



Central Washington Initiative Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is hereby entered into by and between the Washington Department of Natural Resources, hereinafter referred to as "DNR", and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, hereinafter referred to as the "U.S. Forest Service." Hereinafter, the two agencies are collectively referred to as "the Parties."

TITLE: Central Washington Initiative: Defining a Large-scale, Critical Landscape in Central Washington for Wildfire Risk Reduction and Watershed Resilience

I. BACKGROUND:

Throughout the western United States, including Washington State, forest health has been in decline for several decades. Land managers are facing a range of urgent challenges, among them uncharacteristic and catastrophic wildfires, loss of critical fish and wildlife habitat, degraded watershed health and expanding risk to our communities, natural resources, and local economies as well as to our citizens and firefighters. We are facing a wildfire crisis due to changing climate, exceptional drought, and decades of fuels build-up in our forests due to past fire exclusion and management practices.

Several evaluations and plans look at forest and aquatic restoration and wildfire risk reduction in Central Washington and beyond in an effort to identify the greatest needs and priorities for treatments. Among these are the DNR's 20-Year Forest Health Strategic Plan: Eastern Washington, the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest Restoration Strategy, and the recent U.S. Forest Service Wildfire Crisis Strategy. Critical landscapes in Chelan, Kittitas, Okanogan and Yakima Counties are consistently identified in these plans as among the highest priority areas for forest and aquatic health treatments. Addressing the critical forest and aquatic health issues and the wildfire crisis on these landscapes requires that we work across boundaries at an aggressive pace and scale.

The U.S. Forest Service is receiving a significant increase in funding from multiple appropriation bills, including the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, to carry out the work required to increase forest resiliency and reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires. The DNR has also seen a significant increase in funding for this work through Washington House Bill 1168. These new, sustained sources of funding provide an unprecedented opportunity to further implement our shared stewardship strategy and make significant progress in treating critical landscapes across Central Washington.

II. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this MOU is to formalize the Parties' cooperation on what will be known as the Central Washington Initiative. The Central Washington Initiative is the joining of several targeted investments in Chelan, Kittitas, Okanogan, and Yakima Counties, as depicted in the Appendix A, to reduce the risk of impactful wildfire and restore forest and aquatic health and

resilience. This initiative takes advantage of the unprecedented opportunity provided through the passing of recent state and federal legislation, including House Bill 1168 (H.B. 1168) and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, to leverage a sustained increase in resources to Central Washington and create efficiencies wherever possible to rapidly address restoration and wildfire risk reduction needs over the course of a 10-year period. It also builds upon complementary ongoing and incipient efforts the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP), among others. This MOU provides a framework for the parties to coordinate and align programs of work to effectively share and leverage resources to meet mutual goals in Central Washington across all-land ownerships using available programs, tools, and authorities. It facilitates integration of efforts, without overriding or replacing the authority or processes of individual agencies, in accordance with the following provisions.

This MOU is not intended to address authorities for funding or implementing work. There are already several instruments in place between the Parties that address these authorities, including multiple Good Neighbor Authority Agreements. The work conducted as part of the Central Washington Initiative will utilize instruments and authorities covered by existing and future agreements.

III. STATEMENT OF MUTUAL BENEFIT AND INTERESTS:

The parties agree that their mutual benefit and interest is to work cooperatively to reduce hazardous fuels, restore fire-adapted forests, improve public safety, and increase resilience from wildfire across all lands and jurisdictional boundaries within Central Washington as well as to restore aquatic and watershed health. The current defined focus areas in Central Washington are identified in Appendix A and will be revised as necessary over the life of this agreement. This cooperative effort will improve forest management and watershed resilience by leveraging assets and resources to accomplish focused cross-boundary projects and strengthen working relationships between the parties and the public.

