

## Wyoming Forest Action Plan Meeting National Priorities

Below are the three priorities identified by Congress in the 2008 Farm Bill that are incorporated throughout the Wyoming Forest Action Plan and include conserving, protecting and enhancing Wyoming's forest resource. The purpose of the National Priorities chapter will be to demonstrate effective outcomes that build legislative, policy, and funding support for federal, state, and private forestry programs important to the Wyoming State Forestry Division in accomplishing priorities identified in the Wyoming Forest Action Plan.

Featured below, are some of the highlights that the Wyoming State Forestry Division has compiled since the creation of the Wyoming Forest Action Plan. They make very clear the need and importance of the outputs and services provided to the state by Wyoming State Forestry Division.

### **National Priority #1: Conserve & Manage Working Forest Landscapes for Multiple Values and Uses**

#### **BLM Co-op Forester Position**

In partnership with the BLM, WSFD created a co-op forester position in 2014 with the goal of increasing timber management activities on BLM lands as well as mentoring a new BLM Forester. The co-op forester is a State of Wyoming employee supported entirely by WSFD, and housed in the BLM field office in Rawlins, WY. To date the position has dramatically increased the BLM timber sale program and worked to address critical forest management areas across southeastern Wyoming.



#### **Governor's Task Force on Forests**



In 2013, the Governor's Task Force on Forests was created, represented by roughly 20 people from diverse backgrounds that met over the course of two years to develop a final report aimed at improving Wyoming's forested resource. The final report included 12 recommendations that centered around 1.) fire and other disturbance, 2.) forest management, and 3.) economic opportunities and innovation; as well as a Task Force endorsement of the WY Forest Action Plan.

Currently the recommendations are in the process of being implemented across all land ownerships in Wyoming.

### Landowner Assistance

One of the important roles of WSFD is providing assistance to private landowners each year. From 2010 through 2014, WSFD provided technical forestry assistance in some form to 1,972 private landowners across the state.



Additionally, over the last 5 years, there have been nearly 135 Forest Stewardship Plans created for private landowners that amounted to roughly 60,805 forested acres being placed under management plans. These management plans are critical pieces in conserving and managing a working forest landscape for the future.

### State Land Management

Timber harvest has been an important management tool in Wyoming, particularly when dealing with the mountain pine beetle epidemic that has ravaged over 4.4 million acres of forests throughout the state in the past decade. In the 5 year period between 2010 through 2014, saw timber harvest levels on Wyoming state trust lands have averaged 1,215 acres and 3.58 million board feet annually, but showed an increasing trend. This was largely due to the reopening of one large and two moderate sized sawmills.

Additionally, pre-commercial thinning continued to be an important management component on state trust lands, averaging 512 acres annually over the past 5 years. Thinning is important to maintain proper stocking levels and encourage healthy forests; as well as providing sustainable revenues in the future.



## **National Priority #2: Protect Forests from Threats**

### **Insects and Disease**

Given the extent and duration of the current mountain pine beetle epidemic, WSFD is continuing to monitor the situation. The division conducts annual aerial insect and disease surveys on state and



private lands, which has helped to detect and monitor current activity and areas that may need treatment.

In addition to the Western Bark Beetle Federal Funding, the WSFD has worked to create the availability of WY State funds to augment the battle against the mountain pine beetle. In 2014 the WSFD allocated \$2 million through competitive grants to a

number of projects focused on beetle recovery and stand resiliency. These projects are helping to make a difference against the pine beetle in Wyoming.

### **Fire Management**

WSFD has direct fire protection responsibilities on 3.6 million acres of state trust land and cooperative fire protection responsibilities on an additional 25.5 million acres of land. The division also provides technical assistance relating to all aspects of fire management to Interagency Cooperators and financial assistance to Wyoming's 23 counties, 54 Fire Districts and 147 fire departments through federal grants and state appropriated dollars.



### **Federal Excess Personal Property (FEPP) & Firefighters Property Program (FFP)**

Utilizing FEPP/FFP equipment and parts, WSFD annually obtains, overhauls, and paints ex-military trucks, and builds fire packages for vehicles. These trucks and other equipment are deployed to Wyoming counties and fire districts. Currently there are in excess of 300 pieces of rolling stock. WSFD also provides field service, training, and parts to maintain this fleet of fire suppression equipment.

WSFD absorbs the majority of the Federal Excess Property Program to ensure that the fire departments around the state have the necessary equipment to fight fires. WSFD mechanic shop provides a full-scale overhaul of roughly 4-8 military vehicles and places them in service annually.

### Fire Assistance

Twenty county-wide Community Wildfire Protection Plans have been completed covering 87% of the communities identified as being at risk to wildland fire. Over the course of 2010-2014, there have been multiple plans that have been revised and updated.



Each year, WSFD supported roughly 225 fire management training classes that provided instruction to roughly 2,850 students annually. These trainings are attended by many volunteer firefighters, as well as state and federal employees.

The Fuels Mitigation program is responsible for coordinating the National Fire Plan (NFP), Region 2 and Region 4 Community Assistance Funds Adjacent to National Forest and Grasslands (CAFA), interagency wildland fire prevention, and mitigation programs. Between 2010 and 2014, 50 Projects were funded totaling nearly \$5 million.

### **National Priority #3: Enhance Public Benefits from Trees and Forests**

#### Community Forestry

This state program fosters partnerships between government agencies, businesses, and civic organizations to promote and improve community forests throughout the state.

The number of Tree City USA accredited towns annually ranged from 42-45, of the roughly 99 incorporated towns in Wyoming. This represents roughly 44% of all incorporated cities within Wyoming.



*Pictured above is an Arbor Day planting at Sheridan College where they were recognized as a 'Tree Campus USA'; the only school in WY with this title through the Arbor Day Foundation.*

WSFD conservation education efforts have annually supported Project Learning Tree, which has also helped to coordinate the Wyoming Arbor Day Poster contest. Smokey Bear in schools, Arbor Day Poster contest.

From 2010-2014, Wyoming has established 5 arboretums in communities throughout the state.

### *Northern Rockies Tree School*

This joint partnership between WSFD & Montana DNRC started in 2010 that trains representatives from various agencies and organizations in community forest management, conservation education, and other tree care issues. Since 2010, the school has trained nearly 600 students engaged in community forest management in Montana and Wyoming!



### *Living Snow Fence*

This program plants an average of 21,406 linear feet of living snow fence annually that totaled over 107,030 linear feet in the last 5 years. This amounted to an installation and future maintenance savings of nearly \$1.375 million dollars since 2010! Our primary partner in this venture is WYDOT, which annually contributes \$100,000 towards these efforts.