and associated states, and the District of Columbia. Through public-private partnership, NASF seeks to advance sustainable forestry, conservation, and protection of forest lands and their associated resources. For more information, visit www.stateforesters.org.

About the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture

The mission of the Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land and is the largest forestry research organization in the world. For more information, visit: www.fs.fed.us.

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