In consideration of the above premises, the parties agree as follows:

IV. THE PARTIES SHALL:

- A. Coordinate programs of work and leverage funding, as available and appropriate, with a goal to increase forest and watershed health and resilience on at least 350,000 acres¹ across multiple jurisdictions in Central Washington over the next 10 years. Approximately 200,000 acres are to be accomplished on national forest lands. The development of strategies for addressing hazardous wildfire conditions and improving forest and aquatic health across all land ownerships will be informed by the DNR 20-Year Strategic Plan: Eastern Washington, Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forest Plans, as amended, the Okanogan-Wenatchee Forest Restoration Strategy, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest 5-Year Integrated Restoration Plan, and the U.S. Forest Wildfire Crisis Strategy. Best available science and data will continue to inform and underpin work to be completed within the Central Washington Initiative landscape. In order to achieve forest health objectives, in some areas multiple, sequential treatments may be needed. Importantly, the maintenance of desired forest health conditions in the long term will be part of the plan for treatments. An initial list

of anticipated projects, treatments, and activities is included as Appendix B. This list will continue to be updated.

- B. Develop and maintain a 5-year plan for the Central Washington Initiative which identifies current and future priority projects, treatments, and activities to reduce wildfire risk and improve forest and watershed health and resilience across National Forest System, state, and private lands within the Central Washington Initiative counties. The plan will include agency-specific independent actions, actions that the parties will work on jointly, and articulate engagement and interaction of additional partners in the delivery of shared stewardship projects, treatments, and activities on this landscape that will enable the Parties to meet target accomplishments within a 10-year timeframe.
- C. Develop an annual operating plan for the federal fiscal year that identifies annual deliverables and action. This plan will include for each project, treatment, and activity the location, timeline for completion, expected outcomes and deliverables, parties involved (and associated roles and responsibilities), authorities and agreements utilized, and funding sources.
- D. Provide transparent and regular monitoring and progress reporting for the Central Washington Initiative, in complement to existing state and federal reporting, to present to county, state and federal elected officials, and the public that provides information on investments made, resources leveraged, changed forest conditions, and deliverables towards the stated purpose of this initiative.
- E. Name a single point of contact from their agency for purposes of coordination and tracking of activities associated with this agreement and to facilitate involvement of appropriate agency staff and representatives in project level discussions.
- F. Identify primary points of contacts and guidelines for project level coordination to ensure clear communication with appropriate individuals from each agency.
- G. Develop a shared external communication and engagement strategy. The U.S. Forest Service shall be the lead on the Central Washington Initiative and any communication specific to the initiative. The Parties will jointly host any media or public outreach events related to promoting shared work for the Central Washington Initiative or projects covered therein. Generally, the U.S. Forest Service will be the lead and have final approval for outreach related to activities on National Forest System lands and/or the Central Washington Initiative itself and DNR shall be the lead and have final approval for those activities taking place on state or private lands under their jurisdiction.
- H. As authorized and appropriate, explore funding opportunities to increase capacity of forest and aquatic health treatments within the Central Washington Initiative landscapes through applications to special funding programs and authorities (i.e., Joint Chiefs, CFLRP, State and Private Forestry programs, Forest Action Plan, Good Neighbor Authority Program, Secure Rural Schools, etc.).

- I. Complete the following actions, described further above, within 90 days of signature of this MOU:
 - a. Develop the initial Central Washington Initiative 5-year plan,
 - b. Develop a mutually approved template for the annual operating plan and a partial year operating plan for CY22,
 - c. Designate points of contact and provide a current contact list,
 - d. Finalize the communication strategy, and
 - e. Develop a mutually approved template for the annual accomplishment report.

