



## Conserving Working Landscapes with the Idaho Department of Lands

### ABOUT NASF

The mission of the National Association of State Foresters is to represent state and territorial forester interests by influencing forest policy and leading efforts to promote healthy and sustainable trees and forests.

### ABOUT USFS

The U.S. Forest Service mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

Learn More:

[www.stateforesters.org](http://www.stateforesters.org)

[www.fs.fed.us](http://www.fs.fed.us)

[www.idl.idaho.gov/forestry](http://www.idl.idaho.gov/forestry)

[www.forestationplans.org](http://www.forestationplans.org)



With support from the Forest Legacy Program of the USDA Forest Service, the Idaho Department of Lands is achieving goals outlined in its Forest Action Plan.

The Idaho Department of Lands, in partnership with the Trust for Public Lands, acquired a conservation easement for 6,800 acres of crucial habitat, preserving the land as an intact block of working forest habitat.

In late 2014, the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) acquired a conservation easement on 6,800 acres of working forest within northern Idaho's McArthur Lake Wildlife Corridor (MLWC). With funding from the US Forest Service (USFS) Forest Legacy Program, IDL purchased the \$5.695 million conservation easement for a discounted price of \$4.095 million. The landowner, Stimson Lumber Company, generously contributed the difference. Stimson will continue to manage this land under an easement restricting development and subdivision, ensuring that the land will forever remain in active timber production while protecting wildlife habitat and providing free public recreation.

The intent of the USFS Forest Legacy Program (FLP) is to protect environmentally sensitive, high-value forestlands threatened by conversion to non-forest uses, and the MLWC certainly meets these criteria.

Natural resource management is integral to northern Idaho's economy. Idaho's Forest Action Plan identifies the forests within the McArthur Lake area as very high priority for benefiting forest products markets. Ten commercial mills are located within a 2-hour haul distance from project lands, underscoring the value of forest products as a source of jobs and revenue. The easement property contains highly productive forests capable of supplying 2.5 MMBF of merchantable timber annually.

MLWC connects the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Mountains and is recognized as one of the most important wildlife linkage zones in the region and a conservation area of national significance. The large expanse of intact forest provides exceptional habitat and connectivity for numerous wide-ranging wildlife species including elk, mule deer, moose, white-tailed deer, black bear, gray wolf, wolverine and five threatened and endangered species.

Public recreation is an important component of Idaho's culture and economy. Idaho's constitution identifies hunting and fishing as a "valued part of the heritage of the State of Idaho and shall forever be preserved for the people." All around the conservation easement property, hunting and angling are favorite activities due to superb fisheries and wildlife values, along with hiking, berry picking, horseback riding, biking and backcountry skiing. This easement now forever opens up this property to these activities.

**"The McArthur Lake conservation project keeps working forests working and protects and sustains Idaho's natural resources for the benefit of all Idahoans,"** Said state forester David Groeschl, **"This is truly a forest legacy for future generations."**

The acquisition of this conservation easement is only one piece of landscape-scale forest conservation within the corridor. Two additional projects were initiated by The Nature Conservancy. In 2010, IDL purchased an adjacent 3,900-acre FLP conservation easement with USFS funding. By the end of 2015, a third FLP project will secure an 8,000-acre conservation easement within MLWC. In partnership with the USFS and conservation organizations, Idaho's Forest Legacy Program ensures that 19,000 acres of working forestland within MLWC continues to support the economy, provide habitat for the region's iconic wildlife species, and is available to the public for recreation. Most importantly, landowners have endowed the citizens of Idaho with assurance that the forests we depend on will forever benefit all Idahoans.

Photo credits: IDL