V. IT IS MUTUALLY UNDERSTOOD AND AGREED BY AND BETWEEN THE PARTIES THAT:

- A. The intended result of this MOU is to focus coordination by the parties to increase public safety, forest health, and community resiliency by creating resilient landscapes through increasing the number of forested acres treated to reduce wildfire risk and impacts; increasing the footprint of watershed resilience actions (including aquatic restoration and drought mitigation), creating safer conditions for wildland firefighters; increasing the efficiency of treatment execution and planning efforts; leveraging resources and funding opportunities through cross-boundary coordination and interagency planning.
- B. The cooperators will evaluate the use of separate instruments to implement management activities associated with forest lands. Specific projects or activities that involve a transfer of services, and/or anything of value requires the execution of separate instruments. Such instruments may include Good Neighbor Authority Agreements, Collection Agreements, Challenge Cost-Share Agreements, Participating Agreements, Volunteer Agreements, Domestic Grants, Cooperative Agreements, or through procurement actions.
- C. The Central Washington Initiative landscapes include traditional territories of bands and tribes represented by the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation. Indigenous peoples are the first stewards of these lands since time immemorial. The Tribes possess traditional ecological knowledge that provides a critical understanding of these landscapes. The Parties shall work with tribal partners to achieve healthy and resilient landscapes both now and for generations to come, strengthen government-to-government relationships, and support the sovereignty of tribal nations. The tribes will be involved in managing these lands through informal coordination, formal government-to-government consultation, and as planning and implementation partners as described through multiple federal laws, treaties, and executive orders.
- D. Commencement, Expiration and Termination. This MOU is executed as of the date of the last signature and is effective for a period of ten years from that date at which time it will expire. Any of the parties may, in writing, terminate this MOU in whole, or in part, at any time before the date of expiration.
- E. Participation in Similar Activities. This MOU in no way restricts the Parties from participating in similar activities with other entities.

- F. Nonbinding Agreement. This MOU creates no right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable by law or equity. The parties shall manage their respective resources and activities in a separate, coordinated and mutually beneficial manner to meet the purposes of this MOU. Nothing in this MOU authorizes any of the parties to obligate or transfer anything of value.
- G. Principal Contacts. Individuals listed below are authorized to act in their respective areas for matters related to this agreement and/or to designate others to act on their behalf.

Principal Washington Department of Natural Resources Contact:


Cooperator Program Contact
Name: Chuck Hersey Address: 1111 Washington St. SE City, State, Zip: Olympia, WA 98504 Telephone: (360) 561-4540 Email: chuck.hersey@dnr.wa.gov

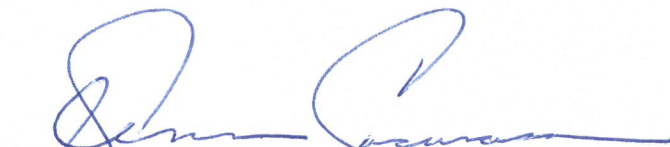
Principal U.S. Forest Service Contact:

U.S. Forest Service Program Manager Contact
Name: Kristin Bail, Forest Supervisor Address: 215 Melody Lane City, State, Zip: Wenatchee, WA 98801 Telephone: (509) 664-9323 Email: kristin.bail@usda.gov

- H. Authorized Representatives. By signature below, each party certifies that the individuals listed in this document are authorized to act in their respective areas for matters related to this MOU.

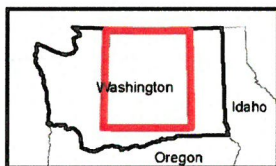
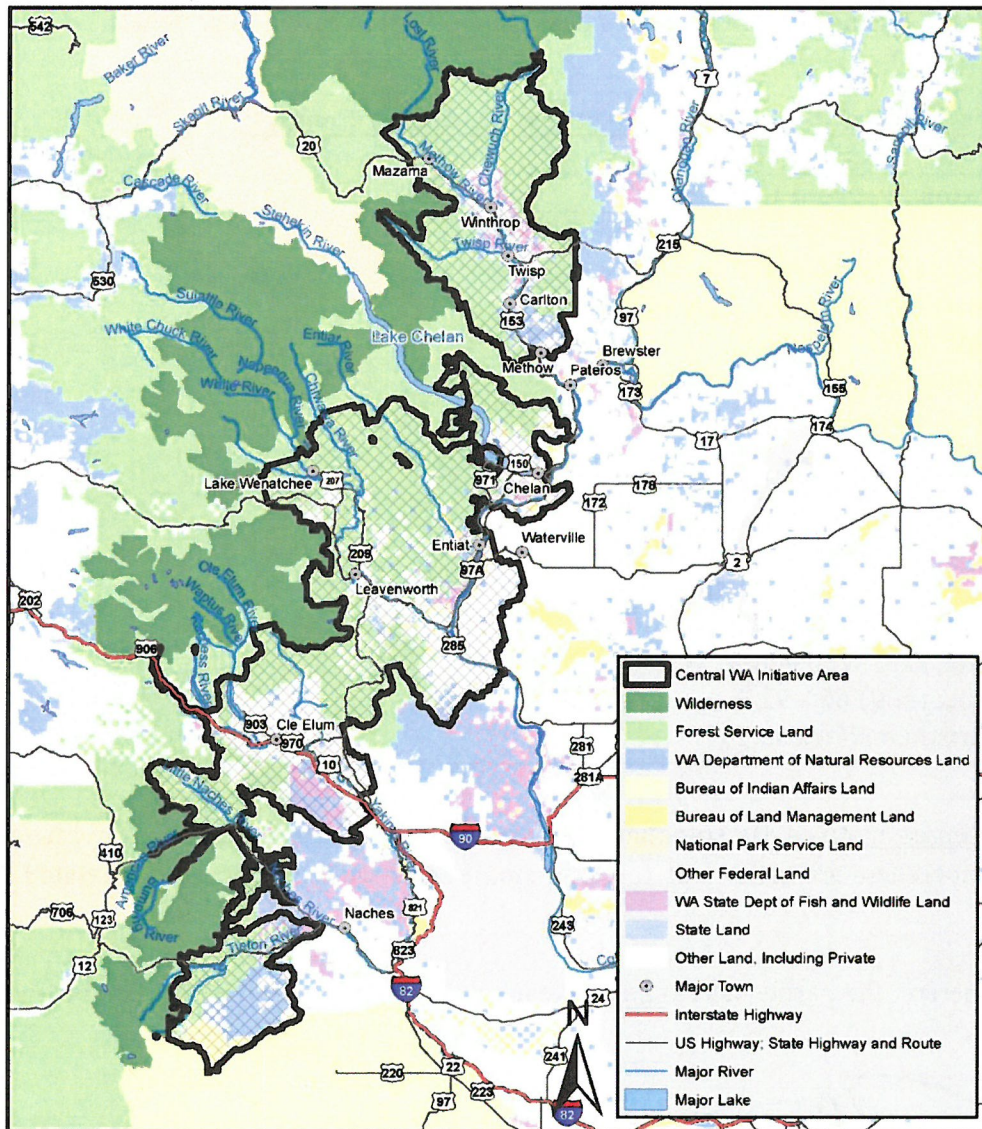
In witness whereof, the parties hereto have executed this MOU as of the last date below.


HILARY FRANZ
 Commissioner of Public Lands
 Washington Department of Natural Resources

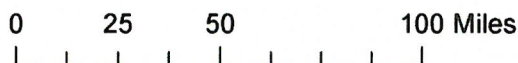

GLENN CASAMASSA
 Regional Forester
 Pacific Northwest Region,
 USDA Forest Service

APPENDIX A – Central Washington Initiative Map

This map reflects the initial focus areas of investment in Central Washington under this initiative. Revisions to the investment area boundary will be made through annual work planning over the life of the MOU, including addressing new priority landscapes collaboratively identified by shared stewardship partners to implement the 20-Year Forest Health Strategic Plan: Eastern Washington.



Central Washington Initiative



EB 4/12/2022

APPENDIX B – EXAMPLES OF CURRENT AND PLANNED INVESTMENTS (UNDER DEVELOPMENT)

The Central Washington Initiative includes, but is not limited to, the following current and planned investments including projects, treatments, and activities within the landscape defined as CWI. Future planning and collaboration will likely result in additions to the list below, which will be reflected in the initiative's 5-Year Plan of Work and annual operating plans.

Central Washington Initiative Geographic Landscape: The Central Washington landscape encompasses 2,450,000 acres (1,350,000 acres of Forest Service land and 1,100,000 acres of state, tribal, private and other lands). See map in Appendix A.

Existing Investments through Plans, Proposals, and Projects:

- Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) – North Central Washington CFLRP: Reducing risk and increasing resilience in Washington's East Cascades Proposal (prepared and submitted in 2019). Implementation of 54,000 acres of fuels treatments, 393,849 ccf of forest products from commercial thinning, 150 miles of sediment-reducing road treatments, 94 miles of in-stream fisheries improvements, and 85,000 acres of wildlife habitat improvement in Chelan, Okanogan, Kittitas and Yakima counties.
- H.B. 1168 implementation of RCW 76.06.200
 - Legislative progress reporting required every two-years, supported by ongoing transparent forest health treatment tracking with other relevant landscape contextual data on Forest Health Tracker.
 - Eastern Washington Service Forestry technical assistance and cost-share to mitigate wildfire and promote forest health on private lands with willing small forest landowners
 - Forest health treatments on DNR management State Trust Lands and Natural Areas
 - State-led prescribed fire implementation across land ownerships
 - 2021-2023 Building Forest Partnerships competitive grant program providing financial support to forest collaboratives capacity to help plan, implement, and monitor forest health treatments in Central Washington including Chumstick Wildfire Stewardship Coalition, North Central Washington Forest Health Collaborative, and Tapash Sustainable Forest Collaborative.
 - 2021-23 All-Lands Direct Investments of \$540,000 to implement fuels reduction and forest health treatments including thinning, piling, construction of potential control lines, mastication, and native seeding in DNR priority landscapes in the Central Washington Initiative on approximately 400 acres in the Nason Community Forest, Chelan Coulee Preserve, Cle Elum Ridge, Roslyn Urban Forest, and Teanaway.
 - 2021-23 forest health treatment implementation commitments on the Okanogan National Forest:
 - \$3.3 million to implement 4,012 acres of the Tillicum Restoration Project in Chelan County utilizing Good Neighbor Authority Agreement
 - \$500,000 to implement 700 acres of the Little Crow Restoration Project in

- Yakima County through All Lands Direct Investments
 - \$99,000 to the Colville Confederated Tribes for construction of beaver dam analogs and associated beaver reintroduction on national forest land within DNR priority landscapes in the Upper Columbia Basin.
 - \$130,000 committed to pre-NEPA planning in the Upper Swauk project area including necessary resource surveys.
- Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest 5-Year Integrated Restoration Plan implementation of completed Records of Decision, including:
 - Little Naches Upland Restoration (Yakima County)
 - Mission Restoration (Okanogan County)
 - Fuels shelf stock and Five-Year Plan opportunities

New and Emergent Opportunities to Discuss:

- Utilization of DNR Federal Lands Program capacity established by HB 1168 to support and conduct NEPA in priority landscapes and accelerate hazardous fuels treatment acreages with available fund sources within existing and upcoming planning areas using state contracting mechanisms through Good Neighbor Agreements.
- Exploration of opportunity for tribal partnership to utilize Public Law 93-638 agreement for planning and implementation of projects, treatments, and activities
- Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest 5-Year Integrated Restoration Plan (2022-2026) implementation of future decisions from environmental analysis currently underway, including:
 - Taneum Forest Restoration Project (Kittitas County)
 - Upper Wenatchee Pilot Project (Chelan County)
 - Twisp Restoration (Okanogan County)
 - Mad Roaring Mills (Chelan County)
 - Upper Swauk (Kittitas County)
- Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest 5-Year Integrated Restoration Plan (2022-2026) additional NEPA planning to initiate and complete:
 - Chumstick to LP
 - Lower North Shore
 - Upper Swauk
 - Knapp Johnson
 - Midnight Restoration
 - Upper Methow Restoration

ⁱ This target is set in footprint acres. At this time of the signing of this MOU, DNR forest health scientists have assessed over 1.5 million acres of land in 15 priority landscapes of the 20-Year Forest Health Strategic Plan: Eastern Washington to identify at least this footprint of treatment need. The assessments were conducted as part of the Forest Health Assessment and Treatment Framework as required by state law RCW 76.06.200. The 15 priority planning areas used to set the minimum treatment target for the Central Washington Initiative were: Methow Valley, Twisp River, Tillicum, Mad Roaring Mills, Upper Wenatchee, Nason Creek, Chumstick to LP, Mission, Stemilt, Upper Swauk, Teanaway, Cle Elum, Manastash-Taneum, Tieton and Ahtanum.